

CLASSIC

BATTLETECH



JIHAD HOT SPOTS: 3072





THE GLIMMER OF HOPE!

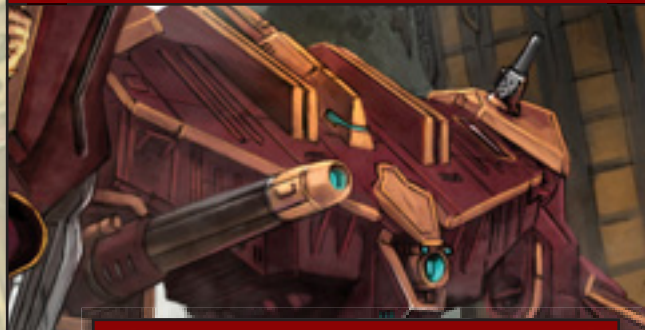


For nearly four years, the fires of war have threatened to consume all the nations of mankind as the Word of Blake's furious campaign of terror and deception raged on. Millions have died, mighty armies have fallen, and ancient empires have shattered, with no end in sight. But even as all hope seems lost, heroes old and new rise from the ashes of fire-blackened worlds to stand against the chaos and, maybe, to start turning the tide at last.

Jihad Hot Spots: 3072™ continues the Jihad series, begun with *Dawn of the Jihad*, bringing the readers into the ongoing chaos and horror of the Sphere-spanning war, as seen from the eyes of those who fight—and die—in this epic conflict. Players of both *Classic BattleTech* and the *Classic BattleTech RPG* will find additional rules and campaign tracks within to continue their campaigns across the Inner Sphere as the Blakist holy war rages on. Finally, *Jihad Hot Spots: 3072* contains detailed information on the cyber-soldiers of the Manei Domini, as well as a mini-Technical Readout section—including record sheets—for numerous new units, including the six new Celestial-series Word of Blake OmniMechs.



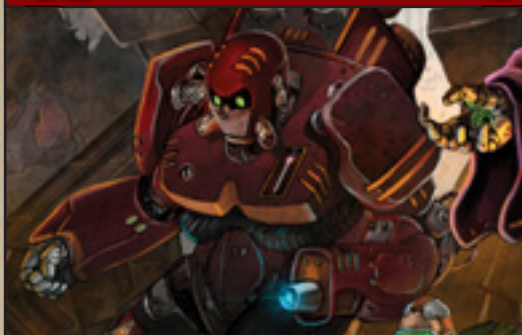
PRETA CELESTIAL-SERIES OMNIMECH



PRECENTOR APOLLYON



PURIFIER BATTLE ARMOR



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STAR LEAGUE ERA

CLAN INVASION ERA

JIHAD ERA



SUCCESSION WARS ERA

CIVIL WAR ERA

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INN NEWS UPDATE...

Jihad Hot Spots: 3072



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THE MASTER'S HAND



The Old Wall, Northern Commercial District
Portent, Gibson
Free Worlds League (Word of Blake Protectorate)
5 November 3071

Beneath a canopy of black smoke that all but choked out the sun, Sahir ran. His legs were on fire, his shoulder screamed with agony, and his lungs seemed to burn with every breath. Despite the pain, Sahir ran, clutching the Emperor AX-22 in his good hand as he raced for the darkened doorway ahead.

The doorway was his only hope.
 His only salvation.

Somewhere behind him, he heard the roar of machine gun fire, punctuated by an explosion. In his mind's eye—he didn't dare look back—he saw the jeep that had carried him this far, exploding.

Ahead, he saw shapes shifting against the wall, and fought down the urge to turn away. The shapes were not attacking; they were on his side.

But did the demons know they were there?
 "Get down!" someone shouted.

Panic and instinct made Sahir obey, mere moments before the whoosh of jump jets transformed the half-seen shapes ahead into flying, ghostlike figures roughly the size and shape of a terrestrial gorilla.

Purifiers!

The two mimetic battlesuits were the only ones left in the New Gibson Freedom League's arsenal, and they had come to cover the exfiltration. He knew them both; Kris and Boyd—the only members of the NGFL trained to operate the Blakist hardware. Half dazed, Sahir watched their leap, saw the muzzle flashes from their arm-mounted machine guns.

Against any other opponent, the attack could be enough.

A moment later, one of the suits became a ball of fire as no less than four missiles intercepted it. Sahir heard a man's scream—Boyd's—filtering out through the still-open speakers amid the blasts. The blood-curdling cry cut out as the battle armor spun backward. With a hollow thud, it slammed against the ancient silver-green walls that ringed Portent, the remnant of the centuries-old pressure domes built by Gibson's first colonists. Almost instantly, the mimetics failed, revealing mangled death-black armor, blasted open across the torso and head to expose an unrecognizable mass of blood, bone and gore.

With a metallic thunk, the second trooper—Kris—landed barely a meter behind Sahir, forcing him to look back at last. Through the blurry gray outline of Kris' armor, he could see the demons again. Dark shadows, eyes aglow, stalking their way *through* the fires.

"Damn it, Sahir!" Kris roared through her speakers. "Run!"

Wincing in pain, Sahir scrambled back to his feet, his boots scraping on the debris-strewn pavement. He charged at the doorway, the ancient exit through the Old Wall, to the jungles beyond. His heart raced, and he tasted copper. The demons were far closer than he'd even imagined.

"Die, you goddamned monsters!" he heard Kris shouting, voice ragged over the roar of her machine gun. "Fucking die!"

Sahir tripped, slammed against the doorway and gasped at the stabbing pain of his shattered shoulder as it caught the brunt of his impact. Through the mind-numbing agony, he heard more explosions rolling in the distance, felt the roar of a passing aero-fighter he could not see through the smoke. Glancing back the way he had come, he took in a scene of horror. Beyond the shadows of the demons and the blaze behind him, columns of shattered glass, twisted steel and crumbling ferrocrete were all that remained of Portent's Northern Commercial District. Fire and smoke still poured from the gutted hulk of the Blakewatch Building.

Between him and the demons, he saw that one of the monsters had fallen to Kris' gun—*finally*—but even as he blinked through the pain, Sahir watched in horror as the creature began to stir again.

Kris was still standing, but she was outnumbered and he could hear her machine gun spinning impotently, its magazine already dry. Five more of the monstrous machine-men had come through the fire, crawling over the wreckage of overturned cars, the shattered hulk of a gold-and-purple SecurityMech.

It was no contest.

Kris fired her jets again, leaping back toward the Old Wall. As one, the demons seemed to pause, and Sahir felt his own breath catch in his throat.

Then, at the height of her leap, two more monsters emerged, leaping out from behind the wall of fire, batwings outstretched, V-shaped eyes aglow with an evil fire. As one, the two armored monsters seized the lone Purifier in mid-flight, catching Kris by the arms with their taloned hands. Her mimetic camouflage rippled black, mimicking the colors of her captors even as they slammed her to the ground with teeth-shattering force.

Even as Kris squirmed beneath, one of the winged demons rose to its full terrifying height, paused, then stomped down hard, caving in the Purifier's chest beneath an armored hoof.

Eyes stinging, Sahir blinked, swallowed dust.

He was all that remained. It had all happened so fast.

And then the demons were on him, the leader emerging from the wastelands that had once been a thriving commercial district. She was a hulk of metal and flesh, her crimson half cape and hood topping off a suit of black armor that bore the downturned broadsword of the Word.

Her right eye glowed blue; her left burned red.

Her bared teeth, silvery and clean, reflected the flicker of nearby fires. What remained of her flesh was darkly tanned. She carried no weapons, but from her exposed right forearm, a bloodstained blade extended from its metallic housing. And hummed.

The blade came up before Sahir's mind even registered the motion, pointing at him.

"You!" she commanded in a voice that boomed. "Drop your weapon now!"

Sahir stared at her, incredulous.

"I said *now*, Frail!"

THE MASTER'S HAND

No, Sahir shook his head mutely. *Not like this!*

Fingers numb with shock, he tried to raise the nearly forgotten assault rifle.

In a blur, the monstrous woman grunted and swung. The hum of her blade barely changed as it sliced through metal, flesh and bone in one clean strike. As the ruined Emperor clattered to the ground—his hand still attached—Sahir clutched at the bloodied stump and screamed as much from shock as from pain.

Somewhere amid the white-hot agony, he felt the demon's follow-up swing, and darkness claimed him.

* * * *

Judgment Point (formerly Castle Masters)

Portent, Gibson

Free Worlds League (Word of Blake Protectorate)

5 November 3071

I am Manei Domini, he thought, as he stared out over his domain, feeling neither pride nor remorse at the sight of oily black smoke rising across the northern sky.

I am The Master's Hand.

At the pinnacle of his domain, his eyes scanned the devastation through the bulletproof bay window of one-way ferroglass. With his human eye, he saw the colors of righteous fury, the thick black smoke that blotted out the northern skies, the golden fires that consumed the ruined skyscrapers, the hazy silver-greens of the Old Wall beyond. At the same time, his *true* eye—switched now to thermal vision—saw the beautiful chaos of heat, the gathering forms of men, the brilliant glow of fusion engines in motion.

A scene of beautiful, cleansing fire.

I am The Destroyer.

Folded across his broad chest, his flesh-and-blood arm crossed his true arm, drawing support from its hard, unyielding metal, idly stroking a crease in his blood red robes. He kept his legs spaced half a meter apart, their claws digging into the tattered purple carpeting of the chamber floor.

I am...

"Precentor Apollyon..."

In the vision of his true eye, reflected now against the darkening pane of the window, a face emerged—dark-haired and dark-skinned, the face almost looked mundane to Apollyon. Were it not for the silvery lines embedded across the man's forehead, around his eyes, and back along his clean-shaven temples, he could have passed for any one of four billion "frails" on this Blake-forsaken rock. In Apollyon's true ears, he received the man's voice without aid from his flesh-bound senses. Nodding, he engaged the communicator with a thought.

"Astaroth," he intoned, his rich, deep voice echoing in the nearly empty chamber. "Report."

Astaroth's image bowed and smiled.

"Victory, Precentor," he said. *"We have cleansed the threat to the factories and purged the infidels from our midst."*

Apollyon nodded again, but allowed himself neither a smile nor a frown. The loss of life—any life—was always a regret, even when it served the greater purpose. Instead, he closed his human eye and focused his thoughts on the relevant data.

"Casualties?" he asked.

"We have lost two of the Master's Hand," Astaroth said. *"Demi Vapula says that damage to the factory complex was minimal, but that seven engineers and thirteen laborers were caught in the rebel attack."*

Apollyon nodded again, assessing the losses and filing away the figures in his mind.

"Reclamations?" he asked, finally.

"Five, this time. Vapula claimed one himself at the factory complex. Three attempted to hole up in the old Blakewatch Building, to little avail. The last was intercepted at a maintenance egress at the Old Wall. We suspect a cell was waiting to rendezvous with the survivors in the jungles beyond; I have Demons sweeping the immediate area as we speak."

With a thought, Apollyon switched his true eye over to telescopic, catching the bright green glow in his reflection. As he dialed up the magnification toward the North Wall, he surveyed the smoldering city limits. The jungles in that area were thick; he could easily make out the tops of several yellow-green mustard trees.

"Add six Celestials to the hunt, Astaroth," he commanded. "You can cover more ground that way."

"As you command, Precentor. In the interim, I have dispatched secondary teams to collect the Reclaimed and the wounded."

"The Master commends your efficiency, Astaroth. Keep me apprised on your hunt. In Blake's name."

"In Blake's name," Astaroth repeated sharply. *"Astaroth out."*

Only after the communication ended did Apollyon once more open his human eye, taking in his own reflection against the backdrop of the roiling smoke. He could barely make out his own hairless scalp beneath the folds of his crimson hood, or clearly see the weathered creases in what remained of his human face. In sharp contrast, the glow of the late afternoon sun highlighted every curve along the true half of his face, a sculpted masterpiece of metal and myomer. It occurred to him at that moment that he rarely looked at his own reflection any more, rarely took the time to admire its technological beauty, the wedding of organic randomness to the perfection of science.

I am Apollyon the Destroyer. I am the Hand of the Master, created in His image.

Turning abruptly, Apollyon took in his surroundings again for just a moment. The peak of Judgment Point—once known as Castle Masters (and, before that, Castle Dystar)—had once been a luxurious bedchamber, paneled in dark native oak (with heavy soundproofing). Thick burgundy curtains, bound with gold braid, once framed the windows, controlling what sun- or moonlight reached the mammoth canopied bed that had dominated this room. The bed itself had been large enough for ten people, and rumor had it that the late Paul Masters had begun to convert this

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chamber into a study simply to erase the stench of corruption left by its sexually insatiable former mistress.

But matters of state had kept Masters from seeing the work completed during his decade-long stewardship. When the Master bade Apollyon to claim Gibson for his own, mere months ago, the work to reclaim this bedchamber was still only half completed. The massive bed had simply been shoved into a corner. The curtains had been drawn closed, and a rank stench permeated the entire chamber.

What had taken Paul Masters ten years to fail at had taken Manei Domini operatives all of thirteen hours to complete. Installing the computers, holotank and communications equipment Apollyon had requested, they had rehabilitated this room quickly. The frivolous curtains had been discarded in favor of laser ablative blinds; the space-wasting bed had been disposed of in favor of a more useful desk, chair and cot. The gaudy tapestries along the east wall had also been removed, replaced by a much more pleasant holo-image of endless forests, filling a pastoral valley that seemed to curl around a tranquil river and a small, almost idyllic cityscape.

Home.

Despite the accomplishments in this tiny corner of the universe, Apollyon didn't need to look out the window again to know that he could never truly rehabilitate Gibson the same way he had this fool's bedchamber. To him, this new world stank of decay and corruption, the failings of humanity.

The failure of ambition.

The failure of greed.

No matter how many purges, he knew, Gibson would forever bear the taint of the squabbling, frail House Lords who had ultimately denied him his home and his destiny.

Gibson could never be Jardine.

I am Apollyon the Destroyer. I am the Hand of the Master. I am Manei Domini.

The thoughts gave him focus. Realigned his priorities. Reminded him of his mission.

A mission forever changed.

His feet thumped softly on the carpet, metal-clawed toes digging into the floor with each step as he strode out of the room. He kept his arms folded, his robe closed around him, as he walked from the chamber. Unaccompanied, he marched through the corridors, past technicians and servants who bowed deeply at his passage. Outwardly, he paid no heed to any of them, but his real senses tracked everyone, monitoring thermal signatures, sweeping them for EM traces, listening to their heartbeats and muted whispers.

Watching and listening to all of them, whether they realized it or not.

Once more, he found himself wondering if they would be so awed by him in the Clan Homeworlds, where he was meant to be by this time. For fifteen years, it had been his dream to find that out.

Until fate intervened.

Almost four years ago now, the last Whitting Conference ended in disaster. What once was seen as the long-awaited Third Transfer should have been a momentous day.

But something had gone wrong. Terribly, unforgivably *wrong*.

But there had been no misstep, Apollyon knew; the Master could not have been wrong about the day. He *could not be* wrong!

It was the hubris of the fallen House Lords that had torn His Plan asunder, a selfishness that defied all reason, all logic. That and the power-lust of fools, Apollyon realized, his mood darkening further. The Pretender Thomas, the Bastard Wolf, and—worst of all—that arrogant *whelp* St. Jamais! All of them chose those moments to converge upon the Plan, their ignorant acts derailing decades—no, *centuries*—of carefully-laid plans.

The Third Transfer did not belong even to the Master. He said so himself. He had simply divined the needs of the future, the path the Faithful had to walk. He saw the real threat, had spent fifteen years tirelessly building to face it, to defeat it.

Forever.

But arrogance and greed had thwarted them all, destroyed humankind's greatest promise on the eve of a golden age.

And Jardine was but one casualty of that awful choice.

The Master's wisdom spoke to Apollyon again, even as he rode the castle's primary lift down, toward the basement levels of his command center. He stood at the center of the lift, statue-still, eyes forward, but unseeing as his mind embraced the true Word of Blake:

The Third Transfer survives, he had said once, after the horrors of that day. Though the course may have changed, the destination remains.

I am Apollyon the Destroyer. I am the Hand of the Master, created in His image, beholden to His Word, the true Word...

The lift slowed, stopped, and the doors parted to reveal a dimly lit, gray-walled corridor. The smell of fresh paint still hung in the air, the last trace of the hasty construction that had created this underground lair in less than five days' time. Stretching back, behind the castle and into the orange rock of Gibson's crust, the labyrinth extended beneath the South Wall. The maze mimicked the layout of Apollyon's Jardine command center perfectly, allowing him to move about with ease, navigating by memory. It was his only other nod to nostalgia beyond the holo-mural in his pin-nacle office.

Guards were unnecessary here. Holo-cameras and sensors concealed in the walls and light fixtures tracked every move, every sound. An intruder—anyone not sufficiently registered with the castle's security net—would find his trip cut short in minutes by blast doors and nerve gas dispensers in the air ducts. No single command center controlled or powered these systems, making it high impossible to disable the network.

But even if an intruder *did* get inside, the corridors were laid out to limit movement, left unlabelled to confuse the unprepared. Only the most entrusted could find their way around—and all of those so entrusted could make short work of any intruder who stumbled upon them.

THE MASTER'S HAND

Apollyon wove his way through the corridors, the silence of his thoughts heedless of the soft tapping his metallic feet made against the hard, unforgiving ferrocrete, or the soft rustle of his robes. In his mind, he sorted files, checked off names and pulled up dossiers. He selected one at last, brought up the report and absorbed the data.

By the time he reached the cell, he knew all he needed to know about its occupant.

With a glance at the terminal keypad, he gained access, stepping into a chamber rendered pitch black.

"Lights!" he barked, but the speech was little more than a theatrical. It was actually by silently transmitting his own mental key to the sensors that he activated the room's illumination, which he dialed up to only ten percent intensity—enough for the subject to make out his form in shadow.

Apollyon switched his true eye to infrared, adding a bloody red glow to the chamber as well.

The room was unadorned. A flat metal shelf was bolted to one wall, a hard metal chair to the floor in the center, directly beneath the armored light source. His feet tapped loudly on the hard ferrocrete floor as he paced around the man strapped into the chair.

The subject's face was scarred, emaciated, slicked with sweat. His hair was plastered to his scalp, and he looked a few shades paler than his dossier indicated. Indeed, Apollyon's thermal scan suggested his body temperature was a few degrees warmer than healthy, his immune system undoubtedly battling the latest chemical cocktail the interrogators had pumped into him hours ago. His naked body trembled in the restraints that locked his head straight up, his arms on the hand rests and his legs to the floor. He blinked painfully, trying to adjust to the first light he had seen in more than 48 hours.

"Wh—? Who?" he stuttered, his voice barely climbing above a whisper.

Apollyon completed three circuits around the man's chair in silence before stopping directly in front of him, hands still folded across his chest. He bathed the man with a cold, red glare, raising his eye's intensity while dulling the room lighting by five percent—another theatrical.

"Who I am does not matter," he said calmly. "I am merely a servant."

"Right," the man scoffed. "A servant of your Blake friends!"

Apollyon leaned forward, kept his face neutral, allowed his voice to drop to a whisper.

"We are all friends of the sainted Blake, Colonel Donner," he told him. "Only the foolish think otherwise."

"Damn you and your 'Sainted Blake!'" the man once known as Colonel Fritz Donner spat back. His sunken eyes were wide, his ragged voice edging on hysteria. With his true eye, Apollyon watched the patterns of heat shifting beneath Donner's skin, the telltale signs of rage and of fear.

After a moment, Donner froze, wild stare suddenly focused, mouth slack. The heat patterns shifted, and Apollyon switched his true eye back to the green glow of enhanced photo-optics with a cold, thin smile.

"Ah," Apollyon whispered. "I see we have recognition."

"You!" Donner gasped. "I've seen you before!"

"Of course you have, Colonel. You see me whenever you gaze upon my brothers and sisters. We are all facets of the Master's vision."

Rage contorted Donner's face. Baring yellowed teeth, he struggled vainly against the restraints.

"No!" he seethed. "You malfing machines fed me that khogshit every year since you took out McIntyre! You can beat me, chain me up, feed me human remains—but I ain't never going to fall for that crap about your 'Sainted Blake' and 'Divine Master'! There ain't a thing you can do to me that I haven't seen or done before! You hear me, you piece of—!"

With the mere touch of his true hand, Apollyon delivered a jolt through Donner's thigh that left the man shuddering and twitching for several seconds. Inwardly, he admired the bandit's attempts to conceal the pain. For nearly four years, Colonel Fritz Donner—the one-time leader of the Circinus military, one-time commander of the Black Warriors, one-time bloodthirsty pirate—had endured punishments both subtle and gross at the hands of ROM and the Manei Domini, without breaking. Seasoned battlefield commanders of realms far nobler than his had shattered under far less effort.

Even this man's subordinate, Michael Cirion, had lasted less than a month under the agonizing ministrations of Apollyon himself, when he was captured and delivered to justice in 3068, mere months after vanishing from Circinus.

Of course, Apollyon realized, a man like Donner *would* take pride in all that resistance.

If only you knew, dear Colonel...

"I assure you, Colonel," Apollyon said finally, still whispering, "were conversion or torture our only goal, you would most certainly be a broken man by now."

"Broken?" Donner choked. "Or turned into one of you freaks?"

I am Apollyon the Destroyer. I am the Hand of the Master. The words of a frail shadow mean nothing.

Apollyon modulated his voice, filled his whisper with subtle and icy depth. "Do you *really* think you could stop us from doing that even now?" he asked. "All we would need is a surgical table and a lot of sharp objects."

Donner's breath caught in his throat.

"No, Colonel," Apollyon added. "You remain as you are because we have made you so. We have strengthened your resolve, given you focus, because the Master has willed it so. And now, you are ready for your mission..."

Donner blinked, swallowed hard. Sweat ran down his forehead, rippled around the stubble across his cheeks, and splashed onto the slicked hairs of his chest.

"A mission?" he echoed.

Apollyon nodded, allowing the human side of his face to broaden its grin while his true face displayed stainless steel teeth.

"Oh, yes," he said darkly. "We have great plans for you..."

STATE OF THE SPHERE: 3072

Once again, welcome to this special report, "State of the Sphere: 3072", here on INN. I'm your host, Michael Bosworth.

Nearly two years have passed since our last comprehensive look at the chaotic events occurring all across the Inner Sphere. Though we originally had hoped to do such a special report for our viewers every year, we have since discovered that the massive scope of the Word of Blake's Jihad makes a two-year update more beneficial to the viewing public. A two-year timeline allows us at INN and our affiliates to compile important contextual data and disseminate it. Therefore, until the end of this crisis, we will continue to offer these bi-annual reports as a service to all our viewers across the Inner Sphere and even in the Clan Occupation Zones.

Presented here tonight is a summary of events since our last special report. Rather than attempt to be comprehensive, we have striven instead to accumulate data from a variety of sources—most through partnerships

and unprecedented access within several organizations. Some data may seem innocuous, if taken alone. But as part of the common fabric of this horrifying war, its meaning becomes clearer and in some cases may point to startling conclusions.

Our goal here at INN, particularly within this specialized department, is to bring you as many voices as possible, in order to present as unbiased a picture as we can. While our objectivity remains at the forefront, please understand that some of the following articles, shows and op-eds contain slants and prejudices. We ask our viewers to receive this data in hopes of seeing the "big picture"—something to which we believe everyone on every planet has a right. Considering that the Blakist Jihad has come to affect even the most out-of-the-way systems, it has fallen upon us to make sure the truth is indeed out there.

Before we begin, I'd like to take a moment to thank our ComStar affiliates for their help in this process. Our counterparts at ISAP have

likewise been extremely helpful; in return, INN has released the rights to this media package for distribution by ISAP channels as well. Lastly, a heartfelt "thank you" to all of our reporters, underground authors, network administrators and others who have taken it upon themselves to not only give us reports on their own struggles, but who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to get the latest and best information out there.

All information presented tonight can be accessed through the downloaded media package to all personal data pads, tri-vid systems and other media devices. When possible, we have included actual video and audio footage, as well as transcripts and copies of written documentation.

We begin tonight with an interesting summarized perspective on the events of 3068 thru 3070.

—Michael Bosworth,
INN Special Correspondent, Skye, Lyran Alliance, 5 January 3073

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Jihad Hot Spots: 3072 (JHS: 3072) is a sourcebook for Classic BattleTech that continues where *Dawn of the Jihad (DotJ)* and *Jihad Hot Spots: 3070* left off, providing players and gamemasters with an ongoing first-hand look at the events of the Word of Blake Jihad from the closing months of 3068 through the end of 3072. To best reflect the continuing chaos and uncertainty of this period, the material presented in this sourcebook—as with the previous and subsequent *Jihad Hot Spots* books—uses the same format of compiled news articles, interviews and "first-person" accounts. In addition, as the truth of events comes to light, this book and its successors will include a timeline describing those events known to be true from previous books, while also providing additional campaign scenarios and new game rules and units based on developments in the appropriate time period.

Beginning with *The Raging Inferno*, *Jihad Hot Spots: 3072* reviews the events that led up to and through *DotJ* and *JHS: 3070*. A review of known events—removed enough from the immediate chaos to be considered fact by nearly everyone in the Classic BattleTech universe—is also provided here.

The following sections take readers forward in six-month increments, using the same format as *JHS: 3070*, with a more chronological focus. Each of these sections includes scenario tracks (called *Chaos Rampant*) compatible with the *Chaos Unbound* campaign system outlined in *DotJ* and the *Chaos Unleashed* tracks featured in *JHS: 3070*. Gamemasters and players can use these campaign scenarios, which follow the *Chaos Unbound* system, for any number of one-off games. We chose not to reprint the campaign system in this book (which originally appeared in *DotJ*, pp. 133-138) so as to provide more room for articles and "hard" rules later

on. *Taking Stock*, the final sourcebook section, wraps up events through 3072, covering a few remaining key happenings between early 3071 and the end of 3072.

The final section, *Jihad Hot Spots: 3072 Rules Annex*, highlights new special rules and spotlights a few new units for Classic BattleTech game play whose introductions and/or use played a major role in the events preceding and featured within this book. Future *Hot Spots* books will add to these rules as the war continues, roughly approximating the pace at which new developments became widespread factors in the greater conflicts of the Jihad.

