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JIHAD SECRETS

THE BLAKE DOCUMENTS™

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A JIHAD PLOT SOURCEBOOK

Centuries-old Secrets Revealed!

Chandrasekhar Kurita has spent his life hunting for ancient secrets. Almost as soon as the Word of Blake formed in 3052, "Uncle Chandy" put his vast network of spies and his massive wealth toward digging behind their façade and now, two decades later, Uncle Chandy has discovered more than he ever thought possible. Now he's using that knowledge to send a coalition of forces against one of the Blakists' hidden five worlds : the Ruins of Gabriel. More importantly, he's found a connection to the single greatest mystery in the last half-millennia. Aware he's almost guaranteed his death at the hands of a Blakist fanatic, Uncle Chandy knows the time has come to stand in the light and reveal the secrets that will change the tide of the Jihad!

Jihad Secrets: The Blake Documents contains a wealth of information on the current universe-shaking Jihad storyline, providing more "hard facts" than any book to date. Detailed information on the opening years of the Jihad, including maps of the most significant conflicts; a current 3075 "Around the Sphere" in the same vein as the Jihad Hot Spots series provides up-to-date information on the latest happenings; biographies of more than twenty individuals important to the Jihad; a complete description of all Word of Blake forces, including unit logos; and the hidden history of Clan Wolverine and the Minnesota Tribe revealed! A complete rules section rounds the book out, with game play rules for taking any Word of Blake division into the field, construction rules for "primitive units," and new 'Mechs, including Clan Wolverine's *Mercury II*, *Pulverizer*, and *Stag*, the "primitive" *Dervish* and the mysterious *Raptor II*.

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JUST BUSINESS

Block 40-3, Marantha City
Dalton, Free Worlds League
11 March 3072, 2050 hours

The squalor was unbecoming a woman of her status.

Which made it a perfect hiding place for a safe house. *Until about a week ago*.

Specter Precentor Omega Berith stood quietly in the doorway to apartment 8C and scanned it slowly, taking in every piece of overturned furniture, every hole in the plasterboard walls, every jagged piece of glass strewn across the carpet.

Finally, his eyes rested on the lone figure in the front room that obviously doubled as an entertainment area. A thought flitted across his mind, disappearing almost as instantly as it had arrived, but in the quickness of the moment, he remembered another sitting area, elegantly appointed. A vague feeling of warmth shot through his chest even as he returned his attention to the carnage.

Two intruders, he decided. The evidence of their passage was abundant, though the local constabulary would not catch it all. A scuff mark here, by the door. A blade slit there, by the curtains. Bloodstains on the couch. A small amount on the baseboard. Two different blood types.

None of it interested him, however.

He stalked through the room, avoiding nothing. Reaching the body, he turned it over.

Not her. Though he could tell as much from the moment he entered the small apartment, he knew eyes-on confirmation was necessary for his report. Barely thinking, he felt the slight vibration in his true eye as he shifted through the various spectrums, recording the information, noting the deep flechette wounds. *Four meters or closer, by the looks of it*.

Still crouched, he inhaled slowly. The air smelled of death and the beginnings of decay. Beneath that—faintly—he detected the tang of propellant and the bitterness of lubricant. But not her. The familiar whiff of her mild perfume—an obsession—was absent.

She was gone.

Near the archway to the short hall that led to the apartment's only bedroom, he noted the hole blasted through the plaster. *Magnum E-45 revolver*. The entry was angled, the shooter firing from the back room. Berith could just see the hand of his last operative, still clutching the weapon in the gloomy shadows.

But the bullet hole held his interest. Scanning the hole, the burns and surrounding area, his true eye noted flecks of metal on the wall and floor. He nodded, once. The miniscule green-tinged dust practically telegraphed who the attacker was.

Standing slowly, Berith looked around once more, his metallic-blue eyes taking in the scene one last time as his mind raced through various scenarios and options—and the processor near his heart conferred. Nodding again, he turned and strode from the room.

He did not bother closing the door. The Frails could clean up the mess or not, for all he cared.

He had an appointment to keep.

12 March 3072, 0839 hours

Robert "John" Farrell checked both sides of the street with just his eyes as he left Yuri's TekShop. Finding nothing unusual or familiar, he nodded to himself and tucked his chin into the top of his coat. Thrusting his hands deep into his parka, he tried hard not to think about the bone-chilling wind that whipped up Dalton Street.

Of all the places he *wants to hole up*, he thought gloomily. *By all rights, we should be halfway to somewhere else by now*.

The job had gone well, after all. But Walt had insisted that only half of the objective had been acquired. The bitch didn't have the satchel on her, and they couldn't leave without it.

The Bounty Hunter *never* left a job undone.

So now here they were, stuck on this dreary little planet where vices cost five times the norm on Galatea. And according to the contact he'd recently left, the entire world was now under lockdown, courtesy of Irian Corporate Security.

Bob kept his eyes roaming across the sidewalk, using window reflections and polished air-car body panels to amplify his field of vision. Dalton Street wasn't crowded this time of day, which made spotting any possible tails easy.

Assuming anyone even knew they were here, he mused. Hell, even the bitch was disguised as some low-end wage slave when they'd come. It had been sheer chance that Bob caught her two male "observers" during the initial surveillance—not that he'd ever admit as much to Walt.

He glanced to his right—down a narrow alley, as he stepped past it—then up again at a man walking toward him, similarly bundled against the frigid air. He absently nodded at the stranger. *Gotta look like I belong*, he thought. *Walt's Rule Number Four of urban scouting*...

He'd barely started to grin at the thought when the back of his head exploded in blinding pain. Then the darkness took him.

1010 hours

Too easy.

It had taken Berith a fraction of one second to deliver the well-placed blow from his true arm, and a mere two seconds more to scoop the Frail's limp form up under his armpits and sidestep into the narrow alley. With no one else on the street at the moment, it was all too simple to disappear.

The detailed map he'd downloaded from Irian's corporate servers quickly led him through the maze of alleyways choked with trash

JUST BUSINESS

JUST BUSINESS

bins and oil rats, to a nearby step-in cooler. The glorified meat locker sat adjacent to the Gilded Trumpet, a fashionable eatery for the rich Frails of Marantha City. The place was closed during the week, which guaranteed Berith and his "guest" the privacy necessary.

Not that this business would take long.

Berith shrugged the Frail into the stainless steel chair he had set up earlier that morning. Quickly fastening the zip-ties on the chair's arms to his victim, he then finished his prep work at the large meat-cutting table. He paid little attention to his guest; his true senses would pick up any change in the man's respiration instantly. The augmentations allowed him to concentrate on the second phase of his plan.

Laying out his tools, he set to work.

Five minutes later, his micro-communicator vibrated at the base of his ear.

"*Planetary control shows an unauthorized orbital insertion about two weeks ago; contact lost over the Tjidian Spires. Nothing found on subsequent overflight*," said the calm voice no one else would hear.

Berith nodded slightly. He opened his mouth a fraction and subvocalized, "Any ascension from that quadrant since?"

"*Negative*," the voice echoed back. "*In fact, nothing unusual at all across the system. One unknown JumpShip was chased from the nadir point a week ago, possible smuggler.*"

Berith smiled slightly. "That would be his transport. I doubt she's truly run off, but jumped somewhere else in-system."

He carefully teased a small chip into its electronic sleeve, working slowly. His true eye shifted magnification, allowing him to make the needed adjustments.

"Continue the lockdown and make a show of it now. Random searches, ID checks, whatever."

The voice on the other end acknowledged the order with no trace of concern. "*Very good, sir. Is there anything else at the moment?*"

"No. But I will get back to you shortly with more instructions and parameters. Berith out." With a thought, he severed the connection.

Behind him, the Frail's breathing shifted.

He was waking.

Scooping up the small lozenge laying on the table in front of him, he stepped over to the Frail and squeezed his cheeks, parting his lips. He slipped the pill into the man's mouth, then quickly gripped his windpipe with enough force to make him gasp involuntarily. At the same moment, while his mouth gaped open like a river trout, Berith shoved the pill down his throat with a forefinger.

The Frail gagged reflexively and swallowed. Berith clamped his hand over the man's mouth as he struggled, quickly regaining consciousness. Sure that his guest had swallowed the pill, Berith tapped him on the side of his head, above the ear.

Hard.

The Frail slumped forward, unconscious once more.

1648 hours

Bob couldn't stifle the groan; his head felt as though a *BattleMaster* had stepped on it, and his tongue felt like a dirty sock stuffed into his mouth. Slowly, his vision turned from dark, blurry images to sharper focus, revealing the interior of what appeared to be a large kitchen. The only light was smoky gray and came in from the long roofline window opposite him.

He tried to grab his head to press the pain away and realized his hands were stuck. Blinking away the hurt as best he could, he glanced down and found his wrists strapped to the arms of a chair.

"Good evening."

Bob practically jumped at the sound. The voice was low, menacing, and came from behind him. He craned his neck around, wincing as the strain only accentuated the pain in his head.

"Oh, don't get up, Mister Farrell."

He caught his breath, swallowing dust. *How did…?*

"How do I know your name? It's not that hard, Bob, if one knows where to look." The voice drifted to his right.

"Wah…wat…" he rasped.

"Water? Certainly. What kind of host would I be now, if I didn't offer refreshment?" Bob heard liquid being poured into a container. Then slow, measured footsteps.

Bob shook his head twice, violently, trying to dispel the ringing from his ears. He looked up as his captor entered his field of view.

The man looked ordinary. Average build, average height. Dressed in a simple civilian tunic-and-pants combination, something that easily blended with Marantha City's latest workman's fashion. His hair was fastened in a topknot at the crest of his head, but that wasn't what held Bob's gaze.

It was his *eyes*.

The man's eyes had a metallic blue sheen to them that practically glowed in the dim light of the kitchen.

In his hand was a glass of water, which he brought up to Bob's mouth.

"Drink," he commanded.

Bob haltingly obeyed. The water flooded down his chin and throat. He could taste the grit, but he didn't care. As it washed the dryness away, the water tasted like the purest offerings of Timbiqui's famed springs.

"Better?" his captor asked.

Bob nodded, trying to collect his thoughts. The ringing in his ears had lessened, but in place of the physical distractions came a sense of panic. *Surely Walt knows I'm missing by now*. *Maybe even compromised*?

"What the hell is going on, Mister?" he finally croaked out, going for feigned ignorance. There was hardly any need to guess who Blue-eyes was now. "Why the hell am I here?"

The man laughed with a throaty growl that conjured the image of a tiger about to lunge. "Don't play the innocent with

JUST BUSINESS

me, Mister Robert Farrell," he said. "Born on Quentin, service record with the Third Dieron Regulars, currently pilots a modified *Shadow Hawk*."

The man's smile became predatory and he leaned closer to Bob. "Oh, wait, that's right—you prefer being called 'Bob,' since your lowlife father was named Robert."

The pain in Bob's head spiked as he thrashed in his chair, and he discovered his legs weren't fastened like his hands were. "Damn it," he hissed through clenched teeth, "*who are you*?"

"Doesn't matter," the interrogator said. "Know this, if you must: I will break you, Bob Farrell. And you will tell me all I wish to know." He cocked his head slightly and gazed into the distance beyond Bob. "But not now," he continued. "I have other business to attend to."

With that, the man spun on his heel and gathered up his tools from the nearby counter.

Bob watched in silence, the whole situation overwhelming him. *What in Procyon's hell has Walt gotten us into?*

The man crossed the room to the steel door and turned his glowing eyes back on Bob. His lips turned up in a twisted grin. "Don't go anywhere, okay?"

And suddenly, he was gone.

The sound of Bob's thrashing filled the room as the evening light faded.

2331 hours

It took about eight hours before Berith finally saw what he wanted. Alerted to the intruder's presence through his true senses, he flipped the monitor over to the correct frequency and watched bemused as a figure in green armor wrenched open the door to his prisoner's makeshift cell. The Specter Precentor leaned in closer and studied his adversary as the intruder snipped Bob's fasteners and carried the unconscious henchman away from the building.

Pity Bob made so little progress with his own escape; Berith had thought for sure the Bounty Hunter—*a. k. a. Walt Urizeman, Bjorn Thomas, Barry Whitmore, Jaclav Roberts, and countless other aliases*—would've trained his subordinates better.

Berith would have.

Then again, the files did suggest that Walt was fairly new to the armor.

No matter, Berith thought. *The plan is in motion and that's the ultimate goal. His presence means he still hasn't located Parrdeau's ultimate secret. That's what counts most*.

The trackers would not activate yet, Berith knew, but he smiled inwardly just the same. He had a good enough idea of his quarry's course; he just needed to check a few more things to be certain.

He would get only one shot at this. And failing the Master was not an option.

Marantha ISC Office
Marantha City
Dalton, Free Worlds League
13 March 3072, 0917 hours

It didn't take long to make Berith unhappy.

"What do you mean, it's already left?" he asked the hapless clerk assigned to him by the Irian Corporate Security office.

The short woman was unperturbed by his looming presence, or the glare he fixed her with through his dark sunglasses—undoubtedly putting up a brave front in the name of professional decorum. "I'm sorry, Precentor," she said flatly, "but the *Wind Dancer* has left its moorings. Though it was scheduled for an 1830 departure—since it was technically a private party subcontract—it can leave port at any time."

Berith frowned. *Too early*. "Flight plan?"

The Frail tapped her datapad again. "Unregistered. Normally it runs the Marantha City-Farragut route, but because it's a—"

"—Subcontracted private party, it doesn't have to," Berith finished with an irritated sigh. "Yes, I know." *Blasted Irian and their corporate bureaucracy loopholes!*

"Who was the authorizing agent?" he finally asked.

As the woman bent back to her data-mining, he held up his true hand.

"Never mind," he snapped. "It's not important. Just give me a heading and probable route information, and download it here."

Unfastening his cuff, he tugged back the sleeve of his jumpsuit around his true arm. Then he flipped up the small compartment near his wrist, exposing the data jack. The woman gasped and looked up at him, trying to peer through his dark sunglasses.

"Do it," he barked. "Now." Though his voice rose only slightly, it dripped with menace. The woman paled, then fumbled with the pad's connector cord and fitted it into the exposed jack. The data transfer was immediate; his internal processor snapped the pad's firewall and dragged in additional data on the class of the *Wind Dancer*, as well as geographic and topographical information.

Less than two seconds later, he snapped the cord out and tossed it to the Frail, then marched out of the office without another word. There was no time to waste language on Frails.

The airship's early departure could mean only one thing: The Bounty Hunter had found his prize.

…*And he was leaving*.

Airship Wind Dancer
Over the Loganwolf Badlands
Dalton, Free Worlds League
13 March 3072, 1642 hours

Encased in four hundred kilos of living legacy, Walt Urizeman—he liked the name, as it reminded him of the good times with Vic

JUST BUSINESS

Travers—stood on the *Wind Dancer*'s empty bridge and absent-mindedly stroked the leather satchel strapped across his armored chest. *The* real *prize,* he thought, *unlike the bitch already being shipped off-world in a luxurious cargo container for the next system over.*

The Hunter had to admire his escape vehicle, though—easily the most unusual in his career. The *Corvair*-class luxury airship was favored by Irian's upper management during their infrequent visits to Dalton—three hundred and fifty tons of airborne opulence. When not being used to ferry around rich moneymen who needed luxury to feel superior, the *Wind Dancer* doubled as a routine cargo transport.

With all the spaceports closed across the planet and Marantha City's main highways shut down by thorough roadblocks and random ID checks, using a corporate fat-cat's tax write-off was the next best way to slip past the city limits undetected. Thanks to some deep contacts in Irian, Walt had managed to subcontract the *Dancer*—a none-too-uncommon affair between local corporations—for the least conspicuous escape route to where his DropShuttle hid.

It even fooled the ROM tail, after all.

Walt frowned inside his helmet. *Or so it seems*, he amended.

From Bob's description, the Blakist ROM agent who'd snagged him was obviously augmented, at least in the eyes. Anyone worthy of that kind of hardware was generally not the type to be easily deterred by a few computer tricks.

But there had been no sign of the agent after Walt busted Bob out. All things considered, that was pretty damned fortunate, since Parrdeau had only cracked the day before and given up the location of her journal pad.

Worrisome, the Hunter told himself, *but not dire*.

Walt had snatched up the prize even before he went back for Bob. Ideally, he would have waited longer to check for a tail, but once he had the prize, he knew time would be of the essence, or Irian Security and its Blakist masters would've locked down every means of transportation and searched every house and sewer to find them. There was even word from his JumpShip out at a pirate point that a Word of Blake cruiser had shown up and was currently burning two gees for orbit.

No time for the slow and subtle escape now.

Despite his armored shell, the Hunter sensed a presence behind him. "What is it, Bob?"

"Um, we seem to have garnered some attention…" Bob said uneasily.

Shit! "Show me," Walt said.

Bob stepped around him and activated the sensor station monitors. "It's intermittent," he said, pointing, "but definitely there. A contact, most likely a small conventional."

The screen lit up again as Bob spoke, data scrolling in a window near the new contact. It was on the extreme edge of range, but slowly closing.

The Hunter immediately knew it was the ROM agent. "How in the Sphere…?"

Suddenly, it hit him.

He swung his armored visor around and glared at his partner. "Bob," he snapped, "do you remember anything unusual during your captivity? Did this guy touch you, or prick you with anything?"

"No." Bob's eyes grew wide. "*No!* I swear to Krishna, Walt, I'm clean! Hell, you did the scans yourself!"

Walt nodded. "I know I did. But there's no way this guy could've not only known we were on this ship, but where in hell we are. Something's wrong, Bob."

Flipping open a pouch at his side, the Hunter produced a transceiver. "Stand still," he muttered.

Bob's eyes practically popped out of his head as Walt gently waved the device around him. With a soft "ping", the display lit up.

"Shit," Walt growled. "Didn't even use the scramblers because someone might pick up the signal noise. Vic would never let me live this down…

"Those signals weren't there before; must've used chemical timers or something." He looked up at his aide. "You're transmitting, Bob. And it's not just one bug. There are at least seven of them in your bloodstream and organs." His hand dropped to his side, sliding the transceiver back into its pouch.

Bob's gaze followed Walt's hand. Tears formed in his eyes. "Damn it, no, Walt. I'm…I'm sorry."

"I am too, Jack." Walt raised his Sternsnacht, in line with Bob's head.

"One request, Walt, please." Color drained from his face. "Take care of my wife and kid, ok? Make sure they make it through this mess."

The Bounty Hunter nodded, once. "Deal." The Sternsnacht boomed.

Bob's lifeless body hit the deck.

1757 hours

Getting on board was easier than the last ROM obstacle course he'd made for his students. Jumping from a tiny Rodell onto the broad surface of the *Corvair* was a piece of cake; the stunt plane's smoking wreckage was now a smudge in the distance, kilometers away.

As he navigated the cavernous rooms of the luxury airliner, Berith considered the effort more of an exercise in stealth.

By now, the Bounty Hunter had to know he was here.

Especially since the tracking signal had ended up on the desert floor an hour ago.

Using the blueprint schematics, he'd made his way forward to the control deck, though he doubted the Hunter would be there. Given this Frail's profile (whatever he called himself today), and Berith's own ability to "read" people, Berith knew his opponent would be in the spacious dining area.

Waiting.

JUST BUSINESS

As he approached, Berith smiled when he found the doors closed. The Specter Precentor knew his quarry was in there; his hyper-advanced hearing could pick up the minute sounds of armor plates tapping each other. As ever, the Hunter was armored, armed and ready.

Probably with a weapon pointed right at the door.

Calling up the blueprints, Berith overlaid them faintly over his true eye's HDR view. *Joists here, here and here*, he reckoned. *And the bar is* here…*perfect*.

He quietly stepped twenty meters to his right and crouched down near the wall, drawing his Sekkaris needler in his right hand.

Putting his left shoulder—his true arm—against the thin wooden spacer, he shoved and pistoned his arm, breaking through the wall and rolling behind the bar on the other side. The walls were expandable; only a few sections—such as the one near the room's main entrance—were fixed to the bulkhead.

Berith heard, then felt, the booming blasts of a Sternsnacht Claymore punch through the bar's front in two places. Then two more. *He's quick*, Berith noted and swiftly processed the situation as he pulled the needler close to his chest.

"You know, I'm kinda pissed at you, Mr. ROM," a synthesized voice echoed. The Sternsnacht slammed two more rounds into the hard oak surface, sending wooden splinters flying. The bar would only offer cover a few more seconds.

"Glad to hear it, *Walt*," Berith tossed back out, stressing the man's name.

The shots ceased. "Well, fuck you too, Blakie." Berith heard a new clip slam home. Twice. Three shots each; Berith was half-surprised that the magazines were unmodified.

"Sorry," Berith riposted, "I don't swing that way." He crouched forward as he spoke. He could hear the tread of Walt's armor approaching the center of the bar. *Closing in*.

Berith rolled past the bar's end post, needler extended as he heard the whisper of the Hunter's armor servos. The Hunter landed behind the bar and twisted left and right. "Where the fu—?"

Berith stood up impossibly fast and drove his true arm forward. "Right here!" he barked as he caught the Hunter's left wrist and jerked it back hard.

The Claymore flew across the room, clattering across an empty table and onto the lounge floor beyond.

The Hunter wrenched himself free and swung his other arm low. The loud report of his second pistol was nearly deafening at point-blank range.

But Berith was already gone, flipping himself back and over another oak-topped table, which toppled with a crash to form an instant shield.

"Have to say, Walt," he called out as he rolled over and readied the needler again, "I can't believe you did that to poor Bob, dumping him out of the airship without even a chute."

"Bastard," the Hunter spat as his remaining pistol blew another hole through the table, mere centimeters away from Berith's head.

Berith grinned in spite of himself. *Fast, but hot-headed; still too new at this*. "Did you really think that would fool anyone at this point?" he jeered.

The Hunter fired again, the blast tearing through the table and nicking Berith's true arm. Berith winced, rolled sideways and sprang back to his feet.

"Given how much you toaster-humpers love your gizmos," the Hunter snapped as he took the shot with another ear-ringing boom, once more narrowly missing Berith. Somewhere across the room, the sound of shattered glass and the whistle of rushing air betrayed a hit to the lounge's observation windows. "Figured you'd at least want to sniff over your beacons."

Berith flashed him a predatory grin. *Feeble comeback, Frail! And you're empty, too!*

He vaulted forward, leaping over the overturned table and landing on the bar, still clinging to his Sekkaris. The Hunter swung his free hand for a blow that almost caught him in the leg, but Berith managed to turn the impact into another backward leap that placed him just behind the armored mercenary. Before the Frail could react, he reached out his right hand, placing the needler's muzzle against the soft neck joint just below the helmet. For a moment, he noticed the bulky contraption strapped to the armor's back. *What the—?*

The Hunter stiffened for only a moment, but Berith caught the imperceptible movement of his shoulder just before he swung around. Reflexively, he fired as the Hunter's torso came about, dimly aware of the warrior's now-empty hands.

With a high-pitched shriek, the needler's darts showered and ricocheted off a shoulder of green armor, but a few on the edge of the blast cone speared into Walt's collarbone. To his credit, the Bounty Hunter barely flinched. Instead, his backhanded punch, augmented by the armor's exoskeleton, sank a hand's breadth before slamming into Berith's right shoulder, numbing his arm.

Berith laughed.

"Wise guy, eh?" Walt mocked as he completed his turn, planting his now open right fist on the bar and using his momentum to pivot and leap over its shattered surface. His armored boot aimed squarely at Berith's undefended chest.

Until the Specter's left hand came up and seized the onrushing foot in a steely vise, twisting clockwise.

"No," Berith hissed, "just your better!"

The Bounty Hunter's spin flattened out and he spilled to the ground on his back.

Only then did Berith recognize the brown leather satchel strapped across the armor's chest for what it was. *The journal pad*!

Walt rolled backwards and to his feet with an easy motion, while Berith turned his left side forward, shielding his still-numb Frail hand. He settled into a *kanti-agzo* stance, his true arm rising in defense, his feet spread apart.

The Bounty Hunter set himself into a classic *kempo* stance, and began moving slowly toward his dropped pistol.

JUST BUSINESS

"I'll give you a little credit, Wobblie man, which I don't often do. Not many people can outmaneuver me." The synthesized voice carried no emotion.

"I'm surprised there are that many stupid people in the universe, then," replied Berith, his gaze firmly fixed on the center of the Hunter's torso. "But then again, you're all just simple Frails."

"Interesting choice of words, there, cyber-boy." He was three steps from the pistol.

But Berith knew he wasn't going for it. *He knows it's empty. He has something else in mind*. Berith settled back on the balls of his feet. *Come on, Frail…*

"You know," came the voice, "this whole thing wasn't even personal." A muffled "whump" somewhere deep below them followed instantly. The airship shuddered as if it had run aground, throwing Berith off-balance and tumbling him to the floor. As he scrambled back up to defend himself, he noticed the Hunter running flat-out toward the cracked bay window nearly ten meters away. Suddenly, Berith recognized the bulky object on his back.

A jump pack.

Berith lunged forward, his processor calculating two seconds to intercept.

A small canister tumbled to the floor from the Hunter's right hand, landing in Berith's path, where it exploded in a violent flash. A wave of nausea and blinding light overwhelmed his senses and threw off his balance as he felt his true vision, hearing and even his processor flicker for an instant.

Mag pulse! his outraged mind screamed, even as the circuits restarted and the blindness faded.

But the momentary disturbance overset his balance, and Berith fell once more.

He shot back to his feet, but it was already too late. With a loud crash and a howl of screaming wind, the Bounty Hunter dove through the over-stressed bay window, hurling himself into the sun-blasted sky. Berith's true hearing picked up the faint sound of laughter over the din as the Bounty Hunter looked over his shoulder and fired his jump pack to get clear.

"It's just business, Blakie!"

Then the bombs exploded below-decks.

1809 hours

What seemed like an eternity was in reality less than a minute since the explosion. Walt watched over his shoulder as the airship died, its frame breaking up as the charges he'd placed two days ago took their toll. The crash was pre-planned, from the moment he'd secured the vessel and rigged it for autopilot. After all, a private airship that crashes in the middle of the desert doesn't invite too many questions right away.

His HUD scanned the falling wreckage for signs of life and failed to find any.

But he knew better.

While the charges had blown the engines, it would still take a while for the airship to completely crash, especially as the damage simply separated the airship's lower half—its crew and passenger spaces—from its helium cells and fan motors. The wreckage would scatter over more than a kilometer, plunging from nearly three kilometers up.

He watched for nearly a minute as his controlled free-fall took him to safety. Soon enough, his sensors would warn him it was time to start braking maneuvers. Yet as the doomed airship continued to rain debris down on the desert sands and the rocky crags of the canyon below, he shook his head with disappointment and spoke to the whistling wind.

"That's for you, Bob."

He frowned.

1809 hours

As the explosions drowned out all other sound, Berith scrambled for the far wall, where the safety equipment was stored. Accessing the system's failing database from a wall panel, he immediately learned that none of the *Wind Dancer's* aerial lifeboats were functioning.

"Figures," he snorted.

With his true hand, he ripped open the secured panel on the side wall, where his schematics claimed the emergency parachutes were stored. With a dry laugh, he found only one left in the cavernous space designed to hold ten such airborne life preservers. With a little magnification, his true eye spotted the C-bill pinned to the top strap. A heavy scrawl—obscuring the old ComStar logo upon it—read simply: "With my blessings."

Berith shook his head and snarled. *No way in hell, Walt*.

The *Wind Dancer* lurched again, her steel spars screaming as Berith felt the airship's lower section tearing free from its mounts. So far, the airship's main cells remained more or less horizontal, but he knew that would change very quickly, once the cells began to rupture in sequence.

He had perhaps a minute left before he was in freefall, maybe less.

Using his true hand for most of the work, Berith climbed toward the shattered bay window and scanned the nearby surroundings, watching with clinical detachment as the rock spires along the canyon walls below loomed ever closer. The *Dancer* was sinking rapidly.

Flexing his true arm, he calmed himself as he measured distances, speed, airflow and the onrushing rocks. Steadying himself in the broken window's opening, he gripped the frame tightly with both hands, ignoring the jagged glass that cut into his fleshy palm.

Got to time this just right, he told himself…

HOW DID IT BEGIN?

Many questions exist within my own organization about the nature of this "Jihad" engulfing humankind, Kisu, and it seems as though even those I've entrusted to gather information about the current doings of the Word of Blake are being biased by wartime propaganda.

I had thought the matter relatively clear, but upon review, even the recent *Jihad Hot Spots* compilations have not laid out a clear picture of just *why* and *how* the Word has lashed out so viciously at all of humanity.

Indeed, these volumes seem to suffer the same taint of bias as all other public sources, working hard to paint the Blakists as mindless fanatics. The samplings of Blakist propaganda they provided, by and large, have been the worst tripe produced by the Blakist zealots. You scarcely saw the eloquent info-web publications and editorials—and not one whit of the Word's more stirring call, to save the Star League. The latter is understandable. After all, what House wants to be painted in a bad light for killing the Star League (again)?

But I digress. What I intend to do here is to explain the Word of Blake's actions since the Star League conference of 3067.

ROOTS OF THE JIHAD

The spark behind the Jihad was ignited long before the birth of the Word itself, and has been well explained by the somewhat questionable "unedited" ComStar archives released by then-Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht in 3052. Produced in the name of forming a new, more transparent and trustworthy ComStar, those archives prove invaluable for any insight we may gain about where this war comes from.

While pre-Schism ComStar preached salvation for humankind from the inappropriate use of technology and publicly deplored the Succession Wars, Focht's "revelations" suggested that ComStar was not one to passively wait for its founder's Word to be accepted by the Inner Sphere. Rather, Focht contends that ComStar worked to hasten that day by helping the Houses to batter themselves into submission, at which point their Order would step in and become humankind's savior. Indeed, Focht's archives go so far as to suggest that ComStar sabotaged the peace talks that failed at the end of the Second Succession War, ultimately instigating the 150-year Third Succession War.

While some details may be suspect, I am inclined to believe the gist of Focht's revelations about ComStar perfidy, if only because it would be difficult to find another single explanation that binds together so many facts so well. ComStar's more overt actions against the Federated Suns beginning in the Fourth Succession War only reinforce the theory that the Order actively worked to cripple humanity.

And when the Clans came, what was ComStar's first action? To befriend them—reportedly in hopes of bringing down the Houses even faster than ComStar had thus far been able to. This alliance, of course, ended abruptly when ComStar learned that the Clans' medium-term goal was Terra, but elements of the Order's leadership still hoped to cripple Clan and Inner Sphere alike after Tukayyid with the ill-conceived Operation Scorpion.

And in that chaos, ComStar fractured. Its bold Operation Scorpion failed because the insanity it called for was too much for many of ComStar's membership to tolerate, much less implement—including Focht. But Focht's own actions to reform the Order from within proved equally difficult to stomach where those raised on old ComStar dogma were concerned.

And so, those disenchanted by the new regime left to form the Word of Blake—creating a much truer successor for the original ComStar than the organization retaining that name today.

WORD OF BLAKE AND TRUE PEACE

After the Schism, we saw in ComStar an organization that was still deeply interested in saving humankind from its abuse of technology and warlike ways. Remember, Blake's Words—or, rather, Toyama's liberal reinterpretation of Blake's diaries—were drafted by a man who worked alongside Aleksandr Kerensky through the wreckage of the Terran Hegemony, a man who watched the Houses descend all too quickly into the madness of the Succession Wars. It is a shame such ideals were so misapplied by the pre-Schism ComStar.

And what of the post-Schism inheritor of ComStar's ethos, the Word of Blake?

Until about 3058, we saw an organization with a great cause, yet no overarching goals. The Word simply acted to build a power base so it could continue its work. It also held a great hatred for the new ComStar, whose people had abandoned The Cause in the most heretical of ways, by declaring a centuries-old faith to be a joke. But still, the Blakists had no focus of their own.

Then, in 3058, something happened: the Star League was reborn.

However misguided, Blake's disciples—in any era—have always striven to rebuild the Star League. At the Whitting Conference of 3058, their centuries of hopes and dreams were suddenly achieved. The Star League was reborn, and now it would be possible to enlighten humankind without hypocritically resorting to the destruction of civilization.

If you wonder why the Word would embrace peace over continued subversion, remember why Operation Scorpion failed: too many of ComStar's personnel believed in Blake's teachings to countenance such actions. A Star League reborn though measured, peaceful means was always preferable to one risen from chaos—even after centuries of studious manipulations.

The Word of Blake's activities in the following decade do not offer great insight into their overall goals for this new League. Their aid to various nations could serve any number of purposes, anything from securing allies in the Star League to acquiring the funds for their expensive "extracurricular activities." The Blakists' activities in the so-called Chaos March could truly have been the enlightened protection of the defenseless—a point that the

HOW IT BEGAN

Word's propaganda still makes at length—or it could have been the pragmatic creation of a buffer zone and industrial base around the Word's crown jewel: Terra itself. More than likely, all of the above were true to some degree.

But no, the real signs of the Word of Blake's plans only became clear after their hopes for the future were dashed in the winter of 3067. What are those signs?

First, I have been able to confirm that the Word knew in advance of the 3067 Conference that the Capellans planned to withdraw from the Star League, and their only reaction to this news—before the delegates even gathered—was to withdraw their own material and technological support from the Confederation.

Second, most House intelligence agencies were very well aware that the Word had built up its military strength, and suspected as many as fifty regiments of various types (or up to two hundred, in "worst-case" scenarios) had formed to fight for Blake's Will. Not the twenty or so alleged by ComStar's *Field Manual* publication. Of course, we now know for certain that the Blakists managed to field just over one hundred regiments at their peak, though many of these may have been only semi-operational when they were first called into action.

Finally, once the Star League was declared null and void, the Blakist reaction was swift, brutal—and very poorly executed. For the successor of an organization that once infiltrated intelligence agents into every level of every House, the Word of Blake brought very poorly chosen retribution to "the apostates" who destroyed its hopes and dreams. In fact, it took the better part of a year before the Word's attacks began to demonstrate proper military planning and full use of its impressive force. The attacks on Tharkad and New Avalon were absolutely not suited for their task. Indeed, as some have claimed, our own sources have found that the attacks were executed using assets originally intended as "olive branches" to the Lyrans and Suns.

What those signs show is a quasi-religious organization that reacted badly to seeing its dreams dashed by foolish foreign politicians. There was no grand plan for a Jihad—not against the Inner Sphere, anyway.

THE POINT OF THE JIHAD

Since 3067, the prosecution of the so-called Jihad has been prosaic and should be obvious. The Word first sought to cripple the perceived foes of the Star League and did so using methods that must have seemed satisfactory to the ideological "hard core" of its leadership. Indeed, the Blakists' efforts to "save the Star League" by killing the unbelievers were actually drowned out by the greater conflicts raging between and in the Houses through the end of the 3060s.

Somewhere around the time the Word's leadership realized that they could not bring the Houses directly to their knees—about the time the Houses began to focus on the Word itself—these same leaders also seemed to realize that their disastrous impulses had committed them to a fight to the death. Today, the Word of Blake no longer fights to save a dying Star League, but because it faces destruction on all sides, and so its tactics have now shifted to those that will prolong its life.

Of course, there is the question of, "If the Word of Blake was such a believer in the Star League's promised peace, why did the Word possess such a monstrous army lurking in the shadows?"

DEADLY GIFTS

Based on access to captured information from the evacuated Word field bases on New Avalon and its satellites, we have learned that the Word of Blake's first strike there was actually conducted by a force intended as a "gift"—possibly in gratitude to the Suns for voting the Word into full membership status at the 3067 Star League Conference. This olive branch consisted of military and industrial supplies for the Suns, which had just been battered by the Federated Commonwealth Civil War, escorted by an honor guard of venerable WarShips and a single parade Division. This was not a force meant to bring New Avalon to its knees, but the ample supplies did enable the Word's task force to make a go of it during the First Battle of New Avalon.

And Tharkad? Contrary to the lamentably over-played confusion of the *Invincible's* arrival in Tharkan orbit, the Lyran planetary authorities were actually well aware that the Word of Blake had brought a large WarShip to Tharkad. They were, after all, hosting a conference of House leaders and security was extremely tight. More than a few participants of the Conference arrived by WarShip—including Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion, whose role in a civil war left scars on Tharkad that remained fresh on the eve of the historic gathering.

The LAAF had ordered the *Invincible* and her escorts in a Tharkad-following solar orbit, just like other visiting foreign WarShips, where they would be hours away from mischief. The oft-repeated record of confusion in Tharkad orbit was a result of the *Invincible* and her escorts entering a new space traffic control sector without a pre-filed flight plan; the traffic controllers were understandably caught off-guard when a behemoth WarShip plowed through their busy traffic corridors without warning.

And the LAAF? They knew what the *Invincible* was; she simply would not have been allowed in-system otherwise. They even knew the Word of Blake claimed it intended to hand over the *Invincible* pending the conclusion of the Conference. This knowledge, in fact, likely paralyzed the LAAF's response when the ship made an unplanned visit to low Tharkan orbit. Admittedly, we are still missing some of the details on everything that allowed this approach, but then, the Lyrans' fragmented internal records on the incident have only been unlocked recently, and come from archives on a planet that was under Blakist blockade and occupation for years.

WOLF'S DRAGOONS

Many wonder what the brutality leveled against Wolf's Dragoons foretold, but while the timing is close, the Word's atrocities on Outreach have nothing to do with the Jihad. In the Word's eyes, the Dragoons were Clans in miniature, and mercenary to boot—an organization dedicated to profiting from war, and one that stood squarely between the Word and its goals for the Chaos March. The Word quite smugly arranged for the Dragoons to be "hoisted by their own petard," using the unemployed and oppressed mercenaries of Harlech as their army. But the Blakists later overreacted—dousing Outreach in nuclear fire—after the enraged Dragoons had the gall to stab at the Word's heart, the Sol System.

THE CLANS MUST DIE

The purpose of the Word of Blake's hidden army bedeviled Inner Sphere intelligence agencies for some time prior to the 3067 Conference. At the time, the general consensus was that these forces were earmarked for a fratricidal war with the Blakists' estranged brethren in ComStar, or perhaps to support the establishment of a unified HPG network under the Star League, a Blakist network that would need force to resist any outside pressure to secularize.

Those conclusions have been…revised in recent years, as the Houses have captured more and more ranking officers in the Word of Blake Militia. Through various endeavors, I have been able to access the results of some interrogations, which paint a remarkably consistent portrait of the Word's true goals. The portrait is quite consistent, at least when drawn from officers who held high ranks prior to 3068: the Word of Blake intended to smash the Clans down into the bedrock of their homeworlds.

Why would the Word of Blake, so removed from the Clan Invasion zone, seek a conflict with the Clans? While I suspect Tukayyid still haunts some members of the Word leadership, the driving reasons, I believe, would be Clan culture and the Star League. The Word—and its ComStar forebear—despised the misuse of technology, particularly for warfare, while the Clans focused their society and almost all technological advances on war. By that reckoning, the Clans were already the Word of Blake's "Anti-Christ," even though the new ComStar—because of their treason and heresy—was the focus of the Word's greater ire for a time. ComStar's role in the rebirth of the Star League, the Word's dream-come-true, mitigated that focus, while conversely, most Clans decried this reborn Star League as a sham because only the Clans could establish the "One True Star League, Seyla."

Clearly, to the Word, the Clans would have to go.

The attack on the Clans was timed to quickly follow the 3067 Conference, as perhaps the greatest gift of all the Word would offer the Inner Sphere. Scores of worlds would be returned to their proper Inner Sphere powers, a scourge would be swept from the stars, and the Word—as the visionaries who ended the Clan threat for all time—would have enormous prestige and political clout to spread Blake's legacy.

I suppose the Word rarely spoke of this goal in public because even the Word's fanatical leadership could understand that the Clans—and perhaps even a few Spheroid rulers—would react badly to hearing the atrocities planned for Kerensky's children. And at this stage, the Word hardly needs any more enemies.

WAYS AND MEANS

Whatever their lofty goals, the Blakists' plans to destroy the Clans took a dark approach of a sort not seen since the early Succession Wars. More than mere destruction of the Clan military, the Word's aim was nothing short of deliberate and systematic genocide.

The reason for this questionable approach and the stockpiling of abominable weaponry was simple: the Word's modest military industrial base could not come close to matching the entirety of the Clans on the given schedule.

Thus, nuclear weapons would counter the Clans' vast WarShip advantage. Orbital bombardment and varied weapons of mass destruction would balance the technological advantage of their ground combatants. Cybernetics allowed new recruits to offset the advantages of the Clans' genetically engineered Elementals. Co-opting allied WarShips would give the Word a sharp expansion of naval firepower on another state's budget. Human experimentation gave the Word its direct neural interface, which let pilots and MechWarriors surpass the superb skills of Clan warriors.

The strategy would take a page from the early Succession Wars: destroy the Clans' industry and allow shortages to grind their mighty Toumans to a halt, while the buffered and hidden industrial might of the Word kept its forces supplied, armed and in fighting trim. We are quite lucky that the Blakists' scientists only managed new, relatively minor twists on technologies available to the Inner Sphere. Consider a Jihad where the Word had unlocked the industrial secrets necessary to mass-produce Clan weaponry.

Yes, I said "modest industrial base," Kisu. This is another point where, lamentably, even my own organization falls prey to Inner Sphere propaganda. The portrait of the Word is of an organization that came out of nowhere with a giant hidden army. Where did it find the manpower? How could it afford the army?

Money? Industry? Manpower? Well, what the Word accomplished by building this army is not particularly impressive when you look at its contemporaries. Two examples I prefer are those of the Clans and the Com Guards.

Before the comparison, let me describe what the Word possessed as of December 3067. Back then, the Word of Blake could claim tens of billions of taxpayers on some of the most industrialized worlds of the Inner Sphere: the Core, and particularly Terra—which I'll delve into further in a moment. The Blakists had hundreds of billions of communications customers for their planet-wide postal and telecommunications services. They had at least hundreds of billions of true believers around the Inner Sphere

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who would happily donate funds or otherwise aid their cause.

Further, from a start of about twenty mixed regiments taken from the Com Guards, the Word had about fifteen years to mobilize another hundred-odd regiments, including perhaps thirty or forty BattleMech regiments.

As for manpower and money, compare the Word of Blake Militia to the Clans of 3050, and not even all the Clans—just the first four invading Clans, Wolf, Bear, Jaguar and Falcon. Combined, these Clans fielded approximately 130 to 150 regiments and about sixty to seventy WarShips, versus the Word's potential for 120-odd regiments and forty WarShips. Those four Clans had approximately three hundred million subjects, out of a total of about 1.2 billion in the homeworlds. Based on economic investigations of the Clan homeworlds since the Great Refusal, their average per capita income would make a lower caste Capellan feel wealthy. The Word has literally hundreds of times the wealth and dozens of times the directly controlled manpower of those Clans, yet fields a smaller military.

Industry? Military growth rates? This is where I like the comparison to ComStar, though the Inner Sphere Clans have also demonstrated reconstruction rates in terms of regiments per year after various setbacks. The Com Guards demonstrated phenomenal growth after Tukayyid, rebuilding scores of regiments in less than three years. But they did this primarily by exhausting SLDF Terran stockpiles, so I will not use this reconstruction as a valid comparison to the Word's military growth. Rather, the more applicable period of Com Guard growth is between 3062 and 3067, when the Guards grew from eighty-six to a hundred regiments, despite losing fourteen regiments to the FedCom Civil War. This approaches six regiments of construction per year, and the actual peak rates in 3065 and 3066 were better than seven regiments of all types.

So, operating from a similar financial basis, the Word of Blake's fifteen-year military growth was similar to that of ComStar's. Of course, even *that's* a fraction of a single House's military construction at the end of the Third Succession War.

Where did it all come from?

While we now revile the Word as a pariah, recall that it was a legitimate trade partner prior to the end of 3067. Thus, the Word had normal access to Inner Sphere markets, which were producing military hardware at rates not seen in centuries. This resource was the key to the Word's pre-3068 growth.

The Word also had control of a number of manufacturing planets around the Inner Sphere. Though battered by the Succession Wars, some worlds of the Word of Blake Protectorate, the Inner Sphere's Core, are major industrial centers. Then there is Gibson, a major arms manufacturing site in the Free Worlds.

And last but not least, Terra. It is widely known that the Terran Hegemony was the heart of military production of the old Star League, especially military industry. It is less understood that Terra was the military industrial core of the Hegemony. Because just as the Hegemony concentrated power in itself to control the Houses during the old Star League, Terrans concentrated power on Terra to control the Hegemony. It was, after all, the *Terran* Hegemony, not the Hegemony of Core Worlds or such. Hesperus II's vaunted Star League-era BattleMech facility was a single, average factory by Hegemony standards; Terra had *dozens* of such facilities. ComStar mothballed many of the surviving factories at the end of the twenty-eighth century, until Focht began reviving them in the mid-3050s. The Word took over just as that industrial juggernaut awoke.

There is more to Terra than BattleMech factories and shipyards, of course. It has six billion of the wealthiest, best-educated people in human space who have been at peace—or at least spared the Succession Wars—for more than two hundred years. And in that period, the original ComStar indoctrinated them en masse. To be fair, Terrans are not universally—or even in the majority—Blakist fanatics. ComStar took a rather hands-off attitude toward administrating the planet, limiting their indoctrination to control of the media and a constant public relations campaign on their own behalf. But rest assured, there are no shortages of Terran True Believers able to staff factories, research new weapons and crew BattleMechs.

And finally, there are the mysterious Five Hidden Worlds, though they seem to have contributed little but outré technology and Gabriel's WarShips. If these were meant to be manufacturing facilities hidden from the wrath of the Clans, they have not made their weight felt because virtually all of the Word's military strength—even that donated to the Protectorate—can be accounted for from better-known sources.

Honestly, one wonders why the Word of Blake's forces were actually not larger. Perhaps there is less sympathy for the Word of Blake among the skilled laborers of Terra than one might suspect.

THE CLAN HOMEWORLDS

One does have to wonder about the silence of the Clan homeworlds these days. The Clans have a poor intelligence network, a worse counter-intelligence system, and are rank novices at ideological modification of populations. In the years after the Great Refusal, given their ultimate goals of destroying this threat, how many Blakist operatives reached Clan space via the SLDF garrison? Could the Word have engineered a war between Wardens and Crusaders outraged at the Great Refusal, perhaps as a pre-invasion disruption?

Unfortunately, our contacts do not reach that far, and the Clans that have left the homeworlds are incredibly tight-lipped about the matter.

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Honored Peter-san:

As requested, I and my staff have spent the last several months pouring over the INN archives so thoughtfully compiled by the late Michael Bosworth; his fastidious approach in saving everything as he pulled together his "Inner Sphere in Review" pieces has netted us a gold mine of information. We have cross-referenced as much as possible which is, sad to say, still less than profitable. I wish to thank you and our benevolent benefactor for granting us unrestricted access to the ISAP archives, as well as the various news sources such as SBC, DBC, NANN and others. Though it made our jobs infinitely more difficult, the ability to support most of our report below with additional facts and references has been worth it.

If the Lord Kurita has any further use for my team and I, you only need to ask.

In the Dragon's service,
Jose Maestas

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Jose:

What follows is a synopsis of several engagements that contained patterns of coordination. Some are obvious—Duke Hasek's ill-named "Sovereign Justice" being one, due to the sheer amount of archival data available to us. Others, such as the Word of Blake's activities on Hesperus, Donegal and Coventry, are less so. For much of these, we have created operational names for the patterns we have detected; few reports actually mention such military operations by name.

Also, we have made some leaps of logic in a few cases; please understand that we are researchers, not military analysts. So please make sure Lord Kurita understands this.

This is our preliminary report; it is not complete by any stretch of the imagination, nor should it be interpreted as such. It is probably the most accurate picture we have of the early part of this war so far, but much remains unknown.

Your humble servant,
Archivist Megumi Kaneda

NOTES

OPERATION: "SOVEREIGN JUSTICE"

The Federated Suns Capellan March assault against the Capellan Confederation

Commander: Duke George Hasek

Dateline: 25 June 3068 to approx. 3 October 3068 [Formal cease-fire: April 3070]

Analyst: Martin Jacobs; Historical Analyst, HTE FedSuns Marketing Division

Precursor

It can now be said in hindsight that the disappearance of Mandrinn Kai Allard-Liao from St. Ives was the first "shot" fired by Duke Hasek of the Capellan March against the Capellan Confederation. (We know now, of course, that the Bounty Hunter was the abductor.) Mandrinn Allard-Liao was subsequently seen in "protective custody" on New Syrtis, from which it can be inferred that the Duke was using Allard-Liao for his propaganda games with the citizens of the St. Ives Commonality. Considering the Mandrinn's exceptional skills, it can also be seen as a way to eliminate—without extraneous bloodshed—one of the biggest threats to the Duke's impending attack.

Wave One (June 3068)

Whether or not the invasion was sanctioned by the Federated Suns government is up for debate in other circles. We do know that the initial wave hit in three distinct "prongs": the Lee Corridor, the Kittery Line and the Zilang Axis.

The Lee Corridor began with the Fifth Syrtis Fusiliers and Twentieth Avalon Hussars facing down the Fourth McCarron's Armored Cavalry on Ares, while Khorsakhov's Cossacks and the First Kestrel Grenadiers hit the Second Capellan Reserve Cavalry on Necromo. Capellan casualties were high, with nearly half of the MAC operating at less than optimal efficiency after three weeks. The Second CRC was rendered incapable of further operations after holding out for a week.

The Kittery Line began with a prepared assault on Gei-Fu, where the First FedSuns Lancers and First Kittery Borderers suffered little damage in scattering the Third Capellan Defense Force; initial reports had large-scale bombardments leveling the Capellan bases, but verifiable reports have since shown otherwise, and we know the Third CDF managed to persist for some time afterward.

The Zilang Axis faced the strongest defenses, as the First Cunningham Commandos and Sixth Syrtis Fusiliers encountered fierce resistance from Renshield's Dragoons on Hustaing (who nevertheless withdrew within a month with only modest damage). On Sendalor, the St. Cyr's Armored Regiment dragged out the fighting against the Ninth Illician Rangers and their additional mercenary support. After nearly four weeks, the world remained only barely pacified before the second wave.

In addition to these three primary strike orders, secondary raids hit other border worlds to destabilize the CCAF, with strikes on Tsingtao, Liao, Ningpo, Aldebaran, Jonathan and Hunan. The only significant FedSuns casualties suffered in these raids was the loss of an Eighth Syrtis Fusiliers battalion in a DropShip explosion during their approach to Liao.

Wave Two (July 3068)

In the second wave, the Lee Corridor forces continued their push onward as the Hussars seized Minnacora (including a top-secret myomer test facility, previously guarded by Capellan mercenaries), the Grenadiers took New Sagan, and the Fifth Crucis Lancers captured Capricorn III. Tsingtao also fell after the initial raid turned into a full-blown invasion. None of the attacking AFFS forces suffered heavy asset losses while neutralizing the CCAF planetary militias, but excessive collateral damage did occur in many cases.

Meanwhile, the Kittery Line thrust continued with the capture of Relevow and Overton, with negligible AFFS losses. But as the First FedSuns moved on to Overton, the resurgence of the partially destroyed Third CDF on Gei-Fu necessitated the assignment of several mercenary commands—centered on the Cunningham's Commandos and Illician Lancers—to secure that world. [*News reports oddly confused the Third CDF with the Third CRC, who were on Holloway all this time. –MK*]

The Zilang Axis push easily captured Purvo and Carmen, two undefended worlds. Once more the invaders' losses were insignificant.

The raids on the coreward border turned into full assaults on Liao, Aldebaran, Jonathan and Hunan. On Ningpo, in fact, the Arcadians suffered huge battle losses and retreated.

Wave Three (August 3068)

Along the Lee Corridor, Aldertaine fell easily to the Fifth Crucis Lancers in the third wave. The troops were not well received by the populace, however, and suffered some casualties due to sabotage and supply problems.

Glasgow, Imalda and New Westin also fell easily along the Kittery Line. However, Renshield's Dragoons (retreating from Hustaing) ended up on Hexare a day after the Fourth Illician Lancers made planetfall. Significant losses to both sides rendered the world divided under martial law, with both sides claiming significant power bases.

Along the Zilang Axis, Homestead fell quickly, while the Jie Fang Legion hammered Denbar, committing several war atrocities as an urban riot control mission went horribly awry. Tsingtao continued to resist FedSuns occupation, with Vong's Grenadiers arriving to inflict significant battle losses on the occupying 59th Illician Strike Regiment.

At the end of August, the AFFS executed a fast resupply chain to several commands along all three attack prongs. Doing so forced the Capellan March to divert a significant number of commercial

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JumpShips from their main routes, creating spikes in pricing and shipping tariffs throughout the region. Several corporate conglomerates appealed to Duke Hasek's office, but to no avail. Corporate losses were not large, but many expressed fears that the conscripted civilian JumpShips would become targets in the Capellan war zone.

Wave Four (October 3068)

The Lee Corridor campaign resumed for its fourth wave with Randar and No Return falling quickly to the Twentieth Avalon Hussars and the Kestrel Grenadiers. Significant collateral damage occurred on Randar when AFFS civilian riot control efforts got out of hand, particularly in the capital city's business district.

Meanwhile, the Zilang Axis advance saw Housekarle fall easily to AFFS, placing them within arm's reach of Sian itself. On Imalda, a counterattack by Death Commandos and the Fifth CRC hammered the 21st Illician Rangers, inflicting serious losses that forced the mercenaries to withdraw after a brief guerilla camapign.

The Kittery Line did not advance in this wave, but instead received reinforcements for a possible push toward Capella.

Border assaults continued to bleed both sides red with massive equipment and manpower losses on Liao and Aldebaran. The First FedSuns Armored Cavalry fell back to Halloran V after suffering nearly fifty percent losses in materiel.

Beyond Sian

The orbital attack on Sian was the turning point in the war. However, it remains unclear exactly *who* the attacker was over the Confederation's capital. Data analysis is inconclusive on this point, as much of the information is Capellan in origin—and they have been reluctant to data-share with our assets in the area.

It is possible that the orbital strike on the Forbidden City was perpetrated by the AFFS, but none of the data analyzed show any AFFS capital fleet assets within two jumps of Sian. Plus, according to the scant reports that did get out, the damage profile is inconsistent with the known weapon profiles of most Davion navy vessels.

A smaller possibility exists that the attack came from CCAF naval assets, as the world did have at least one *Feng Huang* on station. However, its recorded position by space traffic control was close to the system's nadir jump point at the time of the attack (at least partially explaining why the ship was unable to intervene). While technically possible, however, it is horrifying to think a House leader would order such a destructive attack on his own people, especially such a personality as Sun-Tzu, who is known to care more for his people than any other Chancellor in recent Capellan history.

By far the most obvious conclusion is that the Word of Blake executed the strike. Again, no known assets were in the system at the time, but what fleet traffic and space control records we have come upon do record several anomalous contacts arriving around the time immediately before the strike. At least one Blakist fleet asset was within a jump of Sian at the time, so this theory is considered the most probable. It is also the official position of the Confederation.

The end result of the attack, however, cannot be disputed. Fence sitters in the St. Ives Commonality now saw their only liberator—Mandrinn Allard-Liao—as a prisoner of Duke Hasek (despite FedSuns propaganda to the contrary) and rallied to support the Capellan military leader, Talon Zahn, as a massive counterattack was initiated within days of the Sian assault.

No further attacks were undertaken by Duke Hasek's forces after the Sian strike, though it remains possible that additional waves were in the offing when the Capellan counter-offensive began.

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OPERATION: "THUNDERSTRIKE"

The Capellan Confederation's counterattack to Operation: Sovereign Justice

Commander: *Sang-jiang-jun* Talon Zahn

Dateline: 8 October 3068 to approx. 1 April 3070 [Formal cease-fire: April 3070]

Analyst: Martin Jacobs; Historical Analyst, HTE FedSuns Marketing Division

Catalyst

The orbital bombardment on Sian—originally believed to be the result of an AFFS attack—apparently cost the Confederation its Chancellor and the Duchess of St. Ives. It also created a backlash of anti-Davion sentiment on the newly occupied worlds, including those among the St. Ives population who'd been on the fence regarding Hasek's campaign of "liberation." With the Chancellor presumed dead, his military commander, *Sang-jiang-jun* Talon Zahn, took command to authorize the Capellan counterattack.

Wave One (October 3068)

Likely planned well in advance, the CCAF counterattack was launched in three prongs that struck their objectives almost simultaneously. Ares, Aldertaine, Randar and No Return were hit on 10 October, with the most vicious fighting occurring on Ares as the previously pro-Hasek Blackwind Lancers and the Fourth MAC nearly obliterated the Fifth Syrtis Fusiliers (who suffered more than eighty-five percent asset losses).

The second prong of the CCAF counterattack hit Overton,

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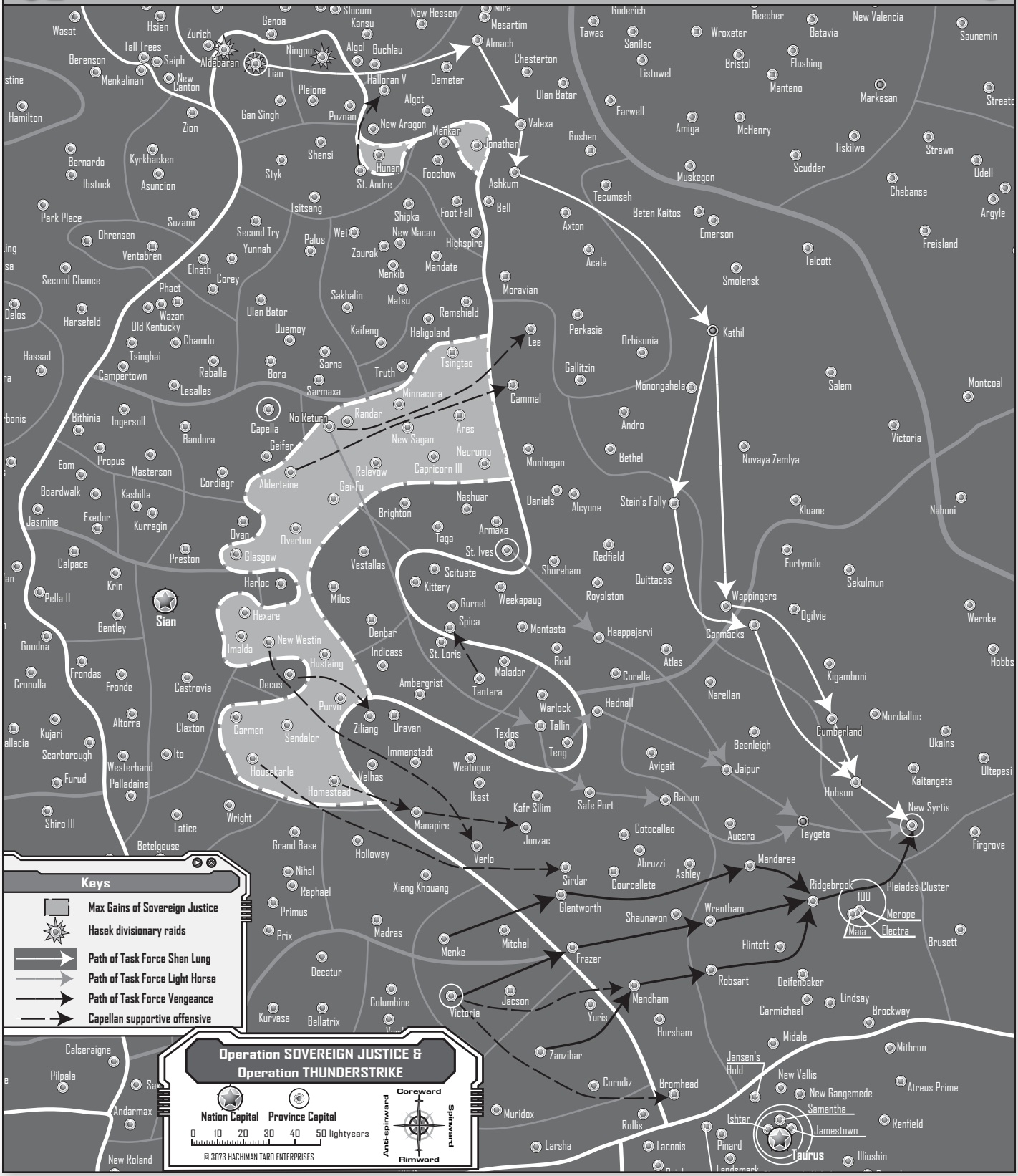

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Glasgow and New Westin. On New Westin, the "renegade" Jie Fang Legion was overrun and summarily destroyed by the Death Commandos and the Fifth CRC, while the battle for Overton would eventually force out the FedSuns troops at the cost of both the Fifteenth Dracon and Warrior House Ijori.

The third prong saw CCAF units hitting Homestead and Housekarle, Liao and Halloran V. On Necromo, the counterattack failed when AFFS mercenaries (Khorsakov's Cossacks) delivered heavy losses to the Second CRC.

Wave Two (October-November 3068)

The first wave attacks proved to be a mere delaying tactic, buying the Confederation time to reshuffle its forces. Three task forces (TFs) formed and merged with several first-wave units, striking out on 20 October.

TF Shen Lung, consisting of Warrior House Dai Da Chi, the Second MAC and the Death Commandos' Third Battalion, hammered Almach.

TF Light Horse, consisting of the First and Second St. Ives Lancers as well as the Third MAC, plunged into St. Ives space to hit No Return, Teng and St. Ives itself.

TF Vengeance contained the First MAC, the Prefecture Guard and Kingston's VCR. This force moved rimward from Menke, Victoria and Zanzibar.

As the second wave launched, most of the first-wave attacks wrapped up as AFFS forces pulled back; supply issues had prevented these invaders from regaining full strength before the CCAF counterstrikes began. While some FedSuns forces were able to evacuate with only moderate asset loss, the Twentieth Avalon Hussars were reduced to a company as they retreated from Randar to Bethel.

By the end of the year, TF Shen Lung smashed into Valexa, eliminating the Valexa CMM. Meanwhile, TF Light Horse reclaimed St. Ives after seven weeks of intense fighting, while the Third MAC secured Tallin.

The most remarkable event of this phase was the fall of Kittery in November—not to CCAF forces, but to the Word of Blake. With Kittery blacked out, it took the AFFS a few months to realize that a key supply point had been cut off.

Wave Three (January-February 3069)

St. Ives, Necromo and Warlock were finally pacified by February of 3069. In the most dramatic battle of this wave, Capellan WarShips used orbital fire to obliterate the remains of Khorsakov's Cossacks on Necromo.

TF Shen Lung, meanwhile, struck Ashkum, meeting minor resistance as most of the AFFS forces had already gone, while Task Force Light Horse took Haappaiarvi and Hadnall, with moderate asset losses to the Second Lancers.

The CCAF made additional progress when the Vengeance forces moved on to take Frazer and Mendham, while Warrior House LuSann and the Third CRC reinforced this prong by attacking Manapire. Verlo and Bromhead were also raided in this wave; like many Capellan strikes along the front, the attackers did not stay long to secure worlds, content merely to disrupt local defenses.

At the tailing edge of their third wave, the Capellans surged forward again with the TF Light Horse hitting Safe Port, while TF Vengeance claimed victories on Glentworth, Wrentham, and Robstart. Additional CCAF forces also struck at Sirdar and Spica, while reinforcements drawn from the Confederation's core secured Aucara, Jonzac, Lee, and Cammal.

With so many worlds overrun, and the loss of Kittery effectively choking off his supply lines, Duke Hasek recalled the remains of his offensive against the Confederation. Shifting quickly to a defensive strategy, the AFFS now struggled to stave off what now appeared to be a coordinated Capellan-Blakist counter-invasion—aimed straight at New Syrtis.

Wave Four (May-June 3069)

In May, Task Force Shen Lung continued its drive into Davion space with a heavy assault on Kathil, severely damaging the shipyards (estimates put the yards at only ten percent operational capacity, with a small percentage of increase over the next few years, at best) and wiping out the Eighth Donegal Guards. Warrior House Dai Da Chi, however, suffered critical losses during the assault. In June, this task force began a "leapfrogging" campaign toward New Syrtis, hitting—but not capturing—Stein's Folly, Carmacks, Wappingers and Cumberland before regrouping at Hobson.

TF Light Horse engaged in pitched battles on Jaipur and Bacum during this wave, ultimately inflicting more than ninety percent asset losses to the Twelfth Vegan Rangers' Gamma Regiment on Jaipur, while WarShip escorts obliterated the spaceport and half of Bacci City on Bacum before the Third MAC landed. Meanwhile, TF Vengeance moved to Ridgebrook and Manadree. Ridgebrook fell in August after heavy fighting, as the rest of the Vengeance forces arrived.

Wave Five (September-December 3069)

In the fifth and final wave of Thunderstrike, Halloran V was attacked once more by the CCAF, pinning nearby commands in place. This "northern front" strike, of course, was merely diversion, as Task Forces Shen Lung and Vengeance dropped on New Syrtis, hitting the six AFFS regiments gathered there—the Sixth Syrtis Fusiliers, New Syrtis CMM, Third Ceti Hussars, Fourth Donegal Guards, Vanguard Legion and Borodin's Vindicators. TF Light Horse, meanwhile, struck at Taygeta, forcing the battered defenders there to retreat to New Syrtis.

In October, Light Horse arrived on New Syrtis in pursuit of the AFFS troops from Taygeta, reinforcing the entrenched CCAF troops. The arrival of the Medusans mercenary command removed the WarShip *Zhejiang* from the Capellan naval presence, effectively

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crippling the Capellans' orbital support.

Fighting on New Syrtis was fierce and calamitous, destroying several major industrial and commercial facilities, and demolishing at least three mid-sized cities in the months-long battle. Estimates suggest the damage to planetary infrastructure is sufficient to throw the planetary economy into a major recession that could stretch on for years. Militarily, the Fourth Donegal and the New Syrtis CMM were all but wiped out, along with the Second St. Ives Lancers and the Death Commandos' Third Battalion.

Conclusion

In January of 3070, the Capellan Chancellor miraculously resurfaced from the ruins of his palace and called for a cease-fire with Duke Hasek's forces, effectively ending the continued firefight on New Syrtis. The CCAF forces executed a fighting withdrawal, however, defending themselves fiercely against the FedSuns forces, which seemed unwilling to accept a truce at this point. The Capellan withdrawal left behind a March capital ravaged and teetering on the brink of depression, stressed not only by the immediate effects of fighting on New Syrtis, but also by the efforts to rebuild the forces battered so badly in Sovereign Justice, by the loss of numerous merchant JumpShips.

Sporadic fighting continued along the border despite the cease-fire, and did not end until Duke Hasek's assassination in March of 3070.

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Flashpoint

Probably the largest catalyst for Duke Kelswa-Steiner's February 3068 declaration of war against the Free Worlds League was the assassination of Helen Thrall at the end of 3067. Concluding it to be a Lyran plot, a Marik naval task force consisting of the Sirian Lancers, with heavy WarShip support, raided Skye in force, culminating in a major two-day battle in and around the capitol. Heavy industry and agricultural centers were destroyed outright, with significant loss of life reported. Less than a week later, Duke Kelswa-Steiner declared war on the Free Worlds League, asserting his right to do in the absence of direct authority from Tharkad.

Before the Skye assault could even begin, Margrave Caesar Steiner was assassinated along with his command staff on Cavanaugh II. Lyran intelligence tracked the assassin origins—she was killed on-site—into the Free Worlds League. This evidence convinced Skye's neighboring Bolan Province of the severity of the League threat. Duke Umayr of Bolan thus declared war on the League on March 1 of 3068, swiftly granting nominal command of the bulk of Bolan's military to Duke Kelswa-Steiner for the offensive.

Überschatten

The first attacks by the Skye/Bolan alliance began on March 10, with a set of coordinated assaults targeting Togwotee, Megrez and Cascade. While mercenaries were used heavily on Togwotee and Cascade, several LAAF commands became embroiled in a severe firefight to dismantle and destroy the Sixth Marik Militia on Megrez. The attacking forces left few survivors from the Sixth.

Three weeks later, Bolan and Skye forces took Colfax, Sheridan, Thermopolis and Pingree, but the fighting for Thermopolis—defended by the Fifth Fusiliers of Oriente—lasted until late April.

After a brief period of resupply and reorganization, Skye forces struck Preston, Rexburg and McAffe in late May. Of these, McAffe proved most costly, when the defending Ninth Regulan Hussars drew the Fourth Lyran Regulars into a neatly laid trap. The Fourth suffered grievous losses, and most of its upper command staff—accused of battlefield ineptitude—was reassigned.

In June, a vengeful Gabhardt's Carabineers and the reinforcing Seventh Donegal Guards arrived to shatter the Ninth Hussars and fully secure McAffe for the Lyrans. That same month also saw Skye forces hit Shasta, Ideyld and Gallatin, which lacked significant defenses and fell easily. In the first actual counterstrike of the conflict, the Knights of the Inner Sphere hit Preston with a lightning attack in late June. After offering the Second Donegal Guards the chance to retreat—which they refused—the elite Knights destroyed the LAAF command by early July.

[*Strange note: It's not clear how or why, but an odd report placed Langendorf Lancers on Preston, battling the Skye Jaegers. The details of the battle, however, show that it took place on Gallatin, not Preston. How MercNet's news sources fouled up the planet name in a published report is beyond me. –MK*]

Turning Point

Duke Kelswa-Steiner, claiming the paltry defense of Marik worlds as proof of the League's weakened state, ordered a new push in July. After taking the relatively undefended worlds of

NOTES

OPERATION: "ÜBERSCHATTEN/ BROKEN FIST"

The Skye/Bolan assault on the Free Worlds, including the FWLM counterattack

Commander: Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner
Dateline: February 3068 to December 3069
Analyst: Kelly Adams; Dean, War College of Skye

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Niihau, Autumn Wind and Gannett, the Lyran forces paused to rest and resupply. While preparing for further advances, however, the "missing" Free Worlds League Military struck back at Colfax and McAffe with tremendous force, as the first phase of Tamarind Marshal Jeremy Brett's Operation: Broken Fist began. The Eleventh and Fourth Lyran Regulars were rendered combat-ineffective, with at least a third of each command captured and taken to POW camps on other worlds, along with the remains of the Gabhardt's Carabineers.

Broken Fist's second phase launched less than two weeks later, and FWLM forces quickly reclaimed Gallatin, Ideyld and Cascade. The offensive shattered the Skye Jaegers and forced their remnants to withdraw from Gallatin with the Skye Guards in late August, but not before much of the main continent of Thurgood was burned by massive "scorched earth" tactics.

The third phase of Broken Fist struck in early September, as Duke Kelswa-Steiner quickly tried to readjust his forces to the resurgent FWLM counterattacks. Sowing further chaos, League forces assaulted Lyran worlds all along the border, attacking Wyatt, Phecda, Alchiba, Milton, Denebola, Loric, Ford, Giausar, Timbiqui and Poulsbo. Most of Brett's forces suffered light casualties seizing the under-defended worlds, and effectively cut off the Bolan-Skye invaders' supply lines. Only Giausar proved to be the exception, as the One-Eyed Jacks' spirited defense against the Twentieth Marik Militia and the Knights of the Inner Sphere turned into a bloodbath. Though the mercenaries eventually retreated—with only fifteen percent of their original force intact—the destruction of several major supply caches ignited numerous forest fires and contaminated several deep fresh-water reservoirs near the battle site. Oddly enough, the Knights also retreated from the battle, after suffering comparatively light casualties.

War Derailed

Pressing their advantage, the Marik forces pushed ahead less than ten days later with assaults on Dixie, Arcadia, Mizar, Summer, Khon Kaen, Penobscot and Cavanaugh II. With several Lyran worlds now under Free Worlds control—effectively cutting off supplies and safe retreat routes for the bulk of Duke Kelswa-Steiner's invasion troops—General Brett initiated cease-fire overtures to the Lyrans. This offer may have been a smokescreen, however; reports suggest upheavals and unrest deeper within the League, while the Captain-General's recall of the Knights and other key commands to Atreus had weakened the central corridor of Brett's center. The Blakist White-Out and the revelation of the Captain-General's false identity sowed further chaos within the League, stalling the Marik advance. Conflicting and contradictory orders threw the coreward front into even greater disarray.

Seeing opportunity in the League's apparent turmoil, Skye forces reclaimed Syrma and Zebebelgenubi in November, and by January of 3069 had landed troops on Mizar, Summer and Alcor. Both sides bled this time, but ultimately the League forces withdrew, and the Lyran banner once more flew over all of these worlds by month's end.

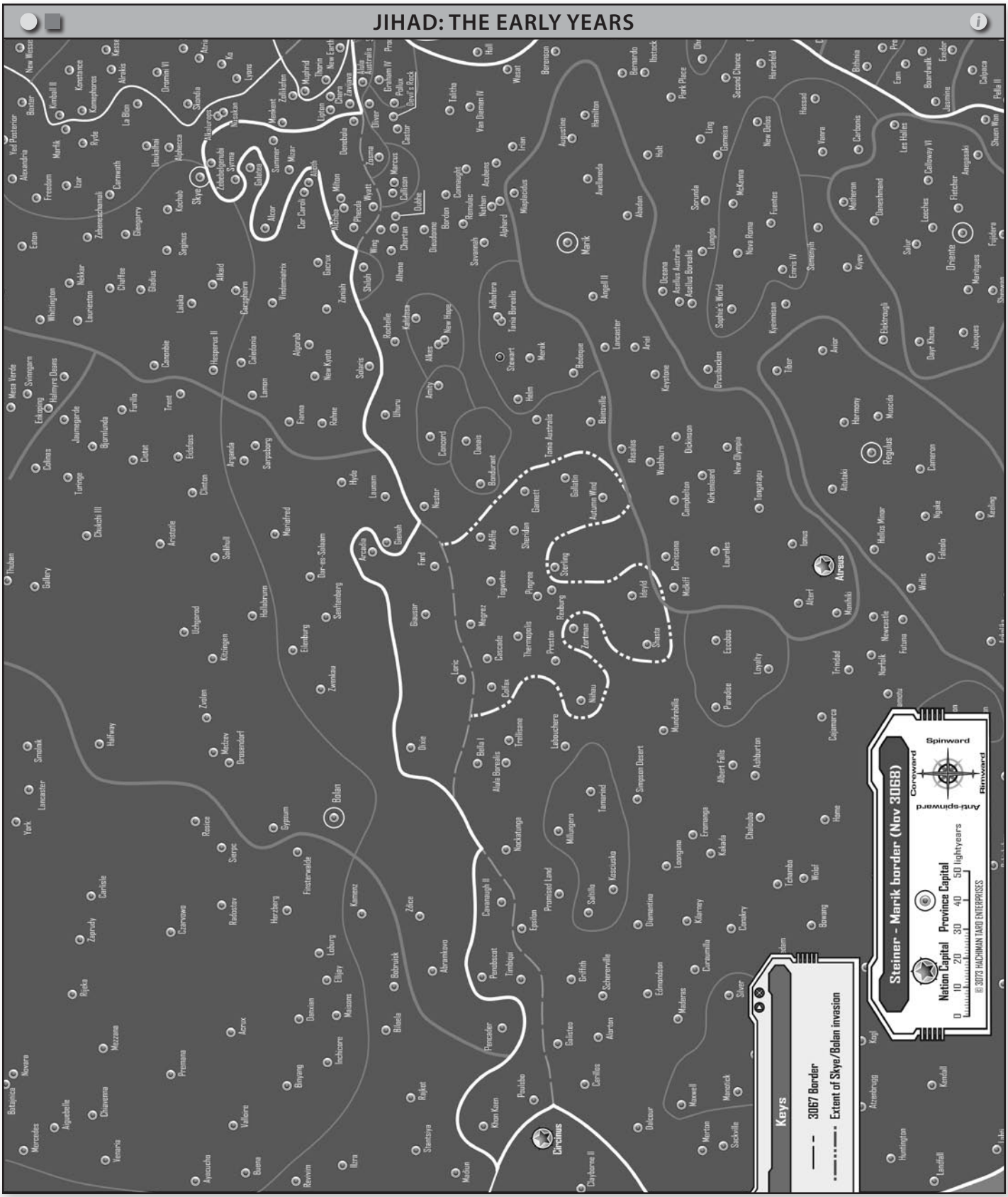
Despite these successful reclamations, the disruptions of the White-Out and Brett's effective control over the invasion force's supply and escape routes brought the League-Skye fighting to a standstill. In fact, Duke Umayr ultimately made cautious attempts to contact Marshal Brett to arrange a cease-fire with the League on Bolan's provincial border—breaking ranks with Duke Steiner-Kelswa in the bargain. As a result, Bolan forces slowly withdrew from Autumn Wind, Gannett, Megrez, Niihau, Pingree, Preston, Thermopolis, Togwotee, Rexburg, Shasta and Sheridan over the course of the next six months.

The Cost of War

Officially, the LAAF forces involved suffered an average of more than fifty percent battlefield losses during their invasion, with little hope of resupply on the worlds they claimed. Alliance media outlets spun the outcome as a moral victory, proclaiming that Bolan and Skye had "made their point," but while Duke Umayr's agreement saw the League forces redistributed, many of the Marik gains were not relinquished. For this reason (and despite the effective loss of his ally), Duke Kelswa-Steiner never officially rescinded his declaration of war against the Free Worlds. Nevertheless, between the Blakist attacks on Tharkad, Donegal, Hesperus and Coventry, as well as the Jade Falcon attacks along the occupation zone border, Skye's conflict with the League reached a level of virtual stasis that effectively ground all military actions on that front to a halt by 3071.

For Bolan Province, the butcher's bill for the Skye-Bolan assault and its aftermath was staggering. The average battle losses to all provincial forces came to just under forty-five percent, with many commands heavily damaged and at least three mercenary outfits destroyed. An extremely large supply of war materiel on Giausar was liquidated, creating a huge drain on the local military industry and supply chain to make up the shortfall. With the Lyran nation's primary manufacturing worlds under Blakist control, Bolan's defenses have taken years to recover and are estimated at only eighty percent of their 3067 readiness levels as of this writing.

Skye's forces, which bore the brunt of the heavier fighting, suffered even heavier losses, with key elite commands destroyed and a corresponding loss of command experience and trained battlefield officers. The average battle loss for all provincial forces came to more than fifty-three percent, sorely weakening Skye's defenses against subsequent Word of Blake attacks in later months. With supplies below critical levels, Duke Kelswa-Steiner authorized a reapportionment of the province's budget to smaller manufacturing companies focusing on cheap, outdated battle technology in order to provide some semblance of materiel to his troops in short order. Surprisingly, this move actually spurred some economic growth on several war-torn worlds and has helped restore LAAF forces in Skye Province and


JIHAD: THE EARLY YEARS
Steiner - Marik border (Nov 3068)
Spinward
Coreward
Rimward
Anti-spinward
Nation Capital
Province Capital
0 10 20 30 40 50 lightyears
© 3072 HACHIMAN TAIGO ENTERPRISES
Keys
3067 Border
Extent of Skye/Bolan invasion
Skye
Mark
Oriente
Bolan
Regulus
Aireus
Circinus

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its localized militias to seventy-three percent of its pre-3067 readiness levels.

An accurate accounting of the League's military losses and readiness levels at this time, meanwhile, has proven extremely difficult. With widespread unrest, Blakist defections and the continued deterioration of central authority League-wide, communication and data accumulation within that realm has become an exercise of impossible proportions. It may be years before an accurate picture can be drawn. Rough estimates, in the meantime, place FWLM forces along the Lyran border at close to forty-five percent of their pre-3067 levels. It should be noted that this remarkably low number not only accounts for the loss of several FWLM commands to the Skye-Bolan attack, but also defections of League commands to the Blakist Protectorate, outright decommissioning and reformation on independent worlds, and other inexplicable disappearances.

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NOTES

OPERATION: "STEEL HAMMER"

The Word of Blake attacks on the Lyran military-industrial complex

Commander: Unknown
Dateline: 3068
Analyst: LAAF Hauptmann Fredrick Plerany (ret.)

What follows is a cursory analysis of key worlds struck by the Word of Blake's assault against several vital economic and industrial centers of the Lyran Alliance. Not content to merely decapitate the Lyran leadership and expand their Protectorate "buffer zone" into Skye Province, the Word's strategy for the Alliance has been one of calculated economic and industrial devastation—a siege writ large against the underpinnings of an entire realm.

Hesperus II

Heavy raids conducted by the Sixteenth and Twentieth Divisions in 3068 hammered the Hesperan defenses and covered the insertion of several Light of Mankind operational teams on the planet. These actions, spread over the course of roughly two years, set the stage for the 3070 invasion of Hesperus II by the Blakists' 38th Division and the 40th Shadow. Taking on defenses weakened from within and without, these forces captured Hesperus II and most of the Defiance Industries complexes on-planet intact. The Blakists' *Lola III*-class *End of Wisdom*, escorted by several "Pocket WarShips," swiftly destroyed the *Melissa Steiner*—the only LAAF WarShip present at the time of the assault. Victorious in mere days where centuries of invaders had failed, the Word of Blake immediately established a blockade to hold onto their prize.

Defiance's local employees were given a choice: Serve their new Blakist masters, or be shipped to a prison colony on Hesperus V. Most employees submitted, and the few acts of rebellion offered were swiftly rebuffed with brutal force. By the end of 3070, however, the Blakists imported several hundred technicians and other specialists from Terra to secure a more reliable workforce and to boost production. By the time the system was liberated in December of 3074, the Defiance complexes were churning out war materiel on improved construction lines that exceeded the factory world's Star League-era potential. Sadly, Blakist ROM agents still at large in the system have sabotaged most of these facilities.

Donegal

Using the same strategy employed to take Hesperus II, the Word of Blake's Second Division raided Donegal three times in 3068, depositing tactical nuclear weapons, a few Level IIs of troops and several ROM operatives on the planet each time. In early 3070, the Second invaded Donegal at full force, overran the already-crippled "Tin Can" orbital settlements, and secured the embattled planet within a week. Many civilian centers were shelled into submission and the massive industrial complexes that survived were quickly converted to the Blakists' use.

A small relief force, shepherded by the *Ian McQuiston*, was forced to retreat in 3070 by the blockading *Blake's Redemption*. The Eighteenth and 31st Divisions, along with the 50th Shadow, replaced the Second shortly after ROM operatives got wind of an impending operation against the world. On 14 February 3072, a combined force from the Wolf Clan-in-Exile, ComStar and the LAAF—collectively led by Precentor Martial Victor Davion—recaptured Donegal after three weeks of heavy fighting. The Blakists withdrew after taking moderate damage, but not before destroying two key industrial sites with cobalt-clad nuclear devices.

Coventry

Unlike the extended attacks on Donegal and Hesperus II, Coventry was attacked outright in early 3068, with the Coventry CPM completely overwhelmed by the Blakists' 30th Division and the *Immortal Spirit* in the matter of days. The planet remained silent, with its HPG shut down, and all resistance was scattered or destroyed by 3071. Coventry Metal Works' complexes, effectively controlled by a token Blakist force, churned out Lyran and Blakist war machines for their captors, refitting several Divisions with their output.

JIHAD: THE EARLY YEARS

In early 3074, operating from battle plans drawn up by Devlin Stone, allied forces raided the Coventry system twice—once with an LAAF aerospace task force, and once by a Jade Falcon fleet centered on the *Red Talon*. The *Immortal Spirit* was heavily damaged in a brief exchange with the Falcon force, but remained in system despite serious need for repair.

In mid-March, the two raiding forces combined, and—despite repeated instances of bickering commanders and "glory-hounding"—managed to recapture Coventry for the Alliance. Though only three of the 30th's Level IIIs remained on the surface at the time, the fighting was fierce around the planetary capital and CMW plants. The Blakists held out for a brutal four days in the ground battle. The biggest prize, however, is the capture of a Star League-era *Newgrange*-class YardShip in polar orbit, apparently brought in to repair the damaged *Spirit*, which fought her last battle against the Falcons' *Red Talon*.

JIHAD: THE EARLY YEARS

NOTES

OPERATION: "SHOWTIME"

The Word of Blake invasion of Solaris VII
Commander: Unknown
Dateline: 16 June 3068 to 11 December 3071
Analyst: Edith Landis (SHA), Pascha O'Sullivan (HTE)

Honored Sirs:

I have endeavored to prepare as complete a record regarding Solaris VII as requested; a more detailed report will be forthcoming with accompanying archival data and footage. My team has prepared a summary of events based on archival footage, pirate broadcasts and Blakist HPG transmissions, as well as standard screamsheet newsfaxes; the situation on Solaris is so convoluted that understanding what happened to the system is critical before substantial investment is made.

—Edith Landis, Archivist (Solaris Historical Archives)
—Pascha O'Sullivan, HTE Financial Services

Overview

Originally believed to be a simple planetary assault, the Blakist invasion of Solaris VII proved to be far more than that. In fact, the battle for Solaris may well have been one of the biggest and bloodiest propaganda projects in the early stages of the Jihad. The potential damage to the Inner Sphere's collective psyche could have been much worse here, had it not been for the heroic actions of Eric Gray and his Solaris Home Defense League.

The attack on the Game World was not haphazard. The sheer number of warriors who defected from their contractual obligations to the various stables and cooperatives and sided with the Blakists in the first hours of the invasion gives the lie to any rumor that the attack was anything less than pre-planned. Still, some apologists have suggested that the Word was recruiting these pilots and crews for their own militias before the war, perhaps to be used in the supposed "Clan invasion" the Word was planning before 3067.

The Attack

On 16 June, elements of the Eighteenth Division and the entire 25th Division dropped onto key locations across Greyland, Solaris' primary continent. At least four battle groups hit the Steiner Coliseum, the Scrapyard, Iron Flats Pityard and the International Zone. Firefights broke out almost immediately, when Solaris City Control verified the attackers were not from the recently removed ComStar garrison. The fighting on the first night was the most vicious at the Coliseum, where more than twenty elite pilots were competing in a charity event, the Allard Cup. At least five competitors immediately sided with the Blakists and managed to bottle up the remaining contestants until the invaders penetrated the arena and captured the remaining seven pilots.

Within twenty-four hours, the rest of the Blakist forces, totaling more than three regiments in strength, captured the International Zone, Montenegro, Burgton and part of the Black Hills. Early casualties included Earthworks-FWL in Montenegro, the Anchor Bay Brewery and the Warner MechWarrior Academy in Burgton, as well as the nearly completed SLDF-dedicated Class Six arena in the International Zone. Several established stables were thrown into chaos, including the Skye Tigers and Bromley Stables, as many of their skilled MechWarriors declared allegiance to the Word of Blake and turned on their stablemates from within.

