

BATTLETECH

HISTORICAL LIBERATION OF TERRA II



THE BEGINNING OF THE END

In 2766, decades of careful planning and manipulation finally culminated when Stefan Amaris wiped out the entire Cameron dynasty in a bloody coup. Rallying the might of the SLDF behind him, General Alaksandr Kerensky immediately attacked Amaris' Rim Worlds Republic, before turning his full fury against the Usurper's "Empire," launching one of the greatest military campaigns in Inner Sphere history.

Historical: Liberation of Terra, Volume 1 describes the early years of the civil war that would ultimately bring about the final end of the first Star League. Covering the fighting from the coup itself to the bloody campaign for the Terran Hegemony, this book provides a hard look at the closing years of the Star League Era, and the fateful decisions that would eventually pave the way for centuries of Succession Wars to come.



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L·I·B·E·R·A·T·I·O·N· OF TERRA

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RISE OF THE ANIMAL

**São Paulo
Brazil, Terra
Terran Hegemony
27 December 2766**

Major General Albert Kannenberg stood up from his desk and stretched, having spent most of the day hunched over his computer reviewing the long list of year-end reports and awards nominations sitting in his inbox. Most of his command had been redeployed off of Terra to support the SLDF's response to the Periphery Uprising, but the virtual mountain of paperwork never seemed to decrease. He grabbed his service coat off of the coat rack in the corner of his office and put it on. It may be a bright sunny day, with the temperature reaching a balmy 31 degrees Celsius, but it was his way, even if he'd be sweating before he made it ten meters from his headquarters' front door. It was almost 1500, and he needed to stretch his legs.

He looked down at the parade field spread out in front of him. Normally it would be filled with Star League troops or 'Mechs or tanks. Now, he had only a handful of SLDF 'Mechs on-hand, most piloted by reserve personnel. A regiment of Rim Worlder "augmentees" also garrisoned his base, in theory giving him another battalion of 'Mechs and two battalions of infantry at his disposal, but as he found out shortly after their arrival, the damn Rim Worlders somehow didn't report to or through the usual SLDF chain of command. In fact, they were nothing but trouble.

There was a knock at his door before it swung open. General Kannenberg turned to see his guest, though he didn't need to. It was Colonel Kulich Otolo, commander of the "vaunted" Thirty-ninth Amaris Legionnaires, dressed in his field uniform. At least he knocked before he barged in.

"What?!" Despite the hundreds of administrative files he had worked his way through during the course of the day, Kannenberg had been feeling fairly cheerful, and was looking forward to visiting as many different offices as he could before heading back to his quarters for the day. At least until Otolo walked into his office. The Rim Worlds officer was flanked by his aide, Lieutenant Cray, and some Amaris sergeant he had never seen, only adding to the general's perturbation.

Otolo offered no apologies or small talk. "General, I have a most important communiqué from First Consul Amaris. A holiday greeting to every host base commander, as well as a gift. A token of appreciation for all of the outstanding support you have provided us." Otolo smirked as he spit out the final sentence. He clearly had no regard for the SLDF officer or apparently even his own nation's leader.

Kannenberg turned back to the window. He no longer wanted to give Otolo the satisfaction of spitting in his face. "You can leave it on my desk and then get out. I'll look at it when I get in tomorrow morning."

"But General," Otolo replied, with a bemused tone in his voice, "First Consul Amaris insists that this gift be personally delivered."

Otolo's watch beeped almost simultaneously with the general's, indicating it was precisely 1500. Though Kannenberg never saw it, Otolo drew a pistol from his waistband, leveled it at the general's head and fired. The laser pierced the back of Kannenberg's head and literally cooked the man's brain in an instant. His lifeless body fell to the floor in a heap.

The Rim Worlds officer turned to his aide, motioning at the general's desk. "Go through his files and make sure we've identified each reserve commander in the region. I don't want to miss anyone."



"Tony, are you done with that pile yet?"

Antonius Zalman swiveled in his chair away from the game he'd been watching on the tri-vid and back to the virtual pile of exams sitting front and center on his noteputer, trying not to think about the five identical icons above that one.

"Uhh, not quite," he responded sheepishly, picking up the noteputer from the desk and opening up the third exam of thirty-four.

"Did you even start yet? You know you've only got two more days to get those grades into the system."

His wife Mara knew him too well, one of the many reasons he still loved her after eighteen years of marriage. He sighed and got back to the work he'd been putting off, resolving to ignore the many distractions at hand but knowing deep down that he would probably fail at that task, likely sooner rather than later. "Yes, dear," was the most he could muster.

It was his own fault, a fact that he'd admitted to himself probably thousands of times throughout the years. Whereas most of his other colleagues created simple multiple-choice or single-entry tests, Antonius Zalman was the opposite. His students were the future of the Hegemony, and he felt it was his duty to ensure they understood the history and culture of the nation they would soon become full citizens of. He loved teaching and inspiring, even if many of his peers didn't understand why he made his own job so difficult upon himself, or scoffed at the way he continued to espouse the ideals of the Hegemony and the Star League. He just hated the paperwork, be it filling out supply requests or individually grading the nearly two hundred essay-format exams in front of him.

"You know, Dad," his son David chimed in from the living room, with all the glee of a seventeen year old able to give back some of the same medicine he'd been given all his life, "if you'd gotten your homework done early, you wouldn't be in this mess."

Zalman couldn't help but smirk, but quickly affected the best—make that worst—whiny-teen voice he could. "But David, the game was on, and I've got all day tomorrow to get it done."

He heard chuckles from all over the house as he dug into the exams in front of him, soon enough tuning out the household noises and losing track of time as he focused upon the task at hand. He never felt the distant rumble nor heard the sirens wailing throughout the city, and barely even registered his son's voice as David tried to capture his attention. Only the touch of his wife's hand on his shoulder brought his attention partially away from his noteputer. He responded with an absent-minded, "hmm?"

"Tony."

The terror in Mara's voice was palpable. Zalman immediately snapped his head up and focused on the tri-vid in his den, which was showing images his mind simply couldn't comprehend. Scenes of mushroom clouds rising over locations labeled as Unity City, Sverdlovsk and Curitiba, the last just a few hundred short kilometers distant. Talking heads looking just as confused and frightened as he was at the moment. And continuous text scrolls indicating there were battles being fought apparently all across the globe.

"What the hell?" was all Zalman could mutter as he bolted up but stood transfixed. The shock only lasted a few moments though. His face flush and heart pounding in his chest, he sat back down and grabbed his comm-link, selecting his commanding officer from his contacts list and pressing the connect button as he placed the earpiece in his left ear. The connection was made almost instantly.

"Geo—" Zalman started, but had to force a swallow down his dry throat before continuing. "George, are you seeing this?"

"Yes, stand by," was the matter-of-fact reply before he heard a beep in the background. "Okay, Tony, you're on with Nat, Logan, Din and Milosz"—one of his fellow battalion commanders, the regimental exec, the first sergeant and the support battalion commander, respectively. "Nothing's on the Def-Net yet, but it looks like Unity City's been hit, so we have to assume the Citadel's been at least knocked off-line for the moment. Wait, now I'm seeing something. We've got action up top. Metz Station is reporting engaging the Rim Worlds fleet."

"Christ." That was Major Logan Dietz, the regimental exec. "We're compromised."

Colonel George Loc continued on without missing a beat, though Zalman could hear the growing fear in his voice. "Status updates are coming in now, from all over the planet. We're under siege." Zalman could hear his regimental commander take a deep breath over the open line before speaking again, clearly collecting his thoughts. "Okay, the 3843rd is on alert. Get the regiment mobilized. Logan, you—What the—"

Zalman heard a commotion over the line, followed by a series of pops and what sounded like explosions, then nothing but the sound of people talking in the background. Unfamiliar people, barking concise commands.

"George," Major Milosz Brkcic yelled into the comm-link. "George, are you okay?"

"Shit." That was Dietz again. "Go secure and get your people together. Watch out for these bastards. We'll talk again in two hours on Tac-Seven-Green."

The line went dead and that was it. For the first time in centuries, Terra was at war again. Zalman took only a moment

to consider that before he switched his com-link to SECURE mode, which would encrypt his communications and disable the device's emergency tracker, and began contacting his company commanders. As the commander of an SLDF reserve battalion, he led a mix of MechWarriors, armor crews and infantry, along with attached support personnel, all living in and around São Paulo, headquartered at an armory located on the west side of the metro area. His regiment's other battalions were scattered throughout the southern half of Brazil. So while he could hope to get at most of his battalion together in the span of just a few hours, at best it would be twenty-four hours before the whole regiment could form up. Probably longer considering the chaos gripping Terra.

Three of his four company commanders answered his calls, and he began briefing them as a dark thought crossed his mind. He used his noteputer to remotely log into his armory's security feeds and found just what he was afraid of.

"Dammit. Looks like they've got a lance of 'Mechs and at least a platoon of infantry stationed outside the armory," he reported. *Goddammit!* Zalman took another moment before continuing. "Okay, get your people moving. No uniforms, though! I don't want these Rim bastards IDing any of our people before we can hit them. Tell them to arm themselves with whatever they have at home. Mustering point is the Alfonso Franco Preparatory Academy"—Zalman's school, the first place he could think of that could both hold his battalion's complement and was within just a few clicks of the armory—"I'll send you coordinates."

After receiving a trio of confirmations, he disconnected, headed up the stairs into his bedroom and began gathering his gear when another troubling thought came to mind. He called to his wife downstairs who, along with their three children, was still staring with rapt attention at the tri-vid. "Mara! Five minute drill! Grab a couple of bags, we're *all* leaving."

"What?" was her confused and frightened response.

"No time." He hoped he wasn't right, but he had the feeling he was. "Get some stuff together and get the kids into the vehicle!" The Rim Worlders had apparently found Colonel Loc and there was no telling who else they would target. "David! Pull everything out of the gun safe! We're taking it all with us." The instincts of a twenty-year SLDF veteran combat officer were kicking in. The Rim Worlders had been on Terra for months, worming their way into every base and every office. Who knew what information they'd stolen? Or what they would do next. They'd already used nukes. The thought of what they might do to anyone that opposed them—or their families—chilled him.

"Tony, are you sure?" Mara appeared at the base of the stairs on the verge of hysteria, tears streaming down her face. She was a civilian, a paper-pusher with no military training, unprepared for her world to come crashing down.

"Yes, one hundred percent. Now get going, we don't have much time." Zalman didn't have time to explain or be supportive. That would have to come later. For now, he had to get his family moving and get them somewhere safe, though he didn't yet know where that somewhere was. Or how they'd get there.

Zalman snapped his fingers. "Support," he said to no one in particular, grabbing his comm-link. He brought up another contact and pressed the connect button, getting back to throwing his uniforms and other gear into a transport bag as his call connected "Kalli, are you watching?"

Kalli Andrushka was an old friend who had retired from the SLDF a few years ago, a former jump infantry platoon sergeant who lived just a block away from Zalman. "Yeah. What the hell is going on?"

"Looks like Amaris' cronies. No time to go into it." Zalman's mind was racing at a kilometer a second. "Listen, they hit my CO's house and I'm not waiting around for them to do that to us. Get together anyone you can for an escort. We're bugging out in five." That they should arm themselves heavily was left unspoken but understood.

"Wilco," was all she said before disconnecting. Andrushka could still be all business.

Zalman threw the last of his gear into his "go-bag" before strapping on the ankle holster and pistol belt he kept in a locked box under his bed, the former carrying a seven-shot hold-out slugthrower and the latter his issue laser pistol. He grabbed his gear and flew down the stairs to his home's main floor. His wife was wrangling their two younger children upstairs yet while he could hear his son David packing the last of his collection of rifles and pistols into their cases in his den. He walked in as David started dropping boxes of ammunition into a hard transport case. Zalman picked up one of his rifles, loading one full magazine into the weapon and tucking the other into a pouch on his belt before slinging the rifle over his shoulder. He then picked up his favorite auto pistol. He loaded one magazine into the pistol and handed the other two—both full—to his son.

"David," he said in a low and calm voice, "grab one of the holsters and keep this under your shirt. You know how your mom gets." He paused a moment as the fear grew on his son's face, placing his hand on the shoulder of the now-trembling young man. "I don't expect there's going to be trouble, but there might be. Keep your eyes open. If there is trouble, it's your job to protect your mother and your brother and sister. Okay?"

The younger Zalman swallowed hard and nodded his head. Antonius put on the best supportive smile he could while trying to hide the tremble in his hands. "Good, now get this stuff into the vehicle. Make sure we can get at it."

"Oh— Okay." David sputtered the words, but Zalman saw the reality dawn on David's face as he squeezed his son's shoulder one more time. He lingered only a moment longer. There was too much to do.

Zalman headed out to the garage, his "go-bag" and one gun case in tow. He hefted both into the back of his vehicle, then opened the back of his wife's in expectation for the bags she'd be bringing down and headed back into the house. "Time to go!" he bellowed.

He could hear his wife and children still rummaging around upstairs, his daughter Susan frantically searching for her favorite

something or other. Zalman headed back upstairs, passing David, who was carrying three rifle cases out of the den. "Split the case between the two vehicles," he yelled over his shoulder as he bounded the stairs two at a time. He found his wife in their bedroom, her largest travel case lying half-filled on the bed his own case had just been on. Mara was nearly hyperventilating, staring at her closet like she had no idea what to grab or take. He came up behind her and put both hands on her shoulders. She was shaking uncontrollably. He turned her around and wrapped his arms around her. "Listen, it'll be okay," he improvised. "I just want to make sure you and the kids will be safe." Zalman stroked her hair for a second as he searched for the next thing to say. Coming up with nothing, he went with simple and easy. "Grab some comfortable clothes, a pillow, some towels and a sheet or two and meet me in the garage. I'll get the kids. Okay?"

Just in the few seconds he'd been holding her, Mara's breathing and shaking had calmed a bit. She nodded her head and managed an "Okay."

He squeezed her again before letting go. "Good. See you in a second." He turned away and went to collect his two younger children.

"I'm ready, Dad," his fifteen-year-old son James shouted as he bolted down the stairs, his camping gear on his back and a satchel in his hand, containing what Zalman guessed was his noteputer along with a dozen other electronic devices.

"Good boy," Zalman whispered to himself. He and his children loved the outdoors. He knew they always kept their camping gear ready to go at a moment's notice for one of their father's "surprise deployments"—weekend trips he'd announce just minutes before packing the entire family into one of the vehicles and heading out into Brazil's wilds. "Put that in your mom's vehicle," he yelled down the stairs after his son, then turned towards his daughter's room.

Ellie was twelve, in that awkward age. Chances were, she was spending more time deciding which teddy bear to take than packing. Zalman's suspicions were confirmed when he reached her door. Her bright green overnight bag lay open on her bed, packed full save for a spot just large enough for one of her stuffed animals. He said but one thing to her: "Mister Bugsie." She looked at him and smiled, grabbing the comically stuffed armadillo. "Meet you downstairs, bug," he said to her. He headed into David's room to grab his eldest son's camping pack and noteputer bag. An instant later he was back downstairs with the rest of his family. "Put all your stuff in the Zoom," Mara's vehicle.

His comm-link chimed. A quick look showed him it was Kalli Andrushka. "I'm here," he answered.

"So are we," Andrushka replied. "And it looks like they are, too. Two black MPCs"—motorized people carriers—"pulling up. Very inconspicuous."

"Dammit!" He was out of time, his mind racing.

Andrushka cut him off before he could say anything more. "We can do this. Get your family down. Looks like there's only a few of them. When you hear the noise, open up the garage door and hit them from behind. They'll never know what hit 'em."

It took him a second to process what she said before he replied with a simple, "Wilco." He looked at his family, staring wide-eyed in front of him. "Slight change of plans. Everyone in the cellar." He spread his arms wide and shooed them towards the cellar door. "I'll be back in a minute," he said while rushing them down the cellar stairs. "Keep the door closed until I give the all clear. David, you know what to do." They all looked back in terror as he closed the door behind them, David giving him a nervous nod as his left hand unconsciously moved to the pistol on his hip.

Zalman rushed back into the garage and pulled the rifle from the front seat of his vehicle, maneuvering its sling over his head. He slapped the bolt release to chamber a round with a satisfying "chunk" and clicked the safety off as he crouched behind his open vehicle door, within easy reach of the automatic garage door control on his dash.

He only had to wait a few heart-pounding seconds before he heard the squeal of tires and shouts outside. "Here we go!" he heard Andruschka say over the still-open comm-link. Amid a flurry of shouts, Zalman hit the garage door control. The gunshots erupted a second later. As the door rose, he could see the two black MPCs, one parked behind the other perpendicular to the end of his driveway, with a quartet of dark, masked shapes huddled between them, trying desperately to return fire at the two vehicles that had blocked off the road ahead of them—Andruschka and her ad-hoc escort team. They'd already taken one of the dark forms down, the body laying unmoving on Zalman's lawn.

Andruschka's team was pouring heavy fire into the front MPC. One of the four dark figures moved toward the driver's door of the rear MPC. Zalman never gave it the chance, firing a pair of short bursts that dropped the figure. The form clutched its left leg, clearly only wounded despite the shots Zalman was sure he'd placed center of mass. He fired another series of short bursts, targeting the figure's lower extremities. Confident of scoring at least another debilitating hit, he switched fire to the other three, this time loosing bursts meant to drive them to the other side of the MPCs and right into Andruschka's line of fire. They turned to face him and fired into his open garage, backing up as they did. Zalman could hear the bullet strikes around him as he ducked behind his vehicle door for a moment. Hearing Andruschka's team unleash a steady volume of fire, he rolled back out and added his own to the cacophony, emptying his magazine.

Zalman dropped behind cover again as he hit the magazine release ahead of the trigger with his right hand, dropping the empty, and slapped a fresh magazine in and hitting the bolt release with his left in one practiced move. He popped back up and made a crouched run down the twelve-meter length of his driveway, all the while firing bursts at the two forms he could still see on the other side of the MPCs. Just like he'd been trained to do back in basic training two decades earlier.

Just as suddenly as it had begun, the firefight was over. All five black-clad forms were on the ground, three still writhing in pain from their wounds. Andruschka approached Zalman while her five other comrades, one sporting a facial wound that looked like it had been caused by shards of broken glass, secured the scene

and disarmed the black figures. "It was just these five," Andruschka reported. "Amateurs." She moved to the still-writhing form Zalman had dropped and pulled off his mask, revealing a young Latin man screaming in pain. "I'd guess local hired guns."

"Not all of them." A burly man in his forties wearing an old-style SLDF infantry vest and helmet with his rifle slung across his chest lifted the head of another still-alive attacker for both Andruschka and Zalman to see. He had a shark tattoo on the side of his neck close to his left shoulder, a common sight among Amaris' most strident Rim Worlders.

Zalman looked around, scanning up and down the street for any signs of further trouble. Seeing none, he decided, "Okay, let's use what they gave us here. Strip their vests and weapons, and check them for ID. Throw the dead ones in the back of the front van. We'll dump that somewhere else if we can get it started. We'll use the other van to get us through any roadblocks they might have. Kalli, can you drive Mara and the kids? I'll take this van."

"Roger that, Major."

Andruschka turned around to direct her five other teammates. Zalman took one more look around the neighborhood, mentally saying a good-bye to the place he'd called home for the past twelve years. Some of his neighbors were peeking out of the corners of their windows, frightened by the gunfight that had pierced the calm of their neighborhood, though Jose Campanello across the street stood brazenly in his front window, three bullet holes prominent in the siding less than half a meter to his left. The man raised a glass in silent salute to Zalman, who smiled briefly and nodded in return.

Antonius turned and rushed back into his house, knocking gingerly at the door to his cellar, but standing to its side just in case David was a little trigger happy. "It's me," he said as calmly as he could. "Everything's okay." He opened the door slowly, and glanced in. His wife appeared at the bottom of the stairs, shaking hysterically. He did his best to reassure them all. "It's okay. We're going to go now. Come on, let's go." One by one, his family filed up the stairs, each one of them clearly shaken to the bone. He ushered them out to the garage, where Andruschka stood next to the Zoom with one of the black-clad assault team vests in her hand. "You all remember Kalli, right," he said motioning to her. "She's going to drive you guys, and I'm going to take the black MPC out there. We'll leave my vehicle here. It'll be okay."

He wasn't particularly sure of that, but he had to say something. He took the vest from Andruschka, which drew a gasp from Mara as he put it on. He needed all of the advantages he could get.

His comm-link chimed. When he glanced at the device's tiny screen, he saw that it was a comm from the SLDF. He pressed the connect button and said, "Hello?"

"This is an automated message for Major Antonius Zalman. The SLDF Command and Information Center Director of Operations has declared an emergency recall and activation of all reserve personnel. The Terran Hegemony is under attack by the Rim Worlds Republic. Contact your chain of command immediately and report to your mustering station as soon as possible."

He shook his head as the line clicked dead. "Perfect timing."

Devlin,

While producing the recent volume on the Reunification War it became apparent we were telling the start of a much larger tale. The Star League has been mythologized by both the Clans and the Inner Sphere, while Amaris and his Rim Worlds Republic have become bogeymen. Yet the true history of the great Cameron experiment is much more nuanced, with heroes and villains on both sides. Let us not forget that the Periphery Uprising is known as the Freedom War beyond the Inner Sphere, winning as it did the independence of the territorial states from Terra's control, and that Amaris' scheming not only provided the Periphery with its chance at freedom but also removed a despot who threatened to destroy the Star League—Richard Cameron.

This isn't an attempt to rehabilitate Amaris—I still put him up there with Adolf Hitler and Jinjiro Kurita—but it should serve as a warning to anyone who believes such conflicts are entirely black and white. Ambition and greed were to blame for the fall of the Star League and even Kerensky, deified by the Clans as he is, was guilty of misjudgments before, during and after the campaigns.

Above all, the Periphery Uprising and the downfall of the Star League show that even grand dreams can be flawed, brought down by petty actions scarcely contemplated by their noble instigators. David thought you might appreciate the parallel.

—Paladin Victor Steiner-Davion, Santa Fe, Terra, 3090.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

BattleTech Historical: Liberation of Terra, Volume 1 is the latest in a series of products that explore the major yet little-detailed conflicts in the past of the BattleTech Universe. In this case, we cover the start of the conflict between the Star League and Stefan Amaris' forces. As with the other books in the *Historical* series, *Reunification War* is part sourcebook and part rulebook, detailing the background and major events of the conflict as well as providing tools relevant to players who wish to recreate battles of the historical era in question.

Rise of the Animal, the introductory story, details the first shots of the conflict from the perspective of Antonius Zalman, later a major player in the formation of the Clans. The first full chapter is *The Rise and Fall of the Star League*, which details the history of the Star League, including the trials and tribulations that lead to the Amaris Coup. *The League's Might* details the structure and practices of the SLDF while also providing military overviews of the Star League member states and Periphery nations. *Personalities* details the political and military notables involved, either directly or in a supporting role, in the early campaigns. The next three chapters detail the conflict itself: *Conquering the Hegemony* expounds on Amaris' occupation and efforts to control the Terran Hegemony; *The Rim World's Campaign* showcases events in the Periphery, including Kerensky's occupation and reduction of Amaris' home nation; and *The Hegemony Campaign* covers the initial period of Kerensky's efforts to retake the Terran Hegemony.

The *Rules Annex* includes a number of items designed to aid play in the late Star League era, including rules for generating SLDF and Republican forces. *New Combat Units* provides game stats for the greatest technological achievement the Star League military ever produced: the Space Defense System and its drone WarShips.

A Note on Sources:

Select details of the Amaris Coup and Operation CHIEFTAIN (the SLDF's liberation of the Terran Hegemony) have appeared in numerous volumes: the *Star League Sourcebook, Handbook: Major Periphery States* (and its precursors, *Periphery Sourcebook*, first and second editions), and the *Handbook* series (and their *Housebook* precursors), as well as several Technical Readouts (notably, but not exclusively, *TR2750* and *TR3075*). The era has also appeared in fiction: The early Star League (and the "kids clique") form the backdrop of the BattleCorps novel *Fall from Grace* by Chris Hartford and the first meeting of Aleksandr Kerensky and Michael Steiner on Tharkad appears in the *Destiny's Call* serial by Loren Coleman. The subsequent histories of several notable SLDF and RWA personalities can be found in *Historical: Operation Klondike* as well in the *Wolf Clan* and *Jade Falcon* sourcebooks together with *Invading Clans*. *Field Manual: SLDF, Era Report: 2750*, and the *2750 Field Report* PDF-exclusive series will provide additional detail on the military and political situation across the Inner Sphere prior to the Periphery Uprising and Amaris Coup.

THE AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE: ONCE MORE INTO THE BREACH

So here we are at the fifth volume of the *Historical* series. Actually, it's the fifth and sixth, the massive war between Kerensky and Amaris being split across two volumes. As with the previous volume, *Historical: Reunification War* (which in many regards is the first volume of the trilogy that these books will complete) the basic structure of the conflicts that comprised the *de facto* Star League Civil War have been known since the earliest days of BattleTech but a lot of the fine detail was missing. The scale of the conflict is staggering, with around four thousand regiments employed by the SLDF alone. The ramifications are still being felt in the modern BattleTech universe, their full impacted unrealized until the end of the Dark Age. Without the Amaris Coup, the war that ensued and Kerensky's Operation EXODUS there would be no Clans, no ComStar (and, by extension, no Word of Blake or Jihad), and no Republic of the Sphere.

Once more, writing these volumes required combing through multiple sources and reconciling different accounts of some events. The assistance of the fact-checking and MUL teams in keeping us on the straight and narrow is much appreciated and any continuity issues are entirely our fault.

Volume 2 will pick up the tale where this book leaves off—at the end of 2774—and follow the campaign through to its conclusion. It will also look at the catastrophic aftermath of the war and the fall of the Star League that will lead to the Succession Wars and the Exodus of the SLDF, in turn leading to the formation of the Clans.

INNER SPHERE - 2765

Lyran Commonwealth

Tamar Pact

- 1) Trelshire
- 2) Tamar Domains
- 3) Camlann Shire

Protectorate of Donegal

- 4) Coventry Province
- 5) Alarion Province
- 6) District of Donegal
- 7) Furillo Province

Federation of Skye

- 8) Kannon Shire
- 9) Virginia Shire
- 10) Rahneshire
- 11) Isle of Skye

Draconis Combine

Pesht Military District

- 1) Kagoshima Prefecture
- 2) Coudoux Prefecture
- 3) Bjarred Prefecture
- 4) Pusht-i-rud Prefecture
- 5) Ningxia Prefecture

Galedon Military District

- 6) Oshika Prefecture
- 7) Matsuida Prefecture
- 8) New Samarkand Prefecture
- 9) Kaznejev Prefecture

Rasalhague Military District

- 10) Radstadt Prefecture
- 11) Trondheim Prefecture
- 12) Tinaca Prefecture

Benjamin Military District

- 13) Baldur Prefecture
- 14) Xinyang Prefecture
- 15) Kajikazawa Prefecture
- 16) Proserpina Prefecture
- 17) Irurzun Prefecture
- 18) Kuzuu Prefecture
- 19) Ashio Prefecture

Federated Suns

Draconis March

- 1) Robinson Operational Area
- 2) Fairfax Operational Area
- 3) Woodbine Operational Area

Crucis March

- 4) Markesan Operational Area
- 5) Minette Operational Area
- 6) Chirikof Operational Area

Capellan March

- 7) Kathil Operational Area
- 8) Taygeta Operational Area

Capellan Confederation

- 1) Tikonov Commonality
- 2) Chesterton Commonality
- 3) Sarna Commonality
- 4) Capella Commonality
- 5) Sian Commonality
- 6) St Ives Commonality
- 7) Andurien Commonality

Free Worlds League

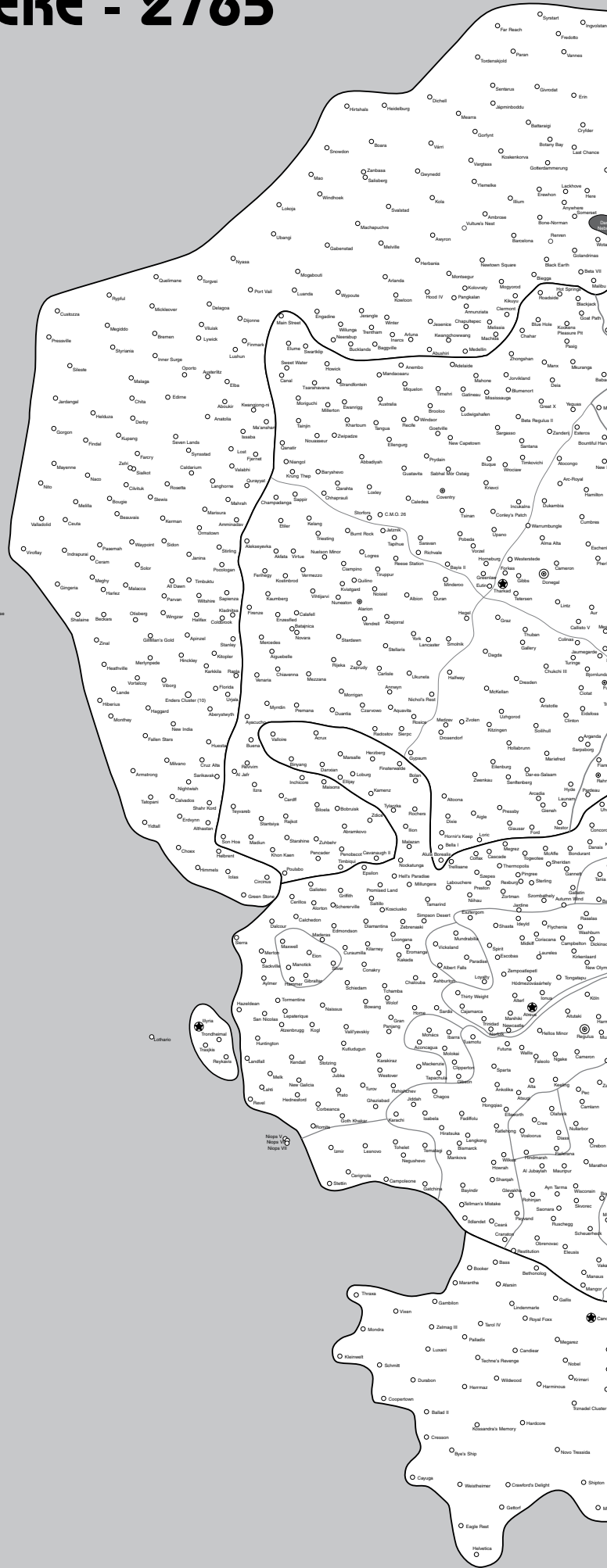
- 1) Marik Commonwealth
- 2) Federation of Oriente
- 3) Principality of Regulus
- 4) Duchy of Andurien
- 5) Stewart Confederation
- 6) Duchy of Graham-Marik
- 7) Rim Commonality
- 8) Regulan Free States
- 9) Principality of Gibson
- 10) Abbey District

Terran Hegemony

- 1) Alliance Core
- 2) Lone Star Province
- 3) Lockdale Province
- 4) Tyrfin Province
- 5) Terra Firma Province

The Periphery

- 1) Magistracy of Canopus
- 2) Taurian Concordat
- 3) Outworlds Alliance
- 4) Illyrian Palatinate
- 5) Rim Worlds Republic
- 6) Tortuga Dominions





LEGEND

30 LIGHT YEARS

120 LIGHT YEARS OR 36.6 PARSECS

● Region capital ● District capital ★ National capital

MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS

Map compiled by COMSTAR.
From information provided by the COMSTAR EXPLORER CORPS
and the STAR LEAGUE ARCHIVES on Terra.



RISE AND FALL OF THE STAR LEAGUE

THE BURNED RECORDS

There has been much criticism of histories of the Star League era, claiming that the focus has been erratic—illuminating microscopic details of some events, while only covering others in the broadest detail. To some extent this reflects the biases of the historians in question, but it also reflects a stark reality of the history of this era: many records were destroyed or rendered inaccessible, leading to gaps in what we know of the situation. The Succession Wars caused much of this, but the Jihad played its part too. Archives and data repositories were frequently targets of these conflicts, their destruction commonly being referred to as the “burned records.” Frequently the material lost was that related to government-level documentation whereas private diaries and recollections survived the targeting of said infrastructure. As a result we are left with often-generalized historical data containing some fairly glaring gaps where information was “so obvious” to those at the time they failed to record it.

A classic example is the name of the Magistracy Campaign in the Reunification War. Broad histories survive, along with many diaries, but with the sacking of Atreus and Terra (more than once) a great deal of material joined the “burned records” or was placed out of reach by hostile governments who wished to conceal some past indiscretion or gain a strategic advantage by controlling the knowledge.

Ironically, the Clans filled in many of these gaps, the descendants of Aleksandr and Nicholas’ exoduses having retained copies of the SLDF archives. Though the Clans have had a foothold in the Inner Sphere for almost forty years, they have been notoriously tight-lipped about their recent archives—while they happily talked about their own history, they were somewhat more guarded regarding the history of their blessed Star League era—and only with the publication of *Reunification War* have they allowed open access to some of their historical records “to correct the biases and inaccuracies inflicted upon our heritage” according to Laurie Tseng, Loremaster of the Council of Six. It wasn’t until the Council complained to the Republic about “misrepresentations” in our recent volume that the designation of the Magistracy Campaign as Operation ARDENT SHIELD became clear. To be fair, the name was known but it was one of a dozen operational names that appeared in documents of the era and its provenance was dubious

—*Personal annotation*, Paladin Victor Steiner-Davion

“Gueith camlann inqua arthur & medraut corruerunt et mortalitas in brittannia et in hibernia fuit.” (The strife of Camlann in which Arthur and Medraut perished, and there was plague in Britain and Ireland)

—*Annales Cambriae*, 10-13th Century

THE GOLDEN AGE

With the conclusion of the Reunification War in 2596 the Star League was complete and an era of peace and prosperity descended on the Inner Sphere and Periphery. Ian Cameron had only a little time to enjoy his victory; he died in 2602, two years after his wife, and was succeeded by his son Nicholas who bore the responsibility of reconstruction and political reunification. A serving SLDF officer, badly injured during peacekeeping operations in the Taurian Concordat, Nicholas knew firsthand the horrors of the Reunification War and worked diligently to repair both the physical and political damage inflicted on the territorial states. Despite this, the first great challenge for the new First Lord came not from the Periphery but from one of the Inner Sphere powers.

Never very stable, Leonard Kurita’s madness reached its zenith on 1 September 2604 when in a drunken rage he murdered one of the First Lord’s bodyguards, Tanya Kerensky, during a council session. He fled the Court of the Star League and for a few months war between the Star League and the Draconis Combine seemed inevitable. In the end, elements within the Combine dealt with the situation and a level of normalcy resumed.

By the late 2620s, the economic woes of the post-war era were finally put to rest and the Star League truly entered its golden age. The standard of living increased throughout the human sphere and both military and civilian technologies soared to hitherto unknown heights. On 1 January 2630, the universe suddenly shrank with the first use of the faster-than-light communications system now known as the hyperpulse generator (HPG). Unlike previous endeavors that were solely for military use (e.g. the “Black Box” system that first saw use in the Reunification War), HPGs would become part of the civilian infrastructure and revolutionized society in much the same way as the telegraph and telephone did in the nineteenth century. It was now possible to effectively govern an interstellar empire from the capital and several organizations emerged that had as their goal the deconstruction of the feudal society that had dominated the Age of War. For the most part these efforts failed—to many in the Inner Sphere and Periphery states the noble classes were seen as part of their cultural heritage—though some of the more extreme groups turned to harsher methods to get their message across. The best known of these is the Scourge of Death in the Free Worlds League who, in 2678, killed the Captain-General and many of the Marik clan. The backlash from that incident was devastating, resulting in both the annihilation of the organization and also the unseating of House Selaj, the Scourge’s backers, from Regulus.

Through the rose-tinted spectacles of hindsight, the years 2650 through 2750 are viewed as the Century of Peace. The reality was somewhat different. Though standards of living rose significantly, the riches and freedoms provided by the Star League were not enough for some and dissent rose, both within and between member states. As with the situation in the Free Worlds League, violence was often the result. Elsewhere proxy conflicts emerged.

The economy became a playground for speculators and governments alike, with the HPG network facilitating manipulations of unprecedented scale and geographical reach. Fortunes were lost and won and the Department of Economic Relations (DoER) suffered conniptions in its efforts to establish a pan-Star League currency, the Star League Dollar (SL\$), also referred to as the “Cameron Dollar” or “Cameron-Bill” (heralding the later C-Bill). Eventually the DoER was able to reign in the speculators but that didn’t head off large-scale economic troubles, most notably the Atreus Credit Crisis of the 2720s and 2730s.

THE FIRST HIDDEN WAR

More significantly for the SLDF was the militant nature of the Draconis Combine, many of whose warriors sought an outlet for their frustrations. The First Lord's Edict of 2650 had disenfranchised significant numbers of DCMS warriors, causing greater resentment than did the drawdowns mandated at the formation of the Star League (when the Reunification War provided an outlet for the Kurita warriors' frustrations). The Edict coincided with the rise in Combine militancy associated with Urizen Kurita's *Kokugaku* and the rise of interest in the ways of *Bushido*. The warriors disenfranchised by Michael Cameron's edict became *ronin*, masterless warriors, and the Kurita authorities on their new capital of Luthien disavowed all responsibility for their actions. At first, these troops sought to prove their strength against each other, forming schools and dojos. Like all such warriors, they sought greater and greater challenges and eventually they began to look beyond their social groups to the *gaijin*—foreigners—within their realm: the SLDF.

The first duel between the SLDF and *ronin* forces occurred on Benjamin in 2681. Amanda Kazutoyo, a dueling master in the Third Benjamin Regulars, issued a challenge to Fort Shandra. Initially the Star League forces declined the challenge but Kazutoyo refused to withdraw and for ten days maintained her vigil outside the gates. Eventually, Lieutenant Bradley Grebbers accepted the challenge—going against his commander's orders to do so—but lasted a little over ten minutes against the skilled Dueling Master. With the execution of Grebbers by Kazutoyo the SLDF became incensed, and what became known as the First Hidden War began. Over the next seventy years the SLDF and DCMS *ronin* fought more than 300 duels, with much of the early advantage going to the skilled Combine duelists. Eventually the SLDF fought back with the ACMS (Advanced Combat and Maneuvering Skills) Project, later renamed the Gunslinger Program, instilling select warriors with the skills needed to prevail in such encounters. The *ronin* were not discouraged by the improved SLDF performance—quite the opposite, in fact—but by the time of the last clash in 2751, the honors were more or less even between the combatants. Though wasteful—death was often the fate for the loser, either the subject of a *coup de grâce* or to atone for their failure—these duels served as a pressure-release valve for the militaristic Kurita warriors.

CLIQUE AND CLASHES

The signatories of the Star League Accords were very aware of the fractious natures of the member states and knew that the only way of ensuring peace and stability was to build bridges between the future rulers of the member and territorial states. Though never official policy, many of the council lords positioned their progeny to benefit from the lessons of the war and to work together for the greater good; Nicholas Cameron, Rhean Marik and Kevin Dinesen all participated in the conflict to some degree and their shared experiences brought them together as a loose alliance among the heirs of the Great Houses. Joined by Zane Davion and Rinalla Centrella the "kids clique" gained a level of notoriety in the last years of the twenty-sixth century before the responsibilities of governing their respective nations caused them to drift apart. Those outside the clique may have felt slighted, none more so than the paranoid Leonard Kurita whose murder of Tanya Kerensky shocked the Star League and pushed the alliance to the brink of war, but their cooperation and understanding allowed the League to stabilize and prosper despite the difficult circumstances.

Unfortunately the balancing act could not continue. With the death of Magestrix Rinalla Centrella and the deposing of Captain-General Rhean Marik tempers flared in the council chambers at just the wrong moment. The cost of reconstructing the

Periphery realms and paying for the Reunification War had been managed by financial wizardry and diplomatic skill. With tensions rising, the economy and courts became proxy battlefields, plunging several states into difficulties. They would recover, but forty years of trust and planning were discarded. For all that it is perceived as a "golden age" the members of the Star League soon began to look for what would benefit them rather than what was best for humanity as a whole. Nowhere would this self-interest be more apparent than in the run up to the Amaris Coup and in the civil war that ensued.

—from *Leaders and Libertines*, Mikhail Von Bohrs, Terra Press, 2907



COUNCIL EDICT 2650

Scarcely a year after Michael Cameron succeeded his grandfather Nicholas he faced a crisis that shook the Star League to its core. It had become clear that the loyalist Rim Worlds Republic was building a massive army. With the Lyran Commonwealth concerned about the buildups along its border, Archon Sarah Steiner-Dinesen was granted authority over SLDF troops in her realm and staged a series of SLDF-LCAF maneuvers along the Rim Worlds' border to discourage adventurism by Tadeo Amaris, who was serving as regent for his cousin Selanta.

The growth rate of the RWA slowed but did not stop, with constant reports of new shipments of material arriving on Apollo, Götterdämmerung and other of Tadeo's base-worlds. The origin of the material was unknown, but eventually it became clear that it was not the Rim Worlds who was paying for it. It would eventually be revealed that the Draconis Combine bankrolled these efforts, to place pressure on the Lyran state.

Amaris refused calls to disband his forces. He pointed out that the RWA force strength was within the provisions of the SLDF Defense Protocols, to which the Rim Worlds was a signatory, rather than the more restrictive limits placed on the other Periphery states. Nonetheless, the High Council argued in favor of forcibly disarming the Republic. The prospect of another conflict like the Reunification War did not sit well with the House Lords. Instead, they settled on a compromise: They amended the Star League accords so as to significantly limit the size of all Periphery military forces.

Issued as Council Edict 2650, the original drafts of the amendments only addressed the militaries of the territorial states. To win approval by the territorial states it was aimed at, the First Lord also insisted the Edict include additional reductions in the size of the member states' militaries, removing roughly a third of the armed strength of each. It was a compromise that pleased no one, but it did hold... publicly at least.

—*Cycles of History*, Giulietta Mahon, Republic Impressions, 3083

RENAISSANCE AND REBELLION

Jonathan Cameron witnessed the heightening tensions between the Star League and its member states and pushed for vastly increased funding for the SLDF and military manufacturers. This shocked the Council who thought that, with the exception of the Combine's dueling, the League was at peace. Jonathan argued that the funding was needed to advance military technologies to the next level and without investment these advances might be lost. He pointed to the K-F drive, citing the century-long delay between the theories of Kearny and Fuchida and the development of usable technologies. He made it clear that following the provisions of the SLDF Protocols any new technologies would go first to the Royal units but would eventually be cascaded down to the rest of the SLDF and the houses. As such, the member states had a vested interest in pushing the boundaries of technology in order to ensure their own troops benefited from the shared technologies, albeit a number of years after the Royals. This carrot proved irresistible and Jonathan got his budget.

The advances of Jonathan's reign lead directly to the SLDF capabilities of the late Star League (and indirectly, that of the Clans) while ensuring the Royal formations maintained a qualitative advantage. The funding also facilitated the continued expansion of the SLDF. The Star League Army had grown steadily through the twenty-seventh century and as the twenty-eighth century dawned it began to approach the monolithic size seen in its final years. Meanwhile, house forces continued to be squeezed and by 2700 the SLDF outnumbered the entire armed forces of the member states combined. Surely this was an unbeatable force?

Perhaps the greatest achievement of Jonathan's reign—albeit one that would later haunt Kerensky in his war against the Usurper—was the Space Defense System (SDS). While the SLDF provided a mobile force, Jonathan was determined to safeguard humanity's homeworld through a combination of fixed defenses and mobile weapon platforms. The core of the system were drone WarShips, each packing a battlecruiser's firepower into a hull that maneuvered like a destroyer, supported by automated repair yards and ground-based weapon installations capable of gutting any naval vessel in low orbit. Focused on the jump points, these systems provided a formidable frontline defense against any attacking force and, unlike the SLDF, were purely defensive. Initially, these phenomenally expensive defenses were deployed at Terra but were extended to other key worlds in the Hegemony. The M5 drone ships operated independently but required a crew to jump between systems, limiting the extent of their deployment. The ultimate intention was to extend the system to all house capitals and key base and factory worlds throughout the Inner Sphere, but glitches in the system caused several accidental engagements. Though these problems were eventually resolved, the SDS network was never deployed beyond the Hegemony's borders.

The cost and challenges of building the SDS—and the First Lord's insistence that the system be completed—was the first significant sign of Jonathan's growing instability. While it did not become clear until later in his reign just how driven Jonathan had become, he slowly began to exhibit classical signs of paranoia. He came to believe that the Hegemony and Star League would be smashed by outside forces. He was plagued by nightmares of foreign troops prowling the shattered remains of Terra, humanity driven away from its cradle and Terra's importance in the universe lost. Initially, few knew about

these nightmares beyond his wife, Ludmella Grenson, and his sister Jocasta, but soon the First Lord's mania became impossible to conceal.

In 2729, as the Star League was consumed by events in the Free Worlds and on the Combine-Suns border—the First Lord failing to act in either case—the crisis came to a head and the SLDF Commanding General, Ikolor Fredasa, maneuvered to unseat the First Lord. He had no desire for power himself but wanted to save the Hegemony and the Star League from a madman. He approached Jocasta Cameron with a view to her taking over as First Lord but Mother Jocasta, still sequestered in her Scottish cloister, refused. Fredasa was not dissuaded and decided that if Jocasta would not voluntarily take up the office, he would force the issue.

He began spreading rumors of a coup in the offing, implying Jocasta was the instigator, going so far as to redeploy Terran forces in a manner consistent with such an operation. When the HCIB passed on the rumors to the First Lord he refused to believe his sister capable of such a deception.

“MISTER WATSON. COME HERE, I WANT TO SEE YOU.”

The Kearny-Fuchida drive facilitated man's expansion into space but like the conquest of the American West or the imposition of the British Empire, the key limitation on governance was communication. Messages could only travel as fast as the swiftest JumpShip. Most commercial vessels devoted significant storage to messages and other zero-mass cargoes such as electronic books and periodicals. With recharge times lasting upwards of a week this meant most messages were taking months to reach their destinations. The further from Terra you ventured, the more erratic the communications and the greater the reliance on local initiative. This isolation and independence played a significant role in the Outer Reaches Rebellion and the formation of nascent states across the fragmented human sphere.

Matters remained unchanged throughout the Age of War, with the return to a feudal order allowing central authority and military command to be delegated in order to facilitate the functioning of large states despite the communications limitations. Most conflicts of this era were localized and didn't suffer significantly from the lag between the issuance and execution of orders. The Reunification War was another matter entirely.

Spanning the Inner Sphere, more than 500 light-years from Terra and with fronts sometimes stretching hundreds of light years, the communications issues became clearly manifest. Even before the conflict erupted the Terran Hegemony had been investigating FTL communication systems but had made only modest progress. As a consequence, three of the four fronts of the conflict were fought using Age of War methods. The fourth, the geographically dispersed Rim Worlds campaign, mostly followed the same principals but late in the war select units field-trialed prototype FTL-comms systems to facilitate coordination. The system was eventually abandoned (though the devices were resurrected in the thirty-first century as the “Fax” or “Black Box” system) but even the limited advantage they provided spurred on the Star League to develop more efficient systems.

By the second decade of the twenty-seventh century, several teams were working on the problem. In 2614, Joshua Hoshiko was appointed Minister of Communications to coordinate the efforts, including the thorny issue of integrating the technologies being pursued by the Free Worlds League's Rhyllene Hypertech. The matter eventually reached the High Council and involved both the First Lord and the Captain-General in a “spirited” debate over eminent domain. Eventually, under the aegis of Professor Cassandra DeBurke, the efforts paid off and the system known as the hyperpulse generator (HPG) was born.

Using the same principals as the K-F drive, the HPG transmitted packets of electromagnetic energy up to fifty light-years through hyperspace. Doing so required immense quantities of energy and massive infrastructure and it took almost a decade for the first installations to be completed. On New Year's Day 2630 the first message was successfully broadcast from the test center outside the Court of the Star League: “Watson, come quick. I need you.” This message recorded by the First Lord mimicked the first message sent by Alexander Bell 750 years earlier upon the invention of the telephone. Within a handful of years the system was fully operational and HPGs were being built on worlds across the Star League. By the early twenty-eighth century the technology was sufficiently refined to allow compact (truck-sized) generators to be installed on WarShips and employed by mobile army HQs.

The current network of stations across the Inner Sphere can trace its origins to the Star League; ComStar is the current incarnation of the Star League Bureau of Communications as re-established by Jerome Blake after Operation LIBERATION. The network's operating procedures have hardly changed. Each station is classified as an “A” (hub) station, or “B” (node) station. A-class stations usually broadcast their information every six hours while B-stations transmitted twice per day. Both classes of stations broadcast to all stations in range, resulting in multiple copies of their messages being passed through the network, the redundancy safeguarding against interference and packet loss. More secure communication can be realized by specifying a specific path rather than broadcasting to each station in range, but this places messages at the mercy of station schedules and mishaps. In addition, real-time HPG communication became a reality in the late Star League. Requiring paired transmitters at each station, this network was prohibitively expensive and only utilized for priority government and military communications. The system was never widely taken up in the Inner Sphere, though the Clans developed the concept prior to the Jihad and used it for communication with the homeworlds while ComStar's Explorer Corps established their DRUM network for fast communication in the Deep Periphery.

—*A Timeline of Technology*, Paladin Daniel Mueller, Hegemony Press, 3084

**JONATHAN CAMERON:
SAGE OR PSYCHO?**

It is easy to see Jonathan's preoccupation as insanity, a madman's ravings that just happened to come true in light of the horrors of the Amaris Coup over half a century later. Certainly during the latter days of the Star League and the Succession Wars he was regarded as little more than a madman whose paranoia handed Amaris the tools he needed to secure his conquests and gut the SLDF that was looking to rescue it.

Portions of Jonathan's correspondence have become clearer over the years, but only since the rescue of Terra from the Blakists has it been possible for historians to study the full texts. Much of his writings are non-specific ramblings, talking of "horrors untold" and "the mutilation of our homeworld". In their historical context, some of these phrases take on more ominous tones. Perhaps his best known quote, from a letter of 2729, mentioned *"I dreamt of seeing the wheel again, but this time upon its rim were vultures black as night who looked expectantly at the young child who was laughing and playing with swords in the wheel's center ..."* which seems to predict both the threat from Amaris and the vulnerability of Richard Cameron. Another is *"foreign flags upon Earth's soil and strange, coarse men walking the white halls of Unity City"*. What has not been commented on previously is the next line: *"These will be dark days, when Wolves prowl across Terra."*

At first glance, these are just more of Jonathan's paranoid ravings, but in the modern context the capitalization of Wolves brings about a whole other meaning: Did Jonathan predict the Clans? Similarly *"our people, buried in dogma, ground under foot only to be liberated and oppressed once more, thrown into Hades before rising to new glory"* sounds like Jonathan was either very lucky, or that he prophesied the struggle of ComStar and the Word of Blake.

I'm one of those who think the idea of prophecy is just so much bull manure, if you pardon my Davion, yet there is enough in Jonathan's letters and diaries to make even hardened skeptics doubt (and to send the believers into paroxysms of theorizing). Like Nostradamus, whom Jonathan has often been likened to, how much of this is wishful thinking by the readers, and how much an extraordinary ability—if not precognition then perceptiveness?

—Olivia Bishop, *The Focht Lectures*, Geneva, 3085

Instead, he set the agency on the trail of the true conspirators and on 11 November, General Ikolor Fredasa, BSLA Commander Gregory Wallace and SL Revenue Director Brice Hinchcliffe were arrested. The conspirators were found guilty and hanged, Fredasa protesting on the gallows that as a military officer he had the right to a firing squad. Upon hearing of this, his successor, Rebecca Fetladral, retorted "traitors have no rights."

Though he remained convinced of the threat to the Hegemony, Fredasa's coup attempt made it clear to Jonathan just how ill he had become and he requested his sister serve as his advisor. To all intents, Mother Jocasta became the new First Lord, achieving what Fredasa had wanted but without unseating Jonathan, and served as the driving force behind the League until the accession of Simon Cameron in 2738. Perhaps the most amazing aspect of Jocasta's rule is that she did so without ever leaving the Abbey of St Joan, instead carrying out the business of the Council remotely. Even when the council met in person—such as it did in 2735—it was convened at the Abbey and Jocasta remained aloof from the world, separated by a rood screen. Only for Jonathan's funeral in 2738 did Mother Jocasta leave her cloistered life, anointing Simon Cameron as the new First Lord before withdrawing from the world once more.

**A PLAGUE ON BOTH YOUR HOUSES:
THE WAR OF DAVION SUCCESSION
(SECOND HIDDEN WAR)**

The second great crisis of the Star League was a long time in the making. In 2696, Mary Davion, daughter of Prince Roger Davion, was attached to a diplomatic mission to the Draconis Combine. While there, Mary met and became enamored of a young Kuritan. They became lovers and soon marriage was proposed. Ordinarily, such a marriage would not have raised any eyebrows; the Star League era had seen a number like it. But the young man in question was no ordinary Combine citizen; he was Soto Kurita, son of Urizen Kurita and brother to Coordinator Takiro Kurita. Like the marriage of Therese Marik and William Liao a century earlier, it was a political bombshell and unpopular in both houses.



THE FIRST LORDS

1) First Lord Ian Cameron**Lived:** 2514-2602**Served:** (2549) 2571-2602

Despite the somewhat murky circumstances of his ascension to the Directorship of the Terran Hegemony, it was Ian's drive and vision that birthed the Star League, making him one of the most revered names in the Inner Sphere. Unfortunately his single-minded determination propelled the newborn Star League into the Reunification War, making him by far the greatest figure of hatred, particularly in the bloodied Taurian Concordat.

2) First Lord Nicholas Cameron**Lived:** 2556-2649**Served:** 2602-2649

A distinguished soldier whose body testified to his service, it was Ian's son Nicholas who steered the Star League towards its golden age. Though facing a number of economic and political hurdles, his tenure saw the introduction of a single Star League currency, the advent of the HPG and the dissemination of many quality-of-life technologies that today seem miraculous.

3) First Lord Michael Cameron**Lived:** 2622-2692**Served:** 2649-2690

A scholar and scientist rather than a soldier (though his military service included several years as XO of the battleship *Arkansas*) Michael continued his grandfather's work and sought to both strengthen the Star League and better the lot of its citizens. His edict of 2650 sought to denude the house militaries and ensure the primacy of the SLDF though it had unforeseen political and military consequences. His policy of non-interference held the Star League aloof from the political dissent in several member states, though he could not ignore the challenges of the militaristic Kuritan "ronin" which led to the establishment of the Gunslinger Program.

4) First Lord Jonathan Cameron**Lived:** 2660-2738**Served:** 2690-2738

On the one hand a visionary, on the other a paranoid madman, Jonathan Cameron's tenure threatened the very fabric of the Star League and prompted General Ikolor Fredasa's abortive rebellion. It also saw the creation of the SDS system and the construction of numerous fortifications to safeguard the Hegemony, defenses that would ultimately serve Amaris so well.

4a) Mother Jocasta**Lived:** 2663-2742**Served:** 2729-2738

Revered by some as a saint, Jonathan's sister Jocasta was advanced as a candidate to succeed her unstable brother and is acknowledged by historians as the greatest First Lord the Star League never had. Though she refused the post of First Lord, she became a stabilizing influence and allowed the Star League to weather her brother's reign and the political storms in neighboring realms. She became *de facto* co-ruler of the Star League in 2729 despite residing in an isolated religious community. She ensured the Camerons and the League prevailed and ensured the succession of Jonathan's son, Simon.

5) First Lord Simon Cameron**Lived:** 2709-2751**Served:** 2738-2751

Simon was left with the task of rebuilding trust and respect for the Star League after his father's reign and went a long way towards ushering in a second golden age for the League. His death on New Silesia in 2751 is shrouded in mystery—officially an accident but regarded by many as part of a grand conspiracy.

6) First Lord Richard Cameron**Lived:** 2743-2766**Served:** 2751-2766

Only eight when his father died, Richard Cameron lacked stabilizing influences in his life. The Star League came under the authority of the regent, General Aleksandr Kerensky, and the immature, isolated child was an easy target for Stefan Amaris' manipulations. Insecure and hot tempered, the adult Richard was putty in the Rim Worlder's hands and was in many regards the architect of his own demise through blind trust in Amaris.

7) Emperor Stefan Amaris**Lived:** 2717-2778**Served:** 2766-2778

Self-proclaimed and unrecognized by the member states, Stefan Amaris occupies a legal grey area. He was never formally First Lord—though he claimed the title—and instead used Emperor. He was legally installed as the Director General of the Terran Hegemony, prompting many historians to regard his conflict with Kerensky as a civil war rather than a war of liberation.

THE GOVERNANCE OF MAN

The government of the Star League was monolithic, but followed a simple pyramid: the First Lord, the High Council and the Bureaucracy (the Bureau of Star League Affairs).

First Lord – Though commonly held to be the “first among equals” the First Lord headed the Star League and had powers above and beyond the other House Lords: He could order SLDF deployments (though he could not declare war without High Council approval), he had supreme authority over the mints and commercial interests, and he could issue Executive Orders (albeit within the scope of the Star League accords and subject to veto by a 90-percent vote of the High Council).

High Council – Initially comprising the six lords of the member states, the High Council expanded to include the leaders of the territorial states in the early twenty-seventh century after a period in which they were observers. However, the Periphery Lords were often treated as second-class citizens. Until Council Directive 41, their decisions were subject to ratification by the Periphery Administrators even after their sovereignty was restored. Furthermore, the Inner Sphere lords’ numerical superiority on the High Council made it easier for them to force their will on the Periphery in any matter. The Council met twice per year (the spring session in May-June and the autumn session in September-October) though special sessions, called by the First Lord or the Councilors, could be held at other times. The High Council could issue binding proclamations (either Council Directives or Council Orders), which required a simple majority of all the Councilors for approval. The motion could pass if any council members were absent, but was considered provisional and subject to annual ratification until all Councilors voted on the matter.

The Bureau of Star League Affairs (BSLA)

– The civil service of the Star League, the BSLA maintained offices throughout the member and territorial states, comprising six departments:

The *Department of Administration* served as the diplomatic corps of the Star League. State Administrators served as ambassadors to each state, eventually becoming hereditary posts, their families remaining key players in those states’ affairs (such as the Brewers of the Lyran Commonwealth or the Hughes of the Free Worlds). In the Periphery, the state administrators replaced the territorial governors as the key Star League representatives and retained the right to overrule the local government in matters of concern to the Star League. Though seemingly a draconian presence, the Periphery administrators also safeguarded the territorial states from Inner Sphere interests, and their withdrawal in 2722 removed these safeguards and opened up the Periphery for gross exploitation.

While Soto was not in the direct line of succession, Mary was heir to the Federated Suns and so Roger passed the Act of Succession, stripping Mary of her right to the throne and promoting Joseph Davion in her place. Mary acceded to the Act, giving up her rights for the man she loved. The matter seemed resolved, with Joseph becoming First Prince in 2703 and Mary raising her children in the traditions of the Combine. Then, in 2715, Mary fell ill and died. While both the Davions and the Kuritas mourned, Takiro Kurita had no desire to let the matter lie.

Almost immediately after her funeral, the Coordinator sent embassies to New Avalon claiming Mary’s eldest son, Vincent, should be heir to the Davion throne. Joseph, who was about to name his own son as his official heir, dismissed the claim. Refusing to be swayed, Takiro took the matter before the Star League High Council. He provided documentary evidence that showed though Mary had given up her own rights, she had not abrogated those of her children. Neither Davion nor Kurita could agree on the matter and instead turned to the First Lord to resolve the dispute. Knowing that deciding for either party would cause disastrous political shockwaves, Jonathan chose to sideline the matter, ordering a committee to investigate the claims while binding their efforts in red tape. In an attempt to sideline the hot-potato issue, he declared that should Joseph Davion die before the committee reported its findings the decision would default in the Federated Suns’ favor. This declaration dangled the prospect of a decision in Kurita’s favor while assuring the Davions that their realm would not come under the sway of the Combine.

By 2725, Takiro’s patience with the committee’s vacillations had run out. He ordered the DCMS to draw up plans to enforce his nephew’s rights by force and on 9 March 2725, the Eleventh Benjamin Regulars crossed the border and attacked Marduk. The AFFS struck back, both against Marduk and also into the Combine. Unfortunately, the *ad hoc* Davion offensive stood little chance against the fanatical and well planned DCMS operation. The AFFS troops ground to a halt and finally found themselves pushed back. Fearing the worst, Joseph Davion took personal charge of the operation on Royal. It would be a fateful and disastrous decision.

During the battle for Baron’s Harbor, Joseph’s *Marauder* was crippled and the Prince found himself isolated. Though he fought valiantly, his immobilized machine, its ejection system malfunctioning, was swarmed by DCMS infantry and brought down. Though most histories leave out the grizzly details, stating that Joseph was “killed in his cockpit”, DCMS records show that the First Prince of the Federated Suns was pulled from his ‘Mech, forced to kneel and then decapitated. The AFFS force collapsed and was swiftly pushed off Royal and many other worlds. Soon Robinson was under threat and the heart of the Federated Suns ripe for occupation.

The Combine could have smashed the AFFS and shattered the Federated Suns but it soon found itself facing a new enemy. Though present on many of the contested worlds, SLDF forces were ordered to remain in their barracks and to act only in self defense. It was the SLDF’s inaction as two member states bludgeoned each other that prompted General Fredasa’s abortive coup; the Star League could not sit idly by and the new Commanding-General did not. Acting on the orders of the First Lord and Mother Jocasta, Rebecca Fetladral initiated Operation SMOTHER and sent five divisions of troops with orders to intervene, separate the combatants and restore order. Though notionally peacekeepers, these troops were authorized by the SLDF charter to do whatever was necessary to make the peace. The task forces targeted five worlds, three of which immediately submitted to Star League authority. On Breed, the Combine contested the SLDF intervention but soon found itself outgunned and outclassed. On Royal the DCMS attempted to overrun the beachhead of the SLDF’s 160th BattleMech Division but were eventually driven back and the world secured. Among those receiving awards for their gallantry in the “battle of the beachhead” was Captain Aleksandr Kerensky, a young Muscovite leading his first combat command.

Peace returned and the border was reset to its pre-war boundaries. Jonathan chastised both powers and denied Kurita’s claim to the Davion throne in perpetuity, a decision the Kuritas would hold against the Camerons until the fall of the Star League. The Davions, who were the primary beneficiaries of the SLDF intervention, also resented the Camerons for failing to act more swiftly. As a result, in the aftermath of the crisis both powers reduced their cooperation with the Star League markedly.

Continued on p. 19

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

The First Lord's distractions allowed the Council to act with greater freedom than they might otherwise have had and in 2722, the Capellan Confederation and Free Worlds League proposed Council Directive 41, ensuring its passage by back-room negotiations with the other councilors. Officially a deregulatory bill, it freed the Periphery states from the onerous bureaucratic red tape that hindered the establishment and operation of businesses in the Territorial States. This served to ease the moribund economies of several regions (most notable being the Free Worlds League, whose repeated defaults came to a head in 2729 with the Atreus Credit Crisis just as the Free Worlds League began slipping into civil war). Directive 41 also removed many of the safeguards placed on economic relations between the member states, and the deregulation saw blatant land grabs as well as economic exploitation by larger Inner Sphere corporations. Like China in the nineteenth century, many Periphery worlds found themselves locked into disadvantageous "deals" with the Inner Sphere, who threatened legal (and, in more than one case, physical) measures if they did not comply. Resentment soared.

The ascension of Elise Marik to the Captain-Generalcy in 2703 set the Free Worlds on the path to civil war. Following the lead of her paranoid father, Gerald, she unleashed SAFE against "subversive elements" and even refused to heed calls by her moderate brother, Oliver, to rein in the security services. When he was singled out as an enemy of the state, Oliver Marik fled to the Hegemony, leaving Elise free to continue her persecutions. In 2728, Parliament attempted to strip Elise of her authority by declaring the "crisis" over, making the post of Captain-General no longer necessary. The Captain-General saw this as an attack by her enemies and marched on Parliament. With the MPs detained or sent home, Oliver acted. On March 23 he crossed the border at the head of a volunteer brigade and established a Parliament-in-Exile on Oriente which immediately named his son, Boris, as the true Captain-General.

The civil war that followed threatened to shatter the Free Worlds League, pitting Oriente and Andurien (for Oliver and Boris) against Stewart and Regulus (for Elise). The conflict raged for six years, during much of which Elise was imprisoned by the rebels after a daring raid on Atreus. The SLDF Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Armies deployed in the Free Worlds League were powerless to stop the bloodshed as the civil war was an internal matter and SLDF intervention was expressly prohibited. They were able to defend themselves and Star League property and also provided a conduit for humanitarian aid. The Star League also refused to support the Free Worlds economy and cut off their access to credit, which prompted the Atreus Credit Crisis. Boris Marik initially attempted to weather the economic storm but by 2732 had no option left but to allow the Hegemony to foreclose on many existing loans and to take whatever material reparations it desired. With its economy stabilized and a peace eventually brokered between the factions, a measure of normality returned to the Free Worlds League in 2734.

Though she was eventually rescued, Elise's imprisonment shattered what little remained of her sanity and her son Bertram saw no option but to assume her responsibilities. Eventually a deal was brokered between the combatants that acknowledged Bertram's rule and condemned Oliver to a traitor's death. Despite this, Bertram's short reign was a time of healing for the Free Worlds League, a calm before the storm of his unpleasant son Ewan's tenure, which would threaten the Free Worlds League's place in the Star League.

The War of Davion Succession and the Marik Civil War showed that despite a century and a half of Star League rule, the ambitions of each Great House remained strong. In addition to Davion and Kurita's jockeying for supremacy, the Lyran Commonwealth and Capellan Confederation had sought to exploit the situation and called for SLDF intervention. At first glance, the calls were made on "humanitarian" grounds, though in reality the two Great Houses wanted to denude the SLDF so that they could advance their own positions. Though never proven, it was suggested that each was eyeing choice worlds on the Hegemony and Free Worlds borders and, had the SLDF been stretched to the limit by fighting two major wars, may have made overt moves to seize them. Jonathan and Jocasta refused the bait, but the similarity to the plan eventually adopted by Amaris is uncanny. In such a climate Jonathan's paranoia didn't seem so unreasonable.

The *Department of Social Relations* served as the Star League's political arm, monitoring treaties and providing negotiators to settle disputes within and between the League's members. The Department of Social Relations incorporated the Hegemony Central Intelligence Bureau (HCIB), the Hegemony civilian intelligence-gathering agency, which provided information to both the Department of the Attorney General and the SLDF's Intelligence Command (SLIC).

The *Department of Economic Relations* served as a hybrid central bank and financial regulatory authority. It controlled the Star League Mints and the Stock Exchange System and was responsible for overseeing the financial fitness and responsibility of all businesses in the Star League (often working hand-in-hand with the Department of Revenue). The Department of Economic Relations could also intervene at the state level if they believed one realm was taking advantage of another.

The *Department of Revenue* served as the customs and revenue arm of the Star League, gathering the taxes agreed by the member states. The Department mixed investigative and diplomatic skills, and possessed significant legal and paramilitary elements (as some worlds would rather fight than pay Star League taxes). The DoR also served as a counter-espionage agency and its personal provided half the First Lord's security detail.

The *Department of Education and Information* ensured educational standards across the Star League, licensing teachers and providing a core curriculum. While being Star League licensed was not a requirement in most realms (and the League's curriculum was often sidelined in favor of a locally derived syllabus), licensed *Teachers of the Star League* were highly sought after, both in the state sector and as private tutors. The department also encompassed the Bureau of Communications, which oversaw the HPG network.

The *Department of the Attorney General* oversaw legal matters in the Star League, including the apprehension of criminals and their prosecution. The department also trained judges and lawyers, its three-tier court system providing a mechanism for enforcing the law and also challenging the High Council; the Supreme Court could (and occasionally did) overrule both the First Lord and the High Council in matters of regional or planetary interest.

The Star League Defense Force (SLDF) –

Though not a government body per-se (but responsible to it and commanded by the First Lord), the SLDF often worked hand-in-hand with the BSLA, providing monitoring expertise to the Department of Economic Relations, law-enforcement operatives to the Department of the Attorney General and intelligence to the Department of Social Relations. The SLDF is detailed in *The League's Might* (see p. 31) and in *Field Manual: SLDF*.

VISIONS OF A NEW CAMELOT

Forthright and honest, Simon Cameron was a far cry from the wheedling schemers of the High Council. His strict honor code and outlook were inextricably linked to the Modern Chivalrist movement. It was little surprise that some came to regard Simon as King Arthur reborn, the High Council his round table and the Star League a new Camelot.

Feudalism had become an inescapable part of life in the Inner Sphere and Periphery, so it was only a small leap for the Chivalrist movement to become ingrained in popular culture, with tales of knights and damsels, of courtly love and great heroics. Reality, of course, was a far cry from the chivalric ideal and some saw adherents as naïve fools to be exploited. This “second age of chivalry,” though brief, has become synonymous with the glory days of the Star League and it was in this culture that the young Richard Cameron was raised.

Of course, the Arthurian Legends have a bitter ending: betrayed from within, Arthur’s achievements cast down into darkness. Though the Chivalrists did not realize it, to rise so high and then fall so far was the perfect analogy for the last days of the Star League.

—*The Second Age of Chivalry*, Misha Auburn, Tharkad University Press, 3037.

Almost immediately, a plague of “bandit” raids erupted throughout the Inner Sphere. It was clear to all concerned that these were house troops feuding with each other and the SLDF made a vain effort to keep them apart and to arrest the perpetrators. By 2744, Simon had had enough and ordered the SLDF to change their tactics. Rather than capturing the “bandits,” the SLDF would shoot them on sight. This did not discourage the clashes, as “bandit” WarShips were soon escorting the raiders. None of the belligerents acknowledged the attacks or took responsibility for them, but it was an open secret across the Inner Sphere. Various known as the Phony War or the Third Hidden War, the conflict dragged on, crippling the economies of many border worlds. Diplomatic efforts by the First Lord and the BSLA to end the fighting came to naught.

STAR'S END

With the Council Lords refusing to put aside their differences and barely acknowledging his authority, the First Lord decided upon a dramatic course. Rather than appeal to the leadership, he would appeal to the people. In 2750, he set in motion plans for a five-year tour of the Star League, visiting each member and territorial state. Skye swiftly fell to his charms, then Furillo, Donegal and Coventry. His direct appeal to the people through the media had an almost immediate effect and support for the Star League soared. Realizing their grip was slipping away, the House Lords scaled back their confrontations and sought to convince the First Lord that all was well now and that he could return to Terra (and leave them in peace). Simon declined and pressed on. For the first time in the twelve years of his reign, he felt truly in control.

On 17 February 2751, the First Lord visited Star’s End, a disputed mining world on the border between the Lyran Commonwealth and the Rim Worlds Republic. An unscheduled side-trip took him to the mining asteroid of New Silesia where he met with the employees of the facility, drinking tea in their cafeteria while listening to their tales of their grueling work. He was offered a tour of the facility and, trained as a MechWarrior, he asked if he might pilot one of the hulking remote-controlled mining robots.

What happened next is still the subject of conjecture. Some believe the machine was faulty, others that the First Lord, his piloting skills rusty, erred. Yet others suggest sabotage was involved. What is clear is that the machine did not act as expected. It turned and charged the control booth, shattering the porthole and sucking the First Lord and nine other people into the vacuum.

DECLINE, REVOLUTION AND FALL

When Simon Cameron became First Lord in 2738 following his father’s stroke, he inherited a realm sundered by internal divisions. An experienced political operative (he’d served as Director-General of the Terran Hegemony since 2734) he was well versed in the relationships between the houses. Compared to his paranoid father and his cool, detached aunt Simon was direct and uncompromising. He was brutally honest and fair in his dealings with others. His bluntness, while playing well to the public, did not sit well with the other House Lords. He struggled to bring the disparate needs of the ten member-states into alignment and found the self-centered natures of most of the House Lords a stark contrast to his own strict morality.

The Periphery proved to be a particular thorn for the First Lord. Directive 41 had opened up the Territorial States to rapacious exploitation and many residents of the Periphery called for Cameron blood, something Amaris would exploit a few decades later. Repealing the act proved almost impossible, as the Free Worlds and Capellan Confederation would not vote against their own bill, and the War of Davion Succession ensured the Draconis Combine and Federated Suns would not support Cameron’s plan. He berated the Council Lords and sought political or military intervention to protect the Periphery people where he could. It soon became clear that this was too little, too late. A more drastic and more personal approach would be needed.

In 2741, extremely well equipped brigands raided The Edge, killing hundreds of civilians and stealing massive quantities of raw materials. Both the LCAF and SLDF went onto high alert and in 2742, guided by information provided to the LIC by the Hegemony, a Lyran taskforce struck at Butte Hold. In the bandit’s base they discovered the Draconis Combine had provided both materials and funding for the raiders. When confronted in the High Council with this information the Coordinator did not deny the accusation, saying “business is business,” and a fistfight erupted between the Coordinator and the Lyran Archon. Adding fuel to the fire was the abrasive Ewan Marik, a boorish drunkard who took particular relish in winding up his fellow Council Lords. Only Warex Liao stood aloof from the infighting, which by itself was enough to make the other lords suspicious of him.



SLIC COMMS

* Priority * Priority * Priority * Priority * Priority * Priority * Priority * Priority * Priority *
Commanding General's Eyes Only

General,

Initial reports into the incident in Tunnel 5T, Level 42 confirms suspicions of foul play though the evidence is classified to SLIC and HCIB personnel. The local coroner will rule the incident an accident but forensic evidence confirms tampering with the control circuits of the mining drone and installation of a Trojan routine. The nature and timing of this tampering is highly unlikely to be happenstance, and so we are faced with the prospect of a belligerent, technically skilled and coordinated opponent.

Unfortunately, no evidence exists to identify the perpetrators. The components and modifications are generic, and a wide range of political and economic agencies might have cause to wish harm on the First Lord. We believe a nation-state is the most likely culprit, with the Draconis Combine and the Lyran Commonwealth the most geographically and technically likely agencies; both the LIC and ISF have numerous operatives with the appropriate training. The Rim Worlds Republic cannot be ruled out either, particularly as the incident occurred in their territory, but they have not demonstrated appropriate fieldcraft in recent years.

—SLDF Commanding General's communications archives, 2751 (courtesy of Loremaster Laurie Tseng)

[The finger of blame has often been pointed at Amaris, as the death of Simon Cameron played directly into his hands. However, not a single drop of evidence exists to link the Rim Worlds to the incident and Amaris would not meet Richard Cameron for another two years. Yes, there is circumstantial evidence that the Republic's military build up began before Simon Cameron's death, but this doesn't prove a causative relationship. In my opinion, Stefan Amaris was probably innocent of the crime, though he certainly exploited its aftermath. —VSD]

THE REGENCY

Simon's son Richard was only eight, the legal heir to the Hegemony and the First Lordship but too young to assume the offices. Without the leadership of a strong First Lord the Star League seemed doomed. Even the Council Lords seemed to appreciate the disaster that was looming and spent much of March debating what was to happen next. There were no Camerons with the requisite heritage or skills to rule the Star League. Instead, on 3 April, they confirmed Richard as First Lord but appointed the Commanding General of the SLDF, Aleksandr Kerensky, as his Protector and Regent.

Kerensky offered to stand down as Commanding General but the High Council refused to accept his resignation. They argued that he was too important to the SLDF command, which had recently been slimmed down, and to the SAS counterterrorism operations underway in the Periphery. They magnanimously stated that they would help oversee the day-to-day running of the Star League.

In many regards, Kerensky was the perfect regent. He was intelligent, charismatic, morally upright and inspired great loyalty among his men. To this the council added that he was a workaholic, constantly touring SLDF installations across the Inner Sphere (he was one of the most traveled people in history, visiting more than six hundred worlds during his career) and had never been a parent (Nicholas and Andery would not be born until the eve of the Amaris Coup). Richard would be without Kerensky's guidance a lot of the time, something the High Council thought would give them more time and opportunity to manipulate the young First Lord and advance their own agendas.

The Council wasted little time in their self-aggrandizement. In the spring Council Session of 2752, they passed a series of new taxes targeting the territorial states. Advertised as a mechanism for funding new regulatory bodies, much of the money instead slipped into the House Lords' pockets, which caused additional grumbling from the Centrellas, Avellars and Calderons. The taxes increased the simmering resentment directed at the often heavy-handed counter-terrorism operations that followed the First Lord's death.

The new lord of the Rim Worlds Republic, Stefan Amaris, was notably absent from the protests. He continued his role as a "slightly eccentric jolly fat man" as some court circulars referred to him. No one realized the pretense, nor the scheming going on in Stefan's mind. The council also revoked Council Edict 2650, allowing them to expand their forces as desired (and not constrained by the SLDF protocols; the repeal expressly kept those suppressed).

THE SCHEMERS

Stefan Amaris is often called "the schemer", but to be brutally fair to him, he was far from the only one indulging in self-advancement. With the exception of General Kerensky, every one of the High Council members sought advantage, be it the proxy bandit wars between the Inner Sphere houses or the two-faced professions of loyalty to the Star League while supporting independence movements of the Periphery states. He was just much better at hiding it than they were.

Precisely when Amaris began his plans to suborn the Star League is unknown though he had been indoctrinated since birth to regard the Star League and the Camerons as "the enemy". The death of Simon Cameron may well have been the trigger for Amaris' ambitions, the demise of the First Lord revealing to Stefan the possibilities of a future in which he ruled the entirety of humanity. Certainly, by the time Amaris met Richard Cameron for the first time in the summer of 2753 the first steps of his schemes were in motion.



What the Rim Worlds lord found was a naïve, socially awkward child devoid of any real parental presence in his life. Richard's temper tantrums were legendary around the court and Amaris' agents had passed on the stories to their lord. Stefan spent almost two years studying the boy before finally engineering a meeting with the child. He knew what the boy liked and disliked, what intrigued him and what bored him. His gift to his young liege was perfect: a book about knights and chivalry, wondrously decorated with holographic images and interactive tableaux. The boy was fascinated by the strange, mustachioed lord from the distant Periphery and an odd friendship began.

In another age, the closeness between the ten-year-old boy and the forty-six-year-old Amaris would have raised eyebrows, but the palace staff were relieved that someone was able to take charge of the boy, entertaining and educating him. Kerensky, the notional father figure in Richard's life, was frequently absent from Terra and rarely took the First Lord on trips away from the capital, leaving Amaris free to act. Stefan reinforced the neo-Chivalric ideals that fascinated Richard. Rather than stressing the honor and duty of a knight, Amaris focused on the power and divine rights of a Lord. Richard, believing his status as First Lord and a Cameron, became ever more tempestuous. Anyone who did not do what he wanted, when he wanted, was defying his rights. They were traitors waiting to strike and, at Amaris' tacit urging, he began to note who his friends and enemies were at court.

The first appearance of the young First Lord at a High Council session—at Amaris' suggestion—came in October of 2755. At first the other lords thought he had come to watch, but Richard surprised them all by announcing that to honor his good friend Stefan's birthday he was elevating Amaris to the rank of Knight of the Star League. Furthermore, because of their long and loyal support of the League, the SLDF forces in the realm would be withdrawn and their bases handed over to the RWA. The Councilors, stunned at the "birthday proclamations", ratified the decision before the true import of the decision had sunk in.

Raising Amaris to the knighthood set off a political storm within the Hegemony but played little outside its borders. The redeployment of the SLDF provoked a more significant reaction from General Kerensky who regarded the move as both strategically unsound and politically unwise. He particularly objected to the handing over of SLDF bases to the RWA but his was the lone voice of dissent in the council session. Some of the council records suggested that the discomfort inflicted upon the General, and the tension it provoked between him and the First Lord, was a key factor in the Council's decision to support Richard's proclamation. Kerensky departed Terra soon after, traveling to the Periphery while engaging in a terse debate with the First Lord and the High Council via HPG. He steadfastly refused to hand over SLDF facilities to Amaris. Richard insisted and called on the High Council to demand that Kerensky comply. Eventually he did, but not before he sought to strip each base of anything that would provide material or intelligence aid to the Rim Worlds Republic. The effort failed, and though Kerensky succeeded in denying Amaris much of what he had sought to gain from the proclamation, the Rim Worlds gained a treasure trove of intelligence and technology.

PERSUASIVE FORCE

By the spring of 2757, Richard was a spiteful, inconsiderate youth who thought of nothing more than himself and his own urges. Amaris' propaganda in the Periphery would later paint the youth as a dissolute wastrel, indulging in a hedonistic lifestyle. Sadly, most of the allegations were true. Even at thirteen, he was indulging in a range of vices and Kerensky had begun to despair. He took the youth with him during the Operation PERSUASIVE FORCE exercises in the Terran Hegemony, hoping to show Richard the awesome might that would one day be at his disposal and the moral strength he would need to command it.

Though publicly a training exercise, the maneuvers were privately acknowledged to be part of the SLDF's planning for future wars, against the Periphery or the member states, should further conflicts arise (as they did three years later along the Capellan Confederation–Federated Suns border). Aboard the SLS *McKenna's Pride* the young First Lord and the Regent witnessed the full panoply of the operations, lasting a full three months that just so happened to coincide with the spring High Council session. The message was not lost on the Lords who took it to be a metaphorical knuckle-cracking by the General: he was watching and more than willing to act.

Richard, for his part, was impressed. He saw naval battles and orbital assaults and even accompanied the General in ground battles in a two-seat *BattleMaster*. Kerensky hoped the three months he spent with Richard would allow him to re-exert control over the boy's life and set him back on the straight and narrow, additionally weaning him away from Amaris' malign influence. The effort failed, Amaris' influence being too deeply ingrained in Richard's fragile psyche that showed marked similarities to his grandfather Jonathan. Attempts to suggest Stefan had less than noble intentions toward the First Lord and the Star League drew the Richard's ire and only served to further deepen the chasm between First Lord and his Commanding General.

THE PACT

While the evidence of a Rim Worlds military build up prior to Simon Cameron's death is circumstantial at best, by 2754 the Republic was certainly pursuing that goal. Records exist of covert meetings between Amaris and representatives from the other Periphery realms in which the assembly of a covert force, commonly referred to as the Secret Army, was discussed. Amaris played on the territorial states' desire for freedom from Star League oppression, becoming both strategist and fixer for the grand revolution that would win the Periphery its freedom. The Periphery leaders were under no illusion about the selflessness of Amaris' support but they cared little for his schemes so long as they won their liberty.

For almost ten years the pact between the four states endured, with Amaris sharing much of the information on the SLDF he had garnered from the abandoned bases in the Republic and observers embedded on Hegemony vessels. Meanwhile, massive secrecy surrounded the assembly of their new Periphery armies. The Taxation Edict of 2763 pushed matters to the brink and Amaris announced that the time would soon be ripe to launch the Freedom War. Then, in April 2765, the Light of Liberty bombed Fort Simpson and shortly after Fort Gorki lit the touch paper of the Uprising on New Vandenberg.

—*A New History of the Periphery*, by Erin Carr, Terra Press, 3083

FIELD REPORT: OPERATION TORCH

8 May 2765

Excellency,

Operation TORCH has proceeded per your orders and has succeeded far beyond of our projections. Our fellow Periphery states already manifested dissatisfaction with the Star League authorities and it has taken only a slight push from our operatives to fan the flames of dissent. Resentment was already high before Centrella and Calderon made their proclamations. In this, both the Magistratrix and Protector have proven receptive to the overtures you suggested but it is their populations who have proven our greatest asset since Fort Gorki.

The League's social and economic policies have proved to be hot-button topics, and heavy handed tactics by the SLDF have further alienated the population. The revolts have proved to be self-perpetuating, with copy-cat incidents occurring even away from the expected flashpoints. Greed as much as social justice has proven to be the principal motivations; rumors of stores and riches concealed by Star League institutions have made each Terran office and employee a target for the uprising.

General Kerensky and his forces have reacted as you predicted and we are set to launch GUILLOTINE on schedule tomorrow. This, combined with HARMONY and SHADOWPLAY, should leave us well placed to launch APOTHEOSIS by next fall. Contingency plans are in place and eighty percent of the camps report their recruits ready, with exercises further honing their skills.

We stand ready for your command, for the glory of House Amaris and the Rim Worlds.

—From the *Apollo State Archives* as secured by the SLDF in 2788 (courtesy of Loremaster Laurie Tseng)

Simmering tensions between the Capellan Confederation and the Federated Suns exploded into life on Demeter in 2760, when a nuclear weapon demolished an industrial complex and killed hundreds. The two powers threw themselves at each other and soon fighting was reported on numerous border worlds. The SLDF prepared to intervene, but before news could reach General Kerensky, who was on operations near the Outworlds Alliance, the High Council issued orders to the SLDF forces on the embattled worlds to withdraw. A number of officers questioned the orders, some likening it to “the insanity of Jonathan Cameron” and were reprimanded. News of the redeployment orders reached Kerensky before he could issue his own directives and he knew that to countermand them from such a distance would be futile. Instead, the General returned to Terra via a command circuit, arriving a scant three weeks later. His efforts to convince the other High Councilors had little impact. Each was too busy considering what gains they could make while the SLDF remained effectively impotent. The war might have lasted longer, but in early 2762 an event occurred that shocked even Barbara Liao and John Davion into working together.

Richard Cameron turned 18 and came into his majority.

ENDGAME

The First Lord's birthday celebrations were a glorious affair, the Hegemony and Star League heralding Richard's coming into his authority and their survival of the Regency. Spurred on by Amaris, Richard immediately flexed his muscles and drafted Executive Order 156, calling for the disarmament of all house militaries. He showed the draft to Kerensky at a “private” audience (Amaris was also present). The general stated that while he admired the First Lord's intentions, he didn't believe it would be achievable. Richard took this to be jealousy on the part of Kerensky, particularly after the General berated Amaris for suggesting the First Lord was above Star League law.

Despite Kerensky's disapproval, the First Lord issued the Executive Order, fully expecting the Council Lords to bow to his will. They didn't, summoning an emergency council session in the last week of February with XO156 as its sole topic. As expected, the House Lords protested the order as illegal under Star League law, a contravention of their rights enshrined in the Star League accords. They singled out Amaris as the malign instigator of the order, and Amaris panicked, calling for the guards in fear of his life. Kerensky, ever a cool head, ordered the troops to stand down and called for the council to cease its barracking of the Rim Worlds lord. If Richard and Amaris thought the general would side with them, they were quickly disabused. Kerensky made it clear that he thought XO156 was illegal and that the courts would not uphold the move. Chagrined, Richard withdrew the order and went into seclusion for several months, Amaris whispering poison in his ear all the while.

When he returned to public life later in 2762 Richard was more driven and determined, intending to rule directly. He disbanded the High Council and vowed to rule by decree. His direct rule was a disaster as Richard had little grasp of the intricacies of politics and economics and a succession of mini-crises ensued. Most significant was his Taxation Edict of 2763, which sought to bolster League coffers at the expense of the Periphery states. Instead, the edict further fanned the flames of resentment in the Periphery, as Amaris intended, and the Periphery states refused to pay. By 2764, the Periphery was a tinderbox and the Inner Sphere a shambles. It was time for Amaris to strike.

The first move in what would later become the Amaris Coup was innocuous. Amaris met with Kerensky in the Periphery, providing him with intelligence on the terrorist group the Taurian Freedom Army (TFA). He claimed the information had come into his hands through business dealings and that he was honor-bound to share it with the general because of their mutual love for the First Lord. Kerensky was not convinced, but he accepted the intelligence, which he verified through his own agencies. Furthermore, he told Amaris directly that he was a bad influence on Richard and should leave him to learn the art of leadership himself. Amaris told the General not to worry as he would be returning to Apollo for an extended period to oversee matters at home.

Returning to Terra, Stefan told Richard a different story—that the general had banished him from court and so he would be returning home for the sake of peace in the Star League. His martyr act played on Richard's sympathies and drove a further wedge between Richard and Aleksandr. Amaris played his final card and offered to aid Richard in any way he could. On 21 July 2764, Richard and Amaris signed a pact, the Humanity Homeland Defense Agreement, stating Rim Worlds troops would be deployed to the Hegemony in defense of the Star League should the First Lord demand it.

The trap was set and only a spark was needed.

YEAR OF A THOUSAND BATTLES

Though distrustful of Amaris, Kerensky found the Rim Worlder's intelligence on the TFA to be solid (unsurprising since Amaris had manipulated the insurgents and Nicoletta Calderon) and launched an operation against the TFA base on Camadeierre. Like many of the operations of the previous quarter-century it was spearheaded by the SAS and achieved total surprise, resulting in the seizure of the terrorist leadership and large quantities of intelligence. The documents seized implicated the Taurian government in the movement, its aims being to win freedom for the Periphery from Star League oppression.

If Kerensky believed the crushing of the TFA would bring peace and stability to the Periphery he was rapidly disabused. The number of violent incidents increased dramatically, spreading like wildfire through the Concordat and the other Periphery realms. Only the Rim Worlds Republic remained aloof, ostensibly because of their loyalty to the Camerons. In truth, the situation was orchestrated by Amaris' agents and the Republic's stability was part of his efforts to snare Richard Cameron. The First Lord and the Republican leader had signed a pact in July 2764 that would move Rim Worlds troops to the Hegemony to bolster their defenses while the SLDF dealt with the Periphery unrest. It was an exquisitely baited trap.

Kerensky and the SLIC struggled to maintain order and deployed ever larger numbers of troops to the Periphery states. There seemed to be no rhyme or reason to the troubles and the incidents seemed out of proportion to dissatisfaction to the Star League's edicts. Mass demonstrations became a common sight and Star League buildings and personnel were targeted. The casualty figures grew on both sides but Kerensky still hoped to avoid outright war.

At 1703 hours on 14 April 2765 Fort Simpson, home of the 265th Assault Regiment on Perdition, was vaporized by a tactical nuclear device hidden inside a car visiting the base. The atrocity drew quick condemnation from the Commanding General and the Inner Sphere powers but the HPG net also flashed images from the Periphery states of crowds celebrating the nuclear car bomb. Tempers reached melting point and disaster ensued, firefights erupting between SLDF garrisons and insurgents.

Two days after the bombing, New Vandenberg and seventeen other Concordat worlds seceded from the Star League (but not from the Concordat itself), protesting the heavy-handed SLDF tactics. Richard and the High Council vacillated and failed to draw up a response. The wily Nicoletta Calderon remained outwardly loyal to the Star League while the SLIC reported that she had sanctioned the secession. Frustrated at the lack of direction from Terra, Kerensky took unilateral action under the terms of his existing orders to bring peace to the Periphery. He took personal command of operations on New Vandenberg, hoping to disarm the planetary militia and thus avoid bloodshed while setting an example for the other Periphery worlds. The Taurians refused and instead a tense standoff began.

Despite the scale of the rebellions, Kerensky had little reason to fear the uprising. The attackers were both quantitatively and qualitatively inferior to the SLDF and should have been easily (if bloodily) suppressed. Unfortunately some SLDF forces sided with the rebels, dismayed at the corruption shown by the Great Houses and the injustices visited on the Periphery realms. Even so, the size and number of the opposing force surprised Kerensky. Most were untrained civilians, armed from looted militia armories and weapon caches dating back to the Reunification War (later investigations would reveal much more modern equipment provided by Amaris' agents). The rebels had access to heavy weapons and armor, but their ill-trained tank crews and MechWarriors were no match for the SLDF veterans. For that first month the Periphery Uprising looked to be a bloody but ultimately one-sided conflict. Then on 9 May, the true apocalypse began.

As part of his preparations, Amaris had established numerous camps in the deep Periphery, training cadres of warriors and equipping them with state-of-the-art BattleMechs and combat vehicles. Initial rumors of skilled, well-equipped opponents were dismissed as misreporting of defected units but as SLDF forces in each realm came under massive assault it soon became clear that something had gone disastrously wrong. SLIC estimates numbered the attackers as thirty divisions, a fearsome force, but post-war analysis placed the totals at closer to fifty divisions.

The first many SLDF units knew of these forces was when headhunter detachments, often company or battalion strength, attempted to kill the command staff of the unsuspecting SLDF formations. In many cases the attacks succeeded, leaving the Star League troops leaderless and vulnerable to rebel attacks, which contributed to the horrendous casualties the SLDF suffered. In other cases, a combination of luck and skill allowed the SLDF commanders to survive, turning the tables on their attackers. Kerensky himself survived one such attack on New Vandenberg before withdrawing to the *McKenna's Pride*. Killing Kerensky was essential to Amaris' strategy. Not only was there personal enmity between the two men but removing the Commanding General would eliminate the only potential opposition to his influence over Richard Cameron. The failure of this mission did not sit well with the Republican leader but it did not doom his efforts—he would just need to change tactics.

THE NEW CAMLANN

Legend has it that peace negotiations failed to save King Arthur's reign when a knight drew his weapon to kill a snake, accidentally precipitating an apocalyptic clash between armies. For the Star League, that incident was Fort Gorki on New Vandenberg.

A firefight broke out between militia inside the fort and SLDF troops, the First French Regiment under the command of Lieutenant General Dominique Petain. It began accidentally when an SLDF vehicle broke down near the base but was mistaken for an attack force by the Taurians. The squad onboard was killed as they attempted to repair their vehicle and then flee. Petain did not rise to the bait, knowing that an overreaction would send the Periphery into another terrible war and instead held back. For thirty hours a standoff ensued, tensions ratcheting ever higher. Petain's efforts to maintain the peace were misinterpreted, as the Taurians feared the Star League troops were waiting for reinforcements. Believing that waiting would doom them, they struck at the SLDF force *en masse*. The French Regiment fought for their lives, sustaining and inflicting vast damage before fighting their way clear. Later investigation acknowledged the failings on both sides, but recognized that the incident was a tragic accident. Both forces were exonerated but the damage was already done; the Periphery erupted in open rebellion.

—*Flashpoints of War*, Thelos Auburn, Tharkad University press, 3012.

LEGERDEMAIN

At the start of 2765, most of the SLDF troops were in their cantonments throughout the Inner Sphere and Periphery. It soon became clear that the three armies stationed in the Periphery (the Twentieth had been withdrawn from the Rim Worlds Republic in 2755 on Richard's orders) were insufficient to maintain order. Additional forces were called up from the Inner Sphere. Four Armies—the Third, Fourth, Sixth and Seventh—joined the Nineteenth in the Taurian Concordat. The Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Twentieth joined the Eighteenth in the Outworlds Alliance and the Ninth, Tenth, Twelfth and Thirteenth joined the Seventeenth in the Magistracy of Canopus. The SLDF's 300 divisions faced off against a force of more than fifty divisions who were both determined and elusive.

By July, fourteen armies were deployed in the Periphery, leaving only a single Army group garrisoning each member state. Additionally, two of the Terran Corps were shifted to cover gaps in the member states' defenses. That left only a single corps—eight divisions, and a handful of independent regiments—to safeguard the Hegemony. It was classic misdirection; Amaris' lavish spending on training the secret Periphery forces distracting the SLDF, while emasculating the Terran defenses. At first glance, the deployment of Rim Worlds troops after Richard activated his secret treaty with the Republic was equally innocuous. The thirty Rim Worlds 'Mech regiments were numerically on a par with the remaining SLDF forces (approximately thirty-six BattleMech regiments, backed by forty-three conventional regiments) and qualitatively far inferior. However, Amaris' transport manifests lied. The true strength of his redeployment was vastly higher and, by Christmas of 2766, the SLDF in the Terran district was outnumbered more than two-to-one, while the First Lord refused to heed Kerensky's suggestions to hire "reliable" troops from the other member states.

—from *By Any Means Necessary: Misdirection and the Art of War*, by Robin Phillips, Albion Military press, 3017

Kerensky pulled back many of his forces to key staging posts, regrouping and rearming while calling in troops from across the Inner Sphere. He issued orders for troops to move "with vigor and force into the Periphery as soon as possible to relieve besieged units and take on enemy forces." As Christmas approached, the SLDF began to make headway against the insurgents, bastion after bastion falling to the massed Star League armies. Both sides resorted to brutal tactics. The SLDF practiced a total war doctrine but unlike the rebels, tempered it with elements of the Ares Conventions, avoiding fighting near population centers. Both sides used strategic weapons, mostly battlefield nukes and the occasional chemical and biological weapon, though not as profligately as in the Reunification War. Despite their questionable origins, the "Secret Army" was fighting for its homeland and saw no advantage in tainting the landscape. The conflict became a meat-grinder, and by the end of 2766 more than a hundred SLDF divisions had been destroyed or rendered combat-ineffective. As 2767 dawned, there was no end in sight for the conflict.

APOTHEOSIS

With Kerensky mired in the Periphery, Amaris knew it was time for the final act. Returning to Terra for the First Lord's Christmas festivities, he sent out coded orders to his troops and operatives. His DropShip reached Terra on Christmas Day but poor weather in the Pacific Northwest—a major blizzard struck on Christmas Eve—had reduced the situation around Unity City, unaccustomed to such heavy snowfall, to chaos. Amaris could only wait until the weather improved. Publicly he laughed at how something so inconsequential as a snowfall could throw the capital of the Star League into chaos but privately he knew that waiting for clearer weather would aid his cause. *Blackshark One*, Amaris' personal vessel, eventually grounded late on the evening of 26 December. Rather than being agitated by the delay, Amaris was calm. In many regards the delay was irrelevant as his forces would not act until he gave the go signal and it actually spared him the excruciating social events of the festive season, particularly the First Lord's "Boxing Day" soiree, a holdover from the Camerons' British heritage. Members of the Cameron family would be in the palace along with their staff, but the armies of diplomats and hangers-on who plagued Unity City would largely be absent. So much the better for what was to come.

Though he could have scheduled a meeting with his "good friend Richard" that evening he chose instead to wait until 0900 the next morning. Approaching the audience chamber, Amaris and his guards were granted immediate access, thanks to Richard's standing orders. Stefan bore a large box, wrapped in bright paper and tied with a bow, his belated Christmas present to the First Lord. Richard was almost bouncing in his chair when Amaris arrived, so eager was his anticipation of his friend's arrival, betraying the immature child concealed behind the First Lord's authority. Amaris flattered his young associate and apologized for his delay, proffering his gift in the true spirit of friendship between their nations and themselves.

Laughing with glee, Richard shredded the wrapping and opened the box only to discover another identically wrapped package within. He opened that too, and the next, and the next. In the sixth box, no larger than a shoe box and crafted from ornately carved rosewood, was the true gift. Nestling on a bed of velvet and silk was an ornate laser pistol, glittering with jewels, the Amaris sigil on one side of the hilt and the Star League insignia on the other. Richard beamed at the gift. "It is a very special sidearm my lord, crafted for you according to my exact specifications. It is beautiful and historic." He paused, a crooked grin crossing his face. "Allow me." Amaris held out a hand and took the weapon. "Let me show you how it works." Moving it back and forth so that it caught the light, Amaris lowered the barrel so that it came to rest pointing at the First Lord's head. Richard grinned at his friend's joke. Amaris tilted his head to one side as a distant rumble reached the chamber. "It has begun," he whispered almost inaudibly as his head came up, eyes locking with the First Lord.

He pulled the trigger.

Megajoules of energy bore through Cameron's skull and the result was explosive. The decapitated body of the last Cameron First Lord slumped back in his chair and slid slowly to the floor.

A CLOSE-RUN THING

Amaris had planned the seizure of the Terran Hegemony down to the last detail, but it was chance that very nearly scuppered his achievement. As his guards mowed down Richard's bodyguard and seized control of the palace security systems—systems a young Richard had taken great pleasure in demonstrating—Amaris lowered himself into one of the grand armchairs the First Lords had installed for visitors, surveying the tableau. Calling for the removal of “that unsightly mess,” the First Lord's body, he donned a headset to monitor the takeover of Unity City.

What he didn't realize was that an upgrade to the security systems had included sensors that monitored weapons discharges and the shot that murdered the First Lord and the subsequent killing of his guards had triggered a number of alarms. As his people seized buildings throughout the city (the explosions he and Richard had heard were a move designed to both place the infrastructure under his control and to scatter the remaining SLDF defenders into easily manageable units), the alarm gave the Terran forces a focus for their efforts: the First Lord was in danger and must be protected.

Though they did not know it was already too late, troops of the Cameron's personal regiment, the Royal Black Watch began to mobilize while the First Lord's bodyguards within the palace began to converge upon the Audience Chamber. As the Black Watch warriors mounted up, a series of charges, placed in their barracks weeks earlier by Amaris' operatives, detonated. The casualties were high, but had they not been warned by the palace alarms the entire Black Watch might have been annihilated.

The swift action of Amaris' troops in seizing the security systems turned many of the defenses upon the SLDF troops within the palace, but the defenders' speed and determination allowed them to press on towards their beleaguered liege. Only at the doors of the chamber were they finally halted and Amaris realized the danger he was in.

As the survivors of the Black Watch approached Unity City, aiming to cut a path through the Rim Worlds troops to allow Richard to escape, the bodyguard units sought to evade the palace security and extract their lord. Using jump-packs, they hopped across the high palace roofs, coming under fire from systems designed to knock out attacking fighters. Establishing themselves on the roof of the Audience Chamber, they began to drill and to place charges to break through the ornate marble roof. Amaris could only listen in horror as first dust and then fragments of the roof began to fall into the chamber; given the number of SLDF troops still in the palace his personal guard was not sufficient to break out of the chamber. A distant rumble announced the death of the Black Watch as the Fourth Amaris Dragoons employed tactical nukes, but even as news of this victory reached Amaris, he could only imagine that his dreams were about to be shattered.

The charges set by the SLDF assault team blew out a section of the roof and the north wall that housed the security system controls. Two of Amaris' guards died in the blast and Amaris was only saved from injury by the heavy chair in which he was ensconced. Even so, the blast threw him to the ground and he imagined vengeful SLDF troopers storming the room. As if on cue, the sounds of weapons fire and explosions in the corridors echoed into the Audience Chamber. Amaris knew that he was about to die, but vowed to meet his assailants head on. Still holding the jeweled pistol in his hand, he opened the Audience Chamber's battered main doors. Expecting to be shot on the spot, he looked out to see a trooper leveling a laser rifle at him. His heart leapt into his throat but the weapon snapped up and the soldier saluted. He wore the Black Shark insignia of the Rim Worlds forces.

The SLDF forces had been beaten back and he had prevailed.

SPOILS OF WAR

All that remained for Amaris was to consolidate his gains. The military operations proceeded apace (detailed in *Conquering the Hegemony*, see p. 68) but Amaris had two other loose ends to pursue: political control and dynastic hegemony.

LEGENDS OF ANASTASIA

After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the ruling Romanov family were imprisoned at Yekaterinburg and eventually murdered in the summer of 1918. For much of the twentieth century, rumors persisted that one of Tsar Nicholas' daughters, the Grand Duchess Anastasia, had survived, fueled by the absence of the bodies of Tsarevich Alexei and one of his older sisters (Anastasia or Maria) from the mass grave containing the Tsar and Tsarina. Several people stepped forward claiming to be her, though investigations carried out after the Second Soviet Civil War uncovered a second grave site near the city and proved the story to be a fabrication.