ABOUT THE CHAOS RAMPANT CAMPAIGN

The campaign tracks presented here follow the same rules as originally presented in *Dawn of the Jihad (DotJ)*. Players and gamemasters will also find the following rulebooks handy, depending on the type of campaign run: *Total Warfare (TW)*, *TechManual (TM)*, *CBT: RPG* and *Merc Supplemental: Updates (MSU)*. References to *AeroTech 2 (AT2)* indicate rules and track options specifically slanted toward aerospace units, or that use aerospace units not featured in *Total Warfare* (such as JumpShips, space stations and WarShips).

If a track does not specify certain parameters, the gamemaster decides what is fair to his or her particular player group. The overall concept of this campaign is to present gamemasters with a framework that allows them to bring their players through the massive conflagration known as the Word of Blake Jihad. Gamemasters begin this arc of the Chaos campaign with the *Savage Silence*, *Storming the Balance* or *Free-Fire Zone* tracks. Player groups begin this campaign arc with 1,000 Warchest points or with whatever they had remaining at the end of the *Chaos: Unleashed* campaign from *Hot Spots: 3070*.

THE RAGING INFERNO



THE RAGING INFERNO

THE ENEMY PERSPECTIVE

The following report is a draft smuggled to INN by contacts within the growing Word of Blake Protectorate. Though much of it is vague and obviously slanted, we have chosen to include it here—in its entirety—for the insight it provides on Word of Blake propaganda at home.

As with our previous reviews, related articles are interspersed throughout this text, to provide counterpoints to the Blakist overview.

—Michael Bosworth, INN Special Correspondent

THE CHAINS OF FATE

Message to: Precentor Bjorn Rapkis

Sender: Adept Larissa Frontisak

Subject: Analysis Report Mu 68-70a

Date: 10 Jan 3071

Precentor,

This is one of the last files that Adept XX Rianne Emory compiled before a terrorist bomb ended her brilliant career in 3069. As I've gotten the job of disseminating her research, I thought it correct to make sure this was delivered to you as originally requested. I have continued her work with later facts and events; the bulk of the report, including her observations and opinions, remains hers. I do this in honor of my friend's memory.

Blessed be the Will of Blake.

—LF

INTRODUCTION

This report is being compiled as requested by Mu/Mu directive Psi-Omega 447. The time period of this overview covers the years 3068 through the waning months of 3070. For an event summary of the Protectorate before this report, please reference **Mu 65-66b** and **Mu 66-68a**. Where this overview refers to events in those reports, appropriate sections are marked and linked.

As ever, may the Blessed Hand of Blake guide these words.

The end of 3068 and the bulk of 3069-70 saw the stabilization of our **new Protectorate**. With operations winding down in securing important worlds such as Hesperus and Dieron, our economy and manufacturing base stabilized, freeing us to devote greater focus to the training and augmentation of our new Protectorate Militia. Considering the threat on the horizon, appropriate steps needed to be taken.

LURCHING LEAGUE

Near the end of 3068, the Free Worlds League was **our most beleaguered ally**, riddled by a vast political conspiracy that threatened to tear its Parliament apart. While the collateral damage from our own actions to thwart this conspiracy was tragic in its execution, the results cannot be denied: the power base of the Imposter Marik was destroyed, along with the majority of the rebels' cabal among Members of Parliament. While several systems will need to reinstate new MPs, the League's people may finally select politicians untainted by the power, greed and corruption of ComStar's "puppet lord."

Despite our actions, the affiliated blood nobility of the **Imposter Marik** refused to stop their traitorous ways. Though the rebellion

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

Late 3068

(3 October) The surprise recall of both Knights of the Inner Sphere regiments to Atreus weakens Marshall Brett's counter-invasion of the Lyran Alliance. Capellan March troops seize Housekarle, No Return and Randar as Duke Hasek rushes to resupply troops poised near Sian.

(7 October) A Word of Blake orbital strike pummels the capital city on Sian, killing Duchess Candace Liao and trapping Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao among the ruins (where he is feared dead). Believed to be the work of FedSuns WarShips, the attack galvanizes the Confederation against the Davion enemy. *Sang-jiang-jun* Talon Zahn declares himself Military Regent of the Confederation. Meanwhile, the Word captures Muphrid, Thorin and New Earth, reportedly employing tactical nuclear weapons in all three assaults. Clan Jade Falcon seizes Graus from the Lyran Alliance.

(16 October) Contact with Canopus (and its neighboring systems) is lost.

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

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

(25 October) During a hastily arranged parade in honor of the returning Knights, Blakist forces attack Atreus, employing chemical weapons to kill the bulk of Parliament and the Knights themselves. A massive naval engagement between pro-Word and pro-League WarShips allegedly erupts in the capital system. Blakist propaganda, broadcast as the attack commences, exposes Captain-General Thomas Marik, former ComStar Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht and ComStar Primus Sharilar Mori as frauds; immediately afterward, the local communications network suffers widespread disruption. Across the Inner Sphere, a flood of Blakist propaganda and



BUSINESS REVIEW: 3070

As we approach the end of the 3070, let's take a quick look at some of the major financial news coming from the heavy hitters across the Sphere. The following synopses are taken from wire reports and company financial statements, where available.

Luthien Armor Works—Teetering on the brink of financial collapse at the end of last year, LAW experienced a near-miraculous recovery over the course of 3070. Rumors of partial buy-outs involving IRTech notwithstanding, the company made some shrewd financial moves in order to stay soluble. LAW released several new licenses to various manufacturing partners and managed to open several new manufacturing facilities. Still crippled by the loss of nearly sixty percent of its BattleMech manufacturing, LAW is rumored to have entered into partnerships with transportation and shipping conglomerates in the Pesht District for middle-growth stability.

Bottom line: If the rumors regarding shipping partnerships are true, then LAW's profitability to its stockholders should increase via the reduction of costs. Cost is mid-rate, but worth it for heavy investors.

Viability factor: 7 (of 10)

Defiance Industries—Hampered by the loss of its major facility on Hesperus II as well as damage done to other Lyran sites, Defiance Industries' stock took a hard nosedive in early 3070 with no sign of stopping. Though the free-fall has slowed somewhat, thanks to an aggressive war bonds campaign across the Lyran state, the future looks grim at the start of the coming year. Rumors swirl of a possible bailout involving Coventry Metal Works and Irian; until hard information is forthcoming from up top, though, don't expect any changes.

Bottom line: Even if you're not a Lyran patriot, now is a great time to snap up Defiance stock. Previously nigh-unattainable to even mid-level market masters, the going rate for this company is better than the bottoming out of the GoTerran shopping conglomerate a decade ago.

Viability factor: 3 (of 10)

Independence Weaponry—IW's diversification has actually helped stabilize the company since a year ago, with record profits reported in the third quarter. With facilities scattered across the Sphere, IW's proclaimed neutrality in the ongoing conflict has made it a go-to company for several war goods manufacturers, including Ceres, Earthwerks, Vicore, GM, LAW and Boeing. Additionally, IW showcased their new plasma rifle at the War Expo in March, nearly tripling projected sales goals. If the IW team can maintain their neutral stance, they stand to come out well ahead when the radiation clouds are decontaminated.

Bottom line: If you didn't get in during the first quarter, you're going to pay the price now. Watch for any breach of neutrality, which could sink or skyrocket their stock, depending on which way they swing.

Viability factor: 9 (of 10)

—Excerpted from *ISAP Finance: Year in Review (Dec 3070)*, Stewart Publications

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

other interference chokes the hyperpulse generator network with "white noise."

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

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

(9 November) The Word of Blake destroys the First Kittery Borderers and conquers Kittery "in the name of the Capellan

Confederation." All HPG traffic on Northwind ceases amid rumors of a massive orbital assault.

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

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

(27 November) Lyran forces reclaim Syrma and Zebebelgenubi.

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

THE RAGING INFERNO

burned out on Atreus, the flames were fanned on other worlds across the League as opportunists and fanatical blue-blood devotees jumped into the fray. It will take some time for the League to stabilize; until then, we have seized much of its naval might, to ensure that its massive WarShips are not used against civilians and systems unable to defend themselves.

Fortunately, many former FWLM units have seen the truth and embraced the Protectorate, expanding our borders to encompass these frightened worlds. The Protectorate Militia has welcomed these experienced troops and their equipment, rewarding them for their clarity of thought by using them to strengthen the nuclei of several new Militia Divisions.

Meanwhile, the loyal troops of the FWLM fought against Duke Steiner and **his personal war**. The Lyran Alliance—most assuredly not party to the Skye Separatists' action against its League neighbor—nonetheless refused to rein in its wayward duke. The FWLM proved to the Lyrans that the League knew how to fight and succeeded in retaking several lost worlds from previous years. Though some rational nobles attempted to defuse the bloody border conflict, Steiner's refusal to accept defeat kept the fires of war burning.

CRUMBLING CONFEDERATION

The Confederation, still without **their "god-king" Sun-Tzu** at the end of 3068, lashed out against continued Davion aggression and counterattacked **Marshall Hasek's forces**. Seeing our wayward ally fight a losing war—only now without their spiteful leader—we stepped in to secure several worlds around Kittery, forming a small island of stability along the tumultuous border.

With our success before them and the astonishing (or merely suspicious) reemergence of the Chancellor from a cubbyhole in his palace's wreckage, the Confederation pressed forward and managed to turn the Davion tide.

PRODIGAL'S RETURN

—Unverified transcript posted by "What is Truth?" (pirate Zion interweb site), December 3070

<<SECURITY INTERCEPT: KZ9471A>>

<<Excerpt commences: 19:21 (Oriente Standard)>>

<Overhead camera point of view. Location: Duke Halas' office. There is a knock on the door, then creaking as it swings open.>

[Voice (ID: Michelle Fellows, Aide)]: "Your...son-in-law, my lord."

<Halas looks up as a tall figure comes into the field of view.>

[Voice (ID: Christopher Halas, Duke)]: "Thomas...or is there some other name I should call you?"

[Voice (ID: "Thomas Marik")]: "I'm still the same person you worked with all those years. The same person you allowed to marry your daughter."

[Halas]: "The same person who left her behind on Atreus?"

[Marik]: "Corrine kept her behind, to save her life. If Sheryl had come with me, the journey would have killed her..."

[Halas]: "Like my grandchildren?"

[Marik]: "My sons, Christopher. I've lost three children now, one to illness that provoked a war and now two more because of *this* war. Don't lecture me on losses."

[Halas]: "And don't you lecture me on innocence. Were it not for your charade, we'd not be in this mess."

[Marik]: "And you'd have Duncan as your Captain-General...and probably an ongoing war with Andurien and the Confederation."

[Halas]: "He would've done the job, or else been replaced."

[Marik]: "By whom? Neither Paul nor Kristen wanted the post—Paul *still* doesn't, or he wouldn't have lumbered Corrine with it—and it took this current disaster for Therese to step back into the limelight."

[Halas]: "The League didn't need ComStar's interference."

[Marik]: "The First Circuit's influence has been greatly exaggerated. You got me; you didn't get them. And if I were in their pockets, do you think Paul would've pulled his stunt? I played fair with the League, and I played fair with you. I always did what was best for the League, and I'll continue to do so."

[Halas]: "Then you'd better start with the truth. Every detail."

<"Marik" nods, then looks up directly the camera. The duke follows his gaze.>

<<Recording terminated 19:23>>

TIMELINE OF

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

(10 December) Capellan forces hit Valexa and Tallin.

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

3069

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

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

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



THE RAGING

However, the question of the **Chancellor's sanity** reared its head repeatedly, with the sudden "wedding announcement" between himself and Naomi Centrella in February of '69, the stunning revelation of a Liao love-child-turned-heir, and finally the Capellans' treasonous attack on Protectorate worlds in 3070 amid charges that we—and not the Davion aggressors—were somehow behind the bombardment of Sian.

Only the timely escape of Kai Allard-Liao managed to stem the Capellans' mad rush to overextend themselves. Unfortunately, the unexpected breakdown of communications between CCAF commanders and their troops managed to prolong the conflicts between the Confederation, the Suns and our Protectorate.

Worse, actions taken by such renegade units as the Blackwind Lancers on Talon only served to prolong and escalate the conflict, rather than defuse it. Such horrifying incidents are to be condemned, not lauded—as Sun-Tzu's CCAF has silently done.

CHAOTIC COMBINE

The kidnapping of the heir of the Combine set the tone at the beginning of 3069, when the renegade forces that continued to tear apart the Dragon from within managed to whisk Hohiro Kurita away from **our protective custody** on Dieron. **The internal strife** played havoc with the Combine's industrial sector, causing arms shortages to several frontline units. Seeing weakness in their mortal enemy, the Federated Suns attacked several Combine worlds, including the Prefecture capitols of Benjamin and Galedon.

The **lack of military cohesion** caused the Combine to suffer severe losses on both worlds. On Galedon, the Suns upped the

WHY DO THEY SERVE?

(19 February 3069)

New Avalon [ISAP]—The Word of Blake came to New Avalon with guns blazing and a fiery determination. Depending on the Blakist spokesman you ask, you can get explanations for the invasion ranging from "The Federated Suns is defying Blake's Will," to "A strategic maneuver to weaken those who destroyed the Star League, thus furthering Blake's Will." The most interesting answers, though, come from the warriors of Blake, the frontline soldiers, like Adept II Edward Sheehan of Chicago ("Look up the province yourself—there's one and only one real Chicago"), Terra. When asked why he served, Adept Sheehan was blunt:

"Sometimes I wonder what the hell I was thinking, coming to armpit planets like this. I mean, New Avalon is supposed to be one of the sweetest planets the Feddies got? Kee-rist, it's like I'm stuck in the 25th century here or somethin'. Fuel cell-powered cars and the dumbest computers I've seen outside of Antallos. Frickin' boondocks.

"And then I see that goofy-assed sunburst flag, and I remember why I'm here. It's those damned Houses. They need their teeth pulled. They ain't done nothin' right in three centuries, and spent most of the time tryin' to pillage Terra.

"Like, when the Houses finally manage to put the Star League back together, so like Terra can breathe easy for a bit, and what happens? It comes apart because some inbred royals think the Star League, you know, the thing that coulda got back the hundred of their planets from those crazy Clan bastards, wasn't worth it.

"Yeah, the Robes are kooks, but they got their hearts in the right place: cut the rocks off the Houses until they learn to pour piss out of a boot without a roadmap. They're doin' all right by Terra, so Terra'll stick by them as long as they're worth it. That's why I'm here."

TIMELINE OF THE INFERNO

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

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

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

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

(18 February) Capellan WarShips secure St. Ives, Necromo and Warlock, while additional CCAF forces hit the FedSuns

worlds of Ashkum, Bromhead, Frazer, Haappajarvi, Hadnall, Mendham, Manapire and Verlo.

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

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

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

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

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ante with the deadly release of an ancient chemical weapon, sparking a plague that spread beyond the system's border.

To add despair to the Combine's misery, Coordinator Theodore Kurita died in the opening months of 3070. With their beloved leader gone, his heir muffled by dissident forces and the realm besieged on all sides, the Combine is on the verge of collapse—a fate unimaginable for a **staunch Star League ally** only two years before.

SEETHING SUNS

The complete breakdown of order characterizes the Federated Suns during this period. With two March Lords launching their own **power-grabbing forays** against the Suns' vulnerable neighbors, the loss of contact with **New Avalon** became obvious. Though New Avalon resides in our care (until such time when the power-mad nobles finally cease their treasonous ways), the ignorance of the Suns' nobility continued. Until his death at the hands of Capellan assassins in 3070, Duke George Hasek continued to prosecute his revenge on the Capellan state with the blood of innocents. His counterpart, Duke Tancred Sandoval, followed in his father's footsteps and began selective strikes at the Combine: revenge attacks cloaked in altruistic motives, launched by a man who had not shown his face since 3067. Even the border worlds along the Concordat were stripped of their troops for personal crusades, allowing pirate predation and Taurian aggression to continue virtually unchecked.

When the Protectorate attempted to intervene at systems like Galax and Kathil, the AFFS commands instead escalated the violence, forcing us to remove their war-making materiel in order to safeguard millions of civilian lives. Instead of acknowledging their mistakes and standing down, various Suns nobles and commanders twisted facts and presented their version of "the truth" to the masses, stoking their anger at their mistreatment and turning it against the Protectorate (in reality a neutral target). It is only right that we defend ourselves against such naked violence on worlds like Tikonov, Achernar and Sheratan.

GROSS ESTIMATES

(18 January 3071)

Arc-Royal [INN] — Officials close to General Adam Steiner today released details from an LIC report that estimated the overall size of the Word of Blake military. The report sheds new light on the Blakist army, but also prompted cautionary advice from LIC spokesperson Robin Powers, who reminded reporters that the numbers and deployments mentioned were based heavily on inferences and interpretations.

"Even as we speak," said Powers, "the Blakists may be shifting troops around, hoping to confuse observers, or conceal the deployment of newer troops... We also have little hard data on the Word's deployments beyond the Lyran realm..."

The report estimates Blakist strength as of the middle of 3070 to be around roughly 45 divisions in front-line forces. This equates to roughly 48 to 50 standard BattleMech regiments, backed up by an almost equal number of non-Mech units.

That runs nearly double the number of troops believed to have been part of the Word of Blake Militia shortly after the beginning of their holy war against the Inner Sphere, and it does not include secondary units—such as the Protectorate Militia and the dozens of mercenary commands known to be operating on the Word's payroll. Powers cautions, however, that while the estimate is alarming, it is comparable to the LAAF's strength prior to the war, and is thus far outnumbered by the collected forces of the Inner Sphere now arrayed against the Blakists.

"In a war of attrition, the Word faces certain defeat," Powers said. "No amount of nuclear weapons, no amount of germs and no amount of cyborgs will save them."

Also noted in the report—which cites sources from allied states and ComStar—is the belief that many of the Word's Militia, including its enigmatic "Shadow Divisions," may be operating at diminished capacity even now. Powers claims that this is a result of battle damage as well as the hasty deployment necessary to field such units so quickly after the fighting started.

"We know they have sustained damage. We know they have suffered losses... The Word is far from invincible. They will be stopped."

LINE OF THE JIHAD

- (18 March)** A Lyran task force of DropShips and fighters fails to break through the Tharkad blockade.
- (21-28 March)** Capellan troops hit the FedSuns worlds of Safe Port, Glentworth, Wrentham, Robsart, Sirdar, Spica, Aucara, Jonzac, Lee and Cammal. Hasek recalls his offensive against the Confederation to defend against the Liao counterattacks. Meanwhile, the Taurian Concordat sends reinforcements into the embattled Pleiades Cluster.
- (1-7 April)** DCMS troops return to Galedon V to expel the invading Draconis March troops. Meanwhile, Blakist forces and affiliated mercenaries attack Ascella, Atlas, Moore, Royalston and Sabik, while additional forces out of Kittery hit the FedSuns worlds of Scituate and Gurnet.
- (12 April)** Word of Blake WarShips attack Alarion in the Lyran Alliance and Galax in the Federated Suns. At both worlds, the Blakists demolish the shipyards and make off with all



DOGS OF WAR

(5 February 3071)

Arc-Royal [RASALHAGUE REPORTER] – The rabies is spreading! After Wolf's Dragoons' going feral on Outreach, it is now the Wolves-in-Exile's turn to go wild.

While the public only sees them paying their rent to the ARDC by blunting Falcon beaks, Phelan Kell has finally unleashed his unruly band of gene-warriors upon their true enemy: Clan Wolf. And he's done it like a real man—Sphere-style!

In a swift, un-Clanlike decision, the son of Duke Morgan took advantage of a potentially disastrous situation and turned it into a propaganda success as well as a breakthrough for his own agenda. The event referred to is the attempted nuclear assault on Arc-Royal by Word of Blake forces three days before New Year's Eve, timely thwarted by the outbound WarShip *Ulric Kerensky*. What the official press release didn't cover was exactly how the captured ordnance (rumored to be around 30 megatons) had been "disposed of." Inquiries by this reporter to officials were met with silence, and even the usually reliable inside sources couldn't help. Until three days later, when an official communiqué advised the press of a massive nuclear assault by unknown vessels on Clan Wolf's capital planet of Tamar. Blakists suspected, but not confirmed!

Together with the fact that Kell's office still vehemently refuses to comment on these happenings in the occupation zone, the Wolf peace envoy making planetfall on Arc-Royal yesterday sheds a whole new light on things.

Thank you, Exiled Wolves! Thank you, Mr. Kell! We FRR refugees are on your side! You're doing the job our government should've done all along!

Kick out the Clans!

THE RAGING INFERNO

ARROGANT ALLIANCE

The sins of Inner Sphere nobility continued unabated in the Lyran Alliance as well. Renegade actions by **the Dukes of Bolan and Skye** kept worlds all along the League border in turmoil and destruction. Even after our forcible seizure of Hesperus II from Lyran control—to deprive Duke Steiner of further war materiel—the greedy, power-mad nobles continued to attempt to fill the void left by **Tharkad**. Though the Alliance capital remained in our safekeeping (and our search for the missing Archon continues), those intent on using the unfortunate collapse of the Star League for their own agendas maintained their bloody crusades.

Our attempts to remove WarShips from these nobles' dirty hands succeeded, but—desperate to focus blame elsewhere—the LAAF spun conspiracies of Protectorate forces "biologically assassinating" prosperous worlds such as Alarion. (Eager to follow suit, the AFFS did the same regarding our success at Galax.) Only in facing the renewed assault of Clan Jade Falcon did the Lyrans finally do something right.

CALCULATING CLANS

While the pettiness of the Inner Sphere lords once again kept them focused only on the territory, power and prestige they could claim for themselves, **the Clan threat** continued to grow. Clan Snow Raven demonstrated once more why the Clans are a dire menace to humanity, decimating Galedon and Dante while offering political promises and war materiel to the naïve Outworlds Alliance.

Meanwhile, Clans Jade Falcon and Wolf took advantage of the Lyrans' distraction to attack and seize more worlds on the border.

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

jump-capable vessels they can capture, while poisoning the planetary ecospheres with extremely powerful biochemical weapons. At Alarion, the LAS *Fylgia* manages to escape.

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

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

(7-21 May) Word of Blake and allied mercenary forces hit Alya, Ankaa, Cebalrai, Kessel and Vega. Alya, Cebalrai and Vega fall

in conventional attacks. Kessel does not succumb despite the use of tactical nuclear weapons, in part because of the timely arrival of Combine WarShips. Blakist neutron weapons reportedly kill over 10,000 civilians on Kessel before the invaders retreat.

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

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

(3 June) Word of Blake troops hit Kathil, destroying the shipyards already damaged by the earlier Capellan assault and cap-

THE RAGING INFERNO

Not content with invading Inner Sphere space, these two Clans also attacked each other, in **their primeval displays** of dominance and submission. Our mission to eliminate two Clan threats had mixed success, with one world escaping and the other receiving proper judgment.

Even the supposedly neutral Ghost Bears couldn't stay away. Throwing off pretenses, the Ghost Bears began their own invasion, starting with Tukayyid and Orestes at the end of 3070.

CLOSING THE GAP

In the end, the past two years have conclusively proven **the truth of Blake's own words**. Fueled by personal greed, the vaunted nobility of the Great Houses once more took advantage of events and continued their brutal wars for power and vanity. Ignoring **the sanctity of the civilian**, they trod their boots of war over the innocents, washing their hands in blood and ignoring the true threat that faces us all. The right for these privileged few to rule has **proven false**, and it is up to the purity of the Protectorate to right that wrong.

And while we fight, the true threat—the most dangerous foe facing humankind today, the Clans—looms over our shoulders, with a dagger at our back and bloodlust in their eyes.

Only now, the Word of Blake is ready for them.

—Adept XX Mu/Mu Rianne Emory, Terra (deceased)

—Adept XIV Mu/Mu Larissa Frontisak, Terra

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

turing numerous jump-capable vessels still at hand there. Follow-up nuclear and biochemical strikes are launched, causing massive casualties, but FedSuns fighters reportedly intercept several inbound attacks.

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

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

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

(16 June) The Snow Raven fleet at Galedon initiates a massive city-by-city bombardment of the planet's surface, quickly achieving a level of carnage surpassing the Kentares Massacre. Planetary infrastructure collapses. Combined with the loss of planetary administration, most transportation and govern-

INTELLIGENCE BREAKDOWN

(18 December 3070)

Alexandria [DBC] – Hello. This is Ricardo Biggs, reporting for the Donegal Broadcasting Company. Reliable sources have provided information pointing to yet another breakdown of the Lyran intelligence agencies—one that rivals their failure to anticipate the Word of Blake's initial attacks in 3067. For the past three years we have watched as the Blakists rode roughshod over the best defenses we could muster. While it is true that the Word of Blake secretly built up their forces far beyond anything hitherto imagined, it still seems incredible that they could inflict such levels of death and destruction. Though some ascribe our military failures to the incompetence of our leaders, the disturbing truth is that the Word of Blake possesses technology against which there is no defense.

Now, exclusively on DBC, I can reveal what our leaders have known for months. The Word of Blake is using a revolutionary Kearny-Fuchida jump drive design. Its origins remain a topic of heated debate in the intelligence community; theories include the mysterious "Ruins of Gabriel," long-forgotten records on Terra, or even Clan origin. But wherever this technology came from, its capabilities are terrifyingly clear. With it, the Blakists possess more than a mere incremental improvement over the centuries-old range limit of thirty light years. Indeed, analysis of Word of Blake ship movements for the past three years reveals that our foes possess drive technology that gives them almost unlimited range.

Unlimited range!

Is it any wonder that our attempts to stop them have been so ineffective? The Word of Blake has the ability to concentrate its forces in order to achieve local superiority, strike and then move on. At this moment our military leaders are faced with two choices: disperse to protect multiple targets (and be overwhelmed in pieces), or concentrate and give the Blakists an irresistible target for their nuclear arsenal. Evidence also exists that the same drive has been installed on Word of Blake WarShips—a development that makes previous estimates of their fleet strength wildly inaccurate. Even in fewer numbers, Word of Blake ships so capable would possess an incredible strategic and tactical advantage. Precentor Martial Cameron St. Jamais and his troops effectively enjoy "interior lines"—shorter lines of supply and communication and the ability to move troops quickly in response to any threat.

Unless this capability can somehow be neutralized, it seems there is nothing standing between the Blakists and total victory.



THE RAGING

AFTER THE STORM

Less than a week after the impostor Thomas Marik was removed from power, the situation within the Free Worlds is stable and the government continues its day-to-day business. "There's been a smooth transition," reported a government spokesman. "The reins of power are back in the hands of the Marik family."