The Word gained control over the International Zone, planetary media, the HPG and both of Solaris VII's main jump points within seventy-two hours. From strongpoints within Montenegro, the IZ and the Black Hills, the Word pushed out to capture the rest of the city, which finally fell by the end of the month.

Occupied Solaris

With daily broadcasts of Word victories over the "elite" gladiators who refused to serve them—executed in the re-opened arenas under the Blakists' control—the Word began to record and transmit their triumphs across the HPG network. Most of the Top Twenty faced these staged executions and died before crowds of

JIHAD: THE EA

thousands within the first six weeks of the occupation.

While most newsfeeds smuggled from Solaris during the occupation show the SHDL as the lone defenders against the Blakist aggression, the truth was far more complex. All across the world, scores of resistance groups sprang up. Even as the lopsided Blakist "games" played out in nearly every arena across Greyland, resentment and resistance followed. The SHDL, however, was the most marketed of the rebel groups, thanks to Eric Gray and his liberal use of the Silver Dragons' marketing team. Utilizing a network of traders and smugglers, the SHDL managed to sneak vast amounts of footage and commentary out on a daily basis, effectively countering much of the Blakist HPG propaganda. Still, very little mention of the sacrifices made by other, smaller, less-equipped resistance cells made it offworld—and in the jaded and distrustful environment of Solaris VII, this apparent inequality stirred resentment between many of the cells, despite the common threat of the Word's occupation.

Very little coordinated action took place for nearly two years as the Blakists tightened their grip on Solaris, destroying all but one of VEST's manufacturing and testing complexes, gutting Blue Shot Weapons' main facility near Roland Fields and eliminating a major resistance cell near Nowhere, comprised of the remains of the Pentastars gang, the Hombres and the Renegades Cooperative.

With the gladiator structure and scoring in shambles, creative press leaders devised a new scoring system and begin rating warriors from news reports of raids, calculating kills, damage and other arcane data to structure a "new" Top Twenty. Footage from raids and other operations became more popular than the Blakists' nightly "battles." This, in turn, led to increased Word aggression against reporters and news agencies.

Recession and Anarchy

During the lull between major actions, business on Solaris returned to a semblance of normalcy; commerce resumed in fits and starts, with Blakist security conducting thorough checks of all shipments on- and offworld, often diverting supplies and components to other, Word-mandated destinations. Tourism, however, dried up, as the system was closed down for nearly fourteen months. Thrill seekers and gambling addicts were turned away at the nadir and zenith points, often under threat of force by Blakist WarShips. Most tour companies received the message early, after a Word *Essex* (identified as the *Dawning Horizon*) destroyed a Meier-Star Agency *Star Lord* and six luxury DropShips that attempted to bypass the blockade.

As tourism revenues dried up, Solaris VII experienced a tremendous recession, especially within war-torn Solaris City. These economic woes strained the city along factional lines until March of 3070, when a Cathay riot, supported by warriors from the remains of Zelazni and Tandrek Stables, poured into Silesia looking for foodstuffs and other necessities. The rampant looting sparked an angry backlash by Silesian businesses and turned

SOLARIS VII CORPORATE PROFILES (1Q, 3072)

MANUFACTURER	PRODUCTION CAPACITY	LOSSES*
VEST	4%	92%
Blue Shot Weapons	8%	80%
Solaris Arms	0%	100%
Earthworks – FWL	6%	82%
Nashan Diversified	0%	79%
New Avalon Technologies	5%	99%

**Personnel and capital losses*

OTHER CORPORATIONS	LOSSES	STATUS
Solaris Broadcasting Corp	63%	operational
Solaris Times	39%	operational
FedSuns Broadcasting	48%	limited operations
Tekshop	99%	destroyed
FWLNS	19%	operational
OGS Productions	87%	currently closed
Tanya's Place	100%	destroyed

STABLE	LOSSES	STATUS
Banshees	98%	considering merger
Black Lions	74%	rebuilding
Blackstar	95%	unknown
Bromley	100%	eliminated
Cenotaph	59%	competing
Delon	78%	competing
Dispossessed	100%	eliminated
Fitzhugh	92%	considering merger
Galahad	100%	eliminated
Gemini	79%	considering merger
Hombres	100%	eliminated
Huntsman	81%	bankrupt
Killjoys	66%	limited competition
Lion City	53%	considering merger
Lynch	64%	limited competition
Overlord	94%	bankrupt
Renegades	53%	unknown
Silver Dragons	71%	competing
Skye Tigers	100%	eliminated
Starlight	98%	unknown
Tandrek	62%	limited competition
White Hand	79%	considering merger
Wraiths	37%	unknown
Zelazni	46%	unknown
Zellbrigen	31%	limited competition

JIHAD: THE EARLY YEARS

worse when 'Mechs from Starlight Stables arrived. The resultant bloodbath killed more than five thousand people, including most of Starlight's warriors, before 'Mechs and battle armor from the 25th Division arrived to put down the riot.

In less than five days, most of Solaris City burned as riots burst forth from every corner. Warriors from several stables still operating chose sides; the resulting 'Mech battles put the '62 and '65 riots to shame. The Word pulled out of Solaris City to the IZ and let the citizenry beat themselves into a bloody pulp.

Rebellion

As the riots peaked in June, Eric Gray's SHDL used the chaos to pull the various resistance cells together. Finally seeing the consequences of Blakist rule, most cell leaders joined the SHDL, expanding its size five times over. With most of the Word's attention focused on the daily war zone of Solaris City, Eric sent representatives to most of the outlying corporations to enlist their help in establishing several bases of operation. Raids were coordinated to seize Blakist supplies from the IZ, rescue operations were rolled out for various important people (including the Lyran governor), and the SHDL slowly coalesced into a respectable fighting force.

By May of 3071, the SHDL was ready to reclaim Solaris City. Using criminal contacts, the SHDL managed to alert most of the population without drawing Blakist attention. They hit the city from all sides, capturing Montenegro within three hours. The Word then employed its DropShips as close-air support and damaged more than eighty percent of the district. With the invaders distracted in Montenegro and their DropShips away from the IZ, the SHDL employed its reserves and captured the large warehouse portion of the Zone, where they liberated hundreds of "impounded" BattleMechs and other combat units.

In June, the Word was forced out of Solaris City and into the Reaches, though it destroyed the HPG as it retreated. But as the battle waned, old rivalries quickly surfaced between the various cell leaders as accusations and threats of theft and "unfairness" abounded. Thanks to the new ranking system, warriors began to pay more attention to their own personal battles and coordination broke down once again. The issue came to a head when a lance of top-rated warriors from Overlord were killed in an ambush laid by Ulter Pentrovsky (ranked Eighteen of the Top Twenty) and seven other warriors from the Wraiths Stable. The ambush in Cathay sparked off a series of short, bloody battles between Lyran and Capellan stables, culminating in the complete destruction of the Wraiths.

Counterstrike

Eric Gray's appeals to the various SHDL members went unheeded until the Word seized the IZ once more in a devastating assault. With the warehouse district reclaimed, the Word unloaded a battalion of artillery pieces and began to shell Solaris City proper.

The SHDL splintered into at least five distinct groups along national lines. Working separately but in loose coordination toward the same goal, the rebels managed to push the Word out of the IZ in October. Driven again into Xolara and Burgton, the remnants of the Blakists' 25th Division ultimately withdrew to the city of Nowhere, where they seized the remaining Blue Shot facilities there. (These facilities would eventually be ransacked when the Word was forced out again later.)

Curtain Call

Toward the end of 3071, fighting on Solaris slowed to a crawl thanks to the attrition and loss of so many suitable repair facilities. Both sides increasingly relied on field repairs and scavenging tactics, with the SHDL drawing from deeper resources thanks to Gray's previously established supply bases. Finally, too battered to continue and with no reinforcements imminent, the Word fell back in early December, and abandoned Solaris.

The extent of the damage on Solaris VII has not been fully calculated until recently; even so, much is still unaccounted for and may have further impact on the following figures, which estimate the situation as it stood in first quarter of 3072.

Forecast

It is the opinion of this department that despite the bleak outlook, many exciting opportunities remain viable on Solaris VII—though most are admittedly high-risk. As you can see, investment opportunities abound within stables and other corporate interests; the severe lack of manufacturing and production capability will continue to cripple Solaris in the area of arms manufacturing. Current negotiations to gain StarCorps a significant foothold continue, but are now tied up with Legal Affairs.

Passive investment is not advisable; given the volatility of the local economy, any significant investments will need to be actively shepherded. Solaris will recover, this is certain, but which direction this recovery will take depends largely on how much influence outside factors will have in shaping the planet's reconstruction.

NOTES

OPERATION: "ICE STORM"

The Clan Ice Hellion Invasion
Commander: Khan Raina Montose, saKhan Connor Rood
Dateline: June 3071 to April 3072
Analyst: Yosef McTavish; StarCorps/SH

Peter:

During one of my intel stops on Twycross, I managed to reconnect with Mr. K's Shark contact and was successful in acquiring the equipment needed for our upcoming operation. I also bargained for (and won) a data file of intelligence regarding the Inner Sphere invasion by a new Clan—the Ice Hellions—that hit the Periphery side of the Falcon OZ not too many years ago. While it's old news indeed, it's worth looking over, as the data in here is straight from Clan Watch reports, both Falcon and Shark. It doesn't explain everything, of course, but it does provide a better picture of the Falcon situation in the OZ. I highly doubt the markets will open up in Falcon space anytime soon, but the info will probably be useful at least to the LAAF or this Devlin Stone chap we've been hearing about. Considering that Archon Steiner has been most gracious to our operation, this might be worth some political and tactical coin to ease the debt I know we're incurring here.

—Yosef

REPORT ANA-CIH-3071-V (rev) – 15 May 3072
Fr: Loremaster Kael Pershaw
To: Khan Marthe Pryde

My Khan, this is the Watch's final analysis of the "Hellion Tantrum" that ended last month. We find ourselves in a precarious situation, with continued hostility along the Wolf border, Horse boasting and Lyran troop movements all along our own border. We have also lost contact with Erewhon once more. I have dispatched a scouting force to hunt along our border; I suspect the Vipers may have decided to continue their tirade against us and I fear they used the Hellions to soften us up.

I have also forwarded you several codices of some excellent warriors for consideration to replace Galaxy Commanders Tavin Mattlov and Erik Chistu. Their sickbed deaths were unfortunate; the scientists on Butler are looking into a possible viral mutation of yimpisee *fever as the cause.*

In Turkina's service. —KP

Overview

The initial Hellion assault was unconventional, with the Clan arriving at several worlds in the middle of our territory. From the start, the Hellions operated two task forces—one headed by each Khan—that did not seem to be cooperating on a unified battle plan. Khan Raina Montose's forces focused on striking our industrial worlds, while saKhan Connor Rood secured the Periphery border.

June 3071

Clan Ice Hellion

Alpha, Delta and Zeta Prime Galaxies (Montose) take Golandrinas, Winfield, Persistence and Wotan.

Beta and Zeta Galaxies (Rood) seize the Dark Nebula, Anywhere, Bone Norman, Somerset, Erewhon and Lackhove.

Notes: Industrial complexes 245 and 249 destroyed on Winfield; Wotan HPG damaged.

Clan Jade Falcon

Gamma Galaxy retakes Bone Norman, Golandrinas and Wotan in a series of rapid strikes.

Epsilon Galaxy loses Steelton to Horses.

Epsilon Galaxy takes Seiduts from Horses.

Notes: Falcon Guards retake Bone Norman in solo action.

July 3071

Clan Ice Hellion

Alpha and Zeta Prime Galaxies capture Derf, Trell I, Romulus and Maxie's Planet, and retake Golandrinas.

Delta Galaxy re-attacks Wotan.

Notes: Orbital supply station over Derf destroyed by Alpha Galaxy Naval Star.

Clan Jade Falcon

Gamma Galaxy hits Somerset.

Notes: Heavy naval action over Somerset destroys CIH *Taney* and CJF *Lightning Strike*.

August 3071

Clan Ice Hellion

Alpha and Zeta Prime Galaxies take Evciler.

Beta Galaxy seizes Bensinger and Toland

Notes: Khan Raina Montose grievously injured on Evciler. Zellbrigen broken repeatedly by Alpha and Zeta Prime Galaxies.

September 3071

Clan Ice Hellion

Zeta Galaxy attacks Wotan.

Beta Galaxy captures Botany Bay, Von Strang's World and Apollo.

Delta Galaxy attacks Steelton

Notes: Delta Galaxy Naval Star heavily damaged; *Swift Bait* captured by Falcon forces.

Clan Jade Falcon

Alpha Galaxy recaptures Erewhon.

Notes: Large Hellion supply force captured at Falcon's Beacon by the *Emerald Tornado* in Deep Periphery.

October 3071

Clan Ice Hellion

Beta Galaxy attacks Last Chance and Lackhove.

Delta Galaxy retreats from Steelton.

Zeta Galaxy captures Gotterdammerung and Here.

Notes: Wotan's capital (Borealtown) is razed in order to root out Falcons' 78th PGC.

Clan Jade Falcon

Epsilon Galaxy pushes Hellions off Steelton.

Gamma Galaxy reinforces Lackhove and Last Chance.

Alpha Galaxy reinforces Wotan.

Notes: Hellions are declared dezgra by saKhan Clees after reports from Wotan are confirmed.

November 3071

Clan Ice Hellion

Zeta Galaxy pulls off of Apollo.

Beta Galaxy retreats from Lackhove, but without the 200th Attack Cluster, which is destroyed.

Notes: The *Cold Hunter* is heavily damage over Apollo after the arrival of the *Falcon's Nest* and *Blue Talon*. The 176th Attack Cluster is destroyed on Bensinger.

Clan Hell's Horses

Theta and Iota Galaxies assault Von Strang's World, Bensinger, Apollo and Toland.

Notes: The *Steel Shield* and the *Black Knight* destroy the CIH *Moore's Honor* over Toland.

December 3071

Clan Ice Hellion

Alpha Galaxy captures Vantaa.

Zeta Prime Galaxy attacks Seiduts.

Notes: Vantaa's spaceport is destroyed by Falcon technicians in a failed attempt to trap Hellion DropShips.

Clan Jade Falcon

Alpha Galaxy retakes Derf and Winfield.

Delta Galaxy retreats from Seiduts.

Gamma Galaxy retakes Trell I.

Notes: The Falcon Guards take Trell I with minimal losses, using zellbrigen against the 45th Striker Irregulars.

Clan Hell's Horses

Theta Galaxy captures Last Chance, Botany Bay, Gotterdammerung, Lackhove and Here.

Notes: Only the Third Hector Cavaliers are able to retreat from Gotterdammerung. All other Hellion opponents are destroyed before they can retreat.

January 3072

Clan Jade Falcon

Alpha and Delta Galaxies attack Romulus.

Notes: The Falcons absorb the surrendering 53rd Striker Irregulars and destroy the 150th Hellion Lancers on Romulus.

February 3072

Clan Ice Hellion

Alpha Galaxy retreats to Vantaa.

Zeta Prime Galaxy retreats from Seiduts.

Notes: All remaining forces under saKhan Rood are recalled to the Dark Nebula orbital bases, including the remains of Beta Galaxy Naval Star.

Clan Jade Falcon

Alpha, Delta and Gamma Galaxies attack Evciler.

Notes: The CJF *Janis Hazen* is destroyed by the remains of Hellion aerospace fighters over Evciler.

Clan Hell's Horses

Theta Galaxy captures Maxie's Planet and Seiduts.

Notes: Khan Cobb returns Botany Bay and Last Chance to Falcon control.

March 3072

Clan Ice Hellion

Alpha and Zeta Prime Galaxies are destroyed on Vantaa, including *Cage's Pride*.

Beta Galaxy accepts hegira at the Dark Nebula, offered after the destruction of the *Whelp* and *Cold Hunter*.

Notes: *Pack Leader* is claimed as isorla by the Horses, *Chaos Sailor* by the Falcons. Khan Raina Montose is presumed killed on the battlefield.

Clan Jade Falcon

Alpha and Gamma Galaxies attack Vantaa, including the *Jade Aerie* and *Hawker* in the assault.

Delta Galaxy attacks the orbital station in the Dark Nebula.

Notes: The Falcon Guards are destroyed as a unit, but the Falcons carry the day. SaKhan Samantha Clees offers saKhan Connor Rood hegira.

Clan Hell's Horses

Iota Galaxy attacks Vantaa in conjunction with the Falcons.

Theta Galaxy attacks the orbital station in the Dark Nebula.

Notes: *Mount Olympus* is damaged beyond repair. Iota Galaxy is heavily damaged by orbital fire from the *Cage's Pride*. Khan Cobb offers the Hellions hegira. Offer is accepted by saKhan Rood but vehemently rebuked by Khan Montose.

April 3072

Clan Ice Hellion's invasion force ceases to exist as a viable threat to the Falcons or the Horses. SaKhan Rood flees the Inner Sphere with the *Coterie* and less than three Clusters of Beta Galaxy.

Aftermath Analysis

The Hellions' initial successes came primarily from the fact that our Clan was in the process of redeployment against Clan Wolf and the Lyran Alliance. Thanks to the stalwart skill and honor of Alpha, Delta and Gamma Galaxies, our Periphery border and industrial heart has been preserved mostly intact.

While the Horses have returned Last Chance, Botany Bay, and Lackhove to us, the audacity of Khan Cobb to retain his hold on Steelton, Seiduts, Maxie's Planet, Here, the Dark Nebula and Gotterdammerung is appalling. Our forces, however, are in dire need of refit and resupply; I reluctantly suggest we allow the Horse to retain those worlds; let them cover the process of rebuilding those worlds until such a time as we can reclaim them.

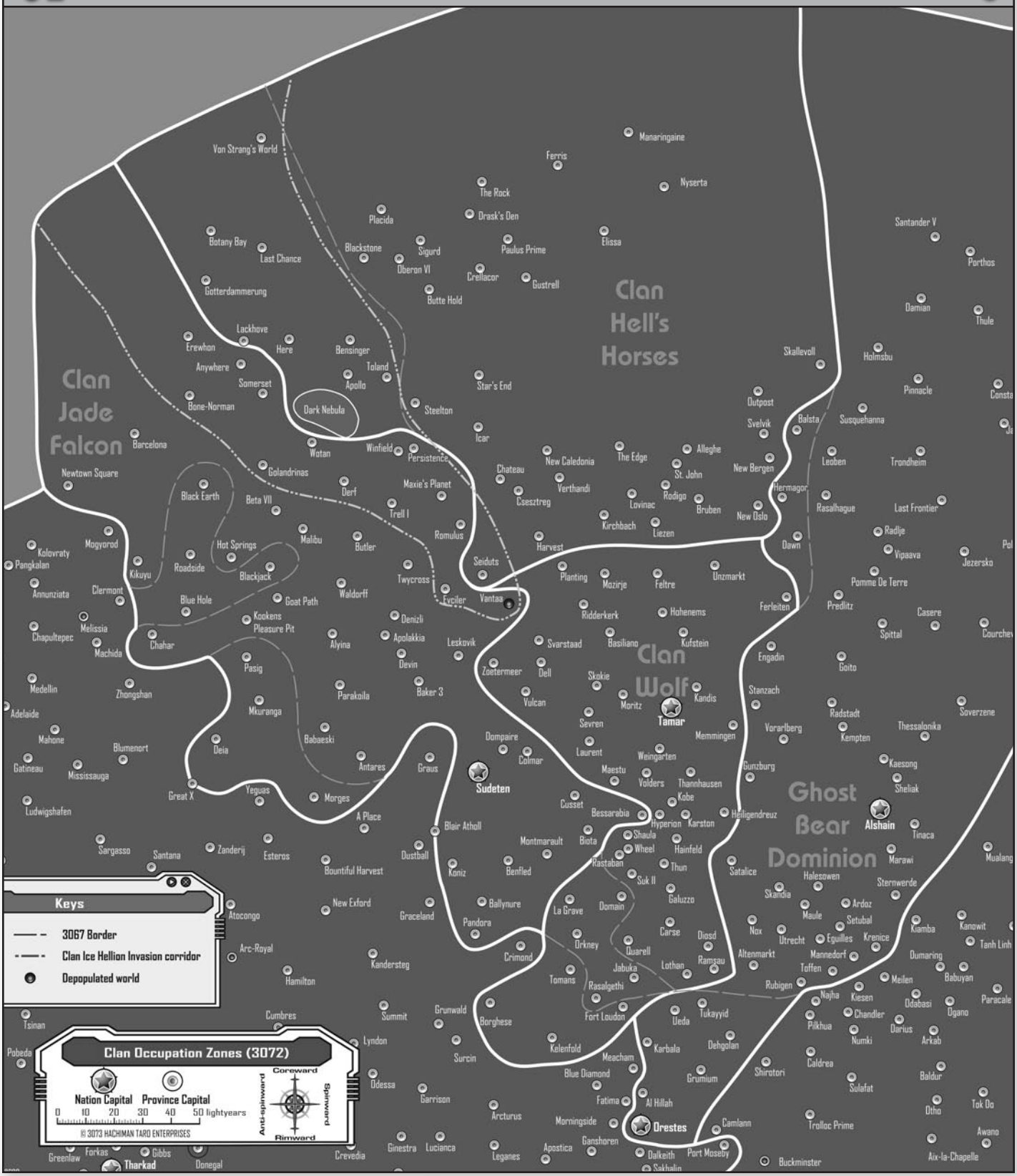
The fate of saKhan Rood is unknown; his last jump took him presumably back into the Deep Periphery. Our Watch reports still show a small garrison force of Hellions at Nouveaux Prime, so it is entirely plausible he will return there before making his way back to the Homeworlds. We do not, unfortunately, have the resources at this time to monitor his progress, but I am confident we will not be bothered by the Hellions for a very long time.

[*Note: The Falcons and Horses have sparred a few times since this report; see the 3075 map for the current state of the Clan OZ borders. –PA*]

Report ends

//15 May 3072//

JIHAD: THE EARLY YEARS



AROUND THE SPHERE

AROUND THE SPHERE

OVERVIEW

The catastrophic events of 22 January 3073 on Arc-Royal did more than send a fledgling alliance of state leaders and major mercenary commands into confusion. It also effectively decapitated several international reporting apparatuses. Among these was ComStar's INN, whose prominent coverage of the Jihad had placed INN at the forefront of our collective understanding of the war and its events. While the various news agencies—including INN and the ISAP—have managed to carry on despite the shock and damage caused by the so-called "Donner Bombing," an official compilation of events since 3072 does not appear to be forthcoming.

For this reason, we have put together our own "miniaturized" review of the past few years' events, to further our own understanding of the events that have unfolded since January of 3073. The following articles, collected from various news outlets and other sources, should provide a decent picture of the most salient events through December of 3074.

—Michelle LaPowers, HTE Archives Division, 11 January 3075

THE FEDERATED SUNS

Honored One,

What follows is some of the more pertinent coverage of events within the Federated Suns.

Our sources indicate that morale in the AFFS is low. The lack of visible leadership from either New Avalon or Princess Regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion has led to great uncertainty, a problem only exacerbated by the confirmation of Marshal of the Armies Jackson Davion's death at the hands of Word of Blake.

As a result, the Federated Suns government has lost control over large swaths of its worlds. The formation of the Filtvelt Coalition is only the most obvious example. The savagery of the fighting along the Taurian front is a more subtle indication of this trend. The Federated Suns troops ordered to blunt the Taurian advance have largely abandoned all pretense of following AFFS strictures of civilized warfare (though Davion propaganda claims otherwise). Our own recruitment of the Fox's Teeth shows how tenuous the Princess Regent's hold is.

In such an environment, the risk that one or other of the March lords may choose to chart their own course is a constant threat. For obvious reasons, our intelligence assets are primarily focused on House Sandoval and force movements within the Draconis March.

Still, one should not assume that the Federated Suns is defeated.

With the recent liberation of New Avalon, the Federated Suns is largely free from Word of Blake predations. Perennial border conflicts with the Capellan Confederation and the Combine have largely died down. Most importantly, the AFFS is willing and able to fight, if only they are given clear direction. Of all the Successor States, the Suns may be the best positioned to hurl back the Blakists.

The Federated Suns remains a sleeping giant. Woe to those who rouse him from his uneasy slumber.

—Your servant, Peter Abdulsattah

Breakaway Nations: Trend or Temporary?

[*The camera shows two people standing behind an oak podium, a microphone jutting up from the podium's top. The first is a tall woman with snow-white hair. She is lanky, or as a kinder observer might say, trim. She wears a stylish dark blue dress and a strand of pearls. She stands straight, her eyes alert, her bearing regal.*

Beside her is a man of average height in a slate-colored suit. His skin is darker than the woman's, the color of coffee (with two creams). He is balding, his dark hair no more than a wreath encircling the shiny crown of his head. He looks slightly disheveled, but his eyes sparkle with intelligence.

Behind the two principals is a backdrop. Pale blue, it is dotted with a repeating pattern in white: two hands, clasped in friendship above the legend: FILTVELT AND MALAGROTTA—UNITED IN FRIENDSHIP.]

[Trempleau (*the woman*)]: [*Points at someone, not visible.*] "Yes, Amy?"

[Female Reporter (off-camera)]: "Yes, thank you, Marquess Trempleau. Amy Condract, INN. Now that the Filtvelt Defensive Army has largely put down the pirates plaguing the Federated Suns outback, do you see a continued need for the Filtvelt Coalition?"

PARTING COMPANY

"…The main and undeniable role in any benign and benevolent government is the protection and welfare of its people from threats, from within and without. If a ruling system cannot effectively deal with this bare minimum of responsibility, two options are available. The first is to remove restrictions and red tape from its laws and processes to allow its citizens the ability to organize and prepare for themselves. The second—less desirable—option is for the citizens themselves to wrest away from the system that leaves them vulnerable and unprotected, to form a new covenant, a new community.

"The Federated Suns government and nobles, occupied with their foreign wars of conquest and chaos, have failed in their primary duty of protector. Despite our pleas, and our countless attempts, our rulers have not exercised the first option. And so, by default, we are forced to exercise the second option, to separate and forge a new identity, a new organization that can protect its people from the dark, empty void from which evil intent and evil men spring forth…"

—Excerpt from the Malagrotta Declaration of Independence, 19 March 3073

AROUND THE SPHERE

HASEK DENIES INVOLVEMENT

"…Despite what provocateurs may be saying, neither I nor anyone under my command had any hand in or knowledge of the bombardment of Taurus that occurred recently. The Capellan March and the whole of the Federated Suns is, in fact, shocked and dismayed at the tragedy that has occurred.

"We would like to remind *everyone* that the Federated Suns, as a signatory to the Ares Conventions, remains committed to its ideals, which forbid any attacks of this sort. Unlike some of our neighbors, we still respect that document, and its prohibition on employing weapons of mass destruction against civilian targets.

"The Capellan March will be offering humanitarian and medical aid to the Taurian Concordat victims if they will accept. We also offer a cease-fire in the disputed territories between us, so that the Concordat can mount effective rescue operations for any possible survivors in their stricken capital..."

—Excerpt of official statement from Duchess Angela Hasek regarding the asteroid bombardment of Taurus, NSNN, 9 May 3074

[Trempleau]: [*smiles engagingly and leans into the microphone*] "Although defense is the first obligation of any government, it isn't the only reason the worlds of the Coalition banded together. We have numerous economic and cultural interests that make a closer relationship between neighboring worlds both logical and beneficial. New Avalon is simply too far away to address the collective needs of our people."

[*Trempleau steps back from the podium and seems slightly surprised when the man steps up.*]

[Honorer (the man)]: "Although pirate attacks on the Coalition have fallen off, we are still seeing plenty of violence on Malagrotta and in surrounding systems. The drop-off in attacks you cite, Amy, is proof that Marquess Trempleau's approach is working and was one of the key factors in Malagrotta's decision to join with the Coalition."

[*Honorer points at someone else.*]

[Male Reporter (off-camera)]: "Thank you, Prime Minister. Daniel Hazelton, FSNS. Sir, doesn't it seem strange that pirate attacks should increase against Malagrotta at the very moment when you were considering whether or not to ally with the Coalition? Especially since Marquess Trempleau maintains that the FDA has wiped out piracy in this region of space?"

[*Honorer frowns and then opens his mouth to respond, but before he can speak Trempleau brushes him aside and reclaims the mike.*]

[Trempleau]: "Thank you, Daniel, but I believe we've already addressed that issue. Next question, please."

—Taken from a press conference held by Marquess Helen Trempleau of the Filtvelt Coalition and Prime Minister David Honorer of Malagrotta, 22 March 3073

[*Yvonne continues to posture on the Outback "situation," but in the end she doesn't have the military power to bring these worlds to heel. As long as the Taurians and Word of Blake remain a threat, I predict the AFFS will take no action against the Coalition. —CK*]

New Avalon: Torture, Lament and Freedom

DATE: 14 AUG 3074

FR: MARSHALL JOHN DAVION, COMMANDER AFFS, [LOCATION REDACTED]

TO: YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, PRINCESS REGENT YVONNE STEINER-DAVION [LOCATION REDACTED]

My Royal Cousin,

I pray daily for your continued safety and that God grants you the wisdom to lead us to victory. It has taken some effort to secure this message against interception. I can only hope it has successfully found its way to [REDACTED].

What follows is a summary of the situation here on New Avalon.

The loss of Jackson Davion was heartbreaking, but New Avalon fights on still.

Jackson's death makes it impossible for me to call the Third Battle of New Avalon anything other than a defeat, though he managed to take with him the Blakist commander, Precentor Avitue, and the Davion Heavy Guards and Davion Assault Guards inflicted significant damage on the enemy. Large elements of both the Heavy and the Assault Guards survived the battle. I still possess an effective fighting force.

Troop morale is grim, but determined. We will never surrender.

In the aftermath of the battle, the Blakists consolidated their position, taking the Den from us, though we made them pay dearly for it.

Operating without a command and control center, we have adopted the tactics of asymmetrical warfare. We hit Blakist targets when my local commanders can isolate enemy forces and ensure either numerical superiority or parity. We strike hard and then fall back into the shadows. We have not captured any strategic objectives, but we are making the Blakist occupation a bloody affair. In this goal we are assisted by the civilian population, which acts as our eyes and ears around the planet.

The Blakists have committed atrocities against non-combatants, though they have yet

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to employ WMDs. I hold in reserve the nuclear weapon brought by the Fifth FedCom. In the event the Blakists employ WMD, we will respond in kind. (A summary of the events surrounding the arrival of the Fifth and the subsequent arrest and court martial of Field Marshal Kossacks are attached.)

It is the assessment of our DMI and MIIO analysts that that we are facing the 44th Shadow Division (Avitue's Avenging Angels) augmented by the remnants of the WoBM 31st and 36th Divisions. The Davion Assault Guard significantly degraded Bronson's Horde during the Third Battle of New Avalon. The mercenary unit is no longer regarded as an effective fighting force.

Word of Blake maintains absolute aerospace superiority. A mix of WarShips and aerospace forces will certainly contest any spaceborne assault on New Avalon.

DMI/MIIO indicates that all Word of Blake forces in-system are under the command of Precentor Geoffrey Zucker, though my front line troops continue to report encounters with Avitue.

Our best analysis indicates that she was killed in the encounter with Jackson Davion, but too many good soldiers have reported her presence to dismiss out of hand the possibility that she may still live. Avitue haunts New Avalon like a ghost. What does it take to kill these Manei Domini?

TAURIAN INSANITY

(14 September 3074)

New Syrtis [NSNN] – With the Federated Suns engaged on every other front, even in the heart of the Crucis March, and with its armed forces stretched to the breaking point, the Taurian Concordat has declared that the Federated Suns escalated the conflict by smashing the Concordat's capital city with an asteroid.

Rebuffing all denials and offers of help from the Suns, the Concordat has not explained why its leaders believe the Federated Suns would strike a civilian target with such a clumsy weapon of mass destruction. Nor have the Taurian leaders explained why the Suns would launch such a strike so cleverly, yet fail to follow through with attacks on other strategic targets like the Concordat's BattleMech factories and military bases. In fact, the only thing the Taurians have explained is their conclusion that the Suns is responsible for the attack, and their plan to "fight fire with fire."

Though the Taurians might be exhibiting a collective insanity brought on by years of baseless paranoia about the giant neighbor that has ignored them for three hundred years, they have been honest in their promises: they have indeed been fighting fire with fire. And they apparently need to. The backwater, under-equipped planetary militias on Bromhead and Brockway gave the Taurian frontline units such a run for their money in June that the Taurian marauders withdrew to their DropShips and opted to launch nuclear weapons against their stalwart foes. In July, the beleaguered Taurians did not even attempt to engage the militias of Lindsay, Carmichael and Diefenbaker with conventional forces until after obliterating the defenders' bases and armories with weapons estimated at up to 350 kilotons in destructive force.

In the greatest travesty of this senseless invasion, the bombardment of Midale must have let the Taurians feel that they got their kilo of flesh back for Taurus. Midale had only a light militia force like Bromhead and Brockway, but this moderately industrialized planet had been mobilizing its industry to support the earlier skirmishes against the Concordat. After the Taurians brutally executed the survivors of Midale's militia, militia maintenance personnel and civilians took stockpiled armored vehicles meant to bolster Capellan March forces and all but drove the Taurians offworld. The Taurians responded with a nuclear bombardment aimed at Midale's industry so they would not have to face a repeat of this threat, and they used powerful strategic weapons meant to cripple the planet's modern, distributed manufacturing exurbs. As of this writing, ComStar personnel at Midale's HPG have estimated some ten million subjects of the Federated Suns have died from that nuclear attack.

One can see a hint of the depths of Taurian insanity when you remember that Midale was once a core world of the Concordat. That is how the Taurians treat those they claim to be liberating.

Against this onslaught, though, there is more than a little hope. The militias of the Federated Suns have faced superior Taurian forces time and again with daring, determination and success. Now, news of further success has reached the Federated Suns: the indomitable Hansen's Roughriders have struck back, taking the war back to the Taurian homeworlds.

After years of fruitless struggle, the only way the Concordat military has been able to achieve a measure of success against the might of House Davion has been to throw the entirety of its armed forces against an exhausted Capellan March. This has left its homeworlds virtually defenseless, and the Roughriders even now are cutting the Taurian supply lines at their source. Early reports indicate that the Roughriders have struck as deep as New Vandenburg, where they destroyed the new Paulina Weapons factory. It is only a matter of time before the Concordat's forces must turn to face the threat crippling their military at its heart.

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I am heartened by the rumors that several Regimental Combat Teams are gathering in the Crucis March for the conquest of New Avalon, but a final assault may not be needed.

We are beginning to see signs the Blakists intend to withdraw. JumpShip traffic has increased dramatically, but many of the jumpers arrive empty, as if they expect to find their cargo on the planet. In addition, the Blakists have retreated to their bases and camps. Their patrols are defensive in nature, designed to protect their positions from infiltration or attack. They haven't launched a major offensive action in three weeks.

I am hopeful that New Avalon will soon be free—though I fear we will pay a terrible price for our liberation. The Blakists have never been known for graciousness in defeat.

With Greatest Respect and Loyalty,

—JD

[*Marshal Davion's concerns about a WOB scorched-earth policy appear to have come to pass. Attached are seismic traces taken by a New Avalon geophysical research station that indicate massive explosions in the vicinity of Mount Davion. Also attached is a pirated video clip taken by a comms satellite in low planetary orbit. At least 1,400 fires are clearly visible in the vicinity of Avalon City, including three major conflagrations. —PA*]

THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

The Dragon honors strength. The Lyrans are like a rock in stormy waters, strong, firm and patient. For centuries our forces washed against them, and though they lost a fair share of ground, they never bowed to our might—a truth the Word is now starting to recognize. They may not be the most astute on the battlefield; their true strength comes from the might of their merchants. For centuries it was said, only the strong army can tip the scales in favor of you, but what can your strong army do without a thriving industry to support it?

The start of this Jihad has been a trial for the Lyrans, a constant battle for survival. I watched them, carefully, from a distance. Always anticipating the day when they would finally manage to rise to their destiny. We are close to this point. Our forces, reunited against the once-powerful enemy of humanity, have begun to turn the tide. The crown of the realm, Tharkad, is finally free again, starting to heal the wounds suffered when the Jihad began. A strong and vital Archon now stands at the helm of the ship that almost seemed lost in the storm. Peter Steiner-Davion has given his life for his realm, gunned down by Blakist assassins barely a year ago. And Adam Steiner, the hero of so many battles against the Lyrans' other archenemy—the Jade Falcons—is facing an unknown, yet promising future.

Hesperus and Coventry are free as well, rescued from the clutches of the Word. Hesperus… Where even the mighty Dragoons had to admit defeat, the forces of evil succeeded. A hidden truth is buried here, an irony to be sure. I have to think about it some more… So much power had been lost, so many battles ended in glaring defeats, and yet the rock never moved. Symbols were needed and found. Symbols like the *Fylgia* and the *Yggdrasil*, fighting like samurai against overwhelming might, always alone, but always firm.

The Battle for Skye was an epic struggle, fought to the death of so many skilled warriors. Yet the Lyrans stood fast and their strength never failed them. Not even the Democracy Now movement seems to hinder their steps—and we all know the enemy within will bring down even the strongest tree. This might be the yellow bird the Lyrans have to fear. But only time will tell that, and this is no time to stand by idly and observe.

The Word should behold the power of the resurrected Lyran Alliance. It is time to take this war back to where it started—and with the wisdom of the Dragon and the staunch power of the Lyran Rock, we shall be victorious. And when the final battles have been fought, we will see if the Dragon or the Stone prevails…

—Chandrasekhar Kurita

Bombings and Barbarism

(30 January 3073)

Arc-Royal [ISAP] – Scarcely a week has passed since the fateful events of 22 January, and many here on Arc-Royal remain shocked and appalled by this latest act of Blakist terrorism. Though the explosion was not quite as powerful as initial reports suggested, more than one hundred people died as a result, and hundreds more were injured. Targeting an allied summit meeting aimed at battling the ongoing Word of Blake crisis, the attack claimed the lives of several of the Inner Sphere's most powerful leaders, including LAAF Leutnant-General Sabine Steiner—aide to General of the Armies Adam Steiner—and General Maeve Wolf of Wolf's Dragoons, who died soon after the attack.

Other key dignitaries claimed by the assault included Shin Yodama, a close aide to Draconis Combine Coordinator Hohiro Kurita; Field Marshall Vanessa Bisla and Marshall Daniel Darwith of the FedSuns delegation; Caradoc Trevena, an intelligence expert from the ComStar delegation; and Rhonda Snord, the retired commander of the Snord's Irregulars mercenary command. Also lost were saKhan Marco Hall of the exiled Wolf Clan; Star Colonel Diana Pryde of the Jade Falcon delegation; and Khan Bjorn Jorgensson of the Ghost Bear Clan, whose small entourage had reportedly arrived merely to observe the proceedings.

Analysis of the explosion has confirmed that the blast was, in fact, centered on the person of Fritz Donner, former leader of the Circinus Federation's infamous Black Warriors. Though the possibility exists that secondary explosives were used, the central element—according to forensic analysis—appears to have been

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specially implanted plastic explosives, which may have been grafted onto, or even replaced completely, several of Donner's bones. Donner, who was liberated from a Blakist maximum-security prison in a daring raid on New Home last November, was reportedly brought to the summit on the orders of Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion, allegedly to disclose vital intelligence on Blakist operations and plans that he was privy to. Whether this was a ruse to gain the allies' trust or an honest effort to oppose the common enemy may never be known.

The "Donner bombing," as some are already calling it, reflects a new level of sophistication in a series of suicide bomb attacks the Word of Blake has launched in recent years. Though similar in many ways to Richard Steiner's 3071 suicide bombing—which claimed the life of the Free Worlds League's Tamarind Marshal Jeremy Brett—this attack managed to evade some of the tightest security measures in the Inner Sphere, including several x-rays and magres scans.

Psychological analysis of both cases also points to a longer and more elaborate method used for this bombing than that of Richard Steiner and many others. Where the others have been delivered by converts and other people who apparently knew what they were doing, expert analysis of Donner's mental state prior to the summit bombing suggests that Donner may not have been aware that he was primed as an assassin. These details paint a picture of a Word of Blake terror campaign that involves the creation of unwitting "sleepers" who could even now walk among us, spying for their Blakist masters, and even explode in our midst—all the while unaware of the fact that they are working for the enemy.

Kell Hounds Attacked on New Exford

(1 September 3073)

Old Connaught, Arc-Royal [ARNN] – Tragedy has struck our world once again. The people of Arc-Royal are in mourning as news has filtered from the Fort about yet another blow to our beloved Kell family. According to the brief statement, the First Kell Hounds Regiment was attacked and nearly destroyed on New Exford by Blakist forces. Among the dead was Christian Kell, acting commander of First Regiment, and son of the late Patrick Kell. Duke Morgan Kell, who narrowly survived the suicide bombing of an allied summit earlier this year, is said to be devastated by the news.

According to our sources, the Blakist force arrived on August 28, at a pirate point just hours out from New Exford. Three DropShips burned toward the planet, answering no hails and blowing through a hasty aerospace defense thrown up by the Hounds. BattleROMs tentatively identified the attackers as the Fiftieth Shadow Division, a unit most recently seen on Atocongo. In a daring move, the Hounds' Second Battalion attempted to outmaneuver the enemy and hit the Division's flank, but unfortunately, the attackers anticipated this tactic. Vast minefields and a devious trap caught the Hounds unaware, and battle armor—deployed by the dozens from VTOL and hovercraft vehicles—attacked en masse. Reports claim that not a single Hound survived this attack, and that those who were not immediately killed in the counterattack were shot in their cockpits or after ejecting. The massacre took place within minutes.

Meanwhile, the Fiftieth's 'Mechs attacked the remaining battalions, where "head hunter" squads targeted the regimental commander, Christian Kell. Kell went down fighting, but the Hounds—shredded and demoralized—were forced to retreat with losses estimated at seventy percent or more. The victorious Blakists then reportedly ransacked the Hounds' base, looting the facilities for ammunition, spare parts and salvage.

Grand Duke Kell has declared the next three days to be a period of mourning. Flags will be flown at half-staff, all public buildings will be closed and shop owners are asked to close their stores in a sign of respect to the dead. We from ARNN deliver our condolences to Grand Duke Kell and to the surviving Kell Hounds.

This is Dan Wallace, ARNN, Arc-Royal.

Coventry Liberation Aftermath

My Lord Kurita,

Attached you will find a report written by the Precentor Martial's personal aide, Galen Cox, about the events leading up to and through the liberation of Coventry. I thought you might be interested.

Your humble servant,

—Jane Ash

ADAM STEINER ABOUT TO WED

Yes, ladies, hard to believe, but the Alliance's most eligible bachelor is now off the market. Adam Steiner, just recently named Archon of the Lyran Alliance, finally sailed into the haven of honored matrimony. For long years the rumor mill suggested he had a liaison with his long-time aide Rachel Spector, and some people cried havoc about a marriage to this young woman of common heritage. Yesterday, Archon Steiner announced his engagement to Heather Fyhne, daughter of Duchess Arielle Fyhne of Arcturus.

The wedding will take place here on Tharkad, near the ruins of the destroyed Tharkad City in honor of its people (but well out of harm's way). Adam Steiner is said to be preparing a speech to announce plans for a future war against the Word of Blake. As far as my sources told me, the wedding is to be small—perhaps the smallest our realm has seen in centuries—with a guest list well below even a "modest" five hundred.

This reporter still remembers the holovids from Hanse and Melissa's epic wedding on Terra. Those were the days… But we live in a much more troubled time nowadays.

Now, let me tell you about some nice young fellow who is not *yet* promised to someone…

—From the "Tharkad Insight" column by Christine Rendo, Tharkad, 14 May 3074

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Internal Report # 02172/74
Subject: Liberation of Coventry Aftermath
Author: Galen Cox
Recipient: Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion
Date: 10 May 3074
Classification: Top Secret -Your Eyes Only

Victor,

It's been almost two months since the fighting ended, but still some resistance can be found around here. Last night, a suicide bomber took out two platoons of infantry. Still, Coventry is fully free again and when the repairs have been finished, we'll know just how bad the damage is. I compiled this report to tell you what went down here, in a nutshell.

We jumped in-system for the main attack on 16 March, roughly two months ago. Our joint task force consisted of Jade Falcon and Lyran vessels, escorting two BattleMech line regiments, one RCT, two mercenary regiments and a Cluster of Jade Falcon warriors. Our naval forces suffered heavy losses when engaging a small fleet of "Pocket WarShips" and an *Aegis*-class cruiser believed to be the *Immortal Spirit*. I am sorry to report two vessels lost on our side due to nuclear attacks, but after six hours, the battle was won and we were able to claim aerospace supremacy. Our WarShips deployed into strategic positions to be able to throw back a possible counterattack as our ground forces moved in.

When we set down on Coventry, we were surprised, to put it mildly. We were greeted by a variety of local militia forces, rebels and freedom fighters and whatnot. It looks like the Word of Blake never actually secured the planet, and the resistance fighters did a pretty good job at confining the enemy troops to the capital city and the CMW facilities located there. But the Blakists there were thoroughly entrenched; it took a lot of effort to punch through the defenders' screen and finish the last cells of resistance. I can't tell you how badly the facilities have been damaged, but I'm sure some bean-counter is writing a report for you as we speak.

I don't envy General Fisher. She had one hell of a job keeping our forces together and the Robes in the dark about our problems. The Jade Falcons almost left the minute we made planetfall when Fisher told them to stay out of her forces' way. Had to remind them again that the plan called for LAAF troops to contact the "friendly" resistance; they would've fired on Falcon machines no matter what anyone else said. Still, dealing with the Clanners was a royal pain in the butt. I know you and Stone have a thing for these "coalition forces" and the "united might of the Inner Sphere," but frankly, sire, I for one could sure do without them.

But Khan Pryde did a great job at training her forces. They didn't lose a bit of their bite. When finally deployed, they shredded through the Level III trying to put up a standard defense. It took our forces just twenty-four hours to secure the Metal Works and our battlefield losses are moderate. All in all, it may have been worth the toll. Not much remains of the defending Blake Militia here. May they rest in pieces.

Now, I know you'll have stumbled about the name of the *Aegis*-class WarShip I mentioned above. Yes, we found the *Immortal Spirit*. A team of our Rabid Foxes was able to secure the bridge after the fight and we even managed to secure the logs intact. From what we can tell, she was stranded there for—get this—*eleven* years. That's right. When we "visited" Coventry in 3063 and expected the *Angela Franks* (a.k.a. the *Arthur Steiner-Davion*), the *Immortal Spirit* had "superjumped" into the system, turned the *Franks* into a selection of small pieces and hidden herself in the outer asteroid belt. But the "superjump" blew out her K-F drive, stranding her in-system.

And here comes the winning ticket for the lottery… Last year, the Word finally decided it could use the extra firepower and so they sent a *Newgrange*-class YardShip here to overhaul it. Vic, I never saw a ship that damned *big* before, let me tell you! But *we* have it now. Intact, no serious damage, thanks to a few dedicated marines and a bunch of crazy vat-born Falcon Elementals. The exact terms of ownership have not yet been decided, but I have my hopes that if we can't claim this prize for the Alliance or ComStar, we may at least manage to claim it for the Coalition before those green birds get their claws too deep in her.

I'll send you more info as it comes in, but the bottom line: Coventry is ours!

—Galen

Hero of the Alliance
FROM: Hauptmann General Elisa Braun
SUBJECT: RE: Second Quarter 3074 Promotions and Decorations List
DATE: 20 August 3074
TO: Archon Adam Steiner

[Archon, the fighting continues to provide a lengthy list of those whose efforts are deserving of recognition (all too often posthumously). There is, however, one special case requiring your decision. I have attached the relevant after-action report and have annotated it where appropriate. —EB]

Engagement Furillo307404-17D2 – After Action Report – Colonel Thomas Hogarth

The Furillo BPM made contact with Blakist raiders at dawn on April 4. In my role as liaison to Defiance Industries, I held my *Atlas* in strategic reserve as Word of Blake BattleMechs probed the perimeter around the Furillo factories. At approximately 14:00 hours a small force of OmniMechs penetrated the Militia's line and headed for the main production lines. Moving decisively, I intercepted them at the main gate and engaged the enemy

[Hogarth probably stopped for lunch and his Atlas *was parked at the main gates when the raiders blundered into it. —EB]*

With one shot I put down a *Grigori*, but then its comrades (a

Deva and a *Preta*) were upon me with a vengeful fury. Their weapons tore at my *Atlas'* armor, but my fine Lyran BattleMech shrugged off their assault. I was able to hold them, and was about to administer the coup-de-grace when battle armor-equipped members of Defiance Industries security arrived to assist in eliminating the attackers.

[Hogarth got lucky and actually hit something with his autocannon. With the Grigori *down with a destroyed gyro, the other two made a tactical error and paused to finish off the* Atlas *when they should have pushed on to the factories. Hogarth's lumbering assault 'Mech survived just long enough for security personnel to arrive and take down the Blakists.*

So there you have it. In my honest opinion, Hogarth is a tiresome old windbag who shouldn't have been allowed to return to service and is a liability both on and off the battlefield. Unfortunately, the press has gotten hold of the story and is hailing him as "the Hero of the Alliance." In the end it is your call, but the depressing fact is, I can't see how we can justify not pinning a nice shiny medal on the fool's chest and promoting him for "a job well done." —EB]

Hesperus II:
Climbing the Mountain

[*A* Grasshopper *rounds a dark loch, its feet sinking deep into the marshy ground. The 'Mech is painted dark red, except for its arms which are black. Behind it is Mount Alba, topped by the massive fortress known as The Citadel. The great moon Stirling rides high in the sky, its maria picking up the pale blue of the heavens.*

A dozen lines of ruby laser fire lance out and catch the Grasshopper *in the chest. Somewhere close by the deadly rattle of an autocannon can be heard. The whipcrack of PPC fire*

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Peter,

This is fresh out of Coventry. Please forgive the delay, but the Coalition is still clamping down on communications. With their navy controlling all traffic lanes to and from the planet, it's hard to even get a courier through. Anyways, news is good.

Assessment of Production Capabilities

Coventry Metal Works' installations have survived nearly unscathed. The Word of Blake forces showed unusual restraint and patience in seizing the compound. Such as it is, CMW could be up to specs again already if it weren't for the lack of raw resources and imported components.

Their warehouses are filled wall-to-wall with finished hulls, all missing vital parts like missile-guiding systems, voice-command chips or laser focusing lenses, leaving them effectively useless.

Customer/Market Analysis

CMW's products are obviously not ready for sale, thus cash flow stutters. How long the company can keep it up cannot be determined

On the plus side, those few units that can be finished go mostly directly to the planetary militia—no export. Apparently the Coalition can't yet decide who gets what—Lyrans or otherwise.

Risks and Opportunities

Due to their import deficiencies, CMW's board is looking out for new business contacts, trying to reach agreements with external manufacturers and alternate suppliers. Contracts with Defiance Industries of Hesperus for final assembly of CMW's stock are being laid out as you read this. All that is missing are the necessary transport capabilities.

IrTech—our esteemed competitor already "supporting" Luthien Armor Works—seems to be getting ready to jump in here. Eager to draw CMW and Defiance into their conglomerate, they might indeed have the necessary resources to pull it off.

Conclusion

What CMW sorely misses is transport capacity and specialized computer parts—both of which we could easily provide. This would also keep them out of Irian's clutches and gives us an additional edge in the Lyran market—especially when we manage to capitalize on CMW's ties with Hesperus.

I recommend the following steps be taken:

Immediately open negotiations with Coventry Metal Works and/or Defiance Industries on the matter of interstellar transport of unrefined goods between Hesperus II and Coventry (and associates)

Further assess market potential toward supplying Coventry Metal Works with electronic components of Tanadi production

Secondary proposition: Enter additional trade relations with said parties, delivering surplus raw materials

Sincerely,
Paul Umbridge (13 July 3074)

Addendum: Related Observations

Once again hints are abundant that WoB is getting desperate for hardware, fueling our suspicions. Otherwise they would have level-bombed the whole CMW place from the beginning.

Defiance Industries might not be as ripe for plucking as official reports want to make us believe. Though all 'Mech production factories are said to be severely damaged, Hesperus just seems to rotate another assembly line out of its wondrous mountains. Offering currently nothing but minor components on the open market, I'd bet they're gearing up fast with substantial help from the Lyran state.

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offers grim counterpoint. Azure lightning smashes the Grasshopper*'s cockpit and it falls forward.*

A Toyama *stalks forward. Its head and torso are painted blood red, morphing into black legs. It's covered with metallic gold highlights. The BattleMech examines the fallen* 'Hopper *for a moment.*

Then it turns to face the camera.

A man's voice can be heard swearing softly and fervently in German.]

—BattleROM footage taken from Hauptmann Bernard Groell's *Axman* on 30 September 3073 during the engagement between the Twenty-second Skye Rangers and the Fifty-second Shadow Division on Caledonia. Hauptmann Groell is missing and presumed dead.

[*Note the markings on the Word of Blake 'Mechs, Honored One. The insignia and color scheme suggest that these are Apollyon's Chosen, and yet our best intelligence places the Fifty-second Shadow on or near Gibson less than a week before this attack. I suspect an effort at deception on the part of the Blakists. Either way, one thing is certain—with the Twenty-second Skye smashed, the effort to retake Hesperus II will be delayed. —PA*]

[*The camera zooms in on a pretty woman of Asian descent. She is wearing a headset, a slim mike positioned over full lips. Her glossy black hair is tied back in a ponytail. She is very pretty. The distant sounds of combat can be clearly heard. Somewhere the distant rattle of an autocannon is answered by the piercing shriek of a heavy laser.]*

[Hu]: "This is Sandra Hu of TBC, embedded with the First Skye Jaegers, reporting live from Hesperus II where, two days ago, Allied forces conducted a daring spaceborne assault on this strategically vital world, establishing a beachhead on the continent of South Whitman. After consolidating their LZ, the Allies moved rapidly to capture the massive Defiance Industries complex.

"Nearly four years ago, the Word of Blake became the first enemy to successfully capture this world, winning the Sixteenth Battle of Hesperus II. Late last year, plans to retake this planet were put on hold when the Twenty-second Skye Rangers were crushed by a surprise Word of Blake raid.

"Hesperus might have remained in the Word's hands forever if it were not for the mysterious Devlin Stone, Hero of Skye. It was Stone who cobbled together an alliance of multinational forces—including many different factions, even Clan Wolf's Delta Galaxy—and has brought them here to take the fight to the Blakists."

[*Camera backs out, showing that Ms. Hu is on a high ridgeline looking down into a valley. There is a city below, but closer inspection reveals that it is little more than broken ruins, mounds of concrete dust mingled with the broken shards of skyscrapers. There is movement in this blasted wasteland. The camera refocuses on a* Dire Wolf *painted medium brown and speckled with black triangles, stalking toward a* Lightray *painted light gray on top morphing to black as the paint scheme reaches its legs.*]

[Hu]: "You're looking down into Melrose Valley. Behind me is the wreckage of the planetary capital, Maria's Elegy. A desperate struggle rages for the city, which provides cover for an approach to DefHes, the massive BattleMech facility that makes this planet so valuable. What you're seeing behind me is a Clan *Dire Wolf* engaging 'Mechs of the Fortieth Shadow Division, also known as Sariel's Conquerors.

"Whatever you want to say about Word of Blake, you have to give them credit for this: they've brought the rest of humanity together."

[*The contrails of Streak missiles and the silver blur of a Gauss rifle suddenly connect the two BattleMechs as the* Dire Wolf *rips into the* Lightray.]

—TBC Broadcast, Hesperus II, 3 November 3074

[*Honored Master, Hesperus II finally fell to Allied forces on 14 November. This is another impressive victory for Stone, who did what the Lyran Alliance by itself could not. Stone has developed quite a cult of personality in the Alliance—and beyond. One wonders where his celebrity will lead. —PA*]

IN MEMORIAM

Peter Steiner-Davion.

Few were ever really happy with him, it seems. But now that he has been murdered by the Word of Blake, we have all found that his passing left a void in our hearts and souls. There are voices out there demanding democracy under the stars; to end the feudalism once and for all. There are voices out there that celebrate Adam Steiner as the true heir to the Lyran Commonwealth. But Peter was a great man and a great warrior—and, perhaps, if one simply were to look closer, one would surely find the ways in which he was truly loved by the people of the Lyran Alliance.

Unfortunately for Peter, he never had the chance to prove his wisdom on the throne as he did his prowess on the battlefield. Too soon his capital was destroyed, his world under siege, he himself a virtual prisoner of the Word of Blake, forced to abdicate his birthright for the nation he ruled. So soon after hope emerged anew, he was murdered by an assassin, before he could do much good to heal the new wounds taken during the long Jihad.

I will tell you the story of Peter the Monk, Peter the Warrior, and Peter the Leader. About Peter the Great—a name he might have earned if he ever had gotten the chance.

Prologue to *Peter Steiner-Davion: A Retrospective*, by Katherine Mullian, Tharkad Press, December 3074

AROUND THE SPHERE

THE DRACONIS COMBINE

For obvious reasons, I have a vested interest in the stellar nation of my birth.

Never one to involve myself in politics like the rest of my family, I have—wrongly—ignored the warning signs surrounding me ever since Theodore escaped the Black Dragon threat more than a decade ago. I, as many of my peers, thought that their existence was at an end with the necessary purging of all aspects of the Combine hierarchy. But like so many of my brethren, we tend to turn a blind eye to our surroundings, which are so familiar that even blood shed violently doesn't alter our perceptions of things after time passes.

Such is the fault of myself and many others.

Too late did we learn our lesson, and Luthien paid the price.

Too late did we observe our universe with new eyes, and Dieron paid the price.

Too late did we forget our past, and the Dragon still pays the price.

I have little time enough left here on this plane. My empire—such as it is—is vast and bountiful. I have turned all of its power to supporting the Dragon's heart, as it recovers from wounding within. And I vow now until the end of my days that I will help my kin and my peers to see the Dragon triumphant once more, with the shining Black Pearl once again the heart and soul of the Combine.

I have compiled some of the more important reports I have had delivered to me. The information is staggering—shocking, even—yet the knife's incision is necessary. The Dragon must survive, and to survive we must cut out our cancer with our own hands. To rely on another is only to invite more destruction and pain.

Use this to see with clarity where the Dragon has been—and where it is going.

—Chandrasekhar Kurita

Betrayal of Ideals

>>REPEAT TO: ALL COMMANDS PESHT / DIERON / GALEDON DISTRICTS

THE UNIT FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE TENTH GHOST REGIMENT IS HEREBY DECLARED RONIN AND IS TO BE APPREHENDED OR DESTROYED ON SIGHT. TAI-SA GRETCHEN NODA IS TO BE CONSIDERED A PERSON OF INTEREST FOR THE ISF.

ANY INFORMATION REGARDING THE CURRENT WHEREABOUTS OF THE TENTH GHOST IS TO BE FORWARDED TO YOUR LOCAL ISF LIAISON.

>>END MSG 7OCT3072

[It seems the DCMS waited quite a bit before declaring the Tenth ronin. *As we suspected,* Tai-sa *Noda removed the unit from Quentin after the Blakists departed in 3070, though their AWOL went unnoticed for a while because of the damage to the HPG. Reliable intel from two independent IE sites confirm that the unit was sighted at Rezak's Hole in 3071; considering the unit was battalion strength when Star Corps sent them on their mission to Odessa, they must have found something worthwhile on that pustule of a planet after the Ravens scoured it.*

My guess is they found that cache we thought was there and rebuilt before turning up at Orestes in '73. I doubt the information we found regarding their sacrificial orders on Quentin will matter now; may Buddha guide their path into the uncertain future. —PA]

The Passing of Innocence

(20 March 3073)

New Samarkand [VOTD] – It is with a sad heart and troubled soul that we of the Dragon's Voice report the passing of the Combine's wise caretaker of the Order of the Five Pillars, the Abbess Tomade Yamiro. The Abbess died peacefully in her sleep while visiting the Coordinator's interim palace here on New Samarkand.

"The Abbess was the Dragon's heart personified," said the Coordinator. "She embodied the virtue and the vision of all the people of the Combine, even as war threatens to tear us asunder."

A day of remembrance has been declared for all citizens of the Draconis Combine, to be observed as conveniently as possible by the planetary governors.

"Reflect on all of the Pillars of our society," reminded the Coordinator. "It is our strength as a culture and as a people that will see us forge a new destiny from these trials."

TIGER'S EYE BLIND

>>**Internal Security Force Report #7921-IDc**
>>**Commander**: *Tai-i* Akira Tormark (Musukosan No Ryu)
>>**Target**: Tiger's Eye (O5P #TY921-e)
>>**System**: Herndon
>>**Debriefing Interviews**: attached (5)
>>**Comments**:

I wish to personally commend *Chu-i* Thomas Alexander for suggesting and executing our approach. Completely unorthodox, his operational plan allowed the team to apprehend Tiger's Eye in plain daylight and without collateral damage or loss of life.

Target was exactly where information suggested she would be. The subject attempted to defend herself; apologies for the upper-body bruising. All vital areas were avoided. Subject was given prescribed dosages for journey's return. Medical center was notified per protocols.

Contact made with *Mokonete* team before extraction; decoy in place and surveillance initiated successfully.

—AT

[*ISF taking on the O5P in broad daylight? Someone is playing dangerous games back home. —PA*]

AROUND THE SPHERE

Abbess Yamiro is survived by her brother, *Sho-sa* Li Yamiro, currently serving with Eleventh Legion of Vega.

Arkabs under Fire

The Azami people never avoided hardship. From the very beginning they dedicated their lives to wastelands, settling planets other colonists deemed unworthy.

For centuries, the Azami suffered. But they suffered gladly, for they brought life to places where there had been none before. And they did it for freedom, to be left alone.

Soon the Azami were asked to endure hardship for others—fighting their fights, dying their deaths on foreign soil. All they ever asked in return is what they already had: To be left alone. To keep their freedom—freedom to live, freedom of thought, freedom of faith.

And the Dragon gladly obliged.

So why do the desert people now mock the Dragon for his kindness?

In their time of direst need, the Azami called upon the Combine for help, while they simultaneously shirked their duties, simply because their demands were not met instantaneously.

Where is their need for freedom now? Why didn't they help themselves?

How convenient it is to call upon the Dragon's protecting embrace when suddenly the sun darkens on the horizon!

So I ask you: Did we do the right thing not to help them?

YES, I say!

For no one renounces the love of the Dragon and lives on unpunished.

In the interest of open discussion, let me present to you the chain of events:

In February 3071, disaster struck Arkab, when an asteroid hit the planet's surface. Immediately the Azami leaders demanded relief and supplies, despite the knowledge that the rest of the Combine had also fallen into a dire state. Other planets needed help as urgently, but did not plead. Looking for solutions on their own instead—as true citizens of the Dragon learned to do.

In August 3071, the Azami themselves worsened their situation by recalling their fighting force, the esteemed Arkab Legions, back onto their homeworlds. This action—against the explicit orders of the *Gunji no Kanrei*—served no clear purpose, but left other Combine planets vulnerable in the face of our enemies, weakening the Dragons' claws at the worst possible moment in recent history. And still, the Azami demanded to be soothed, their wounds tended to.

When the Dragon finally responded in January 3072, dispatching one of our precious WarShips to the task, it was greeted not by thanks, but by nuclear fire, destruction and the imprisonment of his loyal citizens.

From there onward the circle of hatred escalated: Attempts at negotiations in April 3072 to release the prisoners were met by brute violence. To keep his citizens from being brutally slaughtered, the Dragon was even forced to call upon the last, desperate measure in his arsenal: nuclear weaponry. To fight fire with fire.

But even then, the Azami leaders could not see what was happening around them, what they were damaging. Focused entirely on their own fate, they even formally declared a state of war in September 3072 to settle their demands!

Now, almost two years later, the Dragon once again extends its hand to the Arkab in a gesture of acceptance, offering sanctuary to its lost children. Ever forgiving, ever caring.

One can only hope that the Azami have learned their lesson: In these trying times, every district, planet—even city—must play its part.

The Dragon must protect its entirety and cannot waste strength dabbling in local problems, as it did when it was strong and healthy.

It is all for the greater good.

Long live the Dragon!

[*Officers!*

These pamphlets were found all over public places yesterday. Make sure they disappear, by whatever means necessary. If any of the Azami delegates see this "propaganda" on my watch, heads will *roll!*

We're lucky enough these robed nutters kept their Legions purely on defense these last months. Imagine what could happen with them going on a rampage!

Oh, and keep an eye out for Saurimat activists. They haven't stirred in weeks. Makes me itch…]

—*Tai-i* Leonard Kurokova to all DCMS "riot control" outposts, Benjamin, 23 March 3074

THE CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION

For its part, the Capellan Confederation has been the "odd realm out" in this war. Despite offers made from various factions, Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao has apparently chosen to "go it alone" against the Word of Blake, and only the Magistracy of Canopus—the realm of his bride—stands with him.

The Chancellor may have proved himself crafty and resourceful on many occasions before—and his survival of the bombardment of Sian has already become the stuff of legends that inspire a new generation of ever-more devoted troops—but I have to wonder if he has not overplayed his hand this time. This decision to refuse all outside aid may well have nearly doomed the Confederation, especially since the latest Blakist push against the Capellan capital and its leadership came just centimeters away (almost literally) from accomplishing that goal.

BLACK DRAGONS UNMASKED

I have spent the past month compiling the stack of reports dropped off "mysteriously" at my office. I am still appalled that the heart of the Dragon has been so thoroughly corrupted: unlike the other nations that blame their internal troubles on the Word bogeyman, we have no one to blame but ourselves. Fortunately, it appears we have finally stopped the slow hemorrhage of the Dragon's heart and now the healing can begin.

You can read the attached reports in detail at your leisure, my lord; I will attempt to summarize below, as I know of your penchant for the "short and sweet."

Whether by their own initiative or from someone's direction, the loyal Sons of the Dragon (a secret sect within the ISF that opposes the *Kokuryu-kai*) launched an investigation in 3070 regarding the events on Luthien in order to determine just how the coup came about as well as to determine just how deep the *Kokuryu-kai* 's roots really go.

From what I gather with the following evidence, the results shocked them to the core.

Working hand-in-hand with various splinter cells on Luthien and other Jihad-ravaged worlds such as Dieron and Quentin, the Sons stumbled into something much deeper and darker than even Subhash Indrahar would have ever conceived.

The 3059-60 purge could be described as "skimming the ice off an iceberg."

The *Kokuryu-kai* 's roots run extremely deep; it appears now that the society may have existed in some form or another *since the time of the Von Rohrs* (O5P #4822-DCK-9a). Now is neither the time nor the place to delve into how it formed or survived for so long in complete secrecy, however. This summation will focus solely on the Dragon's current crisis so that immediate solutions can be devised.

Capturing Black Dragon soldiers has been a priority since the initial coup; sadly, the tone of the fighting on Luthien made this highly difficult (see ISF order #2781). Neither Combine nor Black Dragon nor Word of Blake would commit wholly to a battle and it was not uncommon for engagements to be brief (but furious) fusillades followed by withdrawal. In the beginning years, it was rare for a soldier on any side to be captured. Only as the years wore on—and attrition took its toll—were more desperate measures taken. Of course, all that ended with the Nova Cat and Ghost Bear attacks in '72 and '74. With the Word eliminated as a factor, Combine troops were finally free to bring enough pressure to bear on the Black Dragon forces, enabling us to claim prisoners intact.

In late 3072, one of the DEST teams the Sons had smuggled to Luthien—acting on a tip from an O5P agent identified only as "Jasper" (O5P profile #JST231)—captured a small *Kokuryu-kai* cell operating in the Teak Ward. Two men in particular were captured—Minister of Communications Regis Ferward and Qan Hagatomi of Sipher Communications. To the more conspiracy minded—or to those who follow the Drake underground press—these individuals were known as "Pearl" and "Diamond," respectively.

The Sons had found two of the so-called "Gems," assumed to be the core of the *Kokuryu-kai* leadership (ISF-DRKE 2781-4w).

I won't bore—or sicken—you with the details of the interrogative process employed (see ISF #8119-923J). The final result was that several other collaborators were named, among them the now-deceased Duke Hassid Ricol ("Ruby") and *Tai-sa* Tok Do ("Emerald"). But the biggest name culled from the interrogations was that of the heretofore unknown "Tiger's Eye," arguably one of the top three leaders for the entire organization:

Abbess Tomade Yamiro (O5P profile #TY921-e [amended]).

Thanks to Akira Tormark and his team, in January 3073 the Abbess was apprehended and brought to New Samarkand for further inquiry (ISF #7921-IDc). Before her untimely passing, she revealed to an O5P observer the names of three more "Gems": LAW CEO Hoek Botterfield, *Tai-sho* Paul Omishita, and Erik Nekatagu of Mangon Aeronautical Shipping—"Opal," "Onyx" and "Obsidian," respectively. The O5P placed surveillance teams on all three men but made no move to arrest them immediately (O5P order #82110-3).

(There was one other name mentioned as well, but none of the reports give that person's identity. It appears it was removed some time later from the originals before they were dropped into my lap. I am unsure I even wish to know what high-level person it could be that would force such secrecy.)

Under direct order by the Coordinator (and countersigned by the *Kanrei*), the ISF and O5P merged resources "to purify the taint still lurking within the Dragon's heart." The *Kanrei* had several long meetings with the new Abbess of the O5P, Mara Selenica, and with ISF Director Shakir Jerrar during the concurrent Arkab crisis. Shortly afterwards, thirty *Kokuryu-kai* collaborators were arrested and publicly executed.

Notified of an assassination plot put into motion by a Black Dragon cell within the ISF, the *Kanrei* and the Director launched an investigation (augmented with resources from the O5P) and discovered that over half of the ISF is indeed riddled with Black Dragon operatives (ISF #288A-G). All doubt about Jerrar's complicity in such a massive infiltration of the department was erased when the *Kanrei* vouchsafed the Director. Forming a task force of O5P agents, fanatically loyal DEST troops and hand-selected Sons of the Dragon, Benjamin and New Samarkand have been fully purged of Black Dragon influence; more than 2,500 collaborators were put to the sword on the capital alone. The task force then expanded and spread out to surrounding District capital worlds (ISF #G229-TF).

With the safe arrival of the Arkab leaders in March, the first test of the *Kokuryu-kai*'s demise has passed. While reports are still trickling in from the Dragon's distant border worlds, it does appear that this time, the Dragon's purge has been brutally effective, but it will most likely take another decade to truly root out this cancer for good—assuming that the Dragon suffers from no further "outside issues" in the interim.

There are still a few so-called "Gems" at large (O5P #G002-85g), but with the ISF's newfound diligence and the O5P's resources, it is only a matter of time before these individuals are exposed and eliminated.

So, Lord Kurita, for now at least, it appears the *Kokuryu-kai* threat has been greatly diminished. With Luthien back under the Dragon's wing and the majority of the "Gems" now excised, the Combine can focus its attention fully on the threat of the Word.

—Archivist Megumi Kaneda (12 May 3074)

AROUND THE SPHERE

If the Confederation or its people are going to emerge from this war alive, we have to prevail upon Sun-Tzu to recognize that his realm cannot hope to stand apart from the rest. I fear, however, that he has let his distrust of the other House Lords—particularly Victor Steiner-Davion and his siblings—cloud his judgment too much to embrace a coalition effort now.

—Peter Abdulsattah

The Sacking of Sian

To: His Celestial Wisdom, Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao
Fr: *Sang-jiang-jun* Talon Zahn
Re: After-action Analysis, Sian, January 3074
Date: 23 January 3074

Celestial Wisdom,

It pains me to acknowledge this, but I refuse to dishonor you with the slightest hint of feigned ignorance: Had I not witnessed the action with my own eyes, I never would have believed your sister capable of such a masterstroke.

I refer not merely to the execution of the White Tigers' last-minute betrayal and slaughter of the Blakist Rakshasa, but the skill with which she manipulated our own intelligence and security agencies while simultaneously misleading her erstwhile partners in the Word of Blake.

As I review the records—going back for months—it becomes clear that only Kali could have managed to secretly smuggle two Word of Blake Divisions onto Sian without raising any alarms. And only Kali could have coordinated the action with the deployment of her "Warrior Houses" on another unauthorized strike into the Free Worlds League. What once seemed random and nonsensical has become crystal clear as an elaborate ruse worthy of the finest chess masters. Were she not so unpredictable and unstable, Kali might have made a fine general. I admit this now, even as I recoil in horror at the thought.

But it all became clear within hours of the attack—on the evening of her own trial, no less! Could Kali have truly planned such perfect timing as this?

The attack may have caught us by surprise, but Forbidden City has been on alert ever since the start of this conflict. For this reason, even the sudden appearance of two Blakist Divisions in our midst did little to hamper the determination and ferocity of our defense. Backed up by the Citizen's Militia and Lady Naomi's Third Fusiliers, our Red Lancers and Warrior House Imarra managed to stop the attacking forces cold along every avenue to the Celestial Palace.

But we were stretched thin, and the enemy knew it. After more than a day in deadlock, Kali's aberrations appeared—those "Warrior House" mockeries conceived by herself and her Blakist friends. She claims the technology and the drive were always within our reach, but the horrors of those demon-men were even more extreme than the Word of Blake's own fanatical Manei Domini. Determined to break the lines for the palace, these monstrosities advanced through the breaches in our ranks. As we spirited you and the rest of the Celestial family to safety, I prepared the palace guard for what I feared would be our last hopeless battle.

At the gates, however, Kali played the final card in her mad hand. Before our very eyes, the monsters turned on each other, White Tigers tearing into the bewildered Rakshasa without a moment's hesitation—all at the same instant. In seconds, half of the Rakshasa "Thuggee-Domini" were eviscerated, by 'Mech, by blade or even by bare hands. The carnage defies description.

The act, however, also spelled doom for the Blakist line. Having apparently commanded some of her White Tiger minions to hang back among the regular troops, Kali's agents also sprang their trap against the unsuspecting forces there. Sabotage and brazenly suicidal acts of White Tiger treachery brought down scores of Militia units, shattering their offensive line and opening them up to our retaliation. Chaos ensued, and within hours, the broken forces of the Word were in a full retreat.

In less than forty-eight hours, it was over, Highness. Betrayed at the very moment of victory, the Word stood no chance against the determination of the Confederation. But I shudder to think about it even now: Would we have fared as well if Kali had not turned against her Word of Blake allies at that moment?

Once more, Celestial Wisdom, I beg for your mercy and forgiveness. Perhaps, had our efforts been more diligent beforehand, we would have seen this attack coming and prevented it long before it reached this crisis point.

Your humble servant,

—*Sang-jiang-jun* Talon Zahn

Like Mother, Like Daughter

[*One of our contacts on Sian slid this over. This is the real deal; if we ever find out that Hanse actually did order an operation to genetically tinker with the Liao bloodline, it would not surprise me in the least. —PA*]

Personality update// LIAO, KALI; #499s-LIA
XI-XI ACCESS ONLY
Login_____

::Subject Briefing::UPDATE:: 5 Nov 74//

Subject has moved from delusional schizophrenia to megalomaniac paranoid dementia.

Sometime during this period, subject managed to mastermind a complex plan to insert loyal shock troops onto Sian; evidence suggests this was in conjunction with Word of Blake operation to seize control over Confederation. Ideal outcome: line of Sun-Tzu Liao terminated and subject's bloodline replacing deceased on throne.

Continued disobedience to Chancellor's personal directives escalates throughout 3073, culminating in previously mentioned plan to remove brother from power. Repeated resistance to calls for surrender; escapes arrest through violent means.

KALI'S BLOODLUST

My honored brother, the Celestial Wisdom Sun-Tzu Liao, believes me mad.

In this, as in so many other things, he is wrong.

Was it madness to form my own Warrior Houses, the White Tigers and the Rakshasa? Sun-Tzu refers to my creations as "monsters," but when has a Liao ever foresworn any weapon needed to guard the Celestial Throne?

Ever has the Confederation been the weakest of the Successor States. Lacking the wealth of the Lyrans or the might of the Suns, we have survived because we excel at one other thing.

Cunning.

We do not love intrigue. We do not love death. But we do what we must to survive. Is there a single leader in all the Inner Sphere who is any different?

Yes, I ordered my Tigers to assault Les Halles in April of '73 and yes, that raid led to a Duchy of Oriente retaliatory strike a month later. But did not this very act cause the False Thomas to journey to Sian under a flag of truce, leading to discussions that defused much of the tension between the Confederation and what is left of the League? It was not the first time that an act of war ultimately led to a gesture of peace.

Did I not peacefully accompany my brother's Death Commandos when they came for me on Highspire at the end of last year? Even after he subjected me to the indignity of arrest, didn't I try to explain to my brother how my plans were for the ultimate benefit of his realm?

And when Cameron smuggled troops and 'Mechs onto Sian for nearly a year, preparing a strike at the very heart of the Confederation, didn't I stand athwart his plans? When the Eighth and Twenty-fourth WoBM Divisions drove toward the Celestial Palace in the first week of the new year, who rose up to stop them? My beloved White Tigers struck down their brothers the Rakshasa at the very gates of the palace and then turned on the Blakists, shattering their assault.

Twice I have saved my brother's realm, once from all-out war with the League and again from the treachery of Blake.

And yet my brother still thinks me mad. You'd think he'd be grateful!

Yet his score is not the only one I have to settle.

Cameron, my love, you have betrayed me one time too many. This Sixth of June, you shall receive a gift.

He is a beautiful child, fair of hair, with a ready smile. He has seen the passage of six summers.

He has your eyes—as you well know.

You are a treacherous man, Cameron, steeped in deceit, and so I know you will not believe this news. That's why I've enclosed a small token of proof.

His severed hand.

Oh, how he cried when I collected this little gift for you, tears streaming from his eyes.

Your eyes.

—Writings of Kali Liao, discovered in her cell, 14 May 3074

[*I reviewed Starling's "leaked" report about the tie between Kali and Cameron, but, still, to see it confirmed that she actually birthed a child—and St. Jamais' child, no less—just chills me to the bone. —PA*]

AROUND THE SPHERE

Captured on 28 December and charged with treason and crimes against the State. Subject uncooperative with authority and replies in cryptic phrases.

Remains in maximum-security psychiatric ward on Sian. Currently force-fed through intravenous methods due to repeated hunger strikes. Subject was placed in restraints after multiple attempts on doctors. Experimental pharmacological procedure in use.

Extensive physical scan indicates post-operative cosmetic surgery from C-section removal. Further off-site tests required.

::UPDATE:: 4 Jan 75//

Evidence recovered suggests positive DNA match on blood samples taken in Highspire; close match to subject, but variances indicate blood relation does contain several neurotic and psychological genomes. Apprehension and safe transport of personage considered priority.

Comments:

::29 Dec 73:: Initial evaluation indicates Kali is extremely paranoid in nature, yet completely devoted to the Confederation. She reveres her brother as a saint and does not seem to understand his charges against her. *—XU*

::3 Jan 74:: Kali was put into bed restraints today after her successful attempt to disembowel associate physician Citizen Xiya. She has apparently received some augmentation in her left-hand finger bones; the work is extremely durable and delicate—very few cybernetic doctors exist who are capable of such work. Materials test forthcoming. *—TW*

::19 Jan 74:: Kali is now on continual medication. Her dosages need constant revisitation, however, as her body seems to adapt to the new dosages fairly quickly. She is now restrained at all times, though by order of the Chancellor she remains ungagged. A Maskirovka agent has been placed on permanent duty in the next room and records everything for future analysis. *—TW*

::8 Apr 74:: Rants have increased in tempo and volume, ceasing only when subject's vocal cords are strained. All orderlies and physicians are required to wear earplugs at all times. *—OW*

::30 May 74:: Subject dosages tripled under duress of primary physician. Coma induced at 2109. Chancellor present. *—OW*

::19 Sept 74:: Subject body weight and physiology returning to normal, though still not responding to chemical treatments. Muscle reflexes testing as

AROUND THE SPHERE

HARDWARE RAILROAD

[Excerpts from dockmaster's private log, Motor City, Detroit, late 3074]

###Entry 67###

New Roland dropped off the grid four weeks ago—no comms, no HPG, no nothing. The weekly shuttles are overdue and *Skimmer* didn't check back in.

Strangely enough, the eastern run isn't picking up pace. Zanzibar depots are reportedly empty, with minimal merchandise trickling through. None of my routes are making their quota. It's like they don't want us to gear up. Think they don't need us, do they?

###Entry 85###

Went with the boys last week and couldn't believe my eyes: Customs actually doubled the fees!

Yes, fees, not bribes. Those cost extra, like always.

Thought we were on the same page here. At least *Skimmer* showed up again. They had to skip Turin because of some local martial law locking down all traffic and comms. Met a free trader on the Zenith, however, and sucked up a newsdump.

Logs put Ceres Metals at their best in decades, churning out hardware by the heaps, but obviously that stuff is directly burnt into Confed war efforts.

###Entry 119###

I don't get it. Is his Celestial Golden Templeness backing down from the deal? Those were four perfectly fine Po tubs we just shipped back direction ConCap. Judging from the looks of it they never even reached our techs back on Canopus. Crates had their Menke Factory seals and packaging still on and all that. Next thing they'll want their *Men-Shen* back!

###Entry 123###

All right… things are obviously worse than suspected. "The tides are turning," as HQ said. Now we're suddenly delivering, not receiving. Detroit's warehouses got literally raided earlier this morning, everything combat worthy packed up and sent into Capellan space. It must be more desperate up there than I thought if they can't even wait for our units to train. Hopefully *Skimmer* makes it back.

normal. Surgery scheduled to remove cybernetic enhancements within the next two weeks. —*RI*

::4 Nov 74:: Subject awake, all life signs normal. Unresponsive to communication, even to Chancellor. Though vitals are strong, subject remains in psychological vegetative state. —*RI*

::6 Nov 74:: Kali Liao has escaped the facility. Five fatalities. Destination unknown. —*HD*

THE BLAKE PROTECTORATE

My Lord Kurita:

I've spent the past few weeks immersed in the giant pile of crap the Word puts out in its Protectorate. And I feel like I need a brain-scrubbing after subjecting myself to such pap, spin and raxx manure.

Aside from that, there is truth in among the weeds. But not any type of truth the Word is trying to portray.

I've pulled some select pieces for you to consider; in all of this, there seems to be an underlying current that, if tapped at just the right point, could tear the Word's bastion apart.

There seems to be a rift growing between Cameron and his Master, Thomas Marik.

It's imperceptible, certainly. But when you put the pieces just so, and look at them just right, it's visible, if only for a moment. Consider: St. Jamais has been heavily reinforcing a ring of worlds around Terra, pulling back from many key gains in the Protectorate. Apollyon—the mysterious Precentor at the head of the Word's previously unknown Shadow Divisions—has been burning worlds left and right, in complete disregard for St. Jamais' movements. And neither Precentor seems to take or even want control of the other's forces. (Indeed, see Peter's excellent breakdown of the Word's forces elsewhere in this document.) With one on the extreme attack and the other building up an extreme defense, and little overlap of control, it's hard to see what the Word's strategy is except two forces pulling in opposite directions.

Such strategy can be extremely dangerous or extremely fortuitous, depending on how it is countered. Suffice to say, there is little chance the current coalition could do anything to tip the balance in our favor against the Word. Hitting the hardened defenses around Terra (and one can only squirm when considering the type of defenses *on* Terra!) will take an inordinate amount of manpower; meanwhile, the Shadow Divisions beyond the ring of defense can capture and burn critical supply lines and even whole worlds while our offensive batters the wall around Terra.

So please, Lord Kurita, examine the following information closely and see if there are ways to lever these cracks into wider fissures that could break the Word down internally. Otherwise, we're looking at a war of attrition that will make the Clan Invasion look like a backyard tussle.

—*Marcel Webb*
4 January 3075

AROU

What Is the Blakist Goal?

(10 August 3074)

New Syrtis [INN] – The Word of Blake's seizure of Terra might have raised eyebrows because the "little" splinter group managed that feat, but no one questioned its motivations. But after the Word of Blake's subsequent conquest of the worlds of the newly formed Chaos March, the question "Why?" suddenly became common.

With the fervor that many Blakists evidenced, many simply dismissed the conquests of the Chaos March as land grabs that the Word would justify with references to Blake's teachings. But as the so-called "Word of Blake Protectorate" has expanded, simple dismissal has failed to silence these questions because there are so very many methods used to add worlds to the Protectorate.

Since 3067, a majority of additions to the Protectorate have come through brute conquest, like Ingress, Kittery and many others. This only feeds the impression of the Word as an expansionistic power hiding behind the trappings of its quasi-religion, but what about the worlds where the Word used honeyed words and gifts?

In contrast to its conquests, the Word of Blake has "subverted" many planets with generous aid. Terra Firma was brought to its knees by conflicts between Liaoist and FedCom loyalists after Operation Guerrero, but the Word of Blake's help restored its infrastructure and the government's finances. Caph was similarly stricken by multi-factional fighting after its independence, but the Word ended those conflicts, to the relief of the people—despite the thousands killed by its mercenaries in the process. The Word went on to begin cleaning up Caph's infamous wastelands from the fallout of the Succession Wars, deploying advanced planetary reclamation technology and restarting Caph's Succession Wars-ravaged industries. And so Caph became—by all accounts—a grateful member of Blake's Protectorate.

Hsien and Epsilon Eridani joined the Protectorate almost as allies—not because of any shared beliefs in Blake's teachings, but rather because their populations have seen the Word of Blake as means to form what was billed as "the second coming of the Terran Hegemony."

When Leftenant-General Benton inaugurated his government on Epsilon Eridani with the vow of independence, "*because our rulers from the Great Houses have not done well by us. Therefore, I believe we must do right by ourselves*," he was politely expressing the more-pungent views of a population exhausted by Great House manipulations, and particularly the brutality of Liaoist terrorist cells, Operation Guerrero and the damage of the Succession Wars. It was not the Word that lured Eridani into the Protectorate, but rather Terran businessmen and

SHARING THE LOVE

—From *The Cullen Institute Journal of Mercenary Affairs*, Issue 6, Vol II, 3073

As most private military executives are aware, the downturn in new merchandise across the Inner Sphere has led to a brief resurgence in the second-hand equipment market, but it is becoming increasingly apparent that the materiel pool is limited. Already unscrupulous resellers are marking up prices to well over 85 percent of original wholesale, and—more distressingly—early tech models, traditionally seen as inferior, are being sold at the same margin. With resources stretched, many operators are entering into detrimental garrison-supply contracts with their main suppliers, simply to maintain an effective cash pool, rather than put all their liquidity into dubious reworked chasses.