Similar rumors began circulating throughout the Star League despite Amaris' best efforts to hide his massacre of the Cameron clan. Neighbors reported the disappearances of the First Lord's kin and Amaris' sweep had not caught every member of the dynasty, a number of whom later reported the extraordinary lengths they went to in avoiding capture. Alongside these tales, and always told second- or third-hand, were claims that Amanda Cameron had not died with her mother. Some versions claimed that she had survived the massacre, not shot by Amaris and his guards but rather left to perish in the Throne Room. A sympathizer heard the child crying and rescued her, smuggling the toddler out of the Unity City and into obscurity. Another version suggested that she had never been present, that the babe who Elise held in her arms had been summarily executed but was not Amanda.

Most likely these tales began with the SLDF resistance on Terra, stories designed to inspire hope among those who did not support Amaris (and to strike fear in the hearts of those who did) that one day a Cameron would come along to extract vengeance upon them. In the end, it was Aleksandr Kerensky who liberated Terra and brought Amaris to justice and no Cameron stepped forward to claim the throne (though cadet lines remain even today throughout the Inner Sphere).

Recent years have seen the debate over the fate of Amanda Cameron renewed. The records brought back to the Inner Sphere by the Clans show that many of those in the Exodus adopted new identities. Mostly this was for innocent reasons—people who wished to conceal their pasts and start a new life with the Exiles—but a few stand out. One such may have been Jennifer Winson, a young woman of an age with Nicholas who experienced the hardships of the Exile and the Second Exodus alongside the future ilKhan of the Clans, eventually becoming his wife. Unlike most of the founders, almost nothing is known of Winson's life. Her early

Continued on p. 28

history is a complete blank and even her life within the Clans is something of a cipher, as if someone (most likely Nicholas or her brother Jerome, who succeeded Kerensky as ilKhan) deliberately sought to obfuscate her presence. It has been suggested that she was a Cameron descendent (or possibly an Amaris) though this is only conjecture. If she truly were a Cameron (and especially if she was Amanda), why did she not reveal herself and possibly save the Star League from dissolution? Perhaps another child First Lord would have been unpalatable. Perhaps she feared the role, or the other members of the High Council who had a vested interest in seeing the Hegemony fall. Perhaps she was to be Aleksandr's "ace in the hole", her presence part of some grand plan to one day return and reform the Star League. It may be that the dream died with Aleksandr or was subsumed within Nicholas' ambitions.

The truth is we do not know. The thousands of words that have been written about this "mystery" are little more than hot air. It is supposition, not hard evidence. Winson may well be just another private soul, seeking a new life. The Clans certainly don't know, and if they did they'd surely have used it against us Spheroids in the decades since their return. Maybe mitochondrial DNA could shed some light on the matter, were the Clans not so precious with their genetic legacies and were a suitable Cameron exemplar available, but even then that would only suggest a maternal link to the Camerons, and it is widely acknowledged that some distant members of the Cameron clan departed with General Kerensky.

—*Hopes, Fears and Lies*, by Sean White, Harvard Press, 3082

laughable. Amaris played well to the public thanks to his control of the media, but behind the scenes brutality was the order of the day: the torture and denigration of SLDF troops occurred in 2766, and the most infamous atrocity of the war, the murder of Pope Clement XXVII by the Greenhaven Gestapo in 2770, occurred before Kerensky had left the Rim Worlds Republic. Stefan Amaris may not have directly committed the atrocities, or even ordered them, but they were carried out in his name.

In stark contrast to the treatment of the SLDF, Amaris' forces initially showed the Cameron captives kindness, providing them with comfortable accommodations, albeit while limiting their freedom and access to communications. On 21 January, two days after his election as Director-General, Amaris had the Camerons brought to the Throne Room. Remaining calm and polite, he addressed the gathered families and pointed out that he could not risk having Cameron claimants to the throne at liberty to challenge his rule. He required that all present swear fealty to him, forswearing any claim to the Hegemony and Star League thrones. Those who did not would be executed. It was a harsh demand, but one that fell within the tenets of the Neo-Chivalrist ideal and the protocols followed in the Age of War: you did not leave your enemies' children alive to exact vengeance on you.

Though she knew it meant her life, Elise refused the oath, both for herself and her daughter, and Amaris bowed, accepting her decision with good grace. Other members of the immediate family followed Elise's lead, refusing to bow to Amaris, each met with a polite nod or a conciliatory gesture. The twenty-first member of the family to be asked to answer was a distant cousin of the First Lord, Jason Cameron-Bashina. He knelt before Amaris and bowed his head, pledging fealty and undying loyalty to the Emperor.

Stefan shot him with the same pistol he'd used to kill Richard, his beatific grin becoming harsh and cruel.

The remaining Camerons realized they had no hope of survival and rushed the throne, only to be cut down by Amaris' guards. Calmly, Amaris walked from the chamber, ordering it sealed. The bodies of the fallen Cameron clan remained there until Kerensky liberated Unity City in 2779.

In the first of these, the society of the Terran Hegemony played into his hands. Richard Cameron had been wildly unpopular in the Hegemony. His self-centered nature and immaturity as First Lord and Director-General of the Hegemony threatened to derail the political and social advances that had been made under the Star League. While Richard's murder shocked the people, public sentiment was not as negative as might have been expected. Many thought "good riddance," wishing for a firm hand on the reigns of power to return the Hegemony to its former glories. Amaris knew his assumption of the post of First Lord would not be confirmed by the High Council (with First Lord being restricted to the Cameron family he took the title Emperor instead), but he had no such reservations about the post of Director-General. Indeed, the Chivalrist ideal, popular in the hegemony since Simon Cameron's reign, played right into his hands: Amaris was just another Lord and though his methods were harsh, the Hegemony (if not the Star League) was his by right of conquest.

On 30 January 2767, the Terran Senate confirmed him as the new Director-General after a plebiscite, with some sixty-three percent voting in his favor. Evidence of gerrymandering was largely ignored at the time, though ComStar's analysis of the records showed significant voting irregularities. The BSLA, rudderless during Richard's reign, proved particularly supportive of the new Director-General and smoothed the transition. The SLDF, however, largely resisted and was crushed, with the average League citizens wondering why Kerensky stood opposed to their new lord. Like the population of Germany or Japan in the Second World War, the people became complicit in the crimes that followed, providing legitimacy to the new regime as well as political and economic support and swelling the ranks of the Emperor's military.

THE THRONE ROOM MASSACRE

While he maneuvered for political suzerainty, Amaris more quietly removed obstacles to his dynastic succession. Many members of the Cameron family were present in Unity City for the festivities and were quickly detained, as were others within the Hegemony identified through the Star League's genealogical records. Of particular value to Amaris was Richard's young wife, Elise, and his eleven-month old daughter, Amanda. Through them he controlled the immediate succession, and through the rest of the captives had almost all the other blood claimants.

Recent histories have attempted to rehabilitate Amaris' image, with the bleakness of the Jihad making the Rim Worlds leader's actions seem mild by comparison. However, the brutality of some of his actions during the consolidation goes far beyond what was required to secure his control and was, wisely for his political ambitions, mostly concealed from the population. Suggestions that only late in the war did he lose control are frankly

SILENCE IN THE HEAVENS

- [18:34:26 zulu] **Beatrice Halvorsen [Chief HPG Technician, Irian Station]:** Look lively. Thirty seconds to Van Diemen intercept.
- [18:34:37 zulu] **Jaques Lonn [Astech, Irian Station]:** Storage and PSUs are green. All motors showing good and tracking. Alignment is within tolerances.
- [18:35:40 zulu] **Halvorsen:** Anything?
- [18:36:15 zulu] **Lonn:** Negative. Nothing on H-band.
- [18:36:35 zulu] **Halvorsen:** Keep on track for another minute, then realign for the Connaught feed at 42. We should get the mirror feeds.
- [18:37:50 zulu] **Lonn:** Tracking and running a diagnostic here.
- [18:39:11 zulu] **Lonn:** Alignment complete and diagnostics complete. All green apart from a secondary servo which is amber-flagged.
- [18:39:41 zulu] **Halvorsen:** Enough to glitch us?
- [18:39:53 zulu] **Lonn:** Nope. It's on one of the redundant drivers.
- [18:40:21 zulu] **Halvorsen:** Not us then. It'll be like those bloody Wasat amateurs mis-calibrating the azimuth.
- [18:41:05 zulu] **Lonn:** As ever, as ever.
- [18:43:21 zulu] **Halvorsen:** Well?
- [18:43:45 zulu] **Lonn:** Nothing. Not a byte.
- [18:43:21 zulu] **Halvorsen:** Run the diagnostics again. It has to be us. The odds of a double transmission failure are astronomical.
- [18:44:01 zulu] **Lonn:** Still nothing, and still green here.
- [18:44:19 zulu] **Halvorsen:** It has to be us. It has to. [sound of tapping on the desk] There's 19 minutes until the Wasat feed is due. Pull the boards and do a hardware verification.
- [18:44:31 zulu] **Lonn:** It'll be tight.
- [18:44:51 zulu] **Halvorsen:** Do it
- [18:59:32 zulu] **Halvorsen:** Five minutes. How's it looking?
- [18:59:44 zulu] **Lonn:** [Exasperated sound] Better if you stop hassling.
- [19:03:00 zulu] **Halvorsen:** Sixty seconds.
- [19:03:53 zulu] **Lonn:** [Metallic scraping] Done. All green still. Alignment is...green.
- [19:04:11 zulu] **Halvorsen:** Nice work. I owe you a beer.
- [19:05:12 zulu] **Halvorsen:** And? Please tell me we got the blasted signal.
- [19:05:35 zulu] **Lonn:** You don't want to know. Negative on Wasat.
- [19:05:45 zulu] **Halvorsen:** We are so screwed. That cannot be happening.
- [19:06:11 zulu] **Lonn:** Not even the H-band carrier.
- [19:07:01 zulu] **Halvorsen:** Okay, fire a test packet at Wasat, then at Connaught and Van Diemen. Push a Black Alert to Acubens and Pliska too – they'll be just behind us on the transmission schedules.
- [19:07:27 zulu] **Lonn:** In the next packet?
- [19:07:45 zulu] **Halvorsen:** Nope. Do it now, out of sequence. I'm going to call in the rest of the team so we can pull this beast apart if needs be.
- [19:19:02 zulu] **Lonn:** I'm getting a carrier broadcast from Acubens. Realigning the receptors.
- [19:20:11 zulu] **Lonn:** Acubens acknowledge the packet and report bit-loss within normal parameters.
- [19:20:35 zulu] **Halvorsen:** Then it's not us. It's like the stations have gone dark. Something has happened.
- [19:21:35 zulu] **Lonn:** A cascade failure?
- [19:21:45 zulu] **Halvorsen:** Maybe. Maybe not. Send out traceroute. Ping the stations.
- [19:21:50 zulu] **Lonn:** Which ones?
- [19:22:03 zulu] **Halvorsen:** All of them. And tell them to ping their neighbors too, we need to see where this is headed.

ComStar Archive Transcript 988134-Omega, Irian Station, 26 December 2766

TIMELINE OF THE STAR LEAGUE

EARLY STAR LEAGUE (2571-2597)

- 2571** Star League Accords signed. Ursula Liao becomes Chancellor of Capellan Confederation. Shandra Noruff-Cameron appointed Commander-in-Chief of Star League Defense Force. Ian Cameron named First Lord of the Star League.
- 2572** Star League Directive 21 instituted. Santiago Massacre. United Triumph Military Exercises take place. Border Guards Agreement passed.
- 2573** Malagrotta Affair. Rim Worlds Universal Act of Loyalty passed. Bureau of Star League Affairs created.
- 2574** Harsh Periphery trade restrictions and taxes passed.
- 2575** Pollux Proclamation issued. Manchester Directive issued in Rim Worlds Republic. Taurian Campaign begins. Shandra Noruff-Cameron steps down and is succeeded by Carlos Dangmar Lee.
- 2576** Case Amber enacted.
- 2577** Canopian Campaign begins.
- 2578** Star League officially declares war on the Periphery states.
- 2579** Ian Cameron renounces tenets of Ares Conventions.
- 2581** Operation Mailed Fist launched. Outworlds Campaign begins. Pitcairn Legion formed. Rim Worlds Campaign begins.
- 2583** Case Black enacted. Amalthia Kincaid assassinated.
- 2584** Free Worlds League captures Canopus IV. Freebooters War begins.
- 2585** Peace of Cerberus negotiated. Outworlds Campaign ends.
- 2587** Grigori Avellar dies. Barton Avellar named Outworlds Parliamentary President.
- 2588** Free Worlds League gains control of Magistracy of Canopus. Freebooters War ends. Marantha Calderon becomes Protector of the Taurian Homeworlds. Melissa Humphreys appointed Military Governor of Magistracy. Canopian Campaign ends.
- 2591** Hehiro Kurita dies. Leonard Kurita named Coordinator of Draconis Combine. Kevin Steiner-Dinesen kidnapped.
- 2592** Kevin Steiner-Dinesen rescued. Lyran Estates-General disbanded.
- 2596** Viola Steiner-Dinesen killed. Kevin Steiner-Dinesen named Archon. Taurians surrender. Marantha Calderon commits suicide. Henry Calderon named Protector of the Taurian Homeworlds. Rim Provisional Government surrenders. Taurian Campaign ends. Rim Worlds Campaign ends.
- 2597** Reunification War ends. Taurian Concordat, Magistracy of Canopus, Rim Worlds Republic and Outworlds Alliance become Territorial States of the Star League.

GOLDEN AGE (2598-2750)

- 2598** Capellan Decree of Succession issued. General Nicholas Kinnol named Commander-in-Chief of SLDF.
- 2599** Normann Aris becomes Chancellor of Capellan Confederation. Gregory Amaris assassinated. Richard Amaris becomes President of Rim Worlds Republic.
- 2600** Shandra Noruff-Cameron dies. Good Years begin.
- 2602** Ian Cameron dies. Nicholas Cameron named First Lord.
- 2604** Kerensky family named Defenders of the First Lord after the murder of Tanya Kerensky while defending the First Lord.
- 2606** Executive Order 34 issued.
- 2607** Territorial States given Associate-Member status.
- 2623** New Star League currency system adopted.
- 2629** First Hyperpulse Generator built.
- 2631** Executive Order 35 issued.
- 2640** First Martial Olympiad.
- 2646** General Killian Squarn-Turk named Commanding General of SLDF.
- 2649** Nicholas Cameron dies. Michael Cameron named First Lord.
- 2650** Good Years end. Council Edict 2650 issued.
- 2676** House units allowed to compete in Martial Olympiads.
- 2680** Admiral David Peterson named Commanding General (Commanding Admiral).
- 2681** First duel involving SLDF MechWarriors fought.
- 2687** First "gunslingers" graduate and join their SLDF units.
- 2690** Michael Cameron retires. Jonathan Cameron named First Lord.
- 2700** Aleksandr Kerensky born.
- 2707** General Ikolor Fredasa named Commanding General.
- 2717** Stefan Amaris born.
- 2722** Council Directive 41 passed.
- 2729** Commanding General Fredasa executed after plotting a coup to remove the unstable First Lord. Rebecca Fetladral named Commanding General. Mother Jocasta becomes de facto First Lord.
- 2736** Last Martial Olympiad.
- 2738** Jonathan Cameron dies. Simon Cameron named First Lord. Aleksandr Kerensky named Commanding General.
- 2744** Richard Cameron born.
- 2750** Simon Cameron begins tour of Star League.

REGENCY (2751-2762)

- 2751** (17 February) Simon Cameron killed.
(3 April) Richard Cameron named First Lord. Aleksandr Kerensky named Regent.
- 2752** Repeal of Council Edict of 2650. Illegally passed laws impose heavy taxes on Periphery.
- 2753** (August) Stefan Amaris meets Richard Cameron for the first time.
- 2755** Birthday Proclamations passed. SLDF asked to leave the Rim Worlds Republic.
- 2757** Operation PERSUASIVE FORCE fleet maneuvers.
- 2760** A nuclear attack on Demeter triggers a three-year war between the Capellan Confederation and the Federated Suns.
- 2762** (Feb 9) Richard Cameron comes of age. Kerensky Regency ends. Executive Order 156 issued and withdrawn.
- 2764** (5 May) Nicholas Kerensky born.
(21 July) Richard Cameron signs secret treaty with Rim Worlds Republic. Amanda Cameron born.

PERIPHERY REVOLT (2765-66)

- 2765** (14 April) Fort Simpson destroyed by a nuclear car bomb.
(16 April) Eighteen Periphery worlds (including New Vandenberg) secede from the Star League. clash between SLDF and TDF troops at Fort Gorki triggers the "Year of a Thousand Battles." Fifty SLDF divisions cut-off (18 regiments and 13 divisions lost by year's end).
(July) 60% of Terran SLDF moved to Periphery. Battle of Gotterdammerung (later proved to be a work of fiction).

AMARIS COUP/STAR LEAGUE CIVIL WAR

- 2766** (9 Nov) Andery Kerensky born.
(Dec 27) Richard Cameron assassinated. Amaris Coup. Sixteen Rim Worlds divisions battle remnants of SLDF near Terra. Cameron family massacred.
- 2767** (January) Stefan Amaris proclaims himself Emperor. Kerensky retakes New Vandenberg.
(May 19) Amaris informs Kerensky of the Coup. 34th Royal BattleMech Division goes AWOL (later destroyed above Epsilon Indi).
(May 23) Kerensky addresses SLDF and proclaims state of war between SLDF and Amaris Empire. Kerensky declares a ceasefire against Periphery belligerents.
(Aug) Rim Worlds Republic invaded.
- 2769** Rim Worlds Republic conquered.
- 2770** The Greenhaven Gestapo murder Pope Clement XXVII.
(Aug) Conquest of the Rim Worlds completed.
- 2772** SLDF departs former Rim Worlds Republic.
(14 July) Operation CHIEFTAIN, the Terran Hegemony Campaign begins.

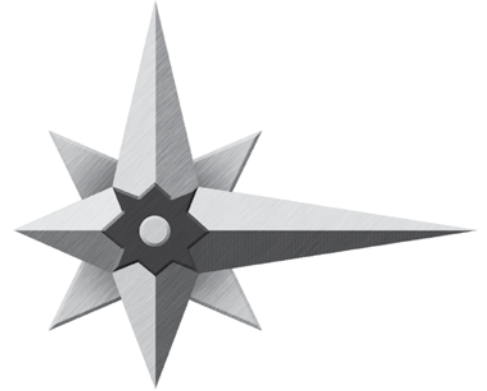
THE LEAGUE'S MIGHT

Thus the highest form of generalship is to balk the enemy's plans, the next best is to prevent the junction of the enemy's forces, the next in order is to attack the enemy's army in the field, and the worst policy of all is to besiege walled cities.

—Sun Tzu, the Art of War

From outside, the Hegemony resembled nothing better than one of those old medieval cities, walled off from the outside universe and ready to repel all-comers.

—General Ekatarina Thorskinden, personal diary



THE STAR LEAGUE DEFENSE FORCE

The SLDF of 2765 was the greatest fighting force of all time. It was substantial, well-equipped, well-trained, disciplined and ruthless. The last is not something commonly associated with the Star League military—rose-tinted spectacles tend to result in their being regarded as knights in shining armor—but their rules of engagement were shaped by the Ares Conventions and the experiences of the Reunification War. It is easy to forget that the Conventions promoted the use of military force as a political tool and the SLDF's policy tended towards establishing an overwhelming force, or failing that overwhelming firepower; if you could not intimidate the opposition, you made sure he did not get up again after you hit him. Furthermore, while they did not use them in the peacekeeping duties during the Star League, both the Regular Army and the Star League Navy were equipped with nuclear weapons and were well-versed in their use.

In that context, Amaris' brutality in the conquest of the Hegemony becomes less abhorrent; it wasn't so much a case of the RWA using excessive force as it was the Rim Worlds forces getting in their knock-out blows before the SLDF troops returned the favor. Matters did occasionally get out of hand (such as on Caph) but rarely reached the ferocity that would be seen in the "total war" of the First Succession War.

COMMAND STRUCTURE: 2765

While commonly regarded as a single entity, the SLDF's combat arms—the Regular Army and the Star League Navy—were just two elements of an organization that numbered fifteen commands in total. The deployed elements of the SLDF—from independent regiments to the twenty armies—drew their members from a wide range of commands.

OPERATIONAL COMMANDS

These commands formed the principal fighting arm of the SLDF and were the public face of the organization.

High Command

Based in the Citadel, a fortified complex near the Court of the Star League, the thirty-six members of the SLDF's High Command served as the ultimate leaders of the SLDF, formulating policy and making operational decisions. The commanding general headed the High Command and served as the principal liaison to the High Council and the First Lord. The heads of each operational command and of the military districts and regions (who, in many cases, were synonymous with the army commanders), plus the deputy commanding general, formed the body of the High Command, usually supported by aides and advisors.

Regular Army Command

CO: General Andreas Obikwelu III

The Regular Army Command oversaw the Star League ground forces and comprised eight sub-commands: BattleMech, Armored, Trooper, Fighter, Artillery, Engineering, Resupply (field logistics), Planning and Strategy. When deployed, Regular Army forces had operational command of actions on a planet's surface or within the atmosphere.

Naval Command

CO: Admiral Ignacio Blake

The Naval Command (often called the Star League Navy) provided the transportation and aerospace forces of the SLDF. Like the army, it comprised numerous sub-commands: WarShip, DropShip, Naval Aerospace, Transport, Marines, and Planning and Strategy. These worked closely with their army counterparts though a good-natured rivalry existed between the two combat arms.

Special Forces Command

CO: General Koji Talasko

Little mentioned, the Special Forces Command oversaw the disparate elite forces of the SLDF. Best known were the "Blackhearts" (more correctly the Special Armed Services or SAS) whose primary focus was on counterespionage and counterterrorism operations. The Blackhearts were the only force in the SLDF equipped with the top-secret Nighthawk light power armor, a forerunner of Clan battle armor and a direct ancestor of the PA(L) suits employed by ComStar and the Word of Blake. Also within the Special Forces Command were the "Foul Weather Fiends" (the All Weather Combat Corps), a 'Mech battalion trained to fight in conditions from the deep ocean to the vacuum of space, and the "Flying Lions" (the Special Forces Aero Wing).

Royal Command

CO: General Tamerlan Stefannson

The former High Command of the Hegemony Armed Forces, the Royal Command continued to exist within the SLDF as a means of maintaining the cohesion and excellence of the Royal formations, the only member-state troops absorbed into the SLDF intact. Officially, the Royal Command's role was the maintenance of discipline and quality within the command, as well as ensuring its loyalty to the Star League. This latter aspect was a sham and the Royal Command served as a shadow High Command through which the First Lord (under the authority of the Director-General of the Terran Hegemony) could order them to take action without consulting the High Command or the High Council.

SUPPORT COMMANDS

The Support Commands did not play a role in front-line combat but were vital to the operational efficiency of the SLDF.

Intelligence Command

CO: General Framboise Apfelbucher

The SLDF Intelligence Command (SLIC) served as the information gathering and intelligence arm of the Star League military, usually working closely with their civil counterparts and their opposite numbers in the member states such as the LIC and SAFE. The SLIC had seven sections: SI1 (Intelligence Liaison), SI2 (Communications and Technological Security Group), SI3 (Research and Development), SI4 (Strategic Analysis and Planning), SI5 (Counterintelligence/Counterterrorism), SI6 (Foreign Intelligence) and SI7 (Special Forces).

Member-State Liaison Command

CO: General Ichi Ippouinu

Commonly called the Liaison Command, this command provided the bridge between the SLDF and the armed forces of the member states as well as with local authorities. This latter role was often the most publicized, liaison officers smoothing over cultural differences and defusing political tensions between the Star League troops and the not always welcoming population, but they also played a key role in ensuring the SLDF formations were not sundered by factional loyalties and infighting (a lesson that was lost by those in Kerensky's Exodus fleet).

Reserve Command

CO: General Abhinav Hammond

Overseeing both planetary garrisons and demobilized troops and their equipment, the Reserve Command served as a resource that could be used to bolster the active commands in times of need. Members of the reserve were expected to attend a two-week recertification exercise each year for which they were paid a stipend. Some commands (such as BattleMech and fighter forces) required bi-monthly weekend exercises.

JAG Command

CO: General Sergey Araujo

The Judge Advocate General Command served as the legal and law-enforcement arm of the SLDF, responsible for counseling SLDF troopers and commanders and also for ensuring the SLDF complied with Star League and local law-enforcement policies. The JAG Command also policed worlds placed under martial law and provided military governors where needed (such as during the Reunification War).

Administrative Command

CO: General Halyna Idoko

The bureaucracy of the SLDF, the Administrative Command was responsible for managing the SLDF's payroll, recruitment, training programs and records, simultaneously being the least well regarded but most important element of the SLDF. Without the Administrative Command's monolithic (but surprisingly well-oiled) presence, the other commands would be buried in trivia and paperwork.

Medical Command

CO: General Inga Di Martino

Considered to be at the cutting edge of medical science even by the Star League, the Medical Command cared for the soldiers of the SLDF, providing battlefield medics, hospital JumpShips and numerous care facilities across the Star League.

LOGISTICAL COMMANDS

Though officially part of the Support Commands, the Logistical Commands (or Operational Support Units, OSUs) formed a close-knit and often interdependent part of the Star League military. As a consequence, they were commonly treated as a third element within the SLDF.

Transport Command

CO: General Feng Venel

The Transport Command coordinated the movement of SLDF troops and supplies, maintaining a massive database of vessels, supplies and personnel in conjunction with the Quartermaster Command, the Administrative Command and the Navy. The Transport Command also worked closely with the Communications Command (with whom it co-operated many communications facilities) to maintain the records and communicate them via the HPG network.

Communications Command

CO: Vice-Admiral Dola Shatilov

Working closely with the Transport Command and the Administrative Command, the Communications Command was responsible for the flow of information within the SLDF. They maintained the SLDF's HPG facilities (both fixed installations and field or naval portable units). They also oversaw battlefield communications and the SLDF's electronic-warfare capability.

Quartermaster Command

CO: General Aslan Lybekk

The Quartermaster Command oversaw the procurement and delivery of everything needed by the SLDF. Whether paper and memory chips for the Administrative Command, or K-F drives for the Star League Navy, the Quartermaster Command met those needs. Additionally, the Quartermaster Command liaised with the SLIC and the civil intelligence services to monitor military contractors and ensure security protocols and quality controls were adhered to.

Replacement-Deployment Command

CO: General Kim Hyong Suk

Working hand-in-hand with the Quartermaster Command and the Administrative Command, the RepDep Command ensured all SLDF field units were at full strength and had the equipment and personnel needed to function. The command maintained clearing centers and depots in each military region from which resources could be dispatched swiftly to units in need. They were also responsible for the repatriation of the SLDF's war-dead to the troopers' homeworlds as well as the maintenance of the SLDF's cemeteries in conjunction with the Star League War Graves Commission.

THE COMMANDING GENERALS

1) General Shandra Noruff-Cameron (2571-2575)

The wife of First Lord Ian Cameron, General Noruff-Cameron had the responsibility for outlining and assembling the Star League Defense Force. She had to overcome rivalries (and in some cases hatreds) and widely differing organizational and doctrinal structures. The army that fought the Reunification War broadly followed the outline she laid down but Noruff-Cameron never took operational command of the conflict; she suffered a massive heart attack in 2575 and stepped down in favor of her deputy, though she remained active within the High Command until her death in 2600.

2) General Carlos Dangmar Lee (2575-2597)

General Carlos Lee received a baptism of fire, inheriting the newborn SLDF from Noruff-Cameron but finding himself charged with prosecuting a war against three (later four) Periphery powers. During his command, the SLDF became a battle-hardened force but it remained fractious with strong regional affiliations throughout the conflict. Though he became a figure of hate in the Periphery, he had been widely praised in the Inner Sphere for his adaptability and determination as the SLDF's first operational commander. He retired in 2597, exhausted by over two-decades of continuous war.

3) General Nicholas Kinnol (2598-2646)

With peace restored, General Kinnol continued the military reforms initiated by Shandra Noruff and shaped the SLDF to the form it would retain though to the disaster of the Amaris Coup. Under his command, the SLDF strove to become a unified force—aided by his ability to recruit fresh personnel from across the Inner Sphere rather than having to rely on existing troops whose innate loyalties were to their homelands, not the Star League. Kinnol also benefited from the booming economy of the post-reconstruction era, expanding the SLDF and its facilities throughout the Inner Sphere. A less well-known contribution of General Kinnol to the Star League was the founding of the Star League Exploration Command, a sub-command of the navy charged with surveying star systems both beyond the League's boundaries and in the voids between worlds within the member states. The worlds discovered by the Exploration Command became a valuable source of raw materials and prompted the establishment of hundreds of new colonies. Kinnol also oversaw the creation of the Martial Olympiads, the first of which took place in 2640.

4) General Killian Squarn-Turk (2646-2680)

General Squarn-Turk continued the expansion of the SLDF and had a largely unremarkable tenure. The most significant event of his career was Michael Cameron's Edict of 2650, further reducing the militaries of the member and territorial states, which SLDF inspectors had to verify and account for the redundant material. As part of a wider policy toward demobilized soldiers (including those in the SLDF) Squarn-Turk proposed that troops be allowed to purchase their equipment with their muster-out pay (advanced Hegemony technology was not to be included in this policy), in effect building up a large body of well-armed reservists throughout the Inner Sphere and Periphery who could help combat the rising tide of banditry and lawlessness. Though hotly debated by the High Council, the measure passed. The final notable event of the general's service came in 2676 when House units were allowed to compete in the Martial Olympiad (though none ever won the competition).

5) Admiral David Peterson (2680-2707)

The only commander of the SLDF not to be a Regular Army officer, Admiral David Peterson took charge of the SLDF at a time of rising tensions. His unique viewpoint helped end many of the inter-service rivalries between the army and navy and fostered close doctrinal ties between the two. Peterson also oversaw the

"Advanced Combat and Maneuvering Skills" Project (later called the Gunslinger Program) designed to give SLDF duelists a fighting chance against their DCMS rivals. His tenure also saw the first developments of the controversial SDS system along with numerous advanced technologies that First Lord Jonathan insisted were necessary to maintain the SLDF's technological edge against the House militaries. Unfortunately, Admiral Peterson was killed in a DropShip accident before he could see many of these advances enter service.

6) General Ikolor Fredasa (2707-2729)

C-i-C Peterson's aide, General Ikolor Fredasa took operational command of the SLDF upon his predecessor's death and was confirmed in the post by the First Lord a week later. Gregarious and authoritative, Fredasa's public profile was much higher than any of his predecessors, as often appearing in the social press as much as in the political and military media. He took credit for many of the reforms to the SLDF and the new technologies that entered service in the early twenty-eighth century though almost all of these were instigated by Admiral Peterson. Despite his vainglorious nature and willingness to accept credit for the actions of others, Fredasa was a thoughtful and intelligent commander, dedicated to the ideals of the Star League, but his loyalty was to the League as a whole rather than to the First Lord. As a consequence, when Jonathan Cameron's instability became clear, particularly his indecisiveness over the War of Davion Succession and the Marik Civil War, Fredasa chose to act against the First Lord for the greater good, seeking to engineer Jonathan's replacement with his sister, Jocasta. The coup plans failed—for which the General and several co-conspirators were executed—but in many regards, his efforts succeeded; Jocasta Cameron became *de facto* co-First Lord, saving the League from disaster. Among the Clans, Fredasa is still regarded as the epitome of a conflicted warrior, part hero and part villain, resulting in their naming a WarShip class after him.

7) General Rebecca Fetladral (2729-2738)

A long-time associate of Jocasta Cameron, Rebecca Fetladral was the natural choice to replace the disgraced Fredasa. Her short tenure was among the most dramatic of the SLDF commanders, seeing both the expansion of the SLDF and new technologies but also the completion of the SDS system and many Castles Brian. She also pushed the SLDF to a higher state of operational readiness, both through exercises and also in peacekeeping operations such as separating the combatants in the War of Davion Succession. Her more militant stance (a combination of her own determination and the First Lord's vision of disaster for the Star League) was wildly unpopular with the House Lords who accused the SLDF of "flexing its muscles" and prompted near-constant skirmishes between General Fetladral and the High Council. When Jonathan died and was succeeded by Simon Cameron, Rebecca took the opportunity to resign, recommending her aide take command of the SLDF.

Note: General Fetladral's granddaughter, Elise, fought during the Amaris Coup and left with Kerensky's Exodus, eventually becoming one of Nicholas Kerensky's 800, founder of the Fetladral bloodname and saKhan of Clan Wolf.

8) General Aleksandr Kerensky (2738-2802)

Only 38 when he took charge of the SLDF, Aleksandr Kerensky had seen both war and political conflicts first hand and was determined to do his duty. He would become the best known of the commanding generals, a legendary figure both in the Inner Sphere and to the Clans, and the longest-serving (though the last eighteen years of his tenure were in exile, the Star League itself having disbanded in 2784). Much of his story is recounted elsewhere in this volume but his later career appears in volumes such as the *Wolf Clan Sourcebook* and *Warriors of Kerensky*. His eldest son, Nicholas, would found the Clans and in doing so damn (or save, depending on your perspective) both the exiles and the Inner Sphere.

OPERATIONAL DEPLOYMENTS

In 2765, the SLDF comprised over four-thousand line regiments, of which just over half were BattleMech units. These units (plus associated naval assets) were divided between the ten military districts (one per member state and territory) and further subdivided as Armies—one in the compact Hegemony, three in each of the more geographically expansive member states and one in each territorial state.

Much of modern military organization in the Inner Sphere—at least at regimental level or lower—can trace its origin to this era and the Star League's unification protocols. Even the most tradition-bound forces—notably the DCMS—used Star League organizational doctrine. Lances, companies, battalions and regiments are familiar to the modern MechWarrior but what would be surprising is the uniformity of the smaller formations. Whereas today there are hundreds (if not thousands) of 'Mech designs, the SLDF's repertoire was much smaller, and frequently whole lances and companies (and occasionally even battalions) used the same 'Mech design. That did not mean the same models were used across the SLDF; the size and age of the SLDF meant there were often a succession of models using the same chassis, the most advanced versions being employed by the ex-HAF "Royal" units, while older models cascaded down to the non-Royal units and eventually the member and territorial states.

Above the regiments were brigades, divisions, corps and army formations. Above all of these were the military regions and state commands (also known as army groups). In most cases operational deployments were at the divisional level, with independent regiments providing flexible and swift-acting forces to respond to low-level incidents. On only three occasions did the larger formations come into play operationally: the Reunification War (where ten corps were initially deployed), the Periphery Uprising and in the Liberation of the post-Coup Terran Hegemony (in which all twenty armies saw action).

REGIMENTS

The regiment-level combined arms structure common during the Reunification War was largely gone by the 2760s, replaced with the service branch specific deployments we still see today (though some independent regiments remained multi-service). Modern soldiers would be surprised by the specialization of Star League regiments, though functionally they resemble modern formations. From the earliest days of the Star League efforts had been underway to build up particular expertise at the regimental level and by 2765 such forces provided the backbone of the SLDF. This expertise made the SLDF forces formidable weapons but also proved their undoing in the chaos of the civil war; their specialization made them inflexible and vulnerable. Independent regiments were usually self-contained entities but those operating within the brigade and divisional structures (referred to as line regiments) shared support elements with their sister regiments. Deprived of these, as was often the case in the chaos of the Periphery Uprising, the supremely well-honed weapon became a brittle one.

Line Regiments

The principal line regimental formations of the 2760s followed the same organizational doctrine as modern regiments save that they lacked intrinsic aerospace and support arms, instead relying on brigade- and division-level resources.

Heavy Assault: These regiments contained heavy and assault BattleMechs and were intended for offensive operations. The battalions of heavy assault regiments also included a detachment of artillery, giving each four companies.

Battle: These formations were multi-role regiments, comprising medium and heavy BattleMechs.

Striker: Comprising light and medium 'Mechs, striker units were employed for reconnaissance and breakthrough exploitation. They were the only line regiments to have intrinsic aerospace assets, including LAMs.

Independent Regiments

Unlike line regiments, independent 'Mech regiments contained a full complement of support troops (including, in many cases, armor and infantry). Most independent regiments also had integral DropShip and JumpShip assets to facilitate their redeployment. The three principal types of regiment were broadly analogous with the roles of the line regiments but the fourth, the CAAN units, only existed as independent regiments.

Dragoon: The independent equivalent of heavy assault regiments, dragoon regiments mixed heavy and assault weight 'Mechs and armor. They rarely employed infantry in offensive roles but instead held them back for defensive operations.

Hussar: Medium/heavy weight and multi-role, hussars were the most common form of independent 'Mech regiment.

Light Horse: Principally light and medium weight 'Mechs and armor, light horse units served as the eyes and ears of the SLDF. They also operated as quick-response troops, usually grouped in multi-regimental formations (all light horse units) known as Regimental Combat Teams.

CAAN: Cavalry, Armored, Aerospace and Naval regiments were trained in aquatic operations and were the only SLDF units with integral blue-water naval assets.

Aerospace

Unlike the thirty-first century, where dedicated aerospace formations are the exception rather than the rule, most aerospace forces of the late Star League operated as aerospace wings. The SLDF organized most of its aerospace combat forces into "Wings"—formations built around what is more commonly known as an aero regiment in the thirty-first century. Each wing included its own maintenance and support personnel, and in most cases also included transport and other combat support functions.

Ground Aero Wing (GAW): Attached to divisions, the fifty-four fighters of a GAW were tasked with providing aerospace superiority and ground support capability for the units within the division. In some cases, a GAW would also include full regiments of conventional aircraft (primarily for close air support, but often

with two or three squadrons of reconnaissance craft) and transport aircraft, as well as at least one engineer battalion and other ground crews needed to construct (or repair) and operate airfields.

Fleet Aero Wing (FAW): Attached to naval squadrons and divisions, a FAW's role was to protect WarShips, JumpShips and DropShips. FAWs often followed no specific organizational structure; instead, they were composed of the squadrons assigned to the capital ships comprising the naval squadron, in addition to the support vessels and dedicated aerospace squadrons that might be attached for the duration of an operation. They rarely operated in a ground-support role but they were often employed to bolster aerospace superiority over the battlefield.

Independent Aero Wing (IAW): Less specialized than the GAWs and FAWs, the independent wings were capable of operating wherever they were needed. Most operated as supplementary GAWs, organized and equipped very much in the same way, though provided with intelligence gathering and electronic warfare capabilities. A battalion or more of paratroopers were often integrated with IAWs.

Attached Aerospace: Attached aerospace forces were those directly integrated with independent regiments, a pair of fighters per company in the same manner as modern regiments (with a total of three squadrons of fighters). These units did not possess the same additional transport and engineer support as did their GAW and IAW sister formations, and were consequently forced to rely either upon other co-deployed units or local populations to provide those services.

Navy

Early in the SLDF's history the Star League's WarShips were attached to divisions and corps, acting as escorts for the lumbering Regular Army transports. The reforms of Commanding Admiral David Peterson freed many of the capital vessels for independent operations (though many retained close ties to their "mud lover" associates). While many small and medium WarShips operated independently or in pairs, the most common organization was in a squadron of up to a dozen vessels, tasked with specific duties and often assembled around a small cluster of battleships and carriers. In some cases three to five squadrons were grouped together as independent fleets.

Fire-Support Squadron: Attached to army corps (or occasionally divisions), fire support squadrons provided the Regular Army with a means of dominating local space as well as platforms for orbital fire support. They commonly comprised half a dozen cruisers and frigates, such as the *Avatar* and *Aegis*, with associated support tenders.

Reconnaissance Squadron: Operating independently, reconnaissance squadrons employed the lightest and swiftest vessels of the Star League Navy, usually corvettes and destroyers. As their name suggests their principal role was intelligence gathering but they also served as picket vessels for larger fleet gatherings. These squadrons favored swift, light vessels such as the *Vincent*-class corvettes but occasionally heavier vessels like the *Kimagure*-class cruisers were employed.

Escort Squadron: Comprising cruisers and frigates, the principal role of escort squadrons was guarding other formations, be it conventional transports or other WarShips, utilizing a balanced mix of firepower, maneuverability and resilience. A wide range of vessels appeared in escort squadrons but designs like the *Congress*, *Lola III* and *Riga II* were most common.

Line Squadron: These formations represented the principal offensive arm of the navy, assembled around three or four battleships or carriers (and occasionally a mix of the two) with frigates and cruisers as escorts. Line squadrons were both resilient and packed a fearsome punch but were rarely swift or maneuverable. Vessels like the *McKenna* were central to line squadrons, backed by the *Texas* and *Farragut* classes and escorted by *Sovetskii Soyuz*, *Cameron* and *Riga II* fleet escorts.

Pursuit Squadron: Intended to chase down other naval vessels, pursuit squadrons employed cruisers and battle cruisers that often sacrificed resilience for speed and firepower. Designs like the *Black Lion*, *Avatar* and *Kimagure* formed the mainstay of pursuit squadrons but lighter elements such as the *Aegis* also appeared.

Interdiction Squadron: Whereas pursuit squadrons ran down vessels at liberty, interdiction squadrons were intended to contain enemy forces. In some regards these squadrons were schizophrenic, mixing light recon elements such as the *Vincent* (and in some cases the *Bug Eye*) with heavier combatants like the *Avatar*, *Riga II* and *Congress*. This mix of vessels allowed interdiction squadrons to respond quickly and contain their targets. Most interdiction squadrons also featured substantial fighter and assault DropShip elements as well as a marine contingent.

Transport Squadron: Operating in conjunction with ground forces rather than as part of independent fleets, transport squadrons combined DropShip and JumpShip elements to carry ground troops as well as WarShips, assault DropShips and fighters to protect them. Vessels like the *Potemkin* and *Carrack* usually operated as part of these squadrons, protected by *Lola III*, *Naga* and *Essex II* classes.

A DIFFERENCE OF PHILOSOPHY

The design philosophies of modern WarShips and those of the modern era differ markedly. Compared to their modern kin, Star League vessels are often under-armored and lacked point defenses, making them vulnerable to enemy aerospace and missile attacks. While essentially correct, this view neglects a key factor in the SLDF navy; unlike today's isolated behemoths, WarShips of the 2760s were designed to operate as part of squadrons and fleets, relying on their companions for defense and screening. This apes the ultra-specialized aspects of the Regular Army, something the sheer size of the SLDF allowed but which isn't practical in the pitiful modern fleets. Today we think of destroyers and frigates and cruisers, but in the Star League there'd be a clear distinction between a fleet destroyer and a vessel intended for independent operations. There was little need for carrier WarShips like the FWL's *Thera* (though some pseudo-carriers like the *Kimagure* and *Aegis* existed), instead DropShips like the *Titan* served as the base for air wings.

—Admiral Heather Alexander, *The Black and the Blue: Navies through the millennia*, Oriente Military Press, 3061

Science/Survey Squadron: Operating as part of the Star League Exploration Command, science/survey squadrons were the forerunner of the modern Explorer Corps and Interstellar Expeditions, charged with expanding human knowledge and discovering new worlds. They employed a wide range of conventional JumpShips and DropShips and occasionally employed light WarShips for more hazardous assignments. Science missions varied from one to a dozen vessels, usually operating independently for months or even years at a time.

Armor

Though downplayed by the SLDF (divisions were almost exclusively named as BattleMech or infantry formations despite their true composition), armor forces remained a vital part of the Regular Army. Most were employed in defensive or garrison roles, though heavy and assault units often served alongside (and against) BattleMech forces. Most armor regiments were classified by weight (subdivided by motive type: tracked, wheeled or hover) and usually comprised of only one or two designs, though specialized battalions—VTOL, scout/pathfinder and heavy assault being the most common—were assigned at the division level and even often at the brigade level (especially among the RCTs). Armor regiments assigned to defensive duties were typically supported by a battalion of mechanized infantry and engineers.

On the other hand, artillery of all kinds was a key support element within SLDF doctrine, focusing almost entirely upon self-propelled artillery within the line combat units. Each division was typically assigned a full regiment of combined tube and missile artillery, while independent regiments could claim up to a battalion of artillery depending upon the assignment. For assault operations, the SLDF also deployed AirMobile Artillery batteries and companies, each possessing its own organic air transportation assets.

Infantry

Even in the twenty-eighth century, service in the infantry remained the most common occupation in the SLDF. Most were equipped with some sort of organic transport capability: APCs for mechanized infantry, Infantry Fighting Vehicles (lighter armored but faster and more maneuverable than APCs) for motorized infantry or jump packs for jump infantry; mechanized and motorized infantry regiments also typically had conventional armor assets organically assigned, typically one platoon per company plus an additional company per battalion. Other infantry had no integral transport assets and were variously called line infantry, PBIs (Poor Bloody Infantry) or grunts. Some infantry units received special training (for example as paratroopers, combat engineers or in hostile environments) though often these were only battalion-sized forces (albeit officially designated as regiments).

DIVISIONS AND BRIGADES

The standard operational unit of the SLDF, a division, comprised three brigades of three regiments plus an additional armor brigade, a Ground Air Wing and both combat (e.g. artillery,

engineering) and logistical (e.g. transport, signals and medical detachments) support units. Brigades usually comprised troops from the same service branch—BattleMechs, armor, infantry and so forth—and were almost never deployed as an operational force. In contrast, divisions comprised forces from several service branches. The most populous branch (or in some cases specialization) named the divisional type, of which there were four, as outlined by Shandra Noruff before the Reunification War:

BattleMech: Two brigades (six regiments) of 'Mechs and one brigade (three regiments) of mechanized infantry. These were the principal offensive arm of the SLDF.

Mechanized Infantry: Reversing the structure of the 'Mech divisions, Mechanized Infantry formations comprised two brigades of mechanized infantry and one of BattleMechs. Doctrinally they were "offensive support" units.

Infantry: Two brigades of non-mechanized infantry and one brigade of light BattleMechs; infantry divisions were principally defensive formations but a number were adept at fighting in specialized terrain such as mountains, snow and urban areas.

Jump Infantry: Intended as shock troops, jump infantry divisions comprised two brigades of jump infantry and one brigade of BattleMechs as well as a second aero wing. Their role was akin to paratroopers in earlier conflicts—to move quickly and seize objectives, which heavier forces could then secure.

CORPS

While regiments and divisions were responsible for individual worlds (or parts of them), Corps were charged with guarding broad segments of space. The exact area of responsibility varied considerably but usually comprised between thirty and one hundred worlds. The composition of corps was equally diverse with the largest containing nine divisions and the smallest comprising only four. The average was six or seven divisions, often with up to the equivalent of another division in independent regiments. Each Corps maintained its own transport assets and WarShips, as well as supplies and non-combat facilities.

ARMIES

The largest permanent organizational forces of the SLDF, armies coalesced from the rapidly expanding SLDF during the twenty-seventh century. Their formation was part of Shandra Noruff's original plan for the SLDF but during the Reunification War, and for several decades afterwards, corps were the main operational force. Initially there were ten armies, one per member and territorial state, each commissioned in 2642. This number was expanded to twenty during the reign of First Lord Jonathan Cameron to facilitate the effective garrisoning of the Star League's territory.

As with corps, armies were not a uniform force and comprised between two and four corps. The smallest armies (the Sixth and Seventh, in the Capellan Confederation) fielded only around 140 regiments each, while the largest (the Fourteenth, Fifteenth and Sixteenth, all garrisoning the militant Draconis Combine) fielded

well over 300 regiments each. Most armies contained six (or occasionally seven) BattleMech divisions, but the number of infantry divisions varied from nine to twenty-seven, depending on the size of the area to be garrisoned and the belligerence of the inhabitants. The number of independent regiments varied considerably, too; several divisions had none, while others more commonly had ten to twenty. The largest armies had thirty independent regiments, usually where the area of responsibility was large or fragmented (such as the territorial states or the fractured sub-realms of the Free Worlds League).

Until the Periphery Uprising in 2765 the armies were largely an administrative and political construct, responsible for safeguarding (and maintaining order in) a member or territorial state (or a third of one in the case of the non-Hegemony member states). The commanders of each army served on the High Command and even in the era of HPG communication had significant authority to pursue their orders and operate independently. After the commencement of hostilities on New Vandenberg, eleven of the member-state armies (including the Twentieth Army that had been ordered out of the Republic in 2755 and found itself as a fourth army shared between the Lyran Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine) had been moved wholesale in support of the troops already deployed in the territorial states. The "safe" First Army in the Hegemony dispatched two of its three corps to bolster the weakened member-state garrisons, leaving it fatally vulnerable to Amaris' scheming.

Though each was unique, the SLDF classified the armies as one of four types:

Standard Defensive Armies: Jack-of-all-trades forces, fielding somewhere between 180 and 220 regiments across two-dozen divisions, standard armies were the baseline groupings for the SLDF. Most of their corps contained independent regiments (around nine in total), which served as both scouting and quick-reaction forces.

Light Defensive Armies: Slimmed down formations with only around 130 regiments (fifteen divisions), the light armies only appeared in the Capellan Confederation (the Sixth and Seventh Armies) and reflected the compact nature of the realm and the ease of defending it.

Heavy Defensive Armies: Employed in the Draconis Combine, these massive forces reflected the size and militarism of the inhabitants and the need for stronger garrisons. With between 315 and 325 regiments across the thirty-four divisions of the Fourteenth, Fifteenth and Sixteenth Armies, these were the largest and most powerful formations of the SLDF.

Mobile Armies: Two of the Free Worlds League armies (the Eighth and Ninth) and all the territorial state force (Seventeenth, Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Armies) were designated "mobile" forces. The total strength was almost identical to a Standard Defensive Army but they made significantly more use of independent regiments (usually three times the number in standard divisions, around twenty-seven to thirty in total), allowing them to respond to situations with considerably more flexibility than the more rigidly defined armies.

Military Regions and Army Groups

Each member and territorial state of the Star League was designated a military region and became the responsibility of one or more armies, known collectively as army groups and commanded by an SLDF general who answered only to the High Command and the First Lord. Each army group was named for the ruling House of the nation or territory (so the armies in the Federated Suns were Army Group Davion, while those in the Magistracy of Canopus were Army Group Centrella). The Hegemony and the territorial states each were home to a single army while the other member states were home to three armies (and, in the years before the Amaris Coup, elements of a fourth in some cases). With the exception of the Hegemony, the territorial and member states each maintained their own armed forces though their numbers were controlled and it was clear the SLDF was the senior member in any martial partnership. Publicly, the only independent military force available to the Hegemony was the purely defensive SDS, but in practice they maintained authority over the Royal units scattered throughout the SLDF. These House forces did not fall within the direct authority of the military regions but their command could be transferred to the SLDF in times of crisis. General Kerensky pressed the First Lord to do thus during the Periphery Uprising but Richard instead trusted in his alliance with Stefan Amaris, fatally so.

With the coming of the Periphery Uprising, and the deployment of the great majority of the SLDF to put down the rebellion, General Kerensky authorized the formation of several new army group headquarters to maintain command and control of the armies. These became even more critical as the three territorial army groups were so beleaguered they were unable to assume command of the armies arriving in-theater. These new army groups were designated numerically, beginning with eleven (the first ten being the current ten member-state and territorial army groups). Eleventh, Twelfth and Thirteenth Army Groups assumed control of the invasions of the Taurian Concordat, Magistracy of Canopus and Outworlds Alliance, respectively, while Fourteenth Army Group, supported by Tenth Army Group (formerly known as Army Group Amaris), was responsible for the SLDF's invasion of the Rim Worlds Republic. During the Rim Worlds campaign, Fifteenth through Eighteenth Army Groups were organized as training and occupation forces, with Fifteenth and Seventeenth Army Groups eventually becoming operational during Operation CHIEFTAIN, which also saw the stand-up of Nineteenth through Twenty-second Army Groups, as well as Second (Army Group Marik), Fourth (Army Group Kurita) and Fifth (Army Group Davion) Army Groups; after the SLDF pulled completely out of the Rim Worlds Republic, Twenty-third Army Group was formed as a new training organization, while Kerensky stood up Twenty-fourth Army Group as the final element of Operation CHIEFTAIN.

Ad-hoc Units

In addition to its permanent formations, the SLDF employed a number of ad-hoc groupings to ease operational organization. The best known were the regimental combat teams (RCTs), groupings

THE MARTIAL OLYMPIAD

Commencing in 2640, the SLDF undertook a series of mass exercises every four years designed to hone the fighting edge of the SLDF and to identify the best division, regiment and ship in the organization. Held every four years until 2736, the preliminary rounds of these wargames took place across fifty worlds as units from each corps and army fought a series of elimination rounds against their neighbors. The winners of the elimination contests traveled to the grand final, known as the Martial Olympiad, where they competed for a number of trophies and medals.

The first fifteen Olympiads (2640-2700) took place on Mars while the sixteenth to twenty-fifth took place on Outreach. The format was the same in both cases: a wide range of attack and defense scenarios, ranging from company pursuits across open terrain to divisional clashes in a specially constructed city range. Other contests paired ground and naval forces or tested the prowess of individual warriors. Though low-powered weaponry was employed in the wargames, the contest was almost indistinguishable from a real battlefield save that they were monitored and recorded in minute detail. Catastrophic accidents occurred and deaths were not uncommon but that only fueled public interest in the contests. The Olympiad became a popular media event and the revenue from interstellar broadcast rights helped to offset the astronomical cost of the events.

The High Council protested the expense of the wargames, almost entirely paid for by the Star League Treasury, but a succession of SLDF commanders and

First Lords insisted that the games were necessary to maintain the SLDF's combat edge and to bolster morale. That the Martial Olympiad served to remind the House Lords of the SLDF's prowess was not lost on the commanders either. The inclusion of House forces in the competition from 2676 only served to highlight the discrepancy between the SLDF and member-state forces, with most of the regimental and divisional awards continuing to be won by SLDF formations.

The grand prize of the Martial Olympiad was the Shandra Noruff Ribbon, awarded to the command or individual in each class with the highest points total after a series of challenges. These "best in class" awards included best division, regiment, battalion, company, WarShip, MechWarrior and aerospace pilot. Unit winners were allowed to fly the Noruff Pennant (a gold and green streamer adorned with a lion) alongside their regimental insignia. Individual winners painted the insignia on their vehicles.

The last Martial Olympiad took place in 2736—planning began for a 2740 event and preliminary rounds were taking place, but the competition was cancelled by the new commanding general, Aleksandr Kerensky. Kerensky believed that the rising tensions in the Inner Sphere and Periphery made the event redundant, and that the competition distracted the SLDF from field operations. His decision proved prophetic as the SLDF found itself locked in a cat-and-mouse game with House-sponsored "bandits" (the Third Hidden War) and, following the death of Simon Cameron, began the inexorable slide towards the Periphery Uprising and the Amaris Coup.

of independent regiments that functioned as a single operational unit. Most commonly formed of light horse regiments, they were fast moving and incisive, more able to quickly respond to threats than more ponderous divisions.

Occasionally, the SLDF organized multi-division (but sub-corps) formations known as battlegroups (occasionally such units were called Operational Combat Units or OCUs). In most cases these were assembled to codify the command and logistical structure without requiring the presence of corps commanders.

The Periphery Uprising (and the Amaris Civil War that followed) saw multi-army forces assembled, placed under the command of a single general or admiral and named for their operational theater (in the Uprising) or the nation-state they were operating from (in the Civil War). For example, the five armies assigned to the Taurian Concordat in the uprising were collectively known as Task Force Taurus (later designated Army Group Eleven) while the amalgamation of units that attacked the occupied Hegemony from the Lyran state was called Task Force Commonwealth.

MILITARY EDUCATION

A significant factor in the success of the SLDF was its policies towards recruitment and training of personnel. During the Reunification War, the Star League made use of troops from the member states to provide a battle-trained core to the new armed forces but after the end of hostilities Commanding General Nicholas Kinnol ordered a return to the recruitment doctrine laid out in the

Star League charter with recruitment stations across the Inner Sphere. Despite having agreed to it, this policy was unpopular with the High Council and so in 2606 Nicholas Cameron issued Executive Order 34 reaffirming the policy. Unlike the troops employed in the Reunification War, whose loyalty was to their homelands, the SLDF recruitment policy would allow them to garner recruits without hardened loyalties (and it was implied, with fewer bad habits than member-state-trained soldiers) and thus assemble a force that was loyal only to the Star League. There was, however, a quid pro quo: when they signed the charter back in 2571, the Houses had been promised access to the SLDF training academies and in requiring the member states to hold to their end of the bargain, the Star League was obliged to do likewise, allowing contingents of House troops to be trained alongside SLDF recruits.

Recruitment

All prospective members of the SLDF underwent a rigorous selection procedure. The first stage was a half-day test of the candidates' knowledge and reasoning abilities, including personality profiling and an assessment of their moral character. Following this was a series of exercises designed to judge the candidates' physical fitness and ability to work in a team. Only if both tests were passed did candidates advance to the next stage though there were numerous exceptions dependant on aptitudes and intended service branches. For example, the fitness requirements for the Quartermaster Corps were lower than for

the infantry (though all troopers were expected to complete basic training irrespective of their intended service branch), and many naval posts were open to those who suffered mobility impairments.

Those intending to join the BattleMech or aerospace branches were further tested on their aptitude to use a neurohelmet. Passing this "skull-cap test" concluded the initial selection tests and qualified the candidate for further training. Many failed, the feedback from the helmet commonly rendering them unconscious and (in rare cases) causing brain damage.

Training

Those who passed the selection courses were assigned to one of the SLDF's boot camps. The basic training of SLDF troopers took six months and qualified those who passed the course as Combat Infantrymen (or Spacers in the naval academies), each capable of defending themselves should the need arise. Those who joined the SLDF before the age of 18 (generally referred to as junior soldiers or junior spacers) also underwent standard schooling during this period and were usually advanced to their branch training after an additional six months. Those who passed "basic" were awarded the E1 rank and regarded as full members of the SLDF though operational deployment after just boot camp was rare save for garrison infantry units or in times of conflict.

In most cases, troops spent the next eighteen months in "trade training" at one of over 200 SLDF academies, focusing more on the specific branch of service the candidate was being prepared for. This included combat tactics, first aid, military history and politics, put to practical use in a constant series of field exercises and an annual series of wargame maneuvers. More traditional education was also provided, including languages, sciences and (to a limited extent) the arts; by the time this academy training period was over, even the lowliest SLDF infantryman held the equivalent of a Bachelor of Arts degree. Those who completed this second stage of training were awarded the E3 rank. Most infantry and armor crews were deployed after this "trade training", though the most promising would be sent for "advanced training".

The advanced training period (between six and thirty-six months depending on branch and specialty) focused on technical skills applicable to their service branch: engineering, accountancy, BattleMech piloting, Zero-G combat, aerospace operations and so forth. Some specialists underwent additional training even after their exhaustive (e.g. medical personnel underwent a residency period, ranging from six months for a nurse to three years for a doctor). Furthermore, the SLDF did not expressly recruit officers but rather observed recruits for the necessary skills, streaming them to additional leadership courses and advanced studies as appropriate and concluding with a six-month Officer Training Course.

With such extensive training—up to four and half years, and sometimes closer to eight—SLDF troopers were without question the best-trained warriors of the Inner Sphere. Graduates of the full academy course were routinely sergeants (E6 rank) or lieutenants (O2 rank), giving them an immediate advantage over their peers in the House militaries.

Academies

The SLDF had more than 200 academies across the Inner Sphere, around sixty of which were considered "comprehensive" (i.e. offering training for all branches rather than just for infantry and armor) or offered advanced training for a specific branch (such as the Fleet School of Keid or the Flight Academy of Graham). Most of these "comprehensive" academies were within the borders of the Hegemony though three—Sanglamore, the Nagelring and Albion—were constructed in member states. More member-state academies were planned but political tensions resulted in their cancellation and efforts instead focused on ensuring national military academies operated to the same standards as those of the SLDF.



STAR LEAGUE

BE ALL THAT YOU CAN BE!

Do you want to see the stars and
do your duty within the Star League?

Are you between 16 and 18 and a graduate
of an approved academic institution?

Apply to your local SLDF recruiting station for
a chance to attend one of our 200 academies!*

*The SLDF is an equal-opportunity organization, and does not discriminate on the grounds of gender, orientation, nationality or ethnicity. Some academic and physical fitness restrictions apply. The Star League Unified Military and Legal code applies to all applicants, including the right of extradition to member-state jurisdiction as appropriate.

—Recruitment poster from Tamar, circa 2711

The most prestigious were those academies on Terra (around a quarter of the comprehensive academies were situated in the Terran system) many of which could date their histories to the pre-spaceflight era. The best known and most prestigious were the "War Triad" (Sandhurst, The War Academy of Mars and the Military Academy of Aphros) but the Administrative Command ensured that the quality of training in even the most remote academies produced gifted soldiers.

Sandhurst: The pinnacle of the SLDF academies, the former British Army officer school was an all-service facility, training army bureaucrats as well as infantry, MechWarriors and naval cadets. The attached teaching hospital produced many of the

SLDF's finest medical officers while the engineering annex at Farnborough produced consummate engineers and technicians. It survived the conflict and became the principal training facility of the Com Guards.

War Academy of Mars: Specializing in strategic training, the War Academy also served as a think tank for the SLDF and its operational headquarters. Unlike most academies, the Mars academy only took officer candidates.

Military Academy of Aphros: The Venusian academy was best known for training advanced MechWarrior skills (and was the site of the Gunslinger program) though it also featured a substantial naval wing.

RANK EQUIVALENCY TABLE

ENLISTED

	SLDF	AFFS	CCAF	DCMS	FWLM	LCAF	MAF	OAM	RRA	TDF
E1	Recruit	Recruit	Recruit	—	—	Recruit	Volunteer	Defender	—	Recruit
E2	Private	Private	—	Private	Private	Private	First Ranker	—	Private	Corporal
E3	Private, First Class	—	—	—	Private, First Class	Private, First Class	—	—	—	—
E4	—	Corporal	Lance Corporal	Lance Corporal	Corporal	Corporal	—	—	Corporal	—
E5	Corporal	—	—	Corporal	—	Senior Corporal	—	Protector	—	Section Leader
E6	Sergeant	Sergeant	Lance Sergeant	Sergeant	Sergeant	Sergeant	Lance Corporal	Guardian	Sergeant	Force Sergeant
E7	—	—	—	Master Sergeant	Staff Sergeant	Staff Sergeant	Star Corporal	—	Over-Sergeant	—
E8	—	—	Asst. Force Leader	Talon Sergeant	Master Sergeant	Sergeant Major	Command Sergeant	—	Master Sergeant	Lance Sergeant
E9	—	—	—	—	—	Staff Sgt. Major	—	—	—	—
E10	Master Sergeant	Sergeant Major	Force Leader	Sergeant Major	Sergeant Major	Senior Sgt. Major	Banner Sergeant	Preceptor	Sergeant Major	Battalion Chief Sgt.

OFFICER

	SLDF	AFFS	CCAF	DCMS	FWLM	LCAF	MAF	OAM	RRA	TDF
O1	Ensign	Subaltern	Sub-Commander	—	Lieutenant Junior Grade	Leutnant	—	—	—	Coronet
O2	Lieutenant	Leftenant	Commander	Chu-i	Lieutenant	First Leutnant	Ensign	Supervisor	Lieutenant	Subaltern
O3	Captain	Captain	Captain	Tai-i	Captain	Hauptmann	—	Section Leader	—	—
O4	Major	Major	Major	Sho-sa	Force Commander	Kommandant	Commander	Director	Captain	Brigadier
O5	—	—	—	—	—	Hauptmann-Kommandant	—	—	Major	—
O6	—	Leftenant Colonel	—	Chu-sa	Lieutenant Colonel	Leutnant-Colonel	Major	—	—	—
O7	Colonel	Colonel	Colonel	Tai-sa	Colonel	Colonel	—	Chairman	Colonel	Colonel
O8	—	Leftenant General	—	Sho-sho	—	Leutnant General	—	—	Brigadier General	—
O9	Lieutenant General	Major General	—	—	General	Hauptmann-General	Colonel	—	—	Comptroller
O10	Major General	General/Marshal	—	Tai-sho	—	Kommandant-General	—	—	Lieutenant General	Marshal
O11	General	Field Marshal	Senior Colonel	Warlord	Marshal	General	—	Senior Chairman	General	—
O12	Commanding General	First Prince	Chancellor	Coordinator	Captain-General	General of the Armies	—	President	—	Senior Marshal

SLDF BASES AND FORTIFICATIONS

During its two-hundred year existence the SLDF established bases across the Inner Sphere and Periphery. Every world in the Star League had an SLDF presence, though not every facility was an armed camp—some were administrative centers, handling recruitment and veterans benefits—most worlds had some form of depot or defensible position around which a world's defenders could rally. Many were little more than fortified warehouse complexes but the largest, called Port Castles, combined fortifications with a compact spaceport, providing a secure bridgehead through which supplies and reinforcements could flow to an embattled world.

The presence of an SLDF base was commonly regarded as a necessary evil by the planet's inhabitants. It was the focus of their defenses, but the territory upon which the base rested received extra-territorial status; it was Star League territory and as such not subject to member-state laws. First Lord's Executive Order 35 allowed for the extradition of criminals from the SLDF, but even with this safeguard the SLDF and its bases became refuges for dissidents, the safety they provided being akin to the sanctuary offered by religious institutions in previous centuries. Here the SLDF was prepared to resist challenges to its sovereignty with deadly force.

Stronger fortifications were commonplace along the borders between member states, widely expected to be the flashpoints in future conflicts. Additionally, a strong ring of fortifications surrounded the Terran Hegemony, safeguarding the approaches to Terra itself. These installations, known as the Home Circle, would prove one of the greatest obstacles to Kerensky's re-conquest in the final days of the Star League. An additional ring of fortifications ran roughly 250 light years from Terra, and a third along the Periphery border. Additional major fortifications were constructed within member states as bastions and fallback positions in the event of a major conflict. Outside of the defensive rings and bastions most fortifications within member states were relatively compact and accessible. The Periphery followed a different pattern, with substantial bases scattered throughout the realms, a stark reminder that while they were accepted as members of the Star League, their past (and, as it happened, future) rebelliousness was not forgotten.

Forts

The most common SLDF bases, forts served as the base of operations for a single regiment. They contained maintenance and logistics facilities as well as homes for the troopers and their dependents. In many cases only a chain-link fence separated the fort from the surrounding terrain but on border worlds or those with a fractious population substantial walls and gun emplacements were common. Many forts were built alongside civil population centers and spaceports but unlike Port Castles, did not encompass the port facilities within their defenses.

Castles/Port Castles

More substantial than forts, castles were first and foremost built with defense in mind and thus were rarely closer than a dozen kilometers from civil population centers. Many were built in deliberately inaccessible locations—deserts, in the side of mountains or underground—and thus harder to occupy in the event of conflicts. At minimum, each castle was surrounded by a fifteen-meter-high wall designed to resist sustained 'Mech weapons fire and had numerous anti-ground and anti-air weapons turrets, many of which

operated autonomously. Such complexes were most common along the borders between member states and in the grand defensive rings around Terra. Each castle contained substantial material stockpiles to allow its defenders to hold out in the event of a siege. A number of castles were established with integral spaceport facilities to provide a secure planetary bridgehead and were known as Port Castles. Most of the fortifications established in the Periphery Realms after the Reunification War were substantial castles commonly referred to as Outpost Castles. The design of these complexes was often similar to that later used in the Castles Brian and the abandonment of the Rim Worlds complexes to Amaris in 2755 provided the Usurper with a valuable insight as to the Terran defenses.

Castles Brian

The ultimate expression of SLDF fortifications, the Castles Brian dominated the Home Circle and many of the Hegemony worlds (Terra alone had 20, a number of which remain in use in the thirty-first century). Later in the Star League a number of Castles Brian were established within the member states, usually the location of key command and logistical centers. They were massive complexes, designed to hold multiple brigades and to support them for several years if needed (some held out against Amaris for a decade). Most were subterranean and immune to even direct nuclear and orbital bombardment strikes, providing a secure base of operations. Any attackers would sustain horrendous casualties and even a relatively small defensive force could hold them against all but the most determined attackers. Most Castles Brian were surrounded by a series of smaller regimental fortifications, known as Mini-Castles, designed to serve as a first line of defense and as points of resistance against hostile activity.

Naval Bases

The vast SLDF navy employed around 520 facilities dotted across the Star League and also made extensive use of civilian spaceports. The SLDF's facilities took a wide range of forms. Some were little different than civilian space stations, designed to serve as logistical hubs or to provide recharge services. Others included vast berthing arrays and dry-docks, surrounded by free-flying automated factories and residences. The most secure were built inside asteroids, often spun to provide the inhabitants with artificial gravity while maintaining a zero-g core in which to berth vessels for maintenance. Camelot Command, hidden away in the Dark Nebula and rediscovered after the Clan Invasion, was an example of such a base. Each naval facility had a complement of marines for defense as well as a wing of aerospace fighters. Many also had a WarShip escort—initially a pair of destroyers but later including cruisers.

SDS Facilities

Occupying a unique position within the SLDF, the Hegemony's Space Defense System comprised both mobile and fixed components. The mobile elements were the infamous Caspar drone WarShips but the fixed parts were massive weapons arrays designed to engage vessels in near-orbit and in the atmosphere. These ground bases were each surrounded by substantial fortifications and weapon emplacements to prevent the neutralization of the weapons arrays by ground troops. A regiment-sized force of infantry and BattleMechs manned these defenses.

Supply Depots and Secret bases

Not all SLDF facilities were permanently occupied or intended for military action. Often, the best defense was to be unobtrusive and the principal of guile was commonly used to conceal supply caches. Some were dug into mountainsides or hidden underwater, their entrances concealed, but others were hidden in plain sight; a warehouse in an industrial district could easily conceal the entrance to an underground cache. Such hidden facilities also served as bases of operations for covert military actions and espionage.

At the extreme end of the spectrum, the SLDF hid bases in the dark void of space. Some were established in the outer reaches of systems or even in uninhabited systems, such as the fleet bases employed by SLDF raiders within the Hegemony. A few took matters even further, being constructed at gravitational null points outside of any star system, employing brown dwarfs and the like as mass references for their "void jumps."

SLDF ARMIES

The SLDF's seventy-two corps were divided between twenty field armies. These varied considerably, from the compact, utilitarian formations garrisoning the Capellan Confederation to the massively reinforced garrisons in the militaristic Draconis Combine and the large independent regiment contingents in the territorial states and the backwaters of the Free Worlds League.

Note: the following snapshot shows the composition and status of the SLDF Regular Army at the beginning of the Periphery Uprising, culminating with losses suffered during that conflict and the Amaris Coup; in many cases, the SLDF's twenty armies experienced significant changes during the build-up to Operations CHIEFTAIN and LIBERATION, including the assignment of new commanding officers, reassignment of forces, and a shift from one army group to another.



FIRST ARMY

Commander: General Saina Kogo

Pre-war-deployment: Terran Hegemony

Headquarters: Terra and Mars

Composition: 3 Corps (I,X,XXI – 7 BattleMech divisions, 16 infantry divisions, 18 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: 6

Divisions, 7 regiments (Also X and XXI corps redeployed to member states)

Operational Strength in 2767: 8%

The garrison of the Hegemony, the First Army was the pinnacle of the SLDF and contained some of the Star League forces' best and brightest troops as well as its best equipment. During the Periphery Uprising X and XXI Corps both lost their constituent units, which were transferred to bolster the defenses of the member states, leaving the two corps headquarters to be expanded to form Twelfth and Thirteenth Army Groups. That left only I Corps to guard Terra; most of its constituent units perished in the Amaris Coup, though two divisions held out against the Usurper for several years. Prior to Operations CHIEFTAIN and LIBERATION, X and XXI Corps were reconstituted into a new First Army.



SECOND ARMY

Commander: General George Roy

Pre-war-deployment: Federated Suns, District FSMR01

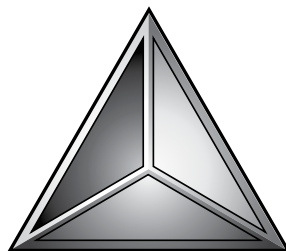
Headquarters: Small World

Composition: 4 Corps (IX, XVI, XXIX, LII – 6 BattleMech divisions, 17 infantry divisions, 9 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: None, but gained 29 regiments from the First Army

Operational Strength in 2767: 113% (but now responsible for all of Federated Suns)

A standard defensive army based in the Federated Suns and charged with protecting the Federated Suns worlds closest to Terra, Second Army became the sole defenders of the Davion state when its companions—Third and Fourth Armies—were relocated to help suppress the Periphery Uprising.



THIRD ARMY

Commander: General Cornel Stangher

Pre-war-deployment: Federated Suns, District FSMR02

Headquarters: Sullivan

Composition: 4 Corps (XVII, XXXIII, LXVI, LXIX – 6 BattleMech divisions, 19 infantry divisions)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: 8 Divisions (plus 2 divisions disbanded)

Operational Strength in 2767: 60%

Responsible for the coreward districts of the Federated Suns, Third was also a Standard Defensive army. It saw limited action in Operation SMOTHER and in hunting bandits during Simon Cameron's reign. During the Periphery uprising Third Army joined the SLDF forces in the Taurian Concordat where it sustained significant damage.



FOURTH ARMY

Commander: General Tatjana Baptiste

Pre-war-deployment: Federated Suns, District FSMR03

Headquarters: Hobbs

Composition: 4 Corps (XXXVII, LIV, LXII, LXX – 6 BattleMech divisions, 18 infantry divisions, 9 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: 8 Divisions, 2 regiments (plus 3 divisions disbanded)

Operational Strength in 2767: 55%

Deployed across House Davion's rimward worlds, Fourth Army played a substantial role in bandit-hunting duties and were the first troops sent to bolster the Taurian garrisons. They paid a heavy price—LXX Corps was essentially destroyed and XXXVII Corps badly bloodied.

FIFTH ARMY

Commander: General Bram Merga

Pre-war-deployment: Capellan Confederation, District CCMR01

Headquarters: Epsilon Eridani

Composition: 3 Corps (XXIV, LV, LX – 6 BattleMech divisions, 13 infantry divisions, 9 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: None, but gained 29 regiments from the First Army

Operational Strength in 2767: 116% (but now responsible for all of Capellan Confederation)
Based on the Confederation worlds closest to Terra, Fifth Army was the only standard SLDF army in the Confederation and the sole defender of the territory after the Periphery Uprising.



SIXTH ARMY

Commander: General Janeth Apostolaki

Pre-war-deployment: Capellan Confederation, District CCMR02

Headquarters: Yuris

Composition: 3 Corps (XXXVIII, LXIII, LVII – 6 BattleMech divisions, 9 infantry divisions)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: 7 Divisions (plus 1 division disbanded)

Operational Strength in 2767: 47%

One of the light armies based in the Confederation, Sixth Army was forced to watch as the Capellans and Federated Suns fought their border war in 2760-62. They formed part of the contingent sent to the Taurian Concordat where they spearheaded the anti-spinward assaults. XXXVIII Corps was functionally destroyed in the campaign and LXIII Corps bloodied, leaving only LVII Corps intact.



SEVENTH ARMY

Commander: General Nguyen Huong

Pre-war-deployment: Capellan Confederation, District CCMR03

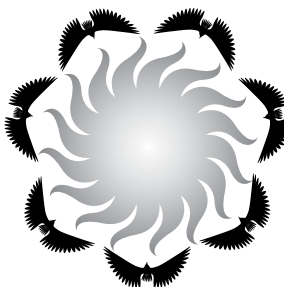
Headquarters: Sadurni

Composition: 3 Corps (LIII, LVIII, LXXI – 6 BattleMech divisions, 9 infantry divisions, 4 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: 5 Divisions, 1 regiment (plus 1 division disbanded)

Operational Strength in 2767: 60%

Guarding the Capellan border with the Free Worlds League, Seventh Army was the second light army and saw little action during the good years of the Star League. They expected to be sent to bolster the forces in the Magistracy but were instead deployed to the Concordat alongside their sister force, sustaining moderate damage overall but essentially losing their LVIII Corps.



EIGHTH ARMY

Commander: General Amar Watanabe

Pre-war-deployment: Free Worlds League, District FWLMR01

Headquarters: Talitha

Composition: 4 Corps (III, VII, XIX, XXV – 6 BattleMech divisions, 16 infantry divisions, 27 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: None, but gained 29 regiments from the First Army

Operational Strength in 2767: 113% (but now responsible for all of Free Worlds League)

Eighth Army, like its sister Ninth Army, was a mobile force based in the Free Worlds systems closest to Terra. Its proliferation of independent regiments allowed the Eighth to deploy forces to even the smallest independent provinces within its area of responsibility. Like most of the Armies based near Terra, it became the sole garrison for the state when its companions were redeployed in the Periphery Uprising. The relationship between Eighth Army and the authorities on Atreus was never warm but cooled markedly after the Amaris Coup.



NINTH ARMY

Commander: General Zhang Craggs

Pre-war-deployment: Free Worlds League, District FWLMR02

Headquarters: Chalouba

Composition: 4 Corps (XVIII, XII, XXXIV, XLI – 6 BattleMech divisions, 11 infantry divisions, 27 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: 5 Divisions, 13 regiments

Operational Strength in 2767: 68%

The second mobile army in the Marik domains, Ninth Army guarded the broad swath of independent worlds along the anti-spinward districts of the Free Worlds League. It was subsequently ordered into the Magistracy of Canopus where it sustained significant but not crippling losses.



TENTH ARMY

Commander: Admiral Agathe Feuntiaume

Pre-war-deployment: Free Worlds League, District FWLMR03

Headquarters: Cirebon

Composition: 4 Corps (IV, XIII, XXVI, XXXIX – 6 BattleMech divisions, 13 infantry divisions, 9 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: 8 Divisions, 2 regiments

Operational Strength in 2767: 59%

Responsible for the rimward sectors of the Free Worlds League, the Tenth Army was the sole standard army deployed in the FWLMR. They had established close ties with the League forces in the Principality of Regulus and the remnants of the Duchy of Andurien and working with those regional authorities rather than the federal government allowed the Tenth to establish a much more productive relationship. They received significant logistical aid from the FWLM when they were ordered to the Magistracy where they sustained moderate to heavy losses.





ELEVENTH ARMY

Commander: General Mohammed Nagenda

Pre-war-deployment: Lyrans Commonwealth, District LCMR01

Headquarters: Zollikofen

Composition: 4 Corps (V, XXVII, XLIX, LI – 6 BattleMech divisions, 18 infantry divisions, 18 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: None, but gained 29 regiments from the First Army

Operational Strength in 2767: 112% (but now responsible for all of Lyrans Commonwealth)

Somewhat unusual in the SLDF, the Eleventh Army straddled the boundaries between the Standard Defensive Armies and the mobile versions seen in the Free Worlds League and Periphery. Officially it was a standard formation but it had twice as many independent regiments as normal, further bolstered during the Uprising (when it became the sole Lyrans garrison) with thirty regiments from First Army.



TWELFTH ARMY

Commander: General Eliud Felischhauer

Pre-war-deployment: Lyrans Commonwealth, District LCMR02

Headquarters: Deia

Composition: 4 Corps (II, XXX, XLII, LXI – 6 BattleMech divisions, 13 infantry divisions, 9 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: 6 Divisions, 3 regiments (plus 1 division disbanded)

Operational Strength in 2767: 63%

Guarding the border with the Rim Worlds Republic, Twelfth Army saw significant action during the "bandit hunting" that preceded Simon Cameron's death. With the Rim Worlds "at peace" they were deployed to the Magistracy during the Uprising where the sustained moderate damage. XLII Corps took the brunt of the losses and was later merged with II Corps.



THIRTEENTH ARMY

Commander: General Armand Surban

Pre-war-deployment: Lyrans Commonwealth, District LCMR03

Headquarters: Zaprudy

Composition: 4 Corps (VI, XX, XXVIII, XXXI – 6 BattleMech divisions, 13 infantry divisions, 9 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: 7 Divisions, 2 regiments (plus 1 division and 1 regiment disbanded)

Operational Strength in 2767: 58%

Based in the anti-spinward regions of the Lyrans Commonwealth, the Thirteenth Army headed the Lindemarle taskforce during the Uprising. Their Magistracy opponents shattered VI and XXVIII Corps but the other elements sustained only light losses before Kerensky ordered their recall.



FOURTEENTH ARMY

Commander: General Daishin Makarau

Pre-war-deployment: Draconis Combine, District DCMR01

Headquarters: Dieron

Composition: 4 Corps (VIII, XIV, XXII, XXXII – 7 BattleMech divisions, 27 infantry divisions, 18 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: None, but gained 30 regiments from the First Army

Operational Strength in 2767: 109% (but now responsible for all of Draconis Combine)

Like its sister armies based in the Combine, the Fourteenth Army was significantly reinforced and fielded almost 325 regiments (and reached 350 regiments after being bolstered by Terran forces). Guarding the Terran districts and the Davion border, it saw constant low-level action against DCMS duelists, though these clashes mostly trailed off during the Uprising (some worlds saw an increased number of challenges).



FIFTEENTH ARMY

Commander: General Dimitry Barrios

Pre-war-deployment: Draconis Combine, District DCMR02

Headquarters: Hassi R'mel

Composition: 4 Corps (XV, XXIII, XXXV, XL – 7 BattleMech divisions, 27 infantry divisions, 9 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: 10 Divisions, 2 regiments (plus 2 divisions disbanded)

Operational Strength in 2767: 65%

Charged with defending the worlds along the Combine's Periphery border, Fifteenth Army saw minimal action during the years before the Uprising. Some of its units based near the old Combine capital of New Samarkand faced challenges by DCMS *ronin* but most of the worlds in the army's area of responsibility were underdeveloped and peaceful. Fifteenth Army moved quickly to aid Eighteenth Army in the Outworlds Alliance during the Uprising, suffering light to medium damage across its corps.

SIXTEENTH ARMY

Commander: General Ekatarina Thorskilden
Pre-war-deployment: Draconis Combine, District DCMR03

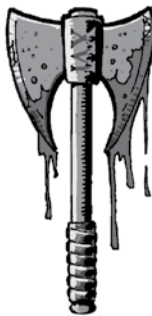
Headquarters: Casere

Composition: 4 Corps (XI, XXXVI, XLIV, L – 7 BattleMech divisions, 27 infantry divisions, 9 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: 11 Divisions, 3 regiments (plus 3 divisions disbanded)

Operational Strength in 2767: 59%

Operating along the border with the Lyran Commonwealth Sixteenth Army was the piggy-in-the-middle in the tit-for-tat “bandit” raids of the mid twenty-eighth century, honing their combat skills to a fine edge. They suffered light to moderate losses in the Uprising, with Outworlds forces bloodying XXXVI and L Corps.



SEVENTEENTH ARMY

Commander: Admiral John Soong
Pre-war-deployment: Magistracy of Canopus

Headquarters: Canopus

Composition: 3 Corps (XLIII, XLVIII, LXXII – 6 BattleMech divisions, 15 infantry divisions, 30 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: 9 Divisions, 8 regiments (plus 3 divisions and 2 regiments disbanded)

Operational Strength in 2767: 46%

The garrison force for the Magistracy of Canopus, Seventeenth Army had historically good relations with the local population. The scale and severity of the Periphery Uprising shocked them and they suffered horrendous losses before extra SLDF forces arrived to bolster their positions. Driven from the worlds around the capital, Seventeenth Army petitioned to be the vanguard of the force sent to retake Canopus, a request Kerensky granted (though hostilities ended before the army could regain face for its beating).



EIGHTEENTH ARMY

Commander: General Son Ok Kim
Pre-war-deployment: Outworlds Alliance
Headquarters: Alpheratz

Composition: 3 Corps (XLV, LXIV, LXVIII – 6 BattleMech divisions, 15 infantry divisions, 30 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: 8 Divisions, 7 regiments (plus 2 divisions and 2 regiments disbanded)

Operational Strength in 2767: 55%

The massive expansion of the Outworlds Alliance stretched the Eighteenth but they made good their peacekeeping duties during the Star League. The isolation of its elements was both a boon and a curse during the Uprising—the forces were too widely scattered to support each other and so could be overrun in detail, but the enemy had many more targets to engage and were likewise spread thinly. As a consequence, though many divisions and regiments were overrun, many were mostly intact when SLDF reinforcements began to pour into the Alliance.



NINETEENTH ARMY

Commander: General Cristian Greene

Pre-war-deployment: Taurian Concordat

Headquarters: Taurus

Composition: 3 Corps (XLIII, XLVIII, LXXII – 6 BattleMech divisions, 15 infantry divisions, 30 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: 6

Divisions, 11 regiments (plus 4 divisions disbanded)

Operational Strength in 2767: 54%

The heart of the Uprising and the focus of much anti-Star League activity, the Taurian Concordat had long been a hotspot of trouble in the Periphery. Even before the Uprising proper began the forces of Nineteenth Army had been operating on a semi-war footing, faced with a belligerent population and a low-level insurrection. They were thus well prepared to face the Concordat troops when the tensions exploded into war, withdrawing from some hotspots but contesting others, but even so took a solid beating. The presence of General Kerensky in their midst kept Nineteenth's morale high and they remained committed to the fight right up to the cease fire order in May 2767.



TWENTIETH ARMY

Commander: General Gal Vlasic

Pre-war-deployment: Rim Worlds Republic (later Lyran Commonwealth and Draconis Combine)

Composition: 3 Corps (XLVII, LIX, LXVII – 7 BattleMech divisions, 15 infantry divisions, 30 independent regiments)

Losses in Uprising/Coup: 8 Divisions, 7 regiments (plus 3 divisions and 1 regiment disbanded)

Operational Strength in 2767: 43%

Twentieth Army was still smarting from their ejection from the Rim Worlds Republic in 2755 and had been divided between the Lyran and Combine military regions. When the Uprising began they leapt at the opportunity to prove their worth and deployed to the Outworlds Alliance where they served as a rapid reaction force. Their desire to demonstrate their effectiveness manifested as recklessness and the army suffered significant casualties, drawing a reprimand from Kerensky.





SLDF FLEETS

On the eve of the Periphery Uprising the SLDF fielded an immense fleet of more than 1,500 front-line WarShips (plus another 750 in the garrison fleet). Many of these vessels were attached directly to the twenty armies, providing integral transport assets and naval firepower, but a substantial proportion belonged to the twenty independent fleets. Many of these worked alongside the armies and were responsible for the security of a state command (the First through Twelfth) but some served as independent fast-reaction forces, bolstering the SLDF's naval presence in hotspots (Thirteenth through Twentieth).

FIRST FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Jonns Ezenwa (SLS *Terra*)

Pre-war-deployment: Terran Hegemony/ Independent Operations

Composition: 7 squadrons (3 line, 1 interdiction, 2 escort, 1 pursuit)

Centered on the SLS *Terra*, First Fleet was responsible for the protection of the First Lord and the SLDF High Command. Consequently, it was often called the Terran fleet as it spent most of its deployment above Terra and the worlds of the Hegemony. Its three line squadrons were dedicated command and protection formations: the First Lord's squadron (Star Squadron, led by the SLS *Star League*), the commanding general's squadron (led by the SLS *McKenna's Pride*) and the High Command's squadron (led by the SLS *Enterprise*). All four flagships were kitted out as specialized command ships which could serve as the mobile headquarters for either the First Lord or the SLDF High Command, incorporating significant intelligence gathering and communication elements (including courier JumpShips) to allow the High Command to manage the Star League, the SLDF and any military or political conflicts no matter their location. In order to maintain its combat edge the fleet's constituent vessels were frequently rotated with those in more active fleets, with only the three command squadrons being permanent assignments to the fleet. Save for Kerensky's command squadron and its escort squadron, the First Fleet was essentially wiped out in the Amaris Coup, though managing to destroy a disproportionate number of Amaris naval vessels in the process.

SECOND FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Illaria Setiawan (SLS *New Earth*)

Pre-war-deployment: Terran Hegemony/ Independent Operations

Composition: 5 squadrons (2 line, 1 reconnaissance, 1 escort, 1 pursuit)

Like its sister-ships within First Fleet, the SLS *New Earth* and *Caph* were dedicated command ships, at least one of which remained deployed within the Terran Hegemony at all times with a senior admiral or general on board; these two ships, along with the three command vessels from First Fleet, constituted the SLECoP—the Star League Emergency Command Post network, which could take command of the SLDF should communications with Terra somehow be lost (Admiral Vincenzo McTiernan on the SLS *Caph* would escape the Coup and assume command of the SLDF within the occupied Hegemony). Like First Fleet, Second Fleet gave up two of its squadrons to assist with operations connected with the Periphery Uprising, while the remainder was mauled in the Amaris Coup; its survivors linked up with survivors of First Fleet to form the “secret fleet” operating from Points Freedom and Liberty.

THIRD FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Renata Dokovic (SLS *Iona*)

Pre-war-deployment: Terran Hegemony

Composition: 5 squadrons (1 line, 1 interdiction, 1 reconnaissance, 1 escort, 1 pursuit)

Third Fleet was dedicated to guarding the Terran Hegemony, often deploying its squadrons independently to patrol the 147 systems in their area of responsibility. With the coming of the Periphery Uprising, Third Fleet deployed to replace the rest of the Inner Sphere fleets moving into the Periphery.

FOURTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Marina Akkayev-Cameron (SLS *Camino Real*)

Pre-war-deployment: Draconis Combine

Composition: 4 squadrons (1 line, 1 escort, 1 pursuit, 1 interdiction)

Unlike most of the ground forces stationed in the Draconis Combine, Fourth Fleet was relatively free of interference from the Combine forces though some squadrons established friendly rivalries with their opposite numbers in the Draconis Combine Admiralty, leading to a series of informal exercises.

FIFTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Taro Marrkgrae (SLS *Duke of York*)

Pre-war-deployment: Federated Suns

Composition: 4 squadrons (1 line, 2 escort, 1 reconnaissance)

Though tasked with supporting the Second, Third and Fourth Armies the Fifth Fleet spent much of its time patrolling hotspots along the Taurian and Capellan borders. At the onset of the Periphery Uprising the fleet was held in reserve but was the first SLDF force to cross the border after Kerensky called for reinforcements.

SIXTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Ilse Huang-Sanchez
(*SLS Dunkle Sturm*)

Pre-war-deployment: Capellan Confederation

Composition: 4 squadrons (1 line, 1 reconnaissance, 2 pursuit)

One of the least active fleets, standards in the Sixth had become slack in the years immediately prior to New Vandenberg and then-Admiral Kumar struggled to reforge them as an effective fighting force before the tensions with the Periphery reached a critical point. He failed, and Sixth Fleet performed badly in the early weeks of its operations in the Concordat, only coming together after the near-disaster at New Ganymede, where Taurian civilian DropShips rigged as fire ships came close to wiping out the SLDF's temporary fleet base.

SEVENTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Salman Venizelos (*SLS Golden Hind*)

Pre-war-deployment: Free Worlds League

Composition: 4 squadrons (1 line, 1 reconnaissance, 1 interdiction, 1 escort)

The Seventh Fleet was scattered throughout the Free Worlds League, its recon squadrons operating in two-ship formations and only its line and escort elements retaining squadron cohesion. As a result, the fleet was slow in reforming and deploying to the Magistracy of Canopus after the Uprising, arriving almost three months after the outbreak of hostilities.

EIGHTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Vicho Nnamani (*SLS Quéribus*)

Pre-war-deployment: Lyran Commonwealth

Composition: 5 squadrons (1 line, 1 reconnaissance, 1 escort, 2 pursuit)

Despite having further to travel, Eighth Fleet began operations in the Magistracy ahead of the Seventh, leading to the friendly needling between the officers—Pearson called the Seventh's commander "The Late Admiral Venizelos." Eighth Fleet undertook a series of operations to limit MAF operations in the spinward systems of the Magistracy, exploiting its combination of speed and firepower to ensure the SLDF's naval superiority.

NINTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Francisca Nieminen (*SLS Infanta*)

Pre-war-deployment: Magistracy of Canopus

Composition: 4 squadrons (2 reconnaissance, 1 pursuit, 1 interdiction)

Almost eighty, Admiral Nieminen was looking forward to retirement after the Ninth Fleet's operations against Canopus in the Uprising but when news of the Coup reached the SLDF she volunteered to stay with Kerensky's forces and would remain as commander of Ninth Fleet until the *Infanta's* destruction above Terra in 2779 during Operation LIBERATION. Her scheduled replacement, Vice Admiral Dmitrios Rummolo, was still in the Hegemony at the time of the coup and fought against Amaris' forces at New Earth before becoming *de facto* commander of Freedom Station.

TENTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Isla Firova (*SLS Drakon*)

Pre-war-deployment: Outworlds Alliance

Composition: 4 squadrons (1 reconnaissance, 1 escort, 1 pursuit, 1 interdiction)

A native of the Magistracy of Canopus, Admiral Firova was conflicted by the Periphery Uprising and her posting but, in a testament to her training and loyalty to the SLDF, put aside her personal feelings and focused on the rule of law. This did not stop some within the fleet whispering that she should be replaced in favor of someone whose loyalties were surer, but Kerensky refused to sanction such a move and expressed his confidence in Firova's abilities and allegiance. Her battle record—and that of Tenth Fleet—stood in testament to Kerensky's trust and Firova would eventually join Kerensky's Exodus.

ELEVENTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Lewis Manseur (*SLS Nebraska*, later *SLS Talitha Flyer*)

Pre-war-deployment: Taurian Concordat

Composition: 4 squadrons (1 line, 1 reconnaissance, 1 escort, 1 pursuit)

Eleventh Fleet was bloodied by the Periphery Uprising, their most grievous loss that of the *SLS Nebraska*, a *Texas*-class battleship, that was destroyed by a fuel ship compromised by Taurian rebels. The *SLS Cairo* was badly damaged by debris but managed to limp clear, continuing combat operations despite its grievous wounds. The loss of the *Nebraska* was a major psychological blow for the SLDF but fortunately for the Eleventh, Admiral Manseur was not aboard his flagship when it was bombed and later transferred to the *Black Lion*-class *SLS Talitha Flyer*.

TWELFTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Guo Tan (*SLS Terra Nova*)

Pre-war-deployment: Rim Worlds Republic (Lyran Commonwealth)

Composition: 3 squadrons (1 reconnaissance, 2 pursuit)

With the best knowledge of the Rim Worlds Republic, Twelfth Fleet—deployed to the Outworlds Alliance during the Uprising—was pulled from front-line duties as soon as news of the Amaris Coup broke. A navigation officer with a complete computer core of astrogation data for the Republic arrived at Kerensky's HQ only five days after Amaris' communiqué and the entire fleet arrived ten days later. Their navigators provided valuable information on Republican hazards—adding their insights rather than just raw data—and even before Kerensky's official declaration of war against Amaris' forces, the swift vessels of Twelfth Fleet slipped their moorings above New Vandenberg and sped to the Republic. Ostensibly, this was to update their navigational charts, but in truth it was to provide a swift demonstration of the SLDF's resolve. [See *Black Buck* in the Rim Worlds Campaign for more details].

THIRTEENTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Oliver Finch (SLS *Black Rock*)

Pre-war-deployment: Independent Operations /
Lyran Commonwealth

Composition: 3 squadrons (1 reconnaissance, 1 pursuit, 2 line)

The first fleet without fixed responsibilities, the Thirteenth operated from bases in the Lyran Commonwealth and Free Worlds League. Working with Eighth Fleet, they had been charged with suppressing "bandit" forces in the years before Simon Cameron's death and had continued to serve as a deterrent force during the Regency, being deployed to Canopus after the Periphery Uprising.

FOURTEENTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Nina Alexander (SLS *Ashanti*)

Pre-war-deployment: Independent Operations /Draconis Combine

Composition: 4 squadrons (2 reconnaissance, 1 pursuit, 1 science)

The lightest fleet of the Star League Navy, the Fourteenth was a specialist intelligence-gathering unit, adept at keeping track of hostile fleet and troop movements. During peacetime they doubled as a science/survey fleet, working in conjunction with the Star League Exploration Command. When war erupted with the Periphery once more, the Fourteenth was operating on the fringe of the Draconis Combine from where it was assigned to the Outworlds task force.

FIFTEENTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Connall Shockley (SLS *Uluru*)

Pre-war-deployment: Independent Operations /Federated Suns

Composition: 4 squadrons (1 reconnaissance, 1 pursuit, 1 escort, 1 line)

Even in the 2760s the War of Davion Succession colored relations between the Draconis Combine and the Federated Suns and although notionally an independent unit, the Fifteenth served as a deterrent to any future adventurism, patrolling the agreed borders and watchful for aggressive moves by either side. As part of this remit they saw considerable action "bandit" hunting in the Third Hidden War before being deployed to the Outworlds Alliance during the Periphery Uprising.

SIXTEENTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral El'dinar Meeks (SLS *Palatine*)

Pre-war-deployment: Independent Operations /
Capellan Confederation

Composition: 5 squadrons (1 reconnaissance, 2 line, 2 escort)

As with the War of Davion Succession, the conflict between the Capellan Confederation and Federated Suns between 2760 and 2762 shaped SLDF deployments in the region. Though Kerensky was prevented from interfering, he deployed the heavyweight Sixteenth to ensure the conflict didn't flare up once more. The Sixteenth remained on station even after the Periphery Uprising, only being redeployed to the Taurian Concordat in the second year of the conflict.

SEVENTEENTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Shiloh Sakne (SLS *Anchorage*)

Pre-war-deployment: Independent Operations /Free Worlds League

Composition: 4 squadrons (1 reconnaissance, 1 pursuit, 2 interdiction)

Previously a bandit-hunting force, the Seventeenth found themselves in the odd position of gamekeeper-turned-poacher; they used their knowledge of smuggling operations and pirate points to ensure a steady flow of supplies to troops within the uncooperative Free Worlds League. Difficulties during Ewan Marik's reign escalated during the lordship of his son Kenyon, who became Captain-General in 2763. This odd state of affairs only lasted two years as the Seventeenth were seconded to Magistracy once the extent of the Periphery Uprising became clear.

EIGHTEENTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Rackham Jones

(SLS *Jonathan Cameron*)

Pre-war-deployment: Independent Operations

Composition: 4 squadrons (1 escort, 2 line, 1 pursuit)

The free-floating Eighteenth saw six different deployments in the decade after Simon Cameron's death and was scattered across the Free Worlds League and Magistracy of Canopus when the Uprising began. The fleet took significant damage from saboteurs in the early weeks of the operation but linked up with Ninth Fleet shortly after the emergence of Amaris' Secret Army.

NINETEENTH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Thomas Belleau (SLS *Moscow*)

Pre-war-deployment: Independent Operations /Taurian Concordat

Composition: 5 squadrons (1 reconnaissance, 2 escort, 2 line)

Throughout the Star League era, the Taurian Concordat had always been a flashpoint for trouble and as a consequence the Nineteenth Fleet had been deployed as unofficial reinforcement for the Eleventh. Operating from bases in the Federated Suns, the Nineteenth moved swiftly to intervene in the Uprising—their arrival possibly preventing the Eleventh from being smashed—and the two fleets operated as a joint command for much of the conflict.

TWENTIETH FLEET

Commander (Flagship): Admiral Sebastian Groll (SLS *Pashupatinath*)

Pre-war-deployment: Independent Operations

Composition: 3 squadrons (1 reconnaissance, 1 pursuit, 1 line)

Deployed on exercises in the Terran Hegemony when the Uprising began, the Twentieth quickly rearmed and prepared for action on one of the battlefronts. Kerensky initially opted to hold them in reserve, but by mid 2766 the Twentieth had been deployed to a forward base in the Federated Suns in anticipation of a combat deployment. Before they could be activated, however, news of the Amaris Coup began to filter through. Several Rim Worlds observers had remained on-board the vessels and were soon interned as prisoners of war.

GARRISON FLEET

Commander (Flagship): None

Pre-war-deployment: Various

Composition: Circa 750 destroyers and cruisers, assorted assault DropShips and fighters

Many SLDF naval facilities (and some Castles Brian) were assigned permanent naval protection in the form of a pair of destroyers, sometimes bolstered by a cruiser. These vessels operated outside the fleet command structure and were instead included in a notional garrison fleet for administrative purposes. The boundaries between the twenty active fleets and the garrison could sometimes be blurred, with fleet vessels seconded to bolster defenses and, rarely, garrison vessels participating in fleet actions.

NAVAL RESERVE

While the SLDF's active fleet comprised some 2,250 vessels this represented only seventy percent of its total strength. The remaining vessels, around a thousand ships, were held in the reserve, mothballed to save on operating costs or else undergoing periodic refits. In time of conflict these vessels could be reactivated and used to bolster the Star League Navy. Though refits on some vessels were accelerated after the Periphery Uprising, reactivating the Reserve Fleet was not considered a priority—the existing deployment grossly outclassed the Periphery fleets—and so most of these vessels sat idle and forgotten. Unfortunately for the Hegemony, Amaris had not forgotten and using codes his observers aboard the fleet had gathered, suborned over a hundred vessels which he employed in the execution of his coup. Several hundred more were drafted into the Imperial Navy after the takeover, the remainder being scuttled by SLDF rearguard actions or else unusable due to lack of parts or manpower.



MEMBER STATE FORCES

The armed forces of the Star League member states were twice forced to downsize—once immediately prior to the Reunification War and again in 2650 as part of the council edict intended to rein in Tadeo Amaris' militarism. Neither was popular, but the disarmament was tolerated and accepted as the price for membership in the Star League. The reduced force sizes ensured SLDF supremacy but did not prevent conflict. The member states still clashed or else fought via proxies. Sometimes the Star League intervened but at other times they did not. The twenty-eighth century saw a spate of military actions: the War of Davion Succession, the Marik Civil War, the third "Hidden War" and a confrontation between the Capellan Confederation and the Federated Suns. Militarism and paranoia were at an all-time high when Simon Cameron died on New Silesia.

One of the High Council's first maneuvers after Regent Kerensky was safely away from Terra was to strike down Council Edict 2650. The details of their schemes were even more cynical—they removed not only the 2650 restrictions on their own forces but also those of the Star League Protocols, in effect leaving themselves unfettered while insisting the Periphery held true to the limitations. Furthermore, they continued the policy of piling taxes on the Periphery. With these blatant double standards, the eventual Periphery Uprising was unsurprising.

Between Simon Cameron's death in 2651 and the outbreak of the Uprising in 2765 the Inner Sphere militaries roughly doubled in size and by the disbanding of the Star League in 2781 had doubled again. Kerensky was not happy at the Council's games and staged the Operation PERSUASIVE FORCE exercises as a means of scaring them into submission, but as discontent in the Periphery grew he was thankful of the larger House forces that, he hoped, would aid the Star League's cause. Tragically, Richard Cameron chose to call on the support of the Rim Worlds Republic rather than the member states, and the five member-state armed forces largely sat out the Amaris Coup and the civil war that ensued. Ironically, the largest actions they fought during the era were against the SLDF, who pushed uncooperative troops of both the FWLM and DCMS from worlds deemed necessary to the encirclement and liberation of the Hegemony.