Despite reports of FWLM troops on the streets of Atrous City, the markets have remained open and trading has been brisk. Uncertainty drove the Atrous Bourse shares index down almost sixty points, but the market rallied to close the week only ten points down once it became clear that the intervention didn't herald a full-blown civil war. All communication and supply networks have remained in operation, though additional security checks throughout the Commonwealth have led to delays at a number of transit hubs. According to public statements by government officials, "We ask for the people's understanding and support in this matter as we seek to apprehend the fugitive impostor."

Early rumors of clashes between Word of Blake troops and the FWLM on Atrous and other League worlds have proved to be exactly that—rumors. "Understandably, some tensions exist after the incident on Atrous, but high-level talks between the Captain-General and the Word of Blake have resulted in the deployment of Word of Blake forces to secure the heart of the League, freeing up the FWLM to deal with the threat of rebellion from Regulus, Andurien and Tamarind."

—FWNS special report, Atrous, 16 August 3070

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

(28 December 3070)

Wyatt [INN] – So what does it all mean? Now that the damage is done, how will this affect you, me, the economy, the planet?

Questions not easily answered, unfortunately. Barely two years removed from a devastating nuclear strike against the Bowie factory complex near Earhardt City, planetary officials are still uncertain just how affected Wyatt will be.

Preliminary findings paint a bleak picture. Radiation poisoning from the cobalt-laced bombs is the biggest problem, as most of the residents of Earhardt City fell under the affected strike zone. The exact yield of the blasts is now known—two fifty-kiloton explosions centered half a kilometer apart—but the long-term damage to the planet's ecology is not.

A Class Nine storm hit the area shortly after the strikes, and consequently dispersion rates nearly quintupled in estimation. Wyatt's high-altitude wind speeds certainly helped spread the radiological cloud faster and farther than anticipated, with the eventual fallout reaching well beyond original zone estimates. Much of the midland crop yield was affected, resulting in a Famine Alert that remains in effect.

Birth defects and cancer rates are expected to continue to rise, thanks to the widespread radiation. Until a systematic cleansing of the soil can be done along the equatorial belt, consumable foodstuffs will remain the system's biggest import for several more years. The highly prized saugat fisheries have not recovered, nor are they expected to for another twenty years.

Unless the Alliance or the League steps in with some major assistance, Wyatt probably will not regain its self-sustaining economy. Instead, it will become like many of its neighbors—heavily dependent on imports for survival. What Wyatt does have that will likely be exploited on a larger scale is its vast mineral and raw ore wealth, something desperately needed to fuel a nation at war.

Only time will tell if Wyatt remains a fixture of the Alliance... or disappears from the stellar charts forever.

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

ment controls, the deadly plague released during the earlier FedSuns/Combine fighting begins to spread among the survivors. Only about 30,000 Galedonians escape from the planet, to become Raven *isorla*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

EARLY 3071: HELL UNLEASHED



3071

EARLY 3071: HELL UNLEASHED

The year 3071 dawned on a universe already grown too accustomed to the horrors of the Jihad. With the center of the fire radiating from Terra, war continued to rage in all directions. Fallout from horrific attacks on several key industrial and capitol worlds began to settle in; the Lyran Alliance started to crack politically under the strain of Tharkad's silence and Skye's independent actions. Radical democracy movements began to rise on several Lyran border worlds, threatening violence and instability across an already splintered infrastructure.

Similar sentiments seemed to spread to the Free Worlds League, where smaller sub-states—seeing one Captain-General exposed and another placed on a “puppet throne”—launched open warfare upon their neighbors in a chain reaction of power grabs and alliance building. Covert actions were undertaken and secret deals forged between campaigns of bloodshed and invasion. All the while, the Word continued to exert its grip, deepening the cracks in the already battered League.

In the Capellan Confederation, whole worlds went dark as their Word-attended HPGs fell silent and scant information escaped the struggling nation. Embroiled in a three-way war against the fragmenting League, an embittered Federated Suns and a suddenly powerful Word of Blake, the Confederation began to close in on itself, abandoning its Trinity allies.

The Clans momentarily halted their renewed invasion as rumors of Tamar being blackened began to circulate. Though mostly triumphant in their push through Lyran lines, even the Falcon advance came to a gradual halt. Meanwhile, Diamond Shark merchants confirmed that Clan Hell's Horses had indeed returned to the Inner Sphere on a mission of revenge. Furthermore, among

the Ravens and the Bears, political wars erupted amid the marble and stone edifices of the Outworlds Alliance and the Rasalhague Republic—a new kind of battle, waged by Clansmen apparently looking beyond the goals of the next planetary conquest.

The fires of war continued to burn across occupied Federated Suns territory as well, against conquerors from the Word and the Confederation. The remains of the late Duke Hasek's war burned out as the AFFS attempted to exert control over its demoralized and damaged armies. Coreward, the Combine continued to fight internal dissent while fending off further strikes on its district capitol; in the face of terrible tragedies, even the Dragon's more distinctive and faithful cultures lashed out at their realm's seemingly impotent leadership.

In short, Hell continued to burn, unabated.

THE CLAN FRONT

WOLF CLAN IN DISARRAY

(25 January 3071)

Terra [VOICE OF BLAKE] – Degenerate descendants of the people who abandoned the Inner Sphere in its moment of need, the Clans sought to enslave us all when they returned in 3050. The armies of the Successor States failed to stem the tsunami of their assault and the people of the Inner Sphere could only watch in terror as world after world fell to the merciless invaders. Only when the wise and compassionate Primus Myndo Waterly directed the soldiers of Blake to intervene were these barbarians finally brought to heel.

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(27 September) ComStar forces mustering on Summer are on hand along with local Lyran defenders when a Blakist task force of

FALCONS ON GUARD

Khan Pryde, appended below is Star Colonel Brian Pryde's Watch report regarding the surprising appearance of the Hellions near our rear areas. While their true motives remain as yet undetermined, we can reasonably assume that they will try to make their asinine point of our "weakness" as an Invading Clan and invade the Inner Sphere themselves through our OZ. I am fairly confident the Horses will stay occupied with the Wolves, considering those two Clans' continuing enmity.

According to our current deployment strategy, it will take at least three months to sufficiently shuffle our touman to face the Hellion, Horse, Wolf and Lyran threats. I have some ideas on misdirection strategies that the Watch can incorporate to help facilitate this.

Peruse the attached documents, my Khan, and may you guide our Clan to ever-greater heights.

—Loremaster Kael Pershaw

>>>Message Attached<<<

>>>Priority: ALPHA<<<

Loremaster:

It is with great shock and alacrity that I make this report.

Against all logic, the Hellions are at our back door.

My contact within the Hell's Horses Watch made me aware of this alarming news last week during a standard merchant transfer out at Watchpoint 6. Our merchant caste received the last of our material shipments for the new facility on Vendôme from the Horses during this time.

According to my source, the Hellions are massing a large invasion fleet with full support at Nouveaux Paris—and have been doing so since last year. While the mind of Khan Cobb is unknown, reasonable deduction allows that the two Clans have some type of alliance in effect. Considering the current raids and attacks on Wolf worlds by the Horses, it is simple to assume the Hellions are positioning themselves to invade the Inner Sphere—either through our Clan or by skirting around us in the Periphery.

I managed to gain a near-complete list of the Hellion transports located at Nouveaux Paris and from the estimated tonnage present, I daresay 90 to 95 percent of Clan Ice Hellion is currently perched in our rear.

Personally, Loremaster, I welcome the ice rats. We should punish them for their continued insults to our Clan in the Homeworlds.

[signed] Star Colonel Brian Pryde

—LIC HPG intercept (leaked to INN by anonymous source, veracity confirmed), 15 January 3071

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

"Pocket WarShips" and fighters attacks the planet. In the ensuing battle, a powerful thermonuclear device launched by a "Pocket WarShip" levels the planetary capital of Curitiba and decimates the on-planet defenders. Curiously, the Blakist forces then move on, leaving no occupation troops behind.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(1-7 November) Word of Blake forces from Kittery conquer Spica and Denbar.

(2 November) Capellan forces repel a Word of Blake attack on Liao.



EARLY 3071: HELL UNLEASHED

In the closing days of 3070, Blake's sacred warriors have once more struck a decisive blow against the so-called Wolf Clan. Executing a daring raid, the Blessed Winds III-kappa penetrated the defenses drawn up around Tamar. Formerly the capital of the Tamar Pact, the world fell to the Wolves in late 3051. Since then it

has served as the administrative capital for their conquered territories. Achieving almost total surprise, Precentor Naval Gregory Zwick's handpicked crews struck key military targets and withdrew with what the Precentor Naval described as "minimal casualties."

Early reports of the damage inflicted indicate that a decisive blow to the Wolves' ability to wage war on the people of the Inner Sphere has been delivered. While the Lyran Alliance is content to sit and do nothing while its former citizens languish under the yoke of Clan enslavement, the Word of Blake has dedicated itself to the task of eliminating the threat posed by the Clans, once and for all.

HELL'S HORSES ADVANCE

(5 February 3071)

Arc-Royal [INN] – Following last year's rumors, we can now confirm that Clan Hell's Horses has returned to the Inner Sphere. This Clan first appeared in 3061, when Khan Vlad Ward of the Wolf Clan allowed a single Galaxy of Horses to take possession of Engadine, Stanzach and Vorarlberg—ostensibly to stabilize his spinward border with Clan Ghost Bear. The Horses' stay was to be relatively brief; in 3064, after the Ghost Bears turned away from their own short conflict with the Draconis Combine, they ejected the Horses from these three worlds.

But now the Hell's Horses are back, and under new leadership. Malavai Fletcher, their previous Khan—renowned for his hatred of the Ghost Bears—is dead, defeated in single combat by James Cobb, who now stands in his stead. Moreover, the Great Refusal that ended the Clan invasion effectively killed the Crusader cause, but also scattered those known as Warden Clans who had opposed the return to the Inner Sphere. Violent political upheavals among the Clans may have followed as new ideologies emerged to fill the vacuum. Reportedly, Cobb is—or was—as fervent a Warden as Fletcher was a Crusader. No one can say what Cobb's political leanings now are in light of the Horses' return.

First came the news that Nyserta, Oberon IV and Paulus Prime had fallen. Obvious objectives because of their strategic worth, their fall was not conclusive proof that the Horses were specifically targeting Wolf holdings. But with the new year came fresh reports. Manaringaine, Elissa, Ferris, The Rock, Drask's Den, Crellacor, Gustrell, Placida, Sigurd, Blackstone and Butte Hold—all have fallen to Cobb's troops. Whatever this new Khan's intentions, they are now unquestionably focused on the Wolves. Perhaps Cobb feels that the Horses were ill used by the Wolf Khan. Ward has certainly displayed a degree of political acumen that would normally be considered unbecoming in a Clan Warrior. A more pragmatic view may be that—compared to the mighty Ghost Bears who already beat them once—the Wolves are just an easier target for the Horses. Indeed, if reports of Blakist raids on Tamar are correct, the Wolves are more vulnerable than ever to predation by other Clans.

The latest news is that Star's End has fallen, and more ominously, elements of the Hell's Horses force—estimated as four Galaxies strong—have pushed onward into the Inner Sphere proper to strike at New Caledonia.

SUICIDE JUMP

The following transcript was intercepted and recorded by the *Omniss Seed*, a civilian agro-freighter operating near Dante's nadir jump point, before her destruction two days ago:

[Morning Violence]: "I hold single contact, desig Sierra One, inbound along standard commercial traffic. Incoming vessel, re-verify your identity."

[Omniss Seed]: "Raven vessel, this is independent freighter *OmnissSeed*, Flight Plan Delta-One-Niner-Seven-Bravo-Mark-Eight, inbound from Dindatari."

[Morning Violence]: "Acknowledged, *Seed*. Maintain course and sp—*Freebirth!* Jump pulse! I have emergent jump pulse!"

[Bloody Talon]: "Stravag. How close?"

[Morning Violence]: "Too damned clo—"

[Indecipherable static, overlapped screaming]

[Bloody Talon]: "STRAVAG! JumpShip just materialized on top of *Morning Violence*. Severe damage visible. Break the conclave link. *Captain to the bridge.*"

NE OF THE JIHAD

(8-14 November) Free Worlds units from Andurien and Zion launch strikes against Capellan space, hitting Betelgeuse, Sigma Mare and Second Try.

(2 December) Duke Umayr of Bolan receives and accepts Jeremy Brett's call for a cease-fire.

(3-14 December) Buchlau and Woodstock surrender to the Word of Blake without resistance, as the Word attacks Foochow, Gan Singh, Pleione and Wei with mixed results. Blakist forces are routed or destroyed at Foochow and Gan Singh, but prevail on Pleione and Wei.

(8 December) The Thirteenth Stalking Horse mercenary unit—one of the last AMC units still in operation—raids Talitha in the Free Worlds League.

(16 December) Word of Blake forces attack Glengarry, shattering the local defenders.

EARLY 3071: HELL

[Night Wing]: "Talon! I have DropShips deploying from JumpShip desig Bravo Two. *Surat!* That *Union* just launched a Killer Wh—"

[Bloody Talon]: "Capital weapon. Pocket WarShips! Bring all batteries to bear."

[Ebony Claw]: "Talon, *Morning Violence* is adrift. Not answering hails. Inbound JumpShip destroyed on arrival."

[Bloody Talon]: "This is *Bloody Talon* Actual. I am assuming command. Target: three contacts inbound at attack velocity. All vessels, fire at will."

[Omniss Seed]: "Three? Wait! Raven ships! Do not engage. We're not with them! We are a civilian vessel! *DO NOT EN—*"

>>>END TRANSMISSION<<<

RESPOND TO THIS ARTICLE WITH COMMENTS:

Johnny66: We are damn lucky to have the Snow Ravens with us. Those WarShips were attacked in the middle of their conclave. I hear their saKhan was killed, and they lost a Galaxy of troops. The universe is a dangerous place. We're lucky the Snow Ravens are willing to stand between us and the insanity.

ClanKiller: Lucky? I think Johnny needs to pony up for an extra weekly session with his shrink. The Snow Ravens aren't PROTECTING us from the insanity. They brought it with them. The attack only happened here BECAUSE they were here. If we want to keep the OA out of the fight, we should ditch them.

Johnny66: They're here to protect us, "Killer."

ClanKiller: Yeah. Tell that to the crew of the OMNISS SEED.

—Taken from the blog *Dante's Eyes*, Morthac Interweb, 13 March 3071

NO QUARTER

LIC#400-1>>>Clan Affairs

Keywords: Hell's Horses, Wolf, Steelton, Wolf OZ

Timestamp: 3 Mar 3071

Authorized: Strauss, Kinchmeyer, Boyans, Dido

Agent #: 42-MEL-2991

Report reads:

Current agent reports show excessive violence on Steelton, with Clan Hell's Horses' Kappa Galaxy having engaged Clan Wolf's Thirteenth Wolf Cluster. Reported bids were large, and fighting has raged non-stop for more than 72 hours. The Horses have offered *hegira* to Star Colonel Sender, who declined. Estimates have the 412th Mechanized Strike now listed as a non-functional combat unit; additionally, the Wolves have lost all transportation assets.

The most chilling information however, is in regard to the Bethel Park Arcology. A brutally contested landing near that civilian structure ended when an *Outpost*-class DropShip and an *Overlord-C* collided overhead. The resultant explosion and falling debris weakened the structure to the point of collapse. The death toll is estimated at 45,000 and continues to climb.

No adherence to the Clan code of combat seems to be present, bringing further proof that the war between these two Clans is more than a simple invasion—the intensity rivals that seen on our own planets during our recent liberation war.

Recommendation: Observation and reporting protocols only. The Alliance at this time should not interfere.

(signed//verified): Kommandant Jerold Powalski, Sector F-2 Analyst

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

(31 December) By this time, LAAF forces have withdrawn from the captured League worlds of Autumn Wind, Gannett, Megrez, Niihan, Pingree, Preston, Thermopolis, Togwotee, Rexburg, Shasta and Sheridan, due to battlefield attrition and arrangements made between Duke Umayr of Bolan and Brett.

3070

(5 January) Theodore Kurita dies. Hohiro Kurita is named Coordinator.

(7 January) Citing new evidence, the Capellan government declares that the Word of Blake—not the Federated Suns—were the culprits behind the bombing of Sian. In an astonishing turnaround, Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao calls for a cease-fire with Hasek's forces (including those still engaged at New Syrtis), and offers to unite against the common enemy.

(15-30 January) As Wolf Clan troops cut deeper into Lyran space—claiming Borghese, Ft. Loudon, Kelenfold and Tomans—the Jade Falcon incursion angles toward Arc-Royal.

(1-7 February) Despite Sun-Tzu's declarations, CCAF forces departing New Syrtis and Taygeta stage fighting withdrawals with a great deal of collateral damage. Duke George Hasek orders all his commands to "show no mercy" to the departing Capellans.

(6 February) Having weakened its defenses with prior raids, the Word of Blake captures Hesperus II and blockades the planet.

(14-28 February) The DCMS reportedly launches a massive thermonuclear bombardment of Galedon V as part of a final solution to the "Curse of Galedon," but officials on New Samarkand deny these claims.

(15 February) Taurian reinforcements allegedly bound for the Pleiades Cluster attack Midale and are destroyed.

EARLY 3071: HELL UNLEASHED

FALCON STRATEGY SHIFTS?

[Karen Silverford]: "Hello again, Colonel. Thank you for taking the time to talk to me."

[Thomas Hogarth]: "My pleasure, Karen—you don't mind if I call you Karen?"

[Silverford]: "No, Colonel; Karen will be fine. Sir, what do you make of reports that Clan Jade Falcon is abandoning its advance on a broad front?"

[Hogarth]: "Well, now. It just goes to prove that Sharon Bryan was right! The way to deal with these Clans is with the same good honest tactics used by our Lyran forefathers. BattleMechs standing shoulder to shoulder! Our enemies dashing themselves to pieces on an impregnable wall of armor!"

[Silverford]: "But Colonel, General Bryan was killed on Melissa using those tactics in '64."

[Hogarth]: "Poor Sharon—I served with her in '42, you know? I'm afraid her combat command had been contaminated with this Davion thinking. Diluting perfectly good regiments with too many heavy, medium and even light BattleMechs! All that emphasis on maneuver! She tried to do her duty with what she had."

[Silverford]: "So why do you think the same tactics are working now?"

[Hogarth]: "In a way, the Jade Falcons did us a favor. Their attack in '64 helped weed out this sub-standard Davion equipment. We could rebuild with God-honest, solid-built Lyran designs like the *Atlas*, *Fafnir* and *Berserker*. Don't misunderstand me, now. There's still a place for lighter equipment like the *Banshee* and *Zeus*, but history has shown us that the best way to defeat our enemies is to bring an irresistible weight of metal to the field. That's what we've done, and now the Clans are finding that they can't just brush us aside like they used to."

[Silverford]: "So now the Jade Falcons are concentrating more forces on fewer targets?"

[Hogarth]: "Precisely, Karen!"

[Silverford]: "I'm not sure I see how that helps defend Alliance worlds. The Falcons are just having to work harder to capture their targets."

[Hogarth]: "Ahhh! But we have the advantage of numbers and industry, Karen. We can afford to lose a few 'Mechs to eliminate one of theirs. Sooner or later, the Clans are simply going to run out of steam."

[Silverford]: "Thank you, Colonel. I'm sure the Lyran people will be reassured by your analysis."

—From a DBC interview with Colonel Thomas Hogarth, (former) commanding officer of the Furillo BPM, Furillo, 25 March 3071

HORSES' JUGGERNAUT UNSTOPPABLE?

(2 April 3071)

Alexandria [DBC] – Can the Wolf Clan stop the Hell's Horses? We can presume that Khan Ward did not deploy his best troops to secure the Wolves' Periphery conquests, but Cobb's forces barely seem to have slowed as they rolled over the Wolves. Though Wolf Clan resistance does appear to be stiffening, the Hell's Horses have pushed onward to claim Icar, Chateau and The Edge, driving a deep anti-spinward wedge between the Wolves and the Falcons. Even more ominous for the beleaguered Wolf Clan, it appears that Cobb may be developing a second axis of attack along the spinward flank of the Wolf Occupation Zone by seizing Skallevoll.

The Jade Falcons and the Ghost Bears have been curiously quiescent throughout the Horses' assault. Whether this stems from some custom of their warrior culture or they are merely content to wait while the Wolves are further weakened is unclear. What little we know of Clan politics over the past decade indicates that Vlad Ward and his proud Wolves have made few friends. These latest Hell's Horses victories, combined with losses suffered by the Wolves on Tamar, lend credence to the rumors that Khan Ward has been forced to the negotiating table in a summit on Arc-Royal.

THE WORD OF THE JIHAD

- (27 February)** In a similar fashion to the Hesperus conquest, the Word of Blake assaults Donegal, capitalizing on defenses weakened since the start of the war. Meanwhile, a suicide bomber traced to the Word of Blake narrowly fails in an attempt to kill Lyran General of the Armies Adam Steiner on Atocongo.
- (14 March)** Baron Kithrong and his Calderon Protectorate declare war on the Taurian Concordat "in the name of all Taurian people," citing Shraplen's "ongoing obsession with reclaiming the Pleiades while the Word of Blake makes war on all humankind" as proof of his inability to rule.
- (18 March)** A Word of Blake strike force staging from the Circinus Federation attacks Blantleff in the Marian Hegemony.
- (19 March)** Duke George Hasek is assassinated, reportedly by Word of Blake operatives. His aide and interim successor, Field Marshall Ally Swanson, eventually rescinds his "no mercy" or-

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EVICITION NOTICE

***PRIORITY MESSAGE TO: PRECENTOR MARTIAL/
COMSTAR***

Dissemination Level: Gold

To: Former Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht:

This is a formal notice of *hegira* from the Ghost Bear Dominion, enforceable by the might of Clan Ghost Bear.

The Clan Council has recognized the remaining worlds of the Free Rasalhague Republic as “worlds-in-crisis.” As such, the Clan Council has authorized, with the backing of the Rasalhague Riksdag, the full assumption of these worlds under the protective custody of the Ghost Bear touman.

The assistance of ComStar to these worlds is effectively at an end as of oh-one-hundred hours, 25 June 3071. ALL ComStar personnel must vacate these worlds within twelve months of receiving this message. ComStar has done well for the Rasalhagian people in its stewardship, but the time has come for change.

All honor will be accorded to ComStar personnel who leave by the deadline. It is strongly encouraged that you accept this offer of *hegira*, as any forces remaining after the time stated will be considered engaged in of a Trial of Refusal and will be so confronted.

On behalf of Rasalhague, the Bear thanks you for your service to our people. However, your time is done; our time is now.

—Khan Bjorn Jorgensson

OMEGA RIDES AGAIN

Esteemed Khan Ward:

We have noted the emergence of an unknown Galaxy among the Hell’s Horses, specifically in the Horse victories and consolidations on Crellacor, Placida and Butte Hold. The new Galaxy has been referred to as “Omega” Galaxy among the few Horse bondsmen we have claimed.

As my Khan is aware, we lost contact with our own Omega Galaxy on our Periphery border worlds. From the information we can gather, it appears that Galaxy Commander Stevic Hawker authorized each Cluster to conduct a Harvest Trial with the Horses. While most of our wayward Wardens accepted the Trials and were absorbed by the Horses, the Second Wolf Guards Grenadiers stood up in proper Wolf fashion and held off the Horses’ 77th Mechanized for nearly three weeks.

While it is discouraging to see what was once Wolf now with the Horses, I do respect them for following their own path in accordance to the Great Father’s Way. Your wisdom of placing all our Warden malcontents in Omega has proven prescient, as we can now fight them in proper Clan tradition—on the field of battle, rather than in a war of ideology. It will be good to face our former *trothkin* on the field of honor, so that we can give them a glorious end in a right and proper manner.

—Intercepted message from Wolf Clan Loremaster Katya Kerensky, dated 12 May 3071

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der, allowing Capellan troops to return to their home space with minimal resistance.

(20 April) On An Ting, the sudden outbreak of a plague bearing an unsettling similarity to the Curse of Galedon prompts the Combine leadership to launch an immediate investigation.

(24-30 April) Word of Blake forces assault Buckminster, but the attack is blunted by Delta Regiment of Wolf’s Dragoons—albeit at a terrible cost.

(2 May) Word of Blake raiders attack Hachiman, destroying the Hachiman Taro Electronics facilities.

(21-28 May) The Word launches a second assault against St. Andre, but again fails to secure the world.

(7-14 June) Jade Falcon forces attack Zanderij.

(21-28 June) Government and military forces on Alula Australis, Dubhe, Kalidasa, Stewart, Zion and Zosma declare their

allegiance to the Word of Blake, expanding the Blakist Protectorate deep into League space.

(11 July) Clan Ghost Bear forces arrive at Tukayyid and destroy the Word of Blake ships there.

(14-21 July) A third fleet of Snow Raven WarShips arrives in Outworlds space, as Raven representatives reportedly intensify efforts to cement a long-standing alliance with the Periphery realm.

(1-21 August) The Marian Hegemony launches several raids on Free Worlds League planets—including Huntington and Hazeldean—after accusing the League of fostering ongoing anti-Hegemony rebellions.

(12 August) Lyran and Wolf (in Exile) forces on Zanderij finally repel the attacking Jade Falcons.

(21 August) Ragnar Magnusson addresses the Rasalhague Republic government on Orestes, launching negotiations on

**BUSINESS AS USUAL**

(24 January 3071)

Regulus [REGULAN EXTRA] – Despite the constant security that now attends him, Captain-General Cameron-Jones made time to greet onlookers at last night's gala premier at the Agra Theater in Regulus City. Many had waited for hours in the rain for a chance of seeing the stars of the holo-screen, and were overjoyed at the unexpected bonus. Striking a dashing figure in his dark suit and sash of office, Prince Kirc basked in the adulation of the crowd and continued to greet the populace despite the protests of his security detail. Accompanied by miss Sonja Amora, dressed in a flowing purple silk gown that perfectly matched the Captain-General's attire, the Prince eventually had to break off or else risk delaying the premiere.

"It's vitally important to show support for our native industries in this troubled time," he stated later in the evening after meeting the actors. "And the arts in particular are vital for keeping up morale. They can remind us of better times, that there is beauty in the universe despite the war that rages around us. Perhaps, they can also educate us about the present," he added wryly.

The play was *The Return of Martin Guerre*.

