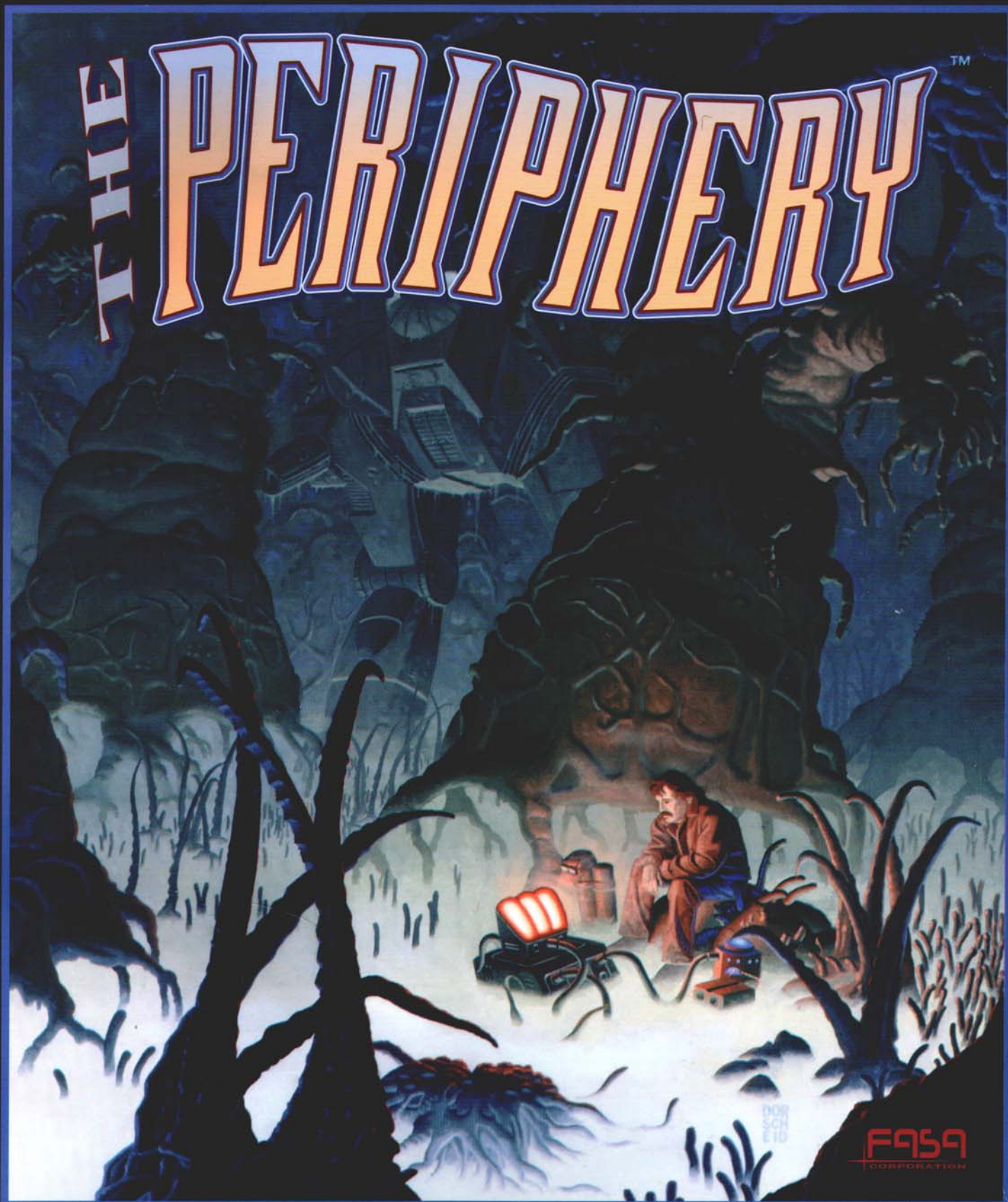


BATTLETECH

THE PERIPHERY™



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COMSTAR CLASSIFIED REPORT SANCTUM LEVEL CLEARANCE TFD-714-LLB

FROM: Precentor Eliza Phereson, Research Team-chi, ComStar Archives
TO: Personnel assigned to Periphery worlds
DATE: 17 January 3059

Our primary goal in compiling this report was to gather information on the current condition of the Periphery states, then analyze that information to draw useful conclusions regarding likely alliances and conflicts and to determine the political ambitions and strengths of the major players. This report is intended to inform all ComStar personnel assigned to the Periphery of the dangers and opportunities that region of space affords, to better prepare all members of the Explorer Corps to fulfill their mission, and to offer all other personnel a comprehensive and up-to-date framework for information gathering and interpretation.

A comprehensive, though abbreviated, history of the development of the Periphery prefaces this report to provide a frame of reference for those unfamiliar with colonized space beyond the Inner Sphere. For each of the major Periphery powers—the Taurian Concordat, Magistracy of Canopus, Outworlds Alliance, Marian Hegemony and Circinus Federation—this report provides a detailed discussion of its origins, its social, political and military structure, and its current situation and goals. Brief descriptions of less prosperous but relatively stable Periphery realms follow. Potentially influential worlds and groups also receive a minor treatment that explains their current roles in the Periphery situation and how those roles might change.

The final section of this report describes territories and planets controlled by the Successor States and offers information about previously undocumented colonies situated in the farthest reaches of known space. Detail maps of each Periphery realm have been attached to the end of this report, as have the technical specifications for various vehicles and BattleMechs unique to the Periphery.

Much has changed beyond the borders of the Inner Sphere since we last focused our attention past our Order's own pressing concerns. The current situation in the Periphery bears careful examination, both for its potential impact on ComStar affairs and the opportunities it provides for our Order.

THE PERIPHERY

Because it remains largely an unknown quantity, the region of space known as the Periphery has served as a rich source of fiction and fantasy for hundreds of years. Because it was virtually ignored by the leaders of the Inner Sphere since the beginning of the Succession Wars, the average citizen's sum total knowledge of the Periphery consists of the tiny trickle of information brought to the Inner Sphere by traders and soldiers.

The prejudice directed at the people of the Periphery has been a major source of tension between those realms and the Successor States for many, many years. The most widely accepted view of the Periphery characterizes the inhabitants of that part of known space as a collection of pirates, bandits and religious extremists. Though the Periphery certainly harbors many such people, the population of that area is widely diverse. To take such a narrow view does a disservice to the majority of hard-working, decent people who went to the Periphery simply for the opportunities it offered for adventure, exploration and the chance to be a part of something new.

Long isolated by war and hardship, the Periphery states fought an uphill battle to gain economic stability and establish a technological level capable of competing with the Inner Sphere—and defending against incursions by the Successor States and other Periphery realms. The Magistracy of Canopus and the Taurian Concordat currently seem very close to reaching technological parity with the Inner Sphere, and other realms also appear to be taking firmer steps toward finding permanent solutions to their economic and military problems.

The most dramatic development in the Periphery, however, is the current wave of exploration swelling out from the Inner Sphere. Tired of centuries of warfare, and in some cases hoping to escape a future dictated by the Clans, privately funded groups are traveling to the Periphery in record numbers and settling on barely explored and even uncharted worlds. Though wary of the predations of bandits (which have also increased sharply since the beginning of the decade), these adventurers seek the same opportunities the first settlers pursued: the freedom to make a new life for themselves by hard work, determination and a lot of luck.

IN THE BEGINNING

The area of space surrounding Terra that came to be known as the Periphery was settled at the same time as the planets of the Inner Sphere, for some explorers simply went deeper into space than others when they jumped away from the cradle of humankind. Although the Terran Alliance succeeded in both supporting and administering all the new colonies for a number of years, the rapid growth in the number of settled worlds eventually outstripped the government's ability to control the colonists. As the level of home rule neared total autonomy, it was only a matter of time before the colonists broke off relations with the Terran government.

The most dramatic declaration of independence took place in 2235 and resulted in the Outer Reaches Rebellion. Much to its surprise, the Terran Alliance had neither the military might or the political support necessary to defeat the distant colonists, and its failure prompted a political change. The new controlling party thought to punish the rebellious colonies by declaring all

FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

The part of space known as the Periphery can be defined in two ways: according to specific cultural and technological parameters, and by physical distance from Terra. If defined by the first method, it quickly becomes apparent that many planets currently considered to be part of the Periphery enjoy a higher level of technology and a more complex cultural structure than dozens of worlds belonging to the Successor States. The second method of definition classifies any world more than 500 light years from Terra as part of the Periphery. While this provides a more satisfactory result, this parameter places nearly one-fourth of the Federated Commonwealth in the Periphery and includes parts of the Magistracy of Canopus, the Taurian Concordat, the Circinus Confederation and several other Periphery worlds in the Inner Sphere.

Current scientific credo offers a very specific breakdown of known space into marking rings of 250 light years each, beginning at Terra. The first 250-light-year radius circle, known as the Core, is comprised entirely of Inner Sphere worlds. Some of the most densely populated planets in the Inner Sphere, these worlds have supported human life since man's earliest days of space exploration. The second 250-light-year increment, known as the Inner Circle, encompasses most of the remaining Inner Sphere and parts of the known Periphery. Also highly populated, this region includes the capital worlds of all the major Inner Sphere Houses with the exception of Sian, the capital of the Capellan Confederation. Nearly one-fourth of the former Federated Suns and a small slice of worlds from both the Draconis Combine and former Lyran Commonwealth extend past this boundary. The first two rings mark the Inner Sphere as approximately 1,000 light years from end to end.

The third ring is known as the Outer Rim. This area contains several known Periphery realms, but the remaining space remains mostly unexplored. The Explorer Corps is currently concentrating its efforts in this area and has found several small nations and many settled worlds that appear to have little knowledge of and less interest in the affairs of the Inner Sphere. Beyond the Outer Rim lies what the Explorer Corps has designated the Great Expanse—where we believe the Clan homeworlds lie, if not beyond.

—From a lecture on the Periphery by Professor Roland Hutchinson, Nagelring Academy, 3058

settlements beyond thirty light-years from Terra independent, but it only succeeded in creating greater political upheaval and disrupting the Terran economy.

Only the strongest colonies survived this forced self-sufficiency. Those communities living on marginally habitable worlds relied heavily on the technological and economic assistance of the Alliance to supplement the meager existence of their frontier lives. Many of these groups abandoned their established settlements and traveled deeper into the unexplored reaches, seeking more hospitable worlds to colonize. Known as the second Exodus, this renewed movement away from Terra strengthened the pride in self-reliance and love of freedom felt by the surviving colonists, and the realms established during this period were founded on the belief that they would make it on their own or not at all.

After a century of wars fought throughout known space to control the most resource-rich planets, the creation of the Star League in 2571 brought peace to what was by that time called the Inner Sphere. The member states of the League no longer needed their highly trained armies to war against one another, and First Lord Ian Cameron wisely chose a target for those troops to subdue—the fiercely independent Periphery realms. These nations failed to see the advantages of Star League membership as presented by the League's diplomats, and Cameron quickly decided to enlighten the Periphery realms by force of arms.

It took the Star League twenty bloody years to beat the Periphery states into submission, and though they bowed, they never broke. Having exhausted their people and their resources battling the Star League and still forced to accept that body's administration, the Outworlds Alliance, the Taurian Concordat, the Magistracy of Canopus and the Rim Worlds Republic—referred to as the Periphery Territorial States—chose to take advantage of their reluctant membership to revitalize their nations. Willing to offer lip service to the League's ideals in exchange for technology, trade relations and industrial growth, the Periphery realms prospered under its rule.

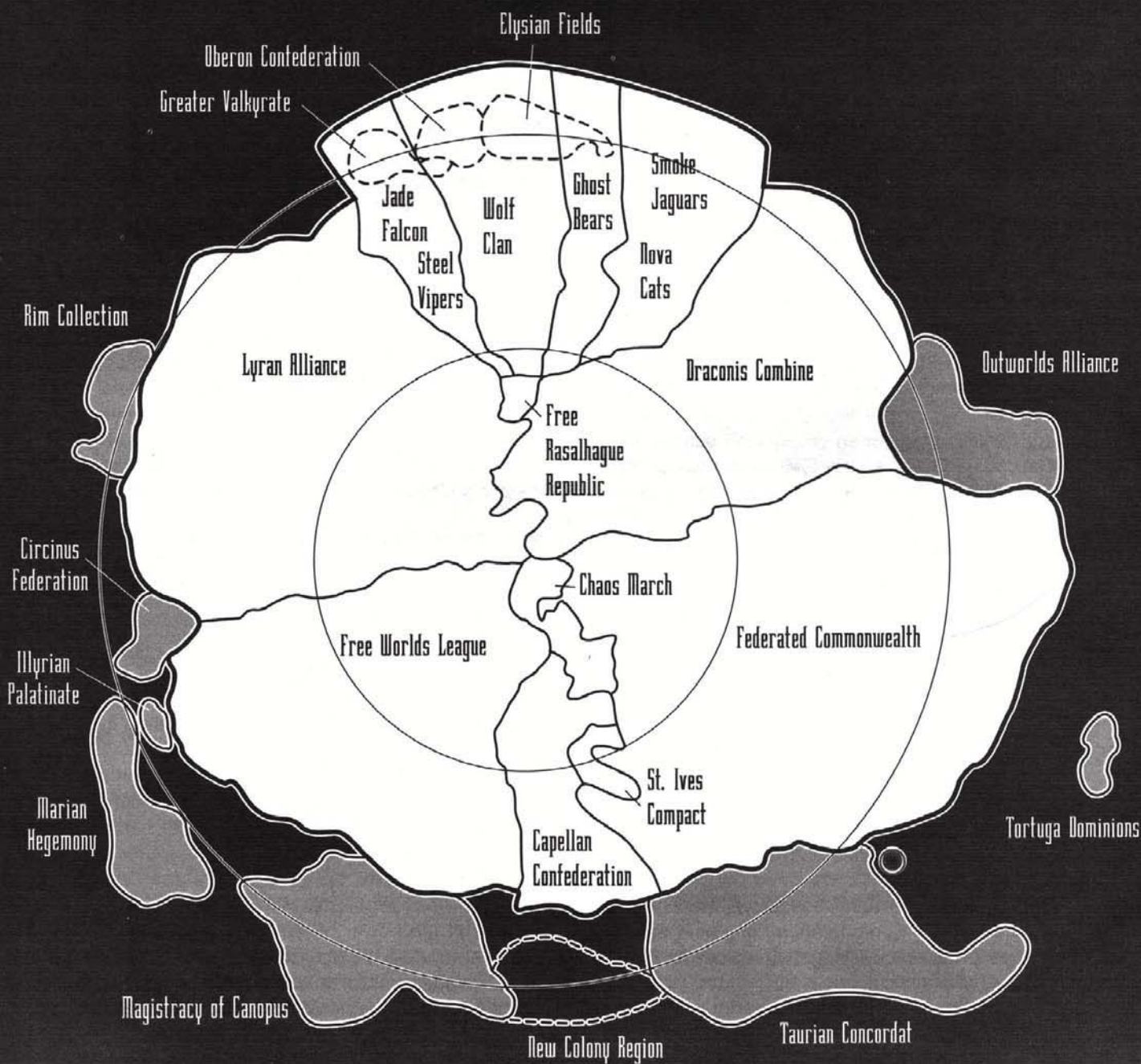
A SUBTLER WAR

In the 2750s, during the Regency for Richard Cameron II, the Star League High Council passed an edict levying disproportionately heavy taxes on the Periphery states, funneling the extra revenue to the Inner Sphere states. The leaders of the Territorial States saw this as the beginning of the end—even as they protested against this action, they feared the worst was yet to come. And they were right. In the year after First Lord Cameron reached his majority and took his place on the throne of the Star League, he issued the Taxation Edict of 2763, which further strained the Periphery's finances. When the Periphery states refused to honor the edict, Richard Cameron sent the Star League Defense Force, under the command of General Aleksandr Kerensky, to teach them the folly of disobeying him.

The Usurper Stefan Amaris murdered First Lord Cameron and every man, woman and child whose veins carried a drop of Cameron blood in 2766, shortly thereafter proclaiming himself to be First Lord of the Star League. As soon as he heard of Amaris's treachery, General Kerensky declared a cease-fire with all the Periphery states except the Rim Worlds Republic (Amaris's realm) and began fighting his way back toward Terra. He reached Terra and ordered Amaris killed in 2779. Almost from that moment the Star League was doomed, as the members of the High Council vied to become the new First Lord. Sick at heart to see the finest thing mankind had ever done destroyed by five individuals' pride, General Kerensky gathered together those members of the SLDF who believed as he did and left the Inner Sphere.

When they saw the House Lords building up their militaries and increasing their factories' output of war materiel, the Periphery states quickly cut all diplomatic ties with the Successor States and began preparing for the inevitable conflict. Though the Periphery realms managed to stay aloof from the Succession Wars, the loss of the economic stability provided by the Star League, the widespread destruction of

THE PERIPHERY



MAP OF THE INNER SPHERE AND NEARBY KINGDOMS IN THE PERIPHERY

16 Parsecs
80 PARSECS OR 260.8 LIGHT YEARS
Map Compiled by COMSTAR
From information provided by the COMSTAR EXPLORER CORPS
and the STAR LEAGUE ARCHIVES on Terra.
© 3058 COMSTAR CARTOGRAPHIC CORPS.

THE PERIPHERY

factories and communication facilities, and the disruption of interstellar travel and trade pushed the Periphery worlds into a downhill slide from which they have yet to fully recover.

The Succession Wars also exacerbated one of the aspects of the Periphery for which it is most infamous. As the years of conflict raged back and forth along the frontier, many 'Mech units, composed of the fragments of larger units defeated in combat or disgruntled mercenary units, fled to the Periphery and declared themselves kings of worlds they took by force. Scattered all around the fringes of the Inner Sphere, these so-called Bandit Kings eventually returned to the Successor States to raid those worlds for profit and survival.

A RIPPLE IN THE TIDE

The end of the Fourth Succession War marked a few small but significant events in the Periphery. Assuming that House Davion had so weakened the Capellan Confederation that it would be vulnerable to attack from an unexpected quarter, the Magistracy of Canopus encouraged the always-fractious Duchy of Andurien to finally secede from the Free Worlds League, convinced that together they could defeat the Successor State. Unhappy with the League practically since its inception, the Duchy accepted the Magistracy's invitation to war, announcing its secession and new alliance simultaneously. Though the initial stages of the invasion went well for the Andurien-Canopus alliance, the Confederation troops refused to admit defeat.

The Magistracy of Canopus and the Duchy of Andurien remained allies for the five years they fought to annex the Capellan worlds, but when the Free Worlds League launched its campaign to bring Andurien back into the fold, the Magistracy declined to assist its ally in remaining free from House Marik. Along with the stabilization and emergence of other realms, this breakup again changed the face of the Periphery. The Magistracy, the Taurian Concordat and the Outworlds Alliance gained strength and recognized the Marian Hegemony and the Circinus Federation as nascent realms. The Belt Pirates and the Oberon Confederation, long-time bandit kingdoms, took steps toward establishing their nations as legitimate members of the Periphery states.

THE CLANS

This period of relative prosperity ended when the Clans invaded. The descendants of Kerensky's Star League troops staged a violent return to the Inner Sphere, marching through the Periphery and crushing everything in their path. Though their corridor of destruction touched only the bandit kingdoms and the fledgling Oberon Confederation, all the Periphery states suffered once again from the widespread disruption of commerce, communication and transportation.

CURRENT SITUATION

Though many things about the Periphery have changed, the constant, damaging presence of pirates has not. Largely

responsible for the weak condition of the Outworlds Alliance and an ever-present threat to the other Periphery states and to outlying Successor State worlds, the bandit kings' influence has not diminished over the centuries.

Even the Clan invasion and the Truce of Tukayyid have not changed substantially the pattern of pirate activity in the Periphery: whenever the Successor States engage in a major conflict, the Periphery bandits target Inner Sphere worlds for their raids, anticipating greater returns for their efforts on those richer planets. When the Inner Sphere is at relative peace, the bandits revert to picking on the more poorly defended worlds of the Periphery rather than face the superior House troops invariably reassigned to the far-flung parts of the Successor States. As a result of the overwhelming might of the Clan invaders, mercenary units sent to the front lines fled to the Periphery rather than face certain death in combat. This new flood of renegade troops rejuvenated the existing bandit kingdoms, created new pirate bands, and increased the number of men and women forced to survive by raiding other planets. Of all the problems the Periphery states must solve to survive, how to neutralize the Periphery pirates remains the most pressing issue.

STATUS OF THE STATES

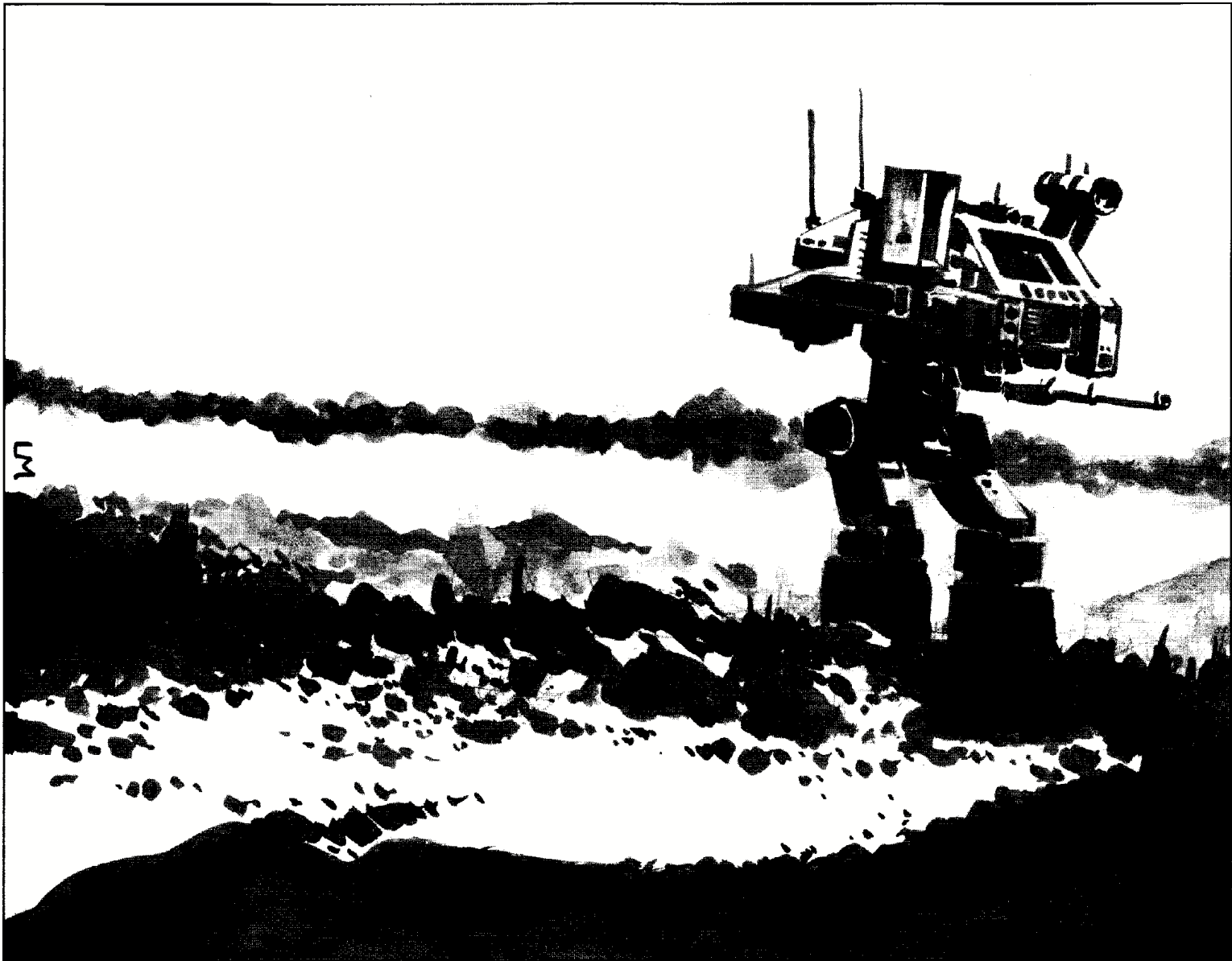
A change in leadership, the negotiation of mutual-aid agreements, and increased willingness to deal with the Successor States have launched the Taurian Concordat, the Magistracy of Canopus and the Outworlds Alliance into an upswing of prosperity. After many years of walking the wire between survival and disintegration, the three longest-established Periphery states now seem firmly set on the road to success.

Newly elected President Jeffrey Calderon of the Taurian Concordat repealed many of his father's most extreme measures and negotiated an alliance between his realm and the Magistracy of Canopus that promises to bolster the economy of both nations and increase the size of the Concordat through new colonization. Magestrix Emma Centrella, a long-time believer in the power of diplomacy, has established friendly relations between the Magistracy of Canopus and nearly every other Periphery realm in her effort to create a Periphery-wide alliance to defend against the Clans and the always-present danger of Inner Sphere invasion. In the process, she has recaptured the economic power of the Magistracy's glory days.

The realm slowest to recover from lackluster leadership, the Outworlds Alliance continues to struggle to regain a viable economic base. President Mitchell Avellar's innovative business initiatives with the Federated Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine promise to dramatically reduce unemployment and increase income to the state, and current negotiations with the Taurian Concordat may substantially improve the performance of the Alliance military.

Of all the fledgling kingdoms attempting to gain legitimacy with the other Periphery states and with the nations of the Inner Sphere, the Marian Hegemony and the Circinus Federation seem closest to reaching their goal. Though small, a stable

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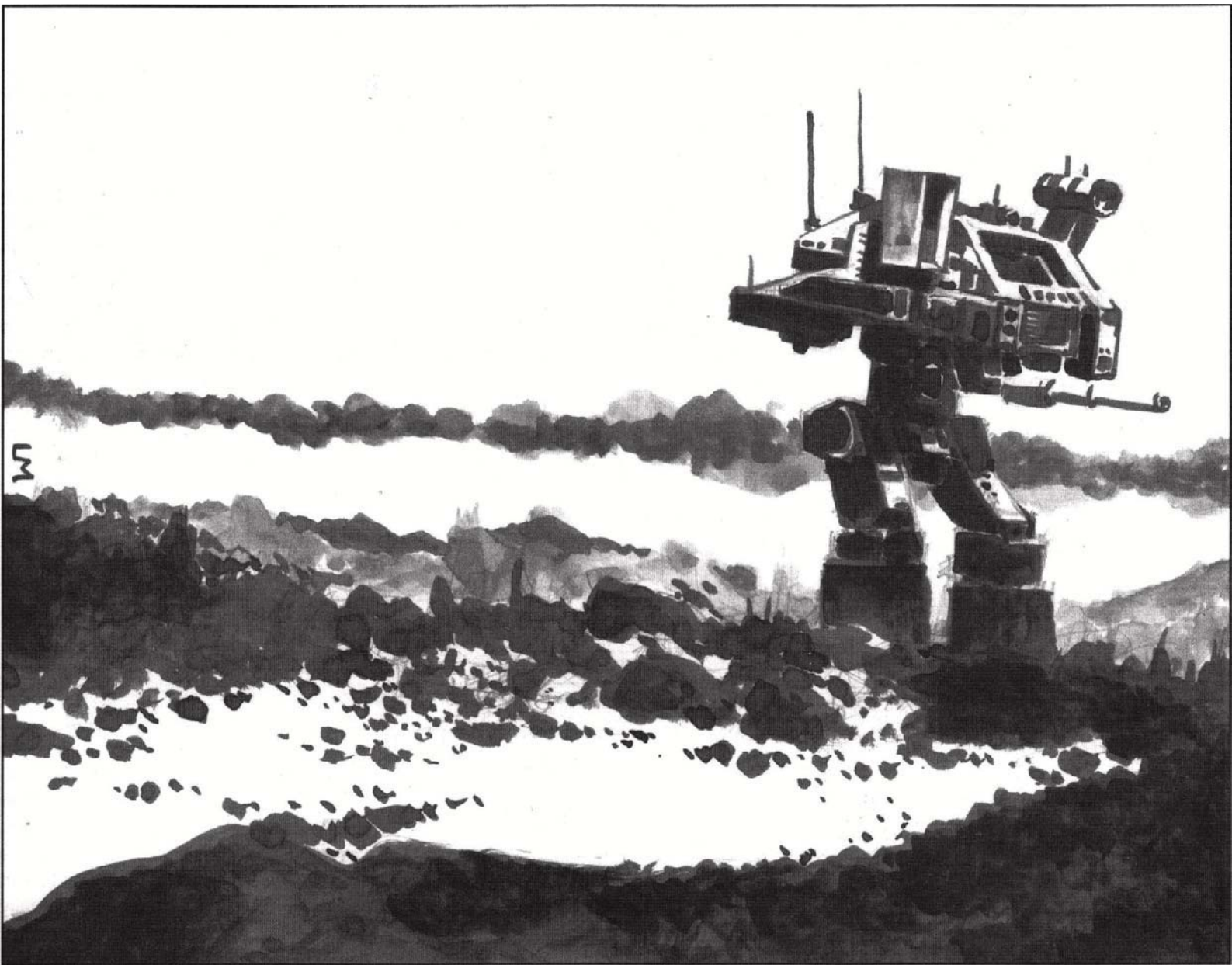
economy and continuity of leadership have allowed these realms to establish relations of a sort with the surrounding territories, though most of their efforts still are directed at maintaining control over their citizens and protecting their nations against the incursions of other pirates.

EXPLORER CORPS

Founded in 2960 by Primus Adrienne Sims, the Explorer Corps is the division of ComStar responsible for expanding our knowledge by charting far-distant Periphery worlds. Even before the Clans attacked the Inner Sphere, it was a long-term goal of the Explorer Corps to learn the fate of Kerensky's Exodus and to ensure that any survivors who returned to the Inner Sphere made their first contact through ComStar. It is a stunning irony that it was an Explorer Corps vessel, the *Outbound Light*, that eventually led the Clans to invade the Inner Sphere.

The first ships of the Explorer Corps began to make their way through the vast Periphery in 2961. Though they did not find the trail of the Kerensky fleet, they did locate a number of isolated and forgotten colonies, some of which are described in the following pages. In addition, our Explorer Corps vessels kept us up-to-date on the evolution of the known Periphery states, and they continue to perform this task to the present day.

In the years following the Clan invasion and the battle of Tukayyid, funding was understandably shifted away from the Explorer Corps to more pressing needs. However, Explorer Corps operations continued virtually uninterrupted after that time thanks to generous funding from several benefactors, most notably Draconis Combine Coordinator Theodore Kurita. In exchange for this support, it is now the primary mission of the Explorer Corps to locate the homeworlds of the Clans to aid the Inner Sphere's war effort.



THE TAURIAN CONCORDAT

Despite the brief period of turmoil through which it has recently passed, the Taurian Concordat remains among the Periphery's most stable nations in 3058. Untouched by the Clan War, the Concordat has recently allied with the Magistracy of Canopus, another of the larger and more stable Periphery states. This alliance, which many would have deemed unlikely a generation ago, stands to make the Taurian Concordat one of the Periphery's leading players in the coming years.

The Concordat of 3058 stands at the dawn of a new era. Its military is one of the best-trained in the Periphery and it enjoys a healthy economy. Colonial expansion has nearly doubled the realm's size since 3030, and the Taurian Defense Force is slowly catching up with the growth of its realm's territory. Protector Jeffrey Calderon has also hired reputable mercenary units to help safeguard outlying planets, and authorized the creation of the Colonial Marshals to act as protectors and law enforcers on jointly administered Taurian-Canopian colonies. Many of the new colonies are rich in natural resources, which has pumped new blood into Taurian industry. Generous tax breaks given to colonists with large families have prompted a flood of takers, not only from the Concordat and its new Canopian allies, but from other Periphery realms and even from the Successor States.

BEGINNINGS

Founded in 2253, the Taurian Concordat was an attempt to develop a free, egalitarian state far from the high-handed imperialism of the Terran Alliance, and it retains much of its democratic character to this day. Its founder, prominent businesswoman Samantha Calderon, converted her personal fortune into a fleet of faster-than-light ships and struck off for parts unknown, accompanied by 2,300 followers who, like her, had lost loved ones and livelihoods at Terran Alliance hands during the Outer Reaches Rebellion. After nearly two years of travel, the Calderon expedition reached the Hyades Cluster, an as-yet unexplored region of space obscured by a dense cloud of gas and dust. The vast asteroid field within this nebula cost Calderon's fleet several ships—but beyond the asteroid belt were eight star systems with several planets apiece fit for human habitation. Samantha Calderon's expedition made planefall on the world they christened Taurus, which would eventually become the capital of the Taurian Concordat.

The habitable worlds within the nebula proved rich in resources and fertile soil, enabling the colonists to build a thriving society far from the prying eyes of Alliance bureaucrats, Marik pirates, and other remnants of the Inner Sphere from which they had fled. Within a century, the people of the Taurian worlds expanded their holdings beyond the nebula, colonizing several mineral-rich worlds. The vast resources of these planets added to the state's prosperity, as did periodic influxes of

refugees from the Inner Sphere's political upheavals. From the early twenty-fourth century until the Reunification War, the Taurian Concordat continued to expand and prosper through colonization.

Expansion brought the Concordat into conflict with the realms of the Inner Sphere, most notably the Federated Suns. That nation, itself eager to expand to new territory, saw the Taurian planets on its border as ripe for the picking, and it took several losing border conflicts with the Taurians to convince Davion forces otherwise. To safeguard itself against this increasingly powerful enemy, throughout the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth centuries the Concordat made occasional common cause with one of the Federated Suns' bitterest rivals, the Capellan Confederation; however, most Taurian leaders found the lords of House Liao no more trustworthy than the Davions, and so confined themselves to temporary alliances of convenience. When Houses Liao and Davion brought their nations into the Star League, their presence as member-states gave the Taurians ample excuse to distrust the League's growing power. When asked to join, they declined, setting the stage for the brutal conflict known as the Reunification War.

STAR LEAGUE AND SUCCESSION WARS

During the Reunification War, the Taurian Concordat fought one of the Periphery's bloodiest battles against absorption by the Star League. Many in the Concordat saw the Star League as the hated Terran Alliance dressed up in new clothes, and had no desire to be ruled by any authority of which the Alliance or the Federated Suns was a part. The Taurians fought fiercely against the Star League for eighteen years, eventually succumbing to the League's superior war machine. Though First Lord Ian Cameron and his successors included the Concordat in their Periphery-wide program of economic redevelopment throughout the Star League era, increasingly harsh taxation and other oppressive policies did little to endear them to Taurian citizens. Successive Calderon leaders put the good of the Concordat well ahead of support for the Star League, forging closer ties to the neighboring Magistracy of Canopus in an effort to resist Star League authority. When violent tax protests erupted on the Taurian world of New Vandenberg in 2765, that rebellion helped set off the Amaris Civil War that led to the Star League's destruction.

The Concordat remained neutral throughout the subsequent three centuries of the Succession Wars, resisting the temptation to ally with the enemies of the Federated Suns for fear of being swallowed up in conflicts that had little to do with their realm's legitimate interests. The only attempt the Taurians made to capitalize on the Inner Sphere's disarray came in the early twenty-ninth century, when the First Succession War had turned the eyes of the Successor States away from the

THE TAURIAN CONCORDAT



THE TAURIAN CONCORDAT

DAMNED IF YOU DO . . .

We knew where they were. According to our latest data, it was 95 percent certain that the pirates who'd hit Althea's Choice were hiding out on the edge of the Pirate's Haven star cluster. I had the first battalion of the Taurian Lancers ready to go the second we got authorization—we all wanted the pirates' blood so badly, we could almost taste it. When the ComStar acolyte came in that morning with a message from the Protector, I felt like cheering; I was sure it was the go-ahead for our search-and-destroy mission.

Then I read the message, and it was all I could do to keep from breaking something. The Protector had ordered my unit to sit tight and prepare to defend Althea's Choice against a rumored Davion attack. If we ignored the orders and went ahead with the mission, we would be considered renegades and banished from Concordat space. This, in spite of the fact that on our last scouting run we'd seen nothing remotely resembling an attack force anywhere along the FedCom border—and we'd told the higher-ups so in no uncertain terms. There was no reason for us to stay put, no reason to let the pirates walk away, except for our Fearless Leader's fixation on the Evil Davion Bogeyman.

We just loved our Protector Thomas Calderon after that.

—From an interview with Subaltern Sergio McDaniel, commander of the First Taurian Lancers, from *Facing the Renegades*, Lothair Broadcasting, 3033

been one of Thomas' most trusted advisors in addition to ruling several Taurian worlds. Many in the Concordat mourned Edward's death, for he was widely regarded as a fair-minded man who would have ruled the Concordat well. More than a few Taurian businessmen had particular cause to regret Edward's passing, which deprived them of a chance to open trade relations with the Federated Commonwealth. Edward, lacking his father's overriding fear of the powerful Successor State, had been cautiously willing to deal with them as a potentially lucrative market for Taurian goods. With him gone, that chance seemed dead.

Thomas's eldest daughter Janice assumed Edward's position in name, but her youth prevented her from fully taking on the heir's responsibilities. Only fourteen at the time of her brother's death, Janice nonetheless did her best to shoulder the burdens that had so unexpectedly fallen to her. In June of 3034 she embarked on a tour of the Concordat, charming the people with her vitality, beauty, and sober acceptance of her new position. Janice's popularity helped temper growing disenchantment with Thomas Calderon by giving the disaffected some hope that things would change for the better upon Janice's succession.

Meanwhile, the Far Lookers turned Edward Calderon's unexpected demise to their own ends. Taking advantage of Thomas's distraction and the temporary administrative confusion, Far Looker sympathizers in the Ministry of Trade and Colonization drafted a bill that apparently authorized the creation of a "trust fund" for research and development of better aerospace technology, for the exclusive use of the TDF. In fact, the trust fund was under the control of Loren MacKenzie, a junior Auditor assigned to the Ministry of Trade.

Periphery. Seymon Calderon saw a chance to take several worlds whose possession had been disputed by the Magistracy of Canopus, and in the absence of Star League authority he sent Taurian forces to capture the contested planets. The Magistracy fought back, and when the dust settled the Concordat had gained nothing. Successive Taurian rulers learned from this experience, and throughout the rest of the Succession Wars kept the bulk of their armies ready to repel possible attack by the Federated Suns. They had no intention of allowing their old enemy—or anyone else—to use the Concordat as a pawn in the Inner Sphere's deadly power games. Continuing border disputes with the Magistracy were resolved by diplomatic means, and relations between the two powers gradually improved. As in the Age of War before the Star League, the Concordat continued to welcome streams of refugees from the Inner Sphere's political upheavals.

Rather than conquering territory, the Concordat continued cautious expansion of its holdings through its favored method, colonization. Colonization efforts received a considerable boost at the turn of the thirty-first century with the rise of the Far Lookers, a philosophical sect devoted to exploration beyond the boundaries of known space. Hefty tax breaks from Protector Zarantha Calderon, as well as increasing sympathy for their views from government officials, enabled the Far Lookers to finance the founding of several colonies between 2990 and 3020. Protector Thomas Calderon, who succeeded Zarantha in 3017, rescinded most of the tax breaks at the outset of the Fourth Succession War, citing the need for sharply increased military funding in case of a Davion invasion. The Far Lookers and their sympathizers initially accepted Thomas's rationale, expecting to regain their privileges once the war ended.

The outcome of the Fourth Succession War, however, did little to soothe the Protector's fear of the Davion enemy. The union of the Federated Suns with the Lyran Commonwealth into a single, vast super-state, plus the conquest of nearly half the Capellan Confederation, tipped Thomas Calderon's fear of the Federated Suns into outright paranoia. Convinced that the Davions intended to invade the Concordat, Thomas kept the Taurian Defense Force in a state of alert and continued to pour money into military coffers. Considerable funding went toward upgrading the TDF's aerospace arm, much of it to pay advisory pilots brought in from the Outworlds Alliance. Though the Taurian people at first backed these policies, as the years went by with no sign of a Davion invasion, they began to resent the tax money paid to "foreign so-called experts." Increasing pirate raids on Taurian border worlds added to the problem, as Thomas barred the TDF from pursuing the pirates beyond Concordat borders. The Protector also refused to sanction expeditions to find the raiders, again citing the risk of a Federated Commonwealth invasion.

TROUBLE BREWING

The 3030s and 3040s brought increasing trouble to the Protector and the realm, beginning with the death of Edward Calderon in a DropShip accident in March of 3034. The loss of his eldest son and heir hurt Thomas politically as well as personally, as Edward had

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MacKenzie and several associates within the Ministry, all of them adherents of the Far Lookers, channeled large amounts of government funds to renewed (and ostensibly private) colonization efforts. By the end of 3035, Taurian colonists had settled seven new worlds; between 3035 and 3037, the Far Lookers had added sixteen new planets to the Concordat. The storm broke in late 3037, when Thomas discovered the embezzlement. Enraged, Thomas ordered every member of the Ministry of Trade and Colonization arrested and their assets confiscated. To the protests of those who insisted they had not been a party to the scheme, Thomas replied that they must have known of it, and had betrayed both him and the Concordat by failing to speak out. Only the timely intervention of Katherine Calderon, Thomas's wife, convinced the Protector to release the ministers and restore the assets of those whose guilt could not be proven. The damage, however, had been done; for the first time, members of the Concordat government began to wonder about their ruler's mental stability.

NEW MISFORTUNE

In 3038, while visiting the world of Brisbane, Janice Calderon contracted the Brisbane Virus. This incurable, degenerative nerve disease slowly but surely robbed the young woman of her physical strength and coordination; within two years of infection, she was confined to a wheelchair and could barely sit up by herself. Intensive physical therapy gave her limited use of her arms and hands, but she no longer had the strength to function as the Concordat's ruler. The next heir in line, Ian Calderon, left the Concordat in 3042 to join the Green Mountain Boys, a mercenary MechWarrior unit. The position of heir-apparent then fell to Felix Calderon, a quiet young man who shunned the public spotlight. As the fourth of five children, Felix had never expected to assume the rulership of the Concordat, and had devoted most of his life to the study of science and navigation. He loved exploration, and dreamed of leading an exploratory mission into uncharted space. Despite his distaste for governing, Felix bowed to his father's wishes and attempted to fill his elder siblings' shoes. However, he found it impossible to give up what Thomas termed his "foolish schoolboy notions" of exploring deep space. In 3046, on a star mapping mission near the farthest reaches of the Concordat, Felix's JumpShip disappeared. Speculation ran rampant that Felix had left the Concordat to escape his duties, for which he was singularly ill-suited.

Only one of Thomas's children now remained to succeed him—his youngest son Jeffrey, twenty years old and little known to the people of the Concordat. In this climate of uncertainty, growing opposition to Thomas's policies split in two directions. Some pinned their hopes on Jeffrey; others cautiously began to search for some alternative.

BORDER CRISIS

Late in 3047, a freighter registered to the Federated Commonwealth misjumped into the Landmark system. Jittery TDF aerospace pilots, fearing that the freighter might be on a spying mission, destroyed it. When their report of the incident

reached Thomas Calderon, he placed the military on alert and began preparations to hold off the full-scale Federated Commonwealth invasion that he was sure would follow. A few months later, the mercenary unit Dedrickson's Devils went rogue over a pay dispute with the Federated Commonwealth and jumped into the Pinard system in Concordat space. The Pinard government, suspecting some Federated Commonwealth skullduggery, refused the unit permission to land and resupply. The Devils' commander, a short-tempered man at the best of times, responded by raiding Pinard's capital and then fleeing deeper into the Periphery. This incident convinced Thomas that invasion was imminent. He authorized numerous reconnaissance missions, many of which resulted in skirmishes between the TDF and the AFFC. Small-scale battles continued to erupt intermittently throughout 3048, but the "invasion" never materialized.

In 3049, the AFFC launched the military exercises known as "Victor '49" in Davion space near the Concordat border. Believing that the FedCom invasion was finally at hand, Thomas dragooned large numbers of Concordat civilians into constructing planetary defenses against the AFFC's Regimental Combat Teams. Widespread opposition to this action intensified in the opening months of 3050, when rumors of an invasion on the other side of the Inner Sphere began filtering into the Concordat. The abrupt departure of the Victor '49 units gave credence to the rumors, and made a mockery of Thomas's insistence that disaster lay just around the corner.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Clan invasion did nothing to alter Thomas's conviction that the Federated Commonwealth intended to attack his realm. The Protector dismissed Taurian intelligence reports of under-defended Davion border worlds as a ruse intended to make the Concordat let down its guard. As the months passed, Thomas became convinced that the rumors of the Clans were an elaborate trick devised by Hanse Davion. He expounded on this theory to anyone who would listen, including the Capellan ambassador to the Concordat. Hoping to persuade Thomas into an eventual alliance with the Capellan Confederation against the Federated Commonwealth, Chancellor Romano Liao and her son Sun-Tzu sent him frequent messages allegedly proving that the Clan invasion was a plot to fool the Concordat.

Beginning in 3051, opposition to the Protector's policies found its most eloquent voice in Marshal Hadji Doru, commander of the Taurian Guard. A brilliant speaker, Marshal Doru revealed Thomas's policies for the madness they were, and prompted widespread doubt among many who had once been the Protector's staunch supporters. Factions in Taurian society who had long since opposed the Protector looked to Marshal Doru as a potential savior; they believed he would soon take concrete action to stop Thomas, and assumed he would also willingly replace Jeffrey Calderon should the heir-apparent prove to be a chip off the old block. Throughout the early 3050s Marshal Doru gained his greatest support among the Taurian Defense Force, many of whom had grown tired of the constant vigilance against

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a war that never came. Thomas, completely paranoid by this time, refused to answer the marshal's accusations; the only thing preventing him from clapping Doru in prison for treason was his inability to decide whom to trust with the task. Katherine and Janice Calderon pleaded for calm, but their words fell on deaf ears. Meanwhile, Jeffrey Calderon stayed out of the dispute and quietly pursued his own agenda for the Concordat.

SHADOW DEALS

Throughout 3053 and 3054, Jeffrey Calderon engaged in secret negotiations with Emma Centrella, the Magesrix of Canopus. Knowing that it was only a matter of time before intense political opposition forced his father from power, Jeffrey was determined to lay the groundwork for the Concordat's future prosperity. He believed the Concordat's interests could best be served by a formal alliance with the Magistracy of Canopus, which he hoped would counteract the insidious power plays of the Capellan Confederation. Unlike Thomas, Jeffrey saw Capellan interference rather than Federated Commonwealth military power as the greatest threat to the Concordat's freedom. Emma Centrella welcomed the prospect of alliance with another large and relatively stable state, for she saw the advantage of creating a united front large enough to dissuade foreign invasion and understood the potential for economic improvements.

THE FINAL STRAW

In early 3055, members of the Ministry of Trade and Colonization stormed a meeting of the Protector's advisory Privy Council. They demanded that the Protector end civilian conscription for planetary-defense construction; order the Taurian Defense Force to stand down from alert status and allow them to resume operations against pirates and raiders; ease trade restrictions that had been passed to fill military coffers; and redirect a significant portion of the overinflated military budget toward colonization. Outraged, Thomas refused. The ministers then threatened to appeal to the Court of Judicial Review, charging the Protector with unacceptable violations of civil liberties.

After the ministers' departure, Thomas ordered Marshal Doru to send the Taurian Guard to arrest them. Marshal Doru refused. Before the startled Protector could take any action against him, Doru informed his troops of the incident and declared the Protector no longer fit to govern. Accompanied by select members of the Taurian Guards' Second Battalion, Marshal Doru took Thomas into protective custody. He then went alone to the Calderon family residence and reported his actions to Katherine, Janice and Jeffrey. The marshal ended his account with an impassioned plea for Jeffrey to assume the throne before Thomas's various opponents could take advantage of the situation. With a little additional persuasion from Janice, who was far too ill to cope with the stresses of ruling, Jeffrey agreed.

Some days later, the day after his twenty-ninth birthday, Jeffrey Calderon announced his accession to the Concordat at

large. Janice was at his side, making a rare public appearance. In an emotional address, Janice admitted that her condition made it impossible to carry out the tasks of governing an interstellar nation. She asked that all Taurians give their loyalty and support to Jeffrey, whom she would serve as an advisor. This speech, plus widespread disillusion with Thomas, ensured the peaceful transition of power to the new Protector. In his first official act, he appointed Janice Calderon as his senior advisor. Privately, he also offered to make Marshal Doru Minister of Defense. The Marshal refused the appointment, however, saying that he had no wish to become a potential magnet for the political opposition or wild conspiracy theories that might threaten the stability of the realm.

Marshal Doru resigned his commission and left the Concordat not long after Jeffrey's accession. He has since been seen on Indicass in the St. Ives Compact, where he reportedly boarded a trading vessel scheduled to stop in the Federated Commonwealth and the Capellan Confederation. What he plans to do and where he plans to go remain unknown.

As for Thomas Calderon, reliable reports indicate that he suffered a massive stroke within weeks of being taken into protective custody. He lingered, bedridden and unable to speak, for eight months before dying in his sleep in early 3056.

NEW DIRECTIONS

In January of 3056, Jeffrey Calderon publicly announced several sweeping changes he had planned for the Concordat. He formally repealed civilian conscription of builders, various taxes enacted to beef up the military budget, and all restrictions on colonization that Thomas had imposed since the end of the Fourth Succession War. He also announced measures intended to enhance trade both within and outside the Concordat, and to promote terraforming efforts on certain of the colonies that had been founded since 3035. In a move that greatly pleased BattleMech manufacturers, Jeffrey authorized increased production of BattleMechs for the TDF to meet the demand of the new colonies. Funding for the new 'Mechs would come from a reorganization and streamlining of the defense budget rather than from any new taxes. Jeffrey wound up his proclamation with a bombshell; revealing that he had been conducting negotiations with the Magistracy of Canopus for nearly four years, he announced that the two realms were close to signing a treaty that would greatly benefit the Concordat.

Though the notion of a treaty with another Periphery realm startled many people, actual opposition to closer ties with the Magistracy was minimal and disorganized. The text of the treaty, swiftly made public by the Protector, added to positive public perceptions of Jeffrey's bold move. The prospect of lowered trade barriers between the two nations was a further inducement to support the treaty; colonial expansion had already begun to increase job opportunities, and greater trade with a prosperous neighbor seemed likely to further enhance the Taurian economy.

sent of the Concordia Courts, which periodically review the statutes the Protector enacts. In time of war, the Protector can invoke emergency powers that permit full and complete authority over matters of state to prosecute the war effort.

Privy Council

Initially made up of members of the main families in the original Calderon expedition, the Privy Council has evolved into an advisory board to the Protector. It consists of a representative from each of the major Taurian governmental departments, and other councilors that the Protector may appoint. The Privy Council meets monthly to review matters of state and makes recommendations on those matters to the Protector, who is in no way bound to follow such recommendations.

Ministry of Defense

The Ministry of Defense is a board of advisors and military specialists—staffed by both civilian and military personnel—charged with the coordination of defense policy, training new recruits, equipping units in the field, research and development, and economic liaison with the private sector for the acquisition of materiel.

In recent years, the Ministry of Defense followed the directives of Thomas Calderon and took as its major concern the constant revision of contingency plans to be used in the event of invasion. Under Jeffrey Calderon's administration, this Ministry is focusing its efforts on more efficient use of existing assets and on upgrading the technology level of Taurian Defense Force units.

Exchequer

The Taurian Exchequer, under the direction of the Treasury Director, formulates policies to maintain the Concordat economy and manages fiscal affairs relating to member planets. In addition, the Exchequer manages the Concordat Bank of

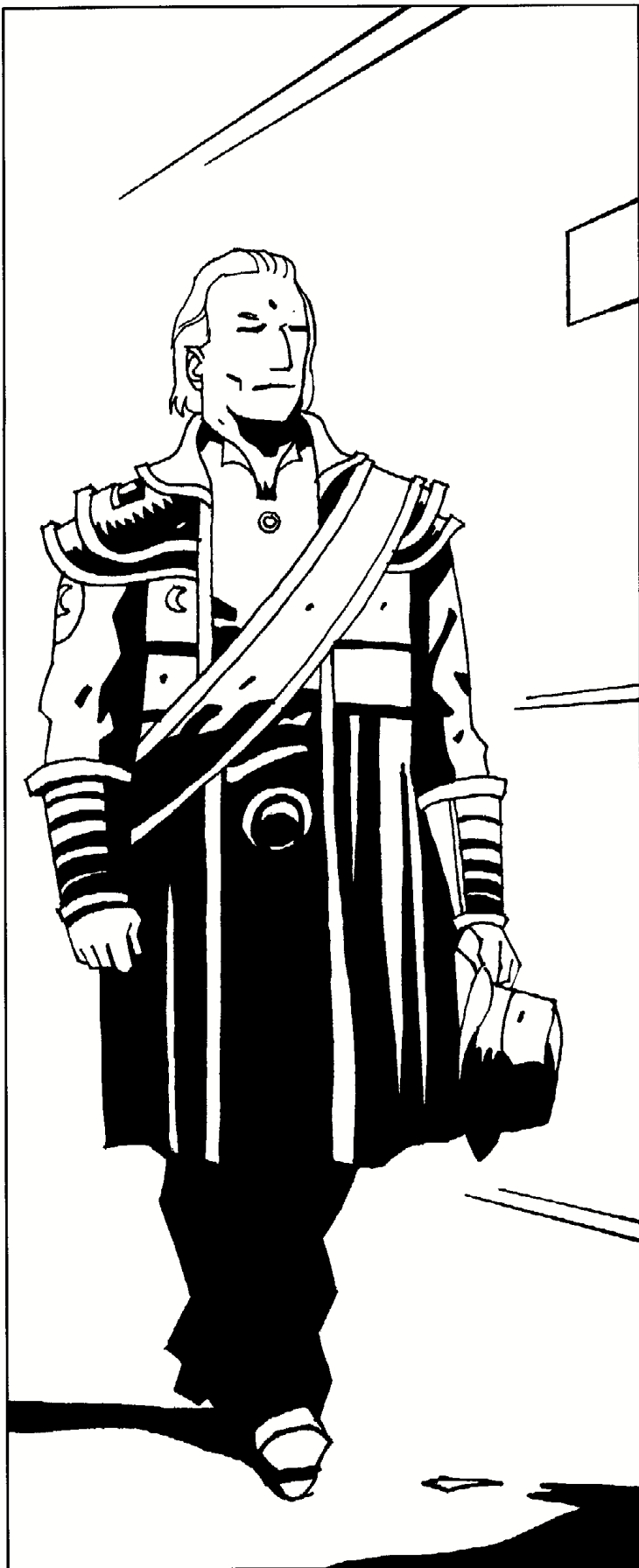
conomic interests, agree to pool certain financial and technological resources in order to expand colonization efforts through co-colonization of several new worlds. These colonies shall be governed by a Colony Council, whose laws shall be drawn up with the mutual consent of the Concordat and the Magistracy. The Council shall have complete jurisdiction over the New Colony Region, answerable only to the duly constituted governments of the Concordat and the Magistracy. Notwithstanding the abovementioned co-colonization provision, both States may also engage in separate colonization efforts.

The Taurian Concordat and the Magistracy of Canopus will refrain from interference with matters of state that only affect a single realm.

Neither the Taurian Concordat nor the Magistracy of Canopus shall engage in secret negotiations likely to harm each other or the alliance.

The Taurian Concordat and the Magistracy of Canopus shall develop and implement strategies for promoting peace in the Periphery and the Inner Sphere.

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Taurus, the government mint, and the Taurian Treasury Reserve located on the Concordat capital.

Ministry of the Interior

The Ministry of the Interior is concerned with matters of internal security. The Minister commands the Concordat Constabulary, a paramilitary force responsible for maintaining civil order on all Concordat worlds, as well as guarding against infiltration by foreign agents. He is also charged with gathering intelligence pertaining to civil and military order within the Concordat.

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education provides for the education of the Taurian people, from elementary through university levels. To this end, the Ministry is responsible for maintaining literacy standards throughout the Concordat, appointing and promoting instructors and administrators, and developing new educational and research institutions within the state.