MEMBER STATE TROOP STRENGTHS

AFFS

Strength (2750)—BattleMech Forces: 53 regiments
WarShips: 25

Strength (2765)—BattleMech Forces: 110 regiments,
WarShips: 51

CCAF

Strength (2750)—BattleMech Forces: 42 regiments,
WarShips: 30

Strength (2765)—BattleMech Forces: 92 regiments,
WarShips: 37

DCMS

Strength (2750)—BattleMech Forces: 55 regiments,
WarShips: 30

Strength (2765)—BattleMech Forces: 115 regiments,
WarShips: 42

FWLM

Strength (2750)—BattleMech Forces: 60 regiments,
WarShips: 30

Strength (2765)—BattleMech Forces: 95 regiments,
WarShips: 47

LCAF

Strength (2750)—BattleMech Forces: 52 regiments,
WarShips: 40

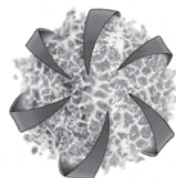
Strength (2765)—BattleMech Forces: 90 regiments,
WarShips: 62

**TERRITORIAL STATE
TROOP STRENGTHS*****MAF****Strength (2750)**—1 Division (9 regiments),**WarShips:** 9**Strength (2765)**—20 Divisions (77 conventional regiments, 108 BattleMech regiments),**WarShips:** 22**OAM****Strength (2750)**—5 regiments,**WarShips:** 4**Strength (2765)**—19 Divisions (72 conventional regiments, 100 BattleMech regiments),**WarShips:** 15**TDF****Strength (2750)**—13 regiments,**WarShips:** 15**Strength (2765)**—21 Divisions (78 conventional regiments, 115 BattleMech regiments),**WarShips:** 31

*2765 strengths include "Secret Army" forces but exclude irregulars and insurgents.

RWA TROOP STRENGTHS**RWA****Strength (2750)**—4 Divisions (10 conventional regiments, 30 BattleMech regiments),**WarShips:** 18***Strength (2765)**—24 Divisions (115 conventional regiments, 95 BattleMech regiments),**WarShips:** 300+**Strength (2770)**—41 Divisions (197 conventional regiments, 172 BattleMech regiments),**WarShips:** Circa 300

* The Rim Worlds Navy also had access to around thirty mothballed *Pintos*, constructed during Tadeo's madcap rearmament in the 2650s but never scrapped.

**TERRITORIAL STATE FORCES**

An unspoken tenet of the Star League was keeping the Periphery nations—the territorial states as they were called after the Reunification War—subjugated and inferior to the Inner Sphere member states. In the early years there was the pretence of egalitarianism but that soon gave way to cynical exploitation and oppression. Even the Rim Worlds Republic came under the Terran thumb after Tadeo Amaris' attempts to revitalize and expand the RWA. Some states profited from membership in the Star League, but pockets of resistance developed in all four Periphery nations. Throughout the twenty-seventh century this resentment simmered but as the twenty-eighth century dawned and even the pretence of treating the Periphery fairly was abandoned, opposition to the Star League grew.

The size of the armed forces of the territorial states was strictly limited and the three conquered nations—the Taurian Concordat, Magistracy of Canopus and Outworlds Alliance—were closely monitored even a century and a half after the Reunification War. As a result, they were unable to perform the military gymnastics that allowed the Rim Worlds Republic to develop a significant reservist capability, leaving them vulnerable to even mercenary forces in the employ of Inner Sphere companies, utilized in some of the more brutal "hostile takeovers." When Stefan Amaris whispered the possibility of raising additional troops away from the watching eyes of the Star League, he had the perfect bait to lure the territorial states into his schemes.

While Amaris assembled and equipped the divisions of the "Secret Army", the states themselves provided the troops and took notional control over the formations. However, while they were flagged as members of the relevant armed force (and are included in the 2765 force strengths for each nation), they rarely had the same level of organization or training and none of the logistical and command integration, making them essentially independent entities. Most of the new divisions would be brutalized in the Periphery Uprising, their initial successes against an unprepared SLDF soon reversed, but after Kerensky's armistice offer many of the survivors and their equipment were incorporated within the territorial state militaries, leaving the Periphery states not only free of the Star League but with bolstered military capabilities. However, like many secessionist movements they had not reckoned on the economic interdependency with the Star League and though standing aloof from the Succession Wars that ensued, were inexorably drawn into the pit of ruin alongside the Inner Sphere powers.

**THE RIM WORLDS ARMY/
AMARIS EMPIRE ARMED FORCES**

Though the Rim Worlds Republic was a notional ally of the Star League during the Reunification War, it had suffered a political collapse and slipped into civil war. The situation was confused, and when the Star League eventually moved to aid Gregory Amaris they found themselves attacked by rebel and loyalist forces alike. As a consequence, most of the Republican armed forces had to be neutralized by the SLDF before order could be restored to the realm. What remained after the conflict was the skeleton of a military—units and command staff had to be rebuilt and the shortage of appropriately skilled personnel meant that the Star League found itself allied with those it had fought against during the conflict, with officers such as Hakim Wbika rising high in the Republican government.

This fresh start meant the Republic could be re-shaped and modernized—the pre-Reunification War force was heavily biased towards vehicles—and make extensive use of reconstruction funds to bolster their armed forces. The RWA adopted the SLDF rank structure and many of its doctrines, even using the terms brigade and division for formations above regimental size. The reform of the RWA was complete

THE SECRET ARMY

Commander: Unknown

Composition: circa 50 Divisions

By 2755, Amaris' scheme to take control was advancing but even with his manipulation of Richard Cameron, getting Aleksandr Kerensky and the SLDF out of the way remained a major obstacle to his plans. Even his bolstered RWA would stand little chance against an enraged SLDF and so he set about finding a way of both distracting and denuding the Regular Army and Star League Navy. The political situation of the 2750s played right into his hands; when the Council Lords voted to increase taxation on the Periphery the fury was palpable and Stefan set about exacerbating matters. On the one hand, he covertly encouraged the High Council's actions, and on the other he set about making conciliatory moves towards the other territorial states.

Meeting secretly with factions within each Periphery realm, Amaris established a solid core of anti-Star League sentiment that he eventually expanded to include the leaders of each realm. Over several years in the late 2750s he convinced them that they had to stand together against Star League oppression and that he would use his position as Richard's confidant to aid them. Stefan knew full well that the militaries of the territorial states would stand little chance against the SLDF (particularly as all save the Republic still had Star League garrisons) and that any overt military buildup would be detected and dealt with.

Instead, with covert financial contributions from donors in all of the Periphery states he established training camps in the Deep Periphery, using RWA instructors to drill recruits from all four realms. Equipment was more problematic, but many Inner Sphere arms manufacturers were greedy for profit and were thrilled at the prospect of sales to the dozens of shell companies established by the Rim Worlds leader. By 2760, this force numbered two divisions of troops and a year later there were ten divisions. An SLDF exploration team stumbled across one facility in late 2763 but was summarily dispatched by the aerospace forces guarding the world. By mid 2764 almost fifty divisions had been formed in utter secrecy, hidden in the vastness of the Deep Periphery and Amaris had them prepared for battle (another twenty divisions had been constructed for the Republic, but Amaris kept those secret from even his Periphery partners). By the start of 2765, everything was in place.

This "Secret Army" was numerous but its equipment was a hodgepodge, assembled from a wide number of suppliers. Many of the divisions were combined-arms formations, mixing 'Mechs

and armor for offensive operations and relying on infantry for defense. Many of the troopers assigned to the infantry formations took heed from the Reunification War and were as adept at terror tactics as they were at small-unit operations. Many of the BattleMechs and tanks these divisions used had first seen action in the Age of War, but the units were stiffened with modern designs. Aerospace fighters were similarly of mixed vintage but the infantry equipment was first-rate. The secret force had no WarShips and little in the way of military DropShips, instead relying on customized civilian vessels, but with surprise solidly on their side, they hoped such limitations would not be a major disadvantage.

A common misconception about the Secret Army was that it was full of Amaris loyalists. Though Amaris had organized and bankrolled their formation most of their members had little knowledge or loyalty to the Republic, let alone the Amaris Empire. They fought for their own independence, not to benefit Amaris, though for the most part this served the Republic just as well. When Amaris' perfidy became clear and Kerensky offered a cease-fire with the territorial states, the surviving divisions heeded the call and pulled back, accepting that to all intents they had won. When Kerensky announced that the SLDF would turn and occupy the Rim Worlds Amaris called on the Secret Army to mobilize and defend his homeland. Almost all the troops refused, to all intents vanishing back into the civilian population.

Another myth is that when the Secret Army disbanded its equipment was deposited in great stores in the Periphery, used centuries later by the Word of Blake in their Jihad. Certainly some equipment was placed in such caches but the quantities were usually small and a larger proportion was abandoned or rendered unusable after two and a half years of bloody conflict or else absorbed by the militaries of the periphery realms. There are no figures as to the losses suffered by these troops, but they are believed to be proportionately higher than those of the SLDF (which, overall, lost around forty percent of units involved in the conflict). Figures as high as eighty-percent losses have been suggested, though that would still leave the equipment of around thirty combined arms regiments to dispose of in each realm.

That the Blakists made use of some of the camps is undoubted (though many of their training facilities were new) and most of Amaris' training camps remained undiscovered, sometimes becoming home to pirates and at others slowly crumbling to ruins.

and widely accepted when Tadeo Amaris became regent for the Republic and pushed for an expansion of the Republican military to reflect the economic and political status of the Rim Worlds. This growth (secretly bankrolled by the Draconis Combine to discomfort the Lyran Commonwealth) threatened the peace of the Star League and so Michael Cameron issued Council Edict 2650, amending the Star League protocols and forcing Amaris to reduce the size of his military. Amaris' vision of his own brigades, divisions and corps faded away as the Edict limited the Republic to a scant twenty regiments (twelve BattleMech regiments and eight conventional regiments), later revised to forty regiments (thirty of BattleMechs and ten conventional units).

Amaris and his successors were not disheartened and immediately began searching for a way around the limitations. The SLDF itself provided the inspiration, its reserve forces providing a substantial body of men and material that could be called to service but which were not part of the official TOE of the SLDF. Officially known as the Rim Royal Guard Act, it has variously been likened to the Prussian Krumper system or the reservists of the Helvetic Confederation or Israel. This entailed large numbers of recruits undergoing military training and service but being returned to their civilian employment after three years. This ensured a large pool of troops who could be called on in time of need. With the equipment stored in reservist caches throughout the Republic, the RWA could triple its size at short notice. Stefan Amaris further bolstered the Republic with equipment acquired as part of his "Secret Army" program, though unlike most of that provided to the other Periphery states, the equipment gifted to the Rim Worlds' ghost divisions was the best money could acquire. He also acquired military transports and JumpShips and had the Republic's shipyards manufacture components for hundreds of WarShips, which were assembled in the Deep Periphery.

Adding to the complexity of the RWA was its naming conventions. Though many of the pre-Reunification War units were numbered sequentially, the Star League-era force used an almost random numbering system and had a tendency to rename units. Tracking the size and deployment of the RWA became a major headache and one which increased drastically after Richard Cameron's birthday proclamations that prompted the withdrawal of the SLDF from the Republic and thus removed most of the direct observation of the RWA.

In addition to gaining valuable insights about Star League fortifications and technologies from the abandoned SLDF bases, Stefan Amaris used the privacy of the withdrawal to activate many of the reservist units, bringing them to full operational status. The reality of the RWA in 2766 was a far cry from what the SLDF believed, which would cost them dearly. Officially, Amaris maintained the pretense of holding to the Edict and having only thirty 'Mech regiments. When Richard Cameron ordered troops from the Hegemony to bolster the defense of the member-states during the Periphery Uprising, he called upon his treaty with the Republic to provide extra garrison forces for worlds around Terra. The treaty provision called for "up to three-quarters of the

RWA to join the Terran Garrison." Cameron understood this to be a force roughly equal to the SLDF I Corps that remained rather than a force three times its size, which is what Amaris deployed. Cameron never realized the truth of this; Amaris killed him and shattered the remnants of I Corps as he seized control of the Hegemony.

Had the Usurper left it at that he would have faced a massive disadvantage against the Star League, but instead the Emperor, freed from any constraints, ordered extensive recruitment both in the Republic and in the Hegemony. While the recruits lacked quality and experience, there was no shortage of them.



AMARIS EMPIRE ARMED FORCES

By 2770, the Rim Worlds Republic and its eight divisions of defenders had been conquered by Kerensky and his SLDF. Even then, Emperor Amaris' armed forces within the Hegemony had swelled from three armies (of twenty-four divisions, a third of which were mercenary forces) to a little over five armies (forty-one total divisions), many equipped by SLDF caches and Hegemony manufacturers. Furthermore, the political instability across the Inner Sphere had revitalized the mercenary trade, with Amaris wooing many to his cause with generous offers; eleven full divisions of mercenaries served within his Hegemony armies at the beginning of Operation LIBERATION. Kerensky would not have an easy fight retaking the Hegemony.

Field Organizations

Given the more compact nature of Amaris' military, the armed forces of the Rim Worlds Republic, as well as the related Amaris Empire Armed Forces, did not possess nearly the variety of different unit formations as did the SLDF. As was the tradition, even in the Star League era, almost all of Amaris' regiments were organized along specialty lines (BattleMech, armor, infantry, etc.), with many brigades, and every division, formed of regiments with different specialties. Amaris' armies typically followed standard Star League organizational lines at and below the brigade level. Given the limited scope of his military, it was only at the divisional and army levels that Amaris' forces diverged from the Star League organizational standards.

Line Units

Amaris' regiments (and independent battalions) were organized by specialty—though that function was only rarely used within the unit's designation to make tracking those units by foreign intelligence agencies more difficult—and named using one of a few conventions, based upon the background and loyalty of each unit's personnel. Most units were also numbered, though not consecutively (and often renumbered), again to make intelligence gathering more difficult.

Amaris Dragoons: These regiments were the most loyal, best equipped, and generally best trained formations within the Usurper's armies after the Amaris Guards—and, in many cases, they were also the most ruthless and bloodthirsty in carrying out their leader's orders. Amaris Dragoons regiments included BattleMech, armor, infantry and even aerospace formations and encompassed just about every "type" of combat formation, though given the heavy reliance placed upon them, they tended to be assault and heavy attack formations.

Amaris Fusiliers: The Amaris Fusiliers represented the "typical" workhorse regiments within the Usurper's armies.

Amaris Guards: As their name suggests, these regiments were the private guards of House Amaris. Always provided the best equipment and training opportunities, these forces were both elite and loyal, though their focus was defensive and thus were rarely used in direct assault operations, at least without heavy support.

Amaris Legionnaires: Harkening back to their formation during the Reunification War, the Amaris Legionnaires were the reserves of the Rim Worlds Republic, called to service to quickly bolster the Usurper's armies. Generally, these units were poorly trained and possessed the lowest quality equipment, at least at the beginning of the war, and often varied widely in their dedication to Amaris' causes. The great majority of the Amaris Legionnaire regiments remained stationed within the Rim Worlds Republic during the Coup and thus were destroyed (or suborned) during the Rim Worlds campaign. Only the most loyal Legionnaires took part in the Coup.

Hegemony Patriots: Amaris ordered the raising of the Hegemony Patriot battalions and regiments after the Coup. Initially these units were filled with volunteers from among the Hegemony's citizens who sided with Amaris, but eventually also included citizens forced to join Amaris' military. Those units organized during the first few years of the Occupation received competent, if shortened, training, but also whatever equipment could be quickly made available to them. During the last years of the Occupation, new "recruits" received only cursory training and minimal equipment, and in any event were only assigned into infantry or, very occasionally, armor units raised specifically for defensive assignments—typically as "fortress" battalions meant to man the defenses of a Castle Brian.

Mercenaries: If any of Amaris' military forces "broke the mold" organizationally, it was his mercenary units. Though his hiring officers concentrated mostly upon contracting BattleMech

formations, Amaris hired armor, infantry and fighter units as well, of all sizes, qualities and nationalities. The only qualification he demanded was their loyalty to their contract over their home nations; given that even when the first eight divisions of mercenaries were hired war within the Periphery loomed heavily, coupled with Amaris' demands of secrecy, relatively few mercenary organizations that were both legitimate and above-board accepted these contracts. By the start of the SLDF's Hegemony Campaign, Amaris had recruited some eleven full divisions of mercenaries, many with significant criminal histories.

Regiments, Brigades and Divisions

Like the SLDF, Amaris organized his forces into brigades of three regiments, and divisions of three combat brigades. Unlike the SLDF however, the regiment remained the primary combat unit of Amaris' armies, with a significant number of battalions also organized for independent operation. These units were typically provided the support (maintenance, supply, medical, etc.) forces they needed for independent operation, but after the Coup often did not have all of the resources they needed.

Operationally, the forces assigned to each planet formed a provisional brigade (or division, if the forces present were large enough), which could be comprised of battalions and regiments every different kind and designation, all under the command of an Amaris officer (even when the forces on-world were primarily, or even entirely, mercenary), supported by political officers from the Office of Policy and Directive (OPD) as well as agents from the Hegemony Security Force (HSF) to ensure loyalty.

Though standing brigades and divisions were mostly administrative formations, three to five divisions were assigned into a corps formation, most of which had responsibility for the defense of a region within either the Rim Worlds Republic or the Terran Hegemony; two corps within each of the Rim Worlds Republic and the Terran Hegemony, usually consisting of the most loyal forces, could be directly tasked by the commander of Amaris' military within that nation to reinforce a world or quickly respond to an emergent situation.

Divisions, despite their largely administrative function, were permanently assigned at the corps level and had responsibility for defense of the worlds within their region. Amaris' divisions were given one of five different designations, depending upon their constituent regiments, and further designated numerically.

Amaris Regulars Division: Amaris Fusiliers and Legionnaires regiments formed the bulk of these organizations, often with a single Amaris Dragoons regiment to support. Most of the personnel assigned within the Amaris Regulars Divisions were natural citizens of the Rim Worlds Republic, though Amaris' regular army possessed quite a few foreign recruits, who made up a not-insignificant percentage of the Regulars' manpower.

Imperial Division: These were the most elite and best equipped units that Amaris possessed, hand-picked because of their unfettered loyalty to their emperor. They were given the toughest assignments—morally if not militarily—and afforded

the greatest latitude in accomplishing their assignments, in return reaping the greatest rewards. Amaris possessed four Imperial Divisions prior to the Coup, three of which took part in the Coup. Each of these divisions was named for a prominent Rim Worlds figure, with the "best" of them named after Stefan Amaris himself. The Imperial Divisions mostly consisted of Amaris Guards and Amaris Dragoons regiments, with a handful of the most loyal Amaris Legionnaires also included.

Lancers Division: Every one of Amaris' mercenary forces was organized into regimental formations (even if only for administrative purposes) and ultimately into the Lancers Divisions. As the Occupation of Terra progressed, Amaris recognized his most loyal mercenaries by forming the single Imperial Lancers Division—forces he could depend upon as his "troubleshooters" and enforcers.

Patriot Division: The Amaris Empire Armed Forces formed its Patriot Divisions following the Coup, assigning its Hegemony Patriot regiments to these formations, often supported by a loyal Amaris Dragoons (or other) regiment. In the latter years of the

Hegemony Occupation, the Patriot Divisions grew tremendously in overall manpower with the addition of significantly overstrength Patriot defense battalions (many filled with unwilling recruits). As could be expected, the Patriot units all boasted significant OPD and HSF "support" within their ranks.

Republican Guards Division: Amaris' Republican Guards divisions were his loyal workhorse units. Anchored by at least a brigade of Amaris Dragoons regiments—and sometimes two—the Republican Guards divisions were staffed entirely by natural Rim Worlds citizens and accorded better manpower and logistical support than any others save the Imperial Divisions.

Armies

Prior to the SLDF invasion of the Rim Worlds Republic, Stefan Amaris claimed a total of four armies—three stationed within the Terran Hegemony and one remaining within the Rim Worlds Republic. Though each was roughly analogous to an SLDF army, composed of four to five corps, they were all also much smaller than any of the Star League's twenty field armies.

THE TERROR

When asked whether it was better to be loved or feared as a ruler, Machiavelli wrote, "The answer is that one would like to be both, but since it is difficult to combine the two it is much safer to be feared than loved, if one of the two has to make way." He went on to add "Men are less worried about harming somebody who makes himself loved than someone who makes himself feared, for love is held by a chain of obligation which, since men are bad, is broken at every opportunity for personal gain. Fear, on the other hand, is maintained by a dread of punishment which will never desert you." Such was the policy adopted by Stefan Amaris.

Even before beginning his plan to suborn the Star League he kept a close eye on the Republican population—as had generations of Rim Worlds leaders before him—via the secret society known as the Krypteia. One part secret police hunting the RRA and undesirables, one part old boys club; no one rose to power or authority in the Republic without membership in and approval by the Krypteia. Rumors that every fifth member of the population was a member of or reported to the Krypteia are highly exaggerated, but people feared that this was the case.

Amaris applied the same principals to the RWA to ensure no "undesirables" served in his forces and that loyalty to the president was absolute. Officially designated "Section 9 of the Rim Worlds Office of Policy and Doctrine", the public face of these watchers were the political officers (sometimes called commissioners or commissars—Kerensky, and by extension the SLDF, used the Russian term "*zampolit*") installed in battalion and regimental (and occasionally company) command staffs. At times affable, at others petty as dictators, they were the sword of

Damocles hanging over the RWA, and their message was clear: conform and behave or face the consequences.

More insidious was the network of informers within units; as in the civilian sector, no one could be sure who was an informer and would report them to the authorities. In many regards the system worked well for instilling obedience but it was an abject failure at ensuring loyalty. Republican soldiers became secretive, unwilling to compromise themselves to their peers, which made it easier for bodies like the Rim Republican Army to infiltrate the RWA and exploit Amaris' build up and training programs as a boot-camp for their own operatives.

As H-hour for Operation APOTHEOSIS approached, the political officers were bolstered by hand-picked squads whose role was to enforce obedience at gunpoint if necessary. For the good of the operation as a whole, even the slightest disloyalty was punished and it was a testament to their brutal efficiency that absolute secrecy was maintained in the run up to the Amaris Coup.

Between the Krypteia and OPD/Section 9 fear predominated in the Republican population, leading to the collective name for the Amaris security services: The Terror. At the end of the conflict, Kerensky showed a willingness to forgive rank and file members of the RWA for their transgressions (many, in fact, accompanied the Exodus fleet) but he never forgave members of the OPD or the Krypteia and, had the Star League not collapsed and he been stripped of his office, intended war crimes trials for their members.

—Carmen Sanchez, *Unwilling, Unbowed, Undefeated*, Republic Press, 3085

Only the pre-Periphery Uprising Rim Worlds Republic armies could claim any parity with the SLDF, at least in manpower (the Star League always possessed the clear advantage in training and equipment).

RIM WORLDS NAVY

Even as Amaris was expanding his own nation's military in the years after the death of Simon Cameron, he spent a significant percentage of the Rim Worlds Republic's budget upon a tremendous expansion of its navy. Unlike the expansion of his ground forces, where he could rely heavily upon surreptitious purchases from Inner Sphere defense manufacturers willing to sell to anyone, he could not hope to purchase WarShips in the same way. Instead, he first focused upon expanding the production capabilities of his nation's shipyards, constructing a handful of new yards in secret before starting construction on a series of new and copied WarShip designs and rapidly turning out scores of ships in record time—despite many of them exhibiting numerous design and construction flaws, some debilitating, during their shakedown cruises.

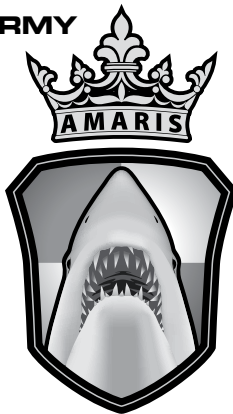
At the same time, Amaris used his relationship with Richard Cameron to convince the First Lord to authorize the selling of some two hundred decommissioned and mothballed SLDF WarShips, nearly all centuries old and just as outdated, to his Rim Worlds Republic. In the course of a decade and a half, he had built a massive WarShip fleet, albeit one seriously outmassed and outgunned when compared to the SLDF average.

IMPERIAL LIBERATION ARMY

Commander: General Javier Park

Composition: 17 Divisions

Initially the only army-level organization that Amaris possessed within the Hegemony prior to the Coup, after expanding his military this army took responsibility for the Hegemony's Core Province as well as for forming the first Patriot units within his burgeoning military. He also retained his most elite and loyal divisions within the Imperial



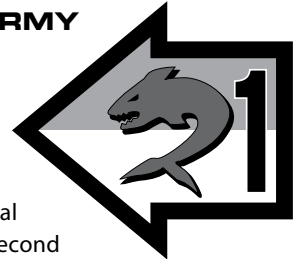
Liberation Army, where they could serve as his personal bodyguard units as well as his enforcers, when needed—which was increasingly more and more as the Occupation, and later the SLDF invasion, of the Hegemony progressed. Its initial commander, General Patrick Scoffins, became Amaris' military commander in chief within the Hegemony while General Javier Park, one-time commander of the Fourth Amaris Dragoons, advanced to command the Usurper's primary army.

FIRST LIBERATION ARMY

Commander: General Sibely Amaris

Composition: 12 Divisions

While Amaris executed the Coup with just one army commander and headquarters overseeing his military operations, General Scoffins stood up both First and Second Liberation Armies to maintain command and control of the expanding Amaris Empire Armed Forces. First Army, commanded by a third cousin of the new emperor, took charge of Lockdale and Lone Star Provinces, though given the sheer number of worlds within the Lockdale Province, First Army assumed provisional control of the Second and Fourth Patriot Divisions from the Imperial Liberation Army to bolster defenses within its area of responsibility.



SECOND LIBERATION ARMY

Commander: General Uribar Minguzzan

Composition: 12 Divisions

Second Liberation Army had responsibility for the highly populated and industrialized Terra Firma and Tyrfinng Provinces. Like First Army, Second Army had provisional control of Third Patriot Division. But while First Army managed to avoid many of the problems associated with the resulting contrived chains of command, Second Army was not so lucky, leading to inadequate logistical support for Patriot units on half a dozen worlds throughout most of the Occupation.



PERSONALITIES

"What has destroyed liberty and the rights of men in every government which has ever existed under the sun? The generalizing and concentrating all cares and powers into one body."

—Thomas Jefferson

STAR LEAGUE



SIMON CAMERON

Rank/Position: 5th First Lord of the Star League (Served 2738-2751),
18th Director-General of the Terran Hegemony (2734-2751)

Lived: 11 May 2709 – 17 February 2751

After the near-disaster of his father's reign, Simon Cameron faced the dual challenges of bringing harmony and prosperity to the Star League and restoring faith in the office of the First Lord. His aunt Jocasta had made a good start at the latter, proving that a Cameron could be a strong and insightful leader, but Simon had to continue the process by rebuilding trust and respect for the Star League. Two major conflicts, a civil war and a clash between states, had been fought within the Star League in the preceding decade. Simon made clear his intention to prevent similar conflicts in the future. Only twenty-nine when he became First Lord, albeit after

serving four years as Director-General of the Terran Hegemony, Simon faced an immediate struggle to exert his authority on the older and more experienced members of the High Council. While his experience and skills as an administrator served him well, his forthright nature and strict moral code put him in conflict with his scheming peers.

A Neo-Chivalrist, Simon believed in honor, personal responsibility and fairness in his dealing with others. This ran counter to the Councils' beliefs and convincing the House Lords to set aside their personal agendas proved impossible. As a consequence the disputes between member states escalated, culminating in the Third Hidden War, a conflict fought using "bandits" as proxies for house forces.

Simon's wife died in 2749 shortly after giving birth to the couple's third child, Helena. The First Lord became driven, throwing all his energies into dealing with the situation on the council. Aware that a straight approach would be futile Simon chose to appeal directly to the people.

In 2750, he began a grand tour of the Inner Sphere, leaving his three children behind on Terra to be cared for by nannies and relatives. The First Lord sought to exploit his popularity with the common people in order to undermine the positions of the Great Houses and to force an end to the conflicts. During the first year of his travels, visiting worlds in the Lyran Commonwealth, the plan worked like a charm. Had his plans come to fruition it seems likely public opinion could have brought all the member states to heel.

In February 2751, Simon was killed in an unlikely accident so convenient for his political opponents that few believed it was anything but murder. Simon's death left his eight-year-old son, Richard, as heir to the Hegemony and Star League. Unfortunately the orphaned boy and his sisters would be at the mercy of the manipulations of the Council and others, a state of affairs that would have dire implications for the Hegemony, Star League and humanity as a whole.

RICHARD CAMERON II

Rank/Position: 6th and Last First Lord of the Star League (served (2751)2762-2766), 20th Director-General of the Terran Hegemony (2762-2766)

Lived: 9 February 2744 – 27 December 2766

Even prior to his father's death, Richard Cameron II lived a somewhat withdrawn life. As a young child, much of his life was governed by nannies and teachers, his parents being distant figures. The arrival of his sisters, Elizabeth (born in 2747) and Helena

(born in 2749), further eroded his relationship with his mother and father. Elizabeth was a rival for their affections and only grudgingly tolerated. Helena, by contrast, was despised. Richard's mother, Jessica Drillson-Cameron, died shortly after giving birth to Helena. His father's departure on a five-year grand tour scarcely a year after his mother's death left Richard isolated. The young Cameron's relationship with his siblings festered as a sense of abandonment compounded his jealousy and isolation.

Simon Cameron's death propelled the youth to the pinnacle of human society, but his age barred him from wielding any real power. Aleksandr Kerensky was named as Richard's regent until his majority, while the role of Director-General of the Terran Hegemony remained in the hands of his father's ally, President Jens Pinera of the Hegemony Congress. A workaholic absent for long periods, Kerensky proved to be no better than Cameron's father in providing a strong paternal influence in the boy's life. Richard began exerting his influence on those who couldn't impede his will: the Cameron household staff. In his rare visits to his charge, Kerensky sought to impress his ideals of honor, duty and responsibility on the child. Unfortunately, Kerensky had a rival in Stefan Amaris, whose manipulations of the child were more constant and played on Richard's fears and desires. Amaris, unlike Kerensky or his father, would not abandon the boy and the sense of chivalry he instilled in the child was more skewed toward the rights of the lord rather than the responsibilities of the office.

It is little surprise that Richard grew up to be hot-headed and demanding, masking his insecurities with tyrannical decrees and jealousy. Periphery propaganda would later liken him to the Roman emperor Caligula, living a debauched and hedonistic lifestyle even at a young age. By his early teens he was orchestrating drunken revels in his apartments at which courtesans and the facilitators of his hedonistic lifestyle were prominent guests and those who offended him were beaten to a bloody pulp. There are also suggestions that Richard began to abuse his sisters at this time, something that continued up until his death, with sadistic threats compelling their silence and preventing tales from reaching the Regent's ears.

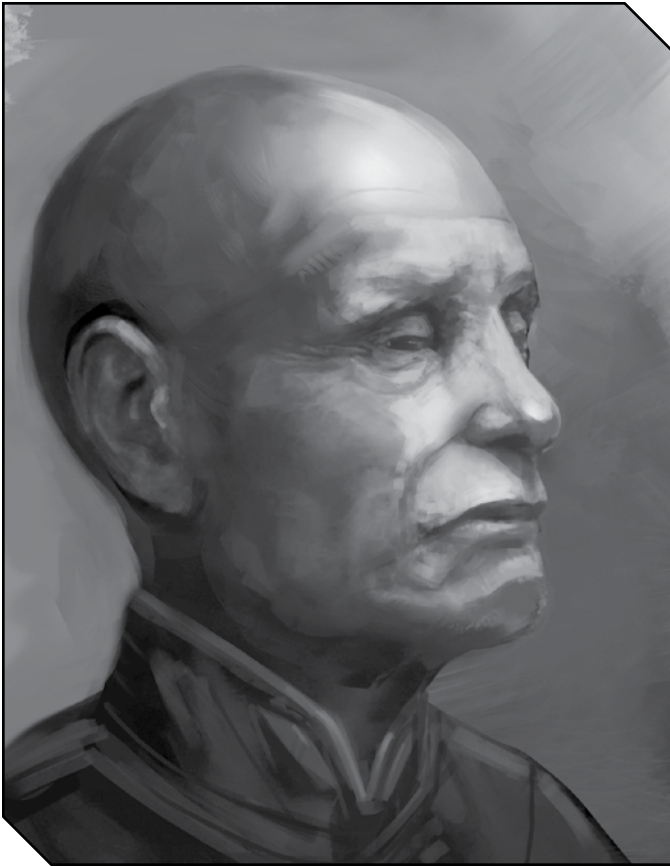
Even so, Kerensky began to realize that something must be done to improve the First Lord's character and took him along during the Operation PERSUASIVE FORCE exercises. The General had hoped to impress on the boy the responsibility of his office. Instead, Kerensky only succeeded in showing him the massive power that would one day be his.

Amaris trounced Kerensky for Richard's affections but was not always as successful as he'd hoped. In 2760, Richard's attention wavered and his attitude towards others improved markedly. The staff breathed a sigh of relief but Amaris frowned and set about finding the cause. It wasn't hard. During his first term at the Lake Stephens Grammar School, Richard had been typically spiteful and set about dominating his fellow pupils. One in particular became the target of his ire, a young English girl named Elise Graham. She publicly mocked the arrogant



First Lord and when he tried to bully her she had slapped him and punched one of Cameron's bodyguards when he tried to intervene. Rather than his typical anger, Richard laughed... and fell head over heels for her. With Elise a rival for the First Lord's affections, Amaris tried to get rid of the girl but found her strength of spirit and determination to "rescue" Richard indefatigable. He conceded defeat and set about exerting his control in other ways. Richard and Elise married in early 2763, shortly after Richard disbanded the High Council, and their daughter Amanda was born in February 2766.

The arrogance Amaris instilled in Richard led him to believe that only he had the insight and authority to rule the Star League and from September 2763 until the Coup he ruled directly, without any guidance from Kerensky or the High Council. Only Amaris had any influence, allowing Richard to make a series of bad decisions, intended to be self-aggrandizing but instead serving to turn the population of the Star League against him. Two groups in particular came to despise him: the people of the Terran Hegemony who faced his mismanagement directly, and those of the Periphery whom many of his policies targeted and offended. The Periphery Uprising became inevitable, and with it Richard's final error of judgment, calling on Amaris' Rim Worlds forces to garrison the Hegemony, a mistake that not only cost his life but also that of millions of others and that of the Star League itself.



ALEKSANDR KERENSKY

Rank/Position: 8th Commanding General of the SLDF (served 2738-2801), Commander of Task Force Confederation

Lived: 16 December 2700 – 11 June 2801

Aleksandr Sergeyevich Kerensky was born to Nikolai Maksimovich Kerensky, Head Curator for the People's Museum of History in Moscow, and Anna Tronchina Kerensky, a Moscow City Administrator, both of whom were former SLDF soldiers. Aleksandr's early youth was plagued by a congenital heart defect that left him sickly and weak, even after its diagnosis and surgical repair when he was three years old. Despite recovering from his heart ailment by the age of five, Aleksandr remained shorter than average and thin. He was also shy and polite, and had a love of reading that matured into a passion for history and literature—eagerly fed by both of his parents.

With a choice of universities to attend thanks to his outstanding academic records, Kerensky accepted a Star League merit scholarship to the University of Tharkad in 2718. It was there that he met and befriended future Lyran Archon Michael Steiner, a research fellow on track to professorship, who took the young Kerensky under his wing and mentored him during his years on Tharkad (the two would remain friends throughout their lives). Prior to his graduation, the SLDF offered Kerensky a position within the Nagelring Military Academy's class of 2723 after a battery of

physical, mental and psychological tests showed he would perform well as a MechWarrior. He struggled briefly with the decision, until his family and friends pointed out the opportunities SLDF service could provide coupled with the satisfaction he would find serving his nation.

Kerensky graduated from the Nagelring with honors, placing so well among his MechWarrior class that he was immediately accepted into the Gunslinger Program at the War Academy of Mars. He was assigned as duelist champion to the 564th Hussar Regiment in 2724 on the Combine world of Paris, fighting a number of duels against DCMS MechWarriors during the waning years of the First Hidden War. Within three years, he was promoted to lieutenant and command of a lance, where his leadership potential earned him rapid promotion to captain. In 2729, his regiment was a part of Operation SMOTHER, the SLDF's response to the four-year-long War of Davion Succession (also known as the Second Hidden War) between Houses Davion and Kurita. It was on the world of Royal, in his first combat command, that Kerensky truly shone; with his fellow Hussars overrun by the Second Sword of Light and the regiment's entire command staff wiped out in a DropShip collision, Captain Kerensky rallied the regiment, which fought hard to hold off the elite Kurita MechWarriors long enough for reinforcements from their parent 160th BattleMech Division to arrive. For his heroism and his level-headed leadership under the worst of conditions, Kerensky was awarded the Medal of Valor as well as a two-step promotion to colonel.

Immediately after Royal, he took command of the 261st Royal Dragoons independent regiment, assigned to the Taurian Concordat. Kerensky soon found himself waging a new kind of war, this time against political corruption and corporate greed; there, too, he quickly made a name for himself as he fought bitterly to end the Inner Sphere's mistreatment of his corner of the Periphery. His actions angered many politicians and businessmen, who had long taken advantage of the Periphery's people. They could not corrupt the ultra-principled Kerensky nor could they move directly against such a well-respected (and by extension, well-protected) SLDF commander, so they turned to their own political allies, which included Capellan Chancellor Warex Liao, who engineered a new promotion for the colonel. Riding a wave of celebrity within the press for his "bold campaign to stamp-out corruption," the thirty-one-year-old Kerensky returned to Terra a lieutenant general assigned to the Planning and Strategy Sub-Command.

Thanks to his enemies' machinations, Kerensky came to the attention of numerous members of the SLDF High Command and the Star League Royal Court, though none more important than Simon Cameron, son of then-First Lord Jonathan Cameron, and SLDF Commanding General Rebecca Fetladral. His friendship with the former ensured he was a regular presence in Unity City, where the once-shy Kerensky truly honed his abilities in winning allies, while the latter became a mentor and advisor to the young and promising general. After just two years, he was promoted again, this time to major general as Fetladral's Deputy Chief of Staff; in

this position, he became her troubleshooter, once again targeting corruption, though this time on a far grander scale. The Med-Tech Scandal of 2736 nearly ended his career when he used his celebrity to attack the Star League Council in the media for refusing to act upon evidence he and his investigators had provided; public outcry prevented his court-martial or other punishment. He was removed as Fetladral's Deputy Chief of Staff and issued a reprimand—effectively slaps on the wrist—but immediately transferred to the Royal Command, which he took charge of just a few months later when promoted to full general.

He remained in that position for less than two years, where despite his meteoric rise past many other senior officers, he soothed tempers and genuinely earned many friends. When Jonathan Cameron died in 2736, General Fetladral retired, recommending Kerensky as the only suitable officer who could lead the entire SLDF; now-First Lord Simon Cameron readily agreed, quickly convincing the Star League High Council to ratify his decision (aided by Archon Michael Steiner as well as First Prince Richard Davion, who likely remembered Kerensky for his bravery fighting against the Combine just a few years earlier).

Thus began the service of both the youngest and the longest-serving (not to mention the final) SLDF Commanding General. From the very beginning, he made a name for himself as a reformer. Not only did he continue his campaign against corruption, he also targeted the SLDF's bloated and inefficient bureaucracy. He was not a micromanager though; he trusted his staff to carry out his plans while he traveled the stars, making it his goal to visit every SLDF unit, base and facility, fostering the loyalty of his soldiers and officers wherever he visited. Following Simon Cameron's tragic death in 2751, the Star League Council selected him as First Lord Richard Cameron's Regent, at the same time refusing to accept his resignation as Commanding General; Kerensky fulfilled the duties of Regent ably, leading the Star League government in the place of his old friend, but continued to ply the star lanes in the SLS *McKenna's Pride*, maintaining the peace during the Third Hidden War and growing tensions within the Periphery. Of course, by remaining away from Terra for months on end he could not be any sort of role model for the young Richard Cameron, paving the way for Stefan Amaris to plan and execute his Coup.

Nevertheless Kerensky somehow found time for a family, albeit late in life. He had met his future wife Katyusha two decades earlier when she was a young staff officer assigned to the Citadel, but it wasn't until her retirement from the SLDF that the two apparently began their relationship. He scheduled a number of rare long stretches of time on Terra during the early 2760s, marrying Katyusha in 2763 in a small private ceremony. Their union produced two children (Nicholas in 2764, and Andery in 2766), the Kerensky family living in anonymity among a larger extended family within Aleksandr's home city of Moscow—a deliberate choice by the private couple which ultimately saved the lives of Katyusha and their children during Amaris' long occupation of Terra.

AARON DECHAVILIER

Rank/Position: SLDF Deputy Commanding General, Commander of Task Force Sun

Lived: 13 October 2714 – 15 May 2801

Born on the Federated Suns world of Kestrel, Aaron DeChavilier spent his formative years closely following the course of the Davion War of Succession. It was after seeing the SLDF swoop in and crush the invading Combine forces that he decided to join the SLDF. He was initially unable to gain admittance to the Star League academies he had set his sights upon and so entered the Federated Suns' Sakhara Academy for his first year, after which his grades, and especially his high marks in military studies, earned him a place within the Albion Military Academy's corps of cadets. Even though he, in effect, had to repeat his first year because of his entry into a new academy, DeChavilier excelled, easily qualifying as a MechWarrior. By the end of his first year of active service, his regiment had earned top honors in the Martial Olympiad, and with the second-highest individual score, he earned a promotion to lieutenant and a position within the next Gunslinger class.

Over the next ten years, DeChavilier quickly rose to company and battalion command within the 320th Dragoon Regiment, and then command of the 3843rd Battle Regiment, where he found himself amid some of the heaviest fighting against Inner Sphere- and Periphery-supported "bandits" during the Third Hidden War. Given his units' fantastic performance during their combat assignments, and especially their high morale even in the face of difficult and stressful pirate-hunting duties, he found himself promoted to lieutenant general and transferred to the Citadel on Terra. It was a staff assignment that he hated however, and after just a year he managed a transfer back into the field, this time as assistant division commander of the 149th BattleMech Division, which he rose to command in just a year's time.

He spent four years as commander of the 149th, guiding it through the confusion following the death of First Lord Simon Cameron, before he was offered command of XXI Corps, one of the three SLDF corps responsible for protecting the Terran Hegemony. It was during this assignment that Aleksandr Kerensky truly took note of DeChavilier, whom he had first met following the 2736 Martial Olympiad and encountered again after his assignment to the Citadel. Kerensky saw in DeChavilier a good tactician but a peerless organizer and motivator, someone who was also loyal, dedicated and unimpeachable. From that moment on, the careers of the two officers were linked, soon followed by a deep friendship after Kerensky promoted DeChavilier to general and command of First Army in 2758. Just two years later, Kerensky advanced DeChavilier to Director of the Regular Army, where he was responsible for training and motivating the SLDF's millions of soldiers, pilots and MechWarriors.

As the Periphery began to explode into outright rebellion, DeChavilier received his final promotion—to Deputy Commanding General of the Star League Defense Forces, where he was

responsible for preparing the entire SLDF for war. During the Periphery Uprising, he followed Kerensky into the field, inspiring and leading his armies as they went to war against the rebellious territories. He, like Kerensky, left his family behind on Terra in the process; his wife, Cynthia, and three of his children—Julia (born 2749), Benjamin (born 2750) and Kristina (born 2760)—were killed after Amaris' agents rousted them from their Unity City home while searching for Camerons in the wake of the Coup. His eldest two children, both SLDF officers, died in the war; Major Roger DeChavilier (born 2739) died on Lushann with the bulk of the 199th BattleMech Division, while Colonel Angela DeChavilier-Banacek (born 2738) died on Talitha during Fifth Army's drive into the Terran Hegemony.

JOAN BRANDT

Rank/Position: SLDF Admiral, Commander of Task Force Commonwealth

Lived: 26 August 2712 – 16 March 2799

As a child on Outreach, Joan Brandt was front-and-center to the most fantastic spectacles imaginable: the Martial Olympiads, as well as the many training exercises and mock campaigns conducted on the world. From her earliest years, the swirling ballet of aerial dog-fighting captured her imagination, prompting her to learn to fly at the earliest age she could. By the time she earned entry to the Flight Academy of Graham, she had logged nearly 1,000 flight hours and more than a dozen aero-spacecraft qualifications, placing her well ahead of her peers. Her barely average grades kept her from the highest ranks of her class, where she likely could have selected her initial assignment.

She found herself assigned to the Seventy-fifth Light Horse Regiment, an integral component of the First RCT—considered an honor by many, as the RCTs rarely recruited any but experienced pilots with proven records in combat assignments. Unfortunately, her pride and ego nearly ended her career there; though clearly an exceptional pilot, she felt ground support operations—the bread and butter of any pilot assigned to an independent regiment like the Seventy-fifth—beneath her. She had joined the SLDF to be the best of the best and destroy enemy fighter pilots, not to drop bombs on and shoot up relatively immobile ground targets. Her attitude earned her poor performance ratings, held-up promotions, menial flight assignments and a number of transfers throughout Tenth Army during her first years of service.

In 2739, a chance encounter simultaneously almost ended her flying career and propelled her to greatness. Consigned to twice-a-day cargo runs on New Olympia, she often practiced unauthorized combat maneuvers in her shuttle, using whatever “targets” happened to be available. In this case, she chose a flight of Free Worlds fighters on routine patrol, doggedly pursuing them through a series of evasion maneuvers and through a steep re-entry dive that no shuttle pilot in their right mind would attempt to perform. In her mind, she “splashed” her two targets before flying on to her destination—where she was immediately grounded following a report of her “reckless, dangerous and unauthorized flying stunts”

by the two FWL pilots, and placed on modified assignment while charges were leveled against her by her commanding officer. Three days later, she found herself facing not a court-martial but instead Vice Admiral Lucien Peterson, commander of Seventh Fleet's combined aerospace forces. Peterson had witnessed her exploits from the bridge of the SLS *Golden Hind* and resolved to meet the shuttle pilot who had clearly bested two FWL fighter pilots.

By the end of the week, she found herself transferred to the 711th Fleet Interceptor Squadron on-board the *Golden Hind* after a grueling series of check rides and mock dogfights against the Seventh Fleet's best pilots. From then on, her star shone; the Third Hidden War gave her the opportunity to show just what kind of a pilot she was, earning the Geerson Flying Cross in 2741 after claiming her fiftieth aerospace victory and leading her squadron as they claimed the most bandit fighter kills within the SLDF that year. She rose to the rank of commodore in 2747, taking charge of Fleet Aero Wing 73, and then to rear admiral three years later commanding the SLS *Arkhangelsk*. She alternated between WarShip and fighter commands in Seventh and Fifth Fleets for the next several years, until she took command of Second Fleet in 2759. Kerensky promoted her to Director of the Naval Command in 2762, which she gave up when he later asked her to command all naval forces during the SLDF's action to put down the Periphery Uprising. Ultimately overseeing all combat operations within the Magistracy of Canopus, she was later the ideal officer to take charge of one of Kerensky's three theaters during Operation CHIEFTAIN.

After the war, she retired to New Earth with her husband, Colonel Erik Peterson (retired)—son of her old mentor and great-great-grandson of one-time SLDF Commanding Admiral David Peterson—where she penned several historical works outlining the SLDF's (and her) actions before and during the Amaris Civil War. One of her three children, Carl Peterson, also settled there after the war with his eventual family of six; her daughter Andrea Peterson was wounded in action in the naval assault on Lockdale, ultimately dying of her injuries before the final assault on Terra. Her youngest, Demitri, and his family followed Kerensky into Exodus.

THE RIM WORLDS REPUBLIC

STEFAN AMARIS

Rank/Position: President of the Rim Worlds Republic, (served 2738-2779), Emperor of the Amaris Empire/Star League (served 2766-2779), 21st Director-General of the Terran Hegemony

Lived: 28 August 2717 – 29 October 2779

Born to President Cynthia Amaris in 2717, Stefan Ukris Amaris was an only child, doted on by his mother. His father, industrialist Stefan Gorienko, was a distant and frequently absent figure, his mother becoming the primary influence on his young life. Like previous generations of the Amaris family since their “betrayal” by the Camerons in the Reunification War, Cynthia plied her son with tales of power and intrigue and of the uncountable glories that were rightfully theirs and would, one day, be granted them. With this constant drip of poison in his ear, it is unsurprising that



Stefan exploited Richard Cameron. The death of Simon Cameron and the infighting and self-interest of the High Council created the ideal circumstances for the Amaris clan to achieve their ambitions, granting Stefan an unparalleled opportunity denied to his forebears.

Stefan was only twenty-one when he succeeded his mother. He was a capable administrator and proved adept at motivating others, or more specifically at identifying what made them tick and applying pressure or inducements as appropriate. He established a solid power base on Apollo but upon his first visit to Terra in 2739 found himself, like the other leaders of the territorial states, marginalized. Little was expected of him and he slipped into the role of an affable and somewhat bumbling provincial lord, renowned for his gregariousness but not his intellect. He drew to himself people who sought to exploit his generosity and position and through such meetings first began to influence the upper echelons of Terran society. Despite his outward appearance he was a shrewd politician and knew the benefit of alliances and of being underestimated.

Amaris played his role for almost a dozen years, secretly manipulating civil dignitaries and councilors, until the death of Simon Cameron opened the way for his dreams to become reality. He quickly realized that both the High Council and Regent were distracted and paying the young Richard scant attention. He did not immediately move to influence the boy but instead set about

building his understanding of Richard's character. Richard was ripe for manipulation and through him Stefan sought to take the Amaris clan to greatness. When the pair finally met in 2753 there was a natural affinity between them, the Star League little recognizing its doom.

Amaris did not set out to destroy the Star League but rather to rule it. He could have gained most of what he wanted through Richard, using Cameron as a puppet, but that didn't sit well with his personal desire for vengeance on the Cameron family. Stefan knew that one day Richard would have to die, but first he would need to neutralize the SLDF and political opposition in the Hegemony, a scheme that would take a dozen years.

Though he would later be painted as a traitor and despoiler, Amaris saw himself as a liberator, rescuing the Hegemony and Star League from the (engineered) mismanagement of Richard while simultaneously taking revenge for centuries of Cameron slights. Unfortunately his methods and those of the people he employed colored perceptions of his actions. His troops' treatment of SLDF prisoners during the conquest of the Hegemony falls a long way short of civilized behavior and his own orders with regard to the Cameron family were brutal. While some historians have excused these horrors as the side effects of a transition of power, incidents later in his reign—such as the murder of Pope Clement or of his own pregnant mistress—were either pointless brutality or else a dictator's desperation to protect his own position.

MOHAMMED SELIM

Rank/Position: Regent of the Rim Worlds Republic (served 2751-2769)

Lived: 9 November 2702 - 29 October 2769

The man who rose to become regent of the Rim Worlds Republic came from humble stock on Delagoa. His father was a carpenter and his mother a mid-level bureaucrat in a finance company and the couple struggled to raise their large family of four boys and two girls. Mohammed was the eldest and frequently served as a surrogate parent to his siblings while his parents were engrossed in work, so he became adept at managing the household and the disparate personalities of his brothers and sisters. Like much of the Rim Worlds population he underwent military training (at the prestigious Apollo Military Institute). Though he was passionately loyal to the Amaris clan, he had little empathy with the military and settled into a civil service post at the Republic's finance ministry. By 2740, Selim had demonstrated his administrative skill and risen to head the department, becoming finance minister two years later. When the Speaker of the Rim Worlds Parliament resigned in a sex scandal in 2746, Selim assumed the post as Interim Speaker, becoming *de facto* head of the government.

Uninspiring (he was often called a "grey" man for his brutal efficiency but lack of charisma) his loyalty to Stefan Amaris was undoubted and the pair established a solid working relationship. When Amaris began scheming to seduce Richard Cameron, he needed someone he could trust to manage the Republic, as he certainly could not trust the vipers of his own family, and thus named Selim as his regent for the years he was on Terra.

Communicating with his lord regularly via HPG, Selim instituted the policies laid down by Amaris but otherwise had free reign over the Republic. When Amaris made his final move to take control of the Star League, Amaris reconfirmed Mohammed as governor of the Republic. Unfortunately, for all his bureaucratic skill Selim was not a military commander and when Kerensky announced his intention to annex the Rim Worlds there was little in the way of military leadership to stop the SLDF tide. Selim did not fall to the vengeful Star League. Instead, he was murdered by a crowd whipped into a frenzy by RRA operatives, his body hung from a traffic gantry.

MEMBER STATES

KENYON MARIK "THE EAGLE"

Rank/Position: Duke of Atreus, Captain General of the Free Worlds League (served 2763-2804)

Lived: 21 April 2734 – 19 June 2804

The reign of Kenyon's father Ewan had been a tumultuous time for both the Free Worlds and the Star League and the ascension of the younger Marik offered hope for the relationship between the nations. Unfortunately, though calm and stable compared to his father Kenyon had a long-standing vendetta with Aleksandr Kerensky, whose staff he had served on in 2756, that colored the relationship.

While Kerensky was away on Terra, Marik had acted to suppress a protest on Pollux. Though he acted within his authority, Marik's actions were brutal and left more than a dozen people dead and

the situation on Pollux on the brink of exploding. Kerensky was horrified but matters could have been salvaged had Kenyon taken responsibility for his part in the tragedy shown remorse. Instead, Marik was defiant, stating that violence was the only thing the protesters understood and that the General, "an upstart Russian peasant," wouldn't dare to punish him, the heir to the Captain-General and a High Council seat. He underestimated Kerensky, who not only proposed a tribunal but cashiered Marik from the SLDF with a dishonorable discharge that shaped relations between the two until the Exodus.

Kenyon's support of the SLDF after the Amaris Coup was half-hearted at best. He had no love for Amaris, but he hated Kerensky and though he grudgingly allowed the Star League forces to transit the Free Worlds en route to their Rim Worlds campaign, he refused permission for the SLDF to use FWL worlds during their re-conquest of the Hegemony. Unlike House Kurita, whom he suspected was in League with Amaris, Kerensky knew Kenyon's actions were personal spite aimed at him. He demonstrated his contempt for the Captain-General by taking control of the SLDF's Oriente fleet base and daring Kenyon to contest the occupation. Marik did, but by the time the FWLM forces were ready to strike, the SLDF had moved on.

Marik never forgave the General's arrogance and deliberately slighted him during Operation LIBERATION and its aftermath. Despite this pettiness, Kenyon would be remembered as one of the Free Worlds' greatest Captain-Generals. He oversaw passage of Resolution 288 and prosecuted the First Succession War, including the infamous "clear a route ten parsecs wide to Sarna." He was succeeded by his son Thaddeus in 2804.

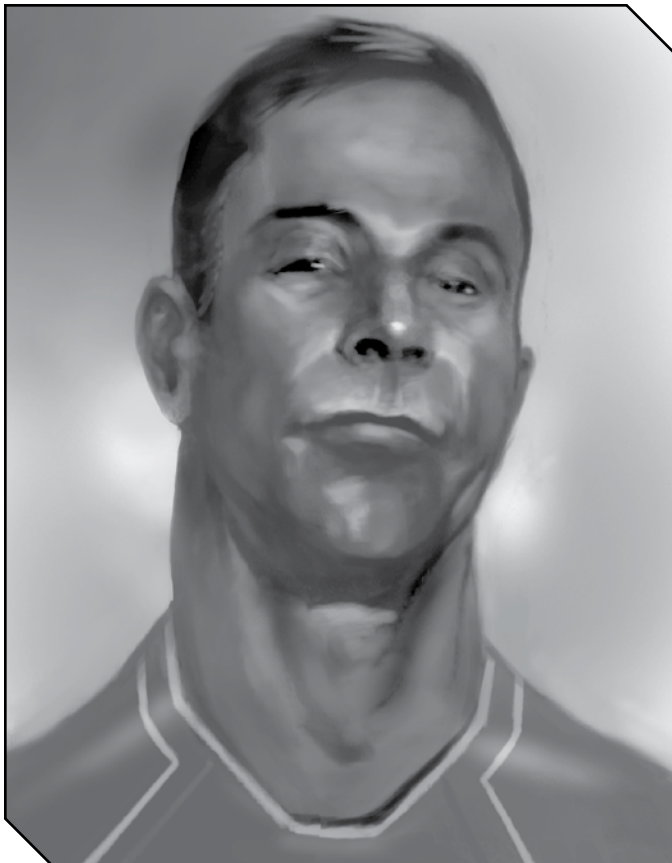
ROBERT STEINER II

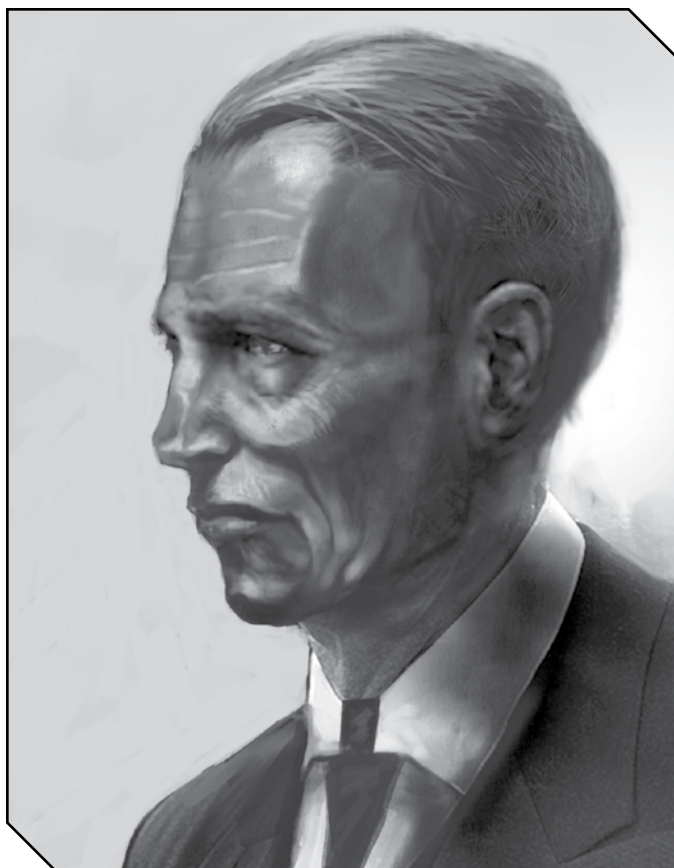
Rank/Position: Archon of the Lyran Commonwealth (served 2760-2781)

Lived: 17 March 2701 – 29 June 2781

Michael Steiner maintained a close relationship with Aleksandr Kerensky, whom he had first met while the future general was a student at Tharkad University (Michael, a quarter-century older than Aleksandr, was a research fellow). The relationship between Kerensky and his friend's son, whom he'd known since the 2720s, was cooler. A form of sibling rivalry has been suggested, with Aleksandr having become a surrogate son of sorts to Michael. More likely there was simply a disagreement in outlook as Robert was groomed for political office while Aleksandr was a career soldier. Unlike his father, Robert was condescending toward the commoner Kerensky, preferring the company of his fellow blue-bloods and upon assuming the Archonship in 2760, immediately found himself in confrontation with Kerensky.

Michael had advocated Kerensky's installation as Regent for Richard Cameron, but Robert felt Kerensky had been elevated above his station and struggled to accept the upstart Terran. When Amaris staged his coup, Robert was paralyzed by indecision. He was no friend of either Amaris or Cameron and despite his revulsion at Amaris' seizure of power, chose inaction rather than siding with either the Usurper or General Kerensky. This did not sit well with the





Lyran people who, having shared a border with both nations, were much more sympathetic to the Terran cause. Robert offered tacit support to the SLDF, but refused to condone any action by the LCAF despite popular sentiment. Only when a revolt seemed likely did Robert finally act, cynically launching an assault on the shattered remnant of the Rim Worlds Republic rather than in support of Kerensky's operations near Terra. While this risked a confrontation with the SLDF, Kerensky chose to tolerate the move rather than disrupt his campaign against Amaris.

Robert's last significant acts were as a member of the High Council that dismissed Kerensky (possibly instigated by the Archon as a means of dodging any repercussions for his assault on the Rim Worlds) and disbanded the Star League. He died shortly after returning to Tharkad and did not witness Kerensky's Exodus or the horrors of the First Succession War.

JOHN DAVION

Rank/Position: Prince of the Federated Suns (served 2745-2797)

Lived: 8 November 2719 – 9 December 2797

Assuming leadership of the Federated Suns when he was only twenty-six, the horrors of the War of Davion Succession were still fresh in John Davion's mind. His grandfather's death in the conflict and the SLDF's slow response colored John's attitude toward the Star League. He would support it while its goals coincided with his own, but believed it was becoming increasingly irrelevant to the

interests of its members. That disillusionment evaporated with the death of Simon Cameron, and John became a staunch advocate of the League and its ruling family. He nominated Kerensky for the post of regent and threw his full support behind the general. Together, they worked to preserve the Star League. Even so, Davion still felt the pull of ambition and supported the striking down of Council Edict 2650. Reconciling these two goals was an almost impossible task, but Prince John rose to the challenge.

Davion was one of the few Inner Sphere leaders to offer support to Kerensky's forces after the Amaris Coup, but even he stopped short of offering troops. Instead, he opened AFFS logistical and repair facilities to Kerensky's force, allowing those who had fought in the Taurian and Outworlds campaigns to repair and re-arm before moving against the Rim Worlds Republic and the Terran Hegemony. After the liberation of Terra, John was the only Council Lord not to bear Kerensky any malice, but his efforts to dissuade his colleagues from their course of action proved futile. He refused to sanction the wholesale looting of the Hegemony that many of the other member states indulged in. Nonetheless, Davion became one of the claimants to the First Lordship, prosecuting the First Succession War and defending the Federated Suns against both the Capellan Confederation and Draconis Combine. Together with his son Joshua, Prince John was assassinated in late 2797 while planning a counteroffensive against the Combine.





BARBARA LIAO

Rank/Position: Chancellor of the Capellan Confederation (served 2760-2795)

Lived: 1 May 2731 – 18 November 2795

Barbara Liao had a baptism of fire upon assuming the Emerald Throne; four days after her ascension news of the nuclear attack on Demeter reached Sian and the Confederation and Federated Suns were plunged into war. Neither government was complicit in the attack (it was the work of Chesterton separatists) but neither the new Chancellor nor Prince John were willing to back down. Barbara was not warlike, but neither would she flinch from a confrontation.

This stance typified her involvement with the Star League as she didn't look for trouble but was quite prepared to fight for her corner. After the Coup she refused to aid Kerensky in his moves against Amaris, citing a legal pretext that it was an "internal Terran matter," (the same reason given for the SLDF's non-intervention in the Marik Civil War). While this was not popular with her people, Barbara believed the Confederation's involvement in the dispute would weaken it in the face of Free Worlds and Federated Suns militarism. Political unrest resulted and eventually the Chancellor gave her permission for the SLDF to use Confederation worlds, though she stopped short of offering comfort and support to the campaign. She later regretted not doing so, and realized the treatment of Kerensky by the High Council was a terrible blunder. When the Star League collapsed, Barbara's foresight became clear

and the CCAF made significant gains against the Federated Suns in the First Succession War. The Confederation was less fortunate in its clashes with the Free Worlds League, costing the lives of Barbara's sons. When she died from a rare blood disorder in 2795, a reeling Confederation came under the sway of Sandol Quinn.

TAKIRO KURITA

Rank/Position: Coordinator of the Draconis Combine (served 2691-2767)

Lived: 17 January 2646 – 8 February 2767

Takiro Kurita was born at a time of great change for the Combine. His father, Urizen II, had instigated the *Kokugaku*, which advanced the culture of ancient Japan as the model for the Combine. His family life was steeped in this lore and he became the typical samurai, part courtier and part warrior. Unlike many of his five more aggressive younger siblings, he was contemplative and slow to anger. Some felt this made him unsuitable to be Coordinator but when his father retired in 2691 at the age of 101, he insisted that Takiro succeed him.

Like the other High Councilors, Takiro was not above advancing his own agenda and has commonly been painted as a villain because of the mistaken belief he facilitated the Amaris Coup. He was guilty of participating in the Council's rapacious behavior just like the other lords, but unlike most of them, he did appear to see through Amaris' charade. Takiro rightly predicted the troubles that would ensue when the SLDF voyaged to the Periphery once more and sought to extricate his family from the inevitable clash. His failure (his nephew Drago, the Combine's ambassador to the Hegemony, was seized by Rim Worlds forces) led to the Combine's appeasing stance toward the Amaris Empire. The stress was too much for the aging Takiro, who like his father had lived into his thirteenth decade, and he collapsed shortly after hearing the news from Terra.

MINORU KURITA

Rank/Position: Coordinator of the Draconis Combine (served 2767-2796)

Lived: 30 April 2705 – 14 September 2796

Minoru Kurita succeeded his father as the horror of the Amaris Coup became clear. The short-tempered new Coordinator was expected to take a belligerent stance toward the new Emperor. That he did not do so gave the other House leaders cause for thought and fueled suspicions of Combine complicity in the Coup. The reality was that on his death bed Takiro had ordered his son to hold true to the masquerade to ensure the safety of his cousin. Minoru complied, publicly at least.

Behind the scenes his response was more nuanced. While he publicly refused to vilify Amaris and or support Kerensky, going as far as to contest the SLDF's seizure of various Combine worlds on the Hegemony border and to betray several SLDF operations, he also provided covert aid to Kerensky's forces, including material and special forces. The truth behind Minoru's schizophrenic actions did not become clear until the liberation of Terra and the discovery of Drago's murder.



Despite this, Minoru had little spiritual investment in the Star League. Though he too claimed the First Lordship, Kurita was just as happy to let it die. He planned for war, taking aim at the Federated Suns against whom he had fought in the Davion War of Succession half a century earlier and the First Succession War saw massive gains for the Combine. The summer of 2796 found Minoru on newly conquered Kentares IV, where a sniper's laser killed the beloved Coordinator. The Kuritan reaction was swift and bloody as Minoru's heir Jinjiro declared the planet's entire population guilty of the murder and ordered the DCMS to "kill them all." The result was the Kentares Massacre, the worst military atrocity in human history in which fifty-two million people—ninety percent of the planet's population—were executed.

TERRITORIAL STATES

JANINA CENTRELLA

Rank/Position: Magestrix of the Magistracy of Canopus (served 2760-2802)

Lived: 16 March 2723 – 4 January 2802

Janina succeeded her mother Vanura in 2760, immediately reversing the fortunes of the Magistracy. Where her mother had capitulated to the Inner Sphere's rapacious activities in the Periphery and had run down the economy and military, Janina took a hard-line stance. She protested vehemently the mistreatment of her people

and took steps to protect and revitalize the Canopian economy. Her mother had half-heartedly committed to Amaris' schemes for the Periphery. Janina, though wary of Amaris' motivations, saw an opportunity to escape the yoke of what she called "Inner Sphere fools". She had already been in touch with Amaris' agents, declaring that his true intentions did not matter.

As the political crisis in the Periphery approached critical mass, Janina added fuel to the fire. She had already ended cooperation between the MAF and the SLDF and on 6 June 2764, announced that Canopus was establishing an independent military deterrent. She immediately began to use the state's revitalized financial reserves to acquire material and mercenary troops to bolster her force. Her motivation, she announced, was to protect her people where the Star League had failed to do so. A diplomatic storm erupted but was soon eclipsed by the Periphery Uprising and the tragedy on Terra that followed.

Janina refused to aid Kerensky's operations against the Hegemony, but sympathized with his plight and provided details of Amaris' Periphery scheming. She was unsurprised when the "fools" of the High Council turned on Kerensky after the liberation of Terra, shattering the Star League in their greed. For her own part, she declared the Magistracy an independent nation once more in 2786, though the realities of economic interdependence would cast a pall over the remaining years of her reign. She died in 2802 and was succeeded by her niece Rwannah.



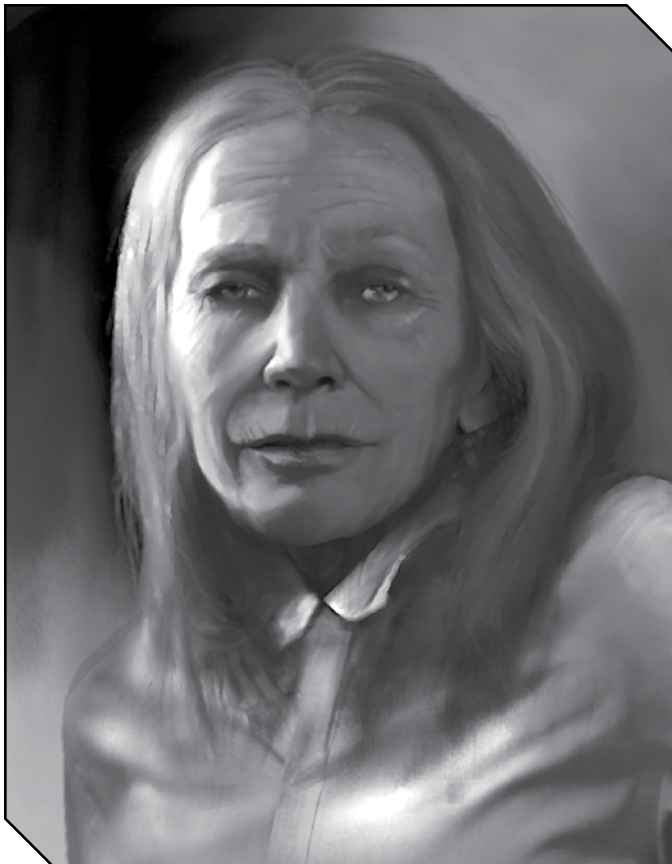
BEATRICE AVELLAR

Rank/Position: President of the Outworlds Alliance (served 2706-2709-2765)

Lived: 27 September 2691 – 18 April 2765

Only fifteen years of age when she succeeded her father in 2706, a regent ruled in Beatrice Avellar's stead until she reached her majority in 2709. Her rule would last fifty-six years, during which she encouraged the expansion of the Alliance, pushed for social reform and invested in technology and infrastructure. Unfortunately, the political capital Beatrice gained from her public works was tempered by resentment of efforts to impose her conservative views on the people. She was at times aesthetic and possessed a moralistic streak which, even by Alliance standards, tended towards extremism. Had she kept such attitudes to herself the people would not have cared, as freedom of worship was a central social tenet of the Alliance. Forcing her views on others went against the grain.

The idea of an independent alliance appealed to Beatrice and when Amaris' agents approached her she proved receptive. The cultural and social agencies she had created proved to be ideal fronts for stirring up the people, not through direct political agitation but rather through works of art and "guerrilla protests". Though disliking the idea of another war, Beatrice allowed herself to be persuaded of its necessity and of the need for the Alliance to play an active role.



Beatrice died of natural causes in 2765, shortly after news of the rebellion on New Vandenberg reached Alpheratz. According to popular legend, upon reading the news she said "And so it begins," then collapsed, dying two days later. At her lying-in-state, visitors reported a satisfied smile on her serene face.

ALLYCE AVELLAR

Rank/Position: President of the Outworlds Alliance (served 2765-2772)

Lived: 31 March 2732 – 14 July 2794

Beatrice's son, Lukas, had died in 2745 and she was succeeded by her granddaughter, Allyce. Fragile and emotional (several biographies have suggested she would have been much happier at Woodstock or Glastonbury 800 years earlier) she was ill-suited to high office but felt it was her duty to follow her beloved grandmother as President of the Alliance. Many, including her brother Simpson, opposed the move and the Alliance entered its greatest crisis since the Reunification War with a vapid airhead at its helm. Allyce refused to commit Alliance forces to the Rebellion (though she also did not decide to oppose it) and when Amaris killed Richard Cameron, she was shocked that "jolly uncle Amaris" had hurt "that poor Cameron boy". The idea that Kerensky would go to war to retake the Hegemony upset her deeply (she is alleged to have spent days in her chambers, crying about the ugliness and selfishness in the universe) and in refusing to take sides she kept the Alliance safe from both sides of the conflict.

By 2772, tolerance of Allyce's mishandling of the Alliance ran out and her brother staged a bloodless coup. Despite the justification of his actions, the Alliance Parliament refused to sanction Simpson as the new President. Months of debate followed before David Avellar, Allyce's son, was elevated in her place. Allyce retired to her estates and spent the next two decades studying art and music, with some of her own works becoming sought-after items in the Inner Sphere art market.

NICOLETTA CALDERON

Rank/Position: Protector of the Taurian Concordat (served 2725-2801)

Lived: 4 January 2707- 29 November 2801

If anyone can be said to have been Amaris' accomplice in the Periphery Uprising, it is Nicoletta Calderon, earning her a unique place in the history books. Like Beatrice Avellar, Nicoletta came to power at a young age following the retirement of her grandfather and the murder of her uncle. Youthful and gregarious, Nicoletta was above suspicion, though after her death, rumors linking her to the plot circulated widely. As none of those involved in the plot remained alive, these rumors became little more than a historical footnote.

Her dedication to freeing the Concordat from the strictures of the Star League soon earned her plaudits. Those in the Concordat and on the High Council who mistook her for a "little girl" were quickly disabused of the notion by her combination of intellect and temper. She fought for Periphery rights in the face

of Spheroid exploitation and long before Amaris' schemes began, she sought alliances with her neighbors. Canopus in particular was a focus of her attentions, being a modern industrialized state (unlike the Outworlds Alliance) that did not seek to ingratiate itself with the Inner Sphere (unlike the Rim Worlds Republic). She negotiated with Jehan and Vanura Centrella, but it was in Vanura's daughter Janina that she found a kindred spirit, negotiating with the Magestrrix-designate for almost a decade before her own assumption of power.

Stefan Amaris' offer of military support for a "Freedom War" was exactly what Nicoletta had been looking for, a deal so perfect that she naturally became suspicious of the Rim Worlde's motives. There were exhaustive negotiations through the fall of 2754 before the Protector accepted the pact, her own role in the affair being to foster the Taurian Freedom Army and to provide the spark that triggered the Uprising.

Though Calderon's complicity in the Fort Simpson atrocity was never proven, SLIC deemed it likely. Similarly, though officially aloof from the secession of eighteen Concordat worlds from the Star League (but not from the Concordat), the move had her tacit support. She declared it an "internal matter" and refused to allow the SLDF to intervene, citing that to do so would be a violation of the Star League Accords.

The resulting crisis led to two years of bitter fighting and though the Amaris Coup prompted Kerensky to proclaim an armistice, he remained wary of Calderon and her motives. Though Nicoletta felt as betrayed by Amaris' actions as the other Periphery leaders (in particular his abandonment of the cause and his order to Kerensky to crush the uprisings) Kerensky regarded her as a willing accomplice and refused to meet with her, unlike the other Periphery leaders. Instead, he delegated the task to General DeChavilier. Nicoletta had little to do with the Star League for its remaining years, but did attend the final Council on Terra and proposed the formation of a neutral body to oversee

communications. Of all the Star League agencies, it is the only one to survive to the modern day—as ComStar.

Nicoletta lived long enough to see her people free of the Star League's shackles but also to witness the horrors of the Succession Wars. She died peacefully in 2801, succeeded by her aggressive and unintelligent son Semyon.



CONQUERING THE HEGEMONY

All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing
—commonly attributed to Edmund Burke

Jus belli, ut qui vicissent, iis quos vicissent, quemadmodum vellent, imperarent
(It is the right of war for conquerors to treat those whom they have conquered according to their pleasure)
—Julius Caesar, Bellum Gallicum

27 December 2766 marks the Amaris Coup and the beginning of the conflict widely known as the Amaris Civil War, but neither were all of the pieces in place for Amaris to launch his coup immediately put into place, nor was the takeover of the Terran Hegemony completed in just a few days or even a few weeks. The assassination of Richard Cameron represented but one small, albeit significant, act in a decades-spanning tale of avarice, vengeance, betrayal and downfall.

ACHIEVING APOTHEOSIS

When Stefan Amaris, First Consul of the Rim Worlds Republic, initially met First Lord Richard Cameron in August 2753, the former certainly had intrigue on his mind. Though he could not yet have possibly conceived of his ultimate end-game, there is no doubt that he was hoping to ingratiate himself with the young First Lord to better his own position as well as that of his home nation. Almost certainly, he also harbored deep-seated feelings of resentment towards the ruling Cameron family and their Star League after two centuries of slights (both actual and imagined) aimed at his family and their Rim Worlds.

From that first moment, Amaris plied young Richard with gifts and recounted tales that emphasized the “divine right” of a leader rather than personal honor and integrity. Unfortunately, General Aleksandr Kerensky’s duties as Commanding General of the Star League Defense Force regularly took him across the stars, and even when he was on Terra, his additional duties as Regent prevented him from spending any significant amount of time with the otherwise mentor-less First Lord. With no close family to care for him, it was up to a long series of nannies and tutors to care for the orphaned Richard.

None were up to the task of caring for the spoiled brat that was Richard Cameron. General Kerensky had selected a more than capable and qualified security chief in the form of Major (later Colonel) Travis Coronado, who replaced a long string of caregivers for reasons ranging from corruption to incompetence to being mere sycophants. Most left simply because the young First Lord was too much for them to handle. At first, Coronado blocked much of Amaris’ access to Richard, seeing the Rim Worlds ruler as nothing more than another noble sycophant looking to curry the First Lord’s favor. But the security chief eventually realized that Amaris was apparently the only adult presence in Richard Cameron’s life both willing and able to contain the young man’s worst qualities. With Amaris around, Cameron buckled down and was eager to learn, and was especially fond of Amaris’ history lessons that seemed just right for preparing the young lord to rule the Star League.

TRUSTED ALLY

It was undoubtedly during this time that Amaris developed and refined his ultimate plan for conquest. He was a regular fixture in Richard Cameron’s household. Though still distrusted by the remote Kerensky and the aloof Star League Council Lords, to the royal household staff he was Richard’s only apparent hope of maturing into a responsible First Lord. To that end, the staff gave Amaris unfettered access, which he slowly turned on them. In the course of just a few years, he was able to place a number of individuals whose loyalties he had either purchased or suborned first into the household staff and then the Hegemony government, “recommending” them for open vacancies—many naturally opened by retirements or transfers, but more than a few that opened through underhanded dealings or mysterious deaths.

Likewise, Amaris began to control access to the First Lord, peddling audiences, appointments and special favors to those he felt he could use in the future. In this way, Amaris built a large cadre of allies within the Hegemony royalty and government. Though he never managed to suborn the members of the Star League Council in this way, neither did he need to; he had become the Hegemony’s Foreign Minister in all but name and would soon become the Hegemony’s virtual Prime Minister. After Colonel Coronado’s eventual promotion to the SLDF Headquarters, he was able to maneuver a Hegemony-born officer into the job who, though unwilling to give Amaris complete access to the First Lord’s security staff, gave the Rim Worlds leader far more latitude within Unity City and the Royal Palace than his predecessor had.

Behind the scenes, Amaris was the conduit to the First Lord, the individual that Hegemony government officials and royalty would propose new policies and legislations to, and whose support they would have to curry in order for Richard Cameron to give his approval. In return, Amaris would ask for what seemed like minor favors, such as the appointment of his allies to positions within the government or the awarding of choice contracts to his political allies—nothing outside of the “norm” of the day, and more than worth the price if it meant easier dealings with an increasingly tempestuous Richard Cameron.

That, too, was a product of Amaris’ machinations. The spoiled brat “matured” into a petulant teenager with a capricious streak and a mounting paranoia. Stories of his tantrums, and later of his plunge into a myriad of vices and degenerate behavior, leaked out of the Royal Palace—at first through Amaris’ agents, but soon enough by the growing number of disgruntled palace staff and government

officials that dealt with the young First Lord on a daily basis. These, in addition to stories of Richard's behavior within the Star League Council chambers, increasingly turned public sentiment both in the Hegemony and across the Star League against the First Lord and the whole Cameron family. Meanwhile Amaris, Richard's dutiful friend and only apparent ally, played both sides against each other, all the while increasing his own power base on Terra.

SYNCHRONICITY

As Amaris laid the groundwork for his grand conspiracy on Terra, his agents focused upon preparations within the Periphery, supplemented by the Schemer himself secretly meeting with the leaders of the Periphery's most powerful anti-Star League movements. His Rim Worlds secretly financed the raising of fifty full divisions of Periphery troops, specifically trained to resist the Star League Defense Forces. The 2760 Capellan-Suns crisis and the Star League Council's bitter in-fighting played right into Amaris' plan, drawing the attentions of Kerensky and every other critical opponent away from the Periphery.

By Richard Cameron's majority in 2762, all of the pieces were nearly in place. At Amaris' urging, Cameron had issued the disastrous Executive Order 156, and later dissolved the Star League Council through yet another one of many illegal executive orders, closely followed by the so-called Taxation Edict of 2763. The House Lords, of course, refused to accept Richard's edict, appealing its passage to the Star League Supreme Court, while both the Free Worlds League and Capellan Confederation threatened to withhold tax revenues until the Council was reconvened and could get back to governing the Star League.

Amaris made one final series of moves before springing his trap. He travelled to meet with General Kerensky, who was busy in the Periphery desperately trying to keep the peace. In his first and only apparent act of friendship, the Rim Worlder provided Kerensky information that would let the SLDF crush the Taurian Freedom Army, one of the largest and most violent Periphery resistance movements.

He then returned to Terra. Though he had indicated to Kerensky that he would "spend less time on Terra" with the First Lord, he told the First Lord that Kerensky had ordered him off of Terra. Amaris "accepted" this only because Richard no longer needed his counsel and the rebellion that was undoubtedly coming would require his full attention. Before he left, he put into place the last piece he needed—an agreement that pledged RWR troops to the defense of the Terran Hegemony in any time of crisis.

Amaris left Terra in July of 2764. Six months later, the Periphery was in outright armed rebellion. New Vandenberg and seventeen other Taurian worlds seceded from the Star League, and with the Star League Council still in a perpetual recess, Kerensky himself traveled to New Vandenberg at the head of a huge SLDF task force to put an end to the resistance. Instead, the Periphery erupted into violence as Amaris' secret divisions attacked.

By July of 2765, Kerensky was forced to mobilize the bulk of the First Army—assigned to the defense of the Terran Military Region—and deploy them to cover units moved out of the five surrounding Member-States. Because this would leave the Hegemony largely undefended in this time of crisis, he suggested that the Star League hire troops from "trusted" nations like the Federated Suns and Lyran Commonwealth to fill in the defensive gaps. Instead, Cameron replied that would not be necessary, that he had already signed a treaty with the Rim Worlds Republic which would provide for the Hegemony's defensive needs.

General Kerensky, and indeed the rest of the Star League Council, immediately objected, at least until word of the Battle of Götterdämmerung, in which twenty RWR regiments fearlessly repulsed the attack of a rebel 'Mech division—a battle later uncovered as an Amaris fabrication—spread across the Star League. Only Coordinator Takiro Kurita expressed any further objections, which were dismissed by his fellow distrustful Council Lords. And with Kerensky's attention still wholly upon the Periphery Rebellion, the general could not act before Rim Worlds troops began to stream into the Hegemony.

PERIPHERY LIBERATION MOVEMENT

In the years immediately preceding the Periphery Revolt and the Amaris Coup, scores of different Periphery independence movements sprouted up throughout the Inner Sphere, most of which were non-violent organizations consisting of peace-minded individuals who simply did not want to see war return to the stars. Of course, the majority of these, especially the largest and most organized, saw significant financial support—both covert and overt—come from the Periphery. More than a few, in fact, were initially organized by Periphery government agencies. The Periphery Liberation Movement, founded on Tamarind in the Free Worlds League, was one such organization that grew tremendously over the course of just a few years. At first simply opening propaganda offices on some of the League's major worlds, several large donations from anonymous League- and Hegemony-based benefactors allowed the PLM to expand into the Terran Hegemony, and with its messages of peace and tolerance, took hold among the many liberal-minded citizens within the Hegemony, especially for the growing throngs who viewed Richard Cameron as an incompetent looking only to prompt a war that would distract the Star League from his inability to govern as First Lord.

PLM-sponsored protest marches sprung up on scores of Star League worlds, targeting SLDF bases and Bureau of Star League Affairs (BLSA) facilities in the early 2760s. These were all peaceful demonstrations, though as they grew in frequency and size, more often than not SLDF and other security forces were called in to break them up. That suddenly changed in 2764, when nearly identical terrorist bombings struck twenty-seven different worlds in a total of some 300 different attacks—all in the name of the PLM. The PLM immediately denied and condemned these terrorist actions, which soon came in greater frequency and with rising civilians casualty counts. In 2765, PLM terrorist attacks struck more than a hundred Star League worlds, including some eighty within the Hegemony, prompting the Star League to declare it a terrorist organization and imprison its members, especially after the New Vandenberg Crisis. That only drew an even greater protest from the peaceful PLM members who had espoused their innocence from the first bomb blast, though that a number of PLM members began to violently resist their arrest incited a spiral of violent counters between the police forces and the PLM.

More than ten thousand Hegemony citizens were imprisoned at one time or another by the end of 2765

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because of their affiliation to the PLM, while tens of thousands more had their assets frozen and were under surveillance. Meanwhile, the terrorist attacks continued to target military and government facilities and even specific officials throughout 2766. The Hegemony's intelligence and police agencies were stretched thin trying to contain the PLM threat in the midst of a growing war in the Periphery. It was only natural then that they missed the massive plot aimed at Unity City and the rest of the Terran Hegemony.

Of course, the PLM was but one part of Stefan Amaris' grand plan—first creating a “wedge” issue within the Hegemony and then turning the ire of the average Hegemony citizen against the Periphery independents when the PLM's major funding was traced back to Magistracy, Outworlds and Taurian banks. Meanwhile, the PLM terrorist attacks eliminated a number of prominent officers and government officials that might stand in Amaris' way while also giving Rim Worlds troops an excuse to place additional “security” forces throughout the Hegemony—forces that jumped into action in the days after Christmas of 2766 to summarily put down any resistance to Amaris' coup.

—Andrea Palidowa, *Hidden Victims of the Amaris Crisis: A Thesis*, University of the Great Lakes, 3055

ARRANGING THE PIECES

Amaris moved quickly. By the end of November, he had moved some sixteen full divisions of his own loyal house troops into the Hegemony (though transportation manifests officially showed the arrival of only eight Rim Worlds divisions), and half again that number in additional mercenary troops—far outnumbering the mere eight divisions of SLDF forces still stationed within the Hegemony. Likewise, nearly his entire war fleet had relocated to the Hegemony, quietly taking up patrol routes or jump point defensive stations. Proudly painted in the colors of the SLDF and prominently displaying the Cameron Star—they were, after all, virtually part of the SLDF, albeit reporting through a liaison directly to the First Lord—to the average Hegemony citizen the Rim Worlders could only be identified by the subtle Amaris shark still adorning their 'Mechs, tanks, fighters and ships. The sudden appearance of so many foreign military men and women caused some alarm among those few Hegemony citizens they met, however.

For the most part, the Rim Worlders remained cloistered within the bases they were assigned so that they wouldn't cause that kind of panic. On Terra, one Rim Worlds BattleMech division and an equal number of mercenaries took up position within military bases across the planet, including the elite Fourth Amaris Dragoons occupying a vacant SLDF base just to the north of Unity City. Meanwhile, skeleton SLDF forces remained stationed within the Castles Brian on Terra.

On the typical Hegemony world however, Amaris' troops were able to take full possession of nearly every major military installation and further station quick response forces near most major government facilities—to ensure security should Periphery terrorism strike the heart of the Star League, of course. Additionally the Rim Worlders, some disguised as SLDF officers either liaising with the RWA troops or simply transferring into new assignments—complete with forged orders—were given virtual free run of some of the Hegemony's most critical defensive establishments, including many Space Defense System command centers.

As December of 2766 dawned, nearly every piece of Stefan Amaris' intricate plan was in place. He had but two final, yet vitally important, pieces yet to place. He was not yet on Terra, but had left Apollo in time to arrive to see his “old friend” Richard by Christmas. More critically, he had not yet dispatched his final orders to his commanders on each of the Hegemony's worlds. After years of hard training in both the reduction as well as the defense of Castles Brian, of the art of urban assault, and of putting down civil unrest, followed by a mass—and in many cases secret—mobilization to the Terran Hegemony, many of his troops had deduced the ultimate goal of this operation. But their commanders and their political officers were under strict orders to prevent any such seditious talk—or even fraternization with Hegemony citizens—all the while ruthlessly ensuring complete loyalty to Stefan Amaris.

When Amaris departed his Rim Worlds capital of Apollo, he did so behind a massive armada of ships to carry his final operational orders; he dared not send these, or any other related communications, through the HPG network. Hand-picked officers, accompanied by teams of elite commandos to ensure absolute loyalty, delivered these orders to each of the planetary commanders, briefing them on the specifics.

All was set to launch Operation APOTHEOSIS—the coup and assassination of Richard Amaris—on Christmas Day, 2766. When Amaris reached Terran orbit, though, an unexpected snow storm developed over the Puget Sound area, blanketing Unity City in snow and bringing nearly everything in the region to a halt, including air traffic. Stranded in orbit, the usually boisterous Amaris was strangely calm. As soon as the storm had cleared and he confirmed a 0900 (local time) audience with the First Lord, he recorded a holiday greeting for his troops—in actuality the “go” order—and sent it out at the highest priority via the HPG network. His APOTHEOSIS would occur at 1700 Terran Standard Time, 27 December 2766—as he was delivering his own Christmas present to First Lord Richard Cameron.

HEGEMONY BLACKOUT

Amaris' plan was, of course, nothing short of unthinkable audacious. To this point he had somehow maintained nearly complete security. His troops were poised to overwhelm the Star League defenders and ruthlessly take command of the Terran Hegemony even as he was seizing control from Richard Cameron. But for Operation APOTHEOSIS to fully succeed, Amaris needed to strike swiftly while somehow maintaining a blanket of secrecy over the entire Hegemony—any word leaking out of the Hegemony before his coup had succeeded could well bring the united strength of the five Great Houses as well as the SLDF down upon him.

It would be absolutely impossible to somehow prevent every broadcast station on each of the Hegemony's worlds from transmitting live reports of the coup's progress, but Amaris' forces did have the means of shutting down the HPG network within the Hegemony. And with the bulk of the Rim Worlds fleet operating within the Hegemony, Amaris could likewise limit the flow of interstellar traffic as well.



Each Hegemony world was assigned a special forces team, supported by an accompanying tech team, whose sole responsibility was to take command of its world's HPG station by any possible means. Their orders were first and foremost to ensure no distress messages were transmitted, but they were also tasked with keeping their stations online so that priority traffic could pass to and from the Rim Worlds' field commanders throughout the Hegemony. The particulars of these seizures were left to the individual team commanders, based on the unique situations on each world. In general, however, most HPG stations were guarded only by small contingents of lightly armed security troops—supplemented on many worlds by an additional detachment of Rim Worlds troops on “anti-terrorist” duty.

Rim Worlds commandos struck simultaneously on 146 of the Terran Hegemony's 147 worlds (including eighteen jointly controlled by the Hegemony and one of the other five Star League Member States) at 1600 TST—sixty minutes before the designated H-hour for APOTHEOSIS (only on Dieron did the local Rim Worlds commander, General Tolstin Eukai, fail to launch Operation APOTHEOSIS on time, with disastrous consequences to himself and his troops; see *Fortress Dieron*, p. 82 for additional details). Within the hour, 143 of those stations were in the hands of Amaris' troops, with all back on-line within twelve hours; on Acamar, Caph and New Dallas, the HPG transmitters were destroyed due to heavier than expected resistance.

Command of the Stars

Disabling the HPG network was the first step in bringing a communications blackout upon the Terran Hegemony. The next step, launched at H-hour minus 30 minutes, involved nothing short of seizing each and every standard jump point within the Terran Hegemony, in the process eliminating much of the SLDF's naval threat to the Republicans while also temporarily staunching the flow of interstellar traffic. This required the positioning of hundreds of WarShips and assault DropShips throughout the Hegemony and tens of thousands of trained marines to seize control of the many defense and recharge stations scattered across the Terran systems.

The majority of Amaris' WarShip fleet spread itself thin to cover the Hegemony's periphery, positioned to engage the known SLDF WarShips operating within the Hegemony, especially the large force stationed within the Terran system, while squadrons of military DropShips—supported by significant aerospace fighter forces—largely took charge of the Hegemony's other systems.

In general, this phase likewise progressed relatively smoothly. At the Hegemony jump points, Rim Worlds combat ships announced a state of emergency, ordering every ship to remain in place while heavy fighter screens patrolled the points, ostensibly searching for signs of terrorist activity. The fact that many recharge and defense stations suddenly “went dark” at the same time—due, of course, to the Republicans' machinations—convinced most civilian ships to comply with what they presumed were lawful orders. Republican ships in a

VOYAGE OF THE DAMNED

We was sitting at Dieron when the goons attacked. Damn good thing we was waiting on a coupl'a Droppers got delayed, 'cuz we had a full charge. Don't think we would'a made it outta Styx [their next destination system] if we'd already gone. That was the best damn delay we ever got stuck with!

We had a good seat for the show. The Amaris goons been gliding through the Hegemony for the past few months like they owned the place. We knew they was up ta somethin' but who knew this? They was just sitting [at the] nadir, all calm and peaceful, 'till they launched everything and OT'd [overthrust] at the Star Leaguers, leavin' behind a bunch of swifties [aero-space fighters] and gun-drops [armed DropShips] to wrangle us boomers [JumpShips, literally "K-F Boom"] and Droppers. My commo sez they 'casted a surrender order, but I sure didn't hear. I wasn't about to stay around, least 'till them swifties shot the hell outta a coupl'a boomers. We shut down good and watched the light show, hopin' they wouldn't just blow us outta the sky for grins when they was done.

But damn if them Leaguers didn't give it to the goons. Nose to nose, the Leaguers OT'd right down the goons' throats, throwin' fire out both broadsides. And the dumb goons just let 'em. I swear I even seen the goons hit each other more'n a few times while the Leaguers raked 'em. They took out two goon boats that way, which pulled the CAP off the rest of us. There wasn't but a coupl'a swifties left to guard us and I wasn't gonna wait around to see what happened. I told my nav to blind jump us out into the black [deep space]. It was risky but no way in hell I was gonna jump outta this fireball and into another one. There was just too many goon ships out there to roll the bones on.

Damn lucky we did, too. We had'ta burn a bunch of fuel to recharge off'a our engines out there in the deep, but worse case we brought two Droppers along with us and we could'a siphoned off'a them. It took a while to charge, but it also took my nav time to figure out where we was in the deep black. So from there we jumped to Fomalhaut and Northwind, keepin' outta the jump points and well off of the orbital plane so we didn't run into any goons. But it was all the same there too. The goons had taken over [those systems]. So I had my nav work up a course that would take us to the FedSuns. No way in hell I was gonna try the Combine, just in case! But a coupl'a jumps later, we ran into a Leaguer ship a few AU from us. We never saw them, least 'till they jumped right next to us. That was a tense coupl'a minutes, after which I had to change my breeches.

number of systems were nonetheless forced to disable and/or board ships that attempted to escape, easily justifying their actions by labeling those ships as terrorist threats. Amaris' naval crews disabled scores of JumpShips and DropShips, destroying a handful outright, though dozens more JumpShips were able to escape their systems, the great majority immediately finding themselves at another Amaris-controlled point.

While the Republicans secured most of the Hegemony's standard jump points bloodlessly in this way, several were not so easy. Battles erupted in the Errai and New Earth systems between Amaris task forces and heavily-defended SLDF supply convoys waiting to transport replacement equipment and troops to the Periphery fronts. At Errai, SLDF Commodore Justine Campos drove her six-WarShip detachment into the heart of a much heavier five-ship Rim Worlds task force; fresh from the front lines of the Periphery Uprising, her outgunned crews were more skilled than their Amaris opponents and eliminated them, though at the cost of four WarShips. Her two remaining ships lasted only ten minutes longer against the rest of the Rim Worlds DropShips and fighters securing the nadir, their sacrifice allowing the bulk of their transport ships—packed with critical war materiel and replacement troops—to escape, either by jumping out of the system or fleeing into deep space (where they would later rendezvous and jump away).

Fleet action at New Earth was even more desperate. New Earth was a major SLDF supply world, and a large convoy was still assembling and loading. Commodore Altran Serdamba commanded a convoy defense flotilla of one cruiser, four destroyers and nine corvettes, while Vice Admiral Dmitrios Rummolo, scheduled to receive his third star and take command of Ninth Fleet on the Magistracy front, was attached to the convoy—along with his flagship, the *Texas*-class SLS *Wales*, accompanied by one *Congress*-class and a pair of *Essex*-class destroyers, all four of which arrived from Terra just before Christmas. Waiting at the nadir point for the convoy to completely assemble, the combined escort force was pounced upon by a force of twenty Rim Worlds WarShips. Though no longer possessing overwhelming force, the Amaris ships nonetheless hoped to catch the SLDF convoy by surprise and eliminate them. Commodore Serdamba's ships were already preparing for a return to the Periphery though, and were performing combat zone drills when the Rim Worlds ships approached.

The Rim Worlds ships first targeted the SLS *Wales* and Commodore Serdamba's *Luxor*-class SLS *Van der Bergh*, immediately scoring a number of serious hits against the unawares SLS *Wales*. The *Van der Bergh* and Serdamba's other ships, already on alert and at combat stations because of the approaching Amaris ships, immediately returned fire, launching fighters at the same time as their opponents. Serdamba's ships screened Admiral Rummolo's squadron for several critical minutes while their crews raced to combat stations. Adding Rummolo's guns to the fray brought the fight to a more even level, where the SLDF crews' greater experience gave them the advantage. Still, it took more than thirty minutes to drive the Rim Worlds ships off, destroying or crippling fourteen ships at a cost of eight of their own. Still knowing only that the Rim Worlde ships launched a sneak attack upon them, Admiral Rummolo ordered Serdamba to jump to secure Nicholas Spacecraft's *Apollo-Four* shipyards, situated at a Lagrange point near the system's fifth world. Meanwhile, Rummolo's three surviving ships held off the Amaris ships at the jump point while they quick charged their drives. A day later, Rummolo's two surviving destroyers jumped to the *Apollo-Four* yards while Rummolo led thirteen military and government JumpShips out of the New Earth system to a secret SLDF naval base (see *Freedom Station*, p. 90).

Republican WarShips successfully engaged SLDF ships—all either lone ships or small formations of two or three, and every one fighting hard until the last against the Amaris invaders—at seventeen other standard system jump points, securing the Hegemony and setting the stage for the full coup. While these fleet actions quickly disabused most civilian crews of the notion that the Rim Worlde ships were acting to prevent terrorist attacks, the simple fact that massive naval melees were being fought all around them cowed most into remaining in place lest they become targets themselves. The job of eliminating the SLDF's naval presence within the Hegemony was far from complete however, which Amaris' admirals were soon to learn.

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BLOODY YULE ON TERRA

When Stefan Amaris finally walked into the royal palace through a thick blanket of snow just before 0900 on the morning of 27 December 2766, he had no idea whether the initial stages of Operation APOTHEOSIS had succeeded across the Terran Hegemony, or even if the Terran system itself had been secured. He knew only that the Terran HPGs (both the primary station in Geneva as well as the station in Tacoma that was dedicated to serving the SLDF headquarters and the Court of the Star League) had been secured, and that his troops on Terra had taken to the field “on exercise.” He simply had to trust that everything was in place.

He strode into First Lord Richard Cameron’s private chambers with a small contingent of his personal bodyguards and presented Cameron with his Christmas gift—the very laser pistol that Amaris shot him dead with minutes later.

BATTLE FOR UNITY CITY

Almost instantly alarms sounded throughout Unity City and the SLDF Headquarters. The Royal Black Watch Regiment, the First Lord’s personal bodyguard regiment, immediately jumped into action, as did the royal security detail. A weapon had been fired within the First Lord’s private chambers and the royal palace’s security force was under fire, triggering an automatic lock-down of Unity City. But while that was happening, charges set by Amaris’ agents in the weeks and months before the Coup exploded throughout the city (and all across Terra, in fact), further throwing the city into confusion. Fire and rescue crews responded to calls for assistance throughout Unity City while police and the SLDF attempted to lock down the Star League capital. The Black Watch battalion on duty moved to take up positions around the city, while the rest of the Black Watch mobilized from their base just south the capital. Meanwhile, SLDF troops still stationed in the nearby Mount Baker Castle Brian (often simply referred to as the Tacoma Castle Brian, after the nearby city) likewise initiated a complete mobilization.

Alarms were also ringing across the globe and in orbit. Terra was under siege. Acting on reports given by the standing fighter patrol over the city before it was shot down by an Amaris fighter squadron, Colonel Hanni Schmitt led a company of her Black Watch within Unity City swiftly to the north to meet the Fourth Amaris Dragoons, which were themselves moving quickly south towards Unity City from their own base. Meanwhile the rest of her battalion worked to secure the city. Seconds later, an atomic blast rocked the capital, destroying Fort Cameron, including its spaceport and the Black Watch barracks (along with its still-mobilizing MechWarriors), and seriously damaging the Citadel—the SLDF headquarters. The same Amaris fighters that delivered that atomic strike made three more strikes in the next five minutes, destroying the primary entrances to Mount Baker. The closest SLDF reinforcements were now at best hours away.

Amaris agents positioned throughout the city went to work while his personal bodyguard force sprung into action from Unity City Spaceport, where his DropShips had landed. A battalion of elite Rim Worlds BattleMechs scrambled to find and destroy the surviving Black Watch as two companies of mechanized Rim Worlds infantry rushed to reinforce the attackers at the royal palace. Amid the absolute chaos within the city, the two sides met each other dozens of times, sometimes engaging and other times misidentifying their opponent as one of their own. Within short order however, the palace became the primary battleground within the city.

But the Fourth Amaris Dragoons had the command of the air. They made constant strafing runs into the heart of Unity City, savaging the Black Watch ‘Mechs and organized police formations even as they reduced whole blocks of the once-proud Star League capital to rubble. At the same time, Colonel Schmitt had taken up station near the Gorst Flats, engaging the Fourth Amaris Dragoons at the only direct route they could take to Unity City.

Desperate Actions

Massively outnumbered, the Black Watch nonetheless held the advantage over the Amaris ‘Mechs, which had to compress their lines into a narrow strip of land between a Puget Sound inlet and a steep ridge. Colonel Schmitt and her mere eight comrades completely destroyed the Dragoons’ scouting company and laid waste to another before the Amaris troops halted their advance. The Star League MechWarriors continued to pour fire into the disrupted Amaris Dragoons, who attempted to climb the hill to flank the Black Watch. When that didn’t work, Fourth Dragoons commander Colonel Armstrong Duket called in air support to dislodge Schmitt and her ‘Mechs; desperate to reach the city before Star League reinforcements could arrive, Colonel Duket ordered a nuclear strike to wipe out the Black Watch when the first few strafing runs proved ineffective.