HELL UNLEASHED

the world's capital city. According to sources in the Blackhearts mercenary command, Fellers had threatened to destroy the city unless the mercs surrendered. Rather than yield, the Blackhearts withdrew from Wasat, hoping that would defuse the crisis. Instead, Fellers set off the nuclear weapon.

According to both Blakist and mercenary sources, civilian casualties would have been higher still had it not been for the actions of the HeavyHell Raisers commanded by Major Manu Sharma. The mercenary command, under contract to the Word of Blake, was ordered to withdraw from the city. According to multiple sources, the Raisers evacuated civilians using high-speed rail and their own APCs.

"We did everything we could," said a junior officer in the HeavyHell Raisers. "We sent our 'Mechs through the city announcing that they were about to be attacked. We moved people out. We had people riding on our tanks. Women and children sitting on top of the armor. I carried out a class of third graders in the cupped hands of my 'Mech. But we only had an hour. We only managed to save nine hundred people. It just wasn't... It just wasn't enough."

PARLIAMENT RAISES, LOWERS TARIFFS

(20 February 3071)

Regulus [REGULAN EXTRA!] – Conflicting actions by the dueling Free Worlds League parliaments have once again left interstellar merchants in a state of confusion while laying the groundwork for a showdown between the two legislative bodies.

One parliament—stationed on Atreus and pledging its loyalty to Corrine Marik—has lowered tariffs on merchandise traded between League planets as part of that government's pledge

LINES OF FRACTURE**A DESPERATE HOUR**

(28 January 3071)

Wasat [ISAP] – Today the Word of Blake Third Division under the command of Precentor David Fellers detonated a nuclear weapon in the heart of Wasat Prime, killing more than 30,000 civilians in

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behalf of the Ghost Bear Dominion for an accord on behalf of "all Rasalhagian peoples."

(22 August) Rebel WarShips in the Shiloh system ambush and destroy two Word of Blake WarShips.

(13-15 September) Word of Blake forces, augmented by several mercenary commands, attack Sian and St. Ives, engaging Capellan WarShips near both worlds. Ground forces land on Sian but are repelled by the CCAF, augmented by Canopian troops and even elements of the discredited Free Capella movement.

(13 October) Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao marries Naomi Centrella, heiress to the Canopian throne.

(30 October) Mandrinn Treyhang Liao, leader of Free Capella, is killed by Blakist assassins. His aides act on the Mandrinn's final instructions to formally dissolve the movement.

(1 November) Free Capella formally dissolves.

(14-28 November) Clan Hell's Horses returns to the Inner Sphere with the capture of Nyserta and Oberon VI from Clan Wolf.

(22 November) Blakist forces engaged in a heavy raid on Bethel are destroyed after calling down a nuclear attack on their own position.

(1-14 December) The Hell's Horses Clan takes Paulus Prime from Clan Wolf.

(2 December) Unknown bandits believed to originate in the Fronc Reaches raid the Taurian world of Argos.

(7 December) Having determined that the rapidly spreading epidemic on An Ting is in fact the Curse of Galedon, the DCMS High Command places the planet under quarantine.

(9 December) President Allison Carver of the Periphery planet Herotitus is assassinated. No one claims responsibility.

(28 December) Blakist forces launch surprise nuclear attacks on Tamar and Arc-Royal. At Arc-Royal, Wolf (in-Exile) forces man-

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to reach out to every world in the League. A second parliament, based on Oriente and claiming to be a direct continuation of the government that existed before the Blakist assaults, has raised those same tariffs, claiming increased revenue is needed to support the war effort.

The ability of either government to enforce its regulations, especially on merchant ships traveling outside the immediate vicinity of either planet, is highly questionable.

"This won't change anyone's lives, except for a few bureaucrats doing unnecessary paperwork," said Bertrand Vandermark, vice-president of government relations for Free Flight, Ltd. "No one is going to know what they're supposed to pay, so they're not going to pay anything, and neither parliament can enforce their legislation."

Prince Kirc Cameron-Jones said the divide will not increase anyone's faith in either government.

"This tariff nonsense is nothing more than two puppet governments exposing their own weakness for the entire League to see," Cameron-Jones said. "Misguided loyalty to the Marik name and those who hold it—especially those who hold it by fraud—will only cost the League as a whole. This is yet another sign that we need new blood in the Captain-Generalcy...legitimate rule."

Representatives from both parliaments say their authority in the League is absolute, and that they expect their edicts will be obeyed immediately and completely.

TAKING A STAND

(6 March 3071)

—Excerpt from a special announcement by Captain-General Kirc Cameron-Jones, Regulus, 6 March 3071

"Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen of the press.

"Having been left little choice but to take the reins of power after the treachery of Atreus was revealed, I have sought to defend the rights of the people—not only those of Regulus, as some commentators have suggested, but of the entire Free Worlds. I am not

a Marik, but I have done and will do everything in my power to lead effectively and impartially.

"Unfortunately, there exist divisive elements within our nation who fail to see the wisdom in a unified front against our enemies and have decided to mount a leadership challenge, throwing any hope of unity to the winds and allowing our enemies to devour us piecemeal. Yet, misguided as they are, these pretenders are loyal to the Free Worlds. Not so the viper of Atreus, who has for long decades lived at our nation's heart and who—four years

THE SCOURGE CONNECTION

—Private communiqué reportedly intercepted on Oriente, dated 27 February 3071 (veracity unconfirmed)

[Thomas—I don't think I need to spell out for you how this is going to be used. I should add, though, that if they are going public with this, it means they think they have enough evidence to convince the public of their case. That doesn't mean it is real evidence—just convincing. —CH]

>>>ENCRYPTION KEY 93j2Xy4TuBB11<<<

Captain-General Cameron-Jones:

We have the evidence we have long sought. It is a complicated web—we would expect no less from the man who defrauded the entire Free Worlds League for so long.

At this time we cannot directly connect the Pretender to the Scourge of Death's attempt on your life, but we have tied Christopher Halas to the crime. The past and current relationship between the two men makes it likely that the Pretender was behind Halas' actions, using Halas as a front since the Pretender, quite reasonably, would not wish to have direct dealings with an organization that bears strong hostility to the Marik name.

The evidence tying Halas to the assassination attempt is indirect but firm. We have tracked funds through several channels, as well as re-created a series of meetings in 3066 (see attachments). All of this information, taken together, leads to a single inescapable conclusion—the Pretender used Halas to enlist the most notorious terrorist organization in the League to carry out his will.

While the evidence we have gathered is clear, I must advise you that we likely do not have what we would need to initiate criminal charges (especially considering the state of the League's judiciary). We will continue our efforts in that direction, but now is the time to submit the evidence to the judgment of the people. Let them see what we have and make whatever judgments their wisdom directs.

—Enid Ashkelon, Regularan SAFE

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age to intercept the attack in space, but on Tamar, the attack "scours" several highly populated areas, including the primary headquarters for Clan Wolf.

(30 December) Units sporting FedSuns insignia launch a devastating attack on the Capellan world of Mitchell, targeting the planet's most populous industrial centers. At the height of the assault, two cobalt-laced thermonuclear weapons airburst over the planet's two largest cities, decimating the local population and salting the proverbial earth.



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ago, while still maintaining his masquerade—tried to have me assassinated by a reborn Scourge of Death. This cuckoo has since fled to Oriente, where his 'loyalist' co-conspirators have offered him shelter.

"This cannot be allowed to continue. The cancer at the heart of the Free Worlds must be excised, and to that end, Regulus will take a stand. I have therefore authorized the following actions..."

A WORLD TOO FAR

(11 April 3071)

Oriente [OBS] – The former Captain-General looked bowed and haggard as he mounted the stage, seemingly much older than his father-in-law who stood at his side. The Grand Duke approached the right-hand podium, Thomas stopping a meter or two behind and pausing before stepping forward to his own

lectern. The delay made it clear that the Lord of Oriente was the senior figure present.

"Prince Cameron-Jones' proclamations against the League government and Oriente have destabilized the Free Worlds in a blatant campaign of self-aggrandizement," began the Grand Duke with an icy strength that belied his ninety years. "But his

SIEGING IS BELIEVING

(12 April 3071)

Oriente [ORIENTE OBSERVER] – The citizens of Oriente are breathing easy tonight, with the night sky displaying none of the terrifying light show that greeted them yesterday. From eyewitness reports, the fleet that came to devastate this world was not of Blakist origins, or even those of the illegal Captain-General, Corinne Marik, as was initially feared. Instead, our attackers hailed from a more disturbing quarter: the Principality of Regulus.

Apparently, the self-styled Prince of Regulus, Kirc Cameron-Jones (who also claimed the Captain-Generalcy nearly two years ago), decided to press his claims for legitimacy through force. He sent a fleet to Oriente, while minor elements struck at the nearby worlds of Dayr Khuna, Jouques and Shenwan. Perhaps hoping to destroy Duke Christopher Halas as a potential rival to the Captain-Generalcy, or the man long known as Thomas Marik, the Regular fleet came with enough BattleMech carriers on hand to support a full-scale invasion.

But Cameron-Jones' dreams of conquest were shattered as the *Santorini* Battle Group engaged his forces in orbit, in a display of firepower that left the attackers reeling. Captain-General Thomas, leading the defense from a ground-based command center, graciously allowed the survivors to retreat, claiming only the Regular corvette *Attica* in reparations.

In Thomas' words, the rest of the Regular force would be "better needed at home." Whether this statement amounted to a threat of reprisal from a man known for chivalry and honor, or simply conveyed an impression of the situation wrought by the Word of Blake's ongoing Jihad, Cameron-Jones' actions have uncomfortably brought to light how fractured and endangered the League has become.

STREET WHISPERS

[Kirc Cameron-Jones]: —known all along! But now, *now* Halas will pay for his temerity! Is the fleet ready yet?

[Col. Mark Branhauber]: Sir, I must again emphasize that I strongly advise against this course of action. We have no idea what they've got there.

[KCJ]: She said you'd oppose me on this. I expected better of you, Colonel.

[MB]: Sir, with all due respect, I don't trust your consort, but *she* doesn't enter into this.

[KCJ]: You question my judgment, Mark? Halas' hold on Oriente is tenuous now at best—the legacy of the company he keeps. A swift strike to remove him and the Pretender, and the rest of the League will finally recognize their *true* Captain-General.

[MB]: Sir, at least postpone the strike so we can go through the SAFE report further. The Ninth has yet to load up anyway, and despite what Ms. Amora says about Halas, assassination has never been his style.

[KCJ]: We have been friends for a long time, Mark, but you would do well to follow your orders. I trust Sonja implicitly; in her own way, perhaps it *was* she who inspired this master-stroke, but don't think me a fool. The fleet goes. As planned. Meanwhile...have the Second Hussars finished deploying to Wallis yet?

[MB]: No sir, they're still en route. Marshall Brett was most displeased when they lifted off. Once they get to Wallis, they're to take up defensive positions on the Gascoigne Plains, fifty klicks from the Ronin facility.

[KCJ]: Yes, yes. And their other orders?

[MB]: They begin preparing as soon as they arrive. They'll be ready when you need them, my Prince.

[KCJ]: Excellent...Oh, don't look so sour, old friend! In a few weeks, I'll finally be the undisputed Captain-General, and with our League reunited, we'll remove the Blakist scum from our midst forever. Now come, Sonja is throwing a party this evening; I'd like you to attend. There are some people we'd like you to meet...

—Partial transcript of laser-microphone surveillance between Colonel Mark Branhauber and Prince Kirc Cameron-Jones, dated 3 March 3071 (veracity unconfirmed)

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most recent actions go beyond ego-massaging to outright folly. Claiming the Free Worlds throne was a misguided—yet understandable—step, but launching military attacks on his neighbors falls into the realm of malice.”

“[Cameron-Jones’] actions play into the hands of our mutual enemies: the very people Cameron-Jones claims to oppose,” added the former Captain-General. “It is this self-cannibalization of the Free Worlds that saves the invaders from doing their dirty work themselves. The Blakists have Atreus, but they don’t have the Free Worlds. By turning Regulus against Oriente they eliminate two of their major opponents; irrespective of the outcome,

both powers will be weakened. The attempted Regularan invasions of Dayr Khuna, Jouques, Shenwan and Oriente itself accomplish exactly the opposite of what the Prince claims are his goals.”

Duke Halas once more took center stage, and all eyes focused on him as he proclaimed: “Make no mistake, the Regularan invasion will fail. We have already blunted their mercenary forces on several worlds, and the *Santorini* Battle Group intercepted and disabled their primary task force here. We will not be dissuaded from opposing the Word of Blake. A free and independent Oriente will forever stand against tyrants, be they foreign or domestic. Oriente is a world too far in Regulus’ ambitions, and one that Cameron-Jones will find impossible to swallow.”

CORPORATE INTENT

(18 April 3071)

Andurien [ANDURIEN BUSINESS JOURNAL] – Irian-based corporate conglomerate Irian Technologies (IrTech) announces yet another estimated growth of 13 percent for the next financial period.

Having openly announced its cooperation with the Word of Blake (WoB) last October, IrTech recently switched its forecasts from quarterly to monthly “due to an increasingly hard-to-predict economic environment.” In their bulletin, IrTech’s executive board also welcomed the decisions of the leading stock exchanges in League and Alliance space to leave IrTech titles open for trade.

“Freezing our accounts and traded assets only hurts an already crumbling economy in a large part of [both] our realms,” said IrTech CEO Chris Blocher. “Even this war will come to an end in its time. Let’s not waste time and money in bureaucracy. I personally will stand trial at the end of this if anyone deems it necessary. But right now, I prefer to focus my energy on the pressing matters at hand.”

ABJ’s leading business analysts assume that these “pressing matters” include WoB’s ongoing efforts to obtain more than one directly controlled seat on the board of directors.

In related news, Irian and affiliated planets continue to reinforce their security assets. Standing forces and militia reserves are currently undergoing massive upgrading, as are stationary installations. IrTech has also hired more auxiliary units, most of them smaller mercenary outfits like the HeavyHell Raisers (relieving Redfield’s Renegades on Irian) or the Black Cats on Acubens, who have proven loyal to WoB in the past few months.

Contracts are issued by IrTech directly, not WoB local command, which only holds command rights in the event of imminent action. Interested parties are invited to apply; the call is still open.

THE TRUTH WILL OUT

—Intercepted live broadcast by INI affiliate Atrean Channel 5, 5 May 3071

[Bill Stafford]: “...And in sporting news, the Atreus Eagles have revealed their lineup for tonight’s match against Irian Fire. McAndrew will replace Hassan, who’s still out with a hamstring injury, but the rest of Coach Remarque’s team are the same who successfully trounced the Connaught Irish last month.”

[Jacob Smith]: “Sounds like it’ll be a class match, Bill. In hockey...”

[Cormac Ramirez]: “Hold it, hold it!”

[A middle-aged man appears in the field of view, pulling off a headset.]

[Ramirez]: “This can’t go on.”

[Stafford]: “We’re still live, Cormac!” *[gestures to the camera]*

[Ramirez]: “I know. Clear the stage. You don’t want to be part of this.”

[The anchors reluctantly shuffle out of view.]

[Ramirez]: “Please excuse the interruption, but this can’t wait and after tonight there won’t be another chance.” *[takes a deep breath]* “From midnight tonight, our ‘friends’ in the Word of Blake are insisting on a five-minute broadcast delay for ‘technical reasons.’ In reality, this gap will allow them to censor our broadcasts, notably the news and current affairs. This runs counter to the principles upon which Irian News Interstellar was built and comes at a time when we’re already cooperating with the authorities on matters of ‘national security.’

“At the request of the Captain-General’s office, we did not report on the clashes between FWLM and Blakist forces on Atreus, nor on those that took place *and are still ongoing* on other worlds. Enough is enough! Sacrificing some liberty for security is a bitter pill, but one we’ve had to swallow. This is tantamount to thought control, part of a stealth conquest of the—”

>>Signal terminated at source<<



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PLUNGING INTO DARKNESS

SHROUD OF TURIN

[Yee]: "Next topic: the confusing three-way conflict that occurred near the town of Deres. Nikki, your take?"

[Nikki]: "Well, for one, we have the tremendous defense of our soil by the resident 212th Infantry Regiment, the Flying Furies. Obviously, their experience and tenacity was the key to their success against the mercenary and Blakist forces."

[Charles]: "Oh please, Nicole. You know damn well the Furies got lucky—those mercs ran scared when the Blakists popped up out of nowhere and nearly wiped them out. It's only because of the booby traps the mercs left that the Blakists took enough damage for the ground-pounders to take them down."

[Yee]: "Possibly. But I tend to agree with Nikki, Charles. The incredible bravery the Furies displayed was awe-inspiring, to say the least."

[Charles]: "I grant you that. The image that cameraman got of those three young riflemen facing down a Blakist *Lightray* will most likely win this year's Beijing Award."

[Nikki]: "I'm not saying it was all the Furies. They were key, yes. But not the sole reason."

[Charles]: "Glad to see the blonde doesn't go root-deep."

[Yee]: "So as far as the timeline of events goes, we have the Golden Boys—second-rate mercs we now know were hired by the Duchy of Andurien—hitting Deres and the CCAF supply depot located there."

[Nikki]: "Correct."

[Yee]: "Then, after pushing through the still-mustering Furies, of whom half—"

[Charles]: "Three-quarters."

[Yee]: "—Three-quarters were stationed nearby, but not in the immediate area. As the Boys loaded up the supplies, a Blakist force pops up from the ground and nearly demolishes them."

[Charles]: "Well, the Word forces obviously had somehow gotten onto Turin undetected."

[Nikki]: "Which begs the question as to who fell asleep at the switch for THAT error to happen?"

[Yee]: "Absolutely. The Maskirovka has already begun an investigation, according to their press conference earlier today."

[Charles]: "So the Word pushes the Boys out, but doesn't load up on supplies. Actually, according to a source in the Furies, it looked as if the Word was searching for something. They weren't loading supply transports."

[Yee]: "Yet they still got caught by some of the mercenary booby traps."

[Nikki]: "Of course. They're fanatics. Brains aren't in ready supply."

[Charles]: [*scoffs*] "How little you know."

[Yee]: "Ok, when we get back from the break, we'll have Kenneth Clarkson as our special guest—the same young man who took the picture we've all been seeing these last few days..."

—Transcript from *The Citizens' Review*, Turin Media Net, 5 February 3071

ANTI-BLAKIST RIOTS SWEEP CONFEDERATION

(1 March 3071—System Error 0404—Story relayed via JumpShip 16 April 3071)

Jasmine [ISAP] – Today, a mob of Capellan citizens rampaged through Jasmine's hyperpulse generator station, killing the Word of Blake technicians that operated it and dragging their bloody bodies through the streets.

ARRIVAL

(14 February 3071)

Ares [CBS] – Slated for arrival later today, the bulk of the remaining Green Machine mercenary outfit will bolster Ares' flagging defensive capability, but with the recent departure of the Fourth MAC, the planet remains at risk from Federated Suns reprisal attacks.

Colonel Michael Green assured planetary and militia leaders in a short meeting at the governor's mansion late last night that the Green Machine was indeed "ready, willing and able to protect this vital Confederation system from encroaching enemies." Some concern still lingers on Mandarin Hill, however, as the Machine's reputation is less than stellar, according to the Galatean Review Board's statistics. This alone has many citizens worried, despite assurances from Mandrinn Gunford.

The Machine's last mission took place on Purvo, where it participated in the defense of that world until its contract was terminated in 3067. Though the unit suffers from some "staffing issues," Colonel Green assured the people of Ares that the Machine would be 100 percent operational within a week of grounding.

The deployment of mercenary forces along the FedSuns border is not unusual these days. With much of the regular Confederation military either shifting to the Protectorate front or defending key interior targets, many worlds such as Ares, Turin and Mitchel have augmented militia forces with mercenaries.

"Precautions will be taken, however," Mandrinn Gunford admitted. "We certainly don't want incidents like the ones we've heard of on Victoria. Citizens may rest assured that the Machine will be accountable during their stay, lest they run afoul of Confederation law."

Colonel Green concurred. "We will abide by the conditions set in our contract with the Confederation. We'd like to assure the citizens of Ares: you will be safe for as long as the Green Machine is here. You have my word."

EARLY 3071: HELL UNLEASHED

Members of the mob voiced several complaints about the Word of Blake. Xiyun Li, a 43-year old elementary school teacher, said, "The Blakists have placed us under interdiction. Many of us cannot speak with our families on other worlds. Our businesses have suffered."

"[The Blakists] brought the rage of the Davions down upon us," said Natalya Lavrov, a 26-year old mother of two. "If not for them, Sian would not be under attack."

Jasmine is only the most recent world to see Word of Blake staff driven from its HPG. Those parts of the Capellan HPG network still operating are largely controlled by the Confederation, though a few HPGs—such as Highspire's—remain under Word operation. Sources within the Capellan government claim that the riots are spontaneous expressions of the people's outrage and that there is no concerted effort by the Confederation to take control of the HPG network.

The Maskirovka claims to have had no involvement in the Jasmine riot.

WORSHIPPERS OF DEATH

[Camera focuses on a pretty woman wearing fatigues, a flak jacket and a helmet with a microphone. Explosions and weapons fire can be heard in the background.]

[Reporter]: "This is Sarah McCall of the FSNS, embedded with the AFFS forces here on Chesterton, where a fierce battle has developed for the fate of this planet. Mysterious attackers from a new Capellan force known only as 'Warrior House Rakshasa' have landed to give the Chesterton militia a bitter fight. As the fighting drew to close quarters, these mysterious Confederation troops revealed their true nature all too clearly..."

[Camera pans down to the ground where a massive body lies. Smaller than an Elemental, but still clearly much larger than a human male, the body is dressed in tattered and bloody black armor. The camera focuses on an emblem over the corpse's heart.]

[Reporter]: "This enemy soldier swallowed poison rather than accept capture. Note the emblem on his chest: a depiction of the Death Goddess Kali. I don't know if our viewers at home can see, but she is holding a curved sword and a severed head in her two left hands and blessing her followers with her two right hands. She wears a garland of 51 severed heads around her neck. This emblem ties these warriors to Kali Liao and her Thuggee cult."

[Camera pans back and up, settling once again on the pretty reporter.]

[Reporter]: "What is even more disturbing is what lies beneath this soldier's battle suit. His muscles seem to be enhanced and armor plating has been surgically implanted beneath his skin. The soldier's modifications seem to be similar to scattered rumors the MIIO has heard about Blakist super-soldiers called Manei Domini. Is there a connection between Kali Liao and these so-called 'Hands of the Master'? If true, this is an ominous sign—"

[Voice Off-Camera]: "Fall back, fall back! They've broken through!" *[Camera pans wildly, showing ten to fifteen soldiers clad in black armor running into the AFFS compound. One emerges who seems to have four arms, two of which carry automatic weapons, while a third races toward the camera. His dao flashes downward and the picture dissolves into static.]*

—Live FSNS broadcast from Chesterton, 20 March 3071, shortly before the planet's fall

COMSTAR AID REFUSED IN THE CONFEDERATION

(5 March 3071)

Orestes [INN] – After months of uncertainty, Primus Gavin Dow has at last been in contact with Precentor Maria Hess. Serving as his personal representative, Precentor Hess set out across the Capellan Confederation to offer Chancellor Liao ComStar's aid in restoring the HPG network. Because of the network's poor condition, however, all contact with Hess' party was lost more than six months ago. Despite fears that the mission ran afoul of hostile forces, by Blake's will, the Precentor succeeded in reaching Sian and securing a private audience with the Chancellor. Unfortunately, Hess reported that Sun-Tzu Liao chose to follow the lead of the Free Worlds League in rejecting ComStar's help.

The decision is certain to leave billions of Capellans in the dark for years to come. Though ComStar technicians have worked tirelessly over the past two years to restore communications throughout the rest of the Inner Sphere, without their skill and knowledge, coverage of the Confederation's HPG network remains patchy at best. The impact on the Confederation's economy is virtually incalculable. Worse, poor communications are putting Confederation and League forces fighting Blakist incursions at a disastrous disadvantage.

Last week, Primus Dow personally and publicly reiterated his offer to aid the Confederation. In the special transmission, he asked Chancellor Liao to reconsider his position before following the Free Worlds League in a "most unwise course of action."



(24 December 3070)
"President Strauss Proposes 'New D

(27 December 3070)
"Herotitus Government in Crisis" ("Carter Assassination...

[ISAP]

ACCESSING



EARLY 3071: HELL UNLEASHED

HORROR NIGHT

[Anchor]: "...and now, with the latest update, here's Channel 28's own Bruce Harvey. Bruce, what's the situation?"

[Switch to: full-screen image of disheveled and soot-stained reporter standing in front of the still-smoldering husk of a building. In the distance, long lines of fire snake up the hillside.]

[Harvey]: "The fires still rage here in the Boot Hill section of Crimson. Behind me stands the burned-out shell of what was a Tru-Save store. The flames were so intense, the building still smolders hours after being put out. I can still feel the heat, even though we're nearly a hundred meters away."

[Anchor]: "I have to ask, Bruce: is there any word on what exactly happened earlier today? Can you put any rumors to rest?"

[Harvey]: "According to an anonymous source close to the Magestrix's Resistance, Word of Blake forces initiated another round of dialogue at approximately ten-hundred this morning. While we don't know the topic of discussion, we do know that shortly before noon, several DropShips entered the airspace above Hallison, McGarver and the Boot Hill areas of the city and showered the area with some sort of heavy mist. Despite efforts by local authorities, a mass panic evolved as many assumed the mist was a biological attack—similar to the acidic rain sprayed over Cleopatra several months ago.

"From what the local emergency crews have told me, the mist was actually some sort of adhesive accelerant—possibly a derivative form of Inferno fuel—which ignited several major flash-fires when the DropShips opened fire on their next pass."

[Anchor]: "By the Unfinished Book..."

[Harvey]: "Crews managed to contain the fire in McGarver, but no one is being allowed to enter or leave the area. Fire suppression teams—already short-staffed by the ongoing enemy siege here—are overwhelmed in Hallison and Boot Hill, with much of the focus now on evacuating the adjoining suburbs. With the speed and intensity of this firestorm, it will likely increase as it sweeps into the heart of the Opal District, where much of Crimson's industrial base is located."

[Anchor]: "Is there no conjecture on why the Word would do such—"

[Image suddenly dissolves into a logo of a downturned black broadsword, wreathed in fire, superimposed upon a red triangle with the number "41" on it.]

[Voice]: "Citizens of Canopus, hear us! This warning comes as a result of your Magestrix's inability to cooperate with the authority of the Word of Blake and her ally, the Capellan Confederation. Know that our offensive will cease when the fugitive Emma Centrella and her sadistic lapdog, Hadji Doru, step forward to accept their fates as criminals against humanity.