Ministry of Trade and Colonization

The Ministry of Trade and Colonization is responsible for stimulating trade and commerce within the Concordat. It is also directly involved with the charting and colonizing of new worlds. This Ministry took on new responsibilities when Protector Calderon signed the alliance with the Magistracy of Canopus. In addition to the work involved in managing the dramatically increased levels of colonization, the Ministry of Trade and Colonization, in cooperation with a parallel Canopian committee, administers the Colonial Marshals.

Though the Marshals receive intensive military training, they also must possess a thorough understanding of the dynamics unique to colony worlds and the special problems such isolated communities regularly encounter. The Ministry of Trade and Colonization is particularly suited to providing such training and can offer ongoing support of the Colonial Marshals' goals when needed.

Concordat Courts

The Concordat Court system is the judicial branch of government. There is a civil court for every ten thousand inhabitants on each Concordat world, with a Planetary Court of Appeal for every three worlds. A separate Court of Judicial Review periodically reviews statutes and decrees of the Protector and other government branches, with the power to strike down any legislation that might threaten individual civil liberties.

Concordat Functionaries

In the Concordat, the term "functionary" refers to a variety of civil servants empowered to carry out a wide range of administrative duties. Functionaries are divided into two general categories: Auditors and Masters of Requests. An Auditor's function is similar to that of the ancient office of Inspector General. Masters of Requests make up the majority of the Taurian bureaucracy, handling the enormous load of paperwork required to keep the government afloat.

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TAURIAN NOBILITY

Taurian nobility is bestowed on those individuals who render special service to the state, in this case defined as the Taurian people rather than the government. Many noble titles are hereditary, while some nobles have achieved recognition in the areas of education and administration. All titles reflect the notion that aristocrats must serve the people they command.

Nobles have few material advantages compared to their Inner Sphere counterparts, a condition unique to the Concordat's social structure. This mirrors the Taurian social concept that an enlightened aristocracy provides the greatest good to the greatest number. Specific titles are similar to those used in the Successor States.

CONDITIONS FOR CITIZENSHIP

By law, the Taurian Concordat government guarantees a free and open society, individual rights, and the general welfare of its citizens. All citizens can move about freely within the Concordat, without the need for passes or work permits, and individuals can pursue their own economic and social goals without regulation. In return for government-sponsored education and protection, Concordat citizens must serve in some capacity to defend their state for a period of four years. Beyond this obligation, Taurian citizens are free to lead their lives as they please.

CULTURAL STRUCTURE

The philosophies of the Concordat's founders had a profound effect on the development of the realm's religious and social precepts. In addition to many important personal liberties, the average Taurian can expect free medical care, old age pensions, and a living allowance, plus guaranteed death benefits paid by the government to surviving family members.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

The people and government of the Taurian Concordat tolerate all forms of religious and philosophical expression, reflecting centuries of tradition and popular precedent. Unique to the Concordat, however, is official support of a state religion, Deism (in keeping with many of the social trappings of the Terran Age of Reason that the Taurians have adopted). Though no citizen is forced to belong to the Taurian Deist Church, and indeed many question the point of even having a Deist "church" at all, this institution receives government support and can boast the largest following of any religious persuasion in the Concordat.

In the last century, two philosophical creeds, the Far Lookers and the Inheritors, have gained prominence in the Concordat. Both owe their growth to the Calderon family, and both seek to establish a pragmatic approach to daily life in the Periphery.

The creed of the Far Lookers suggests that life in the Periphery should not be as static as it has been. Just as the original founders of the Periphery states settled the Taurian Concordat, so, too, the Far Lookers insist, should contemporary Taurians explore new worlds at the edge of the known galaxy.

They argue that expanding the boundaries of the state is necessary to keep it vital and strong. Though it is unlikely that this philosophy fueled the Protector's recent support for expansion, the Far Lookers seem pleased that their agenda is being carried out, regardless of the rationale.

The Inheritors accept the philosophical premises of the Far Lookers, but they go one step farther. The Inheritors posit that the age of the Inner Sphere is over, and that humanity is on the verge of a galaxy-wide cataclysm. When this happens, the Inheritors predict that the enlightened peoples of the Periphery will pick up the pieces, resettling and repopulating the Inner Sphere to bring about a new and more vibrant social order.

EDUCATION

Because the Concordat government has traditionally given the educational system a high priority, the Taurian Concordat has retained the highest consistent literacy rate in the Periphery from its founding to the present. Indeed, the Taurian educational system has served as a model for other states, including several in the Inner Sphere. During the Reunification War, many of the Taurians' largest educational institutions were lost when the Star League forces overran planets where the schools were located. In the years of the Concordat's Territorial status, the Star League attempted unsuccessfully to modify the educational structure to emphasize the benefits of membership in the Star League. Since regaining their independence, the Taurians have rebuilt their schools to pre-Star League levels and standards. The realm now boasts six universities, located on Taurus, Samantha, Pinard, New Vandenberg, MacLeod's Land, and Euschelus. These institutes of higher learning graduate an average of more than forty thousand students annually.

THE ARTS

Viewing itself largely as a servant of the people, the Taurian government has traditionally refrained from censoring its media, even in time of war. Throughout the Concordat, individuals retain the right to free expression without the threat of government intervention, as long as such expression cannot be proven libelous.

Such freedom of expression has given rise to a prolific creative community. Like most free societies throughout history, the Taurian Concordat has produced its share of major artists in many disciplines. Based on public interest and available instructors, a different type of artist flowers in each generation; visual artists, writers, dancers and so on. Life in the Concordat generally rewards creativity of all types with public acclaim and material success, and so the people of those worlds tend to find some creative niche at some point in their lives.

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY

The huge influx of valuable raw materials from the colonies, the prospect of even more colonization in cooperation

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with the Magistracy of Canopus, and increasingly open trade relations with its new ally have placed the Concordat on the brink of immense economic expansion. Concordat traders are finding eager markets for their goods and raw materials in the Magistracy, the Capellan Confederation, certain duchies in the Free Worlds League, and even the cash-strapped Outworlds Alliance. Colonial expansion alone has created incredible wealth for many Taurians, especially those who ply the stars for a living. Among the proposals recently backed by the Protector are exploratory missions into the Pirates' Haven star cluster, long rumored to contain treasure troves of lostech from Star League bases and even lost ships. This mass of stars is also known as the home of pirate bands and renegades who regularly plague the Concordat and other states, and the Taurian Defense Force is eager for the chance to hunt the renegades down.

The Taurian black market has also grown, as many traders seeking more and more buyers are turning to clients with whom Concordat law has forbidden them to do business. Certain black marketeers are suspected of selling to pirate bands and even some terrorist factions based in the Federated Commonwealth. According to ROM operatives in the Concordat, several traders are selling raw materials to Fuchida's Fusilliers, the new Tortuga pirates, and the Citizens For Davion Purity on the backwater world of Malarn. The Protector has stepped up law-enforcement efforts somewhat, but for the moment is more concerned with expanding political and economic ties across the Periphery and Inner Sphere.

THE CHAOS MARCH

The Marik-Liao invasion of the Sarna March has proved a blessing in disguise for the Concordat, at least for the present. The thought of an allied force of Marik-Liao troops on the Concordat's or Magistracy's doorstep initially unnerved Jeffrey, but this potential problem currently is less serious than it appears—though it may become more so. The Capellan Confederation has bogged down in its attempt to reconquer its lost territory, and the collapse of authority in the so-called Chaos March has focused all of Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao's attention on that region. Sun-Tzu's military and political troubles are likely to keep him too busy to bother the Concordat for the foreseeable future, allowing the Concordat and the Magistracy time to consolidate their forces against the threat of an eventual Liao invasion.

The sudden dissolution of the Federated Commonwealth has left Jeffrey Calderon unsure of whether or not to continue his cautious efforts to open trade with the giant Successor State. He appears to be biding his time, waiting to see how the Lyran secession and resultant turmoil works out. Fortunately for the Protector, Victor Steiner-Davion has more than enough trouble keeping his realm together, and so House Davion is unlikely to pose a military threat to the Concordat any time soon.

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

Jeffrey Calderon's accession to the position of Protector has wrought significant changes in the Concordat's relations with other nations. No longer hobbled by Thomas Calderon's pathological mistrust, the Concordat government has established embassies on the capital worlds of the Outworlds Alliance and the Mica Majority, and opened a consulate in the St. Ives Compact. The Protector even sent diplomatic representatives to New Avalon and Tharkad just prior to the Lyran secession. Diplomatic activity in the Magistracy of Canopus has been stepped up with the signing of the Treaty of Taurus, and representatives of various Taurian and Canopian businesses are discussing cooperative efforts and possible joint ventures to be launched once the trade barriers are lowered. The only neighboring realm in which diplomacy has stalled is the Capellan Confederation; the Concordat maintains its embassy on Sian, but Jeffrey Calderon has significantly reduced substantive contacts between the two states.

Relations with Successor States

The Concordat has recently opened limited trade with the Federated Commonwealth, but a combination of domestic opposition in the Concordat and instability in the Commonwealth has left expansion of trade relations in limbo. The disruption may pose problems for the Protector, as it gives domestic opposition time to organize and gather force. The Federated Commonwealth government has expressed wholehearted support for the Taurian-Canopian alliance, but these assertions have done little to calm anti-Davion hardliners. As yet, most of the hardliners who hold government offices are supportive of their Protector in other areas, but their unease over the Davion issue eventually may prompt more widespread opposition unless the Protector can convince them to change their minds. The leading voice of the opposition, Lord Grover Shraplen of MacLeod's Land, argues that the Federated Commonwealth has designs on Concordat planets to replace those lost to the Clans, the Lyran Alliance, and the Marik-Liao invasion of the Sarna March. Lord Shraplen has raised some support on nearby border worlds, but has yet to amass any real power.

Trade with the Capellan Confederation remains relatively strong despite political frostiness; Taurian merchants see no reason to turn away from the lucrative Capellan market simply because high-level political relations have cooled.

The Free Worlds League has given Taurian diplomats a chilly reception on many matters, including trade relations. Captain-General Thomas Marik has sharply criticized the Treaty of Taurus, warning both the Concordat and the Magistracy that the League will meet any aggressive action on the part of the alliance with equal force. According to ROM operatives, the Captain-General fears that the Magistracy will enlist Taurian support in efforts to take back long-disputed planets awarded to the Free Worlds League after the Reunification War. Some of our agents speculate that the

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Word of Blake is also influencing Marik against the Concordat; they distrust the Protector because he appears to favor ComStar over the Word of Blake.

Jeffrey Calderon has also opened diplomatic relations with the St. Ives Compact, possibly as a potential ally against the Capellan Confederation should Sun-Tzu Liao make any moves against the Concordat. The Protector and Duchess Candace Liao communicate often, and political rumor mills are rife with talk that the Duchess, the Protector, and Magestrix Emma Centrella will hold a summit sometime soon.

Relations with Periphery States

In addition to allying with the Magistracy of Canopus, the Concordat is also expanding relations with the Outworlds Alliance. Mitchell Avellar's poor nation is eager to widen its circle of friends among Periphery states, and the Concordat considers the Alliance a good investment. Jeffrey Calderon has authorized a limited economic aid package for the Alliance, and is actively encouraging Taurian industries to open factories and branch offices on Alliance planets. According to his closest advisors, the Protector's benevolence stems in part from his recognition of the debt the Concordat owes the Alliance for its help in improving the TDF's aerospace arm.

The Protector cut off all relations with the Marian Hegemony after that realm conquered the tiny Lothian League. Though the League was an independent nation, it was founded by Taurians and had maintained a special relationship with the Concordat ever since its inception. The Protector has publicly labeled the Marian Hegemony "a pariah state with no regard for basic human rights," and makes no secret of his contempt for Caesar Sean O'Reilly.

ComStar and the Word of Blake

ComStar has retained control of all HPG facilities that existed in the Concordat at the time of the schism. Former Primus Waterly's misguided machinations fortunately did not extend to the Periphery states, and so ComStar's reformation occurred gradually and peacefully in most Periphery realms. Our Order has remained on reasonable terms with the Calderon government, and most of the citizens are at least tolerant toward ComStar personnel. A lingering distrust of anything smacking of the Inner Sphere remains, but ComStar's establishment of schools and training programs over the past three centuries have done much to lay such unfounded suspicion to rest.

Knowing that easy and swift communication with the Concordat's colonies is vital to their survival, the Protector asked ComStar to build HPG stations on recently settled worlds. Most of the newest HPGs are solidly in our control, though the Word of Blake has made inroads on some of the outlying colony worlds within the past year. Strangely enough, some colonial populations appear to regard the Word of Blake as the "real" ComStar precisely because they cling to the ritual and mysticism to which Periphery citizens have long been accustomed. There is no evidence, however, of widespread

support for the Word of Blake's political agenda among the colonists.

TAURIAN CONCORDAT MILITARY

The Taurian Defense Force is among the best-trained and most experienced militaries in the Periphery, with fighting skill and unit coordination virtually unmatched by any other Periphery state. Arranged according to the principles of nineteenth-century Napoleonic armies, the BattleMech regiments are grouped into operations corps. Naval elements are attached directly to Corps Commanders, with each fleet further divided into two demi-squadrons each. The Concordat Constabulary, a paramilitary force normally used for internal security purposes, supplements the regular TDF units and can be mobilized in time of war.

Protector Jeffrey Calderon has cut back the military budget since his father's departure, redirecting funds away from wasteful expenditures and pouring the savings into increased BattleMech production, a move heartily supported by a variety of heavy industries. In addition to stepping up production, Protector Calderon is making a concerted effort to ensure that Concordat manufacturers gain access to as much recovered technology as possible; buying the information when he can, trading for expertise for expertise when feasible, and turning a blind eye to less above-board methods when necessary.

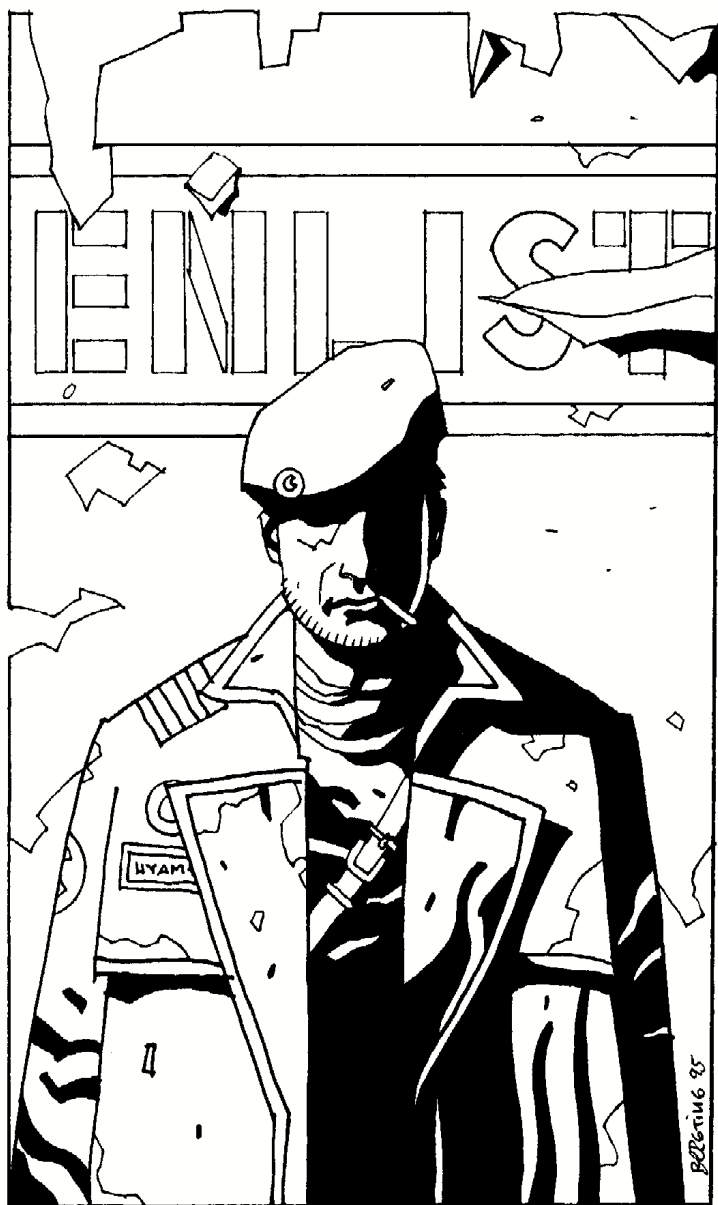
Improvements to Taurian military academies have also become a high priority for the TDF. Now considered one of the top MechWarrior training facilities anywhere, the Taurian Ecole Militaire produces highly motivated and skilled officers on a regular basis. Other Taurian training programs, while equally efficient and well-respected, are less prestigious and so accept a slightly higher percentage of applicants. All Taurian military academies now accept non-resident students, a strategy that provides yet another source of income for the Concordat.

The biggest problem facing the Taurian Defense Force is the Concordat's increased size. The TDF is not yet large enough to protect all the new colonies, and so the Protector and his advisors are solving the problem by hiring reputable mercenary units and increasing production of BattleMechs and conventional vehicles. Because tanks and infantry equipment are quicker and cheaper to produce, tank battalions and infantry units are currently the only military presence on many Taurian colony worlds.

UNIFORMS

The standard uniform of the Concordat military is a navy blue tunic with silver buttons and trim, and black trousers. Members of most branches wear navy blue field caps, although members of special forces and MechWarriors wear black berets. Officers wear the standard uniform, with buttons and trim of gold rather than silver. Dress uniforms correspond to standard uniform styles, with silver sashes and white gloves for

THE TAURIAN CONCORDAT



all enlisted ranks, and gold sashes and white gloves for officers. Marshals of the Concordat military wear gold aigrettes on both shoulders as well.

In the field, troops wear camouflage fatigues with rank insignia on their uniform lapels. Designs for personal gear such as neurohelmets, cooling vests and flight gear differ slightly from unit to unit, but all are based on Liao and Davion models.

ENLISTED RANKS

Ranks within the TDF are organized along a six-level tier for both officers and enlisted personnel. Rank titles exhibit the influence of the title system used by eighteenth-century French and English armed forces.

The six enlisted ranks are: recruit, section leader, force sergeant, lance sergeant, and battalion chief-sergeant.

Recruit

Under Concordat law, all Concordat citizens, male and female, must join the TDF at the age of 18. Recruits are divided into provisional training battalions based on their home planetary geographical district, or canton. Each recruit undergoes eighteen weeks of basic training before being assigned to a field unit.

Corporal

In infantry formations, corporals lead five-trooper units called maniples. Two maniples constitute a squad. In armor units, corporals serve as tank commanders. In all other branches of the service, the rank denotes the junior-grade of one or more specialist positions (techs, medical personnel, and so on).

Section Leader

Section leaders in the TDF infantry command squads. In Taurian armor units, section leaders command maniples that comprise two armored fighting vehicles (three such maniples constitute a Taurian armor lance). In all other services, the rank denotes senior specialist positions.

Force Sergeant

A force sergeant commands a platoon of twenty-five troopers (two squads). In TDF armor units, a force sergeant commands an armor lance of three maniples. The rank also denotes junior pilots in the Taurian aerospace arm.

Lance Sergeant

A lance sergeant serves as assistant platoon leader to a cornet-ranked officer. In armor units, the lance sergeant acts as assistant company commander to a subaltern. In the aerospace arm, lance sergeants are pilots in charge of an air lance.

Battalion Chief-Sergeant/Air Master

Battalion chief-sergeants are the senior battalion non-commissioned officers in all Taurian ground units. The equivalent rank of air master is used in the aerospace arm to denote junior flight commanders controlling two air lances.

OFFICER RANKS

The six commissioned ranks in the Taurian Defense Force are: cornet, subaltern, brigadier, colonel, comptroller, and marshal.

Cornet

The cornet is the TDF's lowest-ranking junior officer grade. Cornets serving in ground units typically act as company commanders. Aboard ships they serve as assistant department heads, and in the aerospace arm they command wings of two air lances. In BattleMech units, cornets serve as MechWarriors.

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Subaltern/Air Master, Junior Grade

Subalterns are battalion commanders in the Taurian ground forces. In Taurian aerospace forces, subalterns serve as assistant commanders of air divisions (consisting of two wings of four lances each). In BattleMech units, subalterns command lances of four BattleMechs. Air masters, junior grade, act as department heads aboard naval vessels.

Brigadier/Air Master, Senior Grade

Brigadiers act as regimental executive officers. Often, they lead four or more companies, depending on assigned mission tasks. Senior grade air masters command aerospace corps of three aerospace wings.

Colonel/Space Master

A colonel is a senior regimental commander. Space masters act as ship captains aboard Taurian naval vessels.

Comptroller/Commodore

A purely organizational rank, the comptroller belongs to the senior command and planning staff found at the corps level. In certain circumstances, a comptroller may be delegated to command a regiment or part of a regiment for special missions. Commodores command demi-squadrons, collections of naval vessels assembled according to the dictates of specific mission requirements.

Marshal

At present, six marshals, one commanding each corps, serve the Concordat military. The rank of senior marshal is reserved for the Concordat's Protector in his role as commander-in-chief.

STRUCTURE OF THE TDF

The following is a brief description of the major divisions of the Taurian Defense Force.

Concordat Army

The Concordat Army consists of seventeen BattleMech regiments, a mix of line and mercenary units. Oriented toward lances of light-to-medium BattleMechs, Taurian units are similar in composition to their counterparts in the Successor States.

Units routinely train to perform duties common to Special Task Groups, such as local counterattack teams or as deep-space raiders directed at vulnerable communication and supply points. Though Thomas Calderon assigned increasing numbers of units to permanent garrisons each year he held the Protectorate, Jeffrey has begun to reclaim a more flexible military response by reinstituting the Special Task Groups.

Concordat Navy

The Concordat Navy currently consists of 117 DropShips and JumpShips divided into four fleets, each fleet being assigned to a corps front commander. Taurian naval personnel are typically long-term volunteers, with officers serving from

four to seven years. In time of war, the Navy is expected to serve as the first line of defense against any aggressor. In a departure from Reunification War doctrine, all four fleet components, including that of the Taurian Guard Corps, are charged with engaging the enemy as far forward as possible, sacrificing themselves to blunt the enemy's invasion away from the Hyades Cluster. This strategy means that only a few vessels would remain behind to defend the Taurian homeworlds from any part of the attacking force that managed to slip through.

Aerospace Arm

Though staffed, like its naval counterpart, with long-term professionals, the Aerospace Arm remains the weakest of the three principal military branches. A chronic lack of equipment and cursory experience fighting against modern combat tactics leaves this organization at a distinct disadvantage against its Inner Sphere counterparts—and even the better-trained Periphery states. In order to build on its existing strengths, the Aerospace Arm traditionally concentrated its efforts on improving its ground-support role. In recent years, the Concordat has brought in advisors from the Outworlds Alliance to help modernize the arm, though it may be years before the Taurians are on par with their potential opponents.

Medical Division

The Medical Division recovers and rehabilitates wounded personnel in the field. At present, the medical service available to the average Concordat soldier is comparable to that of the Inner Sphere. Emphasis is placed on the quick retrieval of wounded personnel close to the forward edge of battle, and the division is fully capable of deploying emergency medical and surgical support stations via support craft at a moment's notice.

Transport and Service Division

The Transport and Services Division is responsible for transporting men and materiel to the field of battle. In addition, it can provide men and materiel to recover and repair battle-damaged craft and machines, as well as transport reserves capable of maintaining the integrity of units in the field. Except for those vessels directly assigned to specific regiments, this division controls all military DropShips and JumpShips.

Administrative Corps

The Administrative Corps is responsible for all matters pertaining to personnel and administrative functions in the armed forces, including disbursement of funds, recordkeeping, promotion review boards, and the hiring and management of mercenary units.

Propaganda Division

Charged with maintaining good morale within the armed services, the Propaganda Division functions as an independent arm of government that disseminates information regarding the positive aspects of Concordat life and discounts rumors instigated by enemy agents.

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THE TAURIAN DEFENSE FORCE Deployment as of 3058

Commander: Senior Marshal Jeffrey Calderon
Aide: Comptroller Patrick Sterling
'Mech Strength: 17 Regiments, 2 Battalions

THE TAURIAN GUARD

Commander: Marshal Brenda Calderon
Aide: Colonel Samantha McGrinn
'Mech Strength: 3 Regiments

Unit Name	Experience Level	Loyalty	Homeworld
The Taurian Guard			
(CO: Colonel Arthur Hedstrom)			
1st Battalion	Elite	Fanatical	Hyades Cluster
(CO: Brigadier James Sterling)			
2nd Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Taurus
(CO: Brigadier Tamartha Marshall)			
3rd Battalion	Veteran	Fanatical	Hyades Cluster
(CO: Brigadier Bradly Clayton)			
The Taurian Velites			
(CO: William Heise)			
1st Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Taurus
(CO: Brigadier Charise Heiser)			
2nd Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Hyades Cluster
(CO: Brigadier Margaret Doru-Trudel)			
3rd Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Aea*
(CO: Brigadier Charles Calderon)			
The Concordat Commandos			
(CO: Colonel Jacob Mornay)			
1st Battalion	Veteran	Fanatical	Taurus
(CO: Brigadier Jean Trudel)			
2nd Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Diik*
(CO: Brigadier William Renshaw)			
3rd Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Grossbach
(CO: Brigadier David Grenadine)			

I CORPS

Commander: Marshal Valerie Makepeace
Aide: Colonel Adam Buefort
'Mech Strength: 3 Regiments

Unit Name	Experience Level	Loyalty	Homeworld
The Concordat Jaegers			
(CO: Colonel Kai Shoguwa)			
1st Battalion	Veteran	Fanatical	New Vandenberg
(CO: Brigadier Brigid Heckman)			
2nd Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Pinard
(CO: Brigadier Carol Trennouth)			
3rd Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Burton
(CO: Brigadier James Howard)			

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Unit Name	Experience Level	Loyalty	Homeworld
The Red Chasseurs			
(CO: Colonel Michael Griswald)			
1st Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Landmark
(CO: Brigadier Clarence Cheplak)			
2nd Battalion	Regular	Reliable	Lastpost*
(CO: Brigadier Gerald Dildine)			
3rd Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Logan's Land
(CO: Brigadier Barbara Schmidt)			
Gordon's Armored Calvary			
(CO: Colonel Dick Gordon)			
Mitchell's Lancers	Veteran	Reliable	Dicallus
(CO: Brigadier Alberta Mitchell)			
Arrow's Chasseurs	Elite	Reliable	Pinard
(CO: Brigadier Nathan Arrow)			
Simon's Banshee's	Elite	Fanatical	New Vandenberg
(CO: Brigadier Carl Simon)			

II CORPS

Commander: Marshal Fiona Jamesen
 Aide: Colonel Nim Chok Soo
 'Mech Strength: 2 Regiments, 1 Battalion

Unit Name	Experience Level	Loyalty	Homeworld
The Concordat Culrassiers			
(CO: Colonel Phillip Canderson)			
1st Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Organo
(CO: Brigadier Joeseeph Timar)			
2nd Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Perdition
(CO: Brigadier Theresa Smalley)			
3rd Battalion	Regular	Questionable	Atreus Prime
(CO: Brigadier Lucynda Hecker)			
The Hyades Light Infantry			
(CO: Colonel Tanis Verbret)			
1st Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Jamestown
(CO: Brigadier Mohammed Chakravarti)			
2nd Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Brinton
(CO: Brigadier Sarasvati Rinaldi)			
Longwood's Bluecoats			
(CO: Colonel Moses Longwood)			
Mac's Hell-Raisers	Veteran	Questionable	Perdition
(CO: Major Belinda MacKelvy)			
Ivan's Marauders	Veteran	Questionable	Euschelus
(CO: Major Ivan Tchorgin)			

III CORPS

Commander: Marshal Victoria Newman
 Aide: Colonel Robert Taylor
 'Mech Strength: 2 Regiments, 2 Battalions

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Unit Name	Experience Level	Loyalty	Homeworld
The Pleiades Hussars			
(CO: Colonel Boris Tharn)			
1st Battalion	Regular	Questionable	New Ganymede
(CO: Brigadier Thomas Tepper)			
2nd Battalion	Green	Questionable	Celentaro
(CO: Brigadier Francis Whitten)			
3rd Battalion	Regular	Reliable	Marknick*
(CO: Brigadier Gene Lind)			
The Taurian Lancers (1st Regiment)			
(CO: Colonel Sergio McDaniel)			
1st Battalion	Regular	Reliable	Norman's World
(CO: Brigadier Richard Ody)			
2nd Battalion	Green	Fanatical	Illiushin
(CO: Brigadier Alan Mogoliotti)			
3rd Battalion	Regular	Questionable	Laconis
(CO: Brigadier Eric Hiner)			
Bannockburn's Bandits			
(CO: Colonel Sylvia Bannockburn)			
Morgan's Lancers	Veteran	Reliable	MacLeod's Land
(CO: Major Katherine Morgan)			
Carter's Commandos	Regular	Reliable	MacLeod's Land
(CO: Major Isaac Carter)			

IV CORPS

Commander: Marshal Nelson Calderon-Sims

Aide: Colonel Dennis King

'Mech Strength: 2 Regiments

Unit Name	Experience Level	Loyalty	Homeworld
The Pleiades Lancers			
(CO: Colonel Alice Chainer)			
1st Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Althea's Choice
(CO: Brigadier Florence Fowler)			
2nd Battalion	Regular	Reliable	Cyrton
(CO: Brigadier Robert Kosimic)			
3rd Battalion	Veteran	Reliable	Organo
(CO: Brigadier Melissa MacBeth)			
The Taurian Lancers (2nd Regiment)			
(CO: Colonel Darlene McKinnon)			
1st Battalion	Regular	Reliable	Belle Isle*
(CO: Brigadier Terrence Sheffield)			
2nd Battalion	Regular	Questionable	Flaum*
(CO: Brigadier Phillip Gordon)			
3rd Battalion	Green	Relaible	Argos*
(CO: Brigadier William Sangrey)			

THE TAURIAN CONCORDAT



PERSONALITIES

JEFFREY CALDERON

At 32, Jeffrey Calderon is one of the youngest Protectors in Concordat history. Intelligent and energetic, Jeffrey puts the welfare of the Concordat first and everything else second. Through the alliance with the Magistracy of Canopus and increased diplomacy and trade with other Periphery and Inner Sphere states, the young Protector hopes to make the Concordat powerful, prosperous, and a major force among interstellar nations. Aided by the sound advice of his older sister Janice, Jeffrey has proven an adept politician as well as an able leader; he is immensely popular with his people, and so far has kept potential opposition off balance.

Jeffrey Calderon remains unmarried, though rumors abound of his romantic involvement with a senior officer in the mercenary unit Prey's Divisionals.

ONE MAN AGAINST THE WORLD

8 July 3058

Dropped off on Spencer today. For the moment, I'm alone. The higher-ups tell me other Marshals'll be here within two months—from what I hear in other quarters, I can expect them in five. I'm not sure yet just how much of a problem that is. Still, it'd be nice to have a few people to pal around with.

12 July 3058

Welcome to beautiful metropolitan DuMont, the garden spot of Spencer ... oh, it's not really that bad. A little primitive, but then, what else can you expect from the first real town on a frontier world? Most of the families here are good folks, anxious to make something of their colony. A few of them want more defense, and they've been bending my ear about it. Loudly. Don't blame them, I guess. One Marshal for a whole town isn't exactly reassuring. I keep telling them what the higher-ups told me—there'll be at least four more of us by August. That settled most of them, but there's a few who just won't quit. They won't tell me exactly what they're afraid of, either.

17 July 3058

Damn all bureaucrats to the seventh level of Hell ... ! Last week's food shipment never turned up, and before I knew it I had a riot on my hands. God knows when the shipment'll get here. I've organized several foraging parties to head out into the woods. I hope we find enough edibles to make it worth the risk.

20 July 3058

Now I know what the loudest complainers were afraid of. While I was out on patrol, a few nice people broke into my HQ, knocked out my deputies, and cleaned out the armory. Last sighting placed them in the forest, probably heading toward one of the ruined cities around these parts. I've still got no backup, either. Where the hell are the other Marshals they promised me?

22 July 3058

Pirates hit while I was hunting down the gun thieves. DuMont doesn't look too good—25 casualties, and about 50 people snatched by the pirates. My *Hatchetman* is in pretty rough shape, and so am I. I can't defend an entire colony all by myself! What do they expect of me?!

5 August 3058

Still haven't run the gun thieves to ground. What clues I have make me think they're holed up in the ruins to the north of DuMont—too far away for me to travel in one day. The food shipment's still AWOL and our foraging parties aren't having much luck. As if that weren't bad enough the damned pirates damaged the crops. Some of the adults are looking malnourished—they're shorting themselves for their kids.

Dear God, I hope this doesn't get any worse.

12 August 3058

I found the gun thieves. They weren't in the ruins—they never even got close. They're all dead, killed by something with huge, ripping claws and a taste for humans. I picked up the scattered guns and went back to town. I'm having trouble with 'Mech repairs—the *Hatchetman*'s functional, but not what I'd consider battleworthy.

I wonder if she'll be ready to take on a pack of whatever killer critter is out there?

20 August 3058

The food shipment arrived today, along with more colonists. Guess they're meant to replace the seven who've died of scurvy. No more Marshals, though—just a message that they won't be arriving for another three months. Lucky, lucky me ...

—From the journal of an unnamed Colonial Marshal. *Hardcore Publishing, 3057*

THE TAURIAN CONCORDAT



JANICE CALDERON

Janice Calderon, Senior Advisor to the Protector, enjoys immense popularity among Concordat citizens. Her courage in dealing with her disability, as well as the considerable charm she still possesses, have endeared her to her people. Janice's unwavering support for her brother is invaluable to him, enabling the Taurians to easily accept the startling changes wrought by the Protector since his accession barely three years ago.

Though the ravages of the Brisbane Virus have confined her to a wheelchair, Janice refuses to give in to her limitations. She recently traveled to the Magistracy of Canopus to undergo a promising experimental treatment, and is expected to return to the Concordat by year's end.

SHERMAN MALTIN

A former ambassador to the Magistracy of Canopus with a long career in the Ministry of Trade and Colonization, Sherman Maltin was recently appointed President of the Colony Council. President Maltin, along with three councilors from the Concordat and three from the Magistracy, will guide policymaking for the New Colony Region created by the Treaty of Taurus. To prepare for his new responsibilities, Maltin and his entire family have recently moved to the colony world of Detroit.

At 65, Mr. Maltin has earned great respect within the Concordat for years of honorable service. He is also well regarded in the Magistracy as an intelligent administrator with a



reputation for fair dealing. Maltin has announced that "my door is always open" to colonists and even people outside the New Colony Region who have policy suggestions or grievances in need of redress. Given his reputation as a man not easily sidetracked by petty considerations, most observers expect Maltin to make sound decisions no matter who those choices upset.

LORD GROVER SHRAPLEN

Ruler of the planet MacLeod's Land and a contemporary of Thomas Calderon, Lord Shraplen shared Thomas's paranoia regarding an always-imminent Davion invasion. With his planet positioned where the Federated Suns, the Capellan Confederation and the Taurian Concordat meet, Shraplen constantly lobbied for additional garrison troops and fully supported Thomas's civilian-conscription initiatives. Bitterly disillusioned by what he sees as Jeffrey's unwise reforms, this outspoken, well-respected leader has begun to actively campaign against the young Protector's policies.

Though a rather unprepossessing man, Grover Shraplen speaks eloquently and persuasively. Much of his conviction in what he says comes from a deep-seated fear of his planet and people being overrun by a foreign power; MacLeod's Land is one of the most successful of the colonies in the Concordat, and Shraplen cares deeply about maintaining its citizens' lifestyles and the integrity of their freedoms. He has not openly refused to meet with Jeffrey Calderon, but remains deeply suspicious of the Protector's offers to do so.

MAGISTRACY OF CANOPUS

Long renowned for its lucrative entertainment industry and respected medical community, the Magistracy of Canopus has grown into one of the leading economic, political and military powers of the Periphery during the past few decades.

Thousands of the familiar Canopian "pleasure circuses" continue to travel throughout the Inner Sphere and the Periphery, and tourists still flock to the Magistracy itself each year to sample the indulgences of its famous casinos, brothels and entertainment complexes. Another long-standing Canopian industry—physicians practicing both traditional and nontraditional medicine—also continues to thrive. But in recent years these industries have been overshadowed by the Magistracy's growing reputation as one of the pre-eminent political powers of the Periphery, a reputation fueled by economic diversification and the persistent diplomatic efforts of Magestrix Emma Centrella.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

The Magistracy of Canopus was founded in 2530 when Kossandra Centrella, a former captain in the Free Worlds League forces, led a group of Free World deserters to the Canopus star systems, near the Taurian Concordat. Kossandra negotiated secret aid and mutual-security arrangements with dissident leaders on the border worlds of the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation, and by 2548 the new Magistracy included thirty-six independent star systems.

Within a few years, the worlds of the Magistracy had become the acknowledged center of the so-called pleasure industry. Thousands of Inner Sphere and Periphery residents flocked to the Magistracy worlds to indulge in gambling, hunting, illicit sex and other activities that remained unavailable or illegal within their own states.

The pleasure industry earned billions for the Magistracy worlds, which made the planets tempting targets for Star League forces when the Reunification War erupted. The Magistracy was drawn into that war when Free Worlds League forces captured the Canopian world of Gouderak in 2577. For several years, the Canopian naval forces resisted incursions by Marik forces. Despite achieving an impressive victory at Hardcore, however, the Canopians were fighting a losing battle. Their defeat at Thurrock in 2583 cost them much of their aerospace and naval forces and proved to be a turning point in the war. The following spring, Marik troops captured Canopus IV, and by 2588 Star League forces had completely subjugated the Magistracy worlds.

Almost immediately, the Magistracy worlds began to rebuild their economies with the help of generous aid from the Star League. By 2607, the Magistracy had become a territorial member-state of the Star League. For more than 100 years, the Magistracy shared in the general prosperity that descended on the Star League and Periphery worlds.

This peace and prosperity began to erode in the latter half of the twenty-eighth century, however, when the secession of New

Vandenberg and seventeen other Periphery worlds inspired a rebellion against the Star League. The resulting isolation of the Periphery grew with the Amaris coup and the ensuing fifteen-year civil war, which led to the destruction of Star League's HPG network, the disruption of trade routes, the withdrawal of SLDF forces from the Periphery, and the collapse of the Star League in 2785.

In the wake of that catastrophe, the Magistracy worlds adopted a position of armed neutrality. Despite this policy, the Magistracy fell prey to ancient inter-Periphery disputes that erupted when the unifying influence of the Star League evaporated. Such disputes led to the Taurian-Canopian War in 2813. Neither side proved able to achieve a decisive victory, however, and in 2814 the Magistracy and the Taurian Concordat signed a treaty ending the war.

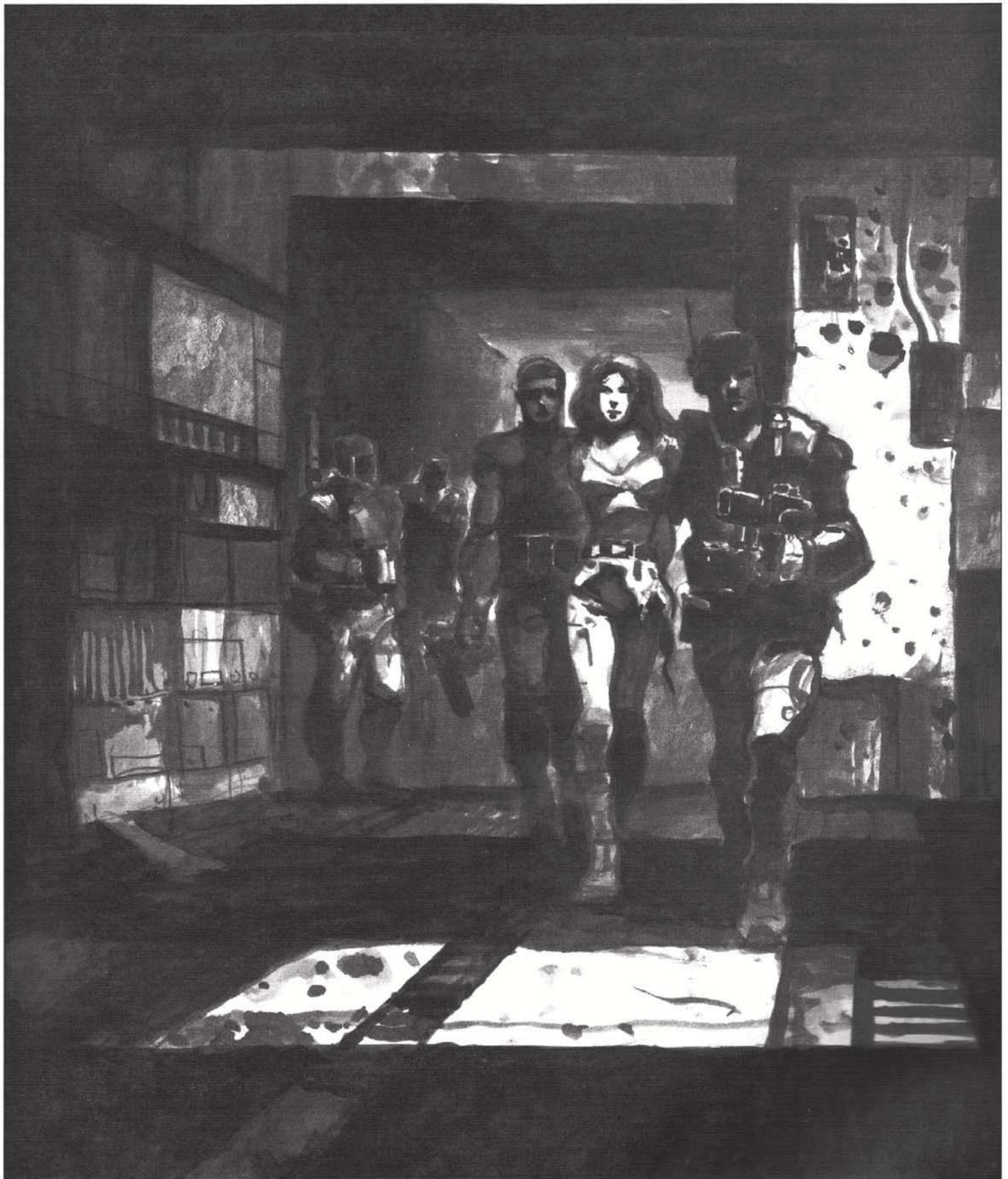
For approximately the next 200 years, the Magistracy existed in relative peace. The Succession Wars in the Inner Sphere prevented Inner Sphere tourists from visiting Magistracy worlds, which severely crippled the Canopian economy. The lack of an adequate communications network in the Periphery further hindered the Canopian economies, leaving the Magistracy unable to finance a substantial military force. As a result, the Magistracy relied on diplomatic means to resolve border disputes with the Taurians, the Free Worlds League, and the Capellans. Despite these efforts, the Magistracy began to shrink as it lost worlds to its more powerful neighbors.

REBIRTH

The seeds of the Magistracy's transformation into a major economic and political power were sown during the waning days of the Fourth Succession War. Emboldened by the weakened state of the Inner Sphere militaries, then-Magestrix Kyalla Centrella embarked on a plan of interstellar conquest. First, Magestrix Kyalla entered into a pact with Dame Catherine Humphreys, leader of the Free Worlds League province known as the Duchy of Andurien. Then in September 3030, the Duchy seceded from the League and announced its alliance with the Magistracy. Within a short time a combined Canopian-Andurien invasion force had attacked the Capellan Confederation. Confident that the Capellan military had been severely weakened by its battles with the Federated Suns during the Fourth Succession War, Magestrix Kyalla and Humphreys planned to conquer the remaining worlds of the Confederation and form a superstate that would rival the Inner Sphere powers.

The invasion force enjoyed several initial successes against the ragged resistance provided by the war-weary Capellan troops. But eventually the seasoned defenders rallied. The troops of House Daidachi proved particularly effective against the Canopian and Andurien invaders; in a few engagements the mere presence of these troops turned the tide of battle. By 3035, the Capellans had driven the invaders out of Confederation space.

MAGISTRACY OF CANOPUS



MAGISTRACY OF CANOPUS

BUSINESS BEFORE PLEASURE

Recently ROM has begun to carefully monitor the activities of all Canopian pleasure circuses. Many intelligence observers have long suspected that these space stations harbor agents of the Magistracy Intelligence Ministry (MIM) posing as pleasure/entertainment providers. Recently collected evidence seems to suggest that such suspicions are correct and that MIM operations aboard pleasure circuses are much more extensive than previously thought.

In addition, other Inner Sphere intelligence services have apparently begun to suspect such operations as well. Recently, the Lyrans announced the capture of a Canopian spy on a pleasure circus operating within the Alliance. Apparently, a highly placed Lyrans general had been enjoying the favors of the alleged MIM operative and inadvertently sharing classified information on Lyrans troop strengths with her as well. Though the Canopian government vigorously denied the agent had been operating with its approval, it quietly arranged to exchange a captured Lyrans intelligence operative for the individual.

For these reasons, all ComStar personnel are strongly advised to avoid visiting Canopian pleasure circuses.

—From a ComStar ROM internal memo

On May 8, 3040, Emma arrived on Canopus IV. Members of the Royal Guards brought her, chained and shackled, before the Magesatrix. Then, as courtiers and nobles watched, Emma silently removed her own restraints. The enraged Magesatrix ordered the Royal Guards to execute Emma immediately. Instead, the guards took Magesatrix Kyalla herself into custody. The next day, Emma announced that several eminent physicians had examined her mother and declared her unfit to rule by reason of full-blown paranoia, and Emma appointed herself Magesatrix of Canopus. The Canopian Electorate approved Emma's ascension immediately, and the new ruler began to secure her position.

Emma realized that the Free Worlds League presented the greatest threat to the safety of the Magistracy, and so she immediately issued formal apologies to the League in general and to the Marik family in particular. She even allocated substantial rebuilding funds for several Marik worlds that had suffered during the war to bring the Duchy of Andurien back into the League.

With her goodwill message delivered, the new Magesatrix set about accomplishing her second goal: revitalizing the Canopian economy. She began by funneling large amounts of her personal fortune into the Magistracy's traditional entertainment industry. Within three years Canopian pleasure circuses again were a welcome sight in almost every Successor State, and large numbers of tourists were traveling to the Magistracy to sample its casinos, brothels and other entertainment offerings. The revival of the entertainment industry also strengthened support companies such as Magliss Spirits, which recently recaptured its status as the largest producer of wines and brandies in the Periphery, and other producers of entertainment aids. The Magesatrix then used the profits realized from these ventures to strengthen and start up other industries in an attempt to diversify the Canopian economy. Within ten years, the Magistracy possessed one of the most diverse and successful economies in the Periphery.

TIME OF THE CLANS

The first rumors of an invasion from beyond the Periphery circulated through the Magistracy in early 3050. Eyewitness accounts of battles with "aliens" and the rumored end of the Inner Sphere created mass hysteria across the Periphery, and the worlds of the Magistracy were not immune. The Magesatrix, however, responded to the threat with the calm rationality that had gained her renown. Within months, Emma had dispatched diplomatic teams throughout the Periphery to engage in negotiations with every legitimate Periphery

Though the Canopian-Andurien defeat spelled the end of Magesatrix Kyalla's territorial ambitions, the ill-fated campaign facilitated the rising political fortunes of the Magesatrix's daughter, Emma. The young 'Mech commander personally opposed the invasion, yet served with distinction and gained considerable respect in the Canopian military by disregarding her own safety to rescue endangered comrades on numerous occasions. As the campaign wound down and morale among the Canopian troops faltered, Emma began to gain unexpected support for her quiet opposition to the war. Antiwar sentiment in the Magistracy continued to grow when the Canopian-Andurien alliance broke down and the Free Worlds League began to threaten retaliation against the Magistracy for supporting the Duchy's secession. As a result, Emma's political popularity grew as well.

However, Emma was unwilling to directly confront her mother after the war's end, and so she returned to Luxen to resume her duties as ruler of the planet. Despite her reluctance to challenge her mother's rule, Emma eventually became the focal point for groups that opposed Magesatrix Kyalla and her policies. Meanwhile, Magesatrix Kyalla immediately ordered the reconstruction of the damaged Canopian military forces. And luckily for the Magistracy, internal problems within the Free Worlds League prevented the League from taking any aggressive action against the Magistracy.

EMMA'S ASCENSION

In 3039, an assassination attempt against Emma prompted the royal heiress to take action. Convinced that the assassin had been sent by her mother, Emma fled to the world of Hardcore, where she hoped to rally her loyal followers and make plans to overthrow the Magesatrix. When Magesatrix Kyalla received word of her daughter's movements, she dispatched the Magistracy Royal Guards to Hardcore to arrest Emma and return her to Canopus IV.

Unknown to the Magesatrix, however, several elements within the Guards had switched their loyalties to Emma. These elements located Emma, and with the aid of supporters from among Hardcore's warriors-for-hire, they managed to smuggle Emma away from Hardcore.

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state. Apparently, Emma planned to use trade agreements and other favors to entice other Periphery states to join a Periphery-wide alliance strong enough to oppose the Clans in the event the invaders turned their attention toward the Periphery.

The alliance never materialized, but the initiative did produce new diplomatic relations and trade agreements with several Periphery powers, including the Magistracy's powerful neighbor, the Taurian Concordat. In the wake of the Clan defeat at Tukayyid, the Magistracy focused increased attention on its diplomatic relations with the Concordat. On May 4, 3056, those efforts culminated in a treaty allying the two Periphery powers. In the treaty, the Concordat agreed to help the Magistracy build several new 'Mech factories. In return, the Canopians granted the Concordat favored trade status. The treaty also led to a joint Canopian-Taurian colonization effort, which has so far achieved only marginal success.

SOCIOPOLITICAL STRUCTURE

Since its founding, the Magistracy of Canopus has been ruled by a matriarchy, with supreme power vested in the person of the Magesrix. Though the position is theoretically open to anyone winning the support of a two-thirds majority of the Canopian Central Committee, the Magesrix has always been a member of the Centrella family.

The center of the Magistracy government lies on Canopus IV, where the Magesrix maintains her Royal Court, the Canopian Central Committee and the Royal Courts of Appeal. Unfortunately, the damage done to the planet's delicate ecological balance by years of strip-mining has yet to be successfully arrested, let alone repaired, and the world continues to become more inhospitable with every passing decade. The Canopus government eventually may be forced to relocate, a fact that the current administration seems willing to ignore.

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

In the early years of the Magistracy, political positions were open exclusively to women, reflecting the Centrellas' personal bias against the male-dominated governmental systems of the Inner Sphere. Beginning with the administration of Floral Centrella, however, the Magesrix gradually eased these restrictions, and following the Reunification War the Canopians were forced to further modify their political structure under the direction of a Star League-appointed military governor, Melissa Humphreys. Under the Humphreys administration (2588–2604), the position of Magesrix was modified to that of a constitutional monarch and suffrage was extended to all, regardless of sex, origin or social status.

Following the Magistracy's declaration of independence from the Star League during the Amaris Crisis, the power and privileges of the Magesrix were restored to their former levels, though many rights granted individuals during the "Territorial Period" were retained. At present, each Magistracy citizen is guaranteed the right to elect legally protected representatives. Other rights, including trial by jury and freedom of speech, are protected as much by tradition as by Star League precedents.

Magesrix

The position of Magesrix, or supreme head of the Canopian State, evolved in the mid-2540s. Beginning with the tenure of Floral Centrella, the third of her family to run for office, a revamped Canopian Constitution provided for a strong centralized government headed by the Magesrix. Holding a lifetime office, the Magesrix is responsible for the welfare of all Magistracy citizens. This responsibility includes nearly total control over taxation, the appointment of military officers and civil officials, and the formation of internal and external policies.

During the Magistracy's Territorial Period, many of these sweeping powers were assumed by the Military Governor of the Canopian Territorial State, and later by the Star League Council itself. The Magesrix's authority was limited to maintaining civil order and promoting Star League policies within the Magistracy. Following Canopian independence from Star League control in the late 2700s, the Magesrix reassumed control of these governmental responsibilities, now aided in the performance of these tasks by a Central Committee of legislative peers.

In its present form, the office of Magesrix remains largely authoritarian, with legislative veto powers and the right to command the Canopian military. Ever since Melissa Humphreys established numerous democratic Peoples Councils, the position of Magesrix has diminished somewhat in stature, if not in actual capability.

Unlike similar institutions within the Inner Sphere, the Magesrix does not have the right to nominate her own successor. At the death of an incumbent Magesrix, specially selected officials, known as the Canopian Electors, nominate a new executive and forward their choice to the Central Committee. The Committee then votes for a new Magesrix; if that body does not reach a two-thirds majority of electoral votes, it instructs the electors to repeat the process until a majority vote occurs. In theory, the assembled electors may choose any citizen in the Magistracy, though a female member of the Centrella family (though not necessarily the oldest) has always been selected.

Central Committee

Drawn from popularly elected representatives from each planet of the Canopian systems, the 33-member Central Committee is a creation of the Humphreys administration of the early 2600s. Originally designed as a Board of Legislative Review, this body was revised and expanded in the latter days of the Star League to provide legislation for the Magesrix's approval, as well as to review policies handed down from that office. By 2750, membership in the Central Committee was opened to all citizens of the Magistracy, of both genders, with terms of office set at five-year intervals. With the Magistracy's independence, this term of office was reduced to two years. Because they often pursue different priorities, the office of the Magesrix and the Central Committee frequently find themselves in opposition.

Crimson Council

Formed as a result of an Imperial edict by Coranna Centrella (2550–2582), the Crimson Council administers matters

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pertaining to Canopian nobility. The Magestrix appoints this six-member panel, which rules on the creation of new nobility, the assessment of noble privileges and responsibilities, and general accountability to the state and its citizenry. On rare occasions, the Crimson Council (named for the traditional dyed-red ermine worn by Canopian nobility) has served as a judicial review board in cases of misconduct involving Canopian nobility. Membership in the Crimson Council is for life, though the Magestrix may dismiss a council appointee at her discretion.

Canopian Judiciary

The Canopian Judiciary is divided into three branches: the Canopian Provincial Courts, which conduct all manner of civil and criminal law at the planetary level; the Canopian Star Courts, which handle all matters pertaining to corporate and business law; and the Canopian Courts of Appeal. Canopian citizens may bring cases to a Provincial Court if they can produce a witness able to corroborate their case. Generally, the findings of the Provincial Courts are binding, and special officials of the court, known as Magistracy Field Officers (the equivalent of local marshals and deputies), enforce their rulings. When an individual wishes to appeal to a higher court, he may present his case to a Court of Appeal if the Central Committee approves his petition. In general, the Canopian court system maintains a high regard for the rights and privileges of the individual citizen, but protects the traditional privileges of the Canopian nobility as well. When rights are in conflict, the Magistracy Courts typically favor the private citizen.

Canopian Electors

The Canopian Electors are a select group of individuals whose sole governmental function is to choose a new Magestrix when the current one dies. Two electors from each Canopian planet are appointed for life. Though originally restricted to members of the aristocracy, Canopian electorship was extended to private citizens in the mid-2800s. They are selected by popular vote, with special elections held to fill vacancies. Though limited in function, the position of elector is most prestigious and carries considerable power to influence events. Thus, aspirants to the office will spend vast sums of money to secure the popular support needed for election. Nor is it uncommon for electors to become wealthy overnight through "gifts" tendered by Magestrix candidates. Beginning in 2955, the office of elector became hereditary in several influential families, though popular election still applies for the majority of electors.

MAGISTRACY NOBILITY

Canopian nobility is unique because it is not hereditary. Extensions of noble titles and privileges to successive generations depend on special service to the state. With the passage of time, the strictures regarding service have loosened dramatically, but some token service is still required for those wishing to retain honors that may be generations old.