But the Leaguers just wanted to know who we were and what we knew. ‘Course that wasn’t much, but we gave ‘em the run down on what we seen. Then they told us the rest. Them goons had taken over the whole Hegemony and killed the little Dick [Richard Cameron], so [the SLDF] was watchin’ for an opening, I guess. Anyway, they recruited us. All me and my crew knew was the Hegemony, little Dick or not, and we wasn’t gonna let the goons ruin everything. ‘Least most’a us. One of our Droppers didn’t want anything to do with it, ‘long with a coupl’a my guys, so the Leaguers took ‘em and said they’d drop them with the Feddies or the Elsie.

The rest of us jumped to this place they called “Freedom Station”—some nameless system in the Epsilon-Terra Firma-Sheratan Triangle with a nice, bright “F” class star. Must’a been another twenty boomers there, ‘long with a few big Leaguer boats. They was watchin’ the goons from the edge of systems, and moving supplies and refugees around. It was dangerous work, and no pay to speak of, but at least it was something. So we joined in. And for the next ten years or so peeped on the goons and moved Droppers full of supplies to keep the resistance fighting while Kerensky beat the hell out of ‘em.

—Captain Kefochidon “Kif” Wong, *In Their Words: Destroying the Schemer Amaris*, Abraham Tarantino, ed., Dragon Technology Media, 2781

The second atomic blast to rock the outskirts of Unity City detonated at 0932, killing Schmitt and her eight MechWarriors holding the line (certainly along with a number of Amaris Dragoons MechWarriors caught in the blast radius) and effectively spelling the end of the Royal Black Watch Regiment. The few Black Watch MechWarriors that might have still been fighting within Unity City proper did not last much longer against the massed Amaris firepower. That left only the Unity City police force, now in complete disarray, and the First Lord's remaining security detail to defend the capital.

The situation at the Royal Palace was no less desperate. Stefan Amaris had locked himself within the First Lord's private chambers along with just the four bodyguards he'd been initially allowed to bring with him. Those four Amaris soldiers took charge of the palace's security systems and had held off the royal security force's every attempt to breach the heavily armored and secured room. But even the Star League's very best technology could not keep the chamber totally secure for very long. While the bulk of the royal guards secured the palace, an assault force took to the roof of the palace with jump packs, intending to breach the audience chamber from above. Controlling the palace's defensive turrets from inside Cameron's chambers, Amaris' guards did what they could to eliminate the royal guards, blasting many out of the sky as they jumped from rooftop to rooftop. That simply prompted the elite guards to take riskier low-angle approaches, where the turrets could not track them.

They reached the roof above the audience chamber just ten minutes after the alarm first sounded, but it was another twenty long minutes before they finally cut through the roof and several layers of armoring, all the while taking blistering fire from the growing throng of Amaris troops on the ground. Even the blinding flash and concussion wave from two different nuclear blasts just kilometers away only paused their efforts. At 0937, the guards on the roof lowered a satchel charge through the hole they had cut and detonated it, blowing out the wall housing the defense system controls and instantly killing two of Amaris' four bodyguards.

The royal guards immediately prepared another set of breaching charges that would expand the hole in the roof enough to enter the room when a series of explosions rocked the palace. A platoon of Amaris' elite mechanized infantry, accompanied by two BattleMechs, had finally broken through the SLDF and police forces in the city to reach the palace. They'd detonated their own breaching charges, following that up with a massive fusillade into the side of the building before driving one of their APCs into the midst of the gaping hole. Amid the flames and crashing rubble, the APC made it into the heart of the palace, disgorging a squad of shock troops that eliminated the royal guards attempting to breach the audience chamber's door. Minutes later, their emperor finally surrounded by a ring of heavily armed bodyguards, the Rim Worlds troops secured the rest of the royal palace and were well on their way to locking down the entirety of Unity City.

Fall of the Citadel

Fort Cameron, Unity City's SLDF garrison base and home to the SLDF headquarters known as the Citadel, was destroyed in the opening minutes of the Coup. The majority of the Royal Black Watch Regiment and its reinforced fighter wing were wiped out in the nuclear blast, while dozens of military and government DropShips were similarly destroyed or seriously damaged. The massive thirty-story black pillar that was the Citadel was rocked by the blast but stood firm—the Rim Worlders' atomic strike was meant to cripple the spaceport and destroy Unity City's defenders, while the fortress itself was designed to survive multiple tactical nuclear strikes as well as bombardment from orbit.

The occupants of the Citadel were nonetheless shaken, with scores killed after being flung into furniture or walls by the shock, or by flying debris. Moments later, a handful of explosions rocked the interior of the Citadel. Though the SLDF HQ was one of the only military facilities where Rim Worlds "augmentee" personnel were not allowed to serve, a small contingent of RWA officers were allowed access to coordinate security activities for Amaris' "visit" to Terra; four of these officers detonated suicide bombs smuggled in, damaging the Reagan SDS control center and the Intelligence Fusion Center (the latter responsible for coordinating all domestic intelligence gathering efforts). Meanwhile General Tomohiro Musuibes, SLDF Chief of Staff and senior officer within the Terran Hegemony, died when RWR Liaison Major General Elena Crosata stabbed him with a poison pen, though not before mortally wounding his attacker.

Amid the chaos, SLDF Major General R.J. Emedolu—senior officer on duty within the SLDF's Command and Information Center (CIC, the SLDF command post on Terra)—began to put the pieces together. Though the nuclear strike had temporarily knocked most communications systems off line, it did also trigger an automatic sealing of the Citadel. As communications with other Terran commands came on line and emergency alerts were received, it was clear that Terra was under attack, and soon enough also clear that the Rim Worlds Republic was responsible. From inside the Citadel, there was little he and the rest of the SLDF could do to resist Amaris' invasion, but the Star League forces in Unity City were being quickly overwhelmed.

General Emedolu ordered a Call to Arms—the arming of every one of the thousands of SLDF personnel on-duty within the Citadel—as well as a Priority Evacuation—the evacuation of the dozens of senior (three star) general officers and their most critical staff from Terra. Though occasionally practiced, neither of these "last ditch" actions had ever been fully accomplished, and certainly never together; with the Citadel staff already overwhelmed, these orders only added to the confusion. Nevertheless General Halyna Idoko, Director of the Administrative Command and first senior general to reach the CIC, confirmed those orders. maglev trains within the Citadel's lowest levels were readied to transport the SLDF High Command away from the capital, first to Fort McKenna through tunnels under the Puget Sound and then another fifty kilometers south to Mount Baker.

Meanwhile SLDF engineers from inside the Citadel as well as those that survived the nuclear strike on Fort Cameron automatically jumped into action, clearing the spaceport's taxiways and runways of debris and temporarily patching holes—despite many facing certain death sentences from radiation poisoning. Their sacrifices paid off; concentrating on SLDF resistance within Unity City and Fort McKenna, the Rim Worlds air cover and ground forces completely ignored what they assumed was a nuclear wasteland. Twenty-three fighters and seven assault ships emerged from the Citadel's underground hangars to take to the skies while forty-two BattleMechs deployed on the ground—many piloted by senior SLDF staff officers who kept vehicles at the headquarters so they could maintain their ratings.

This renewed—and completely unexpected—counterattack threw Amaris' troops into confusion. Two Rim Worlds fighter squadrons were destroyed in the first few minutes by the better armed and more skilled SLDF pilots, who immediately assumed aerial supremacy over the Puget Sound region, forcing the Rim Worlds onto the defensive. The Citadel's 'Mech battalion took advantage as best they could, streaming into Unity City in double-lance formations in an effort to reach the royal palace and rescue the First Lord (there was still no word on his condition), destroying every Rim World 'Mech and tank they could find.

Their actions brought the nearly full surviving strength of the Fourth Amaris Dragoons directly into Unity City and the remains of Fort Cameron, giving the Rim Worlds Republicans overwhelming local superiority but also making them easier targets for the Star League fighters. Coupled with a strong defense at the Citadel, General Emedolu was able to evacuate most of the SLDF senior leadership while at the same time building a complete picture of Amaris' invasion. And when it became obvious that the SLDF on Terra was outclassed and outnumbered by Amaris' "augmentee" force, Intelligence Command personnel began to "sanitize" the Citadel—destroying all classified materials that might be of use to the Republican forces.

The brave stand of the Citadel's defenders bought the SLDF on Terra the critical time it needed to evacuate some of its most key officers to Mount Baker, followed by several waves of non-combat personnel from both the Citadel and the beleaguered Fort McKenna, now under assault by the Ninth Amaris Dragoons. When Fort McKenna finally became too hotly contested, General Emedolu ordered the maglev tunnel sealed and flooded, choosing to hold out with several hundred fellow SLDF soldiers and direct things as best as possible until the Amaris troops eventually destroyed the Citadel.

Before that happened, the surviving SLDF High Command at the Mount Baker Castle Brian made a risky and controversial decision (one that many Terrans later derided): to evacuate seven of the nine High Command members accounted for on Terra. They launched separately from drop-pads secreted within the Mount Baker complex during the air melee over the Puget Sound (and calling upon assistance from SLDF WarShips still in orbit and from surviving fighter units over North America); two were shot

down in the melee (with a third, carrying General Aslan Lybekk, Director of the Quartermaster Command, taking serious damage and crash landing in central Canada). Of the four that made it to orbit, two more were lost after the WarShip they docked with was destroyed. The final two officers, General Sergey Araujo (Director of the JAG Command) and General Kim Hyong Suk (Director of the Rep-Dep Command) escaped Terra (see *Struggle for the Terran System*, below). General Tamerlan Stefannson, Director of the Royal Command and the senior surviving officer on Terra, ordered (through the Citadel) all surviving SLDF personnel to "...resist the Usurper Stefan Amaris and his malevolent thugs at all costs" (the first time the term "Usurper" was applied to Amaris).

It was only time before the Republican forces gained the upper hand within Unity City and Fort McKenna. They convinced many defenders to surrender after Stefan Amaris himself broadcast a message threatening to kill First Lord Richard Cameron unless resistance ended. Those that did surrender did not last long, however; many were summarily executed for their "crimes" against the Terran Hegemony and its new leader, while others were forced to perform acts such as lowering the Star League flag and replacing it with Amaris' personal flag or even digging their own graves before being shot.

The Citadel itself held out for a full day, surviving dozens of ground assaults and one more nuclear strike before a Republican WarShip squadron rained down an hour-long orbital barrage that finally leveled the building, turning the rubble remains of Fort Cameron into a crater (in the process throwing a huge amount of radioactive debris into Terra's atmosphere, causing radiation alerts throughout the Puget Sound region, across the Cascade Mountains and well into the North American High Plains). Mount Baker would remain a thorn in Amaris' side for some time to come, however.

Attack and Counter

At 1700 TST, the rest of Humanity's homeworld was plunged into the same chaos as was the Star League capital, though in most cases not to the same bloody extent. Republican soldiers and undercover agents alike sprung into action across the globe, targeting military and government facilities in an effort to quickly and as bloodlessly as possible seize power. At SLDF bases all across Terra, the Republicans used a mix of bombs and chemical and biological agents to kill and subdue as many Star League MechWarriors, soldiers and pilots as possible; tens of thousands of SLDF personnel died in the course of just a few minutes around the world. Where terrorist actions alone could not eliminate the SLDF threat, Republican forces stormed bases and facilities, indiscriminately destroying everything in their paths.

Within every major city, too, Republican forces—typically infantry squads, perhaps supported by a single armored vehicle or a rare BattleMech—took up key positions to cut off any possible police or SLDF reserve interference in the coup. They occupied government buildings—both Hegemony and local agencies alike—holding unsympathetic government leaders hostage and threatening, or actually using, violence to convince them to submit.

Battles between the Republican invaders and Terran defenders, including SLDF troops as well as miscellaneous groups of police, reservists and common citizens, broke out in cities and communities all across the planet. The heaviest action centered upon the largest of SLDF bases as well as Hegemony capital of Geneva. There, the Royal First Swiss Cavalry Regiment fought bitterly for hours against the Eighty-fifth Amaris Fusiliers and Seventeenth Amaris Legionnaires, neither of which had been able to infiltrate the Geneva SLDF base. Ultimately calling down orbital strikes from two SLDF ships, the First Swiss was able to deliver heavy losses to the two Republican regiments, which were ordered to take the Hegemony capital intact. The eventual arrival of elements from the mercenary Greenhaven Gestapo and the Second Legion of Fire finally allowed the Amaris troops to unseat the Swiss Cavalry and ultimately to take the Hegemony Government complex.

Terra's twenty Castles Brian were likewise primary targets, sixteen of which fell to the Republicans that day. Most were easy pickings after gas and bombing attacks neutralized a

majority of the combat troops stationed within the fortresses, leaving the non-combat personnel frightened, confused and overwhelmed by Republican assault forces. In addition to Mount Baker, four additional Castles Brian were of particular import as they contained back-up Space Defense System command centers: Magadi in Kenya, Manaus in Brazil, Takayama in Japan, and White Cliffs in New Zealand. The Republican attackers eliminated all four through a combination of nuclear attacks, precise orbital strikes and internal sabotage.

Just as Mount Baker remained a thorn in Amaris' side, so too did Katmandu in Nepal, Sandhurst in the British Isles and Sverdlovsk in Russia. Nuclear attacks and orbital strikes did little damage to Katmandu, which held but a single battalion each of 'Mechs and mountain infantry; those SLDF soldiers and MechWarriors harassed Republican forces across Asia from their Himalayan base of operations throughout the occupation of Terra. The Sandhurst Castle Brian, reinforced by the cadets and staff of the Royal Sandhurst Military Academy, occupied the Republicans for weeks, though the limited expanse of the British Isles gave the defenders



little room to maneuver once Amaris' commanders concentrated additional forces there. Sverdlovsk required more than twenty nuclear strikes to reduce, though its garrison melted into the Russian expanse to carry on the resistance rather than be destroyed within its tunnels and bunkers.

While Terra's twenty Castles Brian were certainly the focus of the ground battle on the first day, hundreds if not thousands of smaller pockets of resistance sprouted across the face of the planet as Amaris collaborators and Republican invaders alike moved to secure control of Terra's major cities and districts. Tens of thousands of SLDF personnel—most non-combat support personnel—assigned to various bases and offices across Terra took up arms against the Usurper's army, as did many more reserve and retired SLDF personnel along with countless police and private citizens. As most military centers and large police stations were already guarded or otherwise neutralized, these *ad hoc* bands of defenders organized at local clubs, schools or even homes to strike out at the Republican invaders and their allies. Without access to heavy anti-Mech and anti-armor weapons however, they could do little more than strike out at isolated Rim Worlder groups or ambush larger forces. Still, the combined experience and ingenuity of Terra's unorganized defenders managed to disable or destroy a combined total of more than two regiments of armor and 'Mechs in the first few days.

Likewise, while Amaris' troops specifically targeted every SLDF academy and training base, they failed to account for the many private military academies. Schools like the Citadel in South Carolina, the North African Academy in Tripoli, and the People's United Collective University in Nanjing—all with long loyalist histories—sent their corps of cadets into the field, armed with 'Mechs and tanks owned by the academies themselves. The sudden appearance of these strong, if green, forces in supposedly pacified regions caused even more confusion among the Republican invaders, who called upon their already overtaxed aerospace fighter squadrons to help put down the resistance. This drew much-needed aerospace support away from the critical battles in Terran orbit and around major Republican objectives, like Unity City, to hunt down loyalist forces that made hit-and-run attacks before fading into the countrysides when Republican fighter support finally appeared.

STRUGGLE FOR THE TERRAN SYSTEM

The Battle for Terra encompassed far more than the actions of Republican ground forces and their fighter cover. Before Amaris could truly claim Terra, his forces would have to defeat significant SLDF naval presence within the Terran system.

The battle began just as it did in every other Hegemony system: at the two standard jump points. Here, as in many other systems, Republican preparations began months earlier with the insertion of covert agents and then the replacement of SLDF marine presence with Rim Worlds "augmentees" at the system recharge and defense stations. Terra's stations (Versailles at the zenith and Brandenburg at the nadir) were not under military purview but instead were

civilian-controlled, giving the Republicans the opportunity to move large occupation forces onto both stations under cover as naval crews on holiday furlough.

At the appointed time (in the case of the Terran system, H minus 30), the Republican assault forces (after arming themselves from caches secreted within cargoes moved onto the stations) launched a lightning attack, supported by the detonation of charges at critical points (to cut off potential counterattack or to seal specific areas to be cleared later). Each station's command center fell within minutes.

That freed the Republican fleet to focus upon the SLDF naval presence at each point. The defense stations were quickly neutralized by Rim Worlds marines, who utilized a combination of sabotage and direct assault to remove the greatest threat to the Republican ships as well as the local control nodes for the SDS ships assigned to the jump points. Republican WarShips and fighters meanwhile used scores of nuclear missiles to disable and destroy dozens of SLDF ships. Nevertheless, both jump points turned into massive free-for-alls that saw the surviving SLDF ships and fighters engage the numerically superior Republicans while dozens of JumpShips jumped away and many more DropShips fled in all directions. It was only a matter of time before the Rim Worlds fleet secured Terra's two jump points, however.

The next phase began at H minus 5, when Republican WarShip squadrons jumped to pirate points within short distances of Terra and both Columbus Station and the Ian Cameron Shipyards (the former near Mars and serving as the SLDF naval headquarters within the Terran system, the latter Terra's primary shipyard). Combined with RWA WarShips already on-station nearby (as well as at Mars and Venus), they created a local numerical superiority, which the Republican immediately took advantage of.

At both Mars and Venus, Republican ships used select nuclear strikes and orbital bombardments to destroy critical targets (such as the SLDF HPG station on Mars) and military formations. At Columbus Station, the Republicans likewise used nuclear weapons to cripple docked Star League WarShips; of the sixteen docked WarShips, only two were able to slip their moorings before being destroyed. Those two joined together with seven other ships "parked" nearby to oppose the Republicans, but as all were critically short of manpower (their crews largely on holiday furlough) they did not last long.

The Cameron Shipyards was a prime Republican target, but for a different reason. Seventeen SLDF WarShips were moored there undergoing major work while a dozen more were in various stages of construction (not to mention the many more JumpShips and DropShips being built or maintained). Here Amaris' commanders held their fire, save for a handful of warning shots and precisely targeted shots that destroyed defensive turrets, instead employing a fleet of small craft to land marines. The shipyards fell in less than an hour's time, with only thirty-nine Republican assaulters losing their lives (mostly to accidents, especially with breaching charges).

LAST STAND OF THE GRAND OLD QUEEN

The TAS *Dreadnought* was perhaps the most famous WarShip in human history, or at least since humanity's colonization of the stars began. Constructed in a wild era of expansion and political turmoil, the *Dreadnought* and her sister ships were designed to project Terra's power throughout the stars. But before they could do so, they were literally the vessels by which Admiral James McKenna eliminated the corrupt and incestuous structure that was the Terran Alliance, forming the Terran Hegemony in its place.

As the very first capital WarShip constructed by man, the *Dreadnought* became the template by which every other WarShip was designed and judged. And as James McKenna's flagship—at least until the first *Black Lion*-class battle cruiser (designed by McKenna himself and progenitor to the modern vessel of the same name) debuted—the *Dreadnought's* many demonstrations of power throughout the stars brought dozens of wayward planets back under Terra's hegemony.

The THS *Dreadnought* (redesignated, of course, after the formation of the Terran Hegemony) served its nation admirably for more than two and a half centuries, earning more battle stars and kill awards than any other WarShip in service. At the same time, she also suffered the highest number of casualties of any Hegemony ship, sustaining crippling damage in many of her battles, including a nearly-catastrophic fire during an early Age of War battle near Cylene, triggered when a disabled Combine fighter made a *kamikaze* run into the *Dreadnought's* port landing bay. Over the course of her service life, she spent a grand total of almost four decades in dock, repairing battle damage and undergoing service life extensions.

By the time of the Star League's formation in 2571, three of the seven *Dreadnoughts* had been lost or scrapped, while the remaining four were rapidly approaching the end of their service lives. The last of more than a dozen lifetime upgrades were made to three of the ships in the 2550s and 60s, with only the *Dreadnought* remaining when the Star League Accords were signed; Shandra Noruff-Cameron, Commanding General of the newly formed Star League Defense Force, decided to cancel the *Dreadnought's* final upgrade, instead assigning all four surviving *Dreadnoughts* to the reserve fleet.

While her three remaining sister ships were reactivated during the Reunification War, serving with some distinction during the war before their final retirements from service in 2602, the SLS *Dreadnought* became the cornerstone of the Luna Air, Space and Stars Museum. Floating in orbit above the sprawling museum complex on Luna's face, the *Dreadnought* became a curious

cross between museum piece and military showpiece. While many of her cargo bays had been converted to showcases for notable artifacts from humanity's race to the stars, she remained on the SLDF rolls, crewed solely by SLDF personnel—albeit personnel typically on their final tours before retirement, including her commanding officer, always a retiring SLDF rear admiral. The *Dreadnought's* crew maintained the ship in pristine condition, though many battle scars were evident to anyone who visited the ship. The *Dreadnought* even supported a demonstration wing that flew a variety of vintage fighters and craft during special shows and historical events.

When Amaris attacked Terra, his invaders paid only cursory attention to Luna, using nuclear weapons to destroy the two largest SLDF bases on the moon. They completely ignored the *Dreadnought* however, assuming it was merely a museum piece. Rear Admiral Martin Castillo ordered his crew to battle stations as soon as they detected the first nuclear explosions on Luna, but with only limited fuel bunkers and ammunition stores, they could not aid in the battle for Terra. The *Dreadnought* took on survivors from the moon bases and civilian refugees fleeing the chaos on Luna as she moved to and docked with the orbiting Tranquility Base to refuel, watching for hours as the battle over Terra unfolded.

Admiral Castillo broke orbit some eighteen hours after the battle started, escorting dozens of civilian DropShips away from Terra to Jupiter, stopping at the Deep Range Gunnery Station to rearm before jumping away from the Terran system at a pirate point—carrying thousands of passengers transferred from the civilian DropShips. The *Dreadnought* jumped from system to system, watching from the edges to gauge the Republic's strength before hitting the least defended jump point to eliminate the Republican invaders and, more importantly, allow as many civilian ships to escape as possible.

This went on for nearly three weeks, with the *Dreadnought* amassing a civilian fleet of almost thirty JumpShips and over sixty DropShips. By the time Admiral Castillo's "fleet" reached Wyatt, their luck finally ran out. Ambushed by a heavy Republican squadron, the *Dreadnought* nonetheless held out for nearly thirty minutes of withering fire before losing her engines, jump drive and most of her turrets. Admiral Castillo apparently ordered the ship scuttled, its magazines all exploding at the same time. Though the battle left no survivors from the *Dreadnought*, the civilian fleet, watching from the edge of the system, jumped finally into Lyran space, bringing with them the tales of Amaris' ruthlessness and the courage of the *Dreadnought's* crew.

The battle over Terra was another matter completely. The SLDF had a significant naval presence in and around Terra's orbit, which included five orbital defensive stations, two squadrons of WarShips, dozens of DropShips, numerous fighter squadrons and most especially a large contingent of SDS WarShips. This, in addition to several orbital transfer stations and a multitude of civilian DropShips and shuttles operating constantly in near-Earth orbit. The sheer number of potential targets and armed opponents was daunting, to say the least.

The arrival of the Rim Worlds WarShips at a Terran pirate point was confusing and potentially threatening, but not altogether unimaginable to the SLDF space traffic controllers. After all, they

were a part of the Hegemony garrison now, and military use of pirate points in emergencies and during exercise was a regular practice. By the time the first nuclear detonations were recorded just minutes later, it was too late. Two of Terra's defensive stations were instantly obliterated. Likewise, the Republican attack immediately took two SLDF WarShips out of play. The Rim Worlders were unable to take out all of their primary targets however, and that left them at a disadvantage despite their numerical superiority.

Three of the SLDF orbital defensive stations were still operational: the Metz, undamaged and in geosynchronous orbit over Terra's Eastern Hemisphere, as well as the Sumter and the Messina, both in low-Earth polar orbits and heavily damaged by

Republican nuclear strikes. Additionally, the SLS *Star League*, the First Lord's command ship, and the SLS *Enterprise*, the command ship for the SLDF High Command (both *McKenna*-class battleships), plus their two respective WarShip escort squadrons, were also in orbit, along with several other ships. Though many of the Star League WarShips were operating with skeleton crews, those that were left undamaged in the first salvo, including the two command groups, turned to face the multitude of attackers. Unfortunately, the SLDF's most potent defensive measure could not be employed; with the Citadel and each of the backup SDS command centers offline, the Space Defense System could not be ordered into action against the Rim Worlds ships in Terran orbit.

The result was nothing less than an eighteen-hour series of tremendous dogfights fought in both low- and high-Earth orbits, with hundreds of civilian ships already in space—along with hundreds more that launched to escape the chaos on Terra—caught in the middle. The Rim Worlds fleet held the advantage in number, but the SLDF had the clear advantage in training. Unfortunately, the Star League fleet was hampered by a definitive breakdown in the chain of command; Vice Admiral Constance Peterson, commanding the SLS *Star League* and its escorts, split her ships between supporting combat operations around both Unity City and Geneva, hoping to rescue the First Lord and members of the Star League and Hegemony governments. Meanwhile Vice Admiral Santiago Mroczkiewicz and the SLS *Enterprise*'s group at first directly engaged the Republican ships, but later refocused their efforts upon supporting the evacuation of the Citadel during a critical hour, while Major General Gruber tried to direct what he could while seeing only half of the battle (and remaining well out of range of most combat from high geostationary orbit).

The first hour of battle saw the Star League forces eliminate almost half of the Republican WarShips while taking only a few losses of their own, but things began to fall apart by about 1800 TST, when Admiral Peterson's squadron shifted from directly engaging the Republican ships to providing orbit-to-surface support, in the process splitting her WarShip squadron into two smaller groups. Admiral Mroczkiewicz and General Gruber continued the fight, coordinating as best they could, destroying Rim Worlds flagship, the RWS *Stefan Amaris*, and three of its escorts over the Pacific Ocean as they attempted to eliminate Admiral Peterson's ships above Unity City. Peterson and the *Star League* were lost in that battle.

Shortly thereafter, by about 1910 TST, Admiral Mroczkiewicz received orders from the Citadel instructing her to support the evacuation of the High Command; that kept many of her ships anchored over the Unity City region, drawing even more fighters from the ground and DropShips and WarShips from orbit into the fray. The evacuation operation ran behind schedule, with the DropShips from Mount Baker finally lifting off after 2000 TST; by that time, half of the *Star League*'s escort had been destroyed and the *Enterprise*'s group was down to itself, a *Black Lion* and a *Sovetskii Soyuz*, while the rest of its squadron focused upon Republican threats in higher orbit. Only two DropShips survived the launch

from Mount Baker to dock with the SLS *Kharkov*, which immediately broke orbit with the *Enterprise* and the *Black Lion*-class SLS *Theodor Logan* and burned towards the nearest LaGrange jump point.

The concentration of so many SLDF ships over the Pacific Northwest for so long allowed the Republicans to focus on eliminating the Messina and Sumter stations before turning towards the heavy ship concentrations over the Western Hemisphere, ignoring the Metz for the time being. The withdrawal of the three-ship *Enterprise* group at about 2040 TST effectively ended the WarShip battle in low orbit for the time being, though the aerospace battle there and in high atmosphere continued on for hours longer.

As soon as the *Kharkov* was safely away, the *Enterprise* and *Logan* turned about to rejoin the fight. By that time, Republican forces on the ground had managed to take command of several ground-based SDS batteries and bring them on-line. Though their fire was wildly inaccurate, it was enough to destroy two of the *Star League*'s escorts, a pair of *Congress*-class frigates that had been firing upon Republican forces in and around Geneva. The *Enterprise* and *Logan* rendezvoused with the Metz briefly before leading an attack squadron into the heart of the surviving Rim Worlds fleet, now holding in low orbit over Eastern Europe, where they were supported by three European SDS batteries under Republican control.

Over the course of the next sixteen hours, the SLDF ships destroyed every Republican WarShip in Terran orbit, but at the cost of nearly their entire complement. The *Enterprise* died after suffering numerous heavy hits from ground batteries. The *Logan* and five other WarShips survived the battle, rendezvousing with the Metz to lick their wounds, only to be finally destroyed on 29 December at 2127 TST, less than a day after eliminating the last *Amaris* WarShip over Terra, by the massed fleet of every surviving Republican WarShip in the system.

A mere four Rim Worlds WarShips survived the battle for the Terran system, all heavily damaged. Likewise, every defensive platform in Terran orbit was destroyed or seriously damaged. For the first time in centuries, the Terran system was left nearly defenseless, though the surviving SLDF navy within the Hegemony did not realize that for several weeks, by which time the Republicans had moved additional ships into the system while reactivating several more captured at the Ian Cameron Shipyards.

TERRA "PACIFIED"

Despite the battles still raging across the face of Terra as well as above it, Stefan Amaris addressed the world at 1800 TST the next day from the royal palace. The seal of the First Lord had been replaced by his own family crest. Likewise, the Cameron family colors were gone, with the flags of the Amaris family flanking the Usurper as he stood at what clearly was the First Lord's podium. Addressing the people of Terra, with a number of prominent nobles and government officials standing to his flanks, he announced that he had "...ended the tyranny of the Cameron dictators... return[ing] the [Terran] Hegemony to its people."

Reaction among Terra's citizens was mixed. The members of the Star League Defense Force, along with countless private citizens, had stood unsuccessfully against the Usurper, many losing their lives in the process. Republican regulars, bolstered by mercenaries transported in secret to Humanity's homeworld as well as the police departments and security forces loyal to the many nobles and officials whose own loyalties Amaris had suborned or outright purchased, were standing vigil outside city halls and community centers around the world. In the regions where they had already neutralized armed resistance they were there to "maintain order" while elsewhere Amaris and his mouthpieces declared they were "facilitating the peaceful transfer of power from the dictatorial Cameron lackeys."

With the details of the coup still confused—the death of First Lord Richard Cameron had not even yet been announced, and rumors of the nuclear devastation visited upon Unity City's surrounds were only just beginning to leak out (quickly discounted by many who saw Amaris speaking from the clearly "intact" royal palace)—Richard Cameron's loudest detractors hailed Amaris as the Hegemony's "savior." The common citizens were of course caught in the middle, the great majority choosing to take the cautious path before passing judgment. Unfortunately, that was all Amaris needed to truly seize and consolidate power on Terra.

Amaris controlled the dominant military force on the planet, with some five brigades of regulars and mercenaries deployed all over Terra. On the other hand, the SLDF's 191st Royal BattleMech Division, responsible for Terra's defense, had been nearly wiped out by Republican action over the course of but a single day. Many of its survivors, such as Captain Elizabeth Hazen and five of her Royal Black Watch comrades who somehow escaped the devastation of Fort Cameron, took to the wilds to regroup and plan their counterattacks. These wildly scattered bands would soon become the genesis of the Terran resistance movement, though for the time being they could do little more than watch as Amaris consolidated power, hoping beyond hope that General Kerensky would somehow return to evict the Usurper before more blood was needlessly shed.

COMETH HELL'S LEGIONS

Without a doubt, Terra was the lynchpin in Stefan Amaris' grand plan, the one world that he and his armies absolutely had to take in order for the coup to succeed. Terra was just one of 147 inhabited systems within the Terran Hegemony however, with many of the rest also possessing significant SLDF forces. Eight full divisions of Star League troops, plus the bulk of First Fleet, scores of other WarShips (many, but not most, laid up for maintenance), tens of thousands of Star League troops currently in training, millions more SLDF support personnel, and of course reserve or militia units on every world still remained within the Hegemony, all potentially able to oppose the coup.

Standing against them were Amaris' twenty-four divisions—three full armies—supported by a fleet of some three hundred WarShips. The Republicans were well-entrenched and in many

cases well-hidden. As on Terra, they were able to catch the existing SLDF garrisons completely by surprise, though they were also able to occupy most of the SLDF's Castles Brian and other major bases well in advance of the coup than on Terra, considerably easing their efforts on many worlds.

At 1700 TST, 27 December 2766, Republican commanders in the Hegemony's other 146 systems ordered their forces into action. Just as with their initial attacks on Terra, they triggered chemical, biological and high explosive weapons secreted within facilities across the Hegemony to immediately kill tens of thousands of Star League military and government personnel (wounding many times more), directly attacking with their own 'Mechs, tanks, infantry and fighters only where they could not successfully employ their terrorist tactics. Confusion reigned throughout the Hegemony. In this way the Republican invaders eliminated the majority of the SLDF's standing defense force within minutes. By the end of the first hour, Republican troops had occupied or completely destroyed nearly every large SLDF base and further were occupying or had otherwise "secured" the largest population centers on the majority of Hegemony worlds.

The Republicans were not immediately victorious on every world, however. There was quite a bit of distrust of the Rim Worlders among the SLDF High Command, a feeling which carried over into many of the offices and units remaining still in the Hegemony. The Republicans did not have absolute *carte blanche* everywhere they deployed, and as a result faced at least some amount of armed resistance on most Hegemony worlds. They did possess numerical superiority however, allowing them to secure the capitals and primary SLDF bases on most worlds by the end of the first day.

On a handful of worlds the Republicans found they could not use terrorist methods to eliminate their opponents, or did not possess either a clear advantage or even the initiative.

THE BATTLE FOR CAPH

As one of the many gems of the Terran Hegemony, Caph was a prime target for Stefan Amaris. Just one jump away from Terra itself, it was one of the oldest and most populous inhabited worlds in the Inner Sphere. It possessed numerous SLDF bases, though its prime contributions came from its extensive technology industry backed up by perhaps the strongest academic research system in the Hegemony. The world was also something of an evolutionary curiosity, in many ways resembling Terra in its Jurassic era, though centuries of industrial development had driven the "wilds" further and further from the population centers. Nevertheless, special barriers had been constructed around the many outlying cities and communities bordering Caph's wilds to keep the worlds numerous and deadly dinosaur species at bay.

Like many of the Hegemony's worlds, Caph looked an easy target to Republican operational planners, who detailed just two regiments to accomplish the task of seizing the world. Amaris' 118th Dragoons took possession of Caph's four Castles Brian in November, while the mercenary Salazar's Irregulars snuck onto the world and prepared in secret for the start of Operation APOTHEOSIS. What they

did not expect was the arrival of the newly-formed 3378th and the 3381st Special Forces Battalions, or three additional battalions of newly graduated infantrymen, all of whom were scheduled for three months of training on Caph before deploying to the Periphery.

Arriving in early December, these Star League troops deployed in company and battalion formations across the planet in different cities and regions for a week or two before swapping locations with another unit. The special forces troops remained largely outside of the cities, though with the Christmas celebration, Major Derjan Sefik brought the 3378th into the capital of New Brunnel for a brief furlough. So when the Republicans began what appeared to be a training deployment on the 26th, Major Sefik took the opportunity to task his battalion with shadowing the Republicans and setting up simulated ambushes. He became concerned when the Republicans took up critical posts within the capital city however, and redeployed his own men to quickly

counter any threatening moves they might make. The 3378th was thus nearby when Republican commandos attempted to seize the HPG station, countering the assault and intercepting the Rim Worlder reinforcements within New Brunnel.

The battle for the capital raged for most of the day. The Republican invaders destroyed the HPG when they couldn't seize the station, moving on to secure the capitol and other government buildings. The highly trained, albeit recently qualified, commandos of the 3378th exacted a heavy toll on the Republicans, especially the mixed battalion of primarily mercenary troops that were detailed to security and cleanup. The SLDF troops received only token support from Caph's people however, especially after Duchess Micha Confalonieri ordered the people of Caph to end all resistance to the Stefan Amaris' "liberators." Major Sefik nonetheless gained some critical assistance from New Brunnel's police force, though by the end of the day the Republicans had nominal control over the city.

TERRAN HEGEMONY FIXED DEFENSES (AS OF 2776)

World Name Castles Brian SDS

Lone Star Province

Lone Star	5	Yes
Altair	1	
Dieron	4	Yes
Kervil	1	
Lambrecht	6	
Lyons	1	
Nusakan	3	Yes
Sabik	1	
Telos IV	1	

Tyrfing Province

Tyrfing	5	Yes
Alioth	1	
Connaught	3	
Denebola		Yes
Marcus	2	
New Dallas	3	Yes
Oliver	3	
Pollux	3	Yes
Summer	3	Yes
Talitha	3	
Wyatt	1	
Zebebelgenubi	2	

World Name Castles Brian SDS

Terra Firma Province

Terra Firma	5	Yes
Aldebaran	2	
Chisholm	2	
Nanking	4	
New Canton	1	
Outreach	2	Yes
Slocum	4	
Van Diemen IV	1	
Wasat	2	

Lockdale Province

Lockdale	5	Yes
Addicks	3	
Al Na'ir		Yes
Angol	2	
Bharat	1	
Epsilon Indi	4	Yes
Errai	1	
New Florence	2	
Northwind	1	
Ozawa	3	
Rio	1	
Small World	2	
Tigress	2	

World Name Castles Brian SDS

Hegemony Core

Terra	20	Yes*
Alula Australis	3	
Caph	4	Yes
Epsilon Eridani	4	Yes
Fomalhaut		Yes
Graham IV	5	Yes
Keid	2	Yes
Killbourn	2	
New Earth	4	Yes
New Home		Yes
Procyon	2	Yes
Rigil Kentarus		Yes
Sirius		Yes
Thorin		Yes
Zollikofen	2	Yes

*Terra's SDS consists of the more advanced and elaborate Reagan Space Defense System

Elsewhere on the planet, the Republicans faced little resistance to the coup. It wasn't until a few days later that the SLDF units in the field began to retaliate, ambushing small units and destroying Republican bases. That, in turn, initiated a series of escalating attacks and counterattacks that ultimately led to Republican Colonel Orestes Tomasevi ordering the deactivation and destruction of the many "Large Fauna Containment Systems"—the energized fences and barriers designed to keep the world's many massive animals from threatening Caph's inhabited regions. He did so both to punish the Caphians who were apparently hiding the SLDF troops as well as to give those resisting units fewer safe regions to hide from the Republicans.

Colonel Tomasevi declared the world "pacified" in a courier message to Terra on the 27th, though in reality the Battle for Caph—including the later rape of the world—continued on for years.

THE MARINES OF CARVER V

Carver V was a world of medium import to the Hegemony, boasting a population of a little more than one hundred million but as a water-rich world it remained a critical food supplier. In the early days of the Terran Hegemony, it sat on the highly contentious border with the Capellan Zone, ensuring that it was also well-fortified. Though those borders were later pushed back, the world retained its strong defenses which, as Carver V claimed no true continental land masses, did not feature any Castles Brian. Instead, Hegemony (and, before that, Terran Alliance) engineers fortified entire island masses, effectively turning them into virtual fortresses. These extensive fortifications were further expanded and modernized in the Star League era when the world became home and training center for the SLDF's elite CAAN (cavalry, armor, aerospace and naval) regiments.

Though most of Carver V's permanent garrison had been stripped away to deploy into the Periphery, the world remained a primary training center, with an SLDF "boot camp" as well as advanced specialty schools and, of course, the CAAN school, which graduated thousands of CAAN-rated troops every year. All of these were located in and around Quantico, the world's largest island (and simultaneously the name of its fortification).

When Republican forces first deployed to the world, only a handful were allowed to take up station on Quantico—primarily aerospace fighter squadrons and administrative personnel. The rest of the Republicans detached to Carver V were spread out in tiny encampments on islands across the planet.

At H-hour on 27 December, the Republicans attacked, having already secured Carver V's HPG station. Unable to sabotage or realistically capture Quantico through sneak attack, Republican General Noriko Milton-Davis attempted to destroy the SLDF fortifications and troops with nuclear weapons. Her squadrons were unable to base any nuclear weapons at Quantico however—as a routine matter General Saul van der Kolk, senior officer on-world and commander of all SLDF CAAN forces, had ordered the Republicans to store all of their nuclear weapons within Quantico's nuclear weapons bunker. General Milton-Davis was

forced to rely upon squadrons based on remote islands to strike Quantico, hoping that her fighters on the island could launch and keep the SLDF forces occupied enough to allow the nuclear strikes through.

Instead, Carver V's Space Traffic Control raised an alert when numerous Republican fighters had launched on sub-orbital ballistic courses that would take them to Quantico while nearly the entire Republican aerospace force on the island was also filing last-minute training flight plans. STC manager Colonel Koji Icho ordered the Republican fighters at Quantico grounded, scrambling SLDF fighters and raising an alert with General van der Kolk. Within minutes, the few Republican 'Mechs on Quantico mobilized to protect their fighters as they attempted to launch despite the grounding. SLDF security forces responded in kind; even the Star League CAAN fighters warming up on the ground joined the fray by firing their energy weapons in an attempt to take out what opponents sharing their airfields they could—a tactic taught to the CAAN fighter pilots, but rarely ever used in practice.

A few Republican flights managed to launch despite most of their comrades being destroyed on the ground. On the other hand, many of the Star League pilots—trained to take off, land, and resupply under fire at forward airbases—were able to launch and engage the Republican fighters, both those that had just launched as well as those bearing down on the island from orbit. A handful of nuclear-armed Republican fighters made it through those initial screens of interceptors to launch their missiles. Their attacks were uncoordinated however, with the Rim Worlds pilots focusing only on their given targets and not the most valuable available objectives. Four weapons exploded, damaging infrastructure, several large defensive batteries and a portion of the city of Bellacqui, but leaving the bulk of the SLDF bases on Quantico undamaged.

The Republican first strikes were unsuccessful, leaving Quantico and its numerous defenders intact. General van der Kolk ordered Quantico's three CAAN regiments—training organizations filled with those pursuing the CAAN rating and led by CAAN veteran trainers—to eliminate all Republican forces on and around the island mass. Meanwhile, Milton-Davis consolidated her hold over the remainder of Carver V, including the Reinhardt island chain and the world's capital of Korce.

Milton-Davis turned towards Quantico after the new year, but without an overwhelming superiority of forces or an easy access to the island, she could do little but probe the SLDF defenses there until reinforcements arrived—which did not happen until April. Thus began the six-year battle for ultimate control of Carver V.

FORTRESS DIERON

Every major military operation seemingly has some sort of hiccup, and for Stefan Amaris' Operation APOTHEOSIS that happened on the world of Dieron. General Tolstin Eukai, commanding all Republican forces on the world, either misunderstood the orders delivered to him on Dieron or received incomplete or garbled orders. In any event, while Republican WarShip Captains Urgur Toch and Yorrnan Garcil had both quickly and efficiently subdued

Dieron's two jump points, by the time initial distress calls from both points reached the world at about 1815 TST, General Eukai was still waiting to receive a final "go" order from his Emperor.

Eukai and his commanders on the ground scrambled into action as soon as reports of the Rim Worlds naval action at Dieron's jump points reached the planet, ordering his troops to immediately seize or destroy their assigned targets. Of course, Major General Annika Tellman, commander of SLDF forces on the world, and Governor Paolo Varellas had also heard those distress calls and immediately ordered a state of emergency. General Tellman opened the world's four Castles Brian to anyone that wanted to flee the Amaris occupation, while Governor Varellas called upon his people to peacefully oppose the Republicans in any way they could. Meanwhile, Varellas also dispatched a distress call via HPG to every world within range; with every HPG world within fifty light-years already under Amaris' control, this desperate call for help reached no one.

General Tellman's troops did what they could, but with only a few combat units still present on Dieron, their resistance to the Republicans amounted only to a holding action. They prevented the Republicans from immediately occupying Dieron's capital and the SLDF Fourteenth Army headquarters within the Fort Hallik Castle Brian, but ultimately could only halt the Republicans' advance temporarily—long enough for General Tellman to seal the Castles Brian, however.

For his part, General Eukai prosecuted a relatively straightforward campaign against the SLDF. While many of Dieron's leaders had retreated into the Castles Brian, along with tens of thousands of citizens, Dieron was a planet of some 2.4 billion citizens and all of the surviving SLDF regulars were now trapped within the four fortresses, while select nuclear and conventional strikes had easily eliminated their primary communications arrays, cutting off their access to most of the planetary communications networks as well as control of the system's SDS (though Tellman had ordered the auxiliary SDS command centers destroyed, likewise preventing the Republicans from assuming control of the system). Eukai, aided by Amaris' allies, easily assumed control of the world and had emplaced their own puppets in positions of planetary leadership.

General Tellman and the four Dieron Castles Brian continued to be a thorn in his side, as did tens of thousands of SLDF personnel—retired, reserve and those on leave from the front—who took up arms against their conquerors. Dieron's resistance soon proved to be one of the most threatening operating within the Terran Hegemony. Eukai had failed his Emperor on a grand scale—failed to follow the APOTHEOSIS plan, and had further failed to reduce the Castles Brian (either by taking them or destroying them) and seize control of the SDS. His forces had also failed to take command of the HPG station (his own troops had actually destroyed its transmitter to prevent any further communications from the planet). On 10 January, General Eukai's replacement arrived. Eukai personally reported to Amaris on the morning of 28 January; he was publicly executed at noon that day for his incompetence.

NEW DALLAS

Following the lead of their planetary governor, retired SLDF General Titus Clay, the people of New Dallas neither welcomed nor trusted the Rim Worlders that their First Lord had stationed on their world. They were also very vocal opponents of Richard Cameron and what they saw as his network of "toadies" spreading throughout the Hegemony. Prior to the official arrival of the Republican garrisons, Clay mobilized his world's strong volunteer militia, which assumed responsibility for New Dallas' three Castles Brian as well as many of its SLDF bases. Major General Carlos Kataga, senior SLDF officer on-world, further called upon the many reservists that called New Dallas home to voluntarily take on additional duties within the world's numerous bases and facilities; the great majority did so.

Thus both Governor Clay and General Kataga reported to Terra there was no need for any Rim Worlds "augmentees" to be assigned to New Dallas. When the troops began to arrive anyway, both complained loudly to their superiors, to no avail. Nonetheless, when Republican commander General Viktoria Benboudaoud handed Kataga orders issued under General Kerensky's signature requiring the Rim Worlders to take up station within the Castles Brian, both Kataga and Clay laughed, agreeing only to give over tiny corners of the most outlying of bases to the Republicans. Benboudaoud's objections only led to her armed escort from the governor's office, the detention of her DropShip, and the revocation of all Republican landing clearances.

Benboudaoud raised her objections with both General Patrick Scoffins, commander of all Republican forces within the Hegemony, as well as Amaris himself. Neither Rim Worlder was willing to push the matter with the SLDF High Command and instead ordered Benboudaoud to secure what facilities she could for her troops and to plan for "alternate emergency means."

The Republicans took up position within their remote bases, but were largely prevented from responding to any crises, especially the increasing wave of Periphery independent terrorist attacks. General Kataga simply deployed companies of SLDF recruits to provide the necessary added security, pulling them from their simulated field-training activities and putting them into the very kinds of situations they would be likely to encounter in the Periphery. The Republicans meanwhile were only able to deploy onto the training ranges, and then only under the close supervision of a New Dallas observer unit.

In the months leading up to the Coup, Amaris' agents triggered more and more terrorist attacks, but that only brought additional pressure from New Dallas' militia and police down upon any suspect activity. As a direct result, they discovered two battalions of Amaris' mercenaries trying to sneak onto the world (imprisoning them as terrorists and seizing their arms), while their investigations brought them close to uncovering the true source of the terrorist attacks. Only the Coup itself prevented New Dallas' combined efforts from derailing Operation APOTHEOSIS.

The Republican attackers were from the very beginning forced to prosecute a very different kind of war on New Dallas. Unable to plant many of the bombs and booby traps here that their

counterparts managed on other worlds, they were forced to attack directly. When the covert assault upon the world's HPG failed miserably, Benboudaoud ordered the station destroyed. And when her initial attacks on New Dallas' military and infrastructure likewise failed, she withdrew her troops into their enclaves and called upon the squadron of heavy Republican WarShips in orbit to enforce Amaris' will on the world. Unfortunately for the Republican general, New Dallas' planetary SDS was still firmly under SLDF control; dozens of drones squared off against eight Rim Worlds ships over the course of the next six hours while Kataga led heavy ground forces against the now-outnumbered Republicans. By the end of the battles, the Republicans had been vanquished, though only at a heavy cost.

Governor Clay called for a state of emergency to prepare for possible reprisals, which came eleven days later. The jump points had remained in Republic hands, along with the SDS forces controlled from there. The SDS drone ships reinforced an arriving fleet of thirty Rim Worlds WarShips that arrived at both of New Dallas' jump points, and all of these vessels advanced on the world. The fleet reached New Dallas and destroyed the last remaining SLDF-controlled SDS drones defending it on 14 January. Admiral Otto Idowu gave the planet's defenders just twenty-four hours to surrender and submit to Emperor Stefan Amaris. Clay and Kataga responded by ordering the world's fighter squadrons to engage and destroy the invaders. Badly outnumbered and outgunned, however, these fighters lasted only a few hours against the Republicans. When his deadline passed, Admiral Idowu gave the order to open fire; Republican WarShips targeted one base after another, leveling each and slowly but surely eliminating the bulk of the world's defenders.

Idowu ended the bombardments on 31 January, by which time additional Republican ground forces had arrived to begin securing the world. Despite the systematic destruction of New Dallas' organized military, the world became a hotbed of resistance activity, especially after the capture, mock trial and public execution of Governor Clay.

SABIK

Prior to the Amaris Coup, the world of Sabik was notable only for its rich mineral deposits and its harsh environs. Its few residents—most of whom served lucrative high-risk five- or ten-year contracts before moving back to their homeworlds—almost exclusively supported its mining industry. The only exceptions were the denizens of the SLDF's Harsh Terrain Test Center (HTTC) and the Special Armed Services Training Center (SASTC), the first a series of ranges where military vehicles of all kinds were tested and evaluated, the latter where the SLDF's most elite commandos finished their training.

When the Republicans came, General Koji Talasko, Director of the SLDF Special Forces Command, was visiting his troops for the holidays. They were surprised by Republican nuclear strikes on the world's Castle Brian and the SASTC that seriously damaged both but failed to destroy the Castle or the SASTC's underground barracks and hangars. General Talasko himself planned and led the SLDF counterattacks that virtually eliminated the Republican

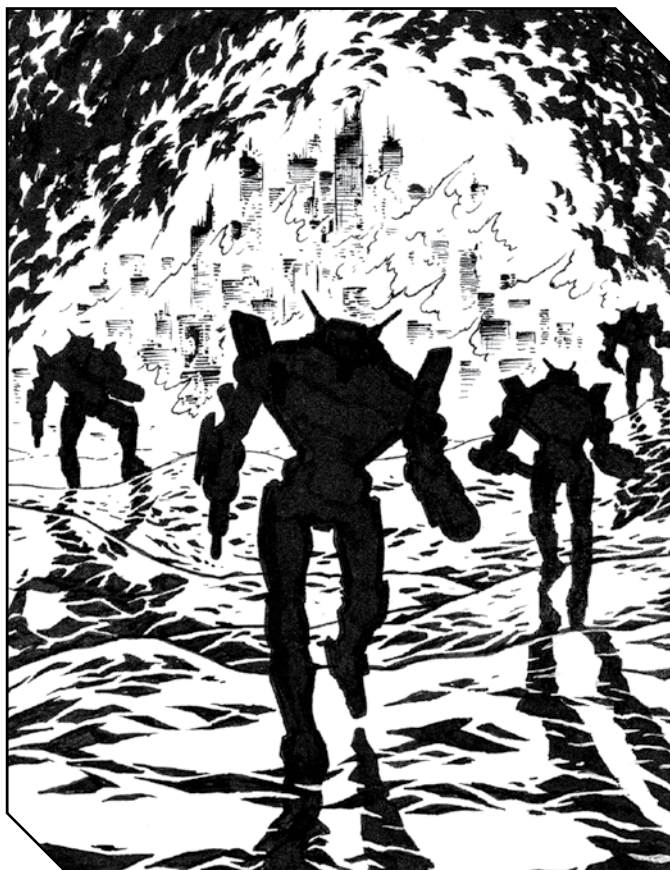
threat on the world over the course of just a few days, though not before the Rim Worlders had shipped off the majority of Sabik's warehoused raw materials to Terra.

Before the last few Republicans withdrew, they disabled the HPG station. More significantly, they stripped the system of all of its JumpShips, leaving behind only a few sentry ships—it was easier to simply cut the world off from the rest of the Hegemony than task additional troops or WarShips to eliminate a relative handful of elite Star League troopers. Talasko and his operatives had a number of DropShips available to them on the planet's surface, including the general's own assault ship, but with no way of escaping the system, they could only sit on their hands, hoping either that they could somehow repair the HPG or that SLDF reinforcements would arrive.

ATROCITIES AND EXCESSES

As a rule, the brave men and women of the Star League Defense Forces resisted Amaris' invaders on nearly every Hegemony world, but with the majority of the Star League's combat troops fighting a war within the Periphery, only a handful of garrison units remained behind. Of course, there were still numerous cadre units throughout the Hegemony training new recruits, and without fail those worlds hosting SLDF training bases became firestorms of activity.

Epsilon Eridani, Small World, Talitha and Zollikofen, like Dieron, were each home to a series of major training bases as well as a Military Region headquarters (and its associated



army group HQ). Though the bulk of the army and army group headquarters organizations had deployed to the Periphery, there were still large staffs left behind—primarily support, logistics and administrative personnel. On those worlds, the Republicans were able to successfully occupy at least one Castle Brian prior to the initiation of the Coup, but were largely excluded from the regional headquarters and the training bases. Additionally, both Talitha and Zollikofen were home to major Star League securities exchanges and mints, making them even more valuable to Amaris.

The Republicans struck the training bases on all four worlds with a combination of nuclear and biological weapons, focusing additional nuclear strikes upon the Castles Brian that housed the Military Region HQs. While these attacks eliminated much of the SLDF threat upon the worlds, they did not entirely eliminate it. The Republicans were likewise unable to destroy every training facility where caches of weapons were stored or where tanks, 'Mechs and fighters were maintained; neither did they capture or destroy all of the implements of war that were being readied for shipment to the front lines. Each of these four worlds became hotbeds of resistance, led by SLDF survivors.

On Bryant, the SLDF Engineering Corps was responsible for operating the series of orbital Storm Inhibitors that made the world inhabitable. That constellation of orbital mirrors focused the energies of Bryant's sun onto the world's upper atmosphere to inhibit major storm activity, but these mirrors could also easily focus those energies against Republican spacecraft and troop formations. SLDF engineers destroyed and disabled numerous enemy DropShips and even damaged two WarShips by overloading their sensors and overheating their systems, causing several catastrophic crashes. They did the same against targets on the ground, preventing Republican ground forces from moving in the open for several days. The Republicans, naturally, responded by targeting the Storm Inhibitors; unable to maneuver and refocus fast enough to defend all flanks, those mirrors quickly fell prey to Republican fighters and assault ships, eliminating the Storm Inhibitor Array and leaving the only real defensive weapons the SLDF possessed on the world in shambles. Bryant was fully secured by the first week of January.

Graham IV was a major Hegemony industrial world and therefore of prime importance to Amaris and his military planners, who knew they would need its manufacturing output to quickly recoup materiel lost during the Coup. As a one-time border world, it was also defended by five Castles Brian and a Space Defense System. The Republicans were able to secure three of the castles without firing a shot. They cracked the other two over the course of some eight weeks through repeated nuclear strikes, though in the process they faced a far heavier than expected opposition in the air, which stymied their efforts for almost a month. When the survivors of Fort Ball ultimately surrendered, the Rim Worlds forces lined them up and shot them. Unwilling to die without a fight, the survivors of the Fort Baldwin Castle Brian fled into the planetary capital of DeKirk City when their fortress was finally breached. The Republicans simply gave the city's people one day to hand

over the SLDF survivors, targeting the city with a powerful nuclear weapon when they did not. The blast not only destroyed the city, it caused the SLDF's underground Icarus Research Center—a secret aerospace R&D facility that the Fort Baldwin survivors had taken refuge in—to largely collapse, turning DeKirk City into a massive radioactive sinkhole.

Sirius, like Sabik, was an important mining world that possessed a hostile environment and relied upon regular off-world shipments to supply its inhabitants. Terraforming had given it a breathable atmosphere, but widespread tectonic activity allowed only temporary facilities to be constructed on the planet's surface. Two large orbital facilities housed many of the world's permanent residents as well as the headquarters of the mining concerns that were exploiting the planet. When the Republicans attacked, they simply emptied the massive stores of raw materials, blasting the two orbital complexes out of the sky as they departed. And just as on Sabik, they left the survivors behind to fend for themselves.

Addicks, Keid, Lone Star, Nusakan and Wasat were all relatively major worlds with large populations, corresponding large industrial output, and Castles Brian still occupied by SLDF forces. The Republicans assigned significant invasion forces to each of these worlds and, after unsuccessful attacks on 27 December that left SLDF units still in command of most of the Castles Brian, began long-term campaigns that saw a variety of WMDs used to "soften" the targets before ground troops followed up with assaults into the heart of the massive underground fortresses. Each world's infrastructure and civilian population suffered significantly—with casualties often reaching into the tens of thousands, if not into the hundreds of thousands—during battles that waged on for months or, in the case of Nusakan, for more than a year before the Republicans finally destroyed the defending forces.

ACQUIESCING TO THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE

Stefan Amaris addressed the entire Terran Hegemony on 30 December, just three days after murdering First Lord Richard Cameron and initiating the bloodiest and most brutal coup in humanity's history. His address, very much like the one he had given to the people of Terra just two days earlier, belied the violence he and his minions had employed as well as the death toll and sheer devastation they had visited upon a number of worlds. Stating matter-of-factly that he and his "liberators" had put an end to the "corrupt Cameron government" and freed the Hegemony from their "evil imperium," he expressed regret that "some of the brave men and women of the Star League Defense Forces chose to resist the mandate of the people." He also told the Hegemony citizens that their "...future[s] were] now in [their] own hands," promising a free election for the Hegemony's new leader within the next month.

When he transmitted this carefully crafted and produced thirty-minute address across the Hegemony, he knew that his Republican forces had succeeded well beyond his own expectations. By the end of the first day, his forces were firmly in possession of ninety-five of the Hegemony's 147 inhabited systems, a number

that increased to 135 by the time he recorded his address. There were, of course, pockets of resistance on most worlds, some fairly significant, while a handful of others like New Dallas remained hotly contested. Nonetheless, Amaris privately declared victory; his troops had control of almost every world's government and nobility, while his loyal technicians controlled the HPG network and his navy commanded every jump point within the Hegemony.

The Hegemony was his. Now it was time to reform it in his own image.

THE USURPER EMPEROR

Central now to his plan was the massive network of political allies, sycophants and corrupted officials Amaris had created over the past fifteen years. His own troops were a tremendous minority when compared to the population of the Hegemony, and though he had the distinct advantage in firepower, he had no illusions of retaining control of Terra, let alone the entire nation, should the Hegemony's people turn against him.

One prominent citizen after another stood up in support of "the Liberator Stefan Amaris" after his address. Many were willing supporters, though many more did so only because they or their families were threatened by Amaris in one way or another. These proclamations of support, enhanced by tri-vids supposedly of SLDF officers and Star League officials peaceably surrendering to Republican commanders and pledging their loyalty to Stefan Amaris—most of which were outright fabrications—were transmitted throughout the Hegemony. At the same time, Amaris' communications techs blocked the spread of footage of Republican atrocities as much as they could, removing them from newswire HPG messages.

There was, of course, much that Amaris and his agents could not bury. So he did the only thing he could do: make the story his own. The question of what had happened to Richard Cameron became a heroic fable for the Usurper. According to his own telling, when the First Lord refused Amaris' demands to step down from the throne, Cameron pulled a pistol, which the Rim Worlds leader took from the younger man during a struggle, shooting and killing the First Lord in the process. And according to this fiction, Amaris later assembled Cameron's entire family, who accepted exile rather than face the wrath of the Hegemony's citizens (a tale believed by many of Amaris' own people; the truth that Amaris murdered seventy-nine Cameron men, women and children in Richard's throne room, sealing them inside to rot, was known only by a relative handful of loyal guards).

Likewise, Amaris explained that he was only using the most humane methods possible to ensure that the Star League military did not interfere in the removal of the Cameron government, relying upon surprise attacks to spare the Hegemony's innocent civilian population from as much harm as possible. According to this fiction, only when necessary did his commanders resort to attacks that might injure or kill civilians, and even then only after Star League troopers did so first. Of course, there were accidents and some cases of intentionally inflicting civilian casualties, but

Amaris deftly handled those as well, publicly executing those Republican officers found "guilty of committing war crimes" in quickly completed trials—such as with General Tolstin Eukai, the "Butcher of Dieron."

Mandate of the People

Amaris was adamant that a free election for the Terran Hegemony's new Director-General be held. Not that it was to be a fair election, however. Count Frederick Oldenhof, as President of the Terran Congress, served in the interim as the Director-General Pro Tem and the only individual other than Stefan Amaris whose name was ultimately included on the ballot. Over the course of just a few weeks, two members of the Hegemony High Council—Somjit Berkhout from Fomalhaut and Atrisha Kisabaka from Bryant—forwarded their names for consideration but later withdrew from the race, Berkhout because of an indictment on embezzlement charges and Kisabaka because she wanted to focus on family needs (Amaris had imprisoned her family in an African gulag).

The election was held on 28 January 2767, nominally in all 147 Hegemony systems. Despite projections that showed less than ten percent participation of the electorate on most worlds, the Hegemony Department of Administration officially reported a record eighty-five percent turnout with almost seventy percent voting for Amaris. The reality was that the Usurper's agents were firmly in control of the vote, even going so far as to fabricate massively pro-Amaris results from contested worlds and those cut off from the HPG network, like New Dallas. When the Hegemony governors confirmed the results of the public elections on the 30th, unanimously deciding that Amaris would be the next Hegemony Director-General (despite the fact that less than eighty governors were alive or otherwise able to transmit their votes, with most of those sending theirs under some form of duress).

Stefan Amaris, the new Director-General of the Terran Hegemony and the only non-Cameron to assume that title since James McKenna more than four centuries earlier, addressed his newly adopted nation on 31 January, declaring common political platitudes such as the "dawn of a new era" and that the "injustices of the Cameron overlords" would be rectified. Moreover, as the new leader of the Star League—a right he was entrusted with and entitled to as the Hegemony's leader—he would finally "unite Humanity in peace and prosperity."

Unthinkable Reality

This was the first transmission that the rest of the Inner Sphere had seen leave the Hegemony since the HPG blackout more than a month earlier. Following that message were personal messages from Amaris to each of the Inner Sphere and Periphery leaders, declaring his imperium over the Hegemony and instructing them to deliver his best wishes as Emperor of the Star League to all of his minions. Techs at every receiving station forwarded this traffic on a priority basis throughout the Inner Sphere. Without exception (likely save for a handful of trusted officers "in the know" within Amaris' Rim Worlds Republic), all who viewed these messages were stunned.

The unthinkable had somehow happened. HPG traffic throughout the Inner Sphere suddenly exploded in a flurry of activity as billions of private citizens, businessmen and politicians attempted to determine the status of their loved ones, friends and associates. Meanwhile, it was five long days before Amaris' initial message reached General Kerensky in the Periphery, bringing the war effort to a rapid halt. It was General Aaron DeChavilier who stepped in and ordered emergency routing on SLCOMNET—the Star League Communications Network, aka the HPG network; all official military and government HPG traffic would be routed around the Terran Hegemony, a measure designed to prevent Amaris' agents from intercepting and decoding classified traffic.

For their part, the leaders of the five great states stood in silence. All were shocked, frightened and angered by Stefan Amaris' coup. While they would not offer his actions legitimacy by officially acknowledging he was the Hegemony's Director-General, and certainly not the new leader of the Star League in any way, shape or form, neither would they oppose his actions. None of the five House Lords would detail any military assistance to the Hegemony or the SLDF, though each directed General Kerensky to report on his status and intentions.

To Kerensky himself, Amaris sent nothing for more than a hundred additional days, instead intently watching what the general would do. When he finally did dispatch a message to Kerensky, it was mocking and antagonistic, daring the general to try to unseat him and promising a high price in innocent civilian blood if he did.

EMPIRE BUILDING AND BLOODY EXCESSES

Amaris had accomplished everything he had set out to do, or nearly so. The First Lord lay dead, along with the entire Cameron line. He alone had taken by force the most powerful and wealthy nation, repaying centuries of slights against his family and his nation perpetrated by the Camerons and the Star League. He had not brought the mighty Star League Defense Force to heel however, but before he could do that he had to ensure the security of the Hegemony lest Kerensky return home before Amaris was ready.

Tens of thousands of trained and absolutely loyal Rim Worlds security officers began arriving within the Hegemony the first week of January. These officers formed the core of the Hegemony Security Force (HSF), a secret police force that would enforce their Emperor's will and ensure absolute loyalty to Amaris. They created detachments on every Hegemony world, recruiting heavily from Amaris' supporters, from those easily swayed by money and power and from the morally ambiguous.

At the same time he also created the Director-General's Office of Policy and Doctrine, in reality the official legitimization of his home nation's system of political officers. OPD operatives would initially be assigned to every major government and military office or unit to ensure that all activities would be carried out in accordance with the new Director-General's orders and policies. Any who objected, whether due to conflict with established Hegemony law or simply their consciences, quickly found that dismissal and public humiliation were the least of the penalties they could face.

In the first year alone, these two organizations rooted out thousands of anti-Amaris resistance fighters, killing many while shipping more than two hundred thousand away to gulags hastily erected in remote and harsh climates on planets throughout the Hegemony. Oftentimes, they did so through the forced assistance of local and national law enforcement officers cowed into submission. Hefty monetary rewards also encouraged many citizens to report their friends and neighbors for disloyal activities.

Meanwhile, Amaris reopened the rolls of the Hegemony Armed Forces to average citizens who wanted to serve their nation. Amaris set a goal to recruit and equip some thirty divisions of troops from the Hegemony, dedicating all of the military equipment the nation's factories were producing into outfitting these new formations. The first classes of new recruits entered their basic training bases on 1 April.

By then, just some five months after the coup, the Hegemony was clearly becoming a police state. Twenty-four Republican divisions, including an equivalent of some eight divisions of mercenary forces, had deployed into the Hegemony. Though more than fifty regiments—nearly six divisions—had been wiped out during the coup, and many more had sustained significant casualties, the rest of the Republican forces remained on alert and deployed into cities and communities on nearly every world, ready to enforce Amaris' will upon any who defied their new Director-General.

Soon enough, hushed rumors of Republican death squads targeting outspoken community leaders and former SLDF officers were being overshadowed by more public demonstrations of caprice and on much grander scales. The mercenary Greenhaven Gestapo, already entrenched

FROM: Stefan Ukris Amaris, Emperor of the Amaris Empire
TO: General Aleksandr S. Kerensky, Commander of the late Star League Defense Forces

General:

I, with my infinite skills and aided by my loyal subjects, have struck, with a swiftness given only to the righteous, a blow that has corrected decades of injuries and slights to my family. I rule where the Camerons once called home. I control the Cradle of Humanity. All within the Hegemony have bowed before me; those who didn't are dead.

Join me, General Kerensky. Become my sword arm and help me impress my word and wisdom upon the other realms. I've no reason to hate you; I wish only peace between us. Join me and convince your men and women to follow you, and I will give you power second only to mine.

But should you dare turn a blind eye to the wisdom of my offer and decide not to join, then heed my warning: I control everything the Hegemony has. All its defenses, all of its fortifications are now manned by people loyal to me. Should you try to attack, every inch of Hegemony soil will be stained with the blood of the fallen, and every drop will be a burden upon your soul, which must already be heavy with guilt for allowing me to accomplish the complete control of your homelands.

(signed) Emperor Stefan Ukris Amaris I

within the grand city of Rome and having robbed or defaced millennia of artistry and architecture, arrested Pope Clement XXVII after he refused to denounce and identify priests who actively encouraged their congregations to resist Amaris and his minions (three years later they would murder the Pope and most of the College of Cardinals when they refused to pay a ransom for their release in money or ancient treasures). Other large religious bodies, used to practicing their freedoms of speech, were similarly targeted by Amaris agents; the leaders of the Church of the Crucifix and the United Faith Ministry were hunted down by Amaris' agents and killed or imprisoned during the first year. And when tens of thousands of Muslims made their annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Amaris' agents gathered more than a hundred outspoken Islamic leaders and entombed them within a mass grave. Throughout the occupation of the Hegemony, the atheist Amaris continued to show nothing but disrespect for any religion that didn't accept him as its prime deity; tens of thousands of churches, synagogues and other places of worship were defaced or destroyed by his followers during this time.

Unfortunately, those were not the worst of the atrocities committed by and for Amaris. The rounding up of vocal Cameron supporters was fully expected, while the sudden disappearance of prominent critics of Amaris' rule and anti-Amaris partisans was similarly tolerated. What wasn't so obvious was that Amaris was also withholding necessary supply shipments to worlds whose populations relied upon shipments of food, water and medicine to simply survive. Thanks to his continued control of the HPG network, few ever heard of these desperate stories, or the cries for help from the people of Helen; there, the mercenary Burning Tygers ransacked the world's huge artistic community, outright murdering at least a hundred thousand innocent civilians over the course of the occupation.

Matters grew steadily worse within the Hegemony for each year of occupation that passed, though. Factory workers once rewarded for their efficiency were now brutally punished for failing to meet Amaris' unrealistic expectations. Productivity within the Hegemony in all sectors plummeted to all-time lows, while the Usurper's brutal regime offered no hope of relief. Interstellar shipping soon was refocused towards one prime goal: supplying the needs of the factories pumping out war materiel. Moreover, JumpShips would now have to apply for new operations permits. It was still possible for a supposed free citizen to travel from one world to another, but the reality of the situation ensured the only requests from private citizens that were approved were ones accompanied by large bribes. Within just a few years, an expansive black market smuggling system grew within the Hegemony; anyone could get anything anywhere for the right price. Amaris' growing cadre of HSF and OPD officers simply took their cut and looked the other way, allowing criminal enterprises that once operated in the shadows to suddenly become some of the most profitable businesses within the Hegemony.

Along the way, the common citizen was left behind. At first, necessary shipments of food and supplies were only withheld from worlds being specifically punished by Amaris. Eventually though, more and more critical shipments were diverted or outright

replaced by the smugglers, who used the freed cargo space to move their own wares. These shortages were soon compounded by Amaris himself when he chose to punish entire worlds for their citizens' failure to meet his production demands by temporarily cutting their supply shipments off. Massive shipments of food simply rotted for months or years at a time within warehouses or DropShips. Even on Terra, food and medicine shipments to some regions were halted because of rebel activity or "insurrectionist activity"—often hungry civilian masses simply asking to be fed.

Preparing for the Inevitable

Stefan Amaris may have been an egomaniacal narcissistic sociopath, but he knew that it was only a matter of time before General Kerensky put an end to the Periphery war and turned the SLDF's attention upon the occupied Hegemony. The raising of thirty divisions of loyal troops within the Hegemony was little more than window-dressing; he knew that the key to the defense of the Hegemony, and especially Terra, was the Space Defense System. His troops had only managed to take full command of six SDSs, however.

When his commanders informed him that Ulsop Robotics of Zebebelgenubi was the SDS control system's key developer, he must have celebrated a private cheer. Over the course of three years, several thousand loyal Republican officers trained on Zebebelgenubi in SDS operations. After months of intensive training, it required Amaris' technicians almost two years to bring all of the existing SDSs on-line, including Terra's more advanced Reagan system. Partisans on Zebebelgenubi made several attempts to end the training, including one incredibly successful attack that killed forty Republican trainees and injured more than a hundred more in a fire that ravaged the training complex; local Republican commander Colonel Vargo Burkenya responded by executing three hundred of Ulsop Robotics' staff, effectively ending the training process for more operators (and when partisan attacks on the world continued, Burkenya responded by executing five researchers or technology workers for every Republican killed; this continued for two more years until Burkenya himself, along with his entire command staff, was killed by three partisan snipers). By that time the Republicans needed no additional outside trainers.

The activation of the various SDSs was a critical link in the Hegemony's defense plan. Amaris' three-hundred-WarShip Hegemony fleet had been reduced by more than half, thanks in large part to the Space Defense Systems (often supported by the better skilled SLDF naval crews). Amaris ordered the Hegemony's naval shipyards to focus on building SDS drones and system defense stations; during Amaris' occupation, they laid down less than twenty new WarShip hulls while constructing scores of drones and almost fifty major stations.

This alone proved to be inadequate to the Emperor, especially after Kerensky turned the entire SLDF upon his Rim Worlds Republic, effectively ending any possible support from that quarter. He ordered his rapidly expanding OPD to fill the ranks of the HAF in any way they could. By the end of the decade, tens of thousands

of unwilling Hegemony citizens were pressed into service, most into common infantry regiments, commanded and overseen by a relative handful of loyal officers and OPD operatives. In less than two years time, Amaris filled the remainder of his thirty-division quota (the average division was assigned two infantry brigades).

While expanding out the Hegemony defenses in this way, Amaris also consolidated his hold over the Hegemony's tremendous academic and research structures, especially after productivity began to plummet precipitously in the year following his rise to power. He began by ordering all major military research projects to relocate to Terra, no matter what consequences that might have on their schedules or even ultimate success.

By that time, the OPD was reporting more and more opposition speech within the Hegemony's academic institutions. Threats and arrests eliminated some, but could not end all of the vocal opposition to Amaris' increasingly brutal rule. The HSF shut down entire academic departments at the schools with the largest opposition movements, imprisoning the "worst" of the offending academics for their crimes of sedition. In turn, the OPD created a new division, one dedicated to certifying university educators and ensuring every university possessed a "doctrinally appropriate" curriculum. Together the OPD and HSF shut down hundreds of universities during the Hegemony occupation, apparently imprisoning many thousands of academics in the process.

RESISTING HELL'S LORD AND MINIONS

From the very moment of the Rim Worlders' first attacks, the resistance movement within the Terran Hegemony began. While members, both current and former, of the SLDF were among the first to take up arms against Stefan Amaris' invaders, Hegemony citizens from all walks of life actively joined the resistance movement. Unfortunately for the Hegemony's brave defenders, the Republicans' ambushes were tremendously successful. The survival of large SLDF units was the exception and not the rule, ensuring that the invaders quickly overwhelmed the surviving defenders to take control of most Hegemony worlds in short order.

The survivors became the core cadres of the hundreds of resistance cells that formed in the wake of the coup. While some immediately jumped into the fight, like the survivors of the fights in and around Unity City that continued to harass Stefan Amaris' personal bodyguards and the Fourth Amaris Dragoons for months, many others laid in wait, adding to their numbers while arming themselves with whatever they could find. Within weeks of carrying out typically low-level sniper and bombing attacks, resistance leaders on each world emerged. Some were military officers—even a few generals—while others were police officers, teachers or simple laborers.

Terra's movement was very much the typical, albeit much larger and better trained, planetary resistance. Many SLDF-related cells soon made at least some contact with each other in an effort to share intelligence and coordinate their actions. Others operated in complete independence, while invariably one or two

small groups, claiming members that were once special forces or intelligence operatives, operated behind the scenes, sometimes supporting other groups and other times specifically targeting Republican leaders and notable Amaris sympathizers.

Because Republican forces concentrated within the cities and military bases during the first years of the Amaris occupation, resistance cells had a plethora of targets to choose from. Unfortunately, that also meant a greater chance for civilian casualties; while most resistance groups attempted to minimize civilian damage and injury, more than a few—especially those that formed later among an atmosphere permeated by Amaris' secret police and collaborators reporting their neighbors for supposed crimes—believed they were serving the greater good and what few innocents they might kill in the process were unfortunate martyrs.

THE SECRET FLEET

Unknown to most, be they resistance fighter or loyal Rim Worlder, the SLDF navy remained a small but powerful presence within the Hegemony. A number of WarShips and military JumpShips escaped the initial Republican attacks, some bringing a host of civilian ships in tow. While some simply jumped from one hornets' nest to another, materializing in the midst of the same kind of desperate battle they had just left, many others jumped into deep space. The SLDF maintained a number of relay stations and refueling points in uninhabited Hegemony systems. A few surviving admirals began to take charge of these ships, organizing them into *ad hoc* squadrons and dispatching them to jump to the edges of nearby Hegemony systems and simply gather intelligence. Completely cut off from the HPG network, they simply had no idea as to the scale of Amaris' invasion.

By the end of January, as Amaris was declaring himself the new Director-General of the Hegemony, the SLS *Kharkov* arrived at one of these points, soon to become known as Freedom Station. On board were two members of the SLDF High Command, Generals Sergey Araujo (Director of the JAG Command) and Kim Hyong Suk (Director of the Rep-Dep Command); they met there with Admiral Vincenzo McTiernan (Deputy Director of the Naval Command) and a handful of rear admirals and senior captains to decide upon a course of action. With the relative few ships they had at their disposal, they could not hope to stand against Amaris' fleet. But they could build a picture of what had happened and the disposition of Amaris' forces. They could also raid and harry the Republican fleets, making contact with resistance cells and surviving SLDF formations where possible. Meanwhile, they had two prime tasks: escort as many civilians out of the Hegemony as possible and report to General Kerensky.

With a fleet of some thirty WarShips of all kinds at their disposal (including a handful of *Bug-Eye* scouts), this so-called "Secret Fleet" focused mainly upon intelligence gathering—except for those rare occasions when they could jump in to ambush lone Amaris WarShips or small DropShip formations before jumping out again. The Secret Fleet destroyed thirteen Rim Worlds capital ships and damaged more than a dozen others during the first few

FREEDOM STATION

The name “Freedom Station” is often overlooked in many most histories of the Amaris Civil War. Even in many of the more detailed accounts, “Freedom Station” is typically used simultaneously to refer to two different locations.

Properly, Freedom Station is a point 10.72 Light Years rimward of Epsilon Indi, seventeen million kilometers distant from the nadir of an unnamed F3-class star. At first simply a random point in space within two jumps of Terra and most of the Lockdale, Terra Firma and Core Provinces, the surviving SLDF navy eventually dismantled and moved a recharge and refueling station to the point to service its Secret Fleet. The system had never been officially used by the SLDF or the Hegemony prior to the Coup and so was never on any navigation charts.

Even after choosing this location, only a relative handful of the many thousands of spacefarers that eventually called the system their “home” ever knew its actual location. Typically only the captains and chief navigators of the JumpShips that operated from the system were given its location, though enterprising navigators on most of the DropShips that also operated from Freedom Station were able to pinpoint the star.

This became of critical importance after the *Tukufu's Chariot*, a civilian JumpShip operating with the Secret Fleet, was captured by Rim Worlds marines. The ship's captain and navigator destroyed the navigational computers and killed themselves before the Republicans could secure the ship, protecting Freedom Station's location, but stranding the crew of the DropShip *Great Green Goliath* on the surface of Northwind, where they were supplying elements of the Northwind Highlanders. Leaving their ship behind to be captured by the Republicans, they snuck onto another outbound DropShip, ultimately subduing its crew as well as the crew of the *Invader*-class RWS *Apollo's Saddle* and returning to Freedom Station with the Republican courier ship. The *Goliath's* captain was literally slapped on the wrist by Admiral Vincenzo McTiernan for his breach of security a moment before the admiral slapped him on the back and toasted him and his crew's achievement.

The name “Freedom Station” has also been applied to a secret SLDF naval base located in the Luyten 68-28 system. Only a handful of the most senior SLDF admirals even knew of its existence, which was constructed in the early twenty-eighth century as a base to operate intelligence-gathering ships from—not only the famous *Bug-Eyes* but also converted civilian ships that would ply the Inner Sphere's shipping lanes while spying upon both the Star League's enemies and allies.

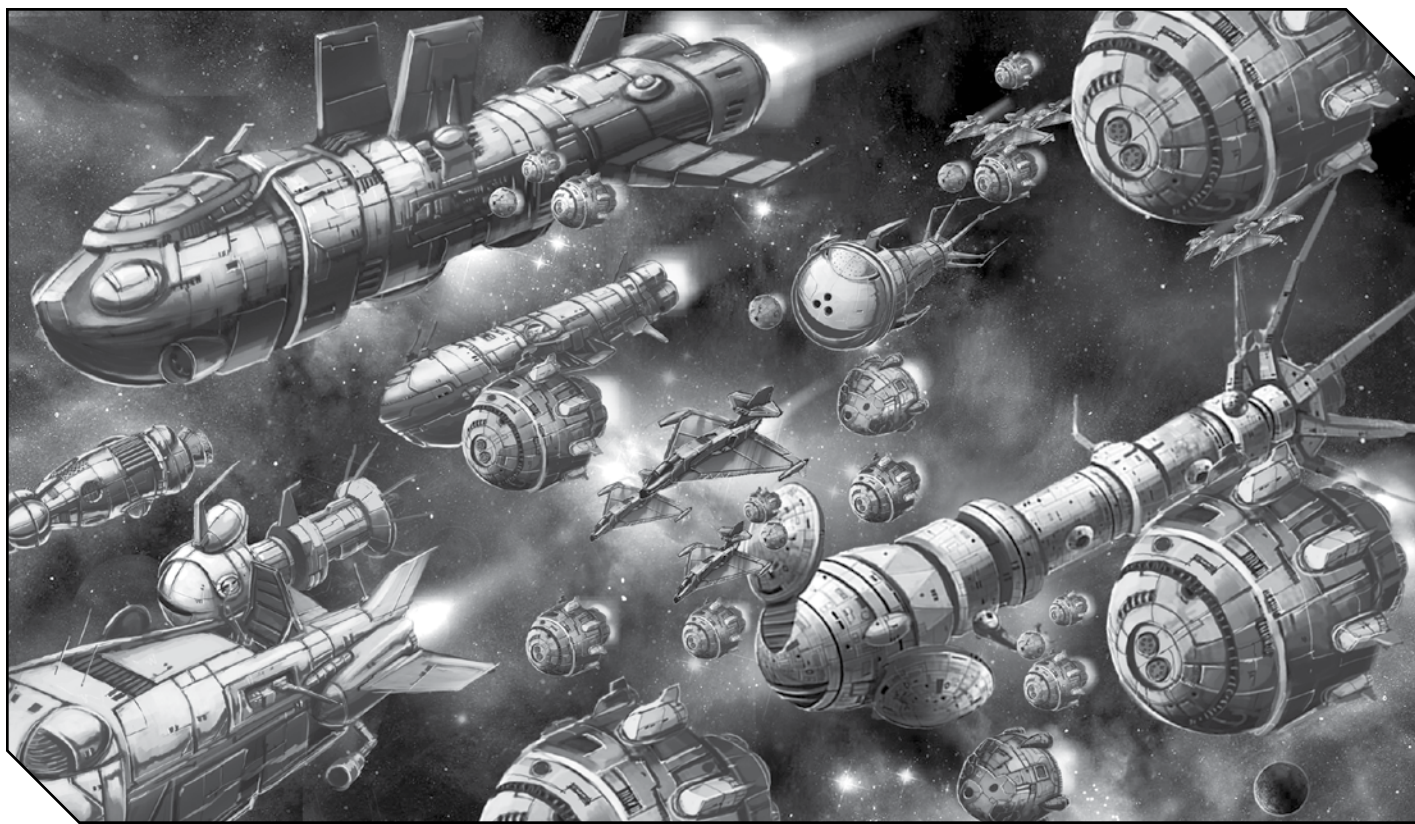
Most civilian captains operating as a part of the Secret Fleet suspected that the SLDF possessed such a secret base (located less than one jump from Freedom Station, which is likely why many historians confuse the two points), but only a handful were ever allowed access, and then only after turning control of their nav computers over to an escorting SLDF ship. Admiral McTiernan and the surviving members of the SLDF High Command typically operated from here, where their tiny WarShip fleet at least had access to repair yards.

Luyten 68-28 became a tremendously important staging point for Task Forces Sun and Confederation WarShip squadrons as they struck into the heart of the occupied Hegemony, especially as it was the only naval repair yards the SLDF fleet had access to without having to travel deep into one of the other nations.

Both points remained in active use throughout the occupation and the liberation of the Hegemony, and well beyond. Freedom Station was for many years an alternate recharge station that civilian ships could use while nearby stations were repaired or rebuilt. Later, during the First and Second Succession Wars, it became a staging area for Capellan and Federated Suns fleets striking into the heart of the former Hegemony. After the recharge station itself was destroyed by Davion ships in the Second Succession War, Freedom Station no longer retained any value and soon was forgotten by most.

Of course, Luyten 68-28 became the home of the WarShip fleet that ComStar secretly inherited from the SLDF, remaining a critically important key link in the defense of Terra and ComStar until today.

—Demi-Precentor Theta-VII Amanda Thim, *Brief History of Deep Space Outposts During the Amaris War*, ComStar Archives, 3046



months of the occupation before the Republicans changed their tactics. Ultimately, Amaris ordered hunter-killer squadrons into deep space to locate and destroy the Secret Fleet.

After two engagements that cost the SLDF two capital ships and thousands more valuable crew members, the Secret Fleet ended its harassment campaign to focus upon intelligence gathering. They eventually consolidated their staging points at two random points in space, which soon became known as Freedom Station (Rimward of Terra) and Liberty Station (Coreward of Terra); the only way the Amaris ships could find them at these points was through a one-in-a-trillion lucky jump. Scores of civilian JumpShips and DropShips eventually joined the Secret Fleet at these points to aid in the intelligence-gathering mission.

Eventually, the Secret Fleet received one additional order from General Kerensky: support the Hegemony's freedom fighters as best they could until he and the SLDF could finally return home to

end the Amaris occupation. This support came primarily in the form of supply and equipment drops. While the WarShips of the Secret Fleet would occasionally make high-risk jumps into pirate points over an occupied world to drop their cargoes before jumping out, more often than not they simply made use of the rapidly expanding smuggling culture within the Hegemony. A generous enough bribe could easily get a DropShip full of weapons and supplies onto just about any world, where sympathetic dockworkers would unload the containerized equipment and place them on trucks bound for a resistance cell (or alternately they would capture one of these supply convoys).

The Secret Fleet operated in this way for more than four years, when Kerensky began to send squadrons of intelligence-gathering ships and escorts. Admiral McTiernan organized and launched Operation KEYHOLE—the systematic survey of every Hegemony system to be targeted in the first invasion—by the end of 2771.

THE RIM WORLDS CAMPAIGN

THE SILENT DOG

Though he initially blamed the situation in the Periphery on a combination of the High Council's high-handedness and Richard's lack of leadership, Kerensky began to suspect a more deep-seated issue. The existence of the Secret Army made it clear that there was an element of pre-meditation in the Uprising and that Fort Gorki and New Vandenberg were merely the match thrown onto well-prepared tinder. He knew of the Periphery governments' connections with the rebels and presumed they had somehow conspired together to prepared for the troubles. The composition of the enemy units seemed to support that idea; the interrogation of captured pilots from the hidden units showed that they had ties to the states in which they were fighting. But the level of coordination and expense was staggering. Furthermore, what did they hope to gain by this? Independence? That seemed the most likely option, that by widespread and simultaneous uprisings they would throw off the shackles of the Star League and defeat the SLDF garrisons, their determination for independence prompting the Star League to allow them their freedom.

In hindsight that seemed a foolish notion given the strength of the massed SLDF, but it must be recalled that the League was being led by a foolish boy, leaving it essentially rudderless. The massed deployment of the SLDF to the Periphery was done on Kerensky's orders, not that of the First Lord or the High Council. Had the Periphery states counted on the Star League's weakness and inaction to win their freedom?

While there are no written records suggesting Kerensky suspected Amaris' hand in the situation, it seems likely that his involvement was mooted. Equally likely however was the involvement of a member state, several of which had a track record of using the Periphery as a proxy in conflicts with their neighbors. It was not until 2767 that the true architect of the Uprising became clear, suspicions rising though January (Amaris' January proclamation reached the Periphery in early February), with confirmation finally reaching the Commanding General on 19 May.

The Great Father's private diaries show that during the period immediately following the Usurper's communiqué he blamed himself for the situation that ensued. He disliked Amaris immensely and

"Vengeance is a dish best served cold."

—Mathilde, *Marie Joseph Eugène Sue*, 1841

By the winter of 2766 fourteen armies, over three hundred SLDF divisions and 200 independent regiments, were engaged in the Periphery. The equivalent of almost 1,400 BattleMech regiments and 1,600 Infantry and armor regiments fielded by the SLDF alone, this war dwarfed any of the previous conflicts that took place throughout the Star League era or the Age of War. The formations engaged a mix of forces—some conventional units, others irregulars—and were forced to shift their tactics on a near-constant basis.

Initially, the conflict in the Periphery had been a holding action, the garrison forces defending their positions and maintaining control of their worlds, often in desperate last-stand clashes around their fortified bases. As additional forces began to arrive from the member-states the efforts turned towards the reconquest of worlds lost to the rebels. It was during this phase of the operation in mid 2765 that Amaris' Secret Army burst onto the scenes, targeting HQ positions and logistics facilities. With many commands deprived of their leaders and support the SLDF resistance became disorganized and their elements were destroyed in detail. Numerous regiments and divisions ceased to exist. Kerensky himself came face-to-face with disaster, targeted by headhunters, but was able to fight his way clear and maintain control of his forces, albeit at the cost of abandoning New Vandenberg to the rebellion.

By the summer the rebels had lost the element of surprise. Despite being substantially bolstered by the divisions of the Secret Army, they were facing a plentiful and determined enemy. On the surface it should have been an easy matter for the SLDF, with their near ten-to-one numerical advantage, to crush the opposition. However, political reality hindered their response.

Officially, the governments of all the territorial states remained loyal to the Star League despite the uprisings within each realm. The secession of almost twenty Concordat worlds was publicly attributed to renegades, but Kerensky had intelligence placing the blame squarely at the feet of Protector Nicoletta Calderon. He could not, however, publicly challenge the Protector despite the evidence in his possession. That would need to fall to the First Lord and the High Council but Richard was still ruling by decree and unwilling to heed his commanding general. As a result, Kerensky took a pragmatic approach to the blatant, but unofficial, involvement of territorial state forces in the Uprising, and the widespread opening of their armories to the rebels while the House troops failed to intervene. He could not directly target the territorial states' command and control structures without worsening the crisis, nor could his troops take control of their bases and store houses without similarly violating their sovereignty. His authority under the SLDF mandate did, however, allow him to undertake peacekeeping operations within the territories of Star League signatories and so he redeployed his forces to best do so, "accidentally" (of course) interfering with the political and economic operations of the realms. Their foreign and domestic trade was suddenly subject to massively intensified customs inspections, their communications subject to "buffering delays" and civilian life subject to heightened security checks. Kerensky made it abundantly clear that he knew what was going on behind the scenes, though his understanding of the conflict would prove to be tragically flawed.

The consolidation continued into the second half of 2765 and as the New Year approached, the SLDF renewed the offensive, pushing into all three territorial states simultaneously. The pressure from these offensives mounted through 2766—as did the losses on both sides—and broad swathes of worlds returned to the Star League fold. However, as their ancestors learned in the Reunification War, taking and holding worlds were very different matters; the "liberated" worlds had to be strongly garrisoned, and

Continued on p. 93

these troops commonly found themselves under attack by insurgents. The prospect of regaining control over the territorial states, originally expected to take months, began to look like a multi-year campaign. Kerensky had little fear that it would become a massive slog like the Reunification War campaigns—his numerical strength ensured that—but he did have grave misgivings.

The First Lord notified him in mid-2766 that troops from the Hegemony were being sent to bolster the member states' garrisons and that he had reached an accord with Amaris to use Rim Worlds forces to boost the Terran defenses. Kerensky distrusted the Rim Worlds Leader (though he failed to see Amaris' hand in the Uprising despite beginning to suspect some outside manipulation) and instead suggested that Richard call on the House Lords for support rather than relying on a single Star League state. Richard refused and Kerensky considered returning to Terra to argue his case—his last visit had been in early February—but matters in the Periphery were delicate, and he chose to acquiesce to the First Lord's will. He would not return home again until 2779.

By the end of 2766, the Periphery Uprising had cost the SLDF 106 divisions and sixty-one independent regiments (equivalent to just over a thousand regiments). An additional sixty-one divisions and six independent regiments had been rendered functionally inoperative and disbanded, a total loss to the SLDF of just under twelve hundred regiments. Added to this were losses in Amaris' Coup, though Kerensky did not become aware of these until May 2767. In all, the SLDF had lost 1,255 regiments—just over thirty-percent of its strength.

believed him to be bad influence on the First Lord, but had tried not to let his personal feelings cloud his assessment of the Rim Worlds' ruler. In giving him the benefit of the doubt, he allowed Amaris to manipulate the First Lord and himself, to put the SLDF off-balance, to allow a serpent to strike at the Star League's heart.

Shortly before he addressed the SLDF on 22 May, the Great Father wrote a Russian proverb in his diary: *Ne boysya sobaki, shto layet, a bosya toy, shto molchit, da khvostom vilyayet* (Do not be afraid of the dog that barks, but be afraid of the one who is silent and wags its tail.) He knew who the enemy was and how he had been misdirected. Now it was time to strike back...and not in a manner Amaris would be expecting.

—*The Fall of the Star League*, a commentary by Laurie Tseng, Loremaster.



THE TAURIAN CAMPAIGN

The Taurian Concordat had always been most fractious and disloyal of the territorial states, a legacy of the Reunification War in which its population had been brutalized by the SLDF. As a consequence, the existence of a secessionist group like the Taurian Freedom Army was hardly surprising. Their bloody activities drew the SLDF's attention to the Periphery and Kerensky hoped their demise would bring peace. That it didn't was the first sign of a deeper problem for the SLDF, that the trouble was greater than those insurgents alone.

TROOPS INVOLVED IN THE TAURIAN UPRISING

SLDF (ARMY GROUP ELEVEN)

SLDF Third Army (6 BattleMech Divisions, 19 Infantry Divisions)

SLDF Fourth Army (6 BattleMech Divisions, 18 Infantry Divisions, 9 Independent Regiments)

SLDF Sixth Army (6 BattleMech Divisions, 9 Infantry Divisions)

SLDF Seventh Army (6 BattleMech Divisions, 9 Infantry Divisions, 4 Independent Regiments)

***SLDF Nineteenth Army** (6 BattleMech Divisions, 15 Infantry Divisions, 30 Independent Regiments)

Total: 30 BattleMech Divisions, 70 Infantry Divisions, 43 independent regiments (433 BattleMech regiments, 510 conventional regiments)

Losses: 34 Divisions, 14 regiments plus 11 Divisions disbanded (419 regiments)

TDF/REBELS

Officially, though no Concordat troops took part in the Uprising, the reality was that almost half of the Taurian Defense Force (around twenty regiments) were fighting the SLDF, either on their own initiative or with the tacit approval of the Protector. There were around forty more regiments of irregular troops and the Secret Army would bring a further seventeen divisions (150 regiments) to aid the uprising and dozen SLDF regiments would side with the rebels, a total of a little over 210 regiments.

Total: 21 Divisions (233 regiments – 193 TDF/Secret Army plus 40 of irregulars)

Losses: Unknown (circa 200 regiments)

*The pre-Uprising garrison force

The Taurians knew they were at a numerical and qualitative disadvantage, but they recalled the tactics employed by their ancestors to discomfort and bloody the occupiers. The use of a nuclear weapon against Fort Simpson made it clear that the insurgents were both determined and technically proficient, but overall the SLDF had little reason to fear the situation.

Then came Fort Gorki and the explosion of incidents across the Periphery. The Concordat was, predictably, the most affected by the Uprising, with secessions and bloody clashes shattering what little peace remained. At first garrisons faced few direct threats, with terror attacks and small-unit clashes being commonplace. However, within a week of the news of Fort Gorki being flashed around the Inner Sphere, the garrison forces came under attack by more organized opposition and casualties mounted. Then, just as the tide seemed to be turning in the SLDF's favor, Amaris' Secret Army joined the fray.

The forces of the Uprising now had a rough parity to the SLDF garrison units but they initially steered clear of direct confrontations. Instead, they launched attacks against command formations and bases and only once those were dealt with did they turn on the main bodies of the SLDF units, who were now leaderless and uncoordinated. Dozens of worlds were lost, their garrisons obliterated or forced to flee. In the wake of these disasters a second wave of uprisings swept through the Concordat, including many worlds that had previously remained loyal to the Star League. By early June, more than eighty percent of the Concordat had seceded from the Star League (though notably none seceded from the Concordat) and Kerensky had little choice but to pull back his troops to the handful of worlds that remained loyal or else to the Federated Suns and Capellan Confederation.

With the arrival of reinforcements from the Inner Sphere, Kerensky instigated a multi-prong assault in the Concordat, aiming to use his numerical advantage to best effect by hitting multiple targets across the whole Concordat and thus limiting the rebels' ability to concentrate against them. Nineteenth Army, the Taurian garrison, pushed out from its bases across the Concordat while the other four armies drove inwards. Third Army pushed through the most spinward worlds of the Concordat, driving in a sweeping arc around the Badlands Cluster towards Serenity. Its sister Federated Suns unit, the Fourth Army, pushed through Amber Grove, Grossbach and Tirabad to link up with the Third and to isolate the spinward worlds from the capital. Meanwhile, Sixth Army drove through the anti-Spinward regions, liberating worlds such as Rockwellawan and Heliat while moving steadily towards the Hyades. Seventh Army approached the Taurian capital from the other side, using Atreus Prime and Renfield as stepping stones. The SLDF completed the occupation of New Vandenberg on 17 January 2767, but with the Hyades still in Rebel/Taurian control, there was still a long way to go.

THE MAGISTRACY CAMPAIGN

During the Reunification War, the Magistracy campaign had been a hard-fought but ultimately civilized conflict and the Canopians proved to be loyal and eager members of the Star League. Relations between Canopus and Terra had cooled over the years as the tax burden on the territorial states grew. Even so Canopus had more to gain from membership in the Star League than it did outside it. Council Directive 41 was the principal sticking point and prompted Magestrix Vanura Centrella to state "In a civilized nation, even a whore is protected from rape. We are the whores of the Star League and are being raped by your so-called businesses, so where is *our* justice?" Simon Cameron had sought to ameliorate the impact of the directive (though he was unable to repeal it) but in the benign neglect of the Regency and Richard's more malicious abandonment, Inner Sphere businesses renewed their plundering of Canopian interests.

Unlike the Concordat, where dissatisfaction was expressed through terrorism, the situation in the Magistracy was more subtle. Troopers found their wallets stolen, their drugs spiked, and some of their "companions" seemed to have avoided the Magistracy's stringent health checks, prompting a series of widespread and somewhat embarrassing epidemics. Thankfully the loss of life was small—at least until Fort Gorki.

In June 2764, Janina Centrella announced Canopus' right to defend itself and set about recruiting mercenaries and purchasing war material from a wide range of suppliers. The Star League diplomatic corps protested, but could do little to stop the buildup. By the spring of 2765 and the commencement of the Uprising, the Magistracy had assembled a military presence in excess of that it employed in the Reunification War. Though many MAF units were not direct participants in the conflict, much of the material purchased by the Magestrix—and many of the mercenaries she employed—was soon embroiled in combat.

Unlike Nineteenth Army, who lived with near-constant terrorism in the Concordat, the Seventeenth had built strong ties with the local community and were badly prepared for the horrors unleashed upon them in the early weeks of the Uprising. Car bombs and booby traps were commonplace, often laced with chemical or biological agents. The conflict became a distinctly brutal affair, with the SLDF trying to keep to the Ares Conventions while the insurgents definitely did not. The presence of MAF "renegades" and mercenaries calmed the situation somewhat as the insurgents held back from using weapons of mass destruction for fear of harming their own people. The bloodied Seventeenth found the best way of avoiding such attacks was to engage the enemy in their own population centers. Unfortunately this was a direct violation of the Conventions and though doing so saved them from WMD attacks, the civilian casualties and collateral damage that ensued fanned the flames of resentment.

Seventeenth Army abandoned a few worlds, mostly around Canopus, but in many cases were confined to their fortresses, ceding control of the rest of the world to the rebels. The SLDF reinforcements dispatched to the Magistracy thus had two tasks

ahead of them; relieve the beleaguered forts and disarm the rebels. The first wave of reinforcements, spearheaded by the Tenth Army, were moving to relieve the defenders when the Secret Army struck, catching them largely unawares. Only the swift arrival of more troops prevented a disaster.

Local command of the Magistracy operation fell to Admiral Joan Brandt and her initial efforts focused on securing the border, with Thirteenth Army securing the worlds around Lindenmarle and the Twelfth securing Borgan's Rift and the surrounding worlds. Ninth and Tenth Armies pushed deeper into the Magistracy, isolating the capital. Plans were underway for the capture of Canopus in mid 2767 when Kerensky ordered a cessation of hostilities.