While some operators—and, indeed, several state entities—maintain extant purchasing ties, more than a few second- and third-tier buyers are looking toward the most cost-effective options to maintain a steady contract stream. Previously, this type of "second-string" manufacturing fell to smaller concerns like Gilmour MilTech, which used available components and low volume runs to establish a steady clientele. (Admittedly, Gilmour was helped immensely by its partnership with Hollings-Dupre.) Industry analysts expected the current downturn to result in further "second-stringers" servicing low-volume contracts, and in essence, "sharing the love."

However, the lack of restriction on the dissemination of the New Dallas memory core has allowed several influential manufacturers to retool existing (and/or obsolete) lines to begin mid-volume runs of previously forgotten designs. Dubbed "RetroTech" by the popular media, there is a misconception that the designs are somehow flawed compared to modern standards. While it is true that most of these designs use relatively basic manufacturing techniques and materiel, at least one major manufacturer has expanded upon these obsolete chasses' base configuration, adapting them for service in the thirty-first century. It seems certain that other manufacturers will adopt the same methodology after the initial successes of the trend.

The popularity of this production philosophy is seen in the formation of the Blakists' Protectorate Guard. While the majority of first-tier manufacturing is allocated to the Word of Blake Militia, the Protectorate Guard have largely been outfitted with second-tier materiel, whether from on-world production, or second-stringers like Gilmour MilTech (*Ed: With Talitha's acceptance into the Blake Protectorate, it is assumed that Gilmour will become a favored supplier to the WoBM and Protectorate Guard*). Several other major militaries have adopted similar allocation philosophies, with "RetroTech" gaining further mainstream acceptance.

At the moment, these second-string manufacturers are largely unaware of the increasing market value of their product, allowing certain operators to offload older—yet still seen as "first-tier"—equipment in exchange for the less popular but more cost-effective second-tier designs. The major problem with a strategy such as this is overcoming the unwarranted disdain most employees have for the oft-derided product. For some operators, this concern will be negligible, but for those executives with a better-established brand, the negative connotations implied by such equipment may require further cost-benefit analysis.

[*I've included this piece because of its origins. Unlike MercNet, the JMA is a peer-reviewed professional journal. As such, it doesn't just represent the opinion of a single (normally biased) writer, but the experience of a broad group of contributors. Also, despite its pro-Word bent, the JMA is surprisingly informative about goings-on in the Protectorate. —MW*]

AROUND THE SPHERE

diplomats. (The union has not been a perfectly happy one, as witnessed by the atrocities on E. Eridani, but it started well.) Hsien's population welcomed Brenn Twohy, commander of the Word's mercenary unit Hsien's Hotheads, as liberator and leader after years of strife. His credentials were those of the distant heir of Duke Roderick Twohy, the Hegemony-era leader of the planet exiled by the Capellan conquest in the 2780s. Once more, like Eridani's population, Hsien's supported Twohy for reasons that stem from the Hegemony days.

So, for all of these different methods of expansion, what is the Word's goal?

Those who dismiss the Word as a mindlessly expansionist power or as "out to conquer the Inner Sphere" are giving their enemy too little credit. Those who seek deep conspiracy theories related to Blake's teachings are probably trying too hard. Whatever the Word of Blake planned for its hidden forces in 3067, it was something big, and the Word would need a lot of resources to support that operation. It follows, then, that the Word of Blake by and large established the Protectorate, encompassing many of the most-developed and most-industrialized worlds of the Inner Sphere, to support that operation.

Unfortunately, whatever that "big operation" was going to be—and theories abound, to be sure—may never be realized in our lifetime. The fact that the worlds of the Protectorate were added more through outright conquest after 3068 than prior to it, however, lends credence to the idea that—whatever their plans—the Word has been forced to change them after that fateful conference on Tharkad.

Internal Strife

(11 November 3074)

New Syrtis [INN] – For the past few years, the Word of Blake has appeared to be a monolithic juggernaut composed solely of fanatical cyber-warriors, but this is obviously not the case. Like any human organization, the Word is composed of humans with a spectrum of dedication and endless reasons to participate in this current Jihad. Some of those Blakists and their allies are starting to find that the Jihad is not what they signed up for, and are working against Blake's Will.

The worlds of the Blake Protectorate constitute one such group. It is thought that at least three WoBM Divisions and a majority of the Protectorate Militia are involved in suppressing revolutions on the Word's restless power base rather than guarding its borders.

Not all of those suppression operations are effective. In 3071, the Word's troops on the outlying Protectorate "island" of Kittery, Scituate and Gurnet were routed by a local revolution of "reeducation" camp prisoners. More than routed, a number of the Protectorate Militia units defected to the resistance movement, apparently appalled at conditions in the camps. Elsewhere, on Irian, rebels have all but destroyed Redfield's Renegades in recent months, shattering the mercenaries assigned to garrison the planet.

In just the past month, key industrial worlds of the Protectorate have been erupting in revolt. Tikonov, Towne and Wasat have kept the Protectorate Militia very busy, and the Tikonov rebels held onto Earthwerks factories by turning the Word's own tactical nuclear weapons against them. How far these latest rebellions—which seem to be exploding on the Protectorate's most fortified worlds—will progress is open to speculation, but it demonstrates just how unstable the Word's empire is.

Some Chaos March worlds joined the Protectorate voluntarily, and not because they desperately needed aid. Despite the Word's careful control of information, though, even these voluntary members of the Protectorate are realizing that aligning with the Word of Blake was a fool's move. Their ally-of-convenience, who gave them a chance to rebuild the Terran Hegemony by another name, has locked them into a conflict that could escalate to the destructiveness of the First Succession War. Some continue to "hold the tiger by the tail," cooperating with the Word's desperate fortification efforts, but others have been backing off, reducing their cooperation with the Word.

No world in the Protectorate has attempted to secede outright, but some are ending open-door cooperation with Word's intelligence and security bureaus. Others are becoming less earnest about persecuting anti-Word dissidents, and the latest parliamentary elections on Hsien even allocated seats to anti-Word opposition parties. If not secessionist yet, these planets cannot be far away from abandoning their one-time ally.

Not all of the mercenaries employed by the Word represent the most bestial side of humanity's nature. Many are simply units looking to survive. As observers of the mercenary trade have noted, almost half of all mercenary commands fail or are destroyed within the first six months. Under such pressure, mercenary commands *must* consider a contract from the Word of Blake, which has been consistently offering excellent terms to new and established mercenaries. Unfortunately, stringent measures by the MRBC to discourage mercenary units from working with the Word has ironically trapped otherwise good-natured units in the Word's employ.

Just last month, when the HeavyHell Raisers were ordered to slaughter Irian civilians, two of the three mercenary companies did not just refuse their orders but sided with the rebels. The survivors later managed to hijack a WoBM JumpShip and are reportedly offering their services—and fresh intelligence—to Alys Marik's rebellion. This is not the first mercenary rebellion, and even the "example" of the Martian Cuirassiers does not seem to be slowing resistance to the war crimes the Word's mercenaries are ordered to carry out almost daily.

And then there are the Blakists who never agreed with the Jihad. Before the Schism, ComStar was little different than the Word we now see, except for being more subtle—so much so that many of ComStar's most faithful adherents truly believed that ComStar sought nothing more than peace for all humankind, and would

WORD OF DEATH: BLAKIST UNITS AND EQUIPMENT

FILE:DC5220.LUTH.HIC.23TSO-black
To: All DCMS theater commanders
Fr: O5P Data Analysis

Greetings, honored protectors of the Dragon:

Attached is a file of utmost importance for your eyes only. Disseminate at your discretion.

We have compiled a detailed cross-section of the Word of Blake's current assets and technologies as well as an intel brief on the two latest units discovered in the Blakist order of battle. Specifically covered (and in greater detail than normal) are those BattleMechs and other machines that are of Combine origin, or which have been used to great effect against our forces. It distresses us greatly that our own resources and assets on Luthien, Dieron and other Combine worlds are being utilized against us. While the attached file is thorough, I have summarized the most salient points for your immediate attention:

#CAT35122.50U.28// PNT-14S *Panther*: This modified version of the DCMS' signature light 'Mech is most troubling, as it is being built in large numbers on Dieron. The new jump jets give this 'Mech tremendous flexibility, allowing it to use its snub-nosed PPC to deadly effect. We have seen this 'Mech in many reinforced scout Level IIs, especially with the Shadow Divisions that have been plaguing our worlds of late.

#CAT35122.50U.162// Zephyr: This light scout tank has been upgraded with newer electronics and has been seen working in tandem with artillery and fire-support Level IIs. Utilizing TAG-oriented systems and warheads, these Zephyrs have wreaked more havoc than assault units in several Blakist attacks. Much of the civilian damage on Pesht was inflicted by several of these hovercraft swarming in and around civilian and industrial sites, directing artillery fire and in at least three instances, orbit-to-surface strikes.

VARSPDLAS// EXP: Spotted only among extremely elite units—most likely the cyborg commanders of the Word's Shadow Divisions—these high-powered, high-speed lasers have been extremely effective in laying down voluminous fire support for extended periods of time. It is extremely high priority to capture a unit mounting this weapon system as soon as possible; such an edge will help the Dragon recover against the predations of the Blakists and our antagonistic neighbors.

52SD.APPCHO// This is the Fifty-second Shadow Division, often noted as "Apollyon's Chosen." Rumored to be led by Precentor Apollyon himself, this Shadow Division has been reported in several places in the Lyran Alliance and Free Worlds League. While this unit has not been located within Combine space, if any contact is noted, this unit is to be attacked and destroyed with extreme prejudice. Our nominal allies have reported that more than several billion C-bills of civilian infrastructure damage and countless lives have been lost to this unit's "special" brand of terror tactics.

OVSD.OPACVENAT// The Opacus Venatori, an alleged "covert operations" unit akin to our own DEST squads, has been noted in various systems rimward of Terra. The only confirmed sighting of this unit is a small group action on Dieron in 3068 that led to the brief capture of Lord Kurita. Current information on these "Shadow Hunters" is sparse, though we believe the unit is small and that its members are cybernetically enhanced and capable of piloting nearly any type of battlefield hardware. Their specialty seems to be in headhunting and sabotage missions, and so DCMS forces close to the Protectorate should be doubly alert for infiltration attempts and surgical strikes.

These are the highlights of the enclosed file. Wise you would be to absorb as much of this package as possible so that we may fight our enemies with wisdom and not just heart.

—*YT*

Office of the Five Pillars

never tolerate violence. After the Schism, these faithful could not tolerate Precentor Martial Focht's secularization and fled to the Word of Blake, where they remain to this day.

While the Word's leadership might hope to keep such faithful servants blind to the truth as they toil in Blake's name, the atrocities of the Jihad have gone on too long. It might have taken years, but the Word's peaceful stalwarts have been awakening to the horrors committed in Blake's name.

These peaceful followers of Blake's name are not, of course, in the Word of Blake Militia and are excluded from higher leadership, but they are so numerous that their impact is felt. In a dramatic example, Demi-Precentor Lutz was pressed into managing the Word of Blake's reeducation camps on New Earth when the Word ran short of its usual thugs. Lutz used his position to manipulate data, informing the hungry reeducation camps that they were due to receive few dissidents while informing the dissident hunters that their tens of thousands of dissidents were being executed on schedule. In this way, between 3070 and 3072, Lutz is thought to have rescued more than sixty thousand prisoners by actually "exiling" them to remote locations on New Earth, far from prying eyes.

THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

The Free Worlds League is barely worthy of its name now. Neither free nor truly a united league any longer, the worlds and leaders of this realm have continued their gradual, tragic decline into anarchy and corruption with the inevitability of a dying sun. The Word, in tightening its grip, has seemingly focused on the core of the realm—the Marik Commonwealth—leaving the outlying provinces to wither and rot. Meanwhile, those same outlying mini-states have grown increasingly bold and defiant of the central government—while ironically finding themselves no better off now than under the imagined shackles of the Marik eagle.

Like a dying star, the League continues to draw in upon itself, compressing its mass as the fires of its life seem to burn themselves out. So too have the Lyrans and the Capellans seen little activity emerge from this withering realm.

But most dying suns finish with a spectacular nova, and if the warning signs from within are any indication, I fear the day the Free Worlds League reaches critical mass.

—Peter Abdulsattah

AROUND THE SPHERE

Null and Void

(10 August 3073)

Concord [Silver Hawk Examiner] – Signing a mercenary contract with a Successor State often has many drawbacks. Their negotiating teams are generally better, the profit levels are generally lower and command structure stricter. However, the one balancing factor is stability—where smaller employers may or may not stay around, the Houses go on.

Until now. A small ripple has spread and now mercenaries are voiding their contracts with the Free Worlds League as fast as they can find new employment. The floodgates opened in 3069, when Olson's Avengers signed up with the Lyran Alliance and jumped across the border to the Lyran world of Dixie.

"There is no Free Worlds League any more," said Major Charlie Olson, the Avengers' commander, "just a bunch of mini states, pretending to be a nation."

Ten days after the unit arrived on Dixie, the League attempted to reinstate the Avengers' contract, going so far as to threaten MRBC involvement, but the lack of governmental cohesion prevented any progress. Since then, other commands have followed suit. The Chameleon Strikers have signed with the Duchy of Oriente, while the Anduriens have secured the services of Assad's Assyrian Assassins. The Fox Force returned to Federated Suns, while the Fifty-seventh Special Operations Company and Panzer Group 4 have joined Olson's Avengers in the Lyran Alliance. Rumors that the Devil Dogs have gone to the Magistracy are unsubstantiated, while here at home, the Silver Hawks leadership is courting the Bad Dream and Jackson's Raiders.

This revelation does not bode well for the future of the League. Its member states are not helping things by hiring League employees, but neither can they abandon their people. While we can only hope that the scourge of war will soon leave our fine realm, it won't be mercenaries who fight alongside our League forces—not if the League itself becomes null and void in the bargain.

Anatomy of a Bloodless Coup

—From *Andurien Parameters Editorial*, December 3073

On 2 July 3072, self-proclaimed "Captain-General" Kirc Cameron-Jones gave his impassioned "Day of Infamy" speech, promising swift retribution to those responsible for the devastating attacks on his homeworld of Regulus in June of that year. Unknown to the rest of the Inner Sphere, thirteen days earlier forces loyal to Cameron-Jones launched a massive undertaking—the Purge. This pivotal event anchored what would be the Regulan state's tumultuous and ultimate transition of power: the fall of Prince Kirc, and the rise of Prince Titus.

Titus' ascension can be linked directly to Kirc's paranoia after the so-called Night of Fire, when the Word of Blake's Forty-ninth Shadow Division razed the seat of Regulan power at the end of a drawn-out campaign of infiltration and espionage. With a death toll of just over one million, the impact on the Regulan community was immeasurable, but more important was the effect it had on the psyche of the wounded nation's leadership. Unwilling and unable to trust anyone after the betrayal he had suffered at the hands of Sonja Amora (a.k.a. Naamah), Kirc delegated to his estranged son the responsibility of finding the unseen traitors who had helped Amora carry out her mission.

Yet even as Titus worked to uncover those who had betrayed the Regulan state, Kirc's paranoia grew. Unwilling to wait for his son, he ordered what remaining forces he implicitly trusted to undertake the Purge, a large-scale operation where those even suspected of ties to the Blakists or to the "False Marik" were detained and sent to "filtration" camps. Here, these unfortunate souls were tortured and killed, their assets seized and their bodies buried in mass graves that dotted the hillsides surrounding the burnt-out husk of Regulus City. For nearly six months, no sector of the community was spared the brutality of the Purge, while Kirc's inflammatory oration fanned the fires of frustration and vengeance for those citizens who had survived the horrors of the Blakist attack. Driven by grief and revenge, their tolerance for the often-illegal measures used to round up "disloyal" elements became a testament to the nationalist fervor that gripped the Principality.

At the same time, Kirc began to lay the groundwork for his coup de main—Operation Vijay. While the Regulan defense has always included the option of " nuclear deterrence", the Night of Fire had seen Regulus' small stockpile of weapons captured by Blakist forces before their departure. When the Regulan Security Service confirmed the location of the Forty-ninth Division (Naamah's Nightwalkers) on Gibson in mid-March, Kirc turned once more to his estranged son to gather and lead a force against those who had attacked Regulus itself. Titus Cameron-Jones was given operational command of the Fourth Regulan Hussars—the only Regulan force to so far escape severe damage—and ordered to form a credible task force.

Kirc soon came to realize that his son, the oft-ignored and virtually pacifist Titus, had a gift for organization. Acting under the guise of "ensuring Regulan public security," Titus quietly gathered two veteran and vehemently anti-Blakist mercenary units—the Thirteenth Stalking Horse and the Wild Geese—to support his Hussars. But as Kirc declared this force insufficient, Titus gathered more units to the cause, adding a number of smaller, less-reputable commands that had escaped the Blakist occupations of Galatea and Outreach.

As Titus' task force neared readiness, his father's paranoia suddenly grew by leaps and bounds. On 27 April—alarmed by his son's sudden upswing in popularity among the Regulan military—Kirc gave the order to place Titus under "protective custody." Titus was detained and placed under house arrest for "his own protection," while command of his task force was given to Kirc's stalwart friend, General Tomaso Kinchuhara, whom Kirc had brought out of retirement specifically for the cause.

AROUND THE SPHERE

ALL QUIET ON THE SPINWARD FRONT?

Hauptmann Paul Jeffries:

After exhaustive review of the Bolan/League border, we can safely come to the conclusion that League activity is back to pre-3067 levels. While the damage is extensive on both sides (and a few province worlds remain in Marik hands), defenses are now static with few signs of reinforcement or troop movement.

One concern at the moment is the heavy-handed treatment of the Savannah Pact worlds by forces from the Marik and Stewart Commonwealths. These pro-Blakist states have hammered the independent Pact worlds several times in the past few years. Even though Alys Marik announced her support for the informal alliance in late 3073 and reinforced the Fourth Legionnaires still active with additional forces, the Commonwealths continue to press.

While this fighting is of no intrinsic value to the LAAF, we believe we should continue utilizing our assets on Savannah, Remulac, Nathan and Bordon. Out of all the current Marik states, these Commonwealths remain the most dangerous to the Alliance border, and anyone who opposes them aids us.

—Norn 49

[Verified 4 January 3074]

Unwilling to wait a moment longer, Kirc ordered General Kinchuhara to launch his assault on 28 June with the forces at hand. Five weeks later, the assault force arrived in the Gibson system, and met no initial resistance. Ignoring the protests of his senior mercenary commanders, Kinchuhara insisted on a mass combat drop on the proving grounds of their primary target, the Gibson Federated BattleMechs factory. But when Kinchuhara led the Fourth Hussars into the massive complex, swarms of unknown battle armor troops ambushed his command in the tight confines. When the Wild Geese and Stalking Horse moved to assist, the Fifty-second Shadow Division—heretofore believed to be off-world—emerged from hiding to savage their flank, while Naamah's Nightwalkers executed a combat drop under heavy aerospace cover directly atop the mass of smaller mercenary units.

When Precentor Apollyon, leader of the hated Manei Domini, called for the Regulans' surrender, nearly all of the smaller commands—hopelessly demoralized—powered down, leaving the remaining Regulans to fend for themselves. The Fourth Hussars suffered heavy damage, but the battle was truly lost when the body of General Kinchuhara was flung from the cockpit of his BattleMech by Blakist battle armor. Bereft of leadership, the Regulan second-in-command ordered a general retreat, and the task force command net became a three-way shouting match between the Regulan exec, the Wild Geese commander, and the spokesman for the smaller task force units. Even as the assault force boosted away, Blakist WarShips harried their attendant fleet, capturing some JumpShips and destroying most of the task force's aerospace assets.

Ultimately, barely a regiment of combined forces managed to escape "impregnable" Gibson.

When word of the debacle reached Kirc in September, his immediate excuse was that Blakist spies had somehow compromised the mission. His paranoia now at its peak, he quietly prepared to undertake a new, even more far-reaching Purge, certain that the last had not excised enough of the cancer within his realm. Only at that point did Force Commander Michelle Ryan of the First Hussars—aided by a group of like-minded officers—free Titus from detention and urge the heir apparent to move against his estranged father. Confronting him on 21 September, the very eve of Kirc's new Purge, Titus accomplished the impossible without firing a shot. While it remains unknown what was said between father and son, the effects were dramatic. Kirc Cameron-Jones abdicated, allowing his son to assume the Regulan throne in his place. The reign of Prince Titus had begun.

In the end, Kirc's brutal Purge cost the lives of more than eighty thousand Regulans, and countless more on other worlds in the Principality, and his disastrous Operation Vijay and botched assault on Gibson only tempted the Word to bring further horrors to his homeland. That Prince Titus not only circumvented more excesses, but did so without bloodshed, has given the Regulans a new leader who understands not only when to fight, but when not to. How long this will last remains to be seen, but with the constant threat looming over the Principality, the rise of Titus seems fated to accompany the loss of innocence.

Samantha Collins is a syndicated journalist with the Oriente Chronicle. *She appears here courtesy of DMG Media.*

Strike Resolution

—ISAP vidcast, Oriente, 19 May 3073

[LaBaron]: "We now bring you breaking footage from Keystone. This footage is extremely violent, so our more sensitive viewers should leave the room for the next minute…."

[*Shaky footage as if taken from a small camera, perhaps on a vidphone, shows the front gates of Earthwerks' Keystone offices. A crowd of workers shouting slogans and hoisting signs protesting the Jihad fills the foreground.*]

[LaBaron (Voiceover)]: "The workers began striking two weeks ago, protesting the Jihad and all the destruction it has brought to the Inner Sphere. Keystone security and management attempted to break the strike for several days, but failed. Nine days ago, this footage was shot…."

[*The frightening shape of a white-painted* Malak *OmniMech steps into view. Many in the crowd gasp and cry out, but few try to flee.*]

[*Malak* MechWarrior (speakers)]: "Attention, citizens! By authority of Earthwerks Incorporated and the government of Keystone, you are hereby ordered to cease this illegal gathering and return to work!"

AROUND THE SPHERE

FOLDING INWARD

Citizen Hyun-ki Takeo
Zang shu er,

I have done a thorough analysis of the Duchy of Andurien since their probing attacks of 3072-73 and despite their opportunities along our border since, they have all but ceased their raids. While the formation of the First and Second Andurien Rangers is troubling, their focus now appears to be elsewhere, solidifying the Andurien border and probing independent League worlds nearby as the Marik state fractures.

Ever since the surprise strikes on Regulus, the Anduriens have been extremely wary of Word of Blake infiltration. They have continued to build up planetary defenses and our agents have made several reports regarding mass conscription of able-bodied men and women for filling out planetary militias (though this makes little sense, given the more than adequate number of volunteers available).

Several former Duchy worlds in the area have appealed for Andurien protection. While not part of their government per se, these worlds—Kwamashu, Furud, Antipolo and Kanata—have hosted Andurien forces for brief "defensive rotations." This has expanded Andurien's reach and we've made note of increased border defenses in Oriente because of it.

We've also received two disturbing reports—both confirmed—of Andurien-authorized production of chemical weapon systems. One is located on Kwamashu, the other on Sadurni. I have attached the relevant trivid feed for your examination.

—Citizen Boris Dumfries (1 April 3074)

ATT: KWAM.TRIV/SADU.TRI

REBELS AND ROGUES

[VOICE OF TRUTH] Terrorist insurgents were driven back when they attempted to capture and hold a supply depot earlier today. The fighting, which lasted only three hours, cost the insurgents nearly three dozen infantrymen and more than a lance of heavy equipment, while only a handful of our brave defenders lost their lives. Though some heavy equipment was lost, captured insurgents netted us the location of several safe houses, allowing us to deprive our enemy of places to hide as they gear up for further attacks against the security of our world…"

[FREE WORLDS LIBERTY MOVEMENT] "We bloodied the nose of our Blakist oppressors today, during operations to capture supplies and war materiel. Our successful heist netted us several hundred tons of supplies and critical documents, while also costing the lives of several of their higher-ranking officers. Though casualties were moderate, we have been able to use captured intelligence to maneuver and elude the grasp of those fanatical dogs…"

—Press releases retrieved regarding a resistance battle with WoB Militia on Atreus, June 3074

[*An object comes flying out of the crowd to bounce off the 'Mech.*]

[LaBaron (Voiceover)]: "This *Malak* was dispatched from the Word of Blake's Twenty-seventh Division, the so-called Shield of the Faithful. They certainly aren't the Shield of the Innocent…."

[*As another object bounces off the OmniMech's hull, the* Malak *opens fire with several machine gun bursts. The crowd panics and dissolves into chaos as the 'Mech brings its flamers to bear next.*]

[LaBaron (Voiceover)]: "We have reports of dozens dead in this massacre alone. Additional fighting killed more than one hundred over the next few days. The Twenty-seventh, no doubt eager for more action, took their fight to the streets of Keystone Park…."

[*The footage changes, the picture steadier and clearer. Infantry forces, battle armor and standard troops are seen herding people through the streets. Troops now lead coverall-clad people into the plant. Guards stand at every door.*]

[LaBaron (Voiceover)]: "Now the people of Keystone must help make the machines of death that are used to strip them of their freedom. A cry of reason in these harsh times put down in bloody fashion. We can only hope that someone can come to their aid before things get even more dire.

"For INN, this is Edward LaBaron."

The State of the State

To: Deputy AD Niki Manon
[Verified 27 December 3074]

We've compiled the information you requested regarding the Marik and Stewart Commonwealths. For ease of reference, I've broken it down into two subcategories.

Military

Corrine has maintained a tight grip on the military forces of the Marik Commonwealth, though we suspect the more aggressive actions (such as the scorching of Savannah's southern continent) came at Paul's behest, rather than the Captain-General's. Much of the border between the Commonwealth and Regulus has been heavily reinforced; even with advances against Tiber, Aitutaki and Wallis, the border remains tightly defended. The best example we can point to is the failed February invasion of Dickinson.

Because of Paul Marik's continued influence within SAFE, he has managed to plant several false reports that were picked up by Regulan agents indicating a major move by Irian to the planet. According to the planted data, Irian Security was to take over defense of the world for departing Commonwealth forces and would include a large shipment of manufacturing parts as well as

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a large stockpile of new Irian-produced OmniMechs. Marik even verified the data using a triple agent and burning another.

When the Regulan Hussars struck, they met little opposition and quickly secured the supposed Irian stockpile center. As night fell, hidden Commonwealth and Blakist troops burst out and slaughtered the Hussars; not one escaped, and all five DropShips were captured or destroyed.

Paul sent the fifteen surviving members of the unit back to Regulus with a datacard, which contained—in minute detail—what fate would befall Titus and his homeland if the Commonwealth were "forced" to come to Regulus. As a result, Titus renounced his claim to the Captain-Generalcy within 24 hours.

Industrial

In May of 3074, one of our deep-cover agents inside Irian stumbled across a detailed contract regarding Irian corporate concerns on several Commonwealth worlds. After some careful digging, she found that Irian has made severe inroads into the Commonwealth through fourth- and fifth-party corporate blinds, acquiring large swaths of land and sea for various concerns. At least four large mega-industrial complexes are planned for Washburn, Angell II, Abadan and Tongatapu. Each of these complexes, once completed, would be able to produce several thousand tons of BattleMechs, aerospace fighters and DropShips for the Commonwealth. While not stated as such, we can assume that the Blakists will be involved as supplier and purchaser.

While Irian is indeed the League's largest military and commercial manufacturer and supplier, having such exclusive conglomerates within the Mark and Stewart Commonwealths will drastically tip the balance of power between the largest members of Parliament.

Additionally—and most alarmingly—Irian Corporate Security will be authorized to maintain sizeable security forces at each site, effectively giving the Commonwealth an additional four to six regiments in defense.

The first complex is due online in late 3076.

We recommend the following:

Increased SAFE operations in the Commonwealth, with a focus on infrastructure and disruption. We can pin the blame for these on Alys and her merry band of revolutionaries.

Increased monitoring of Irian actions both on and off the planetary markets. If they're doing this in the Commonwealth, they will no doubt be doing it elsewhere. It's an awfully nice carrot to many independent worlds currently caught in the middle of Regulan and Marik power plays.

Infiltration of Paul's SAFE network. Until it is neutralized, we must consider our own network suspect.

—Voltaire, #MIAP32

THE PERIPHERY

The outlying states of the Periphery have had their share of misfortunes and opportunities since the start of this war, but in the final analysis, it appears that the main action remains squarely within the borders of the Inner Sphere itself. Nevertheless, it would be an insurmountable mistake to ignore the significance of the Periphery in these chaotic times, especially as it remains a given that two Near Periphery realms—the Circinus Federation and the Taurian Concordat—remain directly influenced by Blakist machinations, while at least two others—the Marian Hegemony and the Magistracy of Canopus—have suffered greatly at the Word's hand.

These past few years have seen a surge in activity on the Taurian front, especially since the asteroid bombing of the Taurian capital in May of this year. The tragedy—as likely staged by the Blakists as by anyone else with an axe to grind against Taurus—has unleashed a maelstrom of vengeance that has thus far left countless dead in both the Federated Suns and the Concordat itself. Meanwhile, Blakist forces have continued a campaign of raiding and pillaging the Magistracy of Canopus, while leaving the Marian Hegemony reeling from the wounds it suffered in the neutron bombing of Alphard.

Strangely quiet in all this has been the Outworlds Alliance, where Snow Raven activity remains high despite the gradual slowing of traffic from Clan space. Though it seems that some of their recent military efforts have included securing their conquests in Combine space, our analysts feel the activity is "nest building" rather than early warnings of a new military campaign.

Or so we can only hope!

—Peter Abdulsattah

Houses Hiring Pirates?

Pirates, bandits, outlaws—they are the scourge of the Periphery, no matter what you call them, preying upon the poor worlds on the edge of human-occupied space. Some, though, have turned from scourge to savior. Smaller realms, unable to fully defend themselves, have looked to the past for a solution—back to another age of pirates, where nations would issues letters of marque to those with less-than-stellar reputations. Effectively opening safe ports to pirates and reducing the number of ships hunting them down, the nation—if it bargained with the right bandits—could gain some peace of mind in knowing that those who once preyed upon them now worked for them against their enemies.

Today, it's the Filtvelt Coalition offering shelter to Marion Leaford, the Calderon Protectorate harboring Rheinhold's Privateers, and even rumors that the Duchy of Andurien has made a deal with the devil to secure the "services" of the Blades of Death. Now these pirates raid their neighbors, keeping them (and in some rare cases, the Blakists) from mounting any significant attacks.

As if this wasn't enough, some reports suggest that even the larger states have been looking into buying security by hiring

AROUND THE SPHERE

WELCOME HOME!

Rejoice, my fellow citizens! At long last "Uncle" Sun-Tzu has seen fit to release our troops guarding his worlds. Our husbands and wives, sisters and brothers, sons and daughters, mothers and fathers—are all coming home! Now we can focus on restoring and rebuilding our realm, our communities and our families. I share your hopes and desires. You want to take back your loved ones and hold them tight, never to let go. However, as easy as it may be to find comfort in their arms and by hiding away from the universe, we still have work to do.

What we started with the rescue of our Mother must continue. We did not live under Star League occupation! We will not live under Blakist tyranny! We will not live under the thumb of *any* foreign nation! Where we had feared that our great leader was slain and her daughter held in a gilded cage on Sian, we have at least the assurances that Magestrix Naomi, upon her return, will rally our forces to repel the robed invaders once and for all!

So welcome home our troops! Give them a night to remember that they were missed. Take them in your arms and let them know they are loved, that you appreciate their sacrifice. Then pack them up and say good-bye—not with sorrow, but with hope, promise and determination! For they are not going halfway across the Sphere to fight someone else's battles, but just next door, to fight *ours*!

—The Fox of Royal Foxx

[*This flier distributed to the unoccupied worlds of the Magistracy of Canopus minutes after a 17 October 3074 public announcement was made that Canopian troops in the Confederation were returning. What's curious is not only the timing—indicating a larger and surprisingly well-coordinated resistance network still functioned across the Magistracy—but that a possible assassination plot on Sian prevented Magestrix Centrella from leaving Sian less than a week later, undermining the message. –PA*]

pirates. The Harrison Brothers have allegedly been seen on Niops and there are rumors of Lyran representatives visiting with the Blue Dragons. Is this just a passing fad as the chaos of the Jihad spreads, or a worrying trend for the future? Will we see "privateering" spread to the edges of the Blake Protectorate? While an advantage to the realm issuing the letters, the rest of us lose as pirates prey upon innocent civilians. We can only pray our leaders come to their senses before it's too late.

—Lucinda Franz, ISAP Syndicated Columnist, 20 March 3073

The Boy Who Would Be Caesar

Have you ever taken a morning walk along a beach after a vicious storm has raged long and hard through the night? Under clear blue skies and accompanied by the soft, sibilant voice of the surf, you will find the terrible remnants of the storm's anger: the broken bodies of crabs and starfish littering the sand. Gulls and sand fleas dining on rotting fish thrown from the sea. Huge brown strands of kelp torn up from the ocean bottom and draped across the land.

That's what I found when I was summoned to the Caesar's office on the morning of March 15, 3073.

Senator Quintus Pullo stood in the office, silent but red-faced. Pullo was an extravagantly fat man. Today he was dressed in a tailored suit of dark blue, rather than his ceremonial toga.

Standing next to him was General Ivy Ward in dress uniform: a gray tunic over a white shirt with matching gray trousers. Her arms were folded across her chest and her mouth was a thin line.

Only Prefect Michael Alexander looked pleased with himself. He sat in a black leather chair, hands clasped behind his gray-haired head, a cold smile stretched across his lined face.

"You called for me, sir?" I said, addressing Alexander.

"Ah, the commander of the Caesar's house guard! Surely you won't object to using the *Legatus* here as our witness, eh, Quintus?"

Pullo said nothing.

Alexander raised his eyebrows. "Senator Pullo thinks I've pulled Cassius O'Reilly out of a hat. He thinks Cassius is a clever ruse to make myself ruler of the Hegemony. Really! As if I were a Calderon. The very idea is—"

"Ridiculous," said a firm voice. The door to the Caesar's private office had opened to admit Cassius O'Reilly. The boy had curly golden hair and blue, blue eyes. Like Ward, he was wearing a dress uniform. But on him it looked like prep school attire.

"Caesar," said Pullo carefully, "we are already under attack from the Federation on behalf of the Word of Blake. For now we must ignore the Lothian and Illyrian rebellions. And no matter what you've been told," he glanced at Ward and Alexander, "it profits us nothing to punish League worlds that may be supporting those rebellions."

"Well, I agree with that," said young O'Reilly. "The last sentence, anyway. There will be no more raids on League worlds. But we will *not* ignore the rebellions."

"Caesar," said Ward, "we must strike at our enemies. If we don't, Word of Blake will devour us whole."

"I agree with that, too," said O'Reilly. "This is turning out to be a productive meeting. There are Federation troops on Illyria and Lothario. We will send the Cohors Morituri to one world and the Legio Limitanei to the other, reinforcing the legions already there. We will either quickly win or the Feds will reinforce, in which case they won't have the troops to invade the Alphard District.

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"Either way," the boy said—but with the iron tone of a man—"a brutal war will be dropped right in the laps of our two rebelling populations. A subtle reminder that their Caesar is not happy with them."

"It will take time—" Ward began.

O'Reilly cut her off. "The DropShips are already loading."

"I caution you," said Pullo, rallying, "many things could still go wrong."

"Yes," said Caesar, "which is why I'm sending *you* as my personal representative to observe the battle on Illyria."

Pullo paled as he realized he'd just stepped into a meat grinder.

Alexander emitted a sharp bark of laughter. "Still think I'm using Cassius as a puppet, Quintus?"

—Account related by *Legatus* Malcolm Landon, 2 March 3073

The Day the Heavens Fell

—Taken from the feed of Capital Concordant live branch, 1 May 3074

[*Live stream from the capital city of Taurus, showing a river of shuttles and small craft attempting to abandon the city. Were it not for the visibly frantic pace of the ground and air traffic, the scene would reflect a great city basking in the warmth of its native sun.*]

[Anchor (voiceover)]: "…But the unanticipated approach of these large rocks—obviously powered by thrusters as reported by pursuing defenders…somehow were not detected until they passed by outbound civilian cargo DropShips…

"Several gunboats have already attempted to use Mark IX "Dropbuster" thermonuclear warheads to fracture the smaller asteroids, but even those massive megaton weapons have had no effect on the main asteroids that are now within seconds of entering atmosphere…"

[*A large streak flashes across the top of the screen and down onto the city. A massive explosion washes out the screen for an instant, erasing many of the shuttles as a vast dust cloud raised by the shockwave races upward and outward. In a heartbeat, blackness consumes the scene. A moment later, the live feed cuts back to a newsroom.*]

[Anchor]: [*Visibly shaken*] "God in heaven! L-ladies and gentlemen, the shockwave of the blasts has apparently disabled our camera. We are hundreds of kilometers away, but we are still feeling the impact as the first of those gigantic asteroids struck the Samantha metro area. We will be providing constant live feeds from all our crews as our homeland continues to be bombarded by…."

[*Feed breaks off*]

Taurian Fire

"I've agreed to this press conference because certain people are questioning the preliminary conclusions of the Samantha Commission. The criticisms basically fall into three categories.

"The first is that two weeks isn't sufficient time to perform a proper evaluation. Sure, we'd like more time, but if a foreign power is attacking the Concordat we don't have the luxury of crossing every 'T' and dotting every 'I'. Still, in the fifteen days since Samantha was destroyed by the asteroid strikes, my team has gathered more than sixteen *thousand* pieces of debris. More comes in daily. We have ample evidence for our conclusions.

"A second criticism is that I'm somehow covering up the truth. People will have to draw their own conclusions, but I'll tell you now, I'm no toaster lover. I'd love to lay this attack at the feet of Word of Blake—but facts are facts. And they just don't support that conclusion.

"The last criticism is that my team has been fooled. Look, I've been an accident investigator for 26 years and a lead investigator for seventeen. I've seen just about every kind of disaster that can come from something falling out of the sky. *I'm not wrong.*

"We can conclusively prove that the asteroid that struck Samantha was powered by DropShip engines. And we've found enough parts to prove—*prove*—those engines were built in the Federated Suns. Oh, it's not just a few cowlings with Fed serial numbers. It's all the internal parts, too. Wiring and chips and struts and fuel valves and hydrogen lines and half a thousand other parts that tie back to a hundred suppliers *all from the Federated Suns*.

"This kind of evidence just can't be faked."

—Statement by Dr. Keller Lang, Chairman of the Samantha Commission, Outskirts of Samantha, Taurus, 16 May 3074

Christening

"We come together today not only to launch a vessel, but to honor a man. Protector Grover Shraplen guided the Concordat safely through many a troubled day. He was always wary of Federated

UNITED IN SORROW

"We have never renounced our love and faith in the Taurian Concordat's citizens, and this devastating attack on our people's homeworld is just as repulsive to those of us here in the Protectorate as it has been to the Concordat.

"In a show of solidarity with our brethren, we—the people of the Calderon Protectorate—are formally renouncing any offensive operations against the Concordat, and offering up medical and humanitarian aid for our battered capital. In addition, our military forces stand ready to begin relief operations in several border systems, willingly under the authority and supervision of the Taurian Defense Force, to allow their military to begin reconstruction efforts on the capital as well as to prepare for retaliation against whomever initiated this atrocity. This will prevent any opportunistic pirates or brigands from taking advantage of the situation, further stretching our brother nation's resources thin and leaving its citizens unprotected…"

—Press release from the office of Baron Cham Kithrong, Erod's Escape, 3 May 3074

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Suns—our enemy for more than eight centuries. Protector Shraplen was often condemned for his fear of the Suns. How sad it is that only in death could he win this argument. On May first, not only did our ancient enemy murder millions of our people, they took our great Protector from us.

"But they did not count on Taurian determination—or that of Taurus' allies—determination that has led to a truce in the conflict that so long divided us. And allies, who have provided us this refurbished *Quixote*-class WarShip.

"I vow today, with this new sword we will avenge the Mayday Dead. And so I dub thee . . . *Vendetta*."

—Remarks by Senior Marshal Boris Tharn upon the commissioning of the TCW *Vendetta*, 19 May 3074

Echo of Reason

"The Protector dies and Shraplen steps in to take his place. Taurus is brutally attacked and we rush to condemn the Federated Suns. And who is standing there ready to hold our coat? None other than Word of Blake—who just happen to have a bright, shiny WarShip to offer us for a very low price—our *souls*. And we swallow it all, all of it, without even a second's pause for consideration.

"My God, what is it about we Taurians that we will not see?"

—Attributed to Baron Kithrong in a message to the Taurian High Command, 1 June 3074

What's Coming to Them

[*A mushroom cloud rises in the distance, a plume of black capped by an umbrella of dark debris given to the sky. The camera swivels and focuses on a young noncom in burgundy fatigues, clutching a submachine gun to his chest in an easy approximation of port arms.*]

[Challs (Off-camera)]: "This is Brenda Challs of TNS, interviewing Section Leader Burt Lawson on the world of Brockway, recently liberated by our brave soldiers. Section Leader, are you at all concerned by the widespread use of weapons of mass destruction in the reclamation of Bromhead, Midale and this world?"

[Lawson (the non-com)]: [*Laughs bitterly*] "Anyone who has any qualms needs to go back and watch the tapes of Taurus burning. I had a sister in Samantha."

[Challs]: "Including *Vendetta*'s orbital strikes on Midale, there are some estimates that ten million Fed Suns troops and civilians have been killed in the fighting. Do the civilian casualties bother you?"

[Lawson]: [*Smiles and shakes his head*] "If it were up to me, lady, *all* the Suns would burn."

—TNS Interview, Brockway, 30 June 3074

[*The Taurians' blind hatred of the Davions makes them easy targets of manipulation. In addition to Bromhead, Midale and Brockway, Taurian mercenaries have taken Hyalite and Lothair. This offensive is unlikely to stall any time soon. If the Federated Suns is to serve as a cornerstone of our efforts to stamp out the scourge of Blake, it would be propitious to find a solution to this conflict. —PA*]

THE CLANS

There is one thing in this life that I will never be accustomed to: lack of information. I'll admit it up front: it scares me. I like—no, need!—to be informed to the saturation point; this has done me exceptionally well in my business empire and in dealing with other interests inside and outside the Dragon's influence.

Which is why the current situation boiling beyond the Periphery borders is so frustrating to me. My contacts among the Sharks have slammed their jaws shut like steel traps; not even extraordinarily favorable trade terms can loosen their tongues. (I suspect the traumatic loss of the *Titanic* has something to do with it.) More disturbing is the sudden silencing of several IE contracted projects in the Deep Periphery. I know that at least one location was completely destroyed—nothing was left on HTa422 except broken machinery and an empty DropShip. I can only assume similar fates befell the other six sites.

Whatever has happened along the Exodus Road and in the Homeworlds of the Clans, it must be incredibly destructive. Maybe more so than the Blakist Jihad we suffer through here. And if that is indeed the case, then I hope beyond Buddha's dreams that it may never boil in our direction. The Dragon was ill-equipped to handle the initial Clan invasion, and I doubt we could even stand half a chance today against such an onslaught.

I see my dark thoughts continue to escape my control. This is why I hate lack of knowledge. This is, in part, why I do so much to find a way to control the now, in order to save the future.

It is the unknown future that drives me crazy.

—Chandrasekhar Kurita

Homeworlds: Theories

[*Lord Kurita: My distinct advanced apologies for this summation. I've attached the audio portion of the debate so you can hear it first-hand because, honestly, I feel my summary reads like a Starling rag piece and not a concise précis of an academic roundtable. —JM*]

Send in the Clans: An Evaluation of Theories

Academic Roundtable, Pesht University of Military Science

Present: Dean Truman Gieger, Professor Hu Jingawi, Dr. Lois Gelman, and *Tai-i* Robert Kilisaka (ret.)

Dean Gieger opened with a long-winded introduction that basically felt like a pitch-sheet to the audience to donate to the school. Since Pesht is currently under an economic emergency, educational funding has been stripped bare in order to rebuild damaged infrastructure. [*While PUMS is a worthy college, I think the citizenry's monetary assistance is better utilized in such frivolous donations to the Red Cross and Dragon, the Pesht Food Council or the Kurita Shelter Foundation. —JM*]

As dull as Gieger was, Professor Jingawi electrified the audience. Somehow, the Periphery Wars professor managed to obtain a two-minute trivid recording of a three-way assault on Thule between the Adders, Horses and Bears. While the footage

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was decidedly amateur, it was a spectacle—and a "refreshing" change from the brutal footage most of the Dragon's citizenry sees in the sparse Combine victories on Benjamin, Buckminster and other worlds.

Jingawi proceeded to inform the audience of his personal theory that the Clans were undergoing some sort of "rite of passage," an obscure Trial hierarchy rarely enacted and used to "switch up the balance of power when said power has failed the society." His assertion was that the Adders and Horses had chosen to enact the rule and evict the Ghost Bears from Dominion space. [*I did manage to obtain a copy of that recording and have forwarded it on to Mr. Abdulsattah. —JM*] His theory holds little water, however. Upon examination of the footage at my leisure, it was clearly obvious that none of the three Clans were working together; it was a three-way battle of such ferocity it reminded me of the footage a few years back of the fighting on Luthien.

Dr. Gelman spoke next. She didn't posit a theory, so much as spell out a list of factoids, verifiable rumors and some assumptions. While much of it was just rehashed news reports we've seen from the Wolf and Falcon zones, she did have some points of merit.

According to her sources, there were a few attacks within the Falcon Occupation Zone after the Hellion threat was neutralized. The strikes hit worlds deep within the Zone, making random pirate attacks unlikely (but not impossible, given the infinite amount of jump-capable stars surrounding us). The strikes were short on detail, but appeared to be restricted to warrior caste zones and military firebases. I personally believe that Archon Steiner has taken it upon himself to make sure the Falcons remain pinned in place so they can't hit vulnerable Arc-Royal.

Another point Dr. Gelman raised was the possibility of a mass plague wiping out swaths of Clanners on their homeworlds. As we are aware, living conditions on the Pentagon worlds are harsh, and from our meager data collected from the Great Refusal, virulent plague breakout is not uncommon. So according to Gelman, we could be seeing the remnants of the distant Clans fleeing their poisoned worlds and hitting the Spheroid Clans for new homesteads, only to be met with equally violent force.

Tai-i Kilisaka's presentation was perfunctory, as befitting a career DCMS officer. The subject of his presentation, however, was anything but. He claims—though with no real proof—that the Clans are in fact dealing with an outside invasion, much like what the Inner Sphere dealt with when the Clans arrived on our border in 3050. According to the *Tai-i*'s assertions, the supposed anathema of the Clans, a Clan "Wolverine" (assumed to be the "Not-Named Clan" that even the Sharks rarely speak of), somehow returned from extinction and is exacting revenge on those who exiled them. Using powerful tripod designs, 200-ton "Titan-class" 'Mechs and singularity-powered WarShip fleets, they are systematically wiping the Clans from their homeworlds. What we've heard reported as pirate attacks (or covert operations) are in reality "scouting missions designed to test the mettle of the more powerful Clans in our midst."

Kalisaka's final words were directed with powerful vitriol against the Nova Cats currently within our borders. Because we harbor these Abjured warriors, Kalisaka believes the Dragon will

WOLVES AND HORSES: A PRIVATE WAR?

The bloodletting between the Wolves and the Horses continues apace. All efforts to put the conflict in any kind of context have failed. The theory that the Falcons, Wolves and Ghost Bears have all been corrupted by Inner Sphere ways and thus are suffering a culling by more conservative Clans appears to be countered by the fact that the Horses have turned on the Ice Hellions as they were in the midst of attacking the Jade Falcons, and the Ghost Bears haven't been attacked. So what is fueling the brutal conflict between the Wolves and Horses?

The truth is, we just don't know. "Feud" is the best guess we can manage.

It is terrifying to see that scope of military power employed without having any idea as to why. For now, all we can do is catalogue what is happening. Yet even that is growing difficult. The following is largely gleaned from commercial contacts with Diamond Shark traders, which are drying up for mysterious reasons of their own.

Our intelligence suggests that the Horses are proceeding in two thrusts through Wolf space, one each along the Wolf OZ's spinward and anti-spinward borders. It appears that the two prongs of the Horses' assault have taken Harvest and Unzmarkt in a drive toward Tamar. The Horses' advance is slowing, however—as they take more and more Wolf territory, their supply lines lengthen, while the Wolves' lines shorten. Also, as the Wolves are backed into a corner, their might grows more concentrated—as does their will. This conflict is likely to get extremely bloody before it's over.

We don't know what all this means, but there is some fear that the Clan conflicts may spill into Lyran space (even more than they already have).

—LIC intelligence analysis of the Clan Wolf–Clan Hell's Horses Conflict, 2 January 3073

[*Something strange is happening among the Clans. No one knows yet whether or not it is related to the Jihad. Until just a few years ago, the Horses and the Ravens seemed to be powerful Homeworld Clans largely content with their own affairs. These all-out assaults and massive relocations look more like a hastened Ghost Bear migration than a simple feud can explain. —PA*]

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be assaulted simply by association—much as the Lyrans would be for their association with Phelan's Wolves.

Bear in mind, Lord, that the *Tai-i* did not have a single shred of proof of his theory, but built it solely on past excavations of the Minnesota Tribe and extrapolating semi-plausible technological evolutionary processes. [*That Kalisaka was recently diagnosed with Ageranium's Disease also does little to help his case. —JM*]

As you can see, you missed quite the symposium. Heavy food for thought, Lord.

I feel I need a shower now.

—Jose Maestas (29 November 3074)

Blakists on Radstadt!

(2 April 3074)

Rasalhague [DOMNET] – Brilliant beams of death, contrails of destruction. These were the first telltale signs of what was about to happen on Radstadt when the fighting began on 7 March. As the Elementals of the Third Claw battled the Blakist cyborgs pouring forth from their hiding place near Munich, the first of the Blakist sell-swords emerged to pour their deadly fire into the armored soldiers of the Claw. Spreading out into the suburbs of Munich, they called to themselves the attention of the Fifth Bear Regulars, stationed at the nearby Kohl Space Center. Meanwhile, additional elements of the Fifth, along with the Third Claw and the FRR Tyr Regiment, faced down the main Blakist force, now identified as the elite 43rd Shadow Division.

No one knew how the Word had come so deeply into Dominion space, but their true intentions became obvious when the first mushroom cloud rose above Kohl Space Center, annihilating the facilities in a neutron storm. A second strike targeted the main industrial complexes near Lake Wagner, the main water supply for several cities. But the third—and most cowardly—attack came an hour later when the Blakists, without regard for their allies, detonated a neutron bomb near the center of Munich, catching not only the Fifth Regulars, but also their own honorless mercenaries in the strike. FRR fighters shot down a fourth fighter-launched strike, aimed at Camp Eisenweiss, and recovered another atomic device from the wreckage.

Fighting between the Shadow Division and the remaining Ghost Bear/FRR forces turned into a brutal slaughter as the Blakists slowly drew back to their concealed DropShips, making the Dominion forces pay for each meter gained. In the end, even a suicidal attack against the Blakist camp by the remains of the Third Claw could not prevent a small force of Blakist troops from escaping their chosen fate. Their parting gift, however, will be felt for a long time. Soon after their liftoff, several Blakist aerospace fighters swept back at Radstadt, and targeted several of the planet's major freshwater reservoirs with canisters of an as-yet-unidentifiable biological agent. The extent of the damage from the bio-agent is yet to be established, but between the fighting and Blakist WMDs, more than two million are believed to have already died, while the Fifth Bear Regulars and Third Claw have been destroyed for all intents and purposes. Of the Tyr Regiment, only a company of BattleMechs remains battle-ready, leaving the stricken and sickened world of Radstadt with scarcely any defense should the Word return in the near future.

STILL NO CURE FOR RADSTADT DISEASE

(10 November 3074)

Trondheim [DOMNET] – In the seven months since the cowardly Blakists struck Radstadt with neutron bombs and biological agents, the combined minds of Rasalhagian and Ghost Bear scientists have been racing to unravel and counteract the plague the enemy unleashed in their March attack. More than three million died in the initial fighting and from the neutron bombs, but the true horror only started to show in the days after the Blakists left. By the end of the month, nearly four million Dominion civilians had fallen ill from a mysterious series of viruses.

As the pandemic worsened, riots erupted that left hundreds dead, forcing the FRR government and Ghost Bear council to declare a state of emergency and martial law on Radstadt, while relief efforts to evacuate civilians from the contaminated regions began. Officials continue to stress that that this is only a temporary measure until a cure can be found, but so far the solution has eluded scientists, while the Radstadt ecosystem shows escalating signs of contamination.

This is of little comfort to the local population, however. Estimates are that more than eight percent of population has caught the virus, mostly in the largest cities. Meanwhile, a pitifully small portion of the population has so far been evacuated and transported to nearby worlds, while others are being moved en masse to more remote areas on-world, in hopes of containing the spread.

Raging Bears

—Benson Sinhavic, ISAP syndicated columnist, 22 December 3074

After the attack on Radstadt, it should come as no surprise to anyone that the first reports of Ghost Bear retributions have begun, striking—of all places—at the heart of the Draconis Combine. Long the object of hate and loathing by the people of Rasalhague, the Black Pearl of Luthien has ever existed as a grim reminder of centuries spent under the oppressive rule of House Kurita. To some, it must therefore be a joy to learn that a substantial Ghost Bear force over three Galaxies in strength has assaulted Luthien, while another two Galaxies simultaneously struck at Pesht—the military heart of the Combine.

Both Combine worlds have been besieged by the Word of Blake and torn by years of low-level civil war between Kurita loyalists and

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the Black Dragon Society. Now a fourth force enters the fray in the form of the Ghost Bears, and one can only wonder: what are the Bears' ultimate objectives? Will they stop merely at punishing the Word of Blake? Or will the Rasalhagian voice in their ear whisper for more vengeance? Will the Bears' rage escalate into a free-for-all of epic proportions, unleashed on all takers?

We all recall the last time the Dragon provoked the Bears. After the disastrous attack on Alshain, the Ghost Bears launched an all-out assault along the entire Combine front, sparing none. The attacks were hardly coordinated, seemingly random forces striking out at the nearest worlds with DCMS troops on them. The result was a brutal campaign that quickly bogged down as both sides slugged it out.

What's different this time is, first, the time frame. After Alshain the reaction was almost immediate. This time it took almost ten months before we saw a clear move. There have been rumors, speculation based on reports of a massive Ghost Bear troop shuffling, coupled with a redeployment of KungsArmé forces into the Dominion itself. But it has also been business as usual, with ceremonies like the activation of the new First Tyr Assault Cluster, held by both Khan Kabrinski and Prince-Elect Ragnar.

The Ghost Bears have to date not displayed the same adventurism that several of the other Clans have. Even when their neighbors are weak, they have refrained from attacking them to expand their territory. In fact, most of the Bears' territorial gains since Tukayyid have been made against their fellow Clans.

Likewise, it wasn't until the Bears moved to annex the remainder of the Rasalhague Republic that their forces moved against the Blakist WarShips over Tukayyid. The bombardment of Orestes likewise provoked no frenzied response from them. Even after the Horses raided Rasalhague, the only Dominion response came through attacks on a few Horses planets, meeting only token resistance.

The Blakist forces on Luthien and Pesht are the nearest and most isolated that the Ghost Bears can easily reach. But a rage like the one that sparked the last Combine-Dominion war would entail striking down toward Terra—a prospect fraught with its own pitfalls, depending on how much the spirit of the Tukayyid Truce matters to the Bears now. Likewise, despite their troop movements, it is unlikely that the Bears will abandon the defense of the entire Dominion to the vastly under-strength KungsArmé, especially given the Rasalhagian predilection for rebellion.

So in all likelihood, the Bear assaults on Luthien and Pesht could be a mere warning to the Blakists—powerful, but a warning nevertheless. One with a simple message: "Leave us alone, this isn't our war."

Falcons: Analysis

My Lord:

I've gone over the scant data we've received from Khan Kell, along with the Watch data you forwarded me from Twycross. My theory behind the Falcons' sudden shift in attitudes can only account for one thing: a murderous press by the Word within their own nest.

So what do we know?

Sometime in early 3072, the Exiles got scattered reports of concentrated, heavy attacks on the Falcon worlds of Wotan and Waldorff. These reports could not be confirmed, however, as both worlds' HPGs went black. Coincidentally or not, these were both current Galaxy Command headquarters.

[*I'm fairly sure this is the first indication of two coordinated Word of Blake strikes, though there's no firm evidence. Considering the few reports we'd received from our IE contacts in the Deep Periphery, these may have been heretofore-unknown reserve Periphery forces. —LD*]

During the summer of 3073, a large amount of naval activity was detected across most of the OZ. Yet, little movement occurred within the Falcon Touman beyond a large shifting of JumpShip and DropShip assets. The Exiles were concerned the Falcons were repositioning for more attacks against the Alliance, but such attacks never materialized.

[*The redistribution of transport assets could be an indicator of quarantine protocols or a reshuffling of resources in order to provide aid to stricken worlds,* a la *Alarion and Galax. They could also have been a reaction to the Hellion and Horses incursions. —LD*]

Several Watch reports from the Exiles and Horses, as well as from LIC outposts, indicate severe upheaval on a large number of Falcon worlds to varying degrees. Many indicated some type of armed resistance and heavy urban combat. In at least three cases, the Falcon response included orbital strikes.

[*Using the pre-Protectorate Chaos March as an example, most likely we have rebel cell insertions on several worlds by the Word, arming those anti-Clan groups still surviving with the means to overthrow Clan rule. That the Falcon response is so brutal may indicate a fundamental shift in war policies, which will be bad for the Alliance. —LD*]

At the end of 3073, Parakoila, Benfled and Sudeten's HPGs went offline. Scattered reports on the Twycross Chatterweb indicated some type of trouble on each planet; several major shifts were noted in agricultural and resource trade routes but not military build-up, per usual Falcon war doctrine.

[*With so many possible plague worlds and rebel activities—far greater occurrences here than in the rest of the Inner Sphere, it seems—it very much proves the theories of our analysts that the Clans are indeed hated by the Word. We may be seeing a microcosm of what the Word really wanted to do in 3067 if things hadn't gone awry. —LD*]

In early 3074, interstellar commercial shipping ground to a halt on at least sixteen worlds.

[*See above. Further proof of a dual-attack plan by the Word: plague and revolution. And then there's the case on Radstadt where Blakist activity was confirmed. —LD*]

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In November, two full Jade Falcon Galaxies disappeared, their whereabouts unknown, but quite possibly relocated to a "silent" world within the Zone.

[*This is most likely a sign of more brutal retaliation by the Falcons against the Word within their OZ. —LD*]

Taking this all together, one very clear (though admittedly flawed) thread appears: the Word took the brutality of the Jihad to a new level in the Falcon OZ. As such, Khan Pryde must have seen firsthand the power of the enemy the rest of us face and decided that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," inspiring her current "cooperation" with our allies.

As always, however, I stand to be proven wrong and will continue to monitor and analyze the data as it becomes available to us.

—Lupě Detloff, Sr. Analyst (26 December 3074)

COMSTAR AND THE COALITION

I have mixed feelings about ComStar's decline in stature over the past several years. On the one hand, it feels as though the Inner Sphere is losing a powerful and vital partner in the war against chaos. Yet on the other, I am reminded that so many of our problems—accumulated through the centuries—were born of ComStar activities and machinations. In fact, the Jihad as a whole often gives me the feeling of some kind of cosmic karmic realignment aimed straight at the house Jerome Blake built.

Unfortunately, we're all being made to pay the price.

And then there is this Devlin Stone and his coalition of allies. Stepping into the void created by the Donner bombing on Arc-Royal, he seems to have secured himself an almost legendary position in short order. While accusations fly—based in no small part on his mysterious origins—no one has come up with any evidence that Stone is anything more or less than the hero he appears to be. His charisma is obvious to all who have dealt with the man, and his tactics and battlefield prowess cannot be faked. Some may claim he is a plant, sent by the Word itself to undermine the alliance, but had they not already done just that in January of 3073? Why send us a double agent able to wrest control of some of the most valuable manufacturing centers the Word could possibly attain? Why gamble with the greatest assets at their disposal?

In either case, Stone's Coalition has stepped in where once Victor Davion and his ComStar friends might have led us, and the turning point for the war may well hinge on what Stone can accomplish in the next few years.

—Peter Abdulsattah

ComStar: The Future

(9 December 3073)

Tharkad [TBC] – From its inception at the end of the 28th century, ComStar has styled itself the guardian of knowledge and the savior of humankind. In truth, the quasi-religious organization was hardly so benign. Internal politics and infighting at the highest levels were endemic and few of those to hold the title of Primus were fated to die of natural causes. Jerome Blake himself may have fallen afoul of the ambitious Conrad Toyama—the man who succeeded him as Primus and shaped ComStar into the mystical form that persisted until the middle of this century. The peaceful façade the Inner Sphere was familiar with hid an Order that manipulated events behind the scenes and stoked the fires of hate to keep the Succession Wars raging.

When the Clans arrived in the Inner Sphere, ComStar allied itself with the invaders, somehow convinced that they could direct Kerensky's children against targets of their choice. Only when the Clans' intention to capture Terra became known did Primus Myndo Waterly act against them and allow Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht to negotiate a proxy battle for Terra. Yet even then, the Primus couldn't play an honest hand—launching her ill-fated Operation Scorpion in an insane bid to bring both the Clans and the Inner Sphere to their knees. Focht and Sharilar Mori attempted to change ComStar, but their efforts would only trigger the Schism that created the Word of Blake—the "purified" Order, complete with the worst trappings of Conrad Toyama's ComStar.

So what future is there for ComStar? What credibility the organization managed to salvage with its stand against the Clans on Tukayyid and in taking the fight to the Clan homeworlds was diminished with the revelation that Primus Mori was actually a deep cover agent working for the Draconis Combine's Order of Five Pillars. This startling announcement triggered yet another wave of defections to the Word of Blake, even as news of their horrors spread.

Though politically astute, the current Primus—Gavin Dow—is seen by many as no less a manipulator than his predecessors. During the FedCom Civil War, Dow dealt closely with Katherine Steiner-Davion, and though ComStar officially remained neutral in that divisive conflict, the way Dow (then acting as "First Precentor") played both ends against the middle was a little too much like the bad old ComStar of the previous century.

ComStar no longer commands the awe and respect that it once had. At best it is seen as little more than a slightly eccentric corporation that provides interstellar communications. At worst, the people of the Inner Sphere identify ComStar a little too closely with the Word of Blake. Changing these perceptions will be the work of lifetimes.

The Com Guards, ironically, are at the heart of ComStar's current problems with its image. Introduced to the Inner Sphere following the Fourth Succession War, this military force had existed in secret since the early 30th century. Officially deployed to guard ComStar assets such as HPG stations, the Guards garnered good will by providing humanitarian aid to disaster-struck communities. But it wasn't until the Battle of Tukayyid that the Inner Sphere truly became aware of the Guards' size and

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power. With the Clans halted, the Com Guards had established a glowing reputation, and it was that reputation that sustained "secular" ComStar as Focht and Mori tore down its wall of secrecy to reveal the Order's darker past.

But reputations are a fragile thing, and the appointment of (the newly dispossessed) Victor Steiner-Davion as Precentor Martial triggered internal strife within the Guards' ranks. The actions of some Guard units during the FedCom Civil War raised questions about ComStar's neutrality, and the disastrous Case White operation against the Word of Blake has left many to question whether ComStar's military arm remains a viable fighting force. Precentor Martial Steiner-Davion has reorganized his surviving loyal troops, and the Com Guards are now cooperating as part of a growing coalition against the Word of Blake. But now, in light of the Com Guards' past actions and those of the Word of Blake zealots, people are beginning to question whether ComStar should have a military arm at all.

Coalition Situation

(24 January 3074)

Uncle,

As requested, I have compiled a "quick and dirty" summation of each of our partners in this endeavor. However this mission to Odessa turns out, I am humbled and honored to serve alongside such an august group of men and women.

I have also made a single encrypted copy for our Ghost Bear representative at the upcoming meeting on Tukayyid. I've further taken the liberty and copied the rest of the journal's information into a separate file for the Bears as well; considering what a landmine we have here, I thought it best they should see it. I know I disagree with the Mirza on this, but I really feel you need to let the Clan see all of this data. If even half of what Khan Kell said several years ago was true, then this will be mind-shattering to them.

—Marcel Webb

Chaos Irregulars: Any possible taint this unit had with regard to its Word of Blake "ties" was burned away during the crucible on Arcturus. Their inspired defense of the outlying firebase and supply sheds bordered on fanatical; Colonel Simson was very grateful for the shipment of four vintage *Maulers* that HTE dropped off to replace their losses. Both colonels have reassured me they will be ready for the next operation.

I suggest we let the colonels split the Irregulars up into demi-companies and utilize them as flankers and harassers if possible.

Crescent Hawks: Even though a quarter of the unit was lost on Arcturus—and Captain Youngblood suffered the loss of his hand from a dramatic last stand against a Blakist *Vanquisher*—the Hawks have bounced back quickly. Jeremiah assures me his prosthetic replacement is not a hindrance (just "creepy"); their recent combat exercises confirmed that. Though we have not been able to acquire replacement fighters for the unit, the Sky Riders will be able to provide some coverage for the Hawks' DropShips, if necessary.

I will note that the Hawks are not flying Kell Hound colors, per our agreement with Colonel Brahe. We were fortunate that the Hounds were able to replace the three MechWarriors killed and I suggest we compensate the Colonel for his generosity in classic Chandrasekhar fashion.

Devil's Brigade: Heavily damaged in the fighting on Arcturus—they reportedly faced the Forty-seventh's command Level III—we've only been able to get the Brigade up to 75 percent strength. A large part of the reason, however, is because the Word has been intercepting and seizing Star Corps' shipments whenever they cross paths. We may have relied too much on the Brigade's connection to the company; I recommend we post an addendum to their contract and increase their salvage take to help cover future losses.

As an aside, LAW has been making soft inquiries to Major Keller regarding his *Gladiator*.

Ghosts of the Black Watch: This "mercenary" unit is one of our recent additions, though they're unaware of it. By appealing to Colonel Jaffray's sense of honor, Star Corps was able to retain them in exchange for material support and generous contract bonuses, allowing Jaffray to continue preparations for his inevitable personal campaign to free Northwind.

The Ghosts are currently being prepared to infiltrate Odessa and gather intelligence for us.

McFadden's Sky Riders: The Sky Riders acquitted themselves very well during the Blakist assault, downing several Cobra and Shadow fighters over the battlefield. Through your contacts with Jalastar and Wakazashi, we've managed to double the Sky Riders' size. Commander McFadden personally vetted the dispossessed pilots we recruited and after extensive training, the Sky Riders are ready for action.

Periphery Star Guard: Unfortunately, this is our biggest casualty of the campaign so far. The PSG was on the receiving end of the initial attack by the Word and during the fighting, it seemed the Blakists were specifically seeking out the PSG. Colonel Annapoulis and Lieutenant Holden are the only surviving members of the Guard, as the Blakists made every effort—even conducting suicidal runs—to destroy this command.

The PSG's naval support unit was wiped out when its DropShip was gutted by the saboteur's bomb.

Ronin: Originally the Tenth Ghost, these DCMS soldiers abandoned the Combine after what they felt were egregious sins committed against them by the Dragon. They do not know about

AROUND THE SPHERE

your connection with Star Corps—to whom they are currently under contract—and I would highly recommend they not find out. Gretchen Noda is quite the hotheaded commander and she would just as easily break contract and abandon her mission as she would shoot the messenger. We should consider letting their contract lapse once their mission on Odessa is over.

Star Seeds: And we come to my outfit. Once again, I offer a thousand apologies for the actions of a small group of my officers; had I done the proper vetting, I could've caught their ROM connections. As it is, we can now trace back the Word's knowledge of our existence on Arcturus to them, as well as their knowledge of our order of battle, defenses and more importantly, how the bombs were planted on the Star Guardsman's DropShips.

With the help of *Tai-i* Cenkar, we have fully purged the Seeds of all possible Blakist connections and as a result, I am happy to say, are more a cohesive unit now than we were before the treason.

We stand ready to assist you, Lord Kurita.

In Donner's Wake

—Professor Bertram Habeas, 3074 Duntroon Land Warfare Conference, Donegal, 19 October 3074

Colonel Fritz Donner, though I'm sure many of you know him by other names.

There's much conjecture about what exactly happened that day on Arc-Royal—but to be blunt, for the purpose of this presentation, the details are irrelevant. Suffice it to say that, personally, I feel the man acted of his own free will. Others may, and do, object.

But I was there. I saw it with my own eyes.

We all know the toll of that single act. But what we haven't fully examined—still—is the impact it has had on the overall war effort. I apologize to those of you who have heard this before, but I feel this needs to be made very clear.

The casualties of the bombing were not just those individuals that lost their lives, but the burgeoning relationships that were coalescing to create the core of a true anti-Blakist coalition. For nearly twenty years, the architects of that kind of cooperation were Anastasius Focht and Victor Steiner-Davion; from the Clan War to the Second Star League, those two men were at the forefront of bringing the disparate elements of the Inner Sphere together.

But they were not omniscient or infallible. Indeed, some have argued that Focht's naiveté allowed the Blakists to launch the Jihad after he failed to immediately retake Terra in 3058. And Victor? Well…

But the Donner Incident removed both men as viable candidates with regard to forming a new, post-Star League coalition. (Though some may argue that Focht was invalidated with the revelation of his true identity, a revelation on par with the discovery that Thomas Marik was *not* the man seated on Atreus' throne in 3068 either.) In the minutes before the bombing, the gathered leaders were accusing both men of having somehow started the entire mess, despite doing all they could to contain it.

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

(20 July 3074)

Arcturus [MERCNET] – OldTech. RetroTech. Whatever you call it, it is a trend that has started to sweep through the Inner Sphere.

During the fist two Succession Wars, the Houses' military-industrial complex was hammered so badly that knocked the Inner Sphere into a technological equilibrium (of sorts) roughly equal to that of the late Age of War-era. (Civilian technological decline, by comparison, fell somewhat farther.) As factories became too precious to destroy, tactics changed to make them prizes of great value, and the slide in manufacturing capabilities was halted. But now, the Word of Blake has transported us back to the bad old days to of the early Succession Wars. Worse, with communications and interstellar commerce disrupted to a degree never before experienced, many of the surviving weapons factories are having difficulty sourcing vital raw materials and components, and for the first time in centuries production lines stand idle.

For militia and mercenary alike, this is not good news. Invariably, when supply cannot match demand, it is the regular House troops who receive preferential treatment. In response, weapons and equipment manufacturers have delved back into the history books, looking for designs that can be constructed using those components still available or for which substitutes can be manufactured locally. Oftentimes, these "RetroTech" designs are crude by today's standards. But by melding the old with the new, serviceable equipment can still be manufactured with limited resources. In addition, service and repair centers are being converted into makeshift production lines for these less sophisticated designs. The rate of production is low, but the output from these "chop shops" makes a vital contribution to the challenge of keeping local forces and the soldier-for-hire armed and ready.

Now legendary BattleMech designs like the *Battleaxe*, *Firebee*, *Gladiator* and *Hammerhands* are back on the battlefield alongside almost forgotten armor and aerospace fighters.

But what also made such a coalition nearly impossible at that time can be seen in the nature of those killed by the blast. The Khan of the Ghost Bears, the saKhan of the Arc-Royal Wolves, even a "Bloodnamed freeborn" Jade Falcon warrior. These casualties to the Clans—who at the time represented the Inner Sphere's most untouched leadership in this war—almost prompted their withdrawal from the alliance process.

Even more destructive were the recriminations. The deaths of two ranking Davion officers, as well as a key Steiner family aide to the Lyran Marshal of the Armies, threatened to re-ignite Civil War tensions. Both sides blamed the other for what had happened, and the appearance of former Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion in a Wolf Clan entourage certainly exacerbated the festering sentiments of that conflict. The death of Victor's long-time aide Caradoc Trevena also led many conspiracy theorists to believe it was a convoluted attempt by a Wolf-backed Katherine to erode the support base of her brothers, Archon Peter Steiner-Davion and Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion. That no Clan Wolf personnel suffered injuries certainly supported this theory at the time. Regardless, both Victor and Katherine were viewed with suspicion given the methods both had been rumored to use in the past.

But the most insidious accusation leveled in the Incident's aftermath is that regarding the self-appointed coalition-builder, Devlin Stone. Stone's secretive origins—coupled with the fact that he was left the only viable candidate for such a task—led many to suspect him of being the mastermind of the Donner bombing, clearing a path for himself to "assume the throne." While Stone's recent actions have alleviated this concern, the lack of disclosure regarding his past, and the speed at which Victor Davion vouched for this man—going so far as to make himself subservient to the man's leadership—have left many to wonder at his true motives.

Whatever the case, the fact remains that Stone presently is the only entity—state-supported or otherwise—willing and able to actively pursue a unification strategy against the Blakists. Even with all the suspicious baggage, that is the true aftermath of the Donner Incident—that

DEVLIN STONE: THE MAN

"Yeah, I was with Stone in the camps. The thing about those places—worse than the beatings or the malnutrition—the worst thing was that they were always coming at you sideways. Playing slippery games with reality—Your sister wasn't named Megan, she was named Mary, see? Little lies that added up.

"Know how Stone beat 'em? No? Well, let me tell you. Storytelling. Every night we'd lie in our racks and tell the stories of our lives. And so when the Robes bent our minds so we didn't know which way was up, there'd be thirty guys retelling us the story of our very own lives, reminding us what was real.

"It was brilliant. Stone kept us all sane, raised a hardscrabble army, right in the middle of the Robes' brainwashing hell.

"Funny thing is, I can't remember Stone ever telling us the story of *his* life."

—Testimony of former POW, *Leutnant* Alexander Dunston, 16 June 3073

"We have learned that 'Thomas Marik' is *not* Thomas Marik. Yvonne Steiner-Davion is missing. Archon Peter Steiner-Davion yields his power to petty barons. Do we know yet of the mental stability of the Combine's heir? I have seen madness stalking the members of my own family.

"Who knows what strange games are played at the very heights of power? To be a great leader is to study circles within circles.

"So do not speak to me of the heroism of Devlin Stone. I do not know this Devlin Stone."

—Attributed to Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao, 23 August 3073

Honored Master,

The thing about Stone is not his military victories. It is certainly true that he led a coalition force that retook Coventry in March of 3074, and he broke the Blake attack on Skye in July, and rounded out the year by retaking Hesperus II in December. But think about *how* he did it.

I am not speaking of bravery. Certainly the man can fight. He won a Trial of Possession against the Ghost Bears for use of the Tukayyid HPG. On Skye, he waded into battle and personally captured Precentor Callen.

So he's got guts. But that's not what really matters.

What really matters is the man is a political genius. Archon Peter Steiner-Davion (may he rest in peace) gave his loyalty to Stone willingly. For Stone, Robert Kelswa-Steiner was willing to stop grandstanding and actually defend Skye. Stone somehow managed to get Lyrans to fight on the same side as Jade Falcons. The Nova Cats loved him so much they fought a Trial of Refusal when he tried to send them away. He has the loyalty of David Lear. Of Hohiro Kurita. Of ComStar. The Fed Suns and the Lyran Alliance. Alys Rousset-Marik's Free Worlds Resistance. Wolves and Bears, Cats and Falcons.

Who was the last leader who could build a coalition so diverse, wielding the Inner Sphere itself like some kind of weapon to defeat a brutal and unstoppable foe? Victor Steiner-Davion, that's who.

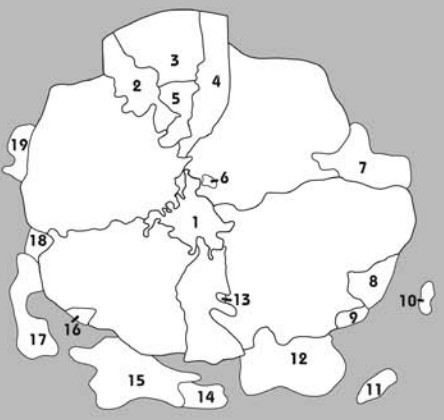
And he's on Stone's side, too.

It almost seems that Stone can do anything. That is a comforting thought as we face the terrible brutality of Blake's Jihad.

But there may come a day when we wake up and wonder where has Stone led us? Because he is far too clever and skilled to tell us in advance.

—Your servant, Peter Abdulsattah (6 January 3075)

INNER SPHERE - 3075



Inner Sphere Powers

1) Blakist Protectorate
2) Clan Jade Falcon
3) Clan Hell's Horses
4) Ghost Bear Dominion
5) Clan Wolf
6) Azami Brotherhood
7) Outworlds Alliance
8) Filtvelt Coalition
9) Malagrotta Cooperative
10) Tortuga Dominions
11) Calderon Protectorate
12) Taurian Concordat
13) Kittery Prefecture
14) Fronc Reaches
15) Magistry of Canopus
16) Rim Commonality
17) Marian Hegemony
18) Circinus Federation
19) Rim Collection

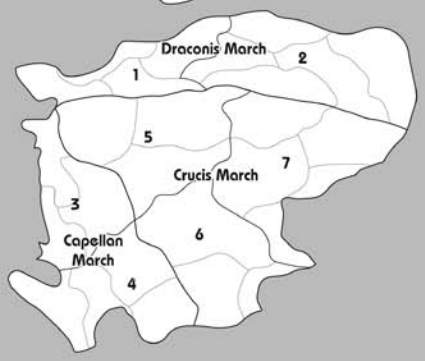
Draconis Combine

Pesht Military District
1) Albiero Prefecture
2) Bjarred Prefecture
3) Qandahar Prefecture
4) Ningxia Prefecture
5) Kagoshima Prefecture
6) Irece Prefecture

New Samarkand Military District
7) Oshika Prefecture
8) New Samarkand Prefecture
9) Tabayama Prefecture
10) Matsuida Prefecture
11) Kaznejov Prefecture

Benjamin Military District
12) Buckminster Prefecture
13) Xinyang Prefecture
14) Benjamin Prefecture
15) Proserpina Prefecture
16) Iruzun Prefecture

Dieron Military District
17) Ashio Prefecture
18) Kessel Prefecture



Federated Suns

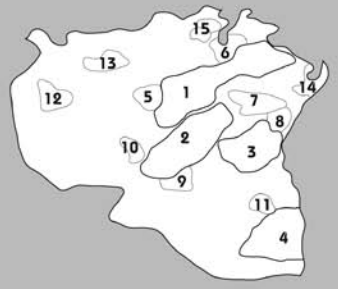
Draconis March
1) Robinson Operational Area
2) Woodbine Operational Area

Capellan March
3) Kathil Operational Area
4) Taygetta Operational Area

Crucis March
5) Markesan Operational Area
6) Chirikof Operational Area
7) Minette Operational Area

Capellan Confederation

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



Free Worlds League

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

Lyran Alliance

Archonettes
1) Arcturus Archonette
2) Kaumberg Archonette
3) Buena Archonette
4) Halfway Archonette
5) Inarcs Archonette

Provinces
6) Donegal Province
7) Arc-Royal Theater
8) Coventry Province
9) Melissa Theater
10) Alarion Province
11) Timbuktu Theater
12) Bolan Province
13) Dixie Theater
14) Skye Province
15) Freedom Theater

LEGEND
30 LIGHT YEARS
120 LIGHT YEARS OR 26.8 PARSECS
Region capital
District capital
National capital
Dead or Dying world
MAXIMUM JUMP APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS
© 3075 COMSTAR CARTOGRAPHIC CORPS
Coreward
Anti-spinward
Spinward
Rimward

AROUND THE SPHERE

it now falls to an unknown demagogue to espouse the virtues of cooperation and mutual support after years of that same cooperation between the Successor States has come crashing down.

Devlin Stone: The Mission

—Gomez Kisu, from "Military Observations Summary: 3075," 9 January 3075

A man with no past, Devlin Stone emerged out of nowhere to forge the first effective coalition to stand against the Word of Blake. Following his campaign to secure the "Kittery Prefecture"—a handful of systems centered on Kittery on the Federated Suns/Capellan Confederation frontier—Stone shifted his attention to Lyran territory in late 3073. This new campaign had two objectives. First, with Inner Sphere powers and several Clans active in the region, it was a convenient place to bring their disparate forces together to face the Blakists. Second, Lyran space held several key worlds that were either controlled by the Word of Blake, or remained under threat of attack.

Coventry: While never wholly conquered by the Blakists, the capital city and the vital Coventry Metal Works factories were denied to the Lyrans by an effective blockade led by the Aegis-class *Immortal Spirit*. Stranded in-system since 3063, when she was used to eliminate the LAS *Arthur Steiner-Davion* before Victor Steiner-Davion arrived (possibly to prolong the FedCom Civil War and inflict maximum damage on the two nations), the *Spirit* had lurked in the asteroid fields and ice rings of the system's outer gas giant until the Word of Blake turned on the whole Inner Sphere in 3067.

Launching from Zanderij's zenith jump point on 5 February 3074, a combined Jade Falcon/Lyran task force arrived at Coventry on 16 March 3074. Backed by a flotilla of Lyran "Pocket WarShips," the Falcons' *Gold Talon* overwhelmed the Blakist blockade. In a last desperate move, a critically damaged *Immortal Spirit* attempted to ram the Falcon WarShip, but a squadron of Lyran *Overlord-A3* DropShips landed a crippling missile strike against the *Spirit*'s maneuver drive. After the space battle, the Fourth Falcon Striker Cluster, Eighth Lyran Regulars Seventh Donegal Guards and elements of the Com Guard's Fourth army found the brief four-day battle to secure the surface something of an anticlimax.

Despite some bickering over the disposition of the spoils of war (including a *Newgrange*-class YardShip that had been working to repair the *Immortal Spirit*'s jump drive), the degree of cooperation between the coalition forces was a promising sign for the future.

Skye: While the Word of Blake presence at Coventry was being eliminated, Devlin Stone moved to reinforce Skye with forces drawn from Clan Wolf, Clan Wolf (in Exile), the Com Guard's First Army and a an ad-hoc company from the Kittery Prefecture. Keeping such a diverse coalition intact proved to be a challenge for Stone, but with the aid of David Lear he held them together until a Word of Blake assault force arrived in late June 3074.

The naval battle was an ugly affair, with the *Ulric Kerensky* and *Touman* falling prey to Blakist "Pocket WarShips" armed with nuclear weapons. In spite of the coalition's best efforts, the Third Division and much of its mercenary support made planetfall and moved on New Glasgow. But the First Skye Jaegers and Second Skye Guards mounted a stubborn defense, preventing the encirclement of the city and buying time for the Thirteenth Wolf Guards and First Wolf Lancers Clusters to arrive.

With the battle degenerating into a slugfest on the plains outside New Glasgow, Stone threw together a scratch battalion built around a company of David McKinnon's Paladins from available Com Guard, Clan and Lyran forces. Personally leading this unlikely formation, Stone hit the Blakist flank, capturing the Third Division's commander and his mobile headquarters. Suddenly without centralized control, the Third fell back to their DropShips—literally throwing their mercenary support to the Wolves. Coalition aerospace fighters picked off several Blakist DropShips, but more than a third of the Division escaped from the Skye system.

Hesperus II: Eager to maintain the momentum of Coalition victories at Coventry and Skye, Stone proposed an ambitious plan to liberate Hesperus II. With supplies critically short, the planet's military-industrial complex was vital to the Coalition.

With Clan Wolf's Delta Galaxy in the lead, the Coalition assault force hit Hesperus II in November. Expecting to face only the Fortieth Shadow Division, Stone and his troops were unpleasantly surprised to discover the Thirty-eighth Division and parts of the Second Division were also present. Reinforced by the First Skye Jaegers, the Wolves continued to apply pressure on the Fortieth, isolating their position at Maria's Elegy. Meanwhile, Precentor Martial Victor Davion brought up the remains of ComStar's First Army, augmented by several mercenary commands such as the Battle Corps, to deal with the Thirty-eighth and Second Divisions dug in around the Defiance Industries Myoo Mountain factory.

After seven days of brutal fighting, the Seventy-ninth Division broke into the mountain complex, but it would take an additional day of combat for Com Guard battle armor to secure the factory. The Fortieth Shadow Division clung on at Maria's Elegy until the end of December when the First Skye Jaegers broke their line in a daring night assault.

BIOGRAPHIES

BIOGRAPHIES

NOTES

I have taken the liberty of compiling a few noteworthy figures that we've been keeping our eye on. While it was tempting to delve into the bigger players of the current war—such as Victor Steiner-Davion, the other major House lords and the Clan Khans—many of these personages have a more direct relation to recent events and our immediate operations.

May these profiles prove enlightening. I have grouped these personas in rough order from those friendly to our cause, to those least friendly.

—Peter Abdulsattah

ALBERT BENTON

Rank/Position: *Tai-i*/CO of Sorenson's Sabres
Born: 2997 (78 in 3075)
Affiliation: Draconis Combine

Albert Benton spent a good deal of his career living in the shadows of his celebrated predecessor. An average man with average features, Benton can easily get lost in a crowd. He started out in the artillery. When his gun took out an enemy *Stinger*, he followed the vehicle that recovered the BattleMech back to the Davion camp. He stole the *Stinger* and piloted it back to the Kurita lines, earning himself a position as a MechWarrior, a position at which he excelled.

When Daniel Sorenson retired, Benton's natural charisma and talent made him the obvious choice to succeed as unit commander. Out of loyalty to Sorenson, Benton elected not to change the unit's name.

Benton led the Sabres during the war against the Ghost Bear Dominion, conducting selected hit-and-run strikes deep in enemy space. The Dominion specifically requested the Sabres attend the Courchevel trial, where *Tai-i* Benton took down a Bear *Kingfisher*.