The Canopian nobility is divided into three components. The first, the Froness, are families who settled the Canopian systems

in the first decade of colonization. The Durachi represent the various merchant princes, whose corporations have helped to develop trade with the Periphery and the Inner Sphere and have made substantial contributions to the office of the Magestrix. The newest class of Canopian nobility, the Girin, are those rare individuals whose personal services to the state, both civil and military, have warranted special recognition. During the early years of the Magistracy, only the Magestrix herself could grant noble status. Beginning with the reign of Coranna Centrella, however, this function was transferred to the Crimson Council. This council regulates all new appointments to the noble classes and arbitrates disputes over the prerogatives of each.

For the most part, the Canopian nobility is an aristocratic body of service-oriented elites. Though most noble families are content to serve in minor governmental functions, members of the Froness are concentrated in the royal court on Canopus.

Among the many privileges that the Canopian nobility enjoy are the right to hire a substitute to fulfill their military service, the right of the female to select her own mate (who cannot refuse her, under Canopian law), the right to conduct foreign trade outside the Magistracy, and the right to serve in specially appointed governmental positions, including military commands.

There is great factionalism and peer prejudice among the Canopian nobility. Many of the Froness believe themselves to be the only true Magistracy nobility, for example, while the Durachi and the Girin consider the Froness to be pure social snobs. During the Canopian heyday, the Girin families accepted many entrepreneurs into their class because of how well those individuals had managed the many Canopian entertainment industries. In the post-Reunification War period, many of these nobles lost their positions due to widespread Star League "neo-Puritanism." The loosening of moral strictures in the days following the Amaris Crisis reversed this trend.

Traditionally, the Magestrix has covertly encouraged this factionalism of the rival noble families. Should the nobility ever put aside its petty differences and unite, the Magistracy's social structure may radically change.

CONDITIONS FOR CITIZENSHIP

The original constitution of the Magistracy of Canopus, established in 2531, granted citizenship to all individuals desiring political, religious and social freedom. Any individual who can prove that he is the victim of such oppression is granted unconditional status as a citizen of the Canopian state for the duration of his life, as are his descendants. No Canopian citizen can be tried unless due cause and corroborating testimony have first been presented to a judicial official. No Canopian citizen can be extradited to another foreign power without the express permission of the Magestrix. Canopian citizens are free to own land, to transfer property rights to their descendants as they see fit and to pursue whatever social status they desire.

In exchange, each Canopian citizen must help provide for the common defense of the state. This obligation may be fulfilled through military service, by involvement in the educational system (as literacy is considered essential to the ongoing

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preparation for defense), or by donating land or materiel to the war effort in times of crisis. Though political parties are banned as being divisive, all Canopian citizens are required by law to participate in all elections.

CULTURAL STRUCTURE

The fact that the entertainment industry originally was and is again the primary source of income for the Magistracy of Canopus has had a visible, lasting effect on that realm's attitude toward religion, education and the arts.

RELIGION

The original Canopian constitution, supported by later Royal Edicts, grants complete freedom of religion and philosophical expression so long as individual worship does not infringe on another's safety. All the major traditional religions exist in the Magistracy, as well as an abundance of newer philosophies. Indeed, the Canopians, more than any other Periphery people, have embraced the spirit of the New Hedon philosophy, which combines the ideas of free love and epicureanism. No religious or philosophical doctrine may hold any official connection with governmental affairs, as special interest groups and lobbies are forbidden.

EDUCATION

If the Magistracy of Canopus faces one constant concern, it is education. The lack of funds to rebuild the educational institutions destroyed during the death throes of the Star League meant that, for decades, the average Canopian had no opportunity to progress beyond an elementary school education. This led to a gradual decline in literacy rates, an issue Magestrix Emma Centrella has recently begun to seriously address. Only two universities (basically technical schools) still exist in Canopian space: the University of Canopus and the University of Luxen. Because average enrollments are less than 500 students and because of the lack of qualified teachers and educational professionals, the Canopians will continue to struggle with attempts to reverse the downward trend in literacy for many years.

The Canopian health sciences represent the sole exception to this state of affairs. Developed in the Magistracy's early years, the medical disciplines have retained a high national priority, at times overshadowing the military in their share of economic resources. Today, the Canopian health industry maintains the highest standards of care to be found in the entire Periphery, and is in many respects superior to health care available in the Inner Sphere. In recent years, many Canopian physicians and surgeons have begun to practice outside Canopian space on long-term service contracts to other governments in one of many strategies designed to stimulate the Magistracy economy. Indeed, one of the major opportunities for the Magistracy to upgrade its educational system is in the area of foreign cultural exchange, where they may develop programs that "trade" medical care personnel for teachers, technicians and other professionals.

THE ARTS

Years of war and hardship nearly destroyed the Magistracy's once-fabled entertainment industry. The more literate Canopians, however, have traditionally valued the contributions of writers, painters and performing artists so highly that they successfully provided a haven for such creative types during the bleakest periods of Canopian history. With the current revitalization of the entertainment industry, artists find employment readily available, with government subsidies in abundance. The only demand placed on the individual creator is to produce high-quality work, and in return, the Magistracy government offers few restrictions on the dissemination of artistic expression and political thought.

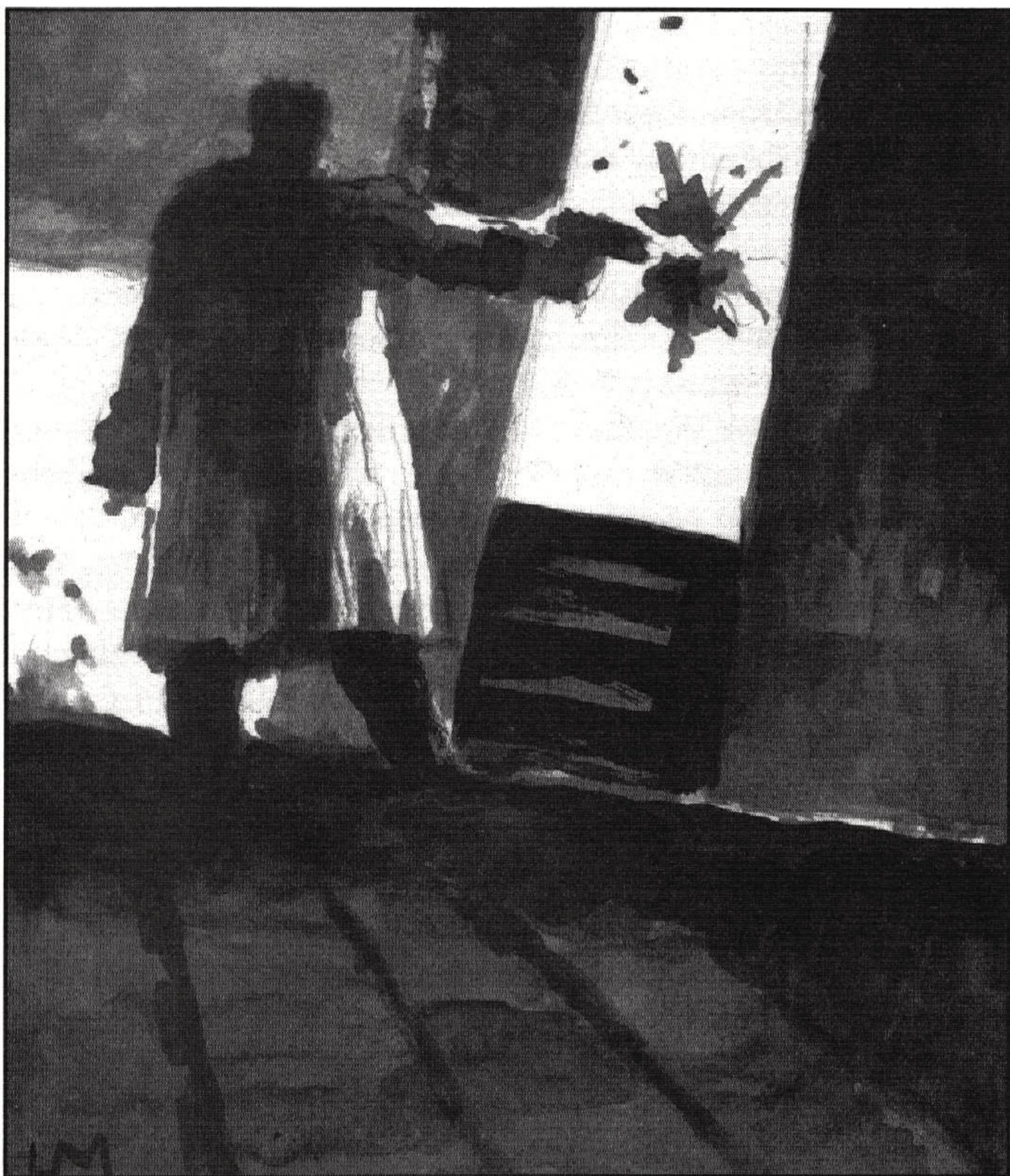
INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

The Magistracy of Canopus maintains diplomatic relations with nearly all Inner Sphere and Periphery powers, largely as a result of Magestrix Emma Centrella's commitment to diplomacy.

COMSTAR AND WORD OF BLAKE

The Magistracy is the only Periphery realm with large numbers of both ComStar and Word of Blake personnel. The Word of Blake's continued effort to drive our Order from the Magistracy has produced massive communications delays, as their operatives refuse to send or relay messages from ComStar HPG stations. And recently, this campaign of intransigence culminated in the brutal assassination of several ComStar acolytes on the world of Harminous.





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Despite such flagrant violations of internationally accepted conduct, ComStar remains committed to its mission in the Magistracy and will continue to use appropriate means to fulfill that mission. To this end ComStar operatives will continue efforts to reclaim stations appropriated by the Word of Blake renegades. Additionally, ComStar will continue its policy of non-cooperation with Word of Blake HPG stations and continue its drive to open new HPG stations on Magistracy worlds.

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

Relations between the Magistracy and the Free Worlds League remain strained at this time. Thomas Marik, though reputedly a peaceful man, has apparently grown disturbed at the growing power of the Magistracy, especially in light of its alliance with the Taurian Concordat. Despite assurances from the Magistracy, Marik seems unconvinced that the Canopian-Taurian alliance poses no threat to his realm.

Despite these conditions, trade between the two states remains healthy. Goods flow freely between Canopian and Marik worlds, and Canopian traders are a welcome sight in many Free Worlds systems. And the populations of many planets within the League, including Atreus itself, regard Canopian pleasure circuses highly.

CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION

Mutual suspicion and animosity have colored relations between the Canopians and the Capellans throughout the history of the two realms. Although Emma Centrella's rise to power has eased tensions somewhat between the two nations, many Capellans still remember the Canopian-Andurien invasion of the Confederation in 3030 and remain hostile toward the Magistracy.

During the reign of Romano Liao, the Magestrix publicly denounced alleged Capellan human rights abuses. As a result, Romano prohibited any diplomatic contact with the Magistracy. After Romano's death and Sun-Tzu's rise to the Chancellorship, relations between the two realms slowly began to change. And when the Canopians announced their new alliance with the Taurians in 3056, Sun-Tzu quickly reopened diplomatic channels with the Magistracy.

Despite their diplomatic ties, both realms remain suspicious of one another. Sun-Tzu has repeatedly criticized the Canopian-Taurian alliance as a destabilizing, aggressive compact and has repeatedly informed the Canopians and Taurians that he will not tolerate any incursions into his realm. Meanwhile, the Magestrix has repeatedly expressed concern that the Confederation is supplying BattleMechs to Caesar Sean O'Reilly of the Marian Hegemony, although she has been unable to produce any evidence of such sales.

Despite its diplomatic ties with the Magistracy, the Confederation still maintains its long-standing prohibition against Canopian traders and pleasure circuses in Capellan space. This prohibition extends to Liao worlds captured by the Federated Commonwealth and those in the St. Ives Compact. Canopian leaders, however, have made only superficial efforts to stop the flow of Canopian goods and circuses into the Confederation. As

a result of these policies, a thriving black market has evolved on Capellan worlds bordering the Magistracy, and smugglers have become common in these systems.

ROM analysts estimate that the Capellan black market in Canopian goods and services generates nearly 100 million C-bills per year. Despite this growing phenomenon, the Capellan government has made only halfhearted efforts to eradicate the market. Apparently, many of the smugglers who supply the market and the traders who deal in contraband provide considerable sums of money to the Capellan authorities in charge of border security. In return, they are allowed to operate without government interference.

In recent years, the Capellan-Canopian border worlds have also become favored exit points for Capellan dissidents fleeing the Confederation, as well as entry points for Magistracy Intelligence Ministry operatives infiltrating the Liao realm. Given these developments, it seems only a matter of time before the Capellans institute stricter border controls in these areas.

FEDERATED COMMONWEALTH AND LYRAN ALLIANCE

The Magistracy maintains friendly relations with the Federated Commonwealth. In return for Commonwealth support of the Canopian-Taurian alliance, the Magestrix has granted Federated Commonwealth firms privileged trade status within the Magistracy. In turn, the Federated Commonwealth has invested heavily in the Magistracy and has promised future aid.

Despite the secession of the Lyrans, the Magistracy has continued to do business with the Federated Commonwealth and maintained diplomatic ties with the distant Alliance.

OTHER PERIPHERY STATES

Canopian relations with the Marian Hegemony remain highly strained. The Hegemony responded to the Magestrix's proposed Periphery alliance in 3051 by raiding nearly every realm within its reach. When Hegemony forces invaded the Lothian League, the tiny state pleaded for help from the Canopians. The Magestrix provided economic and medical assistance but declined to offer any military aid. This refusal caused the Magistracy to lose much of its influence in the League and its closest neighbor, the Illyrian Palatinate. Both the Lothians and the Illyrians accused the Magistracy of abandoning the League to the vicious Hegemony. Eventually the Magistracy did offer some covert military support, but not enough to prevent the Hegemony from conquering the Lothian League in late 3056.

Since then, we have learned that the Magistracy Intelligence Ministry attempted to assassinate O'Reilly at the war's close. Canopian agents had slipped on to the Hegemony capital world of Alphard and taken up positions near O'Reilly's palace. When O'Reilly returned to his home, the agents ambushed him. O'Reilly's guards defeated the agents, but not before they wounded the leader. Apparently, O'Reilly was unable to deduce the origin of the assassination attempt.

Despite Illyrian anger over the relative Canopian inaction during the war, the Palatinate continues to trade with the

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Magistracy, and Canopian firms have been quick to exploit the work force created by the large influx of war refugees to the tiny Scandinavian state.

The Magistracy enjoys friendly relations with the Outworlds Alliance. Though quite distant from each other, the two states have worked hard to foster cooperation and commerce between their populations. With few other allies, the Alliance prizes its relations with the Canopians. Reportedly, the Magestrix has expressed the hope that one day the Outworlds Alliance will join the Canopian-Taurian alliance.

Canopian delegates have received a warm welcome from the small Circinus Federation as well, but the two realms have yet to forge any solid diplomatic ties. This failure seems to be the result of the near-constant upheavals that currently plague the Federation.

Canopian relations with the young Rim Collection have also been warm, but not particularly productive. The Magestrix has promised any support she can to the new state, but many of the Collection's fiercely independent leaders regard such offerings with suspicion.

Despite setbacks and delays, the Magestrix has doggedly pursued her program of diplomatic initiatives aimed at uniting the Periphery states. Those endeavors are aided by the Canopians' position of relative strength, which seems likely to grow if the Magistracy remains on its present course.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

Magestrix Emma's position in the Magistracy seems quite secure. She enjoys wide popularity and respect among her subjects, primarily due to her successful efforts to rebuild the Magistracy and restore its position as an economic and political power. However, a few critics of the Magestrix do exist on the outer, less developed edges of the Magistracy. Generally, most of this opposition consists of disgruntled nobles who feel the Magestrix's government has neglected their worlds. Conceivably, these scattered pockets of opponents could seriously threaten the Magestrix if they united, but such action seems highly improbable. And the Magestrix's popularity ensures that opposition to her rule would gain little, if any, popular support.

Although our operatives have discovered no substantial dissent or discord within the Magestrix's government, they have uncovered evidence of discord within the ruler's marriage. Currently, Magestrix Emma has produced six heirs fathered by a mercenary named Nicholas Ramillie, whom she married in 3041. Reportedly, Ramillie left the royal residence several months ago and now resides with his father's mercenary unit, Ramillie's Raiders, as does the couple's only son, Newton. The couple's five daughters live at the royal residence.

FUTURE GOALS

By all accounts, the Magestrix plans to continue colonization efforts to expand the boundaries of her realm. At the same time, the Canopians are supporting concerted efforts to expand

the influence of the Magistracy through economic means. Both of these enterprises have been bolstered by the Magistracy's diplomatic work, which has focused on creating open markets with its trading partners, gaining new trading partners, and promoting relative peace among the Periphery and Inner Sphere powers.

The Magistracy's alliance with the Taurian Concordat has helped establish the Canopians as one of the major military powers in the Periphery, but so far the Magestrix has refrained from any open displays of that power. This restraint may be attributed to the Magestrix's fears that open Canopian aggression might provide a pretext for invasion by unfriendly Inner Sphere powers.

In recent years, the Magestrix has slowed her efforts to form a Periphery-wide alliance. Though she still maintains that any such alliance would be purely defensive in nature and aimed only at a potential Clan invasion, some Inner Sphere leaders have cautioned her privately about the threat such an alliance would present to the Inner Sphere—and the willingness of certain Inner Sphere powers to conduct pre-emptive strikes aimed at disabling any Periphery invasion force.

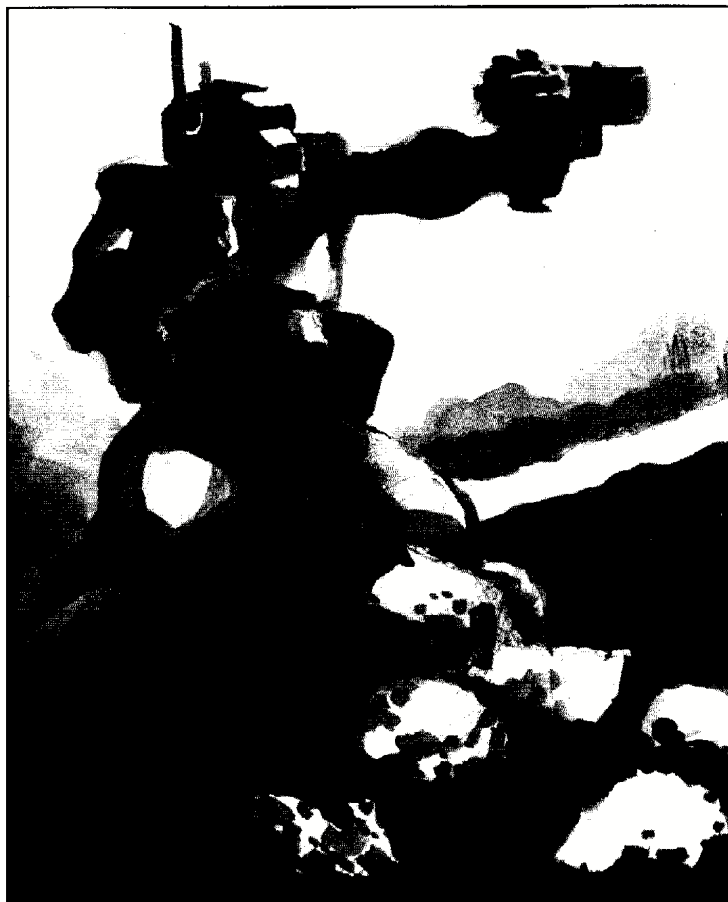
Publicly, the Magestrix has expressed support for our continued efforts to form an Inner Sphere defensive alliance to counter the Clan threat. But she likely shares with her fellow Periphery leaders the concern that any such alliance might one day be turned against the Periphery powers.

MAGISTRACY MILITARY

The Magistracy has traditionally fielded one of the smallest armed forces in the Periphery, relying heavily on local constabularies and mercenary forces to defend the nation against foreign attacks. In the years before the outbreak of the Reunification War, however, the Canopian government began a series of crash rearmament programs to redress this lack of well-trained and disciplined forces. It was too late, however, to do more than fight a delaying action against the best that the Inner Sphere could put in the field. During the Canopians' years as a Territorial State, its military was reduced to a symbolic cadre of veteran soldiers confined to service as palace guards. Military build-up was renewed after the Magistracy's declaration of independence, but the loss of many key industrial worlds stunted the military's potential for growth.

The Magistracy's steady economic growth since the end of the Fourth Succession War has allowed the Magistracy Armed Forces (MAF) to emerge as the second-largest standing army in the Periphery, doubling its size to nearly thirteen regiments. Though the size of the MAF is impressive by even Inner Sphere standards, the average MAF MechWarrior remains poorly trained and unskilled—a lack that even a high degree of motivation and willingness to endure considerable sacrifice cannot overcome. Recently, MAF leaders instituted an extensive training program to remedy this problem, and last year, the Canopian government opened the Canopian Institute of War. This university, patterned

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after the Sun Zhang MechWarrior Academy of the Draconis Combine, is designed to provide highly trained and skilled officers for the MAF. The Institute faculty includes many distinguished 'Mech commanders, but the impact of the Institute on the MAF remains to be seen.

The Canopian government has also bolstered its military power by hiring several veteran mercenary units from the Inner Sphere. Two of the most recent acquisitions have been the Dragonslayers and Ethan Allen's Green Mountain Boys. Reportedly, the Dragonslayers are serving defensive duty on several Canopian border worlds, but their exact location is unknown. The Green Mountain Boys are regularly stationed along the Canopian-Marik border as well, but they are currently serving as a temporary garrison on the world of Detroit in the New Colony Region.

The Magistracy's economic diversification and improved foreign relations have increased the number of BattleMechs, tanks and aerospace units available to the MAF, but the majority of the realm's own output of war materiel still comes from Majesty Metals and Manufacturing on Canopus IV and Duncanshire. The weapons industry has also benefited from the foreign cultural exchange initiatives established by the Magestrix, as skilled technicians and manufacturing experts have upgraded Magistracy operations and increased production.

UNIFORMS

Standard uniforms within the Magistracy Armed Forces are variations on a single theme. Canopian ground forces wear bullet-resistant black tunics, helmets, boots, and gloves over tight-fitting turquoise body suits. Naval personnel wear black body suits with turquoise accessories. The standard uniform is worn in the field and for day-to-day duties, although camouflage fatigues are issued to troops for certain types of missions. Support personnel, including technicians, administrative personnel, and special service functionaries, wear the standard uniforms of their line regiment counterparts, except for blue piping to denote their status.

Canopian MechWarrior battle dress resembles that worn by Inner Sphere MechWarriors. However, Canopian neurohelmets are larger than those used elsewhere, due to the Magistracy's relatively low level of technological expertise. Magistracy aerospace pilots and their naval counterparts wear turquoise helmets and simple black jumpsuits distinguished by arm-length displays that contain emergency circuitry systems and life-sign monitors. Canopian naval personnel wear similar uniforms.

Canopian dress uniforms employ the standard turquoise and black color scheme, but are loose-fitting and constructed of a lighter material than that used in standard uniforms. In addition, officers' dress uniforms feature silver piping on the trouser legs and cuffs.

ENLISTED RANKS

The system of ranks used by the MAF is similar to those of military orders throughout the galaxy. The men and women are on active duty in the MAF are distributed among ten different ranks: four officer grade and six enlisted. The insignia for all MAF personnel is diamond shaped.

The six enlisted ranks of the MAF are Volunteer, First Ranker, Lance Corporal, Star Corporal, Command Sergeant and Banner Sergeant.

Volunteer

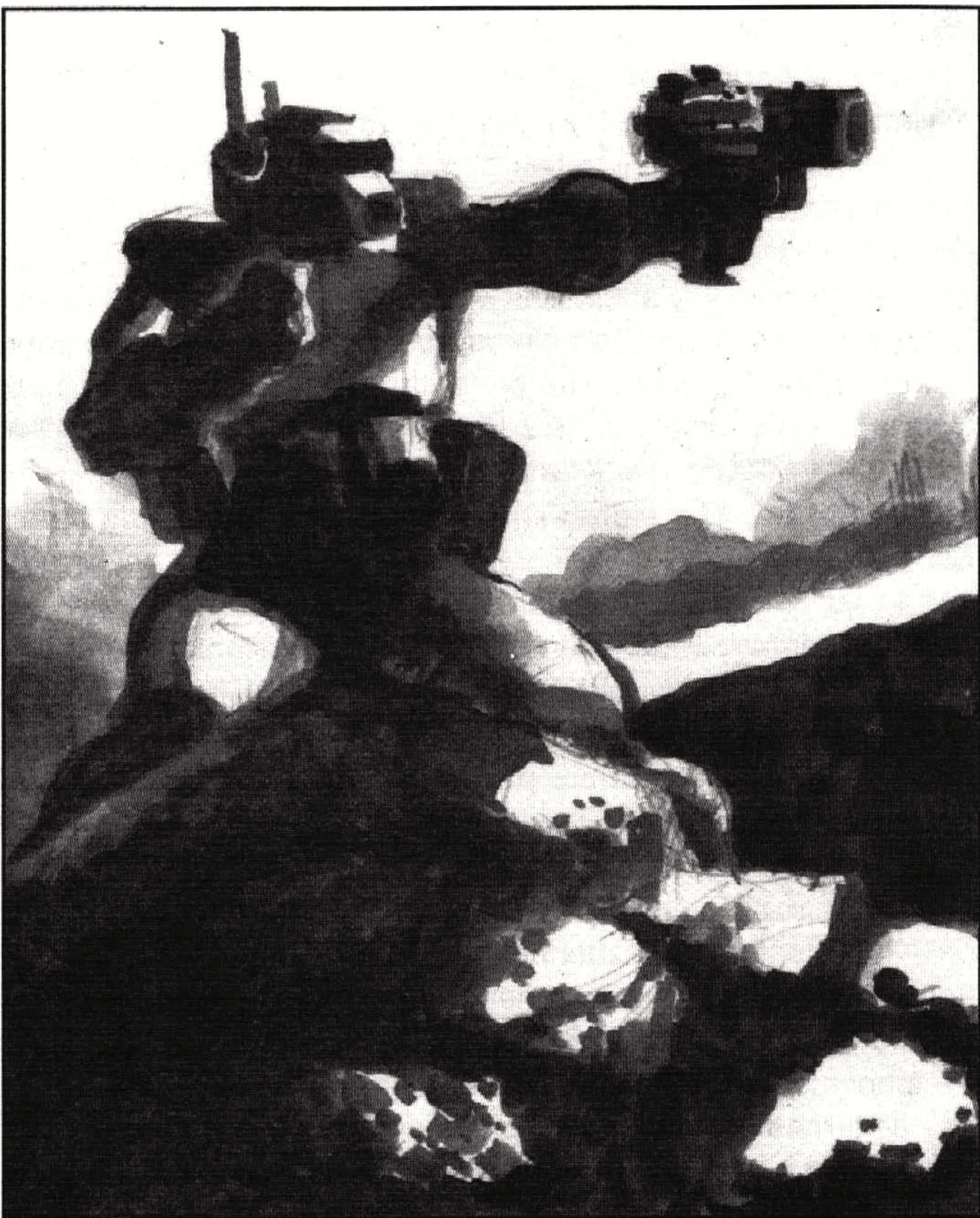
All Canopian citizens are required to serve a minimum of three years in the MAF (though aristocrats can secure exemption by hiring a substitute). All new recruits are referred to as volunteers and wear the silver-edged diamond insignia on their lapels and cuffs.

First Ranker

All graduates of basic training receive the rank of first ranker, unless subject to some disciplinary action. The first ranker then enters into several months of advanced training in a particular area of expertise. Further promotion within the MAF depends on individual initiative and performance. Two silver-edged diamonds, one nested inside the other, identify a first ranker.

Lance Corporal

The lance corporal is roughly equivalent to a sergeant in other military services. Lance corporals are expected to be competent instructors in the field and to command units averaging



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ing between fifteen and twenty troops. A third nested diamond bar distinguishes lance corporals from first rankers.

Star Corporal

The core of the MAF, the star corporal serves in a variety of leadership roles, often in the absence of ranking field officers. Star corporals' most typical role is the equivalent of a platoon sergeant in combat. The rank is named for its insignia, a silver star within a silver-edged diamond.

Command Sergeant

Command sergeants are the equivalent of senior company noncommissioned officers, often holding a variety of staff positions under senior officers. A solid silver diamond denotes the command sergeant.

Banner Sergeant

The rank of banner sergeant harks back to the days when personnel of this rank were responsible for their unit's regimental colors. Though banner sergeants still handle unit flags in full-dress parades, they are primarily responsible for filling senior staff and field commands. They are the equivalent of battalion sergeants in Inner Sphere military structures. The rank insignia for the banner sergeant is two solid silver diamonds.

OFFICER RANKS

Junior officer slots within the MAF are usually purchased positions, a feature unique among Periphery military systems. In all cases involving senior grade officers, however, such purchases require the confirmation of the Magistratrix. Though the merits of this policy may be questionable, this system has gone unchallenged for four centuries. Line regiment officers usually pay 10,000 to 15,000 C-bills less for their ranks than guard regiment officers.

Ensign

The rank of ensign appears in both the Canopian navy and army. Ensigns rarely command set numbers of troops, but may control from ten to a hundred individuals at any given time, depending on their unit assignment. An ensign's rank insignia is a gold-edged diamond. Ensigns typically pay 10,000 to 25,000 C-bills for their position.

Commander

The rank of commander is equivalent to the Inner Sphere ranks of lieutenant, lieutenant commander and commander. Aboard ship, a commander may serve as a department commander or his assistant. On the ground, a commander typically heads up a company or battalion. The insignia is two gold-edged hollow diamonds, one inside the other. Commanders pay anywhere from 16,000 to 35,000 C-bills for their rank.

Major

MAF majors are typically employed as senior battalion commanders and brevet regimental commanders, especially in

training commands. In the MAF navy, the rank of major is usually referred to as comcapt (a bastardization of commodore-captain). A comcapt can command anything from one ship up to a squadron of three to six vessels. A single gold diamond insignia denotes a major; a gold wreath below the diamond denotes a comcapt. Majors typically pay 24,000 to 45,000 C-bills for their position.

Colonel

MAF colonels are the regimental commanders of the MAF. Aboard ship, the rank is referred to as rearad (from rear admiral). In addition to the various regimental commanders, there are three senior colonels who coordinate defense plans for the Magistratrix. Two rearads command the Canopian Navy fleets. Two horizontal solid gold diamonds denote the colonel; a rearad also has a gold wreath. Colonels pay from 33,000 to more than 50,000 C-bills for their rank.

STRUCTURE OF THE MAF

The simple structure of the Magistracy Armed Forces and its small size allows it to be streamlined, with only a few distinctions between branches.

Magestrix Command Center

At the apex of the MAF is the Magestrix Command Center (MCC). Located on Canopus IV, this division of the MAF is directly responsible to the Magestrix for all top-level strategic planning and defense initiatives. Staffed by three senior colonels and their naval counterparts, the MCC coordinates the deployment of all Canopian forces to meet a variety of threats from foreign powers. All operational plans developed by the MCC are subject to the Magestrix's final approval.

Magistracy Army

All ground units within Canopian space are a part of the Magistracy Army. The army does not differentiate sub-branches beyond the distinctions of infantry and armor commands. Artillery and jump troops, when available, are classified as infantry. Engineers and special forces units remain rare within the Magistracy Army.

Magistracy Navy

At present, the size of the Canopian Navy is less than six dozen DropShips and two dozen JumpShips, complemented by many smaller, independently owned merchant vessels, which can be used as privateers. The Canopian Navy is divided into two fleets, with two squadrons of two flotillas each. The Canopian Battle Fleet is charged with the defense of orbital space around potential targets of invasion. The Reserve Fleet patrols in and around the Canopus IV system under the personal direction of the Magestrix.

Magistracy Aerospace Arm

Fewer than 100 aerospace fighters serve Canopian space, most of which are captured and refurbished light or

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medium craft. This small number of fighters allows operational command of the aerospace arm to be relegated to the Navy, with individual fighters divided among the Magistracy's two fleets.

Magistracy Medical Corps

The Magistracy Medical Corps is the one service branch in which Canopians excel over their Inner Sphere counterparts. The MMC takes pains to ensure adequate medical care for every trooper, sailor and pilot. The medical teams take pride in their speed in removing the wounded from the field and returning the recovered soldiers to their units with a minimum of delay. The ratio of skilled medics and surgeons within the MAF is roughly one medical specialist for every seven fighting troops, as opposed to a ratio of one to twenty (or more) in other modern-day armies.

Magistracy Support Corps

The Magistracy Support Corps is a catchall division responsible for administrative, supply, quartermaster and personnel-related functions of the other military systems. The Support Corps is likewise responsible for training recruits, advanced officer training, contractual liaison with mercenary units, and research and development of new weapons systems.

Typical MAF Units

MAF units in the field closely model the deployment schemes found in the armed forces of the Inner Sphere. MAF ground forces are usually concentrated in one heavy battalion, with most of the regiments' BattleMechs formed into four-man lances. Support battalions generally consist of whatever armor (mostly reconditioned Rommel tanks) and infantry forces are available. Air lances are typically absent from MAF forces, the exception being the Magistracy Royal Guards, which contain one air lance per battalion. All other MAF air lances are under the control of the Magistracy Navy, which provides for their transportation, deployment and repair.

Infantry platoons vary in size from 30 to 50 men, with companies of 120 to 180 men. Jump troops, special forces and engineers show a very limited presence within the MAF.

The Magistracy maintains a number of local Militia Defense Battalions. Drawn from the populations of the major Canopian planets, these conventional forces represent reservists with a minimal amount of training. Canopian militia forces maintain a large number of armored fighting vehicles, and they construct local fortifications. Though these militia units cannot stand up to regular forces, they give a good account of themselves when combined with regular armed forces. Militia are typically deployed in oversized battalions of five companies each.

The average Canopian soldier enters service at the age of sixteen. If the individual is a male, he will typically have the equivalent of a twelfth-grade education; females have slightly higher educational backgrounds. Following basic training, the individual undergoes service with a home defense unit for three to four years. Those who choose careers as enlisted per-

sonnel join training battalions near the Canopian borders to undergo additional training before serving in a regular line unit. Instead of attending Officer Training School, those selected as officer candidates (where there is a marked bias toward females) are posted as military aides-de-camp to an officer on duty in a regular line regiment. Nowhere is the concept of on-the-job training taken more seriously than in the MAF. An official commendation from a candidate's "sponsor" makes it possible for him to purchase his first commission (often with his sponsor's assistance).

THE COLONIAL MARSHALS

The Colonial Marshals enjoy the same status within the Magistracy as they do in the Taurian Concordat. Although the colonization fever that has overtaken the Concordat is not nearly as strong in the Magistracy, alliance fever is extremely strong. Many Canopian citizens view the new alliance with the Concordat in a favorable light and consider the Colonial Marshals to be the crowning symbol of this alliance.

The Marshals are trained primarily on Canopus IV at the Canopian Institute of War. Additional training for these troops occurs on several other worlds that closely mirror the conditions of the colony to which they eventually are assigned.

Marshals usually serve a four-year tour of duty on their colony, after which they return to either Canopus IV or Taurus for additional training, discharge or transfer to a new colony or military unit.

INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS

Although the Magistracy Intelligence Ministry (MIM) is technically a branch of the MAF, the intelligence service operates with full autonomy and answers directly to the Magistracy. The size and operational range of the MIM has increased substantially over the past fifteen years. Originally the MIM confined its information-gathering operations to the Canopian-Marik border. But last year ROM agents discovered MIM agents operating in the Lyran Alliance. The appearance of these agents so far from the Magistracy has attracted concern, naturally. However, after carefully monitoring those agents, ROM analysts have concluded that their mission is simply to gather accurate intelligence about the Clans and the Inner Sphere's response to the Clan invasion. Though ROM agents have had less success monitoring MIM agents discovered in the Draconis Combine, those agents seem to be performing similar operations.

Although the MIM still lacks the resources and expertise of most Inner Sphere intelligence services, the MIM seems to be improving very quickly. In addition to operations in the Lyran and Draconis states, the MIM is conducting extensive operations in Marik and Capellan border areas. MIM agents are also believed to be operating within every major Periphery realm.

Our greatest worry is that the crisis between ComStar and Word of Blake within the Magistracy has allowed several MIM agents to infiltrate our Order. Currently, ROM operatives are conducting counterintelligence operations to monitor any such infiltration.

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THE MAGISTRACY ARMED FORCES

Deployment as of 3058

Commander: Magestrix Emma Centrella

Aides: Senior Colonels Holly Van Dame, Trisha Tellaverde and Norbert Kingelt

Mech Strength: 23 Regiments

Unit Name	Experience Level	Loyalty	Homeworld
Magistracy Royal Guards			
(CO: Colonel Vernyce Alkobar)			
Raventhir's Iron Hand	Veteran	Fanatical	Canopus IV
(CO: Major Mariann Tudor)			
1st Canopian Cuirassiers	Veteran	Fanatical	Canopus IV
(CO: Major Margaret Zachara)			
2nd Canopian Cuirassiers	Regular	Fanatical	Canopus IV
(CO: Major Joeseeph Wulf)			
Chasseurs á Cheval			
(CO: Colonel Cynthia Evans)			
1st Canopian Light Horse	Regular	Reliable	Megarez
(CO: Major Darlene Ishora)			
2nd Canopian Light Horse	Green	Reliable	Fanandir
(CO: Major Ardie Germaine)			
3rd Canopian Light Horse	Regular	Reliable	Adherlwin
(CO: Major Betty Kadara)			
Canopian Fusiliers			
(CO: Colonel Sandra Aupriz)			
1st Canopian Fusiliers	Green	Reliable	Lindermarle
(CO: Major Darlene McKinnon)			
2nd Canopian Fusiliers	Regular	Reliable	Afarsin
(CO: Major Rita Stoleburg)			
3rd Canopian Fusiliers	Green	Reliable	Marantha
(CO: Major William Sangrey)			
Canopian Highlanders			
(CO: Colonel Oscar Long)			
Long's Light Lancers	Green	Reliable	Dainmar Majoris
(CO: Major Daniel Hale)			
McGraw's Marauders	Veteran	Reliable	Dunianshire
(CO: Major Judith Wood)			
Nellie's Naughties	Green	Reliable	Luxen
(CO: Major Dorothy Skaw)			
Harcourt's Destructors			
(CO: Colonel Kamala Rahman)			
Harcourt's Aliens	Regular	Reliable	Brixtana
(CO: Major Sheila Joncas)			
Drummond's Destroyers	Regular	Reliable	New Abilene
(CO: Major Alesha Lorre)			
Ramilie's Raiders			
(CO: Colonel Newton Ramilie)			
Command Battalion	Elite	Fanatical	Early Dawn
(CO: Major Paula Nupen)			
Assault Battalion	Veteran	Fanatical	Early Dawn
(CO: Major Nicholas Ramilie)			
Caesar's Cohorts (1Battalion)	Regular	Reliable	Lockton
(CO: Major Worrell Orosco)			

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Unit Name	Experience Level	Loyalty	Homeworld
1st Screaming Eagles (CO: Colonel Paul Hokola)			
1st Battalion (CO: Major Caroline Kenning)	Veteran	Reliable	Booker
2nd Battalion (CO: Major Thomas Raney)	Regular	Reliable	Bass
3rd Battalion (CO: Major Kenneth Frear)	Regular	Questionable	Bethonolog
2nd Screaming Eagles (CO: Colonel Zarfina Warrick)			
1st Battalion (CO: Major Byron Tarkington)	Regular	Questionable	Gambillion
2nd Battalion (CO: Major Christine Dankert)	Regular	Reliable	Palladix
3rd Battalion (CO: Major Gilbert Webb)	Green	Questionable	Techne's Revenge
Magistracy Cavaliers (CO: Colonel Kevin Thorn)			
1st Battalion (CO: Major Dillon Wentworth)	Green	Reliable	Addhara
2nd Battalion (CO: Major Phil McCracken)	Green	Reliable	Thraxa
3rd Battalion (CO: Dushann Frost)	Green	Reliable	Thraxa



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Unit Name	Experience Level	Loyalty	Homeworld
1st Raventhir Footmen (CO: Colonel Mavis Cooper)			
1st Battalion	Green	Relaible	Cate's Hold
(CO: Major Devon Elnes)			
2nd Battalion	Green	Reliable	Gallis
(CO: Major Irene Bourcy)			
3rd Battalion	Green	Fanatical	Royal Foxx
(CO: Major Holly Bradlund)			
2nd Raventhir Footmen (CO: Colonel Geir Hedman)			
1st Battalion	Green	Reliable	Candiear
(CO: Major Craig Hill)			
2nd Battalion	Green	Reliable	Borgan's Rift
(CO: Major Joeseeph Effinger)			
3rd Battalion	Green	Reliable	Kossandra's Memory*
(CO: Major Winston Bush)			
1st Canopian Brigade (CO: Colonel Felicia Joppa)			
1st Battalion	Green	Relaible	Addasar*
(CO: Major Bently Nelson)			
2nd Battalion	Regular	Questionable	Crawford's Delight*
(CO: Major Naia Eberhardt)			
3rd Battalion	Green	Questionable	Weistheimer*
(CO: Major Ted Rutledge)			
The Dragonslayers (1 Regiment) (CO: Colonel Kitiara Galland)	Veteran	Reliable	Unknown
Green Mountain Boys (1 Battalion) (CO: Major Ethan Allen)	Veteran	Reliable	Detroit*
Lethal Injection (2 Battalions) (CO: Colonel Ryan O'Neil)	Regular	Questionable	Hardcore

*Indicates new colony

PERSONALITIES

EMMA CENTRELLA

The Clan invasion seems to have genuinely troubled the 50-year-old Magestrix, so much so that Emma still sends ambassadors to the Inner Sphere to promote cooperation against the Clans. Reportedly, she often spends long hours in her office going over holos of engagements with the Clans and other related data, studying them intensely, looking for weaknesses to exploit.

The Magestrix's marriage to Nicholas Ramillie continues to be troubled, but recently Nicholas has increased his visits to the royal residence. Some observers speculate that these visits may signal renewed efforts by the couple to reconcile their differences.

KITIARA GALLAND

Kitiara Galland commands a mercenary unit known as the Dragonslayers. The unit served the Federated Commonwealth for years before joining the service of the Canopian Magistracy. According to rumors, the Magestrix hired the unit because it possessed an undamaged *Loki* OmniMech. So far, these rumors remain unconfirmed. More likely, the Magestrix hired the

unit because of her long-time friendship with Galland, who served as Emma's lancemate during the Magestrix's early military career. Reportedly, Galland is pleased to be in the Magistracy and reunited with her old friend, but many members of her unit wish to return to Federated Commonwealth space to rescue comrades lost to the Clans.

FULL COLONEL NORBERT KINGELT

A former aide to the Magestrix, Full Colonel Norbert Kingelt commands all forces stationed within the New Colony Region and serves as co-commander of the Colonial Marshals. Kingelt's tactical skills fueled his steady rise through the ranks of the Magistracy Armed Forces, and most of his colleagues consider him a solid commander and stern soldier.

Although Colonel Kingelt works well with the Colony Council, he has had several disagreements with the council president, Sherman Maltin. Apparently, Kingelt has criticized Maltin's slow reactions to events as unduly restricting his military forces.

The 60-year-old, well-built Kingelt acts and carries himself like a much younger man. At 6 foot 5 inches and nearly 136 kilos, Kingelt is fast for his size and age. Kingelt is also a well-regarded painter, and many of his works hang in galleries throughout the Magistracy.

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STRANGE SLAVERY

After so many years of stayin' out of all the fightin' goin' on between the Dracs and the Fedrats, it seemed a shame we couldn't fight our way out of a wet paper bag as far as the pirates were concerned. No matter how hard we tried, we couldn't keep ahead of 'em and we couldn't defend ourselves against 'em. They just rode in like they owned the place, took what they wanted, created a little mayhem, and rode out again, promising to come back soon. They wore down our military, they wrecked our economy, they killed our best and brightest and even took our women.

But the worst began when some malicious fool started a rumor that Antallos had some sort of Star League cache buried under its miserable soil. You know, if half those rumors were true, we'd have to wonder about the brains of the people running the League—they would've been hard pressed to spread their resources as thin as that and still be as successful as they were. Anyway, the worst of the Inner Sphere came to our corner of the galaxy and when the search didn't pan out, they took it out on us—and I can't explain why. The strangest and saddest part of it was that the Antallos slavers actually made money from our misery. They started capturing Alliance citizens and selling them to the prospectors as personal punching bags, complete with papers authenticating their planet of origin. Not that I don't expect the worst from human nature, but this really seemed to go beyond the bounds of anything that could be considered humane or decent.

Lucky for the Alliance, interest in the Star League digs petered out before our nation went completely to hell.

—From An Oral History of the Periphery, *ComStar Publishing*, 3040

worlds in exchange for "protection" against the invading Kurita and Star League forces. As a result of the secret agreement, Davion forces quickly landed on numerous Alliance worlds. Officially, the Davion troops occupied the planets as invading armies under the auspices of the Star League. In reality, the Davion forces simply garrisoned the worlds to deny the Kurita and Star League invaders access to those planets. In 2585, with no decisive end in sight, the Star League terminated the war against the Alliance by negotiating the Peace of Cerberus.

In the years that followed the Reunification War, the worlds of the Outworlds Alliance shared in the prosperity that emerged throughout known space. And by carefully exploiting the tensions between its two powerful neighbors, the Federated Suns and the Draconis Combine, the Alliance remained a noncombatant throughout the Succession Wars.

Neatly sandwiched between the Federated Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine, the two greatest military powers in the Inner Sphere, the Outworlds Alliance maintains a precarious balance between economic solvency and military weakness. Forced to rely since its inception on strategic negotiations to survive as a realm, the Alliance has alternately prospered and declined according to the strength of its leaders. The recent rise of Mitchell Avellar to the Outworlds' presidency bodes well for the future of this Periphery state.

Though bandits continue to cause widespread economic hardship and property damage to the worlds of the Outworlds Alliance, an increase in the literacy rate and viable industrial initiatives seem likely to finally pull the state out of its decades-long teeter on the brink of dissolution. Financial and commercial support from Houses Davion and Kurita have provided the needed impetus for native manufacturers to jumpstart the local economies, and President Avellar seems determined to make the most of the Alliance's natural resources; manual labor, mineral resources and the will to survive.

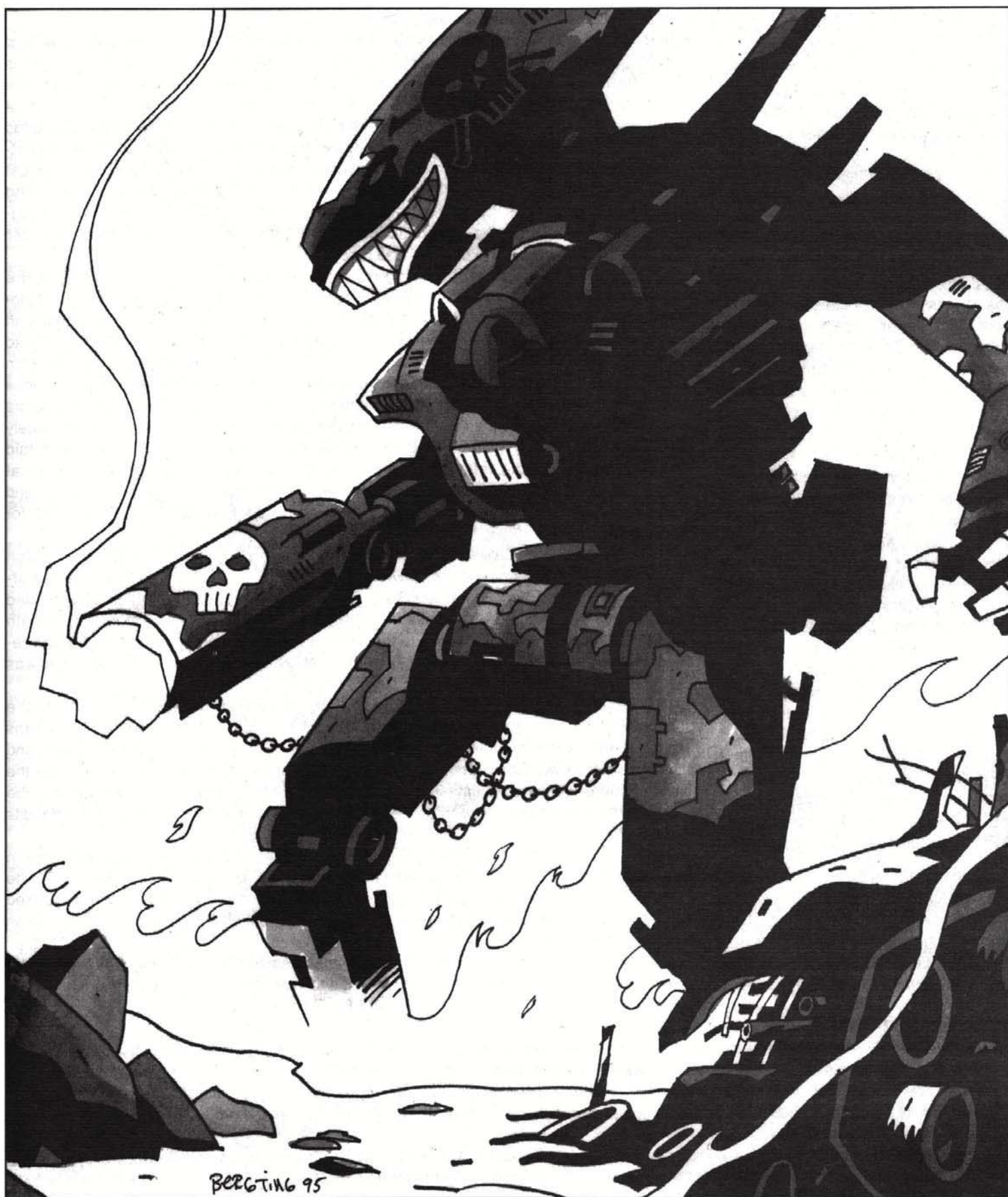
ORIGINS AND HISTORY

Historians trace the inception of the Outworlds Alliance to the Alpheratz colony, founded in 2413 by a former Davion officer, Julius Santiago Avellar. Like many other Inner Sphere emigrants of the time, Avellar and his followers fled to the Periphery to escape the near-constant conflict that plagued the Inner Sphere during the Age of War. Avellar's pleas for an end to the wars found a receptive audience among many residents of the Inner Sphere, and soon thousands of immigrants began to arrive at the colony. Eventually the settlers began to spread to neighboring planets, prompting Avellar to form a government to oversee the new settlements, which he christened the Outworlds Alliance.

For the next hundred years the Outworlds Alliance existed in relative peace, relying primarily on skillful diplomacy to maintain its sovereignty. Midway through the twenty-sixth century, however, the members of the newly formed Star League turned their attentions toward the Periphery realms. In 2571, the League forced the Outworlds Alliance to accept "garrisons" of Draconis and Terran Hegemony troops, ostensibly assigned to protect the Alliance worlds from pirate activity. Unable to resist this occupation, the agrarian Alliance worlds complied. Later that year, on the planet of Santiago, tensions between a Draconis garrison and local residents erupted into a riot that claimed the lives of twenty-seven civilians. The so-called Santiago Massacre triggered hundreds of anti-Star League riots on dozens of Periphery worlds.

Such incidents, combined with the territorial ambitions of Star League leaders, led to the Reunification War in the latter half of the century. The war reached the Outworlds Alliance in 2581, when Star League and Kurita forces attacked and easily captured a number of Alliance worlds, which they proceeded to occupy with brutal efficiency. The Alliance government was unable to resist the invasion by military means, and so it shrewdly enlisted the aid of another Star League member-state, the Federated Suns, to soften the blow of Star League occupation. Exploiting Davion suspicions of the Draconis Combine, Alliance leaders offered Davion leaders several strategic border

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THE OMNISS

Symbol: A flock of doves flying against a field of blue

Homeworld: Dante, Outworlds Alliance

Range: Primarily the Outworlds Alliance, with a strong presence in the Draconis Combine

A society like many others that have enjoyed varying degrees of popularity over the years, the Omnis can trace its beginning to the convictions of a single person. Julius Santiago Avellar, appalled by the eagerness with which the Successor States chose to settle their differences in battle, resigned his naval commission and devoted his energy to writing tracts condemning war. His agitation against this misuse of technology drew a following of people who were pro-agrarian, antimilitary, and who denounced the use of any technology not directly related to the preservation of human life. The quasi-religious Omnis continues to support a strong following that includes many retired MechWarriors.

In an apparent contradiction of the society's underlying precepts, at least one faction of the Omnis has begun a violent campaign to undermine the production of war technology by sabotaging manufacturing facilities throughout the Inner Sphere. Whether the victims of these attacks will demand retribution against the Outworlds Alliance for the destruction the Omnis has caused remains to be seen, though such demands could easily upset the delicate balance keeping the Alliance solvent.

3037 forced the House lord to choose between repairing and restarting those facilities, or reserving his nation's assets for the war he planned to begin in 3038. The bandits, by luck or design, managed to cripple and/or destroy many key facilities, and the Federated Suns neither retaliated nor rebuilt. Lacking the technology necessary to restart operations on its own, the Alliance lost its fragile hold on economic growth and unemployment began to grow alarmingly.

The Avellars produced a daughter, Camillo, in 3037, and another girl in 3038, whom they named Patrice. Though they took great joy in both events, those happy occasions were insufficient to offset their desperate struggle to keep the Outworlds Alliance afloat.

COMSTAR ARRIVES

As the War of 3039 lurched to an end, President Avellar renewed his efforts to persuade other nations to invest in the Outworlds Alliance. Disrupted trade and communications between the Draconis Combine, the Federated Commonwealth and the Alliance made these appeals difficult, but Davion did devote new resources to reopening and rebuilding that realm's existing mining and manufacturing facilities. It was also at this time that Kurita began negotiations for subsidizing Alliance aerospace production, though those plans only came to fruition years later.

In marked contrast to the Successor States, ComStar took a genuine, vigorous and lasting interest in the Outworlds Alliance. We invested in a strong relationship with the Alliance government, offering favorable terms on HPG transmissions and agreeing to use local

PRESIDENT NEIL AVELLAR

Neil Avellar, who became president in 3015, ruled his people reluctantly—and his lack of enthusiasm for the task showed. Low in self-confidence, he consulted endlessly with his advisors before making each decision. Though he proved adequate to the job, the Outworlds Alliance failed to grow economically or in any other way during the early years of his reign. This lack of growth could be laid directly at the president's feet, for the Outworlds Alliance offered worthwhile returns to any party willing to invest in extracting its plentiful natural resources. But because many of its earliest colonists were against technology in most of its forms, the Alliance devoted its assets to agricultural pursuits, never even attempting to take advantage of the planets' mineral reserves. By the time the nation's leaders recognized that their natural resources could be the key to economic recovery, they no longer had the assets necessary to exploit those resources.

In 3034, nineteen unhappy years after he assumed the presidency of the Outworlds Alliance, Neil Avellar married Rebecca DeSanders, a Federated Suns diplomat with close ties to the Davion rulers. Though his marriage made him happier in many ways, not the least of which was the opportunity he now had to father a child to replace him as president, his choice of partners was an unpopular decision both within and without his realm. The Draconis Combine objected to the marriage as an obvious ploy by the Federated Commonwealth to subsume the Periphery realm, and the Kurita ambassador refused to believe any other explanation of the partnership. Unfortunately for President Avellar, a certain number of Alliance citizens felt the same way, afraid that their nation would follow the path taken by the Tikonov Free Republic several years earlier. What little internal resistance existed to Avellar's rule polarized around this issue, and the Outworlds Alliance remained on cool terms with House Kurita for many years.