TROOPS INVOLVED IN THE MAGISTRACY UPRISING

SLDF (ARMY GROUP TWELVE)

SLDF Ninth Army (6 BattleMech Divisions, 11 Infantry Divisions, 27 Independent Regiments)

SLDF Tenth Army (6 BattleMech Divisions, 13 Infantry Divisions, 9 Independent Regiments)

SLDF Twelfth Army (6 BattleMech Divisions, 13 Infantry Divisions, 9 Independent Regiments)

SLDF Thirteenth Army (6 BattleMech Divisions, 13 Infantry Divisions, 9 Independent Regiments)

***SLDF Seventeenth Army** (6 BattleMech Divisions, 15 Infantry Divisions, 30 Independent Regiments)

Total: 30 BattleMech Divisions, 65 Infantry Divisions, 84 independent regiments (459 BattleMech regiments, 480 conventional regiments)

Losses: 35 Divisions, 28 regiments (5 Divisions and 3 regiments disbanded) (391 regiments)

MOC/REBELS

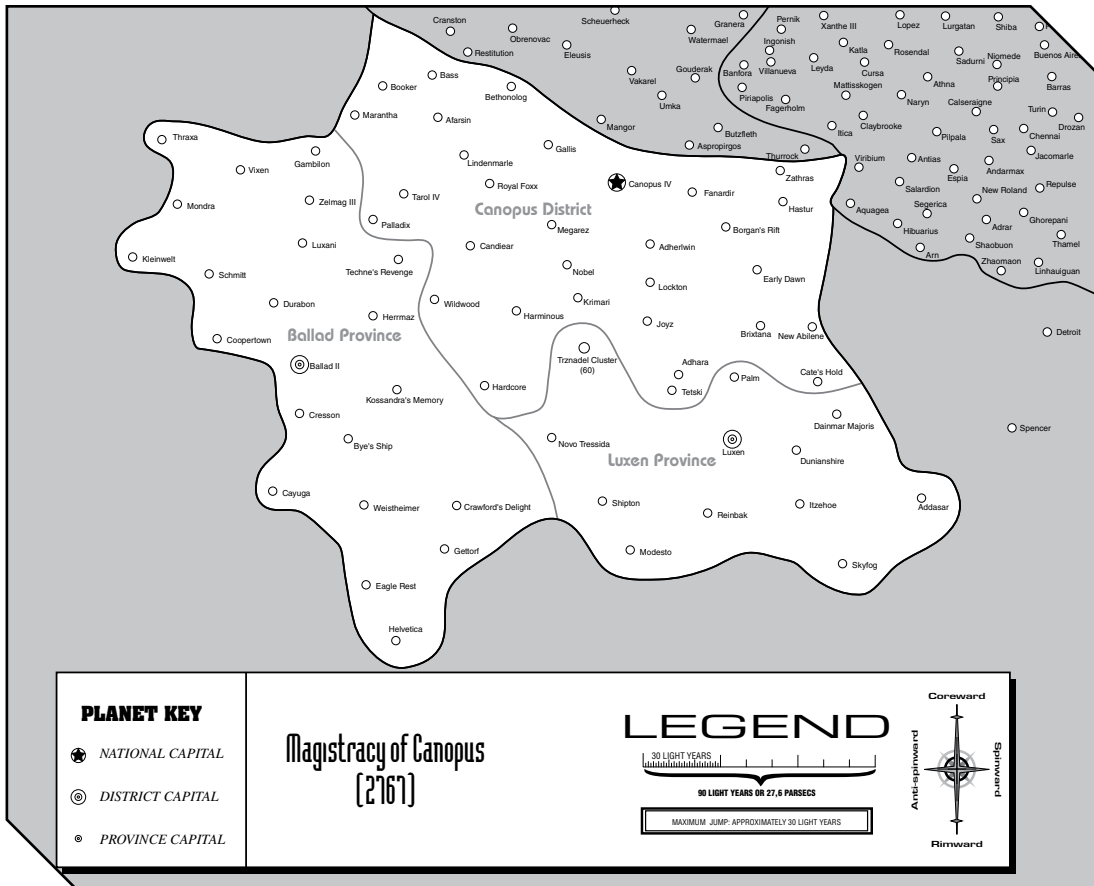
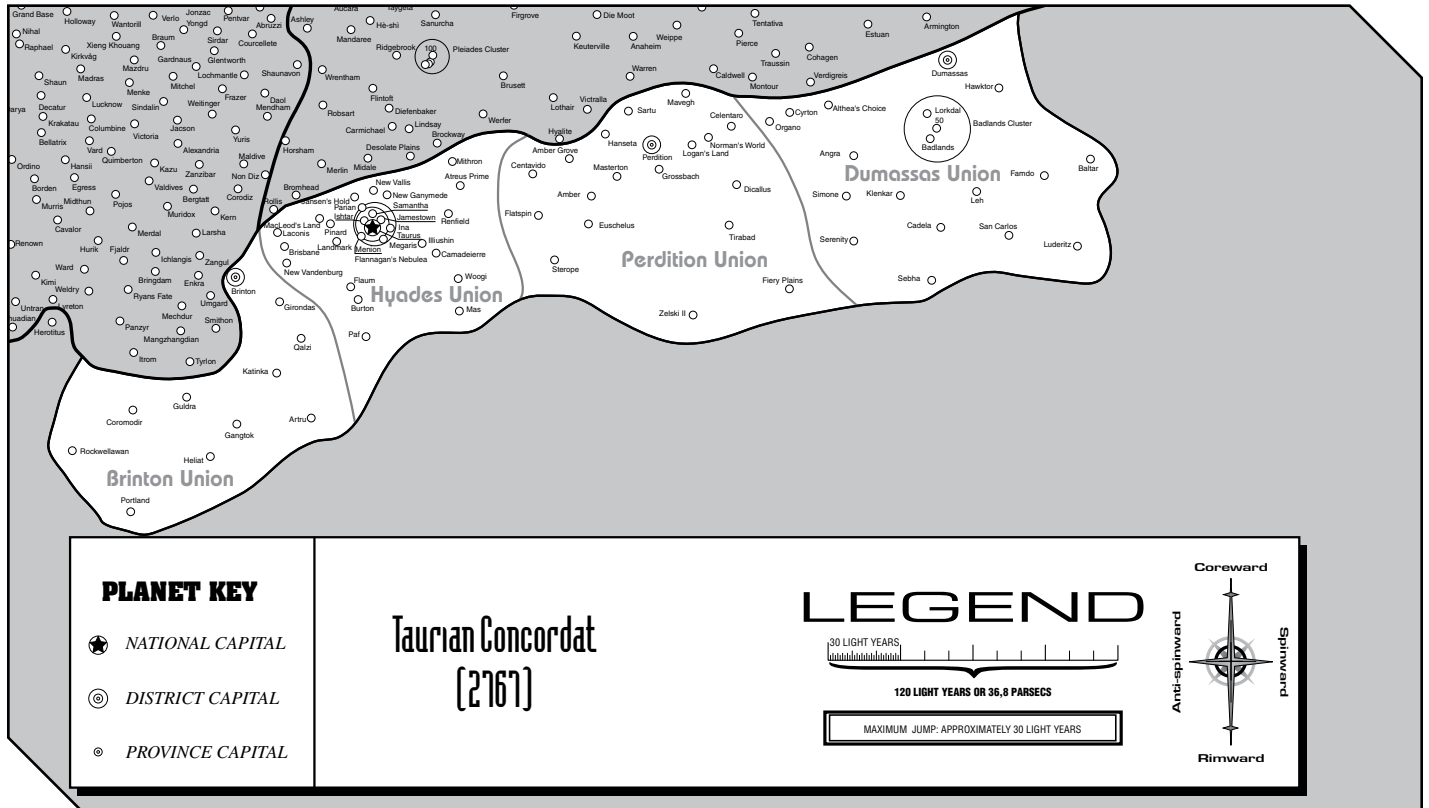
Eight MAF regiments and a dozen of mercenaries joined the initial revolt, which comprised tens of thousands of irregular troops. Most were small units so quantifying them is difficult; estimates range from the equivalent of thirty to sixty regiments. A large number of SLDF formations defected to the rebels in the Magistracy, with Seventeenth Army suffering the loss of around twenty regiments to the rebels. As in the Concordat, Amaris' Secret Army contributed approximately 150 regiments for a total of between 220 and 250 regiments.

Total: 20 Divisions (230 regiments – 185 of MAF/Secret Army plus 45 of irregulars)

Losses: Unknown (circa 210 regiments)

*The pre-Uprising garrison force

THE RIM WORLDS CAMPAIGN



THE OUTWORLDS CAMPAIGN

It is ironic that a pacifistic nation like the Outworlds Alliance became the bloodiest battlefield of the Periphery Uprising. Several factors conspired to make this so: the sheer size of the Alliance, which had grown immensely since the Reunification War, leading to the dispersion of the garrison forces; and the composition of the forces sent into the Alliance.

Tensions within the Alliance mirrored those in the other states as the High Council and First Lord heaped a succession of indignities upon the territorial states and protests and civil disobedience became commonplace. The Alliance also saw its own unique form of protests, using literature and art. Highly artistic guerrilla graffiti satirized the SLDF, the Star League, and the First Lord while pamphlets and e-hoarding hacks presented similar lampooning through poems and short stories.

Beatrice Avellar had been a staunch ally of Nicoletta Calderon and Janina Centrella and had conspired with Amaris' agents to stage the Uprising. However, shortly after hearing of the New Vandenberg crisis she collapsed and died, allegedly with a beatific smile on her face. She was succeeded by her granddaughter, Allyce, who was both naïve and ignorant of the wider plan. As a result, the Alliance Government took little part in the initial Uprising, leaving insurgents to battle the SLDF alone. Compared to the other territorial states, that placed Eighteenth Army in a good position as the attacks against them were inconvenient, but hardly disastrous. On many worlds they continued their normal patrols, confident in their ability to handle trouble.

The arrival of the Secret Army divisions shattered this complacency as the units of the widely scattered garrison army found themselves beset by determined opponents. Around the same time, rogue elements within the government, believed to be loyal to Allyce's brother Simpson, who would later stage a semi-successful coup against her in 2772, opened numerous AMC armories to the rebels and reassigned several regiments to "independent operations" to bolster key rebel positions. Eighteenth Army buckled but continued to hold its ground, its dispersed nature making it hard for their opponents to focus their attention on every base and overrun them.

Soon, SLDF reinforcements began to arrive in the Alliance and began the long process of relieving the beleaguered garrison. The Combine-based Fifteenth Army pushed through Cerberus Province and Traders Domain en route to Blommestein Province. Its sister formation, the Sixteenth, attacked the coreward worlds of Ramora and Alpheratz provinces, their objective being the relief of the garrisons in Onverwacht Province. Both were heavily reinforced armies with large infantry contingents, ideal for garrisoning the worlds they liberated. Unfortunately, the infantry-bias of these formations also made them vulnerable to attack and many took disproportionate losses.

A fourth army, the Twentieth, formerly the Rim Worlds Garrison, pushed through the Rimward systems of Ramora Province and into Baliggora Province before sending contingents to secure Alpheratz, a task they completed in December 2765. From there, the Twentieth acted as a rapid-reaction force for the rest of the conflict. However, in their efforts to rid themselves of the stigma of being ejected from the Rim Worlds Republic the Twentieth took a number of grave risks. On several occasions their forces attacked without gathering intelligence on the enemy positions, left positions under-garrisoned and allowed themselves to be drawn into traps, resulting in significant losses of manpower and equipment which drew the ire of General Kerensky.

At the start of 2767, around sixty-percent of the Alliance was back under Star League jurisdiction and a visit by Kerensky had bolstered the troop's morale. Plans were in place to complete the operation by the end of the year and begin a phased pull-back in 2768. Reality, however, soon intruded.

TROOPS INVOLVED IN THE OUTWORLDS UPRISING

SLDF (ARMY GROUP THIRTEEN)

SLDF Fifteenth Army (7 BattleMech Divisions, 27 Infantry Divisions, 9 Independent Regiments)

SLDF Sixteenth Army (7 BattleMech Divisions, 27 Infantry Divisions, 9 Independent Regiments)

***SLDF Eighteenth Army** (6 BattleMech Divisions, 15 Infantry Divisions, 30 Independent Regiments)

SLDF Twentieth Army (6 BattleMech Divisions, 15 Infantry Divisions, 30 Independent Regiments)

Total: 26 BattleMech Divisions, 84 Infantry Divisions, 78 independent regiments (492 BattleMech regiments, 585 conventional regiments)

Losses: 37 Divisions, 19 regiments (10 Divisions and 3 regiments disbanded) (445 regiments)

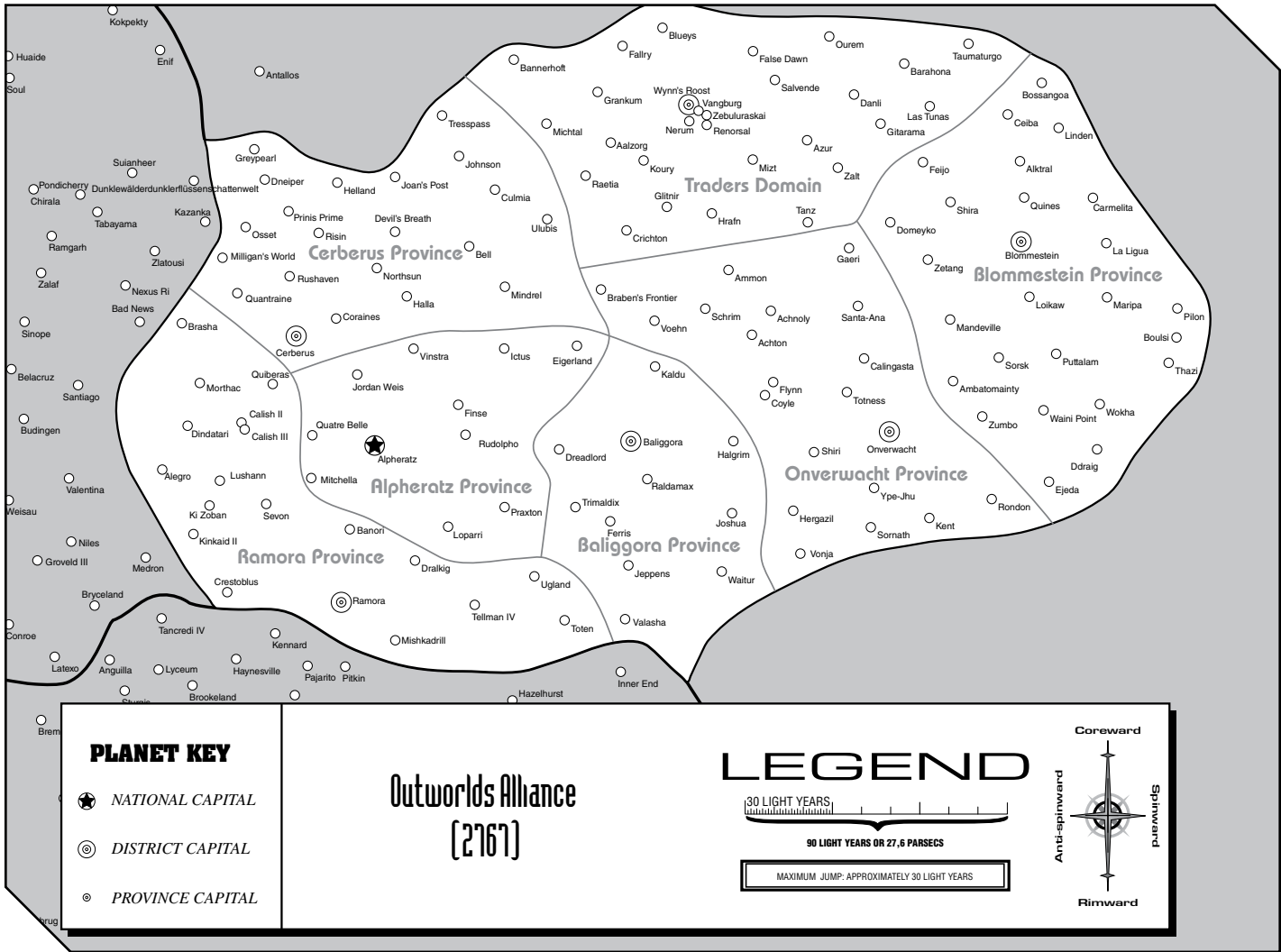
OA/REBELS

Initially the Uprising comprised masses of irregular troops, but these were later bolstered by a dozen AMC units and around sixteen divisions of troops from Amaris' Secret Army. A handful of SLDF forces sided with the uprising and all told, there were probably around 180 rebel regiments, but they performed disproportionately well against the SLDF.

Total: 19 Divisions (202 regiments – 172 of MAF/Secret Army plus thirty of irregulars)

Losses: Unknown (circa 180 regiments)

*The pre-Uprising garrison force



THE RIM WORLDS UPRISING

Initially the Rim Worlds Republic stood aloof from the Uprising, their refusal to pay the new taxes the sum total of their resistance to the Star League. Some took this as a sign of the Republic's true loyalty to the League, with the Amaris family again demonstrating the strength of their alliance with the Camerons. The Rim Worlds media did report incidents throughout the realm, but compared to the other territorial states these were minor and easily handled.

Then, in the late spring of 2765, news filtered through to the Inner Sphere of a massive battle fought on Götterdämmerung between RWR forces and aggressors akin to those who had struck at other states. In a protracted campaign, twenty Republican regiments—a mix of armor, infantry and 'Mechs—had beaten back a BattleMech division. This was immediately seized upon by Cameron and his cronies, proof that the Rim Worlds were suffering just as the League was but that their valiant troops were willing and able to do their bit.

It was not until later, after the Amaris Coup, that questions began to be raised about the Battle of Götterdämmerung. As more

details of the forces involved in the other theaters became clear, the size of the attack on the Republic came into question. It was vastly smaller than the forces that had attacked the other territorial states and had targeted a single world, almost as if it were tailored to the Republican defense. It was widely taken as proof of Amaris' duplicity, but the truth was even more bizarre.

Lyran journalists embedded with Kerensky's forces landed on Götterdämmerung in 2769. As part of their coverage of the war, they asked locals how it compared to the famous battle there a few years earlier. *What battle*, they replied. Archives from Apollo unearthed by the RRA after the SLDF occupation showed that the entire battle was a work of fiction, as were many of the other events in the Republic. The documentation, images and video footage were generated by a Republican propaganda team headed by Samir Njari (later Amaris' Goebbels-like Minister of Communications). The intention had been to conceal Amaris' preparations for war and make the Republic seem an equal partner in the troubles. It was imperfect, but given the distractions of three major conflicts and political instability within the Hegemony, it bought Amaris the time he needed.

NEW YEAR, NEW WAR

As 2767 began, operations against the Periphery states continued. News of the events on Terra would be a long time in reaching the front. New Vandenberg fell on 7 January and Kerensky immediately sent an HPG communiqué to inform the First Lord of the victory. He received no response. That in itself was not unusual as the relationship between Richard and the General was strained, but suspicions soon mounted.

News circulated at the start of January about a communications glitch in the HPG network, focused on but not exclusive to the first circuit stations around Terra. Communications had been re-routed through secondary channels and thankfully the trouble had occurred during the holiday season. However, by mid-January, the HPG traffic had not been restored and the absence of routine communiqués and administrative trivia from Terra became noticeable. When the Hegemony Central Bank failed to authorize the SLDF wage payments at the end of January, alarm bells began to sound. Protocols dictated that courier JumpShips be used to carry essential traffic in the event of an HPG malfunction, but no such vessels had departed the Hegemony and those sent into it carrying communications failed to return. The General feared the worst and ordered several units near Terra to jump into border worlds using pirate points and to bring back news of the situation.

Amaris himself broke the silence surrounding the Hegemony, publishing a proclamation on 31 January that announced him as the new Emperor of the Star League. The message would take weeks to propagate out to the Periphery, reaching New Vandenberg on 4 February. On one hand Kerensky was horrified at the situation; what had happened to Richard and the government? On the other, he felt vindicated in his dislike for the Republican leader. He immediately requested confirmation from the SLDF and Star League elements within the Hegemony, cursing the delay for round trip for messages to Terra even with priority military channels, and sent "hold in place" orders to all SLDF units operating in the Periphery.

Confirmation soon reached him of the situation—of troops fighting and dying in the Hegemony—but Amaris did not answer his query. Furthermore, neither the Citadel nor the War Academy returned his requests for information. He presumed they had been suborned by Amaris and, as their automated systems logged all SLDF data traffic, it seemed likely the RWR had direct access to the SLDF's communication systems and ciphers. The General immediately sent priority messages to all SLDF commands, ordering them to employ emergency codes while new protocols were established to replace the compromised ones, which requiring new codebooks to be hand-carried from the General's HQ aboard the *McKenna's Pride*, a process that would not be completed until the SLDF massed for its assault on the Rim Worlds Republic later that year.

Kerensky made it clear that he did not recognize Amaris' authority, immediately ordering a ceasefire against the Periphery states rather than carrying out the orders he later received from the Usurper to crush the Uprising. He was sure he could complete the suppression of the rebellions, but doing so would be meaningless if he let Amaris hold Terra. Yes, the territorial states were in rebellion, but they were also unwitting pawns in Amaris' scheme. The time spent in completing the operation and the losses the SLDF would sustain would give Amaris even more time to prepare. Instead, the ceasefire gave the SLDF a chance to recover and the political realities time to sink in across the Periphery states.

The leaders of the territorial states realized they had been played by Amaris, convinced they were equal partners in their Freedom War, but then discarded as soon as he had achieved his goals. Amaris' public orders to crush the Periphery Uprising were a shocking betrayal, and the Periphery lords were relieved when Kerensky refused to heed the instructions. The General did not promise that hostilities would not resume, but the ceasefire maintained the prospect of freedom rather than the certainty of defeat.

The conflict did not stop immediately as terrorist attacks continued against SLDF positions for several weeks. Throughout the Periphery large scale clashes reduced in number and then ceased, a tense peace returning to all three realms. The SLDF took the opportunity to abandon many of its more isolated positions and to pull back scattered formations into cohesive corps and divisions. Crippled units were amalgamated with their siblings or disbanded.

For almost ten weeks, peace reigned as Kerensky planned and waited for a reply from Amaris. Most of the SLDF used this time to rest and refit though some were immediately sent into action, most notably the swift Twelfth Fleet was dispatched to update their charts of the Republic. Amaris' message finally arrived on 19 May, and was a far cry from the diplomatic missive Kerensky expected. Amaris, realizing Kerensky would not heed his orders, was cynical and mocking, almost goading the General to attack him. Kerensky knew that he would have to retake the Hegemony, despite reports of public support for the new Emperor, but first he had another objective in mind

HARD CHOICES

The news from Terra was like a hammer blow, the ultimate betrayal of the Star League and its people. The men feel it too, their will to continue the campaign has gone and they just want to get home. It's as well the General has called a cease-fire. Some of the guys are spoiling for a fight and it would be easy to let them vent their frustrations on the Taurians, but they're as much the victims here as we are, and Amaris wants us fighting each other to make *his* life easier.

Yes, I want Amaris dead and the Hegemony freed, but frankly I'm sick of the petty infighting: Spheroid versus Periphery, House versus House, Lord versus Lord. The Star League was meant to be a grand alliance of humanity, but now it seems more like a sick relative with a cancer at its heart needing to be cut out. One part of me thinks euthanasia would be a better option, putting it out of its misery like a sick dog, but Kerensky believes it can be saved so I have to have hope. I can't give up.

Yet without unity, what hope can there be?

—Private Journal of Lieutenant General John Fletcher, Thirty-fifth Infantry Division, Nineteenth SLDF Army (Courtesy of Laurie Tseng, Loremaster)

THE PRICE OF VICTORY

The horrific human cost of the Periphery Uprising is well known. The SLDF suffered just under a million casualties, of whom 250,000 were fatalities, and the Periphery realms suffered around 1.3 million military and civilian casualties (of whom around 750,000 were fatalities). But what is rarely considered in the histories are the economic costs, both in staging the revolt and as a consequence of the rebellion.

The Secret Army

Chief among the issues was how Amaris was able to assemble his Secret Army. A force of fifty divisions—some 450 regiments—would cost hundreds of billions of SL\$, quite possibly a quarter or half a trillion SL\$ in total, more than the Rim Worlds Republic could finance, even supported as it was by the other three Periphery realms. To some extent he did not need to as the Rim Worlds had accumulated significant equipment stockpiles over the centuries, including WarShips constructed by Tadeo Amaris, though this likely only met around ten to fifteen percent of the Secret Army's material needs. The rest had to be paid for by Amaris and his co-conspirators, which would have been impossible to conceal from the Star League's Department of Economic Relations and the Department of Revenue.

Instead, while all four realms did conceal significant spending from the BSLA, Amaris' agents organized funding from financial institutions across the Inner Sphere, individually innocuous amounts but totaling billions of SL\$. Amaris' largest group of creditors included old world institutions within the Hegemony itself, many of whom would later throw their lot in with the Amaris Empire in order to secure their investment. Ironically, the Star League itself had even invested in its own downfall; Amaris had convinced Richard Cameron to authorize the release of regional development funds to the Republic, which Amaris promptly spent on the Secret Army. The rapaciousness of Amaris' troops after the Coup may have been part of an effort to secure the resources he needed to pay back his creditors, but in the end, the effort was futile and Amaris defaulted on many of his debts, further exacerbating the financial aspects of the crisis.

Maintaining the SLDF

The problems facing Kerensky were very different, but no less troublesome. After news of the Coup reached him and the SLDF's isolation became clear, the continued operation of an army numbering in the millions was thrown into doubt. The units had their own supplies, sufficient for months (if not years), which could be topped up from caches at bases across the Inner Sphere. However, the campaign to free the Hegemony would exhaust these supplies in short order and Kerensky needed to secure an ongoing source of food and material. Amaris had, however, cut off the SLDF's access to central funding. Troops' patriotism might allow them to go unpaid to an extent (though patriotism would not support dependents or pay mortgages) but the army could not. As well as supplies, Kerensky needed money and the legal limbo in which the SLDF operated, technically in revolt against the Star League's central government, posed a major roadblock.

Fortunately, the SLDF was used to local legal difficulties and members of the JAG corps, working in concert with the Star League's five State Administrators and other Star League government officials operating outside of Hegemony borders, moved swiftly in member state courts to gain access to blocked funding. Amaris opposed the move and while successful in preventing Hegemony institutions from releasing Star League funding to the "rebel" SLDF, was much less effective in the member states. The Federated Suns in particular found it politically expedient to recognize the legitimacy of the SLDF and allow them access to

Star League revenues gathered within the state while, at a governmental level, remaining neutral in the dispute. When Amaris sent a scathing missive to John Davion, the Prince responded that in a free and fair state, even the government had to acquiesce to the decisions of an impartial judiciary. Institutions within all the member states soon followed suit, though in a significantly more patchwork manner than in the Suns. Though financial records of the era are fragmentary, by the summer of 2767, Kerensky is believed to have had access to around ten percent of the Star League's budget.

The Wider Consequences

Much attention has been given to the military aspects of the Star League Civil War and usually scant attention is paid to the financial consequences of the conflict. Both sides abused the public revenue system—Amaris to pay off his astronomical debts racked up funding the Freedom War and his Secret Army; Kerensky to maintain the SLDF—and in short order the financial system began to crumble. While the war raged, the Inner Sphere plunged into a significant financial downturn. The economies continued to tick over on internal trade and commerce between the member states. The Hegemony's isolation put a major spike in affairs but the blow was not mortal, at least at that time.

As the conflict progressed financial institutions began to collapse, either because of the stagnation of the Inner Sphere economies or their massive exposure to war debt, particularly Amaris'. Within the Hegemony, a number of institutions threw their lot in with Amaris as a means to recoup the loans they had extended to him in more peaceful times (and which he was cagey about repaying) and when the Emperor's ultimate defeat became apparent they were left destitute and collapsed. By the summer of 2779, the Hegemony was a financial wreck and with no Hegemony or Star League central government to manage affairs, no chance of recovery.

With internal Star League squabbles and factional conflicts between Terran authorities preventing reformation of the government in Geneva the Terran Hegemony became a failed state. Its massive debt burden, however, was shared by institutions elsewhere in the Inner Sphere and the collapse of Hegemony's fiscal institutions caused shockwaves throughout the former Star League. Economists talk about the Terran financial crises of 1929 and 2012, the Alliance's troubles in 2242 and even the post-Reunification War depression that came to a head in 2618 but none were as widespread or as lethal as the economic contagion that followed the death of the Hegemony. The Star League had made the economies of the member states and territorial states interdependent and the Hegemony's collapse could not be disentangled from individual states' affairs.

The bloodiness of the First Succession War has been cited as the primary cause of the Inner Sphere's descent into barbarism but many economists believe the level of violence was an effect of a wider financial collapse, not the cause of it. They suggest that the First Succession War was almost a necessity as member states teetered on the brink of their own collapse, on the one hand as a distraction from their own woes and on the other an attempt to secure valuable resources needed to weather the financial storm. Certainly the rapaciousness within the former Hegemony, member states annexing worlds as fast as they could, was not from any altruistic sense of helping the inhabitants. Many of the worlds that "died" in this era were not nuked into oblivion or poisoned. They simply starved or froze or suffocated when interstellar trade collapsed and triggered a sympathetic failing of the local infrastructure.

—*The Fall of the Star League*, a commentary by Laurie Tseng, Loremaster

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Amaris' delay in replying allowed Kerensky to gather intelligence on the situation in the Hegemony and the member states. He didn't like what he saw. A significant proportion of the Hegemony's population supported Amaris' actions if not his methods, freeing them as it did from Richard's mismanagement and fiat. They believed Amaris could, to quote the old proverb, "make the trains run on time". That they were merely exchanging an incompetent dictator for a scheming one barely registered. Overall this didn't surprise the General. There would always be those who sought to tie their fortunes to their new overlords and a comparable element of the population remained opposed to the Usurper. Militarily the situation was worse. The Terran garrison had been annihilated, as had those on many worlds within the Hegemony, with only a handful of formations continuing to resist. There were indications that some of the shattered units had gone to ground and begun a guerrilla war against the Rim Worlds troops. Thankfully, none of the troops within the Hegemony had thrown their lot in with the Usurper nor had those within the member states. Despite this, Kerensky had to concede that Amaris' troops controlled the Hegemony and, with the SLDF's military HQs suborned, most likely the SDS. He could immediately throw the SLDF against the Terran fortifications but he knew that any operation would take years, a campaign the SLDF was ill-equipped to undertake. They had some supplies and could continue to draw from logistics bases in the member states, but that source was finite as Amaris had cut off their finances. The support of the member states soon began to look equally shaky.

Kerensky suspected that one or more of the Great Houses was providing covert support to Amaris. The plan was foolhardy to attempt without outside support, even if the Usurper had managed to miracle an army out of thin air, but a candidate soon became clear. The Draconis Combine, previously bullish and maneuvering for a military clash with the SLDF, had calmed and began cooperating with the Amaris Empire. Takiro Kurita had engineered the War of Davion Succession of the 2720s and the "bandit war" against the Lyran Commonwealth in the 2740s. He was calm and contemplative, a grand schemer, but could be aggressive and forthright in his views. Takiro was a known opponent of Amaris, going so far as to confront the Rim Worlds leader when Richard Cameron attempted to issue Executive Order 156, the ludicrousness of the centenarian Coordinator confronting the child-First Lord and his middle-aged advisor playing well in the Combine. It was alleged he had also sent DCMS forces on maneuvers along the Hegemony border in late 2765, a threat that prompted Richard to activate his defensive pact with Amaris (the rumors would later be shown to be false, part of Amaris' propaganda war). Kerensky began to suspect that the wily Coordinator was playing a role, his antipathy towards Amaris and the Star League an elaborate *maskirovka* designed to support Amaris' actions. Aged 121, Takiro died shortly after news of the Amaris Coup reached Luthien and was succeeded by his aggressive son Minoru who surprisingly undertook a policy of appeasement. Kerensky knew he couldn't trust the Combine nor count on the security of the bases within its borders.

Kerensky's relationship with the Free Worlds League was similarly troubled but in this instance the issue was of a more personal nature. The new Captain-General, Kenyon Marik, had served on Kerensky's staff some years earlier. The young Marik had overreached himself and been cashiered from the SLDF by the Commanding General. As a result there was a constant antipathy between them. Marik hindered SLDF operations in the Free Worlds before and during the Periphery Uprising and continued to do so after the Amaris Coup. While not ejecting the Star League forces from his realm, Marik provided little in the way of moral or logistical support. As a consequence, Kerensky felt he could not trust the Captain-General and his realm, which left him with only three allies: the Federated Suns, Capellan Confederation and Lyran Commonwealth—and those half-hearted at best. Officially, all the member and territorial states were neutral in the conflict but Kerensky felt that these three realms at least would not stab him in the back and would allow him to use the SLDF facilities and transit their space unimpeded.

KURITA AND AMARIS

The truth of the Combine's relationship with Amaris was far more complex than Kerensky suspected and didn't become clear until after Operation CHIEFTAIN (the SLDF's invasion of the Terran Hegemony). Takiro recognized Amaris for what he was, a power-hungry schemer. He knew he had to maintain his guard with the Rim Worlds lord. Where Takiro worked for the betterment of the Combine, he suspected Amaris' motives were less altruistic and that his manipulation of Richard Cameron could only cause trouble. When Amaris' troops took over defensive positions in the Hegemony he began to suspect the trap awaiting the First Lord and feared there would soon be clashes between the Rim Worlds troops and the Terran population, most likely a popular uprising against the unpopular First Lord and his Periphery mercenaries. Contingency plans to evacuate the Combine diplomatic delegation were activated, classified documents and equipment smuggled out in diplomatic pouches, while dependents and non-essential staff were withdrawn. To maintain the illusion of normalcy the Kuritan ambassador, Takiro's grandnephew Drago, had remained on Terra and was still there when Amaris launched his Coup.

The news of the Coup and Amaris' brutal tactics did not shock the Coordinator. Had he been behind such an action he would have slain all the Camerons too, but he felt it was a mistake. It would have been more productive for Amaris to continue his manipulation of the First Lord rather than taking over himself and bringing the ire of Kerensky down on his head. He gave the Usurper a year or two at most before Kerensky ground him under the heel of the SLDF. He might even allow some of the DCMS to fight alongside the General.

Then, news that Drago and his family remained on Terra reached the Coordinator. Amaris made it clear what would happen to the ambassador and his family if the Combine opposed his rule and gave aid to Kerensky. The shock was too much for Takiro who collapsed a few days later and died, though not before extracting a promise from his son Minoru to free Drago through negotiation. Minoru agreed despite Amaris' constant taunts and threats, creating the impression that the Combine and Empire were cooperating. They may have done so on some level but few records exist to provide details. Certainly Minoru hampered SLDF operations. He refused to allow the SLDF to use facilities within the Combine, and may have tipped off Amaris about SLDF operations. He also refused to allow SLDF forces passage through his realm, forcing

Continued on p. 102

Kerensky's forces to make large detours on their way to the Rim Worlds Republic. Later in the conflict the situation became so tense that Kerensky forcibly occupied several Combine worlds in order to secure his advance on Terra, an act that Minoru barely contested but swore vengeance for.

In the end, the Kuritan collaboration came to naught. When Kerensky liberated Terra the bodies of Ambassador Drago and his wife were found murdered in their apartments. The murders were believed to have taken place during Amaris' withdrawal from Unity City. This, too, Minoru lay at the feet of the General, swearing that one day he would have his revenge.

—from *The Sheathed Sword: The Combine during the Amaris Crisis*, Tharkad Press, 3048

THE THIRTY-FOURTH ROYAL BATTLEMECH DIVISION

Like all the Royal divisions the Thirty-fourth (part of Sixteenth Army) drew its members from the Hegemony and felt the news of the Coup like a blow to the gut. Despite Kerensky's orders to hold in place, the command staff decided to return home, abandoning their post in the Outworlds Alliance and rushing to free their loved ones and bring swift vengeance against the Amaris forces. Their target was the world for which they were named, Epsilon Indi, a major SLDF base world in Lockdale Province. Unfortunately for the Thirty-fourth, the world was defended by an SDS system and their assault was crushed before it reached the ground. Recordings of the disaster, captured by merchant vessels in the system, proved invaluable to the SLDF planners in their efforts to circumvent the Caspar droneships and provided the remaining troops with a cautionary tale on rushing into combat with the Amaris Empire.

—From *Into the Fire: Historic Military Blunders*, Canopus Signature Press, 3065

On 22 May, three days after receiving the taunting missive from Amaris, Kerensky addressed his troops and the Periphery realms. He stated that Amaris' actions were unconscionable, that he had little hope for the First Lord (Richard's fate was not immediately clear) or the SLDF forces within the Hegemony, and that through his treachery, Amaris had abrogated his rights to rule. A state of war therefore existed between the SLDF and the Amaris Empire, and his troops would take a measured approach to liberating the Hegemony. The SLDF needed to put aside its anger and allow rational thought, not passion, to dictate what happened next. Clearly, continuing to prosecute the war in the Periphery was unthinkable and he reaffirmed the ceasefire that had been in place since February. Humanity's home must be the priority, not recalcitrant members, though he did not rule out a future return. In the meantime, however, the people of the Periphery would be allowed to rule themselves and shape their own futures as they had long desired. Kerensky made one exception: the SLDF would occupy the Rim Worlds Republic.

The move surprised the SLDF, the member states, and Amaris, all of whom assumed Kerensky would go gunning directly for Terra before the Rim Worlds forces could further consolidate their positions. Kerensky knew this and had no intention of falling into the traps Amaris had likely prepared for him. His forces needed supplies and secure facilities away from prying eyes (which made even the loyalist states suspect to a degree as Amaris' agents could spy on their preparations) and the former SLDF facilities in the Republic were ideal candidates. Additionally, it provided the SLDF with the means to vent its anger before engaging the main body of the Usurper's forces. The troops launched against the Hegemony would be determined, not vengeful, and thus more likely to prevail. Seizing the Republic also gave the bloodied SLDF time to regroup and reorganize after the horrors of the Periphery Uprising, allowing the eventual offensive to be carried out by a cohesive and disciplined force rather than shattered remnants. Above all, the move disconcerted Amaris, who despite his clear lack of loyalty to his homeland, would face dissent from his troops, whose colleagues and families would now have to face the anger of Kerensky's occupying force. Any wedge driven between the Usurper and his troops would benefit the Star League, even if the delay gave Amaris time to fortify his position further.

THE RIM WORLDS CAMPAIGN

On 29 May, orders flashed out from the *McKenna's Pride* to all SLDF units. Those in the Periphery were to consolidate at Points Epsilon and Kappa as defined in the new ciphers SLDF couriers had hand-carried to them in the preceding months. Troops in the Inner Sphere were warned to expect movement orders, the precise details of which would follow shortly.

Almost immediately, the formations in the Periphery began to withdraw from their positions, stripping the bases or securing them against intrusion. One complex on Pinard served as an object lesson when Concordat troops forced their way into the subterranean complex; sensors registered the unauthorized access and detonated demolition charges, destroying the base and the intruders. Similar security measures were enacted at sites across the Periphery and member states.

UNLIKELY ALLIES

The members of the Star League called the seizure of the Hegemony the Amaris Coup, but to the people of the Periphery it was the Great Betrayal. The murder of Richard Cameron wasn't their primary concern, but Amaris' orders to Kerensky to suppress the Periphery Uprising were. They had conspired with the Rim Worlds for a decade to mount the Freedom War and now Amaris was throwing them to the wolves. They had been nothing more than a distraction, pawns to be discarded now that he had what he wanted. Indeed, it seemed Amaris preferred that his erstwhile allies be crushed rather than reveal the full extent of his duplicity.

When Kerensky announced that the SLDF would occupy the Rim Worlds Republic, the Emperor panicked. He realized the force left to guard his home state would stand little chance against the massed Regular Army. He sent an urgent broadcast to all the forces of the Secret Army, calling upon them to rally against SLDF oppression and to defend the Republic against the oncoming storm. A few small units did make their way to the

TROOPS INVOLVED IN THE RIM WORLDS CAMPAIGN

SLDF (ARMY GROUP FOURTEEN)

Commander: General Aleksandr Kerensky

Wave 1: Elements of 14 Armies (Third, Fourth, Sixth, Seventh, Ninth, Tenth, Twelfth, Thirteenth, Fifteenth, Sixteenth, Seventeenth, Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth).

Total: 48 BattleMech Divisions, 123 Infantry Divisions, 132 independent regiments (789 BattleMech regiments, 882 conventional regiments)

Wave 2: Elements of 5 Armies (Second, Fifth, Eighth, Eleventh and Fourteenth).

Total: 25 BattleMech Divisions, 73 Infantry Divisions, 180 independent regiments (549 BattleMech regiments, 513 conventional regiments)

Grand Total: 73 BattleMech divisions, 196 infantry divisions, 312 independent regiments (1338 BattleMech regiments, 1395 conventional regiments)

RIM WORLDS ARMY

Commander: Regent Mohammed Selim

10th Amaris Dragoons	3rd Amaris Legionnaires
17th Amaris Dragoons	127th Amaris Cavaliers
57th Amaris Dragoons	23rd Amaris Chasseurs
207th Amaris Dragoons	33rd Amaris Chasseurs
832nd Amaris Dragoons	6th Amaris Lancers
4th Amaris Fusiliers	11th Republican Light Lancers
Approximately 45 Militia regiments, plus supporting troops	

Total: 51 regiments (Approximately 15 BattleMech regiments, 36 conventional regiments)

Rim Worlds to resist Kerensky's forces, but most of the Secret army refused to comply. They had been paid for with Republican funds and trained by Amaris' people, but their loyalties were to their home states. The forces of the Secret Army melted away, incorporated into the territorial-state armies or else abandoned. A small proportion, the equivalent of several companies, placed themselves at the service of the SLDF they had been fighting only weeks earlier, becoming the core of the Volunteer Regiments that would later bolster the SLDF. Some hardliners continued to snipe at the withdrawing forces, but most of the rebels realized that they had won and that any further conflict was pointless.

The leaders of the Periphery states officially pledged their neutrality in the conflict between Amaris and the SLDF, but their leaders and intelligence agencies provided Kerensky with details of the pact with Amaris. Janina Centrella and Allyce Avellar were forthcoming about their role in the Periphery Uprising, but Nicoletta Calderon's clear duplicity in the secession of Concordat worlds made her untrustworthy in Kerensky's eyes and the General refused to meet with her, sending General Aaron DeChavilier in his stead. The SLIC poured over the information provided, which revealed many of the training camps in the Deep Periphery and the full extent of the Secret Army, including the likely material Amaris had held back for his own use in bolstering the RWR. Kerensky had little doubt that rather than the hundred regiments Amaris was believed to have used to seize the Hegemony, he would soon have dozens more divisions available. Given his access to the Hegemony's manufacturing plants the Emperor would have a powerful force at his command.

BLACK BUCK

The SLDF were a long way away, fighting uprisings in the other Periphery realms, but we knew that eventually some of them would come for us. Pride dictated it, but even so, Kerensky's announcement of a State of War between the SLDF and the Republic and his plans to occupy us were a body blow. Selim knew he had to prepare but had little in the way of resources to work with. The command staff on Apollo projected the arrival of the SLDF in August, though the first arrivals might appear in late June, possibly earlier if the forces near Tharkad moved up to the border. He was sure though that that we had weeks to prepare, at a minimum three or four and possibly as many as eight.

Oh what a naïve fool.

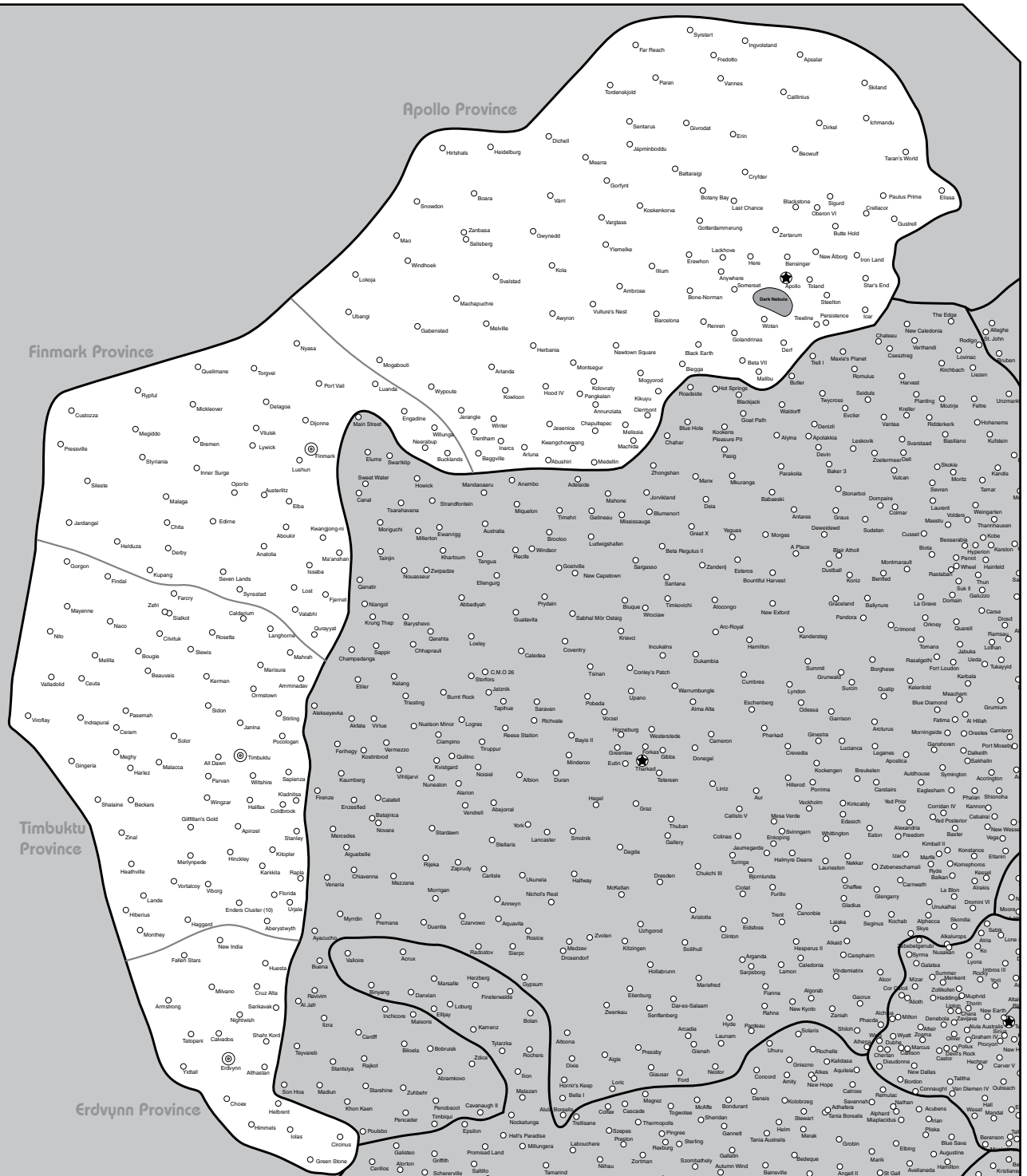
By the time Kerensky's message announcing his decision to attack the Republic reached Apollo on 2 June, some ten days had passed, but Regent Selim still thought we would have plenty of time to prepare. We went to bed that night knowing there was a storm bearing down on us, but little did we realize how close it was.

At about 0300 on 3 June my pager sounded an urgent recall. As I left my house I could see a firestorm engulfing areas west and north of the city. When I arrived at HQ the news was that the military district of the spaceport and Amaris' Palace had both been bombarded from orbit, capital grade lasers turning both into charred ruins. The SLDF wasn't weeks away, it was here already and taking action.

After the SLDF occupation we learned that only two squadrons of SLDF vessels were on-station above Apollo, elements of the Twelfth Fleet, but their appearance and the fear it instilled in Selim effectively paralyzed the government. Operation BLACK BUCK, the designation of the raid against our capital, was Twelfth Fleet's wakeup call to the RWA, a twenty-eighth century equivalent of the Doolittle Raid in the Second World War.

—From the diary of Phillip Drummond (Courtesy of Laurie Tseng, Loremaster)

THE RIM WORLDS CAMPAIGN



PLANET KEY

- ★ NATIONAL CAPITAL
- ⊙ DISTRICT CAPITAL
- ⊙ PROVINCE CAPITAL

RIM WORLDS REPUBLIC (2767)

LEGEND

30 LIGHT YEARS
120 LIGHT YEARS OR 36.8 PARSECS

MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS



THE GATHERING STORM

The first SLDF units began to arrive at Point Epsilon (Alarion) in mid June and at Point Kappa (Romulus) a few weeks later. Elements of the Eleventh Army had already begun assembling massive camps to house the arrivals and construction soon spread to neighboring worlds as the number of SLDF forces grew.

The first arrivals from the Periphery had been those deployed in the Magistracy of Canopus, who made swift passage through the Free Worlds League with the Captain-General's grudging permission. En route the armies had been joined by elements of Eighth Army, whose repair platforms and medical vessels relieved the pressure on the combatant army's resources. Troops from the Taurian campaign journeyed through the Federated Suns and Capellan Confederation before looping around the Hegemony and across the Lyran Commonwealth. Kerensky ordered several units to peel off from these formations to act as pickets and to carry out reconnaissance raids into the Hegemony. While the passage of troops had been tolerated, the use of member-state worlds to launch attacks on the Hegemony did not sit well with the respective governments, though only the Free Worlds League complained to Kerensky.

The troops from the Outworlds Alliance could have cut through the Draconis Combine, despite the objections of the Coordinator, but Kerensky remained convinced of Kuritan complicity in the coup and ordered the force to take alternative routes. Some voyaged through the Federated Suns and others hopped through uncharted Periphery systems. The Periphery detachment destroyed several of Amaris' training facilities en route, but only where the bases fell near their path. No mercy was shown to the installations, with orbital bombardment and nuclear weapons being the SLDF's weapons of choice.

By late July, all of the armies involved in the Uprising were in place and briefed. Kerensky ordered the remaining SLDF troops to begin a phased withdrawal from their garrison positions. Many facilities in the member states were mothballed but some, principally those in a broad ring around Terra, remained occupied and operational for use in the upcoming campaign. These redeployed troops, around eighty percent of the non-combatant armies, would form a second wave of assaults against the Republic.

On 9 August, Kerensky broadcast a message to Regent Mohammed Selim on Apollo, offering him the chance to surrender the Republic. Selim refused, believing Amaris' promises of vast forces en route to defend the homeland from the Star League butchers. In reality, Amaris had nothing to offer him and so began a horrifically one-sided conflict.

Task Force Kerensky:

Primary assault units: Third, Twelfth, Sixteenth Armies
Reserve: Sixth, Tenth, Eighteenth, Nineteenth Armies

Task Force DeChavilier:

Primary assault units: Fourth, Ninth, Fifteenth Armies
Reserve: Seventh, Thirteenth, Seventeenth, Twentieth Armies

Pincer Movements

Kerensky divided the fourteen armies of his initial assault force into two elements, one commanded by himself and the other under the authority of General Aaron DeChavilier. Each comprised three spearhead armies, with an additional four in reserve. Kerensky's force would assault worlds in the spinward provinces of the Republic, Apollo and Finmark, while DeChavilier's force moved through Erdvynn and Timbaktu. Each task force's armies would leapfrog each other, one assaulting a swath of worlds and then pacifying the population while the next hit further worlds, followed by the third army's strikes and so on. These rolling assaults made superb use of the SLDF's numbers and tactical flexibility, allowing them to maintain constant pressure on the Republic and to occupy vast swaths of territory quickly. Often likened to a tidal wave, the assaults became the subject of several poems and short stories, the best known of which was *The Silver Wave* by Albert Tennant that likened the SLDF to the ocean eroding a beach, an inexorable and merciless force.

Some feared Kerensky's forces would unleash the full scope of their arsenals against the Rim Worlds population indiscriminately, using strategic weapons and assaulting civilian areas in their fury. Fortunately, as the General had hoped, the SLDF's bloodlust had diminished and the troops held to the tenets of the Ares Conventions. Orbital firepower and nuclear weapons were employed, but only as a last resort against installations. Kerensky had little desire to ruin the Republic—it was, after all, still a Star League territorial state (albeit a rebellious one) and was thus to be safeguarded. Atrocities occurred, but they were the exception rather than the rule.

The initial assaults were tentative, with the assault forces working to secure their targets while watchful for Republican counterstrikes. The SLIC lacked significant assets among the Rim Worlds and could not confirm the numbers of troops guarding the Republic nor their capabilities, and the stories he'd heard of massed manufacturing in the Periphery made Kerensky wary of a massive trap being prepared for his forces. Many of the initial landings by both task forces met only token resistance, followed by the surrender of the planetary garrisons. Line troops were almost non-existent, prompting the SLDF to suspect a withdrawal to bastion worlds or fortified complexes. The SLDF would remain vigilant for a counterblow for much of 2767, by the end of which the specter of a hidden army had evaporated.

CAMP AMBER

The reality of the Rim Worlds defenses was almost laughable. Only a dozen line regiments remained, backed by around forty militia units and some planetary garrisons and paramilitary police. All told, just over fifty regiments faced off against two and half thousand and there was no illusion as to how that would end. Most of the militia forces melted away though the line units were more steadfast, the result of their political officers (whom Kerensky called *zampolits*) threatening vengeance against deserters and

FAITH, HOPE AND SACRIFICE

I recall the faith I placed in those who smuggled me off Procyon and out of the Hegemony, to rest on Zaniah in St. Marinus' house in God's good grace before embarking upon His great work.

I recall the hope of those placed in my care in the years after the Rim Worlds Campaign and in the horrors of the Hegemony, the souls of the 335th Division I commended to His grace.

I recall the sacrifice of those who laid down their lives to free Terra from the Usurper, and that of those who forsook their home so that the Great Father's vision of a true Unity could be birthed in the Pentagon.

—*The challenges of Faith, Khan Windham Khatib (formerly Chaplain of the 335th Division)* (Courtesy of Laurie Tseng, Loremaster)

their families. On several occasions, however, the politicians got more than they bargained for as troops rose up in rebellion against them, meting out horrific punishments to their erstwhile oppressors.

There were few open-field battles in the Rim Worlds Campaign, and those were decidedly one-sided. Instead resistance coalesced around defensive strongholds, principally those constructed by the RWA but also including those abandoned by the SLDF in 2755. The former proved relatively easy to overcome and most waves came to incorporate several base-assault missions, ranging from special ops infiltrations to BattleMech combat drops. The SLDF forts, however, proved to be harder to crack.

Twenty such bases had been constructed by the SLDF, with DeChavilier's forces the first to encounter one in mid-September during their third wave of assaults into Erdvynn Province. Located on Circinus it anchored the rimward defenses of the Republic and posed a significant threat to the SLDF and to both the Lyran Commonwealth and the Free Worlds League. Camp Amber was buried deep under the northern Ezo Desert with heavily fortified access points. The gateways were often disguised though this was of little value against the organization who had built the complexes in the first place. Initially, the SLDF occupation force focused on the civilian population centers and industrial complexes. After a week on world the SLDF found themselves under sporadic attack by a BattleMech force that seemed to strike and then vanish into thin air. Identified as the Twenty-third Amaris Chasseurs, the raiders were tracked back to Camp Amber, which preliminary reports had suggested was abandoned and thus hadn't yet been occupied by the SLDF.

Chagrined, Ninth Army commander General Thierry Dhair ordered the 108th Jump Infantry Division and the 275th BattleMech Division (The Altair Division) to root out the defenders and secure the complex. Despite having almost twenty times the size of force available to the Rim Worlds defenders, the operation to clear Camp Amber took almost six weeks. The initial approaches to the complex were unremarkable, but as teams worked to open the massive blast doors that secured the entry points, snipers and hidden weapon emplacements opened up on the attackers. These were quickly neutralized and the troops gained access to the facility. However, the labyrinthine passages of Camp Amber allowed the Chasseurs to fight a series of fighting withdrawals to secondary and tertiary defensive positions deeper in the complex. Eventually the SLDF's numbers began to tell, particularly after a foolish effort to break out of the complex by one of the Republican companies ran straight into an SLDF regiment. On 25 October, the complex was declared secure and the occupation of Circinus complete.

FRIENDS? ENEMIES?

The reaction of the less hardcore troops continued to puzzle the SLDF throughout late 2767 and into early 2768. Many of the troops simply threw down their weapons and invited the SLDF in, professing that they were Republican, not pro-Amaris forces. Only the *zampolit* maintained their loyalty to Amaris and even then, many sought to escape and hide their role in persecuting their own people, only to be hunted down by those they had intimidated. The SLDF frequently had to intervene to prevent the RWA carrying out rough justice on their political officers.

Unfortunately, not all of the surrenders were genuine. On Persistence during the second wave of assaults, an RWA company had surrendered and been taken into custody by elements of the Fifty-seventh Mechanized Infantry Division. However, as the debriefing of these "friendly" troops began, one detonated an explosive device concealed in his belt, killing twenty-three SLDF troopers and intelligence staff. Thereafter, all Rim Worlds troops had to be handled with care, screened for weapons and kept away from potential SLDF targets. This enforced lack of trust slowed the occupation of the Republic considerably. Only a handful of saboteurs were unmasked throughout the remainder of the operation, but the risk demonstrated on Persistence remained, and so the SLDF continued its safe but sure process.

Though few line units stood up to the SLDF, irregular actions, long a stock in trade of Periphery insurgents, saw a marked increase. Surprisingly, many of these incidents were not directed at the SLDF but at what little remained of the Rim Worlds military. The Rim Republican Army, long outlawed under the Amaris family, saw a resurgence in the 2740s and the rapid growth of the RWA in the 50s and 60s had resulted in a large number of sympathizers being trained at Amaris' expense. Most turned their coats after news of the coup on Terra and began a low-intensity war against their loyalist opponents, a clash in which the SLDF were mostly spectators. The RRA provided the SLDF with solid intelligence on Republican government officials and military personnel, though informing also proved to be a way of settling personal grudges. The SLIC soon learned not to take the RRA's intelligence at face value. The loyalists also sought to manipulate the information flow to the SLDF, in several cases leading them to suspected loyalist cells that were in fact RRA.

Attacks against the SLDF did occur, mainly from snipers and improvised explosives, but these were sporadic and easily dealt with, a far cry from the Republic's resistance in the Reunification War. In mid 2768, an incident on Erewhon reminded the SLDF not to relax their guard. Three months after the world had been pacified, the SLDF garrison had settled into a routine that made life seem almost normal. Then, on 17 August, as General Kerensky was visiting Fort Merrimack, a stolen catering truck attempted to breach the complex's main gate. It foundered on

the anti-car bomb defenses activated by the gate guard and the driver was shot. An SLDF Ordnance Disposal team approached the vehicle, expecting to disarm several tons of ammonium explosives only to discover a fifty-kiloton nuclear weapon primed and ready to detonate in a near-repeat of Fort Simpson. The driver had been rigged to a dead-man's switch but his body had become lodged in the crash in a way that the trigger had failed to activate. By sheer chance, a large section of the base had avoided devastation and quite possibly General Kerensky's life had been saved.

HIGH AND LOW

Less than a month after the Fort Merrimack attack came another incident with nuclear weapons, this time instigated by the SLDF. Fort Salisbury on Beauvais had proven to be another hardpoint for the RWR resistance, serving as a redoubt for elements of the Seventeenth Amaris Dragoons. Located beneath Mont Beatrice and with approaches to the fort dominated by weapons emplacements buried in the mountainside, retaking the base proved to be a costly endeavor. An initial 'Mech assault was beaten back easily and a second, backed by artillery and air support, fared little better. The Star League engineers who constructed the facility made cunning use of the mountain to provide interlocking fields of fire while making the weapons installations almost impossible to attack save by a close assault. Several special-forces teams attempted to cripple the emplacements. While some were put out of action, too many remained for the SLDF to assault the base without massive losses.

Eventually, General DeChavilier ordered his troops back from the mountain and dispatched a single aerospace fighter armed with a nuclear weapon. The west face of the mountain was shattered by the ensuing blast, and with it the weapons emplacements. Surprisingly the main door, shielded from the direct effect of the blast, remained intact. DeChavilier contemplated the use of additional atomics but was under strict instructions to minimize damage to the Republic's worlds, a policy the fallout from such weapons threatened. Instead, he opted to use his orbital fire support teams to pound the complex to rubble. For two days a detachment of WarShips fired lasers and shells against the complex, by the end of which the mountain and the base it had shielded were ruins.

Several other forts were similarly bludgeoned during the campaign, with nuclear attacks and sustained orbital bombardment one of the few effective strategies against the most well protected bases. However, Kerensky did not want to destroy the complexes if it could be helped; he wanted access to their facilities and the stockpiles Amaris had considerably placed in them to support the defenders. One base, Camp Sienna on Milvano, was destroyed by insurgents, who fought a two-week battle against SLDF forces for control of the facility before committing suicide by detonating the base's reactor, taking with them two regiments of SLDF infantry—the largest single loss of life by the SLDF in the Rim Worlds campaign. By the end of 2769, with the occupation of the Republic complete, eleven bases were in SLDF hands and fully-functional, providing the SLDF secure bases in which to repair and rearm, and three more were serviceable but had been slighted by withdrawing RWA forces.

Perhaps most significant for the SLDF was the three facilities captured by the navy, one in the summer of 2767 and two more in early 2768. Securing an orbiting port facility was vital for the SLDF, and though there were dozens of port facilities in the Republic, only three were capable of handling the SLDF's WarShips. While they had access to some facilities in the Lyran Commonwealth, notably at Alarion, their use was politically sensitive and a security risk. Several mobile repair platforms existed among the gathered naval contingent, but the ships' repair capabilities were limited and the only solution was a dry dock complex. Two were known to exist, the remnant of Tadeo's weapons program back in the twenty-seventh century, and a third existed "off the radar". This last was a facility constructed by the SLDF in the Dark Nebula between Apollo and Wotan and, thanks to the astronavigational challenges of reaching the Camelot Command facility, it had not been occupied by the Republic. A naval attack force jumped to the base in September 2767, carrying out a sweep of the vicinity before landing marines to secure the facility. Naval engineers followed soon after, and by early October the complex was beginning to service Kerensky's battered fleet. Camelot Command had a somewhat limited capacity, and so in early 2768 the SLDF simultaneously assaulted both of the Rim Worlds-controlled shipyards.

BLACK CATS BRING GOOD LUCK?

The world of Engadine proved problematic for the Eighteenth Army, with the 287th BattleMech Division (The Tobruk Division) and the 206th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division (The Democrats of Brazil) facing a determined force of irregulars. Their opponents were like ghosts, launching quick strikes against vulnerable SLDF patrols and detonating car bombs, causing massive civilian and SLDF casualties. Over the course of six weeks, the attacks escalated and intelligence rumors began to circulate suggesting their opponents had acquired chemical weapons and were planning on using them in a "spectacular" attack on the SLDF formations. The nature of this attack and the veracity of the rumor proved impossible to pin down and the SLDF forces began to get paranoid. Several incidents saw civilians terrorized and incarcerated because the Star League forces believed they were in league with the insurgents and the situation threatened to spiral out of control.

Then, overnight, the attacks stopped. Rumors circulated among the civilian population of an ultra-secret special-ops team taking out terrorists in a single night. The SLDF commander, General Gabrielle Morano, had no knowledge of such a team operating on Engadine. Two days after the "night of death," as the locals had called the raids, the General awoke to find a box with a black origami cat atop it sitting on her bedside table. Inside the box (after security had made sure the box wasn't a booby trap) was the head of the terrorist cell leader.

Morano reported the incident to the High Command and news of the event quickly reached General Kerensky. The effectiveness of the special-forces team did not surprise him, but their origins did. He wondered why, if Minoru Kurita was so closely aligned with Amaris, had some of the Combine's elite *Nekogami* assassins aided SLDF operations against the Rim Worlds Republic.

—From *Hidden Agendas* by Fiona Rice-Campbell, Rahne Publishing, 3026

THE HORRORS OF WAR

For what had been touted a “campaign of vengeance” by Amaris’ spin-doctors, the SLDF’s operation in the Rim Worlds Republic was a surprisingly calm and measured affair. Efforts were made to minimize damage to civilian infrastructure and to adhere to the rules of warfare. Mostly these efforts were successful, but occasionally hot tempers and bloodlust got the better of even the SLDF soldiers. Most common were incidents of battle rage, when the level of violence meted out by the troops was disproportionate to their opponents’ strength, but these incidents were usually overlooked. Some occurrences, however, were impossible to classify as anything other than atrocities.

The massacre of POWs at Gutui Junction is perhaps the best known, with the Ninetieth Dragoons killing over a hundred prisoners in the aftermath of a prison riot. The perpetrators were tried and punished by an SLDF tribunal, providing some justice for their victim’s families. However, the court stopped short of imposing capital punishment and instead consigned the culprits to a penal battalion.

Similarly, a food riot on Machapuchre turned into a massacre when the gas shells of an SRM launcher used to disperse the crowd were found to be intermixed with live shells, resulting in more than a dozen fatalities. The pilot was convicted of negligence and demoted. Like Gutui Junction, the “Fishtail Massacre” was exploited by the Amaris loyalists to whip up anti-SLDF sentiment though swift Star League justice nipped these efforts in the bud.

Most other incidents were much smaller, a soldier shot while attempting to surrender or the willful destruction of civilian property, but the JAG Corps treated all with the same level of importance. At this stage of the civil war, Kerensky was still driven by the ideals of the Star League and the honors of war. The true horrors of the conflict, as visited on the Hegemony, would soon cause the General to question his ideals.

—From *Against the Darkness* by Maebh al’Dorvan, Terra Press, 3085.

regiments on-world, which included the 832nd Amaris Dragoons and the Sixth Amaris Lancers, moved against the uprising and violently suppressed the protestors. Soon, though, tensions within the RWA also became apparent, as first individuals and then whole lances and companies refused to fire on their countrymen. Both regiments collapsed into internecine fighting and the SLDF observers began to hear calls for Star League assistance.

Though he had planned to hold off for several more months, Kerensky dispatched an expeditionary force to Apollo comprising the relatively fresh Eleventh Army, securing a beachhead before joining the assault himself at the head of Twentieth Army. There was only token resistance to the arrival of the SLDF as militia units staged a valiant but fruitless series of blocking actions. The only significant resistance to the assaults came from the militia units who retreated to a pair of fortifications constructed on Amaris’ orders a few years earlier and patterned after the Hegemony’s Castles Brian. The militia could, theoretically, have held out for a protracted period in these forts, but their small numbers and lack of familiarity with the complexes and their systems made them easy pickings for the determined 331st Royal BattleMech Division commanded by James McEvedy, who secured both bases in under three days.

The Star’s End Complex had been an SLDF fleet base once, but now served as the center of operations for the RWA navy. No Republican WarShips remained in the system, but there was a significant fighter presence and the Star League naval flotilla, headed by the SLS *Mountbatten*, faced a challenging fight. Several repair gantries and auto-factories were destroyed by the Republican defenders and a helium storage facility was lost when a crippled SLDF fighter crashed into the complex and ruptured several tanks. After a bloody fourteen-hour clash, the *Mountbatten*’s CAG, Stephen McKenna, reported the complex secure.

On the surface, the civilian facility at Erin was less heavily defended than Star’s End and should have been easier for the SLDF to occupy. Unfortunately, unlike the fleet base, where the arrival of the navy flotilla had caught the defenders largely unawares, the Erin yards received considerable advance warning and were rigged for demolition before the fleet could secure them. Almost sixty percent of the complex was destroyed and the remainder was only saved through the quick actions of SLDF EOD teams and the crew of the *Aegis*-class SLS *Bamborough*, who managed to prevent the main yard station from de-orbiting after its station-keeping drives were sabotaged by pushing the facility into a higher orbit with their own engines. Both the station and the cruiser sustained significant damage in the irregular maneuver, but the action earned the crew praise from General Kerensky.

Even with these three facilities, maintaining the Star League Navy was a struggle and Kerensky authorized the assembly of several “secret” facilities to service the fleet while they prepared to assault the Hegemony. Most of these have been lost to history but one—in the outer Odessa system—became infamous in recent years as the Ruins of Gabriel, a key Blakist facility during the Jihad.

APOLLO RISING

Kerensky considered an assault on Apollo at the start of the Rim Worlds Campaign but came to the conclusion that a direct strike against the Republic’s capital would be of little overall benefit and require considerably more effort than was worthwhile. Instead, he opted to let regent Regent Mohammed Selim stew, isolating a ring of worlds around the capital and blocking the passage of any HPG messages from Apollo that had not been approved by the SLDF. Together with seizure of the system’s jump points (which they captured in the second wave of assaults against the Republic) and patrols through the system to dissuade attempts to use pirate points, the communications blackout isolated the Regent and his military officers from the rest of the Republic and the RWA. The result was a nation and military that was rudderless, easy prey for the SLDF. Few quality RWA commanders remained at large in the Republic. Most had already been drafted into Amaris’ Terran divisions, a situation that further contributed to many troops’ eagerness to capitulate. Alongside this, the lack of political leadership allowed opposition groups to flourish and gain control of numerous worlds across the Republic. The isolation strategy had provided much the same result as occupying Apollo, but without the bloodshed.

For almost a year, Apollo was cut off from the outside universe. During that time political tensions began to rise. Simmering throughout 2768, the situation boiled over in late October when a popular uprising erupted against Minister Selim. At first, the loyalist



Many Rim Worlds troopers defected to the arriving SLDF, among them future Nova Cat leader Phillip Drummond, who subsequently served on Kerensky's intelligence staff, providing intelligence on the RWA and the Republic. Dozens more crossed the lines to the SLDF encampments and corralling the POWs soon proved to be a major headache for the Star League forces.

After only a week's fighting, Kerensky's forces pushed their way into the capital where rather than the bitter street-by-street fighting they had expected, they found a city in party mood. During the night of 29 October, the protestors had forced their way into the Regent's palace and had dragged the struggling Selim into the grand square before the parliament building where, after a cursory trial, they had hung him from a traffic gantry.

Kerensky turned a blind eye to the mob justice and the crowds welcomed the arriving SLDF troops as liberators, not conquerors, cheering the end of the Amaris dynasty's rule over them. This jubilation was tinged with fear as they remained unsure as to the ultimate fate of the Republic. Would they be allowed to continue to exist or would they be wiped off the map? Their fate rested in Kerensky's hands and numerous groups set about winning the General's favor.

ANY PORT IN A STORM

The death of Mohammed Selim and the fall of Apollo marked the effective end of Kerensky's campaign in the Republic. All of the former Star League bases were back in SLDF hands or else destroyed and the pro-Amaris forces had been crushed, though it would be almost another year before all of the Republic's worlds were in SLDF hands and the campaign officially concluded. The troops could have simply pillaged the worlds for the supplies they needed, but with

their initial fury spent on the Amaris loyalists, their training took hold and they began to impose order in the shattered nation.

Kerensky knew that the Rim Republican Army had long been a thorn in Amaris's side, as their actions had precipitated the Republican civil disorder during the Reunification War. Despite numerous efforts by a succession of Amarises, the organization had never died. The General had seen the organization in action during the Rim Worlds Campaign, the insurrections it had led paving the way for his forces to take control with less bloodshed than expected. Kerensky made overtures towards their leadership, suggesting a meeting.

Unfortunately, three things hampered the General's plan. First, the RRA's lack of centralized leadership made it difficult to work out who to negotiate with, and Kerensky was forced to weigh a host of competing claimants. Second, though many in the RRA had no love for Amaris, they had little for the SLDF either. Incidents during the campaign—notably at Gutui Junction, where the head of the local RRA was among those murdered—soured the SLDF's relationship with many RRA cells. Star League forces thus found themselves in a guerrilla war with some elements of the organization while holding talks with other branches. Third, some of the former Amaris loyalists claimed to actually be working for the RRA, further muddying the waters. The SLIC had little local knowledge with which to judge such matters and so the general had little choice but to allow the RRA to impose their own form of justice. Commonly this was harsh and summary; members of the former Amaris government and military were dragged from their homes, often in late night raids. The lucky ones were taken to internment camps or publicly humiliated; shaving the hair and branding the foreheads of "collaborators" was a common punishment, while the less fortunate were executed on their doorsteps or hung in the street.

BENIGN NEGLECT

With 20-20 hindsight, Kerensky could easily have lived up to his ideals and saved the Republic without unduly compromising his offensive against Amaris. Even a token force would have dissuaded Robert Steiner and possibly even prompted the Archon to provide substantive aid to the war effort as his people demanded rather than the self-serving “police action” he chose to pursue. Kerensky had expected Robert to hold to the same values as his father Michael, the General’s old college friend, and sorely misjudged the new Lyran leader. Kerensky’s diaries show his guilt at the occupation of the Republic by the Commonwealth and his desire to liberate them at the war’s end. However he reckoned without the scheming of the High Council—Robert chief among them—who stripped him of his office and destroyed the little idealism remaining to him. Rather than rescuing the Republic for part of a now-dead Star League, he chose to depart the Inner Sphere, the fall of the Rim Worlds another failure pressing on his mind.

—From *Against the Darkness* by Maebh al’Dorvan, Terra Press, 3085.

The RRA’s methods disgusted Kerensky, but he allowed them to proceed and, by early 2770, recognized the RRA as the legitimate government of the Republic. Lucien Dormax, a descendant of Katherine Dormax (whose rebellion against Amaris rule triggered the Rim Worlds’ problems in the Reunification War), became head of state. Dormax set about trying to unify the fractious RRA and to reassemble a functioning government. Unfortunately, he was strongly dependent on Kerensky and the SLDF, which did not help his cause. While rival leaders in the RRA denounced Dormax as a Star League puppet, factions within the RRA began waging a clandestine war against each other, something that would haunt the Republic in the years that followed. The SLDF often found itself intervening to separate the combatants, but despite their best efforts, the threat of civil war grew.

Some of the RRA urged resistance to the SLDF, but most sought to demonstrate their anti-Amaris credentials and worked closely with Kerensky’s forces. The trickle of Rim Worlds volunteers that had come over to the SLDF during the campaign became a flood and by late 2771, as the SLDF was preparing for operations against the Amaris-occupied Hegemony, almost four divisions had been added to Kerensky’s forces, around a third of them former RWA and RRA troopers. They wanted to repay Amaris for his betrayal and saw Kerensky’s SLDF as the tool of their vengeance. These troops would be among the most determined and loyal of Operation CHIEFTAIN. The remaining recruits came from across the Inner Sphere (and sometimes from the Periphery), volunteers who sought to throw their lot in with the SLDF. With many of the member states refusing to help Kerensky directly and the territorial states effectively independent, the volunteer regiments were their best way of serving. However, unlike the RWA and RRA recruits, many of these volunteers lacked military training and had to be put through boot camps. Both the RRA and SLDF established facilities, including an impromptu MechWarrior academy established at a high school on Circinus. Surprisingly, the most direct support for the SLDF came from the Draconis Combine, with

a substantial number of recruits arriving in the Rim Worlds complete with their own equipment. These *ronin* had historically been antagonistic toward the SLDF, fighting a succession of duels with Star League Gunslingers, but now volunteered their services. All were skilled warriors, some becoming instructors in the SLDF’s impromptu academies, others joining line units and volunteer brigades. One of the most respected of these, Shin Katsumoto, met with Kerensky and confided that they had been encouraged to aid the SLDF’s cause by none other than Coordinator Minoru Kurita, whose public stance remained aligned with the Amaris Empire. Kerensky was left to contemplate the fickle relationship of honor and duty.

Support for the RRA was patchy across the Republic. Some worlds enthusiastically took up the cause and acknowledged Dormax’s government, but others were noncommittal and in some cases outright scornful. Given time, the president believed he could restore order, but it was Kerensky who dictated the timetable: The SLDF would leave the Republic in early 2772, after which the RRA would be on its own. With many of its members opting to join the SLDF, the Republic struggled to assemble any military of its own and Dormax requested that the General leave at least a nominal garrison to maintain order. Kerensky refused as he could not spare the troops and so the fate of the Rim Worlds Republic was sealed.

THE DEATH OF THE REPUBLIC

Kerensky’s troops began their departure in mid January 2772 and, on 9 February, the last SLDF forces left the Republic. For a few weeks, the peace held. Then in March, open conflict erupted between RRA factions on Götterdämmerung. The unrest spread quickly and by the end of the month, factions of the RRA were locked in a civil war. This conflict might have burned itself out, but the SLDF and RRA security operations had failed to root out all the Amaris sympathizers and with the SLDF occupation withdrawn, they began to emerge from hiding. The civil war became a three-sided conflict—in fact, there were dozens of competing factions, including Hegemony citizens who had settled there—and terror bombings and assassinations became the order of the day. Government officials were the primary targets, but even civilians suspected of particular sympathies soon found themselves among the victims. Now, it was pro-Rebel or pro-SLDF supporters who were lynched or branded as collaborators. Even so, this was a purely Republican affair and Dormax believed that negotiation between the factions and efforts at reconciliation stood a chance of bringing all of the people together under a government of national unity.

By the start of 2773, Dormax had managed to calm many of the RRA factions and was seeking negotiations with the pro-Amaris Republicans, who had reclaimed control on dozens of worlds. The communications were delicate as the hard-line Amaris Loyalists would rather see the RRA burn in Hell than ally with them, but those of a more patriotic nature saw the need to build some sort of pan-Republican alliance if their realm was to survive. Dormax knew he would not be able to get all of his opponents on-side but he would settle for a number of them, undermining the position of those remaining. He organized a conference on Apollo on 5 May to discuss terms, hoping that by the middle of the year his people would be at peace.

Preparations were well underway when frantic messages began to pour into Government House on Apollo. Many border worlds were under assault by determined and well-trained opponents who quickly captured stations and port facilities before overrunning the worlds' meager defenders. With the Republican intelligence apparatus non-existent, surprise was total and gathering information proved to be a major challenge. Eventually, a report arrived from Kikuyu that these troops bore the fist insignia of House Steiner. The Lyran Commonwealth had decided to "deal" with the Republic.

OPERATION ALMARIC

Like many on the High Council, Archon Robert Steiner had refused to provide the SLDF with significant aid in its war against Amaris, but they were not foolish enough to impede the SLDF's movement towards Terra (unlike Kenyon Marik later in the conflict). His reticence did not sit well with the population, however, and Lyran citizens (including many in the LCAF) formed a substantial part of the volunteer force Kerensky assembled while in the Republic. At home, political opinion turned sharply against Robert's isolationist policies and he was given a stark ultimatum: do something or face civil unrest. He would need to act or resign.

LCAF forces had been massed along the Rim Worlds border soon after the Coup on Terra. In April 2773, Robert ordered them to cross into the Republic in what he dubbed Operation ALMARIC. His message to the public was that he was taking action to secure the Rim Worlds and to prevent it from being used as a recruiting and training ground for Amaris' forces. He was, he claimed, removing the knife held behind Kerensky's back and allowing the General to act freely. Despite claims to the contrary by Lyran academics (such as the Auburns), the consensus among historians has been that Steiner acted in a way that publicly was supportive of Kerensky, but in reality was self-aggrandizing. The LCAF was occupying Republican worlds with no intention of giving them back.

Around a hundred Lyran regiments fought their way into the Republic in what Robert insisted was a "police action." These units were a mix of conventional and BattleMech forces, the numbers of which had been made possible by the revocation of the 2650 edict and for which the campaign would be their blooding. The LCAF seized worlds in the name of the Star League but almost immediately began incorporating them into Lyran provinces. Many worlds—both pro-RRA and Amaris Loyalist—fell easily. Several saw the LCAF fighting both factions, which sometimes prompted the Republicans to forge alliances of convenience against their common enemy. More often than not, the Rim Worlds forces were destroyed in detail. Only on a handful of worlds did the LCAF face substantial organized resistance, Bucklands and Somerset being the most notable instances in the early phase of the conflict. Political opposition was another matter.

In private correspondence, Kerensky made it clear that he still regarded the Republic as a protectorate of the Star League, threatening the visitation of the SLDF on the Commonwealth if Robert continued with his occupation. However, with the SLDF engaged against the Amaris-occupied Hegemony and Kerensky's dissatisfaction not widely known, the threat was an empty one. LCAF operations, which halted briefly after the receipt of Kerensky's communiqué, resumed in the fall of 2773. They would continue—albeit with reduced impetus—until 2776. Apollo fell to the LCAF in September of 2775 after a bloody three-month assault, and Lucien Dormax was captured by Lyran special forces and removed to the Commonwealth for interrogation (his fate after this rendition unknown). Crowds gathered to protest the Lyran occupation, denouncing the Archon but also denigrating both Amaris and Kerensky for abandoning them. Amaris had willfully discarded them as he traded-up to the Hegemony, but Kerensky, for all his fine words about preserving the Rim Worlds, had doomed them by destroying their military, then withdrawing without leaving a garrison. Even now, some of the former Republican worlds curse Kerensky's name, in some cases twice-over, once for his abandonment during the civil war and again for the Clans his son founded.

The Lyran offensive continued for several more months, but eventually came to a stop with more than seventy Republic worlds under the "protection" of House Steiner. It remains unclear even today why the LCAF did not complete the occupation of the entire Republic. Was the Archon's appetite sated or was the Lyran bureaucracy and economy choking on the massive influx of new worlds? The remaining worlds were left to fend for themselves, isolated and independent as the Succession Wars began and the Inner Sphere collapsed once more into a cycle of violence. Many worlds perished, but some persevered and survived to the modern era.

Others became the bastions of petty warlords, eventually degenerating into the bandit kingdoms for which the coreward borders of the Commonwealth became infamous. In a few cases, new proto-states were carved from the chaos of the abandoned worlds; the Oberon Confederation (a bandit kingdom with delusions of statehood) and the Rim Collection (a small collection of worlds brought together by the Unification Movement). Many of the former Republic worlds were treated harshly by the returning Clans, who regarded them as the homes of the traitors who destroyed their beloved Star League. It is ironic therefore that one of the ex-Rim Worlds bandit kingdoms that survived, the Circinus Federation, would become the last refuge of the Word of Blake.

SLIC COMMS

* Priority * Priority * Priority * Priority * Priority *
Priority * Priority * Priority * Priority
Archon's Eyes Only

Archon Robert,

Do I need to remind you that the Rim Worlds Republic remains a signatory of the Star League and a territorial state under the protection of the Star League? The Dormax government has been recognized as the legitimate ruling body of the Republic and is to be accorded the sovereign rights expected of such an office. For the friendship I had with your father I will not direct the SLDF against you at this juncture, but once the present crisis is dealt with, the SLDF will fulfill its mandate, no matter past loyalties or present intentions.

[Signed]
Kerensky



RETURN TO THE HEGEMONY

In the profession of war the rules of the art are never violated without drawing punishment from the enemy.

—Frederick the Great

Even the Reaper is not immune to Righteous Justice.

—Terran Hegemony Field Marshal Mears Coblitz

With the Rim World capital of Apollo firmly in General Kerensky's hands by the end of 2768, and the remainder of the Republic pacified and under SLDF control less than a year later, the first phase of Kerensky's ultimate plan was complete. Stefan Amaris, the self-anointed Emperor of the Amaris Empire, was now cut off from any support he might have been able to call upon from his home nation. Moreover, none of the leaders of the Five Great Houses had provided Amaris even a bit of actual support—not even Coordinator Minoru Kurita, who had apparently kept diplomatic relations with Terra open after Amaris' coup and had further refused to aid Kerensky's SLDF in any way, yet who had also never officially recognized the Usurper's claim to Terra, the Hegemony or leadership of the Star League.

Stefan Amaris seemingly had full command of the Terran Hegemony and all of its extensive resources. Available intelligence indicated that he had a combined equivalent of some forty divisions of Rim Worlds regulars, mercenaries and Hegemony-native and -recruited troops at his disposal. He also had command of over half of the Hegemony's Castles Brian and nearly every Space Defense System, as well as an estimated two hundred capital WarShips.

On paper, Kerensky commanded a force of nearly three hundred divisions, an additional two hundred independent regiments, and a fleet of some two thousand capital ships of all classes. In reality though, only about half of those forces were at or near full strength. The war against the Periphery rebels followed by the invasion of the Rim Worlds Republic had taken their toll upon the Star League Defense Forces, amplified by the fact that the steady stream of replacement troops and materiel from the Hegemony had been cut off by Amaris' Coup.

After four years of unrelenting warfare, punctuated only by long voyages from one end of the Human Sphere to the other, the SLDF was exhausted. Meanwhile, Amaris continued to strengthen both his defenses and his resolve within the Hegemony.

STANDING AT THE CROSSROADS

After capturing Apollo, General Kerensky gathered his army commanders together to assess the strength and capabilities of the SLDF and develop a plan of action that would prepare the greatest army ever assembled for the greatest military campaign ever envisioned. Humanity's homeworld and the entire Terran Hegemony—both the breadbasket and the industrial powerhouse of the Star League—was occupied by a hostile force that was clearly intent on destroying everything that was the Star League

and the Hegemony. Hundreds of billions of Hegemony citizens were under the cruel and despotic thumb of a man who would soon be known as history's greatest villain, a man whose grip upon the Hegemony only grew with each day that passed. The campaign to unseat Amaris and his minions would undoubtedly be difficult and unimaginably costly.

Both Kerensky and Amaris knew the preparations for this campaign would require valuable time. But where Amaris was now completely cut off from the only outside assistance he had ever received, Kerensky began to lean heavily upon the five Lords of the Great Houses to finally choose sides in the conflict, especially Minoru Kurita, who appeared to be playing both sides against each.

The interstellar press became the general's first line of offense against both Amaris and the five House Lords. Stories and rumors of the atrocities being committed by Amaris' occupation forces had been slowly and steadily leaking out, carried by the relatively few JumpShips that were still running regular trade routes into and out of the Hegemony. Coupled with sometimes-weekly addresses from "Emperor Amaris" to his "loyal subjects" across the Star League, the common citizens of the Star League often had difficulty determining what the truth was.

Kerensky's press corps worked in earnest, spinning those stories to paint Amaris not as the liberator who ended the Camerons' tyrannical rule, but as a power-mad murdering tyrant. They also began to push the message that Amaris' time of reckoning would be soon coming, while also subtly intimating that it was time for the House Lords to support Kerensky's SLDF as they removed Amaris and his minions. Publicly, the general praised the five House Lords for their refusal to aid "the Usurper Amaris," further declaring that "now is the time for the citizens and leaders of the Star League to unite against the greatest threat modern civilization has ever seen."

Behind the scenes, Kerensky travelled to the capitals of each of the five Member-States to meet personally with their leaders. His message was simple and blunt: it was time to finally choose sides. The entire Inner Sphere was relying upon them to finally carry out the oaths they each took when they assumed their offices to protect and defend the Star League, to rid Terra of "that Amaris scourge."

Each in turn provided Kerensky a laundry list of reasons they hadn't provided him any support yet. And all five continued to provide excuse after excuse why they could not task their own House troops to aid in the liberation of the Hegemony, though each made vague promises to give Kerensky the "support he needed."

AFTERSHOCK

When Stefan Amaris launched his coup in the final days of 2766, his agents temporarily cut all communications into and out of the Terran Hegemony. This of course ensured that the few surviving SLDF and planetary militia units within the Hegemony would remain isolated from reinforcements while also keeping the whole of the Inner Sphere in the dark until it was too late. But while Amaris had seized the entirety of the Hegemony, including nearly the entire Star League government, he did not in actuality manage to seize the reigns of the Star League, which by necessity relied upon a decentralized bureaucracy to manage a nation a thousand light years in diameter. The sudden loss of communications with Terra and other key government and military nodes within the Hegemony initiated a cascade of effects that in turn completely severed Terra's ties with Star League government offices and agencies outside of the Hegemony.

The first major ties cut were economic. When the Department of Revenue failed to authorize the transfer of 2766's final quarter of tax revenues from the five member states to Terra, the State Administrators attempted to contact the Director of the Bureau of Star League Affairs, to no avail. Meanwhile, after the directors of the six non-Hegemony-based Star League Exchanges and their associated League Reserve Banks likewise lost contact with the League Central Exchange and Bank, they placed a hold on all pending transactions with Hegemony banks and concerns until the communications problems could be cleared up. Just weeks later, when February's transaction authorizations from the Department of Administration HQ on Terra, typically issued a week prior to the end of the previous month, were not sent, all Star League funds disbursements were automatically frozen—including wage and benefit payments, scheduled payments on contracts, foreign aid and the like.

The Departments of Administration, Education and Information, and the Attorney General all continued to operate throughout most of January 2767, but each eventually found the loss of communications with Terra debilitating. It wasn't until the money literally ran out that these departments all eventually shut down to one extent or another. Many local administrators managed to keep their doors open a little while longer by furloughing non-essential employees and cutting back their spending as much as possible, but only for a few days longer. Until Amaris' address from Terra finally reached them.

That address, followed by the slew of administrative messages that poured out of the various government offices on Terra, wreaked havoc upon the non-Hegemony Star League bureaucracy. The Director of Star League Affairs, Duke Khalid Ueno—appointed on Amaris' suggestion to head the BSLA just two years prior to the Coup—issued orders to reopen the flow of Star League income and information into the Hegemony, indicating that disbursements (such as wage and benefit payments) would be authorized shortly thereafter.

Before that happened, the five Star League State Administrators conferred with representatives from the five corresponding SLDF Military Region commands, the directors of the six non-Hegemony Exchanges and officials from dozens of regional Star League directors and officials, meeting on the five capitals and coordinating their decisions via HPG. The question they had to answer was simple: would they follow what were apparently legal instructions issued by the Director of Star League Affairs, a man duly appointed by the First Lord of the Star League but who had, if not directly supported the overthrow and murder of First Lord Richard Cameron, at least pledged his loyalty to the very man who had done so? Or would they stand in opposition to the self-appointed Emperor Amaris, fighting to topple him and his conspirators from power? And what about the innocent citizens of the Hegemony caught in the middle?

As one, the State Administrators and the SLDF commanders—none of whom Amaris had been able to influence or suborn prior to the Coup—stood in opposition to Amaris, as did many of the senior bureaucrats. Those that pushed to follow Director

Ueno's orders fell into two camps: some believed it was wrong to ignore the lawful mandates of the BLSA, no matter who the current leader of the Terran Hegemony might be; the rest were directly loyal to the Usurper, appointed through Amaris' political machinations.

In the end, the five State Administrators listened to all the arguments but chose to defy what they considered illegal orders from a collaborative government on an occupied Terra. They would cut the Hegemony off from any and all support they could—including but not limited to Star League revenues, shipments from foreign suppliers and ready access to the SLCOMNET—until the Star League Council reconvened to select a new First Lord and confirm a new Hegemony Director-General.

Not everyone followed their instructions to the letter, or even the spirit. The directors of the Narellan and Preston exchanges, both Amaris appointees, along with three other Department of Revenue regional offices, pushed Star League funds back to Terra, while more than a dozen other ranking government officials either aided them in doing so or worked to otherwise protect those following Terra's orders.

What followed was nearly a year of revolution within what was left of the Star League government. General Kerensky both simultaneously helped the loyalist cause and extended the revolution by months in April when he ordered SLDF personnel within the Inner Sphere to arrest any Star League government personnel that provided aid of any sort to Amaris and his occupation forces. Based on these orders, hundreds of government officials were arrested. Unfortunately, those arrests also encouraged many more fence-sitters across the inner Sphere to unite with Amaris' nominal supporters and fight what they saw as a military counter-coup. The lines became quickly blurred, only causing more confusion and discord among the very bureaucracy that the Star League loyalists would need when they finally turned their attentions towards the occupied Hegemony.

From that moment on, the Star League was a government in name only. In what would become something of a microcosm of the post-war political landscape, the five State Administrators were unable to decide precisely how to best maintain the government or even who would serve as their chief administrator. Instead, they each took responsibility for the bureaucratic structures within their own home nations, keeping the Star League courthouses open, overseeing Inner Sphere commerce and the like. To keep the government working, they would continue to collect taxes and fees on the part of the Star League.

As they soon found out, however, that was easier said than done. Tax incomes fell considerably as many member state planetary governments either refused to release the taxes they had collected or were unable to collect all of the taxes as required by law (and with neither the power of the SLDF nor the First Lord to stand behind them, the Department of Revenue tax collectors lost most of their inherent power). Meanwhile, lawsuits brought within the Star League courts against the Star League government forced these regional entities to pay for a variety of different social programs and contracts defaulted upon when the BSLA stopped all Star League disbursements.

In the end, despite their best intentions and high hopes, the State Administrators were forced to close most Star League government offices and end nearly every social program it had supported for almost two centuries, in the process leaving countless millions of former government employees without jobs. While they were able to collect some of the tax revenues due, more and more they were forced to rely upon mercenaries and other non-government entities to collect these monies, in the process awarding handsome percentages to these "freelance tax-collectors." Most of the money collected in the first years eventually went to pay off debts owed by the League government, with what little remained dedicated to paying what few employees continued in Star League service and the SLDF—all at significantly reduced levels.

—Kana Sohiri, *Rock Bottom: Rebuilding from Revolution*, Tharkad Press, 3066

Amaris, too, attempted to curry favor with the leaders of the five Great Houses. Not daring to leave the security of the Hegemony, he sent each a number of personal messages via HPG, making grand promises of power, wealth and even to cede massive pieces of the Hegemony to them after aiding him in destroying Kerensky and the SLDF. None of the five pledged Amaris any support, though after Kerensky's press corps leaked some of these messages to the interstellar press, the public uproar was enough for the leaders of all but the Draconis Combine to allow Kerensky to stage reconnaissance raids into the Hegemony from their nations.

Publicly, Coordinator Minoru Kurita remained opposed to Kerensky's campaign. Privately however, the Coordinator gave Kerensky a wealth of support, most of which the general would never even learn about or only suspect. So while Kurita remembered and honored the promise he made his father to peacefully negotiate the release of his cousin, Ambassador Drago Kurita, from Terra, he recognized the reality of the situation and gave what covert assistance he could.

THE REVIVAL

While Kerensky attempted to build support for his campaign to liberate the Hegemony, he tasked General Aaron DeChavilier, his second-in-command and closest confidant, to prepare the SLDF for the war against Amaris. After four years of heavy fighting in the Periphery, the SLDF had sustained heavy losses, both in casualties and materiel. While the SLDF had been prepared to absorb and replace these losses in due course of the war through the massive logistical chains made possible by the Star League, the Amaris Coup cut Kerensky's military off from the great bulk of that support just when it needed it most.

Kerensky put a quick end to the war against the rebelling Periphery nations using only the supplies and replacements already on-hand and in-transit before turning on the Rim Worlds Republic. There, his armies largely "lived off of the land," seizing the supplies they needed to maintain the fight and rebuild. After the fall of Apollo, General DeChavilier tasked nearly the entire industrial output of the Rim Worlds Republic, already on a war footing, to support the rebuilding and rearming of the SLDF. At the same time, he had built several large bases across the Republic where new recruits could be trained and existing units could maintain their edge in realistic wargames, including two on Amaris' secret staging worlds; in particular, these exercises continued to focus upon assaulting and seizing the more than one hundred Castles Brian spread throughout the Hegemony. And after the Republic's shipyards were filled to capacity with SLDF WarShips, DropShips and JumpShips requiring repair and refit, the SLDF utilized a repair yard deep in the heart of the Dark Nebula, a secret location where repairs to certain ships could be made out of the range of prying eyes and where fleet maneuvers could simulate attacking SDS-protected systems.

These training centers, in addition to the ten regular initial training bases still operating within the five Inner Sphere member states—one associated with each of the SLDF Military District HQs—brought a steady stream of new recruits into the SLDF. While the ten District Recruit Training Bases and the three non-Hegemony-based SLDF academies had never closed their gates and never stopped training SLDF recruits, the flow had slowed to a trickle as the SLDF had no ships to dedicate and no funds to charter transports to move recruits to the training centers. But now, the trickle again became a flood, with both the SLDF Transport Command and civilian shipping companies devoting significant space to moving recruits. To ensure the SLDF had sufficient new battlefield commanders, every training base established mini-academies that gave promising recruits additional leadership training after they completed initial training—all of which were significantly shortened to ensure the SLDF would have the manpower it needed to prosecute the liberation of the Hegemony.

At the same time, the SLDF began to see something it had only rarely encountered in its more than two century history: the "defection" of active members of the five Great Houses' militaries. At first, only a handful of house troops found their way to SLDF bases to volunteer their services. After Kerensky began his campaign for support through the press, though, thousands of AWOL house soldiers arrived at SLDF bases every week, some of whom brought with them their 'Mechs, fighters or tanks. A few nearly whole companies and battalions managed to defect, as did numerous DropShips and even a pair of WarShips—both Combine battleships.

The five House Lords, of course, did not approve and did everything they could to prevent the loss of their own troops. They deployed large formations near SLDF bases to deter defections, heavily punishing those they caught. Their efforts did little to prevent the hemorrhaging of troops however, especially after hundreds of civilian DropShips and JumpShips volunteered their services to smuggle the volunteers across the stars. At first the SLDF used these already-trained troops to fill vacancies within existing commands, but as more and more of these volunteers began to stream in, Kerensky himself decided to form the Volunteer Corps, organizing regiments and brigades of these troops by nationality, where their common backgrounds wouldn't require as much retraining. By the time Kerensky was ready to begin the liberation of the Hegemony, he had twelve Volunteer Brigades at his command—thirty-six full regiments—with more continuing to arrive every week.

Meanwhile, the SLDF was still in desperate need of materiel—replacement machines, repair parts, ammunition and other consumables. The few large manufacturers still under Star League control increased their output as much as possible, paying for it in part by offering lucrative future contract pricing, while the SLDF contracted with numerous outside concerns to help supply their needs, giving away previously exclusive technologies in exchange.

NOT ENOUGH

[General Kerensky and I] both received the final reports from AdCom [the Administrative Command] today [concerning the Periphery campaigns]. One hundred and ten divisions and sixty one independent regiments wiped out. Over a million and a half combined wounded and killed in those units alone, not counting another twenty-seven divisions and five more independent regiments that we had to disband due to casualties. Plus a full division and five regiments stricken due to desertions.

Alex doesn't like to use that word. He prefers "AWOLs" but they're traitors, plain and simple. And we lost too many of them to the [Periphery] rebels. Officially, that division and five regiments were the only units we lost to desertions, but the truth is worse. We'll never actually know the real numbers, but on average we could have lost up to ten or twenty percent of our "casualties" to desertions in some regiments, and up to half of those to defections.

Tomorrow, we need to make another series of hard decisions. We have a lot of units that are sitting at well below 50% strength, the minimum strength level we all decided was the deciding line. At a minimum, I'm seeing eight divisions and least as many regiments that we'll need to rip apart. And probably another six corps headquarters as well. It's not something any of us want to do, but the fact of the matter is that none of them are combat-capable any longer, and we need to reassign their manpower to other units that are still viable. We won't actually strike them from the rolls, and in fact we'll likely turn some of them into training or administrative organizations. It's semantics, but we've already lost too many good units in the Periphery to simply discard these survivors now. Every one of those men and women that came back alive need something to hold on to, even if it means we keep a few units alive on the books.

Not that any of this will be enough to prepare us for what's to come. But at the very least we can start moving manpower around now and get our guys training again. That, plus the recruits we're pushing out of our boot camps, will just have to be enough.

—General Aaron DeChavilier, *Personal Diary*, 11 January 2770

This alone was not enough, however. On Kerensky's orders, DeChavilier tasked nearly a quarter of the SLDF to strip every SLDF and Star League base, office and other facility of anything and everything that could aid the war effort. That which could not be used to directly aid the war effort was warehoused and, along with years of non-military supplies produced by Inner Sphere businesses, delivered under long-term contract to the Star League government and simply stockpiled, were sold or traded at a fraction of their values in order to purchase additional arms and ammunition.

In some cases, the SLDF simply seized what it needed from the Great Houses. Kerensky targeted House Kurita in particular with these raids after learning of massive supply depots located on Halstead Station and Sadalbari. His ships made off with tremendous amounts of Kurita's weapons, ammunition and supplies, spinning that in the media as the Coordinator's repayment of years of Star League tax shortages. The Coordinator attacked Kerensky mercilessly in the press, but in the end only prevented the SLDF from launching any raids or attacks into the Hegemony from the Combine (one persistent rumor suggests that these depots were additional forms of support the Coordinator gave Kerensky, as was the "defection" of two capital ships, though no known records support these assertions). Later in the war, Kerensky would similarly order major caches on the Free Worlds League's Irian, Kalidasa and Oriente secured, in the process repaying Captain-General Kenyon Marik for his continued snubs.

NEVER GIVE UP

After the fall of Apollo, Kerensky knew it would be years before he could turn the entirety of the SLDF towards its homeworld. He also knew that he had little to no knowledge of what resistance he and his armies would face within the Hegemony. So he organized two major operations, both to provide him and his planners the intelligence they would need to plan the invasion of the Hegemony as well as to give the Hegemony's people some level of hope and relief in the face of the brutal Amaris occupation.

The first was Operation KEYHOLE, the surveillance of the Hegemony. Sending more than a hundred *Bug-Eye* electronic-intelligence WarShips, plus hundreds more ELINT DropShips, into the Terran nation, Kerensky tasked Admiral Vincenzo McTiernan, senior naval officer operating within the Hegemony's borders and commander of the so-called Secret Fleet (see p. 89), to expand his intelligence-gathering operations. Kerensky wanted to know Amaris' fleet and ground force deployments, and just as importantly the true state of affairs within the Hegemony. With a fleet of that size at his disposal, McTiernan was able to focus on more than just the handful of important worlds he had been concentrating on. Meanwhile, deep cover agents and resistance leaders provided valuable HUMINT from the ground.

Within mere months the picture that Operation KEYHOLE was building proved even more desperate than originally thought. Whole worlds were suffering tremendously at Amaris' hands while some were rapidly becoming uninhabitable. Kerensky, DeChavilier and their entire senior staff agreed they had to do something, even if they were not yet ready to invade the Hegemony.

Thus began Operation INTRUDER, under the direction of General DeChavilier. He initially assigned the SLDF's five surviving regimental combat teams (RCTs) to the operation, ordering them to stage reconnaissance raids into the occupied Hegemony. Careful not to make the same mistake as the ill-fated Thirty-fourth Royal BattleMech

Division, they avoided SDS-protected systems, initially launching their attacks upon worlds they knew they could approach safely. At first they made only a few spoiling attacks upon isolated Republican bases and formations, delivering desperately needed supplies to civilians and especially resistance fighters where they could. Emboldened by their initial successes and each with the support of additional independent regiments provided by DeChavilier, they soon expanded their operations, using the cover of civilian shipping to hit several different systems each week, with the goal of both probing Amaris' defenses as well as disrupting the Republicans' operations and movements.

Just weeks into this limited campaign though, Coordinator Minoru Kurita ejected the SLDF from the Combine, forcing the Third RCT—the Eridani Light Horse—to leave their home of decades; the Third RCT became nomads for the better part of a year, launching their raids from systems in each of the other four member states, though operating predominantly from Free Worlds space. A raid upon the world of Talitha in May of 2771 led to disaster, however; after dropping onto the city of Amity, the members of the Nineteenth Striker Regiment found themselves in the midst of three Republican regiments. Less than two hours later, the Nineteenth was no more, the victim of an Amaris agent within the Light Horse.

The loss of the Nineteenth Striker was hardly the only casualties the SLDF suffered during the build-up to Operation CHIEFTAIN—the SLDF invasion of the Terran Hegemony—but it did become a rally call for Kerensky's soldiers, crews, pilots and MechWarriors. "Avenge the 19th" was soon found scrolled onto the sides of tanks and other combat vehicles, while hundreds of permutations of that slogan—many personalized by SLDF personnel who lost friends or loved ones in units assigned to the Hegemony during the Coup, or units later lost during the Hegemony campaign—eventually found their ways onto missiles, bombs and other munitions that would be expended in combat against Amaris' army.

DeChavilier steadily increased the number of units assigned to Operation INTRUDER, with ultimately an equivalent of five divisions—fifteen mixed brigades—raiding by the time the SLDF was ready to launch its invasion of the Hegemony. Despite suffering casualty rates far in excess of those felt just a few years earlier during the Periphery campaigns, there was never any shortage of volunteers to replace those wounded, killed or captured in action. And when Kerensky initially placed them in reserve to rest and recuperate from years of heavy action rather than make them a part of the initial invasion forces, the bulk of their personnel requested immediate transfers into frontline units, where they could finally do more than carry out a guerrilla campaign. Kerensky immediately reversed his orders, instead putting those same regiments—many at less than half strength—into the first wave, where they would serve as the pathfinders, leading their comrades into battle against Amaris' armies.

THE MESSAGE

By the end of 2771, the preparations for the invasion ahead were finally coming to a close. Though still woefully understrength, the SLDF had placed hundreds of thousands of new recruits into its ranks to help fill the holes left by losses suffered during the Periphery campaigns. Likewise, the tens of thousands of new 'Mechs, fighters, tanks and other vehicles helped to bring many brigades up to fighting strength, but only made a figurative dent in the losses experienced to date. There were still gaping holes within Kerensky's rosters, but every additional day he took to fill those holes was another day that Amaris had to fortify the Hegemony. The time had come.