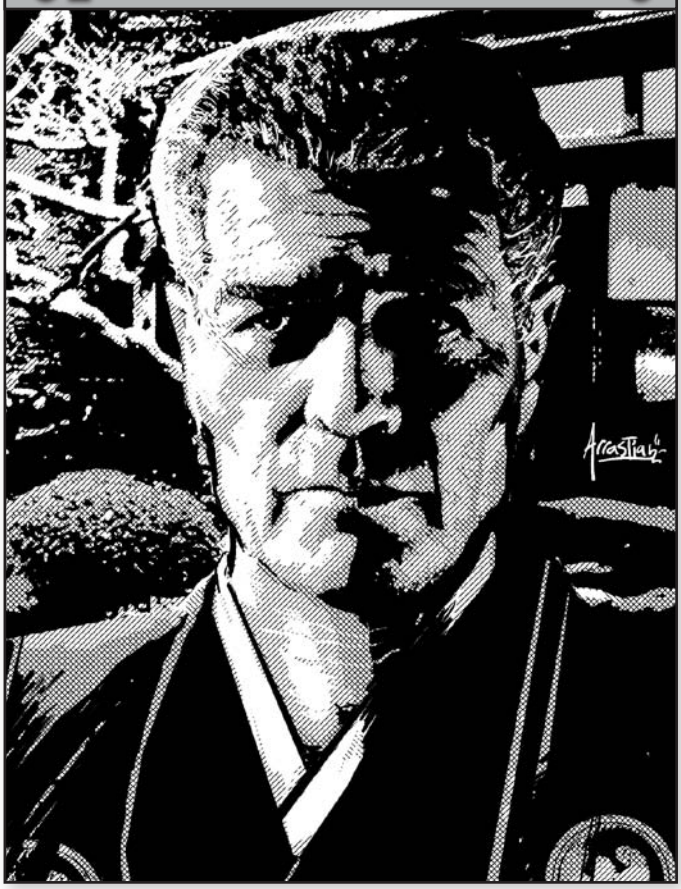
After the Combine-Bear war, the Sabres returned to Luthien, where they were attached to the Otomo—the Coordinator's personal bodyguard unit. At the end of 3068, the Black Dragons and the traitorous Second Sword of Light seized the capital. The Sabres escaped the initial ambush and hooked up with the loyal First Genyosha only to find that Word of Blake had joined the fray. For the next couple of years the Sabres were locked in a brutal three-way battle for Luthien, with no side able to gain a decisive advantage over the other two.

At this point we approached Benton in an attempt to recruit him and his unit for Operation Angel Requiem. A true samurai, Benton was at first unwilling to abandon his duty to Black Luthien, preferring instead to slaughter the rebel Black Dragons. Fortunately, we were able to make him see that the Word of Blake was the true Yellow Bird, and that it had to be stopped at all costs, even if that meant leaving Luthien.

Benton showed the mark of a great leader—the flexibility to do what was right, even in the absence of clear or sensible orders, and his Sorenson's Sabres joined our cause.

Though he is nearly eighty years of age, Benton's guile and experience more than make up for any slowing in his reflexes. More importantly, his role as a member of the Otomo, experience as a veteran of the battle for Luthien and his command of one of the most storied units in the DCMS make him an incredibly valuable asset. Now, as our beloved Combine splinters—beset by opportunists and traitors—men like Benton are desperately needed. He has the credibility and courage to help guide us toward the true path. And his absolute hatred of the Word of Blake is welcome, as well.

ALBERT BENTON



BIOGRAPHIES

ALEX KELLER

Rank/Position: Major/CO of the Devil's Brigade
Born: 3017 (58 in 3075)
Affiliation: Mercenary

Very little is known about Alex Keller. The missing son of prominent Static Infinity Systems chairman Lucius Markus Kelior, he was the victim of a corporate kidnapping and blackmail attempt in 3019. The young Kelior was rescued five years later, but by then his mother had passed away; with no desire at the time to be shackled with a son, Kelior turned the boy over to an orphanage, where his name was changed to Keller.

Kelior's influence was never far from Alex's life, however. Because the Kelior family was one of the founding members of the Millennium Foundation, the network Lucius had available to him was large. Though Alex never knew it (until recently), Lucius had a decidedly firm hand in the direction and choices young Alex made.

Neither of these two men has ever formally acknowledged a connection between them. In fact, the closest the two have ever been was a single time on Pesht, when both were present at an Interstellar Expeditions symposium on the Minnesota Tribe. Yet even though they were in the same building, the two never—to anyone's knowledge—met or communicated with each other.

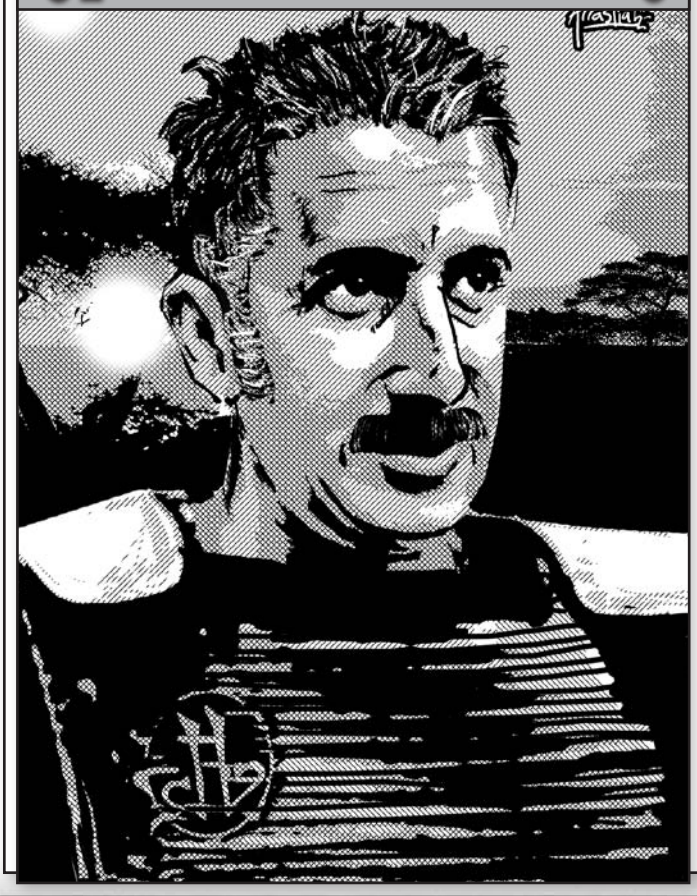
How Keller managed to salvage such an ancient Combine BattleMech (the prototype GLD-1R *Gladiator*) is still an enigma. Yet despite its mysterious origin, Keller did part with his machine for more than a year to allow StarCorps engineers a chance to study it. Not only did the company manage to glean enough information to put together a manufacturing line (utilizing local and regional Lyran parts), they also upgraded Keller's BattleMech with newer technology.

Efforts to discuss Keller's past are always met with veiled hostility, even among his own crew. Yet despite his lack of social graces, Keller is extremely effective as a commander. None of the Brigade's warriors have ever had anything bad to say about their commanding officer.

Though the Brigade suffered heavy losses in the Word's attack on Arcturus in 3073, Keller managed to secure enough supplies and equipment—outside of our network, no less—to rebuild it close to full strength. The use of this "mysterious network" is intriguing, as it would suggest Keller might actually be in contact with SIS in some capacity (much of the equipment can be traced back to SIS and its subsidiaries). More importantly, Major Keller has not denied such accusations, merely ignored them.

What the future holds for Keller and his command remains to be seen, but certainly their recent actions on Odessa will affect their status within the HTE empire.

ALEX KELLER



ALYS ROUSSET-MARIK

Rank/Position: Duchess of Augustine/CO of Kristen's Krushers and the Free Worlds Resistance
Born: 3041 (34 as of 3075)
Affiliation: Free Worlds League

Though she benefited from a noble bloodline and the finest education, Alys Rousset-Marik never planned on becoming a major player in her family's native realm. Instead, she was always content to one day lead her mother's mercenary command, Kristen's Krushers. But fate intervened when the FedCom Civil War led the unit to ruin by a Lyran Alliance eager to purge itself of anything not loyal to Katherine Steiner-Davion. That attack killed not only Alys' mother, but her brother and sister as well. Her uncle, then Captain-General Thomas Marik (not yet revealed as an imposter, rather than her biological uncle), refused to send help to extract the Krushers in the ensuing melee, leaving their rescue to another relative, Marshal Jeremy Brett.

The resulting bitterness Alys felt toward Thomas drove her to get involved with League politics, first by sowing seeds of dissent among various minor nobles, and then by initiating the "Great Debate" to end Resolution 288. This effort, however, would be rendered moot during the opening years of the Jihad, when it was finally revealed that "Thomas Marik" was an imposter. Ironically, the Word of Blake's exposure of "Thomas"—

BIOGRA

ALYS ROUSSET-MARIK

calculated to fracture the League and undermine its political and military infrastructure—turned Alys into an unlikely ally of her former political enemies. In an effort to stave off the Blakist threat, Alys has become the Marik most directly opposed to the Word's activities in the League. As leader of the so-called Free Worlds Resistance, she has become the target of bounty hunters and white robed hunter-killer teams ever since.

Outside of propaganda holovids and interviews, Alys is rarely seen by any non-family members—especially since the Word began resorting to brainwashed suicide bombers to reach their more elusive targets. Today, she is always in motion, often under false identities, managing her resistance from the shadows while gathering allies throughout the League and beyond.

[*There are reports that Alys bore a child—a daughter, to be precise—sometime in 3068. If so, she wisely kept it secret (like so many others have in this age of chaos), and it would explain her virtual absence (at least in public) for most of that year. We're still trying to verify this, of course. –PA*]

JANICE ANNAPOULIS

JANICE ANNAPOULIS

Rank/Position: Colonel/CO of the Periphery Star Guard
Born: 3023 (52 in 3075)
Affiliation: Mercenary

When funding for ComStar's Explorer Corps was cut, Janice Annapoulis cobbled together a mix of small mercenary commands to form the Periphery Star Guard, one of the most successful explorer-mercenary companies around. The Star Guard made itself the go-to choice for providing support and protection for Interstellar Expeditions, working mostly coreward of the Lyran Alliance.

These missions brought the Star Guard into contact with the mysterious pirate band known as the Green Ghosts. The Ghosts significantly damaged the Star Guard, but Annapoulis managed to keep her command together, building camaraderie among a group of people who had fought and died together.

In 3068, the Star Guard arrived on Poulsbo to provide security in the face of rising hostility between the Lyran Alliance and the Free Worlds League. Unfortunately, Annopoulis's command was mangled by Free Worlds forces and retreated to Khon Kaen. Only days after their arrival, they were hit again and the Guard lost about half its remaining strength, including their entire armor battalion.

BIOGRAPHIES

Despondent over the brutalization of her command, Annapoulis accepted a more traditional Star Guard assignment, supporting an IE dig on an uninhabited world nicknamed Blue Water. The buffoon leading the expedition believed he had found a DropShip belonging to the Minnesota Tribe. As we surmised, that claim attracted exactly the wrong kind of attention.

An unknown pirate party captured an IE DropShip and executed a surprise raid on the site, looking to recover the DropShip's memory core. Annapoulis and the Star Guard fought bravely, sacrificing much of her command's blue water naval units. Unfortunately, the pirates recovered the memory core in the end. Only after the battle was over did Annapoulis realize that the core was worthless, the DropShip nothing more than an ancient Lyran vessel gone astray.

At that point, our operative approached Annapoulis and offered her a choice. Did she want to continue to provide security for idiots who thought they'd found a map to Atlantis? Or did she want to fight in a broad coalition whose goal was push back the darkness confronting humanity, to battle entropy?

Annapoulis elected to join Operation Angel Requiem. Sadly, most of her Periphery Star Guard was destroyed in the battle against Word of Blake on Arcturus.

But while her command may have been crushed, it should be noted that Annapoulis has proven herself a resourceful commander on many occasions—able to find strength in adversity and build on disaster to make something stronger and more lasting. If anyone can recover from the pounding she took on Arcturus, she can.

And Annapoulis certainly has the motivation to come back. As a former ComStar mercenary, she never had much love for the Word of Blake, but her feelings for the Robes have deepened into a cold, merciless hatred since the action on Arcturus. She's lived through too much pain and loss to forgive what the Word did to her unit; all she has left is vengeance.

No doubt she'll pursue it with a single-mindedness that should unnerve even a Blakist.

JOCELYN "JOEY" MYRIANNA NICHOLE

Rank / Position: Colonel / CO The Battle Corps Legion
Born: 3038 (37 in 3075)
Affiliation: Mercenary

In response to the possibility that poor subcommand integration affected our coalition's performance on Arcturus (contributing to the destruction of the Periphery Star Guard), our military analyst division has been working tirelessly to investigate other, successful "integrated diversity" command formations. With so many mercenary assets under our wing, our people have been forced to look beyond the more traditional command structures such as those used by the FedSuns' RCTs and Com Guard Divisions, and examine other "irregular" organizations. An answer may lay with Colonel Joey Nichole, commander of the Battle Corps, a combined arms mercenary unit.

JOCELYN 'JOEY' MYRIANNA NICHOLE

At a time when nations are tearing each other apart, both from within and without, Nichole has turned an exceedingly disparate band of individualistic idealists into a hardened combat force that often surprises opponents with its unpredictability. As their MRBC profile indicates, much of this is a result of Nichole retaining and melding each warrior's culture, beliefs and even politics to create a whole that outsizes its parts. Although she is not the first mercenary leader to attempt the "strength through diversity" approach, Nichole's approach has been surprisingly successful.

Anything but the prototypical hard-hitting mercenary commander, Nichole favors skirts to fatigues and has a penchant for the color pink that extends all the way to her BattleMech. In passing, one could easily mistake her for the regimental admin, rather than a highly proficient MechWarrior and leader. Face-to-face however, she projects confidence and authority that inspires even decades-long veterans to rise up and push beyond their limits. What many dismiss as 'bleeding heart' idealism is perhaps one of her true strengths, willing to put her life in harm's way for her beliefs—which includes a near-fanatical "civilians first" philosophy—she has given the Battle Corps a reputation for honestly and compassion more in tune with the Interstellar Red Cross then a combat force.

BIOGRAPH

With family in both ComStar and the Word of Blake, Nichole refused to take sides during the Schism and instead followed in her father's mercenary footsteps. After surviving her unit's near destruction in the FedCom Civil War, she traveled to Galatea and with in six short months had dazzled, commanded, flattered and negotiated the Battle Corps into being. Three years of unwavering principles and success brought the unit to a combined arms regiment and straight into conflict with the Word of Blake on Alula Australis. On Australis, Nichole's own beliefs clashed with those of the Word, but where other mercenary commanders sold out, Nichole led her Corps from Australis—almost at the cost of her own life.

Since then, she has lead the Battle Corps in a crusade against the Word, never wavering from her "civilians first" doctrine. In service to Alys Rousset-Marik and as a member of the AMC, Nichole and her Battle Corps have earned a place on the Word's Most-Wanted List well beyond their modest size would indicate.

Nichole's style seems to prove that diversity can be fostered as an asset, so long as the leader is strong, decisive, and principled enough to inspire others and provide a clear goal they can work toward beyond the next paycheck. This may be one of the reasons that Stone's Coalition has met with so much success to date.

MARCEL WEBB

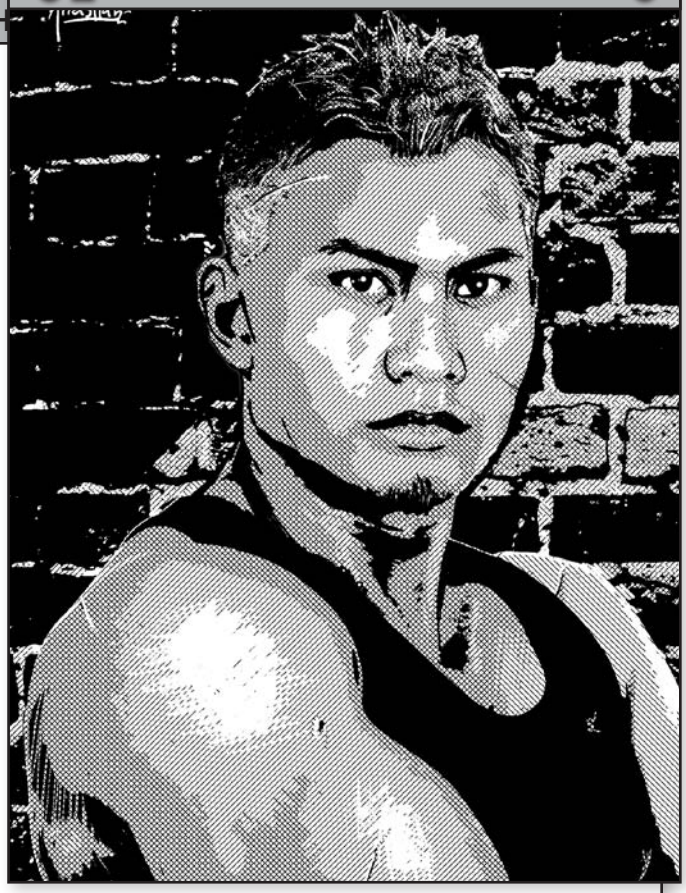
Rank/Position: Captain/CO of the Star Seeds
Born: 3041 (34 in 3075)
Affiliation: Mercenary

Another warrior with a mysterious past, Marcel Webb at least acknowledges that he encourages the mystique. While certain individuals have unearthed some facts regarding his true identity, that information is restricted to a few people. Webb himself has freely admitted to several that the name he bears is not his real one, but has never elaborated on it, suggesting a dark past within the Combine—something else he admits to now, after the disastrous events surrounding the Star Seeds on Arcturus.

But while he freely admits his own character flaws, it doesn't take an observer long to note that Webb is extremely proficient at his work. The de facto commander of the Star Seeds mercenary unit, a rare infantry-only unit used as support and security forces for Chandrasekhar on Arcturus and elsewhere, Webb makes the sole decision on who may join or not. Considering that most (if not all) of his command are former intel and covert operatives and specialists, it is easy to believe that Webb is himself a former spook soldier. He has never denied this.

Webb has also allowed rumor and exaggeration to define the Seeds as well as himself, creating an air of mystery around the entire command. They are extremely skilled at battle armor operations, including naval boarding and hijacking actions, and have no complaints when used as a security force. However, treason from within the Seeds has put the command in some dire straits, with only one employer [*us, of course –PA*] still willing to retain them.

MARCEL WEBB



The betrayal that occurred in 3073 hit Webb especially hard, and it is believed that Webb himself handled the execution of each traitor.

A veritable terror on the battlefield in his Raiden armor suit, Webb continually trains his people with near-fanatical devotion and adaptability. Every member of the Seeds is proficient in at least two different types of battle suits, in order to adapt to unexpected situations. This unfailing devotion to training and unit versatility are trademarks of highly respected DEST commanders.

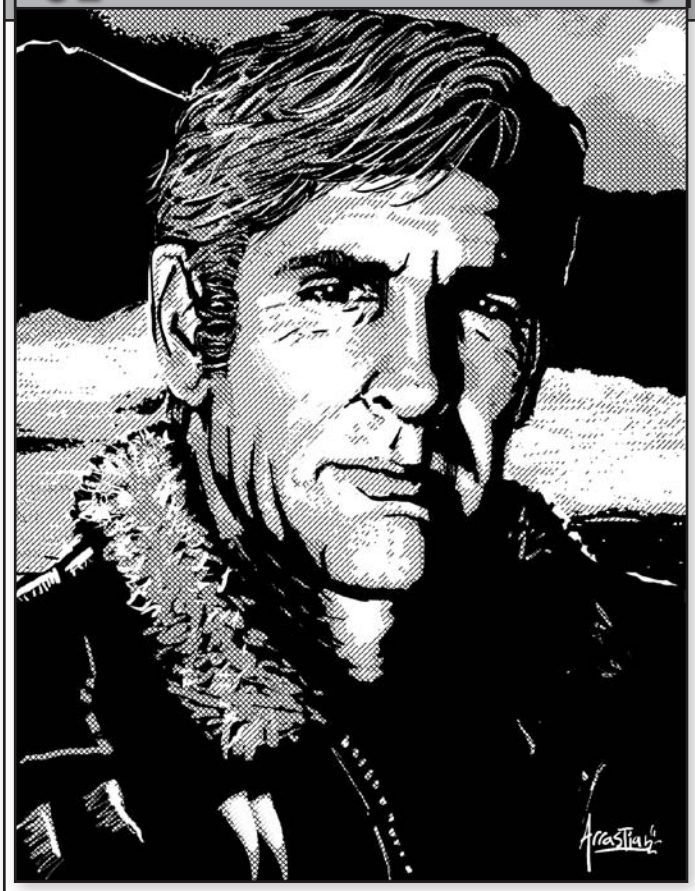
Currently, Webb and his command are serving as security for our naval assets, though speculation has it that the Seeds are to be "loaned out" to an unspecified commander in the near future—possibly to provide continued security, but also to be used as an internal intelligence resource.

ROSS MCKINNON

Rank/Position: Captain/CO of the Fox's Teeth
Born: 3015 (59 in 3075)
Affiliation: Federated Suns

Ross McKinnon attended the prestigious Albion Military Academy on New Avalon as Ross Serran (his mother's maiden name), which gave him the chance to succeed without trading on his famous paternal surname. He graduated with honors, joining the Fox's Teeth recon lance after his uncle, Mark McKinnon,

ROSS MCKINNON



died fighting rogue Combine samurai in the newly formed Free Rasalhague Republic. That tragedy instilled in him a hatred for the ways of the Combine.

McKinnon went on to serve with distinction in the War of 3039, rising to the position of lance commander. When he retired, Ian McKinnon—his father—saw to it that Ross gained command of the Fox's Teeth. More politically active than his father, the younger McKinnon agitated for the Seventh Crucis Lancers to act against the excesses of Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion.

It was this commitment to doing the right thing—even if it meant throwing out the rulebook—that first brought Ross McKinnon to our attention. This trait, along with his fast-hitting battle style and innovative tactics, made him ideal for our needs. (During the early days of the Jihad, the AFFS used the Fox's Teeth as a raiding party, getting the unit in and out fast and causing maximum damage.)

Our first attempt to recruit him failed because of his unshakable loyalty to the Federated Suns and his hatred of all things Combine. He refused to see that the Suns and the Combine needed to work together to survive. We decided a more dramatic demonstration was in order. When McKinnon's Raiders were ordered to hit the munitions plant and ammo dump on Algol in December 3069, we detached a Kurita unit led by Ella Grigorev to make this point.

RAPHIES

Grigorev maneuvered the Fox's Teeth through an abandoned POW camp that was an abattoir, a monument to Blakist cruelty. There were bodies everywhere, some desiccated, others picked clean by scavengers. All wore AFFS uniforms. For McKinnon, it was a shock. Though he had fought the Blakists with honor and skill, this was the first time he saw their true nature close up. At this moment, Grigorev stepped forward to ask him to reconsider fighting alongside the Combine. Despite his objections, she ultimately sacrificed herself, holding off a pursuing Word of Blake force so that Ross could escape.

Ross McKinnon and his Fox's Teeth joined Operation Angel Requiem.

Though he is rapidly approaching his sixtieth birthday, Ross McKinnon still commands the loyalty of the Fox's Teeth. If anything, his tactical mastery has grown, and he can more than hold his own in the cockpit of his *Black Knight*. Perhaps most important, he has found a way to serve his nation by fighting alongside a former enemy. If the Federated Suns is to be brought more fully into the battle against Word of Blake, the Fox's Teeth and their leader may well be a shining example toward this end.

STACY CHURCH

Rank/Position: Captain/CO of the Black Widow Company
Born: 3036 (39 in 3075)
Affiliation: Mercenary

The War of 3039 left many orphans, including a three-year-old girl only known as Stacy. Found by infantry from the Delta Provisional Regiment in the remains of a cathedral on Caph, the troopers nicknamed her Stacy Church. Adopted by the unit, she was placed in one of the Dragoons' sibkos. With her psyche still reeling from the loss of her parents, she fully embraced the Dragoons' warrior aesthetic and immersed herself in every aspect of warfare. Graduating at the top of her class, she earned a rare open spot in the Spider's Web Battalion as much for her talent as her attitude; a photographer's comment about her masculine arms earned him a broken jaw (and Church a demotion to Lieutenant prior to assignment).

Church's combat initiation would be tougher than most; for while the Spider's Web routinely faced some of the Inner Sphere's best, she had to face some of her fellow Dragoons. As civil war split the Dragoons in half, she chose to remain with most of her battalion in support of Jaime Wolf. Involved in many confrontations, her highlight of the war came outside the town of Kerensky Heights, where she ran across a rebel *Gladiator* near an industrial complex. Faking to the right of the massive machine, she walked straight into a trio of large pulse lasers. The fragile armor of her *Loki* was laid bare in several spots, but her first salvo of computer-assisted laser fire severed the left torso of the enemy machine. The injured assault 'Mech tried to flee using its jump jets, but Church climbed up a smelting plant and sniped at the *Gladiator* with PPC fire until its engine containment was breached, shutting it down.

STACY CHURCH

When the smoke of the Dragoon Civil War lifted, Church had survived, though her *Loki* did not. After successful forays in her new *Mad Cat*, she was promoted to captain of the Black Widow Trinary following her initiative on Hall. At first, her desire to become personally involved in combat detracted from her ability to lead. However, John Clavell took her under his wing and taught her the nuances of battlefield command, passing down wisdom he'd learned from the Black Widow herself. Her training served her well when the Broadsword Legion cut down most of the Spider's Web. Church alone survived the ambush that finished off the remains of her wounded Trinary, who was injured and left trapped in her 'Mech's carcass for hours before she could be rescued.

Despite the loss of her *Mad Cat*, Church requested that she stay behind, but Maeve Wolf ordered her to withdraw to Arc-Royal. It was there that she was given a new command and a new mission—the rebirth of the infamous Black Widow Company, the first Dragoon unit to return to combat following the destruction on Outreach. Piloting an experimental *Zeus*-X donated by the Kell Hounds, Church became a terror on the battlefield. Experimental equipment allowed her to shrug off PPC fire as she took down nearly half a dozen Blakist supporters and even survived encounters with the Opacus Venatori.

GRAPHIES

BOUNTY HUNTER

Rank/Position: Bounty Hunter
Born: Unknown
Affiliation: Mercenary

A conspiracy wrapped in secrecy, money, lies, misdirection and myth, the Bounty Hunter is one of the most recognizable but least known figures in the Inner Sphere today. However, the secrecy that shrouds the Hunter does not diminish his skills or ability; he (or she!) has always been successful in every job undertaken.

It is generally accepted now that the persona of the Bounty Hunter is what persists, and not necessarily the man (or woman). We believe the Hunter bequeaths the recognizable green body armor to a handpicked successor whenever he feels the time is right. Whether or not the current Bounty Hunter is the same as the one who went missing between 3051 and 3062 is immaterial; the continued success of each job is evidence enough.

Increasingly, various corporations and private employers have hired the Bounty Hunter for low-profile captures and assassinations of prominent corporate executives. Between 3066 and 3068 alone, the Hunter completed fourteen corporate

BOUNTY HUNTER

contracts, including the snatch of a high-level Blackwell Corporation executive from Outreach during the Blakist scouring of that system, as well as the assassination of a Ceres Metals/Victoria CEO on Sian.

The Jihad has taken a toll on the Bounty Hunter, however. Due to his heightened profile, the Blakists have taken an increasing interest in his activities, and several unconfirmed reports claim that he has lost more than half his team in the past five years. ROM has attempted to slip a mole into his retinue, unsuccessfully. Their frequent attempts, however, have made the Bounty Hunter extremely cautious. Consequently, he has not replaced missing team members for some time, which might be part of the reason he has refused several contracts lately. The lack of a full team, however, has not hindered his job performance; indeed, his cost of business is at an all-time high, limiting his clients to the top one percent of most major planets and nobility.

GAVIN DOW

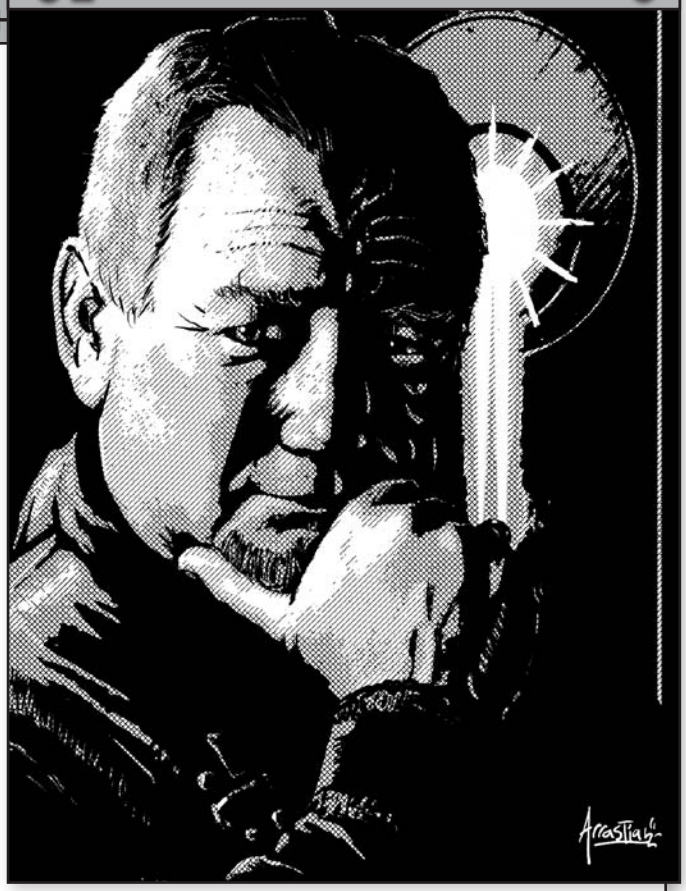
Rank/Position: Primus of ComStar
Born: 3007 (68 in 3075)
Affiliation: ComStar

Though he looks almost like he belongs in papal robes at the New Avalon Catholic Church, Gavin Dow is far less a religious man than he is an accomplished politician. Born in the Lyran Commonwealth to a wealthy, white-collar family, Dow benefited from an excellent education and a life of eternal comfort. Yet he always craved more. Though perilously close to being just another spoiled rich kid, Dow found his calling with ComStar when he was in his early twenties, seeing something in the monastic Order that promised greater fulfillment than simply crunching numbers in the Donegal Stock Exchange.

As an Acolyte in ComStar, Dow rose through the ranks of the Order as an HPG administrator. But while some were drawn to pre-Schism ComStar for spiritual reasons, Dow came to embrace the more corporate and political structure of the Order. In the 3040s, sensing a shift in ComStar with the revelation of the Com Guards' existence, he underwent MechWarrior training and became a passable officer in the Com Guards. Specializing in logistics operations, Dow served among the forces on Tukayyid, but saw little action. The extent of his command was to man an HQ vehicle, directing artillery and air support against distant enemy positions. When the Order fractured in the wake of the Clan invasion, Dow sensed better career potential in the reforming ComStar.

As one of the more established officers in the Com Guard following the first wave of defections, Dow managed to ascend the ranks again, but as an administrator rather than a soldier. By 3060, Dow had returned to Com Star's civilian service, where he would eventually become Precentor of the Tharkad HPG. When Victor Steiner-Davion stepped down as Precentor Martial to fight in the FedCom Civil War, Dow was elevated to Precentor-Martial Pro-Tem as the highest-ranking member (by seniority) of the

GAVIN DOW



First Circuit. Dow wasted no time in underscoring his position to Victor, whom he saw as a troublesome House leader at best, and a political embarrassment to ComStar at worst.

Dow's ability to navigate the political power structure within ComStar and his rudimentary understanding of military command and administration helped springboard him into the newly created position of First Precentor after Victor Steiner-Davion returned to ComStar service in 3067. When the Jihad erupted soon afterward, however, Dow found himself the favored choice—if not the *only* choice—to replace Primus Sharilar Mori after she was killed in 3068.

Though the timing and circumstances of Dow's rise may look alarming, careful analysis has failed to find any evidence of his complicity in Mori's demise, or any links to the Word of Blake. For all intents and purposes, Dow is as he appears: a career politician and administrator with basic military understanding. In peacetime, he would likely make an excellent Primus, whose infamous clashes with Victor (whom he still sees as a dangerous outsider) would be little more than newsvid distractions. Unfortunately, the present state of war—and the greater need for the Precentor-Martial's authority and popularity to carry the Order through it—has strained Dow's innate political calm, and he now appears to see Victor Steiner-Davion more as a rival to his own control over the reformed Order.

KIYOMORI MINAMOTO

KIYOMORI MINAMOTO

Rank/Position: *Gunji-no-Kanrei* of the DCMS
Born: 3022 (53 in 3075)
Affiliation: Draconis Combine

A model DCMS soldier under the reign of Takashi Kurita, Kiyomori Minamoto steadily worked his way to command of the Seventh Sword of Light during the initial Clan invasion. Because the Seventh embodied itself as the guardian of Combine culture and values, Minamoto was extremely resistant to Theodore Kurita's changes. Though he saw the value in some of the Coordinator's reforms, he resisted transitioning the Seventh over to these new doctrines.

Acknowledging the Seventh's importance as the guardians of Combine culture, Theodore spent several years discussing his combat and war philosophy with *Tai-sa* Minamoto. Eventually, the Coordinator and the *Tai-sa* came to a compromise in beliefs so the Seventh could adopt some of the new methods while maintaining its strict adherence to *bushido* philosophy and stoicism. The Coordinator evidently appreciated Minamoto's intelligence and traditionalism; he promoted Minamoto to *Tai-shu* in 3066, and established him as a personal aide and advisor.

Minamoto did not travel with the Coordinator to Tharkad in 3067, but was instead on a tour of the Galedon District when the Black Dragons launched their coup against the Luthien government. While Combine conspiracy theorists still assert that the *Tai-shu* is a dedicated member of the *Kokuryu-kai*, no evidence of this exists. Indeed, his brutal actions on Benjamin only a year ago prove otherwise.

While his self-promotion to *Gunji-no-Kanrei* might be considered an act of extreme hubris, it cannot be disputed that his stepping into the breach during the Combine's hour of need likely spared the Dragon from a tortured death. Many critics are quick to cite Minamoto's abrasive attitude in speaking for the Coordinator, but so far the *Kanrei* continues to maintain proper public (and supposedly, private) respect for Hohiro Kurita, despite the Coordinator's current ills.

SHAKIR JERRAR

Rank/Position: Director of the ISF
Born: 3011 (64 in 3075)
Affiliation: Draconis Combine

Adopted by the prominent Fusilli family after his parents were killed during a border raid, Jerrar eagerly joined the DCMS at the first opportunity. However, his sharp tongue got him in repeated trouble during a tour with the First Proserpina Hussars and landed him a prolonged tour in the Legions of Vega.

His devotion to the ideals of the Combine—mated with his tendency to inform on poorer-performing members of the Legion—brought him to the attention of the ISF. Soon enough, he was reassigned and trained as a *metsuke* agent; his first assignment was to act as a watchdog over Rasalhagian native Daniel Sorenson after the disastrous events on Togura.

Jerrar fit in immediately; he was well liked by most of the unit and reciprocated their trust. He formed a lasting friendship with *Tai-i* Sorenson that continued even after his reassignment to command a DEST team on the Smoke Jaguar front. His unorthodox tactics combined with strict adherence to the philosophies of *bushido* made him a fanatical DEST leader; such devotion carried him through the heavy purges of the program after the assassination attempt on the Coordinator in 3058.

His adopted brother—Toma, to whom he was very close—perished during the Davions' deep strike on Benjamin in the early days of the Jihad. Honoring religious and cultural obligations, he married Kikiyra Jerrar (Toma's widow) in 3069, and adopted Toma's only son, Jamal, was his legal heir in 3070. (Gossip circles have of late made note of Jamal's uncanny resemblance to Jerrar. The family denies any past impropriety.)

Recently independent investigations, however, have turned up some tenuous ties between Kikiyra's family and the *Kokuryu-kai*. This may explain why the ISF has not fully engaged in any investigations regarding the "Council of Gems," whose recordings have been released via various underground Combine media. False or not, the suggestive evidence in these recordings appears

SHAKIR JERRAR

damning on many levels, but only recently has the ISF begun vigorously pursuing suspected Black Dragon connections across the Combine spectrum.

That this sudden surge in activity came only after an allegedly heated discussion between the *Kanrei* and the Director on Benjamin remains troubling. Jerrar's apparent reluctance to handle the *Kokuryu-kai* matter has led many within the rank-and-file to question the Director's loyalty to the Combine.

"THOMAS MARIK"

Rank/Position: Captain-General of the Free Worlds League (deposed)

Born: 2990? (85 as of 3075?)

Affiliation: Free Worlds League (Oriente)

[*I thought it was hardly necessary to bring together all the information on the life of the Pretender. Instead, I had one of our Oriente operatives briefly summarize what the man who was once Thomas Marik has been up to recently. –PA*]

One cannot be around Thomas Marik—or Thomas Halas, or what have you—for very long without sensing a certain bewilderment. His fall from glory was so swift, and coupled with such wholesale destruction in his former realm, that he has yet to recover his bearings. He operates with a continual sense of shock

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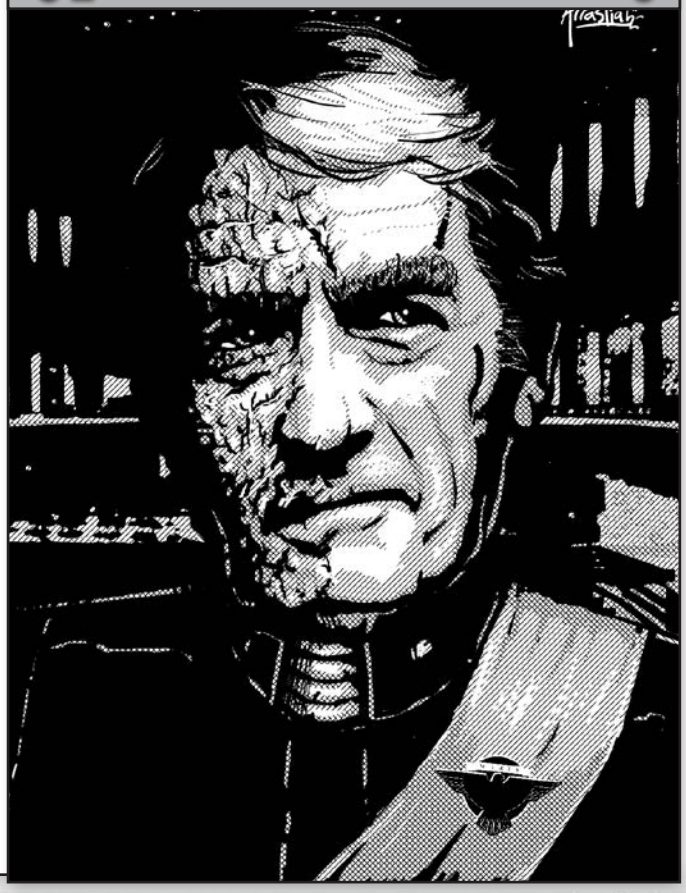
at all that has happened, that his people no longer trust him, and that so much of what he once built is lost.

This does not mean that "Thomas" is without ability and talent. He may not have come to terms with everything that happened to him, but neither does he seem content to sit and accept his current station. The skills that helped this man build the Free Worlds League are still with him; he remains capable of pulling off impressive feats of diplomacy and political maneuvering, no matter how far his name has fallen.

His visit to Sian in 3073 is a case in point. He arrived there without invitation, survived a Blakist assassination attempt, and managed to get an audience with Sun-Tzu Liao despite his deposed standing, and the fact that constant League raids had the Capellan Chancellor contemplating nuclear options. Not only did he get an audience, he managed to negotiate an almost-truce for the *entire* League—not just his corner of it. He didn't have anything that would help persuade Sun-Tzu—no shameful secrets to use as leverage, no cash for bribery—other than the rationality of his arguments, and he pulled it off anyway.

He has not, however, been as persuasive with his own people. No matter what he does now, no matter how much he reminds them of his past accomplishments, they cannot see him as

"THOMAS MARIK"



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anything other than a fake and a liar—not to mention a Blakist collaborator.

When so many chips are lined up against you, it becomes tempting to look for one dramatic play that can turn everything around, and I think that may have been behind his efforts to protect Brooklyn Stevens and her crew so they could report what they had found. If the knowledge of Jardine became public, and if that knowledge led to a decisive blow against the Word, maybe "Thomas" could be redeemed.

The effort, however, didn't work. Stevens is gone. There is a good chance that "Thomas" knows plenty about the location of Jardine and could tell people a thing or two without Stevens' help—but who would believe him now, this man with no name of his own? Wouldn't it seem convenient if he stepped up all of a sudden with the answer to one of the greatest secrets of the Inner Sphere? No one would listen to him. Anything he might be able to offer the League immediately falls into the shadow of his vast, decades-long lie.

TITUS CAMERON-JONES

Position/Rank: Prince, Principality of Regulus
Year of Birth: 3041 (Age 34 in 3075)
Affiliation: Free Worlds League (Regulus)

Eldest legitimate son of Kirc Cameron-Jones, Titus was long dismissed as irrelevant by most political observers within the Free Worlds League, despite his position as heir apparent to the Regulan throne. Estranged from his father after learning of the elder Cameron-Jones' extramarital affairs (most damningly while Titus' mother was alive), Titus was relegated to serving as the figurehead CEO for the family's not-so-vast business interests. With a less than spectacular academic record, and a pacifistic, poetic nature that displayed no interest in the martial aspects for which his realm was so well known, Titus seemed resigned (royal-watchers would say *relieved*) to a life of obscurity. [*Indeed, prior to 3072, Titus was best known as one of the few student protesters at Aitutaki Academy who opposed Marik's invasion of the Sarna March. —PA*]

All this changed on 6 June 3072, a date known to Regulans as the "Night of Fire." The event propelled Titus into the public spotlight as his father—unwilling to trust anyone else but blood—increasingly relied on his son to hold together Regulus's shaky foundations. Ultimately, Kirc's paranoia led to the brutal Purge, Titus' detention, and (arguably) the debacle at Gibson. Only when he learned of a new, even more encompassing Purge did Titus finally act against Kirc. Freed from imprisonment by a group of young officers unwilling to carry out Kirc's orders, Titus forced his father to stand down, and took the mantle of Prince in his stead.

Since assuming the leadership of the Principality, Titus' pacifist nature has warred with his state's need for security. Apart from a single, ill-advised military mission into the Marik Commonwealth, Prince Titus has kept Regulus' troops within his own borders,

TITUS CAMERON-JONES

concentrating on rebuilding his realm. The reaction at home to such an isolationist policy has been mixed, but his marriage to former Force Commander Michelle Ryan, and the recent birth of their son Lester, has done much to alleviate tensions within a community still reeling from the late Prince Kirc's divisive regime. [*There's more to this story, I'm sure. There was a diplomatic flurry between Atreus and Regulus after the mission to Irian, and Titus has since formally renounced Kirc's "Captain-General" title. —PA*]

DAVID LEAR

Position/Rank: Co-Leader of the Kittery Resistance
Year of Birth: 3052 (Age 23 in 3075)
Affiliation: Capellan Confederation

Following her relationship with Duke Kai Allard-Liao during the Clan Invasion, Dr. Deirdre Lear resigned from her post on the Tenth Lyran Guard's medical support team to return to Odell. Naming David Jewell—a MechWarrior killed fighting the Jade Falcons—as the father of her newborn son, Dr. Lear attempted to conceal the true identity of David's father. Not until 3056 did Kai Allard-Liao learn of his son's existence. David's mother strove to shield her son from the rampant militarism that dominates the Inner Sphere. Even after Duke Allard-Liao acknowledged David as his son, the young man showed no inclination to follow

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in his father's martial footsteps. Provided with the best tutors, David proved a remarkably gifted student. Though only sixteen, he was enrolled in the prestigious University of Sian in 3069 to study history and politics.

David Lear's academic career ended abruptly in 3070 when the Word of Blake captured the JumpShip he was traveling on. Consigned to McKinley Ranch—a wildlife preserve the Word had converted into a "reeducation camp"—he formed a friendship with an amnesiac prisoner the guards called Devlin Stone. Lear vowed to help Stone discover his true identity; the pair soon escaped and made contact with a group of local resistance fighters. Returning to McKinley, they freed other POWs and proceeded to liberate Kittery from the Word of Blake's control. [*Tragically, the records that could have provided information as to Stone's identity were destroyed in this fighting. —PA*]

Rather than return home to St. Ives, David chose to remain on Kittery. While not adept at combat, his education and organizational skills were instrumental in establishing the quasi-independent Kittery Prefecture and expanding it to other worlds liberated from the Blakists. As Duke Allard-Liao's son, David's political connections also proved useful in brokering a meeting between Stone and Precentor-Martial Victor Steiner-Davion in 3073.

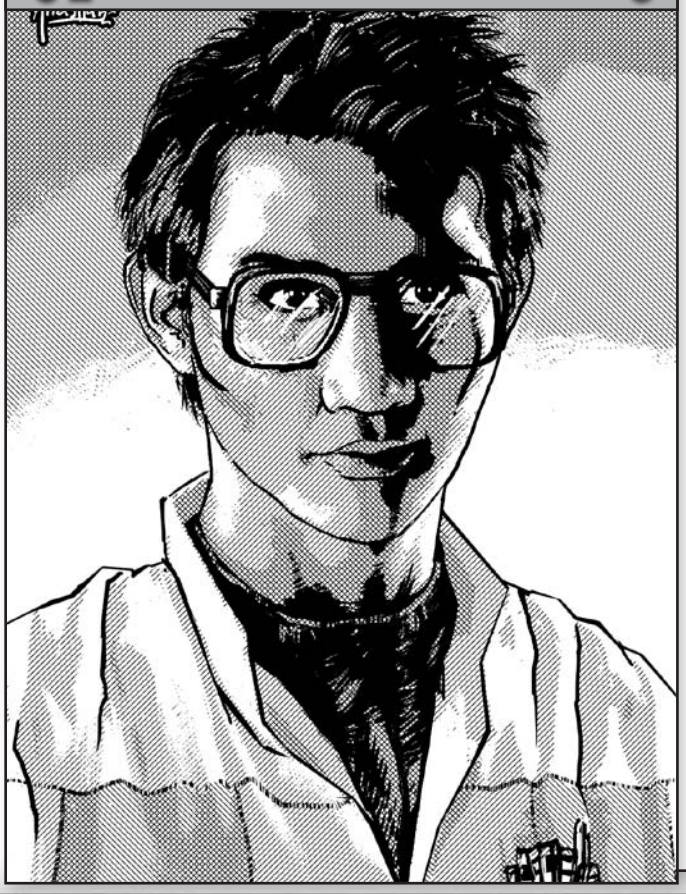
At this time, David Lear's motivations remain obscure. Prior to the Blakist attack he demonstrated no real interest in military or political power. Currently, it is unclear to what extent he is influencing Devlin Stone's policies. Publicly, he is Stone's trusted friend and confidant. But is he merely a faithful follower? Or has David Lear cunningly set up a shell of a man as a figurehead, while he pulls the strings from behind the throne?

WOLFGANG HANSEN

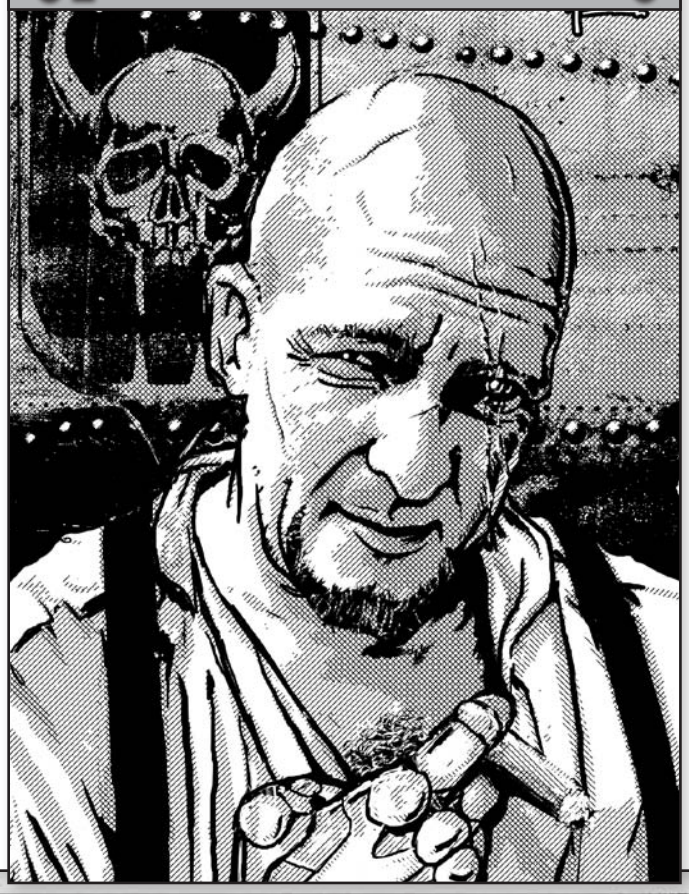
Rank/Position: Colonel/CO of Hansen's Roughriders
Born: 3013 (62 as of 3075)
Affiliation: Mercenary

Son of an influential Marik officer, General Gerhardt Hansen, Wolfgang was only one year old when his family was swept up in the bloody civil war between the Mariks. General Hansen, commander of the Atrean Dragoons, found himself taking the core of several regiments and fleeing the Free Worlds League after a backing Anton Marik's doomed bid for power. In exile, these forces reformed as Hansen's Roughriders. Never allowed to forget or feel ashamed of his heritage, Wolfgang maintained many of the League's influences in the Roughriders' operations when he took command years later.

DAVID LEAR



WOLFGANG HANSEN



DEVLIN STONE

Rank/Position: Leader of the Kittery Resistance

Born: Unknown

Affiliation: Kittery Prefecture

[*I'm including this bit of information with the rest of the biographies, but you may want to keep this private rather than sharing it with the man himself, as he's been a little prickly about confirming or denying alleged facts about his past. We don't yet have enough info to put together a coherent story of his life, so I offer this as an update on the status of the most common rumors swirling about Stone, rather than in our traditional format. I'm pretty confident about the veracity of the conclusions here, but we've all seen things that we thought were true turn out to be complete lies, and vice versa. —PA*]

Claim #1: Devlin Stone is not his real name—TRUE. While there are several dozen Devlin Stones throughout the Inner Sphere, none of the ones on record are connected to this one. As far as official records go—with the exception of Blakist re-education camp records—this Devlin Stone does not exist.

Unofficial channels provide a little more information, enough to allow us to dismiss the idea that Stone first adopted his alias while in the prison camp. An anti-Blakist insurgency group known as Jerome's Truth had a Devlin Stone participating in and even leading covert raids against Blakist positions as early as 3067. The organization doesn't exist anymore and most of its members are dead, but we found enough information to indicate that the Stone of Jerome's Truth is the same as ours. We believe it is likely that Stone first assumed his new name when he joined the insurgency group.

Claim #2: Stone has a Blakist background—TRUE. The thread on this is tenuous, but the evidence we're collecting hints that Stone's parents were Blakists who broke with the Order shortly after Stone was born. We all know how the Blakists feel about dissenters; Stone's parents likely lived on the run until they were caught and apparently executed sometime in Stone's early teenage years. If we look carefully at some of Stone's own remarks, it seems clear that someone spoke openly about the Word and their feelings toward it while he was growing up. Parents or other family active in Jerome's Truth would certainly be the prime source for his knowledge of some of the Word's inner workings.

Claim #3: Stone has noble blood—FALSE. As noted above, Stone's parents were likely common members of the Order, not nobles. It's possible that one of his parents may have risen to the informal rank of Demi-Precentor, but that is far from being noble.

Claim #4: Stone has military training—TRUE. We haven't found his academy records yet, but every source related to Jerome's Truth that we've spoken to agreed that Stone came to them right after he graduated from a military academy, most likely one in the Federated Suns. They all agree that Stone's field skills and tactical knowledge were crucial to his rapid rise in the organization—and a good reason why the Word was anxious to capture and re-educate him.

Claim #5: Stone has deep Clan ties—FALSE. The only ties we've been able to find to Clansmen are the ones Stone forged while in the Blakist camp. There is no evidence that Stone associated much with Clansmen before he entered the camp, and in fact Clansmen from the camp report that he seemed quite unfamiliar with their ways when they first met him. The rumors

that Stone has Clan ties generally spring from the fact that he has been active and successful in bringing Clan representation into his coalition, but those results seem due to his native skill as a leader rather than deep ties to any Clan. This information would also seem to contradict the belief that Stone's coalition is a back-door attempt to build power and prestige for the Clans in Inner Sphere affairs. It's most likely that Stone is gathering such a broad-based coalition because that's what the anti-Blakist effort requires rather than any nefarious explanation. [*This ignores the possibility that, should Stone lead the coalition to victory, no one nation or faction will be able to claim as large a portion of the victor's glory as Stone himself. —PA*]

Claim #6: Stone is a Blakist plant—FALSE. At least, we hope to God it's false. But we have found no evidence to date that would indicate a pro-Blakist agenda.

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Though he never achieved the same reputation as other famous mercenary leaders like Grayson Carlyle and the Kells, Hansen's abilities and attention to detail kept the Roughriders in top form throughout nearly two decades of virtual inaction. Between that and his commitment to exceptionally well-trained conventional support, his Roughriders performed superbly in their first actions against the Clans during Operation Bulldog.

Tragedy struck Hansen and the rest of his command in 3067, when Taurian raiders attacked the world of Bromhead, where the Roughriders' dependents and their infantry support had been stationed. After the infantry handed the raiders several embarrassing defeats (the rest of the Roughriders were on Panpour), the enraged Taurians overran the Roughriders' base. Mistaking the dependents there for combatants, the Taurian forces slaughtered them all—an act that shocked Hansen's command into a berserker mentality it has yet to lose.

Hansen himself, who lost his wife and several of his youngest children in the so-called Bromhead Massacre, has refused to let go of even a gram of his bitter rage over the event. No longer the jovial and light-hearted commander he once was, he has became a brooding, seething individual, prone to bouts of fury directed at anyone who questions his thirst for vengeance.

Though for a time he was not allowed to act on these impulses, his Federated Suns employers recently unleashed Hansen on the Taurian forces currently invading Davion space, and the Roughriders have since gone to great lengths to strike at the invaders from all angles. Hansen himself has personally vowed to "kill ten Taurians for every innocent Federated Suns civilian those animals harm," leaving many to debate not only his methods, but his sanity.

APOLLYON

Rank/Position: Precentor Manei Domini/CO of the 52nd Shadow Division

Born: Unknown

Affiliation: Word of Blake

The origins and birth name of the man known as Apollyon remain unknown to us. Even his age can only be guessed at (with best estimates hovering around the mid-40s). What we have learned about this man largely comes through conjecture and sketchy reports, many of which have yet to be fully confirmed, but one thing is known for certain: Apollyon does not merely command the Manei Domini, he practically *is* the Manei Domini.

As close as our analysis of various snippets can discern, Apollyon could have been the first of the Manei Domini created. His rank and position—often referred to as the "chosen of the Master"—implies that he is somehow close to the Word's unseen leader, and the god-like awe with which even his fellow Domini seem to regard him implies that he either truly speaks with his Master's voice, or that he had an equal share in their creation. It

APOLLYON

has been whispered that Apollyon holds the keys to life and death for all Manei Domini, and that only he can name the so-called "Ascended" Domini on the Master's behalf, but this appears to be part of the hero-worship his fellow cyborgs espouse. [*Fun fact: it appears Apollyon himself has sworn never to use the name of Lucifer or Satan for any of his "children," though he has never explained why. —PA*]

More interesting are the more reliable reports that suggest Apollyon once ruled Jardine, one of the Word of Blake's Five Worlds, and that he personally led a hunt for Doctor Brooklyn Stevens—the ex-IE agent who reportedly found the world shortly before the Jihad. References to Jardine in the past tense—allegedly uttered by Apollyon himself—further indicate that the world has been somehow lost to the Word, and also may explain the fierce contempt he demonstrates toward the denizens of his new home on Gibson. Conclusions drawn from this place Apollyon as a native of that lost world, rather than a previously known or documented member of any House, Clan or ComStar military or covert force.

Though undoubtedly fanatical, and unquestionably insane, Apollyon's motivations appear—at their heart—to be noble. As paradoxical as it sounds, this man has no known vices one might commonly expect. He does not seek power, despite his authority,

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and though his recent campaign was bloody and terrible, it was hardly random; each target struck would have been a legitimate focus for any military action. He does not appear motivated by greed or lust, lives a life almost as austere as that of a monk—if the reports can be believed—and has said on many occasions that "evil lies within the flesh." [*So, cut out the flesh, and you cut out the evil, I suppose. —PA*] Were he born in the Combine, one might liken him to the most devout of our samurai, beholden to the will of one master above all other considerations, but without some of the tenets of *bushido* that might allow him to defy an inhumane order. [*Let's be honest, my friend. Some may still say the same of the DCMS —PA*]

Apollyon has had numerous protégés in his career, the latest being Precentor Berith of the Opacus Venatori. His disdain for non-augmented people—whom he refers to as "Frails," like most Domini—suggests that he keeps no advisors around him who lack cybernetics, and may partly explain his disdain for Precentor-Martial Cameron St. Jamais, who supposedly follows the same Master with the same fierce loyalty.

A minor footnote: The Domini have a chant, evidently used in some sacred ceremony, that specifically names Apollyon. Evidently spoken in Greek, it translates to: "Apollyon, Prince of Scars, Thrice-blessed of the Master, with limbs united, we call on you by name." Strangely, while supposedly spoken only in the Domini's most private rites, this chant is prominently written in its native Greek alphabet wherever Apollyon's minions serve. We suspect a greater significance to this, but have not yet determined what it may be. [*Interesting; a cipher, perhaps? —PA*]

AVITUE

Rank/Position: Specter Precentor/CO of the 44th Shadow Division

Born: Unknown (appears to be in her 30s in 3075)

Affiliation: Word of Blake

What little we know about the Manei Domini operative who calls herself Avitue is a mixed bag of contradictions and half-truths.

She is one of the Master's chosen cyborg soldiers—and yet when she was first encountered on New Avalon, she was described as a beautiful young woman. She is a fanatical devotee of the Word of Blake and yet her first act after arriving on New Avalon was to murder the Blakist commander. She maintained brutal discipline in her command—and yet she tolerated the betrayals of her eventual second-in-command, Geoffrey Zucker. She killed Marshal of the Armies Jackson Davion—and yet New Avalon appears to be slipping through her fingers.

Most alarmingly, she was reported dead after the final battle between her and Jackson Davion…

And yet she lives.

Most of what we know about Avitue comes from battlefield encounters with her on New Avalon as well as intelligence gleaned by the DMI and MIIO from interrogations of Blakist prisoners. Needless to say, neither of these sources are very reliable. Of necessity, our picture of Avitue is rounded out by conjecture and speculation.

Little is known of Avitue's early life. MIIO has given us a name—Mary Durant—though they have yet to uncover anything else about her childhood, including the planet she grew up on.

We *do* know something about her current name, however. Avitue is an alias for Lilith, Adam's first wife and the mother of all demons, and by all accounts, she lives up to that description.

There are some reports that the 44th Shadow Division, Avitue's Avenging Angels, first appeared on Yunnah in early 3072. Elements of the 44th have appeared elsewhere, but Avitue's unit is undoubtedly best known for its role in the Third Battle of New Avalon.

Though she is clearly an elite-grade MechWarrior (she pilots a specially modified *Grim Reaper* with uncanny grace), Avitue does *not* seem to possess the Vehicular Direct Neural Interface used by so many other Manei Domini MechWarriors. Indeed, of the known Domini classes, our best analysis suggests she began her Domini career as a "Ghost," or infiltration specialist.

AVITUE

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During her campaign on New Avalon, Avitue racked up several impressive achievements, including the discovery of the Davions' secret Corean facility and its *Legionnaire* Program, bloodying the Davion Heavy Guards and the Davion Assault Guards, and the capture of the Fox's Den—not to mention finally killing Jackson Davion. Yet despite all this, Avitue was unable to hold New Avalon for the Word of Blake.

Still, it would be a grave error to underestimate Precentor Avitue. Like many Blakist Domini, she is fanatical and ruthless. *Unlike* many Blakists, she is also a tactical genius, capable of thinking outside the box. She has demonstrated an understanding of human nature sophisticated enough to allow her to use pain and fear as a scalpel to cut her enemy apart, and she is dogged in the pursuit of her goals, unwavering in the defense of her values. Avitue is willing to sacrifice anything or anyone to secure victory for the Word of Blake—even herself.

Amid all our speculations, one thing is clear: alive or dead, Avitue is a formidable enemy.

BERITH

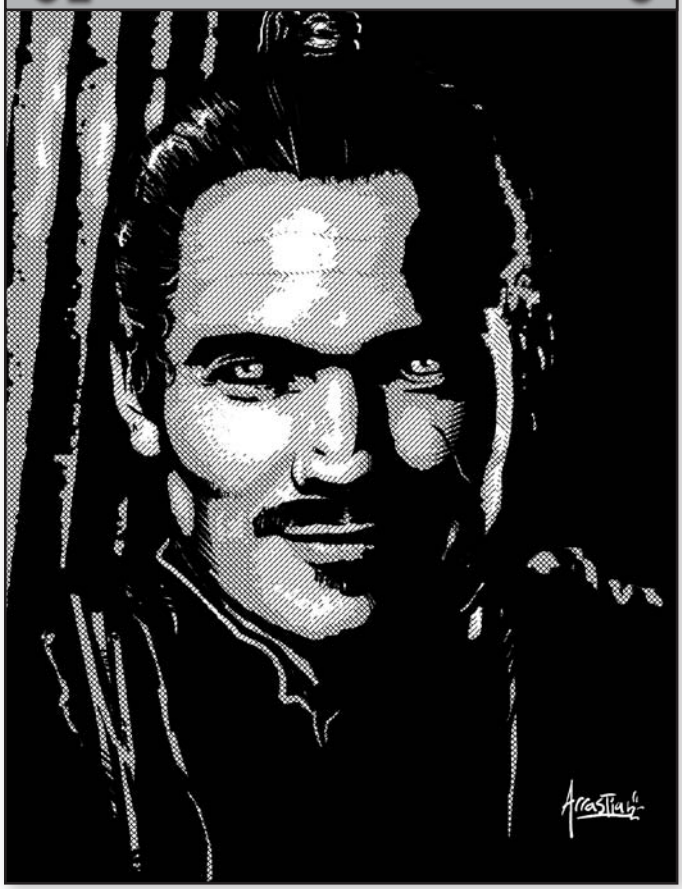
Rank/Position: Specter Precentor/CO of the Opacus Venatori
Born: 3030 (45 in 3075)
Affiliation: Word of Blake

Though he has been active for some time, only recently have the machinations of this Manei Domini special operations commander become noticed—and feared—by the Inner Sphere at large. Formerly a Light of Mankind instructor stationed on Terra, the man now known as Berith apparently caught the eye of Precentor Apollyon early in the war and was tapped as the next commander for the Word's elite special operations unit, the Opacus Venatori.

Berith (originally known as Benjamin Emory) was born to ComStar parents in 3030 and joined the order at the age of fifteen. In 3052, he received his combat baptism by fire in the treacherous wastes of Devil's Bath on Tukayyid, fighting against the Steel Vipers. Though he survived with four kills to his credit, he came away from the battle with a deep hatred for the Clans and a thorough schooling in combined-arms tactics. He continued his education in war when he was promoted into Blake's Wrath and became the ROM group's head instructor by 3057.

When Operation Odysseus came to pass, Berith showed his loyalty to Terra and Blake by surrendering the ROM compound in Cairo to arriving Word forces, defecting with his entire instructional team. After six months of intense vetting, all of them were elevated to appropriate positions with the Light of Mankind, where Berith continued training elite ROM soldiers in the Word's service. Many of his pupils ended up in the Opacus and Venatori operations groups, where their low-failure and high-survival rates stood as a testament to Berith's intensive instructional skills.

BERITH



When the Jihad began to explode around the Chaos March, Berith personally led several operations on soon-to-be Protectorate worlds, safeguarding Word interests and in some cases tipping the balance of power in the Word of Blake's favor. Upon his return to Terra [*and, presumably, his recovery from some injuries that necessitated cybernetic replacements… –PA*], Precentor Apollyon asked him to instruct the newest generation of Manei Domini troops on Circinus. At the end of 3069, he was elevated to command of the now-combined Opacus Venatori, and rumor suggests he effectively serves as third in command of the Word of Blake's forces. [*We believe that a certain requirement for cybernetic implantation as a result of injuries sustained in service to the Word is required to join the ranks of the Manei Domini. The Domini, apparently believe that "the first sacrifice must be given freely, and without expectation of reward", or some such nonsense. What remains unclear is exactly when, where, and how Precentor Emory sustained the injuries that started him on his course to becoming one of Apollyon's cyber-fanatics. –PA*]

Berith was most recently sighted during the still-classified operation on Gabriel, defending the secret Blakist base there from invading forces. His status is currently unknown, though his red and white custom *Archangel* was spotted more recently on Glengarry, wiping out the remaining resistance cells on that planet.

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CAMERON ST. JAMAIS

Position/Rank: Precentor Martial
Year of Birth: 3027 (Age 48 in 3075)
Affiliation: Word of Blake

When looking at the events of the past few years, one name comes up time and again: Cameron St. Jamais. He may not be the mastermind behind the Word of Blake Jihad, but he is the von Moltke or General Jackson Davion to the evil genius of his Master. And lately it seems as if he has plans of his own.

St. Jamais' early years with the Word are sketchy. I have followed the man's history for years and I think I know a lot about him—yet I have no information about him before the Schism. Evidently a rising star within the newly formed Word of Blake in 3052, he became the head of their radical Sixth of June movement around 3057, and it did not take him long to climb even higher in the Blakist hierarchy.

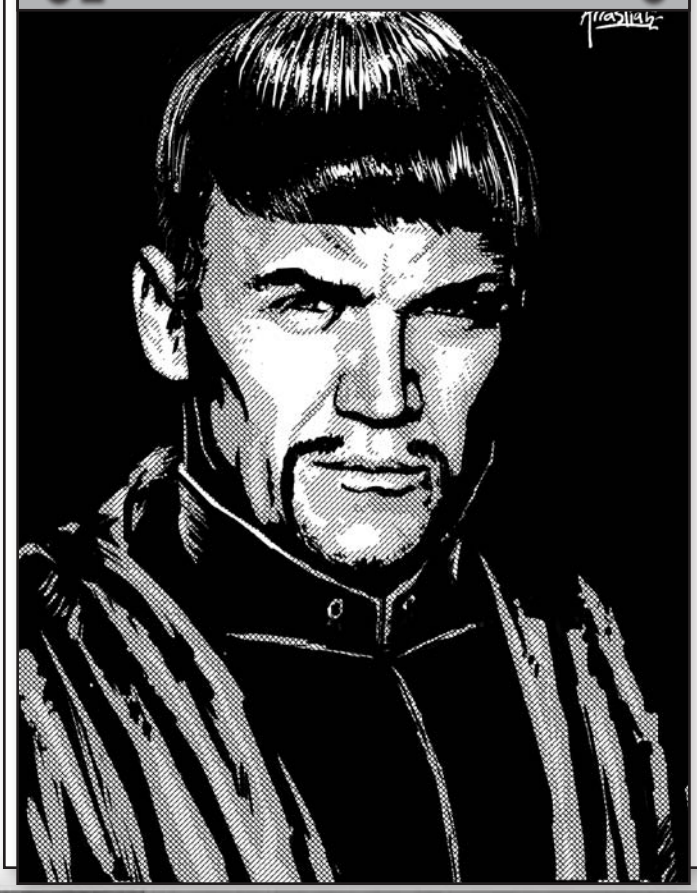
When Precentor Demona Aziz died, some blamed St. Jamais, either for bringing about her demise at the hands of another or for personally executing her in the aftermath of a failed operation in the Periphery. Despite these rumors, St. Jamais became Precentor Martial shortly afterward, and his first order of business was to strengthen the WoBM. Our sources tell us that St. Jamais himself was responsible for many of the various programs that enabled the Word to build up its forces in such secrecy.

When the second Star League was disbanded, St. Jamais was one of the first to call for diplomacy to stave off that disaster, but his pleas quickly change to sharp ultimatums as the delegations left Tharkad one by one. We believe St. Jamais ultimately ordered the "warning shot" fired on Tharkad City, but exactly how or why he gave those orders remains unknown.

Once the Jihad erupted, St. Jamais effectively vanished from the stage. Ensconced on Terra (or, more likely, on Mars), not much has been seen of the Word's Precentor Martial since the war began. Recently, however, we have seen some indications that St. Jamais and his unseen Master have drifted apart. This rift may be responsible for a growing number of failed Word of Blake operations, especially those where WoBM forces and Manei Domini Shadow Divisions share responsibilities. In some cases, we have seen Blakist requests for reinforcements and supplies delayed—or even denied—while key command orders have been lost in otherwise inexplicable communications failures.

It appears as though Cameron St. Jamais has lost his faith in the Word's final victory. At his command, the Word has begun to establish strong defenses around Terra, fortifying a number of Protectorate worlds. While a far cry from capitulation, this strategic shift suggests that the Precentor Martial anticipates an eventual drive against Terra itself.

CAMERON ST. JAMAIS



GEOFFREY ZUCKER

Rank/Position: Precentor/CO of the 36th WoBM
Born: 3013 (62 in 3075)
Affiliation: Word of Blake

Born and raised on New Avalon, Geoffrey Heuaventas grew up in a broken family; his mother died while he was still young and his father worked long hours for Corean Enterprises as a test MechWarrior. Increasingly disillusioned with the "status warfare" of his classmates and the undeserved privileges of the nobility, he joined ComStar against his father's wishes in 3027 and changed his surname to Zucker, his deceased mother's maiden name.

Zucker spent several years in ComStar's diplomatic corps, most of that time on the Steiner/Marik border. When ComStar began fully arming their compounds, Zucker transferred into the Com Guards, training as a MechWarrior and siding with the Word of Blake after the ComStar Schism. He swiftly rose in rank to the position of executive officer of the newly formed 36th WoBM under Precentor Geist. The two men clashed often because of their differing personalities, a matter that came to a head during the siege of New Avalon after the Jihad began.

Initially apprehensive about returning to New Avalon, Zucker was concerned that every encounter he had with New Avalon's fighting forces would pit him against his father, from whom he remained estranged. His concern for the common man also kept him at odds with his commander, though this minority opinion

GEOFFREY ZUCKER

eventually attracted the attention of the 44th Shadow Division's commander, Precentor Avitue, when her forces arrived to reinforce the faltering invasion army. Avitue's fascination with Zucker and his conscience eventually led to Geist's death.

During the escalating conflict on New Avalon, Zucker did encounter his father before the elder man's death; how that situation worked out is unknown, though some reports suggest that Zucker's loyalty to the Word was questioned. We do know that after suffering a narrow victory during the Third Battle of New Avalon, Zucker was promoted to overall commander of the New Avalon invasion after Avitue was grievously wounded in personal battle with Marshall Jackson Davion. Determined to take advantage of the Word's tenuous hold on the capital, Zucker engineered the siege and capture of Mount Davion, holding it for two more years until the Word's forces were recalled. Though he argued publicly with Precentor Avitue against the action, Zucker's impassioned pleas fell on deaf ears when Avitue collapsed Mount Davion and razed Avalon City in a brutal display of scorched-earth tactics.

As of this writing, Zucker and the rest of his Division have reportedly been traveling back to the Protectorate, conducting sporadic raids en route. Sketchy reports also suggest that he may have been recalled to the Sol system to face charges of insubordination and treason against the Word in openly defying Avitue's authority.

BIOGRAPHIES

LINDON ASHLEY

Rank/Position: Leader of the Democracy Now Movement
Born: 3032 (43 as of 3075)
Affiliation: Lyran Alliance (Renegade)

Lindon Ashley is a paradox, a proponent of democratic rule who is willing to use both anarchy and military force to achieve his populist aims. His methods have led many to question what he really stands for and, ultimately, whom he really serves.

Ashley first appeared on the Lyran Alliance on the world of Kaumberg in 3063, reportedly after having left the Rim Collection. An activist rabble-rouser even then, he moved on when his views failed to gain any traction with war-weary locals. Disappearing for a short time, he ultimately found his way to the world of Calafell, seemingly drawn to its brawling political environment (where locals claim the planet's legislature hosts more fistfights than most bars). From there, he joined up with Kalvin Strauss' Novara-based Democracy Now movement, and Strauss quickly recognized Ashley's energy and charisma. While Strauss was unmatched in his ability to clearly express the rationale behind his movement, he did not have Ashley's fire.

Though Ashley repeatedly swore his loyalty to Strauss, that did not prevent a cult of personality from growing around him, and soon a divergence between the views of the two leaders became

LINDON ASHLEY

BIOGRAPH

clear. Strauss sought to make progress through political channels, while Ashley tried to promote democracy through any available means, including military force. Seeds of a power struggle between the two men were already taking root when Ashley inspired a revolt on Enzesfled that panicked the local nobles and threw the planet into anarchy. Some members of Democracy Now condemned Ashley's actions, while others pointed to him as the only person in the movement who was accomplishing anything.

Democracy Now seemed headed for a schism when fate intervened. Assassins struck on Novara and Calafell, killing Strauss and wounding Ashley. Just like that, the potential schism was past. [*Always be wary of convenient deaths. –PA*]

Strauss' death left Ashley free to employ his militant methods, so he built an army on Novara. The revelation that the core of his army was Eriksson's Einherjar—a mercenary group with past Blakist connections—cost Ashley some positive public opinion, and made it easier for Alarion Province officials to crack down on his activities. The Kaumberg Planetary Guard, legitimized by the Archon's installment of the Kaumberg Archonette, moved against Ashley's Democratic People's Army in 3072.

Ashley was smart enough to leave before the end of that battle. Knowing he wouldn't be able to hold Novara for a prolonged period even if his army won the initial fighting, Ashley dropped out of sight, only to resurface early last year on Virtue with the same fiery rhetoric that caused so much trouble on Enzesfled and Novara. There is a warrant out for his arrest, but Virtue had been a stronghold for Strauss' branch of Democracy Now, and Ashley seems to have won the local members to his side, making it difficult for provincial authorities to get their hands on this renegade. With his charisma and hidden resources (it remains unclear how he was able to raise enough money to buy the loyalty of the Einherjar), Ashley is a person with the potential to keep making trouble as long as he's breathing.

KALI LIAO

Position/Rank: Lady of Highspire/Thuggee cult leader
Year of Birth: 3033 (Age 42 in 3075)
Affiliation: Capellan Confederation

If any name were more fitting than Kali Liao's, it is that of her brother. Where Sun-Tzu Liao brought the Capellan Confederation back from the brink of its own near-collapse by rebuilding the strength and morale of that realm, Kali—named after the Hindu goddess of death—was responsible for its near destruction during the Capellan Civil War. As the mind behind the Black May attacks, where her Thugees killed millions—including Mandrinn Tormano Liao—Kali seemed oblivious to the damage she was causing her own nation's efforts to re-assimilate its breakaway cousins in St. Ives. In her mind, apparently, these brutal actions were for the good of the Capellan people, as noble as Sun-Tzu's own stated intentions.

And she got away with it.

More recently—and despite her "incarceration" on Highspire—it seems Kali has managed to once again put the Confederation in harm's way and almost cause the realm to be shattered by its enemies. Her liaison with the Word of Blake's Precentor Martial,

KALI LIAO

Cameron St. Jamais, gave rise to her own Thuggee "Warrior Houses"—military forces raised in secret, augmented by Blakist cybernetics and devoted solely to the whims of their "death goddess." Though it appears that Kali's loyalty to her brother won out in the end, this happened only after a bloody fight on Sian, at a point where the Chancellor's own life—and the survival of the Capellan state—hung in the balance. Given that she aided, abetted and eventually betrayed the Word of Blake in the name of the Confederation, it is not easy to say if Kali is mad or whether she was simply played.

In a private recording our agents were fortunate enough to find, Cameron St. Jamais summed up his feelings for Kali thus: "[Kali] is a special woman. It's hard to call her beautiful or even pretty, and many would say she's as mad as only a Liao can be. But she's highly intelligent and a smooth operator; there's a lot of charisma there. Like her mother before her, Kali knows how to play her opponents. Even though sometimes she might seem to have lost her mind, deep inside her are virtues and special abilities that make her as desirable a partner as any woman."

Kali Liao knows no boundaries, no law and no forgiveness. Where once she might have vied for the throne herself, all she cares about now are her brother and the well-being of the Confederation. Though her methods are wild in the extreme, she has proven craftier than St. Jamais could have guessed—perhaps even craftier than her brother would give her credit for—as her ability to single-handedly engineer a counter-coup in the middle of her own trial for treason can attest.

THE WORD OF BLAKE PROTECTORATE

NOTES

Honored One,

The following report covers the estimated capabilities of the Word of Blake Militia, Shadow Divisions, Protectorate Militia command and major mercenary support, as of January, 3075. Though our resident military observations expert, Gomez Kisu, compiled this data in-house, it draws from all of the combined civil and military intelligence resources we have been able to access, including those generously supplied by the LIC (in appreciation of our "defense" of Arcturus) and a few resistance commands. I have restricted my own commentary to a bare minimum, in hopes that my opinions will not color the briefing overmuch.

Your humble servant,

—Peter Abdulsattah

OVERVIEW

The Word of Blake's greatest surprise of the war—at least to the ground-level troops and civilian agencies who experienced them firsthand—was its sudden and widespread deployment of more than fifty Divisions when most published intelligence sources suggested a probable force strength of perhaps twenty-five to thirty (though, to be fair, some agencies projected a hundred-Division "worst case scenario"). While a great deal of this accomplishment has been attributed to elaborate "shell games" the Word played, using their ever-present all-white-or-camouflage schemes and generic insignia to conceal duplicate forces in plain sight, this technique only explains about half of the additional troops. Others were clearly mass defections, prompted by the shock of this new Sphere-wide conflict and the fruits from years of careful political machinations behind the scenes. That the Word was resorting to inordinate techniques to inflate their forces while publicly declaring only a fraction of their martial strength was widely understood in the intelligence communities of the Great Houses, but the extent of their success can only be appreciated in hindsight.

What truly boggles the mind, however, is how the appearance of some of these Divisions evidently came as a complete shock *even* to the established forces of the Word of Blake Militia. Indeed, while they may follow the same numerical and organizational progression of their fellow Blakists, the so-called "Shadow Divisions" do not appear to answer directly to Precentor-Martial St. Jamais, but instead to their own military commander, Precentor Manei Domini Apollyon. Some have surmised, of course, that these elite forces hail almost exclusively from the elusive "Five Worlds" alluded to by the most fanatical Blakists, and the evidence may bear this out to some extent. Yet if this were true, it seems odd that such assets would have been left out of the Word's standard order of battle and beyond the reach of its own Precentor-Martial—especially if he, too, were a devotee of this unseen Master.

Regardless, the evidence gathered to date has finally fixed the Word's "in-house" military strength to these fifty-two Divisions, in addition to their newly raised Protectorate Militias and mercenary support. Only now, as this war drags its eighth year to a close, can we see more clearly the status of these forces in the grander scheme—our best glimpse yet of Blake's Soldiers.

AKE PROTECTORATE

ORGANIZATION

The Word of Blake's military might is divided into four major force types: the Word of Blake Militia, the Manei Domini Shadow Divisions, the Protectorate Militia Command and mercenary support.

The Word of Blake Militia

Under the command of Precentor-Martial Cameron St. Jamais, the Word of Blake Militia (WoBM) reflects the Blakists' "regular army," and is the largest of these four force groups by far. The WoBM is arrayed across seven major theaters of operations, reflecting the geopolitical divisions of the Inner Sphere and nearby Periphery. Each theater command is nominally configured and controlled by a dedicated senior Precentor, but as these commanders remain centrally organized on Terra, all operations fall under more direct control by St. Jamais.

Shadow Divisions

Commanded and staffed by fanatical, cybernetics-enhanced Manei Domini warriors, the Shadow Divisions seem to fall outside the normal chain of command. These elite and mobile forces answer primarily to Precentor Manei Domini Apollyon, who claims to speak for the Word's hidden "Master" (though this would seem to clash with the Precentor-Martial's own claim to that end). Though separate and somewhat aloof, the Shadow Divisions have shown a general willingness to work alongside WoBM forces to capture or destroy major objectives, but often do so from a position of superiority not apparently shared with their comrades-in-arms.

Protectorate Militia Command

The Protectorate Militia forces are the Word of Blake's last line of defense and primary source of supporting troops for the Word of Blake Protectorate. Planet-bound, these troops are generally light on BattleMechs, but their local knowledge and ample supply of more conventional forces will ensure that any effort to reclaim the captured worlds of the Protectorate will be hard-fought indeed. Each Protectorate Militia force is commanded by on-site officers, but they ultimately receive direction from a central office focused on Terra and under the direct authority of the Precentor-Martial.

Mercenary Support

The Word of Blake's mercenary support apparatus remains strong, despite years of rough handling, heavy combat and the added pressure of a universal and unilateral "outlawing" of Blakist employment by the Mercenary Review and Bonding Commission (MRBC). Largely mirroring the arrangement of the WoBM deployments, most mercs seem to be focused on supporting operations in all seven combat theaters, with the central forces devoted more to defensive and cadre duties, while outer-regional forces operate as raiders and assault support. These operations appear to be coordinated through Terra, though a few commands seem to be tied more closely to the Shadow Divisions and thus answerable to a Gibson-based liaison. It is still difficult, however, to determine which commands follow which office.

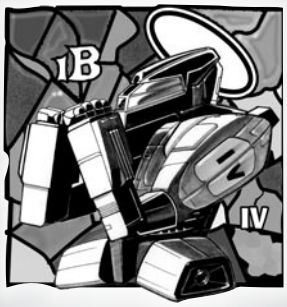
NOTES

PROTECTORATE THEATER

Once regarded as a minor proto-state and opportunistic land grab in the Chaos March, the Word of Blake transformed the entire region of space around Terra into a fortress only somewhat smaller than the original Terran Hegemony. Accomplished more by force and blackmail than through honest negotiations, this small empire now protects Terra on all sides, even though scattered resistance remains a problem.

Backed up by the Protectorate Militia, the Protectorate Theater Command forms the heart of the Blakist defense, centered on seven Divisions.

UNIT EMBLEMS



1st Division (True Devotion IV-Beta): Before the Jihad, the First Division was divided across the Chaos March, with posts including Bryant, Caph, Epsilon Eridani, Ingress and Keid. In 3069, as local planetary leaders were dealing with the sudden chaos of the White-Out, this Division struck at Tikonov, effectively (but not completely) securing the planet in a lightning blitz. The following year saw elements of this Division (likely the Quality of Mercy III-Delta) training Protectorate Militia forces on Caph, even as the bulk of the command remained on Tikonov. This pattern of holding Tikonov while roving IIIs take up cadre duty elsewhere has been maintained ever since.

4th Division (Blake's Boldest IV-Iota): As with the First Division, the Fourth's pre-Jihad stations were scattered throughout the Chaos March, and included Elgin, Hsein, New Canton and Saiph. On Saiph, the Wanderers III aided in the crumbling Saiph Triumvirate government's transition to the Blake Protectorate (taking the worlds of Tall Trees and New Canton with them). On Tall Trees, the Fourth—previously believed to be understrength—unveiled its Keepers of the Gates III-Beta and the Renewed Faith III-Alpha "Phantom" troops to destroy the Eighty-third Com Guard Division, with assistance from elements of the Third WoBM Division. In early 3068, the Wanderers III left Saiph and, together with the Keepers of the Gates III, helped the Hsien Hotheads and their leader, Colonel Twohy, overthrow Hsien's government. In July of 3069, the Fourth led an assault on Bharat, swiftly shattering local resistance and assuming planetary control for the Word. Since then, the Division has roamed among the local Protectorate systems, less anchored than the First, training Militia units and acting as the WoBM's ready-response force.

5th Division (The Chosen IV-Eta): Before the Jihad, the entire Fifth Division was reportedly stationed on Sheratan. In 3069, however, elements of this command claimed Kawich and Ingress in lightning strikes that overpowered the meager defenders on both worlds while simultaneously unveiling their new "phantom" Level IIIs, the Edge of Truth and the Delivery of Wisdom. By 3070, after leaving their conquests to mercenaries and proto-militia commands, the Fifth returned to Sheratan, and were still on planet when the Thirteenth Stalking Horse and Wild Geese mercenary units—acting on behalf of the decapitated Allied Mercenary Command—struck. The Fifth carried the day, but not without some heavy losses. Since then, they have been restored to full six-III strength, and have taken up the First Division's approach to securing the region, with half the Division always on station on Sheratan, while rotating Level IIIs patrol nearby worlds and train local militia.

UNIT EMBLEMS

THE WORD OF BLAKE PROTECTORATE

6th Division (True Believers IV-Theta): After Wolf's Dragoons' attack on Mars, the Sixth Division—previously stationed in China on Terra—joined with the Tenth to assault Outreach in December of 3067. Recovered from the battle damage with Dragoons salvage, this Division's Dawn of Truth III "secured" Thorin for the Blake Protectorate in 3068, reportedly by non-violent means. In late 3069, additional elements of this Division drove Harlock's Warriors off Errai, and remained there to secure the planet for at least a portion of 3070. Since then, this Division has remained active as a mobile defense force, never stationed on any Protectorate world for longer than six months at a time.

7th Division (The Glorious IV-Iota): The Seventh Division formed the core of the Word's Martian defense force in the Terra system before the Jihad, where they engaged elements of the Dragoons-AMC force that attacked the planet in late 3067. During the fighting, two more Level IIIs were sighted, confirming additional "phantom" units in WoBM service. While the Seventh suffered heavily in the battle, and remained on-planet into 3068, the force was reconstituted from salvage and—under the command of Seth Smith-Solomon (formerly CO of the Bells of Faith III-lambda)—has since been seen "touring" the outer edges of the Blake Protectorate.

12th Division (Harbingers of Blake-exact composition unknown): One of the first "new" Divisions unveiled after the start of the Jihad, the Twelfth was likely more of a paper division than an actual one in 3067, though scattered intelligence reports confirmed its existence as early as 3066. The Twelfth was not declared among the active WoBM forces reported before the last Whitting Conference. In early 3070, however, the Twelfth received a boon when the Sixth Free Worlds Legionnaires defected wholesale to the Word, joining up with the nascent Twelfth on Oliver and forming the Dreams of Sunrise III-Alpha and the Blessed Converts III-Beta. Within a month of this event, the Twelfth was attacked by the Legion of the Rising Sun mercenary force, and largely shattered that command. The Twelfth also fought Alys Rousset-Marik's rebels near the end of December in 3070, when those forces came to extract the Legion's single remaining company. Since then, the Twelfth has remained an active part of the defense forces in the "Marik Quadrant" of the Blake Protectorate, patrolling only those worlds once claimed by the Free Worlds League.

39th Division (Purity of Destiny-exact composition unknown): Prior to the Jihad, our sources believed the Thirty-ninth did not even exist on WoBM rolls, but a unit bearing their designation appeared on Thorin around 3071. Sporting a high percentage of Clan technology (likely culled from various sources, such as Tukayyid veteran defectors or salvage from Outreach), and apparently including several cybernetically enhanced warriors in high-profile roles, initial reports suggested that this Division was part of the Manei Domini's "Shadow Divisions," but further analysis places this command more firmly in the conventional WoBM. Though this Division has seen little action against rebels and resistance throughout the Protectorate, intelligence believes it is staffed by some of the finest warriors outside of the Shadows. Ever vigilant, this force rotates irregularly among the worlds closest to Terra, but never strays more than two jumps from the Blakist capital.