"Those of you who see the fallacy of your rulers are welcome into our ranks. Save your city and your fellow Canopians by embracing the Truth and overturning the weaker order. Surrender Centrella and Doru, or Crimson will be bathed in Holy Fire. "You have twenty-four hours to comply."

[Static]

—CNA News Special Report, Canopus, 11 April 3071 (delivered via courier to CNA affiliates on Bass)

CANOPUS UNBOWED

(13 April 3071 – Report delivered via courier to ISAP Detroit office)

Canopus [ISAP] – Word of Blake's Forty-first Shadow Division set ablaze Crimson, the capital of the Magistracy of Canopus, in an effort to flush out the leaders of the Canopian resistance. As of tonight no casualty figures are available, though city officials estimate that the number of deaths will eventually run into the tens of thousands. Several city services, including Crimson's power plant and waste treatment plant, were destroyed in the attack. Six hours later, large portions of the city are still burning.

According to Blakist sources, Magestrix Emma Centrella and Senior General Hadji Doru were killed in the assault. However, unnamed sources within the Crimson Fire Department report that their bodies were never recovered, and Word of Blake ground troops remain in their siege positions around the city. A widespread belief among the people of Crimson maintains that Centrella and Doru survived and escaped to continue their fight against Word of Blake occupation.

The Forty-first Shadow Division, also known as "Uriel's Blinding Fire", was sent to Canopus to put down the Canopian resistance movement, a task that Word of Blake's Thirty-fourth Division and several mercenary units proved unable to accomplish despite occupying Canopus and several neighboring worlds for the better part of two years.



"President Strauss Proposes 'New Direction'"

(1 January 3071)
 "Who's That Girl?" ("Local Debutante Already a Fixture...") [Regulan Rumors] DOWNLOADING

(3 January 3071)
 "Fellers: Time 'Running Out' for Renegade Mercenaries" [Wasat Inquisitor] ACCESSING



EARLY 3071: HELL UNLEASHED

TERRORISTS SLAY HUNDREDS ON KITTERY

(2 May 3071)

Terra [VOICE OF TERRA] – The mission to bring the Light of Blake to the people of Kittery has been threatened by the increasingly violent actions of a small group of malcontents. The return of

No wie Tiao—former ruler of Kittery before the world was seized by the Federated Suns—was widely celebrated by a population that had suffered for more than half a century under the yoke of Davion oppression. However, a handful of people remained unwilling to embrace the brighter future promised by the return of Kittery's hereditary rulers. Instead, they embarked on a campaign that brought terror to this otherwise peaceful world.

Their first targets were seemingly innocuous. McKinley Ranch was a wildlife preserve dedicated to the care and rehabilitation of injured Kittery carnivores such as the majestic razor cat. The good work of people who labored selflessly to undo some of the damage human encroachment is causing to the native jungle habitat was brought to a brutal end. The terrorists' attack left no survivors.

Next to be struck was the Knowls Good Food Corporation factory on the outskirts of the capital. Before dawn, a powerful explosion that rocked all of CanFu City leveled the plant and slaughtered its entire night shift.

In the months that followed, the ferocity of these terrorist attacks continued to escalate. The Romano Liao Memorial Hospital was gassed, leaving more than a thousand patients and staff dead. Car bombs targeted civic buildings with no regard for the scores of innocent bystanders who have been killed or many hundreds who have been injured. By far the worst has been the latest atrocity—the bombing of the Petersen Orphanage in Cathay Province.

Little is known about the group that has styled itself the "Kittery Freedom Army." Their leader, an enigmatic figure known only as "Stone," appears to command an almost fanatical loyalty from his few followers. The KFA's ranks contain many off-worlders, supporting the theory that the group is being sponsored by ComStar to force the Word of Blake to maintain a garrison on Kittery. The Word of Blake will certainly continue to cooperate with Kittery authorities in their endeavor to stamp out this vile terrorist group.

SITUATION

>>>BEGIN PRIORITY OMICRON MESSAGE / KITTERY: PRECENTOR-LEVEL ONLY<<<

Situation on Kittery is under control. No additional forces necessary. Priority re-routing to destinations Rho, Psi and Gamma in effect. System is in flux for transit. Blue-green-green protocols in effect, all non-essential units are to be redirected elsewhere.

>>OMICRON ADDENDUM / VICTORIA<<

Upsilon priority. All available systems to re-route. Coordinates Sigma-tau-five.

>>OMICRON ADDENDUM / INARCS<<

Psi priority. All available protocols enabled.

>>SYSTEM ALPHA BROADCAST: PROTOCOL-TAU: ALL LOCAL RECEIVERS<<

System advisory. Kittery system is currently under restriction due to high-level contamination. All traffic is to re-route through alternate transit points. Delays likely. Length of restriction unknown. Progress is proceeding, status will be determined shortly. Apologies for inconvenience. Have a pleasant day.

>>>MESSAGE ENDS<<<

—travel advisory relayed to all stations within 50 light-years of Kittery, 27 May 3071

FROM HIS CELESTIAL WISDOM

SECURE/SENSITIVE/HIGHEST PRIORITY

091502DJUN3071

FROM: UNKNOWN [CENSORED] TRANSMISSION SOURCE

GREETINGS TO THE MOST HONORED TANCRED SANDOVAL, DUKE OF ROBINSON, PRINCE-REGENT OF THE FEDERATED SUNS

BE IT KNOWN THAT I ENTIRELY DISAVOW THE MONSTROUS ATTACK ON THE WORLD OF CHESTERTON AND SEND MY CONDOLENCES FOR THE TERRIBLE SUFFERING OF YOUR PEOPLE. IN NO WAY WAS THIS ASSAULT SANCTIONED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION, NOR WAS IT CONDUCTED BY ANY OF MY FORCES.

I PLEDGE, ON MY HONOR AS CHANCELLOR OF THE CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION, THAT THE CRIMINAL RAKSHASA WARRIOR HOUSE WILL BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE AND WILL TROUBLE YOU NO FURTHER.

SURELY, YOU MUST KNOW THAT THIS INCIDENT BEARS THE STENCH OF THE WORD OF BLAKE. I URGE YOU NOT TO FALL VICTIM TO THEIR TRAPS BY ALLOWING THIS ATTACK TO DIVERT YOUR ATTENTION AWAY FROM THE DEFENSE OF YOUR REALM.

THE CONFEDERATION IS NOT YOUR ENEMY THIS TIME. PLEASE DO NOT PROCEED TO MAKE IT SO.

SIGNED//CHANCELLOR SUN-TZU LIAO

TOOTH AND NAIL

(20 June 3071)

Merope [TNS] – Three days ago the soldiers of the Lone Star Regiment detected the inbound DropShips of the despised and feared mercenary death squad, Hansen's Roughriders, approaching Merope on another mission to lay siege to the planet. Despite the news, morale remains high after our hired guns' latest victory against other would-be invaders.

But the Lone Stars aren't likely to attempt to drive off the Roughriders in a single push. Everyone here believes that the Roughriders will have more nuclear weapons with them, like those they used against the freedom fighters on Electra; if the Lone Stars group up in one place, they will be vulnerable to the same tactics. Instead, the Taurian defenders here believe they can use their mobility to whittle away at the much slower Davion juggernaut that has shattered unit after unit since the Federated Suns falsely accused the Concordat of killing civilians on Bromhead almost five years ago, when the first efforts to liberate the Pleiades Cluster began. That campaign started after the Davions' own surprise assault against Taurus, punctuating decades of rising tensions all along the border zones.

Here on Merope, the Lone Stars are confident that this world will become the graveyard for the criminal Roughriders. Thanks to salvage taken when the Lone Stars drove off Raymond's Redcoats several weeks ago, the regiment is equipped with several top-of-the-line units, including some generously loaned by allied forces from the Word of Blake, and the Lone Star thus vastly outnumbers the FedSuns' hired murderers. Protector Shraplen has also wisely sent several battalions of conventional forces to supplement the BattleMech-exclusive Lone Star. Many of these warriors eagerly await their chance to collect a share of the multi-billion bull reward placed on the Roughriders' heads, posted by the Protector himself after the Roughriders' nuclear attack on Electra, and the alleged torture performed on the Taurian survivors there.

ALLIANCE UNDER FIRE

ARMING THE ELECTORATE

Calafell [ISAP] – I think it would clarify things if Democracy Now went ahead and changed its name to Democracy Later.

That's the message I take away from Lindon Ashley's unexpected and unwelcome rise to power within the movement. While I appreciate Ashley's verbal dedication to the cause of democracy, his actions contradict his words. Democracy, he seems to think, is fine and good in its place, but that place seems to be quite cloistered. Outside those limits, the ruling tactics Ashley claims to abhor are, to him, quite acceptable.

History repeatedly demonstrates the difficulty of imposing democracy at the barrel of a gun, but it is a lesson militants like Ashley continually ignore. He seems to believe that popular sovereignty and democratic debate are only worthwhile if people listen to you right away. He either has no stomach for or no concept of

HANG TOGETHER OR HANG SEPARATELY

Viewers, I wasn't intending to do an op-ed piece, but this one fell into my lap while I was reporting on two raids. As you can see behind me, Top Twenty sensation Frank "Flashpoint" Paulson is ambushing three Blakist 'Mechs. His *Enforcer III* jumps into the midst of a *Blue Flame*, a *Lightray* and a *Gurkha*. His autocannon chews into the *Gurkha's* left leg while the lasers cut off the right side, sending it crashing to the ground like a puppet with cut strings. Down to just two opponents, he jumps in and out, using all of his skill to get better angles and aiming truer than the veteran Wobbies could ever hope to do. By the time "Flashpoint" finally retreats—left arm blown off and autocannon empty—his final tally is one destroyed *Blue Flame*, its missiles cooking off like popcorn and spewing husks of shrapnel over the street, and a crippled *Gurkha*. An amazing accomplishment for a lone warrior.

Contrast that to this assault by four bush leaguers, shown here. They're hitting a detention center guarded by a *White Flame*, a *Marauder* and a *Crusader*. The allies' *Griffin* and *Watchman* team up on the *Crusader*, lasers and missiles slamming into the right side and leg. As the Blakies turn to respond, the *White Flame* gets hit in the back by the hidden *Valkyrie* and *Scarabus*. Initial return fire from the Wobbies is sporadic and hurried, and most of it misses. This battle doesn't have the intense display of skill you saw in "Flashpoint's" ambush, nor are the odds as dramatic. But, methodically and using teamwork, the quartet manages to bring down all of the Blakist 'Mechs, only losing their *Valkyrie*. Add to our victory forty-one prisoners freed and you can see what a difference four lesser pilots have made working together.

For all his skill and talent, all Paulson did in the long run was take out one 'Mech. Meanwhile, our bush leaguers, working together, have destroyed three heavies and added capable members to the resistance, or at least sent them back to their families.

The lesson here couldn't be clearer. Work together, Solaris, or we're going to end up on the wrong end of the noose.

—Video op/ed "Lessons from the Bench," Free Solaris Productions, 20 March 3071

the hard work needed to organize and lead the masses—it's so much easier to start pointing guns.

Bad enough that Ashley employs non-democratic techniques against his enemies (witness the chaos he has wrought on Enzesfled), but Ashley's mistrust of the tools of democracy extends to his own movement. His rapid rise to power has not been accomplished through popular will, but through the thuggish tools of intimidation, bribery and blackmail.

Ashley has easily adopted the values and techniques of the nobles he claims to despise. Does anyone really think he will lead Alarion Province to democracy?

—From Annalise Guillaume's syndicated *Passing Parade* column, Commonwealth Press, 28 April 3071

OPPOSING VIEWS WELCOME

(17 April 3071)

Novara [ISAP] – Democracy Now, a movement self-described as a public interest champion, has been advocating radical changes in local planetary government for years. While already a party of some influence in the representative halls on Novara, in the months since the Alarion Atrocity, Democracy Now has branched out to several neighboring worlds, including Batajnica, Enzesfled and Calafell. This surge in prominence is generally attributed to the movement's new vice-president, Lindon Ashley. Ashley, who made himself known in Alarion Province during the Kaumberg Incident of 3063, has become the focal point of feudal opposition to Democracy Now, with many claiming he has usurped the position of its leader, president Calvin Strauss. To shed some light on this emerging political force, ISAP recently secured an interview with both gentlemen.

Below is an excerpt from the interviews; complete versions are available to subscribers.

[ISAP]: "Mr. Strauss, your movement's pursuit of greater democracy seems a peculiar one, given the nature of government on hundreds of worlds. Could you explain for our readers?"

[Strauss]: "Certainly! While feudalism and despotism have tended to be the predominant forms of government ever since humankind settled the stars, one doesn't have to be a student of history to see that this system no longer has its original reasons to exist. It does so for the same reason that any ancient system survives: corruption perpetuates and maintains itself. Initially, with the vast distances between inhabited planets and the resulting communication lags, centralized government was impractical—impossible, even. It was thus necessary to delegate considerable autonomy to local governmental leaders. Feudalism was the mechanism to ensure fealty to the distant central government, lest local leaders become too independent. Additionally, as feudalism emerged prior to the development of HPG communications, democratic elections would likewise have been nearly impossible, or at least extremely time-consuming. But technology has come a long way since then, and there really is no longer any reason why planetary governments cannot be elected democratically—much as is done on several Alliance worlds today. And so there is no reason why our representative with the Lyran government cannot be elected and confirmed via HPG. As has been evident on Novara and countless other worlds for some time now, democracies are a viable and productive alternative to feudal planetary rule."

[ISAP]: "Is your philosophy not at odds with your acceptance and support of the position of the Archon as ruler of the Lyran Commonwealth?"

[Strauss]: "Perhaps, if I was a man of absolutes. But good democracy relies on the concept of compromise, which is why it's the best form of government. And I must compromise on the necessity of the Archon's position and power through sheer historic precedent. While the Free Worlds League as a singular example shouldn't be considered conclusive proof that an interstellar democracy is impossible, lacking additional examples, one cannot discount that the League has been most successful as a nation while controlled by a powerful Captain-General. And with interstellar communication in the hands of fanatics or a singular cartel, true interstellar democracy will remain at risk without alternative means of communication. Finally, while not a perfect solution, having a strong and competent leader at the helm during times of war is always preferable to a war managed by committee, which returns us to the nature of compromise: a powerful *and* competent dictator is the lesser of available evils."

[ISAP]: "Mr. Ashley, you are credited with many recent successes by Democracy Now, but your position concerning the need for an Archon—and your past actions on Kaumberg—seem to be at odds with those of Mr. Strauss."

[Ashley]: "Well, we'd make poor proponents of democracy if our internal mindset was exclusively an extension of Calvin's personal philosophy, wouldn't we? He and I both promote the concept that within our unifying goal, opposing views are welcome—or what would the point be? As for Kaumberg, I'm confident your research has determined that the more outrageous claims are mere slander by our dim-witted feudal opponents. Certainly, I encourage people to show their support for their beliefs as passionately as possible, and I absolutely believe that there is no longer any need for a dictator at the helm of an interstellar nation. And it is absolutely true that most successful democracies started with a violent rebellion. But accusations that I seek the violent overthrow of the established order are ridiculous."

[ISAP]: "Aren't you concerned that your declarations that 'People should fight for their rights,' and accusations such as the ones you mentioned, may cause Loki to designate Democracy Now a terrorist organization?"

[Ashley]: "I am not inclined to believe Loki is prone to respond to hysteria. I would hope they would use their considerable resources to combat greater threats and true terrorists like Blakists, pirates and Leaguers. Those are bigger threats to the Lyran Commonwealth than picketers successfully defending themselves from feudal enforcers."

EARLY 3071: HELL UNLEASHED

DUNDEE: SHUT DOWN GALATEA!

[Gabriel Jardinais]: "General Dundee, you are on record as calling for the complete cessation of mercenary activities on Galatea. Would you care to comment on why you think such a move is necessary?"

[Claverhouse Dundee]: "Damn straight I'd like to comment. In case you hadn't noticed, son, Skye has been up to its collective armpits in trouble the past ten years. And when you start looking at who is doing most of the shooting at us, it usually turns out to be mercs hired out of Galatea."

[Jardinais]: "So, General. You're objecting to mercenary troops having the right to choose who they work for?"

[Dundee]: "Damn right I am. Galatea is just too convenient for those Word of Blake loonies, or the Leaguers. Hell, even the Snakes are hiring mercs again."

[Jardinais]: "Surely it's also 'convenient' for Skye and the rest of the Alliance too? Where would you be without all those mercenary commands that are holding the Clan front? How would Skye fare without all those mercs hired to strengthen local defenses?"

[Dundee]: "Lots of those people are Lyrans. They should be a bit more selective about who they work for. Hell, if they wanted to fight they should just have joined the army!"

[Jardinais]: "Perhaps it's the pay they like?"

[Dundee]: "Humph! Well, right now we need to choke off the Blakists' source of fresh troops. And that means Galatea has to be shut down."

[Jardinais]: "Isn't there a danger that a move like that could backfire? You'd essentially be forcing mercs into the Blakists' arms?"

[Dundee]: "And join the ranks of the blacklisted? Nonsense."

—ISAP interview with General John Claverhouse Dundee, 1 April 3071

LET THE GAMES BEGIN

[Camera shows an anchor in his early thirties. His hair is ash blond and his eyes are a piercing blue. He is tanned and handsome. He smiles widely, revealing perfect teeth.]

[Anchor]: "Ladies and gentlemen, you may believe that sport has fled Solaris VII with the Blakist attack, but you couldn't be more wrong.

"Two days ago, only hours after most civilians evacuated Solaris City, the Solaris Home Defense League hit the Word of Blake. The Wobblers responded by pounding the city with their DropShips, but not before the SHDL captured the International Zone and hundreds of impounded BattleMechs. And so we have an empty city, no concern over damage, and hundreds of MechWarriors spoiling for a fight.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the arenas aren't gone from Solaris City. Solaris City *is* the arena."

[Picture switches to a pale white Toyama stalking a green and blue Mad Cat from Zellbrigen Stables.]

[Anchor]: "The city is the biggest, deadliest and most thrilling venue in the history of gladiatorial combat. That's why we at The Fight Channel are offering 24-hour coverage of the Battle for Solaris City."

[The Toyama's PPCs rip into the Mad Cat.]

[Anchor]: "Every day we'll bring you the most exciting games in the Inner Sphere. We'll score the battles, count the hits, measure the damage. And, of course, there are always bonus points for every kill."

[The camera pulls back, revealing the smoking wreckage that was the Mad Cat's cockpit.]

[Anchor]: "So sign up today for The Fight Channel's Fantasy League. Choose your favorite stable or build your own, fighter by fighter. Face off against other fighters. We'll bring you the action and then we'll bring you the scores—and who knows? The next Solaris Grand Champion might be crowned in your very own home!

"As always, all wagering is welcome."

—Taken from the opening broadcast of *The Fight Channel*, Solaris VII, 5 May 3071

AND IN OTHER NEWS...**ARC-ROYAL SUMMIT THREATENED**

(7 February 3071)

Arc-Royal [INN] – We are pleased to report that earlier rumors of Primus Gavin Dow's death have proven untrue. His motorcade was targeted this morning as it passed through Old Connaught here on Arc-Royal in what Com Guard security forces believe was an attack by a suicide bomber. At least four Com Guards were killed in the blast as they attempted to prevent the attacker from approaching. In spite of their best efforts Primus Dow himself was wounded and was rushed to the Arthur Luvon Memorial Hospital, where he is reported to be comfortable.

This latest incident is the second such attack in as many weeks. The first narrowly missed Grand Duke Morgan Kell and his son, Khan Phelan Kell, as they arrived at Old Connaught Aeroport for the arrival of the Wolf Clan envoy, Galaxy Commander Katya Kerensky. The authorities are still working to identify the attackers and their motives. While the Word of Blake may be the most obvious suspect, Arc-Royal and surrounding worlds remain host to a sizable population of Rasalhague and Tamar expatriates. In the past both groups have sponsored terrorist activities against the exiled Wolves here on Arc-Royal and against the Wolf Clan.

Just how much this latest attack will affect the historic Arc-Royal Summit remains to be seen. Not since the last Whitting Conference

EARLY 3071: HEL

has the Inner Sphere seen such a gathering of military and political leaders. Hosted by Grand Duke Morgan Kell, the guest list includes General of the Armies Adam Steiner, Primus Gavin Dow, Precentor-Martial Victor Steiner-Davion, Khan Phelan Kell, General Maeve Wolf, and now Galaxy Commander Katya Kerensky. The inclusion of Clan Wolf at the table has sparked mixed reactions across the Alliance, but also holds out the hope that a negotiated settlement with one or more of the Clans will free Inner Sphere troops to deal with the Word of Blake threat once and for all. Some analysts even speculate that we are seeing the first steps toward reunification of the Wolf Clan.

In light of these continued attacks, the summit has been temporarily suspended, but will be reconvened at a secure location.

DEATH FROM THE HEAVENS

[Camera focuses on a pretty woman in her early thirties. She wears a navy blue blazer and a white ankle-length skirt. A sky blue scarf covers her hair, but a raven curl peeks out. Her eyes are so brown they are nearly black. She speaks into a narrow, handheld microphone.]

[Arkabi]: "This is Sadia Arkabi of AIN reporting from Arkab, just outside the city of Al Qir'awn, the site of a massive asteroid strike that has devastated the city and much of the surrounding farmlands. I don't know if you can see, Hamid..."

[Camera pans away from the woman, revealing a hellish landscape. Broken buildings burn in the distance, pouring acrid, black smoke into the sky, turning day to night. The city beyond glows molten orange at its heart, burning with fires that no one is bothering to put out. The sand Arkabi stands on appears to have been splintered into glass the color of smoke. Worst of all, people beyond counting walk out of the city. Some are hysterical, some are inconsolable, but most are simply numb, walking without seeing, walking just to walk, as if somehow they might walk themselves out of this nightmare.]

[Arkabi]: "...but the devastation is unbelievable. It is not right to say Al Qir'awn is filled with refugees. Better to say that all Al Qir'awn is a refugee."

[She turns and holds her microphone out to a man walking by, his face slack, eyes wide and unblinking.]

[Arkabi]: "Sir. Sir? Can you tell our viewers your story? What were you doing when the asteroid hit? Are the authorities providing you with help?"

[The man simply walks out of the shot, never turning to look at her, as if he and the reporter are not even on the same world.]

[Arkabi]: "They're all like this, Hamid. And believe it or not, this is the lucky side of the city. The north end, where the major pieces hit, is an inferno. Authorities estimate thousands of people died there, and thousands more may still be trapped."

[Another voice cuts in, this one deep and male.]

[Jabr]: "Sadia, this is Hamid. Do you see anything at the location that might explain how an asteroid of this size could have slipped

STEPPING STONE

(11 February 3071)

Pesht [THE DRAKE]—Last week, the Word of Blake brought the Jihad to Pesht. We awoke to DropShips falling from our skies, bitter seeds borne on an evil wind. The Twenty-ninth Division—Divine Fire—had come to call.

They lived up to their name.

Divine Fire laid waste to our world, smashing buildings, burning crops, tearing civilization out by the roots. But as bad as the Twenty-ninth was, they were nothing compared to the Forty-second Shadow Division.

Belial's Angels of Chaos.

I will never forget the sight of a dark-painted *Hammerhead* following the curve of the highway, running flat out a mere twenty meters above the ground as sunlight glinted off chrome highlights...

And trailing white smoke.

The nerve gas floated down, killing everything and everyone. Birds and insects rained out of the sky. The world was suddenly filled with the crash of metal meeting metal, the music of shattered glass. Followed by silence. Motionless cars and trucks littered the highway, barriers to the movement of our troops and 'Mechs.

And all it cost was five thousand civilian lives.

When the mushroom cloud finally came, it was almost anticlimactic.

But perhaps the most frightening thing was that the Angels left us as soon as Pesht surrendered, jumping to some other unfortunate world.

My heart fears that unfortunate world is named Black Luthien.

past our observatories? Why none of our astronomers plotted its orbit before this terrible day?"

[Arkabi]: "I'm sorry, Hamid, but there are no answers here." *[She shakes her head.]* "Not even questions. Only devastation."

[Jabr]: "No doubt these people will be saved, *Inshallah*. I'm afraid we have to go to breaking news. Thank you, Sadia."

[Arkabi bows her head and the camera switches to a headshot of a ruggedly handsome, fatherly man in his early fifties, his raven hair touched with silver. He puts his hand to his earpiece.]

[Jabr]: "The planetary government is announcing that it has so far been unable to contact the Combine. The Ministry of Information has issued a press release stating that they expect the Combine to respond to their request for emergency assistance by tomorrow at the latest. This is Hamid Jabr with AIN's continuing coverage of the disaster. Stay tuned."

—AIN Special Report, Arkab Islamic Network, Arkab, 12 February 3071

GHOST BEARS GO HOME!

Citizens of the Republic, it is time to *wake up!* Did we really throw off the oppression of the Dragon merely to trade it for the rule of the Ghost Bear? How little our freedom must matter to some of our countrymen.

Do you think the Clans offer us safety? Do you think they offer us security?

Were you watching, my brothers and sisters, when our own First Grumium Armored Militia forcibly removed cadets from the Frihet Training Facility? Cadets, whose only crime was opposing talks with the Ghost Bears and daring to express that opinion.

Brother fighting brother. Is this the kind of security you had in mind?

I beg you, brothers and sisters, do not take the Ghost Bears in. Do not undo the work of the great Focht.

Do not surrender to the Clans now.

—Flier distributed by the Rasalhague's Tears group, Grumium, 15 March 3071

THE IMPACT AT HOME

(6 April 3071)

Dnepropetrovsk [Colonial Daily] – Dear readers, over the years this column tended to be somewhat sarcastic and (sometimes overly) critical toward our Daimyo.

It won't be from this day on.

Though today's main article again offers enough loopholes for a juicy rant, I realized that our ruling father was right: For the first time in hundreds of years our society is threatened at its core.

Wars in the past have not touched us much; the occasional battles were short military actions that came and went by. We've suffered ComStar interdiction for a couple of weeks, longed for the occasionally late passenger JumpShip—all minor inconveniences.

Right here, right now, we are faced with a different situation. This particular day marks Day 888 since the last legible HPG message reached or left our station. Everything else since has been someone's propaganda, gibberish or plain static.