When Neil and Rebecca's son Mitchell arrived in 3035, he represented a beacon of hope for all the people of the Outworlds Alliance. Finally, it seemed a better tomorrow might be possible within a generation, and early evidence that Mitchell possessed genius-level intelligence—he spoke in complete sentences and understood basic math skills much earlier than the average infant—gave the Alliance citizens even more reason to hope for a brighter future. The nation soon realized, however, that hope was not enough.

Although the Federated Commonwealth had begun operations to extract the Outworlds Alliance's natural resources in return for favorable trading terms, the returns were too modest for them to fully invest in such a course. Every time Houses Davion and Steiner went to war, their attention would stray from their Periphery operations, and the Inner Sphere realms sometimes went so far as to pull the military assets assigned to the Periphery back to their own borders. And every time the Houses went to war, the bandits returned in force.

The daring raids perpetrated against Davion mining and manufacturing operations in

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Alliance physical and human resources to build and staff new facilities. In return, the Alliance agreed to the construction of HPG facilities on several worlds and granted the Com Guards use of massive expanses of land as training grounds. The arrangement was satisfactory for both sides.

ComStar's presence initially received some negative public reaction. Most likely because our level of technological achievement reminded the citizens of the Star League and the privations suffered in their struggle against that force, our landings often met with demonstrations and protesters. We soon determined, however, that those who opposed us represented the minority. Most Alliance citizens welcomed the jobs our presence created, and our requirements even gave rise to one or two cottage industries in each location where we built an HPG. Our most valuable contribution to Alliance society, however, was the outstanding work of our education teams, which spread out to all Alliance worlds and taught young and old alike.

Though recruitment to our ranks was not a primary, or even secondary, goal of our presence in the Outworlds Alliance, we received an extraordinary number of requests from that realm's citizenry to join our Order. Part of the attraction, to be sure, lay in the heavily mystic nature of ComStar at the time—a nature that appealed to the fundamentally pious background of the citizens' ancestry. The more likely explanation for this overwhelming response, however, was that ComStar members enjoyed a significantly higher standard of living than most members of the Outworlds Alliance. This latter explanation also supports the current, continuing high level of enrollment from the Alliance even after the split between ComStar and Word of Blake.

BEGINNING OF THE END

Though ComStar's presence offered a ray of hope to the Outworlds Alliance that conditions might finally improve, the situation would deteriorate further before things got better. Even before our Order began establishing HPG stations on Alliance worlds, that realm had begun relying more and more heavily on the barter system. While exchanging goods and services with their neighbors and with other communities and planets encouraged the citizens to share their problems, triumphs and fears, it also reinforced just how primitive their lifestyles had become. Their reliance on the barter system also complicated relations with the Inner Sphere, for Alliance traders insisted on receiving payment for their goods in gold, only reluctantly accepting C-bills and refusing all House currency.

Increased communication between communities also served to consolidate an increasingly large faction calling for Neil Avellar's resignation. Though the Alliance's basically pacifistic outlook prevented this unrest from breaking out into armed rebellion, the biggest stumbling block to choosing a new president was a lack of qualified candidates for his replacement. Dissatisfied as they were with Avellar's performance, the citizens of the Alliance had no desire to jump from the frying pan to the fire by throwing their existing government into upheaval merely for the sake of change. Only the most unreasonable factions refused to admit that the Alliance's deep-seated, long-standing economic woes could be more accurately blamed on the realm's founders than its current administration.

The Clan invasion offered only one bright spot for the Outworlds Alliance. As soon as the Inner Sphere realized the strength of the enemy they faced, the House Lords immediately diverted all their energy and available resources to dealing with this threat. The Periphery bandits wasted no time in abandoning their raids against the poorer Periphery realms and devoting their efforts to plundering the richer, underdefended planets of the Federated Commonwealth and Draconis Combine. While the Outworlds Alliance lost even the sketchy economic support of those two realms, they also found themselves nearly free of the regular predations of bandits. The Alliance economy did not improve, but it also did not decline.

The Truce of Tukayyid heralded a return of the bandits to the Periphery, and renewed hope in the Outworlds Alliance for economic recovery. Unfortunately, the apparently permanent presence of the Clans in the Inner Sphere continued to distract Houses Davion and Kurita from resuming their economic initiatives in the Alliance. President Avellar's popularity sank to an all-time low, and even the good news that the tiny Outworlds Alliance military was posting victories against bandit attacks could not redeem him.

PROJECT HOPE

ComStar coming to our planet might be the best thing that ever happened here. Many people felt concern that the organization would try to coerce the local citizens into joining their cause, or even try to stir up resentment against President Avellar, but they needn't have worried. The ComStar people did their best to fit right into the community—shopping at our traders, using the local currency, hiring us to construct their stations and other buildings, even taking our advice on materials and landscaping. Heck, they even worked out an arrangement with Mrs. Lai to deliver fresh-baked bread every morning and fruit pies in season.

Naturally, it took a few tense moments and a lot of compromising on both sides to make the whole thing work. I guess their superiors were a little concerned that they might give away some secrets they shouldn't, and we had a healthy respect for their weapons and troops, but this new situation was just like everything else in life: you accept what you can, improve what will change, and live with the rest.

For me, the biggest hurdle was trusting their teachers. I was willing and able to take advantage of the opportunity to learn to read and write and do figures, and I was determined for my children to get an education, but I suspected they might try to sneak at least a little of their religion into the lessons—and I was right. A lot of what they said was so impractical, though, that we just took comfort from the parts we liked and ignored the rest. I think only two or three townspeople joined ComStar, and well, they always were a little different.

And just so you know, President Avellar didn't need any help to be unpopular.

—From *The Fruits of Knowledge*,
ComStar Publishing, 3055

BITTERSWEET GOOD-BYE

My dear Mitchell,

By the time you read this, your mother and I will be gone. I know I have written a cliché, but I have burdened you with so much already that I thought to spare you this final difficulty.

Though my life has been forfeit for many years to the various factions that called for my death as often as my resignation, do not believe that I feared their actions enough to leave my family so precipitously. Though the Alliance has many faults, intolerance is not among those failings. Do not seek retribution for imagined insults or suspected plots—save your energy and righteous indignation to correct the true injustices of this realm.

I simply could not bear the pain of remaining in this realm any longer. I have performed a difficult job that I did not love for so many years that the very sight of the sky and ground remind me of how I have failed so many people. Rather than look at the disappointed faces of my family and my people a day longer, I have chosen—after much thought and with a fragile determination—to take the coward's way and flee. Rebecca and I have made arrangements to go where we will be most welcome, and we will be free to pursue those things that delight our hearts until the end of our days. I shall have my studies, with ample books to occupy my time. Your mother will have her gardening and the opportunity to dabble in the political arenas of her choosing.

We are both very proud of you, my son. We believe that you will lead the Outworlds Alliance wisely and with compassion. We believe in your vision for the future, and believe you will find the best way to realize your dreams. Most of all, we are happy that you can embrace your destiny wholeheartedly and with a genuine love for the realm we leave in your hands.

Your father,
Neil Avellar

—*From Whence Did They Go: A History of Disappearing Royalty Through the Ages, Robinson Interstellar Publishing, 3057*

A NEW START

In March 3056, President Neil Avellar held a press conference to pass the reins of government to his son, Mitchell. His voice repeatedly breaking as his emotions overwhelmed him, Neil Avellar offered a heartfelt apology to his people for the many years of hardship under his rule and asked their forgiveness. He walked away from the podium and was never seen in his native realm again. After being sworn in as the new president the very next day, Mitchell Avellar pledged to seclude himself with his advisors for as long as it took to devise a workable plan to revitalize the Outworlds Alliance.

True to his word, President Mitchell Avellar returned to his people two months later with a series of governmental initiatives and trade packages known as the Long Road Program. Designed to gradually reverse the nation's economic decline and breathe new life into its minimal industrial base, the Long Road Program addressed multiple solutions simultaneously. Building on the increased level of education and literacy fostered by ComStar's work in the Alliance, the government began negotiations with the Federated Commonwealth toward an agreement that would allow Alliance-owned business groups to rebuild, reopen and/or improve existing Davion mining and manufacturing enterprises with the goal of creating new jobs for Alliance citizens, who were now better qualified to perform those roles. Though each Davion company may work out the specific details of its individual agreement, the main provision of the settlement between the governments calls for the Federated Commonwealth companies to provide sufficient capital to jump-start the operation and to sacrifice a minor percentage of the business's output. In return, the Alliance partner provides the work force, operating capital and delivery to all purchasers.

Determined to give his people a tangible sign of his commitment to raising their standard of living, Avellar arranged to mint new currency. He declined to use his own likeness as the central image, however, choosing instead a picture of the sun emerging from a cloud to remind the citizens of the realm that there was hope for their future. Mitchell also pledged a substantial percentage of his family's personal fortune to funding government-run manufacturing and mining concerns. He intends for this initiative to create new jobs and foster a national income, another effort to improve the nation's economy. Several other factors also currently serve to boost the income of the Alliance: the recently issued currency named the escudo is gaining wider-spread use; the BattleMech games on Lushann enjoy growing acceptance as a less expensive but equally entertaining alternative to the Solaris games; and several spices unique to Alliance worlds have come into greater demand throughout other Periphery realms and the Capellan Confederation.

Though President Avellar's business principles are sound and his advisors and the Executive Parliament agree with his proposed solutions, much of what he is trying to do has been repeatedly delayed by the Alliance's painfully slow democratic process. Because the Parliament must approve all internal and foreign policies by unanimous vote, even the smallest reform requires lengthy deliberation and debate—and Mitchell Avellar's suggested reforms are substantial. President Avellar also blames himself for some of the delays, admitting that his relative youth has caused some to question his credibility and the wisdom of his plans. His only effective response to such naysayers is to point out that he was raised practically from the cradle to assume leadership of the Outworlds Alliance, and there is no one better suited to do so. Though he hopes that his people will eventually accept his leadership on faith and on his good record, he recognizes that he might be forced to accept the assistance of media coaches to establish his credibility outside the realm.

CONTINUING OPPOSITION

Even though Mitchell Avellar has barely held the office of president long enough to demonstrate competence or incompetence, he faces strong opposition from a group known as the Separatists (who also opposed his father's rule), and he must answer the concerns of several factions that believe the military should receive a larger share of the available resources.

Led by Barnabas Huard, chairman of the planet Baliggora, the Separatists believe that the Alliance can no longer exist as a cohesive state. This group advocates dissolving the

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realm and allowing the settled worlds to succeed or fail on their own, obviously trusting that individual planets will conduct their own affairs more efficiently than a central government. Though this organization boasts a devoted following of the disaffected, Huard himself lacks the charisma and leadership skills necessary to forge the Separatists into an effective political force. Until such a leader rises to the fore, this group will remain nothing more than a very vocal club of dissatisfied citizens.

In marked contrast to their traditional views, a growing number of Alliance worlds currently believe that President Avellar's reformation policies do too little for the Alliance Military Corps. Probably as a result of their exposure to our Order's philosophies regarding the deterrent value of a strong defensive force, these worlds are calling for a rapid military build-up and for immediate acquisition of Star League technology. Though counseling the wisdom of establishing a solid economic base before investing in a stronger military, President Avellar's words seem to be falling on deaf ears.

SOCIOPOLITICAL STRUCTURE

Ratified in 2417, the Alliance Charter provides a framework for the streamlined, representative Outworlds Alliance government. While acknowledging the right of House Avellar to hold executive power, representatives of the Alliance citizenry must agree unanimously on legislation before such proposals can become law. Likewise, the charter established planetary representative bodies (known as Planetary Parliaments) and judicial courts of appeal, which protect the rights of citizens from governmental abuse. When the Alliance military was created in the mid 2800s, the Alliance Charter was amended to include a fourth government body, the Alliance Military Review Board.

The Charter's provisions guarantee all citizens of the Alliance freedom of expression, freedom of religious belief and the right to pursue any lifestyle or economic pursuit that does not infringe on the rights of other citizens. Alliance citizenship is granted at birth, and immigrants may be naturalized after a ten-year residency and demonstrable proof of productivity in society.

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

The government of the Outworlds Alliance can be described as democracy at its best, though not at its most efficient. To realize the highest potential of the system, each individual must participate fully in the democratic process, each taking all the responsibility afforded to him. However, in the Outworlds Alliance few individuals take all the responsibility that they might for conduct of the state.

Executive Parliament

As described by the Alliance Charter, the Executive Parliament is the chief governmental organ of the Alliance state. Overseen by the Parliamentary President (an office traditionally filled by the senior member of the Avellar family), the Parliament consists of one representative for every ten inhabited planets of the Alliance.



The Executive Parliament is charged with the conduct of all foreign and internal affairs, with legislation subject to a unanimous vote of all members present. This last, rather awkward requirement reflects the desire of Alliance citizens to prevent any individual from imposing a dictatorship on the majority. Such a provision makes it difficult to pass any but the most conservative policy directives.

In the past, a four-person executive subcommittee of the Executive Parliament handled military affairs within the Outworlds. The rise of a standing army prompted the Executive Parliament to create the Alliance Military Review Board, a group charged with judging when the Executive Parliament subcommittee's operational directives might be contrary to the best interests of the Alliance and vetoing those directives. The President can override the board's decision.

In an effort to improve the responsiveness of the Alliance army, President Mitchell Avellar has argued that the Military Review Board should retain sole responsibility for the administration of the Alliance Military Corps. The Board's exemplary record makes it likely that this legislation will pass relatively quickly.

Planetary Parliaments

Bodies of chosen representatives, known as Planetary Parliaments, govern every inhabited world within the Outworlds Alliance. Each Planetary Parliament consists of one representative for every ten thousand inhabitants, elected by annual popular vote. In addition, Planetary Parliaments select one representative to the Executive Parliament for a three-year term. With full authority to pass any legislation needed to govern their worlds, Planetary Parliaments are subject to the will of the Executive Parliament only in the broadest sense of the term.

Courts Of Appeal

For every five thousand people, there is a five-member Court of Appeal. The purpose of the Court of Appeal is twofold:

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first, to enforce local laws with powers of prosecution; and second, to review the directives handed down by the Executive Parliament. It is entirely possible that one or more Courts of Appeal may decide that an executive directive is unconstitutional, and may subsequently rule that the directive is null and void within its jurisdiction. Once every three years, representatives from each Court of Appeal meet on Alpheratz to confirm or reject nominations to the Executive Parliament and the Military Review Board for the next session.

Military Review Board

The only addition to the Alliance political structure since the realm's inception is the Military Review Board. This board consists of one individual selected from each Alliance provincial capital, each candidate subject to approval by the Courts of Appeal's confirmation committee. Responsible for reviewing the organization and deployment of Alliance military forces, the Review Board has the power to veto Executive Parliament decisions regarding any use of the military (except in a state of Alliance-wide emergency).

Originally established to safeguard citizens from the threat of a military dictatorship or the misuse of funds earmarked for military appropriations, the Board has recently taken a more active role in improving the AMC's training and materiel.

CULTURAL STRUCTURE

The single greatest influence upon the culture and philosophy of the Outworlds Alliance is the Omniss creed. This doctrine laid the groundwork, however inadvertently, for the dire straits of the economy of this Periphery state, but also gave the populace the moral strength and intestinal fortitude to persist in the face of overwhelming adversity.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

The Outworlds Alliance tolerates all religious and philosophical disciplines. Unlike many worlds in the Inner Sphere where different religious communities coexist in the same area, however, Outworlders of various religious persuasions tend to settle on different planets. For example, on the capital world of Alpheratz, the predominant religious faith is Islam, while in the provincial capital of Ramora the dominant faith is Taoism. Planetary segregation keeps conflict between philosophical groups to a surprising minimum, as does the basic and widespread Outworlder dislike of religious bigotry.

Of the many philosophical doctrines in the Alliance, the Omniss creed predominates. Similar in nature to the cultures of the Mennonite and Amish religious groups of Terra during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Omniss forbid the use of technology in even its simplest forms and advocate an agrarian and antimilitaristic lifestyle. As the vocal majority in a truly democratic society, their antitechnology stance prevented the Alliance from efficiently mining and marketing its mineral resources, and their antimilitary position almost proved the Alliance's undoing in the Reunification War. Though their influ-

ence remains strong, changes in governmental policy clearly indicate that many individuals are voting to preserve the state at the expense of their personal philosophy.

One of the newest religious groups to emerge is the Gregorians. Named for the founder of the Order of Dominant Selection, Mathias Gregory, the Gregorians advocate multiple marriages. As a general decline in population threatens this state's existence, the Gregorian creed has gained substantial acceptance in all levels of society. An estimated 30 percent of all Outworlders belong to, or support, the Gregorian creed.

EDUCATION

The nature of its founders—scholars and other members of the intelligentsia opposed to resolving problems by force—ensured the Outworlds Alliance a firm base on which to develop an educational system. Unfortunately, the importance of higher education quickly diminished when set against the grueling labor required for the early colonists to survive from day to day without the benefit of technology. Though the settlers established schools and understood the importance of maintaining a diverse knowledge base, more specialized areas of learning eventually faded from the public consciousness. A strong oral tradition of teaching, carried on by dedicated parents and community leaders all across the realm, kept the Outworlds Alliance from becoming completely illiterate.

Despite the minimal number of BattleMech troops the Alliance fielded, the Reunification War was bitterly fought in that realm, and the educational system suffered deprivations along with the economy and all other aspects of community life. During its membership in the Star League, the Outworlds Alliance rebuilt its schools, but only found the resources and teachers to re-establish one university, which was on Alpheratz. Not until ComStar became a presence in the Alliance did the formal educational system once again reach all the member worlds.

THE ARTS

Many of the purely utilitarian items Outworlders create to perform the tasks of daily life have become popular in the Inner Sphere and across the Periphery for their clean, simple lines and sturdy construction. Cottage industries of metalworking, woodworking, weaving and pottery, among other crafts, have sprung up throughout the Outworlds Alliance as traders return from far-flung planets with well-paying orders for such hand-made items. Aware that the popularity of their work is most likely a passing fad, as such handwork has been innumerable times in the past, the Outworlders maintain a pragmatic view of the potential for profit in the export market.

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

Though the Clan invasion did not touch the planets of the Outworlds Alliance, the realm felt the impact of that conflict. The small financial investment the Federated Commonwealth made years ago in the Alliance by building minor industrial bases on certain planets gave the Alliance economy a significant, if short-lived

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boost. But when the Federated Commonwealth turned its attention to battling the invaders, those manufacturing plants were the first to lose financial and military resources. The increase in economic support hoped for by President Neil Avellar simply failed to materialize, though the troops guarding Davion assets remained. President Avellar's negotiations with Prince Victor seem far more likely to establish lasting economic improvement.

Because the Outworlds Alliance never gave much effort to maintaining communications with Inner Sphere powers other than those directly on its doorstep, Katherine Steiner-Davion's move to separate the newly christened Lyran Alliance from the Federated Commonwealth has had very little effect on the Periphery state. If not for Victor Steiner-Davion's willingness to authorize others in his administration to conduct negotiations with the Periphery realms, however, this internal problem could have seriously delayed President Avellar's recovery plans.

Offering another major boost to the Outworlds Alliance's meager industrial base, the Draconis Combine recently began to subsidize increased production of aerospace fighters. The one military asset the Alliance continually supported regardless of the competence of the realm's leader, the aerospace industry remained in place and ready to implement renewed and expanded production schedules as soon as opportunity allowed.

OTHER PERIPHERY REALMS

Cordial relations with its nearest neighbors has allowed the Outworlds Alliance to resume trading for much-needed resources. The Taurian Concordat, always friendly toward the Alliance, has begun negotiations to trade services—manual laborers from the Alliance to help with colonization efforts in exchange for Concordat military advisors and instructors to help improve the effectiveness of Alliance ground forces.

Unable to offer much in the way of economic aid at present, the Magistracy of Canopus nonetheless has pledged to provide such support as soon as possible. In the meantime, the Magistracy gladly schedules the Canopian pleasure circuses for regular stops in the Alliance, events which always boost the local economy and raise the citizen's spirits.

Of the other nearby Periphery worlds, only the tiny Mica Majority possesses what can kindly be called an organized government, and Alliance merchants regularly stop at this three-world realm to trade for the precious metals mined on the asteroids orbiting all three planets.

The nearby world of Antallos, more commonly known as Port Krin, poses a major problem for the Outworlds Alliance. President Avellar would like nothing more than to establish diplomatic relations with this pirate haven, for doing so would eliminate his realm's most constant and damaging enemy. Needless to say, no single person or band of pirates has been able to gain the upper hand on this brutal, corrupt world, and so Port Krin continues to serve as a convenient base from which bandits conduct their devastating raids against the planets of the Outworlds Alliance. Though the Alliance Military Corps is

willing to mount an attack against Antallos, the probable consequences of their failure to subdue the entire planet are too terrible to risk.

The populations of Dneiper, Milligan's World and Prinis Prime, the three Alliance worlds closest to Antallos, have gradually abandoned their holdings in the face of repeated bandit raids. The people who stubbornly refuse to give up their homes and lands are nearly self-sufficient and long ago ceased to feel any loyalty to the Alliance government.

Pirate attacks continue to represent the greatest source of trouble, both political and economic, that the Outworlds Alliance faces, and at the moment they must try to conquer that particular challenge alone.

COMSTAR AND WORD OF BLAKE

As noted previously, ComStar enjoys a particularly strong relationship with the Outworlds Alliance. Though many Alliance citizens were initially attracted to our organization by the Order's religious elements, the number of people from that realm seeking to join ComStar has not declined since the Primus demystified our technology and knowledge.

Steady enrollment figures and the marked lack of Word of Blake factions in this Periphery realm may be traced to the same reason—the people of the Periphery have always been independent thinkers. We have always assumed that a certain percentage of our members were not true believers in the words said to belong to Jerome Blake, and though willing to follow the rules of our Order, members who came to us from the Periphery often fell into that pragmatic percentage. ComStar personnel stationed in the Periphery were chosen specifically for their ability and willingness to take initiative when necessary and for their flexibility when dealing with native populations. Even if they adhered to former ComStar doctrine to the letter, they were eminently sensible and better able to adapt to the new direction than other adepts and acolytes.

ComStar's Periphery outposts have taken on new importance since the Draconis Combine has invested in revitalizing the Explorer Corps. The HPG stations in the Outworlds Alliance, like similar stations elsewhere in the Periphery, now serve as launching points for ships in search of the Clan homeworlds. This increased activity, of course, provides new jobs for locals living near the ComStar stations.

OUTWORLDS ALLIANCE MILITARY

As might be expected from the realm's pacifistic origin, the citizens of the Outworlds Alliance have traditionally shown very little support for a standing military force. Both the conventional and BattleMech forces suffer from a lack of adequate training and substandard equipment, two contributing factors to their nearly constant defeats at the hands of the Periphery pirates. The Corps's relatively small size also inhibits its effectiveness as units are assigned only to important political and industrial worlds, with standing orders never

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of military force, the citizens of the Alliance readily agreed to establish and support an aerospace presence, apparently under the impression that fighters cost less than BattleMechs to purchase and maintain. This misconception allowed the Alliance government to create one of the most effective aerospace forces in known space. Well equipped and faultlessly trained, this arm of the Alliance Military Corps enjoys far more mobility and greater latitude for initiative in its actions than the conventional and 'Mech units, so much so that other Periphery realms regularly request permission to borrow the Corps aerospace instructors to improve their own military effectiveness and hire retired Alliance aerospace officers for their military colleges.

Though the Alliance manufactures enough fighters to supply their own needs and to export a sizable number every year, they lack Star League technology and still fit their aerospace units with weapons whose designs are a century old. The governments of the Canopus-Concordat Alliance have promised to supply the Outworlds with the rediscovered tech but have so far failed to deliver on those promises. Mitchell Avellar has made the acquisition of such technology a priority for his realm, as up-to-date weapons systems would improve his own military and increase the value of units manufactured for sale.

STRUCTURE OF THE AMC

The structure of the Alliance Military Corps allocates many of the normal functions of military divisions to local Planetary Parliaments or the Alliance Military Review Board. The AMC breaks down into just three distinct branches.

Alliance AeroSpace Arm

Until recently receiving the lion's share of annual fiscal appropriations, the AeroSpace Arm is charged with first-line defense of all Alliance homeworlds. It consists of four fighter regiments, which in turn are composed of three wings each. A wing is composed of three combat flotillas of three air lances, which consist of two fighters. A separate command wing brings the total number of fighters in each regiment to sixty for a total of 240 aerospace fighters of various types. Though many of these craft are the salvaged remnants of previous conflicts, some 60 percent are less than two generations old.

The AeroSpace Arm also commands twelve JumpShips and two dozen DropShips, which deploy the AMC's Mechanized Corps forces when not engaged in aerospace support.

Alliance Ground Defense Arm

The Ground Defense Arm is divided into two separate forces: the Planetary Militia and the Mechanized Corps. The Planetary Militia consists of those citizen militias designated strictly for home defense. Its function is not to contest the invasion of the world, but to tie up the attacker's resources and pin the aggressors in place until reinforcements arrive. The Alliance Mechanized Corps consists of two BattleMech regiments and a regiment of armor and motorized infantry. Two-thirds of the Alliance BattleMechs are light, consisting mostly of *Wasps* and

to abandon their posts for any reason. Though an amendment to the Alliance Charter gave President Avellar authorization to hire mercenary units to expand his military's ranks, the pay the Alliance offers attracts only the most desperate mercs, who often turn out to be no better than the pirates they were hired to defend against.

Reflecting an attitude common to many people who are unfamiliar with the actual requirements of sustaining any type

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Stingers, and the rest represent an assortment of medium and heavy 'Mechs produced on Alpheratz.

Alliance Service Arm

The Alliance Service Arm is a polyglot corps containing all noncombatant services found in any military. Most of these services are meager, however, due to a shortage of equipment and of dedicated, long-term service personnel. The AMC Medical Corps is generally ineffective and relies heavily on local support from civilian institutions.

UNIFORMS

Because the military is considered unimportant in the Alliance, military uniforms are generally drab and indistinct. Members of all Alliance militia, MechWarrior, and support forces wear the same uniform: dark green fatigues trimmed with gold piping.

However, members of the prestigious aerospace arm wear higher-quality uniforms that consist of white blouses trimmed with green piping and dark green trousers. In colder weather, aerospace pilots also don brown leather jackets. During flight operations, pilots wear olive-green flight suits and green and gold helmets.

The Alliance navy consists of the Alliance's few merchant DropShips, which are outfitted with weapons to serve as privateers in time of conflicts. No standard naval uniform exists. Instead, individual ship captains determine acceptable dress for their crews.

In the Alliance, local planetary parliaments are responsible for providing uniforms and personal equipment to local military units. Few parliaments care to devote funds to these purposes, and so most military units receive whatever used or surplus equipment that is readily available. MechWarriors, in particular, use a wide variety of equipment, much of it salvaged from Kurita and Davion units of centuries past.

ENLISTED RANKS

The Alliance Military Corps maintains only four enlisted and four officer ranks. Enlisted ranks reflect the soldiers' role as servants of the state. Enlisted personnel typically serve for a period of four years.

Defender

All recruits in the Alliance military enter service as the result of lotteries, with the respective Planetary Parliaments establishing annual local quotas. Each inductee is presented with the title Defender of the State, a rank that reflects a variety of occupations. The term typically denotes enlisted personnel roughly equivalent to the rank of corporal in Inner Sphere military systems, and the soldiers wear a green circle on each collar lapel to denote this rank.

Protector

Enlisted personnel who have served a minimum of one year of active duty are granted the rank and responsibilities of

Protector of the Homeland. The obligations of the rank correspond to those of junior sergeants in Inner Sphere systems. Two green circles on each lapel signify this rank.

Guardian

The term Guardian of the Homeland denotes enlisted personnel who have completed a minimum of two years of active service in the AMC. Responsibilities correspond to those of staff sergeants within the Inner Sphere. Soldiers of this rank wear a brown circle within a larger green circle on their lapels.

Preceptor

The rank of preceptor is awarded to individuals who have served at least three years in the AMC. A preceptor is roughly equivalent to a senior sergeant or sergeant-major in Inner Sphere armies, though the preceptor's responsibilities are typically less because of the smaller size of the Alliance military. Preceptors wear two insignia, the brown circle inside a green circle of the guardians, on their lapels.

OFFICER RANKS

Officer ranks denote administrative rather than combat duties. To become an officer in the AMC, an individual must be nominated by their local Planetary Parliament representatives and approved by the Military Review Board. An officer serves a minimum of five years.

Supervisor

A supervisor in the Alliance military is equivalent to an ensign or second lieutenant in the Inner Sphere. Most are employed as platoon or lance commanders in BattleMech or aerospace fighter detachments. These officers wear a single green horizontal bar on their lapels.

Section Leader

The equivalent of a first lieutenant or brevet captain within the Inner Sphere, a section leader typically commands two or more platoons of infantry, or two or more lances of BattleMechs or aerospace fighters. They wear two horizontal green bars side by side on their lapels.

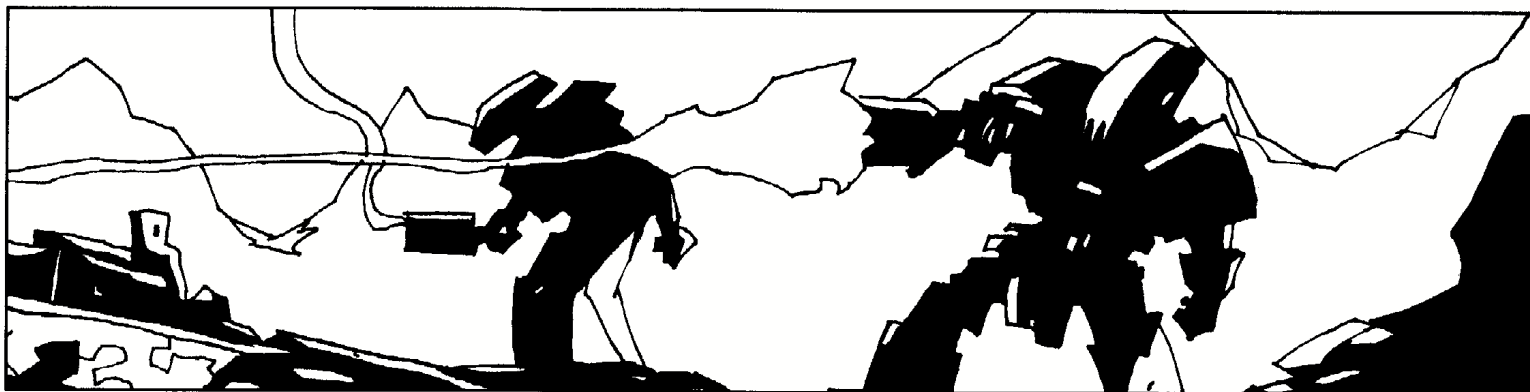
Director

A director is a staff planner or senior commander in the field, typically commanding a company of infantry, BattleMechs, or aerospace fighters. Directors wear one brown horizontal bar on their lapels.

Chairman

Officers with the Alliance rank of chairman serve a dual function in the AMC. At a tactical level, they can command upward of a battalion of infantry, 'Mechs, fighters, or a mixture of several different types of companies. In addition, they serve as senior staff planners and specialists. Chairman-ranked officers wear two brown horizontal bars on their lapels.

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ALLIANCE MILITARY CORPS

Deployment as of 3058

Commander: President Mitchell Avellar
Aide: Senior Chairman Maurice Avellar
'Mech Strength: 3 Regiments, 2 Battalions

Unit Name	Experience Level	Loyalty	Homeworld
The Alliance Borderers			
(CO: Chairman Fitzroy Candy)			
1st Battalion	Regular	Reliable	Ramora
(CO: Chairman David King)			
2nd Battalion	Regular	Reliable	Coraines
(CO: Chairman Ross Hibler)			
3rd Battalion	Green	Questionable	Mitchella
(CO: Chairman Russell Potter)			
The Alliance Grenadiers			
(CO: Chairman Janet Rice)			
1st Battalion	Veteran	Fanatical	Praxton
(CO: Chairman Cynthia Rice)			
2nd Battalion	Regular	Reliable	Baliggora
(CO: Chairman Wayne Girance)			
3rd Battalion	Regular	Reliable	Ferris
(CO: Chairman Irene Simonson)			
Avellar Guards			
(CO: Chairman Douglas Carmichael)			
1st Battalion	Regular	Fanatical	Sevon
(CO: Chairman Ginna Maynor)			
2nd Battalion	Regular	Fanatical	Alpheratz
(CO: Chairman Michael Nielson)			
3rd Battalion	Green	Fanatical	Alpheratz
(CO: Chairman Robert Timborski)			
Spade's Brigade (1 company)			
(CO: Captain Janey Spade)	Green	Questionable	Jordan Wais
Bammer's Bunch (1 company)			
(CO: Captain Harrison Bammer)	Green	Reliable	Rudolpho
Golden Boys (2 companies)			
(CO: Major Charice Kush)	Regular	Questionable	Lushann
Simpson's Sisters (1 company)			
(CO: Captain Amanda Huggins)	Regular	Reliable	Loparri
Thermo Police (1 company)			
(CO: Captain Seymore Hares)	Regular	Questionable	Tellman IV

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PERSONALITIES

MITCHELL AVELLAR

At 23, Mitchell Avellar is the youngest president in the history of the Outworlds Alliance. His enthusiasm for his job and his expansive knowledge of a wide range of subjects, however, goes a long way toward offsetting his lack of experience. Though of below-average height and somewhat socially inept, Mitchell has somehow avoided falling into the common trap of using the arrogance of genius-level intelligence as a defense mechanism. In a conscious effort to appear more accessible to the ordinary citizen, he became a fairly successful aerospace pilot as part of his training to assume leadership of the Alliance, and his efforts in that pursuit enhanced his popularity among the Alliance populace.

Though he misses his parents, Mitchell claims to be ignorant of their whereabouts, and makes no effort to defend his father's lackluster performance as ruler. On that one subject, at least, Mitchell has fostered a carefully neutral attitude, and always encourages his father's detractors to focus on the genuine hope he himself offers for the future. President Mitchell Avellar faces a long, lonely journey on the road to his realm's recovery, and he seems uniquely suited to travel that path to a brighter place.

BARNABAS HUARD

The fairly capable chairman of the Baliggora Planetary Parliament, Barnabas Huard rose to that position through no ambition of his own. His mother pushed him into public service, served as his campaign manager for election to the Planetary Parliament, and efficiently maneuvered the other parliament members into naming Huard chairman of the legislative body. A gentle, agreeable man, Huard only revealed his personal philosophies after the death of his beloved mother—and his fellow parliament members soon realized Huard had been



manipulating them against his mother for years to accomplish his own ends, rather than hers.

Barnabas's election as chairman forced out the fifth-generation member of a virulently corrupt family that had managed to clutch the reins of power long enough to seriously affect Baliggora's economic health, and his strongly held opinions regarding the problems of hereditary leadership soon attracted the interest of the Separatists, anti-Avellar factions on Baliggora and other Alliance worlds. In a move calculated to increase the Separatists' membership, they chose Huard as their spokesperson, counting on his long, graying hair and careworn face to provide the organization with a sympathetic figurehead. Though the Separatists initially hoped that Huard would become as effective a leader for their organization as he had for Baliggora, Barnabas Huard seems content to concentrate his energy on the recovery of his home planet. If the Separatists are planning to replace Huard with a more charismatic leader, he neither knows nor cares.

MAURICE AVELLAR

Neil Avellar's second cousin on his father's side, Maurice Avellar is the current representative of a long and well-respected line of military leaders belonging to the ruling family. Maurice began his military career by assuming command of the Avellar Guards, a unit originally established as an honor guard for the Avellar in power. Over time, and especially in recent years, the Guards have taken a more active part in the Alliance Military Corps, lending their greater experience and better equipment to the defense of various Alliance worlds. President Avellar promoted Maurice Avellar to second-in-command of the Alliance Military Corps immediately upon taking office, well aware of the implications of promoting a relative to such an influential position but convinced that Maurice possessed the necessary skills and strength of character to bring the Corps successfully into a new age.

MARIAN HEGEMONY

WHEN IN ROME . . .

In any discussion of the Marian Hegemony, one question always arises: Why did Johann O'Reilly fashion his new government on the model of ancient Rome? No commentary was made on the subject while Johann was alive, and his successors appear to be continuing the tradition without questioning its origins or his motives. Therefore, we are left to theorize about this rather odd choice.

Many historians have speculated that O'Reilly made the choice as a simple matter of taste. Building a government based on whim may be unfathomable to the Inner Sphere mind, but this kind of arbitrary policymaking could be considered typical in the Periphery. It is quite possible that Johann felt republican Rome was an ideal civilization that would never have fallen but for the misdeeds of its corrupt leaders.

Another possibility is that O'Reilly simply was an avid "fan" of ancient Rome, and he found an opportunity to re-create the glory of Rome when he hit the jackpot on Alphard. Though no hard evidence exists today to support this theory, the book *Periphery Privateers* by Fiona Del Rio, published in 3024, lends some credence to the idea. The book offers several interviews with Marian pirates in which they mention the Imperator's collection of Roman artifacts, handed down from generation to generation. In fact, one pirate recounts the tale of the unfortunate fate that befell one of his comrades when the comrade accidentally touched one of the Imperator's priceless vases.

We cannot confirm the existence of this collection, and if it did exist, whether any of the artifacts were genuine. It is quite likely they were replicas, because even a small exhibition of true Roman antiquities is priceless. It is also possible the collection was begun after Johann chose the Roman model for the Hegemony—a possibility which leaves us no closer to solving this riddle than when we began.

—From *Periphery Despots of the Thirtieth Century*, Free Worlds Press, 3055

In the years since the end of the Fourth Succession War, the Marian Hegemony has transformed itself from an insignificant pirate fiefdom to a potentially major Periphery power. Expansion and improvement of its military, its recent conquest of the mineral-rich Lothian League and the opening of limited diplomatic and trade relations with the Capellan Confederation and the Free Worlds League have changed this latter-day Roman republic into something more closely resembling an empire. Caesar Sean O'Reilly believes he is destined to lead his small nation to greatness, and he is none too picky about how he achieves that goal. Unfortunately for the average Hegemony citizen, these changes have meant increasing loss of freedom as the Caesar tightens his personal grip on power.

FOUNDATION AND EARLY HISTORY

The Marian Hegemony was founded by Johann Sebastian O'Reilly, a native of the Periphery with considerable charisma and a knack for taking advantage of lucky breaks. In 2920 O'Reilly arrived on the world of Alphard, once the home of the Alphard Trading Corporation but left desolate by the tribulations of the Succession Wars. On Alphard, O'Reilly stumbled across a hidden storehouse of germanium, a critical element in the construction of JumpShips. The cache turned out to be worth 50 billion C-bills, and the world held more germanium waiting to be extracted. O'Reilly wasted no time hiring 'Mech units and establishing a colony on Alphard, installing himself as its leader and modeling the government of his newly christened Marian Hegemony after the republican Rome of ancient Terra. The arrival of refugees from pirate raids and the Inner Sphere's ongoing conflicts swelled the Hegemony's population within a few years of its formation, and O'Reilly's government eventually established economic and military control over eight planets.

Initially, the Hegemony's moderate prosperity depended on Alphard's treasure trove of germanium and a modest level of industrialization. Piracy also played a significant role; the Hegemony profited handsomely by using its small but effective army to raid the border worlds of neighboring states during the Third and Fourth Succession Wars. Marian privateers did especially well during the Fourth Succession War, raiding Free Worlds League planets and ambushing Marik trading ships. The Canopian worlds also presented tempting targets, as the Magistracy Armed Forces were otherwise engaged in attempts to take planets from the beleaguered Capellan Confederation. Johann's grandson, Imperator Marius O'Reilly, who ascended to power in 3009, frequently went beyond raiding and attempted to capture planets; during his reign, the Hegemony became involved in an increasing number of border clashes with the Lothian League, the Niops Association, and the Free Worlds League. He apparently made no attempt to capture Canopian worlds, however, most likely because of the MAF's overwhelming strength in comparison to his own Marian Legions.

After the Fourth Succession War, Imperator Marius used the proceeds of the raids to strengthen and expand his nation on several fronts. The Marian government founded schools and military academies, funded the development of new industries, and raised soldiers' pay, among other benefits. Literacy levels rose, along with the general standard of living. Among the young Marian citizens entering the new Collegium Bellorum Imperium for MechWarrior training was the Imperator's own son Sean, who began attending the military academy in 3032 as a member of its first class. Upon Sean's graduation in 3035, he was given a lance command in one of the Hegemony's three BattleMech battalions.

The hopes of some observers that the Imperator's civic improvements indicated a desire to make the Hegemony a more respectable realm were dashed later that same year, when the Imperator narrowly escaped an assassination attempt. Captured and beaten by the Imperator's personal guard, the assassin claimed to have been hired by a Free

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Worlds League agent operating on the independent planet of Astrokaszy. Outraged, Marius swore to avenge himself against his attackers. He did not dare move militarily against the powerful Successor State, but spread the word among the Hegemony's privateers that raids against Free Worlds League planets would buy them favor in his eyes. He also sent the First Marian Legion to smash Astrokaszy.

Astrokaszy's tiny, disorganized 'Mech forces swiftly fell to the Marian assault. The Emperor proclaimed Astrokaszy a Hegemony possession, but before his forces could solidify their control, reinforcements began arriving from surrounding Periphery realms at the request of Astrokaszy's various city-states. In the face of potentially stiff opposition, Marius O'Reilly gave up his claim to the planet.

RISE OF CAESAR SEAN

Between 3035 and 3040, Sean O'Reilly distinguished himself in military service. Scattered rumors reached the Emperor of his son's gambling, numerous dalliances with women and frequent involvement in duels, but Marius passed off these incidents as a typical sowing of wild oats. When Sean informed Marius that he would be a grandfather before the end of 3040, the Emperor decided it was time to steady his wild son by giving him greater responsibility. A few days after the birth of his grandson Julius, Marius O'Reilly announced plans to expand the Hegemony through colonization. He placed Sean in charge of the operation, a challenge the young man eagerly accepted.

Sean spent the next two years organizing the necessary equipment and personnel to colonize three nearby worlds. Unknown to the Emperor, Sean was also siphoning off a portion of the colonization funds for his own personal use. During his five years of military service, Sean had run up quite a string of gambling debts, and was also supporting several mistresses on various Hegemony worlds.

The colonization went smoothly, and by 3045 viable settlements had been established on all three planets. Sean then approached his father with a plan to develop light industry in the colonies, using ongoing funds from the Imperial Treasury. Delighted to see his heir applying himself to the business of governing, Marius applauded the initiative and enacted the proposal into law. The development scheme proved a boon to the new colonies, and simultaneously provided Sean with a steady stream of illicit monies.

In late 3046, the Emperor stumbled across evidence of his son's illegal activities. Furious at Sean's duplicity, Marius summoned him to Alphard and demanded immediate restitution of the stolen funds. When Sean refused, Marius threatened to bar him from the succession in favor of six-year-old Julius. Almost immediately Sean backed down, promising to mend his ways and repay the Imperial Treasury as best he could from his limited personal income. As proof of his good faith, he immediately ended relations with the two most expensive of his mistresses, sold the properties he had given them, and signed the money over to the treasury. Grudgingly, Marius relented, and at the

end of the year publicly reaffirmed Sean's status as his heir. Underneath their civil facades, however, both men remained suspicious of one another. The Emperor's continuing coolness toward him convinced Sean that his father secretly intended to pass the leadership of the Marian Hegemony to Julius. Determined to keep this from happening, Sean began to build a power base within the First Marian Legion.

SEAN'S ACCESSION

In 3048, on a visit to one of the new Marian colonies, Marius O'Reilly died in a climbing accident. Amid rampant speculation that he had somehow arranged his father's death, Sean returned to Alphard and assumed rulership of the Hegemony. In his first public proclamation, the new Emperor imposed a ten-day period of mourning for Marius. At the end of that time, he said, he would formally take up the reins of government and begin to lead the Hegemony toward its true destiny of a great empire. As a symbol of the future that awaited the realm, he would change his title from Emperor to Caesar.

Almost immediately, the Caesar began revamping and expanding the military. Between 3048 and 3052, Sean O'Reilly more than tripled the size of his realm's armed forces and reorganized it along Roman lines. The bulk of the new forces were BattleMechs, which the Caesar organized into three Legions, each the size of a large regiment. Backed by an increasingly powerful military, and especially the staunch loyalty of his former comrades in the First Marian Legion, the Caesar also consolidated his personal political power. Those few voices that might have been raised against Sean's increasingly dictatorial rule were swiftly silenced, either by the promise of riches through conquest or by the threat of force. Most Hegemony citizens, unused to any great degree of freedom, hardly noticed a change.

During this same time, two more sons were born to the Caesar, each by a different mistress. Aurelia Davidson gave birth to Marcus in 3049; Lydia Humphreys, a distant cousin to the Humphreys family of the Free Worlds League, gave birth to Trajan in 3051. Sean installed the children and their mothers, along with Julius and his mother, in a sumptuously furnished wing of the Imperial residence on Alphard. When Gordon Humphreys, planetary governor of Islington and Lydia's father, objected to his daughter's being made a concubine, Sean summoned him to Alphard and had him executed. The remaining members of the Humphreys family took the hint and kept silent.

THE CLAN INVASION

The Clan invasion of the Periphery and Inner Sphere left the Marian Hegemony untouched, and the rumors of war on distant planets provoked little concern among Hegemony citizens. Most agreed with their Caesar that the Inner Sphere was only getting what it deserved—and as for the Clans' conquests in the Periphery, the realms swallowed up were comfortably far from the Hegemony's borders. When a delegation from the Magistracy of Canopus arrived on Alphard in 3051 and offered the Caesar a chance to join a Periphery-wide alliance against

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"invasion by Inner Sphere or other forces," Sean scoffed at the proposal. Hoping to cause trouble for Magestrix Emma Centrella, with whom his political and personal relations had always been strained, Sean made the Canopian proposal public to the Inner Sphere. No Successor State responded with so much as a rebuke; the Successor Lords, busy battling for their lives against the Clan war machine, had no time for the pronouncements of a petty Periphery dictator.

Dismissing the Clans as no particular threat to the Hegemony, Caesar Sean spent 3051 and most of 3052 planning the conquest of the Lothian League. The League's seven planets, resource-rich and poorly defended, presented a tempting target for the Hegemony's newly enlarged armies. Knowing that the Marian Legions would not be up to the full fighting strength he wanted until 3053 at the earliest, the Caesar embarked on a two-part strategy. Throughout 3052 and 3053, Marian privateers and small military units raided Lothian planets, gradually wearing down the mercenary units defending them. The attacks increased in frequency and ferocity as the months wore on, followed by a full-scale assault by the Marian Legions in 3054.

CONQUERING THE LEAGUE

The Lothian League proved a tougher adversary than the Caesar had expected, holding out for more than a year against the Marian assault. Dame Lorelei Logan dipped deeply into the Lothian treasury to hire additional mercenary units, and her daughter Liesel led a small Home Guard BattleMech unit against the invaders with astonishing success. By early 3055, however, the Legions' superior firepower began to overwhelm the Lothian League's defenders. Dame Logan made a desperate appeal to the Taurian Concordat for any troops it could spare, but Protector Thomas Calderon refused to send help, citing the need to keep his troops on alert against the danger of an imminent Federated Commonwealth attack.

The Caesar himself led the assault on Lordinax, the last League planet to fall. He destroyed the Home Guard, killing Liesel Logan. Upon his triumphal landing on Lothario, the League's former capital world, the Caesar ordered Dame Lorelei and her surviving family taken into custody. The Logans had disappeared, however, and presumably remain in hiding.

The Marian Hegemony faces continued active and passive resistance from Lothian citizens, who refuse to accept Marian domination. The Caesar has installed two-thirds of

PRIDE

They smashed our city. Walked right through our defenses like they didn't exist. One minute I was skiing down the street on my way to work, the next minute I was gaping at fiery trails in the sky as the pirates landed. Then all hell broke loose.

I don't remember much of the actual battle ... if you can call it that. The Lucky Strikes were fighting more of the damned pirates on the other side of the planet, or so I heard later. Not that a single 'Mech lance and a tank company would have done much good against the Hegemony thugs anyway. I remember a section of the street blew up practically right in front of me, and I fell down. I woke up some time later, with one helluva headache and blood running down my cheek. Something hit me, I guess. I ran for the nearest building that was still standing, and found a few other scared and hurt people huddled on an upper floor. We hid, waited, watched.

After a little while we saw a parade of pirate BattleMechs coming down Center Street. Their loudspeakers kept blaring, "Join the Marian Hegemony! Become a proud part of the glorious Empire! Let the Caesar lead you down the road to Destiny!" Made me want to throw up. As they drew nearer, one of my fellow survivors took a few objects out of a satchel real carefully. When I saw what they were, I started to grin. He handed me one of the mines, then gave three more to a fella and a couple of women behind me. We all moved to the window, nobody saying anything, all just smiling grim little smiles.

When the 'Mechs came into range, we let go with our arsenal. Three mines landed right on top of the lead 'Mech's head; left the cockpit a smoking mess. The others landed in front of the next 'Mech's left foot, and blew it purely to hell when they went off. The pirates scattered into the side streets, shooting every which way but where we were. One pirate's laser punched through the wall where we'd been, but the whole gang of us had slipped away as soon as we'd dropped the mines.

Sometimes you've got to lend Destiny a hand. ...

—From *Demise of Freedom: The Fall of the Lothian League*, *Hardcore Books*, 3057



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the Second Marian Legion across the seven League planets to deal with the insurgents, but the Legion forces are barely holding their own against their guerrilla opponents. Further, government officials installed to enact the Caesar's policies must repeatedly deal with blatant disregard for their imposed authority. ROM reports indicate that Lothian freedom fighters are receiving covert assistance from the Magistracy of Canopus, which hopes to keep the Caesar and his Legions too busy for further conquests. The resisters may also be receiving small amounts of money and supplies from the Illyrian Palatinate, the Caesar's next likely target.

THE CAESAR AND HIS HEIR

In 3056, Julius O'Reilly entered the Collegium Bellorum Imperium. Intelligent and studious, the young man soon distinguished himself as a tactician and a 'Mech pilot. His talents brought him to the notice of General Ambrose Kelly, the Collegium's premier lecturer on military strategy. The general, a former privateer turned MechWarrior, was the mastermind behind many of the Hegemony's most brilliant and successful raids during the 3030s, and turned to teaching rather than retire completely from military service. General Kelly found Julius to be a promising student, not only of tactics but also of military and political philosophy. The two began spending occasional time together outside of class, and the general wrote glowing reports to the Caesar of his son's progress in his studies.

Though neither teacher nor student expected it, General Kelly became the catalyst for the first real conflict between the Caesar and his heir. During a class lecture, a question by one of the students led the general to a broad discussion of the proper uses of military power, in the course of which he made some injudicious statements about the dangers of too great an imbalance between military and civilian authority. The Caesar, hearing of the lecture and remembering General Kelly's close association with Imperator Marius, ordered him arrested and executed for treason. Julius interceded on his mentor's behalf, arguing eloquently and forcefully that no treason had been intended. The general had made no specific criticism of the Caesar's government, and had proven his loyalty to the Hegemony through long service to the nation. The Caesar responded by offering to spare the general as a gift for Julius's upcoming seventeenth birthday. Three days later, General Kelly was set at liberty, but stripped of his rank and banished from the Collegium.

In the year since this incident, Julius has treated the Caesar with cool civility. For his own part, the Caesar has begun to keep close tabs on his eldest son's activities and associates. Though neither shows the other any open distrust, the strain between father and son is apparent. Remembering his stormy relationship with his own father, the Caesar may find it all too easy to believe that his heir intends him harm—particularly if the rumors about Sean's hand in the Imperator's death are true.

According to what our agents have been able to learn, the danger Julius poses so far exists largely in the Caesar's imagination. However, Julius does appear to be making an effort to

distance himself from his father's excesses. A few individuals and groups known to oppose the Caesar are also keeping close watch on Julius, possibly hoping he will begin to actively work against his father within the next few years.

SOCIOPOLITICAL STRUCTURE

The idea of a Roman empire in the barbaric Periphery conjures a variety of images, few of them encouraging. A closer look at the republican ideal as implemented in the Hegemony, however, reveals that the structure is not too far removed from the feudal system in place throughout much of the Inner Sphere and parts of the Periphery. Most Marian citizens accept the system without complaint, acknowledging that it beats the harsh dictatorships suffered by most of their neighbors.

THE PEOPLE

All people in the Hegemony can be divided into three distinct social classes. The patricians, or upper class, the plebs, or lower class, and slaves. At first, the patricians were simply defined as those who owned land, with all other citizens falling into the pleb class. Early on, wealthy plebs began buying land and titles, becoming patricians themselves. Patrician status is now hereditary, a nobility that differs little from systems across the Inner Sphere. Since land ownership generally passed from parent to child anyway, few complained about the new order.

Only patricians may vote or hold political office, attain high military rank or own real estate. In effect, they represent the Hegemony's legally perpetuated upper class. This system remains viable because the majority of patricians realize that they retain their position only on the sufferance of the plebs, and treat their slaves and employees fairly. Under the increasingly harsh leadership of Caesar Sean and his supporters, however, the possibility of rebellion becomes more real with each passing day.

Slavery is not uncommon in the Periphery, though the Hegemony is one of the largest states to condone it. Because it is illegal to buy or sell a citizen of the Hegemony, slaves are most often prisoners of war. Given enough time and a generous owner, a slave may eventually petition the Senate for citizenship, though such requests are rarely made and even more rarely granted. In order to win his freedom, a slave must prove his worth to the Hegemony and his ability to sustain himself and his family—in both cases, this usually amounts to a large bribe to the proper senatorial council.

THE SENATE

The ruling body of the Marian Hegemony is the Senate. Each senator is elected by the patricians of his senatorial district, a geographical subdivision roughly equal to a small continent or large island. Depending on a planet's landmass and population, each planet supports between ten and twenty senators. Though they are re-elected annually, most senators retain their positions for life. In addition, the generals of each legion possess the rank of senator and wield power equal to those senators elected by the citizenry.

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A full meeting of the Senate occurs twice a year, in which senators discuss matters affecting the entire Hegemony and cast an official vote on those matters. The senators devote the remainder of their working year to various councils, each responsible for specific governmental functions. The head of each council is nominated by the Caesar and ratified by the full senate. This leader then chooses the other members of his council. The only exception to this system is the Military Council, which is always led by the Caesar himself.

The various Senate councils possess the authority to create and manage lesser governmental departments, in effect creating a form of local government. These officials may be drawn from the ranks of both patricians and plebs, and can wield considerable power within their own sphere of influence. For example, all military officers are chosen by the Military Council, while magistrates and police commanders are chosen by the Law Enforcement Council. The judicious assignment of these high-paying jobs serves as an important way for senators to maintain their power base.

THE CAESAR

Until the rise to power of Sean O'Reilly, the Marian Hegemony was ruled by an Emperor. The title of Emperor was a hereditary position passed to the current ruler's eldest son. The Emperor commanded the Hegemony military and presided over the Senate, where he could cast a tie-breaking vote as well as veto decisions he felt were not in the best interest of the state. The Emperor's real power came in the form of his ability to make "declarations." The Emperor could present an issue to the Senate, and a one-third vote would be sufficient to pass it into law. This ability was a strange compromise between a republic and a monarchy, apparently designed by the Hegemony's founder as a way to maintain a king's power while giving the impression of self-rule to the people. So far, it has worked.

Because Sean O'Reilly made no declaration changing the power of his position when he altered the name of the position, it must be assumed that the Caesar commands the same powers as the Emperors before him. Sean claims he made this symbolic change to represent the Hegemony's growth into a true interstellar power, though some among the Senate believe that the Caesar intends for the title change to be more than cosmetic and that he will eventually try to exercise power beyond the current parameters of his station.

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

Sean O'Reilly has made few friends for his realm, though the recent conquest of the Lothian League may open up markets for such Lothian products as copper and iron ores. Political relations with most Periphery states are poor to nonexistent, and trade is minimal. The Caesar may do better both economically and politically with the Successor States, whose need for germanium has grown with their increasing production of JumpShips. The nations of the Inner Sphere are also less inclined than Periphery nations to fear a Hegemony attack, as the Caesar is far more likely to attempt conquest of his smaller and less powerful Periphery neighbors.