NOTES

LYRAN THEATER

With the Protectorate defended heavily by its own forces, locally raised militias, and a large collection of mercenary troops, the Word of Blake's remaining Divisions have been tasked with offensive operations including—but not limited to—expansion into the neighboring territories and "spoiler" attacks on various industrial targets. In the Lyran theater, the Word's strategic forces have proven most effective and far-reaching, accomplishing devastating strikes as far out as Coventry and Arc-Royal, and securing key Alliance planets such as Hesperus II and Tharkad.

UNIT EMBLEMS

2nd Division (Stern Resistance IV-Gamma): Before the Jihad, ComStar's intelligence placed the Second Division at Sandhurst on Terra, but that proved to be a lie when elements of this Division—sporting an SLDF parade scheme adorned with the Word's broadsword—landed on Donegal within months of the apparent nuclear attack on Tharkad. Backed up by the firepower of the *Vincent*-class *Blake's Redemption* and a small arsenal of tactical nukes, the Division quickly shattered most of the planetary infrastructure in a devastating series of rapid strikes. Eventually securing the orbiting "Tin Can" settlements in early 3070, the Second effectively controlled and blockade Donegal until relieved by the Eighteenth Division later that same year. In 3072, this Division—backed up by the Thirty-seventh Division and elements of the Forty-third Shadow—attempted to launch a similar assault on Arc-Royal, but a determined counterstrike by allied forces (including the Exiled Wolves, Kell Hounds and Lyran commands) forced the Second into retreat with heavy losses.

Though it remains unconfirmed at this time, strong evidence suggests that elements of this command—partially reconstituted—assisted the Fortieth Shadow Division in their strike against Arcturus in 3073, where they helped to inflict heavy damage on our coalition of "independent commands," but withdrew inexplicably mid-battle. Surviving elements of this Division turned up on Hesperus II in November of 3074, battling alongside the Fortieth Shadow and the 38th Division against Devlin Stone's coalition. As of this writing, estimates place less than two Level IIIs among the surviving Blakists who ultimately withdrew.

11th Division (Infinite Justice IV-sigma): The Eleventh Division made its debut in 3068 with a surprise assault on Muphrid, spearheaded by nuclear-armed aerospace fighters. The devastating strikes all but collapsed the planetary command networks and crippled the local infrastructure for months, leading to a quick victory, but it also bought the Eleventh years of low-level resistance from the local population. In 3072, elements of this Division staged from Muphrid for the assault on Galatea, backed up by the Forty-seventh Shadow Division, Bullard's Armored Cavalry, Gray's Ghosts, and the Martian Cuirassiers. Sporting Northwind Highlanders colors, the Eleventh formed the spearhead of the attack, confusing the Galatean security forces while covering their fellow units' planetfall. For the next few years, the Eleventh would ruthlessly hunt down mercenary resistance, maintaining (and reportedly even exceeding) its full combat strength, thanks to abundant salvage. This has enabled this Division to hold Galatea's major cities against numerous attempted raids and local resistance attacks.

18th Division (Bloody Revelation IV-delta): Though some reports suggest the Eighteenth was active during the initial assault on Solaris VII, the Division's first *confirmed* appearance was in December of 3068, when at least three Level IIIs belonging to this heretofore-unknown Division struck Glengarry and slaughtered the Brewer's Legion corporate security force. After looting the local Gray Death Industries facilities—inflicting heavy damage in the process—this command moved on to raid several nearby systems, and eventually turned up on Donegal, to relieve the Second Division in 3070. Plagued by local riots and persistent low-level resistance, the Eighteenth's Precentor, Ernst Regan, employed increasingly heavy-handed tactics in handling Lyran POWs, while simultaneously begging for more support from the Precentor-Martial. The Word eventually dispatched the 50th Shadow Division to Donegal, mere weeks before allied forces including LAAF, Com Guard and Wolf Clan troops—all led personally by Victor Steiner-Davion—struck at the planet in February of 3072. Critically damaged, the Eighteenth withdrew under the 50th's cover, during which Regan was killed (possibly by the Fiftieth Shadow's exec, Precentor Sabnock). Though reduced to raiding missions for a time, the Eighteenth returned to full duty in 3074, partnered up with the Third Division for the assault on Skye. The failed assault inflicted severe damage to this Division—perhaps enough to eliminate it as a viable combat force.

UNIT EMBLEMS

THE WORD OF BLAKE PROTECTORATE

25th Division (The Nightwatchmen IV-beta): Comprised of atypical machines for a Blakist force, and initially sporting a parade scheme lacking insignia, the Twenty-fifth's identity as a Blakist force was initially unknown when it attacked Solaris VII in June of 3068. (Some reports suggested ComStar or renegade local stables instead.) Combined with their non-Blakist deployment formations (during the first strikes, they used a mix of lance-, Star- and Level II-sized formations, and had a top strength estimated at somewhere near two or three regiments—the latter possibly due to unconfirmed support from another Division) and the general confusion of the fighting, they managed to secure Solaris City and scattered most of the stronger stables and government forces in short order. For the next several years, the Twenty-fifth would battle the Solaran resistance (the so-called Solaris Home Defense League), until attrition finally forced the Division to withdraw in December of 3071. For the better part of the following year, we have no record of this command's whereabouts, but elements resurfaced again in 3073 as part of a multi-world raiding campaign that followed the Lyran-Free Worlds border region. The latest such strikes—both in December of 3074—targeted the worlds of Son Hoa and Madiun, suggesting that this Division has regrouped in or near Circinian space.

37th Division (Purity of Truth): Completely unknown to the universe at large, the Thirty-seventh first appeared on Tharkad in 3067. Sporting Star League colors and the Word of Blake broadsword, this unit struck the planet under the pretext of "restoring order" after the catastrophic explosion of the Tharkad City reactor. A panicked population and a fragmented LAAF command responded violently to their arrival, transforming the rapidly crumbling Lyran capital into a battle zone within hours of the Division's appearance. Quickly forced on the defensive, the Thirty-seventh's commander authorized extreme measures, including the razing of several Tharkan industries and nearby cities as "object lessons," while also hunting down the missing Archon Peter Steiner-Davion as a resistance group formed around the refugee leader. These measures grew harsher after the death of Precentor Roman McKinnsey, the Division's executive officer, in a resistance ambush near Mako City.

Despite aid from alleged collaborators, the Thirty-seventh ultimately failed to capture or kill the renegade Archon before he abdicated his title to Adam Steiner, effectively robbing Tharkad of its last piece of political clout in the Lyran chain of command. Nevertheless, the Division stubbornly held the planet and persecuted its peoples and industries until early 3072, when a concerted allied push led by interim Archon Adam Steiner forced the Division off-world. Badly mauled, the Thirty-seventh Division disappeared for almost two years, but evidence suggests that at least three Level IIIs bearing this command's insignia have launched several raids along the Lyran-Protectorate border in recent months.

38th Division (Purity of Devotion): Though they sported different colors (intending to mimic DCMS troops), recent analysis confirms that the 38th first appeared on Edasich in April of 3068 when scattered forces—operating in paired Level IIs—struck the planet in a cluster of simultaneous strikes. The raiders devastated cities and industries, sowing panic, but departed just a few months later amid reports that Skye was retaining more mercenaries to shore up interior defenses. In September of 3069, the Thirty-eighth doffed its false colors and raided Summer, reinforced by a flotilla of "Pocket WarShips" and a small array of tactical nuclear weapons. The quick strike leveled the planetary capital of Curitiba and wiped out local Com Guard forces, but the Division was long gone by the time Skye forces arrived to investigate, attempting to raid Skye itself. The surprise appearance of the LAS *Fylgia* thwarted this effort, however, and after losing most of their fighter assets to a failed nuclear attack against the Lyran WarShip, the Division's task force returned to friendly space via Menkent (where they delivered an incidental orbital strike).

In February of 3070, the 38th returned to the Lyran Theater in support of the Fortieth Shadow Division's conquest of Hesperus II, and received a refit from Hesperan factories before the next mission sent this command to Arc-Royal (in 3072) alongside the Second Division and the 43rd Shadow. Badly damaged in the incursion when wary naval assets discovered their ruse, the would-be assault force withdrew with heavy losses. Roughly two Level IIIs survived the encounter, and were present on Hesperus II in November of 3074 when Devlin Stone's allied coalition struck that world. After-action reports suggest that less than two Level IIs survived the battle as of this writing.

NOTES

FEDERATED SUNS THEATER

The Word of Blake Militia forces assigned to the Federated Suns Theater are noticeably less focused on offensive operations than their Lyran counterparts. Rather than directing their energies on anti-infrastructure/anti-industrial operations, these Divisions are more focused on maintaining the integrity of the Protectorate's FedSuns border, sowing chaos along the Capellan-FedSuns front and hampering military command and control. This approach does much to underscore the Word's understanding of the strategic differences in handling the more militaristic Suns versus the commercial-industrial Lyran state.

UNIT EMBLEMS

9th Division (Blinding Light IV-Gamma): The Ninth Division has been one of the hardest units to pin down, according to all reports. Prior to the Jihad, this command garrisoned a portion of Terra's North America region, but soon after the start of the war, their disposition became extremely clouded. Reliable reports put their Measure of Trust III-Beta and newly unveiled Call to the Faithful III-Delta on Demeter, securing that world for the Word (ostensibly at Vicore's request), and remaining there until at least October of 3069. Yet in January of 3069, the Ninth was *also* confirmed to be leading the assault on Luthien (where they initially claimed to be fighting against the rebellious Black Dragon Society). A possible explanation for this latter appearance could lie in the presence of ROM units attached to the Luthien attack force, such as the Circle of the Holy II. Stranger still, Blakist propaganda also places the Ninth on Terra during Case White; other sightings identified elements on Royalston and Atlas in 3069, and on Beid in 3070.

These conflicting appearances suggest either super-fast troop movements or post-3067 "shell games" aimed at clouding the true strength and nature of the Word's forces. Either way, the charades evidently ended by mid-3071, when intelligence from various sources finally managed to confirm that at least four Level IIIs from the Ninth were stationed on Luthien, while another two IIIs (Measure of Trust and Call to the Faithful) were involved in actions along the Blake Protectorate's FedSuns border region. As of this writing, the Luthien elements of the Division are presumed destroyed by the Ghost Bear assault there, leaving only the FedSuns theater units at large.

10th Division (Shooting Stars IV-Beta): Pre-Jihad, the Tenth was reportedly stationed on Terra's South American continent, but after the Dragoons' failed attack on Mars, this Division joined those mobilized to counterattack Outreach. Officially, the Tenth remained in the Outreach system until 3069 as well, but reports from Case White also placed elements of this Division on Terra to defend against the ComStar attack. As with the Ninth Division, however, these reports may be the result of either more Blakist "shell games" or a deliberate division of this unit to cover two objectives. That latter seems more probable, as elements of the Tenth were confirmed in the assaults on Hoan (in August) and Achernar (in September). In both cases, the planetary leadership fell swiftly, but the heavy-handed force commanders resorted to brutal techniques to ensure their control, including the imprisonment and execution of academics and doctors on Hoan, and support for the Opacus Venatori's execution of Achernar's ruling family. In November of 3070, elements of the Tenth hit Bethel, targeting Bethel Labs and the DropShip Irregulars mercenary command. The action ended with Demi-Precentor Rebek Craines, commander of the Night of Faith III-Alpha "phantom" unit, calling in a nuclear strike on her position that destroyed the labs, the Irregulars and her own forces.

Since then, the Tenth (now operating at five Level IIIs) has engaged in numerous raids throughout the Capellan March, gradually working its way to the rimward edge of Davion space. For the past few months, this Division has launched several attacks on Mendham, Horsham and Robsart in what DMI operatives have termed "independent support" of the Taurian invasion.

22nd Division (Sacred Covenant IV-omicron): Though it was not immediately clear as such, the Twenty-second Division made its first appearance in 3068 with two heavy raids against the FedSuns worlds of Talcott and New Valencia. Operating under Capellan House colors, these forces inflicted heavy damage on both worlds' planetary communications and industrial capabilities, helping to fan the flames between the warring Houses. In the following year, however, this Division doffed its

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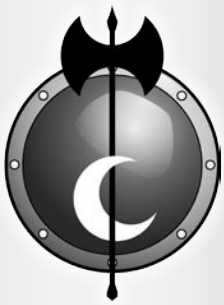
mask and helped claim the worlds of Azha and New Aragon for the Blakist Protectorate. Interestingly enough, on Azha, the Capellan defenders simply withdrew before the Word's attack force, suggesting collusion with their invaders, while New Aragon's defenders, entrenched in many of the ancient fortresses dotting the planet, prompted the Twenty-second to employ chemical weapons in order to quickly clear them out.

In 3072, the Sacred Covenant was spotted among a WarShip-supported heavy raiding force that attempted to hit Princess Regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion's command center at Markesan, but suffered heavy damage in the battle. After disappearing for over a year—likely until suitable replacements could be drawn up—the largely reconstituted Division finally resurfaced in 3074, raiding key command centers and logistical targets throughout the Draconis March.

UNIT EMBLEMS



31st Division (Purity of Faith): Like so many other WoBM Divisions, the Thirty-first appeared suddenly in the Jihad, and in fact was one of the first of the Word's secret Divisions to reveal itself publicly when it landed on New Avalon in December of 3067 to start the First Battle for New Avalon. Though fresh and well equipped, the relatively inexperienced and badly outnumbered Division was forced off-planet after less than three weeks of fighting, but remained in-system thanks to the Blakists' naval supremacy. As reinforcements trickled in, the Purity of Faith would make at least two more attempts to secure House Davion's capital (once with support from the Thirty-sixth Division, and again—successfully—under the aegis of the Forty-fourth Shadow Division). Though the Third Battle for New Avalon was a Blakist win, their tenuous grip on the FedSuns capital ultimately proved untenable, and all three Divisions were recalled in September of 3074. The departing forces—by this point badly depleted and effectively merged into the 36th—have been spotted conducting incidental supply raids throughout the Crucis March, on an apparent course back toward Hegemony space.

33rd Division (Purity of Heart): The Thirty-third emerged from the shadows with simultaneous assaults on Deneb Kaitos and Ruchbah in 3069. On Deneb Kaitos, the half-strength Division—backed up by unidentified mercenaries—overwhelmed the planetary reservist forces, but the inhabitants and scattered militia left on Ruchbah (after the regular AFFS garrison there departed) proved remarkably harder to kill. Even after consolidating its disparate Level IIIs on Ruchbah, the Thirty-third failed to exterminate the resistance. Rather than tie up forces on what was seen as a lesser-priority objective, the Word chose to blockade Ruchbah instead, relying on their control over all trade among nearby systems. This freed the Thirty-third for its 3071 assault on Robinson, and allowed them to hold the world until an allied counterassault the following year forced this Division to withdraw to Protectorate space in shambles. At least two Level IIIs attached to this command resurfaced in late 3073 to raid several Capellan March worlds close to the Protectorate. Capping off the mini-campaign in mid-3074 with objective raids on the FedSuns worlds of Axton and Goshen, this Division delivered its worst damage to the Wangker Aerospace factories on Axton, which have yet to recover.

36th Division (Purity of Thought): The existence of the Thirty-sixth Division, then under the command of Precentor Adler Geist, was first revealed when it arrived to assist the Thirty-first on New Avalon in February of 3068. Despite Geist's more ruthless approach in battle, however, this Division proved no more successful than the Thirty-first alone, especially when Davion reinforcements managed to get through the blockades to ground on New Avalon. Both Divisions were forced off-planet by March of 3069, but would return again to begin the Third Battle for New Avalon in November of 3072, just before the arrival of the Forty-fourth Shadow Division. After Geist's death (reportedly at Precentor Avitue's hands), this Division—now under the command of Precentor Geoffrey Zucker—managed to lead the combined Blakist forces to a narrow victory that opened the Fox's Den to the Blakists. But the Blakists' victory remained untenable, despite their capture of the Den. In September of 3074, the Thirty-sixth—bolstered by remnants of the war-ravaged Thirty-first—was finally recalled before allied troops could storm the Davion capital, and was last observed moving toward the Blake Protectorate.

NOTES

CAPELLAN THEATER

As with the other theater forces, the Blakist Militia troops assigned to the Capellan Theater were clearly deployed by a strategic outlook tailored to their enemy. Relying on a heavier hand (evidenced by a greater preponderance and deployment of weapons of mass destruction), these Divisions have also employed elaborate tactics of misdirection aimed at altering the public perception of their activities on the Capellan front.

UNIT EMBLEMS

8th Division (Hands of Fate IV-Kappa): Before the Jihad, the Eighth Division was reportedly stationed in North Africa on Terra. Soon after the shooting started, however, the Word of Blake apparently identified the fractured SLDF as a potential threat, and the Eighth was sent to Dieron with support from Hannibal's Hermits and Burr's Black Cobras. Though the attack initially focused on the Eridani Light Horse forces present, the Word expanded its targets to include the Third Dieron Regulars after news of Theodore Kurita's stroke reached them. [*Our own analysts believe this may have actually tied into the Word's concerns that a leadership change in the Combine would throw the Dragon into Victor Davion's camp. –PA*] Blakist propaganda also placed elements of the Eighth on Terra at this time, likely as part of their early Jihad "smoke and mirrors" strategy.

In late 3069, the Eighth Division was apparently pulled from the Combine front to fortify the Word's expansion toward Capellan space when elements of this Division formed the leading forces against Slocum and St. Andre. The St. Andre resistance repelled the Eighth's small attack force (and Burr's Black Cobras found their own efforts there equally unsuccessful mere months later), but the WarShip-supported force at Slocum proved more successful. In September of 3070, the Eighth reunited to join in the attack on St. Ives, alongside the Seventeenth Division and Simonson's Cutthroats. The brutal fighting left more than two million Capellans dead, and forced the Blakists to retreat with heavy losses. Though scattered reports indicated this Division remained active as a light raiding force, the Eighth appeared largely off-line until 3074, when it was teamed up with the Twenty-fourth Division and the Manei Domini-Thuggee hybrid "Warrior Houses" Rakshasa and White Tiger for another assault, aimed at the Chancellor himself on Sian. The Capellan resistance—and the betrayal of the White Tigers—shattered the Word's offensive, forcing the Eighth into a desperate and costly retreat.

13th Division (Avatars of Blake IV-mu): Despite operating under-strength (only an estimated three or four Level IIIs were confirmed at the time), the Thirteenth Division's combat debut was its stunning victory over the First Kittery Borderers on Kittery in November of 3068. Shortly thereafter, the Division received an influx of new recruits from the Sixth Free Worlds Legionnaires (as well as possible FedSuns "converts"), and staged further attacks against nearby worlds from their new homeworld. Briefly relieved in the aftermath by the as-yet-unrevealed Forty-first Shadow Division, elements of the Thirteenth (augmented by Manei Domini units) struck at Denbar and Spica a year later, ostensibly in House Liao's name. After securing those worlds and installing local militia and mercenaries to maintain order (with a Level III acting as the local "handler" force), the Thirteenth returned to Kittery in early 3070 to maintain its control zone, which was expanded to include Scituate and Gurnet in late 3070 (thanks to aid from the Thirty-fifth Division).

In 3071, however, a massive insurrection erupted on Kittery, centered on a mysterious POW named Devlin Stone. Stone's followers managed to overpower the guards at reeducation camp RMBU 105 and gain control of enough firepower to eventually rout the surprised and dispersed Thirteenth before the year was out. In the ensuing year, Stone's followers branched out to nearby Blakist-held worlds, heavily damaging the remnants of the Thirteenth and the Word's supporting forces. Reportedly reduced to less than two Level IIIs, the Thirteenth dropped off-radar for a while, though reliable reports in mid-3073 indicated that up to three IIIs from this command resurfaced as a light raiding force primarily used to sow confusion and disorder in the Confederation's Liao Commonality.

17th Division (The Leviathans IV-kappa): In 3069, the Seventeenth debuted alongside the Sixteenth Division with an attack on Algol. Simultaneously, elements of this Division appeared at nearby Kansu. Armed with a stockpile of high-yield tactical nuclear weapons, both forces threatened WMD

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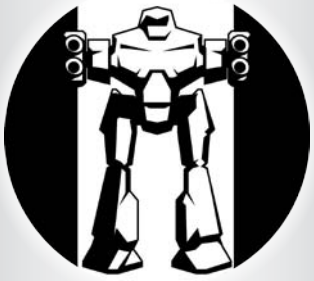
strikes to secure a swift surrender, but only the Kansu task force actually used its weapons when the locals called their bluff and gathered troops in the swamps near the capital city. The strike on Kansu resulted in an ecological runaway reaction that quickly destroyed much of the planet's most densely populated region, and was broadcast to the people of Algol to ensure their surrender [*Interestingly, our sources say that the Word severely punished several of their own commanders over the debacle, and one Precentor was even executed for it. –PA*]

In September of 3070, the bulk of the Seventeenth took part in the Word's first major assault on Sian, alongside the Twenty-fourth Division. Both Divisions suffered heavy damage from the determined Capellan defense and were forced to withdraw, but the Seventeenth returned to duty sooner as a raiding force that has harried the Capella and St. Ives Commonalities since 3072. Never seen operating at a strength of more than two Level IIIs at a time, the Seventeenth has been linked to fierce lightning strikes on Ares, Brighton, Texlos and Warlock.

UNIT EMBLEMS



21st Division (Divine Right and Justice-exact composition unknown): The Twenty-first made its first appearance in the attack on Liao in November of 3069, but was beaten back by the CCAF's Dynasty Guards and the Hell's Black Aces mercenary command. Though badly damaged, the Division returned to active service in September of 3070 to attack St. Ives alongside the Eighth Division and Simonson's Cutthroats. The savage fighting devastated this command, which was forced to withdraw to Protectorate space for a lengthy recovery. As of this writing, only three Level IIIs are believed to be functional within the Twenty-first, each of which has made sporadic raids along the Capellan-Free Worlds border since late 3071. The most devastating of these attacks was a raid on Buenos Aires in early 3072, where the Word employed another of their virulent "Magic Bullet" bio-weapons that effectively tainted the entire planetary biosphere and claimed millions of lives in less than two years.

24th Division (Heralds of Light IV-iota): In October of 3069, the Twenty-fourth's sudden arrival took the relatively undefended world of Menkar by surprise, and their aggressive assault on the few organized defenses—coupled with reports of Blakist WMDs—convinced the planetary leaders to swiftly surrender. Leaving the planet to Protectorate Militia after a six-month stay, this Division joined with the Seventeenth in its September 3070 assault on Sian. Like the Seventeenth, the Twenty-fourth was badly damaged when stiff Capellan resistance and the surprise arrival of Free Capella forces threw off their battle plan. Reduced for a time to a light raiding force, the revitalized Division was called again into battle against the Chancellor in 3074. For this second Sian assault, the Twenty-fourth was teamed up with the Eighth Division and Kali Liao's Thuggee-Manei Domini hybrid "Warrior Houses" Rakshasa and White Tiger. But when the White Tigers betrayed the Blakist offensive and destroyed the Rakshasa, the CCAF counterattack gutted the Twenty-fourth and sent the surviving Blakist Militia forces into a chaotic fighting retreat.

35th Division (Purity of Blood): The Thirty-fifth first appeared in a two-pronged assault on the worlds of Liberty and Genoa in August of 3069. Though grossly under-strength in both fights (estimates placed less than two IIIs in each action), the Liberty task force quickly prevailed thanks to the already weakened planetary defenses. The Genoa conquest faltered, however, and ultimately forced the Word to commit additional assets, including mercenary "viceroys" overseen by ROM agents and provided with tactical nuclear weapons to "secure the peace." (The use of these devices, while catastrophic, failed to quell the local rebellion, which still festers today.) Despite this mixed success, the Thirty-fifth moved on to secure Pleione by December of 3069, where their force—now roughly four IIIs strong—overwhelmed Little Richard's Panzer Brigade. Elements of this Division later appeared at the first assault on Sian in 3070, but their role in that battle was limited primarily to aerospace action. In January of 3071, this Division again appeared to raid Turin, interfering with a clash between Capellan and Andurien combatants there. Departing without significant damage, this Division has since appeared throughout the Victoria Commonality and the Capellan-Periphery border region. In their most significant raiding action, the Purity of Blood successfully ambushed and destroyed Warrior House Lu Sann's forces on Herotitus in 3074.

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UNIT EMBLEMS

Warrior Houses White Tiger and Rakshasa: Though both of these units were recently destroyed, and never were identified as part of WoBM or Shadow Division command structures, the so-called "Warrior Houses" Rakshasa and White Tiger apparently played a key role in Cameron St. Jamais' long-term plans for the Confederation, likely born out of an illicit affair between St. Jamais and Kali Liao.

Both of these forces featured Manei Domini-style cybernetics and training, but clearly operated outside the Manei Domini chain of command and appeared only partly under Word of Blake control. Furthermore, this control ran through Cameron St. Jamais rather than Apollyon, hinting at a split between the two senior Blakist commanders. When Cameron called on these troops to augment his last assault on Sian in 3074—aimed specifically at capturing Sun-Tzu and his family—both "Warrior Houses" went to their assigned staging grounds. But as the attack commenced, the White Tigers fell upon the Rakshasa and the two commands tore each other apart. The fighting undermined Cameron's entire battle plan and the Blakist forces withdrew in disarray, leaving the rabid Warrior Houses behind. Only a handful of White Tigers—and reportedly *none* of the Rakshasa—survived.

UNIT EMBLEMS

NOTES

FREE WORLDS THEATER

Among the least fortified of the Blakists' operational theaters, the Free Worlds front was clearly seen as the "safe" border for the Protectorate. Undoubtedly, this stems from the Word's largely successful subversion of several key League worlds and military commands (not least including the critical worlds of Marik and Atreus). Indeed, only the mounting effectiveness of local resistance cells may have prompted the Word to redeploy Divisions here from other theaters, effectively closing a window of opportunity that may briefly have existed.

UNIT EMBLEMS

3rd Division (Pure Thoughts and Actions IV-Mu): Easily the most infamous of the Word's Free Worlds Theater forces, the Third Division was stationed on Terra prior to the Jihad, and was reportedly still there during ComStar's ill-fated Case White assault in early 3068. However, elements of this Division also appeared on Tall Trees around that same time, helping the Fourth Division secure that planet. The year 3069 also saw elements of the Third on Al Na'ir, supported by mercenaries in a brutal conquest that included the destruction of several pressurized mining domes to cow the local government.

In 3070, the Third was moved to the League operations theater and posted to Kalidasa, where they suffered damage in a mercenary attack [*Evidence suggests the Word itself hired the mercs, who sacked the Third to cull some of its most unreliable officers—an extreme example of "in-house cleaning"? –PA*]. After some replenishment of personnel (including recently defected FWL troops from the Third Free Worlds Guards), the Third was sent to Wasat to handle an insurrection led by the Blackhearts mercenary command. Despite aid from the HeavyHell Raisers and Raymond's Armored Cavalry, the Division's commanding Precentor, David Fellers, grew increasingly frustrated and paranoid. He ultimately resorted to a nuclear attack on the planetary capital, *after* the Blackhearts had successfully escaped. Subsequently, Fellers was "promoted" to the head of an internment camp/re-education complex on Procyon in 3073. [*This reassignment may have been bait in a failed trap used by the Opacus Venatori independent command against the reborn Black Widows. –PA*]

In 3074, the Third Division was redeployed from the League Theater to lead a pre-emptive assault against Skye. In the desperate fighting, Fellers' successor, Craig Callen, and his command staff were captured by Devlin Stone and his coalition. Their loss prompted the Division to quit the field as allied troops whittled them down. Less than three Level IIs from this Division are believed to have survived the retreat from Skye, rendering this command effectively destroyed.

UNIT EMBLEMS

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15th Division (Divine Inspiration IV-delta): The Fifteenth first appeared in September of 3069 when the Division arrived on Van Damien IV to shatter the unsuspecting Third Oriente Hussars. Relying heavily on aerospace forces, artillery and surprise, the Fifteenth made short work of the Hussars, but it was the mid-battle assassination of the Hussars' commander by one of her own that truly doomed the League forces (and added the turncoat Hussars to the Fifteenth's rolls in the process). Afterward, the Fifteenth was called to Atreus, joining the planetary defense forces in 3070 to help root out remnant Knights of the Inner Sphere and other supporters of the exiled impostor Thomas Marik. Since then, they have staged many raids and "peacekeeping operations" throughout the Marik Commonwealth in support of Captain-General Corrine Marik and her pro-Blakist junta, always leaving at least two Level IIIs behind to watch over the capital of the fractured Free Worlds League.

20th Division (Enlightened Ministry IV-sigma): In 3068, the Twentieth was the second of two "phantom Divisions" that raided Hesperus II. Striking six months after the Sixteenth, the Twentieth also remained in-system just long enough to further damage the local defense forces, and withdrew after shattering some outlying defense posts. Not until the following year, when elements of this Division simultaneously secured Vega and Cebalrai, was the Twentieth clearly identified. After remaining on both worlds for close to two years, training local defense forces, this Division moved from the Draconis Theater of operations to the Free Worlds front. Stationed on Marik since 3072, the Twentieth has played a largely defensive and cadre role in the Word-occupied League, reinforcing pro-Blakist Marik Commonwealth forces arrayed on and around Marik against Alys Rousset-Marik's rebellion.

27th Division (Shield of the Faithful IV-alpha): The Twenty-seventh's combat debut on Wei in December of 3069 was met with fierce Capellan guerilla-style resistance. As their attacks focused on sites known or suspected to have contained the deadly UrbStryc-A nerve agent used in the Black May attacks of the St. Ives conflict, it remains unclear whether the Word set off the weapons that have killed millions of Weians, or whether the defenders themselves did so, desperate to thwart the enemy advance. An almost simultaneous strike, aimed at Gan Singh, saw two Level IIIs from this Division destroyed in space by a determined Warrior House Dai Da Chi aerospace defense, though the Word's use of Davion colors left the Capellans confused over who exactly was attacking them at the time.

After the exile of the false Thomas Marik from Atreus in 3068, the Word moved the Twenty-seventh from the Capellan Theater to the Free Worlds, and staged this command on Keystone. As with the Fifteenth and Twentieth Divisions, this move has placed the Twenty-seventh in a defensive role, aimed mainly at defending and controlling the Marik Commonwealth and its nominal position as the heart of the Free Worlds League government.

30th Division (Acts of Salvation IV-gamma): Only two Level IIIs were assigned to the Thirtieth Division in 3068, if the initial reports are to be believed. Yet together with the *Aegis*-class *Immortal Spirit*, her shipboard fighter complement and a few DropShips, these troops helped keep the Lyran world of Coventry under Blakist blockade until allied forces decisively shattered them in mid-3073. Meanwhile, expatriates filled the ranks of the Thirtieth Division abroad, and used that unit's colors when striking at the Combine worlds of Alya and Kessel in May of 3069. The Kessel troops—evidently hailing from Circinus training camps—proved to be the more brutal of the two forces, employing neutron bombs on Kessel before Combine attack forces—augmented by one WarShip—arrived to drive off the Blakist attackers. [*This was an odd occurrence, as the WarShip* Siriwan *had no clue that enemy forces had even entered Kessel space when she arrived. –PA*]

The Thirtieth's remaining forces (estimated at about five Level IIIs in size) were nonetheless relocated by 3071 to the Free Worlds League Theater, staging from the world of Loyalty. Like most League-theater troops, this Division has largely remained in place as a defensive occupation force, as well as a check against possible aggression from the Duchy of Tamarind, whose recent raids against the Duchy of Graham-Marik have already cost this command one of its Level IIIs.

NOTES

DRACONIS THEATER

The Blakists' strategy in the Draconis Theater command roughly parallels that of its FedSuns Theater, focusing forces on the disruption and denial of military command networks over industrial and trade infrastructure. Initially, these forces were somewhat slower to attack the Combine directly—reportedly due to confusion in their ranks that suggest some truth to the Word's claims of intended support for the ruling Kurita family, rather than the rebellious Black Dragon Society. But when confronted by the stern resolve and power of the DCMS, these Draconis Theater Divisions quickly overcame their reluctance and responded with a level of brutality unseen beyond the Capellan and Protectorate Division forces.

UNIT EMBLEMS

14th Division (Glorious Repentance IV-nu): Supported by "Pocket WarShips," the Fourteenth Division first appeared when it assaulted Yorii in June of 3068, during which time a ROM detachment in their midst apparently released a deadly bio-warfare agent into several critical water reserves, sickening or killing millions over the next several years. As the Division employed false colors during the initial assault, the locals alternately blamed the Lyrans and the FedSuns as their world slid into chaos, rendering them unable to effectively respond when mercenaries and Protectorate troops eventually came to annex the planet and surrounding systems. The Fourteenth, meanwhile, moved on to raid several Combine worlds, starting with Pesht in February of 3069, then moving on to McAlister, Jeanette and Matamoras in 3070, Echo V and Qandahar in 3071, and Espakeh, Loysville and Ningxia in 3072. In each instance, the Fourteenth struck with a force of at least three Level IIIs, but evidence suggests that as many as five IIIs are assigned to this Division.

In 3073, the Fourteenth briefly dropped out of sight, but resurfaced in early 3074 with near-simultaneous strikes on the worlds of Midway and Isesaki. The Isesaki raid, as predicted, targeted corporate headquarters for Isesaki Shipping in the city of Ukonsoi, but adequate safeguards taken in advance have suitably diminished the effect of these losses on the company's Sphere-wide operations. [*We lost more than 300 valued employees to that strike; Kisu too quickly forgets our human losses. –PA*]

19th Division (Righteous Judgment IV-omicron): In September of 3069, the Nineteenth Division was revealed when it led a blitzkrieg assault on Algot, ostensibly in support of the Capellan Confederation. Apparently under-strength (only three Level IIIs were distinctly identified at the time), the Blakist forces used their aerospace assets to firebomb the AFFS barracks and then employed chemical weapons against the local population to crush resistance. In the following month, two more Level IIIs from this command appeared on Yangtze and won a quick victory there, but local resistance immediately surfaced. With no immediate reinforcements coming, the on-site commander destroyed several dams in a heavily populated valley area, flooding several cities to quell unrest and cripple the local infrastructure. Neither of these tactics worked for long, and by 3071, both worlds fell into general anarchy before the beleaguered Nineteenth withdrew to the Draconis Theater region.

Tasked with a string of supply depot raids all along the Combine-FedSuns border, the Nineteenth managed to hit a string of fifteen worlds from Ashio and Shinonoi to Matsuida and An Ting in the span of almost three years. Less interested in delivering significant infrastructure damage or engaging local military forces than in demolishing fuel and munitions warehouses staged for the Dragon's rimward defense region, these strikes cost the Dragon countless ryu and created no end to hassles in hunting down the raiders.

23rd Division (Merciful Victory IV-zeta): In June of 3068, the Twenty-third was apparently operating at only four Level IIIs when its forces—assigned Pocket WarShip support—struck at Altair and Asta in near-simultaneous offensives. In the confusion of the fighting, it remains unclear which elements of the Division made landfall on either world, but it is clear that their naval support delivered a mix of orbital and nuclear fire against planetary defense assets in an effort to shock planetary leaders into quick submission. On Altair, additional bio-chemical weapons were reportedly released, but post-battle analysis suggests the Combine defenders, in order to

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counter the Blakist use of nuclear arms and thwart an occupation, could have employed those weapons themselves. Regardless, the Twenty-third did not stay; satisfied with the "pacification" of both planets, the Division moved on after placing both worlds under quarantine.

In April of 3069, the Twenty-third launched another dual lightning assault on the Combine worlds of Moore and Sabik, this time backed up by mercenary forces and—according to a few odd reports—elements of an unknown Blakist Shadow Division (in actuality, this was the Opacus Venatori, who aided in the attack on Moore, reportedly as part of a field exercise). Lacking naval support this time, these offensives did not see the savagery of the Altair and Asta attacks, but on Moore, the initially successful assault culminated in a deadly conflagration in the swamps outside the planetary capital of Shizuoka. The infamous "Day of Fire," triggered by an accidental explosion, cost the Division an entire Level III, but also wiped out its opponents in the shattered Forty-fifth Dieron Regulars. Staging from Sabik, the Twenty-third ultimately went on to lead several additional raids into Combine space, striking as deeply as Irurzun in 3074.

UNIT EMBLEMS

28th Division (Promise of Deliverance IV-xi): The Twenty-eighth Division's first appearance in battle came in April of 3069, when at least three Level IIIs from this command swiftly conquered Ascella despite a lack of WarShip support or WMD use. Later supported by WarShips (or Pocket WarShips), this Division next appeared raiding Buckminster, where their orbital assets helped to quickly shatter the Seventh Amphigean Light Assault Group and several major cities. This significant damage to a Prefecture capital prompted the DCMS to move Wolf's Dragoons' Delta Regiment to that planet, and led directly to the Division's 3070 return on a second heavy raid, this time in support of the Forty-fifth Shadow Division. More focused on crippling the Dragoons than on planetary conquest, the two Blakist forces engaged the defenders with reckless aggression, and suffered major damage before withdrawing under the command of the Twenty-eighth's Precentor, David Baughman. Though they left behind a virtually shattered Delta Regiment, the two commands were so battered that it took a year of refit before either was seen again in battle. Once again paired up, both Divisions swiftly descended on Benjamin in May of 3072, shattered the Sixth Ghost Regiment, and began to dig in for an anticipated counterassault. In October of that year, however, the bulk of the Twenty-eighth was detailed to lead several raids against nearby worlds, leaving only a single Level III on Benjamin with the Forty-fifth Shadow when the DCMS made a push to reclaim the planet in November. Though these forces proved sufficient to repel the Dragon's attack, less than a month later renegade Nova Cat forces assaulted and effectively destroyed the Blakist defenders.

Reportedly, the Twenty-eighth returned to Benjamin in January of 3073, presumably to evacuate the surviving Shadow forces. Since then, this Division has remained active as a raiding force along the command and logistics routes between Benjamin and Buckminster, and was likely responsible for the demise of the Arkab delegation to Benjamin in June of 3074.

29th Division (Defiant Sacrifice IV-omega): In February of 3069, aerospace elements from the Twenty-ninth made this Division's first appearance while escorting a naval task force that blasted FedSuns and Combine troops on Benjamin. The Twenty-ninth (erroneously tagged as "Divine Fire" according to some media reports) never landed, however; instead, they and their task force briefly returned to the Dieron Military District region to launch numerous supporting raids throughout late 3069 and most of 3070. A lack of reported landings led ISF intelligence to suggest that the Twenty-ninth possessed no significant ground forces until they assaulted and occupied Pesht in February of 3072, backed by the Forty-second Shadow Division. Left to secure the world alone, the Twenty-ninth—who used at least one Alamo to hasten their conquest—was still holding Pesht when Clan Ghost Bear's forces struck with at least two Galaxies' worth of troops in 3074. Offered no quarter and no mercy, even this Division's transport and support assets were targeted and destroyed by the surprisingly brutal Clan assault, which left no survivors.

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32nd Division (Purity of Courage): The Thirty-second Division first appeared when it struck at Saffel in March of 3069. Executing a lightning blitz under cover of the Blakist White-Out, this Division managed to catch the local defenders at their barracks-city and eradicated them wholesale. After spending close to a year on-planet, helping to organize a Protectorate Militia for the world and winning over the government (possibly via blackmail and bribery), this Division was dispatched for raids deeper into Combine space, and has been credited with several minor strikes along the FedSuns and Outworlds border regions. Roughly half of this Division was eventually assigned to shore up defenses on Luthien alongside the Forty-second Shadow Division, and was present when Clan Ghost Bear dropped over two full Galaxies on the planet to annihilate the Word's presence there in 3074.

After the Bears obliterated the Shadow troops—ignoring horrendous losses in the bargain—the Thirty-second's panicked commander first attempted to bluff a nuclear counter-strike, and then offered terms for his Division's surrender and withdrawal. The Bears, ignoring threats and offers alike, subsequently eradicated the Thirty-second's forces en masse. The two remaining Level IIIs of this command believed to be at large have since disappeared as well, though our intelligence suggests they may simply have taken a low profile while returning to Protectorate space.

NOTES

PROTECTORATE MILITIA FORCES

Though the Word of Blake Militia has proven highly resourceful and resilient—with most Divisions remaining active despite the sustained offensive warfare to which the Word has exposed itself—Precentor-Martial Cameron St. Jamais has clearly not entrusted his Protectorate's defense to WoBM forces alone. Indeed, the past few years of this conflict have seen a sudden surge in the construction of military fortifications and infrastructure throughout the Blake Protectorate, suggesting that the Blakist leadership is hoping to fortify its conquests against a concerted counter-assault by the allied powers.

Critical to this defensive line are the so-called Protectorate Militia forces. Formally created in August of 3068, the Protectorate Militia is subservient to—but not technically part of—the regular Word of Blake Militia. More of a homegrown defense command, raised exclusively for the Blake Protectorate region, each Blake Protectorate force is tied to its native world, freeing interstellar transport assets for the Word's remaining military and logistics assets.

DEPLOYMENT

Not every world in the Blake Protectorate appears to have a fully functional Protectorate Militia force, but those that do tend to have between one and three combined-arms Divisions they can call on in the event of attack. Furthermore, we have confirmed that several Protectorate worlds have also established elaborate fortifications over the past few years to further provide for the support of Blakist command and control across the region, and to act as bases for Protectorate Militia commands. Some of these, according to the reports, may rival the Castles Brian of old in terms of complexity and strength.

UNIT EMBLEMS

OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

Though they sport uniform color, insignia and nomenclature schemes, the Protectorate Militia differs from Word of Blake military standards in a number of key ways, many of which tie into their "local" nature.

Organization: Protectorate Militia forces use a modified form of standard Inner Sphere organization, rather than a strict ComStar or Word of Blake base-six arrangement. Four-unit lances are common, with six-unit demi-companies operating as a common "middle ground" between these and Blakist formats. Twelve-unit full companies are also used, but standard three-company battalions are often referred to as "demi-divisions," while full regiments are classified as Divisions. (continued on p. 103)

NOTES

PERIPHERY THEATER

With so much of its energies focused on the Inner Sphere Houses, and with at least three realms beyond the Houses [*as well as a great many pirate forces, we suspect –PA*] under effective Blakist control, the Word of Blake has left its Periphery theater of operations sparsely covered. In fact, all three of the Divisions known to be assigned to this area have been sighted primarily in and around Canopian space, apparently focused on disrupting the activities of the one major Periphery power to be actively allied with a Great House. Smaller commands—notably those raised locally or tied to Word-friendly states—have taken up the slack these Divisions do not presently cover.

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16th Division (The Razors IV-eta): In 3068, the Sixteenth was the first of two "mystery Divisions" that raided Hesperus II. Striking within months of the start of the war, the Sixteenth did not remain in-system long, but simply landed to strike at the Doering Electronics factory, damage the local defense forces and withdraw. In September of the following year, elements of this Division showed up at Algol, alongside the Seventeenth Division, but also did not remain long. Exhibiting extreme impatience, the Blakists at Algol threatened the use of WMDs against the planet to secure a swift surrender from the local government, freeing this Division to move onward even as other elements of the Sixteenth led the first strike on Castleton in conjunction with Gray's Ghosts and an assortment of lesser mercenary reinforcements. A dedicated asteroid-based defense force held back the combined assault force, and the Sixteenth had barely made a beachhead by the start of 3070 when the WoBM command ordered the Division's full recall and reassigned it to the Periphery Theater.

In 3071, units sporting FWLM colors—identified as likely elements of the Sixteenth—were spotted in Canopian space, raiding the worlds of Lockton, Adherlwin and Megarez. In 3072, Capellan forces on Early Dawn repelled this Division's assault there after a pitched battle, but at least four complete Level IIIs were known to be at large despite this setback, and have been credited with raids that struck the Canopian worlds of Afarsin, Lindenmarle, Tarol IV, Techne's Revenge and Wildwood over the next eighteen months.

26th Division (Immortal Sanctuary IV-epsilon): The 26th Division's first recorded appearance in the Jihad came when this unit swiftly conquered the relatively defenseless world of Mirach in September of 3069, though elements of this Division assisted directly with the capture of nearby Tikonov as well. After relinquishing both worlds to Protectorate Militia and their fellow Divisions in the Protectorate Theater, this Division moved out into the Periphery, and was confirmed to be staging on Regis Roost, a Taurian world facing the Fronc Reaches and the Magistracy of Canopus. From there, reliable reports have placed the Twenty-sixth on supply and logistics raids against the Reaches and even the rimward edge of Capellan space. These actions, it is believed, are being carried out with the tacit approval of Taurian Protector Grover Shraplen—if not outright at his request. Adept at quick strikes and swift withdrawals, the Twenty-sixth is most notable for having sustained the least amount of damage in the war so far.

34th Division (Purity of Honor): In September of 3069, the Thirty-fourth was no more than four mixed Level IIIs in size when the Word sent the Division to conquer the FedSuns world of Schedar and support efforts to encircle and capture Tikonov. With only two IIIs for the Schedar attack, this Division nonetheless succeeded thanks to Schedar's nearly non-existent defenses, the fear sown by the White-Out and calculated bluffs by the Division's commander. Like the Twenty-sixth, the Thirty-fourth shared its muscle with the Tikonov assault force, ensuring a nominal Blakist victory there as well. That victory started to unravel shortly afterward, when this Division was reunited, assigned several mercenary commands for support and shipped off to the Magistracy of Canopus, where ROM forces had already crippled local interstellar communications and unleashed numerous minor forces and free agents against the unsuspecting population.

Arriving in late 3070, the Thirty-fourth tore into the disorganized Canopian defenses at Canopus itself, occupying the Magistracy capital and scavenging from the remains of the shattered forces there. As the Word's war on Canopus widened, individual IIIs from this Division became a fearsome sight on planets surrounding the capital. Now operating at a combat strength of six Level IIIs, the Thirty-fourth remains active in opposing the Canopian-Capellan forces still fighting to liberate the Magistracy's capital.

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Transportation: All Protectorate Militia units are local and system-bound, as indicated earlier. But while they may lack interstellar transports, and thus may not relocate unless the Word itself provides the JumpShips to do so, most Protectorate Militia have an allotment of DropShips for transcontinental movement.

Composition: Protectorate Militia forces rarely—if ever—claim a force composition of more than one-third in BattleMech assets. More commonly, these troops employ conventional vehicles, conventional infantry (usually with some battle armor support) and a mix of aerospace and conventional fighters.

Personnel: At least fifty percent of each Protectorate Militia "division" is drawn from the local population of the planet they defend. The rest are deliberately relocated from other Protectorate worlds, likely as a means of discouraging defections.

Equipment: The technology used by the Protectorate Militia is generally handed down from the WoBM forces or upgraded older models. This yields a slightly lower technology rating than the WoBM, but a better technology standard than the average for the Inner Sphere.

Designations: Protectorate Militia forces do not use Blakist-style nomenclature, but instead draw their name from the planet they defend. Numerical designations are used only to differentiate Divisions assigned to the same world. Thus, there are no such designations as the "Third Protectorate Militia Division," but there may be a "Second Caph Protectorate Militia Division."

PROTECTORATE MILITIA DEPLOYMENT

As of 1 January 3075, the following worlds are known to have at least one Protectorate Militia Division stationed on them. Where two or more Divisions are active, a number appears in parentheses to indicate the estimated Division count.

Acamar	Dubhe (2)	Liberty	Saiph
Acubens (2)	Dyev (2)	Lipton (2)	Schedar (2)
Addicks (2)	Epsilon Eridani	Lyons (2)	Sheratan
Al Na'ir (3)	Epsilon Indi	Menkar (2)	Shiloh (2)
Alya	Fletcher	Milton (2)	Talitha (2)
Ankaa (2)	Fomalhaut	Mirach (2)	Tall Trees
Arboris	Genoa (3)	Moore (2)	Telos IV (2)
Ascella	Halloran V (2)	New Aragon (2)	Terra Firma
Asta	Hean	New Canton (2)	Tikonov (3)
Berenson (3)	Hsien	New Earth (3)	Towne (2)
Bharat (2)	Ingress	New Home	Tybalt (2)
Bryant (2)	Irian (3)	Phecda (2)	Van Diemen IV (2)
Caph	Kansu (2)	Pleione (3)	Wasat (3)
Capolla	Kaus Borealis (2)	Quentin (3)	Wing (2)
Cor Caroli	Kawich	Rigil Kentarus	Yangtze (2)
Caselton (2)	Keid	Rio (2)	Zion (3)
Cebalrai	Kervil (2)	Rochelle (3)	Zollikofen (2)
Chertan (2)	Ko (2)	Sabik (2)	Zosma (2)
Demeter (3)	Lambrecht (3)	Saffel	Zurich (2)

**Worth noting: Prior to Devlin Stone's emergence, the Word of Blake also had Protectorate Militia Divisions on Gurnet, Kittery and Scituate, and were in the process of building similar units on Denbar and Spica. All these forces were reportedly destroyed or defected to the Kittery Resistance.*

THE WORD OF BLAKE PROTECTORATE

UNIT EMBLEMS

SHADOW DIVISIONS

The so-called Shadow Divisions appear to be the hyper-elite of the Word of Blake, whose appearance was as much of a shock to rank-and-file Blakists as to our own intelligence agencies. Comprised of the most fanatical troops, enhanced with cybernetics on a scale never before seen, these Divisions—thirteen in all—could only have emerged from facilities and training camps hidden even from the Word's own military leadership. This would explain the Shadow soldiers' almost alien attitude toward non-augmented troops (whom they call "frails"), and their apparent separation from the normal Blakist chain of command.

Based on their own proclamations and extensive study, our analysis has confirmed that these forces were initially raised, trained and equipped for a genocidal showdown with the Clans, as most of their augmentations are aimed at besting the genetically enhanced Clan warriors. The shift in focus to the Jihad has turned these forces against the Great Houses.

Most of the Shadow Divisions currently act as assault raiders, smashing objectives and defense forces in ways aimed at shattering morale and inciting terror. A few, however, have made a practice of holding onto their objectives, often for years at a time.

40th Shadow Division (Sariel's Conquerors-exact composition unknown): Sariel's Conquerors captured Hesperus II after other Blakist forces spent several preceding months weakening the planet's defenses through lightning raids. Remaining in place, largely because of the importance of their prize, the Fortieth became a conduit for replacement machines and weapons produced at the Defiance factories. In May of 3073, a major portion of this command left Hesperus to spearhead a raid against our operations on Arcturus. Backed up by the Burr's Black Cobras mercenary unit and a sizeable portion of Word of Blake Militia troops (presumably elements of the Second Division), this force inflicted heavy damage, but not without significant losses of its own. These casualties, however, do not quite explain the Fortieth's sudden withdrawal, or brief disappearance for several months [*likely a supply run to Gabriel? –PA*] before returning to Hesperus in late August.

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In September of 3073, Fortieth Division elements briefly joined up with Apollyon's Chosen to destroy the Twenty-second Skye Guards on Caledonia, but had returned to Hesperus—and to full operational status—in time to face the assault of Devlin Stone's coalition there in November of 3074. Though details remain sketchy, it is believed that at least three IIIs from this Division survived the fighting, but it remains unclear if they departed Hesperus with the regular WoBM forces that quit the planet, or whether they remain on this critical factory world.

UNIT EMBLEMS

41st Shadow Division (Uriel's Blinding Fire-exact composition unknown): In 3071, the Forty-first Shadow Division arrived at Canopus IV and set the entire capital city of Crimson ablaze, capping off a years-long struggle between the Word and Canopian loyalist forces. Since then, they have remained the bane of the Canopian resistance, raiding the Magistracy worlds of Bass, Lindenmarle, Megarez, Adherlwin and Borgan's Rift—often in groups of one or two Level IIIs, leaving their base of operations unknown, but frequently employing the same incendiary tactics to root out and destroy their opponents.

In June of 3073, a joint Canopian and Capellan task force, led by heavy tactical support from the Magistracy's fearsome (but reportedly decimated) Ebon Magistrate, finally tracked the Blinding Fire to its base world of Aspropirgos in the Free Worlds League. In a savage battle that pitted cybernetic warriors against each other [*and saw limited use of Capellan-made tailored chemical weapons, we believe, such as "catalytic" munitions designed to ignite myomer implants, which the Capellans seem unwilling to share. –PA*], the Forty-first lost virtually all of its supporting infantry as well as its staging base, and was forced to withdraw deeper into League space. Though rumors that Manei Domini operatives are still at large within Canopian space persist, we believe that the majority of the Forty-first's three surviving Level IIIs may have returned to Gibson as of this writing.

42nd Shadow Division (Belial's Angels of Chaos-exact composition unknown: In 3071, the Forty-second Shadow made its debut as a support command for occupation and combat forces on Luthien and Pesht. In 3072, elements of this Division attempted to break through Clan Nova Cat's defenses on Irece, but were intercepted and damaged thanks to an alert Nova Cat sentry. After withdrawing to Luthien, they fended off a determined Nova Cat counterattack, taking severe damage in the bargain, but ultimately emerging victorious after employing tactical nuclear weapons to shatter the remaining Clan troops.

Regrettably, our own media and intelligence reports overestimated the Cats' effectiveness, which was mainly limited to the orbital action. Nevertheless, the forty-second Division was still undergoing repairs in December of 3074 when Ghost Bear forces suddenly assaulted Luthien and tore through the Blakists there with more than two Galaxies of troops. While the Forty-second accounted for more than three Clusters of Ghost Bear casualties without resorting to the nuclear option (some estimates put this figure close to five Clusters, but cannot be confirmed), they eventually succumbed to the Bears' onslaught. None of the Forty-second are believed to have survived as of this writing.

43rd Shadow Division (Haborym's Legion-exact composition unknown): In 3072, the Forty-third Shadow Division first appeared at the head of a major assault aimed at Arc-Royal, supported by the Second and Thirty-seventh WoBM Divisions. Even though these forces also fielded WarShip support, the attackers failed to land more than a few Level IIs on the planet, and the entire task force withdrew with major damage to all of its component subcommands. [*Evidence since suggests that the attack itself may have been a smokescreen to deliver agents to Arc-Royal in an effort to disrupt allied activities centered there, but this possibility remains nebulous at best. –PA*]

In 3074, Haborym's Legion returned—this time on Radstadt, where, in concert with unidentified mercenary forces, the Blakists were discovered preparing a major sortie against the Ghost Bears. When the Bears attacked, however, the Forty-third quickly sacrificed its mercenary support and delivered several neutron bomb strikes against the Radstadt capital, while simultaneously releasing a virulent biological weapon into the planetary water supply. [*In the past year, not only has this bio-weapon brought half the planet's aquatic food chain to the brink of extinction, it has allegedly reduced the population by over 150 million ethnic Rasalhagians and Clansmen-roughly 17 percent of the planetary populace. –PA*] Scarcely a single III from this Division survived the Bears' assault, which included at least two full Clusters. Their whereabouts are unknown at this time, but their actions on Radstadt may well have triggered the Ghost Bear Clan's recent rage against the Word.

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44th Shadow Division (Avitue's Avenging Angels-exact composition unknown): The Angels' first major action—so far as we can determine—was the conquest of Yunnah in early 3072, but elements of this command (including its leader, Precentor Avitue) have been spotted across the Inner Sphere since 3068, with many attached to operations by special independent units, like the Opacus Venatori.

In late 3072, the Forty-fourth was dispatched to New Avalon under orders to secure the FedSuns capital without resorting to excessive casualties or weapons of mass destruction [*Likely to forestall another Kentares effect, though why they should have worried about such things while brutalizing the other Houses more readily remains unclear, or perhaps suggests a certain sympathy for the Suns that may exist at the Word's highest levels. –PA*]. By early 3073, in concert with the remnants of the Thirty-first and Thirty-sixth Divisions, the Forty-fourth pulled off a narrow victory in the Third Battle for New Avalon, killing Marshal of the Armies Jackson Davion and securing the Mount Davion command post and the ruins of Avalon City. The position ultimately proved untenable, however, and the Word recalled all of its Divisions by 3074, even as allied forces arrayed themselves for another pitched fight for the planet.

Interestingly enough, our information suggests that Avitue and her Angels were badly damaged in the Third Battle, and that the coordination of the Blakist forces on New Avalon for the last year actually hinged on the Thirty-sixth's commander, Precentor Geoffrey Zucker. However, when the Blakists departed, Avitue's was the last force to leave Mount Davion, evidently collapsing or partially collapsing the complex while doing so.

45th Shadow Division (Arioch's Avengers-exact composition unknown): Originally known as Tunrida's Terror when they first appeared to attack Buckminster alongside the Twenty-eighth WoBM in 3070, the Forty-fifth lost its commander—and its maiden name—in battle against Wolf's Dragoons' Delta Regiment. In the fierce fighting, the Blakists inflicted heavy casualties against the Dragoons, but at a steep cost to their own forces—including their WarShip support. With Precentor Tunrida killed, the Forty-fifth withdrew under orders from the Twenty-eighth's commander, Precentor David Baughman—though accounts conflict over in what order they did so.

Command of this Division subsequently fell to Precentor Arioch, and the unit was rebuilt as Arioch's Avengers. Once more alongside the Twenty-eighth WoBM, the Forty-fifth conquered Benjamin in 3072, and (despite the later absence of their WoBM support) managed to repel a DCMS effort to retake the planet in November of that year. A mere month later, however, the Division was scarcely recovering from the DCMS attack when Clan Nova Cat dropped an entire Galaxy on Benjamin in a sudden and inexplicable blitzkrieg. Only a single Level III reportedly escaped the carnage, but this remains unconfirmed as the Avengers—or another Shadow command sporting their colors—have yet to resurface.

46th Shadow Division (Ipos' Lions of Destiny-exact composition unknown): Though this Division was undoubtedly at large some time before then, the Forty-sixth's first confirmed strike came in December of 3072, when a single Level III from this unit overwhelmed FedSuns security forces at a major repair and replenishment depot on Firgrove. Single-mindedly focused on their objective, the Lions evidently did not address the defenders directly until they had ensured that their objective—the depot itself—was crippled, at which point they savaged the AFFS forces and then withdrew in good order.

Little else has been seen—or reported—about this command since that attack, prompting our intelligence to classify it as a raiding command that may be fighting as much under false colors as under its own. Possibly fixated on the Federated Suns region, these forces may have been responsible for alleged Taurian raids on Taygeta, Hobson, Brusset and Hyalite that occurred over the past year.

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47th Shadow Division (Azazel's Watchers-exact composition unknown): The Forty-seventh's first confirmed combat appearance came in October of 3072, when this Division formed the backbone of a determined and devastating assault on Galatea. Supported by the Eleventh WoBM, along with the Bullard's Armored Cavalry and Gray's Ghosts mercenary commands, the Watchers executed flashy—and seemingly suicidal, if some INN feeds were to be believed—combat drops into the capital of Galatean City.

After spending a year on-planet, making sport of hunting down and killing mercenary stragglers who escaped the initial invasion and failed to join the Word's agenda, the Forty-seventh finally moved on, operating at full strength thanks to a surplus of battlefield salvage. However, aside from some sporadic reports of raids against Carsphairn, Corridan V, Dromini IV, Konstance, Ryde and Unukalhai—all reported over the past year—this Division has not been seen in action since Galatea. [*Honored one, as you know, the Forty-seventh appeared at Odessa and Gabriel during our recent operations there. The post-battle analysis of their combat performance and likely disposition since then is still pending, however. –PA*]

48th Shadow Division (Rimmon's Ravagers-exact composition unknown): In August of 3071, an asteroid struck the Capellan world of Necromo with enough force to duplicate the simultaneous impact of several hundred nuclear weapons. While Capellan authorities noticed the silence, it was months before they could determine the cause, given the complete breakdown of HPG communications across the Confederation—and even longer before word reached them that Blakist troops had sacked the planet less than a week before. [*Given the events on Arkab, Shinonoi and Taurus, we no longer believe this to be an unfortunate coincidence, of course. –PA*]

At the heart of the assault was, reportedly, the previously unknown Forty-eighth Shadow Division, whose aerospace assets helped to neutralize the shipyard defenses and aided in the destruction of the Capellan WarShips *Sundermann Rhys* and *Anhui* (though the Word may have lost a WarShip in the bargain). Planetside, the Ravagers swiftly found and destroyed the Shin Legion and the Home Guard—two commands that were still healing from Operation Sovereign Justice—and spent very little time on salvage or occupation, departing mere days before the first asteroids struck the planet and obliterated its largest cities.

Our sources tell us that the Forty-eighth Division is also likely the one that raided Bora in mid-3072, withdrawing after a cursory engagement with the CCAF defenders there. Since then, they may have been responsible for a string of raids along the Confederation's coreward front, including Tsitsang, Styk and Old Kentucky—all struck during the past year.

49th Shadow Division (Dantalion's Dirge-exact composition unknown): The first "official" appearance of the Forty-ninth—then named Naamah's Nightwalkers—occurred when the unit hot-dropped on Regulus City on 6 June 3072. Their assault, which obliterated the First Regulan Hussars and set the capital city ablaze, was the culmination of a years-long effort by the Division's commander, a master infiltrator named Precentor Naamah. Naamah spent years under the identity of Sonja Amora, a local celebrity socialite who won the trust (and heart) of Regulus' Prince Kirc Cameron-Jones solely to destroy his realm from within. As it happens, however, her Nightwalkers' fire-bombing of Regulus was not the first time the Division struck at the Regulans in combat. In fact, the command destroyed the Second Regulan Hussars on Wallis in May of 3071, at the time sporting Marik Commonwealth colors.

After the razing of Regulus, the Forty-ninth returned to Gibson, where Naamah evidently—and inexplicably—yielded command to her executive officer, Precentor Dantalion (resulting in the unit's name change) in early 3073. The Dirge was still present on Gibson and held out alongside Apollyon's Chosen against a hasty, Regulan retaliatory strike later that year, before deploying to Irian to help combat the insurgency there in 3074.

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50th Shadow Division (Eligos' Hell Knights-exact composition unknown): Like most of the Shadow Divisions, the Hell Knights did not make a first appearance until a few years after the Jihad began, lending credence to the theory that these units—reportedly forged and prepared to battle the Clans—were not in position to readily deal with a war in the Inner Sphere. Nonetheless, the Fiftieth managed to pull off dual raids at Son Hoa and Khon Kaen in 3071, curiously delivering minimal damage to the factories on both worlds. Their lightning strikes sent the local defenders into chaos, but the Division's single-minded focus on capturing equipment and scattering the defending forces minimized the actual damage they inflicted. But if this performance led anyone to believe that the Hell Knights shunned deadly combat, those beliefs would be dashed in 3072, when allied ComStar, Lyran and Exiled Wolf forces faced a hard fight against the Fiftieth to win back Donegal. The 50th's response largely focused on the Clan and Com Guard forces, inflicting the most damage to those two aspects of Victor Steiner-Davion's command, and likely contributed to the Blakists' defeat, as the neglected Lyran forces were able to devote their efforts against the Eighteenth WoBM. When the Eighteenth was forced to withdraw, the 50th's aggressive stance turned into a defensive fighting withdrawal, abandoning Donegal to fight another day.

That day came roughly two weeks later, when the Hell Knights reappeared on Coventry for resupply. Establishing their own foothold on the blockaded and semi-controlled world, the Fiftieth used Coventry as a staging ground for material raids against the Lyran Alliance worlds of Guatavita and Krievci. Relocating to an unknown base location [*possibly Gabriel –PA*], this Division raided Atocongo and New Exford in 3073, engaging and heavily damaging both LAAF and Kell Hounds forces, before suffering severe damage against Exiled Wolf Clan forces on Bountiful Harvest in December. After vanishing for several months, elements of this Division reappeared along the Lyran-Free Worlds border with bold strikes against Son Hoa, Stantsiya and Kamenz, followed by a brief occupation of war-torn Bolan in July of 3074. We suspect this Division is still under-strength; the latest reports indicate their most recent raid on Gallery (in October of 3074) demonstrated an increasing reliance on terror tactics.

51st Shadow Division (Azrael's Terran Guard-exact composition unknown): The Fifty-first Shadow Division may have been among the last of the elite units formed by the Word of Blake for their Manei Domini, but they were ironically the first to see combat in the war when they were dispatched to Terra ahead of ComStar's ill-fated Case White. Led by Precentor Azrael, the Terran Guard savagely defeated a significant portion of the Com Guard troops that landed in Northern Europe, with minimal assistance from local WoBM and TerraSec forces. The Terran Guard has not left humanity's birthworld since that day, but it is said that elements of this Division—often in little more than single Level II-sized formations—have been dispatched across the sol system, making appearances for weeks at a time in locales such as Titan, Io, Mars, Luna and even Venus.

52nd Shadow Division (Apollyon's Chosen-exact composition unknown): Representing the Word's absolute best and the most devout followers of the order's unseen Master, Apollyon's Chosen was presumably first activated as recently as 3068, mere weeks before the start of the Jihad. However, the Division did not appear as a whole until the Word-friendly government ruled by Paul Marik (through his daughter, Corrine) ceded authority over the world of Gibson to the Master and his favorite cyborg minion. The Chosen swiftly—and brutally—put down all opposition on Gibson and transformed the world into a dark shadow of its former self, with massive factory complexes and camps now dotting many of the planet's surviving cities. Some rumors suggest that Apollyon's plan for these camps is to produce a new generation of deadly—but ultimately expendable—cyber-soldiers.

THE WORD OF BLAKE PROTECTORATE

In April of 3073, the Fifty-second launched a bloody campaign through the Protectorate and into Lyran space. Beginning on Hall, ostensibly in response to an urgent request for aid and discussion of contract terms by the Word-employed Martian Cuirassiers, the Chosen eradicated the Cuirassiers instead and then razed the city they had been charged with securing. Two months later, the Division struck at Alphard in the Free Worlds League, where they destroyed the remnants of the Legion of the Rising Sun before somehow returning to Gibson in time to repel a Regulan assault there in August (with aid from the Forty-ninth Shadow). In another incredible demonstration of mobility, the Chosen appeared again on Caledonia in September—joined this time by elements of the Fortieth Shadow—to obliterate the Twenty-second Skye Rangers before the Lyrans could strike at Hesperus II. The campaign evidently wrapped up in February of 3074 with a final assault on Bolan, in which Apollyon's damaged but still deadly Chosen wiped out the Second Brion's Legion mercenary regiment and sacked the planetary capital, throwing the entire world and its surrounding regions into chaos. Following this orgy of destruction, the Chosen returned to Gibson, where they repelled a Regulan raiding force with aid from the Forty-ninth Shadow. As of this writing, the Chosen are still believed to be on Gibson, operating at a full strength of six Level IIIs.

UNIT EMBLEMS

Opacus Venatori ("Shadow Hunters"-exact composition unknown): Not technically a Shadow Division (although they are nominally attached to the Fifty-second), the Opacus Venatori are an independent command shared between the Word of Blake's Light of Mankind and the Manei Domini. Originally formed as two separate commands in 3066, according to our reports, they are currently commanded by Specter Precentor Berith, a Manei Domini close to Precentor Apollyon. This covert operations unit—in various incarnations—has been linked to many of the Word's successes, including the elimination of WolfNet assets in the former Chaos March, the capture of Lord Hohiro Kurita on Dieron, the destruction of the Deneb Light Cavalry on Deneb Kaitos, and the bloody purge of the New Gibson Freedom League cells during Apollyon's occupation and "transformation" of Gibson.

The exact composition of the Opacus Venatori is unknown, though it is commonly accepted that these "Shadow Hunters" consist of at least two Level IIs, utilizing the most advanced equipment fielded by the Word of Blake. Members of the command have been spotted on Dieron, Hamal, Achernar, Thorin, Dayton, Rigil Kentarus and other worlds [*Including Odessa, according to our latest analysis. –PA*].

CRITICAL ADDENDUM!

Master,

In my observations and analysis I came upon a few confirmed cases of the Shadow Divisions employing increasingly prototypical weapons on their new Celestial-series OmniMechs. A number of configurations have been identified, some carrying Clan weapons, and others with more experimental technologies. Apparently dubbed the Caelestis configurations, it remains unclear whether these are truly test-bed configurations, or intended for wider deployment among all of the Word's elite forces.

Our observations continue in order to determine the source of these configurations.

NOTES

MERCENARY SUPPORT FORCES

For more than a decade prior to the Jihad, intelligence agencies across the Inner Sphere noted that the Word of Blake was heavily active in hiring mercenary commands, legitimate and otherwise. Financed at least in part though a number of methods, ranging from legitimate hires via the MRBC to off-Commission solicitations using dummy corporations, the Word retained hundreds—if not thousands—of mercenary commands in various sizes. Indeed, so many irregular troops were employed through so many subtle means that in some cases we have examined, outfits ultimately paid for by Word intermediaries would find themselves in combat with others on the Blakists' payroll. [*That infamous incident on Epsilon Eridani between the Lone Star Regiment and Redfield's Renegades comes to mind. –PA*]

In the years before the war, the Blakists staged a lot of their mercenaries for various operations, with notable focus on the Chaos March and the Circinus Federation—areas that have become effective protectorates of the Word today. Additional troops were evidently seeded across the Inner Sphere for other undisclosed operations, though again it seems almost as if the Word's left hand did not know what its right hand was doing.

When the Jihad erupted, many of these troop shuffles continued, but in short order the key forces aligned in what appears now to be a rough approximation of the same theaters where the WoBM now operates. As with regular Division operations, the mercenary forces under Blakist employ have tailored their activities to suit their theater objectives.

Protectorate Region

The majority of the mercenary commands employed in the Blake Protectorate Theater perform garrison, riot control and cadre duties—all aimed at solidifying the security of Protectorate worlds against enemy attack. They are vaguely arranged into two ranks of troops, those stationed close to the Protectorate border and those stationed within one jump of Terra.

Lyran Alliance Region

Unlike the Protectorate Region, the outer region forces are employed for attack roles, specifically objective raids, reconnaissance raids and support for assault operations led by primary Blakist forces. The Lyran Alliance forces are typical in this regard.

Federated Suns Region

As with the Lyran region, the mercenaries employed in the Federated Suns Theater are focused on offensive operations mostly aimed at disrupting industry and command capabilities. They have also seen extensive use in supporting major offensives, such as the efforts against New Avalon.

Capellan Confederation Region

Like the other outer-region forces, the mercenaries of the Capellan Theater have mainly been tasked with attack roles ranging from objective raids to reconnaissance raids and assault-support operations. A lot of operations also focused on misdirection, stirring up trouble along the tense border against the Federated Suns. A bubble of forces in this region also found themselves tasked with maintaining the mini-Protectorate that formed around Kittery during the FedSuns-Capellan conflict.

Free Worlds League Region

The Free Worlds League region has seen less use of offensive operations and more defensive roles for its mercenary commands. Because the Word's strategy for the League relies so heavily on the efforts of Atreus' pro-Blakist regime to keep the majority of the Free Worlds under their thumb, the mercenaries here spend more time hunting insurgents and "peacekeeping" than anything else.

Draconis Combine Region

The mercenaries of the Draconis Combine region—like those of the Lyran and FedSuns theaters—are devoted mainly to raiding and assault-support operations.

Periphery Region

As with regular Divisions, mercenary forces appear to be sparse in the Periphery region. Where Blakist diplomacy has apparently taken hold over key realms like the Circinus Federation and the Taurian Concordat, most activities in this region are in support of these Blakist allies. Offensive operations, meanwhile, are aimed at hostile states, such as the Magistracy of Canopus and the Marian Hegemony.

THE W

Mercenary Deployments and Status

The attached list of mercenaries assigned to these theaters is not exhaustive, but a rough overview of the major commands actively employed by the Word of Blake in the Inner Sphere. Where possible, units have been identified and followed by a listing of worlds where we believe them to have operated (including their years of operation there). Additional units are undoubtedly filling gaps in the Word's military network over and above those listed here.

In addition, where possible, entries include notes on each command's operational status (destroyed or rebelled against Blakist command). While the reasons for any mercenary command's continued employment with the Word may vary with the given unit's membership, it should be noted that all commands presently employed by the Blakists—whether legitimized by the Mercenary Review and Bonding Commission or not—have been branded as rogue and/or wanted by the MRBC since the start of the war. This unilateral (and arguably illegal) declaration essentially placed a price on the heads of all mercenaries actively working for the Word of Blake. While likely intended to discourage pro-Blakist mercenary service, this policy may in fact have discouraged many commands from breaking ranks with the Word, for fear that doing so would only add to the possible bounties as their only remaining allies—the Word itself—would then come looking for them.

KNOWN WORD OF BLAKE MAJOR MERCENARY DEPLOYMENTS

Protectorate Region
Blanc's Coyotes (New Home [67-68])
Broadsword Legion (Outreach [67-68], Destroyed in 3068)
Burr's Black Cobras (Bryant [67], New Home [68], Dieron [69-72], Arcturus [73])
Canned Heat (Saiph [67-71])
Carson's Renegades (Addicks [68], Caph [71])
Clifton's Rangers (Keid [67-71])
51st Dark Panzer Jaegers (Outreach [67], Destroyed in 3067)
Fists of Mokal (Terra Firma [67-71])
The Furies (Capolla [67-71])
Hannibal's Hermits (Keid [67], Dieron [68-70])
HeavyHell Raisers (Galatea [67], Wasat [71], Irian [72], Rebelled in 3074)
Hsein's Hotheads (Hsein [67-69])
Khasperov's Knights (Ingress [67-68], Quentin [69-70])
Martian Cuirassiers (Fletcher [67], Lessales [72*], Galatea [72], Hall [73], Destroyed in 3073)
Mobile Fire (New Earth [67-68], Imbros III [69])
Simonson's Cutthroats (Caph [67-68], Ankaa [69], St. Ives [70])
Stealthy Tigers (Hall [67-71])
Tiger Sharks (Outreach [67], Destroyed in 3067)
Waco Rangers (Outreach [67], Destroyed in 3067)
Wannamaker's Widowmakers (Galatea [67], Epsilon Eridani [68-70], Outreach [71-73])

Lyran Region
Bullard's Armored Cavalry (Zorn's Keep [67], Addicks [69], Galatea [72])
Gray's Ghosts (Andiron [67], Edasich [68], Castleton [69], Galatea [72])

FedSuns Region
Broadstreet Bullies (Fomalhaut [68], Basalt [69-71])
Bronson's Horde (Epsilon Eridani [67], Orestes [68], Tybalt [69-70], New Avalon [71-73])
Lafeyette Legion (Acamar [68], Unknown* [69])

Capellan Region
Black Angus Boys (Celentaro [67], Royalston/Atlas [69], Beid [70], Kittery [71-72])
Dragon's Breath (Keisen [67], Foochow [69], Sian [70])
Jacob's Juggernauts (Bryant [67], Muphrid [68-70], Bryant [71], Raballa [72])
Olsen's Rangers (Victoria [67-68])

Free Worlds Region
Swann's Cavaliers (Galisteo [67-68], Gibson [71])
Raymond's Armored Cavalry (Fletcher [67-68], Wasat [70-71], Destroyed in 3071)
Redfield's Renegades (Epsilon Eridani [67], Irian [69])

Draconis Region
Sathen's Snipers (Galatea [67], Luthien [69-73])

Periphery Region
Lone Star Regiment (Epsilon Eridani [67-68], Mithron [70], Pleiades/Merope [71-72])
Prey's Divisionals (New Vallis [69-71])
Quint's Olympian Groundpounders (Deirdre's Den [67])
Vulgar Bulgars (Baltazar III [67])

**Data on these units remains unconfirmed as of this writing.*

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

NOTES

Honored One,

This woman is mad. The rantings of a madwoman are strewn across the hundreds of electronic pages within this datapad, with perhaps a few salient truths scattered amid the chaff. Her opinions, her dogma, her obscenities—all fill these documents amid the dossiers of hundreds of nobles and military leaders. I have found the technical specifications of dozens of lostech designs, operative codes and system labels. There may be no way to match up thousands of keyword phrases with names; we'd need a ROM database to work from and the Precentor Martial informed me that it's nearly impossible to tell which ones Parrdeau and her cronies didn't hit with their viral "bombs" when they left.

ComStar-ROM is effectively blind and dumb.

I've culled many of her more coherent comments here, as well as news-net snippets we found that seemed to pique her interest. I suspect there's an embedded code in the writings as a whole, possibly even including the thousands of gibberish words and languages thrown in. It took my team of analysts a full month just to cull these phrases that make some type of sense.

At least this was easier than the Word's "White-Out" from several years ago, but I suspect the algorithm that unlocks whatever further secrets exist in this record may be based on that cryptic lock. And from all accounts, we've progressed little in deciphering that gigantic mess.

So here is what I have found, Lord. If even a quarter of this is true, the full contents of these documents are too horrifying to consider.

—Peter Abdulsattah

OVERVIEW

…A Keeper of Secrets is what I am. A foot in each world, access to everyone's closets—it's enough to drive mortal men mad.

I walk the path of shadow and light. Am I pretentious for being such an egotist? I believe I have earned that right. Over fifteen years have I fooled that old retard and his half-dwarf protégé into thinking ComStar was the "new order" in intelligence, a deadly inheritor of the fearsome ROM of old.

What a crock of crap I sold them.

All under the noses of the supposedly "vaunted" and "revered" Focht and his puppet Davion…

…so many operations, so many secrets, so many Keys…

…Alice Phuong never did find what Siriwan had buried under Imperial City…

LOOKING GLASS

…loss of HPG Prime in Unity City was a blow. So much technology, lost. Though Blake never mentions if they found the rest of the Tesla Project…

…bastard Kerensky left with more than just the SLDF to kill them in the depths of space. He took the twins with him. And he knew it, too. I suspect (and some evidence from Huntress supports this) that he planned on raising them as his own little robots, build a generation or three of them, and then they would return at the head of a massive interstellar army. Blake knew this—I've seen the sacred journal—and ComStar was created in part to protect the Inner Sphere from Kerensky's perfidy.

I've long suspected Nicholas was a baby-eater and had the twins over for dinner one night during their Exodus…

VICTOR STEINER-DAVION MARRIED?

(12 November 3074)

Skye [SKYE EXPRESS] Today—exclusively in *The Skye Express*—we lift the shroud of secrecy that has veiled Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion's private life. Former First Prince of the former Federated Commonwealth, and voted by OUR READERS as the Inner Sphere's most eligible bachelor five years running, the man who defeated the Clans has never been lucky in love. His relationship with Omi Kurita ended in tragedy and it is rumored that Sun-Tzu Liao intervened to end a brief affair with Kali Liao on Outreach in 3051. Not content with his "conquests" in the Draconis Combine and Capellan Confederation, the former Prince has apparently turned his attentions to the last of the Great Houses—the Free World's League. On the rebound after being rejected by Sun-Tzu Liao, Isis Marik must have been easy prey for the amorous Victor. Often seen as traveling companions, *The Skye Express* can report exclusively that the couple were rumored to have been married in a secret ceremony aboard the Com Guard flagship *Invisible Truth* just before the fateful Fourth Star League conference in 3067.

But there's more! Hospitalized following the bombing of the Old Connaught summit in 3072, Victor was visited regularly by a heavily pregnant Isis at the Katrina Steiner Memorial Hospital. Reliable eyewitnesses report that Isis was accompanied on several occasions by a girl of around two to three standard years old, whom she was heard to call "Jade."

A number of questions remain. Are Victor and Isis married? Is Jade their daughter? Now there's a mouthful—Jade Marik-Steiner-Davion! Will Victor press Isis' claim to the office of Captain-General and carve himself a new throne under the purple eagle? Neither Precentor Martial Steiner-Davion nor Isis Marik was available to comment.

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

SUN-TZU'S PARENTAGE?

This was one of my first real intelligence coups… —VP

Assigned to evaluate the results of Operation: Gardenia, I received a variety of tissue samples to evaluate the Liao family tree. While the older generations were relatively easy to determine, the children of Romano Liao did not match any of the potential paternal samples I had been given. A requisition returned additional samples, one of which matched Kali Liao. Chad Jackson was not a total surprise as father of one of Romano's children, but it did not resolve the missing parentage of the heir to the throne. Further analysis of this operation was halted after yet another unsuccessful set of samples and the files were archived.

Operation: Doppelganger, often regarded as a failure, was one of the instigating causes of the Fourth Succession War. While they did manage to kidnap Hanse Davion and hold him for some time, he eventually escaped. While ROM managed to infiltrate the program after it was over, the information collected was determined to be out of date and filed away. I discovered it during a review of archived files. Further, I found a listing of materials, and while in captivity Hanse Davion had various tissue samples taken, including a gamete sample. Transferred back to Sian, these samples were cryogenically frozen and retained in storage.

A log, included in the file, listed access to each of these samples. Little research was done on them, but one name stood out, Dr. Soon Ngyun. The others were typical researchers on the Maskirovka payroll; Dr. Ngyun was the obstetrician for the Liao family. Checking out a sperm sample in 3030, no further mention was made of the tissue withdrawal. Additional research turned up no further ROM knowledge of this.

On a hunch, I had Sun Tzu's genetic code compared with that of Hanse. While lacking physical samples, the ROM file did include a digital copy of his DNA. Using pseudonyms, I had these compared and Hanse Davion was determined to be the father to the heir of the Capellan Confederation.

SAFE File 985-0A344

Operation Little Feet has been deemed a failure. All records will be archived as Most Secret and ancillary documents destroyed. While the importation of pharmacological agent KZ-18 to Regulus has succeeded in starting a spreading addiction to the agent, we underestimated the ingenuity of the local radicals. They have managed to recreate the complex manufacturing process of KZ-18 in their garages and back yards. In addition, this hallucinogen has been exported to neighboring systems. Our attempt to monopolize manufacture and distribution while focusing addiction on the Regulan underground has gone awry. Our cost for manufacture is 150 M-Bills per dose, while the street price has dropped to 100 M-Bills per "shot."

This note to file will be included in place of all documents regarding Operation Little Feet, KZ-18 and Operation Black String.

Director Charles Patel
05-14-3022

Adept Thomas Marik, 542-84-0122

While the primary goal of Operation: Doppelganger was not achieved, in actuality it did finally result in the rebirth of the Confederation. To this day, I have not determined the best way to utilize this information. It would not shock Sun-Tzu, but I don't know if blackmail would give us leverage or further embolden him. I think the best usage would be with his sister. Now for the opportune moment.

…even today, the excavations in and under Unity City continue…

…Dieron is a jewel in our crown, its history is not as important to us as what lies below. The Combine may have occupied Fortress Dieron, but they've never discovered all its secrets…

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

KARPOV'S LEGACY

October 15, 2869.

That was the date. No one knows but Karpov's legacy. Someday it will be my turn to tell.

[Hidden World] was visited by a JumpShip. A miscalculation by the navigator, they believed they had found a lost Star League facility. Only luck saved us. Our scanners caught them and alerted Terra immediately. When the ship jumped back to New Earth, their Captain forbade anyone from leaving and went to our offices to make a claim, relying on secrecy to help keep it. ROM agents killed him and made it appear that a bulkhead leak had killed all aboard during a meeting in the commons.

Karpov knew he couldn't leave his Five undefended. But where to get troops? He could raise his own, but it would take too long. And it would be much harder to keep a secret. What to do? So he found a band of mercenaries, embittered from years of House politics, trying to escape them in another nation only to be embroiled in them yet again. Stuck in ongoing combat for a year, they were tired, tired men. So he sent negotiators, disguised as people trying to look like ComStar. Brilliant, nearly hiding in plain sight. After three days of offering them a relaxing garrison contract, our money won them over. Nearly a full regiment once we outfitted them, a half battalion went to each world, where they would not only guard it but train troops. Some of their decedents guard these worlds to this day.

But Karpov realized that the Primus might not be the best choice to lead these worlds, so he did not tell his successor. Rather, an Adept Davis Monroe was given the task of running the Office of Consumables, to shift supplies and foodstuffs around to the various ComStar facilities. Including the Hidden. That office is not only where I learned of the Hidden, but their guardians. What is left of Clinton's Cutthroats.

…telling that Davion hasn't figured out we turned Curaitis long ago. Such a simple mind, yet so deadly. Thanks to him we also managed to scoop up Quintus…

…Holy Shroud was simplicity in brilliance. It became the flagstone of ROM's legacy, so much so that every Precentor-ROM has an OHS of their own during their term. Mine was exquisite; by the time the fools even notice it, the damage will be extensive and whole noble families may never recover…

…an HPG station on every world, and the world's skeletons in every HPG basement…

KATHERINE SET UP?

Master—

Your plan has succeeded! Our spy confirmed that Victor has bought it, hook, line and sinker. The land sale was most brilliant. The voice recording has left no trace of who ordered the sale. The real estate agent thought Katherine ordered the sale, her accountant thought it was the business manager. She didn't think about who made the sale and was happy about the profit they turned. Katherine herself was totally unaware of the sale. The business manager and accountant have not communicated about where the proceeds were sent. With the large amount of transactions in her portfolio and her occasional personal influence on it, I feel safe in assuming that later audits will note nothing out of the ordinary. You did it!

On the other end of the plan, you must know of the success. Not only was the Archon slain, but that annoying Kell may not make it. His wife is dead, making it less likely that he will pull through. One of my operatives "accidentally" let slip that piece of information to Kell when he awoke following the surgery. The assassin we hired is unaware of the nature of his employer, true or as we have alluded. His history further suggests he doesn't care and will soon be looking for further work. I recommend, your Greatness, that we keep him in mind for future assassinations of difficult targets.

Your loyal, loyal servant,

—Humbaba

…the message in transmission T-2788-06-28-0903 :02 :01 is clear. We will acquiesce until our time is ready…

…Tancred's dirty little secret is safe for now, unless Angela somehow finds out the truth…

… of my followers must be higher than the petty, greedy politics of the House Lords. Politics is a game best played by madmen, and I am not mad . . .

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

…blame Liao, who created ROM through their treachery in 2811. Infiltrating the Mask became a ROM operative's final test for decades…

…still amazed LIC never realized we had Archon Richard Steiner in a brilliant act of blackmail…

…Jeanette Marik was the catalyst for our own genetic projects, despite her brother's attempt to use her as a double agent. Biotechnology is not far from our grasp, though we will need to update our DNA files…

…maddening that the MRB never brought Toyama's idea to fruition. Having a ready-access army through money-soldiers was a great idea; putting a secret clause into every contract was a stroke of genius. And the law would've upheld it, thanks to Sterns v Hegemony. Encrypted cipher clauses are still part of the contract and when both parties agree. That idiot Kurstin and his "Winged Crusader" ruined all of that…

… To use information to manipulate politics is tempting and, in many cases, justified…

…for so long SAFE thought Emma Gomez was a double agent. How quaint. She was an extremely effective triple agent. Her "capture" and "imprisonment" was just a cover to exfiltrate her. She served well in her new identity as…

…Laidlaw knew Karpov was gunning for Dupreas and successfully erased her…

…Karpov's success showed our medical research on Jardine was on the right track…

…fools of ComStar continue to hold to the idea that Dupreas executed a bloody purge at Toyama's order. Michelle fooled everyone. Her vision was equal to that of Toyama, but she knew that true power lies in secrets. Her "purge" was done, all right, but she never murdered Schwepps and his cabal. Carrying out a classic "erasure" operation, most of his band was removed to Facility TD-022 for further debriefing. Schwepps joined them after his recovery from the near-fatal bullet, done to convince witnesses of ROM's intent.