Enough to worry? No, of course not. Neither were the horrible news reports coming in by official courier—as long as that courier came. Until nearly two years ago. Since then, we've grown dependent on the occasional trader who knew our location and, of course, our own lone JumpShip, generously donated by Belokamennaja Trading.

I have specifically chosen the past tense because I have not heard from a trader in months. And because this morning Space Control released a bulletin stating that the *Irma Belokamennaja II* had been commandeered by DCMS forces passing through on their way to "the front"—whichever front that may be.

So here we stand: Stores emptied of all but the most basic goods, no way to communicate with the rest of the realm, completely on our own. A month ago, I complained about not getting

HELL UNLEASHED

the newest holovids anymore. A week ago the Department of Energy announced that three of five fission reactors will run out of fuel rods by mid-year.

For the first time in my career, I am at a loss for words.

ДВУМ СМЕРТЯМ НЕ БЫВАТЬ, А ОДНОЙ НЕ МИНОВАТЬ, comrades. But you will hear from me again tomorrow.

FALCON ENVOYS ON ARC-ROYAL?

(14 April 3071)

Arc-Royal [ARNN] – Tonight the streets of Old Connaught are abuzz with the rumor that a *Lion*-class DropShip bearing the markings of Clan Jade Falcon has made planetfall at the local spaceport. Official sources refuse to comment, but other unconfirmed rumors are circulating that a Jade Falcon officer has been sighted on the landing field. If true, we have a tantalizing possibility that another Clan will join the summit currently convened aboard the Exile Wolf flagship, the *Werewolf*.

With the devastation on Tamar and facing attack by the Hell's Horses, the Wolf Clan has been forced to the negotiating table. We can only wonder what catastrophe could have befallen the Jade Falcons for them to emulate the Wolves. However, any such hopes must be tempered by the latest news from the Clan front: Our forces are still fighting with the Falcon invader on half a dozen worlds.

PROTECTORATE DEFENSES STRENGTHENED

(11 April 3071)

Terra [VOICE OF TERRA] – From the office of Precentor Martial Cameron St. Jamais has come an announcement that the Word of Blake Protectorate Militia is to be strengthened. Speaking from Mars, the Precentor Martial assures the billions who now enjoy the benevolent protection of the Word of Blake that this buildup is merely a precautionary measure. While some of the Protectorate's more belligerent neighbors have probed our defenses, local forces have always proved sufficient to deal with these acts of unprovoked aggression. However, the Word of Blake would be remiss in its duty to the many worlds that have requested Protectorate status if it chose to ignore the potential threat these rash actions represent.

By Blake's will, the means to strengthen the valiant militia forces is at hand. The weapons factories of Hesperus II were constructed originally to serve the people of the Terran Hegemony. Stolen by the faithless Lyrans, those same factories will now serve the descendants of their rightful owners. Production at the Defiance Industries plant buried beneath the Myoo Mountains has restarted. Soon state-of-the-art BattleMech designs will be marching off the production line and into service with the Protectorate Militia. So re-equipped, the militia will continue to serve as an effective deterrent to any who might consider breaking the peace of Blake.

EARLY 3071: HELL UNLEASHED

COME THE NIGHTWALKERS

(23 May 3071)

Wallis [FWNS] – Who are the Nightwalkers? Guessing this unit's identity has become the favorite game from the backrooms of Wallis' seediest drinking establishments to the cocktail parties of the social elite.

Unknown pirates are nothing new in League space, but a group able to drop out of the sky, take out an entire regiment of Regular Hussars and get away without a trace has sparked people's imaginations. Local bookmakers have started pools, but with the release of amateur tri-vid of the fierce fighting at the Second Hussars' Gascoigne Plains base, the flurry of betting has reached a fever pitch.

The oft-replayed footage provides few clues to the unit's identity. Their preferred colors seem to be white, black and purple, and many of their machines appear to hail from League factories—making the favorite theory that they may be a new Free Worlds Guards unit. However, Marian pirates, Blakist imposters, Alys Marik's renegades or even Lyran mercenaries continue to offer good returns.

Whoever these Nightwalkers are—their name comes from the almost Clan-like challenge their apparent leader broadcast from his *Albatross* just before the shooting started—they showed no mercy toward the Hussars. Nightwalker 'Mechs hunted down ejected pilots and even killed those who cowered in the many bunkers and barracks of the Hussars' base—warriors and non-combatants alike. More disturbing is that the Nightwalkers hit the Hussars only, completely ignoring the Ronin 'Mech factories a mere hour down the road. This has led some observers to believe that the Nightwalkers may return.

In sharp contrast to the savagery of the fighting, the light-hearted wagers and debates over the Nightwalkers' identity seem almost surreal. But this unusual preoccupation with the so-called "Nightwalker Mystery" conceals the fear that many Wallisians feel today, after the slaughter of their only defenders: If these brutal renegades do return, will the people be their next victims?

MORE CLANS ARRIVE?

(18 June 3071)

Winter [ISAP] – Over the past weeks, rumors have been filtering out of the Jade Falcon Occupation Zone that their Periphery front is under attack. Early speculation that the Steel Vipers had returned to avenge their expulsion from the Inner Sphere was soon quashed by reports that have positively identified a sizable force of Ice Hellions, a Clan previously not seen in the Inner Sphere. With confirmation of attacks on Bone-Norman and Anywhere, it appears that the Hellions are concentrating their efforts on the Falcons in much the same manner as the Hell's Horses have focused on the Wolf Clan. It remains unclear whether the two attackers are cooperating against the incumbent Clans.

Some analysts anticipate that yet a third Clan will assault the Ghost Bears, possibly indicating a decision by the Clans as a whole that those who have had prolonged contact with the Inner Sphere have become "contaminated." If such a purge is under way, then the most important question is whether these new Clans will remain in the Inner Sphere. Other experts have voiced fears that this new activity represents the start of a renewed Inner Sphere invasion in which all the Home Clans will participate. Only time will tell the extent of this new threat.

COMSTAR UNWELCOME

(25 June 3071)

Rasalhague [ISAP] – Today, the Ghost Bears and the Free Rasalhague Republic issued a joint statement formally asking ComStar to withdraw from Republic space. The move came as the Bears and the Republic continued to work on a mutual defense pact. The government contends that the protection of the Ghost Bears makes the presence of ComStar unnecessary.

Opponents of the pact in the Riksdag decry the abrupt departure of ComStar, whose personnel have helped keep the realm safe ever since the original Clan invasion. Said Kiichi Iversson, a member of parliament from Grumium, "Why are we turning our backs on ComStar? Don't listen to all the rationalizations. In the end, the only reason is that the Ghost Bears are unwilling to share their *isorla*."

ComStar has announced that it will abide by the wishes of the Rasalhague government. An evacuation date has not yet been set.



Date & Title	
(24 January 3071)	"Refit Facilities: BattleMech Triage Go
(2 February 3071)	"Robinson Silenced" ("Officials Fear Worst as Blakist Forces... [FSNN]
(19 February 3071)	"Sphere Watch: The Fragmenting Worlds League" [MercNet]

DOWNLOADED

ACCESSING



CHAOS RAMPANT: SAVAGE SILENCE

SAVAGE SILENCE

Journal Entry 189-R

Boy, did we hit it lucky. Our agent contacted us a few days ago; seems we got approached with similar offers, both on the Cappie world of Chamdo. One was from Askai—Mr. Enigma, but his checks are always good. The other...well, according to our agent, "slimy" didn't even begin to describe him.

Askai wants us to defend his client's property. Mr. Slime wants us to blow it up.

Choices, choices. What's a merc to do?

SITUATION

Nadir Jump Point, Chamdo

Liao Commonality, Capellan Confederation

20 February 3071

A rare thing—two offers, each opposing the other—and a tough choice to make. One is a simple defense mission from a reliable broker; the other sounds like an assault on the same target from a dealer who, frankly, would probably do well in another life as a 'Mech lubricant. So what's the decision, commander?

CHAOS RAMPANT: SAVAGE SILENCE

NOTE: Before setting up, the player group should determine which contract they will honor. Mr. Askai's contract should follow all choice "A" instructions. Mr. Slimy's should follow all choice "B" instructions. Sections without an "A" or "B" apply to the track in general, regardless of choice.

GAME SETUP

CBT: Use maps from the Heavy Urban Terrain table (see p. 263, TW) for either choice. The gamemaster should select two buildings as the objective.

AT2: Use maps from the Heavy Urban Terrain table (see p. 263, TW) for either choice. The gamemaster should select two buildings as the objective. All forces begin the track at any Velocity below 6.

RPG: Use the maps from the Heavy Urban Terrain table as a guide. The gamemaster should be prepared with a generic building blueprint, in case the fighting goes indoors.

Attacker (A)

The Attacker is a mixed unit of "weekend warriors" and mercenaries. As a whole, they have Green experience. The Attacker's deployed force should be 125 percent of the Defender's total deployed force. The Attacker may enter from any map edge, and must designate one edge as their home edge for purposes of withdrawal.

Defender (A)

The Defender is the player group. They may designate up to 25 percent of their total force. The Defender sets up all units within 10 hexes of the gamemaster-designated buildings and should designate one map edge as their home edge.

Attacker (B)

The player group is the Attacker. They may designate up to 25 percent of their total force and may enter the playing area from any edge. They should designate one map edge as their home edge for withdrawal purposes.

Defender (B)

The Defender is a mixed unit of WoB Acolytes and mercenaries. As a whole, they have Green experience. The Defender's deployed force should be 150 percent of the Attacker's total deployed force. The Defender sets up all units within 10 hexes of the gamemaster-designated buildings and should designate one map edge as a home edge.



CHAOS RAMPANT: SAVAGE SILENCE

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 400

Optional Bonuses (all bonuses cumulative):

- +100 Heavy Rain:** Apply a +1 to-hit modifier to all weapon attacks and a +1 Piloting/Driving Skill modifier.
- +150 Fanatical Opponents:** Increase the experience level of the opposing force to Regular.

Victory Bonuses (bonuses not cumulative):

- +200 Partial Victory (A):** Completing one "A" objective.
- +500 Total Victory (A):** Completing both "A" objectives.
- +350 Partial Victory (B):** Completing two "B" objectives.
- +600 Total Victory (B):** Completing all "B" objectives.

OBJECTIVES

- 1. Distraction. (A)** No attacking unit may exit via its designated edge for a minimum of 10 turns.
- 2. Deflection. (B)** Destroy/cripple at least 75 percent of the Defender's force.
- 3. Annihilation. (B)** Destroy/cripple 100 percent of the Defender's force.
- 4. Protection. (A)** The Defender must ensure that at least half the gamemaster-designated buildings survive the end of the track.
- 5. Obliteration. (B)** The Attacker must destroy all the gamemaster-designated buildings by the end of the track.

SPECIAL RULES

All non-player forces must use the Forced Withdrawal rules (see p. 258, *TW*).

AFTERMATH

In the end, it didn't matter whose side you were on. What surprised you was the objective—a satellite HPG station, one of the planetary links to the main compound in Sing-wa. Seems the locals were getting really agitated over the Word's actions elsewhere in the Confederation (rumors abounded of heavy firefights along the old Chaos March border worlds) and were taking steps to remove the Word from their worlds. Why they'd want to cut themselves off from the rest of civilization, you'll never understand; Capellans are usually weird like that.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

So just how connected is Mr. Askai to the Word of Blake? If he was representing a contact's interest...does that mean there's more to Mr. Mysterious than you originally thought?

Expansion Ideas

It seems several Capellan worlds are following Chamdo's lead. But is it right to cut off contact with the rest of the universe out of spite? And just how far are the Capellans willing to go to spite the Word? Despite rumors and evidence of other tragic events, is it justifiable to conduct such reciprocal action against innocent technicians?

NEXT TRACKS

Free-Fire Zone, Nacht Blitz, Severance

CHAOS RAMPANT: STORMING THE BALANCE

STORMING THE BALANCE

[Panicked voice] *"To anyone out there on any frequency: My God, save us. Ashley's goons have managed to find us. My family...all of us, we're in danger! I'm offering a substantial reward if someone can rescue us from these jackals and get us off-planet. Please, for the love of decency, don't let Ashley and his bully squads win. You can contact us on frequency four-four-nine-five. Hurry! This message will repeat..."*

SITUATION

*Inbound Vector
Enzesfled, Lyran Alliance
10 March 3071*

Just as your unit starts settling in to the idea of getting some much-needed rest and relaxation on this far-off-track world, your DropShip captain picks up a distress message being broadcast on several frequencies. Not one to let some rich noble family rot away when there's money to be made—blue-bloods tend to be generous when rescued—you made contact and arranged to help out. It's got to be quick and fast, so there's little time for prep work.



CHAOS RAMPANT: STORMING THE BALANCE

GAME SETUP

CBT: Use at least two maps from the Coastal Terrain table (see p. 263, *TW*). Place the maps with the short edges touching each other. The Attacker then designates one of the two short boundary edges as the objective.

AT2: Use at least one Space map. Follow the *Atmospheric Movement* rules (see p. 78, *TW*), with one edge designated as the planet.

RPG: Gamemasters may prepare an appropriate environment according to the players' plans.

Attacker

The Attacker consists of up to 75 percent of the Defender's total deployed force and is considered to have Regular experience. The Attacker enters from the designated objective edge.

Defender

The Defender consists of 10 percent of the players' total force. In addition, the Defender includes two transport-type vehicles appropriate for the setting, with Green experience. These vehicles are carrying the escaping noble family members. All of the Defender's units enter on the map edge opposite the objective.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 300

Optional Bonuses (all bonuses cumulative):

+150 **Light Fog:** Apply a +1 MP cost to enter each hex.

+150 **Bad Intel:** Add one additional unit to the Attacker's force. This unit has Veteran experience.

Victory Bonuses (bonuses not cumulative):

+200 **Partial Victory:** Completing one objective.

+400 **Total Victory:** Completing both objectives.

OBJECTIVES

1. Survival! At least one of the transports exits off the objective edge.

2. No witnesses... All hostile forces are destroyed or have been forced to withdraw.

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track.

Forced Withdrawal

All defending forces must use the Forced Withdrawal rules (see p. 258, *TW*).

Gift

If both transports manage to escape, the noble family is so grateful they bestow a gift of 100 Warchest points upon the player unit. These points may only be used to purchase new units and/or recruit new members. The points must be spent before the next track begins.

AFTERMATH

Within hours of the fall of the ruling families on Enzesfled, the entire planet fell into anarchy. The collapse of local government sent the economy into a nosedive and panic ensued. With conditions finally ripe, Lindon Ashley stepped up his militant version of the Democracy Now movement and captured the people's attention. Within weeks, Enzesfled became a bastion of support for Ashley's movement; members of Calvin Strauss' opposition party were often shunned, while many local "aristocrats" were rounded up and imprisoned without trial.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

The noble family is exceptionally grateful for the rescue and hires the player group as an escort to their next destination. Intelligence regarding Ashley's and Strauss's campaigns may prove useful to the LIC; consequently, the players may be contacted later for future operations, especially if Ashley's Democracy Now militants gain momentum among the border systems.

Expansion Ideas

Both Lindon Ashley and Calvin Strauss are key political players in the current separatist movements popping up along the Alliance's border worlds. While both might hire small groups to conduct information raids against the other (all while professing mutual alliance), it is more likely that effective and available mercenary commands may be placed on retainer "in case of emergency."

NEXT TRACKS

Nacht Blitz; Oppression



CHAOS RAMPANT: FREE-FIRE ZONE

**FREE-FIRE ZONE**

[Drummer One]: "I've got four unidentifieds two blocks out."

[Drummer Three]: "There goes the neighborhood..."

[Drummer One]: "This is Toranaga Stables to unknown BattleMechs at Harbor and Lake. Identify yourselves or we will open fire."

[Drummer Two]: "Did you get a gander at their markings? Those're Black Lion boys!"

[Drummer One]: "I say again, unidentified 'Mechs currently at the intersection of Harbor and Lake, ID yourselves. You've got ten seconds before we open it up."

[Drummer Three]: "I'll take the Blitzkrieg. Ron, you snag that Bushwacker. Babs, you got a positive ID yet?"

[Drummer One]: "Hell, no. They're not squawking any IFF...and considering what happened last night in uptown Montenegro, I'm inclined to just beat the shit out of them."

[Drummer Two]: "Target lock! Third boy's a Centurion—and it's wielding an axe!"

[Drummer Three]: "Y'know, that Cenny on the vids last night had an axe..."

[Drummer One]: "That tears it. Bring 'em down, boys!"

SITUATION

Border of the International Zone

Solaris VII, Lyran Alliance

4 May 3071

Barely twelve hours after landing at some smuggling station well outside of Nowhere, all hell broke loose in Solaris City proper. Lucky for you, plenty of people were looking for hired guns to augment their forces. The best offer came from Zelazni Stables, who wanted you to go in with another assault force and seize a few warehouses in the International Zone. With the Blakists occupied in their urban renewal of Montenegro, this op seemed pretty easy.

CHAOS RAMPANT: FREE-FIRE ZONE

**GAME SETUP**

CBT: Use any maps from the Light and/or Heavy Urban tables (see p. 263, *TW*). The gamemaster should pre-select five different buildings as the objective warehouses.

RPG: The gamemaster should have a blueprint of the area for player reference. The International Zone is a mix of warehouses and DropShip landing pads; for more detailed information, gamemasters may wish to refer to the *Map Pack: Solaris VII* information book.

Attacker

The Attacker consists of units of the Solaris Home Defense League (SHDL) raised from three other stables (Zelazni [Regular], White Hand [Veteran] and Silver Dragons [Elite]) as well as up to 25 percent of the player group's total force. Each stable may select a starting edge (they may select the same edges if desired). The players' force selects their edge last; it may be the same as one used by any of the stables.

All units enter the battlefield at the beginning of Turn 1, except for the Silver Dragon force. The Silver Dragons may enter at the beginning of any turn after Turn 5; they must declare their intention to do so during the End Phase of the turn prior to their entry.

Defender

The Defender consists of elements from the Word of Blake's Twenty-fifth Division. The Defender's force is 100 percent of the Attacker's total deployed force and is considered of Veteran experience.

The Defender deploys its entire force anywhere on the battlefield. Units may not begin the game inside buildings.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 400

Optional Bonuses (all bonuses cumulative):

+200 Dusk: Apply a +1 to-hit modifier to all weapon attacks. For every 5 points of heat—on a target unit that tracks heat—apply a -1 to-hit modifier to any weapon attacks; conventional infantry ignore this modifier. Searchlight-equipped units do not offset this penalty.

+200 Heavy Fog: Apply a +2 MP cost to enter each hex and a +1 to-hit modifier to all direct-fire energy and pulse weapon attacks.

Victory Bonuses (bonuses not cumulative):

+350 Partial Victory: Completing one objective.

+600 Total Victory: Completing all objectives.



CHAOS RAMPANT: FREE-FIRE ZONE

OBJECTIVES

- 1. Capture the Warehouses.** Be in control of at least 2 of the gamemaster-selected warehouses by the end of the track.
- 2. Paste them.** Destroy or cripple all of the Defender's original total deployed force.
- 3. Justice.** Eliminate all the traitor units.

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track.

Salvage

Salvage may be claimed by the players' force if at least two objectives are completed.

Forced Withdrawal

All of the original Defender units are operating under Forced Withdrawal rules (see p. 258, *TW*).

Traitors

During the End Phase of the turn in which the Silver Dragons enter the battle, each unit assigned to a stable must roll 2D6. On a result of 10+, that unit is a traitor and receives commands from the Word of Blake to double-cross the Attacker's force. Starting in the Initiative Phase of the subsequent turn, any traitor units are controlled by the Defender. These units do not count as part of the Defender's original force.

Warehouses

Units with an operating Beagle Active Probe (BAP) automatically detect objective warehouses when they come within range. If a unit does not have a BAP, it may elect to scan a building under the following guidelines:

- A scanning attempt must be declared during the Initiative Phase and before the unit moves.
- The unit must be within 2 hexes of the target building at the end of its movement.
- Scanning units may not exceed Walking MP or make any weapon attacks during the scanning turn.

To control an objective building, the player must have at least one unit within 2 hexes of the building at the end of the track, with no active Defenders operating within that same distance of the building. The objective building must also have been positively identified.

AFTERMATH

It looked too easy; it became a nightmare. Though some last-minute double-crosses occurred throughout the SHDL ranks, the International Zone finally fell under League control shortly after midnight on the fifth of May. Good thing most of the Blakist guns were still focused on reducing Montenegro and Cathay to piles of dirt and ash—an improvement, according to many citizens.

The stables grabbed most of the warehouses, though some of the more prominent MechWarriors—those that were left—also staked personal claims. The IZ was a veritable treasure trove as ranks upon ranks of “impounded” war machines stored for nearly three years finally saw the light of the Solaris sun.

Rearmed and rejuvenated, the SHDL was spoiling for another fight, though the Blakist double-cross seemed to further highlight the cracks already surfacing amid the allied force.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

The main operation is critically timed, though enterprising forces may use the short amount of down time to scout out the landscape and find Zelazni's warehouses. Additionally, hunting down the traitors may prolong the fight, as a deadly game of hide and seek erupts in the deserted DropPort.

Expansion Ideas

A Blakist counterattack is not out of the question, or one of the more aggressive stables may decide to seize a rival's goods in the aftermath of the battle. If so, gamemasters should make sure player units retain pre-existing damage, as they may not have had time to make the proper repairs.

NEXT TRACKS

Nacht Blitz; Reaching the Limits



LATE 3071: CRACKS IN THE FAÇADE



LATE 3071: CRACKS

Hope flared anew toward the end of the year, as the Word of Blake suffered its first real defeats of the Jihadist rampage. Yet even as some worlds begin to rebel, rumors of a newer enemy—or perhaps a more enraged and enlightened one—began to surface, re-igniting terror and plunging the hope of some back into the pit of despair.

The growing democratic movement along the fringes of the Alliance gained momentum, further fueled by the surrender of the Archonship and the rumors—later found to be untrue—of Peter Steiner-Davion's death. News of Solaris VII's successful rebel campaign fanned the flames on other Alliance worlds and even spawned resistance cells along the Protectorate's border.

Prior rumors from the Diamond Sharks proved true as the first pirated broadcasts surfaced of a war raging across the Clan Wolf OZ. The Wolves faced a new threat from Clan Hell's Horses, while still reeling from the loss of their capital world. More sinister stories begin to circulate on the Combine front, as reports mounted of Nova Cat defections and mass troop buildups. Who the Cats planned to attack became focus for speculation and dark rumor.

The latter half of 3071 could accurately be described as the "time of the resistance." Innumerable rebel cells turned up in every nation, on dozens of worlds. In some cases, whole regiments and military units abandoned their posts to return to their home planets. Others, like Clan Nova Cat, began to gather their forces for an undetermined campaign, putting DCMS and Dominion forces on alert. The Alliance border remained tense—the Galedon Incident still fresh in the minds of the Dragon and the Ravens—and rumors of renegade Combine WarShips further heightened the tension.

And from the recesses of the disintegrating Free Worlds League came tales of terror and horror that rivaled entertainment holos and blockbuster vids. Assassinations, terror attacks and worse overshadowed the scant victories others could claim. As 3071 drew to a close, even the Capellan Confederation would feel the pain of an entire world lost.

Save for the light of a few, the entire Sphere seemed lost.

FRAYED ALLIANCES

GENERAL STEINER SEALS GIBBS, WESTERSTEDE

(2 June 3071)

Arcturus [TBC] – TBC News confirmed today that official orders from General of the Armies Adam Steiner have indeed enacted a military quarantine around the Donegal Province worlds of Gibbs and Westerstede. No official reason for the quarantine has been given, but industrial watch groups did notice a sharp increase in JumpShip traffic in the Gibbs system starting as early as March of this year, much of it diverted from travel routes around Blakist-occupied Donegal and Tharkad.

Observers initially feared that the quarantine might stem from additional Word of Blake bio-warfare attacks on Alliance worlds,

HAVE YOU SEEN...?

—Excerpted from game chat server, Nowhere (Solaris VII), dated 15 June 3071

LISA3546 HAS ENTERED THE CHAT

409ers: ...isn't exactly rocket science, you know.

FuzzyCat100: well you could have at least given me more time. This is a stupid game.

Lisa3546: Excuse me

Blowmekurita: it's not stupid if you just play it right.

FuzzyCat100: I think you both stupid

Lisa3546: Really, can I please talk to someone?

THERE ARE FIFTEEN USERS IN KRONO-CLUSTERS, TRADEMARK LYNSIC, LLC.

409ers: Sure babe. What you wanna talk about. Long as its krono-clusters, we're all ears.

Lisa3546: It's about my son.

Blowmekurita: oh Christ—you a mom?

FuzzyCat100: I was playing it right.

DaddyMech: No you weren't, Cat. Hey, Lisa, why you wanna ask about him? He steal something/

409ers: get bit, daddy. I'm the moderator here.

FuzzyCat100: Then moderate, slag. Lisa, did he play krono-clusters?

Lisa3546: Yes. He did. I found this log-in on his computer. He's been missing three weeks. I've been searching the net hoping someone has a clue.

DaddyMech: what was his handle?

Lisa3546: His what?

DaddyMech: his screen name. What did he log under?

FuzzyCat100: check his connections and see if you see a default setup.

RAVAGE565 HAS LEFT THE CHAT

Blowmekurita: she's not gonna know how to find that.

FuzzyCat100: shut up, blow

BLITZCREEG HAS LEFT THE CHAT

409ers: even if she finds it I'm not squealing on a fellow kroner.

FuzzyCat100: asshat

Lisa3546: I found a raydonooo.

FuzzyCat100: raydon?

Blowmekurita: raydon. I think I saw him in here a few times. Very strange.

FuzzyCat100: strange how?

THERE ARE THIRTEEN USERS IN KRONO-CLUSTERS, TRADEMARK LYNSIC, LLC.

DaddyMech: Lisa, raydon said he got a job. He was on here several weeks ago.

Lisa3546: A job? Where? Doing what?

DaddyMech: he said he was joining a mercenary group. He didn't say what their name was. I thought he was bluffing.

FuzzyCat100: uh oh

LISA3546 HAS LEFT THE CHAT

409ers: you shouldn't have told her that.

LATE 3071: CRACKS IN THE FAÇADE

POLICE ACTIONS

(27 July 3071)

Kaumberg [KNN] – Citing increasing civil unrest in the wake of the Blakist attack on Alarion, as well as the recently concluded actions on behalf of the Enzesfled planetary government, Baron Trent Hasseldorf von Stuttgart confirmed today that more elements of the Kaumberg Planetary Guard were preparing to deploy off-world as part of a regional paramilitary “police action.” The move comes amid growing concern over the militant stance of the populist Democracy Now movement, based on the world of Novara.