SUCCESSOR STATES

The Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation are the only two Successor States that have any formal relations with the Marian Hegemony. In the past, Marian raids on Free Worlds League border planets kept relations between them chilly. The recent Taurian-Canopian alliance, however, has prompted Thomas Marik toward friendlier ties with the Hegemony as a potential counter to aggressive moves by the Magistracy of Canopus. Trade between the two states remains as healthy as it has always been; Marik merchants eagerly buy germanium from the Hegemony, and sell any number of League-made goods to Hegemony customers. It is frequently said in the Hegemony that Marik merchants own the bazaars on the world of Suetonius.

Following Thomas Marik's lead, the Capellan Confederation has also strengthened its ties to the Marian state. The Taurian-Canopian alliance represents a potential threat to Capellan as well as to League worlds; in addition, Chancellor Sun-Tzu may find the Marian Legions useful allies should he decide to strike at the Concordat or the Magistracy. With so many of his own troops bogged down in the Chaos March, the Marian Legions could prove necessary to any such scheme of conquest—provided Sun-Tzu can talk the Caesar out of trying to keep captured worlds for his own realm.

In the interests of beefing up his war machine, Sun-Tzu Liao has recently been buying large quantities of Marian germanium. Marian miners discovered another rich vein of the element in 3057, and the mine has just begun working at full capacity. Current rumors abound that the Capellan Confederation has expressed interest in constructing a BattleMech factory on the Marian world of Pompey in exchange for germanium supplies at a somewhat reduced price.

COMSTAR AND THE WORD OF BLAKE

ComStar has historically had little influence in the Marian state, not least because of the Marian government's insistence on charging a hefty fee for our operations. We have retained tenuous control over the HPG facility on Alphard, but the Caesar has begun to make noises about taking the HPG under direct Imperial control. He has made no overt moves so far, and the situation remains in an uneasy stalemate. Given the necessity of deploying all the Com Guards elsewhere—plus the risk of provoking a confrontation by bringing even a small detachment into Hegemony space—we may need to consider alternative methods of keeping an eye on developments in Marian space.

In another troubling development, Word of Blake ROM agents appear to be frequent visitors to the Imperial residence, and we have reason to believe that the Caesar is negotiating with them to build HPG stations on other Marian worlds. If this is the case, the Word of Blake will certainly use those facilities to further their own plans.

PERIPHERY NATIONS

The Magistracy of Canopus and the Taurian Concordat are the Hegemony's main antagonists in the Periphery, particularly since their recent alliance. Marian pirates have made a practice of

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raiding Canopian worlds almost since the Hegemony's inception, and the Caesar's increased military strength clearly makes Magestrix Emma Centrella concerned for Canopian border planets. The Hegemony's ruthless war against the Lothian League outraged the Protector of the Taurian Concordat, and Jeffrey Calderon has joined the Magestrix in publicly condemning the Marian Hegemony as "a pariah state ruled by a conscienceless criminal, whose actions threaten the stability of the entire Periphery." The Magestrix has warned Caesar O'Reilly that any move against the Magistracy or its ally will have "grave consequences" for the Hegemony, and Protector Calderon fully supports Emma Centrella's declaration.

The Illyrian Palatinate, fearing that it may become the Marian Hegemony's next target, is taking steps to increase its armed forces by hiring mercenary units to defend its four worlds. Palatinate Administrator Ernest Wick has publicly declared that his people will fight for every inch of soil, making any attempt to take the Palatinate extremely costly and ultimately worthless. Even if a military victory was achieved, the conquerors would be left with nothing but devastated cities and a rebellious population.

Of all the Periphery states, only the Circinus Federation has any real ties to the Marian Hegemony, but even these are strained. Both realms maintain trade relations with the other, but President H.R. McIntyre of the Federation has yet to hear any response to his proposal for a joint invasion and equal division of the Palatinate. According to the rumor mill on Alphard, local bookies are taking bets on whether the Caesar will invade the Illyrian Palatinate or the Circinus Federation first. Odds on the Palatinate are running considerably lower than those on the Federation, but a substantial number of Hegemony citizens seem to think that an invasion of the Circinus Federation is likely.

MARIAN HEGEMONY MILITARY

Though the Marian Legions suffered some losses in the final battle for the Lothian League, they have nearly rebuilt to their former strength. Because of Caesar O'Reilly's reorganization of the armed forces, precise equivalents are not possible, but current Marian military strength amounts to roughly three BattleMech regiments, with nearly three times that number in conventional forces. Competent and aggressive, the Legions are a fearsome, potent force. Most of the legionnaires are solidly loyal to their Caesar, as the military owes much of its current power and prestige to him.

The Caesar recently commissioned the building of another military academy, primarily intended to train aerospace pilots. The Flight Academy of Alphard is expected to open its doors in 3059, and boasts three former Outworlds Alliance pilots among its staff. By training cadres of aerospace pilots, Caesar O'Reilly hopes to bridge the Marian Legions' only remaining weakness.

FORCE COMPOSITION AND TACTICS

Originally, the First Marian Legion was organized in the same fashion as standard Inner Sphere BattleMech units. After Caesar O'Reilly expanded the military, he reorganized the Legions along the lines of the armies of the ancient Roman Empire that once dominated Terra. The basic unit is the maniple,

which consists of five BattleMechs or vehicles. Two maniples make a century, and five centuries make up a cohort. Legions consist of two or more cohorts, along with associated support staff and equipment. Each legion also contains combined vehicle and infantry cohorts numbering two to three times its BattleMech forces.

Non-BattleMech units have similar organization, though with a few significant differences. Infantry maniples consist of fifty troops, which are further broken down into five squads of ten. Aerospace craft operate in two-fighter teams. Five of these teams comprise an air maniple, and two air maniples make a wing. Five wings combine into a squadron, though a formation of fighters this large is rarely seen due to the Marian Legions' meager aerospace assets.

Despite its name, the Marian Legions operate most often in cohort-sized units. Each unit is stationed separately from others in its legion and function completely independently, in much the same way as a mercenary battalion.

A typical cohort is a highly flexible unit consisting of two light centuries made up of fast-moving light and medium 'Mechs, two medium centuries containing medium and heavy 'Mechs of moderate speed, and a single heavy century of slower heavy and assault 'Mechs.

On the attack, standard cohort tactics call for the medium centuries to stay together as the main force in fairly tight formation, with the heavy century following close behind. The light centuries flank the main body of the force on either side, ranging forward to scout out hidden units but never engaging the enemy directly. Once the medium centuries have engaged, the light centuries come around the flanks in a classic "horns of the bull" maneuver. This is intended to pin the enemy force in place until the heavy century arrives to deliver the coup de grace. Then the heavy units hold the position until infantry arrives, while the main force moves on.

UNIFORMS

The basic Marian duty uniform consists of a tunic and trousers of a gray bullet-resistant fabric. Various equipment belts adorn the uniform, as well as a heavy piece of armor emblazoned with the soldier's rank insignia and worn on the left shoulder. The uniforms of each different service branch also contain small unique variations.

Marian dress uniforms are cut along similar lines, although they are fashioned of lighter materials and feature purple sashes in place of the equipment belts.

OFFICER RANKS

The unusual Romanlike organization of the Marian Legions creates an equally unusual hierarchy of rank. Almost unique among Inner Sphere militaries is the complete lack of enlisted ranks. All non-officer troops are ranked as legionnaires, though this classification encompasses many different positions, including technicians, MechWarriors, infantry, tank crews, and so on. Each of these groups holds a certain level of prestige in the Legion but officially holds the simple rank of legionnaire. Troops receive assignments to these various positions based

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on skill, seniority and social status. Plebs rarely become MechWarriors or officers, and those who do never gain the clout to advance beyond centurion in rank.

Legionnaire

All enlisted troops receive the rank of legionnaire, though each one performs differing duties based on his station and seniority. Apart from the uniform appropriate to his position, a legionnaire wears no rank insignia.

Principes

Roughly equivalent to a lieutenant, a principes commands a single maniple.

Centurion

A centurion, a position most commonly filled by a patrician, commands each century. In the Marian navy a centurion commands a wing of fighters or a DropShip.

Legatus

Only the most cunning patrician centurions advance to the rank of legatus and gain command of a cohort, because the rank carries as much political clout as military. A legatus inspires fear

and respect on the planet where his cohort is stationed, and usually serves as a senator as well. A naval legatus commands a JumpShip or fighter squadron.

General

The most powerful officers in the Marian Hegemony, the generals each command a legion. The First Marian Legion falls under the direct command of the Caesar. A general also serves as a senator, and, in fact, possesses far more influence on the Senate than civilian politicians. Because the cohorts of a legion tend to operate independently, the generals commonly spend more time in court on Alphard than in the field commanding their troops.

Caesar

The traditional ruler of the Marian Hegemony took the title of Imperator and also commanded the army. When Sean O'Reilly ascended as Imperator and reorganized the military, he changed his title to Caesar. According to this new order, the Caesar leads the Hegemony and functions as the supreme commander of the armed forces. In addition to overall command, the Caesar also commands the prestigious First Marian Legion, and may assume personal control of its First Cohort in battle.

THE MARIAN LEGIONS

Deployment as of 3058

Commander: Caesar Sean O'Reilly

Aide: General Adolf Burake

'Mech Strength: Approximately 3 Regiments

Unit Name	Experience Level	Loyalty	Homeworld
First Marian Legion			
(CO: Caesar Sean O'Reilly)			
1st Cohort	Veteran	Fanatical	Alphard
(CO: Legatus Willhelm Arex)			
2nd Cohort	Regular	Fanatical	Pompey
(CO: Legatus Katherine Applegate)			
Second Marian Legion			
(CO: General Adolf Burake)			
1st Cohort	Regular	Fanatical	Logan Prime
(CO: Legatus Gwen Mustang)			
2nd Cohort	Regular	Reliable	Lordinax
(CO: Legatus Richard Kanny)			
3rd Cohort	Green	Reliable	Leximon
(CO: Legatus Quentin D'Abo)			
Third Marian Legion			
(CO: General Hallis Stepford)			
1st Cohort	Regular	Reliable	Baccalieu
(CO: Legatus Susanne Pentmark)			
2nd Cohort	Green	Reliable	Lothario
(CO: Legatus Dwayne "Bloody Hand" Baske)			
3rd Cohort	Green	Reliable	Islington
(CO: Legatus Marcus Kendall)			

MARIAN HEGEMONY



PERSONALITIES

CAESAR SEAN O'REILLY

Caesar Sean O'Reilly rules his realm with an iron hand. Forty-three years old, Sean is a handsome man with a powerful build, pale blond hair, and brilliant green eyes. Outwardly charming and utterly ruthless, the Caesar believes himself destined to unite the Periphery under the banner of the Marian Hegemony. He enjoys power and its rewards, and cares very little for anyone who cannot give him these things. An indifferent father, he sends occasional expensive gifts to his children when he thinks of it but spends little time with them.

JULIUS O'REILLY

The young heir to the Hegemony looks very much like his father, but is strikingly different from him in disposition. Quiet and serious-minded, Julius appears to have little taste for personal power. He believes in the Caesar's right to rule, but seems aware that the power he will one day wield carries great responsibilities. Hegemony citizens unhappy with the Caesar's increasingly despotic rule see Julius as their hope for a somewhat freer society.

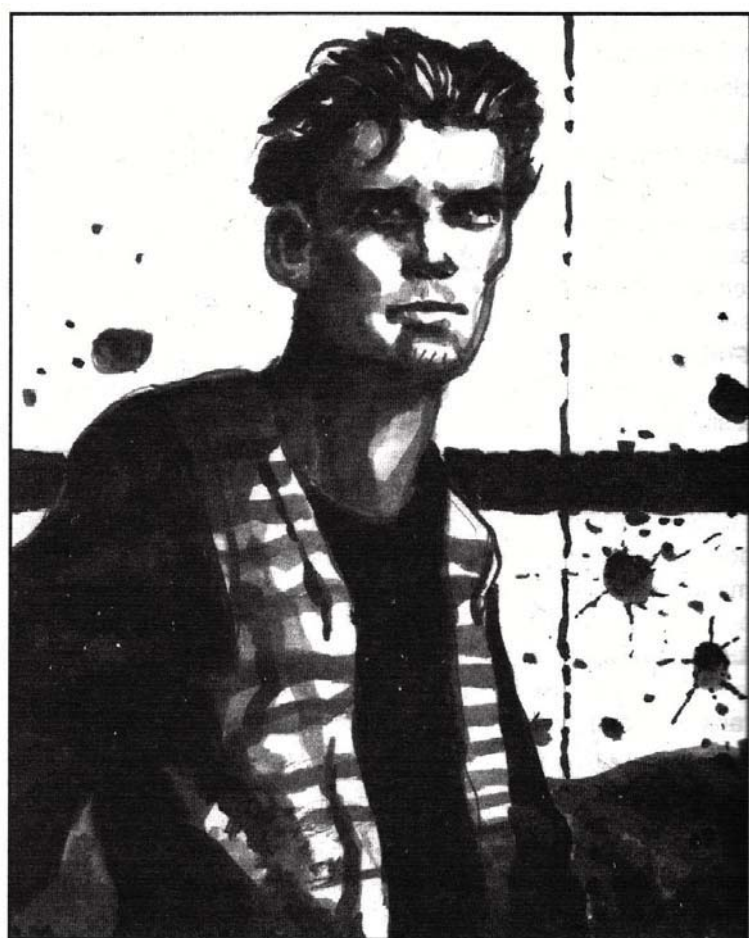
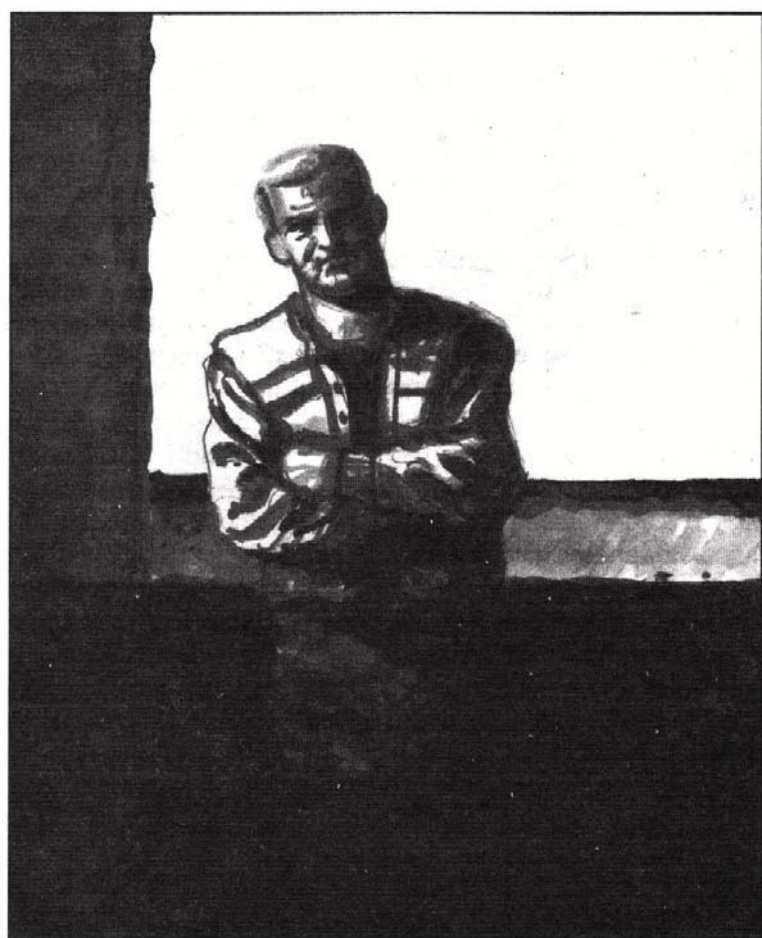
Six feet tall and slender of build, Julius is quick and agile, traits central to his impressive performance as a MechWarrior. A recent graduate of the Collegium, he received command of a century in the First Marian Legion. He is also an accomplished martial artist and a talented swordsman.

ROM agents report rumors that MIM agents from the Magistracy of Canopus have contacted Julius in pursuit of ends that can be easily guessed, but such rumors fail to offer any information on the substance of any such meetings. The sharp eye Caesar O'Reilly keeps on his heir makes it highly unlikely that any contact took place, as the Caesar would surely have responded.

ADOLF BURAKE

General Adolf Burake, second in overall command of the Marian Legions and also commander of the Second Marian Legion, has been the Caesar's close friend and confidant since Sean's first military command. As a reward for Adolf's steadfast loyalty, Sean gave him the responsibility of training the beefed-up Marian Legions into the brutal fighting force they have developed into since Emperor Marius's day.

General Burake makes up for his short stature and slight build with a quick temper and a booming voice; he can easily shout down anyone in his immediate vicinity. He enjoys a good joke, and his hearty laugh can fill a room. A stern disciplinarian, General Burake demands complete devotion from his soldiers and pushes them to reach beyond their limits. Some claim that his extreme methods cause many soldiers to wash out, but the general dismisses such criticism as "sour grapes from losers who couldn't take the pressure."



CIRCINUS FEDERATION

The Circinus Federation is one of most powerful of the Periphery's so-called bandit kingdoms. This small realm is currently led by the dictator H.R. "Little Bob" McIntyre, but factions in the Circinus military and dissenting farm unions have become increasingly critical of his rule in recent years. This domestic discord, along with a recurring internal rebellion on the planet Desdiratz, continues to frustrate McIntyre's long-held plans to expand the territory and prestige of the Federation by invading and conquering the neighboring Illyrian Palatinate.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

After being accused of contract violation against the Free Worlds League in 2770, the Black Warriors mercenary unit abandoned Marik space, narrowly escaping capture by the Free Worlds navy. Vowing eternal vengeance on House Marik for their outlaw status, the Black Warriors settled on the planet Circinus and joined the pirates already operating there. Under the leadership of Colonel Zachariah Cirion, the unit supported itself by conducting stealthy raids against outlying Marik agricultural worlds. With the Amaris Civil War still raging, House Marik proved unwilling to commit troops to clearing up what it considered to be no more than a minor nuisance.

The nascent Federation might have remained a simple pirate band if not for the 2785 arrival of a small convoy of Lyran settlers fleeing the destruction of the civil war. The farmers joined with the mercenaries, providing the Federation with a legitimate means of support for its population. The Lyran farmers apparently never looked too closely into the nature of their new allies—the pirates continued to conduct what remained "covert operations," and the farmers asked no questions as long as their allies provided the tools and consumer goods the farmers needed. In return, they gave the pirates the appearance of a respectable, agrarian society for the neighboring worlds who were their victims.

Then, during a lull in the Second Succession War (2839–2864), Marik troops invaded the world of Circinus. Lacking a defensive force, the population had no choice but to surrender. In subsequent decades, Marik leaders ruled with an iron hand, deepening the Circinian hatred of the League. Eventually the continuing Succession Wars created a more pressing need for Marik forces elsewhere, and the Free Worlds League abandoned its garrisons.

Within months, Circinian forces resumed raiding. The raiders concentrated their attacks against the border worlds of the Free Worlds League and the Lyran Commonwealth, which were too busy fighting the Third Succession War to allocate troops to defend against the Circinian attacks. During this period the inhabitants of Circinus also began cautiously settling nearby star systems, claiming eight planets between 2990 and 3020. From his new empire, President C.J. "Bob" McIntyre entered into a series of joint reconciliation talks with the Lyran

and Free Worlds governments. Through skillful diplomacy and the judicious return of prisoners, and without once admitting to any wrongdoing on the part of his people, McIntyre managed to avert a wholesale counterattack against his federation by playing off the mutual suspicions of his Marik and Steiner counterparts.

During the Fourth Succession War the Circinian raids grew increasingly profitable. At this time Circinian raiders could strike their targets with virtual impunity, as Lyran forces fought off the Kurita offensives and Marik armies deteriorated. President McIntyre used much of the profits gained from these raids to increase the size of the Black Warriors, who remained the primary Circinian military force. McIntyre bolstered the Warriors by supplying them with new BattleMechs, personnel, training and members of several mercenary units left penniless after the Fourth Succession War. By 3032 the Black Warriors had added two full regiments to its numbers, and the Circinus Federation stood poised to embark on a period of interstellar conquest.

RISING SON

President C.J. McIntyre's dream of a Circinian empire received an unforeseen setback when the president died of a heart attack in August 3032. The president's son, H.R. "Little Bob" McIntyre, assumed the presidency immediately after his father's death and quickly consolidated his power with the help of Adam Cirion, commander of the Black Warriors and "Director of Covert Operations," namely piracy.

After securing his position, the new president announced that he would carry out his father's dream of making the Circinus Federation a true interstellar power. As a first step toward achieving that dream, he planned to conquer the mineral-rich worlds of the Illyrian Palatinate and ordered Circinian military leaders to prepare an invasion plan. Within weeks, Circinian manufacturers were busy producing materiel for the invasion, and the Circinian military had completed a campaign strategy.

In November 3032, only days before the invasion was scheduled to commence, a second tragedy again delayed the conquest of the Illyrian Palatinate. Black Warriors commander Adam Cirion died as the result of injuries he suffered during a tavern brawl on Circinus. The Black Warriors, which served as the command staff and core of the Circinian forces, were thrown into disarray. Like the government of the Circinus Federation itself, the Black Warriors had no system to provide an accepted order of succession.

Traditionally, the Black Warriors had been led by a member of the Cirion family. But many military leaders considered the late commander's only son, Michael Cirion, too young and inexperienced to lead the Federation's forces. Eager to avoid any infighting that might threaten morale and unit cohesion and weaken the Federation military, McIntyre announced that he

CIRCINUS FEDERATION

would assume command of the Black Warriors until Michael Cirion was able and old enough to lead. Many individuals in the Black Warriors questioned McIntyre's ability to command the military, as the president possessed only marginal skill as a MechWarrior and virtually no battlefield experience. However, McIntyre pre-empted these concerns by announcing that the invasion would be postponed for one year while he trained with the Black Warriors to ensure a quick victory for the Federation.

During the subsequent months, McIntyre attempted to consolidate his support within the Circinian military forces and eliminate any opposition. His efforts proved only partially successful. Even as the revised invasion date neared, many members of the Black Warriors continued to view McIntyre with suspicion and hostility for his violation of the traditional, unspoken agreement between Circinian politicians and military leaders to refrain from visibly encroaching on one another's areas of influence. In addition, "Little Bob" soon proved himself incapable of continuing the political balancing act of hiding the true nature of the Black Warriors from the Circinian public. Though over the years most Circinians had become aware of the nature of their planet's income, they gladly turned a blind eye in favor of the Federation's continued prosperity. McIntyre's ineptitude stood to ruin decades of clever diplomacy in a matter of months. Michael Cirion emerged as an unofficial leader of this silent opposition, but the Cirion surname continued to elicit respect and even reverence among the Black Warriors and McIntyre could do little to counter the rising fortunes of the young MechWarrior.

PALATINATE INVASION

In 3034, McIntyre announced to the Circinian people that their time had come. He vowed that by quickly conquering the Palatinate, the Circinus Federation would become a respected Periphery power, immune from Inner Sphere aggression forever. Shortly after that announcement, McIntyre ordered the invasion to begin.

Unfortunately, McIntyre's prediction of a quick victory for the Federation proved wrong. Apparently, the Federation's ineffectual intelligence service failed to detect the military preparations taken by the Illyrians during the long delays that plagued the launch of the invasion, and it seems probable that McIntyre's desire for a quick victory caused him to discount any reports that did come through. As a result, the invading Circinian forces were completely surprised when they encountered seasoned mercenary troops defending the Palatinate worlds. As Circinian losses quickly began to mount, McIntyre ordered a full-scale retreat to preserve his forces.

Fearful of the popular disdain the failed invasion might engender, as well as any advantage his failure might provide his opponents in the military, McIntyre immediately ordered his loyal commanders to identify a suitable, vulnerable target for another invasion. Within days those commanders had identified a target: the Lothian world of Dersidatz.

Once the site of a Federation colony, the small agricultural world had been a protectorate of the Lothian League

since 3003. Dersidatz's complete lack of strategic value and its scant resources had enabled the planet's population to live free of outside aggression during the intervening years, and it had virtually no defensive forces when Circinian forces landed. Within days the Dersidatzans had surrendered to the Circinian invaders, who established several small garrisons and settlements on the planet. Despite the quick victory, pockets of Dersidatzan resistance fighters remained on the world. But reports of these fighters were lost in the flood of news accounts of the Federation's victory and the government's proclamations of a dawning Circinian empire. Although Dersidatz held no real strategic or economic value and the victory was not a particularly impressive military feat, it did improve McIntyre's popularity and silence his opponents.

ON THE DEFENSIVE

In the years following the conquest of Dersidatz, a number of events occurred that threatened McIntyre's rule as well as the future of the Federation itself. First, an uprising on Dersidatz in 3036 interrupted the president's plan to mount a second invasion of the Illyrian Palatinate. At the time of the uprising, the Circinian presence on the planet had been reduced to a single company, which was easily overwhelmed by a well-armed rebel strike force. The action enraged McIntyre, who ordered the rest of the Black Warriors to Dersidatz to crush the rebellion.

However, McIntyre quickly withdrew that order when he received reports of massive Marik and Davion troop movements near the Federation borders. Fearing a war that might spill over into the Federation, McIntyre ordered that all Circinian worlds along those border be garrisoned with troops to counter any incursions. At the same time, he ordered that Circinian military forces cease all raiding activities directed against Marik and Davion worlds and return to the realm. For several tense months, Circinian military leaders waited for the attacks they considered inevitable. When a year had passed without any foreign aggression, McIntyre canceled the alert and, confident that the threat had passed, returned his attention to the rebellion on Dersidatz.

The Dersidatzan rebels spent the passing months digging in and preparing sturdier defenses. When Black Warriors returned to the world, they faced a better-armed and better-prepared opponent. The reconquest of Dersidatz quickly degenerated into a guerrilla war, in which the Circinian forces were forced to track small rebel bands through the planet's numerous mountain ranges. Inevitably, the campaign grew far more costly than the Circinian planners had anticipated, and though the protracted war provided further fuel to the simmering discontent within the Circinian military, McIntyre refused to abandon the planet.

By the end of 3040, the Circinians had subdued most of the rebels on Dersidatz. Despite continued, scattered guerrilla activity, McIntyre declared victory for the Federation and withdrew nearly all the Circinian forces from the planet. Then he

CIRCINUS FEDERATION



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began preparations for the delayed second invasion of the Illyrian Palatinate. Those plans were again interrupted in the opening days of 3041 when a group of Black Warriors, secretly backed by Michael Cirion, attempted to seize power in a coup d'état. The president escaped the initial attack, and soon the rebels and troops loyal to McIntyre were embroiled in a fierce, running battle that lasted a full year and spanned every Circinian world. Eventually, the loyalist forces prevailed, but more than two-thirds of the Circinian military was destroyed in the brutal civil war.

McIntyre immediately instituted a brutal purge to eradicate any surviving opposition within his military forces. Michael Cirion was arrested but later found innocent of the charges of treason. Apparently, Cirion had carefully avoided any discernible involvement in the rebellion. That fact, along with the prestige of his family and its influence in the Circinian judicial system, saved him from the executioner's chopping block.

The battered and demoralized Federation received yet another blow in 3042, when a young Black Warriors company commander on a deep raiding mission into Lyran space allegedly discovered a Star League cache on an uncharted Periphery world. Rather than return with this find to the Federation, Captain Hopper Morrison and his unit deserted. The Federation made several failed attempts to hunt down the renegade unit.

Despite all these misfortunes, McIntyre managed to retain the presidency and hold the Circinus Federation together. Slowly the realm began to rebuild itself, resorting to its traditional means of generating capital—raiding. The Clans' invasion of the Inner Sphere in 3050 actually aided this rebuilding effort by drawing Inner Sphere attention away from the worlds along the Circinian border.

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

COMSTAR AND WORD OF BLAKE

ComStar enjoyed good relations with the Federation until the schism that created the Word of Blake group occurred. The redefinition of the ComStar mission confused many citizens of the Federation, and when Word of Blake followers began showing up in the Periphery shortly afterward, Federation natives made no objection to their seizing control of the few HPG facilities ComStar maintained in Circinus space. Blakists maintain control of interstellar communications in the Federation, though we have managed to maintain a small ROM presence among their ranks.

FEDERATED COMMONWEALTH AND LYRAN ALLIANCE

Relations between the Circinus Federation and the Federated Commonwealth and Lyran Alliance remain strained, largely due to the long history of Circinian raids against Davion and Lyran worlds. Recent raids against Lyran possessions have left Circinian-Lyran relations particularly poor at this time, and many planetary rulers within the Lyran Alliance have called

on the Archon to authorize punitive retaliatory strikes against the Federation. More than a few observers have speculated that the Archon might find such military actions an attractive means of bolstering public support for her young Alliance and unity among its peoples.

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

The Federation maintains no diplomatic relations with the Free Worlds League. A history of Circinian raids against Marik worlds and Marik occupation of the Federation have left the populations and governments of both realms suspicious of one another. In recent years, the Free Worlds League has attempted to improve relations by providing economic assistance to several impoverished Circinian worlds, but these programs have done little to alter the deep-seated Circinian hostility toward the Free Worlds League.

PERIPHERY STATES

The Circinus Federation's relations with its Periphery neighbors are mixed. The Illyrian Palatinate, for example, maintains no diplomatic relations with the Circinians and forbids Illyrian merchants from trading with Federation worlds. Circinian relations with the Marian Hegemony, however, have improved in recent months, and trade ties between the two realms are beginning to form. However, many observers speculate that the Federation's friendly overtures toward the Hegemony result entirely from the strategic implications of the Hegemony's conquest of the Lothian League. And those same observers point out that Circinian leaders remain suspicious and wary of the Marian Caesar. Rising factionalism within the Federation has largely stymied Circinian attempts to improve relations with the Magistracy of Canopus, and Circinian relations with the Rim Collection remain strained as well, due to President McIntyre's reluctance to deal with the still-unstable government of the recently founded state. McIntyre's reluctance to deal with the Collection, however, has not prevented Collection merchants from establishing profitable trade arrangements with their Circinian counterparts.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

Though the Circinian government remains firmly under the reins held by President McIntyre, opponents of the president's regime have become increasingly vocal in recent months. Renewed unrest on Dersidatz, the increasing power of the Marian Hegemony, and the growing threat of Lyran and Marik military action against the Federation have provided ample ammunition for critics of the president.

The MechWarrior followers of Michael Cirion constitute the most dangerous opposition faction, because without loyal military backing the president would soon fall. At the present time, Cirion appears to be waiting for an opportune moment to strike at McIntyre. Unlike the president's military opposition, his civilian opponents criticize him publicly. The strongest of these civilian opposition groups are the Federation's farmers unions,

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which criticize McIntyre for doing little to open new channels of trade for the agricultural surplus of Federation farmers.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The Circinus Federation operates under a somewhat passive centralized government that has persisted in its current configuration for more than 200 years—mainly with luck and by the charisma of its leaders. Upon the ascension of “Little Bob” to the presidency, several groups dissatisfied with this state of affairs seriously challenged the status quo, and domestic unrest revolving around this issue continues to the current day. Though active rebellion seems unlikely, large segments of the Circinian population may attempt to simply leave the Federation if they continue to feel their needs are not being addressed.

Technically a representative democracy, the highest posts in the Circinian government actually are filled through Machiavellian maneuvering rather than popular vote. Presidential elections take place once every ten years, but an incumbent president has never been defeated. (Traditionally, the heir of a president is considered the incumbent in the next election following the president's death, though this policy has never been formalized or put in writing.)

The governor of each planet in the Federation serves a five-year term. These governors possess very little autonomy, with their main duties restricted to attending the monthly Central Council meetings to vote on issues of policy and law.

The Circinus Federation maintains only one governmental body, the Federation Central Council. The council consists of all the planetary governors, the commander of the Black Warriors, and the president, who may cast an extra vote to break ties. Though the power to cast the tie-breaking vote technically represents the limit of the president's powers, in practice the president exerts major influence over the council. In fact, since Little Bob took control of the military, most members of the government would characterize the Federation as a dictatorship—Little Bob regards gubernatorial elections as mere formalities to ratify his personal choices, and the council always bows to the will of the president. The Circinian people see this situation very clearly, and the failure to maintain even the outward appearance of a democracy is no doubt the source of much of the unrest plaguing this region in recent years.

CIRCINUS FEDERATION MILITARY

The Black Warriors, plus several additional units, serve as the Circinian military. The current force consists of a battalion-sized core unit of Black Warriors, as well as several House McIntyre lances and mercenary companies. Never a truly unified force, the Black Warriors constantly test the loyalties of the various factions within their ranks. The largest faction, led by Major Fritz Donner, consists of units loyal to President McIntyre. A faction of near-equal strength, however, supports company commander Michael Cirion, heir to the Black Warriors'

command. Because of the fierce rivalry of these two factions, most of the mercenaries employed in the Circinian military studiously avoid taking sides.

UNIFORMS

Circinian military leaders have never made any real effort to regulate or standardize uniforms, and so each Circinian military unit has its own uniform. This system was established when the Black Warriors began attracting other units to join them, under the belief that unique uniforms help each unit maintain a strong sense of individuality and morale. Detractors of the practice criticize it as yet another source of division between military units in the Federation.

However, Circinian military leaders require that all unit uniforms include the emblem of the Federation—and that all military personnel wear the emblem somewhere above the waist. This stipulation was added after the Fighting Shamrocks were spotted wearing large Federation emblems on their rear ends. Although all Federation units use the same progression of rank, rank insignia varies widely among units.

ENLISTED RANKS

As an exclusively BattleMech unit, the Black Warriors integrate only a few enlisted personnel, and only in support roles. A stripped-down enlisted rank structure offers sufficient diversity for this system. Tenure determines promotion, and pay is directly tied to a soldier's rank.

Private

All new recruits to the Black Warriors are issued the rank of private until they prove themselves worthy of another rank. If they are MechWarriors, this process is fairly rapid, as any battlefield or simulator run will prove a soldier's worth as a MechWarrior. Making progress beyond the rank of private in the areas of technical support, medicine and ship's crew requires traveling a long and arduous road, and competition is fierce. Only the most skilled and persistent soldiers reach the rank of corporal.

Corporal

Unlike the low station this rank affords in larger militaries, the Circinian corporal acts as a team leader or department head in the technical support division. Each corporal supervises a team of techs in support of a company, or a department (such as engineering) on board a ship.

Sergeant

Few corporals ever advance to the rank of sergeant, a post soldiers hold until death or retirement once they attain it. A sergeant coordinates the activities of all support personnel associated with a particular battalion or ship.

OFFICER RANKS

The command structure of the Black Warriors follows the typical model used by most mercenary units in the Inner

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Sphere. It is interesting to note, however, that personnel rarely advance from enlisted to officer ranks in the Black Warriors, mainly because such a promotion would require a support person to develop MechWarrior skills and demonstrate competence.

MechWarrior

As the rank name implies, a MechWarrior pilots a BattleMech. Though considered an officer with all the associated perks and pay scale, a MechWarrior commands no authority over enlisted personnel.

Lieutenant

Lieutenants command a lance of four BattleMechs. On board a ship, a lieutenant acts as the executive officer.

Captain

Captains are the most important officers in the Black Warriors. This statement has taken on a deeper truth as the unit has returned to raiding in recent years. Each captain commands a company of twelve BattleMechs, plus associated support staff. The company is the main unit deployed by the Warriors, so each captain is given a large degree of latitude on the battlefield and is expected to operate independent of higher

command authority. In the small Circinus navy, captains command DropShips as well as JumpShips.

Major

In the Federation military, a major commands a battalion. Because the current Black Warriors force consists of only one battalion, there is only one major, the staunch McIntyre supporter Fritz Donner.

Colonel

The position of colonel, the highest rank in the Black Warriors, is currently vacant. The original Black Warriors were commanded by a colonel, and when the Black Warriors total force reached three regiments, each regiment was commanded by a colonel. They in turn reported directly to the president. Though the current Federation forces consist of a full regiment in strength, Little Bob apparently prefers the position of president to the rank of colonel.

For military dress functions, the president's uniform rivals a colonel's in gaudy flash, each shoulder festooned with gold cords and ten glittering chrome stars lining each epaulet and collar (representing the ten worlds of the Federation). As the Federation grows, the President's uniform may become difficult to look at without sunglasses.

THE BLACK WARRIORS

Deployment as of 3058

Commander: President H.R. "Little Bob" McIntyre

'Mech Strength: 1 Regiment

Unit Name	Experience Level	Loyalty	Homeworld
The Black Warriors (3 companies)			
(CO: Major Fritz Donner)			
Sarono's Sting	Veteran	Questionable	Maximillian
(CO: Captain Julio Sarono)			
Davidson's Dirt Devils	Regular	Reliable	Thadora's Land
(CO: Captain Sarah Davidson)			
Cirion's Death Machine	Veteran	Questionable	Circinus
(CO: Lord Captain Michael Cirion)			
McIntyre House Guards (3 companies)			
(CO: President H.R. McIntyre)			
1st Circinus Militia	Green	Reliable	Zorn's Keep
(CO: Captain Jenna Lawrence)			
The McIntyre Guard	Regular	Fanatical	Circinus
(CO: Captain Geraldo Villinus)			
The Circinus Lancers	Green	Reliable	Andirion
(CO: Captain Jimmy Peterson)			
The Fighting Shamrocks (1 company)	Regular	Questionable	Thadora's Land
(CO: Captain Angus O'Leary)			
Reed's Brew (2 lances)	Regular	Questionable	Clayborne II
(CO: Captain Burly Reed)			
Quint's Olympian Groundpounders (1 company)			
(CO: Captain Herman Quint)	Veteran	Reliable	Diedre's Den

CIRCINUS FEDERATION

BERGTING 95



PERSONALITIES

H.R. "LITTLE BOB" MCINTYRE

Since taking power in 3032, the 55-year-old president has grown increasingly paranoid. He is constantly suspicious of those around him and often flies into rages when setbacks occur within the Federation. Fortunately for the president's aides, his current anger and paranoia are directed primarily at the Dersidatz rebels.

In the past few years, McIntyre has begun to deteriorate physically. He has gained weight and developed high blood pressure, no doubt from stress associated with the dangers currently threatening his position and his realm. Not nearly the fighter he once was, the president increasingly resorts to cruelty and threats to enforce his will.



MICHAEL CIRION

Commander of one of the Black Warriors companies, Michael Cirion is a bitter man. He believes that President McIntyre robbed him of his rightful position as commander of the Circinus military and blames the president for all his problems. Since his father's death in 3032, Cirion has searched for a way to usurp control of the Black Warriors from McIntyre. He secretly supported the unsuccessful coup attempt against McIntyre in 3041 and is waiting for another opportunity to depose the president.

Cirion is a man of average build with rather plain features, which allow him to blend in easily with the local population of any world to which he travels. His sole distinguishing physical characteristic is a slight scar under his chin, the result of a duel with a fellow warrior.

LESSER STATES

Unlike the Inner Sphere, the Periphery has always included a number of small states, some no larger than a single world or system. Many of the minor powers described here have existed for centuries—some founded by refugees after the fall of the Star League, some by people fleeing the various Succession Wars. Others were founded more recently, often by people seeking adventure or a better life for themselves and their families outside the boundaries of the Successor States. Such small powers tend to survive not by strength of arms but by remaining unnoticed by their larger neighbors.

Thus far, the Clan invasion has left most legitimate nations of the Periphery untouched. The Clans' invasion path took them through territory claimed by the various powers collectively called the Bandit Kingdoms, and the Clan occupation zones have not extended appreciably past those bounds. However, minor Periphery powers whose small holdings lie above the truce line may yet be in danger of Clan assault, as they are "fair game" even under the restrictions of the Truce of Tukayyid. Some of the endangered states, aware of their vulnerability to Clan attack, are attempting to form loose alliances with their neighbors to provide for mutual defense; it remains to be seen whether or not any of these efforts will be successful.

RIM COLLECTION

Located on the Lyran Alliance border, the Rim Collection is the newest Periphery state. Six independent worlds—Caldarium, Slewis, Waypoint, All Dawn, Otisberg and Gillfillan's Gold—joined to create the Rim Collection in 3048. Before the collapse of the Star League, these six worlds had been part of the Rim Worlds Republic. Three centuries of unsought independence after the Star League's collapse brought them nothing but poverty; by the end of the Fourth Succession War, most people on the worlds of the Rim Collection were barely eking out a subsistence living. Bandit raids, against which none of the planets had any real defense, added to the misery. During the Fourth Succession War, when the Inner Sphere's attention was turned toward their own troubles, the bandit raids became incessant. The people of these six worlds, unable to see any way to change this dismal state of affairs, were eager for a savior. Their salvation arrived when James Moroney landed on Islington in 3041.

Professor James Moroney, a social sciences instructor at the University of Regulus in the Free Worlds League, felt no ambition to become a political leader. Several events during the 3030s, however, changed his mind. That decade was a troubled one in the Free Worlds League—the perennially rebellious Duchy of Andurien seceded in 3030, and the assassination of Captain-General Janos Marik in 3035 was wrongly blamed on Andurien agents. As a native of Andurien, Professor Moroney came under suspicion from an increasingly paranoid and heavy-handed central government. In addition to his ancestry, the professor was known to espouse views on self-determination and

political freedom in ways the Marik government found uncomfortable. Both in classes and outside of them, Professor Moroney spoke eloquently of humankind's unquenchable desire for freedom and the futility of any attempt to impose a destiny on any people who wished to choose their own way. Though he never explicitly advocated his native duchy's secession, he stated many times that no government could hope to keep control over a people who wished to be free of that administration. In 3036, Captain-General Duncan Marik ordered Moroney arrested for treason.

Because the League was by then engulfed in a war to reclaim its wayward duchy, Moroney's trial was not scheduled to take place until early 3037. In December 3036, Thomas Marik—initially believed dead in the same explosion that had killed his father Janos—appeared and claimed the Captain-Generalship. With Thomas's accession, Duncan Marik's death in the field, the successful reconquest of Andurien, and increasing doubt that the Anduriens had actually been responsible for Janos Marik's death, the jury for the Moroney trial found the professor not guilty of treason and sedition. They pronounced him a free man, subject only to a heavy fine for what they termed "irresponsible public statements in a time of martial emergency."

The professor soon discovered, however, that his newly won freedom had its limits. When he attempted to return to work, the University of Regulus informed him that it had revoked his tenure. His subsequent attempt to earn money on the public lecture circuit ended with the League government banishing the professor and his family from Marik space as "political undesirables." In 3038 Professor Moroney relocated to the Federated Commonwealth world of Aberystwyth, where a local community college had offered him a part-time teaching job. While on Aberystwyth, Moroney began speaking out about his trial and expulsion, and also began writing a personal account of his experiences. His stirring speeches on the human right to self-determination garnered him considerable attention, not all of it positive. Members of the Skye separatist movement, the principal focus of opposition to the merging of the Lyran Commonwealth with the Federated Suns, obtained copies of Professor Moroney's speeches and circulated them around the Isle of Skye. Though he had not intended them to, Moroney's speeches and writings also influenced quite a few citizens of both realms who felt uneasy about the union. Eventually, the government of the Federated Commonwealth politely but firmly demanded that Moroney depart.

Lacking funds to go very far, Moroney took his family on a short jaunt to the independent world of Gillfillan's Gold. On this backwater planet, Moroney hoped to build a new and simpler life as a farmer. He seemed to have succeeded until 3043, when a local town councilman and friend of Moroney's ran across one of the professor's taped public speeches on a visit to the Commonwealth. Impressed by the speech's content and style, Councilman Roberts returned to Gillfillan's Gold determined to enlist his eloquent friend's aid in a cause dear to the councilman's heart—the union of Gillfillan's Gold and five other

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nearby, independent worlds into a confederation that might give them some hope for a more prosperous future.

Initially reluctant to step back into the public arena, Professor Moroney was soon won over by the dedication of the Unionists and the crying need for some means of making life better on Gillfillan's Gold and its sister worlds. Within a year, he was traveling from world to world, speaking for the creation of a new state to be known as the Rim Collection. Between 3044 and 3046, the Unionists slowly grew stronger as more and more people threw their support behind the idea. In late 3046, however, a devastating pirate raid on Otisberg laid bare a seemingly insurmountable obstacle to the formation of the Rim Collection—the lack of a military capable of fending off the Periphery's numerous predators. The six worlds had not been able to support a standing army since the time of the Star League, nor did they have the economic resources to pay for reputable mercenary units. With no means of seeing to their own defense, opponents of the union asked, what good would increased prosperity do them? What could they possibly become, except more tempting targets for bandits? Supporters argued that bettering their economies would enable the united worlds to buy mercenary troops eventually, but many people wondered if "eventually" was good enough.

In the midst of this debate, the mercenary unit Able's Aces arrived on Gillfillan's Gold. Still smarting from a bitter contract dispute with the Federated Commonwealth, unwilling to work for Houses Marik or Liao, and unable to obtain a contract from a Draconis Combine still inclined to be suspicious of mercenaries, the Aces had decided that their future lay in the Periphery. Major Jerry Able, the unit's leader, was a Periphery native, and many of the unit's members had come from worlds on the Periphery border. However, the unit had not yet chosen a specific course of action. Some members were arguing for a contract with one of the larger and richer Periphery states, such as the Magistracy of Canopus or the Taurian Concordat. Others were flirting with the idea of striking out toward the deep Periphery in search of alleged caches of lostech. Still others contemplated turning pirate and carving out their own bandit kingdom. Undecided, the Aces made planetfall on Gillfillan's Gold for a brief resupply stop. While there, Major Able attended a Unionist lecture given by Professor Moroney. The professor so impressed Able that the major brought his entire unit to hear Moroney the following night. Major Able then dropped a bombshell. He proposed that Able's Aces volunteer to serve as the first unit in the Rim Collection's army, and to train citizens of the six worlds as planetary militias.

Once the mercenaries got over the shock, many of them supported the major's idea. If their leader was willing to wait for a payroll until the new nation got on its feet, so were they—particularly when Major Able offered to pay those who stayed with him out of his own pocket. A few members chose to leave the unit, but most of the Aces voted to stay. Major Able then tracked down Professor Moroney and Councilman Roberts, and laid his unorthodox proposition before them. They accepted with enthusiasm, and the professor lost no time publicizing the Aces' offer. By the end of 3047, opposition to the formation of the Rim Collection had virtually disappeared.

In early 3048, all six planets signed the Rim Collection Charter. It provided for a Council of Planets with one representative from each member world, presided over by a president. The councilmen were to be elected by the people of their respective planets; the president by the citizens of the entire Rim Collection. Each planet had sovereignty over its own affairs, except as necessary to preserve the well-being of the Collection as a whole. As part of the charter, Able's Aces agreed to train planetary militias and a Collection-wide defense force in exchange for a vote on the Council of Planets in military matters. In addition, the mercenary unit was granted extensive lands on Otisberg, Major Able's homeworld. By unanimous acclamation, Professor Moroney was elected the first president of the new nation.

CURRENT SITUATION

In the first decade of its existence, conditions in the Rim Collection are slowly changing for the better. The confederated planets began trading grains and iron ore with the Federated Commonwealth in 3053, and the Lyran Alliance has announced its intention to continue trade relations. Planetary Councilman Roberts has begun trade negotiations between Gillfillan's Gold and the Free Worlds League, with the promise of extending all trading rights to the rest of the Collection if he succeeds. However, the immense degree of autonomy given to member worlds by the charter often slows the pace of government to a crawl. Professor Moroney, seeing more possibilities for economic expansion with more centralized government control, is currently pushing for a temporary expansion of the president's powers. Councilman Roberts has emerged as the leading voice of the opposition; he and his supporters fear that any temporary change in the balance of power would become permanent, much to the council's disadvantage.

Militarily, Able's Aces has filled its part of the bargain admirably. Lacking the funds to buy large numbers of serviceable BattleMechs, the Rim Collection still has only two BattleMech battalions; however, the Aces have trained several militia units on each of the six worlds to serve as a first line of defense against bandit raids. A few councilmen want the Collection to hire more mercenaries, but the Aces have stonewalled these efforts as unwanted encroachment on what they consider their turf. The Rim Collection is not yet rich enough to attract the attention of large numbers of pirates, but that could easily change within another decade or so. The pirate band known as Morrison's Extractors is the most dangerous of the Rim Collection's current enemies; the Extractors have raided outlying cities on Caldarium and Slewis with devastating effect.

ILLYRIAN PALATINATE

This tiny, four-planet state remains independent despite the best efforts of the neighboring Circinus Federation to conquer it. Colonized by enterprising businessmen in the twenty-fourth century, the Palatinate prospered through modest trade with the Free Worlds League. Since the beginning of the Succession Wars, the Palatinate has sponsored annual

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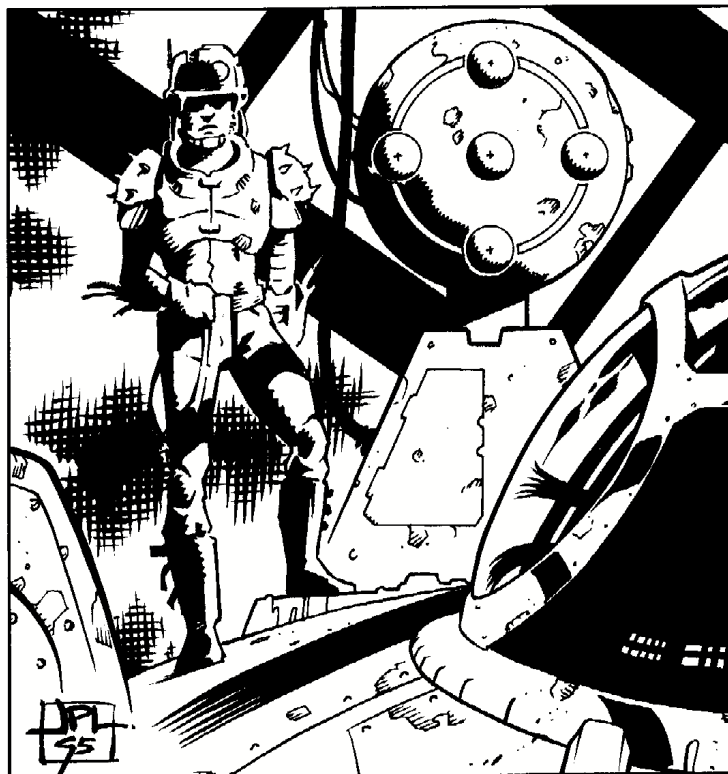
MechWarrior games, in which the combatants duel to the death for salvage and spare parts, as a secondary source of revenue.

Ruled by an oligarchy of rich trading families, Palatinate citizens lived a relatively tranquil existence until the 3030s, when leaders of the nearby Circinus Federation began to make belligerent noises about conquering the small realm. The Circinians attempted to annex the Palatinate in 3034, but ran into unexpected opposition from the mercenary unit Thor's Arms, with whom the Palatinate had signed a multiyear contract. The mercenaries' two battalions of assault 'Mechs easily matched the Federation forces, quickly routing them from the realm.

Over the next seven years the Circinian president continued to plot the Palatinate's downfall, but domestic troubles fortunately prevented "Little Bob" McIntyre from making good on his threats. Unwilling to trust indefinitely in their enemy's ongoing bad luck, however, the Palatinate took steps to safeguard against invasion. In order to earn funds with which to hire more mercenary troops and finance small local militias, Administrator Ernest Wick expanded his nation's trade with the Free Worlds League. He also forged stronger ties with the Palatinate's closest neighbor, the Lothian League, in the hope of using Lothian scientific expertise to bolster his planet's defenses. As the 3040s went by and the Circinus Federation launched no assault, the Illyrian people cautiously began to hope that the threatened invasion might not occur.

Trouble came soon enough, but from an unexpected source—a sudden, vast influx of refugees fleeing the Clan invasion. Between 3049 and 3051, the Clan war machine devastated the Free Rasalhague Republic. Throughout those years, and especially after the battle of Tukayyid in 3052, the Palatinate became the favored destination of thousands of Rasalhagian refugees. Drawn to the Palatinate as much by its predominantly Scandinavian culture as its prosperity, the refugees arrived in droves. Throughout the latter half of 3052, cargo ships carrying fleeing Rasalhagians arrived almost daily. This sudden population increase nearly overwhelmed the tiny Palatinate; housing and food shortages became commonplace even among Illyrian natives. Desperate for revenues, Administrator Wick increased trade shipments of processed steel to the Free Worlds League beginning in 3051. The League gladly obliged its trading partner, needing as much steel as it could get in order to meet the Inner Sphere demand for BattleMechs and refit kits. The trade revenues, however, were insufficient to meet the refugees' growing needs. In addition, Marian Hegemony raids on the Lothian League in 3052 and 3053 came close to crippling the Lothian economy, thereby depriving the Palatinate of its only other major market.

In early 3054, Administrator Wick appealed to the Successor States to send refugee aid, pointing out that Rasalhagian citizens unable to find homes in the Palatinate would surely move on to the Inner Sphere. The Federated Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine took the hint; each of them sent sizable grants, earmarked for refugee aid, to the Illyrian government. The influx of new monies enabled Administrator Wick to set aside an even larger portion of general revenues to continue beefing up his realm's military security—a



particularly pressing problem in light of the Marian Hegemony's conquest of the Lothian League in early 3055.

Fearing that Caesar O'Reilly of the Hegemony would target the Palatinate next, the Administrator made an unprecedented public declaration. In order to resist the expected assault of the Marian Legions and guarantee the safety of every Illyrian citizen, Wick asserted, the Palatinate must gear up for total defense. As part of this effort, the Administrator announced, the Palatinate government would begin construction of bases on all Illyrian worlds. Modeled on the Castles Brian of the Star League era, these bases would be used to stockpile supplies and house several platoons of guerrilla fighters. As an added inducement for the citizens to agree to build the bases, Administrator Wick announced that all construction workers would be provided with free housing for themselves and their families—longhouse-style dormitories on site at first, and permanent homes as fast as Palatinate contractors could build them.

Legions of citizens—both natives and former Rasalhagians—took the Administrator up on his offer. By the end of 3057, the bases were complete, and construction of residential housing was proceeding slowly but steadily, financed largely by money from the Combine and the Commonwealth.

Militarily, the Illyrian Palatinate is in somewhat better shape in 3058 than it was five years ago. Thor's Arms remain in Illyrian employ, with each battalion rotated to every Palatinate world in turn. A second mercenary company, Cavanaugh's Cavalry, serves as a home guard for the capital planet of Illyria. Finally, ex-soldiers from the Free Rasalhague Republic's KungsArmé have joined planetary militias and are training increasing numbers of Illyrian citizens in the arts of war.

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

Relations between the Palatinate and the Free Worlds League remain friendly, as the trade links between them are vital to Illyrian prosperity and security. Administrator Wick has also made a point of courting the Taurian Concordat and the Magistracy of Canopus, knowing that his nation may need all the help it can get if the Circinus Federation manages to launch its long-threatened invasion—or if the Marian Hegemony follows up on its recent threats. The Hegemony, relatively untroubled by domestic strife, may well beat the Circinus Federation to the punch and invade the Palatinate before the Circinians do. The Concordat and the Magistracy have responded warmly to Illyrian overtures, though neither state has yet made any specific promises of military aid.

In its search for allies, the Palatinate government has also attempted to contact the nearby Niops Association, a three-planet state long isolated from the other nations of the Periphery. The Association's leaders have expressed guarded interest in "exploratory talks" with the Palatinate, but so far remain vague about what they expect the substance of such talks to be.

NIOPS ASSOCIATION

This tiny three-world state lies just beyond the borders of the Free Worlds League. Originally the site of a Star League astronomical research mission, the three planets and the personnel assigned to them were cut off from the Inner Sphere when the Amaris Civil War shattered the Star League. They remained isolated until the late 2800s, when Capellan refugees fleeing the destruction of the First Succession War landed on Niops V. Poorly educated peasants for the most part, the Capellans wanted nothing more than freedom from war and modest prosperity. In order to obtain these things, they and their descendants accepted an evolving social order in which they remained subservient to the highly educated descendants of the Star League personnel.