Kerensky turned one last time towards the leaders of the five Great Houses, looking for their direct support in the campaign to come. Once again, Coordinator Minoru Kurita refused to provide Kerensky any assistance whatsoever, which was no surprise to any of the SLDF's leaders. This time however, Captain-General Kenyon Marik also curtly rebuffed the general, not only indicating that the Free Worlds League would provide no military or economic support to Kerensky, but also expelling the SLDF from his nation; no longer would Kerensky's forces have the ability to train or stage forces within the Free Worlds League.

On the other hand, First Prince John Davion, Chancellor Barbara Liao and Archon Robert Steiner II all gave Kerensky permission to utilize their realms in the war ahead, each providing a handful of worlds close to the Hegemony from which to stage invasion forces. Though these three leaders stopped short of providing direct military assistance

HALLELUJAH

Goddamn if those guys weren't a welcome sight!

Here's the thing. I retired from the SLDF after thirty years, the last twenty in the Terran RCT. We were the best, we knew it and we flaunted it. Nothing different than anyone else does, but we sure as hell pissed off a lot of 'Mech-heads in a lot of different brigades. And I was one of the biggest goddamn hellraisers there was for a long, long time. Didn't realize it at the time, but I must've made an impression, because the commander of the 138th Dragoon [Regiment, an element of the First RCT] yelled out "boys, it's that shit, Pile"—my old nickname in the regiment—as he hopped out of his *Flashman*. We stared each other down for what seemed forever before I threw the biggest bear hug around that bastard. It was a long goddamn time since we'd gotten any relief.

At that point, me and most of my guys had been [fighting] four long-ass years. For me, it began when a couple of Amaris' goons knocked my door down, pulled their pistols on me and tried to arrest me. Tried. And failed. After that, this old group of 'Mech-heads, tankers and more than a few admin-pukes got together, beat the hell out of the goons. We had them shaking in their boots. If we had the chance, we'd leave some common grunts alive—what better way to spread some terror through the goons than let them do it themselves? Officers we'd kill, though. Same for any HSF [Hegemony Security Force] and other turncoats we could find. We all got to be pretty good shots; nowhere near as good as "Tango"—Ping DuChamp—but then again she trained as a sniper. We hit convoys, blew up a couple hundred shipping containers, and generally caused them hell for a few years.

But we took a beating, too. It was easy to move around [the city of] Fellan at first, stealing guns and munitions and killing goons. But they got smart, and pretty soon it was hard as hell to even move cross-country at night. I'd never realized just how small a planet Chisholm was until then. They even managed to set us up a few times, killed over half of us, and came damn close to taking nearly all of us out a few times. We were almost at the end of our rope when the 138th dropped out of the sky. I still have no idea how they made it past all the space patrols, but they did and dropped in force just like we used to back in the day. They cacked the local garrison, gave us first pickings on the salvage and dropped a few pallets of stuff in our hands. Enough to keep us in business for a long time.

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Best news was that Kerensky was finally coming to get the Big Bastard himself. We kept the goons busy for another year before the invasion came. Hell, we even nailed ourselves an Amaris general and a couple of colonels before the Second [battalion] of the 138th [Dragoon Regiment] landed, bringing behind them the prettiest goddamn sight I'd ever seen. The last time I saw a whole division land, I know I didn't cry. This time I did, and for a long goddamn time. It was— It was about time.

A couple days later I was back in uniform, driving a new *Wolverine II*. Only this time I was a part of the First RCT. Not that I didn't still let everyone know the Terran RCT was better. I had a tradition to keep up.

—Master Sergeant Heustin "Pile" Shiitaka, SLDF (ret.), *In Their Words: Destroying the Schemer Amaris*, Abraham Tarantino, ed., Dragon Technology Media, 2781

to Kerensky's armies, their citizens continued to flock to Star League recruiting stations and training bases, while their factories worked overtime to build weapons, munitions and vehicles under contract to the SLDF, paid for in part by war bonds sold by what little remained of the Star League government bureaucracy still functioning outside of the Hegemony.

As prepared as they could be, Kerensky's massed armies began to leave their stations within the Rim Worlds Republic in January 2772, bound for staging worlds within the Capellan Confederation, Federated Suns and Lyran Commonwealth. Kerensky had split the SLDF into three major task forces, named after each of the three supporting nations. Admiral Joan Brandt, former Director of the Naval Command who had resigned that posting in order to command the fleet during the Periphery campaigns, took command of Task Force Commonwealth. General Aaron DeChavilier took command of Task Force Sun, while Kerensky himself assumed command of Task Force Confederation.

With more than half of the Inner Sphere to cross, Task Forces Confederation and Sun departed the Rim Worlds first and charted nearly direct paths to reach their staging worlds, though both Kerensky and DeChavilier made massive shows of force while crossing through the Free Worlds League and the Draconis Combine. They made sure that their ships spent as much time in as many different systems as possible, sending messages to both the leaders of those nations as well as to Stefan Amaris, whose agents were sure

to report the mass movement of the SLDF. While Kurita and Marik protested what they called Kerensky's overtly aggressive maneuvers, neither could realistically do much to actually stand in Kerensky's way, especially as many more of their own military personnel and civilians seized the opportunity to join the general's crusade as his ships passed through their systems.

Meanwhile, Operation INTRUDER continued unabated, only now with one additional purpose: to pass the word to every Hegemony world that the Star League Defense Force was returning. Justice, in the form of the greatest army ever assembled, would soon put an end to Amaris' reign of terror. Operation CHIEFTAIN, the code name for the SLDF's invasion and liberation of the Terran Hegemony, was coming.

RETURNING HOME

Operation CHIEFTAIN officially began 14 July 2772 with SLDF attacks on sixty-six Hegemony systems. Kerensky's strategy was simple: to start with the outlying worlds and make his way to the Hegemony's core, targeting Terra last. While the SLDF could have easily targeted Terra and Amaris himself first, the fact is that would have left Kerensky's armies vulnerable to attack from scores of worlds, worlds that he and the SLDF desperately needed to draw resources and manpower from to complete the liberation of the Hegemony. Moreover, while Terra was the Hegemony's heart and soul, there were hundreds of billions more Star League citizens to free in the Hegemony's 146 other systems.

Targeted in Kerensky's first wave was nearly every Hegemony border world, as well as all of the worlds that the Hegemony originally controlled jointly with the five other League member states—each claimed as a part of the Amaris Empire and the liberation of which Kerensky hoped would convince the House Lords to truly throw their support behind him. Additionally, Kerensky's armies targeted twenty-four of the forty-nine worlds protected by Castles Brian, plus four more defended by Space Defense Systems—including the regional capital of Lone Star.

Kerensky's strategy was simple: by targeting a broad front, including worlds bordering both nations that refused to support SLDF operations, he placed significant pressure upon Amaris' defenders, giving them no opportunity to shuffle reinforcements from uncontested sectors. Kerensky's targets also included several systems within the critical sixty-light-year radius of Terra, placing the SLDF within two jumps of Terra and likewise largely preventing Amaris from denuding the Hegemony's interior of defenses.

With ten total army groups, most assigned two armies apiece (each consisting of two to four corps), every army group was assigned a slice of the Hegemony as its invasion corridor, and given from three to ten initial target systems along with a series of additional follow-on targets. Most corps were typically given one world to secure, as well as a follow-on target. On the other hand, each corps commander was also instructed to keep a third or more of his or her combat forces in reserve, giving that commander the ability to immediately call in reinforcements and also to regularly rotate units off of the front lines for rest, repair and recuperation. Meanwhile, the war fleets sortied to both protect and support the invading armies as well as to seek and destroy Amaris' own fleets.

The coming battles would be some of the most vicious and desperate that either side had yet seen, either during the Periphery campaigns or the conquest of the Hegemony.

OPERATION CHIEFTAIN STAR LEAGUE DEFENSE FORCES ORDER OF BATTLE

Commander: Commanding General Aleksandr Kerensky
Total Strength: 80 'Mech & 215 Infantry Divisions, 233 Regiments

TASK FORCE COMMONWEALTH

Commander: Admiral Joan Brandt
Total Forces: 27 'Mech & 73 Infantry Divisions, 101 Regiments

SECOND ARMY GROUP HQ

Eighth Army

III Corps (4 Inf Div, 8 Rgt)
VII Corps (2 'Mech & 4 Inf Div, 7 Rgt)
XIX Corps (2 'Mech & 4 Inf Div, 7 Rgt)
XXV Corps (2 'Mech & 4 Inf Div, 4 Rgt)

Note: Eighth Army began operation at nearly full strength

Twentieth Army

XLVII Corps (1 Inf Div, 6 Rgt)
LIX Corps (1 'Mech & 4 Inf Div, 7 Rgt)
LXVII Corps (1 'Mech & 2 Inf Div, 7 Rgt)

12th Volunteer Brigade (3 Rgt)

FIFTEENTH ARMY GROUP HQ

Eleventh Army

V Corps (1 'Mech & 4 Inf Div, 4 Rgt)
XXVII Corps (1 'Mech & 4 Inf Div, 5 Rgt)
XLIX Corps (2 'Mech & 4 Inf Div, 4 Rgt)
LI Corps (2 'Mech & 4 Inf Div, 4 Rgt)

Note: Eleventh Army began operation at nearly full strength

Seventeenth Army

XLIII Corps (3 Inf Div, 4 Rgt)
XLVIII Corps (1 'Mech & 3 Inf Div, 7 Rgt)
LXXII Corps (1 'Mech & 1 Inf Div, 5 Rgt)

2nd Regimental Combat Team (4 Rgt)

2nd Volunteer Brigade (3 Rgt)

4th Volunteer Brigade (3 Rgt)

TWENTIETH ARMY GROUP HQ

Sixteenth Army

XI Corps (1 'Mech & 3 Inf Div)
XXXVI Corps (4 Inf Div)
XLIV Corps (2 'Mech & 4 Inf Div)
L Corps (2 Inf Div & 1 Rgt)

Twelfth Army

II Corps (1 'Mech & 2 Inf Div)
XXX Corps (2 'Mech & 2 Inf Div)
LXI Corps (1 'Mech & 4 Inf Div)

Note: II Corps absorbed XLII Corps remnants

Thirteenth Army

VI Corps (1 'Mech & 1 Inf Div, 2 Rgt)
XX Corps (2 'Mech & 2 Inf Div, 1 Rgt)
XXXI Corps (1 'Mech & 3 Inf Div, 1 Rgt)

Note: VI Corps absorbed XXVIII Corps remnants

3rd Regimental Combat Team (4 Rgt)

TASK FORCE CONFEDERATION

Commander: Commanding General Aleksandr Kerensky
Total Forces: 27 'Mech & 65 Infantry Divisions, 69 Regiments

FIFTH ARMY GROUP HQ

Fifth Army

XXIV Corps (2 'Mech & 5 Inf Div, 3 Rgt)
LV Corps (2 'Mech & 4 Inf Div, 3 Rgt)
LX Corps (2 'Mech & 4 Inf Div, 3 Rgt)

Note: Fifth Army began operation at nearly full strength

Eighteenth Army

XLV Corps (1 'Mech & 2 Inf Div, 5 Rgt)
LXIV Corps (4 Inf Div, 6 Rgt)
LXVIII Corps (1 'Mech & 3 Inf Div, 7 Rgt)

8th Volunteer Brigade (3 Rgt)

SEVENTEENTH ARMY GROUP HQ

Tenth Army

IV Corps (2 'Mech & 2 Inf Div, 1 Rgt)
XXVI Corps (3 Inf Div)
XXXIX Corps (1 'Mech & 2 Inf Div, 1 Rgt)

Note: XXXIX Corps absorbed XIII Corps remnants

Fifteenth Army

XV Corps (2 'Mech & 4 Inf Div, 1 Rgt)
XXIII Corps (6 Inf Div, 2 Rgt)
XXXV Corps (1 'Mech & 3 Inf Div, 2 Rgt)
XL Corps (1 'Mech & 3 Inf Div, 1 Rgt)

5th Regimental Combat Team (2 Rgt)

6th Volunteer Brigade (3 Rgt)

TWENTY-SECOND ARMY GROUP HQ

First Army

X Corps (2 'Mech & 5 Inf Div, 4 Rgt)
XXI Corps (3 'Mech & 5 Inf Div, 6 Rgt)

Note: Save for I Corps, which was destroyed within the Hegemony during the Coup, First Army began operation at nearly full strength

Sixth Army

LXIII Corps (2 'Mech & 1 Inf Div)
LVII Corps (1 'Mech & 3 Inf Div)

Note: LXIII Corps absorbed XXXVIII Corps remnants

3rd Volunteer Brigade (3 Rgt)

TWENTY-FOURTH ARMY GROUP HQ

Seventh Army

LIII Corps (2 'Mech & 3 Inf Div)
LXXI Corps (2 'Mech & 3 Inf Div)

Note: LXXI Corps absorbed LVIII Corps remnants

1st Regimental Combat Team (3 Rgt)

1st Volunteer Brigade (3 Rgt)

7th Volunteer Brigade (3 Rgt)

10th Volunteer Brigade (3 Rgt)

11th Volunteer Brigade (3 Rgt)

OPERATION CHIEFTAIN STAR LEAGUE DEFENSE FORCES ORDER OF BATTLE

TASK FORCE SUN

Commander: General Aaron DeChavilier

Total Forces: 26 'Mech & 77 Infantry Divisions, 63 Regiments

FOURTH ARMY GROUP HQ

Third Army

XVII Corps (1 'Mech & 2 Inf Div)
XXXIII Corps (1 'Mech & 3 Inf Div)
LXVI Corps (3 Inf Div)
LXIX Corps (1 'Mech & 3 Inf Div)

Fourth Army

XXXVII Corps (1 'Mech & 2 Inf Div, 1 Rgt)
LIV Corps (2 'Mech & 3 Inf Div)
LXII Corps (5 Inf Div)

Note: XXXVII Corps absorbed LXX Corps remnants

5th Volunteer Brigade (3 Rgt)

NINETEENTH ARMY GROUP HQ

Second Army

IX Corps (2 'Mech & 4 Inf Div, 2 Rgt)
XVI Corps (2 'Mech & 4 Inf Div, 2 Rgt)
XXIX Corps (1 'Mech & 5 Inf Div, 2 Rgt)
LII Corps (1 'Mech & 4 Inf Div, 3 Rgt)

Note: Second Army began operation at nearly full strength

Nineteenth Army

XLVI Corps (2 'Mech & 3 Inf Div, 4 Rgt)
LVI Corps (1 Inf Div, 6 Rgt)
LXV Corps (1 'Mech & 3 Inf Div, 6 Rgt)

4th Regimental Combat Team (4 Rgt)

9th Volunteer Brigade (3 Rgt)

TWENTY-FIRST ARMY GROUP HQ

Ninth Army

XII Corps (1 'Mech & 2 Inf Div, 4 Rgt)
XLI Corps (2 'Mech & 2 Inf Div, 4 Rgt)
XXXIV Corps (1 'Mech & 2 Inf Div, 6 Rgt)

Note: XLI & XXXIV Corps absorbed XVIII Corps remnants

Fourteenth Army

VIII Corps (2 'Mech & 6 Inf Div, 4 Rgt)
XIV Corps (2 'Mech & 7 Inf Div, 4 Rgt)
XXII Corps (2 'Mech & 7 Inf Div, 4 Rgt)
XXXII Corps (1 'Mech & 6 Inf Div, 5 Rgt)

Note: Fourteenth Army began operation at nearly full strength

Note: This represents the SLDF organization at the start of Operation CHIEFTAIN. During the course of the campaign, brigades, divisions and corps were frequently moved between armies, and armies were likewise moved between army groups.

AMARIS EMPIRE ARMY ORDER OF BATTLE

Commander: General Patrick Scoffins

Total Forces: 41 Divisions

IMPERIAL LIBERATION ARMY

Imperial Corps

1st Republican Guards Division
Imperial Division Stefan Amaris
Imperial Division Catherine Dormax
Imperial Lancers Division

Central Corps Alpha

2nd Republican Guards Division
21st Republican Guards Division
1st Amaris Regulars Division
11th Amaris Lancers Division

Central Corps Beta

2nd Amaris Regulars Division
12th Amaris Lancers Division
10th Patriot Division

Homeguard Corps

Imperial Division Hector Rowe
1st Patriot Division
2nd Patriot Division
3rd Patriot Division
4th Patriot Division
5th Patriot Division

FIRST LIBERATION ARMY

Coreward Corps Alpha

7th Republican Guards Division
4th Amaris Regulars Division
13th Amaris Lancers Division

Coreward Corps Beta

8th Republican Guards Division
15th Amaris Legionnaires Division
9th Patriot Division

Spinward Corps Alpha

10th Republican Guards Division
9th Amaris Regulars Division
14th Amaris Lancers Division

Spinward Corps Beta

9th Republican Guards Division
17th Amaris Lancers Division
8th Patriot Division

SECOND LIBERATION ARMY

Rimward Corps Alpha

5th Republican Guards Division
11th Amaris Regulars Division
19th Amaris Lancers Division

Rimward Corps Beta

6th Republican Guards Division
16th Amaris Lancers Division
6th Patriot Division

Antispinward Corps Alpha

3rd Republican Guards Division
6th Amaris Regulars Division
20th Amaris Lancers Division

Antispinward Corps Beta

4th Republican Guards Division
18th Amaris Lancers Division
7th Patriot Division

WHEN THE HAMMER FALLS

As the largest of the SLDF's three task forces, Admiral Brandt's Task Force Commonwealth was responsible for the largest front, with target worlds ranging from Bordon along the Free Worlds border to Nashira, a world shared with the Draconis Combine.

Second Army Group had responsibility for most of the Tyrning Province, including its entire Free Worlds border and most of its Commonwealth border. Eighth Army struck Bordon, Callison, Chertan, Dieudonne, Dubhe, Marcus and Wing; while Twentieth Army targeted Alchiba, Milton and Wyatt.

Fifteenth Army Group had responsibility for the remainder of the Tyrning Province's Commonwealth border. Seventeenth Army targeted Cor Caroli, Galatea, Mizar, and Syrma; Eleventh Army, striking out from Skye, attacked the two heavily fortified worlds of Nusakan and Zebebelgenubi.

Twentieth Army Group targeted the Lone Star Province, including both its Commonwealth and Combine borders. Sixteenth Army attacked Atria, Ko, Lone Star and Lyons; Thirteenth Army struck Lambrecht, Moore and Sabik; while Twelfth Army hit Kervil, Nashira and Telos IV.

Within days, it was clear that the fight for the Terran Hegemony would be difficult and costly, but at the same time also brought glimmers of hope. While every Hegemony world struck possessed some sort of occupation force, the size and quality of those defending forces, as well as the defensive preparations they had made and their overall dedication to the Amaris Empire, varied widely, often in conjunction with the importance of the world. That was not always the case, however, especially for worlds that required significant outside support for sustenance or that relied heavily upon technology to maintain a livable environment—worlds that more often than not Amaris' occupation forces had at best neglected, at worst actively sabotaged.

The Republican navy, which Admiral Brandt felt was the greatest threat facing her task force in the opening moves of the Hegemony invasion, was largely absent; Amaris' fleet was focusing its energies upon the Secret Fleet still operating within the Hegemony's borders when the invasion struck. Several Republican squadrons were on patrol in the Lone Star Province, but when faced with massive invasion fleets withdrew rather than engage the SLDF's superior numbers. Every system possessed some naval defense, though mostly in the form of combat DropShips, patrol vessels, fighters and a handful of static defensive stations; these were easily dealt with by the squadron of WarShips and scores of DropShips that comprised each division's naval transport. Of course, Admiral Brandt's task force also had responsibility for securing Nusakan and Lone Star, each defended by powerful Space Defense Systems; the battles for both of those systems would be the costliest of the first wave.

Draconis Front

Of Admiral Brandt's three Army Groups, Twentieth Army Group, commanded by General Armand Surban, faced the least initial resistance. Thanks entirely to House Kurita's outward hostility

to General Kerensky and the SLDF, Amaris had moved many of his garrison troops off of the Combine border, focusing them along the Commonwealth and Federated Suns borders as well as the Hegemony interior. So while Surban's armies hit six worlds defended by Castles Brian—the most of any of the SLDF's ten army groups—they faced stiff resistance on only two of those worlds.

Of course, those Castles Brian nonetheless represented significant challenges for the SLDF armies, despite the relatively few defenders manning them. Kervil and Telos IV both were defended by a mix of mercenary and "Patriot" units—the latter comprised of Hegemony citizens, some volunteers and others forcible draftees, overseen by die-hard Amaris adherents plus twice as many Hegemony Security Force (HSF) agents and Office of Policy and Direction (OPD) political officers as assigned to other units. With a Patriot Fortress Battalion assigned to the single Castle Brian on each world, Twelfth Army easily isolated the fortresses and hunted down the remaining mercenary and Patriot forces on those two worlds, as well as on Nashira (which was also defended only by a relatively small garrison).

More critically, the corps and division commanders quickly came to realize just how deeply ingrained the HSF was within the local planetary governments, and just how frightened the civilian populations were of its agents; the SLDF's more than one thousand infantry regiments became critical on these worlds, just as they would on every other occupied Hegemony world, functioning as *ad hoc* police forces tasked with not only ending terrorist attacks perpetrated by Amaris agents but also with hunting down HSF and other Amaris supporters. In cities and regions or on whole worlds mistreated by Amaris' troops, the infantry also became relief forces.

A week after landing, Twelfth Army's reserve jumped to Deneb Algedi and Inglesmond, again finding relatively few Amaris defenders. In their initial strikes, Thirteenth Army on Moore and Sixteenth Army on both Atria and Ko likewise encountered relatively light opposition, the former defended only by a handful of Combine-native mercenaries, while on Ko the SLDF found a strong pro-Amaris citizenry. On these worlds, Admiral Brandt's troops focused the bulk of their energies on supporting the populations rather than combat operations, but also gave the Sixteenth Army the ability to stage rapid follow-on attacks upon Dyev.

Lyons was defended by a combination of Amaris Dragoons and Patriot forces, miring Sixteenth Army in a battle they would soon realize typified the war their comrades prosecuted across the Hegemony. The Twenty-fifth Amaris Dragoons used biological and chemical weapons against the invading Sixteenth Army without compunction, in the process affecting more than a hundred thousand civilians living in three of the world's largest cities. Meanwhile, the Patriot battalions' leaders quickly swelled the ranks of their units by rounding up thousands of civilians, including many whole families, and forcing them to man defensive turrets and barricades; those who refused were either summarily shot or made to watch the torture or murder of family members. As soon as that became evident, XI Corps commander Major General Pyus Schurter ordered his troops to exercise extreme care, using

WHO HAS THE RIGHT?

As the SLDF's combat divisions prepared for the liberation of the Terran Hegemony, scores of small units formed within each of the three Task Forces to provide very specialized forms of support to recently liberated worlds. Comprised of a mix of both military and civilian personnel, but usually commanded by an SLDF officer, these teams drew members from government, emergency response, industry and education backgrounds, including many without direct ties to the Star League government or SLDF.

Civil Assistance Teams (CATs) were tasked with quickly rebuilding (or reforming) a working provisional government on a liberated world, with the special mandate to completely excise any hints of pro-Amaris leanings. Typically the CATs would identify former members of the planet's government, often regardless of the stance or legal authority of the planetary nobility, and use them to form a provisional government, whose responsibility it was then to do the rest of the work in rebuilding the world's government. Those who stood in the way of the CATs were quickly arrested, with many tried for treason on charges of aiding Amaris and his allies. To accomplish this, the CATs each had a staff of police and intelligence investigators, who ensured the "purity" of the provisional government members—that they were neither Amaris supporters nor major criminals, though an unwritten standard was that they would also have to be willing to support Kerensky in the ongoing military campaign. The CATs could further call upon local SLDF commanders to provide as much manpower as was needed to carry out their investigations and arrests.

Provisional Justice Courts (PJC)s were led by Star League Justices (both current and former) selected by Justice Simone Gutierrez (one of three Star League Supreme Court Justices not on Terra during the Coup) and appointed as SLDF Judge Advocate Generals. Including both prosecution and defense lawyers and large investigative teams among their numbers, PJC)s had the responsibility to try prominent individuals—nobles, government officials, major businessmen, and so on—charged with acts of treason committed in conjunction with the Coup. PJC)s worked quickly, dispensing justice under the auspices of the SLDF Code of Conduct and Justice (CCJ).

Resource Reclamation Units (RRUs) surveyed industries on recently liberated worlds to determine which could be easily rebuilt or retooled to support the Hegemony's liberation and reconstruction. Because of the widely varying nature of each world's industry, individual RRUs typically focused upon a few very narrow specialties, also meaning that several RRUs might be

assigned to any given world at the same time. Within each RRU, a small cadre of SLDF engineers led much larger teams of civilian engineers, technicians and specialists, many coming from large corporations with much stronger ties to the three supporting Great Houses than to the Star League itself.

Kerensky himself ordered the formation of these units, the intent of which is both obvious and idealistic. The legality of these units, on the other hand, was considered murky at best within the civilian government. The CATs were decried for decades as Kerensky's own form of social engineering, while the PJC)s were seen by many—including three surviving members of the Supreme Court—as illegal kangaroo courts that operated outside of the Star League Articles (and Hegemony law) and which were more interested in executing all-but-undefended Star League citizens whose only crimes were of guilt by association. Meanwhile, the RRUs would seize anything of value for the SLDF, regardless of who the rightful owners were, and either use it or sell it to a non-Hegemony company and use the profits to fund the war effort.

On the other hand, Kerensky and the SLDF certainly had legal basis for forming these specialized units, which operated well within the established codes and laws of modern warfare, at least if one considers every "freed" Terran Hegemony world as SLDF-occupied. Realistically, the Hegemony had become the Amaris Empire following the Coup, which easily supports that argument, though it is just as quickly undermined by the fact that even Kerensky himself constantly referred not to the invasion of the Amaris Empire, but the liberation of the occupied Hegemony.

In any event, Kerensky certainly acted no differently than any other conqueror had throughout history. If every SLDF-reclaimed Hegemony world was considered conquered territory and therefore under martial law, by the Star League's own laws the Judge Advocate Corps was legally entitled to prosecute, try and punish criminals under the CCJ, just as it had done during the Reunification War, while also setting up governments that could quickly remove the need for a military governor or continued martial law. Meanwhile, Kerensky relied upon a number of major corporations in the Capellan Confederation, Federated Suns and Lyran Commonwealth to support the SLDF's continued combat operations and to quickly reopen damaged Hegemony manufacturers, providing them very favorable access to Hegemony resources in payment.

—Sortice Doern, *The Price and Cost of Liberty*, New Earth Free Press, 3042

non-lethal weapons (especially crowd-control chemical weapons) where possible. The siege upon the Castle Brian itself lasted more than two months, half of which was spent clearing every corner of the underground complex of Amaris influence.

Perhaps the easiest first wave target was Sabik, a harsh mining world that Amaris' forces had virtually given up early in the occupation after suffering a series of defeats dealt by General Koji Talasko and his elite special forces troops. With much of the world's infrastructure destroyed in the opening moves of the occupation by a combination of select nuclear attacks, orbital strikes and a series of bombings meant to cow the miniscule population and eliminate the SLDF defenders, General Talasko's commandos sheltered tens of thousands of survivors within the Castle Brian as well as the remains of Sabik's other military facilities. Mere survival became their greatest struggle, as the world's population relied heavily upon regular food and supply deliveries; many died during the intervening years of a mix of hunger, sickness and radiation exposure, including General Talasko himself. More died during the three major Republican incursions into the world, raids meant to precede a major return to Sabik to reopen its mining operations. A handful of Secret Fleet relief deliveries both discouraged the Republicans from returning in force while also helping to feed the world's survivors. It was the arrival of Thirteenth Army, followed by a motley fleet of civilian transports that began to relocate the survivors, which saved Sabik's population, however. Within days of Sabik's liberation, several Resource Reclamation Units (RRUs) were en route to determine the feasibility of bringing the world's many valuable mining operations back on-line.

Thirteenth Army also struck the Moore and Lambrecht. The campaigns for these two worlds could not have been more different. Moore fell within a day, though it took months to eliminate all organized opposition, and months more to root out the majority of Amaris' agents. Lambrecht, on the other hand, possessed a total of four surviving Castles Brian (two others had been destroyed during the Coup), each defended by a mixed brigade of Patriot, mercenary and regular Republican forces. Prior to the war, Lambrecht was an important center for finance and commerce, its Star League Exchange setting prices for commodities and futures for a huge expanse of space while its markets saw the trade of hundreds of trillions of Star League Dollars worth of products annually. After the Coup Lambrecht's exchange and markets became virtual ghost towns, with little trade coming in from outside of the Hegemony and similarly little intra-Hegemony trade conducted through anywhere but Terra. In less than a year, Lambrecht was transformed from a prosperous world to one whose population struggled for survival.

XX Corps dropped on the world, immediately isolating the operational Castles Brian and moving against the other garrison forces before taking on the fortresses themselves. Isolated battles raged across the planet, hampered in the northern hemisphere by heavy seasonal storms, as the Republican troops hunkered down within some of Lambrecht's largest cities, forcing the Star League troops to tread carefully. Here, though, XX Corps found Lambrecht's people more than willing to aid their liberators, capturing (or

killing) prominent members of the Amaris government as well as Republican officers and soldiers. Two months of campaigning, aided by reinforcements from VI and XXXI Corps (both of which had found little resistance on Moore and Sabik) and select orbital strikes eliminated half of the Republican defenders, leaving only the Castles Brian—the battles for which lasted another seven long months as the Star League soldiers carefully cleared each of their mix of unwilling civilian shields and strident Amaris supporters.

XX Corps remained on Lambrecht for well over a year, though VI and XXXI Corps both moved from their initial target worlds to Lambrecht to provide additional assistance there briefly before finally hitting their secondary targets of Chaville and Pike IV.

The Battle for Lone Star

XLIV Corps, the strongest within Twentieth Army Group at seven divisions, had sole responsibility for liberating the provincial capital of Lone Star. Though moderately populated by Hegemony Standards, it was an important agricultural world as well as home to a number of sprawling industrial centers. During the buildup to the Coup, Amaris stationed a full brigade of mixed Republican and mercenary troops there, which viciously wiped out the original SLDF defenders and the world's standing militia in a series of terrorist bombings and chemical attacks, destroying the survivors with quick and merciless attacks. Meanwhile, a combination of targeted nuclear strikes and marine assaults disabled the system's Space Defense System, leaving it largely intact for Amaris' forces to eventually take command of and reactivate.

The Republicans' swift assaults left them solidly in command of Lone Star. As they had inflicted little collateral damage, Lone Star's people initially treated the Republicans warily, only beginning to oppose Amaris' occupation once they began to experience their new Emperor's heavy hand of leadership and capricious nature. By then it was far too late to unseat the invaders; small resistance cells formed and conducted a limited partisan campaign against the Republicans, who ultimately expanded their garrison by two reinforced Patriot regiments—mostly forced draftees, supplemented by a relatively few volunteers.

When the SLDF finally returned in July of 2772, it began with a seventy-ship attack fleet tasked with eliminating the Lone Star SDS. This, along with the nearby battle for Nusakan, was the first SLDF attack upon a full-scale SDS; the results were far worse than Admiral Brandt and General Kerensky had feared (recorded in detail by six different Star League intelligence vessels operating in the fringes of the system and studied for months to come). Decoy squadrons arrived ahead of the main fleet at both jump points and engaged the drone fleets before turning to flee into deep space, hoping to lure the drones away. Instead the Caspars largely remained on station, sending only a few smaller vessels to shadow the decoys.

When it was clear the feint hadn't worked, Admiral Vicho Nnamani ordered his combined task force (itself composed of elements of Eighth and Thirteenth Fleets) to converge on the system zenith point and engage the SDS. Both decoy squadrons (including the nadir decoy squadron, which jumped to the zenith when that feint didn't work), as

well as the fleet's main body, attacked almost simultaneously, facing sixty-two drone WarShips, along with two defense stations and a host of smaller drone fighters and assault ships. Admiral Nnamani remained at range, bringing the bulk of the drone fleet rushing in; the Star League ships were able to pick off a few of the incoming drones, which likewise destroyed a pair of escorts, before the true melee began. This was the second largest naval battle fought since the Reunification War (only the simultaneous attack on the Nusakan system was larger), but given the utter precision of the SDS it was far bloodier than any yet fought. The Caspars targeted the heavy destroyers and cruisers first, focusing their fire to efficiently eliminate these dangerous yet somewhat fragile ships, targeting the escorts with opportunity fire and rarely wasting a single shot. Meanwhile, the smaller drone ships split their concentration between repulsing the massed SLDF fighter wings and finishing off critically wounded SLDF ships.

Admiral Nnamani's fleet employed similar tactics, though the much heavier guns of his battleships were better able to quickly eliminate the Caspar ships. After more than an hour, Nnamani's fleet had destroyed the drone fleet, though at a cost of more than a third of his own. Ten hours later, fleet marines had captured the two defense stations (though it would take days longer to entirely secure the stations themselves) and the rest of the invasion fleet arrived in-system.

Reinforced by XLIV Corps' escort flotilla, Admiral Nnamani directed the combined fleet to burn in to Lone Star. The Star League fleet was intercepted two days out from the planet by another drone fleet—two thirds of the nadir defense force, which had executed a high-G burn to rendezvous with a score of Lone Star's own Caspars and then intercept Nnamani's massive fleet of more than two hundred DropShips and some sixty WarShips. Once again, the Caspars dove directly into the middle of the Star League fleet, this time focusing their fire upon the troop transports. In just a few minutes of combat the 138th Mechanized Division was almost entirely exterminated while each of the other three invading divisions suffered the loss of whole battalions in the wink of an eye. On the other hand, the SLDF WarShips, reinforced by the sheer combined firepower of two hundred DropShips and hundreds more XLIV Corps aerospace fighters, overwhelmed and destroyed the drone fleet in short order.

A fleet of an estimated forty Caspars still lay ahead of them, along with three more defensive stations, along with their own associated defensive craft, plus the Republican aerospace fighter squadrons based on-world. Rather than dive directly into yet another drone fleet, Admiral Nnamani first targeted the moon of Vespa, where a combined force of fleet marines and Regular Army infantry secured a large mining habitat. The bulk of XLIV Corps temporarily grounded there while Nnamani, supported by XLIV Corps' dedicated carrier and assault craft, moved to engage the drone fleet. With numbers on their side, though not to the overwhelming extent as they had claimed during the en route battle, the Star League fleet played a three-day cat-and-mouse game with the drones, which largely remained in a defensive stance clustered near the stations, ready to pounce.

When Nnamani finally attacked, he focused his entire force on a single station, drawing in the bulk of the drone fleet in two stages. Once again, the Caspars and smaller drone craft very efficiently targeted the Star League ships, this time singling out Nnamani's flagship, the SLS *Quéribus*, early in the battle, destroying the ship and killing the admiral. Vice Admiral Noeki Giersson took charge of the Star League fleet from the *McKenna*-class SLS *Sovereign Justice* and directed the elimination of the drone fleet and two of the defense stations while marines secured the third station.

Major General Walter Sigurdsson, commanding XLIV Corps, finally landed his troops on 25 July, though not before suffering withering fire from ground batteries and Republican fighters. A brief battle netted Sigurdsson's corps control of Swartzhof, including its seaport and spaceport; though relatively removed from the world's primary industrial and population centers, the city gave XLIV Corps a foothold on the planet in what Sigurdsson assumed would be a safe region, with a single Castle Brian just over one hundred kilometers distant.

Almost immediately, the Republicans responded with a strong air assault, which was met in force by SLDF fighter squadrons and assault ships. Several Republican fighters broke through, however, and were able to launch three nuclear weapons before being turned back. The nuclear strikes destroyed a handful of DropShips, damaged dozens more, killed tens of thousands and left Swartzhof in ruins. Sigurdsson called for his corps' two reserve divisions, realizing that the nearly five brigades of forces already lost before the battle for Lone Star had even begun would certainly not be the last casualties. Meanwhile he tasked his aerospace forces to seek out and eliminate their Republican counterparts. As he waited for his reinforcements, the general used information partially gleaned from resistance cells and civilian authorities to build a campaign plan, one that focused first on destroying every major Republican aerospace base before targeting other key facilities and force concentrations.

Over the course of two months, Sigurdsson's aerospace squadrons and orbiting WarShips made precision strikes upon hundreds of Republican targets, including known Castle Brian entrances and bunkers. When he felt he had uncontested command of the world, he began the ground campaign, which included isolating each Castle Brian and directly engaging remaining enemy formations. Unfortunately, the Republicans began a scorched earth campaign, liberally using chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons—many of makeshift construction—primarily on Lone Star's populations and arable lands. Sigurdsson's troops created as many safe zones as they could where refugees could flee, devoting a great deal of manpower to aid the civilians, but their best defense was mounting rapid and overwhelming attacks on the Republicans, coupled with identifying and quickly eliminating Amaris' many agents hiding within the civilian population.

In the end, the battle for Lone Star was anything but a quick or easy campaign. Estimates show nearly every major city struck with some sort of WMD attack—many suffering multiple attacks—during the latter months of 2772 and the first half of 2773, with a

loss of most of the world's agricultural output (including the death of over seventy-five percent of herd animals) and perhaps half of the arable lands rendered unusable. The world's heavy industry, too, was all but knocked out, with the remainder dedicated to supporting the world's surviving population.

XLIV Corps finally cleared out the last Castle Brian in February of 2774, some nineteen months after landing. Throughout the war and its aftermath, the people of Lone Star largely abandoned the world, which finally fell off maps sometime during the First Succession War, when battles between House Kurita and Steiner finally crushed what little remained of value on the world.

Hegemony Core

Fifteenth Army Group, aimed at the heart of the Hegemony, similarly faced a mix of powerful Republican garrisons scattered among a handful of lightly defended worlds. Seventeenth Army easily overwhelmed the garrisons on Cor Caroli, Galatea, Mizar and Syrma within just a few weeks, sustaining only light casualties while at the same time eliminating only a handful of Amaris' regiments (though on Syrma finding evidence of atrocities committed in the name of Stefan Amaris).

By mid-September, Fifteenth Army Group commander General Dinara Pantazi ordered both XLIII and LXXII Corps to assault Summer, an important world protected both by an SDS as well as three Castles Brian. Meanwhile, Eleventh Army's four nearly full-

strength corps assaulted the two fortress worlds of Zebebelgenubi, defended by two Castles Brian, and Nusakan, defended by an SDS and three Castles Brian. Both of these worlds were important industrial centers in the unique political position of being claimed by both the Hegemony and the Lyran Commonwealth (though historically the presence of the Star League fortifications, garrisoned almost exclusively by SLDF royal formations, ensured the Camerons' dominance). While their large Lyran populations may have quietly celebrated the Republicans' annihilation of the pro-Hegemony garrisons, they resisted becoming a part of the Amaris Empire, and especially rose against Amaris' eventual nationalization of their very prosperous enterprises. By then, of course, it was too late.

Nusakan and Summer both presented serious threats to the invading Star League forces with their Space Defense Systems, the latter also home to several major shipyards while one of Amaris' patrol fleets was at the time based at the former. As with the assault upon Lone Star, the Star League fleets had little option but to attack the drone formations head-on, hoping their superior firepower would allow them to ultimately prevail. The two Star League fleets again mirrored the opening moves of the Lone Star attack, attempting to use decoy fleets to draw some of the drone ships away from the systems' jump points. When that failed, they attacked directly, using the massed firepower of scores of WarShips, supported by countless combat DropShips, assault ships and fighters to eliminate the drone fleet. And just as at Lone Star, both fleets

TWELVE PRINCIPLES OF COMMAND

1. Objective. Always keep a clear goal in mind. Without it, the lives you lose are meaningless.

2. Offensive. When given the chance, attack and remain on the offensive for as long as possible. The enemy is weakest when backing up, and so are you.

3. Unity of Command. Always know who is above and below you in the chain of command and what they are doing. It will not only help you in times of trouble, but it will also give you a better sense of how your mission fits into the overall picture.

4. Strength. Never willingly enter battle at a numerical disadvantage. Even the sloppiest army can defeat you if it is bigger.

5. Economy of Force. Do not waste your effort and supplies. Use just enough of your force to inflict the maximum amount of havoc on the enemy in the minimum amount of time. Save the rest of your strength to exploit your gains or protect yourself from counterattack.

6. Maneuver. Learn the value of maneuverability. Being able to speed across the battlefield in a coordinated wave of force can overwhelm the toughest opponent with a minimum of bloodshed.

7. Surprise. The element of surprise effectively doubles your force.

8. Intelligence. Information is like eggs, the fresher the better. A good guess might win a battle, but a bad one can eventually lose a campaign.

9. Simplicity. If a plan looks messy on paper or in a computer simulation, it is too complicated to succeed. The best plans often turn out to be ones drawn in the dirt and explained with a few hand gestures. A good solution applied with vigor immediately is better than a perfect solution ten minutes later.

10. Maintenance of Morale. Instill pride and sense of duty, worthiness, and loyalty into your soldiers. Keep them informed, rested, and happy. Officers should visit the front often, not to meddle but for personal contact with the troops.

11. Administration. This is the dullest, most mind-numbing of chores, but doing it properly is infinitely better than facing the enemy without ammunition.

12. Mercy. Be firm and win the day, but once the fighting is over, treat your prisoners with respect and courtesy. Not only is it the correct and moral thing for a soldier of the Star League to do, but once enemy soldiers hear of your merciful treatment, they might also be more willing to surrender.

—*A Primer to Tactics and Strategy: 34th Edition*, General Aleksandr Kerensky, ed., SLDF Press, 2742

suffered heavy losses. Admiral Godman Lawrence, commanding the fleet at Summer, had the benefit of reviewing battle logs from both Lone Star and Nusakan before assaulting Summer and devising new battle plans that resulted in fewer overall losses.

The battle for Nusakan was without a doubt the largest naval battle fought since the Reunification War, initially involving more than a hundred Star League WarShips facing a twenty-seven ship Republican patrol fleet and more than seventy drone WarShips at each jump point. Admiral Marina Akkayev-Cameron assaulted Nusakan's nadir point, clearing it before drawing half of the Republican fleet into a trap three hours later. The Republicans jumped in from the zenith point expecting to pick off the stragglers before burning into Nusakan behind the bulk of the SLDF fleet. Instead the Republican ships met a strong SLDF force that eliminated them. Akkayev-Cameron continued her unconventional naval campaign by clearing each of the system's other worlds of Republican presence before feinting a move on Nusakan itself, which prompted most of the zenith drone force and the remainder of the Republican fleet to burn hard for Nusakan, opening the zenith to a strong assault by XXVII and LI Corps' escorts that eliminated the remaining defenses at that point. Akkayev-Cameron then staged a lightning assault upon Nusakan itself from a nearby pirate point, eliminating the SDS defenses there before the drone and Republican reinforcements, which turned to face the two corps inbound from the zenith, could arrive. When XXVII and LI Corps engaged the remainder of the combined drone and Republican fleet, their superior numbers overwhelmed and ultimately destroyed their opponents, though again only at a serious cost in ships and manpower. On the other hand, the engagement did demonstrate one potential weakness of the SDS, which attacked and ultimately destroyed three Republican ships after an Amaris crew accidentally targeted one of the drones; as soon as the drones destroyed the first Republican ship, two more Republicans turned their guns upon the drones, their captains assuming the Star League fleet had somehow regained control of the SDS (in the process paying the price for their mistakes in the lives of their crews).

The Star League's price for reaching Nusakan was over eighty capital ships destroyed or crippled and nearly fifteen regiments lost when their transports were destroyed. At Summer, Admiral Godman Lawrence hoped to avoid those losses by devising new strategies that combined using Republican IFF codes on select WarShips to confuse the defenders and marine assault teams to disable and capture enemy ships. The former tactic gave Lawrence little advantage, though the latter proved a unique tactic to use against the drone ships, especially after learning how they might be able to trigger a Caspar's self-destruct system. Lawrence's fleet secured Summer's other primary jump point just days later by overwhelming the SDS sensors with a veritable cloud of fighters, small craft and DropShips, landing marines on and disabling a handful while using his big guns to open holes in the rest that his smaller craft could then pick apart and destroy. He then engaged another drone fleet en route to Summer, once more disabling

another handful of ships before reaching the world itself and proving the validity of his tactic a third time.

The battle for Summer then became a split operation. Most of the Regular Army forces landed on Summer itself, though Admiral Lawrence tasked two infantry brigades, which had spent the weeks before the invasion training with Lawrence's fleet marines, to secure the hundreds of mining, ore processing and naval construction facilities scattered throughout the system. Summer proved a difficult target for the SLDF, though not nearly to the extent of Nusakan, and certainly not as costly as Lone Star. As had happened on numerous Hegemony worlds, many of those who hadn't outright opposed Amaris following the Coup turned against him once his societal and economic "reforms" began to dig deeply at the prosperous world's population. Their opposition was quickly and ruthlessly put down by the Usurper's troops but never extinguished, rebounding with the arrival of the SLDF. The arrival of XLIII and LXXII Corps overwhelmed the Republicans while allowing the Star League forces to almost immediately occupy every major city and industrial center on the world, though not quickly enough to prevent Amaris' agents from targeting the world with many of the same kinds of attacks their comrades had visited upon Lone Star. XLIII Corps pulled off of the world after six months—mostly spent aiding the civilian population's recovery from the Republicans' attacks—to strike Menkent, while LXXII largely eliminated Republican opposition by February of 2773.

Zebebelgenubi also fell within months, with the full force of V and XLIX Corps—expecting a difficult fight—able to similarly overwhelm and destroy the relatively few defenders. With the help of the resistance movement, the SLDF forces quickly identified many of Amaris' on-world agents and were able to prevent any significant sabotage, though what they found did little to temper their strong emotions. Amaris' forces had staged several mass civilian executions, targeting members of the world's technology and research communities, in response to partisan activities. XLIX Corps prepared to move on to hit another world, but held on Zebebelgenubi awaiting further orders; the world of Zollikofen, protected by both an SDS and two Castles Brian, was within their corridor and liberating it would likely require the efforts of more than a single corps.

On Nusakan, XXVII and LI Corps faced a determined enemy. Here, too, the strong Republican garrison utilized nuclear and chemical weapons, though only directly against the SLDF invasion force. As on Lone Star, an aerospace campaign combined with targeted orbital strikes largely drove the Republicans into the Castles Brian and other fortifications, where clearing operations were severely hampered by the use of Patriot units and other civilian shields.

Free Worlds Front

Second Army Group, like Twentieth Army Group, faced not only determined resistance within the Tyrning Province, it also had lengthy lines of communications from its staging base on Shiloh to deal with. On the other hand four of its ten targets

were “shared” Hegemony systems, which had neither the massive populations nor the tremendous annual gross domestic product of the Hegemony’s “core” systems and thus did not warrant large and fanatical garrisons. Twentieth Army’s assault on Alchiba, and Eighth Army’s strikes on Callison, Dieudonne, Dubhe and Wing each consisted of just a division. Similarly, the border worlds of Milton (in Twentieth Army’s area of responsibility) and Chertan (in Eighth Army’s AoR) both possessed relatively small Amaris garrisons and were consequently attacked with just two divisions apiece. Facing only Patriot units and mercenary forces, with relatively few supporting Amaris regulars, the SLDF liberators had little difficulty in routing and eliminating their opponents. While a reinforced battalion of Amaris Regulars on Alchiba and a few miscreant mercenaries on Dieudonne resorted to using forced human shields and made a few chemical weapon attacks, the Star League soldiers on these worlds were largely spared the horrors their comrades faced on other worlds.

The attacks on Marcus and Wyatt—both worlds possessing strong Republican garrisons in fortified Castles Brian—as well as on the otherwise unremarkable border world of Bordon posed some problems to the SLDF liberators. XIX Corps struck the industrial world of Marcus. Dropping directly upon the most important manufacturing centers as well as the primary Republican bases, XIX Corps spread its forces out across the planet, relying upon local superiority to carry the battles. They were unable to completely contain the Amaris forces stationed within the two Castles Brian however, and in the first few days of battle lost in excess of two total brigades of troops to determined defenses and counterattacks, which included nuclear weapons manufactured using uranium mined on the world. Over the next few weeks the battle lines eventually stabilized, with the scattered SLDF forces—and especially their overtaxed aerospace forces, which had been largely unable to conduct concentrated attacks due to the widely scattered ground deployments—finally able to focus their efforts upon the defenders solidly entrenched within the cities and the two Castles Brian. Though this tactic cost XIX Corps more casualties than they might have otherwise suffered had they followed a more conventional battle plan, they did manage to capture intact many of their initial industrial targets, specifically manufacturers that the SLDF would be counting on to help supply its logistics needs throughout the rest of the war.

On Wyatt, VII Corps faced a single Castle Brian and what on paper was two brigades of defenders. In reality, the Republicans there had built massively overstrength Patriot battalions and constructed fairly impressive defensive works in and around every major target on the world. By the time VII Corps landed on-world, they had also assembled huge formations of human shields. Here, as on Marcus, the campaign lasted the better part of the year as the SLDF forces took care to minimize civilian casualties.

To Admiral Brandt’s planners, Bordon represented a minor threat, as did many other border worlds. When the invasion force of six brigades—the Twelfth Volunteer Brigade, reinforced by an infantry brigade each from III and XIX Corps plus nine more

free regiments formed into three provisional brigades—arrived in-system with its escort of just seven WarShips (typically only corps were provided permanent WarShip escorts, though every system invasion force was assigned a temporary escort to provide security) it secured its jump point and immediately started burning for Bordon. They weren’t able to stop a departing JumpShip, and only detected the thirteen-WarShip Republican force that jumped in just a few hours afterward when they were less than an hour behind them. Rear Admiral Dal Heng turned to face them immediately rather than try to outrun them to the planet, initiating one of the smallest but most notable fleet engagements of the war. After less than forty minutes of combat, five Republican ships had been crippled or destroyed, and another two captured, at a cost of six SLDF WarShips. It was the presence of so many combat DropShips that allowed the Star League fleet to claim victory. The brigades’ ground-support fighter squadrons gave the fleet a much-needed boost while Lieutenant General Braedon Thastus, commander of this provisional corps, ordered his infantry carriers to attack and attempt to seize the Republican WarShips.

Landing craft from three DropShips succeeded, pouring hundreds of dedicated Star League infantrymen into two destroyers and one cruiser; the commander of one of the destroyers scuttled his ship rather than let it fall into Star League hands. Thastus lost almost five total regiments of troops in the battle but proved that conventional infantry could in fact be used to some success in what were traditionally assignments given only to fleet marines. Given that backdrop, the battle for the planet of Bordon itself was almost anti-climactic; the planet fell in short order to the spirited SLDF task force.

Follow-On Actions

Facing the least resistance of any of Admiral Brandt’s three army groups, Twentieth Army Group staged follow-on assaults upon seven worlds, primarily during 2773. With few Republican forces deployed to face the Draconis Combine, the worlds of Chaville, Deneb Algedi, Dyeve, Inglesmond and Pike IV all fell in relatively short order. When Twelfth, Thirteenth and Sixteenth Armies all regrouped to make additional pushes in mid-2773 upon the worlds of Athenry, Imbros III and Styx however, they all found worlds largely bereft of Republican influence. Instead, they found elite Draconis Combine troops in their place.

This, of course, was not entirely unexpected. General Kerensky had long warned his commanders that Coordinator Minoru Kurita’s intentions were unknown and that the Combine could in reality be Amaris’ ally. Intelligence-gathering ships had detected the arrival of some of the Combine’s most elite formations in those systems in late 2772, prompting Twentieth Army Group commander General Armand Surban to postpone operations targeting those worlds until he could be sure his invasion forces possessed overwhelming force.

When the invasion forces did arrive in August 2773, they found worlds claimed in the name of Minoru Kurita for the Draconis Combine, “liberated” from the Amaris Empire by the

BIG TROUBLE

Every world we hit posed its own unique challenges. On some of them, Amaris' forces fought a straight-up principled campaign, while on others they threw out every convention of civilized warfare, oftentimes targeting civilian populations with the worst weapons man has ever conceived simply out of spite. Of course we also had to deal with weather and other environmental issues, long lines of supply, and somehow juggle our combat objectives with caring for thousands, or even millions, of civilian refugees fleeing occupied territory for the "safety" of our bases. They clearly didn't realize that at any time Amaris' forces could drop a nuke or a bio/chem warhead on top of us.

From a purely operational, boots-on-the-ground standpoint, the Castles Brian represented our greatest challenges. And that is something that most people reading the histories will never truly understand. On one level, fixed fortifications may be a monument to man's stupidity, but on another they are also proof of man's evil genius. We didn't build them on key worlds to prevent an invasion force from landing, we built them to hold up that invasion force long enough for reinforcements to arrive and eject them from the planet. They were designed to be a roadblock, plain and simple, and at that they performed brilliantly.

Fortunately for us, Amaris neither had the manpower to utilize them appropriately nor the vision to understand their true function. He formed what amounted to militia battalions and regiments, taking what actual turncoats he could recruit from the occupied populations and drafting the rest at gunpoint, all overseen by a small cadre of loyal thugs who kept their generally less-than-willing charges in line with threats of violence. These became his "fortress battalions" (usually far larger than a single standard battalion) which manned the Castle Brian defenses. Amaris still needed his actual combat forces to keep the occupied populations in order, and that allowed us to target and eliminate them with relative ease when we came. Few of Amaris' combat units ever successfully retreated to a Castle Brian during the first invasion wave.

The fact remains, however, we designed and built the ideal fortresses, just handed our greatest enemy the keys, and then had to come home and devise a way to eject that enemy from those very same fortresses. These were massive

underground complexes, spread out over hundreds of square kilometers, built of heavily reinforced ferrocrete and usually buried under a mountain. There were dozens of entrances to each Castle Brian, allowing a garrison force to slip out and either flank an attacking force or conduct harassment operations. Each one of those heavily armored entrances was defended by several gun turrets, all of which lay behind kilometers of bunkers, pop-up gun emplacements and mine-fields, every square meter of which was also registered by the equivalent of at least a full battalion of heavy artillery. Add to that a few DropShip pads, usually tucked away within a mountain valley, possibly an underground airbase, and in many cases some ballistic missile launchers—added by Amaris' troops when they moved in—and you have a very tough nut to crack.

The Rim Worlders actually came upon the best tactic to eliminate the Castles Brian in the very first days of the Coup—to hit it with multiple nuclear weapons and keep hitting it until it was rubble. Unfortunately, we didn't have that option open to us; use of nuclear weapons was off the table without authorization from High Command. We also didn't have the manpower to waste by simply surrounding each Castle Brian and starving it into submission—they typically had enough stores to feed a brigade for years (and usually longer, as many were expended to also include civilian disaster shelters capable of housing and feeding tens of thousands). So we had to secure them the old-fashioned way: hitting each and every single bunker and turret with enough conventional ordnance to destroy it while our aerospace forces bombed and strafed the hell out of any exposed turrets, especially the artillery pieces.

Once we reached an entrance, we had to blast our way in and then basically fight a door-to-door urban campaign in a sprawling underground city specifically designed to be defended against this kind of attack. While also somehow limiting casualties among the civilians the enemy often used as human shields. This was both time consuming and cost us heavily in casualties. It usually took months to clear out a single Castle Brian, even with detailed plans available.

—Major General Kaile Martinson (SLDF Ret.), *Tales of the Michigan 61st*, Grandy Press of Skye, 2793

DCMS (despite the fact that Amaris' governments remained still in power on the worlds, though now reporting to Combine military governors). Rather than put up a fight, however, the Combine regiments postured briefly, firing a few warning shots as their commanders protested the SLDF's invasion of these "sovereign Combine protectorate" worlds. They readily gave ground to the Star League forces, and eventually withdrew from the worlds, leaving behind small teams of agents who worked quietly throughout the rest of the war to build political and economic ties between the Combine and these worlds (a fact only made clear in the few years prior to the First Succession War).

Meanwhile, Fifteenth Army Group limited its follow-on attacks to just four worlds. Summer was an important operation that was intended to be part of a rapid one-two step into the Tyrning Province. With Cor Caroli, Galatea, Mizar and Syrma all firmly within SLDF hands, Seventeenth Army first focused its attentions upon Summer, turning towards Alioth, a world along the Lyran border

protected by a single Castle Brian, once the invasion of Summer and Menkent was under way (and just as importantly, once seasonal weather patterns had turned favorable on the world's southern continent). The SLDF blitzkrieg tactics were only partially successful as the Republican defenders were well entrenched among the cities. This led to yet another lengthy campaign, this one hampered by short but powerful storm seasons.

Twentieth Army's LIX Corps struck out at both Afleir and Zosma once it was clear the army's initial assaults would need additional reinforcements. On Zosma, they faced a determined but ultimately too-weak Amaris garrison; major combat operations were over within weeks, but it would take the Star League troops far longer to eliminate Amaris' agents and allies on the world.

Alfeir, on the other hand, nearly turned to disaster. A Republican WarShip squadron entered the system a week behind the four-brigade invasion force, which itself faced nearly two brigades of defenders on the world. A combination of Republican

nuclear attacks and orbital strikes—made after the Republican squadron had destroyed the invasion escorts—eliminated half of the SLDF troops on the ground and the rest quickly retreated to relative safety within the cover of the Silver Goat Mountain Range. Only the arrival of an SLDF WarShip task force, cobbled together from several escort groups after intelligence ships in the system reported the disaster, saved the surviving LIX Corps' forces. The SLDF WarShips remained on station, providing orbital support until the Republicans finally retreated into their own strongholds. No longer possessing absolute numerical superiority, the surviving SLDF forces proceeded cautiously, targeting one stronghold at a time until reinforcements arrived in late 2773, allowing them to pursue a more straightforward strategy and avenge their fallen comrades.

In April of 2773, after recovering from the assaults upon three other SDS-protected systems and refining the tactics they would use in the future, Task Force Commonwealth's attack fleets, under the command of Admiral Godman Lawrence, turned towards New Dallas. Though Amaris' forces continued to face a strong resistance on the world, they were in command of the SDS fleet still in-system, including the jump point defensive stations. Based on information recovered from Nusakan's SDS training center and intelligence gathered during Operation KEYHOLE, Lawrence first entered the system with a small force of eleven captured Republican ships, carrying forged orders to take command of half of New Dallas' drones and relocate them to the strategically more important worlds of Tyrning and Pollux. Though the ruse did not work—nor was it actually intended to work—it did allow a strong marine force to land on the SDS defense stations before the bulk of Lawrence's fleet arrived. This gained them command of the SDS defense stations and more than a dozen more drones that they were able to deactivate. Though they were unable to repeat the same ruse at the other jump point or at New Dallas itself, where a much smaller drone fleet maintained vigil, Lawrence's tactics were validated and, more importantly, cost a much smaller price in lives and ships than any of the three previous SDS assaults.

The campaign for New Dallas took on a conventional façade for the first time in the war, with resistance fighters appearing in every community to aid the SLDF liberators in destroying the Republican occupation force. Despite more than a brigade of elite Republican fighters plus regiments more of mercenary and Patriot formations moved there to keep New Dallas' population under control, those very same citizens viciously turned the tables upon the Republicans, conducting their own series of public trials and executions within days of the first SLDF landings.

Connaught

By mid-2773, Eighth Army had largely pacified its original series of targets and looked towards the one important world that had been just outside its initial grasp: Connaught. With a vital economy and massive industrial output, yet poised right along the border with the Free Worlds League, the world had been heavily fortified by the Hegemony throughout its history, which included

three Castles Brian. It was now garrisoned by what was thought to be at least a division of elite Republicans, and though not possessing an SDS, Amaris had positioned there a relatively strong fleet of some thirty WarShips.

SLDF Admiral Marina Akkayev-Cameron, borrowing some of Admiral Lawrence's tactics, began her assault by entering the system at both jump points with a handful of captured Amaris WarShips, still bearing the deep scars of their action at Afleir and Summer. Though the ruse did not last long, it was long enough to infiltrate marines and Star League infantry onto the system transfer stations and three of the four defense stations, largely removing them as threats once the bulk of Akkayev-Cameron's fleet arrived to crush the Republican WarShips.

The assault upon Connaught itself also began somewhat unconventionally, with three *Potemkin*-class transports jumping in to a pirate point close to the planet, where their DropShips joined two smaller groups that had infiltrated the system days earlier as merchants and dropped the 157th BattleMech Division (the Napoleon Division), as well as elements of the Second French Infantry Regiment and the 189th Battle Regiment, onto the highest priority targets. These troops held their ground for days, suffering heavy casualties, while the bulk of the invasion force burned hard for the world.

Thus began one of the bloodiest and most difficult planetary campaigns of the early war. Unlike many other Hegemony border worlds, Connaught was a target that Amaris desperately wanted to hold. So while his defenders had no compunctions about freely making biological and chemical attacks, they only made nuclear strikes when critical industry and infrastructure would not be directly damaged by the attacks.

Moreover, unlike any other world targeted by the SLDF in the first invasion wave, Amaris reinforced Connaught's defenders with fresh troops and ships pulled from Castor, Devil's Rock and Tyrning, considerably lengthening the campaign. The fifteen-month assault on the world in fact seriously damaged Connaught's industrial output, though most critical was the fact that Amaris almost immediately lost access to the world's production. Meanwhile, SLDF RRU's were so efficient that they had some factories literally on the front lines operating day and night to help support its logistics needs.

Finally falling in November of 2774, Connaught was the last world targeted during the initial wave to be claimed by the SLDF.

High Hopes

Kerensky took responsibility for the entire Terra Firma Province, as well as critically important sections of the Lockdale Province and the Tyrning Province for his Task Force Confederation, with a "front" that extended from Talitha (within the Tyrning Province) all the way to Yangtze in the Lockdale Province.

Fifth Army Group was assigned to the Terra Firma Province's border with the Free Worlds League, as well as a small slice of the Tyrning Province. Fifth Army attacked Hall, Talitha and Van Diemen; Eighteenth Army meanwhile targeted Berenson, Mandal and Wasat.

Twenty-fourth Army Group, with only Seventh Army and five independent brigades assigned, struck a very narrow corridor of worlds, attacking Menkalinan, New Canton and Zion.

Twenty-second Army Group focused on a slightly larger slice of the Terra Firma Province. First Army hit the heavily fortified and critically important worlds of Aldebaran and Nanking; Sixth Army meanwhile struck Arboris, Genoa and Ningpo.

Seventeenth Army Group took responsibility for the rest of the Terra Firma Province as well as a portion of the Lockdale Province thick with populated systems. Tenth Army attacked Acamar, Azha and Slocum; Fifteenth Army hit Bharat, Hamal, Nopah and Yangtze.

Ahead of Kerensky lay some of the most densely populated worlds of the outer Hegemony provinces, though at the same time the Terra Firma Province encompassed but twenty-seven total worlds, over half of which were targeted in the initial invasion wave. By the time his task force was done with the first wave, Kerensky planned to be in firm possession of some three-quarters of the province, including most of its manufacturing centers.

On the other hand, Kerensky's armies faced what was likely to be the heaviest concentration of Amaris' forces, including assaults upon seven worlds protected by Castles Brian. Likewise his fleets poised for action, ready should they encounter elements of Amaris' WarShip fleet.

Fifth and Twenty-Fourth Army Groups

Faced with even longer lines of communication than Second Army Group, Fifth Army Group struck into the Terra Firma Province, plus a thin sliver of the Tyrning Province, along the Free Worlds League border. Fifth Army's XXIV Corps targeted the vitally important Talitha, which was home to a Star League exchange and mint, but was also an important regional military center protected by three Castles Brian and up to two brigades of Republican forces. Of course, it was only after the operational orders were published months before the actual assault that the commanders of Second and Fifth Army Groups realized that the latter was responsible for securing the former's headquarters world; this resulted in quite a bit of light-hearted jesting between the two army groups—especially the soldiers of Eighth Army, who once called Talitha home, and Fifth Army, who had been tasked with securing the world.

In actuality, the fight for Talitha was difficult and costly, but not without its victories as well. The Republicans' efforts to subjugate the population had, just as on many other worlds, only encouraged the formation of a strong resistance, one made even more powerful by the presence of so many SLDF retirees on-world. So while the Republican defenders freely used nuclear and other WMDs against XXIV Corps as well as civilian targets, resistance groups quickly identified Republican strongholds and many of Amaris' agents on the world. Thanks to this assistance, Talitha was largely in SLDF control by the end of the year, allowing the rebuilding process to push forward without interference. Though much of the world lay in ruins, Talitha nonetheless retained a strong industry focused on supporting the logistical needs of the military; by mid-2773, it once again was serving as an SLDF regional headquarters and depot, directly supplying Kerensky's armies of liberation.

Fifth Army also targeted Van Diemen IV, with its single Castle Brian, as well as the world of Hall in its initial push, readying a follow-on assault in late 2772 once it was clear that the army's reserves would not be needed elsewhere. Outreach was, in fact, one of Eighth Army's possible secondary targets, but given the trouble Admiral Brandt's fleets had experienced in their first forays into SDS-protected systems, Kerensky decided instead to hit Hechnar, which as an added benefit was also within a single jump of Carver V—a world that had remained contested since the Coup. Unfortunately, Hechnar's defenders possessed a significant WMD cache and proved more than willing to utilize them to both directly attack the SLDF invaders as well as to deny them whole regions of the world. Though Fifth Army ultimately liberated the world from its Republican occupiers, the damage done by Amaris' forces left Hechnar a wasteland, one eventually abandoned entirely during the Succession Wars.

Eighteenth Army faced a Republican brigade dug into Wasat's two Castles Brian as well as heavy Partisan formations on both Berenson and Mandal. After six months of heavy fighting on Wasat, the SLDF captured each of the major industrial complexes—most heavily damaged but largely repairable—it had set its sights upon. With the conquest of Mandal already accomplished (battles on Berenson with isolated Partisan and Republican formations continued throughout 2772 and into 2773), the army moved on to Chisholm, once again encountering a strong Republican presence supported by a large corps of Amaris supporters within the world's government.

Twenty-fourth Army Group, with its single Seventh Army and five additional brigades, targeted a small swath of worlds. LIII Corps hit the world of New Canton as the remainder of the army split its attention between Menkalinan and Zion, moving on to both Saiph and Tall Trees after Zion fell in the matter of weeks. The destinies of Menkalinan, Saiph and Tall Trees had long been closely linked, and their liberation was no different. Here again, the SLDF faced determined resistance that took refuge within the world's cities, extending the liberation campaigns by months.

New Canton, meanwhile, served as a military nexus along the Capellan frontier, with a fleet of twenty-four WarShips and a similar number of transports based in-system. LIII Corps entered the system behind a fifty-ship SLDF attack fleet, encountering and quickly eliminating the Amaris WarShip task force in-system. LIII Corps moved on to New Canton itself, finding just a single regiment of Amaris Regulars, but also four overstrength Patriot battalions—two based within the world's single Castle Brian while the other two garrisoned the depots Amaris' logisticians had established on the world. LIII Corps split its focus, striking hard and fast at the depots in an effort to quickly capture the host of supplies the SLDF would likely soon be in need of. Though the defenders managed to destroy or damage large stockpiles during a series of attacks and counterattacks, LIII Corps' superior numbers brought them victory. The remainder of the New Canton campaign progressed slowly but on a largely conventional basis, especially as the SLDF had captured (or seen destroyed) the great majority of the WMD stockpiles on-world.

TWENTY-ONE TACTICAL PRINCIPLES

1. Victory must be the goal of all combat operations
One that costs you all is not a victory, however
2. Teamwork is the key to victory
True teamwork is impossible without training
3. Situational awareness is necessary for victory
Tunnel vision will get you killed
4. Timely intelligence acted upon in a timely manner
will bring victory
Blindly rushing into battle will lead to nothing
more than loss
5. Know your capabilities and your assignment
Watch for the opportunity to seize the initiative
and crush your opponent
6. Speed and maneuver are double edged swords
So is heavy armor
7. Know the battlefield
And place yourself at the critical decision point
8. Use the terrain to your advantage
But assume the enemy is using it as well
9. Support your team
Or your enemy will pick you apart
10. Act decisively and with intrepidity
A lack of backbone will lead to your demise
11. The foolhardy will bring defeat
Encourage your enemy to be the fool
12. Massed fire is superior fire
Uncoordinated and undirected fire is useful only
for frightening the untrained and for giving away
your position
13. Prioritize your targets
Without yourself becoming a target
14. Know your target
And know your surroundings
15. Initiative is frangible
Never surrender the initiative, especially to a
confused enemy
16. A weaker force can too easily hold up a superior force
While your enemy is focused ahead, attack his flanks
17. Indirect fires are a tremendous force multiplier
Remove the enemy's ability to use that against you
18. Never surrender
But reposition away from superior fire in
superior position
19. Communicate
Extraneous communications lead to confusion,
however
20. Discord and discontent are the enemies of success
Sow it within your enemy before he does so to you
21. We all make mistakes
Learn from them!

—*A Primer to Tactics and Strategy: 34th Edition*, General
Aleksandr Kerensky ed., SLDF Press, 2742

Twenty-Second Army Group

Twenty-second Army Group targeted some of the most populous worlds in the Terran Hegemony with its initial moves. First Army in particular faced the vibrant worlds of Aldebaran and Nanking, both claiming massive populations in excess of four billion citizens. Each was also heavily industrialized and boasted copious natural resources. Given their position along the Capellan border, they were also defended by multiple Castles Brian and, at least in the days before the Periphery Uprising and Amaris Coup, strong ground and naval garrison forces.

Amaris did not ignore these two planets, though given its larger population and massive defense industries, Nanking was the better defended world, with two Republican brigades and a naval detachment of some thirty WarShips (including many captured and refurbished from SLDF naval yards just after the Coup) assigned. Aldebaran claimed but one Republican brigade, though both worlds featured overstrength Patriot battalions and much larger than average contingents of HSF agents. As on many other worlds, Amaris had made a handful of select individuals extremely wealthy and powerful, and he used them along with his secret police to keep the two worlds' massive populations in line.

XXI Corps, as the larger formation, struck Nanking while X Corps targeted Aldebaran, reaching its target world a week before XXI Corps. At Nanking, Admiral Taro Marrkgrae secured the system with an overwhelming fleet of fifty-three WarShips, crushing eighteen of Amaris' WarShips and prompting the rest to flee. The campaigns for both worlds began in nearly the same way, with the Star League troops dropping on top of their most important targets to overwhelm the Amaris defenders. Intelligence greatly underestimated both the total numbers of defenders assigned within several of these initial targets, as well as the loyalty of the worlds' most powerful citizens (and the strength of the security forces they could call upon). Though clearly possessing overwhelming military strength, First Army soon found itself in the same kind of guerrilla action that their comrades had left behind just a few years ago in the Periphery.

Given the importance of the worlds, Amaris' commanders avoided making nuclear and other strikes capable of massive infrastructure damage, though they and their allies more than willingly used the worlds' populations as both weapons and shields. Additionally, Amaris reinforced his Nanking defenses in September by redeploying units from Chisholm, Hsien and Zurich, escorted by the remains of the fleet that had fled the system two months earlier and supplemented by an escort fleet normally stationed at New Canton.

Suddenly overwhelmed, as the bulk of Admiral Marrkgrae's fleet was patrolling the nearby star systems looking for signs of the Republican fleet, XXI Corps' escorts retreated, ceding control of the system's space lanes to the Republicans. As Amaris' ships burned hard in towards Nanking to take advantage of what even they assumed was a temporary superiority, Admiral Marrkgrae returned, bringing a single squadron in at a pirate point (only nine of the twelve ships successfully made that jump) to face the Republicans while the rest of her fleet charged in from behind. Unable to simply jump away, the Republicans fled deeper into the Nanking system. The resulting cat-and-mouse naval action lasted seventeen days and ended with all but seven Republican ships destroyed or captured (the remainder fled) and four SLDF ships lost.

The campaigns for Aldebaran and Nanking lasted well into 2774. While First Army had secured the planets' Castles Brian shortly after the dawn of 2773, it would take much longer to rid the world of Amaris' supporters, who had largely gone "underground" to fight a terrorist guerrilla campaign against Kerensky's troops.

Sixth Army meanwhile focused on the worlds of Arboris, Genoa and Ningpo. Despite its numerous small, typically underground settlements and mining operations, Genoa was only lightly populated and boasted similarly few defenders, consisting mainly of a handful of small mercenary commands supplemented by a Patriot unit which functioned more as a police force than a military garrison; the First Volunteer Brigade quickly crushed the Amaris garrison, which put up only a token resistance before retreating or surrendering.

On Arboris, LVII Corps faced just two regiments of defenders, though also a relatively large corps of Amaris agents that had gradually increased in number during the occupation. In contrast, the people of Arboris had largely supported the downfall of Richard Cameron but soon came to resent and resist Amaris as the Usurper tightened his stranglehold on the Hegemony. With the arrival of the SLDF liberators, Arboris' citizens, as they had many times throughout their history, rose up to fight their Republican overseers, especially after the Sixty-third Civil Assistance Team selected two-thirds of the world's former parliamentary members to reform its government.

Ningpo presented a more difficult target, more like both Aldebaran and Nanking, because of its relatively large population. With an economy based on agriculture and light manufacturing, the population was spread fairly evenly across the planet, claiming only a few major population centers. The Republican garrison was likewise spread across the world, manning a handful of bases and standing in oversight of the world's people, many of whom had violently protested when Amaris cut their ties with the Capellan Confederation. LXIII Corps secured its primary targets in short order, but then spent the last months of 2772 and the bulk of 2773 eliminating small cells of Amaris' agents and former defenders that had taken to hiding among Ningpo's populace.

Seventeenth Army Group

With the border between the Terra Firma and Lockdale Provinces forming the division between Tenth and Fifteenth Armies' invasion corridors, Seventeenth Army Group faced what was expected to be a relatively easy initial selection of targets, one that would later become more difficult as it plunged deeper into the Hegemony. Tenth Army initially targeted three worlds and expected to quickly follow on to one more before halting to prepare to move on to a heavily defended target like Epsilon Eridani.

On Acamar and Azha, Tenth Army faced precisely what it expected. Acamar was a cold, lightly populated world rich in mineable natural resources. Given its relative depth within the Hegemony, its garrison consisted of just a single regiment. IV Corps easily took command of the world in short order, pushing the bulk of its force to Woodstock in September.

Azha, targeted by XXVI Corps, was a moderately populated world that fell to the SLDF in the course of just a few months. The battle for Slocum, on the other hand, became a multi-year affair. With two surviving Castles Brian and a corresponding garrison of four regiments—one of which was a massively overstrength Patriot unit, however—XXXIX Corps expected a tough campaign. Like Aldebaran and Nanking, Slocum possessed a large contingent of Amaris' agents, but what Kerensky's warplanners had failed to account for was the fact that the world was now five years into a quarter-century-long storm cycle, coupled with an eight-year cycle of incredible solar activity, the combination of which had never been experienced since the world's colonization. A campaign expected to last just months turned into a twenty-seven month

affair where solar flares often interfered with or cut off all but short-range communications for hours or days at a time while tremendous storms constantly pounded the world with powerful winds, rain and snow.

Within the Lockdale Province, Fifteenth Army faced a mix of heavily and moderately populated worlds, with Bharat as its primary target. Two and a half billion people lived on Bharat, a breadbasket world that supported nearby planets with its rich agricultural output and modest manufacturing industries. XV Corps struck hard and fast, securing their initial targets, but intelligence failed to identify a series of major armament shipments prepared for off-world transit, which the world's defenders remained in control of and used against the SLDF invaders.

Hamal and Nopah presented few major problems to Fifteenth Army, though Hamal possessed several rather large and unexpected pro-Amaris enclaves which cost XL Corps time as well as the need to recapture territory it had already liberated. Yangtze, as another one of the heavily populated worlds along the Capellan frontier, likewise cost Fifteenth Army significant amounts of time, forcing XXIII Corps to hunt down and eliminate small cells of Amaris' agents and defenders that took refuge among the populace.

Follow-On Actions

Kerensky knew from the very beginning that his Task Force faced a difficult task in fighting Amaris' armies on the heavily populated worlds ahead of them, despite facing just seven worlds protected by Castles Brian. He hadn't expected to fight the same kind of anti-insurgent war that he'd faced during the Periphery Rebellion, however. So while his armies were able to drive on just seven secondary targets, most could only do so months after they originally intended to.

Both Chisholm and Hechnar were targeted in the closing months of 2772, the latter representing the SLDF's closest penetration to Terra. Hechnar's few defenders were wholly unprepared for Fifth Army's surprise attack, which Amaris' generals had expected to hit either Tyrning or Outreach. Reinforced by Sixth and Sixteenth Fleets, the entire LV Corps descended upon Hechnar, securing enough of it by the end of March 2773 that the Eridani Light Horse could begin launching raids upon the contested world of Carver V. Throughout 2773 and '74, Amaris ordered counter-assault after assault upon both Hechnar and Carver V, attempting to dislodge the SLDF from either world. With such a heavy naval presence though, Kerensky's forces held on with few problems—further staging numerous additional raids deep into the heart of the Hegemony core.

Chisholm, with its many small island landmasses, presented some challenges to Eighteenth Army, which also faced strong pockets of pro-Amaris resistance as well as the proto-continent of Lawson, a veritable island fortress home to the world's Castle Brian and several more military reservations. Given the world's geography, the SLDF army pursued an "island-hopping" campaign, targeting and clearing just a few islands at a time and before moving on.

REMEMBER THE HEROES

After spending eighteen years with the man, I could recite General DeChavilier's battle speech in my sleep. Oh, he could be a royal hard-ass when he needed to be, which seemed to be most of the time he was wasn't actually leading men and women into battle, but that's because staff work bored him. It never interested him.

Not that we was a warmonger, not like the press usually tried to paint him as. He was a realist. He knew that "universal peace" was impossible, no matter what the liberals said. Humanity has been waging war against itself for more than six thousand years of recorded history, and not once has there been a single era of true peace. Without a doubt, someone will get jealous of another and try to take what isn't theirs. Or some ethnic group will try to take revenge against another because of something that happened hundreds of years ago. He calls them "the fruits of Original Sin." I'm not a religious guy, but there's definitely something to that.

The thing is, he always wanted to be a soldier. He felt like he had a higher duty, so he joined the SLDF. He was a good soldier, but he was a damn good leader. He didn't do it for glory. He did it because it was his duty. But he also genuinely cared about his troops. You could see that in his eyes as he talked with them. Sometimes, he'd just leave the office and walk through the cantonments, talking with anyone he could, finding out what made them tick and what their problems were. And then he'd come back to us with some wild idea he heard along the way and expect us to make it happen.

He wore the weight of that, though, and from the moment we deployed to the Periphery it was heavy. He rarely let it show, but those of us around him could see that sorrow in his eyes with every casualty report he saw and every hospital he visited. Before battle, he made a point to toast his commanders' upcoming success with them. After battle, though, he had a private drink to salute their fallen heroes.

By the end of our push on Terra, there would be days he wouldn't even leave his private office.

—Colonel J. August Tillingham, *My Time with General DeChavilier*, Leopard Publishing, 2795

After securing its initial targets as well as both Saiph and Tall Trees, Twenty-fourth Army Group pressed on to Zurich in mid 2773. Meanwhile Sixth Army struck Bex, Tenth Army moved on to Woodstock and Fifteenth Army targeted Kawich all also in 2773. All were long and frustrating campaigns, with Amaris' defenders relying heavily upon weapons of mass destruction on Bex, dealing horrendous damage to both Sixth Army and to the world itself.

HEAVY METAL

General DeChavilier's Task Force Sun was, of course, responsible for the rest of the Hegemony, attacking worlds from Angol to Al Na'ir within the Lockdale Province.

Nineteenth Army Group's attack corridor actually encompassed most of the Lockdale Province's border with the Capellan Confederation. Second Army hit the worlds of Achernar, Angol, Basalt and Tigress; while Nineteenth Army struck Rio and Tybalt.

Fourth Army Group was responsible for the bulk of the Federated Suns border with the Hegemony. Fourth Army focused initially on Cartago, Elbar, Mirach, New Rhodes III and Scharar; and Third Army hit New Florence, Ozawa and Ronel.

Twenty-first Army Group had responsibility for perhaps the greatest region of space, though one with relatively few inhabited systems. Ninth Army targeted Galatia III, Mallory's World and Mara; meanwhile, Fourteenth Army hit Al Na'ir, Murchison and Pokhara.

The largest and most populous Hegemony province lay ahead of General Aaron DeChavilier and his Task Force Sun, which on one hand presented an almost unimaginable challenge in sheer numbers of worlds they were responsible for liberating, but on the other hand likely meant that Amaris' limited forces were spread thin across the stars.

The General began the invasion just like he did with every other operation he had commanded, personally addressing his troops—in this case, a process that took months during the long journey from the Rim Worlds to the Federated Suns. As his command ship made its way through the transport fleets, and he flew from cantonment to cantonment once the fleet finally arrived in the Federated Suns, he spoke with hundreds of thousands of soldiers, pilots, MechWarriors and crews, some in relatively small crowds of just fifty or a hundred and others in large divisional formations. He always delivered the same message, though personalizing it based on the audience and their assignment, and always ended it by gathering together the senior officers present and toasting them and their commands.

Capellan Front

Nineteenth Army Group dove right into the Lockdale Province from its initial staging areas on the Capellan world of Tikonov. Second Army, which had seen no action during the Periphery Uprising or the follow-on invasion of the Rim Worlds, struck hard at its first targets. Both Angol and Tigress were heavily populated worlds protected by multiple Castles Brian as well as relatively large garrisons supported by extensive networks of Amaris' allies and agents. Achernar and Basalt, the former a primarily agricultural world and the latter a world rich with mineral deposits and marine sealife, were also key outer worlds that supported the rest of the Hegemony. Nineteenth Army meanwhile set its sights on Rio, a minor world economically but an important key to the Hegemony's defensive network, as well as the industrial world of Tybalt.

Just as Kerensky's armies were discovering, DeChavilier's bid to unseat Amaris' Republicans from the Hegemony worlds in most cases proved to be difficult. Rio's defenders, really just overgrown Patriot battalions, posed little threat, with many surrendering at the first sign of DeChavilier's troops, turning on and killing their Republican overseers. Both Angol and Tigress were tough nuts to crack however, especially after the loss of more than two brigades of XXIX Corps troops to an Amaris WarShip patrol hidden within the Tigress system, followed by nuclear strikes upon several of Second Army's landing zones.

On Tybalt Amaris' troops attempted to hold out as long as they could, securing what supply caches and critical manufacturing equipment they could and destroying the rest. Here they created heavily armed and defended enclaves in and around many key industrial cities, forcing DeChavilier's troops to either waste additional time and manpower on surgical operations that could preserve

the production facilities, or simply level some of the Hegemony's most advanced manufacturing complexes. The world of Basalt, too, proved a challenge as Amaris' defenders favored bases tucked away in mountain ranges or tremendous underground mining complexes that often proved to be as difficult to assault as a Castle Brian.

Achernar, on the other hand, fell quickly. Its small garrison was overwhelmed by the invading LII Corps, who found themselves aided by an underground movement of agricultural workers that rose up to oppose their subjugators as soon as the SLDF had entered orbit. After years of being oppressed by Amaris' government—here, as on many other agrarian worlds, Amaris had ordered the world to double, and then triple, its agricultural output to help feed worlds suddenly unable to support themselves during the excesses and deprivations of his reign, responding by ordering mass executions among the world's population and razing massive tracts of fertile land when they couldn't meet those quotas—the people responded in kind. Company- and battalion-size formations of heavy farm and industrial equipment mounting weapons and makeshift armor attacked Republican formations as LII Corps made landfall, prompting the SLDF soldiers to rush to their aid.

With Achernar and Rio falling quickly, both armies pushed on to strike their next targets, landing in October of 2772. Second Army struck Ruchbah, a moderately populated but vibrant world that prior to the Coup was on the cusp of growing into a major economic power with burgeoning manufacturing and technology industries. Nineteenth Army similarly moved on to Hearn, a lush world favored for its lumber and exotic wildlife exports.

Most of these worlds remained contested throughout the bulk of 2772. Basalt was firmly in Star League hands by the beginning of 2773 while the campaign for Ruchbah was concluded in April 2773, with much of the world's industry in ruins. Primary operations on Angol and Tigress were done by the end of the year, but the anti-insurgent campaign on Angol did not conclude until the last quarter of 2773, on Tigress ending by February of the next year.

Federated Suns Front

Before targeting the occupied Hegemony proper, Fourth Army group first liberated the worlds of Cartago, Elbar, Mirach and Schedar, all worlds jointly controlled by the Federated Suns and the Cameron-led Hegemony. They, like the rest of the Hegemony, were targeted during Amaris' Coup, falling under the Usurper's control. Originally Amaris intended to use these, as well as the rest of the joint worlds he'd captured, as leverage, gifting them to the House Lords once they agreed to ally with him. When none of the five House Lords did so, he attempted to turn them into "free trade zones" where he could profit from selling the Hegemony's myriad products, finally garrisoning them with forces and making these outlying territories a part of his growing police state.

All four were still relatively minor worlds, at least when compared to the average Hegemony world. Schedar was the "best" of them, boasting the largest population and greatest annual domestic product. But all were suffering under occupation, with

Amaris unwilling to direct any resources to help develop the worlds and Prince Jon Davion unable to. Consequently, Amaris stationed few defense forces there and few security forces. Each fell within weeks, though they also required months more relief work; Fourth Army remained in place on those worlds until relief began to arrive from the Federated Suns.

As the bulk of Fourth Army focused on the four joint worlds, its LXII Corps struck New Rhodes III and Third Army attacked New Florence, Ozawa and Ronel. Of these four, Ozawa was the most important and consequently possessed the heaviest defenses. In turn, Third Army commander General Jack Lucas targeted Ozawa with both XVII and LXIX Corps, launching a lightning assault that entirely overwhelmed the Republican defenders. Those Republicans that weren't destroyed outright retreated into their bases, where Third Army surrounded them and prevented them from escaping into the cities and countryside where they could terrorize the population like so many of their comrades did on other worlds. Lucas' two corps destroyed the Republican formations one by one, assaulting the world's three Castles Brian with such speed and force they were each liberated in a matter of weeks rather than months. His infantry brigades then turned towards hunting down and eliminating Amaris' security agents, who were turning towards terrorist attacks to hinder Third Army. Their efforts were largely unsuccessful, however; Ozawa was firmly in Lucas' hands by the end of the year, having suffered only minor damage during the five-month campaign.

Ronel, a mining world inhabited by relatively few people, nearly all of whom supported the mineral-extraction industry, possessed a small garrison of mercenaries reinforced by a Patriot battalion; it fell to the Star League liberators in a matter of just a few days. The battles for New Florence and New Rhodes III were not resolved so quickly and so successfully. New Florence's garrison, after losing nearly two-thirds of their number in the initial Star League assaults, retreated to the world's two Castles Brian, where they waged a surprising holding action that held out until December.

On New Rhodes III, bad luck combined with a determined Republican resistance combined to create several disasters that SLDF responders and civilian relief workers were cleaning up for years. During the initial attack upon the world, a stray missile ignited a fuel storage facility within the capital of Messi, which started a conflagration that spread to a nearby warehouse district and set off a tremendous series of explosions of improperly stored munitions and chemicals. The resulting fire gutted the majority of the city and released noxious plumes that threatened millions more, forcing XXXVII Corps to focus its efforts on preventing the spread of the disaster. Over the next five months, Amaris' garrison triggered a number of additional disasters, including two massive petro-chemical spills and associated fires that ravaged huge tracts of land, killed thousands and affected tens of thousands more before the SLDF soldiers were able to finally focus their energies on crushing the Republicans rather than reacting to their terrorist actions.

Combine Front

General Daishin Makarau and his Twenty-first Army Group took responsibility for the entirety of Lockdale Province's border with the Combine, perhaps the least densely populated region of the province. As it turned out, it was also the least defended, allowing Makarau to penetrate deeply into the Hegemony.

Ninth Army began its operations by securing the final two joint worlds along the shared Combine-Federated Suns frontier: Mallory's World and Mara. Of the six joint worlds within the region, Mallory's World had prospered the most, moreso than Schedar, especially as House Davion had invested heavily in developing the world, which sat within a critical junction along the Hegemony and Combine borders. House Kurita, on the other hand, had done little to develop Mara, relying instead upon the Hegemony to bring prosperity to the world.

Ninth Army struck hard, quickly subduing the two worlds; but where XII Corps remained on Mara for a significant time aiding its population, which had suffered greatly through the occupation as Amaris had largely cut off the constant flow of supplies Mara's people required, XXXIV Corps secured Mallory's World in weeks and was ready to move on to its next target by the final quarter of 2772. XLI Corps meanwhile pursued a slow and steady campaign against the Republicans on Galatia III, wrapping up primary combat operations by the end of August but also spending most of the rest of 2772 there.

XXXIV Corps moved deeper into the Hegemony in October, targeting the world of Helen as XII Corps shifted to take responsibility for garrisoning both Mallory's World and ultimately also Galatia III. Helen's population was relatively small, but the world was an enclave for fine arts and oceanic research, and also one of General Kerensky's favorite worlds to visit, which is likely why Ninth Army pressed to quickly liberate it. XXXIV Corps arrived to find a world in ruins, though. Under Amaris' orders, the garrison forces had stripped the greatest artistic treasures from the world and shipped them back to Terra; meanwhile, the garrison, led by the mercenary Burning Tygers, took everything else of value for themselves, lining up and massacring any who tried to stand in their way before razing whole cities. XXXIV Corps gave the mercenaries and their allies no quarter, hunting them down and wiping them out. The corps remained there through the first half of 2773, lending what assistance it could while it waited for XLI Corps and planned for the eventual assault upon Quentin.

Al Na'ir

Fourteenth Army, responsible for the remainder of the province's Combine border, targeted three worlds in its initial push. Murchison and Pokhara, despite their positions as moderately populated worlds with strong economies, were lightly defended, just as so many other worlds on the Combine frontier were. XXXII Corps easily secured the two, leaving the remainder of Fourteenth Army to prepare for an assault upon the heavily defended Al Na'ir system and for a planned follow-on attack upon Nirasaki, the latter positioned just across the Lone Star-Lockdale provincial border.

Al Na'ir represented a unique challenge for Fourteenth Army. The system was sparsely populated but extremely resource-rich. The inhospitable world of Al Na'ir itself was more a central processing and shipping hub within the system than a homeworld proper, which even the advanced Hegemony hadn't attempted to terraform. The bulk of the population was spread out across thousands of mining facilities on planets, moons and asteroids scattered throughout the system. Several of the largest asteroids housed processing and refining factories within former mining complexes, while a few were even home to major manufacturing concerns, which took advantage of the zero-G environs to produce delicate or specialized products.

Just two Republican regiments defended the system, spread between the few bases on Al Na'ir and key moons and asteroids. These troops recognized from the very beginning that they could do little to defend, or enforce Amaris' will upon, the countless stations and settlements in the system. They instead took control of only a few key locations, where they could monitor the system and respond as needed. Of course, they could do so because they also had control of Al Na'ir's Space Defense System, which included a vast network of sensors that could identify potential threats anywhere in the star system.

General Saulius T.L. Dragulescu, commanding Fourteenth Army, held the bulk of his army in reserve throughout the third and most of the fourth quarter of 2772, giving them additional time to train in zero-G combat operations. Meanwhile Admiral Ilse Huang-Sanchez patiently waited to analyze the anti-SDS operations at Lone Star, Nusakan and Summer. The assault upon Al Na'ir began in November, a month after the attack on Summer and with the benefit of Admiral Godman Lawrence's battle logs and detailed analyses from Summer.

Operation KEYHOLE's continued intelligence gathering on the edge of the Al Na'ir system positively identified the positions of the drone fleets, which were deployed in a zone pattern that covered the major mining regions and could also easily respond to incursions from the jump points which, thanks to the system's class-A star, lay some three weeks away from any of the primary targets at standard acceleration.

Admiral Huang-Sanchez weighed the options and chose to mount a direct and overwhelming assault into the system. She attempted the same kind of ruse Lawrence had used at Summer upon entry into the system, to limited success. On the other hand, only a handful of defenses protected the zenith jump point, which the Star League ships quickly overwhelmed and eliminated. Huang-Sanchez then drove nearly her entire fleet—eighty major WarShips, along with three hundred and seventeen combat DropShips, all carrying a company or more of marines and zero-G qualified infantry—towards the world of Al Na'ir. Meanwhile, the bulk of General Dragulescu's Fourteenth Army waited patiently on Murchison, having given up most of their heavy combat transports to Huang-Sanchez's assault fleet.

Supported by the aerospace fighter squadrons belonging to three SLDF corps, Huang-Sanchez's fleet cut a swath through the

drones, most of which had converged to intercept the invasion fleet near Al Na'ir. The fleet fighter squadrons defended their own ships while the army fighters swarmed the drones, eliminating the smaller ships and allowing marine assault teams to subdue eleven total Caspars while the heavy Star League ships pounded the others into scrap. In the first engagement, a drone fleet of 148 Caspars destroyed thirty-eight SLDF WarShips and more than sixty DropShips before retreating with a loss of seventy-one. Three days later, a reinforced Caspar fleet attacked the SLDF force in orbit over Al Na'ir, claiming eleven more WarShips and thirty-three DropShips with twenty-nine of its own lost before withdrawing. Huang-Sanchez continued to pursue the Caspar fleet for the next five months through the Al Na'ir system.

Meanwhile, General Dragulescu brought Fourteenth Army into the system in January, concentrating upon the regions Huang-Sanchez had already cleared of drone activity. Huang-Sanchez finally eliminated the final drone squadron in early May of 2773 while Dragulescu's army was still hopping from asteroid to asteroid, clearing any hint of Amaris influence before finally turning towards Al Na'ir itself in October.

Follow-On Actions

Fourth Army faced little in the way of determined opposition during its initial strikes into the occupied Hegemony, but was forced to deal with Amaris-induced disaster and privation. When finally able to direct its attentions deeper into the Hegemony, LIV Corps, reinforced by an infantry division reassigned from each XXXVII and LXII Corps, hit the heavily industrialized and fortified world of Addicks. There they faced two brigades of determined defenders who controlled the world's three Castles Brian as well as its largest cities. Here, LIV Corps' troops were able to vent their frustrations upon their enemy, who briefly fell back against the

Star League hordes before using nuclear and chemical weapons to retaliate. The Addicks campaign lasted for months of back-and-forth assaults and counter-assaults that steadily whittled the Republicans down to nothing, in the process also leaving the world in ruins.

Third Army continued its blitzkrieg into the Hegemony, hitting Towne in February of 2773 and Errai in May. While Towne fell relatively quickly in a matter of just a few months, Third Army found itself in something of a stalemate on Errai, unable to rapidly unseat the Republicans or capture enough supplies to remain constantly on the offensive, especially after Amaris routed reinforcements to the world. General Lucas' troops slowly but steadily increased their hold over the world, even after suffering through a series of orbital strikes in July and September from Amaris WarShip patrols, returning to the offensive again in November and December. Operations against Errai's single Castle Brian continued for several weeks longer, while anti-insurgent and relief operations kept them busy for months more.

After discovering tragedies on Helen and Mara, Ninth Army pushed on to Quentin. Facing the same long lines of communication that were beginning to hamper Third Army, Ninth pursued a far less intensive invasion plan here. They secured key objectives over the course of the first week with high-risk landings and lightning assaults while the bulk of their forces moved to surround and isolate the enemy enclaves. A low-intensity liberation and anti-insurgent campaign followed, largely supplied by materiel and consumables manufactured right on Quentin, punctuated by brief assault operations designed to eliminate Republican strongholds. Amaris' defenders remained well-entrenched within Quentin's large population, themselves conducting a terrorist campaign that occupied Ninth Army for a year and caused significant damage to the world.

LIBERATION OF TERRA: VOLUME I



AFTERMATH: A LULL IN THE STORM

"If you are going through hell, keep going."

— Winston Spencer Churchill

During a twentieth century regional conflict, a journalist reported military commanders as saying "it became necessary to destroy the town to save it." The context was the willingness of the military to destroy civilian infrastructure and to endanger their lives in order to win a military victory over its opponent. It soon became clear to Kerensky that, in order to defeat Amaris, he would need to be equally hard-hearted and make difficult decisions. This was exactly the kind of fighting the Ares Conventions, signed some three centuries earlier, was designed to prevent. Those rules of warfare had been suspended during the Reunification War but reinstated in the unified human sphere forged by that conflict. The sundry conflicts of the Star League-era continued to be fought broadly in line with the Conventions. Until, that is, the Periphery Uprising.

The Freedom War/Periphery Uprising counted on two factors to give the Periphery States a chance of victory: irregular troops and ruthless surprise, both of which fell a long way short of the Conventions' ideals. Isolated and outnumbered, the SLDF were forced to employ extreme measures to survive, fighting fire with fire and terror with terror. It was a bloody conflict—particularly after the arrival of the Secret Army divisions—but would soon pale into insignificance.

While the Freedom War sidestepped the defunct Ares Conventions, the Amaris Coup ripped the rulebook apart. Though recent histories have provided a more nuanced view of Amaris' political machinations, the actions of his troops in securing the Hegemony were often nothing less than war crimes. The use of nuclear weapons has been cited as a tactical necessity (though in most cases it seems expedience and frustration lead to their use rather than an absence of less damaging options), but their employment of chemical and biological agents can in no way be justified. Similarly, the humiliation and murder of surrendered troops—many of whom were forced to dig their own graves—ranks alongside the atrocities of Terra's Second World War and the Reunification War. That Amaris tried to gloss over the brutality of his troops, stating that the actions they had taken were "proportionate," only heightened disdain for the man who styled himself Emperor.

Amaris had hoped the SLDF would bow to his will, that the Star League would continue with himself at its head, but Kerensky kiboshed those dreams. He made it clear that the SLDF would not bow to the Usurper and would instead dedicate itself to his downfall. Amaris' betrayals of his erstwhile Periphery allies led them to cut a deal with Kerensky that ended the Periphery Uprising/Freedom War with a *de facto* victory for the territorial states (their independence) that simultaneously freed the SLDF from the quagmire of the Periphery war. Logistics (and to a lesser extent politics) spared Amaris' troops in the Hegemony from immediate assault (their comrades in the Rim Worlds Republic were

less fortunate) and gave them time to prepare. A unified political front by the member states might have put sufficient pressure on Amaris and Kerensky to reach a political solution to the crisis but the Council Lords were too engrossed in their own self-centered schemes and rivalries to realize the danger that lay ahead.

As the eighth year of the conflict came to a close, matters looked bleak for all sides and there was no end in sight. It would be another five years before Kerensky reached Terra but the next year, 2775, would prove to be the tipping point of the conflict. The following summaries detail in the situation among the participants at the end of this first phase of the war and look forward to the actions of 2775. These tumultuous events (and those of the rest of Operations CHIEFTAIN and LIBERATION) are further detailed in *Historical: Liberation of Terra, Volume 2*.

ON THE OUTSIDE, LOOKING IN

By late 2774, the pace of the operation against Terra began to wear on the SLDF forces. They had seized almost 100 worlds, but of those only ten had been within the last eighteen months, at the cost of considerable losses. The casualties in each assault exceeded ten percent of the forces committed, though the proportions were distorted by worlds guarded by SDS systems that inflicted disastrous losses on WarShips and transports alike. Those who had participated in the ground fighting reported back the horrendous conditions many of the Hegemony's citizens had been forced to endure; many were rounded up and placed into booby-trapped internment camps and used as hostages against the encroaching SLDF, most notably to secure the Amaris troops' own escape from contested worlds. The SLDF also had to face Amaris' increasing use of scorched-earth tactics; chemical and biological agents were used profligately, as were nuclear weapons and sabotage of life-support infrastructure. The Rim Worlds forces also left fifth-column agents behind, masquerading as members of the general population but sabotaging the SLDF positions with everything from sniper attacks to chemical poisoning and backpack nukes.

Kerensky was forced to tread carefully and regard everyone as a potential threat. His policy was one of tough love; he would not bow to blackmail—to do so would only encourage further hostage-taking and booby traps—and opted to move against Imperial forces even if doing so endangered civilians or infrastructure. By the start of December, the SLDF was nearing breaking point and the offensive looked to be in jeopardy though a series of events in 2775 would give Kerensky's forces new hope.

The first was the SLDF encirclement of Terra. In practical terms, this would have minimal impact on the Hegemony—trade between the Terran state and the other Star League realms was already at low



ebb—but it provided a significant psychological boost. The second would be Amaris' decision to abandon a number of "undefensible" worlds that the SLDF soon occupied. The impression of a surge in SLDF activities and successes played well with the troops (though many were unaware of Amaris' role in their good fortunes); Amaris' action made strategic sense, but psychologically it played into Kerensky's hands. Perhaps the largest morale boost received by the SLDF came with the liberation of Carver V. This was significant because the world had never been fully conquered by the RWR – three marine regiments had managed to continue the fight against the occupation for over eight years thanks in part to supply drops orchestrated by the Third RCT (the Eridani Light Horse) and the Secret Fleet. This rescue (and the tales of heroism and Rim Worlds treachery told by the marines) spurred the SLDF onwards.

This was not to say that the liberations were plain sailing. The Rim Worlders' "tripwire" program continued to make life difficult and other systems, guarded by SDS systems and Castles Brian, began to look like impregnable fortresses. There was no counter to the vast fortifications and the drone fleets.

Or was there?

INSIDE, LOOKING OUT

The Roman Empire had a "bread and circuses" policy to keep the population pliant—basically, keep them entertained a bribed—and Amaris instigated his own version to win over the people of the Hegemony. This didn't help his already precarious financial position but his increasing indebtedness to the Hegemony's financial institutions also bound them to him; if they were to see a return on their investments and loans Amaris needed to win. They didn't have to like the Emperor, but they knew a Kerensky victory would ruin them.

For much of the Hegemony the war was a far off thing and though rationing was put in place on many worlds (and taxation hiked drastically) life continued much as before. Though some vociferously opposed the new Emperor, most citizens were ambivalent and some lauded him as an improvement over Richard Cameron. Though later demonized for his actions, the early years of Amaris' reign saw him undertake a series of PR moves designed to bring the Hegemony population on side. He advanced the idea of a joint national effort—the Terran Hegemony and the Rim Worlds Republic together—to build a better life and to resist those who sought to restore the old Cameron order. It couldn't be said that troops flocked to his banner, but he was able to recruit substantial numbers from the Hegemony, which he used to bolster his new Imperial Army.

By the mid 2770s, however, it was clear that even this enlarged force was insufficient to withstand the SLDF. The troops were spread too thinly and were being overwhelmed in detail by Kerensky's monolithic force. Amaris had lost much of the calm he exhibited at the start of the conflict and was now beginning to show signs of paranoia. He had taken to wandering the Court of the Star League with a laser rifle and shooting anything that reminded him of the Cameron clan, while his political and military decisions were increasingly brutal.