“The goal of these actions is simple: to ensure the stability of the lawful governments of this region, in accordance with local defense treaties and the laws of the Lyran Alliance,” said Hasseldorf. “In these grim times, we cannot afford to be at each other’s throats, tearing down our own vital infrastructure. Doing so simply plays into [the Word’s] hands.”

Lord of Lords Erich Sheridan, who cited the Firenze Regional Defense Pact and the formal call for aid from Enzesfled’s Landgraf Karl von Weinmann, ordered the KPG mobilization. Baron Hasseldorf, whose family won a brief civil war over Kaumberg’s Stuttgart region amid charges of treason by the late Baron Franklin LeSat, has served as the head of the KPG since the end of that conflict.

The deployment of Guard forces to Enzesfled marked the first time that the reforged planetary defenders have been sent off world, but not their first “police action.” The combined-arms regiment battled crises on Kaumberg itself first in 3063, when roaming FedCom forces jointly struck at the planet, and again in 3067, when local rebels surfaced who proclaimed loyalty to the deposed LeSat family.

such as the attack that decimated the world of Alarion more than two years ago. Alarion remains a quarantine zone, and crisis observers report that since the first outbreak, nearly 60 percent of the planetary population has succumbed to the virulent and widespread bio-engineered plague released there by Blakist forces. Scientists across the Alliance have yet to develop an effective counter for the plague, and given the high death rate and contagion vectors that even now have not been fully identified, recommend maintaining the Alarion quarantine indefinitely.

LAAF officials swiftly denied stories that Gibbs and Westerstede were similarly attacked, leaving the naval and aerospace blockade of both worlds by nominally friendly forces a mystery.

GOING FOR BROKE

—Audio transcripts recorded by the Solaris Home Defense League, Solaris VII, 3 May 3071 (transmitted 19 July 3071)

[The sound of weapons fire and the thumping of BattleMechs on the move can be heard in the background.]

[Cooper]: “Kiva Cooper, here again. You can see as dawn breaks over the city, Solaris Home Defense League ‘Mechs and vehicles are moving through the streets of Montenegro, pushing the Blakists back with the sheer volume of firepower and ferocity. The Word doesn’t even seem to be making visual confirmations, simply firing as soon as they can bring weapons around. Luckily, the League forces managed to clear this section of town last night, so civilian casualties should be low. If you look off to my left, you can even see ‘Flashpoint’ Paulson working with the rest of the SHDL. I’m glad *someone* listens to reporters.” *[The whoosh of an errant missile passes by.]* “Whoa! That was a little close, we’re going to get to a safer and better view...”

NEWS DOWNLOADER v3.7



Date & Title

Service

Status

(22 February 3071)

“Undeclared Martial Law?” (“LAAF Forces Seize Skye ...

[FSP]

COMPLETED

(25 February 3071)

“Citizens Sack HPG Compounds Across Confederation”

[ISAP]

DOWNLOADING

(3 March 3071)

“Widowmakers Fail Again” (“Computer Core, ‘Mech Swiped... [Voice of the Free]

ACCESSING

A SERVICE OF IRIAN NEWS INTERSTELLAR



LATE 3071: CRACKS IN THE FAÇADE

MORE LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

Mom,

The Wobbies finally got everything they could out of us, I guess, and left. The Eagles have been giving us rest, news vids and now time to write. I miss you guys, get them to end this damned war. I saw Lindon Ashley spouting off about democracy and revolution. What the [censored]? As if the Estates General gets a damn thing done. Blake, we're in a war and some puffy shirts are arguing if the ire of the masses or noble backstabbing makes better leaders? How about we finish the job we started and I'm still trying to do before we fight over power at home, especially behind some foreigner? Sorry, I didn't mean to spout off so much, but it really chaps my hide given what I'm going through. Just tell folks what we think out here, if they haven't forgotten about us yet. Weird stuff is happening with the Eagles, it's like upper command is getting [censored] or something, I just don't know. They try not to show it, but they're [censored] the bigger picture, too. Give everyone my love, I'll write again as soon as I can.

Love, Jeremy.

—Private letter attributed to Leutnant Jeremy Minderhoff (POW, captured on McAffe 27 November 3069), dated August 3071)

[Cooper]: "We're back. In the International Zone now... Up in the sky to the east, you can see Blakist DropShips pounding Montenegro with strafing fire. If any Solaris City residents are hearing this live feed, League forces advise that you seek underground shelters as quickly as possible, as the Word seems to be trying to level entire neighborhoods now. As we speak, the buildings and 'Mechs in Montenegro are being flattened without regard for inhabitants or combatants.

"Most of the Blake forces have pulled out of that section and this one, while a good number of the SHDL have managed to control the area we're standing in now. The Robes are going to be SOL when it comes time to refuel... Meanwhile, the SHDL has established temporary HQs in the spaceport complex. Techs are working hard to get all the 'impounded' 'Mechs from the warehouses around here so they can be piloted and thrown into this massive melee.

"Fighting has spread to every part of the city; it's chaos out there. Beyond this area, in fact, neither side truly controls anything and fighting shifts with every new combatant that enters a zone. One warrior likened it to 'watching Vegan jump lizards mating, only without any gratification at the end—just destruction and death.'

"We have to change positions now. More to come..."

[The background audio goes strangely quiet, with only an irregular, dull thumping to be heard.]

WHAT HAVE WE COME TO?

—Private letter by Kaumberg Planetary Guard Leutnant Stephen Johannes, Enzesfled, 5 September 3071

To: Sylvie Johannes-Little (Novara)

My dearest sister,

I was more than dismayed to learn of Frank's death—he was a good husband and I know how much you loved him. The way in which he died—it was not an honorable death—to be shot for a pocket full of C-bills.

And please don't think less of me if I use his death to give you an example of what is to come, if you and people like you blindly look toward the Democracy Now movement at a time when Novara should be working toward uniting the province rather than tearing it apart. What the DN preaches—what they want to achieve—it's not liberty; it's anarchy.

I can agree that Alarion is no longer a viable capital—and I believe Novara is the best candidate to replace it—but not with a governmental reorganization. The nobles have served us well—they have put themselves and their families on the line for generations. It's not the present leader of the DN I fear, Sylvie.

It's this Lindon Ashley—the man smells of Blakist intrigue. Wobbies are experts at setting up a structure to rot from within—hiring agents to disrupt from the inside, to weaken and taint so they can come in and pick up the pieces—make you see things their way—and pray to a false god. Ashley's just such an agent.

With the Sphere in chaos, why should we listen to a rabble-rouser who isn't even a native to our lands? He's from the Rim Collection, Sylvie! His only real agenda is that he hates the nobles and will do anything to see them fall.

Please—I should be leaving Enzesfled in less than two days, maybe for Novara. Think about where your loyalties rest, my sister. You have no idea of what I've seen...what is out there.

With all my love, Stephen

[Cooper]: "It's dusk now over Solaris City, and at the end of the day, little has been settled. We can see the fires starting to glow as the sun sets. Pockets of various forces have formed up all over the city, but only the International Zone has any sense of order to it. Rough estimates place up to a third of the city's population homeless tonight, so open your homes to your neighbors. This reporter hopes that something good will come in the long run, but all she's seen is madness with a little hope attached.

"Until tomorrow, Solaris, this is Kiva Cooper, hoping the citizens of Solaris City pull through safely."

LATE 3071: CRACKS IN THE FAÇADE

ABDICATION

"My fellow Lyrans, it is with a heavy heart that I appear before you today..."

"As I speak to you, Tharkad—the heart of our Alliance—has been under the heavy-handed blockade of a Word of Blake invader for almost four years. In that time, we have seen countless lives destroyed, and heard the cries of comrades facing enemies across the Sphere.

"To all those united against the Blakist menace, I tell you now what you should already know: that the Word's hold on Tharkad, New Avalon and Luthien has never been about conquest, but about terror. They want us to believe we have been defeated. They want to prove their superiority by making us give into our fear. But we can never surrender to agents of fear, or all we have ever accomplished—and all we *will* ever accomplish—will be lost. By depriving us of our highest symbols of authority—our leaders and our capitals—the enemy hopes to bring us all down, mistaken in the perception that our leaders, and not our people, forge the foundations of our nations.

"That is why, on this day, I have chosen to remove one symbol from Blakist control, to deny them the prize they feel they have captured and dominated for so long. On this day, I leave the title of the Archonship, the stewardship of Tharkad and the ultimate fate of the great Lyran Alliance to a man who has fought hard for his people, and who never lost sight of their strength, even through the fires of civil war. A fair leader. A strong leader. My cousin, General of the Armies Adam Steiner.

"Four years ago, I accepted the Archonship in order to help end a bloody war. Today, I step down, in hopes of ending another. Today, Tharkad will no longer be the captive heart of the Lyran Alliance. Today, the leadership of our realm rests with a man proven to have the best interests of all Lyrans at heart, and who has saved Lyran citizens in conflict after conflict without fear or compromise.

"To General Steiner, I entrust the safety and freedom of the Lyran people, against the threat of Blakist tyranny. In the dangerous times ahead, I know of no other who can prevail against the evil that menaces us all. Adam, with the strength of the Lyran people behind you, I am confident you will lead us to a lasting victory.

"To the Word of Blake, I once more say: Tharkad is a hollow prize. You have not paralyzed a people here. You cannot hold a nation hostage to your theocracy forever. Though it may take years yet to come, we *will* be free.

"Thank you all for your attention this day, and may God continue to bless our realm."

—Pirate transcript of Archon Peter Steiner-Davion's abdication address, Trideo Free Tharkad, 27 September 3071

MARCHING ON

FALCONS RETURN TO GREAT X, ZANDERIJ

(20 July 3071)

Arc-Royal [ARNN] – Following their victory on Morges, the Falcons' Delta Galaxy returned to Great X—a world they were forced to abandon in the face of stiff Lyran resistance earlier this year. Though Delta shattered the Dioscuri mercenary command, they did so at great cost to themselves; Galaxy Commander Uvin Buhallin was reportedly killed in a headhunter attack by the Dioscuri command company, and the remaining four Clusters were mauled in the weeks that followed. With the loss of the Seventh Talon Cluster on Baker 3 in 3069, newly promoted Galaxy Commander Lee Newclay was left with only four Clusters for this new attack, one of which was a poorly equipped solahma command.

With months to prepare for the Falcons' return, Lieutenant-General Geiger's Twenty-fifth Arcturan Guard, supported by the survivors of the Thorin FMM and the mercenary Knights of St. Cameron, were more than ready. Galaxy Commander Newclay managed to secure a landing zone using his Gyr Falcon Solahma

Cluster as shock troops, but the entire solahma paid the price. Still recovering from the fighting on Morges, the remaining three Clusters lacked the firepower necessary to make headway against the combined Arcturan Guards and FMM forces, while the Knights of St. Cameron—acting as a mobile reserve—thwarted the Falcons' efforts to break out. When the Eighth Talon Cluster was cut off and annihilated, General Geiger signaled for a general assault, and the Fourth Falcon Dragoons were destroyed buying time for the surviving First Falcon Strikers to withdraw.

Meanwhile, elements of Iota Galaxy launched a second assault on Zanderij. Expecting to find only the Tooth of Ymir and Greenburg's Godzillas present, the Fifth Talon, 305th Assault Cluster and Gyr Falcon Eyrie Cluster found themselves trapped by powerful Lyran aerospace reinforcements while the newly arrived Thor's Hammers kept the Clan position under constant artillery attack. Though the Clan forces remain entrenched there, unless the situation on Zanderij changes soon, another Lyran victory looks certain.

Across the Lyran Alliance people are asking the same question; has the invincible Clan war machine finally run out of gas?

USURPER CLANS SLOWED?

(15 August 3071)

Orestes [INN] – Clearly intent upon seizing the Wolf Clan's holdings in the Inner Sphere, the Hell's Horses have continued their advance, rolling up the Wolves to a line coreward of Kirchbach, but with signs of stiffer resistance than ever. With Khan Vlad Ward shifting his most powerful Clusters from the rimward end of his Occupation Zone, the two Clans seem to be locked in battle on worlds like Liezen, Harvest and Planting.

The loss of New Oslo earlier this year came as a serious blow to the Wolves, as it was the site of their last operational BattleMech production facility in the Inner Sphere. Wolf Clan forces are believed to now be completely dependent on massive supply convoys from Twycross that are reportedly flying under the Diamond Shark insignia. Given the Wolves' precarious position, the cost of such aid will doubtless be considerable.

The Jade Falcons, roused at last, have also moved to counteract the invasions of the Horses and the newly arrived Ice Hellion Clan. While clashes between Falcon and Horses troops on Steelton and Seiduts have been inconclusive, these efforts may have relieved some of the pressure on the Wolves. That relief, however, is the limit of the aid the Wolf Clan can expect, as the Falcons face pressure from Clan Ice Hellion. Pushing in from the Periphery, the Hellions have overrun the lightly garrisoned worlds coreward of Golandrinas, including the ancient Star League naval facility located in the Dark Nebula.

Like the Horses, the Hellions may soon face stiffening resistance. Reports from Lyran forces on the Clan front show a significant reduction in the intensity of the fighting there. The Falcons may be repositioning some of their front-line assets to deal with the Ice Hellions. If true, the Hell's Horses and the Ice Hellions could find themselves fatally overextended by next year.

HORSES TURN ON HELLION ALLIES AS WOLVES COUNTERATTACK

(17 September 3071)

Winter [ISAP] – Already losing ground in the face of a Jade Falcon counterattack, Ice Hellion ambitions in the Inner Sphere have been dealt another blow, this time by their apparent allies in Clan Hell's Horses. There seems to have been a serious falling out between these two most unlikely allies, and ISAP has received confirmation of fighting on all worlds in the Dark Nebula region. Caught between the Horses and a resurgent Clan Jade Falcon, Clan observers believe it is simply a matter of time before the Hellions are driven from the Inner Sphere.

This latest turn of events has prompted analysts to question their original assumption that the Hell's Horses and Ice Hellions were working in concert. Notorious for their impulsive behavior, the Hellion attack against the Falcons is looking more and more to have been a rash and opportunistic move. That the Ghost Bears were not similarly assaulted, as would have been expected if this

CRACKS IN THE FAÇADE

invasion were part of a combined operation, only reinforces the image of an ill-conceived Hellion attempt to emulate the Horses.

Meanwhile, the Wolves appear to have halted the Hell's Horses drive toward Tamar on a line stretching from Ridderkerk to Ferleiten, and may be in the process of launching a counterattack of their own. Sketchy reports also maintain that the Ghost Bears have struck at the Horses' spinward flank. If true, this latest turn of events does not bode well for Khan Cobb's Horses.

NOVA CATS REDEPLOY, NO EXPLANATION GIVEN

—Voice of the Dragon news broadcast, Mualang, 29 October 3071

Ichi Subato, reporting for the Voice of the Dragon from Mualang's main starport, where we have just received confirmation of Nova Cat forces redeploying without orders from Luthien. On Keisen, in what seems like a lifetime ago, Lambda Galaxy was tasked with supporting and training Wolf's Dragoons' Delta Regiment for possible defense against the Ghost Bears. But the Jihad intervened, and since then the Galaxy has withdrawn here, to Mualang—until now. With their DropShips ready for some mysterious departure, I caught up with the Nova Cat commander for a comment just before they lifted.

>>>Recording Begins<<<

[Subato]: "Galaxy Commander Drummond, thank you for speaking with me."

[Drummond]: "Konichi-wa, Subato-san. You are welcome."

[Subato]: "I have received reports that the Nova Cats are redeploying without orders from the DCMS. Can you comment on that?"

[Drummond]: *[Face is masked with anger]* "Stravag!" *[Subato steps back from the Clan warrior.]* "Pardon my outburst, Subato-san; my command and I are not pleased. We have redeployment orders to Irece. I disagree with my Khan and he will hear of it when we convene our next council."

[Subato]: "You disagree with this. Then why are you leaving?"

[Drummond]: "Aff. We are honor bound to defend House Kurita. This is especially true for my command. Leaving our post while war rages around us is an act of cowardice in my opinion. But Santin West is our Khan; we have no choice, but to follow *his* command."

[Subato]: "I know you are about to depart. One more question, please."

[Drummond]: "Aff."

[Subato]: "We have information indicating that Delta Galaxy has departed Kuritan space entirely. Can you elaborate on this?"

[Drummond]: "Neg. I am aware that saKhan Devalis' Delta Galaxy departed with naval support. That is all I know."

>>>Recording Ends<<<

Such is the situation at this hour: the Nova Cats are on the move, but to where, and for what purpose? Even they seem unable to tell. Reporting for the Voice of the Dragon, I am Ichi Subato.

LATE 3071: CRACKS

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE...

—Transcript from *The Outworlds View*, Alliance Broadcasting, 3 November 3071

[Moderator]: "Hello and welcome back to *The Outworlds View*. Tonight's topic: Clan Snow Raven. Do we accept them, or reject them? Our guests are: Walter Garski, political journalist for *The Ravenna Times*; Isabelle Richie, military affairs expert for the Alliance; and Troy Williams, leading expert in Clan culture. Thank you, everyone. Questions may be submitted by interfacing with your keypad and clicking the 'query' button. While we build the queue, would each of you like to make an opening statement?"

[Garski]: "Thanks, Jack, for having us tonight. For me, the bottom line is: reject them. Sure, they've cleaned up that mess on Dante—though rather brutally. But honestly, I don't give a mikka's ass how many 'WarShips' they've lost. We don't need a military overseer; our own government's bad enough."

[Richie]: "Walter, you're so jaded! While our military did get a budgetary increase during the past few years, it's hardly enough to adequately garrison our worlds as it is. Look at what happened on Ramora—and that's from our Suns "allies." Who knows if the Combine will come calling? My bottom line: embrace them."

[Williams]: "You're both right and wrong. True, accepting the Ravens as our 'protectors' would alleviate our own need for a military force—and let's face it, after being a pacifistic nation for so long, our people need quite a change of mind to see a reversal of policy. But don't forget: regardless of how the Clans put it, once they're in place, they'll restructure our society to fit their norms."

[Richie]: "Preposterous! By working out a fair agreement—"

[Williams]: "No agreement with a Clan is ever fair, Isabelle. Look at the Combine; the Jaguar and Cat worlds are still suffering economic depression, thanks to the brutality they exhibited in governing those worlds."

[Garski]: "Exactly! We don't want a Turtle Bay Syndrome to occur in Alliance space."

[Richie]: "Dante, Walter. Dante."

[Garski]: "Bah! A world of neo-Luddite psychopaths—backward even by twentieth century standards—allied with the biggest threat the Great Houses have ever faced? Sticking with ComStar now seems like a brilliant move by the President, doesn't it?"

[Williams]: "What's your point, Walter?"

[Garski]: "My point? Dante is an aberration. Not germane to this discussion. The Clans *uber alles* is. They didn't take those 'terrorists' down for the Alliance. They did it because they got mad."

[Richie]: "We can't possibly say no to them, Walter. They offer so much for so little—"

[Williams]: "You remember that statement when they come and dismantle everything we've striven to build here. Rumors abound of them fleeing their homeworlds, so you know they're just looking for a place to park their butts. What better place than a Periphery pacifist nation with a weaker military than her neighbors? Mark my words; nothing good will come of this..."

THE SELL-OUT

(The following report was relayed to INN via our affiliates still within the Rasalhague Republic; its validity has yet to be verified.)

Honored Khans:

After disseminating the information that Nova Captain Jake Kabrinski passed on to us "in good faith," we found this little gem. Obviously the Horses wanted us to know their plans, if only to assure us their intentions are indeed honorable. It seems clear to me, my Khans, that we are about to witness the death of a Clan.

—Loremaster Laurie Tseng

>>>Transcript HHA01-3071.10.18//1410 Begins<<<

[Khan Marthe Pryde]: "The implications are clear, Khan Cobb. Considering the rampant fighting going on back home, it would behoove you to choose your course of action wisely."

[Khan James Cobb]: "So you have heard the same rumors I have?"

[Pryde]: "I hear much, Horse. And see more."

[Cobb]: "Spare me your Falcon rhetoric. Can we speak, just once, as true peers and warriors of the Father?"

[Pryde]: "...Very well, if only because you amuse me."

[Cobb]: "You would not be saying that if you faced the full might of my Horses."

[Pryde]: "You know as well as I do that to fight the full fury of the Falcon would only shed enormous amounts of blood—mostly yours. However, this may leave us weakened for Vlad—or even your ersatz allies, the Bears—to come and try to finish what the Hellions are woefully attempting."

[Cobb]: "Sadly, you are correct. But my concern lies more with the disturbing news from the homeworlds. The Vipers and Adders are mad with rage; already, they have burned the Sharks and the Ravens. Suppose they turn their small-minded ways in this direction?"

[Pryde]: "So you *do* see. Interesting...Tell me, what is your agreement with the Hellions?"

[Cobb]: "That we would not invade their holdings for five years, *once* we were established."

[Pryde]: "Excellent. Montose is finding out she has misjudged another Clan—by far. They will not remain here long."

[Cobb]: "Unlike the Wolves, who have discovered that once we plant our hooves, we are immovable."

[Pryde]: "I underestimated you, Cobb. Go and fight your feud. When you are feeling up to it, you may step up to our table and feast. I am sure we can be convinced to leave some iced ferret for your sibkos to feed upon."

[Cobb]: "We will not wait too long, Marthe. It would be a shame to see the Falcon lose too many feathers and be rolled over by Inner Sphere barbarians..."

[Pryde]: [*laughing*] "Welcome to the Inner Sphere, Horse. May your warriors find honor, and your enemies howl in fright."

>>>Transcript HHA01-3071.10.18//1410 Ends<<<



LATE 3071: CRACKS

NEW VISIONS?

—Intercepted communiqué reported by *The Drake* on 31 October 3071 (veracity unconfirmed)

>>Encryption Obsidian-Yellow-Nine<<
 Honored *Gunji-no-Kanrei*,

My agents have stumbled upon some distressing news from Itabaiana. According to several corroborated reports, the Nova Cats are in the process of breaking down essential facilities and shipping them to several orbiting WarShips.

Coupled with the recent information gained from our mission to Irece and the rumors that Khan West has had another "vision," the only obvious conclusion I can make is that the Nova Cats are leaving Combine space. Possibly for good.

With their forces absent, our entire prefecture is left devoid of protection, should the Ghost Bears decide to continue their feud. While many in the High Command see fit to ignore this threat due to their misguided belief in Clan honor and the supposed Ghost Bear preoccupation with the Rasalhague Republic, I do not. There are serious rumblings in the Dominion; the Bears are gearing up for a large-scale action. We cannot ignore the fact that we may be the target of such an invasion.

Against my better judgment, it appears that we need to enact certain failsafe measures we discussed more than a year ago. I recommend we initiate *Gunplay*, *Ricochet* and *Yamato*. We should hold off on *Nagasaki* for as long as possible, however, until such time as events are exactly in sync for the best results.

As you very well know, if we lose the Nova Cats, we not only lose our best border defense, but it will also severely hamper the *Benkei* project.

As always, the Dragon is in your capable hands.

—S

NEW BROTHERS

[A beautiful blonde reporter, dressed in a shimmering green blouse and a slim charcoal skirt, smiles at the camera from her seat.]

[Anastasia Drakon]: "We're talking today with saKhan Broderick Sukhanov. SaKhan, the Ravens have begun to integrate themselves with the Alliance. Tell us how you came to this point."

[A tall, handsome man in a military uniform sits across from the woman. He visibly winces at her contraction, but says nothing. He looks into the camera and flashes an uncertain smile.]

[Sukhanov]: "In 3064, we engaged Alliance aerospace fighters and lost. Needless to say we were impressed. We found there were many ways we could work together. We provided the technology for the *Corax* fighter, sold *Issus* fighters to the AAA, and refurbished the Star League-era naval base at *Quatre Belle*."

[Drakon]: "And now you are taking the world of Dante."

[Sukhanov]: "We need an enclave from which to defend your people. Dante, an exposed haven for one such threat, has been properly pacified, and makes a suitable base."

[Drakon]: "What about your forced evacuation of ComStar techs?"

[Sukhanov]: "From our analysis of Inner Sphere reports, we fear Blakist scum may yet hide among ComStar staff. No one wants a repeat of what happened at Dante."

[Drakon]: "Of course not. SaKhan, do you plan to force Clan ways upon our people?"

[Sukhanov]: "I am certain that our cultures will find a way to learn from each other."

[Drakon]: "Excuse me, saKhan, but that's not really an answer."

[Sukhanov]: "Regrettably, I am unable to give you an answer, Anastasia. The answer will have to come from our two peoples working together."

[Drakon]: "A skillful response. What is your response to the charges of the Omnis sect that you're conquering the Alliance?"

[Sukhanov]: "For its entire history, your Outworlds Alliance has been subject to the whims of great powers: the Star League, the Draconis Combine, the Federated Suns. Now, Anastasia, the Raven offers you protection, and something no other power has offered you before—a choice."

—Transcript of Alliance Media Services interview with saKhan Broderick Sukhanov, Dante, 20 December 3071

NEWS DOWNLOADER



Date & Title		
(18 March 3071) "Andurien Raiders Repelled by Bluewater Mercs"	[SAP]	COMPLETED
(22 March 3071) "Enzesfled Government on Brink, Nobles Flee"	[INN]	DOWNLOADING
(17 April 3071) "AMC Stragglers Shattered on Spica"	[VoB]	ACCESSING



DÉJÀ VU

Dave,

I've interspersed the response through your text, but I'll not mince words here. Kirc's pissed, I mean REALLY pissed.

>By Order of the Honorable Duke Paul Marik, the holding of Gibson will henceforth be transferred to the direct control of Precentor Apollyon of the Word of Blake.

Who is this guy? Up until about a year or two ago, I never even heard this name, and now he's everywhere! Seems like one of the Blakies' cyber-goons, but we don't have him in our files, and you KNOW Kirc's not going to let an unknown control one of "his" planets. I think can get him to acquiesce, but I need some background info on this Apollyon guy.

>From this date, all military and civilian personnel located in and on Gibson will be seconded to Word of Blake administrative control.

Yeah, THAT'S not going to happen. Not without a fight. Look, I may be able to get Kirc to let the civvies go, but he'll want control of the military forces. He's already rattling the saber, especially after the Oriente debacle, and then the Wallis thing. You'll have to give him something extra.