For centuries, the educated elite maintained its power by tightly controlling access to education, assuring every laborer a minimally comfortable standard of living and providing for the protection of the Association against roving pirate bands. Niopian rulers created an aerospace force capable of fending off most pirate attacks, and the Periphery's bandits soon learned to leave the Niops Association alone. Another factor in the development of the Niopian technocracy was the lack of a means to communicate with other states. The Association's single HPG station succumbed to multiple equipment breakdowns sometime after the Capellan refugees' arrival; preferring to remain free of outside influences, the rulers of the Niopian worlds made no effort to restore it. Unused to personal freedom and deprived of the knowledge that life could be different, the laborer class had no reason to challenge their rulers' increasing monopoly on power.

Since the beginning of the thirty-first century, however, this solitary nation has gradually been exhausting the natural resources that enabled it to remain self-sufficient for so long.

Many of its mineral reserves are nearly tapped out, and its agricultural base cannot fill the economic gap. No longer able to guarantee moderate comfort for everyone, the ruling class has cautiously begun to look beyond its own borders for ways to salvage the Association's faltering economy.

Thus far, the Association's efforts to end its long isolation have been fitful at best. Though many of the elite recognize that they can no longer go it alone, they are unaccustomed to dealing with the give-and-take of interstellar politics and trade. They are also unused to considering anyone's interests but their own, and find the art of compromise an alien concept. Finally, many of them fear that too close contact with other realms will prompt the very social upheaval they have avoided for so long; they believe that firsthand knowledge of freer societies will inspire their own laborer class to agitate to gain such freedoms for itself. As declining prosperity is just as likely as outside contact to prompt a rebellion before too long, the Niops Association seems unlikely to survive in its current form—unless its leaders can manage the delicate balancing act of forming loose trade ties with their neighbors while hiding knowledge of those neighbors from the Niopian masses.

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

Thus far, the Niops Association has confined its halting efforts at diplomacy to other Periphery realms. In the past three years Niopian leaders have made tenuous contact with the Illyrian Palatinate, the Magistracy of Canopus, and the Taurian Concordat. The latter two realms show only superficial interest in the Niops Association; they are busy solidifying their own recent alliance, and the tiny Association has little to offer them by comparison. The Illyrian Palatinate is eager to forge diplomatic ties with any realm that might offer aid against its enemies, but Niopian ambivalence about the entire endeavor keeps the diplomatic process moving at a glacial pace. The Niops Association has not made any overtures toward the Marian Hegemony, perhaps from a desire to avoid attracting the attention of the planet-greedy Caesar.

MICA MAJORITY

The Mica Majority is a small, unremarkable alliance of mining worlds distinguished by little more than its longevity as a sovereign state. The extensive ore deposits on the three main worlds of the Majority—Mica II, V and VII—have been depleted for decades, but numerous small mining operations continue to work claims on the thousands of small, mineral-rich asteroids of the Mica system. The Mican government consists of the leaders of the three polar planets' life-support domes.

The Mican worlds were first settled in 2560 by involuntary laborers forcibly transferred there for their political opposition to the Kurita regime. The planets' harsh climates and deep ore deposits made mining in the system economically unfeasible for most commercial mining firms. However, the forced-labor system allowed Kurita operations to mine the Mican ore deposits at a small profit. When the price of ore dropped in later years and

made even forced-labor mining unprofitable, the Kurita government began to use the worlds as a penal colony. Eventually the Kurita government determined that the costs of maintaining the planets' life-support domes and planetary administrations outweighed the benefits the territory provided and simply declared the Mica Majority an independent state.

For most of its history the Mica Majority has remained free of any foreign influence, mainly because the Mican worlds provide little incentive for any potential invader. The main Mican ore deposits were already depleted when the Kurita government abandoned its claim to the worlds, and the punishing climates of the Mican worlds prevented the formation of any major cities in the system. Though the life-support domes on Mica II, V and VII were quite impressive engineering feats when they were first constructed, they remain mere curiosities today.

The only recorded invasion of the Mica Majority occurred in 3035, when a Tortuga pirate force commanded by Paula "Lady Death" Trevaline entered the system. Within days the pirates realized that the Mican domes contained only a fraction of the wealth they had expected to find. Frustrated by the lack of plunder and unaccustomed to the frigid temperatures of the polar worlds, the pirate force abandoned the Mica Majority after a few weeks.

Today, the Mican worlds are home to a small number of self-sufficient miners. The total population of all three worlds is less than half a million. Most of their food is grown within the life-support domes of the Mican worlds, and other goods are supplied by small trading vessels en route to other, larger Periphery realms. The Mican government exerts very little authority over the Majority residents, who enforce their own brand of frontier justice.

In recent years, the Mican worlds have also become a destination for small numbers of wealthy, thrill-seeking Inner Sphere eccentrics who wish to temporarily substitute the hardships of the Mican mining life for the luxuries of civilization. A tiny industry has sprung up to arrange lodging, supplies and any other assistance required for these tourists to enjoy (and survive) their stay in the Mica Majority.

MILITARY

The Mican military consists of a small mercenary unit, Larsen's Loners, which once formed part of Bullard's Armored Cavalry. Though all Mican citizens contribute a token tax to pay the mercenary unit, the Majority's tour operators contribute most of the unit's pay. The small unit primarily serves to deter pirate attacks against the Mican planets, and it rotates between garrison facilities located on each of the major Mican worlds.

FRANKLIN FIEFS

The Franklin Fiefs consist of approximately fifty small principalities located on the tiny, isolated agricultural world known as Novo Franklin. Each of these principalities maintains its own militia, but most of these groups are armed only with primitive weapons. A handful of ancient BattleMechs and a single small

spaceport represent the most advanced technology on the planet, whose population uses ancient agricultural techniques to eke out a living from Novo Franklin's rocky soil.

The world was first settled in 2598 by refugees from the Outworlds Alliance fleeing Kurita invaders. Within a few years, these original settlers had divided the small planet's arable land into approximately fifty large farms, whose boundaries closely match the fifty or so principalities that survive today. Eventually, these landowners began to recruit war refugees, deserters and other fugitives from the Inner Sphere to work the fields, offering to pay for the immigrants' transport costs and provide them with food and lodging. In exchange, the immigrants would repay these outlays with their labor. However, the landowners, who controlled Novo Franklin's economy, used their power to ensure that no immigrant ever fully repaid his "debt." Unable to pay their debts and book passage off the planet, the immigrants faced the choice of accepting their lot or starving. Under the planet's archaic code of law—formulated and enforced by the landowners—the debts incurred by these immigrants were passed on to their offspring. Within a generation, the landowners of Novo Franklin had produced a class of serfs.

Novo Franklin's ruling class has employed a number of measures to preserve this neofeudal system for the past several centuries. The planet's isolation has undoubtedly been a major factor in their success. That isolation, and the fact that Novo Franklin contains only a single, small spaceport, has enabled the planet's ruling class to closely monitor and control all contact the planet's workers have with the outside universe. In addition, the ruling class prohibits workers from educating their offspring. Any worker who displays the ability to read and write or who teaches such abilities may be executed under the planet's laws. The rulers educate their own offspring, of course, to ensure that their families continue to maintain their dominant positions within Franklinian society.

In addition to these measures, Novo Franklin's ruling families retain the exclusive right to interpret and enforce the laws of their planet. At times the families have imported mercenaries to aid them in enforcing the laws, but the families generally have little problem doing so themselves, as the planet's workers are legally prohibited from possessing any form of weapon. In addition to banning weapons, workers are prohibited from possessing almost all modern tools and appliances. One result of this ban has been the reintroduction of animal husbandry on Novo Franklin to produce horses and other beasts of burden.

Reportedly, Novo Franklin once boasted nearly an entire battalion of BattleMechs, but recent intelligence reports place the number at twenty-four. All of these machines are owned by the ruling families.

Each of the planet's ruling families maintains a militia, purportedly to defend its principality against aggressors. In reality, the frequent internecine warfare between the principalities produces few, if any, casualties and no property damage. These conflicts appear to be mere diversions designed to distract the large population of workers from the underlying inherent inequality and injustice of Novo Franklin's economic system

TRIAL BY FIRE

Antallos was truly a desolate place. I remember thinking as we touched down and began marching our 'Mechs toward the site of the cache that the wasteland stretched out before me proved this world to be nothing more than an endless series of large rock formations.

After a short while we located the 'Mechs, and several members of the party began to exhume the machines, which were stored in a large, subterranean vault. As they did so, Brother Anathis, Brother Relchard and I set out to patrol the perimeter of the area. Less than one hour into our patrol, Brother Anathis's long-range scanners detected movement. He quickly identified the signals as BattleMechs, and on the orders of Grand Knight Frews, we assumed defensive positions and awaited the intruders. Three other brothers joined us.

After approximately ten minutes, twelve unidentified 'Mechs appeared over the small ridge before us. The strangers identified themselves as Fuchida's Fusiliers and asked us to identify ourselves and state our business on Antallos. Then their commander ordered us to leave the world. When we refused, they advanced.

The battle was truly glorious. They tried to drive through our ranks, but our prowess was too great. Many of my Brothers did perish in the battle—Jan, Andrew and Mayleen all left us that day. But when the dust had settled the Fusiliers were retreating, and the Brotherhood of Randis stood triumphant!

We could not hold the field for long, as Grand Knight Frews called us back to our DropShip. We learned that more Fusiliers were on their way, in numbers that surely would have overwhelmed us. Yet our victory was sweet. We had taken many 'Mechs from the cache and passed our first test.

—Excerpted from the journal of Brother Zontar of the Brotherhood of Randis

Able to collect only the barest minimum of technology with which to establish their new colony, the clans built an agrarian society based on subsistence farming, raising sheep, and breeding horses. As the population increased, each clan struck out for new territory and, like their Terran ancestors, fought bitterly for land and water rights. These disputes once again divided the clans along family lines and precipitated a series of destructive border wars that threatened to quickly reduce the people of New St. Andrews to barbarism.

and society. The planet does not appear to possess an organized military, though the principalities' militias have cooperated to brutally suppress the handful of worker revolts that have occurred during the history of the Franklin Fiefs.

FIEFDOM OF RANDIS

The Fiefdom of Randis consists of the tropical world of Randis, home to a pseudoreligious order of MechWarriors who have dedicated themselves to perpetuating the art of MechWarrior combat. The self-named Brotherhood of Randis maintains a small, competent contingent of MechWarriors, but shows little aggression toward its interstellar neighbors. The Fiefdom continues to serve as a stopover point for traders plying the shipping lanes of the Periphery, but otherwise holds little importance.

The world of Randis, located between the Taurian Concordat and Outworlds Alliance, was first settled by bands of Inner Sphere deserters and washed-up MechWarriors during the First and Second Succession Wars. In 2988 Erdelmaine Randis, a former Marik MechWarrior commander, announced the formation of the Brotherhood of Randis. During its early years, the Brotherhood became known for its strict and often harsh training methods, which, oddly enough, turned out MechWarriors of questionable quality. As an added obstacle to the group's success, the Brotherhood lacked a supply of BattleMechs sufficient for military adventures of any notable force.

In 3037, Galahad Frews assumed control of the Brotherhood after challenging and defeating its former leader. Within a few months of his accession, Grand Knight Frews announced an ambitious series of programs aimed at transforming both the Brotherhood and the world of Randis. Ten years later, Frews's reforms had begun to bear fruit. The small towns of Randis were linked with modern rail lines, and each boasted new storage and trading facilities. Several new spaceports had been constructed to accommodate trading vessels, and the citizens of the world worked the fields of their farms with enthusiasm.

In addition to broadening the planet's economy, Frews reformed the Brotherhood itself. The organization became more regimented, streamlined and professional. In 3051 the Brotherhood provided a convincing display of its new competency by defeating a larger force of Fuchida's Fusiliers in order to claim a cache of BattleMechs on the world of Antallos.

GALAHAD FREWS

The current Grand Knight of the Brotherhood of Randis, Galahad Frews, is an extraordinary man. Almost single-handedly, Frews instituted a training program that transformed the Brotherhood from a group of second-rate MechWarriors with a taste for Terran medieval culture into a group of competent, professional soldiers. As a result, the Fiefdom of Randis has earned a new respect from their Periphery neighbors.

Powerfully built, the fifty-year-old Frews keeps himself in top form with a rigorous regimen of martial arts and strenuous exercise. A master of nearly all forms of combat, Frews also exhibits impressive knowledge of history, philosophy, economics and literature.

NEW ST. ANDREWS

New St. Andrews was settled by the four surviving clans of the Stewart Confederacy, a six-world nation established by people of Gaelic ancestry and absorbed by the Free Worlds League in 2293. Refugees from that conquest sought shelter in the Rim Worlds Republic before Stefan Amaris betrayed First Lord Richard Cameron, and when General Kerensky pitched the entire force of the Star League Defense Force against the Republic in retaliation for Cameron's death, the Brannigan, MacGregor, Sterling and Stewart clans fled again, this time choosing a more remote Periphery world.



Several exploratory missions from nearby Periphery states investigating the potential for mineral exploitation and a number of punishing bandit raids prompted the MacGregor and Stewart clans to reconsider their problems with each other in light of possible outside intervention. At last recognizing that they were in danger of losing all semblance of community, the two clans pulled up stakes and moved across the mountains dividing the northern continent, re-establishing a single settlement away from the other, still-warring families. Also learning from their mistakes in resource management, the clans carefully governed crop and grazing land rotation and preserved the sources of fresh water.

Around the same time that the MacGregor and Stewart clans gained a measure of prosperity, the Brannigan and Sterling clans finally abandoned all pretense at self-reliance and traveled over the mountains in search of the departed families. Nothing more than small, marauding bands of thieves, the Brannigans and Sterlings preyed on the other clans, stealing what they could and destroying what they could not. Because they had anticipated such predations from the moment they

decided to make a fresh start, the MacGregors and Stewarts suffered few truly damaging losses.

Though the situation on the planet appears in many ways to serve as a microcosm of the Periphery itself, the population of New St. Andrews offers a twist: rather than seeking ways to destroy the bandits plaguing them, the MacGregors and Stewarts seem determined to find a way to absorb and rehabilitate them into useful members of their society. With this goal in their sights, it will be many years, perhaps generations, before the citizens of New St. Andrews look to their neighboring planets for trade and other opportunities. In our estimation, because New St. Andrews lacks any viable mineral resources, it will be at least as long before the world has anything of value to offer.

HEROTITUS

In what is now heralded (by those possessing excellent hindsight) as an early indication that the Taurian Concordat and Magistracy of Canopus would someday cooperate in much larg-

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er ventures, Herotitus was jointly colonized by those two realms in the late 2600s. Though situated in a prime position on the routes traveled by traders from the Concordat and the Magistracy, the planet Herotitus passed through the various conflicts fought in the Periphery practically untouched; because neither realm fully claimed it, the agricultural world held no strategic value to the various powers who sought to control the larger states.

When the New Hedons, philosophical dissidents from the Taurian Concordat, arrived on Herotitus in 2997, they quickly took over the planet's minimal government. Firmly devoted to the belief that only those things that give pleasure possess intrinsic value, the New Hedons established governmental initiatives to create an industry providing the widest possible variety of physical and spiritual indulgences. Revenues from the "pleasure industry" and hefty trade tariffs support the expanded gov-

ernment required to administrate the resulting interstellar traffic, immigration laws and necessary law enforcement personnel.

Because the Hedonists concentrated their industry in a limited number of locations, most of Herotitus maintains the simple agrarian lifestyle established by the first settlers. A separate branch of government provides law enforcement, a judicial system and social services for the portions of the population not employed by the pleasure industry. Because no single group dared disrupt the status quo on Herotitus for fear of reprisals from across the Periphery, freedom from war and other conflicts allowed the planet's citizenry to prosper over the centuries. They currently produce sufficient marketable items and crops to support a modest trade in exports, and the revenue from this commerce is earmarked specifically for the nonindustrial part of the society.

PERIPHERY INDEPENDENTS

Deployment as of 3058

Unit Name	Experience Level	Loyalty	Homeworld
Vinson's Vigilantes (CO: Colonel Pada Vinson)	Regular	Questionable	Antallos
Fuchida's Fusiliers (1 battalion) (CO: Major Twylla Sumerai)	Veteran	Reliable	Tortuga Prime
Right Arm of Thor (1 battalion) (CO: Overcaptain Gustaf Narder)	Regular	Reliable	Illyria
Left Arm of Thor (1 battalion) (CO: Overcaptain Hassie Menker)	Regular	Reliable	Trasjkis
Susie's Rebels (2 battalions) (CO: Colonel Susie "One-Eye" Morgraine-Ryan)	Veteran	Fanatical	Star's End
1st Able's Aces (1 company) (CO: Major Parker Able)	Regular	Reliable	Gillfillan's Gold
2nd Able's Aces (1 company) (CO: Captain Sherry Davy)	Regular	Questionable	All Dawn
3rd Able's Aces (1 company) (CO: Captian William Node)	Regular	Reliable	Waypoint
Vance Rezak's Band of the Damned (CO: Vance Rezak)	Regular	Reliable	Rezak's Hole
1st Extractors (CO: King Hopper Morrison)	Regular	Fanatical	Pain
2nd Extractors (CO: King Hopper Morrison)	Regular	Fanatical	The Rack
Brotherhood of Randis (CO: Grand Knight Galahad Frews)	Veteran	Fanatical	Randis IV
Larsen's Loners (2 companies) (CO: Major Jesse Larsen)	Regular	Reliable	Mica Majority

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Though the Clan invasion ended the reign of many of the so-called bandit kingdoms of the Periphery, numerous small pirate monarchies and groups of privateers survive in the Periphery today. Generally, these groups consist of remnants or descendants of the longest-established pirate bands and bandit kingdoms, though evidence suggests that small numbers of Clan deserters have joined such groups in recent years. Typically, such groups form around a single charismatic leader and employ prisoners captured during raids as slave labor.

Pirate bands have acted as a destabilizing force throughout the history of the Periphery. The first pirate bands appeared in the Periphery in the waning days of the Reunification War. Exploiting the chaos caused by the war, these small, loosely organized bands preyed on unprotected Periphery worlds, outlying Inner Sphere holdings and unprotected merchant vessels. The founding of at least two long-lived bandit groups—the Belt Pirates of Star's End and the pirates of the Tortuga Dominions—can be traced back to this time. As the Reunification War drew to a close in 2597 and the Periphery states were drawn into the Star League fold, bandit activity dropped.

The outbreak of the Amaris Civil War in 2751 ushered in the next great period of pirate activity. Once again the Inner Sphere and Periphery powers were forced to allocate military units to a large war, leaving many worlds vulnerable to pirate attacks. In addition, communications and cooperation between the Inner Sphere and Periphery powers collapsed. During this time, deserters from both Star League and Periphery forces bolstered the strength of existing bandit groups and in some cases founded their own bands. In 2780 one such group, a band of mercenaries turned pirates, founded a small "kingdom" on the world of Circinus. Today the Circinus Federation is recognized as one of the major legitimate powers of the Periphery.

The collapse of the Rim Worlds Republic and the Star League, as well as the subsequent Succession Wars, provided further raiding opportunities for the growing pirate bands of the Periphery. The exodus of a large portion of the Star League Defense Force, the destruction of the Rim Worlds army and the long-running Succession Wars enabled these bandit groups to attack targets almost without fear of reprisal. As their strength increased, several of these groups formed permanent settlements.

In 3012 the world of Oberon VI became the homeworld of perhaps the most infamous of all bandit kingdoms, the Oberon Confederation. From this base in the former Rim Worlds Republic, Colonel Hendrik Grimm would later lead raiding parties against unprotected targets as far away as Rasalhague and Black Earth. An ex-Lyran officer, Grimm developed a reputation for ruthlessness by routinely destroying all property his raiders could not carry off and savagely mistreating his enslaved prisoners. In 3018 two deserters from Grimm's band, Maria Morgraine and "Redjack" Ryan, founded their own realms on the worlds of Gotterdammerung and Butte Hold. Later, the two realms would join together to form the Greater Valkyrate. And in 3019, Santander's World became home to a bandit kingdom led by an ex-Davion officer named Helmar Valasek, reputedly one of history's most brutal Periphery bandit kings.

CLAN INVASION

The Clan invasion of the Inner Sphere spelled the end of many established bandit kingdoms and pirate bands. Though the invaders' primary targets were the Great Houses of the Inner Sphere, the Clans ruthlessly destroyed any bandit groups they encountered while pursuing their goal. Among the bandit kingdoms and groups destroyed in this manner were the Belt Pirates of Star's End, the Oberon Confederation, the Greater Valkyrate, and Santander's Killers. By all accounts, the Clans disregarded all their codes of battlefield conduct in many of these battles. Apparently, the Clans view privateers with a special disdain and refused to grant them even the minimal consideration normally afforded defeated opponents. Instead, they summarily executed captured bandits.

TOUGH LOVE

Well you can say anything you want about the Clans, but from where I come from people don't think they're so bad. In fact, a lot of people are glad the invaders came, and they'll tell you so if you ask them. Course, I don't expect you to understand. But then you've probably never had to grovel for your life. And plenty of people had to grovel under old man Grimm's rule.

I'm sick and tired of hearing all you Inner Sphere do-gooders complaining about how them damn bandits—that's right, they were never anything more than bandits, common criminals—were deprived of their rights by the Clans. They never cared about my rights when they looted my farm and burned my home. They never cared about the rights of my wife and daughters. My Johanna died at the hands of those animals! Krystal and Lana lived a few months longer, but they were never the same after what those devils did to them. What about their rights?

And where were you do-gooders when the bastards put me in chains and brought me to their godforsaken planet, put a yoke across my neck and worked me like a beast of burden? No one said anything about any "due process of law" or "burden of proof" then. No one spoke of mercy when thousands of others, enslaved like me, slowly withered away until their skins stretched tight across their bones.

That is why no soul on Oberon VI protested when the Clan invaders brought Grimm and his men before them and put bullets in their heads. Hell, I would have done it myself if I'd had the chance. And that's why people cheered when the invaders put Grimm's head on a pike and paraded it through the city.

For decades we lived in our own filth, buried our own dead, and no one lifted a finger to help us. No one, that is, until the Clans came to Oberon VI.

—Excerpt from an interview with a former resident of Oberon VI, Tharkad Broadcasting Corporation, 3056

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FRYING PAN TO THE FIRE

For weeks rumors had circulated about the invaders, a group calling themselves the Clans. Shakalar and his lieutenants said they were not human. Said they were terrible beings with tails and claws and a taste for human flesh. Then one morning Shakalar and his band were simply gone, having taken everything of value with them. No one knew what to make of their sudden disappearance. Usually they left a few MechWarriors behind when they went out raiding. But there were no 'Mechs anywhere around.

Rolani, the mayor that Shakalar had installed to rule over us, tried to act bold and unbeatable. She claimed that Shakalar would return soon, undoubtedly with a fresh cache of spoils. Within a few days, it became clear that Rolani and her deputies were growing nervous. After a week with no sign of Shakalar, we realized that Shakalar and his warriors had fled Relada like frightened rabbits. Within hours Rolani and her lackeys were hanging from their heels in the city's main plaza.

We enjoyed our newfound freedom for about a month when Brayn the Black and his band landed. He immediately asked to speak with our leader. Rantel stepped forward, but before he could say a word Brayn raised a laser pistol and shot him pointblank. No one said a word when he declared himself ruler of Relada.

A few weeks after Brayn's band had landed, another group of pirates landed on Relada. They caught Brayn's band by surprise, and within a half hour they had killed or captured all his men. Then they went through the city, rounding up all the male inhabitants above the age of twelve. They took the men and boys to Relada's small 'Mech arena, and as the rest of us watched they mowed them down with autocannon fire.

"These men knowingly aided and abetted Brayn Blackwood, and for this crime they have been punished," the pirate leader said. "The same fate awaits any others who oppose our rule or aid our enemies."

—Excerpt from an interview with a resident of Relada Prime, ComStar archives

On many of the worlds previously held by privateers, the invaders deported the enslaved populations to other Clan-occupied worlds. On other planets, such as Oberon VI, the invaders simply instituted Clan rule over the existing population. Though we believe that the Clans treat subjugated populations harshly, even Clan rule offered a marked improvement over the terrible conditions many bandit prisoners were forced to endure. In stark contrast to Clan rule, most individuals enslaved by bandit kingdoms suffer disease, malnutrition, arbitrary beatings and detention. Living conditions have markedly improved on many former bandit-held worlds, and the populations of many such worlds view their Clan overlords as liberators.

NEW PIRATE BANDS

The Clan invaders destroyed or severely weakened many bandit kingdoms and privateer groups, but other groups quickly emerged to take their places. These groups include Vance Rezak and his Band of the Damned, Morrison's Extractors, Vinson's Vigilantes, and Fuchida's Fusiliers. Some of these bands, such as the so-called New Belt Pirates, consist of survivors of former bandit kingdoms. Others are made up mostly of former mercenaries, deserters, and exiled or disgraced Clan warriors. Additional reports suggest that new groups whose membership cannot be attributed to any of these sources have become active in the Periphery as well. Evidence indicates that these bands are based on worlds outside of charted Periphery space, but their exact origins remain unknown. Though all the new pirate bands tend to be smaller than their predecessors, they are far more numerous and apparently better armed.

The Clan invasion provided new opportunities for pirate bands in several ways. First, the invasion and subsequent Clan occupation prompted the Inner Sphere powers to transfer large portions of their militaries to worlds deemed vulnerable to Clan attack. As a result, other worlds were left largely unprotected and ripe for bandit raids. Second, the Clans themselves provide targets for pirate raids. This phenomenon was vividly illustrated in a recent attack on a Clan supply transport vessel outside the Jade Falcon occupation zone. In an almost unprecedented move, a large number of pirate vessels joined together to hijack the Clan ship, suggesting that a number of different bandit groups cooperated to carry out the action. And by destroying many of the established bandit powers of the Periphery, the Clans unwittingly provided opportunities for new leaders and bands to establish themselves. This situation seems to have led to extremely brutal battles between privateers attempting to establish bases in the same areas.

THE NEW BELT PIRATES

The New Belt Pirates, a merger of one of the oldest and one of the newest bandit kingdoms in the Periphery, are a small but irritating thorn in the Clans' side. From the asteroid-shrouded world of Star's End in the Wolf Clan occupation zone, this pirate band launches regular raids against Clan-held worlds. They know they are temporarily safe from retaliation because of the ongoing disarray among the Clans caused by the divisiveness between the Warden and Crusader factions following the Truce of Tukayyid, punctuated recently by the so-called Refusal War between Clans Wolf and Jade Falcon.

Origins

The New Belt Pirates are the remnants of the Belt Pirates of Star's End and the few survivors of Ryan's Rebels from the Greater Valkyrate. The original Belt Pirates came into being just after the Reunification War, when the survivors of the bitter conflict between the Star League Defense Forces and troops of the Rim Worlds Republic fled the conquered Republic rather than bow to the Star League's authority. Bent on vengeance against the Inner Sphere, these Rim Worlds soldiers settled on the planet Star's End and lived off the spoils of raids against the two Star League member states closest to them—the Lyran Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine. Over the years, these men and women embraced piracy as a way of life.

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After the Star League fell and the Succession Wars began, the Belt Pirates raided even deeper into the Inner Sphere. Occasionally, they added to their coffers by fighting for one Successor State or another; but buying their aid cost quite a bit of money, and their penchant for betraying contracts if offered sufficient inducement made employment offers from the Successor States few and far between. Because the various Successor States often found that their raiding activities served as useful distractions, however, no House army made any serious effort to crush them. Beginning in the 3030s, some Successor States even began limited trade with the Belt Pirates, offering foodstuffs and luxury items in exchange for germanium.

The Greater Valkyrate, of much more recent origin, also had a much briefer independent existence. Its original component states, Morggraine's Valkyrate and the Pirates of Butte Hold, were both formed between 3018 and 3021 by disgruntled lieutenants of the notorious pirate king, Hendrik Grimm. "Redjack" Ryan, founder of the Pirates of Butte Hold, was thrown out of the Oberon Confederation after virtually destroying a Free Worlds League planet that his troops had been assigned to garrison. Ryan's lover, Maria Morggraine, was so incensed at Ryan's expulsion that a short time later she led a small band of her loyal followers out of the Oberon Confederation to the planet Gotterdammerung, which she declared the capital of Morggraine's Valkyrate. Between 3021 and 3023, Morggraine extended her control over five icy planets and supported her tiny kingdom by frequent, vicious raids against Inner Sphere border worlds.

In 3028, Maria Morggraine and Redjack Ryan married each other and united their two bandit kingdoms into the Greater Valkyrate. Their sole legitimate heir, Susie "One-Eye" Morggraine-Ryan, has exceeded both her parents as a capable, cruel and ruthless leader. Rising to command the Third Battalion of Ryan's Rebels at a young age, Susie swiftly built a reputation as a particularly brutal fighter. She led the Third Battalion on countless raids, enjoying an unbroken record of success until she came face to face with a new kind of enemy—the OmniMechs of Clan Jade Falcon.

The Clan Invasion

The arrival of the Clans in 3049 had vastly different consequences for the Greater Valkyrate than for the Belt Pirates. In only a few battles, Clans Wolf and Jade Falcon made short work of Ryan's Rebels; Wolf Clan forces shattered the Rebels' First Battalion on The Rock, and Jade Falcon warriors routed the Second and Third Battalions on the planets Last Chance and Gotterdammerung. According to initial reports, the Jade Falcons destroyed the Second and Third Battalions of Ryan's Rebels; recently discovered evidence, however, points to a face-saving cover-up on the part of the Jade Falcon leadership. The Second Battalion was indeed destroyed on Last Chance, but most of the Third Battalion survived the attack on Gotterdammerung.

The Falcon assault on the Valkyrate's capital caught Susie Ryan and the Third Battalion completely off guard. The bandit MechWarriors, soon realizing that the enemy troops had them

vastly outgunned, managed to retreat with light losses—with a little unwitting help from their antagonists. Expecting little resistance from mere bandits, Jade Falcon commanders initially used their forces with less than complete effectiveness; this momentary blunder allowed Maria Morggraine and a few MechWarriors to dig in and fight long enough to let Susie escape with the bulk of the Third Battalion. Susie Ryan and two companies of Rebels fled deeper into the Periphery, away from the invasion path of the Clan enemy.

Meanwhile, Clan Wolf forces ran into scattered units of Belt Pirates during their march through the Periphery. The first band they encountered they easily destroyed; the second, they followed until it disappeared into the asteroid field surrounding Star's End. The difficulties of navigating the field made the Wolves disinclined to pursue a lowly pack of pirates. In addition, their sensor scans showed that several of the asteroids had been fitted with a battery of laser weapons, a cowardly way to protect a world by Clan standards. Judging the Belt Pirates neither honorable nor dangerous enough to fight, the Wolf Clan bypassed Star's End in search of worthier foes. Between 3050 and 3052, occasional bands of Belt Pirates ventured beyond Star's End to raid Clan-held planets; Wolf Clan garrison units easily fended off the raiding parties, regarding them as excellent target practice. Most of the pirates foolish enough to take on Clan troops were obliterated. The Belt Pirates' leader, Morgan Fletcher II, eventually declared a temporary moratorium on raiding and ordered her remaining fighting forces to study Clan Wolf battle tactics.

Shortly after the battle of Tukayyid, Susie Ryan and her MechWarriors landed on Star's End with somewhat exaggerated tales of their "victories" against Clan troops. Almost immediately after her arrival, Susie made Morgan Fletcher a proposal—she and her forces would unite with the remaining Belt Pirates, and together the two battered bandit kingdoms would give the Clans "a taste of their own damned medicine." The only condition Susie Ryan asked was to command her own troops and to share overall command with Morgan Fletcher. Though wary of shared command, Morgan badly wanted to strike back at the Clans, and using the Rebels' expertise seemed her best hope of doing it. She agreed to the proposal, and the New Belt Pirates were born.

Current Situation

In the six years since Tukayyid, Star's End has become a hotbed of bandit activity within the Wolf Clan occupation zone. Various small pirate bands, rogue mercenary units, and even the occasional battered remnant of an Inner Sphere military unit cut off from its fellows have turned up on Star's End, eager to join any force that might give them an opportunity to strike back at the Clans. Initially, the Wolf Clan paid Star's End little heed; they regarded the gathering pirate bands as pathetic excuses for fighters, and contented themselves with destroying a unit here and there on its way through Wolf-occupied space. In the last two years or so, however, pirate raiding from Star's End began to grow serious enough to attract greater notice. IIKhan Ulric Kerensky dealt with the stepped-up raiding by sending out units of Crusader

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warriors to deal with the pirates, and was reportedly contemplating sterner measures when the Refusal War intervened.

This fratricidal conflict was an enormous stroke of luck for the New Belt Pirates, removing at least temporarily the greatest threat to their survival. With the armies of Clans Wolf and Jade Falcon shattered, the bulk of the Wolf survivors fled into the Inner Sphere, and the remaining Crusader Wolves still in disarray, the New Belt Pirates have the opportunity to raid Wolf-controlled worlds with minimal opposition. Attacks on worlds near Star's End have greatly increased in the past few months, and several of the assaults were reportedly led by Susie Morgraine-Ryan. According to rumors, Susie and Morgan Fletcher have captured Clan 'Mechs intact, though these rumors cannot be proved. A few wild stories even claim that the two pirate leaders captured a WarShip from Clan Ghost Bear—a highly unlikely story.

How long the New Belt Pirates can keep up their raiding spree remains to be seen. Though the Refusal War greatly diminished Wolf and Jade Falcon forces, enough viable Clan units remain intact to pose problems for the raiders. Individual Crusader warriors hungry for action have recently begun pirate hunting, to hone their skills in readiness for the breakdown of the Truce of Tukayyid that they consider to be inevitable. In addition, once the two battered Clans rebuild their fighting strength, they will undoubtedly tighten military control over the Wolf Clan occupied zone, and may even move in force against Star's End. There is also a distinct possibility that the New Belt Pirates will destroy themselves in a power struggle between Susie Ryan and Morgan Fletcher II.

VANCE REZAK'S BAND OF THE DAMNED

The first recorded appearance of the pirate group known as the Band of the Damned took place along the Draconis Combine border in 3042, when the raiders struck at the world of Hongor and made off with a fortune in platinum. In the following years the Band struck at targets in the Combine and the nearby Outworlds Alliance with increasing frequency. After the Band looted Combine grain stores on Kokpety in 3048, the DCMS announced its intention to locate and destroy the pirates.

The DCMS officer placed in charge of the mission was Taisa Kurtis Benzinger. Information provided by ComStar agents operating within the Combine suggests that Benzinger was secretly acting in collusion with the pirate band at the time, which may explain why he assigned the mission to the Seventh Pesht Regulars, a poorly organized, battalion-sized unit composed of aging MechWarriors and troops expelled from other units.

For several months, the second battalion of the Seventh

Pesht Regulars chased the pirates throughout the Draconis Rift. The unit finally succeeded in cornering the bandits on an uncharted Periphery world. After two weeks of fierce fighting, both sides had sustained severe losses. In addition, the pirates had successfully sabotaged the Regulars' JumpShip, effectively stranding them on the planet. The commander of the Kurita battalion, Sho-sa Vance Rezak, transmitted a request for reinforcements and ordered his troops to assume defensive positions. The evenly matched forces continued to skirmish for another month, but neither proved able to



achieve a decisive victory. With his unit's supplies running dangerously low and no sign of the requested reinforcements, Rezak ordered his troops to mount an all-out assault against the bandits in a desperate attempt to break the stalemate.

Rezak's transmissions to his DCMS superiors ended after that, so the outcome of the attack and subsequent events remain unknown. The following year, however, Rezak was observed leading the Band of the Damned on several raids against Kurita border worlds. During these raids, Rezak reportedly announced that he was personally declaring war against the Draconis Combine in response to the Combine's betrayal of him and his unit. Over the past few years, Rezak has stayed true to his word, directing the Band against Kurita targets on frequent raids. The group strikes hard and takes any spoils it can capture, including human cargo, which the pirates trade in the slave markets on Antallos. Some observers speculate that Rezak is actually a Combine spy and that his defection from the Combine was merely an elaborately planned ruse to establish a cover. No evidence exists to support this theory, however.

Currently Rezak maintains an estate in the city-state of Port Krin on Antallos. The estate doubles as an operational center for the Band of the Damned, though we have recently

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discovered the main staging point and repair facility for the Band on a world called, appropriately enough, Rezak's Hole. This small backwater world can barely support life, and really has nothing going for it aside from strategic proximity to a large stretch of unguarded Combine border. This makes it ideal for Rezak's purposes, and he goes to great lengths to conceal the world's location (explaining why it took our ROM agents so long to discover it). Current estimates place the Band's strength at one battalion of 'Mechs, and reportedly Rezak maintains a network of spies and informants that operate throughout the Combine and Outworlds Alliance.

Vance Rezak

A highly intelligent and ambitious man born to a noble Kurita family, Vance Rezak is one of the most brutal and fearsome pirate leaders operating in the Periphery today. Before embarking on his present career, Rezak studied at the leading military academies of the Draconis Combine and saw extensive action as a DCMS 'Mech commander. Those experiences, combined with his keen mind, make him far more dangerous than most privateers.

Rezak's only distinguishing physical characteristics are his scarred face and an artificial left hand, both the result of a cockpit explosion during a raid on Koulen during his days with the DCMS.

In addition to overseeing the activities of the Band of the Damned, Rezak is rumored to control a number of illegal activities from his base on Antallos. These activities range from slave trading to smuggling runs deep into the Federated Commonwealth. He is a secretive man who fiercely guards his privacy; nonetheless, observers estimate that his activities have made him one of the wealthiest residents of the Periphery.

MORRISON'S EXTRACTORS

One of the most rapacious pirate bands to form in the past fifteen years, Morrison's Extractors owe their fierce reputation partly to the Star League-era technology they possess and partly to the natural cruelty of their self-styled king, Hopper Morrison. A company commander in the Black Warriors of the Circinus Federation, Morrison stumbled on a small cache of lostech on an isolated planet while resting up between raids in

Lyran space. Though not a major find by most standards, the cache included BattleMechs, and to Morrison it looked like immense wealth. Rather than return to the Circinus Federation with their booty, Morrison and his battalion kept the contents of the cache and used it to start a new career in banditry.

By the end of the 3040s, less than eight years after going rogue, Morrison's Extractors had become the scourge of Lyran space near the Periphery border, and had also raided worlds in

their former nation with great success. The bandits' exploits continually attracted more renegade MechWarriors in search of action and easy money, and by 3048 the Extractors had grown to the size of a regiment. When forming the pirate band in 3042, Hopper Morrison had set up a base of operations on a planet far away from civilized space; he christened the world Pain, in an apparent attempt at dark humor. In 3048, Morrison took over another barren world nearby, which he named The Rack.

The Clan invasion unfortunately did not touch the Extractors,

whose holdings lay some distance from the Clans' chosen route toward Terra. In fact the invasion served as a boon to Morrison and his men, who found their favorite Lyran targets virtually stripped of troops, as the Commonwealth tried desperately to fend off Clan attacks. Morrison's Extractors terrorized countless Lyran border worlds, carefully staying just far enough from the Clan front to keep from attracting the invaders' attention. Since the Truce of Tukayyid halted the Clan advance in 3052, Lyran military units have once again made the Extractors a primary target; Archon Katrina Steiner-Davion of the Lyran Alliance recently offered a sizable bounty for Hopper Morrison's head. So far, however, the pirates have escaped the grasp of both Lyran forces and units of the AFFC.

In the past two years, the Extractors have grown even larger. The unit gained the bulk of its expansion troops when Morrison and his men tangled with Simonson's Cutthroats, a mercenary unit employed by the Federated Commonwealth that went rogue over disputes about combat assignments against the Clans. When the dust settled, the Extractors had defeated the Cutthroats and absorbed the majority of their surviving MechWarriors. A few stragglers fled to parts unknown in the deep Periphery, vowing revenge against Morrison, but it



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remains to be seen if they will ever have the strength to take him on with a hope of winning. The Extractors currently field approximately two BattleMech regiments, including some Star League-vintage machines. Morrison has also expanded his band's list of targets to include the fledgling Rim Collection, whose six worlds are only just beginning to lift themselves out of centuries of poverty.

A cruel man, Hopper Morrison enjoys causing pain and suffering. Rather than granting mercy to captured military men, he is infamous for letting them suffer a painful death chosen by an audience of his cronies.

"King" Hopper Morrison

Greedy, ruthless and cruel, "King" Hopper Morrison is in many ways the perfect bandit lord. Though utterly fearless in battle, he fights only when he believes doing so will yield considerable profit. He is determined to acquire vast wealth, possibly to compensate for a childhood spent in dire poverty. His desire for material gain is matched by his appetite for brutality; according to many accounts of raids Morrison has personally led, this self-styled pirate king enjoys causing suffering for its own sake. His favorite weapon is alleged to be a neural whip that he always carries with him. Some rumors hint that Hopper Morrison is mentally unstable, though he appears to have no trouble commanding his fellow bandits.

Tall and gaunt, Morrison wears dark leathers and carries a Star League-era pistol on his hip. He keeps his thick, black hair in a short buzz cut, and has a small gold crown tattooed on his right cheek.

FUCHIDA'S FUSILIERS

Formerly a mercenary unit known for reliable and honest service, the Fusiliers have degenerated into little more than bandits. They currently control the Tortuga Dominions, filling the power vacuum left by the resounding defeat of Paula "Lady Death" Trevaline by the AFFC armed forces in 3042. From Dominion territory, the Fusiliers conduct frequent raids against worlds in several nearby realms, and also attack Federated Commonwealth planets near the Periphery border.

The Tortuga Dominions were founded by survivors of the Federated Suns 237th Light Cavalry after a wasteful and suicidal attempt to capture a Taurian outpost during the Reunification War. Renaming themselves the Pirates of Tortuga, the 237th and their descendants raided countless Federated Suns worlds, eventually becoming prosperous and stable enough to colonize five star systems. The last of the Tortuga Pirates to rule the Dominions, Paula Trevaline was also among the most vicious bandit rulers in Periphery history. "Lady Death" was infamous for publicly humiliating prisoners before having them slowly executed, and under her leadership the Tortuga Pirates became the scourge of the Federated Suns during and after the Fourth Succession War.

In the mid-3030s, when the AFFC briefly made the Tortuga Pirates one of its major targets, Paula Trevaline shifted her operations to the Taurian Concordat and the Mica Majority.

Neither Periphery state could offer much resistance to the pirates—the Mica Majority because it lacked large-scale military resources, the Taurian Concordat because its Protector refused to recognize any threat aside from a possible Federated Commonwealth invasion. When the AFFC turned its attention to preparations for the War of 3039, Lady Death and the Tortuga Pirates were free to raid with impunity. From 3033 to 3040, the bandits of the Dominions seemed unstoppable.

After the Tortugans resumed raiding Federated Commonwealth worlds in 3039 and 3040, the commanders of the AFFC decided to end the pirates' reign of terror once and for all. In 3042 the AFFC High Command sent the Ninth Regimental Combat Team to the region of space where they believed the Dominions to lie. After two months of searching for the Dominions' capital world, the Ninth RCT landed on Tortuga Prime, taking Lady Death and her troops by surprise. The Ninth overcame the pirates after several pitched battles, capturing Lady Death and decimating her forces. Upon their return to the Federated Commonwealth, the Ninth RCT delivered Paula Trevaline to a maximum-security prison on New Syrtis, where she remains to this day.

Fervently glad to see the backs of their brutal pirate kings, the remaining residents of the Dominions continued to scratch out what livings they could on their resource-depleted worlds. The once-fearsome bandit kingdom existed as a leaderless collection of subsistence-level planets until 3054, when Fuchida's Fusiliers arrived on Tortuga Prime.

The Fusiliers broke their contract with the Federated Commonwealth in 3051, after the AFFC ordered them to the Clan border without giving the mercenaries any of the cutting-edge technology with which it had outfitted its own troops. Fearing that the Clan forces would cut them to ribbons, the Fusiliers refused their orders and took matters into their own hands. The mercenary unit raided the Precision Weaponry plant on Tancredi IV, capturing large amounts of equipment and severely damaging the facility in the process, and then high-tailed it out of the Commonwealth. Cutting through Outworlds Alliance territory and stopping only to raid for food and water, the unit wandered the stellar desert just beyond the Alliance's borders. After a brief stop in the Mica Majority, where they reportedly acquired more supplies and some gold through legal means, the Fusiliers continued their journey. Aside from a brief skirmish with MechWarriors of the Brotherhood of Randis, who defeated them in a fight over a BattleMech cache on the world of Antallos, little was heard of the rogue mercenary unit until 3054, when a Periphery trader traveling between the Mica Majority and Concordat space stopped over near Tortuga Prime to look for customers. Fuchida's Fusiliers reportedly threatened to blow the trader and her ship from the sky, at which point the trader left Dominion space in haste.

In the four years since that incident, the Fusiliers have picked up where the Tortuga Pirates left off, raiding all realms within their reach. Federated Commonwealth worlds appear to be their favorite targets, and the AFFC has responded to the raids by putting a high price on the Fusiliers' heads.

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CITIZENS FOR DAVION PURITY (CDP)

One disturbing locus of activity among Periphery pirate bands is the group known as Citizens For Davion Purity, based on the Federated Commonwealth border world of Malarn. As their name suggests, Citizens for Davion Purity believe that the offspring of the Hanse Davion-Melissa Steiner marriage are "tainted" by their Steiner blood, which has corrupted the ruling branch of the Davions beyond recognition. They regard the Federated Commonwealth as a sham and have called repeatedly for its destruction, along with the death of the entire Steiner-Davion family, using "any means necessary." Recent activity in less savory areas of the Periphery suggest that among the means they intend to use are pirate bands, especially newly formed ones eager for any assignment that might net them some funds and help them build a fearsome reputation.

The CDP dates back to the Fourth Succession War, when several backwater worlds in the Federated Suns half of the Federated Commonwealth suffered food shortages because the fighting disrupted supply shipments. Some local people blamed their suffering on the Steiners, rulers of the Lyran half of the Commonwealth, whom they believed pressured Hanse Davion into starting the war. In the ensuing twenty-nine years, the CDP has grown slowly but steadily stronger. Persistent rumors claim that the CDP receives financial support from the Lyran Free Skye Movement as well as from similar organizations in the Federated Suns. The recent secession of the Lyran Alliance has further strengthened this terrorist movement, adding a certain legitimacy to its ultimate goal in the eyes of disgruntled Davion subjects.

The CDP's recent hiring of pirate bands appears to be the source of persistent rumors that the organization has its own military. According to some reports, a few CDP-affiliated bandits even possess BattleMechs. Individuals known or believed to be members of the CDP have been seen on outlying worlds of the Taurian Concordat, where they are said to have gotten a warm reception from anti-Davion hardliners happy to support anyone interested in making trouble for the Archon Prince of the Federated Commonwealth. Several reports also place CDP members on the capital world of the Tortuga Dominions, on the independent world of Antallos, and on several worlds along the fringes of the Clan occupation zones that are believed to be hotbeds of bandit activity.

ANTALLOS

In the late twenty-seventh century a conglomeration of trading companies from the Federated Suns, Draconis Combine, Outworlds Alliance and Terran Hegemony settled the Hegemony's outpost world of Antallos. Though nominally governed by the Hegemony, Antallos functioned as neutral ground and so quickly became a prosperous independent center of interstellar trade in the region. Acknowledging Antallos's growing importance, the Star League government established several bases on the planet to safeguard it against pirate raids—and also to keep an eye on the often troublesome governments of the Combine and the Outworlds Alliance. Antallos became a treasure trove of high technology, and this treasure proved its undoing after the Star League's collapse. Repeated raids by Draconis Combine forces during the First Succession War shattered the planetary government, and Antallos devolved into a collection of squabbling city-states vying for dominance as the Succession Wars raged around them.

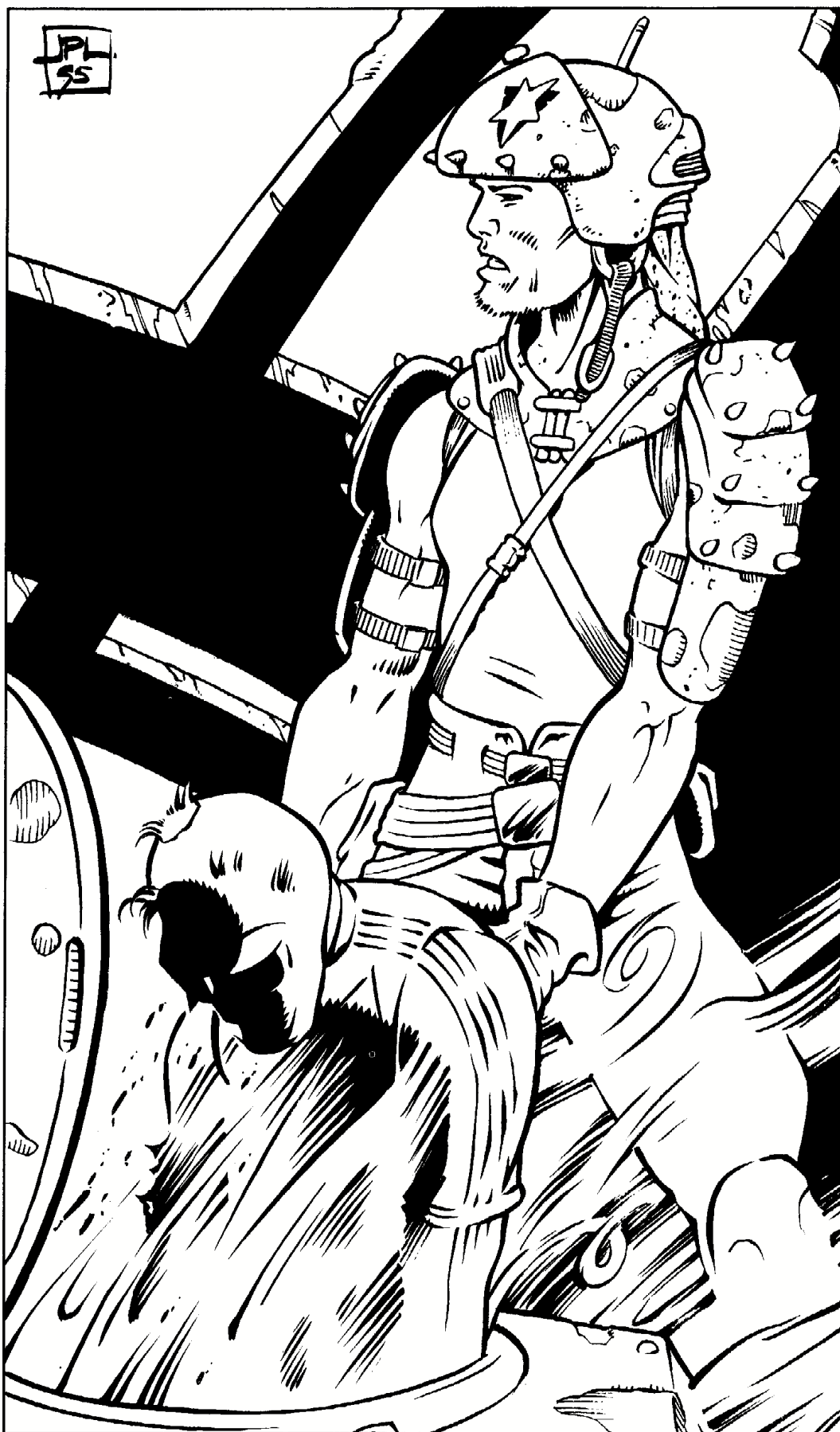
Over centuries of war and technological backsliding, Antallos became a hiding place for fugitives and wandering pirate bands. Along with the criminals came occasional traders, adventurers and lostech prospectors in search of whatever Star League technology might have escaped destruction. By the beginning of the thirty-first century, Antallos possessed a reputation for being a place where anything and anyone could be bought for the right price. The world reclaimed its past prominence as neutral ground for trading, but this time geared toward the underworld and criminal elements. The major center of criminal activity is Port Krin, the largest city-state on the planet.

Port Krin, or "The Port" as locals call it, was founded soon after the initial settlement of Antallos. It became a boom town on the proceeds of a brief but intense gold rush, then declined slowly over several decades after the gold ran out. The Succession Wars brought trade to a standstill and virtually destroyed Port Krin's economy. The city-state did not begin to recover until the early thirty-first century, when Port Krin began to make considerable profit through slave trading. In addition, The Port became a mecca for pirate bands needing to hide out or sell their ill-gotten gains. Port Krin's leaders built a large army from slaves and pirate captives, and this combined with its growing wealth kept Port Krin the major power among the city-states.

When rumors of a large Star League cache near Port Krin spread soon after the end of the Fourth Succession War, The Port reaped huge profits from the thousands of treasure-hunters who came to Antallos in search of the priceless lostech. As the largest city-state near the vast desert where the cache was rumored to be located, Port Krin became a natural staging ground for those hoping to strike it rich. Though few found much of anything, treasure fever and its accompanying surge of illegal activity permanently established Antallos's—and The Port's—reputations as criminal paradises. Fueled by the boom in legal, semi-legal and illegal trade, The Port continued to grow. A few enterprising residents of Port Krin started up Solaris-style BattleMech games in the late 3030s, and the slave trade continued to attract buyers and sellers from all levels of Inner Sphere and Periphery society.

Antallos remains a bandit's haven in 3058. Pirate bands from throughout the Periphery come to The Port to gamble, trade and establish contracts for illegal mercenary work in the Inner Sphere. Representatives from almost every organized crime syndicate in the Inner Sphere and the Periphery have set up shop on Antallos, most in Port Krin but some also in other city-states. According to recent rumors, Antallos has also become a favorite port of call for *dezgra* Clan warriors who fled into the Periphery after their shattering defeats on Luthien and Tukayyid. In addition, speculation is rife that outcast Clansmen—sometimes referred to as members of the "bandit" or "dark" caste—live on Antallos in the city-states and lawless Free Zones. While it is

THE BANDIT KINGDOMS



VINSON'S VIGILANTES

Vinson's Vigilantes is a rogue mercenary unit recently turned to piracy. Up until the Clan invasion, the Vigilantes served most of the Successor States at one time or another. Though the Vigilantes had the good luck to escape battling the Clans during the initial invasion of the Inner Sphere, in late 3052 the Federated Commonwealth High Command ordered Vinson's Vigilantes to the border of the Clan Jade Falcon occupation zone. Claiming that with their current equipment they could not hope to stand against the Clans' vastly superior 'Mechs and weapons, the Vigilantes asked the AFFC to give them refit kits to improve their chances against the invaders. The High Command refused the request. Rather than face certain extinction against the Clans, the unit broke their contract with the Federated Commonwealth.

The Vigilantes raided several Federated Commonwealth armories and then disappeared into the Periphery. A few AFFC units pursued the mercenaries for a time, but the AFFC High Command called off the hunt soon after the Vigilantes left Commonwealth space. Unaware that their former employers were no longer chasing them, the Vigilantes roamed the desolate Draconis Rift for nearly a year. In 3055, they finally settled on the independent world of Antallos, in a Free Zone just outside the city-state of Port Krin. They have remained on Antallos for the past three years, unsuccessfully searching for work and venturing out occasionally on supply raids.

According to observers in Port Krin, the Vigilantes are slowly succumbing to infighting between those who want to return to the Inner Sphere and those who wish to wholeheartedly adopt a life of piracy. Any disarray in the Vigilantes' ranks, however, has not yet significantly impaired their fighting ability. Merchants traveling between city-states on Antallos are regularly warned to steer clear of the Vigilantes' compound to avoid attack.