END OF THE AFFAIR

Richard Cameron's rule proved so disastrous for the Hegemony that, while shocked by Amaris' Coup, many citizens quietly breathed a sigh of relief. The Hegemony's economy was in a perilous state and public morale was at rock bottom, both making the citizenry easy targets for Amaris' charm. He declared the action he took was harsh but necessary to save the Hegemony from itself and that under his leadership they would return to glory. Though there were widespread claims that his supporters rigged his election as Director-General, there also seemed to be a genuine surge in popular support. Any gerrymandering that took place likely secured his position, though with hindsight it may have been unnecessary,

Amaris' early rule likewise earned him kudos with the people. Officially he adopted a balanced budget, seeking to reign in Richard's excesses of taxation and expenditure, allowing the Hegemony population to retain a larger proportion of their earnings (it seems, however, that behind the scenes he was already skimming funds to pay off his debts and to bolster the Empire's military). He was aided in this by two people: Aisling Connor and Samir Njari. Connor was a renowned Hegemony businesswoman (and allegedly one of the Emperor's mistresses) whose combination of economic savvy and political charm made her the darling of the business classes. She kept the Hegemony oligarchs sweet and provided them with a conduit to the Emperor that made them feel important and listened too, even if Amaris rarely heeded their counsel. Njari was a Rim Worlds media mogul who became the architect of Amaris' public persona and the communication of his "message." Later in the conflict, he would also serve as head of the Krypteia, Amaris' secret police, bringing terror and forcing obedience among the population. Connor and Njari jointly molded the Hegemony populace, seeking compliance with their master's will. One of Njari's diaries, recovered after Operation LIBERATION, contained a damning quote: "It is not enough for people to be more or less reconciled to our regime, to be persuaded to adopt a neutral attitude towards us; rather,

we want to work on people until they have capitulated to us." (This phrase originally had been spoken at a press conference in 1933 by Joseph Goebbels.)

In the early years, Connor and Njari were able to drum up fanatical support, organizing volunteer corps among the youth and recruiting substantial numbers into the military. Once Kerensky's efforts to isolate Terra politically and economically began to bite there was a notable waning of support, prompting the duo to take a more hard-line approach, employing the Krypteia to "encourage" obedience. Even this proved insufficient when news of Kerensky's assaults on Hegemony worlds began to filter through. Njari had sought to control the media, but the SLDF took steps to circumvent his embargos and communicate directly with the Hegemony populace. Having thought the General would never make good his threats to use military action, the reality prompted uprisings on several worlds that were brutally suppressed. Elsewhere, resistance groups that had been operating since the start of the war—such as the Ghosts of the Black Watch—found their membership swelling, though the Krypteia exploited this to place agents within the resistance and several cells were compromised and crushed.

By 2774, Amaris was fighting a two-front war: against Kerensky and the SLDF without and against insurgents within. To deal with the latter he took increasingly brutal action, including the use of chemical and biological agents, and he even went so far as to order the execution of several mistresses lest they or any progeny they produced be used against him. The Krypteia and the Imperial Army worked hand in hand to carry out this cleansing, frequently using suspect populations as hostages as part of Operation TRIPWIRE, aiming to slow Kerensky's assaults to spare the hostages or (more commonly) cleaning house by having Kerensky sacrifice the people in his bloody and determined assaults.

—*Traitors, Quislings and Opportunists* by Thelos Auburn, Tharkad University Press, 3018

On 19 January 2775, he would issue orders for the Imperial forces to pull back from a dozen worlds that had been judged indefensible, focusing instead on worlds with an SDS or Castle Brian. He didn't completely abandon those worlds though; since 2772 he'd ordered extreme measures on worlds approached by the SLDF, including the use of civilian hostages and the sabotage of infrastructure to deny the SLDF. The Republicans also left saboteurs and fifth columnists to sow mayhem on "liberated" (occupied in Imperial parlance) worlds. Known as Operation TRIPWIRE, this

scorched earth policy was intensified on the worlds the Empire abandoned, turning each into elaborate booby traps for unwary SLDF soldiers. Meanwhile, the worlds chosen as defensive hard points—Amaris dubbed them bastion worlds—would come to seem almost impregnable even against the onrushing tide of the SLDF. The Emperor had no misconceptions about their ability to weather the SLDF storm, but he hoped the ferocious cost of taking them would give Kerensky pause. How high a price was the General prepared to pay?

SPECTATORS NEAR ...

Despite exhortations by both Kerensky and Amaris for them to join their cause, the other five member states adopted policies of neutrality throughout the war. They declared the conflict an internal Hegemony matter (despite the involvement of Star League forces and the utilization of League institutions to support Kerensky's efforts). In some cases, this was petty spite for the League's prior abandonment—a view particularly popular in the Free Worlds, the Capellan Confederation, and even in the border regions of the Federated Suns—while the view in the Draconis Combine was that the League's intervention in the War of Davion Succession should be punished.

In reality, three of the five governments—the Lyran Commonwealth, the Federated Suns and the Capellan Confederation—provided tacit support to Kerensky, even if it was only transit and basing rights. The Free Worlds League vociferously opposed the SLDF's use of bases and facilities in their territory (something Kerensky ignored and he ordered the SLDF to use them anyway), a result of personal tensions between the Captain-General and Kerensky, and the Draconis Combine seemed to publicly side with the Amaris Empire (to the extent they betrayed SLDF troop movements and resisted efforts by Kerensky's forces to use their worlds) but privately provided intelligence and aid to the Star League forces.

The Combine's stance—playing both sides in the conflict—was both the most self-serving but also the most honest. All of the member states were hedging their bets, not wanting to antagonize either side in the conflict so as not to have an implacable foe once the dust settled. When a likely victor became clear (who that would be was not yet apparent in 2774) they could change their position to make it seem that they had always been on the winner's side. In effect, four of the five realms did little more than observe the carnage, while the Combine took an active (but no less self-serving) stance. All five states continued their troop buildups; by the time of the Coup they had doubled in size from their 2750 levels, and by the end of the conflict, they would double again.

...AND FAR

The former territorial states—the realms of the Periphery—found that, after two centuries of "Star League oppression", full independence was not all it was cracked up to be. Yes, they were free of Terra's dictates but they also found themselves devoid of Star League support. The Freedom War had lasted only a few years, but it had wrought considerable damage to the Periphery worlds,

and—unlike the aftermath of the Reunification War—this time there was no Dame Humphreys or Star League Reconstruction Fund to make good their losses.

The Periphery realms also found themselves unwitting victims of their own actions. The preamble to the Periphery Uprising had seen the rise of a number of anti-Star League terror groups, and now some of these organizations refused to kowtow to the governments that had formed and funded them. Highly trained and armed to the teeth, they sought their own concessions from the Periphery governments and when these were refused, they began their own private terror campaigns. It would take more than two decades for a sense of political equilibrium to be restored... just in time for the Succession Wars.

The first signs of the problems that would cause were already becoming apparent in 2774. Cross-border trade with the member states continued despite the unofficial independence of the Periphery realms, but many of the Inner Sphere powers began to extort punitive taxes on these goods to pay for their militarization programs. The Inner Sphere did not need Periphery goods, but the Star League had reshaped the Periphery economies to need Inner Sphere markets. Grudgingly they paid the hiked tariffs and despite warnings from economists about the dangers of the interdependent economies, few steps were taken to diversify and disengage. As a result, when the Star League collapsed, taking the Inner Sphere economies with it, the supposedly-independent Periphery realms were likewise dragged into the economic quagmire.

A NEW HOPE

The SLDF would surge forward to liberate the worlds abandoned by Amaris—springing or disabling his traps as they went—and at the same time the SLDF high command sought a solution to Amaris' bastions. They sought a way past the SDS systems and to counter forces ensconced in Castles Brian. For months the strategists of the High Command would work on solutions to these problems but in both cases little joy was to be had; blood and tears seemed to be the only counter to the technological monstrosities created by Jonathan Cameron. One vain hope remained. Among the worlds abandoned by the Empire was Nirasaki, home to the Nirasaki Computers Collective who had developed the intricate software used to coordinate the SDS. Kerensky planned to send technical analysts to the system, hoping against hope to find some technological solution in the ruins of the world to solve the problems facing the SLDF.

Until then, he could only wait and pray.



RULES ANNEX

The following rules allow the complexities of the Periphery Uprising/Freedom War and Operation CHIEFTAIN to be simulated in regular campaign play. These rules are for use with *BattleTech* games of all kinds, omnibus rules for which can be found in *Total Warfare (TW)*, *TechManual (TM)*, *Tactical Operations (TO)*, *Strategic Operations (SO)*, and *A Time of War (AToW)*.

Creating Operation CHIEFTAIN scenarios, when used in conjunction with the Creating Scenarios rules contained within *Total Warfare* (see p. 256, *TW*), allows for the quick generation of *BattleTech* scenarios and forces for pick-up games.

Operation CHIEFTAIN Militaries provides optional rules for simulating the unique characteristics of the various forces that fought in the conflict, while *Notable Personalities* similarly provides rules that allow the most significant commanders and leaders of each nation to interact within Periphery Uprising and Operation CHIEFTAIN scenarios.

The last section, *New Combat Units*, provide descriptions and game information the fearsome *Caspar* drone Warships of Jonathan Cameron's SDS system.

SPECIAL CASE RULES

Previous *BattleTech* volumes contain rules relevant to play in the Late Star League era:

Historical: Operation Klondike and *Technical Readout: 3075* contain details of Royal variants of common designs (these also appear in *Record Sheets: Operation Klondike* and *Record Sheets: 3075 Unabridged*, respectively).

Historical: Reunification War contains details of weapons of mass destruction.

Jihad Hot Spots: Terra contains details of Castle Brian fortifications.

In addition to the above, subsequent sourcebooks—including *Era Report: 2750*, *Field Manual: SLDF*, and the *2750 Field Report PDF-exclusive series*—will allow players access to more immersive rules for setting games in this era.

CREATING OPERATION CHIEFTAIN SCENARIOS

Gamemasters and players can use the rules on the following pages to generate scenarios set within the Late Star League era, from the dawn of the twenty-eighth century to the final collapse of the Star League. This was one of the most active periods for the Star League military, with the War of Davion Succession, the Marik Civil War, the Third and Fourth Hidden Wars, as well as the Periphery Uprising (known as the Freedom War in the Periphery) and the Amaris Coup and Star League Civil War that culminated with Operation CHIEFTAIN.

BEFORE YOU START

The Late Star League encompasses a wide variety of battles and campaigns and so the following pages present a basic framework for generating forces and unit abilities. With these, gamemasters and players can create their own battles based on those described in the previous chapters.

Gamemasters and players should use the historical information to create a general framework for any battles or campaigns, and then use these rules as well as common sense to generate the specifics. Prior to the start of any games or campaigns, all involved players should agree on the setup and any special case rules that will be included. Remember also the two “prime directives” in playing *BattleTech*:

1. HAVE FUN
2. DON'T LET YOURSELF GET SO CAUGHT UP IN THE RULES THAT YOU STOP HAVING FUN

GENERAL RULES

Except as outlined below, gamemasters and players should follow all of the *General Rules* for Creating Scenarios in *TW* when designing scenarios and campaigns set during the Late Star League era.

RANDOM ASSIGNMENT TABLES

The Random Unit Assignment Tables in this section should be used instead of those provided within the Creating Scenarios rules (starting on p. 256, *TW*) to provide for era-specific unit choices. Likewise, they should replace the Assignment Tables starting on p. 130 in *A Time of War*. The Random 'Mech and Vehicle Assignment Tables in this book are designed specifically to determine the composition of any Operation CHIEFTAIN-era force.

Statistics for most of these units may be found in *Technical Readouts 3039*, *3050 Upgrade*, *3057 Revised Edition*, *3075*, *Record Sheets: Operation Klondike*, and the *Experimental Technical Readout: Primitives* series, as well as in this book.

Assigning 'Mechs and Vehicles

After determining the weight classes of the combat units in each force (see p. 265, *TW*), use the Random Unit Assignment Table: SLDF/RWA, pp. 148-149, to determine the specific designs to be used.

If using vehicles, aerospace fighters and/or DropShips, simply roll on the corresponding column of the appropriate table (SLDF or RWR). If using BattleMechs, players will roll randomly to determine which BattleMech column to roll on: roll 1D6, applying the modifier for their unit type from the *BattleMech Random Assignment Modifiers* table.

SLDF: On a result of 0 or less, roll on column A; on a result of 1-4, roll on column B; on a result of 5 or more roll on column C.

RWR: On a result of 2 or less, roll on column A; on a result of 3-4, roll on column B; on a result of 5 or more roll on column C.

FORCE COMPOSITIONS

Star League Forces

The SLDF comprised a wide range of units but in their broadest sense units fell into one of three categories: SLDF line units, SLDF Royal units and Volunteer Brigades. To determine this, roll 1d6 and consult the Random SLDF Unit table. If specific units are being used, skip this step.

Additionally, the SLDF of Operation CHIEFTAIN was a far cry from the patchwork organization of the Reunification War. Lances and Companies were commonly comprised of a single design (until the post-Rim Worlds reorganization) and to reflect this in battles up to the and during the Rim Worlds campaign, once the weight class of a lance has been determined for Royal or SLDF line units, only a single roll is needed per lance to determine the specific design. After the Rim Worlds campaign normal rules apply. SLDF volunteer regiments and other forces should always roll per unit normally. If a specific nationality is required for members of Volunteer Brigades, consult the

Random SLDF Nationality table. When determining vehicles for Royal units either the Royal or standard variant may be used for those designs where a Royal option is indicated. For other forces, always use the standard variant.

Amaris Empire

The Rim Worlds Army, later styled the Amaris Empire Armed Forces, was both more and less consistent than the SLDF. It was not as regimented—and so lances and companies comprised mix of units—but it drew troops from only two sources: the Rim Worlds Republic and the Terran Hegemony, though Amaris also made significant use of mercenary troops. Most Amaris units should use the standard RWR tables and unit modifiers for unit generation (whether RWA/AEAF or mercenary) but one unit per company can be determined as if it was an SLDF line (using the SLDF rather than RWA tables), reflecting access to SLDF factories and caches within the Hegemony.



Royal Fighters

The SLDF's Royal units were the Inner Sphere's best-equipped force, making use of cutting edge technologies and in greater quantities than other formations. For BattleMechs this is represented by the SLDF's A column, which contains many of the advanced "Royal" designs produced for the SLDF. Vehicles with a Royal variant available are indicated by a superscript "R" (R). Fighters with Royal equivalents are similarly marked, though the unit designations are somewhat more complex. The list below provides the equivalency between the standard model and the Royal variant.

Standard	Royal
<i>Light</i>	
THK-63 Tomahawk [45]	THK-63b Tomahawk [45]
SB-28 Sabre [25]	SB-27b Sabre [25]
TRN-3T Trident [20]	TRN-3Tb Trident [20]
RGU-133 Rogue [40]	RGU-133Eb Rogue [40]
ZRO-114 Zero [35]	ZRO-116b Zero [35]
<i>Medium</i>	
IRN-SD1 Ironsides [65]	IRN-SD1b Ironsides [65]
HCT-213B Hellcat II [50]	HCT-213C Hellcat II [50]
GTHA-500 Gotha [60]	GTHA-500b Gotha [60]
LTN-G15 Lightning [50]	LTN-G15b Lightning [50]
<i>Heavy</i>	
CHP-W5 Chippewa [90]	CHP-W5b Chippewa [90]
TRB-D46 Thunderbird [100]	THB-36b Thunderbird [100]
STU-K5 Stuka [100]	STU-K5b Stuka [100]
AHB-443 Ahab [90]	AHB-443b Ahab [90]
HMR-HD Hammerhead [75]	HMR-HDb Hammerhead [75]
RPR-100 Rapier [85]	RPR-100b Rapier [85]
EGL-R6 Eagle [75]	EGL-R6b Eagle [75]

Assigning 'Mechs and Vehicles in A Time of War

The *Random Unit Assignment Table* can also be used to assign the starting 'Mech or Vehicle for a new *A Time of War* character created in the Late Star League. In this case, use these tables instead of the Random Assignment Tables (pp. 130-135, *AToW*). Base the character's equipment rating on the character's current regiment (or the regiment with which he last served).

If the character has not served with the SLDF, assume he has a rating of C. Increase the rating by one level for every two of the following which the character possesses: Property, Title,

Connections, Leadership Skill level of 7+, or a Tour of Duty Life Module (only one Tour of Duty Module counts towards this total). Decrease by one level for every two of the following: negative-TP Reputation (any level), negative-TP Wealth (any level), negative-TP Extra Income (any level), Bloodmark (any level), or use of the Ne'er-Do-Well Life Module during character generation. The character's final equipment rating cannot be increased above A (B for non-SLDF characters) or below C.

Assigning Pilots

Once the players have determined the 'Mechs and other battlefield units they will be using, they should then assign pilots to each. The players may make direct use of the *Random Experience Level Table* and the *Random Skills Table (Expanded)* (see p. 73, *TW*).

If playing elements from a specific unit, consult the rules provided for that unit (see *Operation CHIEFTAIN Militaries*, p. 150); each unit (and sub-unit) is given a rating of "Elite", "Veteran", "Regular" or "Green". If playing an "Elite" unit, the controlling player should add a +4 modifier to the Random Experience Level roll and a +2 modifier to the Random Skill Rating roll. If playing a "Veteran" unit, add +2 to the Experience roll and +1 to the Skill roll. If playing a "Regular" unit, apply no modifiers, and if playing a "Green" unit, apply a -2 to the Experience roll and -1 to the Skill roll.

Customization

Numerous customized combat units were used by both the Star League as well as the Amaris Empire during Operation CHIEFTAIN. Players and gamemasters looking to insert an additional level of excitement and randomness may employ customized battlefield units. Use the following rules, in conjunction with Customization (see *SO*, beginning on p. 188), to customize your units for play.

Star League: The SLDF's soldiers were, at least on paper, the best of the best, supplied with the best equipment possible. Some warriors' skills and dedication, however, demanded something additional to reward them or better complement their abilities. The customizations allowed are outlined below.

All SLDF Royal unit lance commanders and "regular" unit (non-Royal) company commanders may make minor customizations to their 'Mechs/fighters/vehicles. They may replace one major weapon or piece of equipment (massing five tons or more and/or occupying three critical slots or more), or up to five lesser pieces of equipment (massing no more than ten tons in total) with equipment of the same or a different class (yet massing the same amount and occupying the same or fewer critical spaces). This replacement may be a Class A or Class B Refit (see p. 188, *SO*), and all new equipment must be placed in critical slots vacated by the replaced equipment. Additionally, up to one more battlefield unit per regular company (or up to two in Royal companies) may receive such a refit (after the conclusion of a given two-year Reunification War campaign period, any soldier credited with

RANDOM SLDF UNIT TABLE

1D6	Nationality
1-4	SLDF line unit
5	SLDF Royal unit
6	Volunteer Brigade (Roll on Random Member State nationality table)

RANDOM MEMBER STATE NATIONALITY TABLE

2D6	Nationality
2	Lyrans Commonwealth
3	Free Worlds League
4	Roll on Territorial State Nationality Table
5	Draconis Combine
6	Lyrans Commonwealth
7	Federated Suns
8	Capellan Confederation
9	Free Worlds League
10	Roll on Territorial State Nationality Table
11	Draconis Combine
12	Capellan Confederation

RANDOM TERRITORIAL STATE NATIONALITY TABLE

1D6	Nationality
1-3	Rim Worlds Republic
4	Outworlds Alliance
5	Taurian Concordat
6	Magistracy of Canopus

BATTLEMECH RANDOM ASSIGNMENT MODIFIERS TABLE

Formation	Modifier	Table
Royal unit	-3	SLDF
SLDF line unit	+0	SLDF
SLDF Volunteer Brigade	+1	SLDF
Member-state forces	+2	SLDF
RWR Line unit	+1	RWA
RWR Republican Guard*	+0	RWA

*Amaris Dragoons and Amaris Guards Regiments

at least five 'kills' was also afforded the opportunity to make such modifications).

All SLDF Royal company commanders and "regular" battalion commanders may make any number of Class A or Class B Refits (see p. 188, SO) on their 'Mechs/fighters/vehicles.

All Royal battalion commanders and "regular" regimental commanders, or higher, may make any number of Class A, B, C and/or D Refits (see p. 188, SO) on their 'Mechs/fighters/vehicles.

These refits may only be made on the soldier's primary battlefield unit (the unit he or she was initially assigned). Replacement and captured units cannot be refit "automatically" in this way during the course of the Operation CHIEFTAIN campaign (though one soldier can pilot another's customized unit if the situation warrants, such as on a temporary basis, or if permanently assigned to that unit after the death or incapacitation of its previous warrior).

Amaris Empire: Stefan Amaris' soldiers have the ability to make the refits outlined above as if they were SLDF "regular" units, unless otherwise specified, using the equipment and facilities at hand (see p. 188, SO). Following the Coup and occupation of the Terran Hegemony (beginning 1 January 2767), all Amaris Dragoons and Amaris Guards units may apply customization as if they were SLDF Royal units.

RECORD SHEET SOURCE TABLE

Abbreviation	Source
HistRW	Historical: Reunification War
ISP2	Jihad Conspiracies: Interstellar Players 2
RS3039u	Record Sheets: 3039 Unabridged
RS3050U-C	Record Sheets: 3050 Upgrade, Clan and Star League
RS3058U-C	Record Sheets: 3058 Upgrade, Clan and Star League
RS3060u	Record Sheets: 3060 Upgrade Unabridged
RS3075u	Record Sheets: 3075
RS3085u-PP	Record Sheets 3085: Project Phoenix
RSOK	Record Sheets: Operation Klondike
TR3057r	Technical Readout: 3057 Revised
TR3075	Technical Readout: 3075
WD	Wolf's Dragoons
XTRPrim2	Experimental Technical Readout: Primitives V2

RANDOM UNIT ASSIGNMENT TABLE: STAR LEAGUE DEFENSE FORCE

Light Units (20 to 35 tons)

2D6 BattleMechs A (0-)

2	FLC-4Nb Falcon [30] (RSOK)
3	HER-1Sb Hermes [30] (RSOK)
4	Mon-66b Mongoose [25] (RS3075u)
5	LCT-1Vb Locust [20] (RSOK)
6	OTT-7Jb Ostscout [35] (RS3075u)
7	HER-1Sb Hermes [30] (RSOK)
8	THE-Nb Thorn [20] (RSOK)
9	SL-1G Sling [25] (RSOK)
10	STG-3Gb Stinger [20] (RSOK)
11	SPR-4F Spector [35] (RS3058U-C)
12	HSR-200Db Hussar [30] (RS3075u)

B (1-4)

TLN-5W Talon [35] (RS3058U-C)
HSR-200D Hussar [30] (RS3050U-C)
PNT-9R Panther [35] (RS3039uu)
FS9-H Firestarter [35] (RS3039uu)
FFL-3A Firefly [30] (WD)
MON-66 Mongoose [25] (RS3050U-C)
SDR-5V Spider [30] (RS3039u)
MCY-99 Mercury [20] (RS3050U-C)
SPR-4F Spector [35] (RS3058U-C)
TLN-5V Talon [35] (RS3058U-C)
NTK-2Q Night Hawk [35] (RS3058U-C)

C (5+)

HSR-200D Hussar [30] (RS3050U-C)
FFL-3A Firefly [30] (WD)
MCY-99 Mercury [20] (RS3050U-C)
THE-N Thorn [20] (RS3050U-C)
WSP-1A Wasp [20] (RS3039uu)
LCT-1V Locust [20] (RS3039uu)
PNT-9R Panther [35] (RS3039u)
STG-3R Stinger [20] (RS3039u)
JVN-10N Javelin [30] (RS3039u)
NTK-2Q Night Hawk [35] (RS3058U-C)
SDR-5V Spider [30] (RS3039u)

Vehicles

Lightning [35] ^H ^R (RS3050U-C)
Beagle [15] ^H (RS3050U-C)
Rotunda [20] ^W (RS3050U-C)
Cobra Transport VTOL [30] ^V (RS3075u)
Cyrano [30] ^V ^R (RS3050U-C)
Lightning [35] ^H ^R (RS3050U-C)
J. Edgar [25] ^H (RS3039u)
Ripper [10] ^V ^R (RS3050U-C)
Nightshade [25] ^V ^R (RS3050U-C)
Chevalier [35] ^W (RS3060u)
Gabriel [5] ^V (RS3050U-C)

Aerospace Fighters (20 to 45 tons)

TRN-3T Trident [20] ^R (RS3050U-C)
SWF-606 Swift [25] (RS3050U-C)
ZRO-114 Zero [35] ^R (RS3050U-C)
THK-63 Tomahawk [45] ^R (RS3050U-C)
SPD-502 Spad [30] (RS3050U-C)
SB-28 Sabre [25] ^R (TR3075)
TRN-3T Trident [20] ^R (RS3050U-C)
F-10 Cheetah [25] ^R (RS3039u)
RGU-133E Rogue [40] ^R (RS3050U-C)
ZRO-114 Zero [35] ^R (RS3050U-C)
SB-28 Sabre [25] ^R (TR3075)

Medium Units (40 to 55 tons)

2D6 BattleMechs A (0-)

2	WVE-5Nb Wyvern [45] (RS3075u)
3	WVR-7H Wolverine II [55] (RSOK)
4	KTO-19b Kintaro [55] (RS3075u)
5	SHD-2Hb Shadow Hawk [55] (RSOK)
6	GRF-2N Griffin [55] (RSOK)
7	CRB-27b Crab [50] (RS3075u)
8	HBK-4G Hunchback [50] (RS3039u)
9	PXH-1b Phoenix Hawk [45] (RS3075u)
10	STN-3Lb Sentinel [40] (RSOK)
11	CRB-27 Crab [50] (RS3050U-C)
12	LNK-9Q Lynx [55] (RS3058U-C)

B (1-4)

SHD-2H Shadow Hawk [55] (RS3039u)
STN-3L Sentinel [40] (RS3050U-C)
WTH-1 Whitworth [40] (RS3039u)
CRB-27 Crab [50] (RS3050U-C)
KTO-19 Kintaro [55] (RS3050U-C)
PXH-2 Phoenix Hawk [45] (RS3085u-PP)
CDA-2A Cicada [40] (RS3039u)
ASN-21 Assassin [40] (RS3039u)
GRF-2N Griffin [55] (RSOK)
KY2-D-02 Kyudo [45] (RS3075u)
STY-2C Starslayer [50] (RS3058U-C)

C (5+)

WVE-5N Wyvern [45] (RS3050U-C)
PXH-1 Phoenix Hawk [45] (RS3039u)
GRF-1N Griffin [55] (RS3039u)
WVR-6R Wolverine [55] (RS3039u)
HBK-4G Hunchback [50] (RS3039u)
SHD-2H Shadow Hawk [55] (RS3039u)
DV-6M Dervish [55] (RS3039u)
ASN-21 Assassin [40] (RS3039u)
CRB-27 Crab [50] (RS3050U-C)
STN-1S Sentinel [40] (RS3039u)
KTO-19 Kintaro [55] (RS3050U-C)

Vehicles

Kanga [50] ^H (RS3050U-C)
Zephyr [40] ^H ^R (RS3050U-C)
Thor [55] ^W (RS3050U-C)
Chaparral [50] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Turhan [50] ^W (RS3075u)
T12 Tiger [55] ^H (HistRW)
Kanga [50] ^H (RS3050U-C)
Maxim [50] ^H (RS3039u)
Chaparral [50] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Goblin [45] ^T (RS3039u)
LVT-4 Hovertank [50] ^H (XTRPrim2)

Aerospace Fighters (50 to 70 tons)

HCT-214 Hellcat II [50] ^R (RS3050U-C)
IRN-501 Ironsides [65] ^R (RS3050U-C)
SL-26 Samurai [50] (RS3039u)
HCT-213B Hellcat II [50] ^R (RS3050U-C)
GTHA-500 Gotha [60] ^R (RS3050U-C)
LTN-615 Lightning [50] ^R (TR3075)
IRN-501 Ironsides [65] ^R (RS3050U-C)
GTHA-300 Gotha [60] ^R (RS3050U-C)
F-90 Stingray [60] (RS3039u)
HCT-213B Hellcat II [50] ^R (RS3050U-C)
LCF-R20 Lucifer [65] (RS3039u)

Heavy Units (60 to 75 tons)

2D6 BattleMechs A (0-)

2	EXT-4Db Exterminator [65] (RSOK)
3	OST-2Cb Ostroc [60] (RS3075u)
4	BMB-12D Bombardier [65] (RS3050U-C)
5	TDR-5Sb Thunderbolt [65] (RSOK)
6	ARC-2Rb Archer [70] (RSOK)
7	WHM-7A Warhammer [70] (RSOK)
8	GLT-3N Guillotine [70] (RS3050U-C)
9	MAD-2R Marauder [75] (RS3075u)
10	GLH-2D Galahad [60] (RS3075u)
11	CHP-1Nb Champion [60] (RSOK)
12	EXC-B2b Excalibur [70] (RS3075u)

B (1-4)

CHP-1N Champion [60] (RS3050U-C)
GLT-3N Guillotine [70] (RS3050U-C)
LN25-05 Lancelot [60] (RS3050U-C)
WHM-6Rb Warhammer [70] (RS3075u)
GLT-3N Guillotine [70] (RS3050U-C)
MAD-1R Marauder [75] (RS3075u)
EXC-B2 Excalibur [70] (RS3058U-C)
CRD-2R Crusader [65] (RS3075u)
BMB-12D Bombardier [65] (RS3050U-C)
BL-6-KNT Black Knight [75] (RS3050U-C)
CTS-6Y Cestus [65] (RS3058U-C)

C (5+)

FLS-8K Flashman [75] (RS3050U-C)
BL-6-KNT Black Knight [75] (RS3050U-C)
OTL-4D Ostol [60] (RS3039u)
GLH-2D Galahad [60] (RS3075u)
WHM-6R Warhammer [70] (RS3039u)
TDR-5S Thunderbolt [65] (RS3039u)
ONI-K Orion [75] (RS3039u)
LN25-01 Lancelot [60] (RS3050U-C)
CTS-6Y Cestus [65] (RS3058U-C)
GLT-3N Guillotine [70] (RS3050U-C)
ST-8A Shootist [70] (RS3058U-C)

Vehicles

Burke [75] ^T ^R (RS3050U-C)
Padilla [75] ^T (RS3058U-C)
Burke [75] ^T ^R (RS3050U-C)
Von Luckner [75] ^T ^R (RS3039u)
Magi [70] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Manticore [60] ^T (RS3039u)
Bulldog [60] ^T (RS3039u)
Demon [60] ^W ^R (RS3050U-C)
Burke [75] ^T ^R (RS3050U-C)
Marksman [65] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Demon [60] ^W ^R (RS3050U-C)

Aerospace Fighters (75 to 100 tons)

CHP-W5 Chippewa [90] ^R (RS3039u)
RPR-100 Rapier [85] (RS3050U-C)
TRB-D46 Thunderbird [100] ^R (TR3075)
STU-K5 Stuka [100] ^R (RS3039u)
AHB-443 Ahab [90] ^R (RS3050U-C)
HMR-HD Hammerhead [75] ^R (RS3050U-C)
RPR-100 Rapier [85] ^R (RS3050U-C)
EGL-R6 Eagle [75] ^R (TR3075)
AHB-443 Ahab [90] (RS3050U-C)
EGL-R6 Eagle [75] ^R (TR3075)
RPR-100 Rapier [85] (RS3050U-C)

Assault Units (80 to 100 tons)

2D6 BattleMechs A (0-)

2	AS7-D-H Atlas II [100] (RS3075u)
3	NSR-9J Nightstar [95] (RS3058U-C)
4	STK-3Fb Stalker [85] (RSOK)
5	CRK-5003-1b Crockett [85] (RSOK)
6	RFL-3N-2 Rifleman II [80] (RS3075u)
7	HGN-732b Highlander [90] (RS3050U-C)
8	KGC-000b King Crab [100] (RS3050U-C)
9	THG-11Eb Thug [80] (RS3050U-C)
10	BLR-1Gb BattleMaster [85] (RS3075u)
11	STK-3H Stalker [85] (RS3039u)
12	SHG-2H Shogun [85] (RSOK)

B (1-4)

PLG-3Z Pillager [100] (RS3058U-C)
AWS-8Q Awesome [80] (RS3039u)
EMP-6A Emperor [90] (RS3058U-C)
PLG-3Z Pillager [100] (RS3058U-C)
LGB-7Q Longbow [85] (RS3058U-C)
THG-11E Thug [80] (RS3050U-C)
STK-3F Stalker [85] (RS3039u)
AS7-D Atlas [100] (RS3039u)
BLR-1G BattleMaster [85] (RS3039u)
HGN-732 Highlander [90] (RS3050U-C)
KGC-000 King Crab [100] (RS3050U-C)

C (5+)

LGB-7Q Longbow [85] (RS3058U-C)
STK-3F Stalker [85] (RS3039u)
THG-11E Thug [80] (RS3050U-C)
STC-2C Striker [80] (RS3058U-C)
AS7-D Atlas [100] (RS3039u)
BLR-1G BattleMaster [85] (RS3039u)
HGN-732 Highlander [90] (RS3050U-C)
KGC-000 King Crab [100] (RS3050U-C)
EMP-6A Emperor [90] (RS3058U-C)
VTR-9B Victor [80] (RS3039u)
CP-10-Z Cyclops [90] (RS3039u)

Vehicles

Puma [95] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Rhino [80] ^T ^R (RS3050U-C)
Puma [95] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Fury [80] ^T ^R (RS3050U-C)
Fury [80] ^T ^R (RS3050U-C)
Alacorn Mk. VI [95] ^T (RS3058U-C)
Rhino [80] ^T ^R (RS3050U-C)
Puma [95] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Alacorn Mk. VI [95] ^T (RS3058U-C)
Fury [80] ^T ^R (RS3050U-C)
Rhino [80] ^T ^R (RS3050U-C)

DropShips

Leopard CV ^A (TR3057r)
Fortress ^S (TR3057r)
Overlord ^S (TR3057r)
Union ^S (TR3057r)
Triumph ^A (TR3057r)
Dictator ^S (TR3075)
Lion ^S (TR3057r)
Mule ^S (TR3057r)
Achilles ^A (TR3057r)
Pentagon ^S (TR3075)
Titan ^A (TR3057r)

*This is a four-legged (quad) BattleMech. ^AAerodyne ^HHover ^SSpheroid ^TTracked ^VVTOL ^WWheeled. ^RRoyal variant available for SLDF Royal units.

RANDOM UNIT ASSIGNMENT TABLE: RIM WORLDS REPUBLIC

Light Units (20 to 35 tons)

2D6 BattleMechs A (1-2)

2	MON-66 Mongoose [25] (RS3050U-C)
3	WSP-1A Wasp [20] (RS3039u)
4	THE-N Thorn [20] (RS3050U-C)
5	SDR-5V Spider [30] (RS3039u)
6	TLN-5V Talon [35] (RS3058U-C)
7	STG-3G Stinger [20] (RS3039u)
8	NTK-2Q Night Hawk [35] (RS3058U-C)
9	LCT-1V Locust [20] (RS3039u)
10	FS9-H Firestarter [35] (RS3039u)
11	HER-1S Hermes [30] (RS3050U-C)
12	OTT-7J Ostscout [35] (RS3039u)

B (3-4)

NTK-2Q Night Hawk [35] (RS3058U-C)
MON-66 Mongoose [25] (RS3050U-C)
WSP-1A Wasp [20] (RS3039u)
OTT-7J Ostscout [35] (RS3039u)
STG-3R Stinger [20] (RS3039u)
FS9-H Firestarter [35] (RS3039u)
JKR-8T Jackrabbit [25] (RS3075u)
MON-66 Mongoose [25] (RS3050U-C)
THE-N Thorn [20] (RS3050U-C)
JKR-9R Jackrabbit [25] (RS3075u)
SPR-4F Spector [35] (RS3058U-C)

C (5-6)

THE-N Thorn [20] (RS3050U-C)
HSR-200D Hussar [30] (RS3050U-C)
FS9-H Firestarter [35] (RS3039u)
LCT-1V Locust [20] (RS3039u)
WSP-1A Wasp [20] (RS3039u)
SDR-5V Spider [30] (RS3039u)
PNT-9R Panther [35] (RS3039u)
MCY-99 Mercury [20] (RS3050U-C)
FFL-3A Firefly [30] (WD)
MON-66 Mongoose [25] (RS3050U-C)
JKR-9R Jackrabbit [25] (RS3075u)

Vehicles

Cobra Transport VTOL [30] ^V (RS3075u)
Beagle [15] ^H (RS3050U-C)
Ignis [30] ^T (RS3075u)
Hipparch [30] ^H (HistRW)
Nightshade [25] ^V (RS3050U-C)
J. Edgar [25] ^H (RS3039u)
Lightning [35] ^H (RS3050U-C)
Cyrano [30] ^V (RS3050U-C)
Ripper [10] ^V (RS3050U-C)
Lightning [35] ^H (RS3050U-C)
Gabriel [5] ^V (RS3050U-C)

Aerospace Fighters (20 to 45 tons)

SWF-606 Swift [25] (RS3050U-C)
SB-27 Sabre [25] (TR3075)
CNT-1D Centurion [30] (TRO3075)
F-10 Cheetah [25] (RS3039u)
THK-63 Tomahawk [45] (RS3050U-C)
TRN-3T Trident [20] (RS3050U-C)
ZRO-114 Zero [35] (RS3050U-C)
RGU-133E Rogue [40] (RS3050U-C)
SPD-502 Spad [30] (RS3050U-C)
ZRO-114 Zero [35] (RS3050U-C)
SWF-606 Swift [25] (RS3050U-C)

Medium Units (40 to 55 tons)

2D6 BattleMechs A (1-2)

2	WVR-6R Wolverine [55] (RS3039u)
3	KTO-19 Kintaro [55] (RS3039u)
4	PX-4R Phoenix [50] (RS3075u)
5	WVR-6R Wolverine [55] (RS3039u)
6	WTH-1 Whitworth [40] (RS3039u)
7	PX-3R Phoenix [50] (RS3075u)
8	GRF-2N Griffin [55] (RSOK)
9	CRB-27 Crab [50] (RS3050U-C)
10	PXH-1 Phoenix Hawk [45] (RS3039u)
11	KY2-D-02 Kyudo [45] (RS3075u)
12	WVE-5N Wyvern [45] (RS3050U-C)

B (3-4)

LNK-9Q Lynx [55] (RS3058U-C)
STN-3L Sentinel [40] (RS3050U-C)
PXH-1 Phoenix Hawk [45] (RS3039u)
WVE-5N Wyvern [45] (RS3050U-C)
GRF-1N Griffin [55] (RS3039u)
PX-3R Phoenix [50] (RS3075u)
WVR-6R Wolverine [55] (RS3039u)
CRB-27 Crab [50] (RS3050U-C)
HBK-4G Hunchback [50] (RS3039u)
SHD-2H Shadow Hawk [55] (RS3039u)
KTO-19 Kintaro [55] (RS3050U-C)

C (5-6)

STN-3L Sentinel [40] (RS3050U-C)
WTH-1 Whitworth [40] (RS3039u)
GRF-1N Griffin [55] (RS3039u)
DV-6M Dervish [55] (RS3039u)
PX-3R Phoenix [50] (RS3075u)
TLN-5V Talon [35] (HistRW)
WVR-6R Wolverine [55] (RS3039u)
PXH-1 Phoenix Hawk [45] (RS3039u)
PX-4R Phoenix [50] (RS3075u)
HBK-4G Hunchback [50] (RS3039u)
SHD-2H Shadow Hawk [55] (RS3039u)

Vehicles

Turhan [50] ^W (RS3075u)
Kanga [50] ^H (RS3050U-C)
Zephyr [40] ^H (RS3050U-C)
Thor [55] ^W (RS3050U-C)
T12 Tiger [55] ^H (HistRW)
Turhan [50] ^W (RS3075u)
Maxim [50] ^H (RS3039u)
Chaparral [50] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Zephyr [40] ^H (RS3050U-C)
LVT-4 Hovertank [50] ^H (XTRPrim2)
Chaparral [50] ^T (RS3050U-C)

Aerospace Fighters (50 to 70 tons)

GTHA-300 Gotha [60] (RS3050U-C)
LTN-G15 Lightning [50] ^R (TR3075)
F-90 Stingray [60] (RS3039u)
IRN-SD1 Ironsides [65] (RS3050U-C)
HCT-213B Hellcat II [50] ^R (RS3050U-C)
GTHA-500 Gotha [60] (RS3050U-C)
SL-25 Samurai [50] (RS3039u)
HCT-213 Hellcat [60] (TR3075)
LTN-G15 Lightning [50] ^R (TR3075)
HCT-213B Hellcat II [50] ^R (RS3050U-C)
IRN-SD2 Ironsides [65] (RS3050U-C)

Heavy Units (60 to 75 tons)

2D6 BattleMechs A (1-2)

2	BL-6-KNT Black Knight [75] (RS3050U-C)
3	CHP-1N Champion [60] (RS3050U-C)
4	LCN25-01 Lancelot [60] (RS3050U-C)
5	CRD-2R Crusader [65] (RS3075u)
6	WHM-6R Warhammer [70] (RS3039u)
7	ON1-K Orion [75] (RS3039u)
8	ARC-2R Archer [70] (RS3039u)
9	MAD-1R Marauder [75] (RS3075u)
10	OTL-4D Ostlos [60] (RS3039u)
11	EXC-B2 Excalibur [70] (RS3058U-C)
12	EXT-4D Exterminator [65] (RS3050U-C)

B (3-4)

CTS-6Y Cestus [65] (RS3058U-C)
EXT-4D Exterminator [65] (RS3050U-C)
FLS-8K Flashman [75] (RS3050U-C)
CRD-2R Crusader [65] (RS3075u)
TDR-5S Thunderbolt [65] (RS3039u)
WHM-6R Warhammer [70] (RS3039u)
ARC-2R Archer [70] (RS3039u)
OSR-2C Ostroc [60] (RS3039u)
CHP-1N Champion [60] (RS3050U-C)
LCN25-01 Lancelot [60] (RS3050U-C)
GLH-2D Galahad [60] (RS3075u)

C (5-6)

ST-8A Shootist [70] (RS3058U-C)
BL-6-KNT Black Knight [75] (RS3050U-C)
BMB-12D Bombardier [65] (RS3050U-C)
OSR-2C Ostroc [60] (RS3039u)
ARC-2R Archer [70] (RS3039u)
TDR-5S Thunderbolt [65] (RS3039u)
CRD-2R Crusader [65] (RS3075u)
OSR-2C Ostroc [60] (RS3039u)
WHM-6R Warhammer [70] (RS3039u)
CPLT-C1 Catapult [65] (RS3039u)
CHP-1N Champion [60] (RS3050U-C)

Vehicles

Demon [60] ^W (RS3050U-C)
Von Luckner [75] ^T (RS3039u)
Marsden II [60] ^T (RS3075u)
Manticore [60] ^T (RS3039u)
Merkava Mk. VIII [75] ^T (RS3075u)
Von Luckner [75] ^T (RS3039u)
Marksman [65] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Demon [60] ^W (RS3050U-C)
Magi [70] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Burke [75] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Padilla [75] ^T (RS3058U-C)

Aerospace Fighters (75 to 100 tons)

VLC-5N Vulcan [80] (TR3075)
EGL-R6 Eagle [75] (TR3075)
CHP-W5 Chippewa [90] (RS3039u)
TRB-D36 Thunderbird [100] (TR3075)
VLC-5N Vulcan [80] (TR3075)
RPR-100 Rapier [85] (RS3050U-C)
AHB-443 Ahab [90] (RS3050U-C)
EGL-R6 Eagle [75] (TR3075)
AHB-443 Ahab [90] (RS3050U-C)
HMR-HD Hammerhead [75] (RS3050U-C)
STU-K5 Stuka [100] (RS3039u)

Assault Units (80 to 100 tons)

2D6 BattleMechs A (1-2)

2	PLG-3Z Pillager [100] (RS3058U-C)
3	STK-3H Stalker [85] (RS3039u)
4	STC-2C Striker [80] (RS3058U-C)
5	GOL-1H Goliath [80] [*] (RS3039u)
6	LGB-7Q Longbow [85] (RS3058U-C)
7	BNC-3M Banshee [95] (RS3039u)
8	HGN-732 Highlander [90] (RS3050U-C)
9	RMP-4G Rampage [85] (ISP2)
10	BLR-1G BattleMaster [85] (RS3039u)
11	EMP-6A Emperor [90] (RS3058U-C)
12	RMP-5G Rampage [85] (ISP2)

B (3-4)

HGN-732 Highlander [90] (RS3050U-C)
CRK-5003-1 Crockett [85] (RS3050U-C)
THG-11E Thug [80] (RS3050U-C)
AS7-D Atlas [100] (RS3039u)
BLR-1G BattleMaster [85] (RS3039u)
AWS-8Q Awesome [80] (RS3039u)
STK-3F Stalker [85] (RS3039u)
RMP-4G Rampage [85] (ISP2)
VTR-9B Victor [80] (RS3039u)
EMP-6A Emperor [90] (RS3058U-C)
KGC-000 King Crab [100] (RS3050U-C)

C (5-6)

PLG-3Z Pillager [100] (RS3058U-C)
THG-11E Thug [80] (RS3050U-C)
STK-3F Stalker [85] (RS3039u)
BNC-3M Banshee [95] (RS3039u)
GOL-1H Goliath [80] [*] (RS3039u)
VTR-9B Victor [80] (RS3039u)
RMP-2G Rampage [85] (ISP2)
BLR-1G BattleMaster [85] (RS3039u)
HGN-732 Highlander [90] (RS3050U-C)
AWS-8Q Awesome [80] (RS3039u)
CP-10-Z Cyclops [90] (RS3039u)

Vehicles

Puma [95] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Fury [80] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Rhino [80] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Puma [95] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Fury [80] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Rhino [80] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Puma [95] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Alacorn Mk. VI [95] ^T (RS3058U-C)
Fury [80] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Rhino [80] ^T (RS3050U-C)
Fury [80] ^T (RS3050U-C)

DropShips

Achilles ^A (TR3057r)
Union ^S (TR3057r)
DroST IIa ^A (HistRW)
Triumph ^A (TR3057r)
Jumbo ^S (HistRW)
Buccaneer ^A (TR3057r)
Gazelle ^A (TR3057r)
Lion ^S (TR3057r)
Buccaneer ^A (TR3057r)
Dictator ^S (TR3075)
Leopard CV ^A (TR3057r)

*This is a four-legged (quad) BattleMech. ^AAerodyne ^HHover ^SSpheroid ^TTracked ^VVTOL ^WWheeled. ^RRoyal variant available for SLDF Royal units.

OPERATION CHIEFTAIN MILITARIES

Each army and fleet of the SLDF and RWR possesses certain specialties and skills based on its experience and the abilities of its commanders and personnel. The following game rules simulate these characteristics and supplement the existing *BattleTech* rules presented in *Total Warfare*, *Tactical Operations*, *Strategic Operations* and *A Time of War* rules. Gamemasters and players should all agree on the use of any supplemental rules before game play. Similarly, players should feel free to modify any rule that seems inappropriate for their campaign.

All of the following rules are ineligible for tournament play.

STAR LEAGUE

Star League Defense Forces

Battle and Hussar Regiments: Battle and Hussar regiments receive a +1 bonus when rolling to randomly determine lance weight. Additionally, Battle and Hussar regiments may Force the Initiative.

Dragoon Regiments: Dragoon regiments receive a +2 bonus when rolling to randomly determine lance weight and may utilize Overrun Movement.

Heavy Assault Regiments: Heavy Assault regiments receive a +3 bonus when rolling to randomly determine lance weight. Additionally, Heavy Assault regiments may Force the Initiative and utilize Overrun Movement.

Striker and Light Horse Regiments: Striker and Light Horse regiments receive a -1 penalty when rolling to randomly determine lance weight. Additionally, Striker and Light Horse regiments may Force the Initiative. When defending in a scenario, these units may select half of the map sheets to be used, may select their own home edge, and may place up to half of their units in hidden positions. When attacking in a scenario, they may either receive a +1 bonus to all Initiative rolls or may select half of the map sheets to be used.

Regimental Combat Teams (RCTs): Apply a +2 bonus to the Random Experience Level roll for all RCT forces. All RCTs gain the Banking Initiative and use Off-Map Movement. Additionally, prior to the start of any battle, the commander of the RCT forces may either select the RCT's home edge or may select to gain a +1 bonus to all RCT Initiative rolls. RCTs gain a +1 bonus to all morale checks.

Royal Regiments: Royal units apply a -2 modifier when determining the column used when randomly rolling to determine unit composition. All Royal units receive a +2 bonus when rolling to determine the availability of equipment, supplies and replacements. Royal units gain a +1 bonus to all morale checks (cumulative with any other morale modifiers).

Volunteer Regiments: Volunteer units apply a +2 modifier when determining the column used when randomly rolling to determine unit composition. All volunteer units suffer a -1 penalty to their Random Experience Level roll.

AMARIS EMPIRE

Rim Worlds Army/Amaris Empire Armed Forces

Amaris Dragoons: Apply a +2 bonus to the Random Experience Level roll for all Amaris Dragoon forces, and when rolling to randomly determine unit composition may *either* reroll any one selection per lance after rolling all of the selections or prior to making any of the rolls may roll once as if they were an SLDF line unit, using the SLDF tables (note: the Amaris Dragoons may only do this after 1 January 2767). The Amaris Dragoons gain a +3 bonus to all morale checks. Prior to the beginning of the battle, the commander of the Dragoon forces rolls 1D6. On a roll of 1-4, he may select one of the following special abilities: Banking Initiative, Force the Initiative, Offboard Movement, Overrun Movement or a blanket +1 Initiative bonus. On a roll of 5-6, select two of the previous abilities.

Amaris Fusiliers: Amaris Fusilier units receive a +1 bonus when rolling to randomly determine lance weight. When fighting within the Rim Worlds Republic, they receive either a +1 bonus to all Initiative rolls or may choose half of the maps to be used as well as their own home edge when fighting in any defensive scenario (commanding player's choice).

Amaris Guards: The Amaris Guards receive a +2 bonus to all Random Experience Level rolls and may optionally also apply a +2 bonus when rolling to randomly determine lance weight. When rolling to randomly determine unit composition may *either* reroll any two selections per lance after rolling all of the selections or prior to making any of the rolls may roll once as if they were an SLDF Royal unit, using the SLDF tables and Royal modifiers (note: the Amaris Guards may only do this after 1 January 2767). In any battle in which they are the defenders, any Amaris Guards formation may select their home edge and may place up to one quarter of their forces in hidden positions on their half of the map.

Amaris Legionnaires: Apply a -1 penalty to the Random Experience Level roll for all Amaris Legionnaire forces. The Legionnaires always roll on the C column when determining BattleMech types.

Hegemony Patriots: Patriot regiments receive a -2 penalty when rolling for Random Experience Level, a -1 penalty to all supply and replacement rolls and a -3 penalty to all morale checks.

RUNNING NOTABLE PERSONALITIES

The following rules allow players to take the notable personalities from this book and plug them into their campaign play. The rules cover a very wide gamut of options, reflecting the disparate nature of the characters in this sourcebook. Some may have rules exclusive to the *BattleTech* boardgame, some may have rules only appropriate for roleplaying using *A Time of War*, while others may have a mix. Players are encouraged to use whichever rules are the most applicable for the type of game they're playing, adjudicating as necessary if a given character rule does not explicitly state every situation that might be covered.

Additional information on generating and using special skills and abilities assigned to notable personalities can be found under Notable Personalities in Non-RPG Campaign Play—Campaign Traits, *Masters and Minions: The StarCorps Dossiers*, pp. 246-252.

STAR LEAGUE DEFENSE FORCE

First Lord Simon Cameron: Honorable to a fault, Simon earned the respect of the people but failed to do so with his peers on the High Council. Charismatic and well-spoken, he gains a +2 modifier on all Negotiation Skill rolls (–1 if negotiating with the High Council). He inspires loyalty in any troops under his command, granting them a +1 bonus on all Initiative rolls, but his rigid honor code means he holds back from exploiting enemy weaknesses. As a consequence, troops under his personal command may not use Banking Initiative, Forcing the Initiative or Overrun Combat, irrespective of any unit abilities.

First Lord Richard Cameron II: A power hungry hedonist, Richard Cameron threatens to run the Star League and Terran Hegemony into the ground. His combination of naïveté and selfishness are a lethal mix that imperils the Hegemony and Star League and that will encourage some on Terra to view Amaris as a savior. Any force commanded by Richard suffers a –2 modifier on their Initiative rolls. Furthermore, Richard suffers a –2 on all Negotiation and Protocol Skill rolls. His mercurial nature means any social Skill rolls receive a 1d6–3 modifier. He also suffers from the Impatient Trait and a –2-TP Compulsion Trait (reflecting his serious addiction to alcohol, sex and drugs).

Commanding General Aleksandr Kerensky: Kerensky is an extremely intelligent and learned man, but despite the friendly and outgoing persona he exhibits publicly, he is in reality a shy and private man. Throughout his life he allowed himself to become close with very few individuals, his wife Katyusha and his deputy Aaron DeChavilier being just two of a relative handful of others who he allowed to see the “true” Aleksandr Kerensky. Kerensky is extremely loyal to those who do their best to serve the Star League, even if they ultimately prove lacking in some way; on the other hand, throughout his career he attacked any hint of selfishness, impropriety, graft and other forms of corruption within his soldiers and the Star League government as a whole, in response earning the general many enemies. Kerensky gains a +3 modifier to all rolls when making INT-based Skill and Attribute checks, but the heart condition that affected him as a young child left him a weaker-than-average constitution, reflected by a –1 modifier to all rolls for BOD-based Attribute checks. Additionally, Kerensky receives a +4 roll modifier to all social interactions with members of the SLDF (+2 when interacting with other citizens of the Star League). This modifier drops to –2, however, when interacting with those individuals and officials he considers to be corrupt.

General Aaron DeChavilier: “Duty, honor, pride and country” are the guiding concepts by which Aaron DeChavilier lives. He is devoutly loyal to the Star League and to his fellow uniformed SLDF brothers and sisters, whether currently serving or retired, at least so long as they remain loyal to the Star League as well. He is a peerless tactician and strategist, gaining a +2 bonus to all Strategy and Tactics

skill checks as well as a +3 bonus to all Initiative rolls for units he directly commands. DeChavilier is also a fantastic motivator; when he is present on the battlefield, everyone on DeChavilier’s side receives a +1 modifier to all Attribute and Skill Check rolls, while those to whom he has just spoken for more than five minutes (be it in a one-on-one conversation or an address to a large audience) receive a +2 modifier on any morale-based checks (lasting a total of 1D6 hours). Unfortunately, during Operation CHIEFTAIN, the stress of fighting such a long, protracted war took its toll upon DeChavilier’s own morale. To reflect this, any time he learns of a major SLDF defeat in the campaign where the SLDF casualties exceed 5 percent of the starting force, DeChavilier will suffer a –1 roll modifier to all WIL-based Skill and Attribute Checks for one hour. Double this modifier and its duration if DeChavilier personally knew any of the casualties.

Admiral Joan Brandt: Joan Brandt is one of the most skilled pilots and aerospace commanders in known space and not only does she know it, she makes sure everyone knows as well; because of her ego, she suffers a –1 roll modifier in all social interactions with others (this becomes a –2 modifier when interacting with superior officers). On the other hand, she also receives a +2 Initiative roll in any combat scenario that purely employs aerospace units. She also receives a +2 roll modifier to all BOD- and DEX-based Skill and Attribute checks (+4 if both Attributes apply).

Deep down, Brandt has lost faith in the righteousness or viability of the Star League, though she wholeheartedly believes that the SLDF is still the most powerful entity in known space and that Stefan Amaris and his Periphery supporters deserve to be punished for their crimes. As a result, whenever Admiral Brandt gives her troops a pep talk before a battle against any Periphery or Amaris-loyal forces, there is a 50% chance that all units under her command will receive a +1 modifier to all attack rolls (but with a corresponding –1 modifier on all Piloting Skill rolls) for 1D6 hours.

RIM WORLDS REPUBLIC/ AMARIS EMPIRE

Emperor Stefan Amaris: Contempt breeds contempt, and having been poisoned against the Camerons by his mother, Stefan set about dripping his own poison into Richard Cameron’s ears. Amaris puts a foppish and unserious face to the world but this act conceals a shrewd and clinical mind. With his combination of ruthless ambition and the Amaris desire for revenge against House Cameron, Stefan receives a +2 roll modifier for all Strategy and Tactics Skill Checks he makes, as well as a +3 roll modifier on any Acting or Leadership Skill rolls. However, though he was trained as a MechWarrior, Stefan Amaris lacks any real martial skill; in the rare instances where he may appear in combat, he is always a Regular-rated unit.

Regent Mohammed Selim: Extremely loyal and a skilled administrator, Selim is the ideal regent for the Rim Worlds Republic. However, despite his training, Selim lacks martial leadership skills and fails to inspire his troops. Any force he commands suffers a –1 Initiative modifier in combat, but receives a +2 roll modifier to Maintenance and Repair checks. Selim himself receives a +4 roll modifier to all Administration Skill Checks, and a +2 roll modifier in Leadership.

STAR LEAGUE MEMBER STATES

Captain-General Kenyon Marik (Free Worlds League):

Raised by a brutal and dissolute father, Kenyon learned to succeed no matter the cost at a young age. His mix of ruthless ambition with a willingness to take risks in pursuit of his goals sometimes resulted in spectacular successes (such as in the First Succession War), but at other times horrible disasters (like his service in the SLDF). In both cases, Kenyon learned and prospered, though his temper often got the better of his highly analytical mind. All troops under Kenyon's personal command receive a +2 Initiative roll modifier and gain a +1 to-hit modifier. However, when dealing with the SLDF he suffers a -1 roll modifier on all Negotiation, Strategy or Tactics rolls (-2, if dealing with Kerensky).

Chancellor Barbara Liao (Capellan Confederation):

Determined but measured in her responses, Barbara Liao was the ideal leader for the Capellan Confederation in the last days of the Star League. She sought to maintain peace and order but was not above taking action, often unilaterally, to benefit her people. She receives a +1 modifier to all Strategy or Tactics rolls. She speaks Mandarin, English and Russian fluently and prefers to do business in the former. Anyone who attempts to negotiate with Barbara in a language other than Mandarin increases their target numbers by 1.

Prince John Davion (Federated Suns): Though the War of Davion Succession lead him to disdain the Star League, John Davion felt Simon Cameron was his spiritual kin—both were men of honor—and when Cameron died John pledged himself to preserving the Star League, but not at the expense of House Davion. Prior to 2750, Prince John suffers a -1 roll modifier on any Negotiation checks with the High Council, but after Simon's death this changes to a +1 modifier (+2 when dealing with Kerensky).

Archon Robert Steiner II (Lyrans Commonwealth): Growing up in the shadow of his illustrious father and the man who would become Regent of the Star League, Aleksandr Kerensky, Robert Steiner II is bitter and vindictive, particularly toward those he views as his social inferiors. Unlike his father, he never grew out of his "wild child" phase and remains self-centered, thinking of his own position and desires above all else (including the Lyrans people). He possesses the Impatient Trait, and also suffers a -2 roll modifier to all CHA-link Skill checks unless he is interacting with other members of the nobility. He also enjoys the finer things in life, and is a skilled equestrian (reflected in a +2 roll modifier for all Appraisal and Animal Handling/Riding Skill checks).

Coordinator Takiro Kurita (Draconis Combine): Calm and calculating, Takiro Kurita is the epitome of a samurai. Skilled in both arts and war, his elegance masks a ruthlessness and determination to better the lot of his people. Any force commanded by Takiro receives a +1 modifier to all Initiative and Morale Check rolls. However, such troops will adhere strictly to Bushido and fight according to its tenets. As a consequence, their actions are limited in the same way as using Level 1 Clan Rules of Engagement (see p. 273, TW). Takiro also receives a +2 roll modifier to Art/Calligraphy Skill checks and possesses the Patient Trait.

Coordinator Minoru Kurita (Draconis Combine): Less refined than his father, Minoru Kurita's upbringing focused on the military aspects of samurai culture. As a consequence, he suffers a -1 roll modifier to all Negotiation Skill checks, but any troops under his direct command receive a +2 Initiative modifier in combat. Additionally, Minoru's presence in the field provides all Combine troops with the Overrun Combat special ability, as well the ability to designate their Home Edge/Deployment zone. Minoru has the Impatient Trait, but receives a +1 roll modifier when using the Acting Skill to intimidate others.

STAR LEAGUE TERRITORIAL STATES

Protector Nicoletta Calderon (Taurian Concordat): Often likened to the British Queen Victoria, Nicoletta ascended the throne at a young age but came to dominate the Concordat and win the hearts of its people. Mixing intellect, charm and ruthlessness she stamped her authority on Taurus and in the High Council of the Star League but was dismayed at the disdain shown the Periphery by the lords of the Inner Sphere. She gains a +1 roll modifier on any CHA-linked Skill checks made when dealing with other Periphery state leaders, but suffers a -1 roll modifier instead when dealing with the Inner Sphere lords. Furthermore, her cooperation with Amaris blackened her name with the SLDF and thus, when making any CHA-linked Skill Checks while dealing with SLDF personnel, her modifier becomes a -2 penalty (-4 if dealing with General Kerensky).

President Beatrice Avellar (Outworlds Alliance): Like Nicoletta Calderon, Beatrice Avellar became leader of her realm at a young age but despite a vigorous reform program, failed to win her people's hearts and minds, due to her conservative views, which flew in the face of the Alliance's spirit of religious tolerance (Beatrice suffers a -2 roll modifier to any CHA-based Skill Checks when dealing with those she believes are dissolute or ungodly). Still, this did not prevent her performing her duty on behalf of her "poor lost souls", and is reflected by a +2 Skill roll modifier for Administration and Leadership.

President Allyce Avellar (Outworlds Alliance): Of an "artistic inclination", Allyce Avellar was a terrible politician and leader. She suffers a -1 roll modifier for all Skill checks except for those involving Art or Interest (for which she receives a +1 roll modifier instead). Furthermore, Allyce's sensitivities are so profound that, if she fails any Skill Check by a MoF of 4 or more, she must immediately make a WIL Attribute Check to avoid being reduced to tears or erupting in a temper tantrum.

Magestrix Janina Centrella (Magistracy of Canopus): Hardnosed and determined where her mother (and grandmother) had been weak-willed and licentious, Janina saw military strength as necessary for the Magistracy's future. She receives a +2 roll modifier to all WIL-linked Skill checks when dealing with MAF military personnel (+1 for non-MAF forces). A skilled MechWarrior and tactician, Janina also provides the troops under her direct command with a +1 Initiative roll modifier, as well as the ability to use Overrun Combat.

NEW COMBAT EQUIPMENT: STAR LEAGUE SPACE DEFENSE SYSTEM

The Terran Hegemony's Space Defense System (SDS) Network was one of the most advanced technological achievements in history. The brainchild of First Lord Jonathan Cameron, it was conceived as a completely integrated defense network able to defend a system from jump point to planet surface with the minimal use of manpower. Deployed across the Hegemony it was intended to defend the nation from all-out invasion, a reality that would tragically come to pass when Stefan Amaris took command of the system and used it to hold off the power of the SLDF navy for years. At the time of its implementation it met with heavy resistance from the Star League Council members. That the system would be deployed within the Hegemony borders caused significant concern; Cameron allayed these fears by explaining the untried network should be rolled out near their place of manufacture. Once the system was proven reliable, the member state capitals would each get their own SDS system. Many Hegemony worlds already possessed ground-based capital weapon defenses and the first SDS drones took flight in 2695, with the network considered fully operational by 2730. Despite this, it was never rolled out beyond the Hegemony's borders.

The heart of this network was its automated aerospace drones, a mixture of robotic fighters, drone DropShips, space stations and Warships, including the infamous M-5 "*Caspar*" drone. The SDS drones used an ultra-sophisticated artificial intelligence system that allowed it to operate with only a handful of humans monitoring an entire network of drones. When linked by a special battle computer network, the SDS drones became even more fearsome, calling on the digitized skills of the Star Leagues best admirals. Using equally automated space stations and space ports, the SDS drones were capable of basic repairs, rearmament and the launch and recovery of sub-drones. Typically SDS drones were deployed at a system's jump points as their primary deployment, with deployment around a system's primary world done for key worlds of the Hegemony. At Terra this was taken to the extreme with the entire system blanketed by overlapping drones, space stations, control ships, and planetary based capital weapon systems.

Jonathan Cameron's goal of the ultimate protective system was fully realized in the Hegemony's SDS Network, much to the misfortune of General Kerensky, the SLDF and ultimately the entire Inner Sphere. During the campaign to liberate the Hegemony from Stefan the Usurper, a huge percentage of the SLDF's naval forces were devastated by the SDS network.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, what we know of the network today is mostly limited to battleROMs and eyewitness accounts. After liberating Terra, Kerensky set out to destroy the entire SDS Network and all records associated with it. His purge left little behind and has all but ensured the system will never be rebuilt. Centuries later, the Word of Blake's *Caspar II* and *III* systems would only offer up a pale example of the original system. With even the Word's imitation nearly able to stop the combined might of the Inner Sphere it is for the best that the original SDS system has never been duplicated.

THE M-SERIES DRONES

While the M-5 "*Caspar*" drone was the most famous and successful of the SDS vessels protecting the Terran Hegemony, they were not the only component of the largely autonomous space defense network.

M-1: The original proof-of-concept drone used an *Ares* MK VII Attack Craft hull as its base. Equipped with a slightly smaller engine and comparable firepower, the M-1 saw its first test flights in 2692. It saw moderate use until the development of the "*BlackWasp*" series drone fighters. While the robot brain of the "*BlackWasp*" was not as sophisticated, it proved more versatile in the long run. There were no M-1s in service by the time of the Amaris Coup.

M-2: The second SDS Drone used the 1,800 ton *Hector* hull to test larger scale deployments. After several friendly-fire episodes involving the M-2 drones, the Hegemony scrapped it in favor of focusing on the larger M-3.

M-3: Based on the *Pentagon* DropShip, the M-3 was the first SDS Drone to see wide-scale deployment. The M-3 proved the viability of the SDS drones and would see service alongside the larger M-5 through the life of the SDS network. The last M-3s were destroyed during Kerensky's final approach over Terra.

M-4: The first WarShip SDS drone used aging *Baron*-class hulls refitted with drone controllers. Intended only as a proof of concept, the last of the ten M-4s built was scrapped in 2735.

M-5: The most infamous SDS drones were based on a ground up modification of the *Lola*-class destroyer. The pinnacle of SDS drone capability, the M-5 would become the stuff of legends and nightmares.

M-6: This drone was a failed attempt to outfit a *Texas*-class Battleship with an SDS Control system. The size of the ship proved too daunting to wire with the advanced control systems and the only prototype was destroyed when it slammed itself into Pluto.

M-7 and M-8: Much smaller cousins to the M-9, these SDS stations were fully unmanned, lightly armed and served as repair and refit stations for robotic fighters and SDS drones throughout the Hegemony.

M-9: Rarely referred to by its M-series designation, the *Pavise* SDS Battlestation was the largest SDS system ever deployed.

M-10: Using refitted *Titan* hulls, this little-seen SDS drone was used for deploying or transporting large formations of robotic fighters into combat. Few were built as the effort to refit the DropShips to drone controls was not usually worth the effort and standard carrier DropShips were used to deploy ASF drones.

The M-series drones would make up the vast majority of all SDS drones produced. Few other drone models were produced and those rarely made it out of prototype stage, with none surviving the Amaris Civil War. This includes the DropShip and smaller experimental prototypes constructed by Amaris's scientists. This attempt to build out the existing SDS network was essentially unsuccessful, accounting for only a handful of kills in the final Terran campaign. [Editor's Note: This information shows that the Task Force *Serpent* SDS intelligence briefing was erroneously focused on the late-stage prototypes that Amaris unsuccessfully fielded as opposed to the primary M-series network that made up the majority of the SDS network]

AEROSPACE SMART ROBOTIC CONTROL SYSTEM (ASRCS)

Introduced: 2600

Extinct: 2780 (Inner Sphere), circa 2850 (Clans)

Recovered: 3069 (Word of Blake)

Using sophisticated “smart” programming to simulate artificial intelligence but designed for simple tasks, robotic control systems (RCS) completely lack a human component and rely entirely on their own on-board sensors for input. While this makes these drones superior to those mounting remote drone systems—a drone carrier controller is not needed—they are still susceptible to ECM while their rigid programming often leaves them unable to adapt to changing environments.

AEROSPACE SMART ROBOTIC CONTROL SYSTEM (ASRCS)

Rules Level: Advanced

Available To: AF, SC, SA, DS, and SS (DS only available prior to 2780, after 3067 (for WoB) and 3082 (for Inner Sphere))

Tech Base (Ratings): Inner Sphere (D-X-F), Clan (X-E-E)

Game Rules: Except where specifically noted otherwise below, units mounting the Aerospace Smart Robotic Control System operate per the standard rules for a given unit type.

Units using an ASRCS are automatically considered to have a Crew of 0 for game play purposes, regardless of the construction rules for said unit, and may not use crew-served equipment beyond weapons, communications, and sensors. A drone’s Piloting or Gunnery Skill is determined by its type as well as how much mass is devoted to the control system (see the Smart Robotic Control System (ASRCS) Equipment Table, p. 156).

Initiative: In game play, drones mounting an ASRCS operate with their own Initiative roll, which receives a –4 modifier. Even if friendly non-drone or SDS drones are present, the ASRCS drones operate on their own initiative and are not counted as part of their player’s force.

Other Actions and Equipment: Drones mounting an ASRCS move in accordance with the standard rules for their unit type (though drones cannot deliberately perform ramming attacks), and may make sensor sweeps and use unmanned communications systems (see *Advanced Sensors*, p. 117, SO). They may also operate any and all mounted weapons per normal rules for the drone unit’s type regardless of crew needs but cannot make secondary attacks. For targeting purposes, drone units ignore modifiers for operating with insufficient crew. Drones units can mount any other equipment that requires additional crew to operate (such as MASH units, field kitchens, etc.), but may not use these items or conduct field repairs without outside assistance. An exception is the Advanced Robotic Transport Bay Systems (see p. 161).

Heat: Drones mounting an ASRCS operate within certain predefined limits intended to maximize their survivability. Drones that track heat will not deliberately exceed their heat management systems, and will not use any equipment that generates heat in excess of their heat sinks. Heat from external sources (such as fire, flammers, and plasma weapons) may force a

drone into higher heat levels. A drone that exceeds 14 points of Heat can perform no other action beyond basic movement at a Safe Thrust rate until its heat levels have returned to zero.

Critical Hits: Critical hits against drones mounting an ASRCS that would normally stun or wound the pilot/crew do not have a permanent effect on drones. However, critical hits to a drone’s pilot/crew are still tracked. In the turn following any critical hits that would stun or wound a pilot/crew, treat the drone as having a Piloting/Gunnery Skill one higher than normal. If no critical hits that would wound/stun a pilot/crew occur during that turn, the Piloting/Gunnery Skill returns to its standard ratings at the start of the following turn. Once a drone receives a critical hit that would kill the pilot/crew, that critical hit destroys the drone’s ASRCS, rendering the drone deactivated for the remainder of the game.

Additionally, drones suffer no pilot damage effects for high-G maneuvers (see p. 78, TW, and p. 36, SO), nor will they suffer pilot damage effects from overheating or hazardous environments.

Independent Command Rules: Drones mounting ASRCS follow the Drone Independent Command Rules (see pp. 165-167) to determine their actions in combat. ASRCS drones must note their Aggression Level at the start of game play and may not change them unless they receive an order from a Control Unit (see below). If an ASRCS drone is controlled by a Control Unit, the controlling player may change the Aggression Level during the End Phase of any turn. However, it does not take effect until the Initiative Phase two turns after the change was issued.

Electronic Warfare: ASRCS drones are unaffected by ECM mounted on ground units. If using the Electronic Warfare rules (see p. 110, SO), at the end of any Movement Phase where an ASRCS drone is within a hostile ECM field from a non-ground unit (including being struck by an ASEW missile (see p. 358, TO), then the drone’s systems will be overwhelmed and the controlling player must roll 1D6:

- On a result of 4 or less, the drone will suffer a +1 modifier to all Piloting and Gunnery Skill Rolls when under the effect of an ASEW missile or within the ECM field of a hostile aerospace fighter, Small Craft, or Large Craft (except

AEROSPACE SMART ROBOTIC CONTROL SYSTEM (ASRCS)

WarShips), and a +2 modifier when in a hostile WarShip's ECM field. This is cumulative with any critical hit effects. The ASRCS drone will also be unable to receive any commands from a controller unit, while effected by the ECM, but will otherwise operate as normal.

- On a result of 5, the drone will drift in the direction it was headed at the time but takes no other actions for 1 turn. (If any other unit lies in its path, the controlling player should treat the effect as an unintentional ramming attack with a +4 to-hit modifier). In addition, the ASRCS drone will also be unable to receive any commands from a controller unit, while affected by the ECM, but will otherwise operate as normal.
- On a result of 6, the drone goes rogue and executes an attack, per Command Tree Event 5: Target Locked (see p. 165), on the nearest active unit of any type, regardless of target's affiliation, for as long as it remains within the area of a hostile ECM bubble. Such attacks will be carried out at the Aggressive Aggression level.

Boarding Rules: When conducting boarding operations (see *Infantry vs. Infantry Action*, p. 199, *TO* and p. 36, *SO*), a successful boarding action will cause the drone to shut down. The Marine Point score of a Small Craft or Satellite equipped with an ASRCS is 1. This represents the drones closed control systems and lack of standard crew access ways.

Marine Point score of a SDS drone is as follows: All DropShip and space station ASRCS Drones have a base Marine Point total of 3. For every 7 tons devoted to general crew, the SDS drone receives .5 Marine Points. For every 7 tons devoted to Gunners, the DropShip or Space Station ASRCS drone receives .25 Marine Point. These Marine Points represent the narrow access ways, sealed compartment structure and internal automated anti-personnel weapon systems.

Controlling players should note a drone's Marine Point value on the unit's record sheet, prior to the start of game play.

Fighter Squadrons: ASRCS drones follow all the standard rules for fighter squadrons (see p. 27, *SO*), with the following exceptions:

- ASRCS drones and human piloted fighters may not be part of the same squadron.
- Only drones of the same skill level may be in a squadron.
- Drone squadrons can only be formed prior to the beginning of game play and will not split into individual fighters under any circumstances.

Control Units: Friendly non-drone units may be designated as a Control Unit for friendly ASRCS drones prior to the start of a scenario using the following rules:

- A Control Unit can never issue more than one command to an ASRCS drone per turn. All commands must be announced at the start of a turn, with the command taking affect at the end of the turn.

- Only four commands can be issued to an ASRCS drone by a Control Unit: Activate, Deactivate, Change Aggression Level, and Designate Priority Target:

- o **Activate:** Activates a deactivated drone. Activation will occur on the next combat round. The control unit must be within 5,000,000 kilometers to issue this command.
- o **Deactivate:** Deactivates (shuts down) an active drone (see *Deactivated*, below). There is no maximum range that this command can be sent from. If the human-controlled ATAC is within nine million kilometers, the SDS drone shuts down at the start of the next combat turn. For every additional nine million kilometers, or fraction thereof, add one full combat round before the SDS Drone shuts down.
- o **Change Aggression Level:** Changes the Aggression Level of a drone (see *Aggression Level*, p. 164). When issuing the command, the controlling player simply announces the new Aggression Level for that drone. The control unit must be within 500 hexes to issue this command.
- o **Designate Priority Target:** Designating a priority target has the effect of overriding the automatic target selection process used in the Drone Independent Command Rules (see pp. 165-167). Instead, the player designates the target to attack; however, all other rules from the Drone Independent Command Rules still apply. The control unit must be within 500 hexes to issue this command.

- Drones in a fighter squadron (see p. 27, *SO*) are treated as a single unit for the purposes of issuing commands.
- Aerospace fighters and Small Craft may only issue one command to a single friendly drone (or drone squadron) per turn and do so in place of their normal Weapon Attack Phase (i.e. the Control Unit cannot make any attacks in the turn they issue a command).
- Large Craft may issue multiple commands to multiple friendly drones per turn. Each command beyond the first reduces the number of arcs it can fire from in that turn, with the player choosing which arcs cannot fire that turn. For example, if a controlling player of a Large Craft issues three commands to three different drones; the player would then need to designate two firing arcs that are unavailable during the Weapon Attack Phase of that turn.
- Control units equipped with and Autonomous Tactical Analysis Computer have their own special rules for controlling drone aerospace fighters (see p. 159).
- To issue any command, a friendly drone must be within the Control Unit's line of sight. Note that in atmosphere, line of sight is 80 kilometers (about 160 *BattleTech* mapsheets) before ground clutter and background interference renders the command incoherent.

AEROSPACE SMART ROBOTIC CONTROL SYSTEM (ASRCS)

- If a unit mounts a Naval Comm-Scanner Suite (see p. 332, TO), the rules above are modified as follows:
 - A unit that mounts a Small NCSS may send two additional commands per firing arc; a Small Craft may send three commands total.
 - A unit that mounts a Large NCSS may send three additional commands per firing arc. In addition, LOS range is doubled.

Human Controls: Aerospace drones are not designed to be operated by human crews. Aerospace, small craft and satellite drones possess no interface controls. Large Craft drones (DS, WS, SS) have rudimentary controls that allow basic operations. When a Large Craft drone is under control of a human crew, apply a +2 modifier to all piloting skill rolls and a +4 modifier for all gunnery skill rolls. In addition, the drone may not move expend more than its safe thrust.

Deactivated Drones: A drone that is deactivated becomes immobile. Airborne drones in the space/atmosphere interface, atmospheric row, or ground row of hexes on the High-Altitude Map fall 1 hex per turn of inactivation, beginning during the Movement Phase (Aerospace) of the turn following. If there are two equal hexes to fall into, randomly determine which hex

the unit enters. If players are using Low-Altitude Movement, the airborne drone falls three altitudes each turn. If it enters a Ground Hex (on the High-Altitude Map) or Altitude 0 (if using Low-Altitude Movement), the airborne drone crashes. Drones operating in space under these conditions continue along their last heading and speed, expend no thrust, and take no actions. If the drone is reactivated at some point and the drone is not destroyed, the drone resumes normal operation. Deactivated drones are treated as having a Marine Point value of zero, for purposes of Boarding Rules operations (see *Infantry vs. Infantry Action*, p. 199, TO and p. 36, SO).

Additionally, deactivated drones have a Marine Point total of 0 as their automated defenses are offline.

Jump Travel: Drone computer systems suffer from a computer equivalent of Transit Disorientation Syndrome (TDS). The TDS effects are extremely severe, resulting in the drone going insane in over 95 percent of all hyperspace jumps. Drones must be deactivated prior to jump travel. If a drone is not shut down prior to a jump, roll 2D6 at the completion of a successful jump. On a roll of 11 or less the drone will go rogue and treat all craft as hostile, regardless of affiliation. It will ignore all commands from control units and its Aggression level will be set to Aggressive.

ASRCS

Consult the Aerospace Smart Robotic Control System (ASRCS) Equipment Table (see below) for the weight of the equipment to be installed. For units weighing less than 10 tons in total mass, the robotic control system adds no weight beyond that of the unit's existing control systems. For units 10 tons and over, the ASRCS adds extra weight as a percentage (listed in the ASRCS Table below) of the unit's total weight to the tonnage of any basic cockpit or control systems already employed by the unit. In all other respects, the unit follows its standard construction rules. Note: If the unit requires weight to be spent on life-support systems (typically represented as crew quarters or cockpits), the drone unit is *not* exempt from this requirement (see *Add Control/Crew Systems* pp.188, TM and pp. 149, SO).

ASRCS EQUIPMENT TABLE

Unit Type	Gunnery	Piloting/ Driving	Mass**
Conventional Fighter	5	6	5%
Aerospace Fighter	5*	6*	5%
Small Craft	5*	6*	5%
Satellite	5	6	5%
DropShip	5*	6*	7%
JumpShip†	5*	6*	10%
Space Station	5*	6*	7%

*An additional 2% mass will lower skills to 4/5. This may only be done once. For craft under ten tons in weight, add 1 ton of additional mass. Craft with a standard control system are indicated by the modifier "standard" in front of their equipment listing, while those with upgraded gunnery and piloting are indicated by the modifier "improved"

**Round all weights up to the nearest .05 tons

†Mass is a portion of free mass after assigning tonnage for KF Drive Unit.

SHIELDED AEROSPACE SMART ROBOTIC CONTROL SYSTEM (S-ASRCS)

Introduced: 2755 (Terran Hegemony)

Extinct: 2780 (Inner Sphere), circa 2850 (Clans)

Recovered: N/A

The original ASRCS system was highly susceptible to the effects of electronic interference, making them questionable to use in conjunction with manned vessels or near major population centers. In the 2750's Hegemony scientists made breakthroughs in the miniaturization of some components of the SDS Drone system that allowed them to improve the ECCM shielding and logic algorithms of the ASRC systems. This shielded version of the ASRC system was most notably used in the Mk 39 "VoidSeeker" series of robotic fighters.

SHIELDED AEROSPACE SMART ROBOTIC CONTROL SYSTEM (S-ASRCS)

Rules Level: Experimental

Available To: AF, SC, SA, and SS

Tech Base (Ratings): Inner Sphere (D-X-F), Clan (X-E-E)

Game Rules: Except where noted below, units equipped with the S-ASRCS follow the same rules as ASRCS equipped units (see p. 154).

Electronic Warfare: S-ASRCS drones are unaffected by ECM mounted on ground units. If using the Electronic Warfare rules

(see p. 110, SO), S-ASRCS equipped units follow the standard ECM/ECCM rules and do not suffer interference like drones mounting ASRCS. Additionally, as a byproduct of their drone communication systems, S-ASRCS equipped units are treated as if they mounted a Guardian ECM system.

Fighter Squadrons: S-ASRCS drones follow all the standard rules for robotic fighter squadrons (see p. 155), except they may not be combined in a squadron with any other drone type.

CONSTRUCTION RULES

S-ASRCS

The S-ASRCS follow the same rules as ASRCS equipped fighters (see p. 156) and use the Aerospace Smart Robotic Control System (ASRCS) Equipment Table (see p. 156) for the base mass of their control system.

S-ASRCS may improve the gunnery and piloting skills of their control systems by two levels. For an additional 1% mass, S-ASRCS are referred to as "Improved" and give the drone a Piloting of 5 and Gunnery of 4. For an additional 3% mass, they are referred to as "Elite" and have a Piloting of 4 and a Gunnery of 3. Units under ten tons in mass can be improved to a Piloting of 5 and Gunnery of 4 for a cost of one ton.

SDS DRONE CONTROL SYSTEM

Introduced: 2695 (Terran Hegemony)

Extinct: 2780

Recovered: N/A

The extreme vulnerability of the Smart Robotic Control System to electromagnetic interference meant any equipped drone could go hostile with little or no warning. This limitation kept its use from being practical for anything larger than a small craft (the only common exception being automated deep space monitoring stations). It also limited the deployment of this class of drones, avoiding population centers and preventing their joint operations with manned formations.

What originally began as an attempt to provide better ECCM logic circuits led to the breakthrough in field of neural network artificial intelligence and resulted in the SDS Drone Control System (SDS-DC). The SDS-DC not only solved the problems of ECM interference but broke the barriers of artificial intelligence wide open and created the most powerful non-human intelligence man has ever seen. This breakthrough would lead to numerous follow-on Star League-era discoveries from robotic assistants to predictive analysis. It is even rumored that an SDS-DC descendent smart computer in the SLDF's planning division predicted a Hegemony civil war to begin almost to the day of the Amaris coup. Supposedly the prediction was discounted as wholly implausible and never shared beyond the planning division's staff.

SDS DRONE CONTROL SYSTEM

Rules Level: Experimental

Available To: SC, DS, WS, and SS

Tech Base (Ratings): Inner Sphere (E-X-F)

Game Rules: SDS drones are automatically considered to have a Crew of 0 for game play purposes, regardless of the construction rules for said unit, and may not use crew-served equipment beyond weapons, communications, and sensors. An SDS drone's Piloting and Gunnery Skill is determined by its type and how much mass is devoted to the control system (see the *SDS Drone Control System Equipment Table*, p. 159).

Basic Features: SDS drones move in accordance with the standard rules for their unit type. Aside from the below exceptions, drone units function per the rules for their applicable unit type, including other critical hit effects and all effects due to heat.

Attacks and Commands: SDS drones operate like any other manned player-controlled unit. They may also operate any and all mounted weapons per normal rules for the unit's type, regardless of crew needs. For targeting purposes, SDS drone units ignore modifiers for operating with insufficient crew. SDS drones may also target multiple targets in a turn. The first two targets in a turn receive no to-hit modifier, with the third and subsequent targets receive a +1 to-hit modifier.

Additionally if an SDS drone has received more than three critical hits of any kind (not including destroyed weapons) or has lost more than 50% of its starting weapons (Capital weapons for WarShips), it may conduct ramming attacks (see p. 241, *TW*), on a Control Roll of 6 or higher. This roll is made at the start of the movement phase and before any movement is made. If the roll is failed, the drone may perform another action per the normal rules.

Initiative: In game play, all SDS drones operate together on their own Initiative roll. Even if friendly non-drone units, other non-SDS drones (see *Aerospace Smart Robotic Control System*, p. 154, and *Drone (Remote) Systems*, p. 305, *TO*) are present, SDS drone operates on their own team initiative and are not counted as part of their player's other forces for initiative purposes. Note: Players controlling non-linked (see ATAC, p. 159) SDS drones should not coordinate their actions during combat, representing their independent operations.

Critical Hits: Critical hits against SDS drones that would normally stun or wound the pilot/crew do not have a permanent effect on drones. Critical hits to a drone's pilot/crew are still tracked. Once a drone receives a critical hit that would kill the pilot/crew, that critical hit destroys the drone's ability to send/receive communications from an ATAC. SDS drones in this situation will continue to operate but must make its own individual initiative rolls for the remainder of combat with a -2 modifier. The distributed nature of their drone systems results

in no additional negative effects to a SDS and the drone will continue to operate until destroyed or deactivated.

Additionally, drones suffer no pilot damage effects for high-G maneuvers (see pp. 78, *TW*, and 36, *SO*), nor will they suffer pilot damage effects from overheating or hazardous environments.

Other Actions and Equipment: SDS drones follow the same rules as ASRCS drones (see p. 154)

Evasive Action: SDS drones making evasive maneuvers (see pp. 77, *TW*) only apply a +1 modifier to hit, instead of the normal +2.

Electronic Warfare: If using the Electronic Warfare rules (see p. 110, *SO*), SDS drones follow the standard ECM/ECCM rules and do not suffer interference like drones mounting ASRCS. Additionally, as a byproduct of their drone communication systems, increase an SDS drone's ECM zone of effect by one hex for the class of unit: WarShips would have a 3-hex ECM field; DropShips 2 hexes, and Small Craft 1 hex.

Anti-Ship Electronic Warfare Missiles: If an ASEW missile (see p. 358, *TO*) successfully strikes a SDS drone, the drone will lose contact with any connected ATAC Unit for $1D6 \div 2$ turns (round down). SDS drones in this situation will continue to operate but must make its own individual initiative rolls for the remainder of combat with a -4 modifier. After $1D6 \div 2$ turns, the interference ceases and the SDS drone may restore normal communication with its ATAC Unit. Additional hits in the same turn do not add additional time to how long the connection is disrupted, but ASEW hits in subsequent turns will extend the original interference by an additional $1D6 \div 2$ turns.

Additionally, an SDS that is struck by an ASEW missile will automatically deactivate on a roll of 12 on a 2D6; the roll is made during the End Phase of any turn following the phase in which the drone was struck by an ASEW missile. This check is made for every ASEW missile that hits a drone.

Boarding Rules: When conducting boarding operations (see *Infantry vs. Infantry Action*, p. 199, *TO* and p. 36, *SO*), a successful boarding action will cause the drone to shut down.

Marine Point score of a SDS drone is as follows: All SDS Drones have a base Marine Point total of 10. For every 7 tons devoted to general crew, the SDS drone receives 1 Marine Point. For every 7 tons devoted to Gunners, the SDS drone receives .5 Marine Points. These Marine Points represent the narrow access ways, sealed compartment structure and internal automated anti-personnel weapon systems.

Controlling players should note a drone's Marine Point value on the unit's record sheet, prior to the start of game play.

Human Controls: SDS drones follow the same rules for human controls as ASRCS equipped drones (see p. 156).

SDS DRONE CONTROL SYSTEM

Deactivated: SDS drones follow the same rules for deactivation as ASRCS equipped drones (see p. 156), with the following exception. The internal defense grid for SDS Drones remains active unless a valid “Prepare for Boarding” command is received. Calculate Marine Points as per SDS Drone rules for boarding (see Boarding Rules, above).

Jump Travel: SDS Drones follow the same rules as ASCRS drones (see p. 156), with the following exception. WarShip SDS

Drones are built with fail-safes that prevent the activation of their Kearny-Fuchida drives while the SDS AI is still active. It is impossible for the unit to jump while the AI is active. In order to successfully jump an SDS drone, it must first be given a deactivation command from a friendly human-controlled ATAC unit to deactivate and then a “prepare for boarding” command. A human crew must then board the vessel and manually engage the KF drive for a jump.

CONSTRUCTION RULES

SDS DRONE CONTROL SYSTEM

Consult the SDS Drone Control System Equipment Table for the weight of the equipment to be installed. SDS-DC controls add extra weight as a percentage of the unit’s total weight. SDS drones must still devote tonnage to quarters for the required minimum crew (officers, gunners, crew, bay personnel, etc.), representing various automation and internal maintenance units and access ways (see *Add Control/Crew Systems*, pp. 188, *TM*, and 149, *SO*). Calculate base crew as normal for the drone unit’s type then dividing the result by half, rounding up to the nearest whole number. Divide final Gunner crew tonnage by half, rounding up to the nearest whole number. This tonnage represents additional fire control and automatic maintenance systems.

All mobile SDS drones (WarShips, DropShips, Small Craft) must be fitted with an SDS Self-Destruct (see p. 162).

In all other respects, SDS drones follows its unit’s standard construction rules.

SDS DRONE CONTROL SYSTEM EQUIPMENT TABLE

Unit Type	Gunnery	Piloting/Driving	Mass*	Notes**
Small Craft	5	6	5%	Additional 2% tonnage will increase skills to 4/5
DropShip	5	6	4%	Additional 4% tonnage will increase skills to 4/5
Space Station	4	5	8%	Additional 4% tonnage will increase skills to 3/4
WarShip	4	5	6%	Additional 4% tonnage will increase skills to 3/4

*Round all weights up to the nearest applicable weight increment (see pp. 184, *TM* for Small Craft and DropShips and pp. 145, *SO* for Space Stations and Warships).

**Craft with a standard control system are indicated by the modifier “standard” in front of their equipment listing, while those with upgraded gunnery and piloting are indicated by the modifier “improved”

AUTONOMOUS TACTICAL ANALYSIS COMPUTER (ATAC)

Introduced: 2705

Extinct: 2780 (All)

Comprising a sophisticated array of neural networks and simulations designed to encapsulate the strategic and tactical thinking of generations of Terran Hegemony admirals, the ATAC system could coordinate the actions of an entire fleet of SRCS-equipped spacecraft. The jewel in the crown of the SDS system, ATAC could turn the relatively predictable drones into coordinated and dangerous opponents drawing on generations of experience.

AUTONOMOUS TACTICAL ANALYSIS COMPUTER (ATAC)

Rules Level: Experimental

Tech Base (Ratings): Inner Sphere (F-X-F), Clans (X-X-X)

Unit Restrictions: WarShips and Space Stations.

Game Rules: While more than one unit per force can be equipped with an ATAC, only one can be connected to a given SDS drone at any given time. In addition, the total tonnage of the force that can be controlled is limited by the mass of the active ATAC.

When multiple ATACs are present the controlling player must secretly note which one is designated as the active controller for a given SDS drone. This information must be revealed to their opponents when any unit equipped with an active probe, DropShip or WarShip moves within 6 hexes of the active ATAC Control Unit. Note that the active controller can be situated off-board.

Should a player wish to switch control from one ATAC to another, or to have a new ATAC take over when another is destroyed, the player must announce this during the End Phase; all SDS drones being controlled by the replaced ATAC will operated in Independent Command mode (see p. 197) for the following two full game turns.

A ship equipped with an ATAC may only control drones in their force. Drones of another player may not be controlled. They are using different authentication codes and will not respond.

ATAC Fighter Squadrons: If the ATAC equipped unit is human-controlled, it may direct robotic fighter squadrons (Either ASRCS or S-ARCS). Treat each squadron as a single unit for purposes of the maximum number of units an ATAC unit may direct. Robotic fighter squadrons under ATAC commanded are treated as a fully intelligent game unit and do not follow the independent drone command tree while under ATAC direction.

Drone Fire-Control Network: The ATAC provides the same ability as a Naval C3 to its SDS drones (see p. 332, *TO*). While controlled by their designated ATAC, up to six drones (with a fighter squadron acting as a single drone) can be linked together to share targeting data. These can either be six drone units or up to five drones and the ATAC controller unit. Any drone actively in a hostile Large Craft ECM field is unable to share or benefit from shared targeting data. Only a unit under active ATAC control can share or benefit from shared targeting data.

Initiative, Piloting and Gunnery bonus: Units operating as part of an ATAC-coordinated formation receive modifiers to their group Initiative rolls and Piloting and Gunnery Skills. This reflects the command and control nature of the network, which allows the units to share combat data. These bonuses degrade with the distance they are from the ATAC-equipped unit that is directing them (see ATAC Modifier Table, next page).

Direct Control: A human-controlled ATAC system can issue additional commands to friendly SDS drones. These commands are:

- **Deactivate:** Deactivates (shuts down) an active drone (see *Deactivated*, p. 156). Its internal defense grid and self-

destruct will continue to operate. There is no maximum range that this command can be sent from. If the human-controlled ATAC is within nine million kilometers, the SDS drone shuts down at the start of the next combat turn. For every additional nine million kilometers, or fraction thereof, add one full combat round before the SDS Drone shuts down.

- **Prepare for Boarding:** A special command required to deactivate a drones internal defense grid in order for maintenance crews or jump navigation crews to board. The human-controlled ATAC must be within 500 hexes to issues this command.
- **Navigation:** Direct the drone to a specific location in space. If issued "direct navigation" command, the drone will travel to the destination, only defending itself if attacked. With a "patrol navigation" command drone will engaged enemy targets as normal, if they are detected. There is no maximum range that this command can be sent from. If the human-controlled ATAC is within nine million kilometers, the SDS drone begins navigating at the start of the next combat turn. For every additional nine kilometers, or fraction thereof, add one full combat round before the SDS Drone acts on this command.
- **Activate:** Will activate any drone that is deactivated. The drone activates on the next combat turn. The human-controlled ATAC must be within 5,000,000 kilometers to issues this command.

Electronic Warfare: If using the Electronic Warfare rules (see p. 110, *SO*) the ECM affects can interfere with an SDS drone's ability to communicate with an ATAC equipped unit.

In the End Phase of each turn, the SDS drone checks its line of sight to its ATAC-equipped unit. If there is a hostile ECM field between the SDS drone and the ATAC equipped unit, make an immediate ECCM roll by the ATAC equipped unit and apply any ECCM modifiers to hostile ECM as if it were targeting the SDS drone. If the ATAC equipped unit counteracts the hostile ECM, the SDS drone operates normally.

If the drone enters a zone where ECM interference provides a +1 to-hit modifier against manned units, then on the subsequent turn the drone suffers a -1 Initiative modifier and a +1 to-hit modifier for all attacks made at Extreme range. (These to-hit modifiers are based on actual range and not modified range as a result of the Naval C3 ability of the ATAC.) For example, if the player rolled an Initiative of 6 for his SDS drones, then the SDS affected by ECM would have an initiative of 5.

If the ECM interference provides a +2 to-hit modifier against manned units, then on the subsequent turn the drone suffers a -2 to its initiative roll and +1 to-hit at long and extreme ranges.

AUTONOMOUS TACTICAL ANALYSIS COMPUTER (ATAC)

If the ECM interference is +3, then on the subsequent turn the drone suffers a -3 to its initiative roll and +1 to-hit at any range.

If the ECM interference is +4, then on the subsequent turn the drone can no longer benefit from ATAC system. It also suffers initiative and attack penalties equivalent to being in a +3 ECM interference zone

At any time, an SDS drone can drop from an ATAC network and operate individually. Such an order takes effect at the start of the turn following the turn in which the order was issued.

During the Weapon Attack Phase, after rolling ECCM again, follow the same process as above, to determine any to-hit modifier effects for that turn.

If the ATAC is located off-board then line of sight to it is considered obstructed if hostile ECM comes between the controlled unit and the edge of the map designated as the home edge at the start of play.

CONSTRUCTION RULES

ATAC

The ATAC has a base weight of 2% of the equipped unit's weight, to a maximum tonnage of 50,000 tons plus an additional 150 tons per SDS Drone it is intended to direct. ATACs may be installed in human-controlled ships or in a WarShip class SDS drone. On human crewed ships, one crew is required for every three drones the ATAC is capable of directing.

ATAC MODIFIER TABLE

Range	Piloting/Gunnery	Initiative*
0-50	-1	+4
51-100	-1	+2
101- to Off-board	-0	+0

ADVANCED ROBOTIC TRANSPORT BAY SYSTEM (ARTS)

Introduced: 2609 (Terran Hegemony), 2700 (Inner Sphere)

Extinct: 2804 (IS)

Recovered: 3068 (Word of Blake), 3085 (Republic of the Sphere)

The ability for Star League-era *Caspar* drone systems to launch and recover themselves and even perform basic maintenance such as ammo loading and refueling was built upon earlier advances in robotic warehouse technologies. The Terran Hegemony's SDS took this to the point that entire space stations supported the SDS drone network. The robotic transport bay took the terrestrial bound technology and applied it space going vessels. While greatly streamlining shipping and reducing crew sizes, in most applications it never replaced crews completely.

ADVANCED ROBOTIC TRANSPORT BAY SYSTEMS (ARTS)

Rules Level: Advanced

Available To: SA, DS, SS, and WS

Tech Base (Ratings): Inner Sphere (D-X-F), Clan (X-E-E)

Game Rules: A unit equipped with this system requires no Bay Personnel to perform launch/recovery, ammunition loading/unloading or small craft/fighter refueling. Drone units equipped with an ARTS may launch and recover small craft and fighter (drone or human-controlled) as if they were a normally crewed unit.

Repair Bays equipped with an ARTS are capable of performing basic maintenance on vessels docked in them using the repair rules and times from the *Maintenance, Repair, Salvage and Customization* rules in *Strategic Operations* on (see pp. 166, SO). The ARTS can make the following repairs at Veteran skill level:

- Replace any damaged armor.
- Repair units with less than 25% structural damage. (Example, an M-5 has an SI of 50. If its SI is between 37 and 49 points,

ADVANCED ROBOTIC TRANSPORT BAY SYSTEMS (ARTS)

the ARTS can fix it. If the M-5's SI was 36 it would need to be repaired in a standard, human crewed yard.)

- Can repair one critical hit to the following systems, Avionics, CIC, Sensors
- Can repair up to two critical hits to Thrusters or Engines.
- Can repair any heat sinks not located in the vessels engine.

Human Crew: If a human-controlled small craft or aerospace fighter lands in an ARTS bay on an SDS Drone, the crew may not leave their craft unless the Drone has had its internal defense system deactivated or the humans conduct a boarding action (see pp. 188, *TO* and pp. 36, *SO*).

ARTS

ARTS may be installed individually and may be installed in the same unit as a standard Transport Bay. Indicate ARTS bays by placing ARTS before the name of the bay. ARTS bays weigh an additional 25% over the standard bay tonnage (i.e. a fighter ARTS bay weighs 187.5 tons instead of 150).

SDS SELF-DESTRUCT SYSTEM

Introduced: 2695

Extinct: 2780

Recovered: N/A

In the time of the Star League it was thought the SDS self-destruct system was put in place after a tragic episode in 2694. A squadron of M-2 *Hector* Drones became non-responsive and destroyed three civilian transport JumpShips because their IFF beacons were broadcasting out of sync. In reality files recovered from the ComStar archives reveal the true reason for the self-destruct system was Jonathan Cameron's fear of the SDS technology falling into the hands of the other member states.

The self-destruct system was little more than a massive bomb fitted into, or in some cases around, the engine compartment. In the event the ship was disabled, the destruct system would engage and scuttle the ship, reducing all the proprietary technology to slag. When combined with the SDS drones' programming to ram enemy combatants if critically damaged, it also turned the self-destruct system into a deadly bomb.

SDS SELF-DESTRUCT SYSTEM

Rules Level: Experimental

Available To: DS and WS

Tech Base (Ratings): Inner Sphere (B/D-F-D)

Game Rules: The SDS Self-Destruct operates identically to the Booby Trap rules in Tactical Operations (see p. 297, *TO*), with the following exception. If a *Caspar* equipped with a Self-Destruct successfully rams another unit, the Self-Destruct is triggered automatically and does damage to the rammed units Structural Integrity equal to the Drones safe thrust MP multiplied by its tonnage (up to a maximum of 500 standard points).

The SDS Self-Destruct can be accidentally detonated when the equipped ship is hit from the Aft. On any critical hit to the Aft, in addition to the normal critical hit rolls, roll 2D6. On a result of 12+ the Self-Destruct goes off, destroying the engine and applying the damage of the Self-Destruct directly to the ships structural integrity.

An SDS drone will activate its self-destruct if any of the following triggers are reached, All Engine criticals are destroyed, 98% of structural integrity (round up) is destroyed, it loses "control" in a boarding action, or it receives a command from a friendly human operated ATAC system.

SDS SELF-DESTRUCT SYSTEM

An SDS Self-Destruct follows the same construction rules as a standard Booby Trap (see p. 297, *TO*), with the following exception. SDS Self-Destruct systems have a maximum tonnage of 10,000 tons.

SLDF SDS JAMMER

Introduced: 2776

Extinct: 2780

Recovered: N/A

As the war to liberate Terra wore on, the SLDF was able to gather more and more data on the super-secret SDS Network. Analysis showed that drones would lose their coordination and suffer degradation in accuracy if exposed to heavy ECM interference.

To capitalize on this weakness, dozens of SLDF WarShips had their cargo decks fitted with multi-kiloton jamming systems. These ECM arrays allowed Kerensky's troops to blanket hundreds of kilometers with jamming waves that disrupted the SDS drones and prevented them from coordinating like they had in earlier confrontations.

SLDF SDS JAMMER

Rules Level: Experimental

Available To: WS

Tech Base (Ratings): Inner Sphere (B/D-F-D)

Game Rules: A ship equipped with an SLDF SDS Jammer system may activate in the end phase of any turn. Once activated the system extends a jamming field out to fifty hexes. If an ATAC equipped unit is located within this jamming field, the jammer generates a +4 ECM modifier for the sole purpose of determining if an SDS drone also in the jamming field can network with that ATAC equipped unit (see *Electronic Warfare*, p. 160).