Despite her belief in a fusion of Schwepps' and Toyama's visions, there were still many doubters and unpurified unbelievers within the Order that needed removal. Including those who opposed ROM as a separate entity. In many ways, Michelle saved ROM from a bureaucratic death and preserved it as a weapon…

…our efforts with the "Minnesota Tribe" legend have surpassed anyone's expectations. Using debris reclaimed from our excavation projects and passing it off as the long-lost Kerensky children on select Combine and Periphery worlds? A hoax of the magnitude of the Loch Ness Monster and the Martian Bones that even Toyama would've believed. Even today, people still whisper of the Tribe and their origins, that a massive interstellar cooperative is dedicated to the pursuit of a few Terran remains from Amaris' reign… Staggering…

…we can emerge as the saviors. The victories will come for us one world at a time—then one House at a time—until we control everything. Humankind will not resist but will invite us to help rebuild, as we have done with blessed Terra…

…the Capellan March react if they were to discover who Kali Liao's father really is? Do they really know just how deeply involved Max's plan was to screw up the nobility of the Suns? He did use our help harvesting Michael's important organs, after all…

…suspect the Taurians will never know the true purpose for our removal of the Tripitz*…*

ARTHUR STEINER-DAVION: THE TRUTH?

—Taken from *Single Truth*, Robinson interweb, posted by [Unknown], 26 November 3071

Did Arthur Steiner-Davion really die on Robinson? That question has been raised time and again over the years. Was he really murdered by Katherine Steiner-Davion or by someone else, maybe the Sixth of June movement? Numerous times people have claimed to have seen him, there was even this "report" about him living on Brockton with a wife and two kids—in the end we were able to prove that this was a hoax.

The fact remains that not much was left to verify his death, not much material so to say. I have been a detective for more than half my life and I have seen a lot of death and destruction. This bomb should have left more material, period. I would bet my left and right arm that he still is alive. He must have been taken before that bomb went off. But the question remains by whom and why this happened.

Lately I stumbled over documents that suggest the Word of Blake indeed was behind all of this. The documents told me they were afraid of Arthur and his vision. We all know he was up to something and it looks as if the Word was really upset about it. So, they took him. Put him away for good. Never to be found again. And you know where they took him? To a re-education camp on Kittery. If the documents I found are accurate, that was in late 3068. This can't be a coincidence. Stone—Steiner, the signs are there. A little cosmetic surgery and voila! And what if all this "Stone the new Messiah" is a hoax as well? And he really is a puppet of the Master? Lord Kurita, you need to be careful, maybe the Word is playing an even greater game than we anticipated…

[*Interesting idea, but I doubt any truth is in this. Still, Peter, we should try and get a DNA sample from Mr. Stone… —CK*]

KALI AND CAMERON?

Well, well, well, look who's back. Yeah, it's me, Starling. Long time no see, old friends. And lookie what I brought with me, fresh out of the court on Sian… Excerpts from the trial for treason they put my good friend Kali Liao through. Telling us she's crazy. For sure… Well, with no further ado, we all know she had it going with good' ol Cameron St. Jamais. Wanna know what went on? Here's the deal—taken straight from the proceedings, Confederation v. Kali Liao (January 3, 3074):

Prosecutor: "Lady Liao, please stop 'summoning the gods of old.' You are on trial here. Your honor, please..."
Judge: "Lady Liao, for the last time, answer the question. Did you or did you not have a relationship with Precentor Martial Cameron St. Jamais of Word of Blake?"
Lady Liao: "Cameron? Oh, yes, we had a relationship. Tried to subdue me. Tried to play me. Tried to play ME!" [**Interrupted by mad laughter**] "Tried to use me against my brother. Tried to use me against the Confederation. But I was smarter than him. **I** outplayed **him**. I am KALI! My only loyalty is to the Confederation, to the Celestial Wisdom, and to the Goddess. Nothing you can do to me will change that..."
Prosecutor: "So you admit having a relationship... When did this start?"
Lady Liao: "Long ago, very long ago... He was so cute; so powerful, so useful." [**Starts laughing again**]

[**Portion Deleted**]

Prosecutor: "Do you admit that you planned and ordered the attack on Chesterton in 3071, using your so-called Warrior Houses?"
Lady Liao: "Yes; it was a test. The Davions needed to be taught a lesson. Nobody can attack our realm and return unpunished. **Nobody!** Those thrice-damned enemies of all Capellans, I **SHOWED** them our power, our might. Showed them what they had gotten themselves into..."
[**Portion Deleted**]
Prosecutor: "...And so you ignored that the fighting had almost ended and everyone—Confederation and Suns—was now facing the **real** enemy, the Word of Blake? Those bastards that your 'friend' commands... And you ignored orders—from the Chancellor himself! You cannot deny it!"
Lady Liao: [**Hums a melody**]

[**Portion Deleted**]

Prosecutor: "...Let's cut to the point here. Do you deny that you sent your 'Warrior Houses' on a mission **against** the Confederation?"
Lady Liao: [**Gasps**] "You! Accuse me? Accuse **me** of working against the Confederation?" [**Maniacal laughter**] "Soon I will ask for your head, **Citizen Traynor**! And believe me, it will be served on a plate!" [**More laughter**] "But I can assure **you**, that all I have done was for the good of the realm. I am Kali! I am the protector of the Capellan Confederation, not you! I am **Kali**, the **Destroyer**! You cannot do anything to stop me!" [**Mad laughter**]
Sun-Tzu Liao: "**Enough of this!** We all can see that she has lost her mind. Kali... Sister... Tell me, where did you send them? What are their orders?"
Lady Liao: "Oh, Brother, you will know soon enough..."

We all know what happened afterwards. Little Kali indeed had played Cameron and taught him a lesson, just like she said… You know what's interesting? I have a little file here that tells me she gave birth some time° ago. Wanna bet who the father is? So long, my friends, we will talk soon enough. Now I need to go, I have an important meeting…
—Starling!

[*This clearly wasn't part of Parrdeau's documents, Honored One, but a much more recent event. Nonetheless, it underscores how far the Word was working to play the Houses against one another. But who played who on Sian? —PA*]

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

CLASSIFIED
Class: *McKenna* Battleship
Name: *SLS Zughoffer Weir*
Laid down: 2712 at Titan Shipyards, Sol System.
Entered Service: 2717

Service History:
2717: Assigned to Army Group Davion
2743: Reassigned to Army Group Liao
2746: Recipient of the *McKenna Wheel*
2765: New Vandenburg Rebellion: Dispatched to Magistracy of Canopus during.
2767: Rim Worlds Campaign: Reassigned to Task Force Hammer.
2772: Hegemony Campaign: Reassigned to Task Force Sun.
2777: Liberation of Terra: Moderately damaged, taken out of service.
2780: Reentered service after overhaul and repairs.
2784: Joined General Kerensky on Exodus.
End Official Records.

Addendums:

February 3062, Precentor ROM:
In late 3061 the Word of Blake brought a heavily damaged and inoperative *McKenna*-class battleship to the Titan Shipyards and started on a process of repairs and upgrading. ROM assets have been unable to properly assert the origins of this vessel, only that it was recovered rimward of the Outworlds Alliance. As no major WarShip activities occurred there during the New Vandenburg Rebellion, indications are that this is one of the ships that left with General Kerensky on the Exodus, later discarded due to damage. [*NB—This entry is duplicated on all unknown* McKenna-*class vessels that left with Kerensky whose fate is unknown*.]

July 3065, Precentor ROM:
The vessel has entered WoBM service as the *WBS Blake's Sword*.

Following entries cross-referred from *WBS Blake's Sword* file.
3067, December 5: *WBS Blake's Sword* enters Tharkad System with WoB fleet.
3068, January 21: *WBS Blake's Sword* enters Tukayyid System, engages and destroys the *Hammerstrike* and *Blake's Vengeance*. Engages Com Guard ground forces with orbital bombardment.
3068, June 12: *WBS Blake's Sword* still in Tukayyid system, indications vessel might be stranded due to drive failure.
3070, July 10: *WBS Blake's Sword* engaged by *CGB Rasalhague*, destroyed.
3072, November 18: Survey to *WBS Blake's Sword* hull deems it unsalvageable. File closed.
CLASSIFIED
[*Fascinating, indeed! —CK*]

…though most of Kurstin's ravings were pure lunacy, he did have some genuine gems buried in his "conversations" with the late Toyama. The psychological deconstruction and inducement of Primus Sims came from Kurstin the Mad…

…how would the Combine react if they ever found out that the Explorer Corps project is a fantastic ROM operation put in place by Primus Takami. Our re-discovery of Columbus more than paid for the project…

…Schwepps' ideals were revolutionary in concept. Rebuilding the Hegemony, but in an image that modeled the truth of what humanity should aspire to? Toyama was a brilliant man, but even he was still human. Dupreas recognized what Toyama didn't, and acted not only to preserve Toyama's authority but also to make sure ComStar kept all viable options open—after all, ROM's true purpose is to preserve the sanctity of the Order …

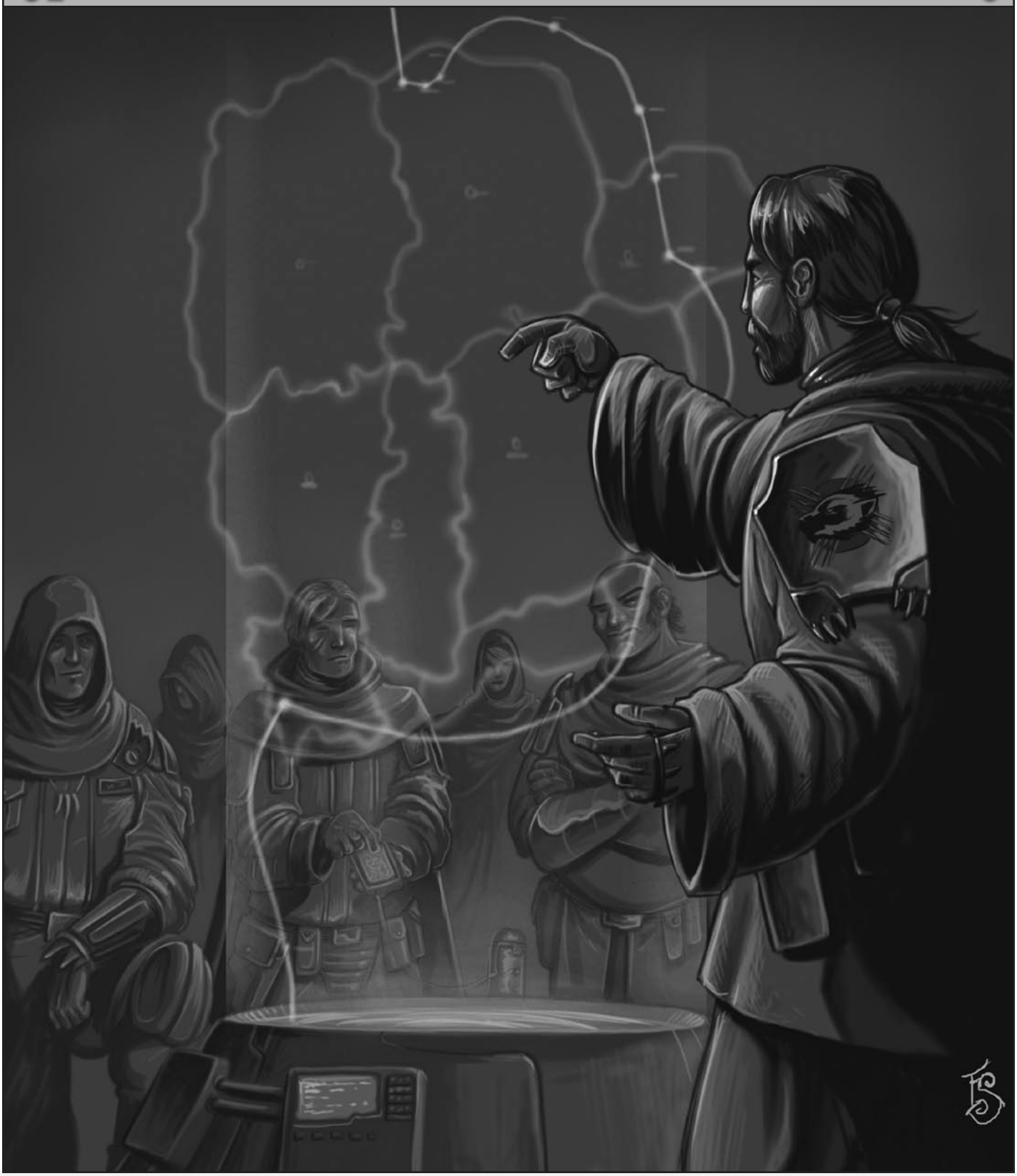
…so Kernoff and Aziz had a son after all. And Kernoff's trying to kill the man after all these years of loyalty…

…wondering how Daiymo Endo will feel when he discovers his son is really a Hepburn…

...expose Katrina's little jaunt across the Periphery and her love trysts with several Marik noblemen—and women…

…White has to be my crowning achievement, aside from my own personal OHS. Planting believers on heretic ships despite the purges—it's as brilliant as the Word's work in the FWLM….

THE NOT-NAMED



NOTES

Clan Wolverine, the Not-Named Clan. Traitors, refugees. Enigmas. We know they rebelled against Nicholas Kerensky's rule and resorted to nuclear weapons before becoming the targets of the first Trial of Annihilation directed at a Clan. Some escaped, however, and likely originated the "Minnesota Tribe" incidents in the Draconis Combine. ComStar sought them, but in vain.

Officially.

What if that was a lie?

What if they'd been here all the time, hiding in plain sight, and much of their "mystery" is little more than a charade?

What if they engineered the Clan invasion, possibly as a means of settling scores with Kerensky's people who cast them out?

What if they were the real force behind the Jihad?

A little overdramatic, I'll grant you, but that in essence is what the following documents suggest. If they are to be trusted—for all that they fit the history, there's something of a discordant note; when things fit too well, I automatically become suspicious, though I'm not the first person to reference the idea—I can credit that to Ms. Piper Anderson, whose book *I Want to Believe* first floated the idea in conjunction with Adrienne Sims' visions. The recovered documents are presented here, together with a framing history for your comments.

—Peter Abdulsattah, 16 August 3074

THE FOUNDING

Nicholas Kerensky's purges destroyed many records of Clan Wolverine-an attempt to write them out of history in many regards-but though largely successful, the "Not Named" can still be found in obscure records, missed in the purges or deliberately retained by record keepers more interested in the pride of their own Clan than following the dictates of the ilKhan. They can also be seen in the shadows they cast in surviving records. The name crops up a few times, sufficient to make the Clan tradition of the "Not Named" blatantly transparent, possibly a failure of Nicholas' efforts-though it's just as likely the "hiding" of the Wolverine records was a sham and that we're seeing what Nicholas wanted us to see, reading the history as he wanted it to be portrayed.

We know the Wolverines were one of the original twenty Clans, founded in the dark days of the Second Exodus. There is no record of the original founders, but we know from records unearthed by Anastasius Focht and then-Bondsman (now Khan) Phelan Kell that the commanders at the time of Operation Klondike were Khan Sarah McEvedy and saKhan Franklin Hallis, and there's little to suggest that McEvedy at least mightn't have been a founder too, as was the case with many Clans. There is a single reference to a saKhan Robinson or Robertson who preceded Hallis, though whether Hallis took office during Klondike or after is not clear.

T-NAMED

There's no mention of Sarah McEvedy in SLDF records, though there's a suggestion that she was in her forties at the time of Annihilation and thus would have been too young to serve with the SLDF. Nicholas himself mentions that her father was commander of the 331st Royal Division, James McEvedy at the time of the Exodus, but there is no record of any other siblings. A couple of lines in the Wolf Clan Remembrance hint at a relationship between McEvedy and Kerensky-Andery, that is, not Nicholas-but stop short of saying whether it was platonic or romantic. It seems clear, however, that her relationship with Nicholas cooled after Operation Klondike, though the reason isn't clear. Was it Nicholas' authoritative stance or something more? Andery's death seems to be a focal point and her grief at the loss of her friend is understandable, but why this led to her distancing herself from Nicholas is unclear. The more scurrilous investigations have suggested the ilKhan and the Wolverine leader "comforted" each other in their grief and that the fallout of a failed romance might explain the tensions. One of the documents that follows suggests another path, however.

In contrast, Franklin Hallis has a clear lineage with the Inner Sphere, descending as he does from General Frederick Hallis, one of Aleksandr Kerensky's staff. It is likely that Franklin was a babe in arms at the time of the Exodus, but his elder brother and sister remained in the Terran Hegemony, later finding themselves incorporated into the Lyran Commonwealth, their descendants becoming the subject of a misunderstanding with the Clans shortly after Tukayyid.

We know the Wolverines fought on Circe alongside Clans Nova Cat, Mongoose and Snow Raven. The Snow Raven Remembrance mentions their deployment "in support of the Not Named" at Constans Ridge but spends almost as much time intimating a personal feud between saKhan Hallis and saKhan Merell of the Ravens (who died in the operation) as it does talking about the disastrous Raven performance. This obfuscation also hints agenda: that the Ravens, badly bloodied in the fighting, wanted revenge. This made the Ravens natural cats-paws.

Nicholas' grip on the Clans was, according to some analysts, slipping in the wake of Klondike and he needed to reassert his dominance. Phelan Kell believes (and I have no reason to doubt his analysis) that the Wolverines were a particular thorn, espousing unClanlike attitudes such as democracy and freedom, and thus became the target of the ilKhan's displeasure. Khan Kell calls Nicholas' actions a "flexing of his muscles," but it was Voltaire who stated it first: "Il est bon de tuer de temps en temps un amiral pour encourager les autres" (it is good to shoot an admiral from time to time to encourage the others).

The Wolverines were to be an object lesson, or so Kell would have us believe.

THE NOT-NAMED

That early history is, however, unclear and many entries are contradictory. It is unclear if the destruction of the Clan was Nicholas' goal or if he simply sought to bloody their nose and bring them to heel. Certainly the first blow came over a Brian Cache in Wolverine territory that the Grand Council (at the ilKhan's urging) declared must be shared. Weeks of political debate ended with a defeat for the Wolverines and prompted a Trial of Refusal that the Wolverines lost.

That should have ended it, but McEvedy was furious with the ilKhan and continued to battle him in the Grand Council chamber. Kell and others believe she was attempting to build an anti-Nicholas faction within the Clans to act as a check on the ilKhan but for all her military skill, McEvedy wasn't as canny a politician and fell into a trap. Surviving transcripts show that the climactic confrontation between McEvedy and Kerensky degenerated into a shouting match and, her temper frayed, she insulted Nicholas directly. In doing so, she alienated the other council members. Even at this late juncture, Kerensky may simply have been seeking to bring the Wolverines into line, but McEvedy wouldn't give him the satisfaction. When Kerensky called for a Trial of Grievance over the insult, McEvedy, realizing her position, declared the Wolverines independent of the Clans.

Phelan Kell suggests this gave Nicholas exactly what he wanted-the Wolverines as an object lesson and an excuse to remove McEvedy and Hallis-but others believe this to be an unplanned escalation (albeit one that still served Nicholas' purposes). Council transcripts suggest that annihilation was not yet Kerensky's objective, but further escalation would bring it to the fore.

Even before the Grand Council had decided on a course of action, the situation escalated further; a Snow Raven task force attacked the Wolverine enclave on Circe and was driven back. The Wolverines took the war back to their rivals and sacked the city of Dehra Dun, the Ravens' capital on Circe. The Wolverines' next action settled their infamy within the Clans; using a battlefield nuclear weapon, they destroyed the Snow Ravens' secondary genetic repository located there. Kell believes this was a message: "We are backed into a corner and will do anything and everything to stop you." There's no prima-facie evidence that this was a political statement-McEvedy was still en route from Strana Mechty and wouldn't land back on Circe for another three days-but suggestions that the Ravens carried out the act themselves to frame the Wolverines don't have any basis.

"Those who break faith with the Unity shall go down in into darkness," was Nicholas' response to the Grand Council's call for a Trial of Annihilation after news of Dehra Dun reached them. The council had already voted to censure McEvedy and her Clan, but with the situation spiraling out of control only the ultimate punishment would serve for the renegades. The motion, passed unanimously by the remaining 38 Khans, led to a series of trials among the Clans, coming down to Clan Widowmaker and Clan Wolf, the latter winning with a bid the other Clans considered too low to ensure victory.

Two weeks after Dehra Dun, the Wolves struck, securing a landing zone despite a spirited Wolverine counteroffensive. The battle that followed raged for two days on land and in the air before the extent of the Wolverines' preparations become clear. SaKhan Hallis, absent from the fateful Grand Council meeting, had remained on Circe deliberately to prepare a "third Exodus," and the result was a running battle as the Wolverines fought their way across Clan space. After nineteen days, the Wolves declared victory, but at the cost of 80 percent of their forces. Officially, none of the Wolverines survived, but the Clans later acknowledged that not all of the Not-Named were accounted for in the end. Tallies of many second-line troops and civilian castemen rounded up in the aftermath were reportedly lower than expected. Decades after the fact in some cases, evidence of escapees came to light in the accounts of other Clans.

According to the official record of the Clans, saKhan Hallis died at Nicholas' hands in a brutal duel on Circe, but of McEvedy no trace was ever found. Suggestions of her escape (a popular topic for conspiracy theorists since the 3050s) prompted Nicholas to lead a task force into the Near Periphery for several months, but he uncovered no evidence of Wolverine survivors.

Officially.

Suggestions exist that the version of events detailed by Phelan Kell are a distortion of reality, presumably manipulated by Nicholas and his supporters to cast their actions in the best possible light. Variations on McEvedy's infamous Grand Council address have come to light over the years, along with suggestions that the Khan didn't leave Strana Mechty until a day or two after the Dehra Dun incident and that Franklin Hallis was present on Strana Mechty (going against the "third Exodus" claims and casting the situation in Dehra Dun in a different light); there are also rumors that he survived the Clan space fighting. Certainly records area easy to fake by the victors, and our access to these is secondhand at best and thus not subject to rigorous forensic examination. For all we know, it is a fiction, overlaying a myth, representing the legend that is the shadow of history.

More solid evidence exists to suggest that the "fruitless" pursuit operation after the close of hostilities in Clan space was anything but quiet. Data-mining economic reports from the Pentagon Worlds and Kerensky Cluster in 2824 suggest a spike in military procurement inconsistent with the slow expansion of the military in that era. It's interesting to note that several WarShips were stricken from the rolls in mid-2824 with no reason given. Did Nicholas' fleet harry the fleeing Wolverines far into the Periphery? Did they eliminate the last vestiges but mask the end result to retain a spectral foe to intimidate any others who would challenge the Way of the Clans?

THE NOT-NAMED

EXILE

[*And here the narrative begins. The dates correspond with the suggested pursuit of the Wolverines into the Deep Periphery that contradicts the official version of events. The fact that this doesn't mesh with the Clan version of the tale piques my interest, particularly in light of the alleged tampering with the record. -CK*]

Log: 7 August 2824

Is it only a month since the Apocalypse came?

How many of our kin died in those bitter days? It has never been tallied, but we exacted a price for Nicholas' megalomania. The butcher's bill among the conquerors was almost as fearsome as ours, and as ever, victor's justice was meted out, those of our civilian caste who could not escape being forced to exist in a living hell, sterilized and then neglected where they weren't outright euthanized. They say we are demons, yet they betrayed us and they carried out the most barbaric acts; it was we who staged a scorched-earth withdrawal, but they who staged a deliberate genocide.

Almost a fifth of our people slipped away, scattering throughout the Cluster and making for our pre-planned rendezvous point. That none of those left behind betrayed the rendezvous point is a testament to their loyalty to us, a willingness to lay down their lives so that others might have the chance for a free existence. The last arrivals brought news that "all" Wolverines had been killed and that an "accounting error" explained the alleged missing people and materiel. It seems the Wolves were prepared to lie to their ilKhan rather than admit they'd failed. They may, of course, suspect that we had help and that any attempt to expose the truth would lead to their own annihilation; we emasculated the Wolf Touman, and even the Snow Ravens could beat them in a fair fight now.

"Help" may be too strong a word. Forces of the Ghost Bears COULD have blocked our escape, but for some reason chose not to. Perhaps it was a quiet protest at Nicholas' actions, or-more likely-an effort to spite the Wolves. I certainly don't believe they were too squeamish. Whichever, they turned a blind eye and accepted that the "civilian" transports had legitimate business. Even the battle-scarred Mech carriers of the 33rd. There was only one hairy moment as a fire-control radar locked onto one of the trailing members of the flotilla. Was it a case of regret by the Bears or a message that "next time we WILL shoot"?

It matters little; we are away and free to live our lives as we see fit.

[*This meshes with a tale in the Ghost Bear Remembrance of there being some Wolverine survivors out there whom they allowed to escape to embarrass the Wolves. It is interesting to note that the author thinks the escape was deliberately kept from Nicholas by the Wolves, showing an insight into his state of mind at the time. The writer seems to know him. If I didn't know better I'd suspect it was McEvedy herself, though some sources suggest she fell in the final battles against Kerensky and that this is some other leader. -CK*]

Log: 29 August 2824

It seems the Bears weren't so generous; a recon vessel has dogged our trail for the past few weeks. At first it seemed like a chance encounter, arriving just as we departed, but the second and third times it appeared put the lie to that. I've no idea how it (or they, since a single vessel would have to get very lucky to follow us once, let alone three times) is tracking us, and it's using a pirate point, so we have little chance to plan an ambush. As it/they seem to have little desire to do more than observe, we'll try to scatter and converge at a new rendezvous point.

Log: 20 September 2824

Three weeks without our shadow, though we've lost some of our number in the process. About two thousand never made it to the rendezvous, but there's no indication of what happened to them. A Jumpship malfunction? Capture by the Clans? Deliberate flight? We waited an extra three days in case the missing ships had been forced to make repairs, but we can't afford to wait any longer. We must press on into the Deep Dark.

[*It's always been assumed that the Dark Caste were exiles from Clan society, existing on the fringes. The common belief is that they were simply those who chose to flee, but there have been persistent rumors of "organization" among these exiles, at least in some areas. Idle speculation, I know, but could it be that the nucleus of the Dark Caste was some of these Wolverine Exiles? Yes, it's a leap of faith-that this document is genuine and that that those left behind "hid in plain sight"-but as you'll see, it makes an odd kind of sense. -CK*]

Log: 31 October 2824

The 33rd has been stretched to the limit guarding the fleet, but after a few weeks of calm some of the civilian caste have begin to agitate for change, for an involvement in the leadership process. For a few days I thought a military confrontation was in the works-our own version of the PRINZ EUGEN-but the ringleader, a scientist named Peter Marillier of Combine heritage, came to accept that a strong central authority would be needed if we are to survive; decision-making by committee is a recipe for disaster. And I've learned too, Marillier will serve as an advisor, allowing me to draw on his lifetime of experience. Some reform is, however, needed.

Despite his madness, Nicholas' caste system does work, assigning people to the jobs they are best suited to. Unlike the Pentagon population, our own impromptu Exodus doesn't have a balance of skills; disproportionately few of our warriors escaped the Great Betrayal, and if we are to protect the fleet and our people we will need to recruit more troops. As such, I'm going to issue an executive order that all able-bodied adults in the fleet undergo martial training-even if it's just pistol skills or hand-to-hand-with those most adept drafted into the military. EVERYONE between eighteen and thirty will be trained and be expected to serve when needed, and to carry out their existing jobs when not. Those in the military will be expect to give their all-but they can also expect the civilians to do their utmost to support them. Not too different from the Betrayer's concept, I must admit, but our methods will be inclusive, not divisive.

THE NOT-NAMED

[*When I first read that entry, I was perplexed; then I realized that for all their Clan terms, these aren't the Clans as we know them. Most of the major players were born in the Star League, either before or during the Amaris Coup, with only a handful of the fleet's leadership born in the forty years since Aleksandr's Exodus. They're first- and second-generation SLDF troops, not the genetically engineered techno-barbarians who returned to the Inner Sphere in the 3050s. They believe in military strength, but they don't have the ingrained caste system we now associate with the Clans, and this reinvention reflects that. -CK*]

Log: 19 November 2824

One of the new recruits pointed out the similarity between our new practices and those of ancient Sparta. Are we the three hundred against the million-strong hordes of our enemies? One part of me hopes not; Leonidas' men died at Thermopylae. Are we then the Immortals?

Log: 20 November 2824

The first "new arrival" joined the fleet today, weighing in at a little over seven pounds. The gene-mother has been excused from duties for the next few weeks and given leave to attend the science detachment whose artificial wombs carried the baby to term. Those machines continue to unnerve me, but given how few our numbers are, I see no choice but to carry on using them; it's that or face the outcry as we re-institute some form of Kerensky's eugenics program and force people to breed, gender equality be damned.

It does raise a serious issue, though: how we're to survive as a people. Do we return home to the Inner Sphere whose people rejected us, or do we carve out our own existence somewhere? Either option will take determination and supplies. The former we have in great measure, but the latter dwindles daily. Few of the systems we have passed through have had planets capable of providing the resources we need to feed the people and maintain our vessels. We're having to cast the net wider afield in search of staples, which has slowed out flight-and we're still too close to the Pentagon for my liking.

Log: 16 December 2824

The "Immortals" carried out a live-fire drill on one of the small moons here. It shook many of those who grew up under Nicholas' thumb, though not those who recall the war against Amaris. We may not have a massive stockpile of nukes, but the Weir's firepower proved more than adequate to "sanitize" the rock before the troops landed. The reaction prompted me to release a few of the troops back to civilian life, those who thought the tactics being used were dishonorable. Lord save us from the fools corrupted by that line of thinking. War isn't nice. It isn't civilized. It is a means to an end. Nicholas professed a desire to "civilize" warfare because of Andery's death, but he was fully aware that war isn't civil and that there are times you have to take hard decisions to ensure victory.

He wouldn't have let his brother die otherwise, or so the story came down from Khan McEvedy.

[*This is interesting. We're used to the Clans as an honor-bound society, yet such ideals were really a late addition to the Clan Way after Klondike. If this is a true account, then the early Clans were much closer to the SLDF's military ideal of "total warfare," believing in peace-and victory-through overwhelming firepower. This may be more relevant than most people think. The suggestion that Nicholas let his brother die during Klondike may explain the friction that arose between McEvedy and Nicholas. -CK*]

Log: 7 January 2825

The order to reduce rations was not popular, but there's little choice. Our pace has slowed to a crawl and we're no nearer finding a safe refuge. There's a system we should reach in early September that'll serve as a layover for repairs, but Veranov and Chee will carry on with their foraging missions.

Log: 17 January 2825

Veranov jumped back with a strange request; translators. He picked up a signal emanating from a small cluster of worlds anti-spinward of our path-Spanish, it seems. There wasn't much to work with, but it appears there's a technologically advanced colony out there that we may be able trade with. He'll take a detachment to negotiate while we carry out repairs here.

Log: 12 February 2825

There's still no news from Veranov, which is worrying. It was only two jumps to the cluster, a two-week round trip with his batteries, so he's well overdue. The other Immortals fear an attack, and any nation capable of taking out a 'Mech formation before it could get a warning off to the waiting JumpShip would be a fearsome opponent. I'm not inclined to flee just yet, though Nav has drawn up jump coordinates for a series of rendezvous points should we be forced to run and I've ordered all JumpShips to hold at full charge. I'll give Veranov until the end of the month, then he's on his own.

Log: 3 March 2825

Damn you, Veranov. We're shifting the axis of travel spinward in case you gave up our plans and whoever those people are decide to come after us. It'll add months to the journey time, but I can't take the risk that you've not stirred up a hornet's nest.

[*One of the old rumors out of the Explorer Corps was that the Ummayads of Nueva Castile were remnants of the SLDF or Clan Wolverine. The Spanish connection here would seem to support the latter, but the chronology is wrong; according to the Castilians, the invaders didn't appear on the scene until 2830. It's close enough to make me think that perhaps the Castilians' dates are a little off, but if so, that begs the question of why Veranov and his troops would decide to go on the offensive rather than carry out the original trade mission. Unless documents come to light on Nueva Castile, I doubt we'll ever know. -CK*]

THE NOT-NAMED

Log: 26 March 2825

Marillier is getting antsy, and I don't blame him. After a month of hard jumping, nerves are on edge and our supplies are beyond critical. People are desperate. There were stories of murders for ration coupons on one of the liners and that's likely to be the tip of the iceberg. There's talk of dispersing the Immortals throughout the fleet to keep order, but I'd hate to see that happen; soldiers make poor police.

Log: 11 April 2825

Sunshine! It's amazing how much you can miss the sun on your face and wind in your hair. It's a simple thing, but after a year cooped up in orbiting tin cans this place seems like paradise. This arid ball of rock is something of an anomaly, sitting only partially within the K! star's life zone. It's hardly Eden, though it feels like it. We've been able to take on fresh water-fresh enough to run through the purification systems at least-and foodstuffs.

There's no question of settling here, but we have breathing room, time to sort our objectives and plan for the future. We can't go back to the Clans, but nor will we be any more welcome in the Inner Sphere, I suspect, assuming they've not devolved into chaos like the Pentagon did. There are few of us who recall that place; even to Marillier, it's half-forgotten memories of youth, though he says it certainly seemed headed that way when Aleksandr left. The Star League brought the Inner Sphere powers together after the Age of War, and with the "dampeners" of the SLDF removed, it seems likely that old hatreds will have quickly come to the fore.

Do we then make our own future, set up our own colony someplace? Nicholas built the Clans from the shattered remains of the six million who followed his father into exile. We have scarcely eleven thousand. Enough people to survive, sure, but is it enough to prosper?

Log: 19 April 2825

It was too good to last; we're not alone here. Thankfully, the community of Franciscans resident here isn't overly technological-beyond their solar arrays and water purification plant-and so we've managed to avoid them. We never planned on staying, but this has guaranteed it. We'll keep our distance while we re-provision, but to be on the safe side I've ordered non-essentials to stay with the ships.

Log: 14 May 2825

Two weeks out of St. Jean-as the monks called it-and it already seems like an age. The mood in the fleet is buoyant, even after the limited shore leave people were allowed. Marillier seems unsettled, though, as if spending time outside of ship-discipline has set him thinking. At the latest senior staff meeting he pointed out-in quite reasonable tones-that we must decide on some eventual goal rather than wandering like band of space-gypsies.

Log: 29 May 2825

The BISHOP suffered a catastrophic seal failure and is beyond the possibility of repair with the gear we have to hand. We'll have to scuttle the vessel and redistribute her passengers and cargo.

Log: 15 July 2825

Our approach to the Inner Sphere is starting to loom large in people's minds. We need to know what's happening, so the fleet has been split again, the fastest military vessels double-jumping toward the Inner Sphere with their LF batteries while the rest of us advance with all practical haste to a rendezvous point mid-way.

Log: 21 September 2825

I shouldn't be surprised at the news, given what we went through. The Hegemony and Star League were doomed before the General left, so without them to keep the Houses in balance, it's little surprise things went super-critical. They at least have some semblance of central authority left, none of whom will have any love for anyone associated with Kerensky. There's no "welcome home" for us; assuming they didn't kill us outright, these "Successor Lords" would try to use us to their own ends. No, we can never go home again and must build our own refuge, away from Clans and Inner Sphere alike.

And therein lies a problem. Our population is borderline. Enough people for a colony, barely, but lacking in key areas of expertise, not to mention equipment. Ironically, for all our archives and records, it's the fundamentals we're lacking: seeds, livestock, farming equipment, skilled personnel. Furnaces, cranes, ferrocrete bonders. Equipment the Inner Sphere worlds, for all the chaos of their "Succession War," still have.

So the path is clear. We're not going home as a people, but some of us are going to pay a visit. Check out the neighborhood and all that and, well, take what we need.

Log: 29 October 2825

That went well. The DCMS troops out here on Svelvik seemed to be little more than a conscripted militia and were quickly brushed aside while the raiders took the equipment and resources we needed. It's good to see that the Immortals' practice has been worthwhile, but one part of me hopes they won't need to fight. There's been too much blood shed in this adventure already.

Log: 14 December 2825

Our first battle losses; Trondheim was a much harder fight than Svelvik and several good men killed themselves rather than be captured by the Combine. Every warrior knows it's a possibility, but to lose comrades in such a manner is a blow. The stiffer-than-usual resistance made sure the Immortals wouldn't be complacent in any battles going forward.

Marillier delivered the inventory from the raid personally, which was something of a surprise. He's distanced himself somewhat from the "military command" since we left St. Jean, styling himself in more of a theocratic role (in my less charitable moments I'd say he wanted to be a messiah for the exiles)-but his reasons soon became clear. Some of the intelligence gathered points to mass arrests of "undesirables and troublemakers" who have been shipped out to a series of detention camps. The people from here on Trondheim seem to be among a number sent to a facility on Richmond. Apparently there was notorious complex there even back when Marillier lived in the Combine, so he "suggests" that we

THE NOT-NAMED

add a fourth target to our raids: the detention center.

As much as I dislike the man and his means of "suggesting" this change of plans, it does make a twisted sort of sense. These are people the Combine leadership doesn't want but who have exactly the sort of skills we need. We can give them a new home, a chance of starting again, and they'll provide the infusion of fresh blood the scientists say we need.

Log: 9 January 2826

The DCMS put up a good fight on Jarrett too. A couple of machines had to be scrapped but were recovered, though we did lose a fighter in the landing. No evidence left there, but I hate the idea of leaving more of ours behind in this hostile land.

Log: 21 January 2826

We very nearly snatched defeat from the jaws of victory on Richmond. The landings and attack on the complex went well, the DropShips arriving before the Combine forces could react, but Marillier sent a team into the records facility in contravention of the agreed plan. Rather than a quick "smash and grab," the Immortals had to weather a string of counterassaults by DCMS troops, and these were are damn sight more professional and determined than those we'd met before. They made us pay, almost two lances by the time the bloody scientist's "excursion" was done. It'd better be worth the blood of those who fell; we were only able to recover five Immortals, and I'm praying the remainder obeyed the order not to take any personal effects to the surface.

[The chronology here certainly matches what is known of the "Minnesota Tribe," down to the small number of the Tribe who fell and whose remains were recovered by the Combine. We already knew of the tenuous link to the North America Division, the 331st, cited in Clan histories. Less well known is the Wolverine patch found on one of the corpses. I'm not sure how much of that was ever made public, though I've seen references in ISF and ROM documents. One part of me finds it too pat, though, a smoking gun so obvious that it seems too clear-cut to be true. Certainly the author seems concerned about security, so if that's the case, why did the troops bear insignia linking them to both the Not-Named and the 331st? Given who was involved, I wonder… -CK]

Log: 14 February 2826

Despite fears to the contrary, it doesn't look like we stirred up a hornet's nest. The newcomers have mostly been accepted into the fleet. A hardcore few look set to cause problems, railing against authority, but Marillier has said he'll take them in hand. If he fails, there's only one course of action open; we have to work together and I won't tolerate mutiny, though having the rogue elements under His influence is scarcely more appealing. His power is too extensive, too deeply entrenched, to counter, however. As the saying goes, we have to pull together or die separately. Marillier needs my troops for security, but I need his influence to keep the people in line.

Log: 29 April 2826

I could do without days like today; a full military alert throughout the fleet when an unidentified vessel was spotted on the edge of the system. The WEIR micro-jumped to the interloper, whose crew demonstrated their own technological prowess by jumping away; battered she may be, but even her anti-fighter systems would scour a civilian ship. We need to be away before they come prowling back. If we're lucky, it's some merchant or treasure hunter who will spend the next week cleaning the seat of their trousers. If we're unlucky, the DCMS will come down on us like a ton of bricks.

Log: 11 May 2826

Whoever they are, they're good. Two jumps down the line and our shadow is back. He may have made some false starts to get to us, but if he's LF-equipped, he can jump twice as often as the fleet-we're limited by our slowest member. We're executing Plan Delta and scattering, putting as many DropShips as possible on the LF-equipped vessels that escaped Barbados. Those of us who evade pursuit will meet up off Valentina in six weeks. Those who don't will purge any computers and seek their own future for the good of the remainder.

Log: 27 June 2826

Only three vessels missing, which is a minor miracle; I presumed breakdowns alone would cost us that many. Are we safe?

Log: 29 June 2826

No, and yet yes. The CORNWELL arrived this morning, reducing the losses to two, but it was accompanied by our shadow. Their hails didn't contain any of the "under duress" code words and so we allowed a DropShip to approach, under the WEIR's guns, of course.

It's not the DCMS, but Jerome Blake's communications agency-ComStar, as they now style themselves-who, if their representative is to be believed, hold true the tenets of the Star League and even of Kerensky himself. This Travis is a slippery character and I suspect he's being economical with the truth, but what he proposes could be the saving of us: why shouldn't ComStar and we exiles work together for the benefit of both? They deal in information and politics, we in technology and military strength. It's got possibilities.

[That would be Emilio Travis, who-officially at least-claimed not to have found the Wolverines. Was this a big cover-up? Did ComStar succeed in making contact with the Not-Named and, even more shocking, offer them refuge? -CK]

Log: 11 August 2826

A route has been laid out. It's circuitous, but it offers the best hope for avoiding contacts-some of our equipment might provoke too many questions. The WEIR and her consorts in particular will stand out; there's nothing left the size of a battleship in the Inner Sphere, I gather, so the old warhorses will have to be mothballed. For the time being, they'll hold position out here in the Periphery, though Travis says with enough time something can be arranged at one of their fleet bases.

THE NOT-N

You know, I can almost breathe a sigh of relief. We need to negotiate with the authorities within ComStar, the First Circuit and their head, Conrad Toyama, but I'm optimistic we'll be able to broker a deal. My big worry is Marillier. He seems to have his own ideas as to the "way forward." Still, military pragmatism and the proposed cantonment on Mars should limit his ability to make mischief, though a simple "airlock accident" has its appeal. We can't afford to let vengeance and petty bickering break us having finally made it "home."

[*That's the last official entry in the log. There's one more, somewhat chilling, in a different style and tone. -CK*]

New Era Day 46

To be retained in archives; not for inclusion in the casket at Koryo.

[*I assume it's referring to a burial-that of the original author, I guess-whose timing, though imprecise, has me wondering. Does "Day 46 of the new era" mean after meeting with Travis, after settlement? The use of "Koryo" implies the latter, but either way, the timing seems suspicious and puts me in mind of some other historical "coincidences." Was our original author, the commander of the fleet it seems, assassinated, once the need to keep him/her and the military in line was gone? If so, was it before negotiations (to smooth their path?) or after (and thus a consequence?) We'll never know, but the tone going forward in the rest of the documents is radically different. Not secular, more…messianic. -CK*]

THE EMILIO TRAVIS REPORT

Our operatives on Richmond managed to penetrate the Combine's investigation team studying the attacks of the so-called Minnesota Tribe. The only concrete evidence recovered thus far has been the body of one of the MechWarriors of the Tribe. The pilot was using a *Lancelot* BattleMech of exceptionally high quality.

Of great interest was the MechWarrior's uniform. The coolant suit was an enhanced version of an SLDF prototype that had yet to reach production when Kerensky's Exodus jumped from the Inner Sphere. Naturally our agent sabotaged the suit so that its design would not fall into Combine hands.

Though the warrior carried no personal effects, his suit displayed two interesting patches. One was the outline of the former North American state of Minnesota, with the numbers "331" faintly stitched on it. Our own archivists indicate that the number and symbol are similar to those used by the SLDF's 331st Royal BattleMech Division (The North American Division) that left the Inner Sphere with General Kerensky. The resemblance is strong, but the symbols are not identical, indicating that the patch was new rather than an old one reworked.

The second patch was also revealing. It depicted a Terran wolverine, white in color, with bloodied fangs. Our searches have revealed no correlation or connection to the designation of any known military unit, meaning that it is a new or reorganized unit.

We conclude that this unit is indeed a surviving element of Kerensky's Exodus. Though we cannot substantiate this with physical evidence, the above items recovered point to a strong connection with the Exodus fleet. It can also be assumed that this unit has an existing technological and manufacturing base. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to determine either the current location or destination of these raiders.

—Summary report to the First Circuit by ROM Precentor Emilio Travis, Archive File 222-802, ComStar Archives (ca. 2826)

[*A few things about this report still baffle me, Honored One. Primary among these: why did this Travis conclude the connection of an insignia of admittedly post-Exodus manufacture tied this individual with the actual 331st and the Exodus fleet? It seems to be reaching. Second, though many have attempted to make the connection, the Wolverine insignia does not match the coloring of the one that was presented in Phelan Kell's treatise on the Clans? Did the exiled Wolverines change their insignia's color to reference their status? Why even retain it-or the 331st's logo-to begin with, if they feared being tracked down by their violent kin? Thirdly-and strangely most disturbing to me-why did Travis' ROM operative not simply steal the cooling suit, which appeared even more advanced than ComStar's own manufacturing capabilities could produce? Sabotage would have required the same amount of access and surely the masters of deception in ROM could've managed a simple act of "snatch and dash" here? –PA*]

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THE BOOK OF THE EXILES

[This next document was appended to the preceding diary, though it's clearly by a different author. Why it was written isn't clear-unlike the preceding log-so the current assumption is that it's part of some religious chronicler's effort to maintain a record of events. What isn't clear is whether it's a contemporary chronicler or, like similar documents from Terran history, written long after the fact to justify contemporary events. -CK]

We came through fire to this place, struggling against those who would destroy us and against ourselves. Against those who would throw away the chance of rebirth, of a new start, for weak concepts of "safety" and "peace." Our ancestors did not prevail in the Pentagon by capitulating, by bowing to others. They fought, tenaciously, knowing that only through the crucible of war can the spirit be tested and a new path forged.

Our people had returned to the worlds of their birth, indeed to the very planet that is the wellspring of humanity, and there found a universe turned upside down. The wolves of the Successor States tore at each other's throats over the Sacred Throne of the Star League, yet the possessors of that very Throne-of Mother Terra itself-stood by and watched. They were sheep. Cold, calculating sheep, but sheep nonetheless. ComStar would not fight for what it believed in, not on the battlefield and rarely in other ways, and these milksops were those with whom the Immortals had chosen to ally? Yes, we were tired after our trials, and yes, the promise of home was tempting, but accepting Toyama and his associates as masters was a step too far. There was but one choice; when the leader is weak, a challenger brings them low. So it was.

The Blessed Father rose to command, his humble origins and civilian background appealing to the First Circuit and its leader. Yet Marillier, praised be his name, wasn't a sheep to follow blindly. He was a true Wolverine, tenacious and ready to strike. A Wolverine in sheep's clothing.

And so it was that the first year of the New Era came to pass on Mars. How appropriate that the refuge of the people would be the world named for the ancient god of war. We were hidden away from outsiders, given spartan homes and scant resources that nonetheless, after years out among the stars, seemed like great luxuries. For weeks we recovered there, regaining strength and tolerating the questions of those few Toyama trusted to know of our presence; a scant few, even the lords of the First Circuit remaining ignorant of the realities. To them, we were a remnant SLDF garrison, drawn into ComStar service in the same manner as those troops who chose not to accompany Kerensky but who held true to the Star League. Our blood ties to the Pentagon and the people of the Betrayer were known to almost none.

Toyama walked among us for awhile, questioning and praising, spending long hours with the Blessed Father. Marillier, praised be his name, knew that ComStar's policy was doomed to failure and told the Primus as much. ComStar, our new people, could not afford to be complacent. We could not afford to be reactive. We had to be pro-active. We had to shape history, not be bound by it.

Toyama saw the wisdom of the Blessed Father's words and put forth a new doctrine. The peoples of the Inner Sphere, exhausted by years of fighting, had brought their Succession War to an end, but if we were to have our victory, each of the treacherous Great Houses would have to be weakened further. Using their influence over the flow of information, the embers of hatred and war were fanned once more, bursting into flame on numerous worlds. In the Free Worlds League, family ties suborned the Marik war efforts until a misstep led the Marik warlord to suspect ComStar's plan. The Captain-General acted, decisively and brutally in a manner worthy of great respect were he not the enemy. Toyama's lackeys argued for peace-for compromise and negotiation-but the Blessed Father knew that to do so would be folly. Show weakness and you are brought down. Show strength and you are respected. The Houses thought ComStar was weak, yet this was the time to show them the contrary. Toyama wanted us for our knowledge of warfare, and a cornered wolverine always fights.

The Free Worlds were shocked to be denied communications, and so were the other nations. They suddenly understood that their ability to govern their vast empires depended on the sufferance of Terra and ComStar, who had no army-that they knew of-but could fight in a way they couldn't counter. The Marik and his people attempted to strike back, but unable to communicate, they flailed about wildly. ROM bore the brunt of the Marik wrath, finding itself locked in a shadow war with SAFE. In these days Toyama feared a Free Worlds attack on Terra itself, against which we would be the bulwark; he revealed to the Blessed Father the vast stores of materiel across Terra, greater than the largest Brian Caches and sufficient to equip a dozen Clans or more. Yet we were not prepared to sit idly by; Toyama was persuaded to allow the people to venture into the League, targeting their weak spots and engendering confusion. This gave us focus and restored a pride dented by years first of flight and then isolation.

And we won the war.

THE NOT-

The Mariks capitulated, coming cap in hand to Toyama and begging for his forgiveness. Yet our great success left a bitter taste; we could not declare our role, and Toyama claimed the glory for himself and for ROM. He insisted that the people return to the "safety" of Koryo, to be placed under the "protection" of ROM so that our valuable knowledge and technology didn't fall into enemy hands. To be prisoners, or worse, pets, was his true meaning. The Blessed Father, never one to shy from necessity, knew what must be done.

Among those who know of our existence, Raymond Karpov stood at the fore. He respected us as a people, understood our need to act rather than to hide. He was ambitious too, and ruthless, and in him the Blessed Father found a true follower. The records say Toyama died of a stroke; we know the truth.

Karpov became the Third Primus, and unlike his predecessor, who relied on the words of Blake for his legitimacy, strove to make his own mark on ComStar. He saw the wisdom of the Blessed Father's teachings, of acting rather than reacting. He unleashed the wolves, turning ROM loose against the agencies of the Great Houses, using their own guile and our martial expertise to shape the future. We would erode the Successor States' ability to wage war, building their reliance on the good graces of ComStar.

[*It should be noted that while Karpov was responsible for much of the mystical shenanigans in ComStar, the ritualistic nature of the organization and much of its dogma was already in place early in Toyama's reign. This "wisdom of the Blessed Father's teachings" would seem to coincide with the deepening of this tradition, not its inception. -CK*]

Not all were in favor of this direct approach. The head of ROM, Dupreas, clung to Toyama's ideal of a peaceable conquest, not grasping the impossibilities of such a process. Her fate was sealed and her replacement showed how much Karpov trusted the Blessed Father's counsel; Janice Laidlaw, as she was known to the outside world, was Blood Kin to the great McEvedy who fought and died so that we might be free of the Betrayer, Nicholas. In her image, we stood at the right hand of the Primus, confidant and executor of the Primus' will.

Our technologies bolstered ComStar, reinforcing the knowledge maintained by the Order and building upon it with the works appropriated by Aleksandr or carried out in the Kerensky Cluster. We had to be circumspect, however. Some of our greatest advances would seem too outlandish to those of the Inner Sphere and were thus consigned to a series of new caches, awaiting the days of greatest need.

The Blessed Father spoke many times with the Primus and between them they came to understand that their campaign against the Houses would be a long one. They knew the war would not be won in their lifetimes, nor likely that of their children or grandchildren, but their vision was such that they accepted this fact and planned for it. Key among their revelations was that the Trinity of Terra, Mars and Venus would not suffice to safeguard the people should one or other of the Great Houses turn their military against ComStar. There had to be a fallback position. The issue of the "secret" of our people came to the fore again too. For years we had tolerated the seclusion of Koryo, yet for our skills and knowledge to be used fully we couldn't remain cooped up; neither could we come into the open. The resolution of these problems was serendipitous; we would hide in plain sight, acquiring worlds deep inside each enemy realm and using ComStar's influence over information to "lose" these worlds. Many colonies were abandoned in these dark days, so why not use them to our advantage?

PRIMUS RAYMOND ANDRE KARPOV

Little is known of Raymond Karpov before his life in ComStar; he was born on Terra and rose through the ranks of Toyama's ComStar to become Precentor Alpha Centauri and Toyama's designated successor. Though the two men had a solid working relationship, Karpov's rise to prominence was meteoric and his elevation to leadership of the Order unexpected. Rumors circulated for years that Karpov, if not directly eliminating Toyama, had hastened his demise—an ironic accusation given the suspicions around Toyama's own ascension. Karpov managed to dodge the stigma that attached to his predecessor thanks to a program more ruthless and involved than anything Blake or Toyama could have conceived of. It was through his offices that the theocratic ComStar with its incantations and robed acolytes came into being, dominating the Order until the Focht Reformation in the wake of Tukayyid.

Karpov took as his core maxim a Blake saying that "only the great religions survive the darkest of wars" and set about using ROM to both enforce his will within ComStar and to limit the technological development of the Great Houses. Whether he was truly a religious zealot or merely used the idea of dogma to enforce his rules is unclear. His ruthlessness is clear, as is his determination. Records of contact between the Primus and the Great Houses support the analysis that he lacked the personal magnetism of his two predecessors and was, in many regards, abrasive in his dealings with others. Indeed, his lack of personal charisma may have been a factor in his decision to step down in 2875—though second thoughts about the extent of his reforms have often been cited—and to appoint the more moderate Andrea Marteen as his successor.

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Thus were born the Five. ComStar under the aegis of Blake and Toyama had reclaimed these worlds: havens, manufactories and storehouses, but we made them our own, places we could work openly, never admitting our origins but free to act unhindered. Great works would in time be achieved, new revelations that even the Star League would have called miracles, building toward the day when victory would be ours. Officially, ROM sought out lost Star League technologies and brought them into the light. In truth, these teams served as a conduit for the knowledge of the Exiles to be made available.

[*ComStar's records of the Five are almost nonexistent, even their "forgetting" of them a testament to how far they'd fallen, but this paragraph seems to confirm the suspicion that the Not Named didn't come to these worlds on their own; rather, they co-opted them from a pre-existing ComStar scheme. -CK*]

Karpov understood, and even after the Blessed Father passed on remained true to the vision, a Wolverine in spirit if not by blood. Yet one man's vision can only go so far, and with the people spread among the Five and the Trinity our influence began to waver. In this atmosphere Karpov chose to step down, and in an act that played more to ComStar's internal politics than our own goals, chose to appoint an outsider, Andrea Marteen, to the Primacy.

[*This is an interesting stretch of narrative, almost as interesting for what it doesn't say as what it does. There's the comment about Karpov acting against the Blood's goals, almost as if he had a change of heart late in his reign. Is it a coincidence that this happened around the time Marillier died? Was his appointment of Marteen a move against the "Wolverines?" It's often cited as evidence of factional struggles within ComStar, so having it as part of a wider power struggle isn't too much of a stretch, nor are the Exiles' efforts to bring Marteen back to their way of thinking. -CK*]

A moderate, his successor did not have Karpov's insight and believed that peace and freedom were the way forward, threatening to unravel the plans of the Blessed Father and Primus Karpov. Yet in ROM the people retained power thanks to the work of Laidlaw, seeking to "educate" the new Primus as to the realities of the situation. It did not take long for her to realize the folly of her approach, and in the end Marteen was brought into the confidence of the people and gave us her wholehearted, if somewhat tardy, support. To outsiders she is a builder, making provisions so that people could live well. To the cognoscenti, she allowed the Five to prosper, concealing funding among the plethora of projects commissioned on Terra. Things were going well. Too well.

[*Marteen was a real wolf in sheep's clothing-to the public a builder, but in secret documents someone who ordered her security services to fake terrorist attacks in order to solidify her position on Terra. Her reign is almost as fascinating as the lack of information on Karpov's five-year career after resigning his Primacy. Did he really go off into obscurity, disenchanted with First Circuit politics, to manage the Blake Medical Center-or did he serve as a power behind the throne until his death in 2880? Reading between the lines, it's tempting to imagine Marteen cutting some sort of deal to support the Blood's agenda with the Five in exchange for their aid in solidifying her political position… her ambition overcoming her reluctance to follow the Blood's agenda. Pure speculation, but in keeping with the Machiavellian politics of the Order and more plausible than, as one of my colleagues put it, a "love-in between the Blood and those who learn their secret." -CK*]

History recalls Dwight Kurstin as a madman, whose poor grip on reality almost cost ComStar dearly. The truth is even more terrible; he very nearly destroyed everything that the people had worked towards. His murder of Marteen-disguised as a crash-fooled few and its repercussions were immense.

Here was a leader of ComStar who knew nothing about our existence and whose reaction, according to his psychological profile, was unlikely to be favorable. He'd engineered his own accession and confirmation and it seemed likely that, given free rein, he'd dismantle the apparatus put in place by his predecessors while pursuing his own goals. He was the proverbial "loose cannon." Unlike Toyama, proximity to whom allowed us to act decisively, Kurstin stood apart and was not vulnerable to direct remedial action. Yet we knew war could be fought in many ways. Our army had melted away over the years, but as we had learned from ComStar, wars could be fought with information and words too.

Thus began a de facto civil war within ComStar, with the Primus taking increasingly brutal measures against his own people to stamp out "heresy." ROM fractured too, many following the Primus' orders but others obeying the will of the First Circuit. The people and the Five stood aloof, knowing that a single misstep could shatter their masquerade and ruin decades of planning. In the end, it was one of the Blood who acted, decisively taking up the reins of power and shaping the road ahead.

The grandchild of one of those who escaped the Pentagon and a full initiate of the mysteries, Gregori Hartford was unusual in that he did not serve on the Five but rather had established himself within mainstream ComStar, rising to

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the post of Precentor Procyon and a seat on the First Circuit. Part of the Blessed Father's plan so that the people would know the innermost thoughts of ComStar's leadership, Gregori's position proved fortuitous, though he was unable to block Kurstin's meteoric rise. He was able to rally resistance, however, and when a First-Circuit Precentor died in ROM custody, the stage was set for a dramatic showdown.

Rallying the First Circuit at the Court of the Star League, Hartford outlined the stark choices facing the Order. They couldn't legally remove Kurstin from power, but they could, working together, prevent him from doing harm by isolating Terra. Hartford convinced even his political opponents in the First Circuit of the wisdom of this action, aiding the Blood's agenda in the process. In doing so, the wisdom of the Five became apparent; Terra, though humanity's spiritual home, was not indispensable. It could be circumvented.

Kurstin's insane reaction to the de facto interdiction of Terra-a witch-hunt against all those plotting against him (or whom he thought plotted against him) showed the Primus' instability, yet many ROM operatives followed his orders and for months the secret civil war raged as agents stalked each other across the Inner Sphere.

The people might have weathered the storm of his madness, but Kurstin had employed several regiments of mercenaries, equipping them with BattleMechs and vehicles from the Terran caches. Ostensibly these troops were going to "liberate" the First Circuit worlds as part of Operation Winged Crusader, but Hartford feared they might target the Five should the Primus learn of them. The revelation of the stockpiles to the mercenaries was a great blow, but the unmasking of the Five would be a disaster of unimaginable proportions.

The assassination of Kurstin on 3 January 2902 brought the conflict to a close in a bloody and decisive manner and also demonstrated the potency of the Blood; the assassin was Hartford's own gene-sister, Julia, a ROM agent who had been raised on the Five. Though she was not the first to benefit from the Great Work, she was the first avatar and as a result is called "the mother" by many of those who came after. Precentor Hartford was the logical choice as the next Primus, proposing a number of reforms to control the succession and limit the power of the Primacy. Doing so assuaged the fears of the First Circuit but also served to strengthen the influence of our people.

A member of the Blood was Primus and the scene was set to advance the Great Work to the next stage.

[*The historical elements here fit with what we know of ComStar's history, courtesy of Focht's treatise from the mid-3050s, though there's no knowing how truthful the "shadow" influence is. On one hand, it* does *explain some of the oddities in the historical record, no matter that Freddie undoubtedly spun a lot of the content for his own ends, but on the other it's almost too neat in its explanation. That makes me think there's a heavy propaganda element, or if not propaganda, then indoctrination. -CK*]

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THE NOT-NAMED

THE BOOK OF VENGEANCE

[*The author here writes in a similar style to that of the previous section, but certain word choices and deviations suggest it may be a different person, or persons. -CK*]

Vengeance cannot afford to rest on its laurels. The insipid Kari Marshall, his one-time political rival, replaced the incisive Hartford and matters stagnated once more. Decisive leadership was needed; Hollings York, one of the Blood, provided that spine and advanced our cause. Determined to prove his quality, the new Primus took a hard-line stance when House Kurita took umbrage at the recruitment into the Order of Necess Kurita.

[*This is an interesting transition. Reading ComStar's histories, Marshall-Hartford's designated successor-was unspectacular, but hardly the failure that calling her "insipid" implies. I suspect some political posturing by the author of the piece. Furthermore, I suspect Marshall, or her advisors, realized there was some limit on her office, illness perhaps, and thus she chose-or was compelled-to name Hollings York as her successor. York was certainly an odd choice of heir-only 22 when he was designated and 29 when he took office, which implies some unseen factor; the average age of a Primus on taking office is 62 years. Speculation at the time had it that he was to be an ailing Marshall's puppet, so once again it's not a stretch to see him as the pawn in a wider game-particularly if, as this text states, it was a means of getting one of their own into the Primacy once more. -CK*]

Until York, ComStar had dealt with external threats through diplomacy and coercion via control of the HPG network. In this confrontation, the Primus opted for a more direct approach that not only played to the prejudices of the target-military action was something the honor-bound Kuritas could understand-but also signaled a major change in policy to the other Houses: If you think us weak and defenseless, think again.

Blessed with foresight of the storms to come, Primus York used the success of the Luthien operation to justify the formation of a true military force for the order, the ComStar Militia and Guard (later shortened to Com Guard) to defend blessed Terra and to serve as ComStar's arm elsewhere. Initially popular with all and sundry, York lost his way and failed to maintain harmony between the new sword arm of the Order and its established elements. Money went into the Com Guard without care for deficits caused elsewhere. Few outside the Order know of the difficulties in those months and years-that ROM faced extinction and with it our hope of vengeance-but in the end the need to survive outweighed all other factors. When York failed to heed their warnings, the Blood were forced to act against one of their own. Shocked at the need to take such action, the inner circle knew they had to advance matters to a new level, providing a focus that could not be ignored.

Adrienne Sims, unlike her predecessor, was not of the Blood, but her upbringing and contemplative nature-she eschewed worldly trappings and lived a simple, almost spiritual, life-made her sympathetic to the cause (though she was never inducted into the mysteries). Having established her reign, Sims was granted visions of the truth of the Kerensky Exiles, visions she interpreted as a warning. In risking this revelation, the Blood made a major gamble, though by doing so through an unwitting proxy they limited the danger. The origin of the visions was never explained, but their repercussions echoed through history. Knowing that the SLDF exiles posed a potential threat to the Inner Sphere, she ordered the formation of the Explorer Corps to seek out the resting place of Kerensky's people and to provide warning of their return.

[*So Piper Anderson was right after a fashion; the "facts" outlined here coincide with her 3056 book. However, just because some nut job makes a wild accusation and is proven right doesn't make the accusation any less random. It is one of the ironies of history that this endeavor to protect the people from the metamorphosed exiles was in fact the trigger for their return. Is it conceivable that this was part of some Clan "long game" aimed at provoking the invasion 90 years later? It's not as odd as it seems-ComStar, we know, planned for the ultra-long term and many states have undertaken decades-long programs. We know the Clans had agents in the Inner Sphere during this period, prompting the dispatch of the Dragoons as scouts in the early years of this century. What does stand out is the denial of any link between Simms and the Exiles, odd given their efforts to foster such ties through previous leaders. Were they really dead set on using a blind proxy rather than one of their own who wouldn't need to be manipulated pharmacologically? It can be justified as a security step-if you're going to play the Clan card, you'll want your cat's-paw to be beyond reproach-but to my mind there's a disconnect in the narrative. -CK*]

Thus did the Blood watch and wait. We built and prepared, ever vigilant for signs of a return by Kerensky's people, the dividend of the Corps' explorations. Alone, we could defeat either foe. Should they fight each other, we could emerge to defeat the weakened survivors, fulfilling the goals of the Blessed Marillier to bring humanity back under a single, all-knowing leadership.

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[*One part of me understands the desire to set two enemies against each other, but the era in which the Explorer Corps was founded wasn't nearly as advanced as in the 3040s. It wouldn't have been a war of mutual destruction; a Clan invasion in the late 2900s would have been a massacre. Would the "Wolverines" have risked such a thing? The descriptions of the* Outbound Light *that follow imply its mission was deliberately targeted at the Clan homeworlds, so were previous missions steered clear? -CK*]

The first signs of the return came in the early years of the new century when a mercenary force, Wolf's Dragoons, appeared in the Federated Suns. Though cagey about their origins, some of their gear was akin to what the Blood had concealed on Mars and it seemed possible that the newcomers were the harbingers of a Clan return. Yet it was not the predicted apocalypse-the Dragoons began to work FOR the Federated Suns rather than fighting them. Were they truly scouts or simply renegades who, like the Blood, had made their way to the Inner Sphere?

The Dragoons rebuffed our efforts at investigation, itself an indication of their hidden nature, as hitherto no sell-soldiers had resisted the influence of ComStar and the Blood. Even when they changed employers to work for the Capellan Confederation, it proved impossible to penetrate their defenses, but Primus Tiepolo was determined to learn their secrets. Opportunity arose when Anton Marik rose up in rebellion against his brother, Captain-General Janos Marik, and ComStar mediated an alliance between the younger Marik and Maximillian Liao. As part of this entente, Liao would provide the rebel lord with troops-Wolf's Dragoons-while our Order installed an agent on Marik's staff, Vesar Kristoffur.

Of the Blood, Kristoffur knew what was at stake-that the secrets of the Dragoons had to be uncovered-but despite working in close proximity to the Dragoon commanders, he could not penetrate their defenses. Nonetheless, that one of their officers was named Kerensky left no doubt in the minds of the Blood that the Dragoons were spies for the Clans. The decision was made to deal with them; under the pretext of bolstering Anton's forces, the unit was to be dismembered and destroyed, Kristoffur providing the leverage needed with Duke Anton and control of the Dragoon dependents.

It should have been a great victory. But Kristoffur, blinded by his hatred for all that was Clan, prompted the duke to slay the imprisoned Dragoons, including co-commander Joshua Wolf and the dependents. He expected this to break the mercenaries' morale, but it did the opposite. Enraged, the Dragoons turned on Anton and gutted his capital. Kristoffur fled (ultimately to face justice from the Order), but the Dragoons uncovered our role in the operation and from that date onward viewed us as an enemy, though never quite knowing why. From thenceforth the Dragoons took every opportunity to slight ComStar and to act against us, never quite waging war but never at peace. Jaime Wolf's appearance on Terra at the wedding of Hanse Davion and Melissa Steiner was an act of bravado, aimed as much at us as at the Dragoons' latest opponent, Coordinator Takashi Kurita of the Draconis Combine, with suggestions of sabotage and espionage at his hands during that last calm before the storm.

[*Kristoffur's fate is unknown, though there's evidence he survived, shipped off to some far distant "scientific outpost." Wolf's feud with ComStar became a thing of legend, though I think it's overstated here, spanning half a century before ending in the nuclear fires of Outreach and the cold darkness of trans-Martian space. There's nothing to suggest Wolf knew what lay at ComStar's heart, or regarded the Order as evil (other than being power-hungry, at least), but his relationship with them was always cool and chilled markedly in the run-up to the Fourth Succession War. The growth of Outreach as a hiring hall for mercenaries and the establishment of the Mercenary Review and Bonding Committee was a direct challenge to ComStar, which had hitherto overseen such matters. The formation of the Allied Mercenary Command was nothing short of a declaration of war. -CK*]

The announcement of the invasion of the Capellan Confederation and Draconis Combine was one of our greatest intelligence failures-we'd become complacent in our observation of their troop movements, with years of exercises disguising real preparations for war-and the prosecution of the conflict threatened our plans with the creation of a de facto super-state and the emasculation of its enemies. Measures had to be taken to limit the power of this new alliance, but the evil that was Hanse Davion deflected the main thrust of our efforts against his power base. Nonetheless, events within the conflict gave rise to a legitimate cause for making the Com Guard public and deploying it across the Inner Sphere. Though it would be many years before all nations accepted the deployment, they DID bow to the inevitable and accept the garrison forces, few realizing that these defenders were in truth a dagger held at their throats.

Tiepolo's failure to deal with the Dragoons

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and the nascent Steiner-Davion alliance brought about his downfall and the elevation of Myndo Waterly, a Kurita, to the Primacy. Though not of the Blood, her ambition and drive impressed the cabal and they sought for ways to bring her into the fold. Events overtook them, however, as Waterly's own brand of ruthless ambition propelled her onwards, her path in many regards parallel to the wishes of the Blood. Hidden within the Order, they could do little more than observe as years of planning came to fruition.

Though the Order had spent many years limiting the technology available to the Inner Sphere to maintain the Successor States as ripe targets for the Clans, the Steiner-Davion alliance-and the recovery of a Star League era data core in the Free Worlds League despite a major containment operation-meant that such tactics would no longer serve. While a shadow war raged between ROM and the Steiner-Davion intelligence agencies, ComStar secretly took sides in the conflict between the Great Houses, on Waterly's orders arming the Draconis Combine against renewed aggression by its enemies. In exchange, Theodore Kurita provided something that ComStar desperately lacked: a battle-hardened commander for the Com Guard.

Anastasius Focht had been born Frederick Steiner but had fallen afoul of Lyran politics and been sent on a suicide mission in the Fourth Succession War. He'd almost died at Kurita hands, but had been spared at the last instant. Willing to put aside his past life-the parallels of Odin giving an eye for wisdom are fitting-he made an ideal candidate and was welcomed by the Primus. Waterly knew his skills would be vital for the Order, though she never entirely trusted him despite his rise to command both ROM and the Com Guard. The Blood opposed Focht's elevation, judging him to be a risk to their goals, but with the Primus outside their reach they could do little to oppose him. Instead, they hoped to use Waterly's agenda for their own ends. The Blood's military acumen was long gone, diluted by years in the shadows, and the Order would need a skilled military commander in the years to come.

The OUTBOUND LIGHT's departure went unremarked, its mission into the Periphery seemingly no different from the hundreds that preceded. Yet this was the mission that served as the Blood's agent provocateur, uploaded with a flight plan that took it into the heart of the Kerensky Cluster. Faced with the discovery of their homeworlds, Kerensky's descendants had no choice but to attack.

[*This last comes across as political spin. One moment they decry Focht and say Waterly is an outsider, the next that the* Outbound Light *was an agent provocateur. Would they really have provoked the Clan invasion when their control of the situation was so poor? It seems more likely that they're claiming responsibility, when in fact the situation simply got away from them. -CK*]

[*There ends the "historical" treatise. Three additional documents follow, expanding on the events of the Clan Invasion and its aftermath. From its content, the author of the first document appears to be Primus Waterly. The second appears to be associated with the shadowy "Master" of the Word of Blake. Finally, my loyal Peter then sums up the events of recent years. -CK*]

THE SCORPION DOCTRINE

Enjoy your games, Frederick. You strive to atone for what you did in the past, the sins of your youth, taking on yourself the mantle of Humankind's Savior. You don't realize that it doesn't matter. Whatever you do won't affect the outcome. It's not the Clans who will rise as masters of the Inner Sphere if they win, nor the Successor States who will reap the bene ts if they fail. No, it is the Order that shall prevail, rising from the ashes as liberators.

Tukayyid is but a distraction, sleight of hand on a cosmic scale that will draw the attention of the Clans and Spheroids and allow my plans to go forward; Scorpion, not your battles, will ensure victory and the birth of a new age of enlightenment. An act of treachery, I can already hear you say, as if such quaint notions of morality apply in this situation. You never did understand the true lessons of power, did you-probably why you failed so miserably in your previous life.

Power is victory. The means matter not, only success. Do anything, say anything, to win. And you wonder why I sent you as ambassador to the Clans; you and Ulric Kerensky both have a blinkered view of honor and morality. Neither of you has the killer instinct of a true victor. Few do. Theodore Kurita is one, as is-despite his black heart-Hanse Davion. They will do what is needed without hesitation, a lesson you never learned.

[*This note stands out as making no reference to the Wolverines, or the Blood, or whatever they're being called. That makes it unique among these documents and draws a degree of interest: Why was it included? To highlight Waterly's agenda as distinct from that of the Blood? That doesn't make sense; it's little more than a gloating message to Focht. Is there something in that? Some significance to the baiting of the Precentor Martial that I can't divine? -CK*]

THE NOT-NAMED

THE HIDDEN HAND

19 July 3052

Death. Hah. Overrated.

Blake's will shaped ComStar long after his death, and Waterly's will do likewise in this "new era."

Not quite what she was expecting, no indeed, but unexpected than an outsider should bring us to this juncture. Not a golden age, but an age of new conflicts. The Betrayer's kin are here at last, but thanks to the viper in our midst have been brought short, neither destroyed nor destroying. Our covenant is broken, the Order shattered and its members scattered.

Yet there is a sense of homecoming too, of returning to our origins. Literally in some cases. Like mine. It's been so long since I've been home, but now it will serve as our refuge. Yet this new betrayal is a beginning, not an end. We have been scourged, cleansed of unbelievers and the weak-willed. This is a chance to star afresh. Leaner. Fitter. More focused.

He will give us refuge. My doppelganger, the one who should have been my proxy. His belief has wavered, the corruption of power overtaking the purity of purpose, but he has not so fallen so far as to refuse us. As to refuse me. An atonement of sorts. A fresh start.

But where? The core worlds have fallen too far, lost to avarice and hedonism. Yet the unsullied outer worlds lack the infrastructure we need to rebuild. We need a balance, a world of purity and technology, perhaps an oxymoron in this League. Or perhaps not. Memory asserts itself and cries out to me.

Gibson.

1 June 3057

Blood not of my blood, yet I feel sadness at the passing. There's an inevitability about such things, but such is the price of dealing with the devil. Dear shadow-brother, you put your own desires ahead of those of your people-my people-and this is the karmic retribution.

[*This event isn't clear, but the timing and phrasing suggest a link to the death of Joshua Marik on New Avalon. If that's true, it implies a truly impressive espionage network; the Captain-General didn't receive word of the death until the end of July, and that the result of a fluke. The cold tone makes me wonder how much of the conflict that followed-Operation Guerrero-was manipulated by the Word of Blake. -CK*]

11 October 3057

Blane and Arian say the time is right for the plan to return Blessed Terra to our control. It's not without its risks, but the rewards are too great to ignore; a return to the mother world. A homecoming to Koryo and the people and assets we left behind. My family here is lost to me, save for the one loyal brother who is privy to the secret, and instead I have found a new family in these exiles of the Blood. Their dreams of glory are now faded, the taste of bitter ashes replacing the grand victory they spent centuries planning for. Complacency led them to this end, a lack of effective leadership and a misplaced belief in their own supremacy.

The Blood have skills and knowledge beyond any others, but they lack the vision and resolve to employ them. Now it is my time to return the faith they placed in me. My time to give them a goal and vision. The dream of a united humanity, a new era of peace and prosperity under the Word of Blake.

By returning to Terra we gain freedom from Gibson and League scrutiny. Legitimacy and authority, and an opportunity to advance our cause. When all is said and done the Blood calls for blood. They want a return, and who am I to deny them, though I'm damned if I'll give Aziz the glory she desires.

16 November 3058

So it comes to pass; a faux Star League to take the war back to the invaders. One part of me wants to applaud the bald-faced cheek of it, but another sees it as a challenge to destiny. The Blood will oversee humankind's resurrection, not some insipid sham. How dare they sully the image of the glorious Star League!

Yet the pretense does serve our purpose. The Clans will be weakened and the seeds sown for yet more conflict. The old saying about power corrupting is as true now as ever, and for all his low cunning Sun-Tzu Liao is no Ian Cameron or Albert Marik. We can make use of this endeavor, a stepping-stone to our own glories. We must seek... rapprochement with the great powers, through the good graces of shadow-brother. The time before the next appointment is likely to be consumed by the war this alliance is to wage, so we will have little opportunity to bring things to pass, though the council after that should serve to establish our bona fides. Yet it is the fourth council, after the third peaceful transfer of power, that shall bring us glory.

[*That phrase I've heard before, the "Third Transfer." Is it really so simple as the election of a new First Lord? What was their aim for the "Third Transfer?" The election of a Blakist First Lord? I know the smart money had been on Thomas Marik-the fake, that is-being the fourth leader of the resurrected Star League, but internal fighting put an end to that and brought the house of cards crashing down. -CK*]

5 June 3061

I must be thankful for Cameron. He warns me of the conspiracy gathering against me and counsels me to act. I say that post is cursed; Focht betrayed Waterly and now Arian betrays me. The significance of tomorrow's date is not lost on me, and there's only one punishment.

[*And there's a master manipulator at work. ComStar agents were blamed for the murder of Trent Arian and his deputy in London on 6 June, the anniversary of Waterly's "retirement," but ComStar always denied it. Could it really have been a "housekeeping" operation by the Master? Or was it St. Jamais looking to advance his own career? Is he really the schemer at the heart of things? -CK*]

THE NOT-NAMED

20 December 3063

Soon. Soon you shall be reborn, stepping into the light as my right hand, my Protégé. We share so much, have a bond that no one else can understand. You will be reborn by grace of the Blood who see in you a kindred spirit who will help us advance the Great Vision. You we must protect when the rest of your line consumes itself, a hope for the future come the Third Transfer. You will see the worlds that I've seen, witness the magnificence of the Five and the austere glory that is Koryo. You will become one of us.

Soon, Arthur.

[*And this is where credibility in these documents wanes, with a step too far and a hokey coincidence. That Thomas Marik may have survived the bomb that killed his father thanks to the intervention of ComStar makes a twisted kind of sense. That history should repeat itself in such an outlandish manner beggars belief. -CK*]

WHAT LIES BENEATH

So what became of the "Wolverines" at the heart of ComStar? If these documents are to be believed, they fled Focht's coup to the Free Worlds League, where they plotted their revenge, led by a shadowy "Master" who may or may not be the real Thomas Marik. Or at least the faction that became known as the Word of Blake did. The more secular elements of the Order remained under the authority of Focht through his puppet, the O5P agent Sharilar Mori. The Blakists' settlement on Gibson is well documented, as are their troubles with some of the locals and the building of a Blakist Militia using the revenue from the Free Worlds League's HPG network.

Their exile was short-lived, with a sneak attack securing Terra and its resources for them in early 3058. Gibson remained a key base of the schismatics, considerably less important in people's minds than Terra and free of troublesome resistance. Oddly, the Blakists never named a Primus, hinting that "Thomas Marik" was to be named as such but never making any such public declaration. It is ironic that in making such statements the Blakists may actually have been telling the literal truth-just not the truth everyone else saw.

Instead, individuals such as William Blane and Cameron St. Jamais came to the fore, supplanting old-school leaders such as Demona Aziz-who disappeared under unusual circumstances a few months after the liberation of Terra-and Precentor-Martial Trent Arian, killed by "ComStar" agents on the anniversary of Waterly's assassination. It seems likely that both moves were part of a power play within the organization, aimed at removing opposition to an unspecified individual. Since the onset of the Jihad there have been rumors of a "master" at the heard of the Blakist order, an uncrowned Primus who might, just might, be the original Thomas Marik.

We know, by his own admission, that the former Captain-General of the Free Worlds League was an imposter, prepared in some hidden facility and sent as a stand-in when the true Thomas was seriously wounded in a bombing in the 3030s. The agenda of this Fake Thomas has never been made clear, but he has intimated that he was to serve as proxy for the still-living Real Thomas-only he found his interests diverging. Furthermore, it is suggested that Real Thomas lost interest in the League in favor of some other goal and that by the time of the Second Star League he was in a position of high office within the Order, tied in with the (mis-)appropriation of funds by the Blakists from transactions in the Free Worlds League. We know this money funded a massive expansion of the Blake Militia, including the establishment of training camps in the Periphery and the suborning of mercenary forces.

However, even if you accept this as evidence that Thomas Marik is the true lord of the Word of Blake and the architect of the Jihad, it doesn't in any way suggest a link with the Wolverines. Only the documents we have-of unclear provenance-do that, and even here much is untrustworthy. The documents are like a self-reinforcing delusion, providing mutual support but lacking any definitive, incontrovertible links to known facts. Much that is stated can be attributed to coincidence or wishful thinking. The deep recesses of our minds want to find a grand conspiracy at the heart of the most apocalyptic war humanity has ever seen. That might in some way excuse how we were tricked into turning on each other in an orgy of destruction. Never mind that we're a weak-willed species and quite capable of committing atrocities without being manipulated; there were no "hidden Wolverines" for Hitler or Amaris. No "secret cabal" for Pol Pot or Jinjiro Kurita.

Then again, the Christians say the greatest trick the Devil ever played was convincing people he didn't exist …

[*Like Peter, I'm skeptical as to the provenance of these documents, but we know something lies at the heart of the Word of Blake. Is it Thomas Marik? The evidence is mounting. Is it some grand conspiracy? Had you asked me at the start of the war I'd have said no, but there are just too many aspects that don't make sense. Is it the Wolverines? My head says no, but my heart says yes. The only thing we can do at this juncture is present the evidence and allow people to make up their own minds. -CK*]

SAVE

RULES ANNEX

RULES ANNEX

The following section provides additional game play and construction rules for units, forces and equipment used in the *Classic BattleTech* game.

Terminology: In these rules, the term *unit* is used as it is in *Total Warfare* (*TW*), to refer to a single battlefield element such as a 'Mech, vehicle, battle armor squad or conventional infantry platoon. The term *force* is used to denote any multi-unit combat formation, such as a Level III (36 units) or a Division.

SPECIAL FORCE RULES (WORD OF BLAKE)

Each Word of Blake Division possesses certain specialties and skills based on its experience and the abilities of its commanders. The Division descriptions in the *Blake Protectorate* chapter touch on these forces in detail. The following game rules simulate these characteristics, and are intended to supplement existing *BattleTech* rules as presented in *Total Warfare* (*TW*), *Tactical Operations* (*TO*) and *Strategic Operations* (*SO*). They should add variety to and enhance game play, but not give unfair advantage to players, and so gamemasters and players should all agree on any supplemental rule before using it in play. Similarly, players should feel free to modify any rule that seems inappropriate for their campaign. All of the following rules are considered advanced rules, and are thus inappropriate for tournament play.

Many of the following rules are specifically designed for use with the *Creating Scenarios* rules (see pp. 256-275, *TW*). Players should feel free to use them in other game situations if appropriate. Unless otherwise stated, the following rules apply to *BattleTech* games only.

Using Hidden Units Rules

Certain forces can use the Hidden Units rules (see pp. 259-260, *TW*) to set up part or all of their forces when scenario circumstances allow. If a scenario offers no such opportunity, and the force's special ability does not state otherwise, the force cannot exercise this option. In a chase scenario, for example, both sides move right from the start, so neither side can employ hidden units. In a stand-up fight scenario, however, one side may be able to use Hidden Units rules. Players must decide for themselves if a scenario accommodates the use of hidden units; in all cases, both players must agree before using the rules in a scenario.

If the rules for a scenario type already call for hidden units, ignore the force's special ability to set up hidden units.

Overlapping Abilities and Advantages

If opposing forces possess identical abilities or advantages, the advantages cancel each other out. For example, if two opposing forces both have the advantage of choosing the side of the map from which they enter, ignore the advantage and instead determine entrance edges using standard rules.

Banking Initiative

Some Word of Blake forces possess an innate grasp of the ever-changing battlefield. They can take advantage of this by electing to give up initiative only to seize it later in combat.

In game play, the player controlling these forces may, *before* making the Initiative roll, choose to give Initiative to his opponent. For each two turns the controlling player elects to lose Initiative in this manner, he may—at a later turn, and before making his Initiative roll—choose to take Initiative. The controlling player may only "bank" up to two Initiatives (giving up four beforehand) at any one time in this way. For purposes of any other special abilities, consider the opponent to have won or lost Initiative (as appropriate) by a margin of 1.

Forcing the Initiative

Several Word of Blake forces have the ability to "force the initiative" and gain bonuses to their Initiative rolls in *BattleTech* games. The bonus is equal to the number of enemy units the side destroyed in the previous turn, reduced by the number of its own destroyed units.

For example, a side with this capability receives a +2 Initiative bonus if it destroyed 4 enemy units and lost 2 of its own during the previous turn.

Off-Map Movement

Some Word of Blake forces are proficient in tactical movement behind the lines of combat. Forces with the off-map movement ability may move units off the map during play, to return later at a predetermined point on the map edge. This ability may only be used if the scenario type allows for it. For example, an offensive force may not use this ability in breakthrough scenarios; in a hold-the-line scenario, the defending force cannot use off-map movement.

To use this ability, the controlling player writes down the exit hex and mapsheet of each unit moving off-map. The controlling player then writes down the hex, mapsheet and turn at which each unit will re-enter. Before re-entering the map, an exiting unit must remain off the map for the amount of time it would take to travel from its exit hex to its entrance hex. To calculate this travel time, count the number of blank half hexes along the map edges between the entrance and exit hexes. Then divide this number by the unit's Running/Flanking MP rating (rounding fractions up). The result is the *minimum* number of turns the unit must remain off the map. The controlling player can delay the unit's re-entry beyond this period if he desires, but must select the re-entry turn when the unit leaves the map.

Each returning unit re-enters the map in the End Phase of the turn noted on its "written orders." At that time, the opposing player can check the unit's orders to make sure the move was legal. If the move was illegal, the unit is considered destroyed and removed from play. (A move is illegal if the unit does not remain

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off the map for the required travel time or does not enter at the location and turn noted on its written orders.) In a campaign setting, these "destroyed" units may be brought back into play in a later battle, since they are actually lost rather than destroyed.

If a returning unit is supposed to enter the map in a hex containing an enemy unit, or containing a friendly unit that would violate the stacking limits of the hex, the returning unit is placed in a hex of the opposing player's choice adjacent to the intended entry hex.