THE BANDIT KINGDOMS

virtually impossible to verify these rumors, the presence of Clan outcasts on Antallos is certainly plausible. The planet's status as a free port and a major center of legal and illegal trade makes it possible for various types of people with no prospects anywhere else to survive on Antallos. Antallos's population includes more than its share of outcasts from all over human-occupied space, many of whom make a point of keeping their pasts dark. If outcasts from the Clans are among them, they would have every incentive to keep their Clan origins a secret. Were they known to be Clan, they might easily become targets for Inner Sphere and Periphery citizens embittered by the Clans' devastation of their homeworlds, or for disgraced Clan warriors looking to regain a little of their lost honor by killing the outcasts who are more deeply dishonored than they.

The constant warfare among Antallos's city-states has subsided to a simmer under the influence of the current economic boom, though tensions may erupt again without warning or apparent reason. Every form of weapon known to humankind, with the exception of atomics, has been used at some point in the planet's history. A particularly grim legacy of Antallos's violent past is the residue of chemical and biological agents in the air, and often the soil, of the so-called Free Zones—large swaths of no man's land between the various dome-covered city-states, utterly lacking in what little passes for law and order on this world.

The Free Zones are home to nomad tribes and bandit gangs who prey on unsuspecting or underprotected trading caravans that travel from city to city. The gangs attack at the slightest provocation, often using dangerous native predators as well as whatever military hardware they have acquired. A few gangs are even rumored to possess BattleMechs. The best-equipped force known to roam the Free Zones is Vinson's Vigilantes, a rogue mercenary unit that appears to be sliding inexorably toward banditry.

ASTROKASZY

Astrokaszy is a dry, harsh world located between the Marian Hegemony and the Free Worlds League. Today the planet is home to numerous bands of outlaw MechWarriors, black marketeers and fugitives. Reports note the emergence of a small light-weapons manufacturing industry on the planet within the past few years, but these reports cannot be confirmed. The planet possesses no central government or organized military force and suffers from constant, low-level warfare.

Astrokaszy was first settled during the early years of the Succession Wars by mercenaries and deserters fleeing hostilities in the Inner Sphere. By 2905, a small number of city-states had emerged around the trading ports of the planet. These city-states had joined together in a loose federation by 3001, earning diplomatic recognition from several Inner Sphere and Periphery powers and prompting ComStar to establish an HPG facility on Astrokaszy.

In 3025, however, a invasion force from the Marian Hegemony descended on Astrokaszy, ostensibly to seek

revenge for an assassination attempt against Hegemony leader Marius O'Reilly. The Marian leaders claimed that the government of Astrokaszy was harboring a Marik agent who had engineered the failed assassination. The Marian invaders easily took control of the planet, and within days Astrokaszy's ruling federation collapsed, as each city-state attempted to curry favor with the planet's new rulers and advance its own interests. Almost immediately forces from the Magistracy of Canopus, Circinus Federation, and the Illyrian Palatinate landed on the planet, ostensibly at the invitation of various Astrokaszyan city-states. These forces convinced the Marian Hegemony to abandon its claim to the planet, but not before attracting a peace-keeping force from the Free Worlds League, which had apparently grown uneasy at the unrest on its border.

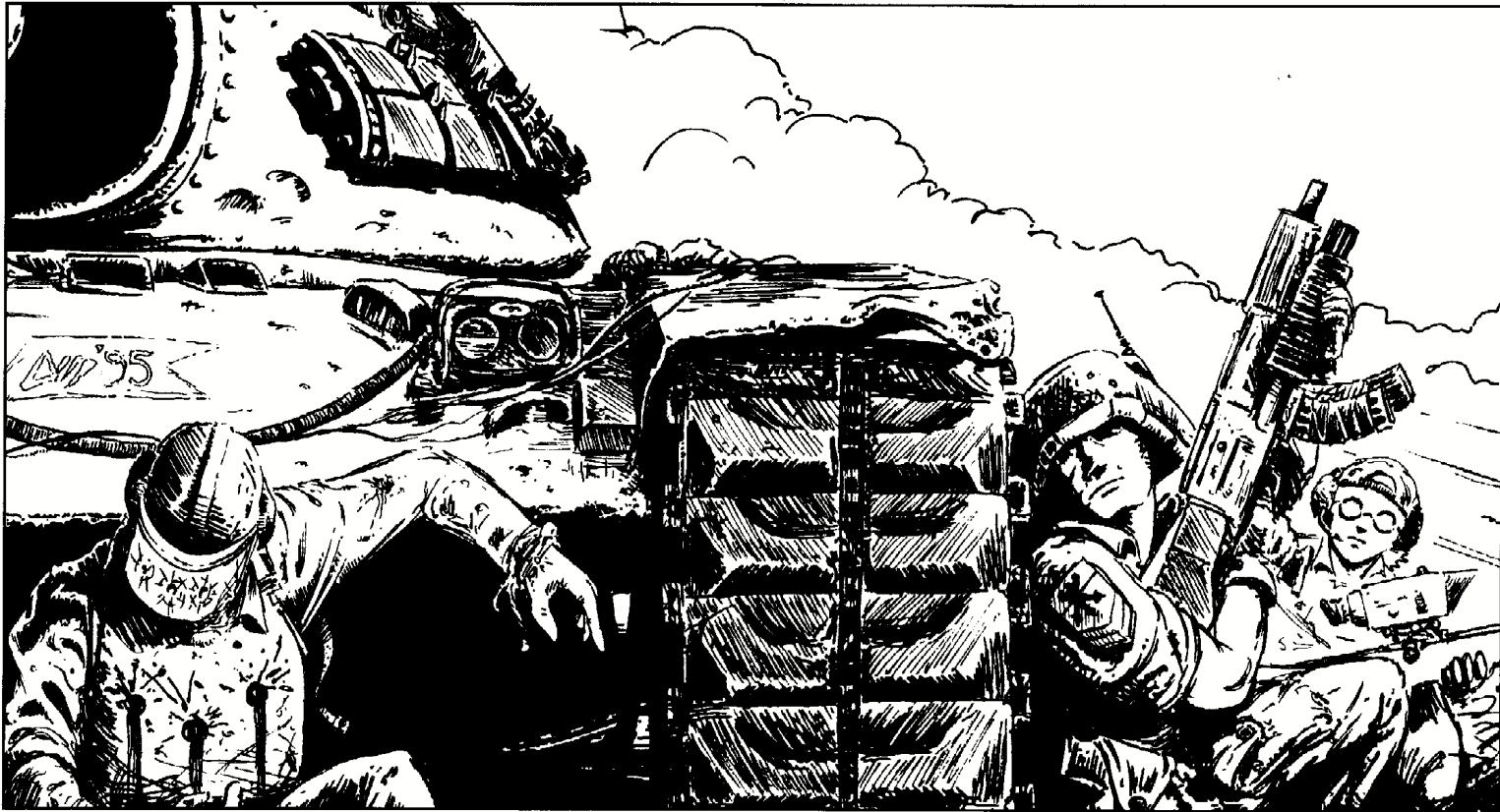
Despite the Marik intervention, several neighboring Periphery powers, as well as the Federated Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine, continued to provide covert military support and experienced combat instructors to Astrokaszy's city-states. Evidence suggests that the Davion and Kurita governments used the ongoing Astrokaszyan civil war as a field laboratory to test various new weapons systems and tactics, and as a training ground for covert units. The Marik peace-keeping force abandoned Astrokaszy in 3032, but the conflict continued to rage for six more years. Relative peace returned to Astrokaszy only after all outside powers had withdrawn their support from the decimated city-states.

Astrokaszy has never fully recovered from its years of civil war. Even today its cities contain vast areas of rubble, and its population remains deeply divided. A Marik-brokered peace agreement between the city-states collapsed within weeks of the departure of the Marik peace-keeping force, and the planet remains without a central government. As a result, Astrokaszy has become a dumping ground for many disreputable Inner Sphere and Periphery merchants eager to jettison contraband or rid themselves of hired mercenaries. The entire planet has become a danger zone. Roaming 'Mech gangs patrol its parched deserts, searching for prey, while rival politico-military factions still fight pitched battles in its cities.

Recently, two interesting rumors concerning Astrokaszy have surfaced, but we have been unable to confirm either story. The first rumor contends that Astrokaszy once served as a holding planet for the Star League Defense Force. According to this account, the Star League maintained several precious-metal storage vaults on the planet during the Reunification War and Periphery uprisings to provide itself with immediate, accessible cash resources if necessary. Though the ComStar archives contain no record of such vaults, the rumor continues to attract adventurers seeking the storage facilities.

The second rumor describes apparently new BattleMech designs and weapons systems in use on the planet. Some claim that these reports serve as evidence that Inner Sphere weapons designers are field-testing experimental designs on Astrokaszy, but we have been unable to confirm the authenticity of these reports at this time.

NEW FINDINGS



In the six years since the battle of Tukayyid, ComStar and the Successor States have stepped up colonization efforts as part of an overall strategy for dealing with the Clan threat. This section describes the various Inner Sphere-sponsored settlements known to ComStar, including our own holdings, as well as other inhabited planets discovered in the past few years by the Explorer Corps.

INNER SPHERE HOLDINGS

Ever since the collapse of the Star League, the Successor States have made sporadic efforts to explore the uncharted fringes of the Periphery and establish settlements on unclaimed worlds. Depending on the needs and available finances of the Successor State in question, these Periphery settlements have included military bases, mining and manufacturing concerns, and even traditional colonies. Beginning soon after the founding of the Explorer Corps, ComStar also established small outposts on various Periphery worlds.

Several of the planets colonized since 3030 already possessed small populations, mostly independent groups who apparently traveled beyond the boundaries of then-known space for various reasons of their own. On worlds claimed in the past three decades by the Successor States, these existing settlements have become protectorates of the Successor State that discovered them. ComStar chose a different approach,

allowing the existing inhabitants of our outpost worlds to remain independent of ComStar's control.

COMSTAR

The Explorer Corps' primary mission was to map the worlds of the uncharted Periphery and explore them for any traces of the long-lost Exodus fleet. Explorer Corps teams also had standing orders to take control of any abandoned Star League bases they might find, and to extend a diplomatic olive branch to any "lost" settlements from the Star League era or earlier that they encountered. In the first few years of exploration, the Corps used some of the worlds it had discovered as staging areas for further exploration. Throughout the Corps's ninety-eight years of service, its members have extended ComStar's sphere of influence in Periphery space through reviving several military outposts and, to a lesser extent, offering ComStar's help and protection to existing native settlements.

The reformation of ComStar affected our organization's holdings in the Periphery, as it affected everything else connected with our Order. A few of the Star League-era military bases and research outposts rediscovered by the Explorer Corps unfortunately fell into the hands of the reactionary Word of Blake, and ComStar ROM agents are engaged in an ongoing effort to find out exactly what the Word of Blake may be doing on those worlds.

NEW FINDINGS

ComStar currently retains control of Star League installations on several Periphery planets, some of which serve as training facilities for the Com Guard and staging bases for ComStar ROM operations. In addition, the Explorer Corps has established compounds on several more worlds near the edges of the regions it has mapped; these worlds continue to serve the Corps as staging areas for further exploration.

FEDERATED COMMONWEALTH

The Federated Commonwealth government controls only a moderate number of Periphery colonies, but various business concerns maintain extensive additional holdings. The vast majority of the latter are not colonies, but mines and other facilities that funnel natural resources from the outlying planets to various industries inside the Commonwealth. Our records indicate extensive mining operations on several asteroid belts located just beyond the Lyran border; these mining facilities appear to be owned by several different Lyran manufacturers.

Though we do not know for certain, it is likely that the small mining settlements in the asteroid belts regard themselves as loyal to Katrina Steiner-Davion and the Lyran Alliance since the recent Lyran secession. Because so many of the Federated Commonwealth's Periphery planets belong to Lyran rather than Federated Suns business magnates, it is likely that the Lyran secession will pose a thorny economic problem for Archon Prince Victor Steiner-Davion.

One world colonized under government aegis—the world of Farstar—appears to serve as a base for Federated Commonwealth intelligence operations. Taken under Federated Commonwealth control not long after the Fourth Succession War, the planet lies behind a dense asteroid field two jumps away from Draconis Combine space. The asteroid field has made infiltration of Farstar impractical, but its location and natural shield make it an excellent location for a DMI or MIO base. The Periphery regions of the Draconis Combine, like those of most Successor States, are sparsely guarded and frequently staffed with substandard officers, and would thus allow F-C agents to slip more easily onto far-flung Combine worlds.

DRACONIS COMBINE

The Draconis Combine has established several bases beyond its borders from which to launch further exploration missions into the deep Periphery. In addition to serving as supply bases, these worlds also keep lines of communication open between exploring vessels and the Combine. Several Combine explorer ships have succumbed to jump drive failures in recent months, and personnel stationed on Periphery bases have proven vital to the rescue of many JumpShip crews.

Mercenary units hired by Coordinator Theodore Kurita act as garrison forces, defending these worlds against pirate attacks.

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

The Free Worlds League has colonized few Periphery planets, and those it has settled officially belong to the individual

duchies who financed each world's development. The Duchy of Andurien claims the greatest number of Periphery holdings—not surprising, considering its historical tendency to ally itself with Periphery interests. With the Marik-Liao invasion of the Chaos March drying up financial resources throughout the League, however, exploration and colonization of the Periphery has slowed to a virtual standstill.

CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION

Of all the Successor States, only the Capellan Confederation has no Periphery holdings at all. The Fourth Succession War severely strained the realm's economy, and Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao has so far been more concerned with regaining territory lost in that conflict than with peaceful expansion of his state's borders. The invasion of the Chaos March has given the Chancellor plenty to cope with for the present, and so colonization efforts are unlikely for the foreseeable future.

The recent alliance between the Taurian Concordat and the Magistracy of Canopus, two Periphery states on the Capellan border that have little love for House Liao, imposes certain practical difficulties as well. Even assuming that the two Periphery nations intend to allow Capellan vessels passage through their territory, they are likely to exact a high price for the privilege. To skirt the borders of the Concordat and the Magistracy requires a much longer journey, with related navigational difficulties and fuel expenses. In addition, the two Periphery states have every reason to balk the Capellans in order to safeguard their newly established Canopus-Taurian New Colony Region.

NEW DISCOVERIES

The Periphery and the Outer Rim are so vast that it is not possible to catalogue in this document every habitable world that the Explorer Corps has discovered. On many worlds where Explorer Corps teams landed, they encountered human populations with widely varying levels of technological and social development. The sheer variety of planetary cultures indicates just how prevalent space travel was during the Star League era, from which many of these far-flung civilizations date. According to ComStar archives, the Star League government sought to expand its influence through peaceful exploration and colonization, and built military bases and factories on many planets in support of these efforts. The small settlements surrounding these facilities in the deep Periphery eventually gave rise to larger communities and even major cities in some cases, all of which were completely cut off from the Inner Sphere in the wake of the Amaris Civil War. That so many of these isolated societies have survived the ravages of time intact is a testament to human resilience.

The Star League was not the only political power to expand its holdings far into the Outer Rim. In the years before the coup that overthrew the Cameron dynasty, Stefan Amaris of the Rim Worlds Republic secretly built BattleMech factories and stockpiled the 'Mechs they produced at hidden military bases in the

deep Periphery. With the dissolution of the Republic, these 'Mech factories and military bases became fair game for the explorers or pirate bands who found them. Small cities grew up around these facilities as well; we have yet to discover how many of them have survived to the present day.

Often led by a desire for a better life, many independent groups also established colonies in the Periphery. Some settlements were founded by ordinary citizens looking for economic opportunity; others by religious or philosophical groups intent on building their own utopias. On some worlds, Explorer Corps teams discovered a particularly poignant piece of history: the ruins of settlements apparently founded by SLDF units unable or unwilling to either join the Exodus fleet or stay in the disintegrating Inner Sphere. To our knowledge, none of these tiny colonies survived for more than a few generations.

THE FATE OF THE 295TH

After the fall of the Star League and the departure of the Exodus fleet, some thirty divisions of the SLDF remained unaccounted for, among them the 295th BattleMech Division. Stationed in the Lyran Commonwealth during the late 2700s, the unit fought against the Rim Worlds Republic and also against Stefan Amaris's forces in the Terran Hegemony. After the Civil War, the unit returned to its assigned station in the Rim Worlds Republic. The 295th eagerly heeded General Kerensky's call for Exodus, but mechanical problems held up their departure for several weeks. By the time the unit's transports were capable of making the journey, Kerensky's fleet had already disappeared from the skies over New Samarkand.

The 295th, knowing they had only a slim hope of catching up with the Exodus fleet without knowing its destination, nevertheless decided to try. A month after Kerensky's departure, the 295th left the Rim Worlds for regions unknown. For hundreds of years, their fate remained a mystery. Some believed that the unit had succeeded in joining the Exodus against all odds; others, that the gallant 295th had misjumped or wandered through uncharted space before succumbing to its dangers. Not until 3043, when an Explorer Corps vessel landed on an uncharted world far beyond the borders of the Circinus Federation, did anyone learn the truth.

Plagued by recurrent technical difficulties, the ships of the 295th apparently made an emergency landing on an uninhabited world. Unable to repair their damaged vessels, they made a virtue of necessity and built several small settlements near the eastern coast of the planet's largest arable continent. From the traces they left behind, we can assume that the colonies survived for close to eighty years through farming and fishing. However, the settlers' birthrate never exceeded the threshold of viability necessary for long-term survival. By the late 2800s, the 295th's descendants had all died, leaving behind only a few scattered ruins.

FARHOME

Located approximately ninety light-years beyond the Taurian Concordat, the planet Farhome is banded by dense

tropical jungles similar to those that flourished across Terra during the age of the dinosaurs. Among Farhome's native predators are creatures similar to Terra's ancient giant lizards; unlike early Terra, however, Farhome is also inhabited by humans. Though not truly indigenous to the planet, the human tribes of Farhome have lived there since the earliest days of deep-space travel and no longer remember any other world.

The Explorer Corps team that landed on Farhome began its explorations in BattleMechs, both to aid navigation through the jungles and as protection from the giant lizards. When a scouting party encountered its first band of humans, the natives fled in panic. Later, after several more-successful meetings in which the Explorer Corps team managed to gain a measure of the natives' trust, the team members learned that the natives had assumed they were some kind of fearsome alien beings. They had no frame of reference for BattleMechs or for much of the equipment that the explorers carried, and had drawn what to them seemed the only reasonable conclusion.

After several weeks of studying the world and its people, the team discovered the origins of Farhome's tribes in the wreckage of an ancient DropShip, which the natives treat as a shrine. The DropShip dates back to the middle of the twenty-second century, not long after the development of jump drive technology. The ship's log, reverently preserved intact by people who no longer understood what it meant, contained fragmentary records of the original settlers. Calling themselves the Naturists, they believed that complex technology ultimately corrupts the human soul, and that only the simplest life-enhancing devices should be used so as to minimize human separation from the rest of the natural world. Some 3,000 families of Naturists pooled their funds to buy a DropShip, travel to a fertile planet far away from the corrupting influence of modern society, and build a low-technology utopia for themselves and their descendants. After landing on Farhome, the Naturists deliberately crippled their DropShip beyond repair and destroyed several vital components in order to ensure that future generations could not use it to rediscover space travel.

In the roughly seven centuries since landfall on Farhome, the descendants of the original colonists have reverted to an even more primitive technological and social level than their ancestors most likely dreamed. Evidence from the ship's log suggests that the Naturists envisioned a technological level roughly comparable to fifteenth-century Terran societies in rural Europe and the Americas, but Farhome's culture more closely resembles that of Terra's Paleolithic peoples. Their language is unique and complex, combining elements of English, French and American Sign Language.

THE CHAINELANE ISLES

This region, located about a hundred light-years beyond the Greater Valkyrate, superficially resembles a collection of miniature Successor States. Within this area less than a hundred light-years in diameter lie several small principalities, each encompassing only a few worlds. All of these tiny realms border each other and are constantly at war.

NEW FINDINGS



The self-styled warlords of these tiny nations manage to sustain unending, low-level warfare with a minimal level of industrial output plus additional materiel scrounged from long-abandoned munitions factories built by the defunct Rim Worlds Republic. According to our records, roughly half of the Chainelane worlds once belonged to the Rim Worlds; the others obtain munitions and other materiel by raiding those planets that still contain Rim Worlds manufacturing facilities. On the rare occasions when trading or exploring vessels pass through this region of space, the warlords attempt to make contact and bargain for weapons or military expertise. When one or another succeeds in this effort, the intensity of the fighting briefly increases.

The warlords of the Isles initially welcomed our Explorer Corps ship, but lost interest when they realized that we would give them no military aid. They showed little concern for events and people outside their own borders; those few warlords who expressed any interest in outside contacts sought only some advantage over their rivals. The general technological level throughout the Isles roughly matches the state of the Inner Sphere after the Second Succession War, except that the warlords have even fewer BattleMechs and find it more difficult to replenish their supply. Politically, many of the Chainelane Isles are monarchies or dictatorships; however, the degree of each warlord's personal control varies from principality to principality. In some, the chief warlord must keep the favor of several lesser warlords and a majority of the people in order to hold on to power. In others, the warlord rules as a virtual dictator. On the latter worlds, local citizens are often forced into the warlord's service.

Because of the shortage of BattleMechs, the warlords' armies tend to use infantry and other conventional forces as front-line troops, relegating the scarce BattleMechs to the position of holding captured territory. Though MechWarriors are respected in the Isles, they do not attract the fame of their Inner Sphere counterparts.

THE WANDERERS

The Wanderers are among the more unusual denizens of the Periphery that the Explorer Corps has encountered. Descended from would-be colonists who left the Inner Sphere in the early twenty-fourth century, these "interstellar gypsies" wander the space lanes in their aging but still-sound fleet of JumpShips, buying and selling whatever they can to keep themselves supplied with food and fuel. Like peddlers between the rural settlements of Europe and America on ancient Terra, the Wanderers carry trade goods and news between the isolated planets of the deep Periphery and the "civilized" nations closer to the Inner Sphere.

According to their own account, the Wanderers' first generation—the original colonists—spent most of their lives searching for the perfect planet on which to settle. Their children grew to adulthood aboard the JumpShips, and regarded shipboard life as a natural state. They did not share their parents' dream of landfall, but preferred to live out their lives in space. Knowing that they must somehow replenish their diminishing supplies, these early Wanderers used the only asset at their disposal: transport. They landed on Inner Sphere and developed Periphery worlds, bartered for whatever potentially useful items they could obtain, and then ferried those items to outlying Periphery colonies. As the edges of the settled Periphery spread wider and once-struggling colonies developed local industries and products, trade flowed both ways, with the Wanderers as a vital link between far-flung planets and interstellar nations. When necessary, the Wanderers bartered their goods for ship repairs and spare parts in addition to food, fuel and other necessities.

The Wanderer fleet consists of six JumpShips, each with two to four DropShips. Despite their battered appearance, all of

the ships are in excellent repair. The Wanderers themselves seem delighted to see strangers, though their generous hospitality is tempered by an instinct for sharp bargaining. They expect payment for anything given away, including a simple meal, though the payment need not always be in kind. They are scrupulous about paying their own debts, and will insist on returning something for any help they receive. They are extremely wary of pirates, whom they despise. When an Explorer Corps vessel first encountered the Wanderers, they mistook it for a pirate vessel and came close to firing on it before the Explorer Corps team corrected the misunderstanding.

ALFIRK

Until Kerensky led his Exodus from the Inner Sphere, the small world of Alfirk claimed the distinction of being the human colony most distant from Terra—a dubious distinction, as the existence of Alfirk was completely unknown. The colonists who would establish Alfirk left Terra like so many others in the twenty-second century, to start a new life with people of like goals and dreams. Colonel William Alfirk III, a retired Terran Alliance tank commander whose survivalist attitude and considerable personal fortune attracted a strong crop of colonists from the military sector, led the group. After making five coreward jumps, the sixth resulted in a minor drive malfunction that damaged their sensors. Luckily, they found themselves stranded in a system featuring a small world suitable for colonization. They named the settlement they built there Alfirk, in honor of their esteemed leader.

The Alfirk colony prospered with no support or contact from the Alliance. This suited the colonists just fine, and they were fortunate enough to require no outside water or other supplies. Over the years the colony spread across the planet. Though they lived in peaceful isolation from the rest of humanity, the people of Alfirk maintained a strong military, outfitted with the weaponry they carried from Terra and sustained by the aging colonel's paranoia. Even after the colonel's death, the colonists maintained the Alfirk militia in his honor, standing guard against an invasion that never came.

This isolation might have lasted forever if not for a planet-wide plague that killed nearly half the population in 2963. Desperate for a cure, a small team of scientists decided to repair their ancient JumpShip and head for Terra. Once the ship's instruments came online, the scientists made a shocking discovery. Alfirk was not six jumps from Terra, as the colonists had always believed. The drive malfunction that burned out the sensors was actually a serious misjump that took them hundreds of light-years off course. After some hurried astronomical calculations, the scientists discovered that Alfirk was in fact 700 light-years from Terra.

A series of government debates resulted in the decision to send the JumpShip back toward Terra to try and establish contact with the Alliance. The plague seemed to be claiming fewer victims each day, but medical assistance was still vital to the colony's survival. Fortunately, the JumpShip encountered an Explorer Corps vessel before reaching the territories of the Draconis Combine. ROM agents on board contacted the Alfirk

crew, learning for the first time that these colonists, long thought lost to a fatal misjump, were in fact quite prosperous.

ComStar offered the Alfirk colonists the medicine they needed to end the plague, plus many technological advances, including improved armaments. ComStar doctrine at the time, however, dictated that our Order not reveal the technology of hyperpulse generators and BattleMechs to lower-tech worlds; that information remains unknown to these colonists. In a perhaps misguided decision, we also warned the inhabitants to remain vigilant against two enemies of the ComStar state: roving bands of ruthless pirates and the Successor States, heirs to a failed dynasty that planned to conquer all of space in the name of greed and power. In the years since, we have also warned them against the invasion of the Clans. ComStar agents periodically return to Alfirk to monitor the colony's progress, keeping their existence a secret from the Inner Sphere. Whether this policy will ever change remains to be seen.

HUNTER'S PARADISE

Outside of Steiner space and beyond the young realm known as the Rim Collection, lies a unique relic of a bygone era. During the height of the Star League, an exploration ship searching for likely mining sites discovered in the Periphery a beautiful planet teeming with life. The blue skies and sweet air of this new world seemed a sure sign that the planet offered ideal conditions for colonists and tourists alike. As the explorers quickly learned, the planet was home to thousands of species of unique animals, nearly all predators. Scientists still debate the hows and wherefores of such an anomalous situation, but accept that the smaller predators simply serve as prey for the larger predators. Creatures so dangerous and powerful that they might overwhelm a BattleMech occupy the top of the food chain.

Though poor in gems and metals, the planet proved to be a biological gold mine for its discoverers. The exploration team quickly hatched a plan to market the new world as a big-game hunter's dream come true. Attempts to establish a surface settlement failed completely, so investors funded the construction of an orbital space station. DropShips would bring wealthy thrill-seekers to the station, where they would meet their guides with the latest in weaponry and survival gear. The richest hunters could even go to the surface piloting BattleMechs. The beasts they caught live would become the main attractions of zoos throughout the Inner Sphere, though most targets ended up stuffed and mounted in dusty trophy rooms.

The so-called Hunter's Paradise prospered for several decades. When trouble began brewing in the Periphery, however, business slacked off. And, as with so many other ventures, the collapse of the Star League spelled the doom of this high-priced resort. Eventually the space station was abandoned and forgotten, until scouts from the Rim Collection recently rediscovered Hunter's Paradise and began exporting exotic beasts captured there to zoos and labs in the Lyran Alliance. Rim Collection President Moroney would like to reopen the abandoned resort, but feels serious doubt that such a venture could succeed in the current financial climate.

RULES

The **Rules** section contains four main subsections: **The Periphery Campaign**, **Optional Rules**, **Technical Readout** and **Archetypes**.

The Periphery Campaign provides background information and suggested adventure hooks for players and gamemasters interested in Periphery-based games and campaigns. The section includes information on life in the various Periphery realms, as well as descriptions of the region's economy and currencies. The **Optional Rules** section supplies **BattleTech** game rules for salvaging, jury-rigging 'Mechs with bypass kits, and for patchwork armor. All of these optional rules are Level Three rules, and thus do not apply to tournament **BattleTech** play. The **Technical Readout** provides descriptions and **BattleTech** game information for some new vehicles coming into use in the modern Periphery. Finally, **Archetypes** contains descriptions of four archetypes that provide a taste of the diverse character types active in the Periphery.

As with other rules and guidelines presented in previous **FASA** products, feel free to disregard or modify these rules to best fit your campaign.

THE PERIPHERY CAMPAIGN

The Periphery is a prime spot for all types of adventures. Unlike the Inner Sphere, the Periphery contains numerous small states, all relatively close to one other. These realms contain a wide variety of different peoples, each with their own laws and customs. As a result, player characters venturing into the Periphery can travel to some rather exotic places quickly and easily. And they are likely to run into some strange characters—including renegades, religious cults, explorers, treasure hunters and any number of fringe groups unable to fit in Inner Sphere society.

The close proximity and varied cultures of the Periphery realms also contribute to underlying tensions in the region. Most of the original Periphery settlers came to the area seeking independence, and that freedom-loving spirit still prevails among the Periphery's inhabitants. Bring up the topic of the Inner Sphere with any Periphery citizen, and you will likely hear comments about "making those Innies pay for every scrap of land if they ever try to invade." And residents are just as ready to guard their independence from their Periphery neighbors as well. This fierce love of freedom and suspicion of outsiders will color any game or campaign in the Periphery.

LIFE IN THE PERIPHERY

Describing the typical Periphery world is an impossible task, simply because no such world exists. Customs, laws and conditions can vary greatly between different Periphery states, as well as within each state.

Many Periphery planets resemble "civilized" Inner Sphere worlds. Most of these are located in the Taurian Concordat, the

Periphery state that most closely resembles an Inner Sphere realm. The Concordat does have its rough edges, however, which are particularly apparent in its newly colonized worlds.

Many worlds of the Magistracy of Canopus superficially resemble Inner Sphere worlds as well. But nearly every Canopian world buzzes with the unique sense of carefree fun that pervades the Magistracy, thanks to the realm's renowned entertainment industry. Indeed, most Inner Sphere and Periphery residents alike know the Magistracy of Canopus as "the realm that never sleeps."

The Outworlds Alliance, on the other hand, is a poor and destitute place. Alliance worlds are filled with people struggling to survive, ruled by a government too small and ineffective to ease their plight. The Alliance government is gradually expanding its reach, but on most Alliance worlds local authorities remain the only form of government. In fact, visitors are often surprised to discover that the Alliance worlds are considered a sovereign, unified state.

On the worlds of the dictatorial Circinus Federation and Marian Hegemony, life is generally oppressive and marked by fear. Residents of Hegemony worlds may be safe from outside invaders and civil disorder, but the oppression they live under is a high price to pay for such safety. Residents of Circinian worlds enjoy more relative freedom, but they also live under a government wracked by internal dissension. This dissension means that Circinians live under the near-constant threat of civil disorder and foreign invasion.

Most of the Periphery's smaller realms and independent worlds are rough places where residents must make do with little or no technology or modern conveniences. On many of these planets, horses or other riding animals share streets with jeeps and hovercars, and laser-toting bandits coexist with nomadic tribes armed with only bows and arrows. On these lawless planets, the struggle for survival dominates life, and justice is only a trigger pull away.

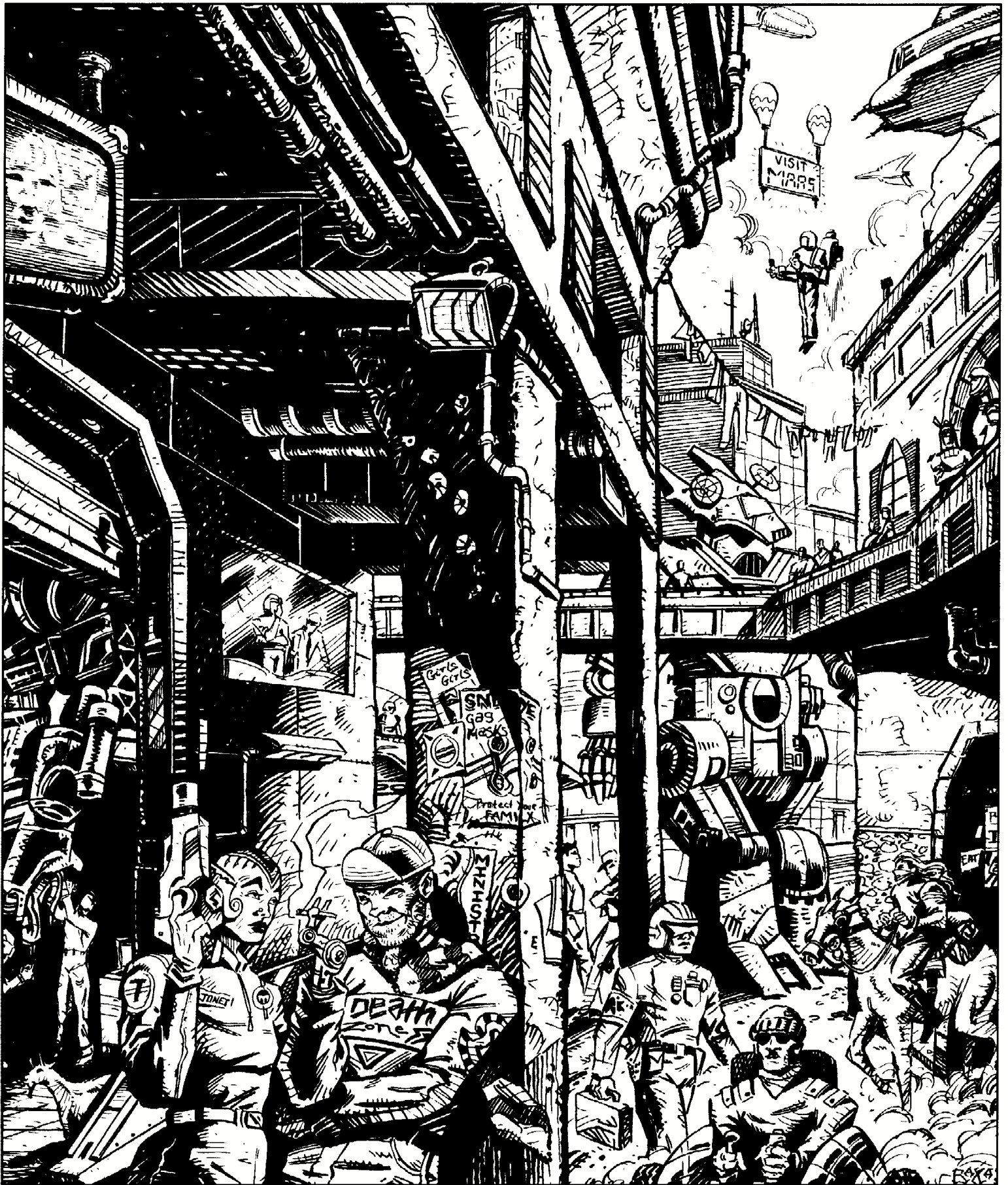
The Periphery's pirate worlds can be truly nightmarish places. On these worlds, slavery and cruelty are the order of the day. Many who find themselves on these worlds are often happy to greet death, for it is much less painful than life. Despite the presence of BattleMechs and other high-tech items, life can be as desolate here as on any independent Periphery world.

Some independent worlds, however, are quite livable. For example, the small, rich world of Herotitus is ruled by a government that has managed to provide a relatively high standard of living for most of its people. The worlds of the Niops Association also provide comfortable, if repressive living environments.

ECONOMY AND CURRENCY

For many decades, the Periphery was considered the poorest section of known space. Historically beset by internal strife, pirate attacks and Inner Sphere incursions, most of the

RULES





Taurian Concordat

The largest of all the Periphery states, the Taurian Concordat boasts a powerful and well-organized military. Hamstrung for years by paranoid fear of a Davion invasion, the TDF is finally prospering under the rule of Protector Jeffrey Calderon. A complete redesign of TDF uniforms and insignia, undertaken at the Protector's direction, embody this new spirit.

OFFICER

This colonel is wearing full dress uniform. His numerous decorations, as well as the scar beneath his left eye, attest to his long years of service.



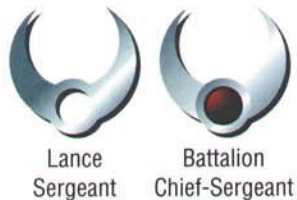
MECHWARRIOR

In the field, Taurian soldiers wear simple camouflage fatigues. However, a MechWarrior's neurohelmet may be decorated in any style desired.



RANK INSIGNIA

Enlisted



Officers





Marian Hegemony

Long considered a simple bandit kingdom, the Marian Hegemony has become a feared Periphery power through the expansionist policies of its recent rulers. The Hegemony's growing military and simple but successful tactics continue to threaten the realm's weaker neighbors, and are making even the mighty Free Worlds League sit up and take notice.

RANK INSIGNIA

Officers:



Principes



Centurion



Legatus



General



Caesar

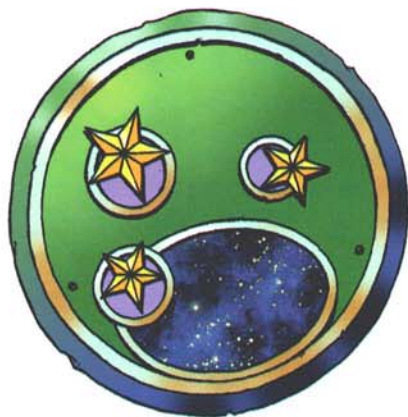
LEGIONNAIRE

This infantry trooper wears the standard uniform of the Marian Legions. He carries a compact rocket launcher with a rangefinder and has HUD built into his helmet.



PRINCIPES

The uniform of a Marian officer. The rank insignia on this officer's shoulder pad marks him as a Principes.



Magistracy of Canopus

All aspects of Canopian society are affected by its massive entertainment industry, and this carries through to the relaxed regulations regarding uniforms. Although the Magistracy is one of the largest and most successful Periphery realms, it has never emphasized military power. However, the Magestrix's recent alliance with the Taurian Concordat is beginning to change this attitude.

RANK INSIGNIA

Enlisted



Volunteer



Star Corporal



First Ranker



Command Sergeant



Lance Corporal



Banner Sergeant

Officers



Ensign



Colonel



Commander



Major



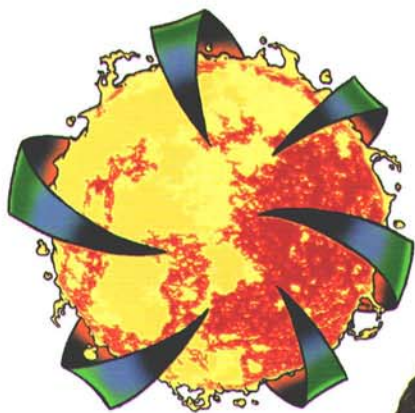
INFANTRYMAN

An MIM special forces trooper charges into battle with a lethal combat shotgun.



MECHWARRIOR

Canopian MechWarrior "Lucky" Linda Lancombe dresses down for the hot confines of a 'Mech cockpit.



Outworlds Alliance

With few ground troops at their disposal, the Outworlds Alliance relies heavily on air defense. As a result, this realm has produced some of the best fighter pilots in all of known space.



RANK INSIGNIA

Enlisted:



Defender

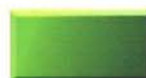
Protector



Guardian

Preceptor

Officers:



Supervisor



Director



Section
Leader



Chairman

AEROSPACE PILOT

Section Leader Jim Brazel takes a well-deserved break between missions. His fighter group, Roswell's Rangers, has racked up an impressive number of kills against the bandits that constantly raid the Alliance.



Circinus Federation

One of many bandit kingdoms in the Periphery, the Circinus Federation is noteworthy both for its size and the veneer of legitimacy it has maintained over the years. Fortunately for its neighbors, the Circinus military is disorganized and plagued by internal rivalries.

RANK INSIGNIA

Enlisted



Private



Corporal



Sergeant



MechWarrior



Lieutenant



Captain



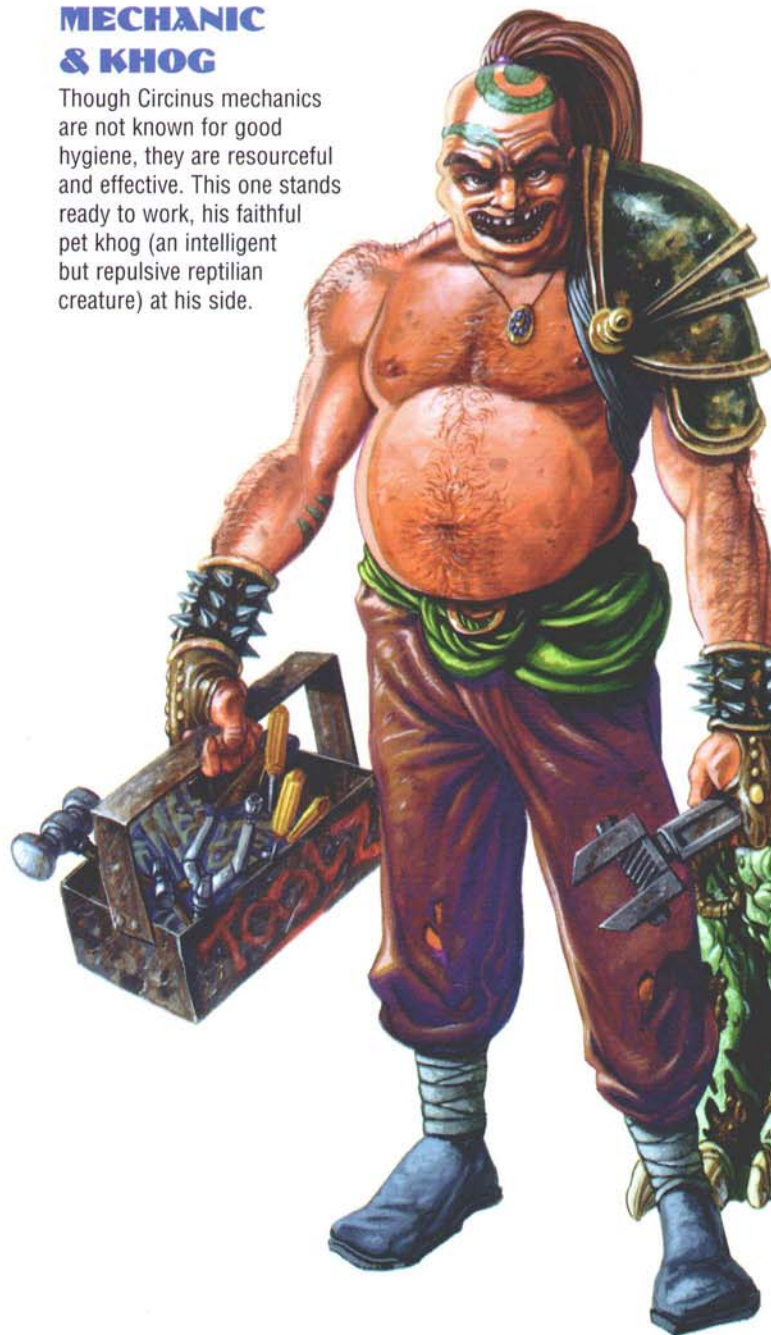
Major



Colonel

MECHANIC & KHOG

Though Circinus mechanics are not known for good hygiene, they are resourceful and effective. This one stands ready to work, his faithful pet khog (an intelligent but repulsive reptilian creature) at his side.



MECHWARRIOR

The Black Warriors make it a common practice to get a tattoo after each campaign. This MechWarrior is clearly a rookie.





A "lucky" patron with too many aces up his sleeve starts another Port Krin brawl.



Ten-to-one odds make tempers flare aboard the Canopian Pleasure Circus *Lady Luck*.



At the climax of a disastrous Circinus raid, a prized *Hatchetman* takes its final bow.

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Periphery states were unable to match the prosperity and living standards of the Inner Sphere.

Although living conditions remain poor on many Periphery worlds, the region now contains a few bright spots. The largest realms of the Periphery, the Taurian Concordat and Magistracy of Canopus, have finally matured militarily and economically. The Magistracy provides a high standard of living to its residents, thanks to its lucrative tourism industry and traveling pleasure circuses. The Concordat, meanwhile, boasts a strong and rapidly growing industrial base, which makes it the most economically stable of the five states. Even the smaller realms of the Circinus Federation and Marian Hegemony are beginning to establish themselves and provide a rising standard of living for their inhabitants. Imports to the Inner Sphere make up most of the Hegemony's economy. Some light industry is beginning to develop in the Hegemony as well, but its growth remains slow.

Despite the C-bill's weakness in the years since the ComStar schism, the currency remains the standard throughout known space, including the Periphery. On many of the smaller, more volatile Periphery worlds, however, even the C-bill is not accepted. Residents of these planets accept only hard cash, such as gold and silver, although germanium is highly prized in some regions. Currently, one ounce of gold is worth 300 C-bills in the Periphery, while an ounce of silver fetches 5 to 10 C-bills. Germanium is quite valuable; an ounce of this metal may fetch 2,000 C-bills or more.

The Periphery Currencies Table shows the values of the major Periphery currencies in relation to the C-bill. These exchange rates are valid as of January 1, 3058. Note that most Periphery currency is still considered worthless in the Inner Sphere.

In past years, the Circinus Federation has attempted to circulate a standard currency, but these attempts have been foiled by the state's continuing instability. The Outworlds Alliance is still struggling to keep its economy afloat as well. The issuing of a new currency, the escudo, has helped this effort somewhat, but many Outworlders still do not trust it and continue to use the barter system.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure hooks can be used as plots for **BattleTech** or **MechWarrior** campaigns in the Periphery, or as subplots or complications to add spice to Periphery adventures.

Defectors

After a long and uneventful stay on a coreward Periphery planet, the players' group is suddenly confronted by a lone Star of OmniMechs! Conflict is inevitable, but eventually the players

MAJOR PERIPHERY CURRENCIES

Realm	Currency	Value in C-bills
Magistracy of Canopus	Dollar	0.125
Marian Hegemony	Talent	0.1
Outworlds Alliance	Escudo	0.05
Taurian Concordat	Bull	0.2

establish a communications link with the OmniMechs and the truth comes out: the Clanners are actually defectors seeking to pledge their allegiance and BattleMechs to the Inner Sphere. But before they can do that, they have to deal with a vengeful group

of Crusaders bent on annihilating them for their treason. Only the players's assistance will enable the renegade Clanners to defeat their hunters and join the forces of the Inner Sphere.

Alternatively, the players may be the defectors in this scenario, seeking sanctuary with a band of mercenaries or pirates. In a Clan-based campaign, the players could bid to become the hunters, blessed with the honor of finding and destroying a group of bandit caste dogs before they can betray the Clans.

Explorers

It's a big universe out there, and it holds plenty of opportunities for exploration. Major Periphery or Inner Sphere realms may hire adventurous MechWarriors, scouts and even scientists to explore the outer reaches of space. New planets never seen by human eyes, worlds long thought deserted—exploration can provide endless adventure possibilities.

For example, the players' group may jump into a system and discover an abandoned and broken-down recharging station. While investigating the site, they discover that its entire crew has been dead for centuries, killed by some uncertain cause. While the ship's doctor investigates the remains, the rest of the group heads insystem for more clues. Perhaps a deadly virus or bacteria killed the crew. Or perhaps the system is home to a Star League-era germ warfare research station. Or perhaps the dead crew is evidence of an even more disturbing threat.

Garrison Duty Gone Bad

Constant bandit raids and a lack of sufficient military units mean that mercenaries can always find work in the Periphery. Boring garrison duty pays badly and rarely enhances your Dragons rating, but this time garrison duty may be more than it seems. Your group may face native rebellions, earthquakes or other natural disasters, simultaneous bandit raids, a two-faced employer who dubs you a bunch of traitors and sends the local militia to chase you out of town, or even a mysterious mildew that rots your 'Mechs' myomers at the most inopportune time. The possibilities are endless.

If You Can't Beat 'Em

Defending a colony world against unpredictable bandit raids requires a large number of troops spread over a huge area. And even if you manage to repel the bandits, they'll be back again soon enough with repaired 'Mechs and a taste for

RULES

payback. The only way to destroy them once and for all is to track them to their hide-out. And to do that you'll have to infiltrate the bandit army and gain their confidence. It's a tall order, but the pay is good and the salvage rights are all yours!

Invaders!

After years of petty raids and grandiose speeches about conquest and glory, a bandit king finally makes a major move against a neighboring world. As luck would have it, your unit is stationed right in the middle of the impending war. If you work for the defenders, you have just pulled danger duty in a big way. Dig in and start shooting! On the other hand, if you are simply there on R&R or in transit to another system, you must choose sides fast or somehow stay out of the fight. No matter which side you choose, desperate opponents usually provide good contract terms!

Privateers

Your unit consists of mercenaries turned pirates who have had one too many run-ins with the law. Seeking a better way to earn a C-bill, you hire yourselves out to the highest bidder as privateers—legalized pirates that plunder for pay. No one is better at hunting pirates than another pirate, so Periphery and House lords will pay you handsomely to seek out and destroy bandit kings and pirate fleets. You still enjoy all the excitement and danger of your former life, but now you have a major backer who's willing to foot your bills.

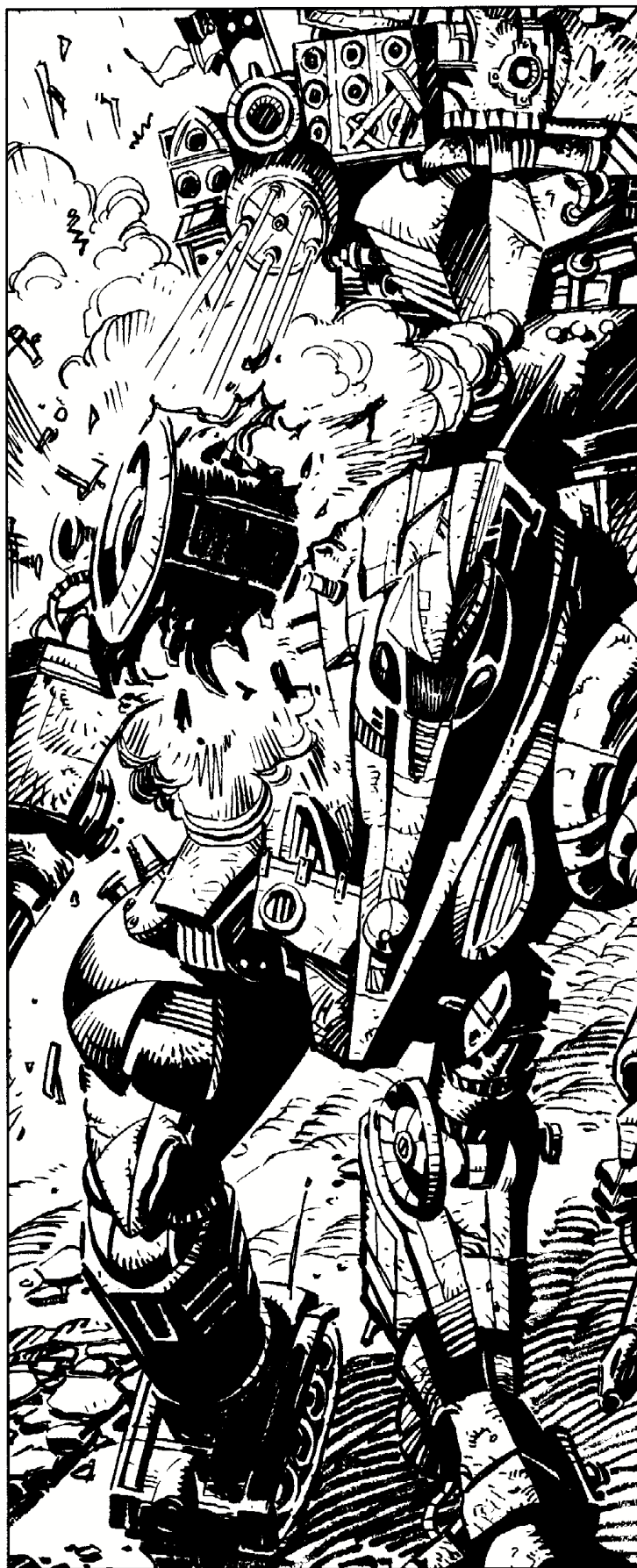
Rescue Mission

Smaller bandit groups commonly resort to kidnapping and extortion to raise money. In this scenario, your team must follow a trail of clues to find a bandit hostage and return her safely home. Along the way, you run into assorted mishaps and distractions as the bandits grow increasingly impatient for their demands to be met.

In a twist on this plot, a minor lord engineers the kidnapping of a rival to clear his own path to power. The player characters are friends of the kidnapped lord, so they are more than happy to undertake the mission to find him. Of course, the usurper has given them false leads, sending them into a trap they may never escape!

Rumors of Lostech

Sure, you know those rumors out on the MercNet are never true. Scouring the Periphery for big caches of Star League goodies is a fool's errand at best, but this time it's different. The source is reliable, the data is solid, and the spot's not too far from where you are now anyway. Sure, it sounds too good to be true, but if it's for real—oh boy! Unknown to you, someone else likes the sound of this rumor, too. Another eager group of MechWarriors is headed for the same stash, and they're not quite as scrupulous as you. Are you ready to lie, cheat, steal and kill to make your claim? These guys are.



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OPTIONAL RULES

The following section provides Level Three game rules for salvaging, bypass kits, and patch-work armor. These optional rules are well suited for Periphery campaigns, but they may be used in any other locale as well.

SALVAGING

The lack of quality 'Mech and vehicle spare parts in the Periphery has created an unprecedented need for a means of salvaging previously unsalvageable equipment. To meet this need, several electronics firms have recently begun to sell scavenging kits that contain a variety of commonly used, inexpensive circuits and other parts. These kits enable technicians to quickly and cheaply reassemble badly damaged weapons or other vital pieces of equipment that would otherwise be beyond repair. Each kit contains enough parts to rebuild three pieces of scavenged equipment.

A tech using such a kit may salvage parts from a 'Mech that has lost all its internal structure to weapons fire or physical attacks by making a successful Technician ('Mech) (9) Roll. Successful rolls enable a player to salvage parts from the 'Mech regardless of the amount of damage to the 'Mech's internal structure. This special salvage rule does not apply to engines or 'Mech locations that are destroyed by ammunition or engine/fuel explosions, or to the life-support system, sensors, cockpit, or any equipment listed under Other Equipment on the Weapons and Equipment Table, pp. 104–106 in the **BattleTech Compendium**.

Repairing Salvaged Parts

Salvaged parts must be repaired before they can be used. Make Repair Rolls per the Repair Difficulty Table, p. 95 of the **BattleTech Compendium**. For the purposes of determining difficulty, consider all of the item's critical slots destroyed. Apply a +2 modifier to all target numbers. If the roll succeeds, the repaired part works. Only complete repairs are possible. If the player rolls a partial repair result, the salvaged part is destroyed.

Using a Repaired Item

Repaired items are particularly vulnerable to breakdowns. Use the following guidelines to determine if and when a salvaged and repaired part fails. If a salvaged part breaks down, the player may attempt to salvage it again using the salvaging rules.

Actuator: When a unit uses a salvaged hand or arm actuator, including such actions as punching, pushing, charging, clubbing, and picking up objects, the actuator may break down. A salvaged leg or foot actuator will break down only if the 'Mech

EQUIPMENT TABLE

Item	Tech Level/ Availability	Cost (in C-bills)
Bypass Kits		
Actuator Bypass Kit	(3/B)	10,000
Energy Weapon Kit	(3/B)	8,000
Engine Bypass Kit	(3/B)	12,000
Sensor Bypass Kit	(3/B)	15,000
Scavenging Kit	(3/B)	4,000
*See Salvaging		

runs or jumps. Immediately after using a salvaged actuator, the player rolls 2D6. On a result of 11+, the actuator breaks down and is considered destroyed.

Gyro: A unit using a salvaged gyro must add +1 to all Piloting Skill Rolls. Every time the unit falls or jumps, the player must roll 2D6. On a result of 11+, the gyro breaks down and is considered destroyed.