If the ATAC unit is located outside the jamming field, it is unable to communicate with any SDS unit inside the jamming

field. For all intents and purposes, the jamming field blocks line of sight, for the C3 network effects, into the jammed area. As a result, SDS drones inside the jamming field may not spot for units outside the field and all SDS units outside the field will not "see" any unit inside the jamming field for the purposes of attacking. In order for an SDS drone to make any attacks on a ship inside the field, it must first enter the field.

Unless under direct human command (from a human operated ATAC equipped unit), the SDS drone must roll an 8+ on 2D6 to enter the jamming field. This roll is made at the start of the movement phase. If the roll is failed, the drone may make another action instead.

SLDF SDS JAMMER

The SLDF SDS Jammer weighs thirty thousand tons. It may be mounted in any SLDF-era WarShip cargo bay, provided the bay is large enough, without any other modifications to the WarShip.

DRONE INDEPENDENT COMMAND RULES

Rules Level: Experimental

Available To: Units mounting Aerospace (ASRCS) or Shielded (S-ASRCS), use these rules (see pp. 154 and 157, respectively). Such units are uniformly referred to as “drones.”

Game Rules: Drone units use the following rules when not under the control of another unit. The Drone Independent Command Decision Tree (see p. 165) consists of Events and Event Orders. During the End Phase of every turn that a drone is in independent operation (see *ATAC Fighter Squadrons* p. 160), it will proceed through the Decision Tree in order from the beginning. If the Event’s Trigger is valid, then the drone will execute the order for that Event. If the Event’s Trigger is not valid, the drone proceeds to the next Event in the Decision Tree. An active drone restarts at the top of the Decision Tree once the end has been reached.

Aggression Levels: When an Event Trigger occurs, the drone will execute the default order for that Event based on the drone’s set Aggression Level. Aggression Levels are: Aggressive, Neutral, and Defensive. Each drone has a single Aggression Level assigned to it that applies to all Events. Aggression Levels are

set at the start of game play for all drones that begin deployed on the playing area. Drones not deployed need not have their Aggression Level set until the turn they are deployed. The Aggression Level may be changed in the End Phase of any turn for drones under control of a Control Unit (see p. 155, respectively). It is recommended a GM control drones that are under Independent Command, to carry out orders described on the following pages.

High-G Maneuvers: Drones will use high-g maneuvers (see p. 78, *TW*) during combat, even if it means possible damage. How often they will use high-g maneuvers is based upon their Aggression Level (see above).

- **Aggressive:** Will always use high-g maneuvers.
- **Neutral:** Will only use high-g maneuvers when weapons are in range.
- **Defensive:** Will only use high-g maneuvers when weapons are in short range.

If a drone only has 1 SI remaining, regardless of Aggression Level, the drone will not use a high-g maneuver.

DRONE INDEPENDENT COMMAND DECISION TREE

The following rules apply only to “drones,” any unit mounting one of the various ASRCS systems. If the rules refer to a specific system, those rules only apply to a drone mounting that system.

Space Stations and Satellites: These drone types ignore all movement orders.

Overriding Orders

These orders will take effect whenever conditions are met, regardless of any Event Triggers that are met.

Target!: If there is a hostile Large Craft in the drone’s forward arc at short or medium range and the drone did not attack another target the previous turn, it will attack that Large Craft with all available weapons.

Large Craft Priority Target: Large Craft (DS, WS, and SS) drones are programmed to target Large Craft as a priority. When selecting a valid target, Large Craft drones will always choose the nearest hostile Large Craft in range unless overridden by another Event Order. When more than one Large Craft is equidistant from the Large Craft drone, use the Bearings Launch Capital Missile rules for target selection (see *Detection Phase, Standard Play*, p. 102, SO).

No Large Craft Targets: Large Craft (DS, WS, and SS) drones are programmed to target Large Craft as a priority. If no valid hostile Large Craft is in range, the Large Craft drone will fire on

any valid hostile target. This is in addition to any action required by a triggered Event.

Remaining Weapons: If after firing all valid weapons at its primary target, Large Craft (DS, WS, and SS) drones that have unfired weapons and sufficient heat sinks to fire them and the target is within range and appropriate fire arc, it will fire on the nearest hostile unit, regardless of size/class.

Ramming: ASRCS and S-ASRCS drones will not attempt a ramming attack. If a ramming attack is indicated, the drone will instead alpha strike with all weapons, even if this means it will overheat.

1. Collision

Event Trigger: Drone is in danger of colliding with another object. For aerospace and small craft drones, treat the Aggression Level of “Aggressive” as “Neutral” for this Event.

Aggressive: Large Craft Drones (DS, WS, and SS). If the possible collision is with any small craft, aerospace or a non-friendly object that will do less than 20% total starting armor damage to the drone, the drone will ignore the possible collision and Proceed to next Event in the Decision Tree.. If not, treat as Aggression Level “Neutral.”

Neutral: Unit will use all available thrust to avoid collision. Will continue to target hostile units and attempt to maneuver to

DRONE INDEPENDENT COMMAND DECISION TREE

remain in combat with the nearest hostile unit (Large Craft for Large Craft drones).

Defensive: Unit will use all available thrust to avoid collision. It will forgo all other actions until it is no longer in danger of collision.

2. Omega

Event Trigger: Drone is crippled. Aerospace, small craft, or satellite drones are considered crippled under any of the following: it suffers a critical hit to its engine or fuel tank, all weapons are destroyed, it loses more than half its original Structural Integrity, or its pilot/crew suffers four or more hits. A Large Craft (DS, WS, and SS) drone is considered crippled under any of the following: suffering three engine critical, all weapons are destroyed, loses more than half its original Structural Integrity, or receives enough critical hits that would kill the pilot/crew of a non-drone unit.

Aggressive: Unit will accelerate at maximum thrust toward the nearest hostile unit (Large Craft for Large Craft Drones (DS, WS, and SS)) in its forward arc. It will fire all weapons at the hostile target as it closes. Once in range, it will attempt to ram the hostile unit.

Neutral: Drone will attempt to keep all hostile Large Craft at long range, protecting its most damaged components. If unable to keep all hostile Large Craft at long range, it will attempt to stay at long range from the largest hostile Large Craft*. Drone will attempt to attack the nearest hostile Large Craft*. If the nearest hostile target (of any kind) is at short or medium range, it will conduct evasive maneuvers.

Defensive: Drone will conduct a Forced Withdrawal (see p. 258, *TW*) using evasive maneuvers when thrust permits. When it reaches the edge of the playing area, it will flee the battlefield, remaining out of play for the remainder of the game.

3. Boarding

Event Trigger: If a Small Craft or ground unit operating in Zero-G (see p. 279, *SO*) enters the same or adjacent hex as the drone and has a relative velocity of 4 or less, the drone will react to the possible boarding attempt. Aerospace drones ignore this Event Trigger.

Aggressive: Drone will not attempt to avoid the unit.

Neutral: Drone will spend the next Movement Phase expending up to Maximum Thrust to increase range with the unit or to increase relative velocity to 5 or greater.

Defensive: Drone will act as per Neutral orders and will also make the unit its primary target, firing all available weapons at the unit.

4. Swarm

Event Trigger: A hostile Large Craft or Small Craft (aerospace small craft and satellite drones only) is crippled and within 12 hexes (6 for aerospace small craft and satellite) of the drone. A drone considers a target crippled if the target has received two or more critical hits to its engine, if all weapons in three or more locations are destroyed, if it has lost more than half its original Structural Integrity, or if the crew has suffered four or more hits.

Aggressive: If the hostile Large Craft is a WarShip and the drone is a DropShip or Small Craft, it will immediately attempt to ram. Otherwise, the drone will close to short range and attempt to fire at the facing with the lowest current armor rating.

Neutral: Drone will shift fire from any active target and attack the crippled unit. It will attempt to fire at the facing with lowest current armor rating. It will close on the crippled unit using Safe Thrust.

Defensive: Drone will ignore the crippled unit and will move to the next Event.

5. Target: Locked

Event Trigger: In the previous turn the drone fired on a Large Craft and the Large Craft is still in range of one or more of the drone's weapons in the current turn.

Aggressive: The drone will attempt to close to short range, using Maximum Thrust if required. It will attempt to fire at the facing with the lowest current armor rating. It will fire all available weapons at the targeted Large Craft.

Neutral: Drone will maintain current range, using Maximum Thrust if required. It will attempt to fire at the facing with lowest current armor rating. It will fire all available weapons at the targeted Large Craft.

Defensive: Drone will maintain current range, using no more than Safe Thrust. It will attempt to fire at the facing with lowest current armor rating. It will fire all available weapons at the targeted Large Craft.

6. Support

Event Trigger: Drone is not currently engaged with a hostile Large Craft and a friendly unit (drone or non-drone) is in active combat with a hostile target at short, medium, or long range from the drone.

Aggressive: Drone will engage friendly's hostile unit while attempting to close to short range.

Neutral: Drone will engage hostile unit while attempting to maintain current range band.

Defensive: Drone will engage hostile unit but will not change range bands. It will not pursue the target if it moves beyond the current range band.

DRONE INDEPENDENT COMMAND DECISION TREE

7. Target: Engage

Event Trigger: Drone is not engaged with a hostile Large Craft or Small Craft (aerospace small craft and satellite drones only) and there is a hostile Large Craft or Small Craft (aerospace small craft and satellite drones only) within range of any weapons mounted in its forward arc.

Aggressive: Drone will engage hostile unit while attempting to close to short range at any thrust.

Neutral: Drone will engage hostile unit while attempting to maintain current range band.

Defensive: Drone will engage hostile unit but will not change range bands. It will not pursue the target if it moves beyond the current range band.

8. Target: Range

Event Trigger: Drone is not currently engaged with a hostile Large Craft or Small Craft (aerospace small craft and satellite drones only) and there is a Large Craft or Small Craft (aerospace small craft and satellite drones only) within range of any weapons mounted in any arc.

Aggressive: Drone will move towards the nearest hostile unit* at Maximum Thrust. It will begin attacking as soon as its Modified To-Hit Target Number is 12 or less for any weapon. Once the Modified To-Hit Target Number is 11 or less, restart the Trigger Decision Tree.

Neutral: Drone will move towards the nearest hostile unit* at Safe Thrust. It will begin attacking as soon as its Modified To-Hit Target Number is 12 or less for any weapon. Once Modified To-Hit Target Number is 10 or less, restart the Trigger Decision Tree.

Defensive: Drone will move towards the nearest hostile unit* while evading. It will not exceed Safe Thrust. Once the Modified To-Hit Target Number is 9 or less, restart the Trigger Decision Tree.

8A. Target: Detected

Event Trigger: Aerospace and small craft drones only. Drone is not currently engaged with a hostile unit and there is a hostile unit within 50 hexes of the drone.

Aggressive: Drone will move towards the nearest hostile unit* at Maximum Thrust. It will begin attacking as soon as its Modified To-Hit Target Number is 12 or less for any weapon.

Once the Modified To-Hit Target Number is 11 or less, restart the Trigger Decision Tree.

Neutral: Drone will move towards the nearest hostile unit* at Safe Thrust. It will begin attacking as soon as its Modified To-Hit Target Number is 12 or less for any weapon. Once Modified To-Hit the Target Number is 10 or less, restart the Trigger Decision Tree.

Defensive: Drone will move towards the nearest hostile unit* while evading. It will not exceed Safe Thrust. Once the Modified To-Hit Target Number is 9 or less, restart the Trigger Decision Tree.

9. Target: Acquired

Event Trigger: Drone is not currently engaged with a hostile unit (Large Craft Drones only: Large Craft), and there are no hostile targets of any type within 100 hexes of the drone.

Aggressive: Large Craft (DS, WS, and SS) drones will move towards the nearest hostile unit at Maximum Thrust. If the standard Maximum Thrust of the target (before any damage) is higher than the drone's current Maximum Thrust, it will choose the next closest target. If no target can be intercepted in this fashion, move to Event Trigger 10. Aerospace and small craft drones will maintain current heading and velocity, unless specifically commanded otherwise by a Control Unit (see p. 155). Restart the Trigger Decision Tree.

Neutral: Large Craft (DS, WS, and SS) drones will move towards the nearest Large Craft* at Safe Thrust. If the standard Maximum Thrust of the target (before any damage) is higher than the drone's current Safe Thrust, it will choose the next closest target. If no target can be intercepted in this fashion, go to Event Trigger 10. Aerospace and small craft drones will expend Safe Thrust to lower its velocity to 0 (i.e. it will remain in its current position), unless specifically commanded otherwise by a Control Unit (see p. 155). Restart the Trigger Decision Tree.

Defensive: Large Craft (DS, WS, and SS) drone will move towards the nearest Large Craft* while evading. It will not exceed Safe Thrust. If the standard Maximum Thrust of the target (before any damage) is higher than the drone's current Safe Thrust, it will choose the next closest target. If no target can be intercepted, go to Event Trigger 10. Aerospace and small craft drones will expend Safe Thrust to lower its velocity to 0 (i.e. it will remain in its current position), unless specifically

DRONE INDEPENDENT COMMAND DECISION TREE

commanded otherwise by a Control Unit (see p. 155). Restart the Trigger Decision Tree.

10. Minimal Threat

Event Trigger: No hostile target within 100 hexes of the drone (50 for aerospace small craft and satellite drones) or any hostile Large Craft or Small Craft (aerospace small craft and satellite drones only) within 100 hexes (50 for aerospace small craft and satellite drones) that have a Maximum Thrust less than the drone's current Maximum Thrust.

Aggressive: Large Craft (DS, WS, and SS) drones will move at Maximum Thrust in the direction of the nearest hostile Large Craft. If thrust is insufficient to intercept (see *Target: Acquired, Aggressive*), it will expend Safe Thrust to lower its velocity to 0 (i.e. it will remain in its current position). Aerospace and small craft drones will expend Safe Thrust to lower its velocity to 0, unless specifically commanded otherwise by a Control Unit (see p. 155). Restart the Trigger Decision Tree.

Neutral: Large Craft (DS, WS, and SS) drones will move at Safe Thrust in the direction of the nearest hostile Large Craft. If thrust is insufficient to intercept (see *Target: Acquired, Aggressive*), it will expend Safe Thrust to lower its velocity to 0 (i.e. it will remain in its current position). Aerospace and small craft drones will expend Safe Thrust to lower its velocity to 0, unless specifically commanded otherwise by a Control Unit (see p. 155). Restart the Trigger Decision Tree.

Defensive: Drone will expend Safe Thrust to lower its velocity to 0 (i.e. it will remain in its current position). Aerospace and small craft drones only: if within 250 hexes of a friendly fighter/small craft cubicle-equipped unit, it will expend Safe Thrust to intercept allied unit and dock. Otherwise the drone will lower velocity to 0, unless specifically commanded otherwise by a Control Unit (see p. 155). Restart the Trigger Decision Tree.

11. Bingo Targets

Event Trigger: No hostile targets within battlefield radar detection range (555 hexes for Large Craft, 55 hexes for small craft, satellites, and aerospace).

Aggressive: Drone will make an active Detection Roll (see *Radar (Object)*, p.119, SO) every turn. Large Craft drones (DS, WS, and SS) only: when a Large Craft is detected, start at

the top of the Decision Tree. Aerospace, small craft, satellite drones only: when a target is detected within 50 hexes, go to Event Trigger 7A.

Neutral: Large Craft (DS, WS, and SS) drones will expend Safe Thrust to lower its velocity to 0 (i.e. it will remain in its current position). It will conduct passive sensor sweeps for hostile targets; when a Large Craft is detected, start at the top of the Decision Tree. Aerospace and small craft drones only: if within 250 hexes of a friendly unit with a fighter/small craft cubicle, it will expend Safe Thrust to intercept allied unit and dock. Otherwise, lower its velocity to 0. Restart the Trigger Decision Tree.

Defensive: Large Craft (DS, WS, and SS) drones will deactivate and can only be re-activated by a DTAC equipped unit. Aerospace and small craft drones only: if within 250 hexes of an allied unit with a fighter/small craft cubicle, it will expend Safe Thrust to intercept allied unit and dock. If there is no unit within range, drone will deactivate. Drone will not reactivate until it receives an activation command from a designated controller unit. Any drone in a deactivated state will cease to process command triggers until reactivated.

12. Hibernation

Event Trigger: Large Craft (DS, WS, and SS) drones only. No hostile targets within radar detection range (5,555 hexes).

Aggressive: Drone will conduct a patrol of the area, moving 1,000 hexes in a random direction and accelerating the first 500 hexes, then decelerating until it reaches 0 velocity. If no hostile Large Craft are detected, the unit will return to its original position and repeat the above process in a new direction. At any time a hostile Large Craft is detected, start at the top of the Decision Tree.

Neutral: Drone will expend Safe Thrust to lower its velocity to 0 (i.e. it will remain in its current position). At any time a hostile Large Craft is detected, start at the top of the Decision Tree.

Defensive: Drone will deactivate. It will not reactivate until it receives an activation command from a valid Control Unit. Any drone deactivated will cease to process command triggers until reactivated (see *Deactivated*, p. 156).

*When more than one Large Craft is equidistant from the drone, use the Bearings Launch Capital Missile rules for target selection (see *Detection Phase, Standard Play*, p. 102, SO).

M-5 "CASPAR" CAPITAL DRONE

The pinnacle of the SDS network, the M-5 drones would so capture the imagination of the Inner Sphere as to overshadow all other aspects of the SDS Network. The drones became known as *Caspars*, after an ancient Terran commander, and were intended as a nod to the superior nature of the M-5 over all the other drones in the network.

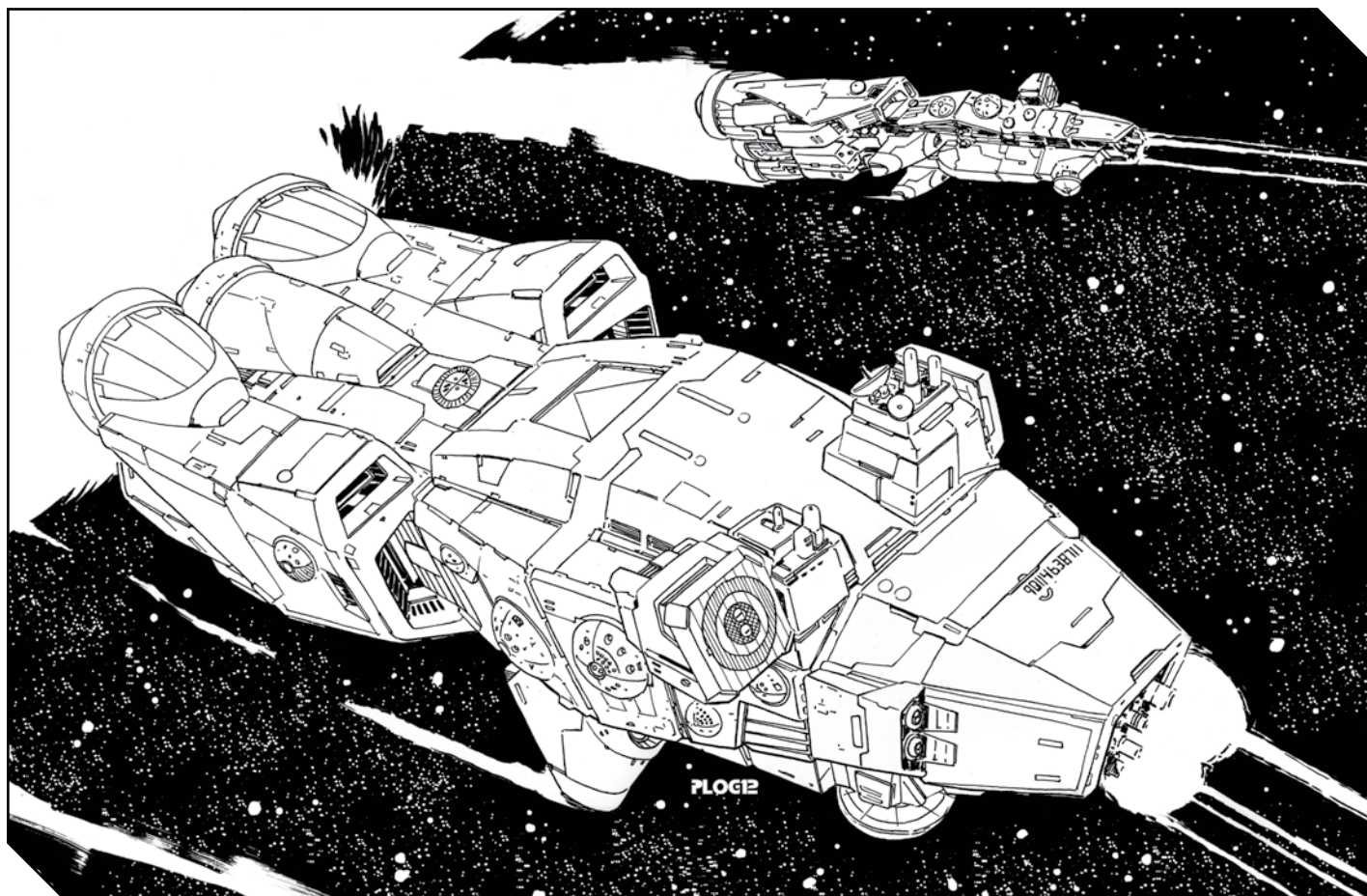
The *Caspar* was the primary capital-class SDS drone. The M-5 used an unequipped *Lola* block II hull as a starting point for its design, heavily modifying the frame to achieve its final form. Not intended for long deployments and meant to rely on outside support for major repairs, the M-5 could surrender most of its cargo space for the advanced drone control systems. The remaining tonnage allowed the M-5 to mount firepower nearly equal to the *Texas*, a ship that out-massed it by 500,000 tons, while maintaining the thrust of a destroyer-class ship. The battery of naval lasers and paired heavy naval PPCs mounted in the nose allowed *Caspars* to make slashing assaults that often struck from outside an opponent's effective attack range. Its large array of heat sinks allowed the drone to dive into enemy formations and fire both of its autocannon broadsides without fear of overheating. Considered the perfect WarShip, its only flaw lay in the self-destruct system, built into the engine

compartment. A lucky hit to the aft could trigger the system and destroy the WarShip drone. Even this flaw was not enough of an edge for Kerensky's forces, who would have to resort to drastic measures to finally defeat the waves of M-5s that guarded Terra.

Most worlds in the Hegemony possessed at least a handful of M-5 drones, while key worlds would field multiple squadrons. Terra had at least two hundred and fifty and possibly more of the M-5 drones. Had Kerensky's technicians not devised a jamming system to offset the drones coordination network, it is possible the Inner Sphere today would still live under the shadow of an Amaris emperor.

Only one variant of the M-5 was deployed. The M-5C variant carried the Autonomous Tactical Analysis Computer, the true secret to the SDS drone network. This advanced neural network could process millions of simulations a second and then relay the results out to all the ships connected to it. It was the ATAC that allowed the *Caspar* drones to coordinate their attacks with such brutal efficiency. Each M-5C could direct up to fifty other SDS drones.

To fit the large computer array, the M-5C downgraded its own SDS Drone computer. While this affected the command drones accuracy, it was able to rely on ships in its network for targeting assistance and the two additional naval PPCs improved its bow armament considerably.



M-5 "CASPAR" CAPITAL DRONE

Tech: Inner Sphere
Introduced: 2710
Mass: 680,000 tons
Length: 628 meters
Sail Diameter: 1,100 meters
Fuel: 1,000 tons (2,500 points)
Tons/Burn Days: 39.52
Safe Thrust: 4
Maximum Thrust: 6
Sail Integrity: 5
KF Drive Integrity: 15
Heat Sinks: 1,250 (2,500)
Structural Integrity: 50
Battle Value: 95,051

Armor

Nose: 48
Fore-Sides: 48
Aft-Sides: 48
Aft: 48

Cargo

Bay 1: Cargo (1,840.5 tons) 1 Door

DropShip Capacity: 0

Grav Decks: 0

Escape Pods: 0

Life Boats: 0

Crew: None

Notes: Equipped with 322.5 tons of Ferro-Carbide armor, SDS Self-Destruct System and SDS Drone Control System (Gunnery 3, Piloting 4). Automated defenses provide 110 Marine Points.

Weapons:		Capital Attack Values (Standard)				Class
Arc (Heat) Type	Heat	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	
Nose (810 Heat)						
4 NL55	340	22	22	22	22	Capital Laser
2 Heavy N-PPC	450	30	30	30	30	Capital PPC
1 Killer Whale (20 Missiles)	20	4	4	4	4	Capital Missile
FR/FL (370 Heat)						
2 NL55	170	11	11	11	11	Capital Laser
3 NAC/20 (300 rounds)	180	60	60	60	—	Capital AC
1 AR-10 Launcher (10 KW 20 B)	20	*	*	*	*	Capital Missile
RBS/LBS (465 Heat)						
1 NL55	85	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	Capital Laser
2 NAC/25 (200 rounds)	170	50	50	50	—	Capital AC
2 NAC/25 (200 rounds)	170	50	50	50	—	Capital AC
2 AR-10 Launcher (20 KW 40 B)	40	*	*	*	*	Capital Missile
AR/AL (350 Heat)						
2 NL55	170	11	11	11	11	Capital Laser
3 NAC/20 (300 rounds)	180	60	60	60	—	Capital AC
Aft (360 Heat)						
4 NL55	340	22	22	22	22	Capital Laser
2 Barracuda (40 Missiles)	20	2	2	2	2	Capital Missile

M-3 DRONE

Based on the 2650 model of the *Pentagon* assault DropShip, the M-3 was the first full production SDS Drone to see widespread use. First deployed in 2698, they replaced the sullied M-2 as the primary drone system of the early SDS network. The M-3 was also the first of the drones to be built new and not as retrofits of existing, crewed ship hulls. Starting in 2704, the M-3 was produced at O'Neil Shipyards and would eventually be built at a half dozen locations across the Hegemony.

While overshadowed by their M-5 brethren, to the point it was often overlooked in fleet action reports, the M-3 would prove to be a highly effective combat platform. With the same performance characteristics as its parent design, its high thrust profile, combined with not needing to worry about the frailty of human crew, allowed the M-3 to quickly engage threats. Its lack of crew and marines allowed it to double its nose firepower compared to its *Pentagon* progenitor. This made it a credible threat to corvette and destroyer-class WarShips and capable of destroying the most thickly armored DropShip in a single salvo.

Easier to produce than the massive M-5, the majority of Hegemony systems were protected by these diminutive assault ships. Again, in the shadow of their larger cousin, and so closely resembling the human crewed *Pentagon*, they often were overlooked in the historical reports that focused on the *Caspar*. While singly they could be ignored by most SLDF forces, en masse they proved a threat that was difficult to discount. Even during the drop onto Terra, after Kerensky had already neutralized the last of the M-5s, three squadrons of M-3s reminded the SLDF of their danger. Deploying from a hidden hanger on Terra's moon, the last drones of the SDS network accelerated towards Kerensky's battle fleet. Working in ATAC coordinated concert, the eighteen drones overwhelmed the defenses of several assault DropShips, blasted through two *Vincent*-class corvettes and descended upon the SLS *Van Gogh*, the last of the *Luxor*-class WarShips. The *Van Gogh* managed to pick away at the oncoming swarm, but the numbers it faced were too many and several of M-3s slammed into the heavy cruiser, ending the proud *Luxor*-class.

M-3 DRONE

Type: Military Spheroid

Use: SDS Drone

Tech: Inner Sphere

Introduced: 2698

Mass: 4,000 tons

Battle Value: 16,459

Dimensions

Length: 89 meters

Width: 75 meters

Height: 75 meters

Fuel: 600 tons (18,000 points)

Tons/Burn-day: 1.84

Safe Thrust: 7

Maximum Thrust: 11

Heat Sinks: 200 (400)

Structural Integrity: 21

Armor

Nose: 368

Sides: 323

Aft: 278

Cargo

Bay 1: Cargo (28 tons) 1 Door

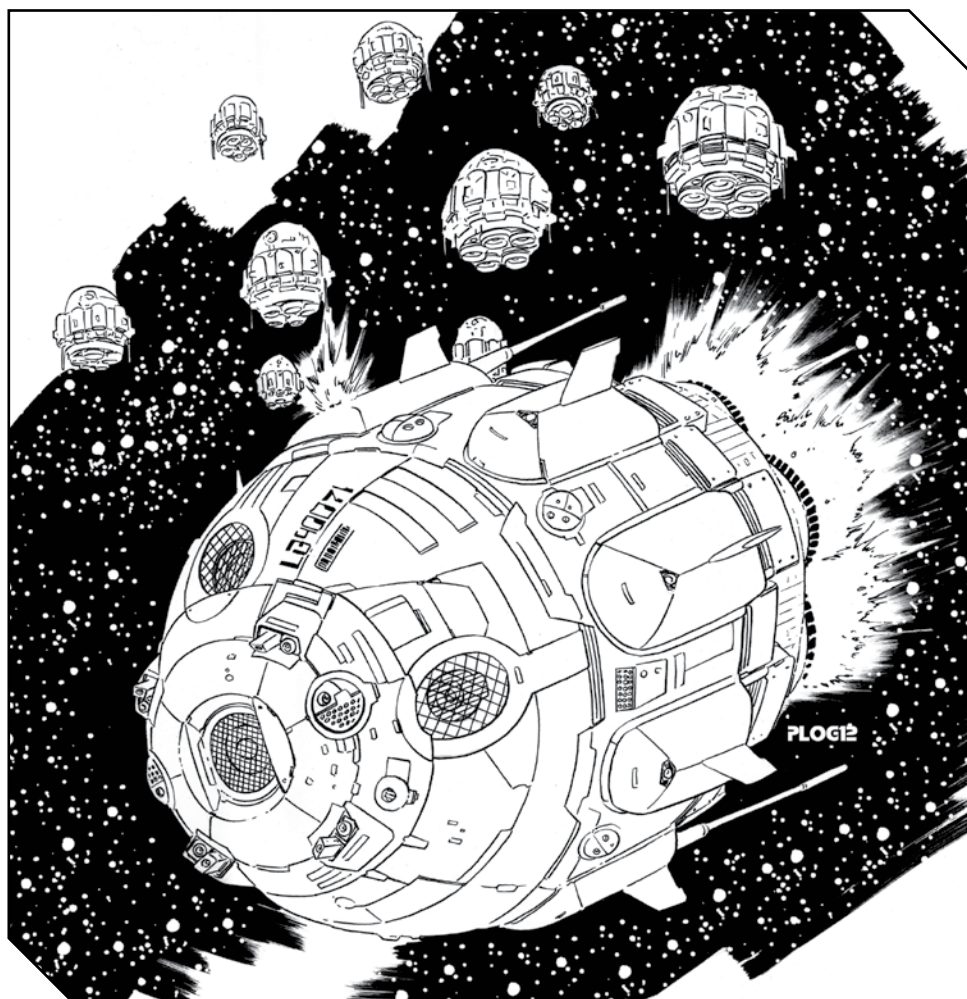
Life Boats: 0

Escape Pods: 0

Crew: None

Notes: Carries 75.5 tons of standard armor, SDS Self-Destruct and SDS Drone Control System (Gunnery 3, Piloting 4). Automated defenses provide 14 Marine Points.

Weapons: Arc (Heat) Type Nose (116 Heat)	Heat	Capital Attack Values (Standard)				Class
		Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	
4 PPC	40	4 (40)	4 (40)	—	—	PPC
4 Gauss Rifles (96 rounds)	4	6 (60)	6 (60)	6 (60)	—	Gauss
4 ER Large Lasers	48	3 (32)	3 (32)	3 (32)	—	Laser
4 LRM 20 + Artemis IV (96 rounds)	24	6 (64)	6 (64)	6 (64)	—	LRM
FR/FL (57 Heat)						
2 PPC	20	2 (20)	2 (20)	—	—	PPC
Gauss Rifle (24 rounds)	1	2 (15)	2 (15)	2 (15)	—	Gauss
2 ER Large Lasers	24	2 (16)	2 (16)	2 (16)	—	Laser
2 LRM 20 + Artemis IV (48 rounds)	12	3 (32)	3 (32)	3 (32)	—	LRM
AR/AL (52 Heat)						
1 PPC	10	1 (10)	1 (10)	—	—	PPC
2 ER Large Lasers	36	4 (36)	2 (16)	2 (16)	—	Laser
4 Medium Lasers						
1 LRM 20 + Artemis IV (18 rounds)	6	2 (16)	2 (16)	2 (16)	—	LRM
Aft (34 Heat)						
1 PPC	10	1 (10)	1 (10)	—	—	PPC
1 ER Large Laser	24	3 (28)	1 (8)	1 (8)	—	Laser
4 Medium Lasers						



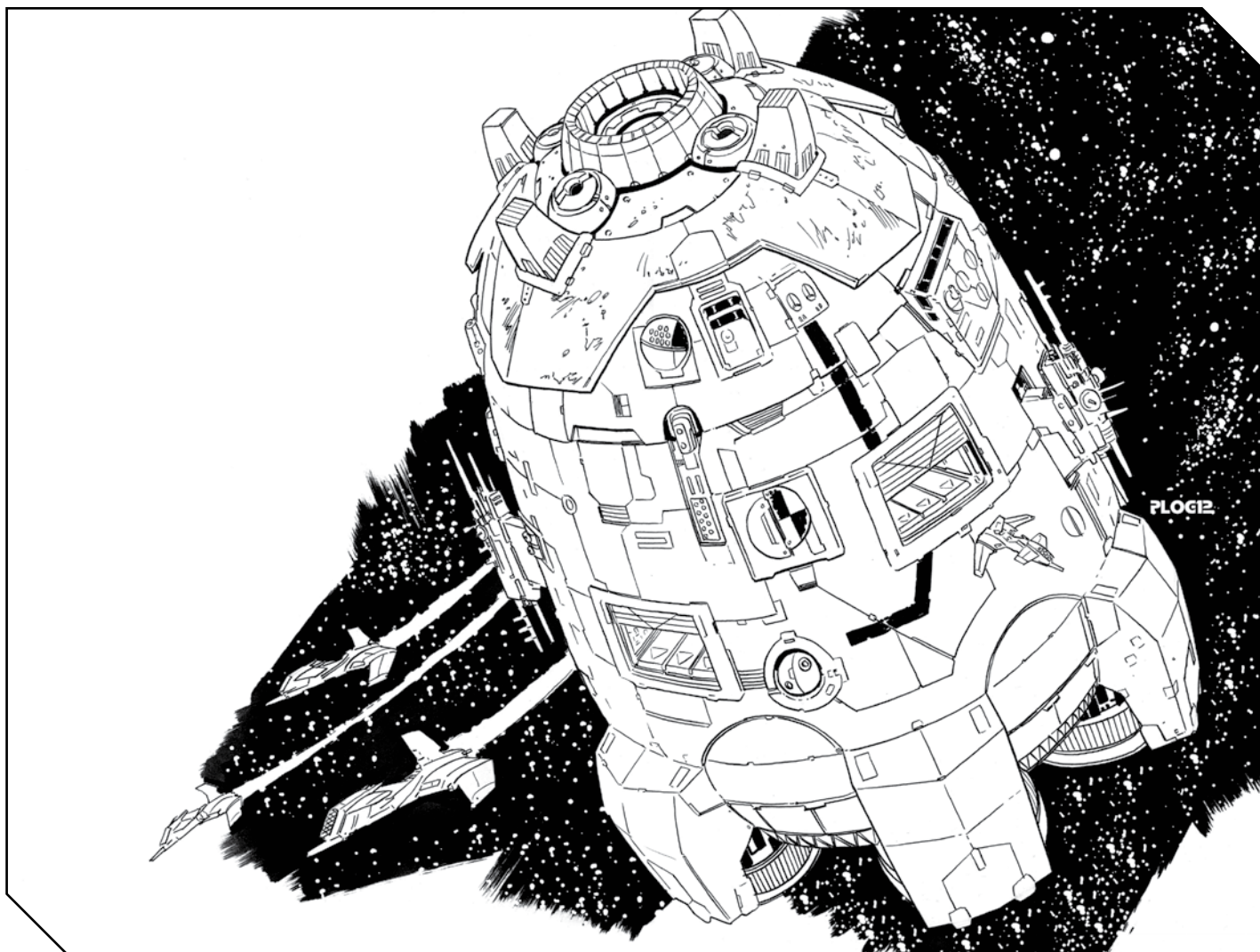
MODEL 96C "HOWDAH" SDS COMMAND SHIP

All too often the SDS network is characterized as a faceless computer network that operated with emotionless and calculating precision. The reality is that as automated as the SDS network was, it could not run completely without human intervention. This human intervention was as much for security as it was to direct the overall network. From an SDS Control center, any drones in the system could be shut down, activated and also directed much like a human-controlled ship, giving it operational orders and providing networking between the various drones. Human-controlled ATAC systems were also able to network in the less advanced drone fighters, giving them near the same intelligence as the full SDS drones.

The first such control centers were built into DropShips. The *Howdah* was originally a simple refit of the *Model 96 "Elephant"* to service and direct early M-2 drones. During testing the drones were deactivated except while in their test zones and these early *Model 96s* towed the drones to and from their test sites, as well as serving as a command center for monitoring the tests. The ability

to not only monitor/control the drones but also service and tow drones endeared the *Model 96* to longer term use and a yard line was started on New Earth to build the *Howdah*. The SDS command ship would see service through the Liberation of Terra, with the last of them scuttled as part of Kerensky's methodical dismantling of the SDS Network.

Outwardly the *Howdah* is identical to the *Elephant*, from performance profile to external weapon systems. Officially the *Howdah* never existed, and was listed on the SLDF rolls as the standard *Model 96*. First launched in 2695, the *Howdah* was based on the 2650 update of the *Model 96*, so lacked the ER PPCs that the *Elephant* was later refitted with. Internally the *Howdah* gave up much of its cubicle space to make room for an ATAC system able to coordinate up to three squadrons of drones. In addition to two small craft, the ship was equipped with six advanced robotic transport bays. When first launched they carried the early MK 20 "*SwiftStar*" Robotic Drones—based on the *Swift* aerospace fighter—and would later carry the more advanced MK 30 "*BlackWasp*" and eventually the MK 39 "*VoidSeeker*" series.



MODEL 96C "HOWDAH" SDS COMMAND SHIP

Type: Military Spheroid
Use: Tug/ SDS Controller
Tech: Inner Sphere
Introduced: 2695
Mass: 15,000 tons
Battle Value: 10,750

Dimensions

Length: 150 meters
Width: 68 meters
Height: 68 meters

Fuel: 700 tons (21,000 points)
Tons/Burn-day: 1.84
Safe Thrust: 5
Maximum Thrust: 8
Heat Sinks: 200 (400)
Structural Integrity: 25

Armor

Nose: 371
Sides: 325
Aft: 279

Cargo

Bay 1: Cargo (1,462 tons) 2 Doors
 Bay 2: Small Craft (2) 2 Doors
 Bay 3: ARTS Fighter Cubicles (6) 4 Doors

Life Boats: 2

Escape Pods: 10

Crew: 9 officers, 38 crew, 9 gunners, 10 bay personnel

Notes: Carries 77 tons of Ferro-Aluminum armor, Tug Adaptor, and an Autonomous Tactical Analysis Computer (up to twenty SDS drones).

Weapons:		Capital Attack Values (Standard)				Class
Arc (Heat) Type	Heat	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	
Nose (64 Heat)						
4 PPC	40	4 (40)	4 (40)	—	—	PPC
1 ER Large Lasers	18	2 (18)	2 (18)	2 (18)	—	Laser
2 Medium Lasers						
2 Gauss Rifles (48 rounds)	2	3 (30)	3 (30)	3 (30)	—	Gauss
1 LRM 10 + Artemis IV (24 rounds)	4	1 (8)	1 (8)	1 (8)	—	LRM
FR/FL (44 Heat)						
2 PPC	20	2 (20)	2 (20)	—	—	PPC
1 ER Large Laser	18	2 (18)	2 (18)	2 (18)	—	Laser
2 Medium Lasers						
2 Gauss Rifles (48 rounds)	2	3 (30)	3 (30)	3 (30)	—	Gauss
1 LRM 10 + Artemis IV (24 rounds)	4	1 (8)	1 (8)	1 (8)	—	LRM
AR/AL Aft (52 Heat)						
2 PPC	20	2 (20)	2 (20)	—	—	PPC
2 ER Large Lasers	30	3 (26)	2 (16)	2 (16)	—	Laser
2 Medium Lasers						
2 Gauss Rifles (48 rounds)	2	3 (30)	3 (30)	3 (30)	—	Gauss
Aft (58 Heat)						
4 ER Large Lasers	54	4 (42)	3 (32)	3 (32)	—	Laser
2 Medium Lasers						
1 LRM 10 + Artemis IV (24 rounds)	4	1 (8)	1 (8)	1 (8)	—	LRM

M-9 "PAVISE" SDS BATTLE STATION

The M-9 was the largest SDS drone ever built. The failure of the *Texas*-based M-6 showed significant problems in integrating the engines to an SDS drone's control systems, but did prove that a hull of its size could otherwise be fitted with drone controls. Thus the *Pavise* battle station came into being. They were intended to be the first and last line in system defense as well as the primary repair and rearm yard for SDS drones.

The *Pavise* was virtually two stations in one. Above the paired 450 meter grav-decks was the human-occupied section. This section operated much like existing traffic control and monitoring stations. Five small craft hangers serviced this section, and a fifty-thousand ton cargo hold held supplies, spares and served as an impound hold for stations serving in customs duties. The large hydroponics decks offered fresh produce and relaxation areas for crew and visitors. In addition to the small crew, the station could support three hundred visitors, be they passengers or additional staff. A single station and its small crew were capable of monitoring up to three hundred SDS drones and an entire star system.

Below the grav-decks lay the most advanced space vessel ever constructed. The entire station was fully automated, down to the life support controls that maintained the habitable upper sections. Automated drones carried parts and ammunition from the automated cargo decks, and huge robot crane gantries allowed ships and cargo to be plucked from space into the stations repair bays and flight decks.

The multi-level robotic flight deck could support 144 drone fighters, able to launch, recover and rearm without the need for human intervention. The twelve DropShip collars typically supported at least a squadron of M-3 drones and could support additional system traffic. The fighters and DropShips provided much needed mobile firepower to the M-9's defense. The two massive repair bays took automated systems to a new level. With one able to service ships up to 800,000 tons and the other up to 100,000 tons they could repair such complex components as the engines and sensor systems of the M-5 drone. The ATAC system, able to coordinate up to 300 SDS drones, was located in the lower portion of the station, though the human crew was able to monitor and override the system if the need arose. While the M-9 was essentially stationary, compared to other spacecraft, it possessed the firepower to stop any ship that came within the range of its weapons and its deep AR-10 magazines allowed it to use bearings-launched missiles to strike targets even farther out.

The *Pavise* was typically deployed near a system's jump points or in orbit around populated worlds. It was a complete success in its role as a SDS command and repair yard, but it would fortunately fall short of its job as the first and last line of defense for a system. Like all space stations, the virtual immobility that granted the *Pavise* the tonnage to mount such blistering firepower also left it as an unwilling observer in the maneuver warfare of space combat. In systems protected by the *Pavise* Kerensky's forces would use high-speed attack runs or bearings-launched missiles to wear down the massive stations. However, Terra, with no less than five stations at each jump point, would require more aggressive tactics.

M-9 "PAVISE" SDS BATTLE STATION

Type: Space Station

Tech: Inner Sphere

Introduced: 2720

Mass: 1,500,000 tons

Dimensions:

Length: 1,000 meters

Width: 200 meters

Fuel: 5,000 tons (12,500 points)

Tons/Burn Days: 2.82

Heat Sinks: 7,000 (14,000)

Structural Integrity: 1

Battle Value: 288,172

Armor

Nose: 550

Fore-Sides: 550

Aft-Sides: 550

Aft: 550

Cargo

Bay 1: Small Craft (10)	1 Door
Bay 2: ARTS Fighter Cubicles (144)	21 Doors
Bay 3: ARTS Pressurized Repair Bay (800,000 ton capacity)	1 Door
Bay 4: ARTS Pressurized Repair Bay (100,000 ton capacity)	1 Door
Bay 5: Cargo (157,585 tons)	2 Doors
Bay 6: Cargo (50,000 tons)	2 Doors

DropShip Capacity: 12

Grav Decks: 2 (450 meter diameter)

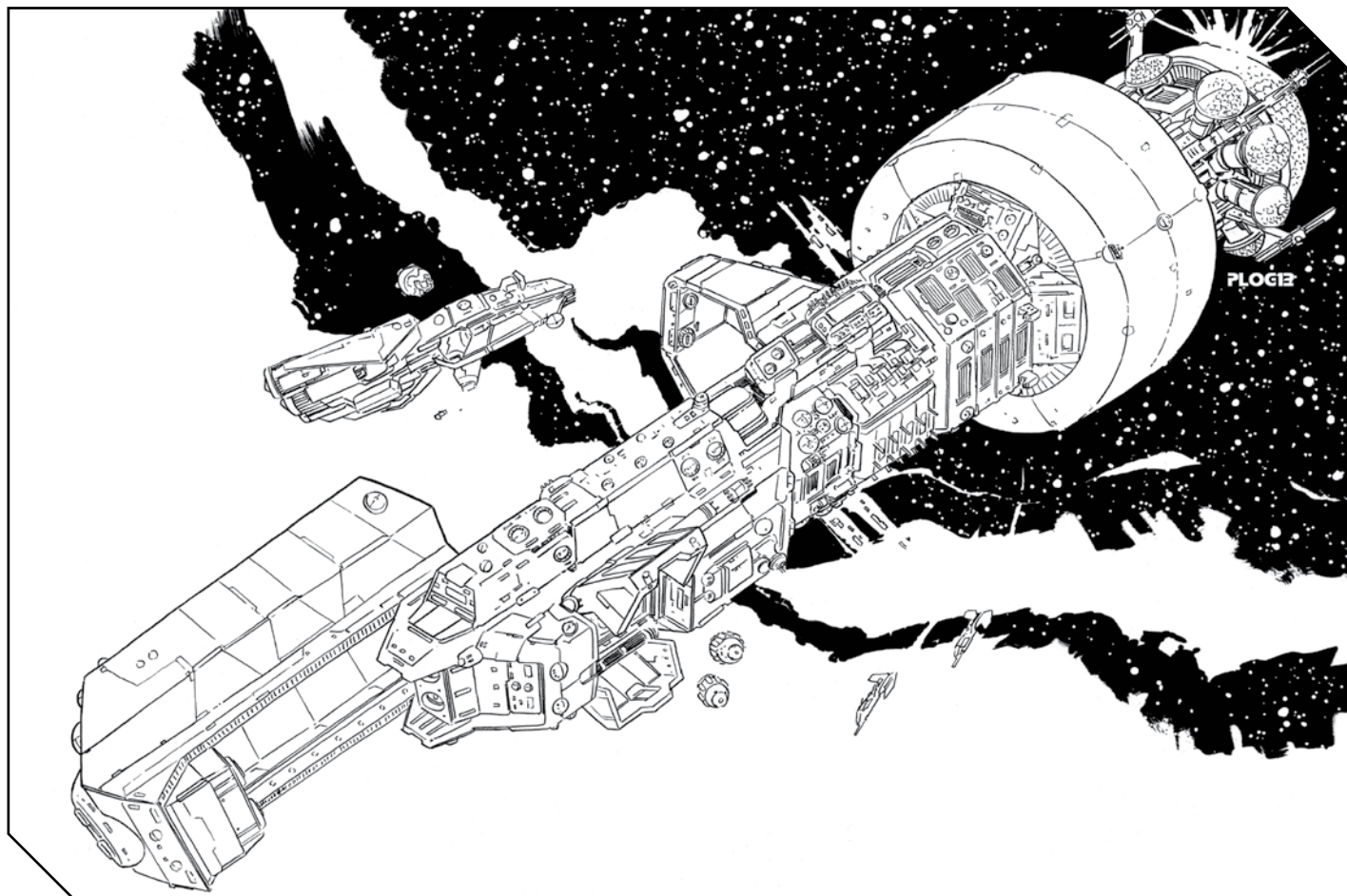
Escape Pods: 90

Life Boats: 0

Crew: None*, 20 first class cabins, 450 second class cabins, 25 marines

*The *Pavise* is fully autonomous and requires no crew to perform day-to-day operations. Twenty officers and 150 crew oversee the SDS computer network, operate the space traffic control center and perform major maintenance that the robotic systems cannot perform.

Notes: Equipped with 4,125 tons of Ferro-Carbide armor, SDS Drone Control System (Gunnery 3, Piloting 4), Naval Comm-Scanner Suite (Large), and an Autonomous Tactical Analysis Computer (up to 300 SDS drones). Automated defenses provide 251 Marine Points.



RULES ANNEX

Weapons:		Capital Attack Values (Standard)				
Arc (Heat) Type	Heat	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	Class
Nose (3,902 Heat)						
2 Heavy N-Gauss	36	60	60	60	60	Capital Gauss
2 Heavy N-Gauss	36	60	60	60	60	Capital Gauss
4 Heavy N-PPC	900	60	60	60	60	Capital PPC
4 Heavy N-PPC	900	60	60	60	60	Capital PPC
6 NL55	510	33	33	33	33	Capital Laser
6 NL55	510	33	33	33	33	Capital Laser
2 NAC/35	240	70	70	—	—	Capital Autocannon
2 NAC/35	240	70	70	—	—	Capital Autocannon
5 NAC/10	150	50	50	50	—	Capital Autocannon
4 AR-10	80	*	*	*	*	Capital Missile
(100 KW, 100 WS, 100 B)						
6 PPC	60	6 (60)	6 (60)	—	—	PPC
6 ER Large Lasers	72	5 (48)	5 (48)	5 (48)	—	Laser
6 Large Pulse Lasers	108	13 (126)	5 (54)	—	—	Laser
12 Medium Pulse Lasers						
12 Small Pulse Lasers	24	3 (36)	—	—	—	Point Defense
4 Gauss Rifles	4	6 (30)	6 (30)	6 (30)	—	Gauss
(160 rounds)						
4 LB 10-X AC	8	2 (24)	2 (24)	—	—	Autocannon
(160 rounds)						
4 LRM 20 + Artemis IV	24	6 (64)	6 (64)	6 (64)	—	Missile
(144 rounds)						
FL/FR (3,902 Heat)						
2 Heavy N-Gauss	36	60	60	60	60	Capital Gauss
2 Heavy N-Gauss	36	60	60	60	60	Capital Gauss
4 Heavy N-PPC	900	60	60	60	60	Capital PPC
4 Heavy N-PPC	900	60	60	60	60	Capital PPC
6 NL55	510	33	33	33	33	Capital Laser
6 NL55	510	33	33	33	33	Capital Laser
2 NAC/35	240	70	70	—	—	Capital Autocannon
2 NAC/35	240	70	70	—	—	Capital Autocannon
5 NAC/10	150	50	50	50	—	Capital Autocannon
4 AR-10	80	*	*	*	*	Capital Missile
(100 KW, 100 WS, 100 B)						
6 PPC	60	6 (60)	6 (60)	—	—	PPC
6 ER Large Lasers	72	5 (48)	5 (48)	5 (48)	—	Laser
6 Large Pulse Lasers	108	13 (126)	5 (54)	—	—	Laser
12 Medium Pulse Lasers						
12 Small Pulse Lasers	24	3 (36)	—	—	—	Point Defense
4 Gauss Rifles	4	6 (30)	6 (30)	6 (30)	—	Gauss
(160 rounds)						
4 LB 10-X AC	8	2 (24)	2 (24)	—	—	Autocannon
(160 rounds)						
4 LRM 20 + Artemis IV	24	6 (64)	6 (64)	6 (64)	—	Missile
(144 rounds)						

Weapons:		Capital Attack Values (Standard)				
Arc (Heat) Type	Heat	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	Class
AL/AR (3,902 Heat)						
2 Heavy N-Gauss	36	60	60	60	60	Capital Gauss
2 Heavy N-Gauss	36	60	60	60	60	Capital Gauss
4 Heavy N-PPC	900	60	60	60	60	Capital PPC
4 Heavy N-PPC	900	60	60	60	60	Capital PPC
6 NL55	510	33	33	33	33	Capital Laser
6 NL55	510	33	33	33	33	Capital Laser
2 NAC/35	240	70	70	—	—	Capital Autocannon
2 NAC/35	240	70	70	—	—	Capital Autocannon
5 NAC/10	150	50	50	50	—	Capital Autocannon
4 AR-10	80	*	*	*	*	Capital Missile
(100 KW, 100 WS, 100 B)						
6 PPC	60	6 (60)	6 (60)	—	—	PPC
6 ER Large Lasers	72	5 (48)	5 (48)	5 (48)	—	Laser
6 Large Pulse Lasers	108	13 (126)	5 (54)	—	—	Laser
12 Medium Pulse Lasers						
12 Small Pulse Lasers	24	3 (36)	—	—	—	Point Defense
4 Gauss Rifle	4	6 (30)	6 (30)	6 (30)	—	Gauss
(160 rounds)						
4 LB 10-X AC	8	2 (24)	2 (24)	—	—	Autocannon
(160 rounds)						
4 LRM 20 + Artemis IV	24	6 (64)	6 (64)	6 (64)	—	Missile
(144 rounds)						
Aft (3,902 Heat)						
2 Heavy N-Gauss	36	60	60	60	60	Capital Gauss
2 Heavy N-Gauss	36	60	60	60	60	Capital Gauss
4 Heavy N-PPC	900	60	60	60	60	Capital PPC
4 Heavy N-PPC	900	60	60	60	60	Capital PPC
6 NL55	510	33	33	33	33	Capital Laser
6 NL55	510	33	33	33	33	Capital Laser
2 NAC/35	240	70	70	—	—	Capital Autocannon
2 NAC/35	240	70	70	—	—	Capital Autocannon
5 NAC/10	150	50	50	50	—	Capital Autocannon
4 AR-10	80	*	*	*	*	Capital Missile
(100 KW, 100 WS, 100 B)						
6 PPC	60	6 (60)	6 (60)	—	—	PPC
6 ER Large Lasers	72	5 (48)	5 (48)	5 (48)	—	Laser
6 Large Pulse Lasers	108	13 (126)	5 (54)	—	—	Laser
12 Medium Pulse Lasers						
12 Small Pulse Lasers	24	3 (36)	—	—	—	Point Defense
4 Gauss Rifle	4	6 (30)	6 (30)	6 (30)	—	Gauss
(160 rounds)						
4 LB 10-X AC	8	2 (24)	2 (24)	—	—	Autocannon
(160 rounds)						
4 LRM 20 + Artemis IV	24	6 (64)	6 (64)	6 (64)	—	Missile
(144 rounds)						

MK. 39 "VOIDSEEKER" DRONE SERIES

As the M-5 was the zenith of the SDS large spacecraft evolution, so was the Mk. 39 series for fighter drones. Prior to its development, the Mk. 30 "*BlackWasp*" was the gold standard for drone fighters – the heavier Mk. 31 and lighter 32 failed to be as effective as the Mk. 30's near perfect blend of thrust, armor and weapons. Unfortunately, the Mk. 30's vulnerability to electromagnetic radiation was a weakness that would hamper its effectiveness. With the possibility of the fighter going rogue, its use in populated locations was limited and canny opponents would drive in close to confuse them.

The Mk. 33 to 38 series would be attempts to develop a hardened control system. It was not until the Mk. 39, though, that advances in the SDS drone systems allowed the ECCM capabilities of the larger drones to be worked into the smaller hull of an aerospace fighter. This breakthrough allowed the "*VoidSeeker*" to operate in the chaotic battleground of mixed space combat and was the final component the Hegemony's SDS network needed. The Mk. 39 series would be deployed only a few years before Amaris executed his coup taking control of the Hegemony and its SDS Network. Despite the short time in production, the success of the design led to thousands of them being built. Even as late as the Clan invasion, examples of these drones were still turning up. Unfortunately (or fortunately depending on the viewpoint), the fail-safes built into the drone controllers have never been cracked and every attempt to plumb the depths of a "*VoidSeeker*" has resulted in little more than a molten pile of computer chips.

Once they had achieved ECCM success, Hegemony designers chose to keep the basic airframe and components of the Mk. 39 as they continued to refine the design. The end result was a series of airframes based on a common structure. Despite many variant attempts, only the Mk. 39-004 *Interceptor* and the Mk. 39-007 *Striker* would go on to see widespread deployment. The base airframe was built around the then-experimental *Stingray* medium aerospace fighter hull, with the Mk. 39 mounting a GM 300 series experimental light engine thereby marking their elite "Royal" status as some of the only fighters to mount the extra-light class engines in the Star League. The engine was supplied with a six-ton fuel tank, allowing drones to sustain burns longer than most contemporary manned fighters. Ferro-aluminum and double heat sinks allowed the design maximum weight to allocate to weapon systems. A side benefit of the new shielded drone controls was the ability to generate an ECM jamming field similar to that of a Guardian ECM, without the additional weight required to mount such a system.

The Mk 39-004 *Interceptor* was the direct descendent of the Mk. 30. Capable of close to six gravities of thrust, it was able to quickly close on its targets, bringing to bear the wing-mounted pulse lasers for deadly effect. Alternatively the high thrust allowed it to stay at range and snipe with the Blankenburg extended-range large laser. The Beagle Active Probe allowed the 004 to cut through enemy jamming, clearing the way for its heavier cousin and SDS drones.

The 007 *Striker* packed an additional fifteen tons into the crafts airframe, bulking up the wings and fuselage both in structure and armor. The "*VoidSeeker*" common engine dropped the seventy-five ton 007's maximum thrust, but it was still on par with other heavy fighters of the era. Three extended-range large lasers gave it three times the ranged firepower of the 004 and with twenty-four reloads for the nose-mounted Artemis IV enhanced LRM launcher had an extra punch that could allow a squadron of 007s to threaten even heavy DropShips.

None of the other variants of the Mk. 39 series saw the widespread deployment of the 004 and 007. Of the only other viable designs, the thirty-ton 009 nearly tore itself apart when executing high-thrust maneuvers and the hundred-ton 005 would damage fighter bay landing arrestors in more than 50% of recovering attempts.

Type: MK. 39-004 Interceptor

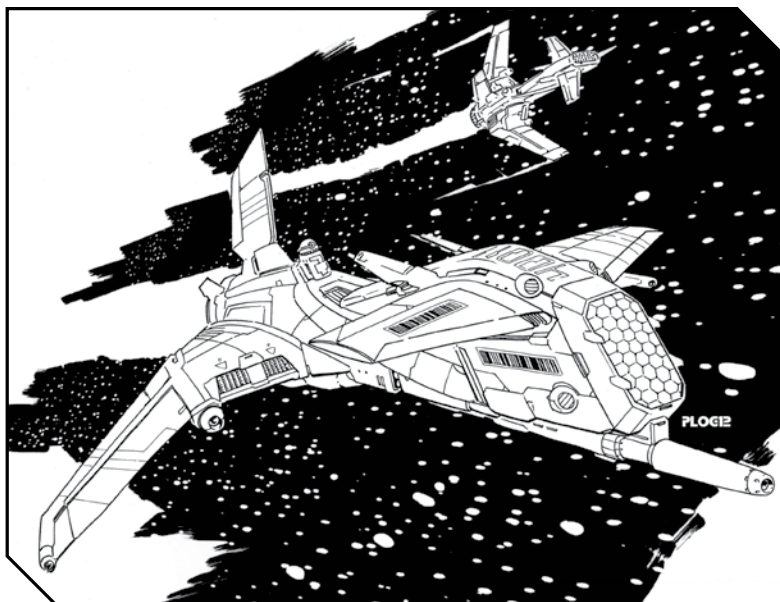
Technology Base: Inner Sphere

Tonnage: 60

Battle Value: 1,421

Equipment

Engine:	300 XL	Mass	9.5
Safe Thrust:	7		
Maximum Thrust:	11		
Structural Integrity:	7		
Heat Sinks:	16 [32]		6
Fuel:	480		6
Cockpit (Robotic):			3
Armor Factor (Ferro):	198		10
	<i>Armor Value</i>		
Nose	58		
Wings	42/42		
Aft	33		



Weapons and Ammo	Location	Tonnage	Heat	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
ER Large Laser	Nose	5	12	8	8	8	—
Beagle Active Probe	Nose	1.5					
Large Pulse Laser	RW	7	10	9	9	—	—
Medium Laser	RW	1	3	5	—	—	—
Large Pulse Laser	LW	7	10	9	9	—	—
Medium Laser	LW	1	3	5	—	—	—
S-ASRCS (Improved)	—	3					

Notes: Shielded Aerospace Smart Robotic Control System (Improved) gives the Mk. 39-004 Interceptor a Piloting Skill of 5, a Gunnery Skill of 4 and the abilities of a Guardian ECM Suite.

Type: MK. 39-007 Striker
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 75
Battle Value: 1,814

Equipment

Engine:	300 XL
Safe Thrust:	6
Maximum Thrust:	9
Structural Integrity:	7
Heat Sinks:	21 [42]
Fuel:	480
Cockpit (Robotic):	
Armor Factor (Ferro):	241
	<i>Armor Value</i>
Nose	72
Wings	58/58
Aft	52

Mass

9.5
11
6
3
13.5



Weapons and Ammo	Location	Tonnage	Heat	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
ER Large Laser	Nose	5	12	8	8	8	—
LRM 15 with Artemis IV	Nose	8	5	12	12	12	—
Ammo (LRM) 24	—	3					
ER Large Laser	RW	5	12	8	8	8	—
ER Large Laser	LW	5	12	8	8	8	—
Medium Pulse Laser	Aft	2	4	6	—	—	—
S-ASRCS (Improved)	—	4					

Notes: Shielded Aerospace Smart Robotic Control System (Improved) gives the Mk. 39-007 Striker a Piloting Skill of 5, a Gunnery Skill of 4, and the abilities of a Guardian ECM Suite.

BATTLETECH

ARMOR DIAGRAM

Capital Scale



WARSHIP RECORD SHEET

WARSHIP DATA

Type: M5 "CASPAR" CAPITAL DRONE

Name: _____ Tonnage: 680,000
 Thrust: _____ Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Safe Thrust: 4 Star League
 Maximum Thrust: 6
 DropShip Capacity: 0
 Fighters/Small Craft: 0 / 0 Launch Rate: 0

Weapons & Equipment Inventory

Capital Scale		(1-12)	(13-24)	(25-40)	(41-50)	
Bay	Loc	Ht	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
4 NL55	N	340	22	22	22	22
2 Heavy N-PPC	N	450	30	30	30	30
1 Killer Whale (20 Missiles)	N	20	4	4	4	4
2 NL55	FR/FL	170	11	11	11	11
3 NAC/20 (300 Rnds)	FR/FL	180	60	60	60	60
1 AR-10 Launcher (10 KW, 20 B)	FR/FL	20	*	*	*	*
1 NL55	RBS/LBS	85	6	6	6	6
2 NAC/25 (200 Rnds)	RBS/LBS	170	50	50	50	—
2 NAC/25 (200 Rnds)	RBS/LBS	170	50	50	50	—
2 AR-10 Launcher (20 KB, 40 B)	RBS/LBS	40	*	*	*	*
2 NL55	AR/AL	170	11	11	11	11
3 NAC/20 (300 Rnds)	AR/AL	180	60	60	60	60
4 NL55	A	340	22	22	22	22
2 Barracuda (40 Missiles)	A	20	2	2	2	2

Grav Decks:

None

Cargo:

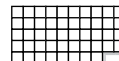
Bay 1: Cargo (1,840.5 Tons) (1 door)

Notes: DS Self-Destruct System and SDS Drone Control System (Gunnery 3, Piloting 4). Automated defenses provide 110 Marine Points.

Ammo: NAC/20 (2,000) Barracuda (140)
 Killer Whale (100)

BV: 95,051

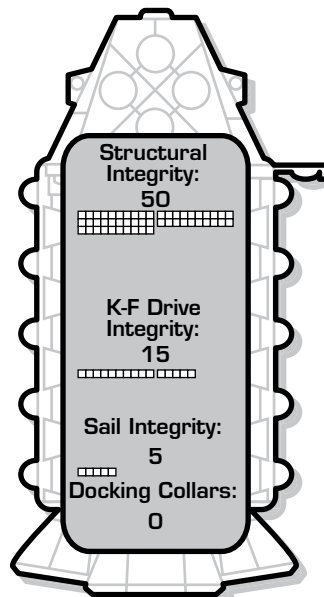
Nose Damage Threshold
 (Total Armor)
 4 (48)



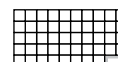
Fore-Left Damage
 Threshold (Total Armor)
 5 (48)



Fore-Right Damage
 Threshold (Total Armor)
 5 (48)



Aft-Left Damage
 Threshold (Total Armor)
 5 (48)



Aft-Right Damage
 Threshold (Total Armor)
 5 (48)



Aft Damage Threshold
 (Total Armor)
 5 (48)

CREW DATA

Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Modifier	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	Incp.

Crew: 0 Marines: 0
 Passengers: 0 Elementals: 0
 Other: 0 Battle Armor: 0
 Life Boats/Escapes Pods: 0 / 0

CRITICAL DAMAGE

Avionics	+1	+2	+5	Life Support	+2	
CIC	+2	+4	0			
Sensors	+1	+2	+5			
Thrusters						
Left	+1	+2	+3	0		
Right	+1	+2	+3	0		
Engine	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	0

VELOCITY RECORD

Turn #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										

Turn #	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										

HEAT DATA

Heat Sinks:	Heat Generation Per Arc
1,250	Nose: 810
(2,500)	Left/Right Fore: 370 / 370
Double	Left/Right Broadside: 465 / 465
	Left/Right Aft: 350 / 350
	Aft: 360

BATTLETECH

ARMOR DIAGRAM

Capital Scale



WARSHIP RECORD SHEET

WARSHIP DATA

Type: M5C "CASPAR" CAPITAL DRONE

Name: _____ Tonnage: 680,000
 Thrust: _____ Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Safe Thrust: 4 Star League
 Maximum Thrust: 6
 DropShip Capacity: 0
 Fighters/Small Craft: 0 / 0 Launch Rate: 0

Weapons & Equipment Inventory

Capital Scale		(1-12)	(13-24)	(25-40)	(41-50)	
Bay	Loc	Ht	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
4 NL55	N	340	22	22	22	22
4 Heavy N-PPC	N	900	60	60	60	60
1 Killer Whale (20 Missiles)	N	20	4	4	4	4
2 NL55	FR/FL	170	11	11	11	11
3 NAC/20 (300 Rnds)	FR/FL	180	60	60	60	60
1 AR-10 Launcher (10 KW, 20 B)	FR/FL	20	*	*	*	*
1 NL55	RBS/LBS	85	6	6	6	6
2 NAC/25 (200 Rnds)	RBS/LBS	170	50	50	50	—
2 NAC/25 (200 Rnds)	RBS/LBS	170	50	50	50	—
2 AR-10 Launcher (20 KB, 40 B)	RBS/LBS	40	*	*	*	*
2 NL55	AR/AL	170	11	11	11	11
3 NAC/20 (300 Rnds)	AR/AL	180	60	60	60	60
4 NL55	A	340	22	22	22	22
2 Barracuda (40 Missiles)	A	20	2	2	2	2

Grav Decks:

None

Cargo:

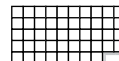
Bay 1: Cargo (1,933.5 Tons) (1 door)

Notes: DS Self-Destruct System and SDS Drone Control System (Gunnery 4, Piloting 5). Automated defenses provide 110 Marine Points.

Ammo: NAC/20 (2,000) Barracuda (140)
 Killer Whale (100)

BV: 100,128

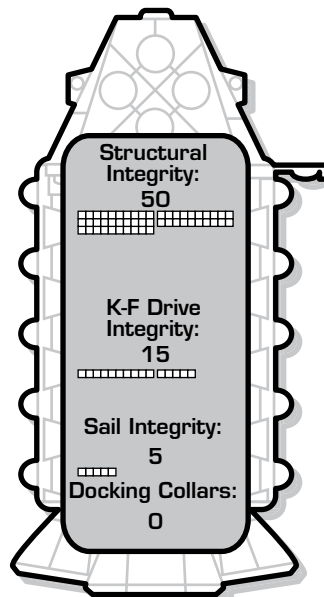
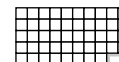
Nose Damage Threshold
 (Total Armor)
 4 (48)



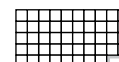
Fore-Left Damage
 Threshold (Total Armor)
 5 (48)



Fore-Right Damage
 Threshold (Total Armor)
 5 (48)



Aft-Left Damage
 Threshold (Total Armor)
 5 (48)



Aft-Right Damage
 Threshold (Total Armor)
 5 (48)



Aft Damage Threshold
 (Total Armor)
 5 (48)

CREW DATA

Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Modifier	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	Incp.

Crew: 0 Marines: 0
 Passengers: 0 Elementals: 0
 Other: 0 Battle Armor: 0
 Life Boats/Escapes Pods: 0 / 0

CRITICAL DAMAGE

Avionics	+1	+2	+5	Life Support	+2	
CIC	+2	+4	0			
Sensors	+1	+2	+5			
Thrusters						
Left	+1	+2	+3	0		
Right	+1	+2	+3	0		
Engine	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	0

VELOCITY RECORD

Turn #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										

Turn #	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										

HEAT DATA

Heat Sinks:	Heat Generation Per Arc
1,250	Nose: 1,260
(2,500)	Left/Right Fore: 370 / 370
Double	Left/Right Broadside: 465 / 465
	Left/Right Aft: 350 / 350
	Aft: 360

BATTLETECH

SPHEROID DROPSHIP RECORD SHEET

DROPSHIP DATA

Type: M-3 DRONE

Name: _____ Tonnage: 4,000
 Thrust: _____ Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Safe Thrust: 7 Star League
 Maximum Thrust: 11
 Fighters/Small Craft: 0 / 0 Launch Rate: 0

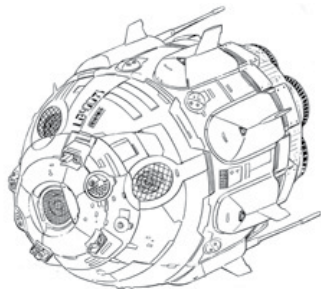
Weapons & Equipment Inventory

Standard Scale	Loc	Ht	(1-6)	(7-12)	(13-20)	(21-25)
Bay			SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
4 PPC	N	40	4(40)	4(40)	—	—
4 Gauss Rifle (96 Rnds)	N	4	6(60)	6(60)	6(60)	—
4 ER Large Laser	N	48	3(32)	3(32)	3(32)	—
4 LRM 20 + Artemis IV (96 Rnds)	N	24	6(64)	6(64)	6(64)	—
2 PPC	FR/FL	20	2(20)	2(20)	—	—
1 Gauss Rifle (24 Rnds)	FR/FL	1	2(15)	2(15)	2(15)	—
2 ER Large Laser	FR/FL	24	2(16)	2(16)	2(16)	—
2 LRM 20 + Artemis IV (18 Rnds)	FR/FL	12	3(32)	3(32)	3(32)	—
1 PPC	AR/AL	10	1(10)	1(10)	—	—
2 ER Large Laser	AR/AL	36	4(36)	2(16)	2(16)	—
4 Medium Laser						
1 LRM 20 + Artemis IV (18 Rnds)	AR/AL	6	2(16)	2(16)	2(16)	—
1 PPC	A	10	1(10)	1(10)	—	—
1 ER Large Laser	A	24	3(28)	1(8)	1(8)	—
4 Medium Laser						

Cargo:
 Bay 1: Cargo (28 tons) (1 doors)

Notes: SDS Self-Destruct and SDS Drone Control System (Gunnery 3, Piloting 4). Automated defenses provide 14 Marine Points.

BV: 16,459



CREW DATA

Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Modifier	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	Incp.

Crew: ☐ Marines: ☐
 Passengers: ☐ Elementals: ☐
 Other: ☐ Battle Armor: ☐
 Life Boats/Escape Pods: ☐ / ☐

VELOCITY RECORD

Turn #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										
Altitude										

Turn #	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										
Altitude										

Nose Damage Threshold (Total Armor) 37 (368)

ARMOR DIAGRAM

Standard Scale



Left Damage Threshold (Total Armor) 33 (323)

Right Damage Threshold (Total Armor) 33 (323)

Structural Integrity: 21

Aft Damage Threshold (Total Armor) 28 (278)

CRITICAL DAMAGE

Avionics	+1	+2	+5	Gear	+5	
FCS	+2	+4	D	Life Support	+2	
Sensors	+1	+2	+5	K-F Boom	D	
Thrusters				Docking Collar	D	
Left	+1	+2	+3	D		
Right	+1	+2	+3	D		
Engine	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	D

HEAT DATA

Heat Sinks:	Heat Generation Per Arc	
200 (400)	Nose:	116
Double	Aft:	34
	Fore-Left:	57
	Aft-Left:	52
	Fore-Right:	57
	Aft-Right:	52

BATTLETECH

SPHEROID DROPSHIP RECORD SHEET

DROPSHIP DATA

Type: MODEL 96C "HOWDAH" SDS COMAND SHIP

Name: _____ Tonnage: 15,000
 Thrust: _____ Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Safe Thrust: 5 Star League
 Maximum Thrust: 8
 Fighters/Small Craft: 6 / 2 Launch Rate: 8

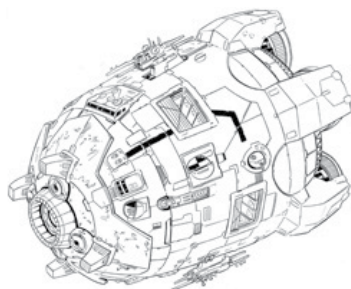
Weapons & Equipment Inventory

Standard Scale	Loc	Ht	(1-6)	(7-12)	(13-20)	(21-25)
Bay			SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
4 PPC	N	40	4(40)	4(40)	—	—
1 ER Large Laser	N	18	2(18)	1(8)	1(8)	—
2 Medium Laser						
2 Gauss Rifle (48 Rnds)	N	2	3(30)	3(30)	3(30)	—
1 LRM 10 + Artemis IV (24 Rnds)	N	4	1(8)	1(8)	1(8)	—
2 PPC	FR/FL	20	2(20)	2(20)	—	—
1 ER Large Laser	FR/FL	18	2(18)	1(8)	1(8)	—
2 Medium Laser						
2 Gauss Rifle (48 Rnds)	FR/FL	2	3(30)	3(30)	3(30)	—
1 LRM 10 + Artemis IV (24 Rnds)	FR/FL	4	1(8)	1(8)	1(8)	—
2 PPC	AR/AL	20	2(20)	2(20)	—	—
2 ER Large Laser	AR/AL	30	3(26)	2(16)	2(16)	—
2 Medium Laser						
2 Gauss Rifle (48 Rnds)	AR/AL	2	3(30)	3(30)	3(30)	—
4 ER Large Laser	A	54	4(42)	3(32)	3(32)	—
2 Medium Laser						
1 LRM 10 + Artemis IV (24 Rnds)	A	4	1(8)	1(8)	1(8)	—

Cargo:
 Bay 1: Cargo (1,462 Tons) (2 door)
 Bay 2: Small Craft (2) (2 doors)
 Bay 3: ARTS Fighter Cubicles (6) (4 doors)

Notes: Tug Adaptor, and an Autonomous Tactical Analysis Computer (up to twenty SDS drones).

BV: 10,750



CREW DATA

Gunnery Skill: _____	Piloting Skill: _____
Hits Taken	1 2 3 4 5 6
Modifier	+1 +2 +3 +4 +5 Incp.
Crew: 66	Marines: 0
Passengers: 0	Elementals: 0
Other: 0	Battle Armor: 0
Life Boats/Escape Pods: 2 / 10	

VELOCITY RECORD

Turn #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										
Altitude										
Turn #	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										
Altitude										

Nose Damage Threshold (Total Armor) 38 (371)

ARMOR DIAGRAM

Standard Scale



Left Damage Threshold (Total Armor) 33 (325)

Right Damage Threshold (Total Armor) 33 (325)

Structural Integrity: 25

Aft Damage Threshold (Total Armor) 28 (279)

CRITICAL DAMAGE

Avionics	+1	+2	+5	Gear	+5
FCS	+2	+4	D	Life Support	+2
Sensors	+1	+2	+5	K-F Boom	D
Thrusters				Docking Collar	D
Left	+1	+2	+3	D	
Right	+1	+2	+3	D	
Engine	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5 D

HEAT DATA

Heat Sinks:	Heat Generation Per Arc			
200 (400)	Nose:	64	Aft:	58
Double	Fore-Left:	44	Aft-Left:	52
	Fore-Right:	44	Aft-Right:	52

BATTLETECH

ARMOR DIAGRAM

Capital Scale



SPACE STATION RECORD SHEET

SPACE STATION DATA

Type: M-9 "PAVISE" SDS BATTLE STATION

Name: _____ Tonnage: 1,500,000
 Thrust: _____ Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Station Keeping Only Star League

DropShip Capacity: 12

Fighters/Small Craft: 144/10 Launch Rate: 16/turn

Weapons & Equipment Inventory

Capital Scale		[1-12] [13-24][25-40][41-50]					
Bay		Loc	Ht	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
2 Heavy N-Gauss (200 Rnds)		N	36	60	60	60	60
2 Heavy N-Gauss (200 Rnds)		N	36	60	60	60	60
4 Heavy N-PPC		N	900	60	60	60	60
4 Heavy N-PPC		N	900	60	60	60	60
6 NL55		N	510	33	33	33	33
6 NL55		N	510	33	33	33	33
2 NAC/35 (200 Rnds)		N	240	70	70	—	—
2 NAC/35 (200 Rnds)		N	240	70	70	—	—
5 NAC/10 (500 Rnds)		N	150	50	50	50	—
4 AR-10		N	*	*	*	*	*
(100 KW, 100 WS, 100 B)							
2 Heavy N-Gauss (200 Rnds)		FL/FR	36	60	60	60	60
2 Heavy N-Gauss (200 Rnds)		FL/FR	36	60	60	60	60
4 Heavy N-PPC		FL/FR	900	60	60	60	60
4 Heavy N-PPC		FL/FR	900	60	60	60	60
6 NL55		FL/FR	510	33	33	33	33
6 NL55		FL/FR	510	33	33	33	33
2 NAC/35 (200 Rnds)		FL/FR	240	70	70	—	—
2 NAC/35 (200 Rnds)		FL/FR	240	70	70	—	—
5 NAC/10 (500 Rnds)		FL/FR	150	50	50	50	—
4 AR-10		FL/FR	*	*	*	*	*
(100 KW, 100 WS, 100 B)							
2 Heavy N-Gauss (200 Rnds)		AL/AR	36	60	60	60	60
2 Heavy N-Gauss (200 Rnds)		AL/AR	36	60	60	60	60
4 Heavy N-PPC		AL/AR	900	60	60	60	60
4 Heavy N-PPC		AL/AR	900	60	60	60	60
6 NL55		AL/AR	510	33	33	33	33
6 NL55		AL/AR	510	33	33	33	33
2 NAC/35 (200 Rnds)		AL/AR	240	70	70	—	—
2 NAC/35 (200 Rnds)		AL/AR	240	70	70	—	—
5 NAC/10 (500 Rnds)		AL/AR	150	50	50	50	—
4 AR-10		AL/AR	*	*	*	*	*
(100 KW, 100 WS, 100 B)							
2 Heavy N-Gauss (200 Rnds)		A	36	60	60	60	60
2 Heavy N-Gauss (200 Rnds)		A	36	60	60	60	60
4 Heavy N-PPC		A	900	60	60	60	60
4 Heavy N-PPC		A	900	60	60	60	60
6 NL55		A	510	33	33	33	33
6 NL55		A	510	33	33	33	33
2 NAC/35 (200 Rnds)		A	240	70	70	—	—
2 NAC/35 (200 Rnds)		A	240	70	70	—	—
5 NAC/10 (500 Rnds)		A	150	50	50	50	—
4 AR-10		A	*	*	*	*	*
(100 KW, 100 WS, 100 B)							

(Weapons and Equipment Inventory continued on next page)

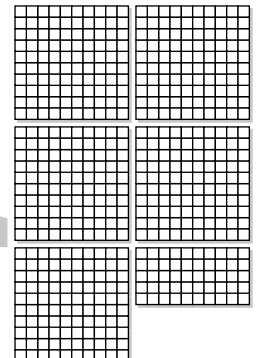
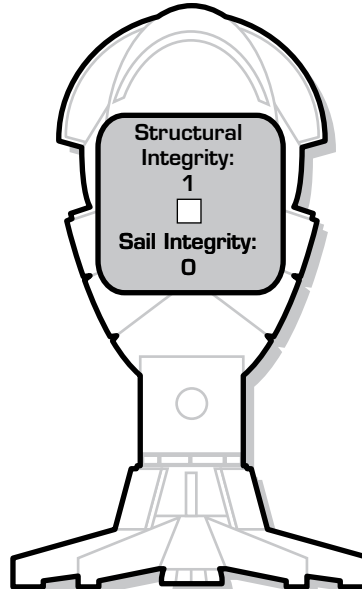
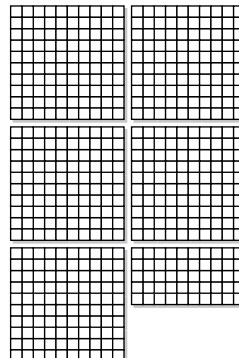
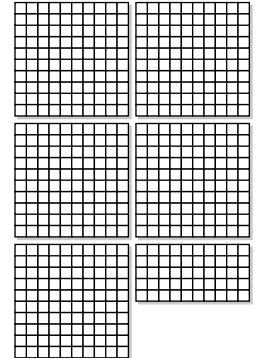
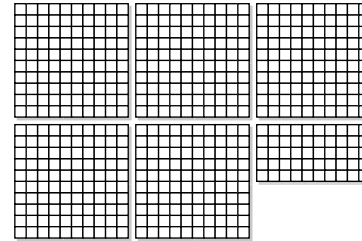
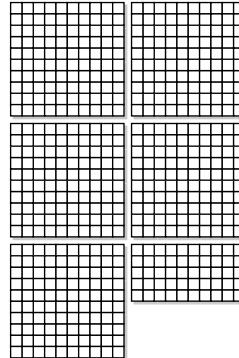
Ammo: Killer Whale (600) White Shark (600) Barracuda (600)
 Hvy. Naval Gauss (2,400) NAC/20 (3,000) NAC/35 (2,400)
 Gauss (960) LB 10-X (960) LRM 20 + Artemis IV (864)

BV: 288,172

Fore-Left Damage
Threshold (Total Armor)
55 (550)

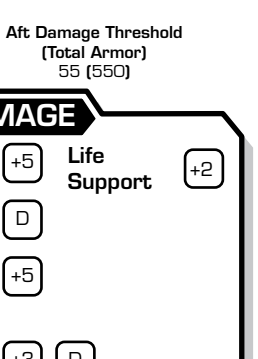
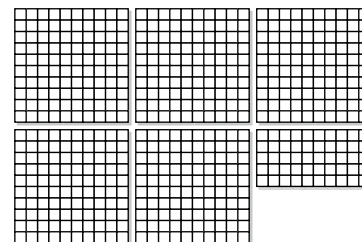
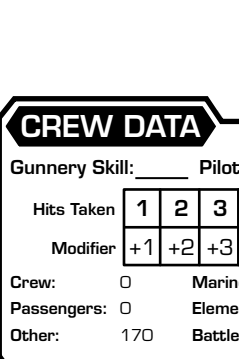
Nose Damage Threshold
(Total Armor)
55 (550)

Fore-Right Damage
Threshold (Total Armor)
55 (550)



Aft-Left Damage
Threshold (Total Armor)
55 (550)

Aft-Right Damage
Threshold (Total Armor)
55 (550)



CREW DATA

Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Modifier	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	Incp.

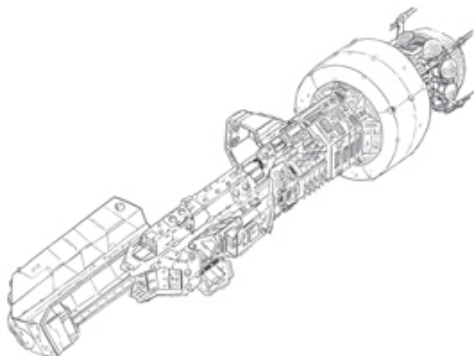
Crew: 0 Marines: 25
 Passengers: 0 Elementals: 0
 Other: 170 Battle Armor: 0
 Life Boats/Escapes Pods: 0 /90

CRITICAL DAMAGE

Avionics +1 +2 +5 Life Support +2
 CIC +2 +4 D
 Sensors +1 +2 +5
 Thrusters
 Left +1 +2 +3 D
 Right +1 +2 +3 D

HEAT DATA

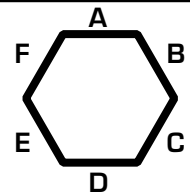
Heat Sinks: 7,000 (14,000) Double
 Heat Generation Per Arc
 Nose: 3,902
 Left/Right Fore: 3,902 / 3,902
 Left/Right Aft: 3,902 / 3,902
 Aft: 3,902



BATTLETECH

SPACE STATION RECORD SHEET (REVERSE)

Advanced
Movement
Compass



STATION DATA (Cont.)

Type: M-9 "PAVISE" SDS BATTLE STATION

Name: _____

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (Cont.)

Standard Scale		(1-6)	(7-12)	(13-20)	(21-25)	
Bay	Loc	Ht	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
6 PPC	N	60	6(60)	6(60)	—	—
6 ER Large Laser	N	72	5(48)	5(48)	—	—
6 Large Pulse Laser	N	108	13(126)	5(54)	—	—
12 Medium Pulse Laser						
12 Small Pulse Laser	N	24	3(36)	Point Defense		
4 Gauss Rifle (160 Rnds)	N	4	6(60)	6(60)	6(60)	—
4 LB 10-X AC (160 Rnds)	N	8	2(24)	2(24)	—	—
4 LRM 20 + Artemis IV (144 Rnds)	N	24	6(64)	6(64)	6(64)	—
6 PPC	FL/FR	60	6(60)	6(60)	—	—
6 ER Large Laser	FL/FR	72	5(48)	5(48)	—	—
6 Large Pulse Laser	FL/FR	108	13(126)	5(54)	—	—
12 Medium Pulse Laser						
12 Small Pulse Laser	FL/FR	24	3(36)	Point Defense		
4 Gauss Rifle (160 Rnds)	FL/FR	4	6(60)	6(60)	6(60)	—
4 LB 10-X AC (160 Rnds)	FL/FR	8	2(24)	2(24)	—	—
4 LRM 20 + Artemis IV (144 Rnds)	FL/FR	24	6(64)	6(64)	6(64)	—
6 PPC	AL/AR	60	6(60)	6(60)	—	—
6 ER Large Laser	AL/AR	72	5(48)	5(48)	—	—
6 Large Pulse Laser	AL/AR	108	13(126)	5(54)	—	—
12 Medium Pulse Laser						
12 Small Pulse Laser	AL/AR	24	3(36)	Point Defense		
4 Gauss Rifle (160 Rnds)	AL/AR	4	6(60)	6(60)	6(60)	—
4 LB 10-X AC (160 Rnds)	AL/AR	8	2(24)	2(24)	—	—
4 LRM 20 + Artemis IV (144 Rnds)	AL/AR	24	6(64)	6(64)	6(64)	—
6 PPC	A	60	6(60)	6(60)	—	—
6 ER Large Laser	A	72	5(48)	5(48)	—	—
6 Large Pulse Laser	A	108	13(126)	5(54)	—	—
12 Medium Pulse Laser						
12 Small Pulse Laser	A	24	3(36)	Point Defense		
4 Gauss Rifle (160 Rnds)	A	4	6(60)	6(60)	6(60)	—
4 LB 10-X AC (160 Rnds)	A	8	2(24)	2(24)	—	—
4 LRM 20 + Artemis IV (144 Rnds)	A	24	6(64)	6(64)	6(64)	—

Grav Decks: Grav Deck #1: 450-meter
Grav Deck #2: 450-meter

Cargo: Bay 1: Small Craft (10) (1 doors)
Bay 2: ARTS Fighter Cubicles (144) (21 doors)
Bay 3: ARTS Pressurized Repair Bay (1 door)
(800,000 ton capacity)
Bay 4: ARTS Pressurized Repair Bay (1 door)
(100,000 ton capacity)
Bay 5: Cargo (157,585 Tons) (2 doors)
Bay 6: Cargo (50,000 Tons) (2 doors)

Notes: SDS Drone Control System (Gunnery 3, Piloting 4), Naval Comm-Scanner Suite (Large), and an Autonomous Tactical Analysis Computer (up to 300 SDS drones). Automated defenses provide 251 Marine Points.

ADVANCED MOVEMENT

A vector is active if thrust is applied while the unit is facing that hexside. A vector is inactive if the unit spends no thrust to move through that hexside.

Each time a unit spends thrust, note down that number on the record sheet in the appropriate vector (the vector of the unit's facing). Next, determine the effect of spending thrust by consolidating the active vectors.

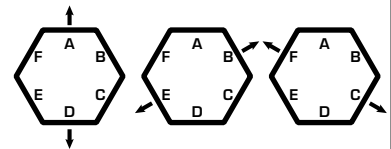
First, consolidate any active opposing vectors (see Opposing Vectors diagram) by subtracting the lowest thrust value from both vectors, reducing one vector to 0.

Next, consolidate the oblique vectors (see Oblique Vectors diagram). When any pair of oblique vectors is active, subtract the lowest of the two thrust values from both vectors (or from both if they are equal), reducing one (or both) oblique vectors to 0, and add the same value to the thrust value of the vector in between.

After consolidating all vectors, a unit should have no more than two active vectors.

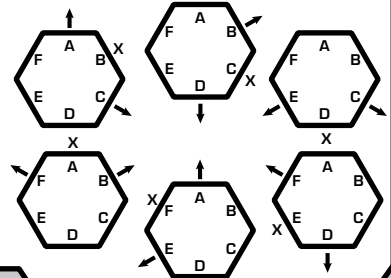
OPPOSING VECTORS

If both vectors marked with arrows are active, subtract an equal amount from both until only one of them is active.



OBLIQUE VECTORS

If both vector markers are active, subtract an equal amount from both and add that amount to vector X.



VELOCITY RECORD

Unit: _____

Turn

Velocity

#	Thrust	Facing	A	B	C	D	E	F	Fuel
1	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
2	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
3	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
4	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
5	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
6	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
7	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
8	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
9	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
10	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
11	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
12	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
13	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
14	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
15	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
16	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
17	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
18	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
19	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____
20	_____	_____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	____/____	_____

BATTLETECH

AEROSPACE FIGHTER RECORD SHEET

FIGHTER DATA

Type: MK. 39-004 "VOIDSEEKER" INTERCEPTOR

Thrust: Tonnage: 60
 Safe Thrust: 7 Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Maximum Thrust: 11 Era: Star League

Weapons & Equipment Inventory

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
1	ER Large Laser [DE]	N	12	8	8	8	—
1	Beagle Active Probe [E]	N	—	—	—	—	—
1	Large Pulse Laser [P]	L/RW	10	9	9	—	—
1	Medium Laser [DE]	L/RW	3	5	—	—	—
1	S-ASRCS (Improved) [E]	—	—	—	—	—	—

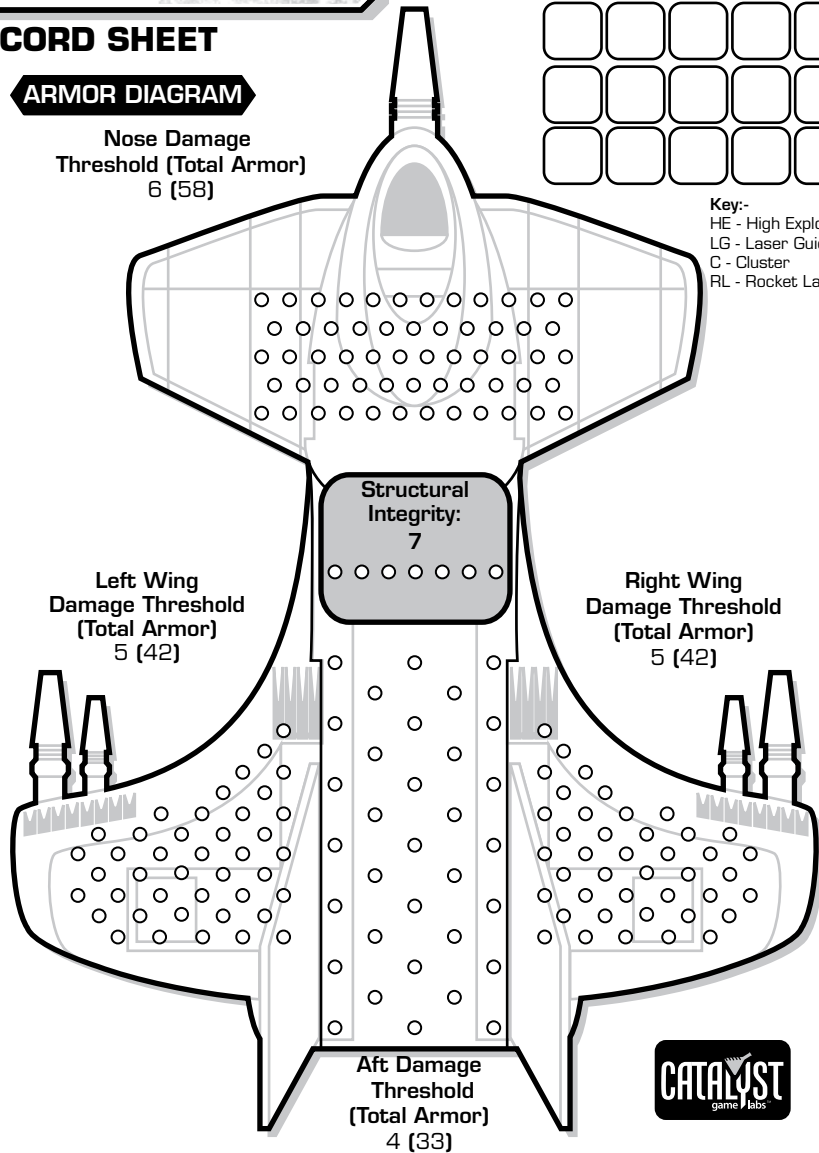
Notes: Shielded Aerospace Smart Robotic Control System (Improved) gives the Mk. 39-004 Interceptor a Piloting Skill of 5, a Gunnery Skill of 4 and the abilities of a Guardian ECM Suite.

Fuel: 480 Points

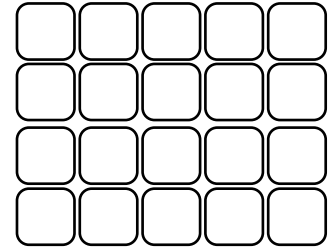
BV: 1,421

ARMOR DIAGRAM

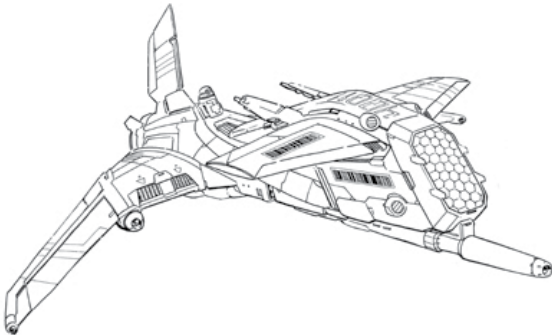
Nose Damage
 Threshold (Total Armor)
 6 (58)



EXTERNAL STORES/BOMBS



Key:-
 HE - High Explosive
 LG - Laser Guided
 C - Cluster
 RL - Rocket Launcher



CRITICAL DAMAGE

Avionics	+1	+2	+5	Engine	2	4	D
FCS	+2	+4	D	Gear	+5		
Sensors	+1	+2	+5	Life Support	+2		

PILOT DATA

Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness #	3	5	7	10	11	Dead
Modifier	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	

HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 16 (32) Double
30	Shutdown	
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	
27	Pilot Damage, avoid on 9+	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	
25	Random Movement, avoid on 10+	
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	
21	Pilot Damage, avoid on 6+	
20	Random Movement, avoid on 8+	
19	Ammo, Exp. avoid on 4+	
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	
15	Random Movement, avoid on 7+	
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	
10	Random Movement, avoid on 6+	
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	
5	Random Movement, avoid on 5+	

VELOCITY RECORD

Turn #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										
Altitude										
Turn #	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										
Altitude										

Heat Scale

Overflow

30*
29
28*
27*
26*
25*
24*
23*
22*
21*
20*
19*
18*
17*
16
15*
14*
13*
12
11
10*
9
8*
7
6
5*
4
3
2
1
0

BATTLETECH

AEROSPACE FIGHTER RECORD SHEET

FIGHTER DATA

Type: MK. 39-007 "VOIDSEEKER" STRIKER

Thrust: Tonnage: 75
 Safe Thrust: 6 Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Maximum Thrust: 9 Era: Star League

Weapons & Equipment Inventory

Standard Scale			(1-6)	(7-12)	(13-20)	(21-25)	
Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
1	ER Large Laser [DE]	N	12	8	8	8	—
1	LRM 15/w Artemis IV [M,C,S]	N	5	12	12	12	—
Ammo (LRM 15 Artemis) 24							
1	ER Large Laser [DE]	L/RW	12	8	8	8	—
1	Medium Pulse Laser [P]	A	4	6	—	—	—
1	S-ASRCS (Improved) [E]	—	—	—	—	—	—

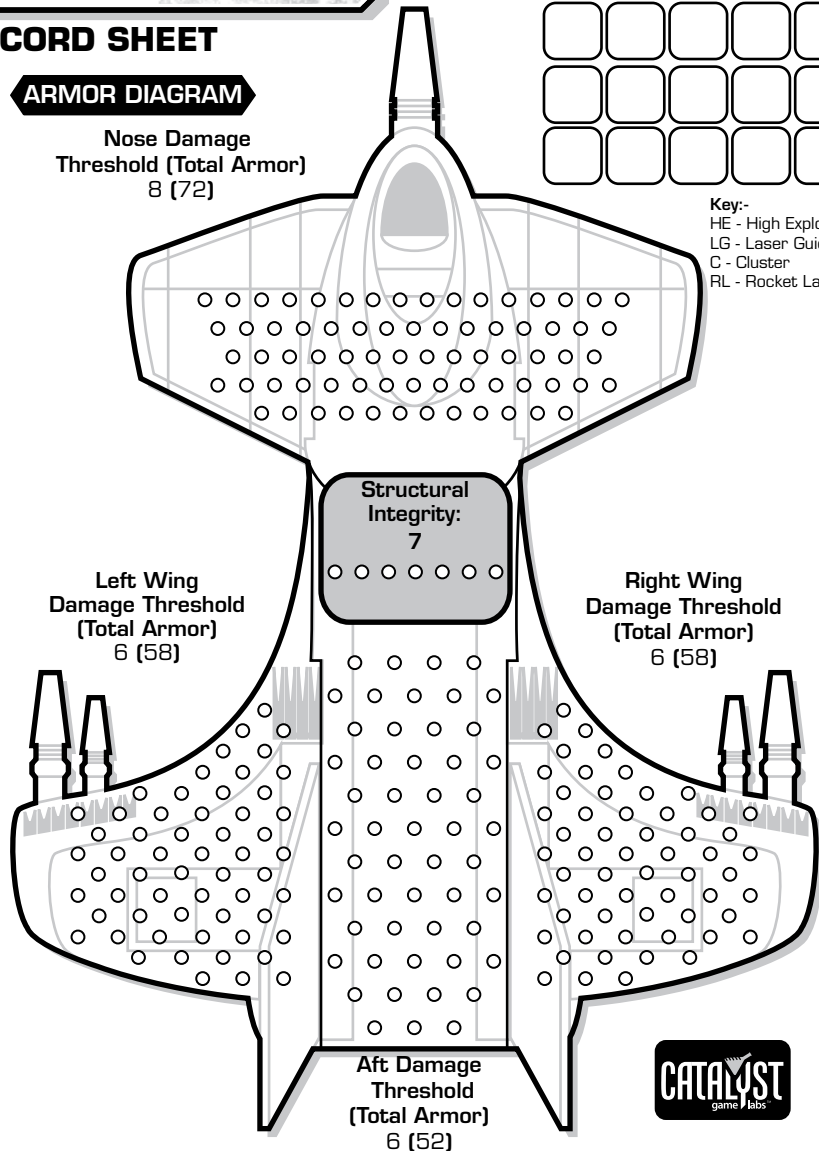
Notes: Shielded Aerospace Smart Robotic Control System (Improved) gives the Mk. 39-007 Striker a Piloting Skill of 5, a Gunnery Skill of 4, and the abilities of a Guardian ECM Suite.

Fuel: 480 Points

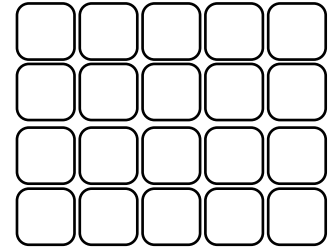
BV: 1,814

ARMOR DIAGRAM

Nose Damage Threshold (Total Armor) 8 (72)



EXTERNAL STORES/BOMBS



Key:-
 HE - High Explosive
 LG - Laser Guided
 C - Cluster
 RL - Rocket Launcher



CRITICAL DAMAGE

Avionics +1 +2 +5 Engine 2 4 D
 FCS +2 +4 D Gear +5
 Sensors +1 +2 +5 Life Support +2

PILOT DATA

Name: _____
 Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____
 Hits Taken 1 2 3 4 5 6
 Consciousness # 3 5 7 10 11 Dead
 Modifier +1 +2 +3 +4 +5

VELOCITY RECORD

Turn #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										
Altitude										

Turn #	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										
Altitude										

HEAT DATA

Heat Level* Effects Heat Sinks: 21 (42)
 30 Shutdown
 28 Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+
 27 Pilot Damage, avoid on 9+
 26 Shutdown, avoid on 10+
 25 Random Movement, avoid on 10+
 24 +4 Modifier to Fire
 23 Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+
 22 Shutdown, avoid on 8+
 21 Pilot Damage, avoid on 6+
 20 Random Movement, avoid on 8+
 19 Ammo, Exp. avoid on 4+
 18 Shutdown, avoid on 6+
 17 +3 Modifier to Fire
 15 Random Movement, avoid on 7+
 14 Shutdown, avoid on 4+
 13 +2 Modifier to Fire
 10 Random Movement, avoid on 6+
 8 +1 Modifier to Fire
 5 Random Movement, avoid on 5+

Heat Scale

Overflow

30*
 29
 28*
 27*
 26*
 25*
 24*
 23*
 22*
 21*
 20*
 19*
 18*
 17*
 16
 15*
 14*
 13*
 12
 11
 10*
 9
 8*
 7
 6
 5*
 4
 3
 2
 1
 0