Once the returning unit has re-entered the map, any enemy unit adjacent to it may immediately attack it using the rules for *Point Blank Shots from Hidden Units* (see p. 260, *TW*). This attack does not restrict the attacking unit's ability to make attacks in the following turn.

Units off the map cannot engage in combat. If the opposing force destroys all the units remaining on the map before the off-map unit's return, the off-map unit is considered to have retreated.

Overrun Combat

Some Word of Blake forces are capable of "overrun" combat during *BattleTech* games. Under certain circumstances, these forces may fire before the enemy units can move or fire.

When rolling Initiative for overrun-capable forces, note the die roll result's Margin of Success. Divide the Margin of Success by 2 and round fractions down. The result equals the number of individual units that may move, designate their targets and fire before any other units move and fire. "Extra" successes (such as when the player has more successes than there are units available to move) do not carry over to later turns. For example, an overrun-capable force makes an Initiative roll of 11, while its opponent rolls a 6. That gives the overrun-capable force a Margin of Success of 5, allowing two units to move and fire before any opposing units may move (5 divided by 2 is 2.5, rounding down to 2).

Units employing the overrun capability do not take part in the normal move/fire sequence and so do not count when determining how many units each side must move when alternating turns during the Movement and Weapon Attack phases. Overrunning units make physical attacks as normal during the Physical Attack Phase.

Equipment and Experience ratings

A letter (or letters) in parentheses appears after the name of each of the following Word of Blake Divisions, along with the force's general experience rating (Green, Regular, Veteran, Elite).

Equipment Ratings

The letters indicate the force's equipment rating, representing its access to advanced BattleMechs and other equipment. This includes access to refit kits, exceptional salvage, the purchase of new designs and preserved (or recovered) Star League-era technology. Players can use the rating when assigning 'Mechs to a force using the Word of Blake Random Unit Assignment Tables.

If using an alternate generation method to choose units, the equipment rating can serve as a guideline for those choices.

WORD OF BLAKE EQUIPMENT TABLE

Rating	Description	Example
SD	Ultra-Heavy Upgrades	Shadow Divisions
A	Heavy Upgrades	First Division (WoB Militia)
B	Good Upgrades	Tenth Division (WoB Militia)
BP	Fair Upgrades	Protectorate Militia

Experience Ratings

The experience ratings (Green, Regular, Veteran and Elite) reflect the average combat experience rating for the entire Division. Individual Level IIIs, however, tend to vary a bit more than this rating might suggest. To reflect this, when generating any force larger than a single Level III (36 units) from one of the forces described here, the Word of Blake controlling player should determine the overall experience rating of each Level III represented in the field by rolling 2D6. Subtract 2 from the result if the Division has a Green experience rating, add 2 if Veteran, or add 4 if Elite. Cross-reference the result against the Random Experience Rating Table on p. 273 of *Total Warfare* to find the experience rating for that Level III and roll all random unit skills for that force using that rating. (Results of 1 or less reflect a Green force; 13 or more indicates an Elite force.)

Commanders (Optional): As suggested in *Total Warfare* (see p. 273, *TW*), one of every six Word of Blake units deployed should be designated as a Level II commander, and an overall force commander should also be identified for each Level III. Level II commanders should modify their Piloting and Gunnery skill values by –1 each; Level III commanders should modify their skills by –2 each. The lowest Piloting/Gunnery skill rating a Word of Blake commander (or warrior) may receive cannot exceed 0/0 unless the rules for that force specifically state otherwise.

Augmented Warriors

The Shadow Divisions (Divisions Forty through Fifty-two), the Opacus Venatori and the Warrior Houses Rakshasa and White Tiger all feature heavily modified warriors who use cybernetic implants to attain an edge in combat. These enhancements are covered at length in *Jihad Hot Spots: 3072*, *Interstellar Players 2: Jihad Conspiracies* and *Starterbook: Wolf and Blake*. Players without access to these materials may opt to reflect these augmentations more abstractly by simply rolling 2D6 for each unit in these forces. On a result of 8+, apply the effects referenced in the Generic

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GENERIC WARRIOR AUGMENTATION TABLE

Unit Type	Generic Augmentation Effects
Conventional Infantry	Divide all non-burst damage delivered against this unit by 2 (rounding down), before determining the number of warriors killed; burst fire damage against these units is also reduced by 1D6. Additionally, these troops receive a –2 modifier when making Anti-'Mech attacks.
Battle Armor	Each battlesuit trooper is figured as having a Damage Capacity of 2 points (rather than the customary 1 point) and the unit may be counted as part of a friendly C^3i network.
Vehicles	The unit receives a –1 Gunnery Skill modifier, and may ignore Crew Stunned critical hits. In addition, the effects of a Driver Hit, Commander Hit or Crew Killed critical hit only apply to vehicles that have sustained two such hits.
'Mechs and Fighters	The unit receives a –1 Gunnery Skill modifier, and may ignore Piloting Skill modifiers for use of a Small cockpit (if any). The warrior may also ignore any pilot damage from ammunition explosions or heat effects. Damage from falls and hits to the cockpit location are recorded normally, but no Consciousness Roll is required to remain operational.

Warrior Augmentations Table above to the affected unit (as appropriate to its type).

Word of Blake Force Arrangements

When assembling a Word of Blake force, remember that Word of Blake (like ComStar) uses a "base-six" organizational structure, with each level of organization designated by a Roman numeral. A Level I Balkist force equals a single unit (BattleMech, vehicle, six-trooper battle armor squad, or 36-trooper conventional infantry platoon), while a Level II is composed of six Level Is (6 units), and a Level III equates to six Level IIs (36 units). A Level IV (also known as a Division), can incorporate up to six Level IIIs (216 units) of mixed forces, and represents the largest common level of organization used by the Word of Blake.

Also like ComStar, the Word of Blake favors a combination for force types, and may mix unit types even within the same force (such as fielding a pair of fighters, a 'Mech, a vehicle and an infantry unit as a single Level II). Players looking for a more authentic feel to Blakist force composition should bear this in mind when generating forces.

FORCE-SPECIFIC RULES

The following advanced rules reflect the special tactics and abilities of the mercenary commands featured in the *Force Briefs Update* section of this book. Although some of these forces were detailed previously in *Field Manual: ComStar*, the equipment rating and special rule changes noted here for previously published Word of Blake commands reflect the changes caused by their experiences since the start of the Jihad. Thus, these rules do not replace those pre-existing special command rules for scenarios and campaigns dated before 3068.

Factional Random Assignment Tables: Some of the following special rules refer the player to the Random Assignment Tables of other factions in the game. Players may find these tables in various *Classic BattleTech* sourcebooks published to date, and may use any appropriate Random Assignment Table for the referenced faction that they can agree upon for their game's purposes. However, for best results, the recommended tables include those found in *Field Manual: Updates* (pp. 206-231), or in *Total Warfare* (pp. 267-271).

1st Division (A – Elite): At the start of any scenario where the First Division is the attacker, the First's controlling player may roll 2D6 and subtract 6 from the roll result. This modified result (up to a maximum of half the opposing player's forces) is the number of units the opposing player may not deploy at the start of game play, reflecting the First's "tactical surprise" capability. In the End Phase of each turn after game play begins, the defending player rolls 1D6 for each unit that has been prevented from deployment by this ability. On a result of 5 or 6, the unit may enter from the Defender's home edge during the following Movement Phase.

At the start of any scenario where the First is acting as the Defender, up to half (rounded down) of this force's units may be deployed as hidden units (see pp. 259-260, *TW*).

2nd Division (A – Elite): For every 6 units deployed by the Second Division, one unit may be chosen from the Word of Blake's Random Assignment Table, rather than rolled randomly.

Second Division units receive a –2 Piloting Skill modifier to avoid skidding on paved surfaces.

If the Second Division deploys more than a single Level III in the scenario, the controlling player receives a –2 Initiative modifier, reflecting this command's preference for smaller-scale actions.

3rd Division (A – Veteran): In any scenario where the Third Division is the Defender and employs infantry units, the controlling player may opt to deploy some or all of these infantry units using the hidden unit rules (see pp. 259-260, *TW*).

All BattleMechs in the Bloody Skies III-mu must be jump capable. When using the Random Assignment Tables for this force, re-roll any 'Mech that does not mount jump jets until the result yields a jump-capable design.

4th Division (A – Elite): If using the Dropping Troops rules (see *Strategic Operations*), any Fourth Division units deployed in this fashion

RANDOM UNIT ASSIGNMENT TABLE

LIGHT UNITS		Equipment Rating			Vehicles	Aerospace Fighters	
2D6	SD	A	B	BP	All	A/SD†	B/BP
2	C-MK-O Malak [30]	HSR-950-D Hussar [30]	OTT-9CS Ostscout [30]	JA-KL-1532 Jackal [30]	Hawk Moth [25]^{V}	S-HA-O Shade [35]	ZRO-115 Zero [35]
3	C-MK-O Malak [30]	NXS2-B Nexus II [25]	COM-2B Commando [25]	WSP-3L Wasp [20]	Chevalier [35]^{W}	S-HA-O Shade [35]	CNT-3S Centurion [30]
4	HSR-950-D Hussar [30]	OTT-9CS Ostscout [35]	GUR-2G Gurkha [35]	GUR-2G Gurkha [35]	Beagle [15]^{H}	ZRO-115 Zero [35]	ZRO-114 Zero [35]
5	GUR-4G Gurkha [35]	GUR-2G Gurkha [35]	LCT-5M Locust [20]	RDS-2A Red Shift [20]	Sprint [10]^{V}	RGU-113LP Rogue[40]	THK-63 Tomahawk [45]
6	MCY-102 Mercury [20]	RDS-2A Red Shift [20]	NXS1-A Nexus [25]	LCT-3M Locust [20]	Lightning [35]^{H}	SPD-504 Spad [30]	F-12-S Cheetah [25]
7	NXS2-B Nexus II [25]	FNHK-9K1B Falcon Hawk [25]	MCY-102 Mercury [20]	MCY-102 Mercury [20]	Blizzard [25]^{H}	TRN-3T Trident [20]	TRN-3T Trident [20]
8	HER-4WB Hermes [30]	NXS2-A Nexus II [25]	HSR-500-D Hussar [30]	OW-1 Owens [35]	Galleon [30]^{T}	F-12-S Cheetah [25]	SWF-606 Swift [25]
9	PNT-14S Panther [35]	GUR-4G Gurkha [35]	NXS1-B Nexus [25]	FNHK-9K1B Falcon Hawk [25]	Pinto [30]^{V}	RGU-133E Rogue [40]	SPD-502 Spad [30]
10	C-MK-O Malak [30]	RDS-2B Red Shift [20]	FNHK-9K1B Falcon Hawk [25]	ZPH-2A Tarantula [25]*	Main Gauche [30]^{T}	THK-63CS Tomahawk [45]	RGU-133E Rogue [40]
11	C-MK-O Malak [30]	MCY-104 Mercury [20]	FS9-B Firestarter [35]	MCY-99 Mercury [20]	Nightshade [25]^{V}	THK-63CS Tomahawk [45]	SPD-504 Spad [30]
12	Puma Prime [35]	C-MK-O Malak [30]	PNT-14S Panther [35]	NXS1-B Nexus [25]	Gabriel [5]^{V}	S-HA-O Shade[35]	SPD-504 Spad [30]

LIGHT UNITS		Equipment Rating			Vehicles	Aerospace Fighters	
2D6	SD	A	B	BP	All	A/SD†	B/BP
2	C-PRT-O Preta [45]	LGH-6W Lightray [55]	GRMR-PR30 Grim Reaper [55]	BCN-3R Buccaneer [55]	Chaparral [50]^{T}	S-RSL-O Rusalka [65]	DFC-O Defiance [55]
3	LGH-6W Lightray [55]	RJN-200-B Raijin II [50]	STN-5WB Sentinel [45]	VT-6C Vulcan [40]	Thor [55]^{W}	S-RSL-O Rusalka [65]	IRN-SD3 Ironsides [65]
4	SCP-12C Scorpion [55]*	CRB-45 Crab [50]	TBT-8B Trebuchet [50]	RJN-101-C Raijin [50]	Turhan [50]^{W}	IRN-SD3 Ironsides [65]	HCT-214 Hellcat II [50]
5	C-PRT-O Preta [45]	BLF-21 Blue Flame [45]*	BNC-3R Buccaneer [55]	KTO-21 Kintaro [55]	Condor [50]^{H}	DFC-O Defiance[55]	HCT-213B Hellcat II [50]
6	WVE-10N Wyvern [45]	SCP-12C Scorpion [55]*	CDA-3M Cicada [40]	CRB-30 Crab [50]	Goblin [45]^{T}	HCT-215 Hellcat II [50]	IRN-SD1 Ironsides [65]
7	RJN-200-A Raijin II [50]	BNC-5W Buccaneer [55]	INI-02 Initiate [40]	CDM-3M Cicada [40]	Zephyr [40]^{H}	HCT-215 Hellcat II [50]	HCT-213B Hellcat II [50]
8	SHD-11CS Shadow Hawk [55]	RJN-200-A Raijin II [50]	CRB-30 Crab [50]	KW2-LHW Lineholder [55]	Maxim [50]^{H}	GTHA-600 Gotha [60]	F-94 Stingray [50]
9	C-PRT-O Preta [45]	LGH-4W Lightray [55]	HER-5C Hermes II [40]	SHD-7CS Shadow Hawk [55]	Drillson [50]^{H}	LTN-G15 Lightning [50]	F-94 Stingray [50]
10	CRB-45 Crab [50]	KTO-21 Kintaro [55]	KW2-LHW Lineholder [55]	BLF-21 Blue Flame [45]*	Stygian [40]^{H}	F-94 Stingray [50]	HCT-213B Hellcat II [50]
11	C-PRT-O Preta [45]	GRMR-PR31 Grim Reaper [55]	WFT-B Wolf Trap [45]	WVE-9N Wyvern [45]	Regulator [45]^{H}	S-RSL-O Rusalka [65]	HCT-214 Hellcat II [50]
12	Ryoken Prime [55]	C-PRT-O Preta [45]	SHD-11CS Shadow Hawk [55]	VT-6M Vulcan [40]	Chaparral [50]^{T}	S-RSL-O Rusalka [65]	DFC-O Defiance [55]

LIGHT UNITS		Equipment Rating			Vehicles	Aerospace Fighters	
2D6	SD	A	B	BP	All	A/SD†	B/BP
2	C-DVA-O Deva [70]	C-GRG-O Grigori [60]	MAD-9M2 Marauder [75]	DRG-6FC Dragon Fire [75]	Zhukov [75]^{T}	S-STR-O Striga [85]	SHV-O Shiva [85]
3	C-DVA-O Deva [70]	GLT-6WB Guillotine [70]	EXC-B2 Excalibur [70]	RFL-7M Rifleman [60]	Po [60]^{T}	SHV-O Shiva [85]	F-700A Riever [100]
4	OTL-8M Ostol [60]	OSR-5W Ostroc [60]	CRD-7W Crusader [65]	ARC-8M Archer [70]	LRM Carrier [60]^{T}	SHV-O Shiva [85]	AHB-643 Ahab [90]
5	C-GRG-O Grigori [60]	ARC-8M Archer [70]	TDR-9M Thunderbolt [65]	TYM-1A Toyama [75]	Burke [75]^{T}	F-700 Riever [100]	AHB-443 Ahab [90]
6	EXT-5F Exterminator [65]	WHF-3C White Flame [75]*	ARC-8M Archer [70]	LNC25-04 Lancelot [60]	Magi [70]^{T}	F-700 Riever [100]	RPR-100 Rapier [85]
7	FLS-9B Flashman [75]	TYM-1B Toyama [75]	TYM-1A Toyama [75]	BL-8-KNT Black Knight [75]	Demon [60]^{W}	HMR-HG Hammerhead [75]	HMR-HD Hammerhead [75]
8	GLT-6WB Guillotine [70]	TDR-9M Thunderbolt [65]	RFL-7M Rifleman [60]	WHF-3B White Flame [75]*	Brutus [75]^{T}	AHB-643 Ahab [90]	HMR-HD Hammerhead [75]
9	C-GRG-O Grigori [60]	DRG-6FC Dragon Fire [75]	LNC25-06 Lancelot [60]	P1 Perseus [75]	SRM Carrier [60]^{T}	AHB-MD Ahab [90]	F-700 Riever [100]
10	C-GRG-O Grigori [60]	FLS-9B Flashman [75]	DRG-6FC Dragon Fire [75]	BNDR-01B Bandersnatch [75]	Pike [60]^{T}	RPR-200 Rapier[85]	AHB-443 Ahab [90]
11	C-DVA-O Deva [70]	EXC-D1 Excalibur [70]	WHF-3B White Flame [75]*	TDR-9M Thunderbolt [65]	Thumper [60]^{T}	SHV-O Shiva [85]	AHB-643 Ahab [90]
12	Mad Cat Prime [75]	C-DVA-O Deva [70]	ST-9C Shootist [75]	GLT-6WB Guillotine [70]	Padilla [75]^{T}	S-STR-O Striga [85]	SHV-O Shiva [85]

LIGHT UNITS		Equipment Rating			Vehicles	Aerospace Fighters	
2D6	SD	A	B	BP	All	A/SD†	B/BP
2	C-ANG-O Archangel [100]	C-SRP-O Seraph [85]	SPT-N3 Spartan [80]	THG-12E Thug [80]	Demolisher II [100]^{T}	Pentagon^{S}	Hannibal^{A}
3	C-SRP-O Seraph [85]	VNQ-2B Vanquisher [100]	ZEU-10WB Zeus [80]	VNQ-2A Vanquisher [100]	Alacorn [95]^{T}	Leopard PWS^{A}	Leopard PWS^{S}
4	LGC-03 Legacy [80]	MR-6B Cerberus [95]	EMP-6M Emperor [90]	GRN-D04 Grd. Crusader II [80]	Ontos [95]^{T}	Mule PWS^{S}	Mule PWS^{S}
5	GRN-D04 Grd. Crusader II [80]	LGC-02 Legacy [80]	TIT-N10M Grd. Titan [100]	HGN-732 Highlander [90]	Schrek [80]^{T}	Overlord^{S}	Dictator^{S}
6	C-SRP-O Seraph [85]	CRK-5005-1 Crockett [85]	KGC-001 King Crab [100]	KGC-001 King Crab [100]	Demolisher [80]^{T}	Vengeance^{A}	Leopard CV^{A}
7	HGN-736 Highlander [90]	GRN-D04 Grd. Crusader II [80]	THG-12E Thug [80]	CRK-5003-1 Crockett [85]	Puma [95]^{T}	Union^{S}	Union^{S}
8	KGC-008 King Crab [100]	VNQ-2A Vanquisher [100]	MR-5M Cerberus [95]	LGC-01 Legacy [80]	Rhino [80]^{T}	Assault Triumph^{A}	Assault Triumph^{A}
9	MAD-5W Marauder II [100]	LGC-01 Legacy [80]	BNC-8S Banshee [95]	MR-5M Cerberus [95]	Ontos [95]^{T}	Leopard^{A}	Leopard^{A}
10	C-SRP-O Seraph [85]	GRN-D03 Grd. Crusader II [80]]	VKG-3W Viking [85]	TIT-N10M Grd. Titan [100]	Partisan [80]^{T}	Merlin^{S}	Excalibur^{S}
11	Masakari Prime [85]	KGC-008 King Crab [100]	MAD-5W Marauder II [100]	TI-2P Titan II [100]	Schiltron [80]^{W}	Union PWS^{S}	Union PWS^{S}
12	C-ANG-O Archangel [100]	C-ANG-O Archangel [100]	HGN-736 Highlander [90]	TI-2PA Titan II [100]	Alacorn [95]^{T}	Excalibur PWS^{S}	Hamilcar^{A}

*This is a four-legged (quad) BattleMech. ^{A}Aerodyne ^{H}Hover ^{S}Spheroid ^{T}Tracked ^{V}VTOL ^{W}Wheeled

†Forces with an SD rating may add or subtract 1 from the roll result (at the controlling player's discretion)

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receive a –1 modifier to their landing roll target number, and may fire their weapons in the same turn as they land.

5th Division (A – Veteran): Extremely adaptable, the Fifth Division receives a +1 initiative modifier in all terrain, unless the scenario takes place under high or low gravity conditions (see *Strategic Operations*).

6th Division (A – Elite): If the Sixth Division is in the scenario, it negates any terrain-based initiative modifiers the opposing force may have. The Sixth Division can also force the initiative.

7th Division (B – Veteran): When operating under low gravity conditions (see p. 55, *TO*), the Seventh's units receive a –1 modifier to all Piloting Skill roll target numbers when exceeding their normal movement speeds.

8th Division (B – Veteran): When deployed in forces of 6 units or less, Eighth Division units receive a +1 initiative modifier.

9th Division (B – Elite): Highly aggressive, the Ninth Division receives the Overrun Combat special ability. However, if the scenario calls for the Ninth to act as the Defender, this force receives a –1 initiative modifier.

10th Division (B – Veteran): Many warriors in the Tenth Division, haunted by the horrors of the Jihad, fight with almost suicidal zeal. For each unit of this Division employed in a scenario where Forced Withdrawal rules are in effect (see p. 258, *TW*), the controlling player must roll 1D6 before the start of game play and note which units received a result of 5 or 6. These units may ignore the Forced Withdrawal rules.

11th Division (B – Veteran): The warriors of the Eleventh Division are masters of disguise and deception. In any scenario where this force is acting as the Attacker, its controlling player may employ false colors to confuse their opponents, but must suffer a –2 initiative modifier in the bargain. As long as an Eleventh Division unit does not betray itself by attacking first, the ruse will not be detected until an opposing unit ends its movement within 3 hexes' range of an Eleventh Division unit.

If the ruse is not detected, the opposing force "believes" the Eleventh's false colors, and may not attack any Eleventh Division unit. Once the ruse is revealed (either when an Eleventh Division unit attacks, or when opposing units get too close), both sides operate normally.

12th Division (PM – Veteran): Built in part from defecting Free Worlds League troops, the Twelfth may roll 2 units for every 3 deployed on the Free Worlds League (House Marik) Random Assignment Table, rather than the Word of Blake tables. The Twelfth Division also receives a +1 modifier to all Initiative rolls made when acting as the Defender in a given scenario.

13th Division (B – Veteran): Up to half of the units deployed by this Division may be selected by rolling on the Free Worlds League (House Marik) Random Assignment Table.

14th Division (A – Elite): The Fourteenth Division has a reputation for "hit hard going in, then hammer" tactics during its continual attacks on various Combine worlds. Because this force works better in smaller, faster attacks, the Fourteenth ignores any Forced Withdrawal rules in play if acting as the Attacker. The Fourteenth also receives a +2 Initiative modifier for the first 3 turns of game play. This Initiative modifier is reduced by 1 point for every 2 turns (or fraction thereof) that they remain in the field after Turn 3 (to a maximum negative modifier of –3 after Turn 12).

15th Division (A – Elite): Divine Inspiration is the symbol of the Word's power in the Marik Commonwealth, with units always deployed at the capital. As such, the Fifteenth Division has access to the newest equipment in the League arsenal, and may thus select up to half of its deployed units by rolling on the Free Worlds League (House Marik) Random Assignment Table, rather than that of the Word of Blake.

The Fifteenth has also become specialists in battling the supporters of the "False Marik." This singular focus applies a +1 modifier to this Division's Initiative roll if the opposing force is from the Duchy of Oriente. Against forces from any other affiliation (including other Free Worlds League sub-states), a –2 Initiative modifier applies to the Fifteenth instead.

16th Division (B – Regular): Well trained in adverse gravity situations, all Sixteenth MechWarriors receive a +1 bonus to all Piloting Skill rolls when the battle takes place in non-standard gravity conditions (see p. 55, *TO*).

Favoring chameleon-like tactics, the Sixteenth may use the Random Assignment Table of any House or Periphery faction most appropriate to their mission (controlling player's choice). However, when building the Sixteenth's force, *all* units must be rolled from the declared table.

17th Division (B – Veteran): The Seventeenth Division specializes in brute-force psychological warfare to demoralize their opponents. Once per scenario, before the start of movement, the Seventeenth's controlling player can "broadcast" a message to the opposing force aimed at shattering their morale, threatening the enemy warriors, their families or even local "innocents." The player(s) controlling the threatened units then must roll 2D6 for each unit on the field, adding to the result the number of friendly units destroyed by the Seventeenth during the scenario. On a result of 12+ the warrior controlling that unit "breaks" and is forced to withdraw (see p. 258, *TW*).

18th Division (B – Veteran): The Eighteenth Division may designate up to half of its SRM-armed units (including vehicles, fighters and battle armor) as being armed with Infernos instead of standard munitions. Known for their heavy-handed tactics, the Eighteenth receives an additional –2 modifier to attack buildings.

Up to half of the Eighteenth's deployed units may be determined by rolling on the Mercenary Random Assignment Table, rather than that of the Word of Blake. Additionally, if using battle armor, 1 in every 3 battle armor squads deployed by the Eighteenth may be composed of Gray Death Scout or Gray Death Standard battlesuits, at the controlling player's discretion.

19th Division (A – Veteran): Experienced in raiding and quick-strike attacks, the Nineteenth uses a particular mix of light, fast vehicles and BattleMechs. For every 6 units deployed, 2 must be light or medium BattleMechs, 3 must be light or medium vehicles, and 1 must be either a battle armor squad or a light aerospace fighter, depending on the mission. Of these units, only the BattleMechs may be selected from Word of Blake tables; all other units are determined by rolling on the Draconis Combine (House Kurita) Random Assignment Table instead.

Because of their extensive service along the Combine-FedSuns border, whenever the Nineteenth faces a DCMS or AFFS-affiliated unit, their vehicle crews modify their Driving and Gunnery skills by –1 each (to a minimum value of 0/0).

20th Division (B – Veteran): Enlightened Ministry currently serves as mentor to several forces in the Pro-Blake Marik Commonwealth. When the Twentieth is deployed alongside forces with a Veteran or lower experience rating, those forces receive a +2 initiative modifier while

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Twentieth Division units remain in the field. This bonus does not apply to the Twentieth itself, however, even if it deploys alone.

21st Division (B – Veteran): The Twenty-first Division has developed a particular hatred for House Liao above all others. When engaging forces belonging to the Capellan Confederation, the Twenty-first gains the Overrun Combat ability (see p. 137). When engaging forces from the Confederation's ally, the Magistracy of Canopus, or mercenaries employed by House Liao, the Twenty-first receives a +1 Initiative modifier instead. Against all other forces, the Twenty-first receives a –2 Initiative modifier.

22nd Division (B – Veteran): The Twenty-first Division's warriors are experts in disrupting enemy communications. At least 1 of every 4 of the Twenty-first's 'Mechs should be equipped with ECM (forces that fail to meet this requirement may re-roll on the appropriate tables and replace any desired units until the quota is reached).

In game play, as long as the Twenty-first maintains at least one functional ECM for every 4 remaining units the Division has in the field, the Division receives a +2 initiative modifier.

23rd Division (B – Regular): The Twenty-third are experts in incendiary suppression tactics. When fighting in wooded or urban terrain, the controlling player for this Division can assign 6 units equipped with lasers, flamers, PPCs or missile launchers of any kind to act as a special "arsonist" squad. This squad applies +4 to any rolls required to deliberately start a fire (see p. *Fire*, p. 43, *TO*).

Additionally, all the units of the Twenty-second may ignore Shutdown and Ammunition Explosion checks at heat levels of 14 and 19, respectively, as they are used to fighting in high temperatures.

24th Division (PM – Veteran): The Twenty-fourth are masters of small-scale warfare with combined forces. Whenever deployed in a force no greater than 6 units, composed of at least one unit each of BattleMechs, vehicles, and infantry (any type) or aerospace, the Twenty-fourth receives a +1 Initiative modifier, *and* a –2 to-hit modifier applies to any LRM indirect fire when the spotter is also from the Twenty-fourth Division. These modifiers do not apply if the 24th deploys with more than 6 units at a time and/or the unit deploys with 2 or fewer different unit types.

25th Division (PM – Elite): Half of the Nightwatchmen's force must be determined by rolling on the Lyran Alliance (House Steiner) or Free Worlds League (House Marik) Random Assignment Tables.

Furthermore, the Twenty-fifth's experience on Solaris VII has allowed this Division to hone its anti-coalition warfare techniques. Whenever the Twenty-fifth fights against a force comprised of units from multiple factions, the Twenty-fifth receives a +2 Initiative modifier as well as the Off-Map Movement ability (see p. 136).

26th Division (B – Regular): More adept at fast raiding and evading fire than stand-up fights, the Twenty-sixth Division receives a –2 Initiative modifier in any scenario where they act as the Defender. When acting as Attacker, the Twenty-sixth's units receive the Off-Map Movement ability (see p. 136) and reduce by 1 (to a minimum of 0) all Piloting Skill modifiers made while using Running, Jumping, Flanking or Max Thrust movement.

27th Division (B – Veteran): Shield of the Faithful's baptism of fire on Wei has left a lasting legacy among the officers and soldiers of the Division. Drawing from their experiences there, the Twenty-seventh have become experts at operations in hazardous environments. When operating in Tainted or Toxic atmospheres (see p. 56, *TO*), treat all Twenty-seventh Division units as having the Environmental Sealing modification. Furthermore, halve all damage (rounding down, to a minimum of 0) sustained to Twenty-seventh units from Hazardous Liquid Pools.

28th Division (A – Veteran): The Twenty-eighth benefits from extremely cool-headed and tactically astute commanders. As a result, this force receives the ability to Bank Initiative, and also negates any opposing force's ability to use Overrun Combat or Force the Initiative abilities against them. To reflect their activities against the Draconis Combine, one of every three Twenty-eighth Division units deployed in a scenario may be determined using the Draconis Combine (House Kurita) Random Assignment Table.

29th Division (PM – Regular): Reluctant to engage opposing forces directly, the Twenty-ninth Division suffers a –2 Initiative modifier in any scenario where it is the defending force. Because of their reliance on aerospace support, the Twenty-ninth Division's aerospace forces modify their base Piloting and Gunnery skill numbers by –1 each (to a minimum of 1/1).

30th Division (B – Regular): The original members of Acts of Salvation that secured Coventry at the start of the Jihad have largely been replaced by new recruits from Periphery training camps. These troops have given the 30th a reputation for brutality and aggression, bordering on bloodlust. Any time a Thirtieth Division unit begins a turn adjacent to an enemy unit, the Thirtieth's unit receives a –1 modifier to all Piloting and Anti-'Mech Skill rolls (including to-hit rolls for physical attacks) in that turn, but the same unit also suffers a +1 modifier to all Gunnery Skills at the same time.

31st Division (PM – Regular): No more than 1 unit for every 12 fielded by the Thirty-first Division may have an Elite experience rating, and no more than half of the same force may be rated as Veteran. One out of every 3 units deployed by this Division may be determined using the Federated Suns (House Davion) Random Assignment Tables, rather than those of the Word of Blake.

32nd Division (B – Regular): Reluctant to engage opposing forces directly, the Thirty-second Division suffers a –2 Initiative modifier in any scenario where it is the defending force. Reliant on their infantry "headhunters" to win their battles for them—often off the field—whenever the Thirty-second Division is the scenario's designated Attacker, its controlling player may declare that he is launching a "pre-emptive headhunter attack" on the opposing force and roll 1D6 for every 6 units he intends to deploy. The result—divided by 2, rounding down—is the number of units that are removed from the opposing player's force before they can be placed on the map (determined randomly).

33rd Division (B – Veteran): Built for raiding and little else, the Thirty-third Division suffers a –2 Initiative modifier when acting as the Defender in any scenario. When acting as the Attacker, however, the Thirty-third receives the Off-Map Movement ability (see p. 136). Because this command focuses on speed to the exclusion of all other concerns, it also receives an Initiative modifier of +2 for the first four turns of play. This Initiative modifier is reduced by 1 point for every two turns (or fraction thereof) that the Thirty-third remains in the field after that (to a minimum modifier of –3). After thirteen turns in play, all Thirty-third Division units must withdraw per the Forced Withdrawal rules.

34th Division (B – Regular): When six or fewer units belonging to the Thirty-fourth Division are on the field, this Division receives a +3 Initiative modifier and may ignore any Forced Withdrawal rules.

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However, if more than six units belonging to this command are in play at any given time, these bonuses are lost and the controlling player suffers a –2 Initiative modifier instead.

35th Division (B – Veteran): The Thirty-fifth Division specializes in close-quarters combat and is adept at setting ambushes. To reflect these abilities, the warriors of this force receive a –1 to-hit modifier for physical attacks and weapon attacks made at short (or point-blank) range, but suffer a +2 to-hit modifier for attacks made beyond medium range. In addition, if the Thirty-fifth is acting as the Defender in a scenario, its controlling player may deploy up to half of this force's units (round down) as hidden units.

36th Division (A – Veteran): The Thirty-sixth benefits from a tactically astute and honorable commander. As a result, this force receives the ability to Bank Initiative and to use off-map movement. The Thirty-sixth also negates any opposing force's ability to use Overrun Combat or Force the Initiative against them. Because of the campaign against the Federated Suns, up to half of the units deployed by the Thirty-sixth Division (round up) may be determined using the Federated Suns (House Davion) Random Assignment Table.

37th Division (B – Veteran): Initiated into the world of guerilla warfare on Tharkad, the Thirty-seventh Division receives a +1 Initiative modifier (to a maximum of +3) for each of the following conditions present in the scenario: Extreme Cold, Snow, Blizzard, Tainted atmospheres, Urban or Wooded terrain. If deployed as the Defender in the scenario, the Thirty-seventh's player may place up to one-third of this force's units (round up) as hidden units, and may negate the opposing force's ability to use off-map movement.

The Thirty-seventh Division may also ignore Forced Withdrawal rules.

38th Division (B – Regular): The Thirty-eighth has a lot of experience in anti-raiding actions. When this force is defending a base, unit or other objective against a raiding force, their opponents receive a –3 Initiative modifier to reflect the Thirty-eighth's ability to "read" their battle plan.

39th Division (A – Elite): The Word of Blake Militia's showcase unit within the Blake Protectorate, Purity of Destiny is staffed by some of the finest pilots on the Word's rosters. As such, the controlling player may re-roll up to three results (per scenario) when randomly determining this force's Piloting and Gunnery skills. The new results may not be re-rolled.

The Thirty-ninth also has the highest percentage of Clan technology within the Word of Blake Militia, incorporating salvage from Outreach, Pesht and Luthien. To reflect this, up to two-thirds of the units deployed by this Division (rounded up) may be determined using the Random Assignment Tables of Clan Nova Cat, Ghost Bear or Diamond Shark.

To further reflect the Thiry-ninth's preferential status for new equipment, on a roll result of 2 or 12 when assigning light 'Mechs to this force, the controlling player may choose an RPT-2X or RPT-2X1 *Raptor II* instead of the table result.

SHADOW DIVSIONS (General): All Shadow Divisions are immune to Forced Withdrawal rules, and negate any Overrun Combat or Forcing the Initiative special abilities the opposing force may have.

40th Shadow Division (A – Elite): When rolling for unit selection, the fortieth may choose to roll on the Lyran Alliance (House Steiner) Random Assignment Tables for up to all of its units deployed. The controlling player, when rolling for BattleMech weight, may also increase the result by +2 once for every three units being selected.

41st Shadow Division (A – Elite): The 'Mechs and fighters of Uriel's Blinding Fire reduce the movement and to-hit modifiers for all overheating effects by 1 point (including rolls to avoid shutdowns, random movement, ammunition explosions and pilot damage). Units from the Forty-first Shadow Division also receive a +4 modifier for all attempts to start fires using lasers, flamers, PPCs or missiles of any kind (see *Fire*, p. 43, *TO*).

Once per scenario, the Blinding Fire can also initiate a short "berserker frenzy." To do so, the Forty-first's controlling player must elect to automatically lose the initiative, but for that turn, all units in this force will receive a –1 to-hit modifier for all Piloting and Gunnery Skill rolls.

42nd Shadow Division (SD – Elite): Belial's Angels of Chaos are highly adept at offensives carried out in urban environments, and have developed a knack for targeting the most devastating weak points in a structure for maximum tactical advantage. To reflect this ability, any time the Forty-second is deployed in urban terrain, if a Forty-second Division unit destroys the last CF of a building with a ranged weapon attack of 5 points or more, the controlling player rolls 2D6. On a result of 10 or higher, the building's rubble explodes as it collapses, inflicting 1D6 5-point hits (locations determined randomly) to all units within the hexes adjacent to the exploding building hex.

43rd Shadow Division (SD – Elite): Harboring a near-fanatical hatred of the Clans, all members of the Forty-third Division receive a –1 to-hit modifier for all weapon and physical attacks delivered to a Clan unit. Additionally, Haborym's Legion is adept at fighting in nighttime conditions (see p. 58, *TO*), and so ignores all penalties for fighting at dusk, dawn and night.

44th Shadow Division (A – Elite): When fighting in mountainous or urban terrain, the Forty-fourth Division receives a +1 Initiative bonus and all of this Division's units apply an additional +1 target movement modifier to any attacks against them. However, because of the Forty-fourth's aversion to inflicting unnecessary noncombatant casualties, its units will not fire upon any civilian structure not occupied by a enemy unit in that turn, nor may any non-infantry unit from this force move into or through a civilian building hex unless an enemy unit is occupying the structure first.

45th Shadow Division (SD – Veteran): Heavily damaged in their battle with Wolf's Dragoons on Buckminster, apply a –1 modifier to the roll when checking for augmented warriors. Because the unit salvaged several pieces of Clan equipment, however, one of every six units fielded by this force may be determined using the Clan Wolf Random Assignment Table.

Due to combat attrition, the Forty-fifth Shadow Division may not deploy more than one Elite unit for every six Veteran units.

46th Shadow Division (A – Elite): Up to half of the Forty-sixth Shadow Division's units may start the scenario off the map, and this force receives the Off-Map Movement special ability (see p. 136). Once all of this unit's starting off-map units enter the playing area, this Division gains the Overrun Combat special ability as well.

In addition, during any scenario with a specific objective (or objectives) to complete, units belonging to the Forty-sixth Shadow may not withdraw or retreat until the primary objective(s) is complete.

RULES ANNEX

47th Shadow Division (A – Elite): If using the Dropping Troops rules (see *Strategic Operations*), any Forty-seventh Division units deployed in this fashion automatically succeed in landing on a Piloting Skill roll result of 4 or less (even if situational modifiers indicate otherwise). Other failed results are resolved normally. In addition, units belonging to this force may fire their weapons in the same turn as they land.

When rolling to select BattleMech or battle armor units belonging to the Forty-seventh Shadow, the controlling player may re-roll any result in which the unit does not have jump capability, but must use the new unit, even if the second result also does not possess jump capability.

48th Division (SD – Elite): Masters of stealth, the Forty-eighth Division may deploy up to half its units (round up) as hidden units if acting as the scenario's defending force.

In addition, whether acting as the scenario Defender or not, all units in this Division receive the benefits of a Stealth armor system (see p. 142, *TW*), as long as the unit does not use Jumping MP, Flanking MP or Max Thrust. This benefit works regardless of the unit's type or whether or not it already has a functioning Stealth armor system. If a Forty-eighth Division unit already possesses Stealth armor, double the unit's normal Stealth armor modifiers instead.

49th Shadow Division (A – Elite): Forty-ninth Division 'Mech units halve any heat received from outside sources (so a single Inferno SRM missile would cause 1 point of heat), while vehicles and battle armor ignore the effects of fire, and conventional infantry are only destroyed by fire on a roll of 10 or greater.

Since Dantalion assumed command of the Forty-ninth, the role of battle armor has increased dramatically. Any time a Forty-ninth Division force consists of at least one battle armor unit for every four units deployed, the controlling player receives a +1 bonus to Initiative, and all deployed Forty-ninth battle armor units receive a –1 modifier to their Gunnery and Anti-'Mech skills.

50th Shadow Division (A – Elite): The Fiftieth are experts in shock tactics. To reflect this, the Division's controlling player may opt to exchange up to half of his force's standard LRM munitions for Thunder munitions before game play begins. Additionally, when laying mines via Thunder munitions, the Fiftieth's units automatically hit their target hex, as long as a valid line of sight exists between the launcher unit and the target hex.

Whenever a Fiftieth Division unit delivers an attack into the rear arc of an opposing unit, the attack receives a –2 to-hit modifier, and the target applies an additional +1 modifier to any Piloting Skill roll target numbers required in that same turn, to reflect his panic.

The Fiftieth's command Level II also receives an additional –2 modifier for each physical attack made using a melee weapon. Punching, kicking and other physical attacks made without melee weapons do not receive this modifier.

51st Shadow Division (SD – Elite): As long as the Terran Guard is on any world or base within the Terran solar system, this force's presence in the scenario negates all of the opposing force's special abilities. In addition, the Fifty-first Division may use the Forcing the Initiative and Overrun Combat special abilities. If deployed on any world beyond the Terran solar system, the Fifty-first loses its immunity to an opposing force's special abilities, but retains its other abilities.

Furthermore, if using the Augmented Warriors rule (see p. 137), apply a +2 modifier when rolling to determine if the unit is augmented.

52nd Shadow Division (SD – Elite): Apollyon's Chosen may choose all of their units from any Word of Blake, Free Worlds League or Lyran Alliance Random Assignment Table without rolling on them, and apply a +3 modifier when rolling to determine if a unit is augmented (if using the Augmented Warriors rule; see p. 137).

In addition, the Fifty-second Shadow Division negates all of an opposing force's special abilities, and possesses the Overrun Combat, Off-Map Movement and Force the Initiative special abilities.

Warrior House White Tiger (A – Elite): The White Tigers' controlling player may use either the Capellan Confederation (House Liao) Random Assignment Table or the Shadow Division Random Assignment Tables to determine this force's composition. In addition, up to half of all White Tigers units (round up) may be deployed as hidden units, regardless of whether the unit is the Attacker or Defender in the scenario.

As a Capellan-based force, the White Tigers use standard Inner Sphere force arrangements (Lances, Companies, and Battalions, as described on p. 34, *TW*) rather than Word of Blake force arrangements.

Warrior House Raksasha (A – Elite): The Rakshasas' controlling player may use either the Capellan Confederation (House Liao) Random Assignment Table or the Shadow Division Random Assignment Tables to determine this force's composition. Also, Rakshasa units receive a –1 to-hit modifier for all weapon and physical attacks made as long as the attacking unit did not rotate its torso or turret that turn.

As a Capellan-based force, the Rakshasas use standard Inner Sphere force arrangements (Lances, Companies, and Battalions, as described on p. 34, *TW*) rather than Word of Blake force arrangements.

Opacus Venatori (SD – Elite): A specialized elite force, the Opacus Venatori may not exceed two Level IIs in size. Each Opacus Venatori unit may be chosen from any Inner Sphere Random Assignment Table on a 2D6 roll result of 6 or higher. (On a roll result of 5 or less, the unit may be selected using the Shadow Division Table).

Each OV warrior is considered Elite when deployed as a BattleMech, and Veteran if deployed as a vehicle, battle armor or fighter unit. If an *Archangel* OmniMech is used in the OV force, the controlling player receives a +2 modifier on all Initiative rolls. Finally, the OV reduce all applicable weather and environment modifiers by 1 point.

Protectorate Militia (PM – Green): As long as a Protectorate Militia force is fighting on its homeworld and is acting as the scenario's Defender, the Protectorate Militia force receives the Force the Initiative and Off-Map Movement special abilities.

If deployed as the Attacker in a scenario, the Protectorate Militia force loses its Force the Initiative ability, but retains its Off-Map Movement capability (see p. 136).

If deployed on a world other than its homeworld (such as an Epsilon Eridani force being deployed on Genoa), the Protectorate Militia force not only loses all of its special abilities, but also suffers a –2 Initiative modifier.

Although Blakist-based, Protectorate Militia forces may—at the controlling player's discretion—use standard Inner Sphere force arrangements (Lances, Companies, and Battalions, as described on p. 34, *TW*) rather than Word of Blake force arrangements.

NEW CONSTRUCTION OPTION: RETROTECH

The following rules allow players to create and use "primitive" designs such as those introduced during the bloody Age of War and the fruits of desperate construction efforts in the face of the Word of Blake's Jihad. *Technical Readout: 3039*, and especially the Age of War section of *Technical Readout: 3075*, make reference to more primitive designs, but construction of these units has not previously been supported by the construction rules.

These optional rules can be used in conjunction with the construction rules presented in *TechManual (TM)* and *Tactical Operations (TO)*.

Primitive vs. Modern

Though technically speaking, all BattleMechs, Combat Vehicles, IndustrialMechs and aerospace units may be considered "modern" designs in the *Classic BattleTech* universe, the engineering behind them has evolved over the centuries. To reflect the technologies of more primitive units, these rules introduce a new Tech Base classification: Primitive.

A unit constructed using a Primitive Tech Base may not use Clan technology unless it has been built after 2850 and the designer is using the Mixed Technology rules found in *Tactical Operations*. Note, however, that such units may only employ Clan-made weapons (and weapon accessories, such as Artemis IV and targeting computers); other Clan components are simply too incompatible to work with Primitive technology.

PRIMITIVE 'MECH CONSTRUCTION

Primitive BattleMechs and IndustrialMechs are built using the standard BattleMech and IndustrialMech Construction rules (see pp. 44–59, and pp. 63–75, *TM*), with the changes described below.

Step 1: Design the Chassis

The following rule changes apply to Step 1 of BattleMech or IndustrialMech design (designing the chassis).

Choose Technology Base

In general, Primitive BattleMechs and IndustrialMechs can only be built using Inner Sphere technology (see *Primitive vs. Modern*, above, for exceptions covering "modern Primitive" designs). Primitive technology is incompatible with most of the advanced construction techniques employed in the Star League era and beyond (such as endo-steel construction, XL engines and advanced myomers), though some more advanced Inner Sphere weapons may be mounted on Primitive 'Mechs to reflect modern "refits."

OmniMechs: Primitive 'Mechs cannot be constructed as OmniMechs.

Choose Weight (Tonnage)

Primitive BattleMechs and IndustrialMechs may weigh between 10 and 100 tons, determined in five-ton increments. Within these limits, the player may choose any tonnage. The total weight of the 'Mech's engine and components (as well as weapons and armor, if appropriate) may not exceed or fall short of this amount.

Allocate Tonnage for Internal Structure

Primitive BattleMechs must allocate 10 percent of their total tonnage to internal structure and receive structure boxes per the Internal Structure Table (see p. 47, *TM*). Primitive BattleMechs may not employ any alternative internal structure types (such as endo-steel).

Primitive IndustrialMechs must allocate 20 percent of their total tonnage to internal structure and receive structure boxes per the *Internal Structure Table* (see p. 47, *TM*). IndustrialMechs may not employ any alternative internal structure types (such as endo-steel).

All Primitive 'Mech internal structure weights are rounded up to the nearest half-ton. Primitive 'Mechs may be constructed as either humanoid or four-legged units.

> *Charles is going to create the MSK-5S* Mackie*, the first operational Primitive BattleMech introduced by the Terran Hegemony in 2439. As a Primitive BattleMech, the* Mackie *can only use Inner Sphere technology.*
>
> *Charles intends the* Mackie *to have a standard humanoid chassis configuration; he chooses to make the* Mackie *100 tons.*
>
> *With a mass of 100 tons, Charles allocates 10 tons for the* Mackie*'s internal structure.*

Step 2: Install Engine and Control Systems

The following rule changes apply to Step 2 of BattleMech or IndustrialMech design (installing the engine and control systems):

Install Engine

Primitive 'Mechs—whether Industrial or designed for battle—are far less efficient at translating power into movement when compared to their more modern cousins. Therefore, they require larger engines to accomplish the same level of performance. To reflect this, when designing any Primitive 'Mech, calculate the Engine Rating as normal, then multiply the result by 1.2 and round the result up to the nearest available Engine Rating from the Master Engine Table (see p. 49, *TM*). Use that Engine Rating and tonnage as the base weight for the Primitive 'Mech's engine.

Primitive 'Mech chassis (Industrial or otherwise) cannot use Light or XL fusion engines (or any type of engine introduced in *Tactical Operations*).

RULES ANNEX

Charles' Mackie *is a 100-ton Primitive BattleMech with a Walking MP of 3. Normally this would require a 300-rated engine, but because this is a Primitive 'Mech, the rating is multiplied by 1.2 to give a final engine rating of 360. As the* Mackie *is to use a fusion engine, the weight is found to be 33 tons, and the 'Mech receives 10 free single heat sinks.*

Add Gyroscope

Primitive 'Mechs use standard rules for computing gyro weights, based on their modified Engine Rating (see p. 50–51, *TM*). Primitive 'Mechs can only use standard gyros.

With a 360-rated engine, Charles' Mackie *requires a 4-ton gyro.*

Determine Jump Capability

Only fusion- or fission-powered Primitive 'Mechs may mount jump jets, in accordance with the standard rules for BattleMech jump jets (see p. 51, *TM*). Primitive 'Mechs may only use standard-type jump jets. Improved jump jets are incompatible with Primitive technology, as are the various jump boosters featured in *Tactical Operations*.

Charles' Mackie *does not mount jump jets.*

Special Physical Enhancements

Primitive 'Mechs may not use physical enhancements such as MASC or triple-strength myomers, nor may they use similar technologies featured in *Tactical Operations* (such as an engine supercharger).

Determine Cockpit Type

Primitive 'Mechs can only mount Primitive BattleMech or Primitive IndustrialMech cockpits. Primitive BattleMechs must mount a Primitive BattleMech cockpit. Primitive IndustrialMechs must mount a Primitive IndustrialMech cockpit.

Primitive BattleMech Cockpit: Primitive BattleMech cockpits are functionally equivalent to those used in their modern counterparts, but weigh 5 tons rather than 3.

Primitive IndustrialMech Cockpits: Primitive IndustrialMech cockpits also weigh 5 tons, rather than the customary 3 tons of a modern IndustrialMech cockpit, and lack ejection systems. In addition, these cockpits feature even less sophisticated sensors than those of a standard IndustrialMech cockpit, and apply an additional +2 to-hit modifier to all ranged weapon attacks.

Industrial Cockpit Enhancements: As with their modern equivalents, Primitive IndustrialMech cockpits can be equipped with advanced fire-control systems and ejection systems at an extra cost. However, a Primitive IndustrialMech with advanced fire control will still receive an additional +1 to-ht modifier to all ranged weapon attacks.

Note: Primitive 'Mechs may not use modern targeting computers, C^3 or C^3i systems unless they are also equipped with advanced fire control. Primitive BattleMech cockpit types automatically feature such fire control systems.

Charles can only use a Primitive BattleMech cockpit (5 tons) on his Mackie.

Step 3: Add Additional Heat Sinks

Primitive 'Mechs may only install standard (single) heat sinks. The number of "weight-free" heat sinks (if any) that a Primitive 'Mech receives from its engine is based on its engine type (see p. 71, *TM*).

Per standard BattleMech Construction rules, the number of sinks that need not be allocated on a Primitive 'Mech is equal to the unit's Engine Rating times 25 (rounded down).

Charles chooses to add an additional 7 single heat sinks to the 10 that automatically came with his Mackie*'s fusion engine. With an engine rating of 360, 14 of these sinks will be internal to the engine, while the other three must be allocated critical spaces on the record sheet.*

Step 4: Add Armor

Armor for Primitive BattleMechs may be purchased in half-ton lots, and the maximum number of armor points a Primitive BattleMech or IndustrialMech may mount in any location is identical to those of a BattleMech of the same weight (see pp. 54–57, *TM*).

Primitive BattleMech Armor: Primitive BattleMechs can only mount Primitive BattleMech Armor, which has an effective BAR of 10 and multiplies the number of standard armor points provided per ton (16) by 0.67 (rounding down).

Primitive IndustrialMech Armor: Primitive IndustrialMechs may only mount Commercial Armor, which has an effective BAR of 5 and multiplies the number of points provided per ton of standard armor (16) by 1.5 (rounding down).

The Mackie *carries 20 tons of Primitive BattleMech Armor. This gives the 'Mech 214 points of armor (20 x 16 x 0.67 = 214.4, rounded down to 214). Charles allocates the armor thus: 8 points to the head, 31 points to the front center torso, 21 points each to the front side torsos, 10 points to all three rear torso locations, 24 points to each arm and 29 points to each leg.*

Step 5: Add Weapons, Ammunition and Other Equipment

Primitive 'Mechs (unless otherwise stated) may add weapons, ammunition and equipment per standard rules for BattleMech design (see pp. 57–59, *TM*). Designers interested in authenticity, however, should limit any items mounted on a Primitive 'Mech to those with an introduction date of 2500 or sooner. (After that period, enough manufacturers had improved their engineering processes to the point where 'Mechs could be made under standard construction rules.)

RULES ANNEX

Charles completes his Mackie *design by adding a PPC (7 tons) to the Left Arm, a large laser (5 tons) to the Center Torso and an AC/5 (8 tons) to the Right Arm (with a ton of ammunition located in the Right Torso).*

Step 6: Complete Record Sheet

Primitive 'Mechs use the standard 'Mech record sheet, which is completed as normal (see p. 59, *TM*).

PRIMITIVE AEROSPACE FIGHTER CONSTRUCTION

As with Primitive 'Mechs, constructing a Primitive aerospace fighter uses the standard rules given in *TechManual* (see pp. 181-199, *TM*), with a few minor changes as outlined below.

Step 1: Design the Chassis

The following rules changes apply to Step 1 of aerospace fighter design (designing the chassis).

Choose Technology Base

In general, Primitive aerospace fighters can only be built using Inner Sphere technology (see *Primitive vs. Modern*, above, for exceptions covering "modern Primitive" designs). Primitive technology is incompatible with most of the advanced construction techniques employed in the Star League era and beyond (such as XL engines, ferro-aluminum armor and so forth), though some more advanced Inner Sphere weapons may be mounted on Primitive aerospace fighters to reflect modern "refits."

OmniFighters: Primitive aerospace fighters cannot be constructed as OmniFighters.

Step 2: Install Engines and Control Systems

The following rule changes apply to Step 2 of aerospace fighter design (installing engines and control systems).

Install Engine

Like Primitive 'Mechs, the Engine Rating of a Primitive aerospace fighter is multiplied by 1.2 and the next available engine (rounded up) from the Master Engine Table us used. Primitive aerospace fighters may only use standard fusion engines.

Add Control/Crew Systems

Primitive aerospace fighters, like Primitive 'Mechs, use a 5-ton cockpit that otherwise functions in the same fashion as a standard fighter cockpit. No other cockpit type is available to Primitive aerospace fighters.

Step 3: Add Armor

Primitive aerospace fighter armor is identical to that used by Primitive BattleMechs (see p. 145), and is mounted using the standard limits for aerospace fighters (see pp. 190-191, *TM*).

Step 4: Add Additional Heat Sinks

Like Primitive 'Mechs, Primitive aerospace fighters may only install standard (single) heat sinks. Primitive aerospace fighters receive 10 such heat sinks "free" (in terms of tonnage) with their fusion engines.

Step 5: Add Weapons, Ammunition and Other Equipment

As with Primitive 'Mechs, Primitive aerospace fighters (unless otherwise stated) may add weapons, ammunition and equipment per standard rules for aerospace fighter design (see pp. 194–195, *TM*). To maintain authenticity, however, such items should be limited to those with an introduction date of 2400 or sooner. (After this time, engineering processes had improved to the point where aerospace fighters could be made under standard construction rules.)

Step 6: Complete Record Sheet

Primitive fighters use the standard aerospace fighter record sheet, which is completed as normal (see pp. 198-199, *TM*).

PRIMITIVE WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

During the Age of War, only a few of the weapon systems seen in *Classic BattleTech* today were widely available for use on vehicles, fighters and (eventually) BattleMechs. Prior to 2460, these weapons were the machine gun, flamer (standard and vehicular), standard LRMs and SRMs, all standard lasers, standard AC/2s and AC/5s, and the Thumper and Sniper artillery pieces. After 2460, production models of the AC/10, PPC and Long Tom artillery weapon became widely available. Finally, the AC/20, developed specifically as a 'Mech-killer weapon system, emerged as a production weapon after 2500.

As production-quality equipment, all of the weapons listed above will function exactly as normal in *Classic BattleTech* games. At the designer's option, however, units may be created using weapons introduced up to ten years before their listed introduction dates, to reflect the use of Primitive prototypical technology. Based on their type, Primitive prototype weapons will operate differently in game play, as described below:

Primitive Prototype Energy Weapons: Primitive prototypical energy weapons (lasers and PPCs) will produce 50 percent more heat when fired (rounding up).

Primitive Prototype Ballistic Weapons: Primitive prototypical ballistic weapons (autocannons and artillery weapons) will suffer a jam on any to-hit roll result of 2 and may carry only three-quarters of their listed ammunition capacity (rounding up) per ton. Jammed weapons cannot be cleared in battle, and are considered damaged—but not destroyed—for game play and repair purposes.

RULES ANNEX

An AC/20, which appeared in the 2500s, could be fielded in the 2490s, but will carry only 4 rounds of ammo per ton (0.75 x 5 = 3.75, rounded up to 4), and will be as prone to weapon jams as a modern Ultra AC.

PRIMITIVE UNIT COST AND BATTLE VALUES

With the exceptions listed on the Primitive Component Cost Table, all costs are calculated as normal. Battle Values are also calculated in the same manner as laid out in *TechManual*.

PRIMITIVE UNITS IN COMBAT (OPTIONAL)

The following optional rules can be used in games involving Primitive 'Mechs and aerospace fighters.

Critical Hit Table (Primitive 'Mechs)

Early 'Mechs were not always as resilient as those seen today, lacking the redundancy that would later be developed. For any 'Mech designed as a Primitive model (IndustrialMech or BattleMech), all rolls on the Determining Critical Hits against a Primitive 'Mech Table are modified by an additional +2.

Primitive BattleMechs treat results of 13 or more as 12 when rolling on the Determining Critical Hits Table. Primitive IndustrialMechs (which combine the Primitive modifier with the standard IndustrialMech modifier of +2, for a total modifier of +4) will sustain four critical hits on any torso location where a modified Determining Critical Hits Table roll results in a 14 or higher. Regardless of 'Mech type, a result of 12 or higher when determining critical hits to a limb or head location will blow off the affected location.

PRIMITIVE COMPONENT COST TABLE

Component Type	Cost
Armor	
Primitive/Industrial*	5,000
Cockpit	
Primitive, BattleMech/Fighter*	100,000
Primitive, IndustrialMech*	50,000
Musculature	
Primitive*	Unit Tonnage x 1,000

**Multiply equipment cost by 2 for designs prior to 2450*

A Mackie *is fighting off a company of Merkava heavy tanks and has sustained significant damage. One Merkava hits the* Mackie *on the right arm with both missiles from its SRM-2 launcher, finally overcoming the armor. For the first missile, the critical hit roll is 5—giving a final result of 5 + 2 = 7. No critical hit. The second critical hit roll yields a 7. Normally, this would not generate a critical hit, but because the* Mackie *is a Primitive 'Mech, the modified result is 7 + 2 = 9. The* Mackie *suffers one critical hit in its right arm.*

SENSORS (PRIMITIVE AEROSPACE FIGHTERS)

The fire control found on Primitive aerospace fighters is less effective than modern targeting sensors at longer ranges. For any attack made by a Primitive fighter at Long or Extreme range, add +1 to the to-hit number, to reflect this deficiency.

RULES ANNEX

NEW 'MECHS

To: *Mirza* Peter Abdulsattah
From: Gomez Kisu, Military Observations
Subj: Addendum to File "XX0" – Specs
Date: 20 January 3075

Mirza,

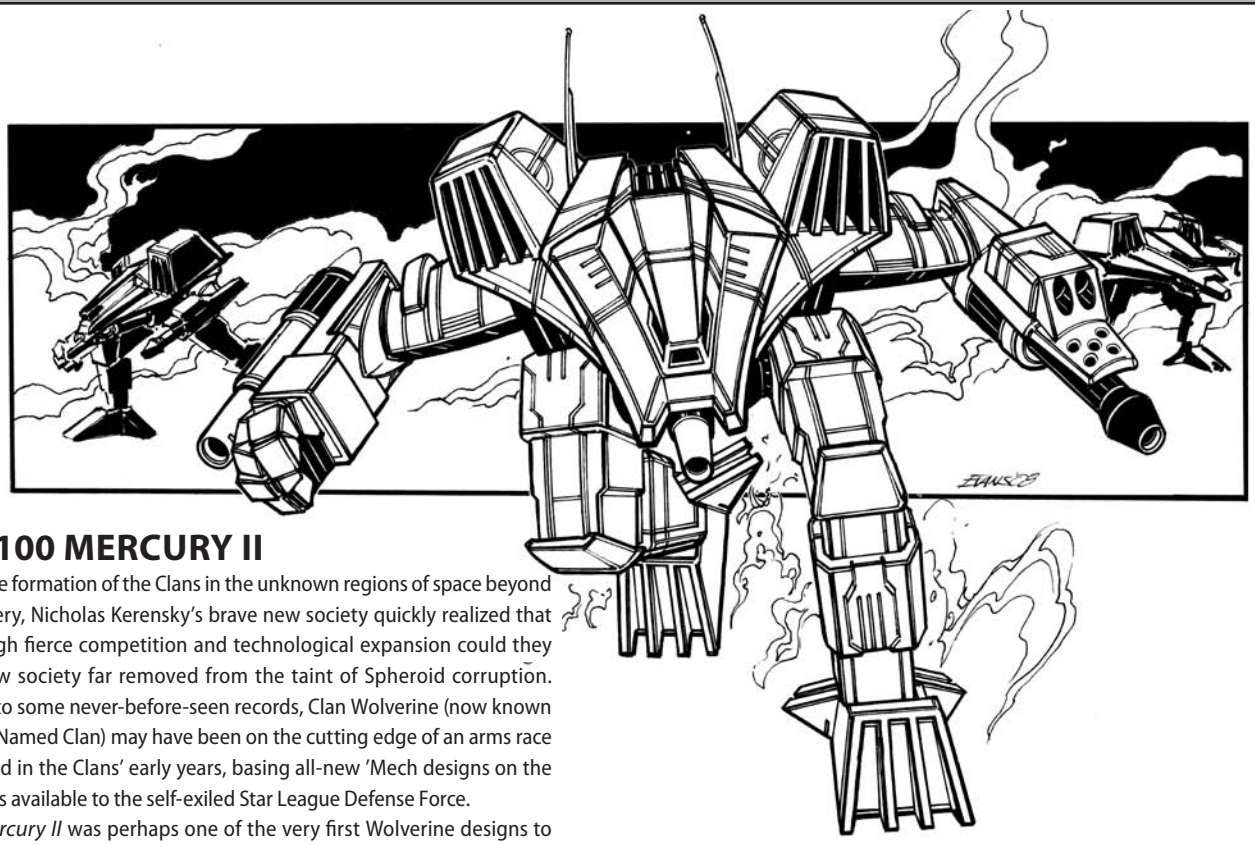
I have finished my preliminary reports on the overall readiness of the Word of Blake military command, but while doing so, I nearly forgot about the specifications documents you wished me to decode and analyze for Uncle's use. I have at this time only partially completed this task, but what I have turned up is astounding, to say the least.

Of the five BattleMech records I have completed, three are of types never before seen in the Inner Sphere and—to date—none have been witnessed on the battlefield with the Word of Blake. If they truly have access to these machines, and we were to gain hard evidence of same, the implications would be staggering!

Of the other two, I regret to say—for differing reasons—that I can confirm their existence in the Inner Sphere. In one case, because it represents the cutting edge in Blakist stealth warfare, and a deadly new tool that more of us may fall victim to before we even realize it's there. In the other, because it represents how desperate we may become to find ourselves reliant on such obsolete hardware.

May these files prove enlightening in the battles yet to come!

RULES ANNEX



MCY-100 MERCURY II

After the formation of the Clans in the unknown regions of space beyond the Periphery, Nicholas Kerensky's brave new society quickly realized that only through fierce competition and technological expansion could they forge a new society far removed from the taint of Spheroid corruption. According to some never-before-seen records, Clan Wolverine (now known as the Not-Named Clan) may have been on the cutting edge of an arms race that erupted in the Clans' early years, basing all-new 'Mech designs on the best models available to the self-exiled Star League Defense Force.

The *Mercury II* was perhaps one of the very first Wolverine designs to see the light of day. Boasting increased weight over its namesake, as well as the added mobility of jump jets, the *Mercury II* was far more than a mere variant—it was an extensive redesign that spared no expense, from its extra-light fusion reactor and ferro-fibrous armor to its double-strength freezers and the firepower of its powerful, extended-range laser. Fast, highly mobile, and carrying superior armor protection for its size, the *Mercury II* was the ideal scout, armed with an active probe to sniff out hidden threats, ECM to foil enemy sensors and the firepower to be an effective hunter/killer in itself.

Type: **Mercury II**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 40
Battle Value: 1,376

Equipment		**Mass**
Internal Structure:		4
Engine:	280 XL	8
Walking MP:	7	
Running MP:	11	
Jumping MP:	7	
Heat Sinks:	10 [20]	0
Gyro:		3
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	134	7.5

	Internal Structure	*Armor Value*
Head	3	9
Center Torso	12	16
Center Torso (rear)		5
R/L Torso	10	15
R/L Torso (rear)		5
R/L Arm	6	12
R/L Leg	10	20

Weapons and Ammo	**Location**	**Critical**	**Tonnage**
Medium Laser	RA	1	1
Beagle Active Probe	RT	2	1.5
ER Large Laser	LA	2	5
2 Small Lasers	LA	2	1
Guardian ECM Suite	LT	2	1.5
Medium Laser	CT	1	1
Jump Jet	CT	1	.5
Jump Jets	RT	3	1.5
Jump Jets	LT	3	1.5

ST-14G STAG

Blessed (or cursed) with an abundance of *Vulcan* BattleMechs, Clan Wolverine's foray into expanding its BattleMech forces began with the production of new *Vulcan* designs. But as it became clear that mere duplication of existing Star League-era machines would never suit the Wolverines' future plans, Khan McEvedy called for a redesign of the classic 'Mech.

Ultimately, the *Stag* was born—a high-tech cavalry 'Mech that could also be used for recon with its active probe. A combination of lasers and SRMs allowed it to hit hard close in, then pull back quickly with its MASC system to snipe as it fled for cover. As promising as the design was, however, the first *Stag*s were apparently pressed into battle as soon as they came off the factory lines, when the Wolverines began to draw more and more unwanted attention from their neighbor Clans.

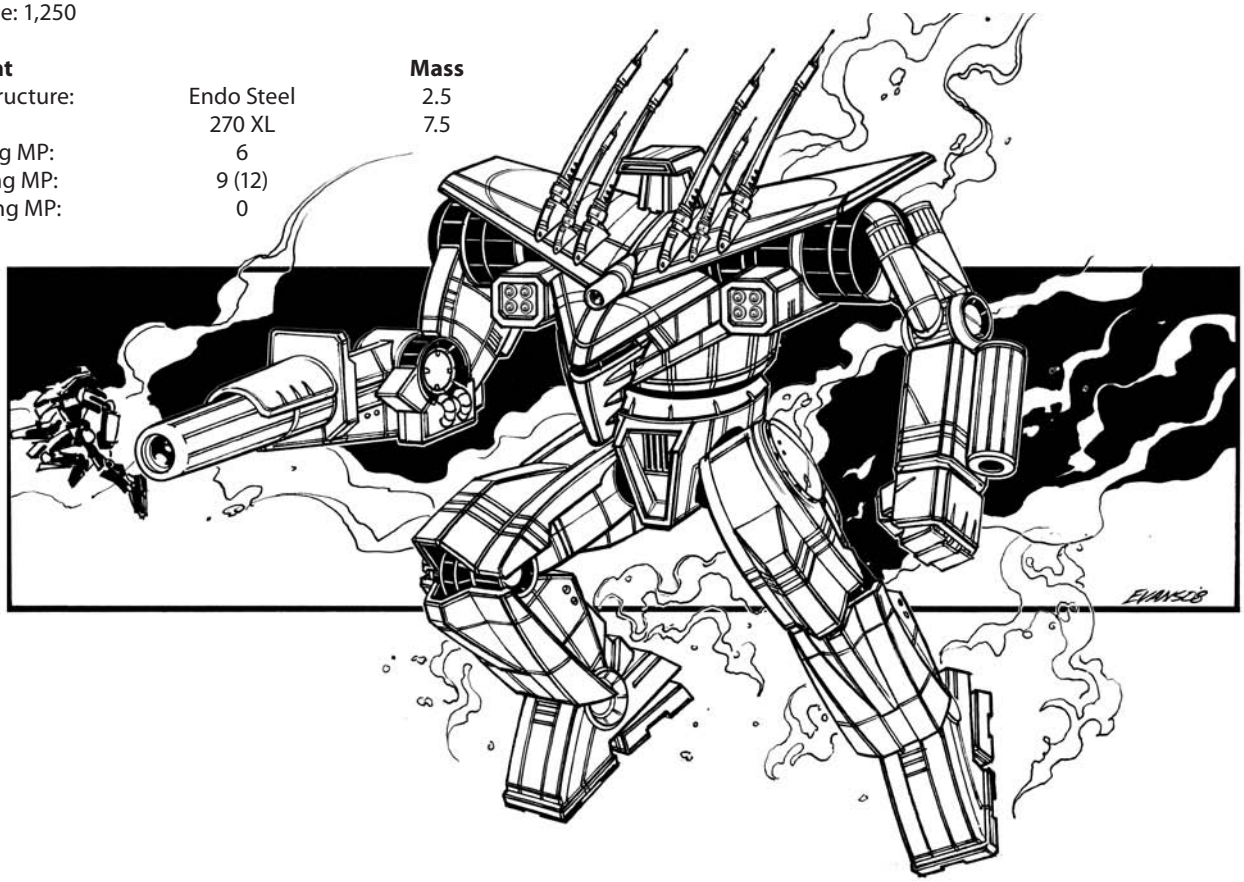
Nevertheless, the design reportedly proved itself well enough to spawn a variant—the so-called *Stag II*—that sacrificed the MASC system for a more powerful engine, dropped the probe and some armor, and mounted an advanced ER PPC prototype. The missiles on the *Stag II* were also replaced by a full laser array to increase its field endurance. It remains unclear if any of these machines survived the Not-Named Clan's fate.

Type: **Stag**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 45
Battle Value: 1,250

Equipment		**Mass**
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	2.5
Engine:	270 XL	7.5
Walking MP:	6	
Running MP:	9 (12)	
Jumping MP:	0	
Heat Sinks:	12 [24]	2
Gyro:		3
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	153	10

	Internal Structure	*Armor Value*
Head	3	9
Center Torso	14	21
Center Torso (rear)		7
R/L Torso	11	16
R/L Torso (rear)		6
R/L Arm	7	14
R/L Leg	11	22

Weapons and Ammo	**Location**	**Critical**	**Tonnage**
ER Large Laser	RA	2	5
SRM 4	RT	1	2
Medium Laser	LA	1	1
SRM 4	LT	1	2
Ammo (SRM) 50	LT	2	2
CASE	LT	1	.5
Beagle Active Probe	LT	2	1.5
MASC	CT	2	2
Medium Laser	H	1	1



PUL-2V PULVERIZER

Given the tumultuous times of the early Clan years, Clan Wolverine's leadership quickly realized that mere Star League refits would never suit their need to forge an identity and power base of their own. Though their innovations had already pushed beyond the bounds of Star League re-engineering with the *Mercury II* and *Stag*, Khan McEvedy accelerated the now-overlooked "arms race" of the Clans' founding years by calling for a completely new 'Mech design tailored to the overwhelming power the Wolverine warriors craved.

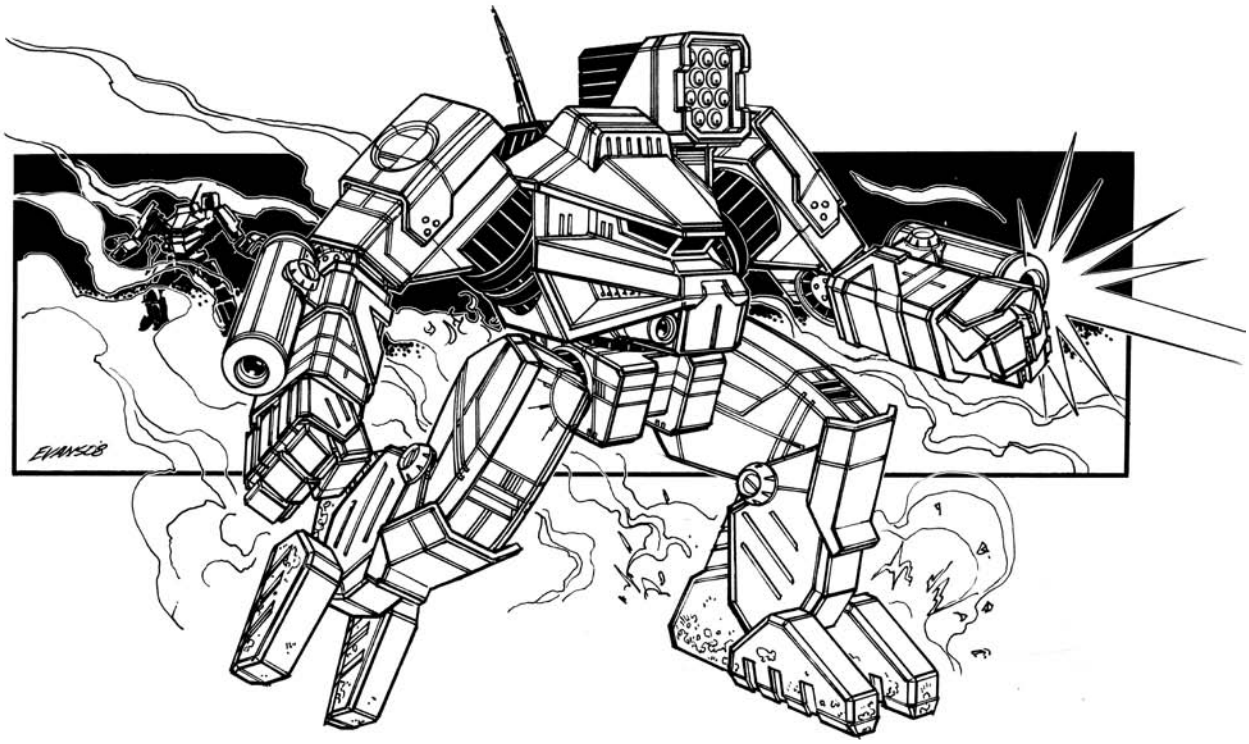
Employing not only the most advanced construction technologies and techniques of the late Star League era, but also enhanced versions of weapons that were merely prototypes when Aleksandr Kerensky launched his Exodus from the Inner Sphere, the *Pulverizer* became a signature command 'Mech for the short-lived Clan Wolverine. Built for long-range firepower, the *Pulverizer* relied on a modified ER PPC and LRMs to strike at a distance, while ECM systems and large lasers discouraged enemy sensors and kept wary opponents at arm's length. More than 15 tons of armor, CASE and a standard fusion engine made the *Pulverizer* extremely hard to kill compared to more sophisticated early Clan machines. Despite these advantages, other Clans reportedly captured some of these Wolverine innovations in the Trials leading up to that Clan's Annihilation, but the Wolverines themselves may have escaped with more.

Type: **Pulverizer**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 90
Battle Value: 2,068

Equipment			**Mass**
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel		4.5
Engine:	360		33
Walking MP:	4		
Running MP:	6		
Jumping MP:	0		
Heat Sinks:	15 [30]		5
Gyro:			4
Cockpit:			3
Armor Factor:	278		15.5
	Internal Structure	*Armor Value*	
Head	3	9	
Center Torso	29	45	
Center Torso (rear)		12	
R/L Torso	19	30	
R/L Torso (rear)		8	
R/L Arm	15	30	
R/L Leg	19	38	

Weapons and Ammo	**Location**	**Critical**	**Tonnage**
Large Laser	RA	2	5
Enhanced ER PPC*	RT	3	7
Large Laser	LA	2	5
LRM 10	LT	2	5
Ammo (LRM) 12	LT	1	1
CASE	LT	1	.5
Guardian ECM Suite	CT	2	1.5

Note: *Enhanced ER PPC inflicts 12 points of damage*



DV-1S "PRIMITIVE" DERVISH

Designed using technology stolen from the Terran Hegemony, the original DV-1S Dervish was an early Lyran Commonwealth BattleMech design—though certainly not its first. Entering service in 2520, the Dervish was a "late bloomer" for the Lyrans. By that time, they had progressed far beyond the so-called "Primitive" era of 'Mech engineering—second only to the Terran Hegemony itself in terms of sophistication. Still, the use of older design standards remained popular as a means of keeping production costs low, and the DV-1S—copied by nearly every realm—quickly became one of the most common designs on the battlefield.

With the formation of the Star League, the Hegemony provided limited aid to upgrade the League member state's techniques in advance of the Reunification War, resulting in the much-improved *Dervish* that became a staple for the Inner Sphere and the SLDF itself (and would ultimately lead to the Federated Suns' popular DV-6M design). Meanwhile, the original DV-1S *Dervish*es were relegated to service with planetary militias and private security forces. Those few that survived the fall of the Star League were routinely stripped for parts during the Succession Wars, resulting in their virtual extinction by the dawn of the thirty-first century.

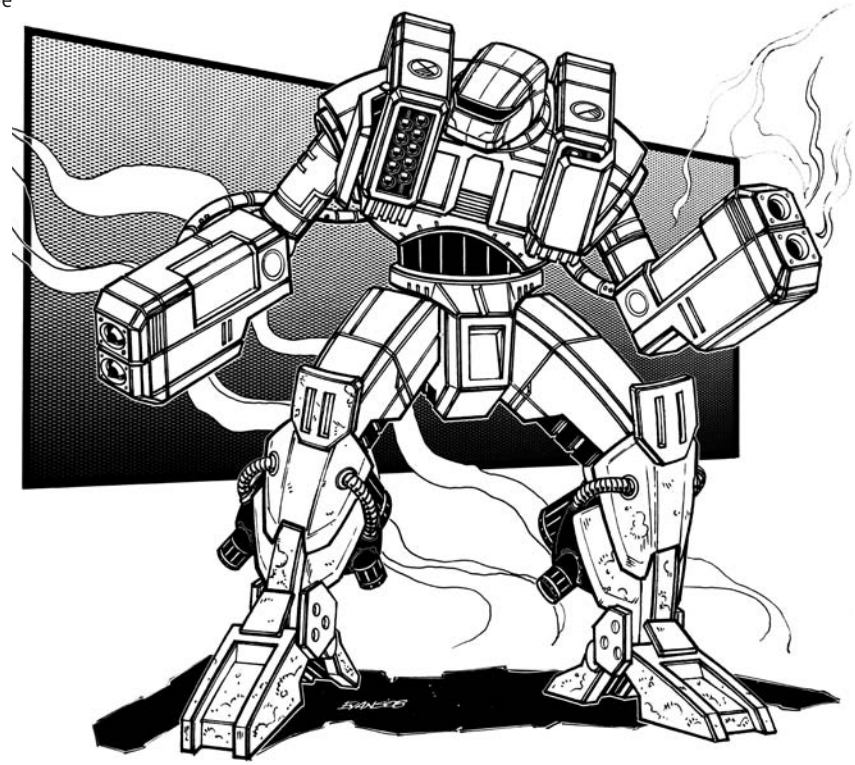
In the past decade, however, the Inner Sphere's military-industrial complex has been literally blasted into a curious state where the ability to manufacture advanced designs remains possible, yet the unbalanced quality and distribution of parts has put some production levels at the worst seen since the Succession Wars. Using simpler components that can be produced locally, many manufacturers are now supplementing production with antiquated designs like the DV-1S that can be assembled in converted maintenance facilities.

Type: **Dervish**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere (Primitive)
Tonnage: 55
Battle Value: 858

Equipment		**Mass**
Internal Structure:		5.5
Engine:	265 Primitive	14
Walking MP:	4	
Running MP:	6	
Jumping MP:	3	
Heat Sinks:	10	0
Gyro:		3
Cockpit (Primitive):		5
Armor Factor (Primitive):	105	10

	Internal Structure	*Armor Value*
Head	3	7
Center Torso	18	19
Center Torso (rear)		3
R/L Torso	13	13
R/L Torso (rear)		3
R/L Arm	9	9
R/L Leg	13	13

Weapons and Ammo	**Location**	**Critical**	**Tonnage**
LRM 10	RT	2	5
Ammo (LRM) 12	RT	1	1
SRM 2	RA	1	1
Ammo (SRM) 50	RA	1	1
LRM 10	LT	2	5
Ammo (LRM) 12	LT	1	1
SRM 2	LA	1	1
Ammo (SRM) 50	LA	1	1
Jump Jet	RL	1	.5
Jump Jet	CT	1	.5
Jump Jet	LL	1	.5



RPT-2X RAPTOR II

Reports of "invisible 'Mechs" have long been ignored as flights of fantasy, but in the months leading up to the Jihad, a spate of rumors with a common theme have seemed too consistent to deny. Unfortunately, it appears as if the rumors are all too true: the Word of Blake has indeed developed a new type of mimetic "cloaking system" capable of concealing a BattleMech the way they can their battle armor. The latest field reports have led our sources to believe that this so-called Void-Signature System actually hybridizes the Star League's advanced Null-Signature technology with a variation of the Word's mimetic armor design. Developed to not only hide the 'Mech from electronic and thermal sensors, this technology can conceal a unit from human eyes as well.

The single configuration of this "Stealth *Raptor*" identified to date carries two of the Word's new variable-speed lasers and a single "taser" harpoon launcher, which suggests that the *Raptor II* is designed to operate as an ambush hunter—exploding from hiding to immobilize its unsuspecting target for a quick capture. A second variant incorporating ER lasers, Streak missiles, and a prototype Bloodhound probe is believed to exist, but has not been confirmed. Interestingly, however, the Manei Domini elite are not known to employ any of these prototype 'Mechs.

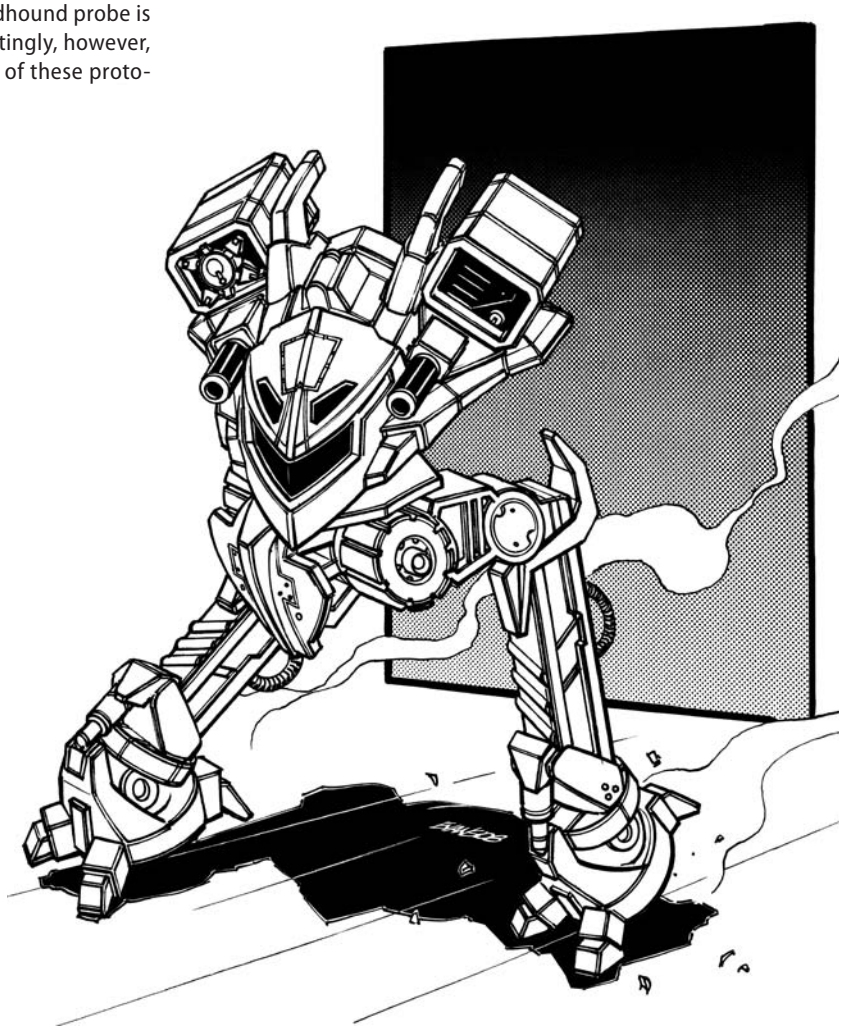
Type: **Raptor II**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 40
Battle Value: 969

Equipment		**Mass**
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	2
Engine:	280 XL	8
Walking MP:	7	
Running MP:	11 (14)	
Jumping MP:	0	
Heat Sinks:	10 [20]	0
Gyro:		3
Cockpit (Small):		2
Armor Factor (Light FF):	118	7

	Internal Structure	*Armor Value*
Head	3	8
Center Torso	12	20
Center Torso (rear)		4
R/L Torso	10	15
R/L Torso (rear)		3
R/L Arm	6	10
R/L Leg	10	15

Weapons and Ammo	**Location**	**Critical**	**Tonnage**
BattleMech Taser	RA	3	4
Ammo (Taser) 10	RA	2	2
Medium VSP Laser	RT	2	4
Medium VSP Laser	LT	2	4
Void-Signature System	*	7	0
Guardian ECM	H	2	1.5
CASE	RT	1	.5
MASC	LT	2	2

**The Void-Signature System occupies 1 critical slot in every location except the Head.*



NEW DROPSHIP: TROJAN (BLOCKADE RUNNER)

Based loosely on the highly successful Union-class 'Mech transporter, the Danais was a slightly lighter civilian vessel that entered production in the late 2720s. Often manufactured alongside its military cousin, the unarmed Danais was also among the few vessel types the Star League allowed the subjugated Periphery States to manufacture. As a result, this DropShip class soon became a favorite of small shipping lines and independent traders.