Heat Sink: A salvaged heat sink may break down if the 'Mech overheats. If the 'Mech's heat level is higher than 1 on the Heat Scale in the End Phase, roll 2D6. If the result is equal to or less than the 'Mech's current heat level, a salvaged heat sink burns out. That heat sink is considered destroyed, but the 'Mech's heat level remains the same.

Jump Jet: Every time a 'Mech using salvaged jump jets jumps, roll 2D6. If the result is equal to or less than the distance (in hexes) the unit was jumping, all salvaged jets in the 'Mech burn out, causing it to crash to the ground. The burned-out jets are considered destroyed and the pilot must make two Piloting Skill Rolls.

If the first roll fails, the 'Mech misses its target hex. Roll 1D6 and consult the Scatter Diagram (p. 79, **BattleTech Compendium**) to determine which of the six hexes adjacent to the target hex the 'Mech actually lands in. If a unit already occupies the hex in which the 'Mech lands, resolve the landing as though the jumping 'Mech had executed a death-from-above attack.

If the pilot fails the second piloting roll, the 'Mech falls. To determine falling damage, consider the BattleMech to have fallen a number of levels equal to the distance (in hexes) the 'Mech jumped.

Weapon: If a 'Mech makes a To-Hit Roll of 2 using a salvaged weapon, the weapon will break down. Resolve the attack normally, but the weapon is considered destroyed from that point on.

JURY-RIGGING WITH BYPASS KITS

Bypass kits allow technicians to perform various bypass operations when making quick, jury-rigged repairs to BattleMechs and vehicles. Each kit contains enough parts and gear for the successful bypass of actuators, energy weapons, engines and sensors. As replacement parts for 'Mechs and vehicles are becoming more available in Periphery regions, however, the demand for these kits is falling.

Bypass kits may be used to repair leg and arm actuators, energy weapons, engines and sensors. The appropriate kit must be used for each repair, and only one repair may be made

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with each kit. Prices for bypass kits are listed in the Equipment Table, below. The quick-fix repairs made possible by bypass kits are not very safe but enable a damaged BattleMech to return to the battlefield very quickly.

Leg Actuators

Repair Time: 75 minutes

To replace a damaged leg actuator with a leg-actuator bypass kit, the player must roll 2D6. On a result of 8+, the replacement succeeds and the 'Mech may move normally with the following restrictions:

Reduce the 'Mech's Running MP by 1. A successful charging or kicking attack by the 'Mech automatically destroys the actuator bypass. A critical hit to the bypass automatically causes the 'Mech to fall and otherwise has the same effect as a critical hit to that location. Whenever the 'Mech makes a jump, the controlling player must roll 2D6. If the result is 7+, the impact of landing destroys the bypass. Bypass penalties to movement are cumulative, except that a unit's Running MP cannot be reduced below its Walking MP.

No more than two leg actuators on the same leg may be replaced with leg-actuator bypass kits. Leg-actuator bypass kits may not be used to replace damaged hip actuators.

Arm Actuators

Repair Time: 75 minutes

To replace a damaged arm actuator with an arm-actuator bypass kit, the player must roll 2D6. On a result of 8+, the replacement succeeds and the 'Mech may use the arm normally with the following restrictions:

A successful punching or charging attack by the repaired 'Mech destroys the bypass, as does any attempt to lift an object heavier than a MechWarrior. A critical hit to a shoulder actuator bypass causes the affected arm to hang uselessly by the 'Mech's side, and any weapons mounted on the arm may not be fired.

No more than two arm actuators on the same arm may be replaced with arm-actuator bypass kits.

Energy Weapon Bypass

Repair Time: 90 minutes

Energy-based weapons (lasers and PPCs) may be repaired using energy-weapon bypass kits. To repair an energy weapon with a bypass kit, the player rolls 2D6. On a result of 7+, the repair succeeds and the weapon be used normally with the following restrictions:

Increase the heat output of the weapon by 2 points. A critical hit to the weapon results in a heat spike, which adds 6 Heat Points during the Heat Phase of the turn. A critical hit also causes an electrical surge in the cockpit, and the controlling player must immediately make a Consciousness Roll for the pilot. If the pilot is currently undamaged, he falls unconscious on a result of 2, but recovers automatically in the End Phase of the next turn.

If the 'Mech falls, the player must roll 2D6 for each bypass-repaired weapon. On a result of 7+, the weapon is destroyed

and causes a heat spike, which creates 6 Heat Points during the Heat Phase of the turn.

Engine Bypass

Repair Time: 150 minutes

An engine bypass kit enables a 'Mech to operate with a damaged fusion engine by rerouting the engine exhaust vents to the outside of the 'Mech. To install an engine bypass kit, the player rolls 2D6. A result of 8+ means the repair succeeds and the 'Mech may operate normally with the following restrictions:

The 'Mech loses half its armor (rounding up) on each rear torso location. For attackers rolling on the Determining Critical Hits Table for successful attacks against the 'Mech's rear, a result of 6-9 inflicts 1 critical hit. Apply all other results normally. A critical hit to the engine results in a heat spike of 10 Heat Points for that turn only, in addition to the normal effects of the loss of shielding.

Sensor Bypass

Repair Time: 45 minutes

If both of a BattleMech's sensors have taken critical hits, a technician may replace the sensors with a sensor bypass kit. The controlling player rolls 2D6. A result of 6+ gives the 'Mech normal sensor operations with the following restrictions:

The sensor bypass occupies only one critical hit slot; consider the second slot a Roll Again result. The sensors can target only one opponent at a time. The sensors can aim only one weapon without penalty; apply +2 modifiers to to-hit rolls for all additional weapons (this restriction does not affect Streak SRMs). The sensor bypass system operates only in the visible light spectrum, so the unit suffers a night-combat modifier of +3.

PATCHWORK ARMOR

Normally, battlefield units that carry ferro-fibrous armor cannot use standard armor and vice versa. The scarcity of armor in the Periphery, however, has prompted techs to devise methods of replacing armor that circumvent this restriction. Techs can fit standard armor to locations that carry primarily ferro-fibrous armor by rolling 2D6 for each armor replacement attempt. A result of 7+ means the replacement succeeds and the armor functions normally.

A result of 7+ also successfully fits ferro-fibrous armor to locations that carry primarily standard armor, but the location must include at least 4 available critical slots (2 available slots if fitting Clan ferro-fibrous armor to the location), regardless of the amount of armor being replaced. The amount of ferro-fibrous being added may not exceed 50 percent of the available armor space, rounding up.

A WHM-6R Warhammer has taken 10 points of damage to the standard armor on its right arm. The Warhammer's tech has only ferro-fibrous armor available to replace the destroyed armor. The arm location contains 4 available critical slots, and so the replacement is possible. However, the ferro-fibrous may only be used to replace 5 points of armor ($10 \times .5 = 5$).

TECHNICAL READOUT

The following new vehicles and 'Mechs have recently appeared on the battlefields of the Periphery.

GLADIUS MEDIUM HOVER TANK

Mass: 40 tons
Movement Type: Hover
Power Plant: Omni 145 ICE
Cruising Speed: 86 kph
Flank Speed: 130 kph
Armor: Marian Arms Standard
Armament:
 1 Pontiac 50 Autocannon
Manufacturer: Marian Arms, Inc.
Primary Factory: Alphard
Communications System: Garret T10B
Targeting and Tracking System: O/P 911

Overview

Bandit kings have always prized hovercrafts for their excellent hit-and-run capabilities and their affordability. Seeking a more flexible alternative to the venerable Saladin Assault Hover Tank, Imperator Marius O'Reilly commissioned the Gladius in 3042. All of the new hovertank's components were manufactured on the Marian capitol of Alphard, with the exception of the tank's armament. In a groundbreaking trade agreement, the Hegemony acquired the Pontiac 50 autocannon from the Taurian Concordat in exchange for 25 percent of the tanks equipped with the weapon.

By the time Caesar Sean O'Reilly assumed control of the Hegemony, the Marian Legions were armed with more than a hundred of the quick and effective new vehicles. Protector Thomas Calderon of the Taurian Concordat was pleased with his end of the deal as well, and stationed his Gladius units along the Federated Commonwealth border in anticipation of an attack by that realm. Although the Commonwealth attack never materialized, the Marian Gladius units proved instrumental in the Marian conquest of the Lothian League.

Capabilities

Named after the sword of the Roman legions, the Gladius is a simple but effective machine. Constructed of commonly available components and time-tested electronics, the tank rarely breaks down and is easy to repair. Although the Gladius is not notably fast, it is capable of executing high-speed flanking maneuvers over difficult terrain and water. With three times more armor than the Saladin, the Gladius can take a significant amount of punishment, especially to its front quarter.

The only apparent flaw in this otherwise excellent vehicle design is the Gladius's lack of a weapon turret. The Pontiac 50's range and power make it a good choice for a one-gun tank, but without a turret the autocannon can fire only at targets directly in front of the Gladius. Generally, the hovertank's

impressive mobility enables Gladius crews to effectively target enemies despite this drawback, but more than one retreating Gladius crew has died due to their inability to fire on pursuers. The Gladius's fixed-cannon configuration does offer some advantages, however. First, the cannon is mounted deep in the interior of the tank's chassis, which protects it from battle damage. And the weight savings provided by the turretless design enables the Gladius to carry a generous amount of heavy armor.

Deployment

Gladius units are stationed only in the Marian Hegemony and the Taurian Concordat. Currently, the Hegemony fields about twice as many Gladiuses as the Concordat, due to losses during the Lothian campaign. Ever since Jeffrey Calderon cut off Taurian relations with the Hegemony, manufacture of the Gladius has come to a halt. Until a suitable replacement for the Pontiac 50 can be found, no new units will be produced.

Type: Gladius Medium Hover Tank

Technology Base: Inner Sphere

Movement Type: Hover

Tonnage: 40

Equipment

		Mass
Internal Structure:		4
Engine:	145	10
Type:	ICE	
Cruising MP:	8	
Flank MP:	12	
Heat Sinks:	0	0
Control Equipment:		2
Lift Equipment:		4
Power Amplifier:		0
Turret:		0
Armor Factor:	96	6

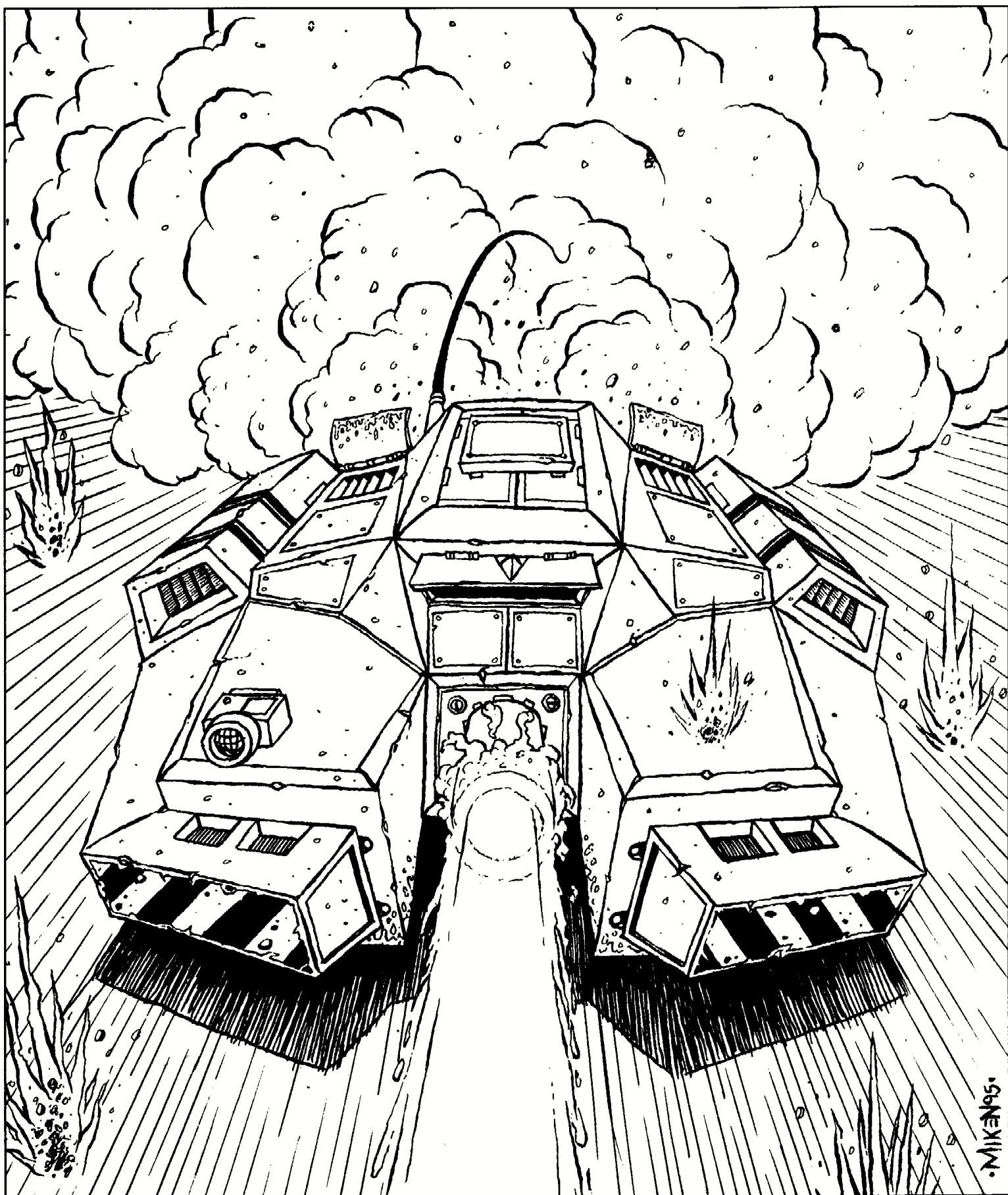
Armor Value

Front	30
R/L Side	24/24
Rear	18

Weapons and Ammo

	Location	Tonnage
AC/10	Front	12
Ammo (AC) 20	Body	2

RULES



RULES

HEAVY LRM CARRIER/ LIGHT SRM CARRIER

Heavy LRM Carrier

Mass: 80 tons

Movement Type: Tracked

Power Plant: InterComBust 160

Cruising Speed: 22 kph

Flank Speed: 32 kph

Armor: Standard

Armament:

4 LRM-20 Racks

Manufacturer: Various

Communications System: Communicator

Targeting and Tracking System: FireScan with IndirecTrack

Light SRM Carrier

Mass: 40 tons

Movement Type: Wheeled

Power Plant: InterComBust 140

Cruising Speed: 43 kph

Flank Speed: 65 kph

Armor: Standard

Armament:

5 SRM-6 Racks

Manufacturer: Various

Communications System: Communicator

Targeting and Tracking System: FireScan with IndirecTrack

Overview

A long-time staple of Inner Sphere militias, missile carriers are even more common among Periphery fighting units. These simple weapons have turned the tide of major battles, and many Periphery colonies have repulsed pirate attacks with a few well-placed lances of missile carriers. Recently, several manufacturers have begun experimenting with improved designs. In the Inner Sphere, companies such as Quickcell are using recovered technology and advanced materials to upgrade missile carriers for the House lords of the Inner Sphere. In the Periphery, where money and technology are scarce, manufacturers are employing alternative solutions to increase the effectiveness of these important weapons.

Capabilities

To improve the LRM carrier, the upgrade designers have opted for a larger and slower "crawler" configuration. In addition, the so-called Heavy LRM Carrier mounts an additional LRM-20 rack, which enables it to launch 80 missiles in a single salvo. The updated design also holds twice as much ammunition than the original, which allows for longer sustained barrages. The addition of a turret enables the ponderous vehicle to track targets on multiple fronts and is especially effective against closely approaching or passing targets. The design also features additional armor plating on the front of the vehicle, but this only marginally improves the LRM carrier's life span.

Generally, the limited range and speed of the SRM carrier confines it to battlefields in cities, dense forests, and other close

terrain. In the past, these units were widely considered disposable, because closing to the carrier's effective range almost always exposes the thinly armored vehicle to enemy fire. The designers incorporated several new features in the updated Light SRM Carrier to address these drawbacks. First, they provided the new SRM carrier with a smaller, wheeled chassis. Although the new chassis restricts the unit to relatively smooth terrain, it provides a 33 percent increase in speed, which enables the SRM carrier to approach and retreat from targets more rapidly. The updated carrier also features increased ammunition-storage capacity and a flexible turret mounting, as well as an additional ton and a half of armor.

Deployment

The new LRM and SRM carriers are just beginning to appear among the larger Periphery militaries. Militia and colonial guard units in the Magistracy of Canopus, Taurian Concordat and Outworlds Alliance have all acquired large numbers of missile carriers to supplement their defensive troops, and other states are expected to follow suit. The use of commonly available parts in the carriers enables any industrial world to support them, and observers believe the units will eventually be deployed throughout the Periphery. Inner Sphere armies are showing some interest in the carriers as well, although the more advanced Quickcell models are currently far more popular among these forces.

Type: Heavy LRM Carrier

Technology Base: Inner Sphere

Movement Type: Tracked

Tonnage: 80

Equipment

		Mass
Internal Structure:		8
Engine:	160	12
Type:	ICE	
Cruising MP:	2	
Flank MP:	3	
Heat Sinks:	0	0
Control Equipment:		4
Lift Equipment:		0
Power Amplifier:		0
Turret:		4
Armor Factor:	64	4

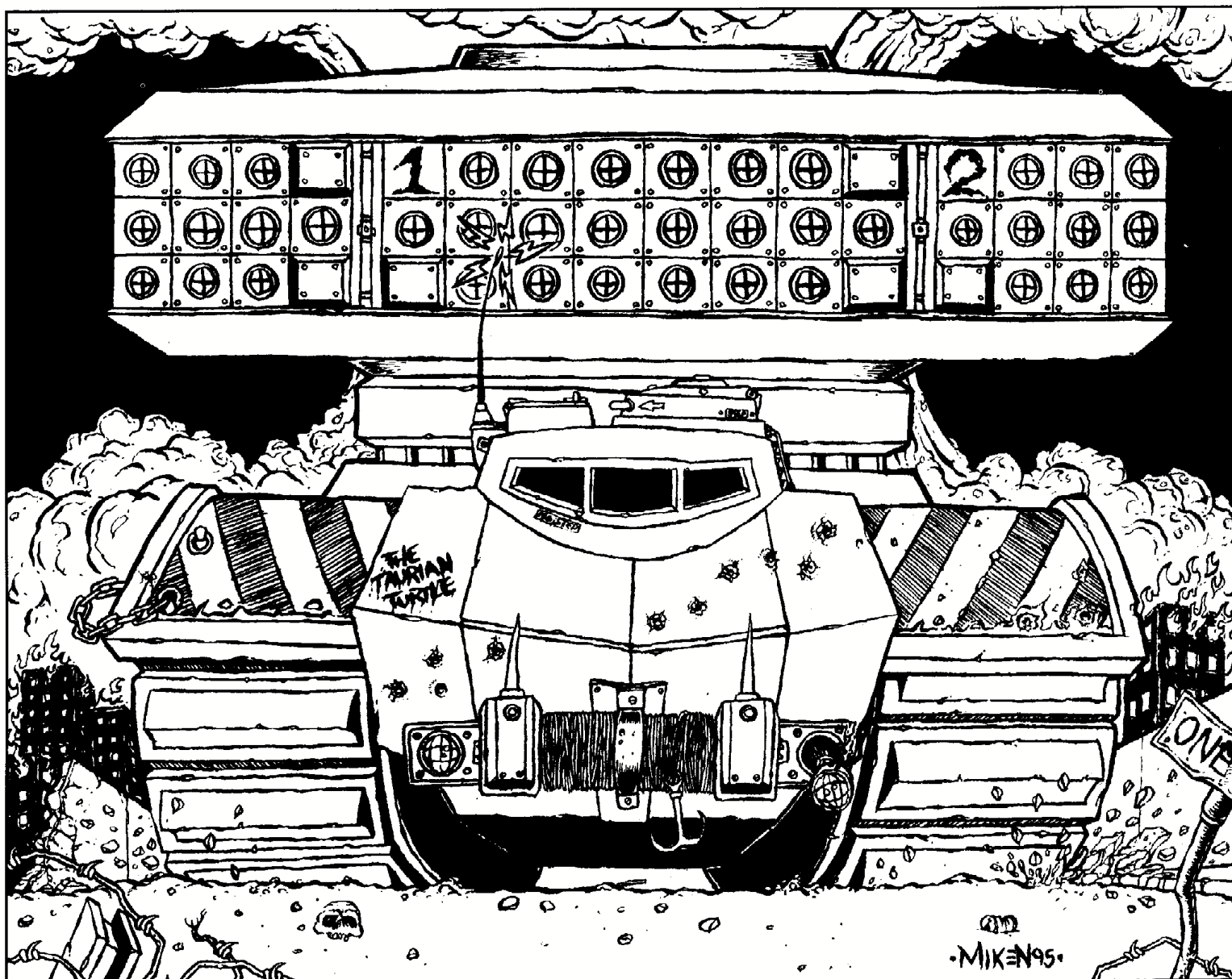
Armor Value

Front	14
R/L Side	12/12
Rear	12
Turret	14

Weapons and Ammo

	Location	Tonnage
4 LRM-20	Turret	40
Ammo (LRM) 48	Body	8

RULES



Type: **Light SRM Carrier**
 Technology Base: Inner Sphere
 Movement Type: Wheeled
 Tonnage: 40

	<i>Armor Value</i>
Front	16
R/L Side	14/14
Rear	12
Turret	16

Equipment		Mass
Internal Structure:		4
Engine:	140	10
Type:	ICE	
Cruising MP:	4	
Flank MP:	6	
Heat Sinks:	0	0
Control Equipment:		2
Lift Equipment:		0
Power Amplifier:		0
Turret:		1.5
Armor Factor:	72	4.5

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Tonnage
5 SRM-6	Turret	15
Ammo (SRM) 45	Body	3

RULES

MHL-X1 MARSHAL

Mass: 55 tons

Chassis: Earthwerk GRF

Power Plant: Magna 220

Cruising Speed: 43 kph

Maximum Speed: 65 kph

Jump Jets: Rawlings 55

Jump Capacity: 120 meters

Armor: Durallex Medium Ferro-Fibrous

Armament:

1 Sunglow Type 2 Large Laser

1 Diverse Optics Type 18 Medium Laser

1 Diverse Optics Type 27 Medium Pulse Laser

1 Hotshot Flamer

1 Delta Dart LRM-5 Rack

2 Sperry Browning Machine Guns

Manufacturer: Taurus Territorial Industries

Primary Factory: Taurus

Communications System: Neil 9000-A

Tracking and Tracking System: Octagon Tartrac System C

Overview

As a provision of the inception of the Colonial Marshals, the Taurian Concordat is required to provide the force's members with BattleMechs and technical support. So far, the Concordat has been issuing each marshal the most conveniently available 'Mech at the time of his posting. This policy has resulted in many marshals receiving substandard, ineffective machines. To remedy this problem, Jeffrey Calderon has commissioned Taurus Technical Industries to develop a 'Mech specially suited to the needs of the Colonial Marshals. Still in development, the MHL-1X *Marshal* promises to be an exceptional boon to the marshals and the Taurian military as well.

Capabilities

The MHL-1X *Marshal* is a multiuse medium 'Mech with exceptional armor, endurance, and firepower. The *Marshal* is rather slow for a 'Mech of its class, although its leg-mounted jump jets enable it to traverse difficult terrain with ease. Ten tons of ferro-fibrous armor give the 'Mech excellent protection, although some critics have complained that the difficulty of repairing ferro-fibrous armor in the field makes the armor a poor choice.

In recognition of the scarcity of ammunition on the worlds patrolled by the Colonial Marshals, the new 'Mech's arsenal features a broad spectrum of energy weapons favored for their reliability. Large, medium, and medium pulse lasers compose the core of the *Marshal*'s armament, which also features a torso-mounted flamer that is ideal for noncombat uses as well.

Both arms of the *Marshal* are equipped with fully articulated hand actuators, which make the 'Mech a helpful construction vehicle in peacetime. For antipersonnel and riot duty, the 'Mech is equipped with a pair of lethal Sperry Browning machine guns. And a single LRM-5 pack provides the *Marshal* with long-range firepower.

Deployment

Production of the *Marshal* is set to begin in 3059. Barring any major delays, all Colonial Marshal units are expected to be fully equipped with the new BattleMechs by the end of 3060. After that time, newly produced *Marshals* will be issued to the Taurian Defense Force. All of the *Marshal*'s components are manufactured in or near the Concordat, virtually ensuring that spare parts for *Marshals* will be readily available.

Type: **MHL-X1 Marshal**

Technology Base: Inner Sphere

Tonnage: 55

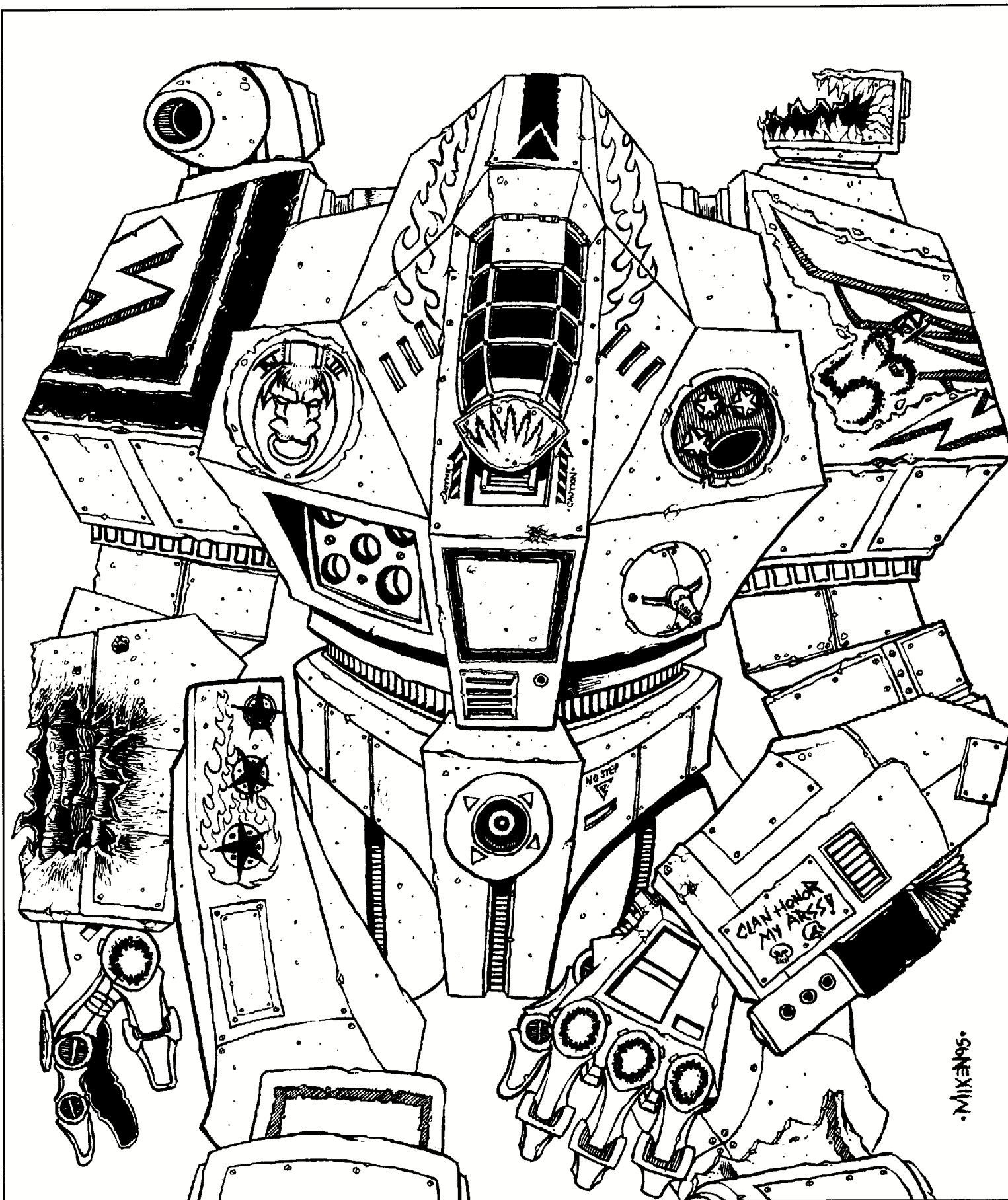
Equipment

		Mass
Internal Structure:		5.5
Engine:	220	10
Walking MP:	4	
Running MP:	6	
Jumping MP:	4	
Heat Sinks:	18	8
Gyro:		3
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	179	10

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	18	26
Center Torso (rear)		8
R/L Torso	13	20
R/L Torso (rear)		6
R/L Arm	9	18
R/L Leg	13	24

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
Large Laser	RA	2	5
Medium Pulse Laser	RT	1	2
Medium Laser	LA	1	1
2 Machine Guns	LT	2	1
Ammo (MG) 100	LT	1	.5
Flamer	CT	1	1
LRM 5	RT	1	2
Ammo (LRM) 24	RT	1	1
Jump Jets	RL	2	1
Jump Jets	LL	2	1

RULES



RULES



ARCHETYPES

The following archetypes represent character types unique to the Periphery. The gamemaster can use these archetypes to create player characters or as handy game statistics for NPCs. As always, feel free to modify the archetypes as necessary to suit the specific needs of your game.

BANDIT CASTE MECHWARRIOR

The so-called Bandit Caste MechWarrior is actually an outcast from Clan society—a criminal or freethinker, a rebel who

has rejected Clan ways, rather than a member of a true Clan caste. In recent years, increasing numbers of these Clan exiles have appeared in the Periphery, apparently drawn by the area's diverse cultures and lawlessness—characteristics that enable a Bandit Caste MechWarrior to easily conceal his true origins.

Most likely, the Bandit Caste MechWarrior started life as a freebirth born of two truebirth Clan MechWarriors. Their indiscretion made their son an outcast from birth, sentenced to a life of toil. In spite of the hardship imposed on him by his truebirth instructors and competitors, he earned the rank of MechWarrior, thanks to his determination and natural skill. Assigned to a light 'Mech on a backwater Periphery outpost, his patience with Clan ways soon wore thin. Eventually an opportunity presented itself, and he fled the garrison with his 'Mech, choosing the honorless life of a mercenary over a life of scorn and rejection. Now, the Bandit Caste MechWarrior wanders the Periphery in search of his next paycheck and a cause worth fighting for.

Attributes

BLD	5	(7+)
REF	5	(7+)
ITN	6	(6+)
LRN	5	(7+)
CHA	3	(9+)

Characteristics

Athletic	(8+)
Physical	(7+)
Mental	(7+)
Social	(9+)

Advantages

Well-Equipped (1 pt)

Skills

Gunnery/'Mech	3	(4+)
Medtech	1	(6+)
Negotiation	1	(8+)
Piloting/'Mech	2	(5+)
Scrounge	1	(8+)
Small Arms	2	(5+)
Streetwise	1	(8+)
Survival	1	(6+)
Tactics	1	(6+)
Technician/'Mech	1	(6+)
Unarmed Combat	1	(7+)

Edge: 1

Assets: 500 C-bills

Equipment

Deluxe Field Kit
Flak Vest
High-Capacity Power Pack
Laser Pistol
2 Medkits
Personal Communicator

BattleMech: Light

RULES



COLONIAL MARSHAL

As a guardian of the great Periphery frontier, the Colonial Marshal is loved and respected as one of the true heroes of the thirty-first century. However, love and respect won't fill his 'Mech's ammo bin or repair the leaky evaporator in quadrant three. And his reputation alone is not enough to repulse the bandits that raid his colony every month like clockwork.

After seemingly endless training at the new academy in the Magistracy, the Colonial Marshal receives a shiny new 'Mech and an assignment on one of the new Taurian or Canopian colonies. Usually deployed alone or in single lances, a Colonial Marshal quickly learns to think and act independently. Although his fearsome reputation is almost entirely a product of Canopian propoganda, the Periphery is full of bandits and other criminals eager to test that reputation.

Attributes

BLD	3	(9+)
REF	5	(7+)
ITN	5	(7+)
LRN	4	(8+)
CHA	5	(7+)

Characteristics

Athletic	(10+)
Physical	(8+)
Mental	(9+)
Social	(8+)

Advantages

Reputation

Skills

Advanced Academy Package
BattleMech Pilot MOS

Gunnery/'Mech	3	(5+)
Leadership	1	(7+)
Medtech	1	(8+)
Negotiation	2	(6+)
Perception	1	(8+)
Piloting/'Mech	2	(6+)
Small Arms	2	(6+)
Survival	3	(6+)
Tactics	1	(8+)
Technician/'Mech	2	(7+)
Tracking	1	(8+)

Edge: 1

Assets: 500 C-bills

Equipment

Deluxe Field Kit
Flak Vest
Pistol w/5 reloads

BattleMech: Medium

RULES



PRIVATEER MECHWARRIOR

The brutal life of a pirate is the fate of many who dwell in the poorer regions of the Periphery. Stranded on burned-out colonies with neither the technology nor the knowledge to earn legal livings, thousands of people turn to lives of crime, preying

on their weaker neighbors. Simple bandits are commonplace, but the most feared villains in the Periphery are the raiders with mighty BattleMechs at their command. Normally only the leaders of a pirate band possess 'Mechs, but generally these are enough to strike terror into the hearts of a simple farmers or townspeople. Even battle-hardened militiamen will flee at the sight of BattleMechs, allowing pirates to sweep in and plunder at their leisure.

Once, the Privateer MechWarrior led such a band himself. Then one day he was offered a lucrative contract to hunt down the very pirates he once led. The choice was not a difficult one. Now the Privateer MechWarrior works alongside legitimate mercenaries, lending his expertise and 'Mech to the task of eradicating the most ruthless of outlaws. Some would call him a traitor. He calls himself a simple mercenary—with a past he would rather profit by than forget.

Attributes

BLD	6	(6+)
REF	6	(6+)
INT	4	(8+)
LRN	4	(8+)
CHA	3	(9+)

Characteristics

Athletic	(6+)
Physical	(8+)
Mental	(10+)
Social	(11+)

Advantages

None

Skills

MechWarrior Package

Blade	1	(5+)
Gambling	1	(9+)
Gunnery/'Mech	3	(5+)
Interrogation	2	(9+)
Leadership	1	(10+)
Piloting/'Mech	2	(6+)
Small Arms	2	(6+)
Streetwise	2	(9+)
Survival	1	(9+)
Technician/'Mech	1	(9+)
Unarmed Combat	2	(4+)

Edge: 1

Assets: 500 C-bills

Equipment

Basic Field Kit
Double-Barreled Shotgun w/5 reloads
Flak Vest
Power Pack
Vibroblade

BattleMech: Heavy

RULES



PROSPECTOR

Following the discovery of the legendary Gray Death memory core, lostech fever gripped thousands of wild-eyed treasure seekers across known space. Soon, the Inner Sphere was rife with rumors of fabulous lostech caches hidden among the untamed worlds of the Periphery. Although a few major lostech finds were made in the Periphery, most of these rumors proved groundless, nothing more than fantasies concocted by pirates and other criminals eager to exploit those infected with the lostech fever. Despite this, thousands pursued their dreams of riches into the Periphery.

Most of these prospectors drained their resources long ago in their vain search for fortune and gave up their dreams. Not all have given up, however. One of the last of a dying breed, the Prospector scours the Periphery for lost and forgotten vestiges of the glorious Star League expansion, looking for the next big payoff in the interstellar lottery. Always hoping for the elusive cache of high-tech weaponry, he usually settles for some scrap of junk instead. A fragment of twenty-eighth century pottery might not be exciting, but there's always a broker on Antallos

who can trade it for enough C-bills to make the expedition worthwhile. And in between quests for the technological grail, the Prospector may lend his diverse skills and equipment to any mercenary band.

Attributes

BLD	3	(9+)
REF	3	(9+)
ITN	6	(6+)
LRN	5	(7+)
CHA	4	(8+)

Characteristics

Athletic	(12+)
Physical	(9+)
Mental	(7+)
Social	(8+)

Advantages

Extra Edge (1 pt)
Well-Connected (1 pt)
Well-Equipped (2 pt)

Skills

Appraisal	2	(5+)
Computer	1	(4+)
Demolitions	1	(6+)
Drive/Ground	1	(8+)
Gambling	1	(6+)
Negotiation	1	(7+)
Perception	1	(6+)
Scrounge	2	(6+)
Security Systems	1	(6+)
SI/History	1	(6+)
Small Arms	1	(6+)
Streetwise	2	(6+)
Survival	1	(6+)
Tracking	1	6+

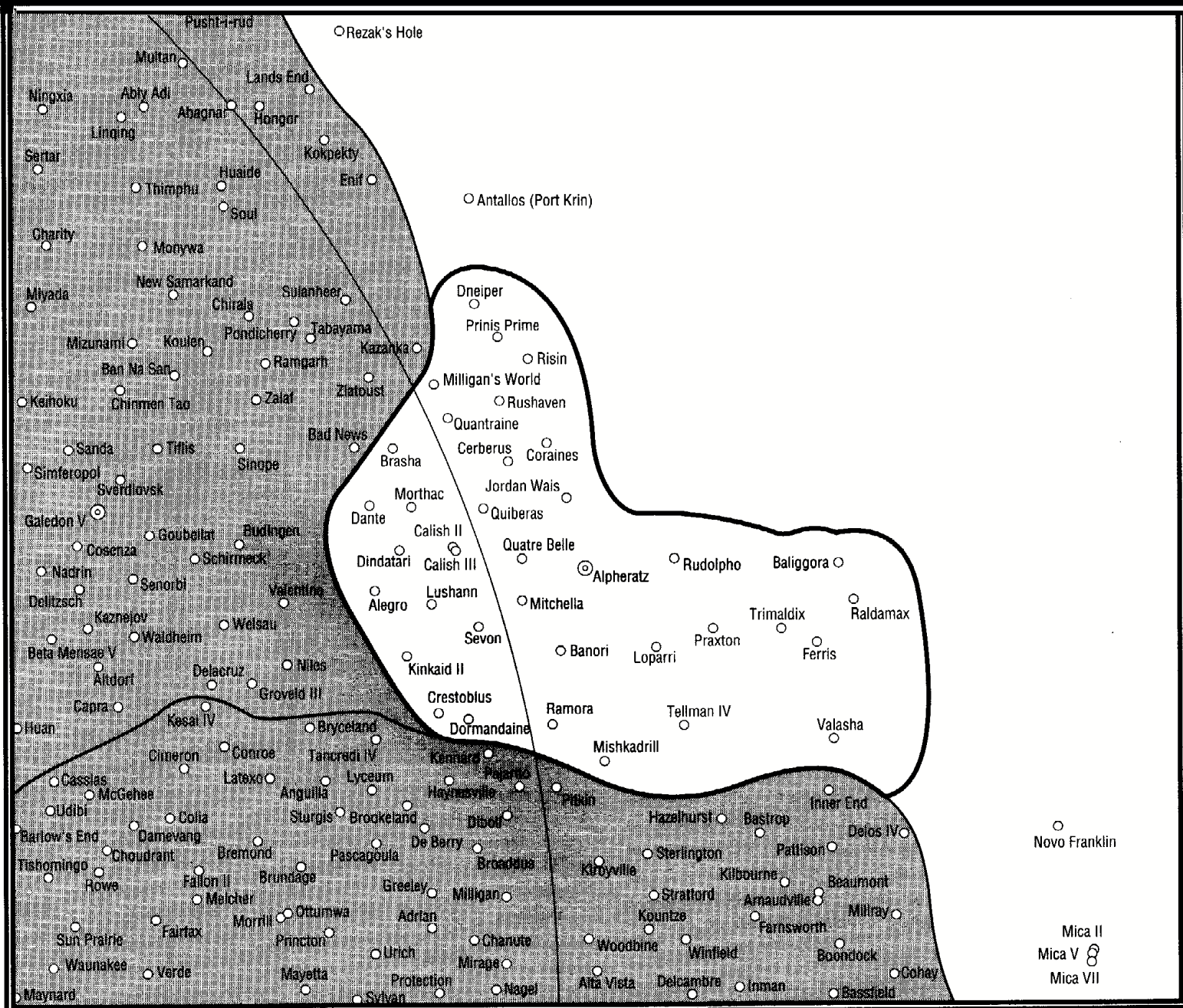
Edge: 2

Assets: 500 C-bills

Equipment

Auto-Pistol w/5 reloads
C8 Blasting Block
Deluxe Field Kit
Deluxe Tool Kit
Demolition Kit
Flak Vest
Hold-Out Pistol w/5 reloads
Light Environment Suit
Lockpick Kit (Basic)
Long-Range Personal Communicator
Medkit
Noteputer
Power Pack
Rangefinder Binoculars
Security Bypass Kit (Advanced)

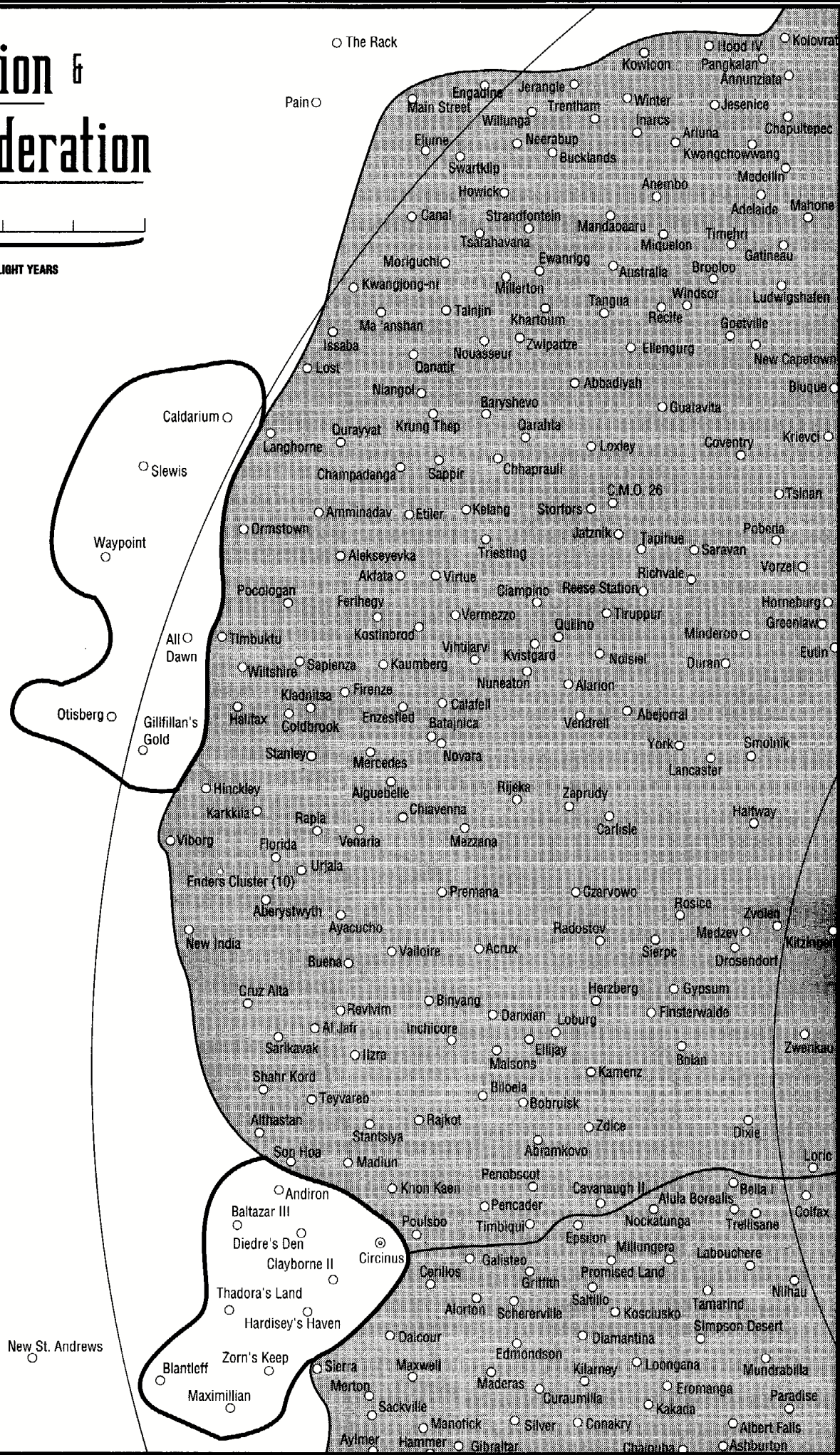
Vehicle: Light

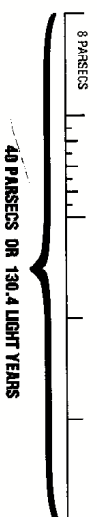


Rim Collection & Circinus Federation

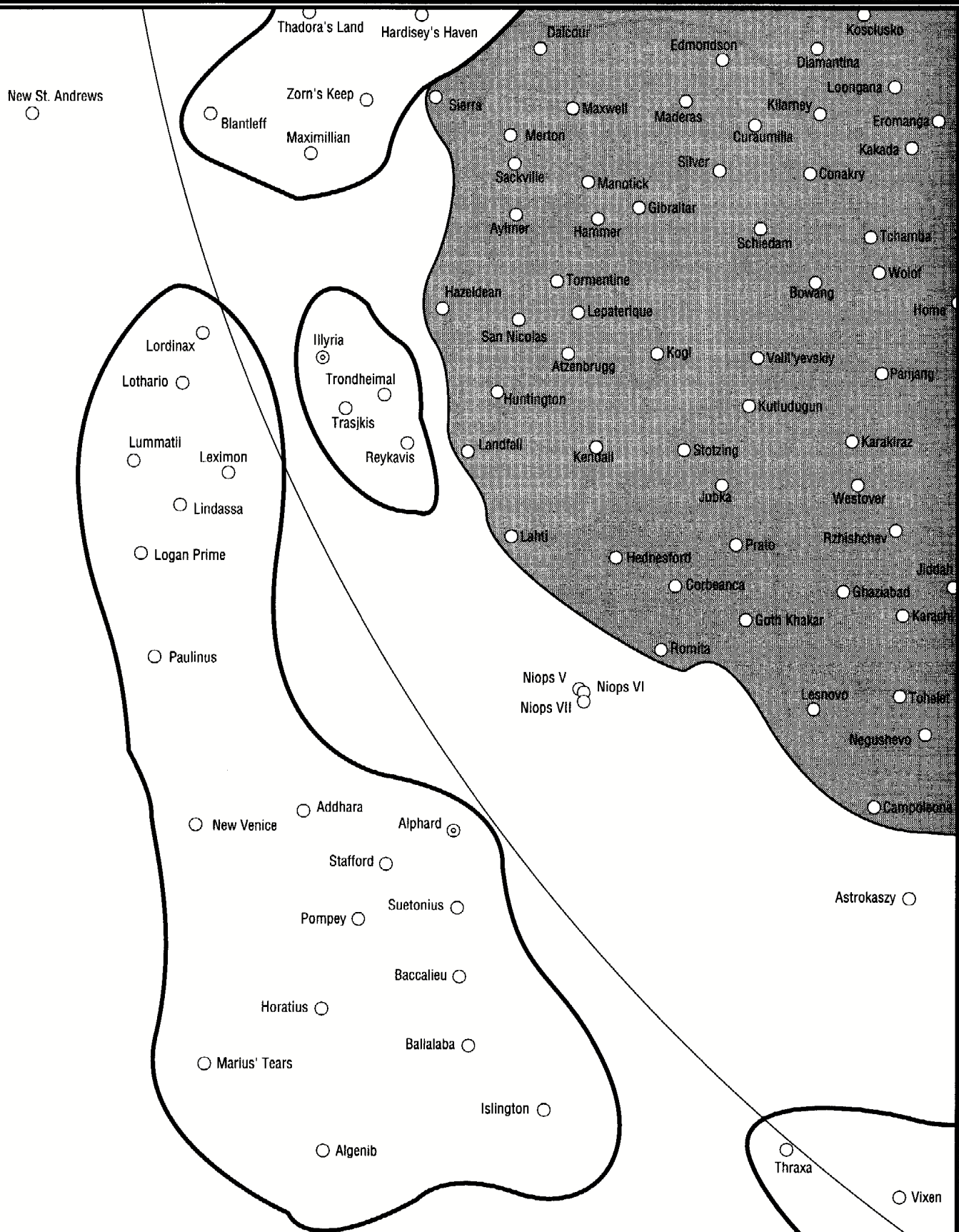


○ Hunter's Paradise





Magistracy of Canopus & New Colony Region



8 PARSECS

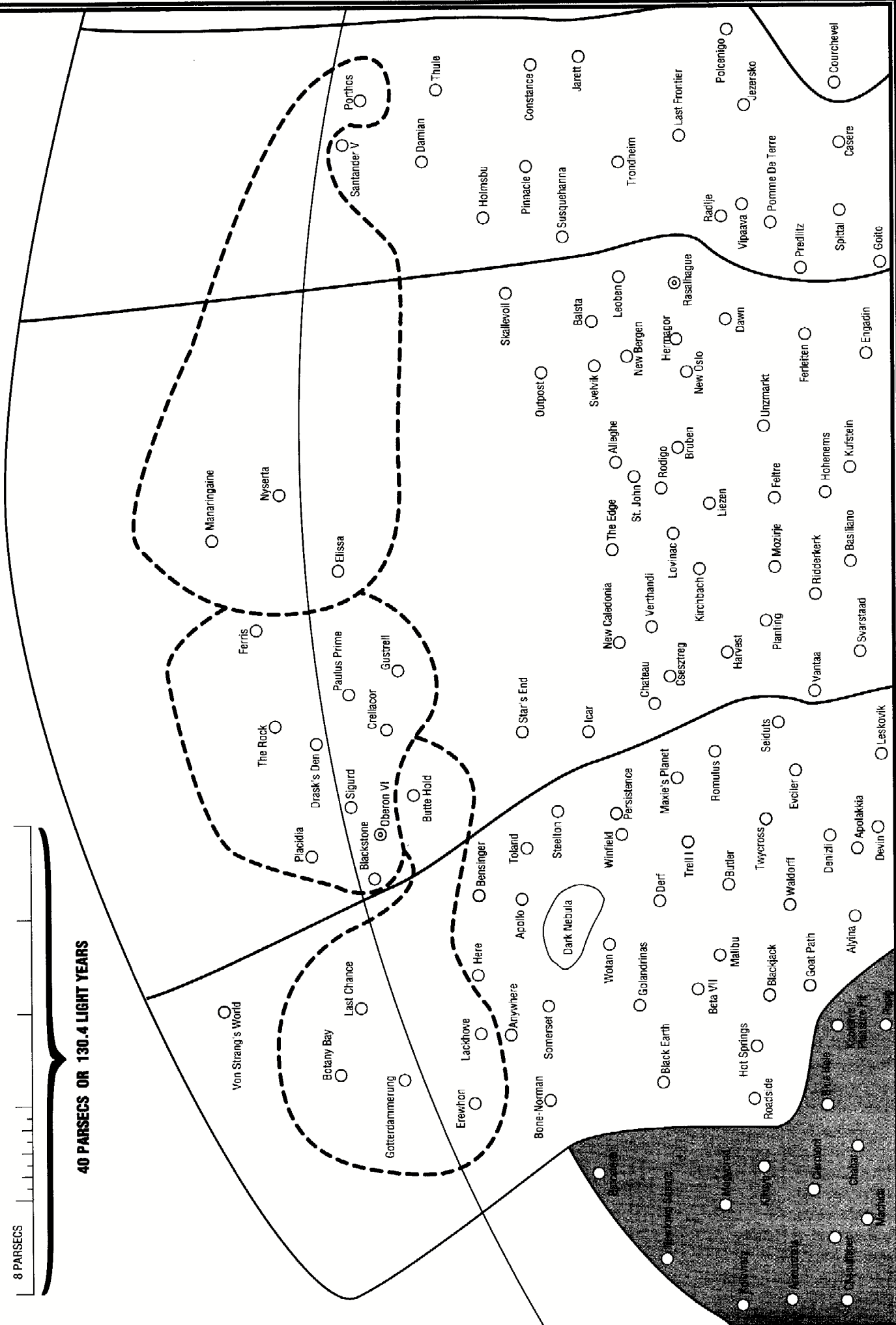
40 PARSECS OR 130.4 LIGHT YEARS

Illyrian Palatinate & Marian Hegemony

Greater Valkyrate, Oberon Confederation & Elysian Fields

8 PARSECS

40 PARSECS OR 130.4 LIGHT YEARS



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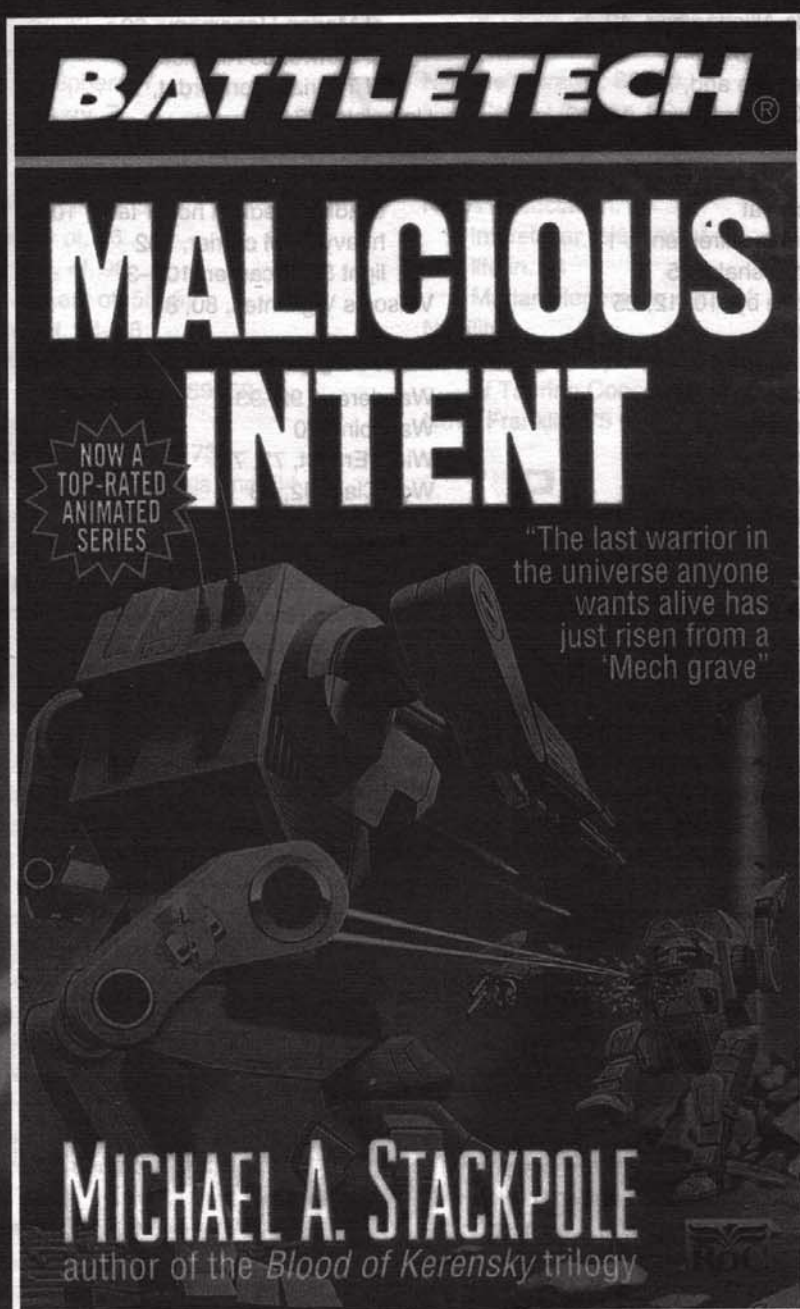
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