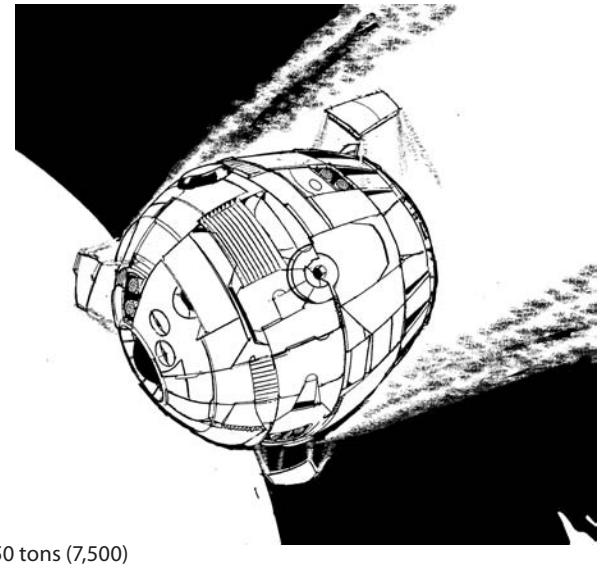
The Taurian Concordat produced the first of the so-called "blockade runner" Danaises. With the imposition of unfair and crippling taxes, Periphery unrest grew rapidly, and the Taurian merchant marine became actively involved in smuggling weapons and equipment. The so-called "Trojan" configuration was the perfect choice for this kind of mission, and soon many of the ubiquitous Danaises were being retrofitted with weapons (often concealed behind blow-off panels). This added firepower and the additional heat sinks installed to accommodate their use slightly reduced the DropShip's original 1,700-ton cargo capacity, while four of the craft's ten second-class passenger cabins were given over to the gunners.

With the outbreak of the Succession Wars, space became a very dangerous place for an independent merchant. With no SLDF navy on anti-piracy patrol, it became an increasingly common practice for captains and manufacturers to scrounge up enough weapons to convert their Danaises into Trojan blockade-runners. Many followed the Taurians' lead in concealing these weapons, but others took the opposite extreme of adding false weapon ports and donning false colors to mimic the much tougher Union-class. These tactics, of course, could sometimes backfire—such as the time in 3025 when the Gray Death Legion's Phobos attempted to infiltrate the Verthandi system, only to be exposed by a Combine patrol. [As the Legion was operating independently at the time and not under the orders of a recognized government, this act technically amounted to piracy, punishable by summary execution anywhere in the Inner Sphere, but somehow the mercenaries avoided that fate and went on to their celebrated career. —GK]

Today, *Trojan* variants continue to be a familiar sight in civilian spacelanes. Equally at home with small shipping firms like Christifori Express as it is among our own Isesaki Shipping fleets, this dependable and flexible DropShip has become a vital link in interstellar communications. With the HPG network still patchy throughout the Inner Sphere, *Trojan* DropShips running their scheduled routes may be the only contact a world has with the rest of the Inner Sphere. Meanwhile, daring crews in blockade runner vessels may employ these ships to regularly run Word of Blake gauntlets, carrying information and lucrative cargo in and out of the Word of Blake Protectorate.

Trojan-class DropShip (Blockade Runner)
Type: Civilian Spheroid
Use: Cargo Carrier
Tech: Inner Sphere
Introduced: 2720
Mass: 3,200
Battle Value: 2,667

Dimensions
Length: 81.5 meters
Width: 81.5 meters
Height: 78 meters



Fuel: 250 tons (7,500)
Tons/Burn-day: 88.65
Safe Thrust: 3
Maximum Thrust: 5
Heat Sinks: 84
Structural Integrity: 7

Armor
Nose: 105
Sides: 105
Aft: 81

Cargo
Bay 1: Cargo (1,550 tons) 2 Doors
Bay 2: Small Craft (2) 2 Doors

Life Boats: 0
Escape Pods: 4

Crew: 1 officer, 3 enlisted/non-rated, 4 gunners, 10 bay personnel

Ammunition: 90 rounds LRM 20 ammunition (15 tons).

Notes: Mounts 23 tons standard armor. Quarters for 6 second-class passengers.

Weapons:	Capital Attack Values (Standard)				
Arc (Heat) Type	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	Class
Nose (18 Heat)					
2 LRM 20 (30 rounds)	2 (24)	2 (24)	2 (24)	—	Missile
2 Medium Lasers	1 (10)	—	—	—	Laser
FL/FR (26 Heat)					
2 LRM 20 (30 rounds)	2 (24)	2 (24)	2 (24)	—	Missile
1 Large Laser, 2 Medium Lasers	2 (18)	1 (8)	—	—	Laser
AL/AR (6 Heat)					
2 Medium Laser	1 (10)	—	—	—	Laser
Aft (6 Heat)					
2 Medium Laser	1 (10)	—	—	—	Laser

CLASSIC BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: C-MK-OS MALAK CAELISTIS

Movement Points:
Walking: 7
Running: 11
Jumping: 0

Tonnage: 30
Tech Base: Inner Sphere 3075

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	ER PPC	RA	15	10 [DE]	—	7	15	23
1	PPC Capacitor	RA	5	+5 [DE]	—	—	—	—
3	ER Small Laser	LA	2	3 [DE]	—	2	4	5
1	Improved C^3 CPU	LT	—	[E]	—	—	—	—

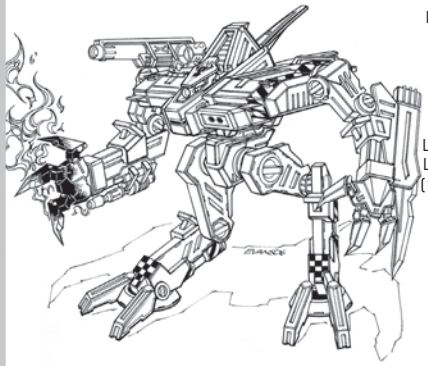
Cost: 6,244,306 C-bills **BV:** 1,254

WARRIOR DATA

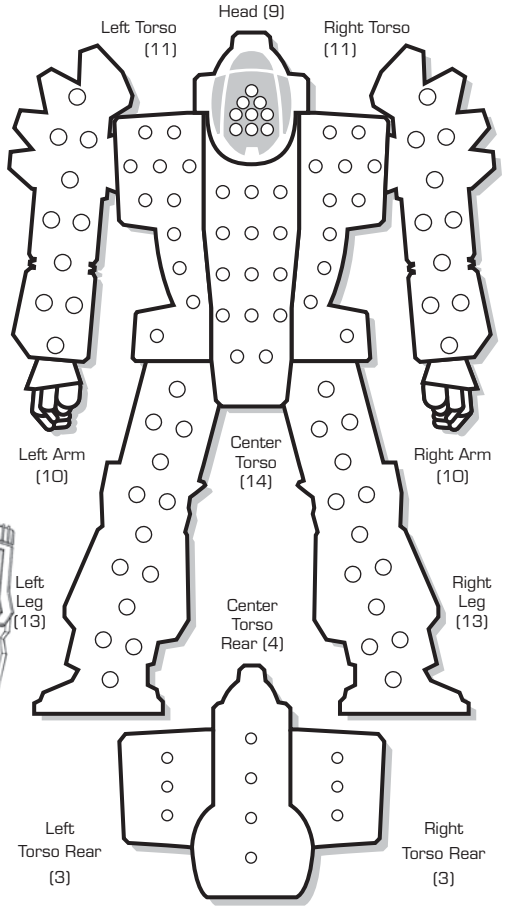
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: ___ **Piloting Skill:** ___

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Hand Actuator
5. Double Heat Sink
6. Double Heat Sink

4-6
1. Double Heat Sink
2. ER Small Laser
3. ER Small Laser
4. ER Small Laser
5. Light Ferro-Fibrous
6. Light Ferro-Fibrous

Left Torso

1-3
1. Light Fusion Engine
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. Improved C3 CPU
4. Improved C3 CPU
5. Double Heat Sink
6. Double Heat Sink

4-6
1. Double Heat Sink
2. Roll Again
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Left Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Light Ferro-Fibrous
6. Light Ferro-Fibrous

Head

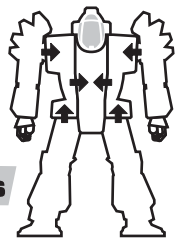
1. Life Support
2. Sensors
3. Small Cockpit
4. Sensors
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Center Torso

1-3
1. Light Fusion Engine
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. Light Fusion Engine
4. XL Gyro
5. XL Gyro
6. XL Gyro

4-6
1. XL Gyro
2. XL Gyro
3. XL Gyro
4. Light Fusion Engine
5. Light Fusion Engine
6. Light Fusion Engine

Engine Hits O O O
Gyro Hits O O
Sensor Hits O O
Life Support O



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. ER PPC
4. ER PPC
5. ER PPC
6. PPC Capacitor

4-6
1. Endo Steel
2. Endo Steel
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Right Torso

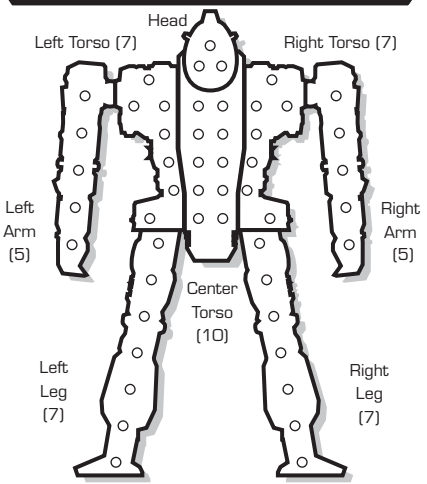
1-3
1. Light Fusion Engine
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. Roll Again
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

4-6
1. Roll Again
2. Light Ferro-Fibrous
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Right Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Light Ferro-Fibrous
6. Light Ferro-Fibrous

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



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

HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 10 (20) Double
30	Shutdown	
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	
25	–5 Movement Points	O
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	O
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	O
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	O
20	–4 Movement Points	O
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	O
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	O
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	O
15	–3 Movement Points	O
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	O
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	O
10	–2 Movement Points	
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	
5	–1 Movement Points	

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CLASSIC BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: MCY-100 MERCURY II

Movement Points:
Walking: 7
Running: 11
Jumping: 7

Tonnage: 40
Tech Base: 2823
Inner Sphere

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	ER Large Laser	LA	12	8 [DE]	—	7	14	19
2	Small Laser	LA	1	3 [DE]	—	1	2	3
1	Medium Laser	RA	3	5 [DE]	—	3	6	9
1	Beagle Active Probe	RT	0	[E]	—	—	—	4
1	Guardian ECM	LT	0	[E]	—	—	—	6
1	Medium Laser	CT	3	5 [DE]	—	3	6	9

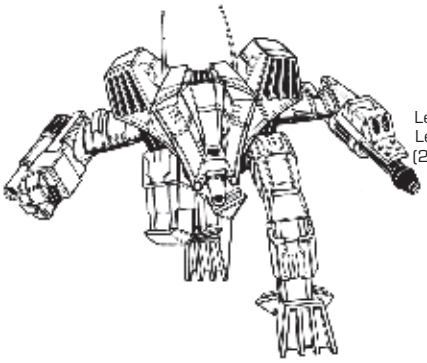
Cost: 7,924,514 C-bills **BV:** 1,376

WARRIOR DATA

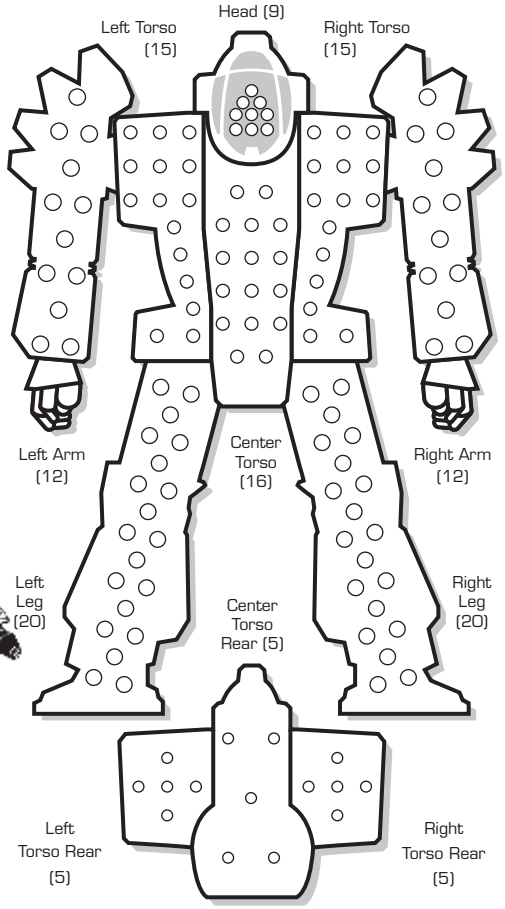
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: ___ Piloting Skill: ___

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. ER Large Laser
5. ER Large Laser
6. Small Laser

4-6
1. Small Laser
2. Ferro-Fibrous
3. Ferro-Fibrous
4. Ferro-Fibrous
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Left Torso

1-3
1. XL Fusion Engine
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. Guardian ECM
5. Guardian ECM
6. Jump Jet

4-6
1. Jump Jet
2. Jump Jet
3. Ferro-Fibrous
4. Ferro-Fibrous
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Left Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Ferro-Fibrous
6. Ferro-Fibrous

Head

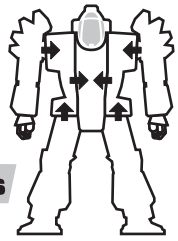
1. Life Support
2. Sensors
3. Cockpit
4. Roll Again
5. Sensors
6. Life Support

Center Torso

1-3
1. XL Fusion Engine
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. Gyro
5. Gyro
6. Gyro

4-6
1. Gyro
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. XL Fusion Engine
5. Medium Laser
6. Jump Jet

Engine Hits ○ ○ ○
Gyro Hits ○ ○
Sensor Hits ○ ○
Life Support ○



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Hand Actuator
5. Medium Laser
6. Ferro-Fibrous

4-6
1. Ferro-Fibrous
2. Ferro-Fibrous
3. Roll Again
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Right Torso

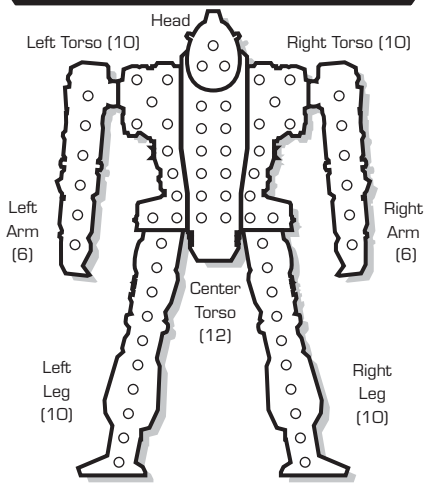
1-3
1. XL Fusion Engine
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. Beagle Active Probe
5. Beagle Active Probe
6. Jump Jet

4-6
1. Jump Jet
2. Jump Jet
3. Ferro-Fibrous
4. Ferro-Fibrous
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Right Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Ferro-Fibrous
6. Ferro-Fibrous

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



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

HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 10 (20) Double
30	Shutdown	
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	
25	–5 Movement Points	○
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	○
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	○
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	○
20	–4 Movement Points	○
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	○
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	○
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	○
15	–3 Movement Points	○
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	○
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	○
10	–2 Movement Points	
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	
5	–1 Movement Points	

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CLASSIC BATTLETECH™

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: RPT-2X RAPTOR II

Movement Points:
Walking: 7
Running: 11 [14]
Jumping: 0

Tonnage: 40
Tech Base: Inner Sphere 3073

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	BattleMech Taser	RA	6	1 [DB]	—	1	2	4
1	Med. VSP Laser	RT	7	9/7/5 [P, V]	—	2	5	9
1	Med. VSP Laser	LT	7	9/7/5 [P, V]	—	2	5	9
1	Beagle Active Probe	H	0	[E]	—	—	—	4

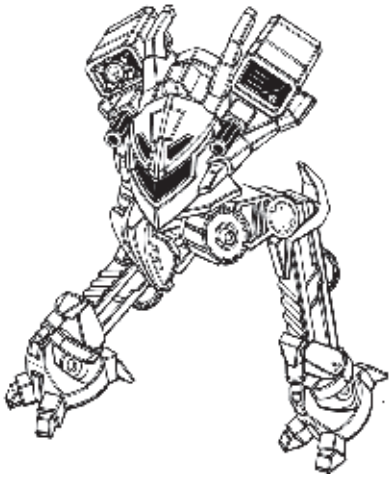
Cost: 11,125,334 C-bills **BV:** 969

WARRIOR DATA

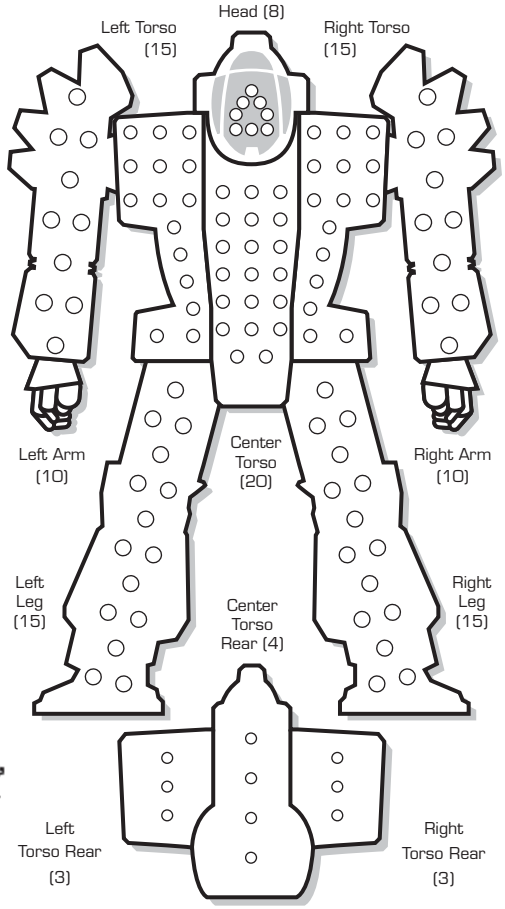
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: ___ **Piloting Skill:** ___

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Light Ferro-Fibrous
4. Light Ferro-Fibrous
5. Light Ferro-Fibrous
6. Light Ferro-Fibrous

4-6
1. Endo Steel
2. Endo Steel
3. Void-Signature System
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Left Torso

1-3
1. XL Fusion Engine
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. Medium VSP Laser
5. Medium VSP Laser
6. MASC

4-6
1. MASC
2. Endo Steel
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Void-Signature System

Left Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Void-Signature System
6. Endo Steel

Head

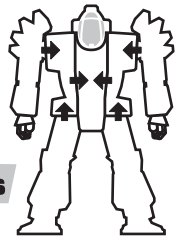
1. Life Support
2. Sensors
3. Small Cockpit
4. Sensors
5. Beagle Active Probe
6. Beagle Active Probe

Center Torso

1-3
1. XL Fusion Engine
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. Gyro
5. Gyro
6. Gyro

4-6
1. Gyro
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. XL Fusion Engine
5. Void-Signature System
6. Roll Again

Engine Hits ○ ○ ○
Gyro Hits ○ ○
Sensor Hits ○ ○
Life Support ○



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. BattleMech Taser
4. BattleMech Taser
5. BattleMech Taser
6. Ammo (Taser) 5

4-6
1. Ammo (Taser) 5
2. Light Ferro-Fibrous
3. Light Ferro-Fibrous
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Void-Signature System

Right Torso

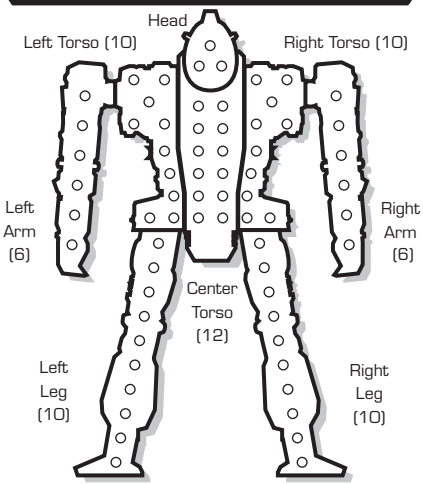
1-3
1. XL Fusion Engine
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. CASE
5. Medium VSP Laser
6. Medium VSP Laser

4-6
1. Light Ferro-Fibrous
2. Endo Steel
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Void-Signature System

Right Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Void-Signature System
6. Endo Steel

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



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

HEAT DATA

Heat Sinks: 10 (20) Double

Heat Level*	Effects	
30	Shutdown	
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	
25	–5 Movement Points	○
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	○
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	○
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	○
20	–4 Movement Points	○
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	○
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	○
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	○
15	–3 Movement Points	○
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	○
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	○
10	–2 Movement Points	
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	
5	–1 Movement Points	

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CLASSIC BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: RPT-2X1 RAPTOR II

Movement Points:
Walking: 7
Running: 11 [14]
Jumping: 0

Tonnage: 40
Tech Base: Inner Sphere 3073

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Bloodhound Probe	RA	0	[E]	—	—	—	8
1	Streak SRM 6	LA	4	2/Msl [M,C]	—	3	6	9
1	ER Large Laser	RT	12	8 [DE]	—	7	14	19
1	ER Med. Laser	RT	5	5 [DE]	—	4	8	12
1	ER Small Laser	CT(R)	2	3 [DE]	—	2	4	5
1	Guardian ECM	HD	0	[E]	—	—	—	6

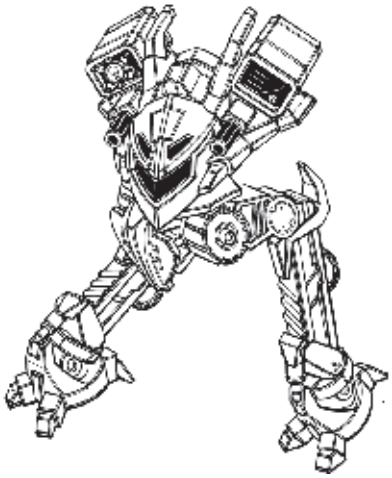
Cost: 11,561,064 C-bills **BV:** 1,375

WARRIOR DATA

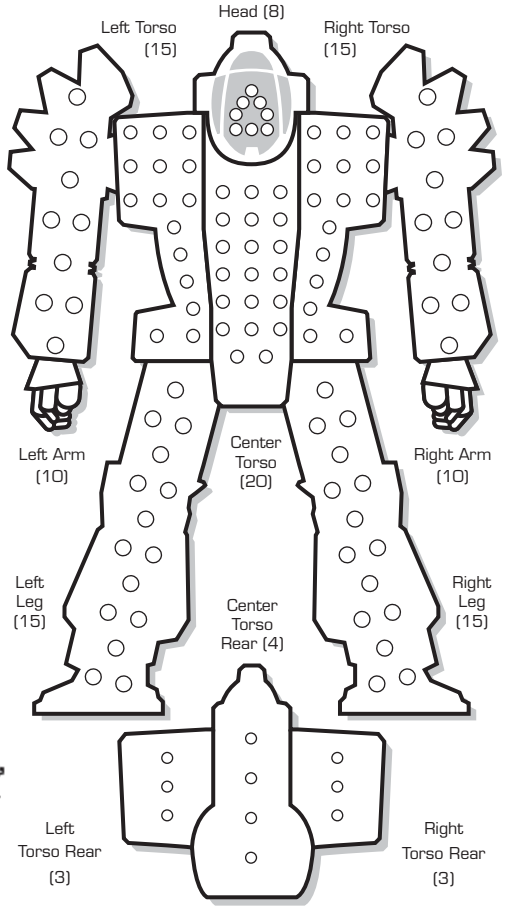
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: ___ **Piloting Skill:** ___

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Streak SRM 6
4. Streak SRM 6
5. Ammo (Streak) 15
6. Light Ferro-Fibrous

4-6
1. Light Ferro-Fibrous
2. Light Ferro-Fibrous
3. Light Ferro-Fibrous
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Void-Signature System

Left Torso

1-3
1. XL Fusion Engine
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. CASE
5. MASC
6. MASC

4-6
1. Endo Steel
2. Endo Steel
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Void-Signature System
6. Roll Again

Left Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Void-Signature System
6. Endo Steel

Head

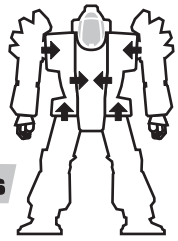
1. Life Support
2. Sensors
3. Small Cockpit
4. Sensors
5. Guardian ECM
6. Guardian ECM

Center Torso

1-3
1. XL Fusion Engine
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. Gyro
5. Gyro
6. Gyro

4-6
1. Gyro
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. XL Fusion Engine
5. ER Small Laser (R)
6. Void-Signature System

Engine Hits ○ ○ ○
Gyro Hits ○ ○
Sensor Hits ○ ○
Life Support ○



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Bloodhound Probe
4. Bloodhound Probe
5. Bloodhound Probe
6. Light Ferro-Fibrous

4-6
1. Light Ferro-Fibrous
2. Endo Steel
3. Endo Steel
4. Void-Signature System
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Right Torso

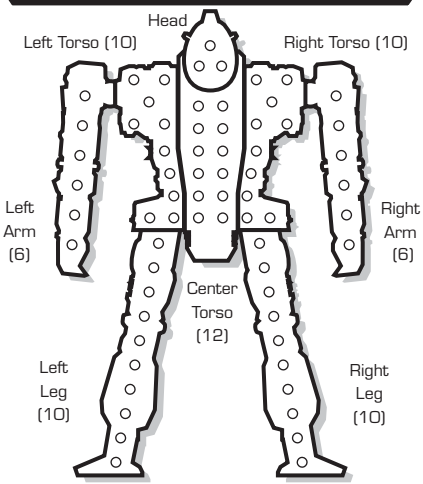
1-3
1. XL Fusion Engine
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. ER Large Laser
5. ER Large Laser
6. ER Medium Laser

4-6
1. Light Ferro-Fibrous
2. Endo Steel
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Void-Signature System

Right Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Void-Signature System
6. Endo Steel

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



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

HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 10 (20) Double
30	Shutdown	
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	
25	–5 Movement Points	○
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	○
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	○
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	○
20	–4 Movement Points	○
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	○
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	○
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	○
15	–3 Movement Points	○
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	○
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	○
10	–2 Movement Points	
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	
5	–1 Movement Points	

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CLASSIC BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: C-PRT-OS PRETA CAELESTIS

Movement Points:
- **Walking:** 6
- **Running:** 9
- **Jumping:** 6

Tonnage: 45
Tech Base: Mixed Tech 3075

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	ER Lg. Pulse Laser*	RA	13	10 [P]	—	7	15	23
1	ER Med Pulse Laser*	LA	6	7 [P]	—	5	9	14
1	Improved C^3 CPU	LT	—	[E]	—	—	—	—
1	ER Med Pulse Laser*	H	6	7 [P]	—	5	9	14

*Clan Tech

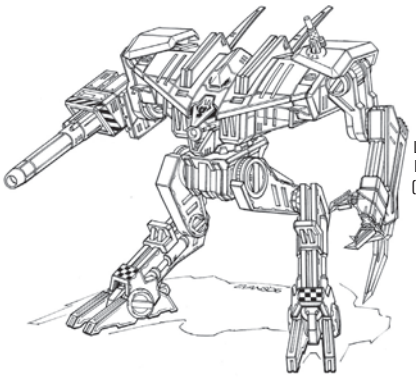
Cost: 10,503,800 C-bills **BV:** 1,566

WARRIOR DATA

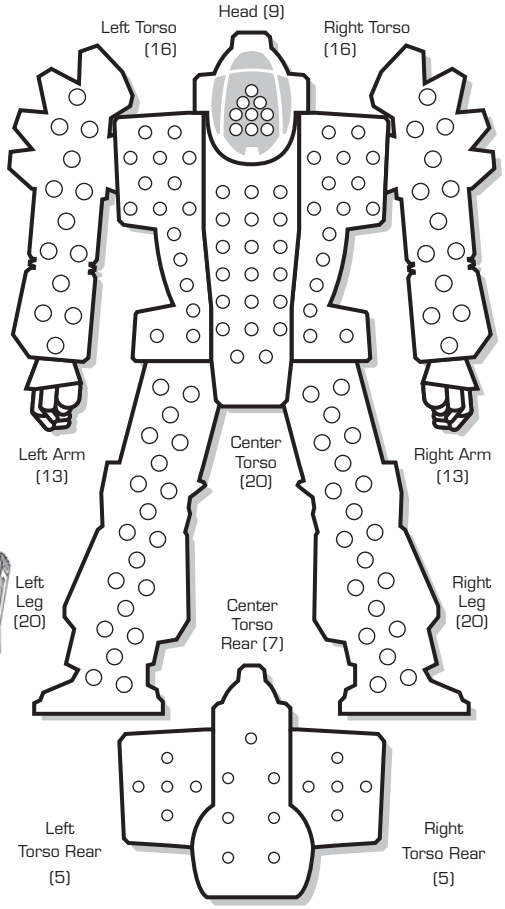
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: ___ **Piloting Skill:** ___

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Hand Actuator
5. ER Med Pulse Laser
6. ER Med Pulse Laser

4-6
1. Endo Steel
2. Endo Steel
3. Endo Steel
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Left Torso

1-3
1. Light Fusion Engine
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. Double Heat Sink
4. Double Heat Sink
5. Double Heat Sink
6. Jump Jet

4-6
1. Jump Jet
2. Jump Jet
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Left Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Head

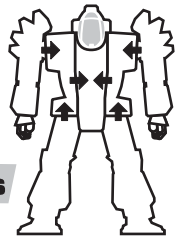
1. Life Support
2. Sensors
3. Small Cockpit
4. Sensors
5. ER Med Pulse Laser
6. ER Med Pulse Laser

Center Torso

1-3
1. Light Fusion Engine
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. Light Fusion Engine
4. Gyro
5. Gyro
6. Gyro

4-6
1. Gyro
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. Light Fusion Engine
4. Light Fusion Engine
5. Improved C3 CPU
6. Improved C3 CPU

Engine Hits O O O
Gyro Hits O O
Sensor Hits O O
Life Support O



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Hand Actuator
5. ER Large Pulse Laser
6. ER Large Pulse Laser

4-6
1. ER Large Pulse Laser
2. Endo Steel
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Right Torso

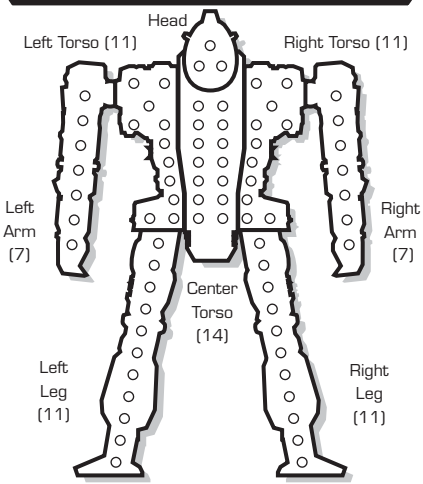
1-3
1. Light Fusion Engine
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. Double Heat Sink
4. Double Heat Sink
5. Double Heat Sink
6. Jump Jet

4-6
1. Jump Jet
2. Jump Jet
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Right Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



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

HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 12 (24) Double
30	Shutdown	
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	
25	–5 Movement Points	O O
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	O O
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	O
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	O
20	–4 Movement Points	O
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	O
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	O
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	O
15	–3 Movement Points	O
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	O
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	O
10	–2 Movement Points	
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	
5	–1 Movement Points	

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CLASSIC BATTLETECH™

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: ST-14G STAG

Movement Points:
Walking: 6
Running: 9 [12]
Jumping: 0

Tonnage: 45
Tech Base: Inner Sphere 2823

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	ER Large Laser	RA	12	8 [DE]	—	7	14	19
1	SRM 4	RT	3	2/Msl [M,C,S]	—	3	6	9
1	SRM 4	LT	3	2/Msl [M,C,S]	—	3	6	9
1	Beagle Active Probe	LT	0	[E]	—	—	—	4
1	Medium Laser	LA	—	5 [DE]	—	3	6	9
1	Medium Laser	H	—	5 [DE]	—	3	6	9

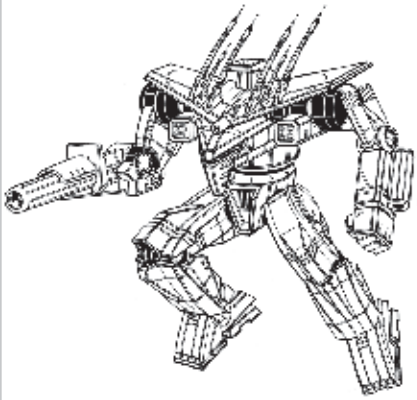
Cost: 8,854,570 C-bills **BV:** 1,250

WARRIOR DATA

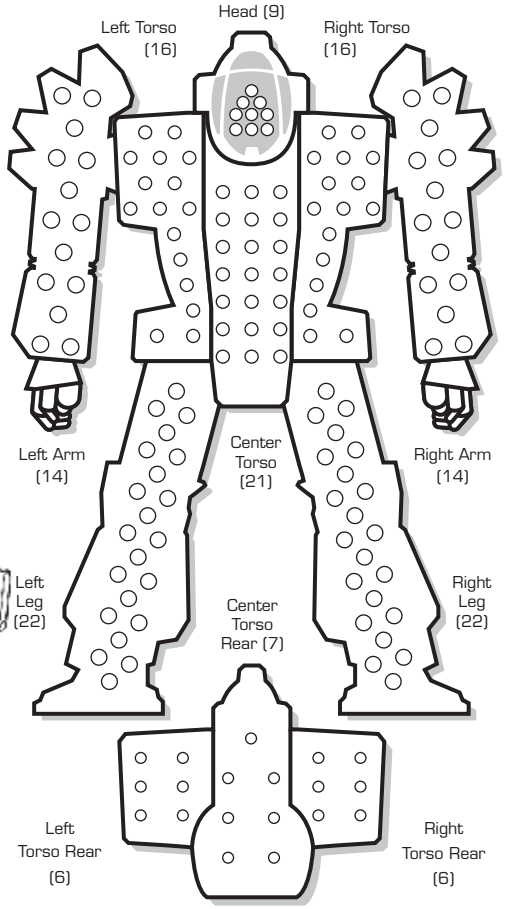
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: ____ **Piloting Skill:** ____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Hand Actuator
5. Medium Laser
6. Endo Steel

4-6
1. Endo Steel
2. Endo Steel
3. Roll Again
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Left Torso

1-3
1. XL Fusion Engine
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. Double Heat Sink
5. Double Heat Sink
6. Double Heat Sink

4-6
1. SRM 4
2. Ammo (SRM) 25
3. Ammo (SRM) 25
4. Beagle Active Probe
5. Beagle Active Probe
6. CASE

Left Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Head

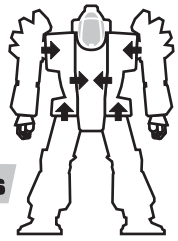
1. Life Support
2. Sensors
3. Cockpit
4. Medium Laser
5. Sensors
6. Life Support

Center Torso

1-3
1. XL Fusion Engine
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. Gyro
5. Gyro
6. Gyro

4-6
1. Gyro
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. XL Fusion Engine
5. MASC
6. MASC

Engine Hits ○ ○ ○
Gyro Hits ○ ○
Sensor Hits ○ ○
Life Support ○



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. ER Large Laser
5. ER Large Laser
6. Endo Steel

4-6
1. Endo Steel
2. Endo Steel
3. Roll Again
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Right Torso

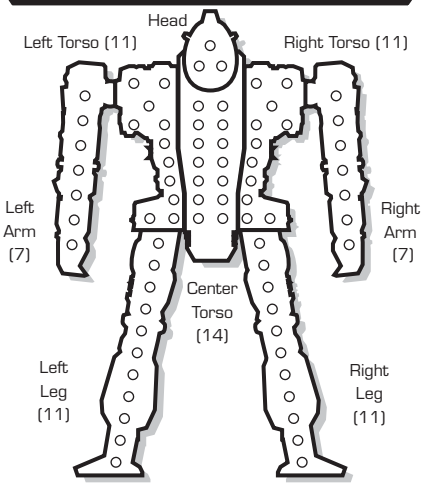
1-3
1. XL Fusion Engine
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. Double Heat Sink
5. Double Heat Sink
6. Double Heat Sink

4-6
1. SRM 4
2. Endo Steel
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Roll Again

Right Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



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

HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 12 (24) Double
30	Shutdown	
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	
25	–5 Movement Points	○ ○
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	○ ○
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	○
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	○
20	–4 Movement Points	○
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	○
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	○
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	○
15	–3 Movement Points	○
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	○
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	○
10	–2 Movement Points	
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	
5	–1 Movement Points	

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CLASSIC BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: ST-24G STAG II

Movement Points:
Walking: 7
Running: 11
Jumping: 0

Tonnage: 45
Tech Base: Inner Sphere 2823

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Enhanced ER PPC	RA	15	12 [DE]	—	7	14	23
1	Medium Laser	LA	3	5 [DE]	—	3	6	9
1	Med. Pulse Laser	RT	4	6 [P]	—	2	4	6
1	Small Laser	RT	1	3 [DE]	—	1	2	3
1	Med. Pulse Laser	LT	4	6 [P]	—	2	4	6
1	Small Laser	LT	1	3 [DE]	—	1	2	3
1	Medium Laser	CT	3	5 [DE]	—	3	6	9
1	Medium Laser	H	3	5 [DE]	—	3	6	9

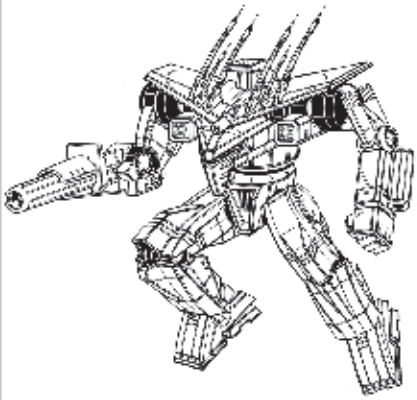
Cost: 9,156,895 C-bills **BV:** 1,449

WARRIOR DATA

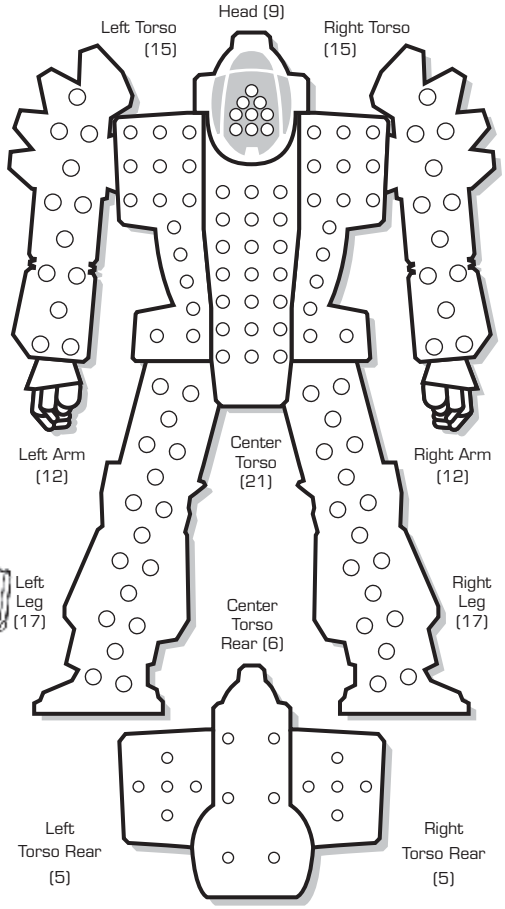
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: ___ **Piloting Skill:** ___

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Hand Actuator
5. Medium Laser
6. Ferro-Fibrous

4-6
1. Ferro-Fibrous
2. Ferro-Fibrous
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Left Torso

1-3
1. XL Fusion Engine
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. Medium Pulse Laser
5. Small Laser
6. Ferro-Fibrous

4-6
1. Ferro-Fibrous
2. Endo Steel
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Left Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Ferro-Fibrous
6. Ferro-Fibrous

Head

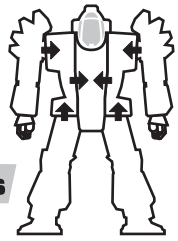
1. Life Support
2. Sensors
3. Cockpit
4. Medium Laser
5. Sensors
6. Life Support

Center Torso

1-3
1. XL Fusion Engine
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. Gyro
5. Gyro
6. Gyro

4-6
1. Gyro
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. XL Fusion Engine
5. Medium Laser
6. Ferro-Fibrous

Engine Hits O O O
Gyro Hits O O
Sensor Hits O O
Life Support O



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Enhanced ER PPC
5. Enhanced ER PPC
6. Enhanced ER PPC

4-6
1. Ferro-Fibrous
2. Ferro-Fibrous
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Right Torso

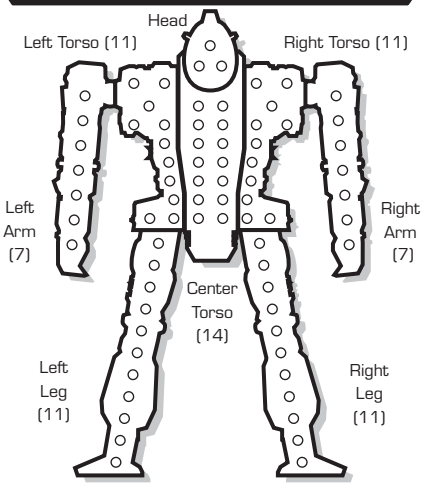
1-3
1. XL Fusion Engine
2. XL Fusion Engine
3. XL Fusion Engine
4. Medium Pulse Laser
5. Small Laser
6. Ferro-Fibrous

4-6
1. Ferro-Fibrous
2. Endo Steel
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Right Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Ferro-Fibrous
6. Ferro-Fibrous

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 12 (24) Double
30	Shutdown	
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	
25	–5 Movement Points	O O
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	O O
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	O
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	O
20	–4 Movement Points	O
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	O
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	O
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	O
15	–3 Movement Points	O
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	O
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	O
10	–2 Movement Points	
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	
5	–1 Movement Points	

Heat Scale

Overflow
30*
29
28*
27
26*
25*
24*
23*
22*
21
20*
19*
18*
17*
16
15*
14*
13*
12
11
10*
9
8*
7
6
5*
4
3
2
1
0

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CLASSIC BATTLETECH™

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: DV-1S DERVISH

Movement Points:
- **Walking:** 4
- **Running:** 6
- **Jumping:** 3

Tonnage: 55
Tech Base: Inner Sphere (Primitive) 2520

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	SRM 2	RA	2	2/Msl [M,C,S]	—	3	6	9
1	SRM 2	LA	2	2/Msl [M,C,S]	—	3	6	9
1	LRM 10	RT	4	1/Msl [M,C,S]	6	7	14	21
1	LRM 10	LT	4	1/Msl [M,C,S]	6	7	14	21

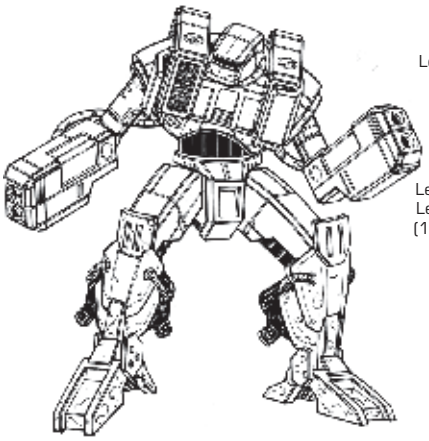
Cost: 4,275,934 C-bills **BV:** 858

WARRIOR DATA

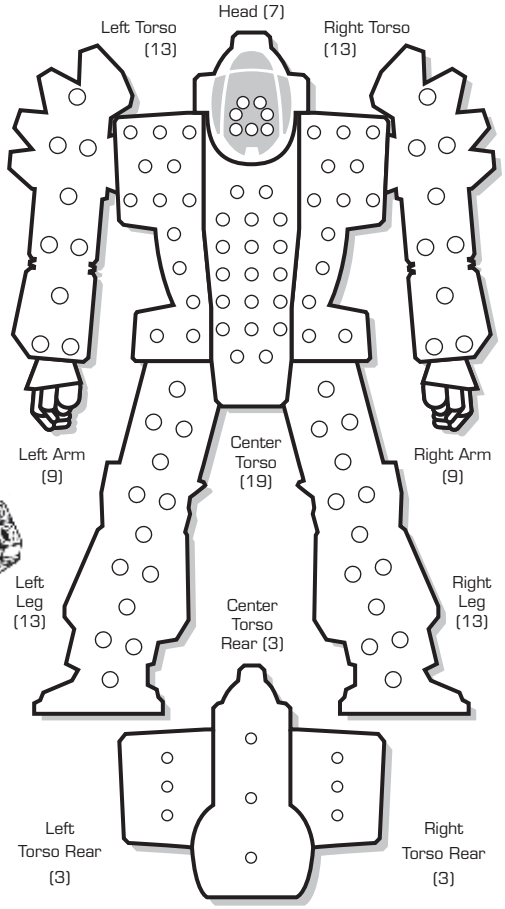
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: ___ **Piloting Skill:** ___

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. SRM 2
5. Ammo (SRM) 50
6. Roll Again

4-6
1. Roll Again
2. Roll Again
3. Roll Again
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Left Torso

1-3
1. LRM 10
2. LRM 10
3. Ammo (LRM) 12
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

4-6
1. Roll Again
2. Roll Again
3. Roll Again
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Left Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Jump Jet
6. Roll Again

Head

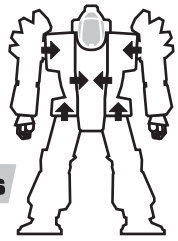
1. Life Support
2. Sensors
3. Primitive Cockpit
4. Roll Again
5. Sensors
6. Life Support

Center Torso

1-3
1. Primitive Fusion Engine
2. Primitive Fusion Engine
3. Primitive Fusion Engine
4. Gyro
5. Gyro
6. Gyro

4-6
1. Gyro
2. Primitive Fusion Engine
3. Primitive Fusion Engine
4. Primitive Fusion Engine
5. Jump Jet
6. Single Heat Sink

Engine Hits ○ ○ ○
Gyro Hits ○ ○
Sensor Hits ○ ○
Life Support ○



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. SRM 2
5. Ammo (SRM) 50
6. Roll Again

4-6
1. Roll Again
2. Roll Again
3. Roll Again
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Right Torso

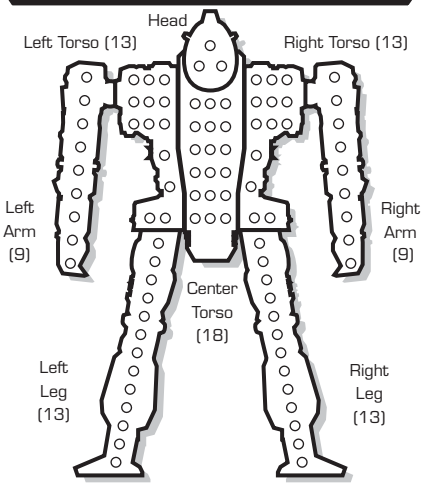
1-3
1. LRM 10
2. LRM 10
3. Ammo (LRM) 12
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

4-6
1. Roll Again
2. Roll Again
3. Roll Again
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Right Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Jump Jet
6. Roll Again

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



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

HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 10 Single
30	Shutdown	
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	
25	–5 Movement Points	○
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	○
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	○
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	○
20	–4 Movement Points	○
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	○
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	○
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	○
15	–3 Movement Points	○
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	○
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	○
10	–2 Movement Points	
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	
5	–1 Movement Points	

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CLASSIC BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: C-GRG-OS GRIGORI CAELESTIS

Movement Points:
Walking: 4
Running: 6
Jumping: 0

Tonnage: 60
Tech Base: Mixed Tech 3075

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	SB Gauss Rifle	RA	1	15 [DB,C,F,X]	2	7	15	22
1	Streak LRM 10*	RT	4	1/Msl [M,C]	—	7	14	21
1	Improved C^3 CPU	LT	—	[E]	—	—	—	—
2	Med X-Pulse Laser	H	6	6 [P]	—	3	6	9

*Clan Tech

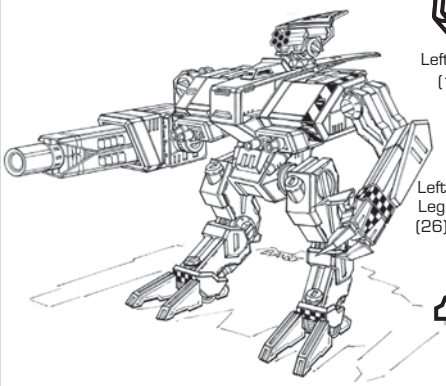
Cost: 13,221,600 C-bills **BV:** 1,343

WARRIOR DATA

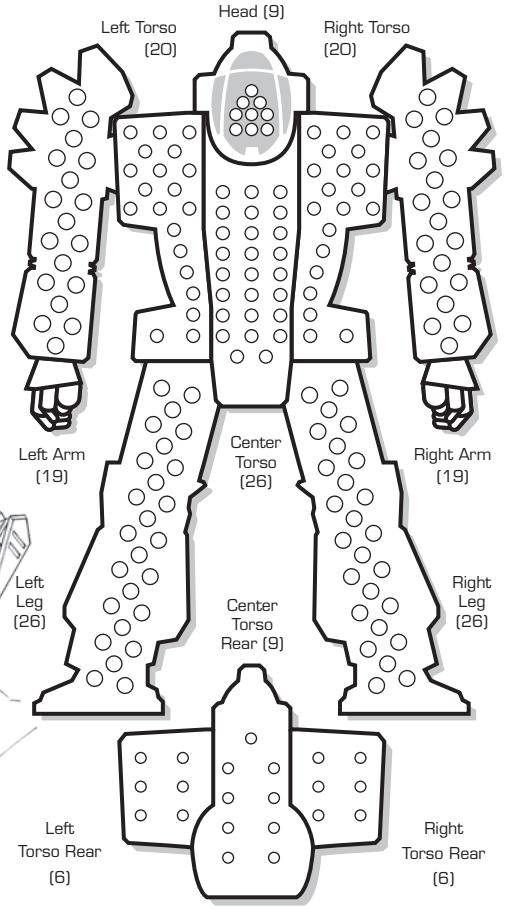
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: ___ **Piloting Skill:** ___

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Hand Actuator
5. Double Heat Sink
6. Double Heat Sink

4-6
1. Double Heat Sink
2. Roll Again
3. Roll Again
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Left Torso

1-3
1. Light Fusion Engine
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. Ammo (Gauss) 8
4. Ammo (Gauss) 8
5. Improved C3 CPU
6. Improved C3 CPU

4-6
1. Roll Again
2. Roll Again
3. Roll Again
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Left Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Light Ferro-Fibrous
6. Light Ferro-Fibrous

Head

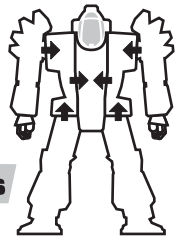
1. Life Support
2. Sensors
3. Small Cockpit
4. Sensors
5. Med X-Pulse Laser
6. Med X-Pulse Laser

Center Torso

1-3
1. Light Fusion Engine
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. Light Fusion Engine
4. XL Gyro
5. XL Gyro
6. XL Gyro

4-6
1. XL Gyro
2. XL Gyro
3. XL Gyro
4. Light Fusion Engine
5. Light Fusion Engine
6. Light Fusion Engine

Engine Hits O O O
Gyro Hits O O
Sensor Hits O O
Life Support O



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. SB Gauss Rifle
4. SB Gauss Rifle
5. SB Gauss Rifle
6. SB Gauss Rifle

4-6
1. SB Gauss Rifle
2. SB Gauss Rifle
3. SB Gauss Rifle
4. Light Ferro-Fibrous
5. Light Ferro-Fibrous
6. Light Ferro-Fibrous

Right Torso

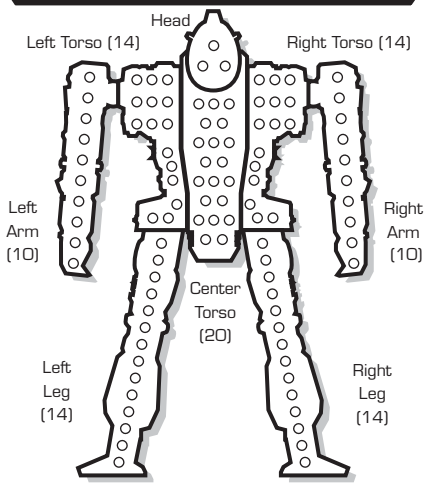
1-3
1. Light Fusion Engine
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. CASE II
4. Streak LRM 10
5. Streak LRM 10
6. Ammo (Streak LRM) 12

4-6
1. Roll Again
2. Roll Again
3. Roll Again
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Right Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Light Ferro-Fibrous
6. Light Ferro-Fibrous

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



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

HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 10 (20) Double
30	Shutdown	
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	
25	–5 Movement Points	O
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	O
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	O
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	O
20	–4 Movement Points	O
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	O
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	O
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	O
15	–3 Movement Points	O
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	O
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	O
10	–2 Movement Points	
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	
5	–1 Movement Points	

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CLASSIC BATTLETECH™

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: C-DVA-OS DEVA CAELESTIS

Movement Points:
Walking: 4
Running: 6 [8]
Jumping: 0

Tonnage: 70
Tech Base: Inner Sphere 3075

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Binary Laser Cannon	RA	12	18 [DE]	—	5	10	15
1	Binary Laser Cannon	LA	12	18 [DE]	—	5	10	15
1	Improved C^3 CPU	LT	—	[E]	—	—	—	—
1	ER Small Laser	CT	2	3 [DE]	—	2	4	5
1	Laser AMS	H	7	[PD]	—	—	—	—
1	Targeting Computer	LT	—	[E]	—	—	—	—

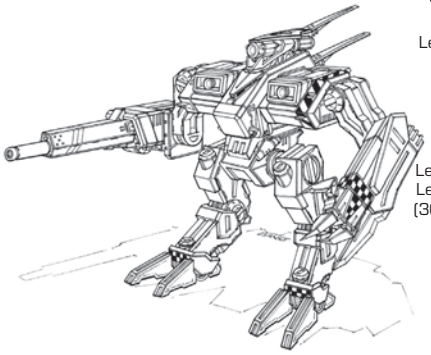
Cost: 25,632,280 C-bills **BV:** 1,937

WARRIOR DATA

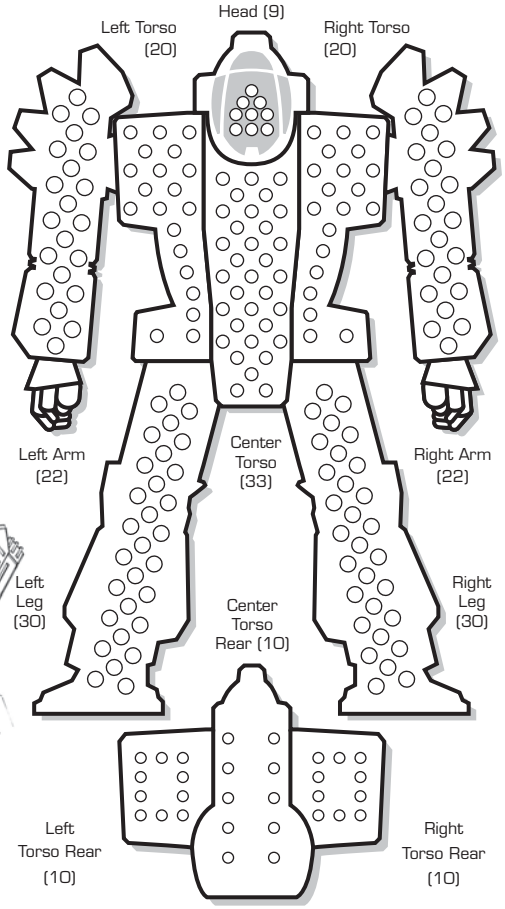
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: ___ **Piloting Skill:** ___

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Double Heat Sink
5. Double Heat Sink
6. Double Heat Sink

4-6
1. Binary Laser Cannon
2. Binary Laser Cannon
3. Binary Laser Cannon
4. Binary Laser Cannon
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Left Torso

1-3
1. Light Fusion Engine
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. Targeting Computer
4. Targeting Computer
5. Targeting Computer
6. Targeting Computer

4-6
1. Targeting Computer
2. Roll Again
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Left Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Head

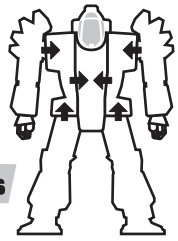
1. Life Support
2. Sensors
3. Small Cockpit
4. Sensors
5. Laser AMS
6. Laser AMS

Center Torso

1-3
1. Light Fusion Engine
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. Light Fusion Engine
4. Heavy Duty Gyro
5. Heavy Duty Gyro
6. Heavy Duty Gyro

4-6
1. Heavy Duty Gyro
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. Light Fusion Engine
4. Light Fusion Engine
5. Supercharger
6. ER Small Laser

Engine Hits ○ ○ ○
Gyro Hits ○ ○ ○
Sensor Hits ○ ○
Life Support ○



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Double Heat Sink
5. Double Heat Sink
6. Double Heat Sink

4-6
1. Binary Laser Cannon
2. Binary Laser Cannon
3. Binary Laser Cannon
4. Binary Laser Cannon
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Right Torso

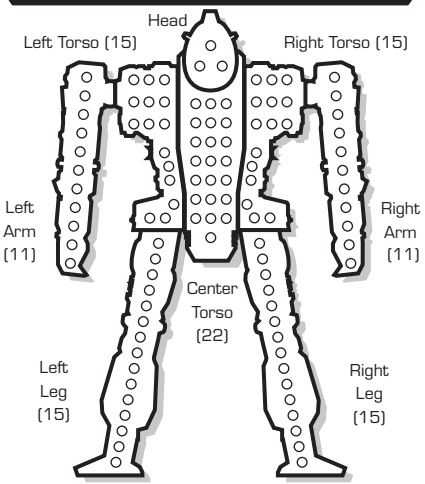
1-3
1. Light Fusion Engine
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. Improved C3 CPU
4. Improved C3 CPU
5. Double Heat Sink
6. Double Heat Sink

4-6
1. Double Heat Sink
2. Roll Again
3. Roll Again
4. Roll Again
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Right Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



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

HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	
30	Shutdown	
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	
25	–5 Movement Points	○ ○
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	○ ○
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	○ ○
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	○ ○
20	–4 Movement Points	○
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	○
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	○
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	○
15	–3 Movement Points	○
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	○
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	○
10	–2 Movement Points	
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	
5	–1 Movement Points	

Heat Sinks: 14 (28) Double

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CLASSIC BATTLETECH™

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: C-SRP-OS SERAPH CAELESTIS

Movement Points:
Walking: 3 [4]
Running: 5 [6]
Jumping: 3

Tonnage: 85
Tech Base: Mixed Tech 3075

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Streak LRM 10*	RA	4	1/Msl [M,C]	—	7	14	21
1	Streak LRM 10*	LA	4	1/Msl [M,C]	—	7	14	21
1	Streak LRM 10*	RT	4	1/Msl [M,C]	—	7	14	21
1	Improved C^3 CPU	LT	—	[E]	—	—	—	—
2	Med. Pulse Laser*	LT	4	7 [P]	—	4	8	12
1	Lrg. Pulse Laser*	CT	10	10 [P]	—	8	14	20
1	Lrg. Pulse Laser*	H	10	10 [P]	—	8	14	20

* Clan Tech

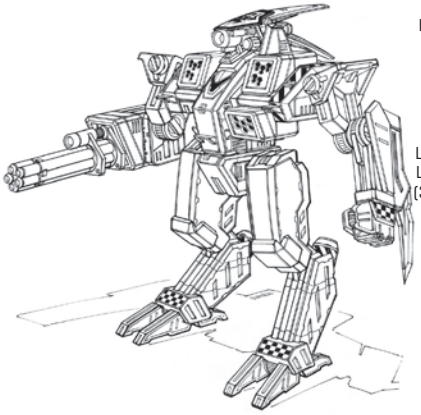
Cost: 22,039,281 C-bills **BV:** 2,788

WARRIOR DATA

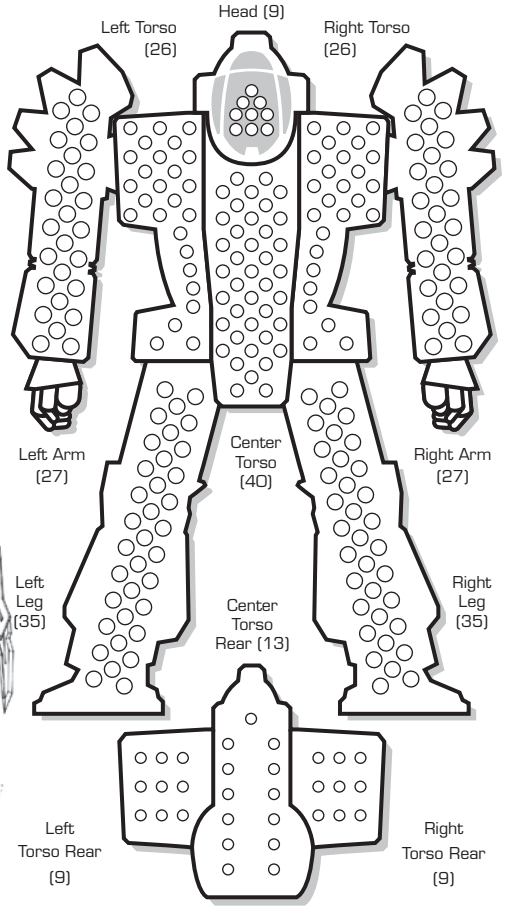
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: ___ **Piloting Skill:** ___

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Streak LRM 10 (1-3)
4. Streak LRM 10 (1-3)
5. Double Heat Sink (1-3)
6. Double Heat Sink (1-3)

1. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
2. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
3. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
4. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
5. Triple-Strength Myomer
6. Triple-Strength Myomer

Left Torso

1. Light Fusion Engine
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. Improved C3 CPU (1-3)
4. Improved C3 CPU (1-3)
5. Jump Jet
6. Jump Jet

1. Medium Pulse Laser (4-6)
2. Medium Pulse Laser (4-6)
3. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
4. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
5. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
6. Roll Again

Left Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Triple-Strength Myomer
6. Triple-Strength Myomer

Head

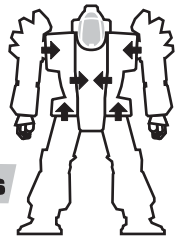
1. Life Support
2. Sensors
3. Small Cockpit
4. Sensors
5. Large Pulse Laser
6. Large Pulse Laser

Center Torso

1. Light Fusion Engine (1-3)
2. Light Fusion Engine (1-3)
3. Light Fusion Engine (1-3)
4. Gyro (1-3)
5. Gyro (1-3)
6. Gyro (1-3)

1. Gyro (4-6)
2. Light Fusion Engine (4-6)
3. Light Fusion Engine (4-6)
4. Light Fusion Engine (4-6)
5. Large Pulse Laser (4-6)
6. Large Pulse Laser (4-6)

Engine Hits ○ ○ ○
Gyro Hits ○ ○
Sensor Hits ○ ○
Life Support ○



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Streak LRM 10 (1-3)
4. Streak LRM 10 (1-3)
5. Double Heat Sink (1-3)
6. Double Heat Sink (1-3)

1. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
2. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
3. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
4. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
5. Ammo (Streak LRM) 12
6. Roll Again

Right Torso

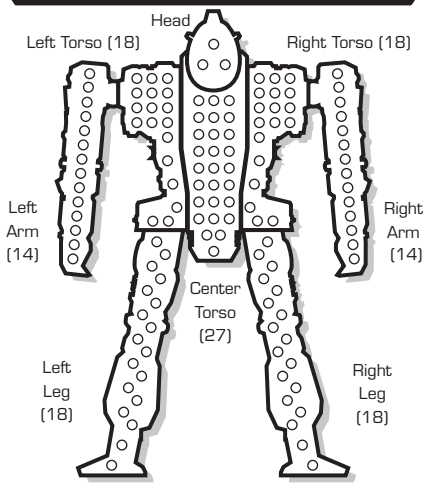
1. Light Fusion Engine
2. Light Fusion Engine
3. Streak LRM 10 (1-3)
4. Streak LRM 10 (1-3)
5. Ammo (Streak LRM) 12
6. Jump Jet

1. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
2. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
3. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
4. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
5. Double Heat Sink (4-6)
6. Double Heat Sink (4-6)

Right Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Triple-Strength Myomer
6. Triple-Strength Myomer

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



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

HEAT DATA

Heat Sinks: 17 (34) Double

Heat Level*	Effects	
30	Shutdown	
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	
25	–5 Movement Points	○ ○
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	○ ○
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	○ ○
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	○ ○
20	–4 Movement Points	○ ○
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	○ ○
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	○ ○
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	○
15	–3 Movement Points	○
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	○
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	○
10	–2 Movement Points	
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	
5	–1 Movement Points	

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CLASSIC BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: PUL-2V PULVERIZER

Movement Points:
- **Walking:** 4
- **Running:** 6
- **Jumping:** 0

Tonnage: 90
Tech Base: Inner Sphere 2823

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Large Laser	RA	8	8 [DE]	—	5	10	15
1	Large Laser	LA	8	8 [DE]	—	5	10	15
1	Enhanced ER PPC	RT	15	12 [DE]	—	7	14	23
1	LRM 10	LT	4	1/Msl [M,C,S]	6	7	14	21
1	Guardian ECM	CT	0	[E]	—	—	—	6

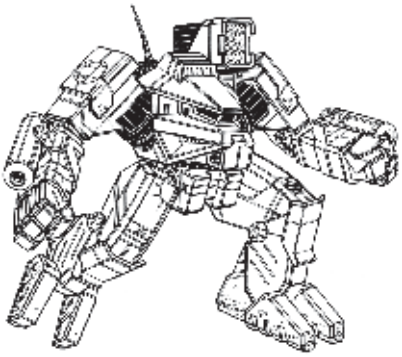
Cost: 10,446,960 C-bills **BV:** 2,068

WARRIOR DATA

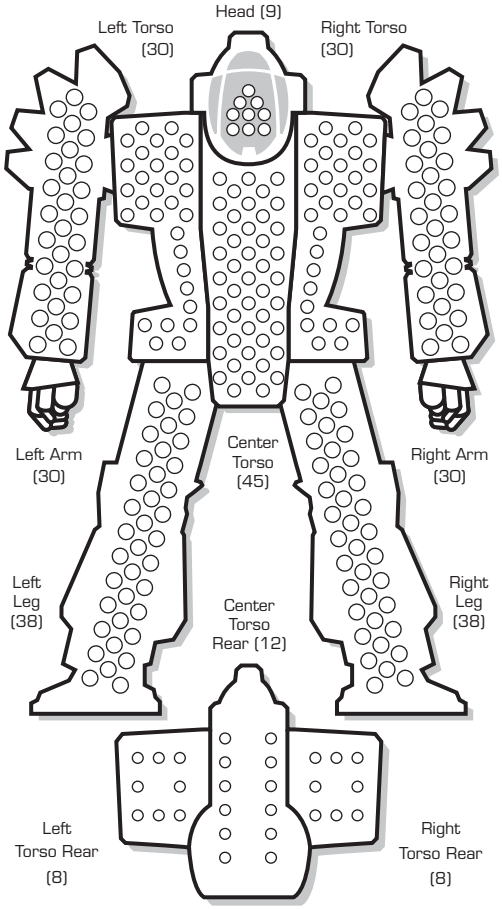
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: ___ **Piloting Skill:** ___

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm
1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Hand Actuator
5. Large Laser
6. Large Laser

4-6
1. Ferro-Fibrous
2. Ferro-Fibrous
3. Ferro-Fibrous
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Left Torso
1-3
1. Double Heat Sink
2. Double Heat Sink
3. Double Heat Sink
4. LRM 10
5. LRM 10
6. Ammo (LRM) 12

4-6
1. CASE
2. Ferro-Fibrous
3. Ferro-Fibrous
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

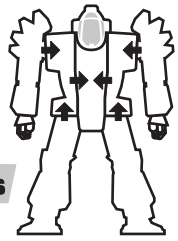
Left Leg
1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Ferro-Fibrous
6. Ferro-Fibrous

Head
1. Life Support
2. Sensors
3. Cockpit
4. Ferro-Fibrous
5. Sensors
6. Life Support

Center Torso
1-3
1. Fusion Engine
2. Fusion Engine
3. Fusion Engine
4. Gyro
5. Gyro
6. Gyro

4-6
1. Gyro
2. Fusion Engine
3. Fusion Engine
4. Fusion Engine
5. Guardian ECM
6. Guardian ECM

Engine Hits O O O
Gyro Hits O O
Sensor Hits O O
Life Support O



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm
1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Hand
5. Large Laser
6. Large Laser

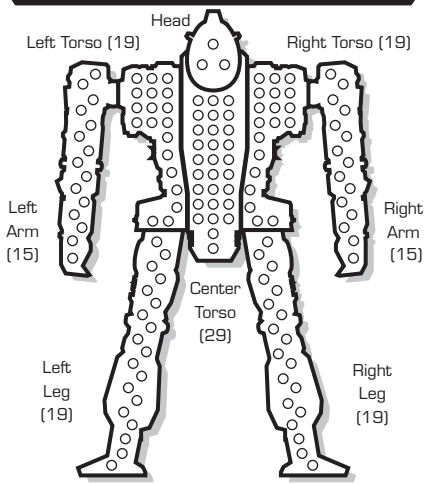
4-6
1. Ferro-Fibrous
2. Ferro-Fibrous
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Right Torso
1-3
1. Enhanced ER PPC
2. Enhanced ER PPC
3. Enhanced ER PPC
4. Ferro-Fibrous
5. Ferro-Fibrous
6. Endo Steel

4-6
1. Endo Steel
2. Endo Steel
3. Endo Steel
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Right Leg
1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Ferro-Fibrous
6. Ferro-Fibrous

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



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

HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 15 (30) Double
30	Shutdown	
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	
25	–5 Movement Points	O O
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	O O
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	O O
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	O O
20	–4 Movement Points	O O
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	O
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	O
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	O
15	–3 Movement Points	O
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	O
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	O
10	–2 Movement Points	
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	
5	–1 Movement Points	

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CLASSIC BATTLETECH™

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: C-ANG-OS ARCHANGEL CAELESTIS

Movement Points:
Walking: 3
Running: 5
Jumping: 0

Tonnage: 100
Tech Base: Mixed Tech 3075

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Thunderbolt 10	RA	5	10 [M]	5	6	12	18
2	ER Small Laser*	LA	2	5 [DE]	—	2	4	6
1	Binary Laser Cannon	RT	12	16	—	5	10	15
1	Binary Laser Cannon	LT	12	16	—	5	10	15
1	Improved C^3 CPU	LT	—	[E]	—	—	—	—
2	ER Med Laser*	CT	5	7 [DE]	—	5	10	15
2	ER Flamer	H	4	2 [DE,H,AI]	—	3	5	7

* Clan Tech

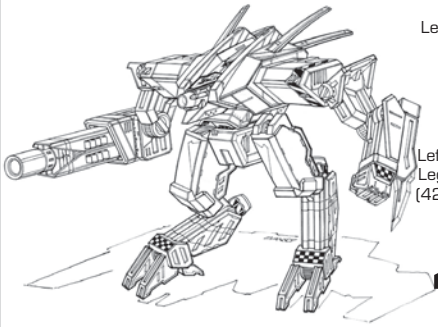
Cost: 21,463,750 C-bills **BV:** 2,218

WARRIOR DATA

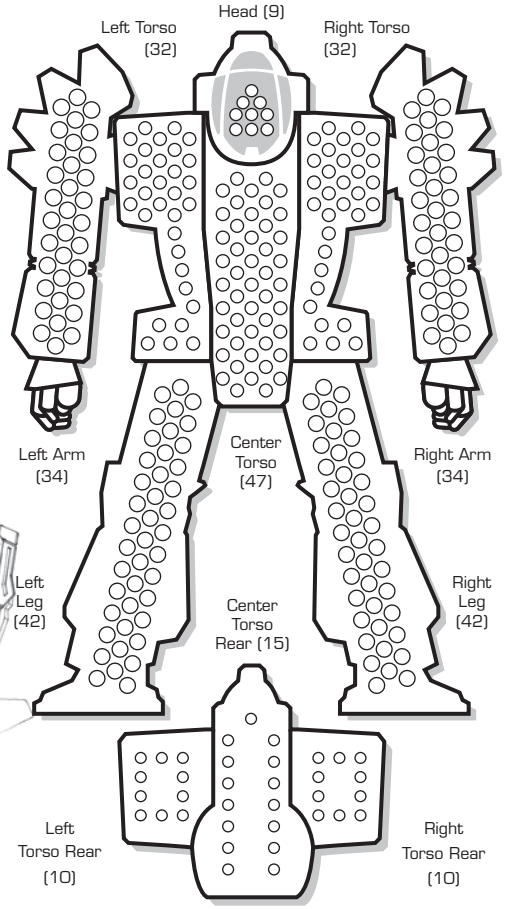
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: ___ **Piloting Skill:** ___

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator

4-6
4. Hand Actuator
5. ER Small Laser
6. ER Small Laser

1-3
1. Double Heat Sink
2. Double Heat Sink
3. Double Heat Sink

4-6
4. Roll Again
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Left Torso

1-3
1. Binary Laser Cannon
2. Binary Laser Cannon
3. Binary Laser Cannon
4. Binary Laser Cannon
5. Double Heat Sink
6. Double Heat Sink

4-6
1. Double Heat Sink
2. Endo Steel
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Left Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Head

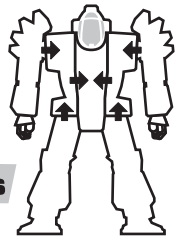
1. Life Support
2. Sensors
3. Small Cockpit
4. Sensors
5. ER Flamer
6. ER Flamer

Center Torso

1-3
1. Compact Fusion Engine
2. Compact Fusion Engine
3. Compact Fusion Engine
4. Compact Gyro
5. Compact Gyro
6. Improved C3 CPU

4-6
1. Improved C3 CPU
2. ER Medium Laser
3. ER Medium Laser
4. Double Heat Sink
5. Double Heat Sink
6. Double Heat Sink

Engine Hits ○ ○ ○
Gyro Hits ○ ○
Sensor Hits ○ ○
Life Support ○



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

1-3
1. Shoulder
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Hand Actuator
5. Thunderbolt 10
6. Thunderbolt 10

4-6
1. Ammo (Thunderbolt) 6
2. Double Heat Sink
3. Double Heat Sink
4. Double Heat Sink
5. Roll Again
6. Roll Again

Right Torso

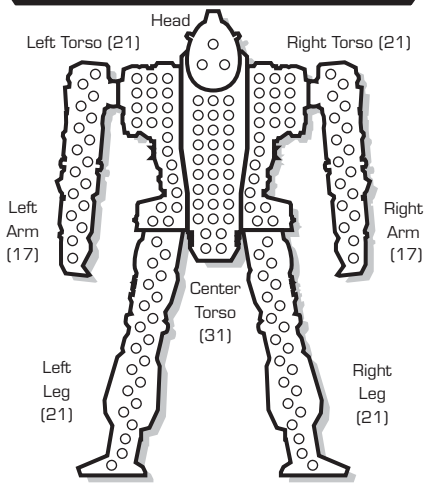
1-3
1. Binary Laser Cannon
2. Binary Laser Cannon
3. Binary Laser Cannon
4. Binary Laser Cannon
5. Double Heat Sink
6. Double Heat Sink

4-6
1. Double Heat Sink
2. Endo Steel
3. Endo Steel
4. Endo Steel
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

Right Leg

1. Hip
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Endo Steel
6. Endo Steel

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



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

HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	
30	Shutdown	
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	○ ○
25	–5 Movement Points	○ ○
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	○ ○
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	○ ○
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	○ ○
20	–4 Movement Points	○ ○
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	○ ○
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	○ ○
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	○
15	–3 Movement Points	○
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	○
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	○
10	–2 Movement Points	
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	
5	–1 Movement Points	

Heat Sinks: 17 (34) Double

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CLASSIC BATTLETECH

SPHEROID DROPSHIP RECORD SHEET

DROPSHIP DATA

Type: DANAIS

Name: _____ **Tonnage:** 3,200

Thrust: **Tech Base:** Inner Sphere 2720

Safe Thrust: 3

Maximum Thrust: 5

Fighters/Small Craft: 0/2 **Launch Rate:** 4/Turn

Weapons & Equipment Inventory

Standard Scale

Bay	Loc	Heat	SRV (1–6)	MRV (6–12)	LRV (13–20)	ERV (21–25)
None						

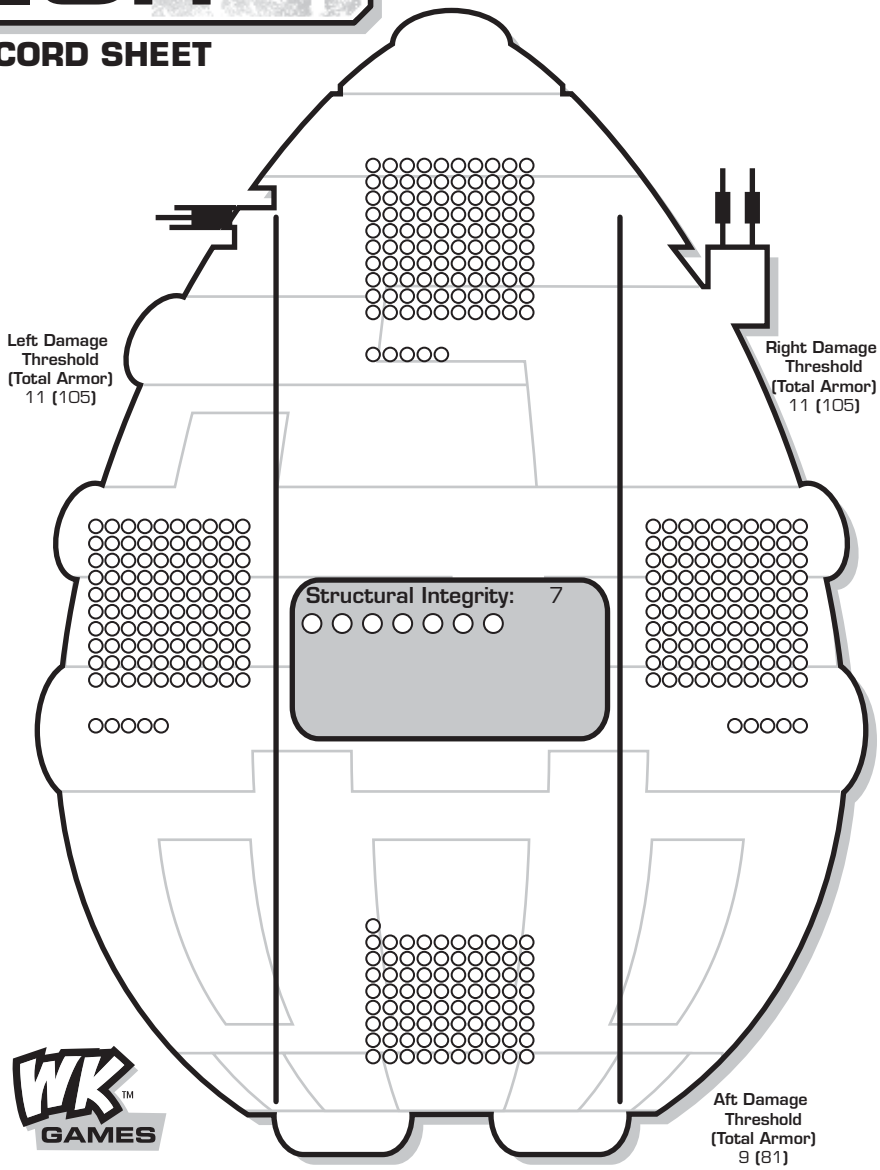
Cargo: Bay 1: Cargo (1,700 Tons, 2 doors)
Bay 2: Small Craft (2) (2 doors)

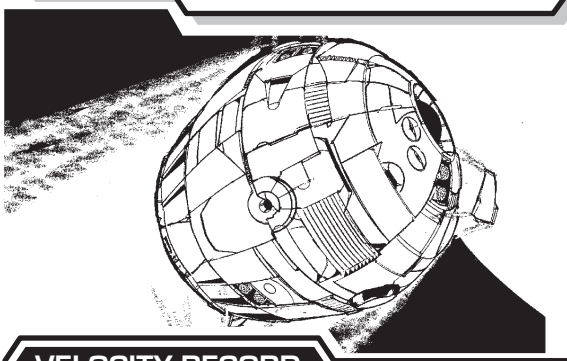
Ammo: None

Cost: 69,412,000 C-bills **BV:** 1,004

ARMOR DIAGRAM

Standard Scale





CREW DATA

Gunnery Skill: ___ **Piloting Skill:** ___

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Modifier	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	Incp.

Crew:	4	Marines:	0
Passengers:	10	Elementals:	0
Other:	10	Battle Armor:	0

Life Boats/Escape Pods: 0 / 4

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

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 Sinks: 31 Single

Heat Generation Per Arc

Nose:	0	Aft:	0
Fore-Left:	0	Aft-Left:	0
Fore-Right:	0	Aft-Right:	0

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CLASSIC BATTLETECH

SPHEROID DROPSHIP RECORD SHEET

DROPSHIP DATA

Type: TROJAN (BLOCKADE RUNNER)

Name: _____ **Tonnage:** 3,200

Thrust: **Tech Base:** Inner Sphere 2720

Safe Thrust: 3

Maximum Thrust: 5

Fighters/Small Craft: 0/2 **Launch Rate:** 4/Turn

Weapons & Equipment Inventory

Standard Scale

Bay	Loc	Heat	SRV (1–6)	MRV (6–12)	LRV (13–20)	ERV (21–25)
2 LRM 20	Nose	12	2(24)	2(24)	2(24)	—
2 Medium Laser	Nose	6	1(10)	—	—	—
2 LRM 20	FL/FR	12	2(24)	2(24)	2(24)	—
1 Large Laser 2 Medium Laser	FL/FR	14	2(18)	1(8)	—	—
2 Medium Laser	AL/AR	6	1(10)	—	—	—
2 Medium Laser	Aft	6	1(10)	—	—	—

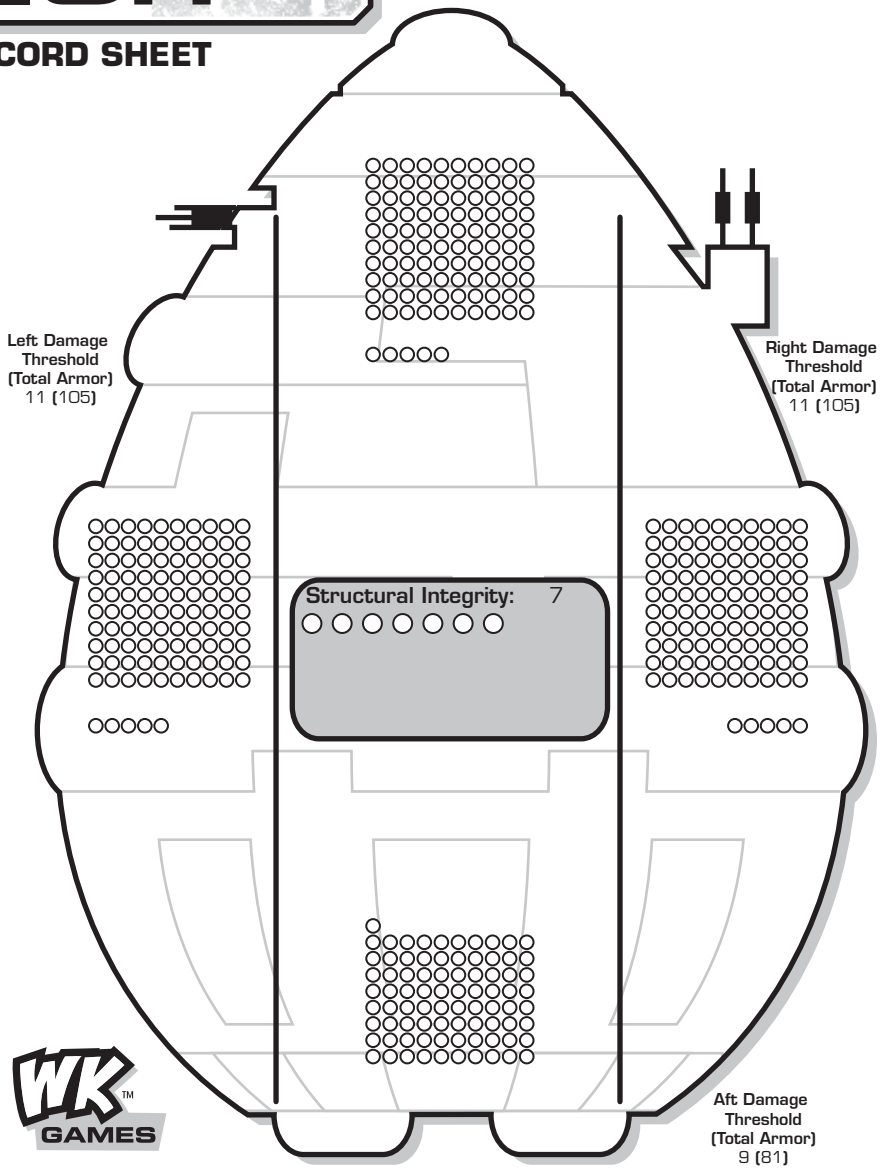
Cargo: Bay 1: Cargo (1,550 Tons, 2 doors)
Bay 2: Small Craft (2) (2 doors)

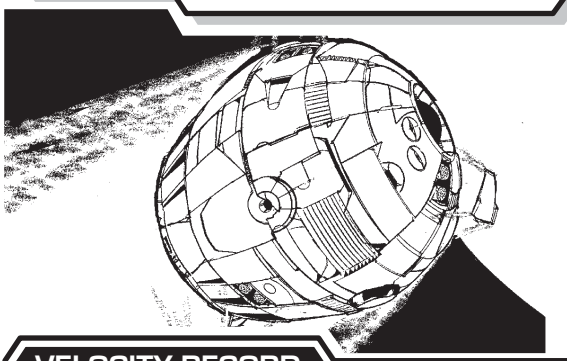
Ammo: LRM 20 (90)

Cost: 150,500,000 C-bills **BV:** 2,667

ARMOR DIAGRAM

Standard Scale





CREW DATA

Gunnery Skill: ___ **Piloting Skill:** ___

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Modifier	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	Incp.

Crew:	8	Marines:	0
Passengers:	6	Elementals:	0
Other:	10	Battle Armor:	0

Life Boats/Escape Pods: 0 / 4

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

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 Sinks: 84 Single

Heat Generation Per Arc

Nose:	18	Aft:	6
Fore-Left:	26	Aft-Left:	6
Fore-Right:	26	Aft-Right:	6

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