>Due to ongoing hostilities, Gibson will be considered a de facto Blake Protectorate world, and as such, subject to existing laws of summary justice as enforced by the Word of Blake Militia.

Look, I have to be honest. Kirc hates these guys. The only way he'll go along with this is if you offer him something BIG (and he'll STILL bitch about it). Let me know what's on the table, and I'll try to placate his Captain-Generalness.

Now, here's "our" list of demands:

- 1) Kirc wants them gone. Or at the very least, subject to his rule. I know that's unlikely, but just see what it'll cost us.
- 2) He's moved on to the notion that you guys (quote: the "Word lackeys") were responsible for the Wallis thing. Probably that bitch Amora whispering in his ear again. So you need to prove otherwise to get him listening (up to you how).
- 3) He'll be issuing a statement tomorrow, an ultimatum really, you know the gist; "blah blah, Selling out the League...blah blah. Remove from provocative position...blah blah. Serious reprisals...blah blah, mobilize the fleet" etc., etc. You know what he's like. Just thought I'd give you the heads-up.

Give my love to Kate and the kids. Hopefully we'll catch up after this mess.

—*Unfinished email reportedly displayed on the screen of Hashim Singh, a Regular diplomat reported missing on 9 August 3071*

CRACKS IN THE FAÇADE

ACTS OF DEFIANCE

FOR WANT OF A NAIL...

"Badly conceived, badly timed, badly executed and doomed to failure."

That was Duchess Humphreys' comment on the disastrous Regular campaign against Oriente that past May. Indeed, with Principality troops repelled from their initial spearhead and their humiliating retreat in the face of stiff Duchy counterattacks, the wisdom of Prince Cameron-Jones' "adventure" has been brought into question. It has achieved none of the goals he set out—the fake Thomas Marik remains at large and Oriente remains independent of Regular authority—and has done little more than degrade the resources of both groups, much as Duke Halas and the impostor predicted.

Yet for all that they failed, the ability of Regular forces to drive deep into the duchy and even assault Oriente itself before being ejected suggests that a better thought-out and coordinated plan could succeed in unifying the Free Worlds once more. Regular had their chance and blew it, and neither Oriente nor Tamarind seem keen to step up to bat. Perhaps it is time for other powers in the Free Worlds to step onto the playing field.

In years past, Andurien lay at the heart of League policies. The Humphreys clan helped forge the Free Worlds, and notables like Melissa Humphreys—Administrator of Canopus and Rhean Marik's right hand—have long held key positions of power. The current crisis may present an opportunity for us to once again prove our qualities, to reunify the Free Worlds and help it stand once more against its enemies.

But the real question is: *should we?* Should Andurien help the entity that has long sought to denigrate it? An entity that used us as a pawn in political games with the Capellan Confederation, and that a scant thirty years ago began an unprovoked invasion and systematic dismantling of our military and political structures?

—Op/ed in *the Andurien Archivist*, a publication of the Free Andurien News Network, 7 June 3071

AZAMI RETURN HOME

—Taken from *The Dragon's Truth!*, a popular Xinyang college interweb site, 11 August 3071

Algedi [THE DRAKE] – We've received reports that the Second Arkab Legion has jumped out of the Camlann system and the Fourth Legion is preparing to leave Pilkhua. Where are the Legions going?

Home.

Our sources tell us that the Second and Fourth Legions are being recalled to Algedi, while the Sixth remains on Arkab.

The Azami leadership has gone six months without being able to secure help for Arkab, or even an answer from the Combine. And they are forced to sit and do nothing as the Word of Blake twists the Azami world of Al Na'ir according to its own profane

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vision. Is it any wonder that the Azami leadership has declared a state of emergency? And *The Drake* has it on very good authority that the Black Dragon Society is involved somehow, looking for every opportunity to cause trouble.

The Combine leadership certainly has given them lots of opportunity. That the Combine's failure to respond to the asteroid strike on Arkab caused widespread anger throughout the Azami population was entirely predictable. Is it any surprise that Pesht Military District Warlord *Gunji-no-Kanrei* Kiyomori Minamoto's appeals to the Azami leadership to keep the Legions at their posts have gone unanswered?

It's obvious Minamoto doesn't have the slightest idea how to—

[*Jack, this news story was cut mid-transmission. Where's the rest? I wonder if The Drake ventured a little too close to the truth this time.*—Ed]

ENEMY OF MY ENEMY

In decades past—long before Kerensky's descendants returned to the Inner Sphere—the future of entire worlds depended on small units of troops, often less than a company in size. But with the recovery of technology afforded by the Helm Core, and the arms race that followed the Fourth Succession War, such small units became almost footnotes in history. Even in the current conflict, the initial battles were fought with massed troops, but as this war grinds on into its fourth year and central authority crumbles everywhere—particularly here in the Free Worlds—the fate of planets may once more fall into the hands of small units. Many of our valiant defenders are FWLM troops cut off from central command, but others are private forces—even mercenaries—who have put aside their own agendas in favor of resisting the Blakist tide.

Though far from the only such group operating in this role, the Krushers—led by Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik—have one of the highest profiles, because of their string of successes against the invaders and the Duchess's prominence in League politics. The Krushers' hit-and-fade tactics, used to great effect in battles during the FedCom Civil War, have kept the Word of Blake off guard, as has their seemingly random (but always well-executed) choice in targets. An expansion of such irregular tactics would seem to be a good means for the scattered FWLM to pin down our enemy until larger forces can be brought to bear, like distracting stings (the kind that may nonetheless provoke a fatal allergic reaction) delivered while the hammer blow is readied.

Tamarind and, to a lesser extent Oriente, have seen the wisdom in such an approach. While politically distant, both have adopted a common methodology. It remains to be seen if this will lead to a rapprochement of the leadership. Or will other factions like Regulus and Andurien follow suit, particularly while the heart of the League and its official government remain a Blakist-controlled dagger at everyone's backs?

—Richard Larsen (syndicated columnist) Tamarind State News Agency, Tamarind, 16 August 3071

COUNCIL OF GEMS

[*Obsidian*]: "So it has begun, then. I knew the traitors would show their true colors."

[*Jade*]: "As if they hadn't before. We've *all* known the Cats would betray us sooner or later."

[*Ruby*]: "This was not unanticipated."

[*Diamond*]: "Indeed. Though if they leave, they strip our worlds and lay them bare for Blakist rape."

[*Pearl*]: "Better that than suffer these genetic freaks much longer."

[*Sapphire*]: "You do not know of what you speak, Pearl. Things have changed in the past ten years. There are...plans...underway that utilize these vile creatures. Their true fate, as it is."

[*Ruby*]: "Enough!" [*Pain-wracked coughing*]

[*Opal*]: "Save your strength, honored one. I see we have a visitor."

[*Jasper*]: "Hai, *meiyo to naru sensei*. I bring news of consequence."

[*Diamond*]: "Speak, then. Let us derail the boastful prattling of our younger members."

[*Jade*]: [*Indistinct muttering*]

[*Ruby*]: "Silence! You are all children and shameful! Is this what we have come to? A schoolhouse gang, plotting needlessly? Perhaps I should phone the Director myself..." [*Coughing*]

[*Jade*]: "Apologies, *Otosan*. Please, continue."

[*Jasper*]: "The Azami have chosen to defy the Coordinator and the *Kanrei*. They have recalled all their legions to Arkab and Algedi. They claim the indifference from the throne regarding their horrific tragedy has finally shown the Dragon's true colors."

[*Onyx*]: "Interesting..."

[*Opal*]: "They have willfully defied the Dragon's command?"

[*Jasper*]: "Hai. And it seems they are anticipating—possibly even welcoming—a fight."

[*Sapphire*]: "With the waters still muddied around Luthien, redirecting focus to how the foreigners are rejecting the Dragon's grace and generosity may work to our advantage."

[*Jade*]: "Indeed. First the Nova Cat rumors and now this..."

[*Ruby*]: "I see opportunity. Onyx, I suggest you inform the Director that perhaps the *Siriwan* and her attendants should show our wayward children of Allah the true depth of their mistake."

[*Onyx*]: "The *Siriwan*? But you know that is not one of—"

[*Ruby*]: "I know perfectly well—" [*Coughing*]

[*Diamond*]: "I see where Ruby is going. It is ideal. I will contact my agents on Algedi at once and make sure the proper words are spoken."

[*Opal*]: "And the Cats?"

[*Ruby*]: "That solution is..." [*wracked breathing*] "...already in hand. Our protégé has executed a masterstroke. [*Coughing*] Excuse me. I must retire. We are done here."

[*Jade*]: "Let me help you, *Otosan*."

[*Ruby*]: "Watch the skies, gentlemen. From there, the Dragon shall roar."

—Partial recording made by ISF Agent 3-86, undetermined location, circa August 3071, posted by the Kuzuu Drake interweb site (veracity unconfirmed)

EMERGENCY RECALL

To: My Honored Servants *Tai-sa* Sahalli Odessa and *Tai-sa* Jabal Sharief,

I implore you to return to your posts. At this time of the Yellow Bird, the Dragon needs the loyalty of all its soldiers.

I have only recently learned of the tragedy on Arkab, and I offer my most profound condolences to the people of that world. And I pledge to you that there will come a day when Al Na'ir is free again. But it is not only the worlds of the Azami that have suffered during this terrible conflict.

The Cat has abandoned us. Clan Snow Raven has attacked us, as has the Federated Suns. And my Black Pearl is riven by treason and profaned by the touch of the Word of Blake. The Combine remains in shadow.

I promise that the wrongs done to the Azami will be redressed. But today I require the Second and Fourth Arkab Legions to return to their posts on the border. This the Dragon commands.

"Obey, or face the Dragon's wrath."

—Hohiro Kurita

The above message was found crumpled up in a garbage can at the headquarters of the Fourth Arkab Legion on Algedi.

RESPOND TO THIS ARTICLE WITH COMMENTS

Rose Petal: Here at last is evidence that the Dragon has not abandoned us.

KDeBello: Right. It doesn't even read like Kurita. I bet this is more of Minamoto's games.

SubtleTruth: It doesn't matter. The Dragon has failed us. It doesn't matter why.

—Taken from the blog *Truth of the Prophet*, Algedi, 12 November 3071

VIVE LA RESISTANCE!

TRIUMPH ON HOLT!

(22 July 3071)

Holt [VOICE OF BLAKE] – One of the greatest threats to peace and security in the Free Worlds was killed today while resisting arrest. Alys Rousset, erstwhile Duchess of Augustine and terrorist leader, was slain on Holt while attempting to commit another outrage against the Word of Blake facilities installed there. According to sources among the peacekeepers, the renegade planned to escalate her campaign, and rather than focusing on the defensive military installation, had sought to destroy a Blake-sponsored adult education center. She was in the process of assembling the staff for execution when Blake Militia forces stormed the complex. A forty-minute firefight ensued, including 'Mech and vehicular combat and house-to-house operations.

"We can confirm that troops from the Fifth Protectorate Militia engaged renegade forces at a complex on the city outskirts earlier

CRACKS IN THE FAÇADE

LETTER FROM THE FRONT

(30 July 3071)

The following communication was forwarded to us by an anonymous source and purports to be the last letter written by Alys Rousset-Marik, Duchess of Augustine whom the Word of Blake claim to have killed on Holt earlier this month. It is presented here as an Oriente Broadcasting exclusive....

>>>

Dearest Christian,

It seems like an age since this whole mess began and we had time to be together. Life with the Twelfth Atreans must be very different from your time at court. I know being in the field with the Krushers is a far cry from parliamentary politics. Still, I'd rather be Nelson, constantly at sea, than his mistress, Emma whatshername, stuck at home fretting. I guess we're both in that boat. Sorry; that wasn't a very good joke, was it? Rather like that time we went to the shrine of Saint John Chrysostom, wasn't it? Me making cracks and you groaning. Here's one for you then: Knock, knock. Who's there. Blake? Blake Who? Blake a leg! There you go, though not up to my usual standard, I must admit. What can I say? Kinda busy here! One day it'll all be over, and we can live out our lives peacefully—or disgracefully, if you prefer.

That has a kind of appeal; time to act *our* age rather than our parents' or grandparents'. Damn, there are days I feel old.

So, what else can I tell you. I heard from Isis—yes, we "Marik Chicks" have a secret network for communication—and she said...<signal loss>

today and that all of the terrorists—including their leader—were killed. Militia casualties were light."

Though unnamed in the official announcement, unofficial sources confirmed the unit as the Krushers, the core of Alys Rousset's renegade terrorist force. Forensic analysts are currently examining the remains of the terrorists and their equipment, and confirmation of the terrorist Rousset's demise is expected shortly.

The Voice of Blake congratulates the Fifth Militia on their role in ridding the Inner Sphere of this menace.

KITTERY FREED!

(11 August 3071)

Numenor [FSNN] – Confused reports coming out of the Capellan March indicate that Kittery has been liberated from Word of Blake occupation. Precise details vary between accounts, but all agree on certain specifics. A local resistance group—without any known support from the Capellan or FedSuns governments—appears to have accumulated enough personnel and weapons to wage an effective guerrilla war against the Blakist occupiers. In late July, the resistance leader by the name of Devlin Stone initiated a general uprising that overthrew Kittery's tyrannical conquerors.



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How Stone (reportedly not a Kittery native) raised and trained an army powerful enough to overcome a Blakist garrison is unclear. For months, however, unconfirmed reports have circulated that Kittery and other Capellan March worlds have giant “prison camps” for Word of Blake captives. If true, this would certainly provide a ready source for willing troops, but these reports are all too often accompanied by wild stories of “reeducation centers” where the Blakists subject inmates to a range of unspeakable experiments more at home in a cheap holo-novel than in real life.

Of even greater concern is the fact that Stone—hailed as a hero by locals—has retained control of an army of undetermined size and capability, and has yet to return control of Kittery to representatives of the Federated Suns. Instead, he is reportedly restructuring district and planetary government, and placing loyal followers in all positions of power. This development prompted one observer to remark that the people of Kittery may have traded one tyrannical ruler for another.

RUMORS OF MY DEMISE...

(13 September 3071)

Augustine [VOICE OF THE LEAGUE] – Ain’t it grand when a liar is exposed? Not just revealed to be “padding” the truth, I mean, but to be so desperate as to make bald-faced lies and then hoping their control of the media is strong enough to bury reality? Well, think again, Word of Blake. We’ve got your number. Alys Marik is dead, is she? You killed her on Holt and have categorical proof?

So how come she just hit Hamilton?

Yes, this is probably the first you’re hearing of it, but you got spanked, well and truly. And Duchess Alys has obliged with evidence of her good health... [Image insert: Rousset-Marik, in her Krushers uniform, stands in front of the Hamilton Legislature building. The words “Rumors of my demise have been greatly exaggerated” are printed across the bottom of the image.]

Why the Blakists thought they could lie to us about Holt, we may never know. Did they kill someone there and dress the body up as the Duchess? I wouldn’t put it past them. They’ve shown themselves to be adept at surgical modifications. Or did someone else masquerade as the Duchess, with or without her consent?

VISIONS OF PURPOSE

—Excerpt from an HPG packet intercept released to INN by ComStar ROM, dated 1 November 3071

Precentor Apollyon,

The following video records a Nova Cat Council meeting held on 12 October 3071. It answers the question of why the Nova Cats have involved themselves with the infidels—and who they have chosen to back. Awaiting your command.

—Precentor Belial

>>>Recording Begins<<<

[Khan Santin West]: “Trothkin, today the time has come for me to reveal to you why I have ordered the redeployments.

[Grumblings of dissent ripple throughout the room.]

[West]: “I know many are not pleased; however, today is not the day for dissension, but for unity.”

[Murmurs of agreement]

[West]: “A year ago, I felt drawn to make another Rite of Vision quest. After informing Minoru, I made my way on foot to Mount Tengoku. After five days of climbing without rest, I reached the location calling for me. Not knowing if I would achieve my quest, I performed the Rite. As I neared exhaustion, a bright light appeared and began to pulsate as a ring of fire formed an outline of the Inner Sphere. Another light—this one brighter than the others—formed far below the pulsating light. As it moved, other lights converged on it, making it brighter and stronger still. Soon the light began to extinguish the flames. Finally, the two lights merged and peacefulness washed over me. The light then formed a man, chiseled out of granite, who expanded out from the light, and faded.

“When I revealed this vision to our Oathmaster, he informed me that he, too, had the same vision. Neither of us knew what it meant...until recently.”

[Minoru Nova Cat]: “The Khan speaks the truth.

“Based on information I have received, saKhan Karl Devalis was dispatched with his Delta Galaxy to investigate. What he has reported confirmed both of our visions: this man of granite, this man of purpose, is named Devlin Stone. He is the future of the Inner Sphere in these dark times, and a beacon to the Nova Cats. Of this, we are certain.”

[The chamber explodes in excitement.]

>>>Recording Ends<<<

[MercNet]

COMPLETED

[Commonality Communicator]

DOWNLOADED

[FSNS]

ACCESSING

(28 April 3071)

“Solaris Rebels Losing Steam?”

(7 May 3071)

“Marian Build-Up Alarms Local Defenders”

(30 May 3071)

“Capellan Cyber-Soldiers: Proof of Blakist Complicity?”



LATE 3071: CRACKS IN THE FAÇADE

VICTORY FOR THE AGES!

(11 December 3071)

Solaris VII [SRN] – Freedom!

At long last, we on Solaris VII can taste it, like a drink from a cool spring after stumbling around in a fetid swamp, too scared to leave for long. But on December 11, a day long known for bitterness and sorrow, we have reason to celebrate; the Word of Blake has left Solaris.

Thanks to the hard work and sacrifice of the Solaran people, we've made this world far too expensive and problematic for the Word to hold onto. In a city made up of citizens from all over the galaxy, we've come together in the spirit of camaraderie—not only to rid ourselves of self-styled overlords, but also to rebuild this battered world. Not only will we do it for ourselves as Solarans, but also as a beacon of hope.

Many died for this day, but we never gave up. In the crucible of war—*real* war—we drew closer than ever before. I've seen tattoo-covered Yakuza being bandaged by blue-blooded Lyran nobility, warriors from the Capellan March sharing their meager rations with starving Capellan children. Even Free Worlders sharing one goal despite all their cultural differences: to rid this world of the Word of Blake.

True, the troubles are not all behind us, but we are working together to rebuild. Soon the teams that stood shoulder-to-shoulder fighting the Blakists will be extinguishing the lingering fires and building shelters for the homeless. Bulldozers are clearing wreckage from the devastated concourses of the Solaris Spaceport, to reopen our link to off-world supplies.

No longer will this day live in infamy for Solaris. Instead, it will live in glory. This is Kiva Cooper, reporting from the *free* world of Solaris, where the healing has already begun!

GAME OVER

[Announcer]: “—this on?” *[Cough]* “Good morning, Solaris! This is your Early Morning News Update. We begin today with words we never thought we'd speak...” *[Muted sobs]* “...Solaris is finally free!

“Free! After four years of escalating violence and open warfare in and under our streets, we are indeed finally free of the Blakist presence! Underground odds-makers had this timeframe at a long 300-1 odds, so if you managed to survive and had placed that bet, good fortune to you!...”

[Frequency change]

[Commentator]: “...earlier this morning, Jason Bloch of Gemini Stables announced that Gemini would merge with its long-time ally, White Hand Stables. Considering the losses both of these stables took in recent weeks—the Geminis' main compound was one of the first casualties in the Blakists' final, five-day artillery bombardment of Cathay and the Black Hills—this comes as no surprise to many insiders. Indeed, several experts were expecting this announcement weeks ago, after White Hand lost their number one and two warriors during the Blakist press into Xolara...”

[Frequency change]

[Commentator]: “...Shot Weapons announced late last night they were folding up most of their major manufacturing on Solaris and moving at least half of their remaining assets off-planet. Within a few hours of their announcement, a small group of warriors from the Renegades Cooperative hit their auxiliary headquarters in Nowhere, practically stripping the place to the bone. When questioned, Giles “Hammerstrike” Wilson—the Renegades' number two (and one-time number five on the Warrior's List)—stated, “If they're abandoning us, then they don't deserve to take it with them. This stuff is Solaran and on Solaris it stays.”

A BSW spokeswoman rebutted those comments early this morning, stating that, “because of the cowardly and reprehensible acts by some of Solaris' once-revered fighters, all BSW employees and facilities will remain armed until we boost...”

[Frequency change]

[Announcer]: “...-ning commute: traffic is being diverted from Solaris Highway as 'Mechs from Tandrek Stables and the Black Nova Cooperative continue their long-running night battle between Cathay and Silesia. Several stretches of the highway, which survived most of the Blakist invasion, have now collapsed and motorists are being told to detour north, through Kobe, if their destination is the Black Hills or the IZ. Once again, for your morning commute...”

—Real-time civilian radio broadcasts from Solaris City, 12 December 3071

**NIOPS TRIUMPHANT!**

The forces of Caesar Julius O'Reilly met with just a little setback earlier this year. An attempt to raid the Niops Association for their Star League technology went a teensy-weensy bit pear-shaped for the VI Legio Ripariensis. By all accounts, their plan started out well enough, carefully staging diversions with a gaggle of their DropShips that pulled the Association Militia Air Division out of position. This gave Legatus Onufry Sopaczak a chance to take a run at Niops V and the warehouses where the output of several automated manufacturing plants was stored.

Unfortunately for the Caesar's finest, those eggheads on Niops had long ago anticipated just such a stunt, and had gone and hired themselves their very own mercenaries. Now, the Black Heart Roses don't exactly measure up to the Kell Hounds, but with the Niops Militia to back them up they still managed to make things hot for the Legionnaires. When Sopaczak's 'Mech got pulled down by some fancy power-armored infantry, his boys decided it was time to bug out.

Definitely a graphic illustration of the old rule: Never underestimate your opponent.

—Captain Johnny Finch, *Merc Weekly*, MercNet Publishing, 1 June 3071

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to combat corruption, to ultimately bring an already crumbling age to an end, so that we may lift it up again!

"This you understandably oppose, misguided as you are. And therefore I grant you the first lesson of understanding in good faith: The fable of the Phoenix rising from its own ashes. Look upon your realm once more, mighty Caesar, and know despair!"

[O'Reilly sits back, looking puzzled, first from the message, then at the senators, and finally at his aide's reaction to something outside the bay windows behind him.]

[Aide]: "Caesar, look!"

[As O'Reilly turns, a blinding flash of light fills the room. Collective screams of anguish, horror or anger echo through the chamber and everyone cringes. Moments later, a loud rumble shakes the building, scrambling the image of the Caesar doubling over before the shattered windows. The screen flashes out.]

**BLAKIST TASK FORCE
FOILS TWO STRIKES IN TWO WEEKS**

(28 July 3071)

Vega [ISAP] – The DCMS has finally confirmed that the Ryukenyon regiment and all supporting units were lost in January in the Ko system. Renowned for their nighttime raid on Matamoras against the Smoke Jaguars and for the defense of Courchevel against Clan Ghost Bear, the veteran BattleMech regiment and eight conventional regiments were holding at the Ko system's nadir jump point. Tasked with liberating Imbros III, the invasion flotilla was caught with sails deployed when a Word of Blake ship jumped in. Spearheaded by a solid phalanx of heavily armed DropShips of unidentified type, and supported by a large fighter screen, the Blakist assault force cut the Combine fighter defenses to pieces before falling on the fleeing troop transports. The few survivors who made it to the escape pods report that the Word of Blake forces proceeded to board the now-helpless JumpShips and succeeded in capturing three intact.

DCMS investigators sent to analyze the wreckage confirmed that the Imbros III flotilla is a total loss. However, they drew some grim satisfaction from the heavy price the Word of Blake paid for their victory. In addition to combat losses, many of the Blakist JumpShips must have suffered significant damage. The attackers were forced to scuttle them—along with all of the DropShips and fighters that their remaining jump capacity could not handle.

We now know that a similar scenario played out just two weeks later in the Federated Suns at New Rhodes III, where the Eighth Deneb Light Cavalry was preparing to mount a raid in force against Addicks. Once more the Word of Blake displayed flawless timing as their attack squadrons caught the Deneb transports with their sails deployed. The *Pride of Argyle*, a *Star Lord*-class JumpShip refitted with lithium-fusion batteries, cut loose her sail and made an emergency jump, carrying one battalion of BattleMechs and another of battle armor clear, but the rest of the assault force was annihilated just as efficiently as the Ryuken before them. Once

AND IN OTHER NEWS...**BLINDING VENGEANCE**

—Bootlegged surveillance camera feed recovered by Ordo Vigilis operatives on Alphard, dated 6 June 3071 (veracity confirmed)

[A high-angle, full-color view into the stateroom of Caesar Julius O'Reilly, overlooking the city of Nova Roma. O'Reilly is at his desk, leafing through paperwork as a handful of Marian senators tensely stand before him. Schubert's Symphony no. 8 in B minor can be heard in the background, but trails off at the sound of an elaborate chime. O'Reilly signs one more verigraph with a calm flourish before calling out to somewhere outside the camera's angle]

[O'Reilly]: "Enter!"

[An aide strides into view, ignoring the gathered senators as he rolls a portable holoivid emitter toward the desk. Straightening up, he addresses the Caesar.]

[Aide]: "Your Honor, this just arrived from a Blakist courier, marked urgent. Security had it screened and deemed safe."

[The camera flickers and the senators tense as the aide presses a control in reaction to O'Reilly's nod. The projection starts, unrecognizable from the camera's point of view.]

[Blakist]: "Hail, Caesar! This day I invite you to ponder the true meaning of your stance in life. Be advised that we—the followers of the Blessed Blake—live for a purpose far above and beyond your imagination. We have founded our enclaves all over the Inner Sphere not out of sheer arrogance alone, but to establish cleansed bridgeheads into a decadent universe. Shining footholds of light

THE MASTER'S MINIONS

[Static dissolves to show a dirty, disheveled man glancing furtively beyond him and at the camera. The background appears to be an underground bunker or fallout shelter. The man reaches up and adjusts the camera lens, then speaks.]

[Vincenzo]: "Thi...thi...this is Steven Vincenzo, New Gibson Freedom League, Cell Four. Umm...I...don't...know what to say or how to say it, but if you're seeing this, my God you're lucky. I thi...thi...think hell has finally broken upon us...and his name is App...App...Apoll—"

[Massive crash. Vincenzo looks beyond the camera, his eyes wide.]

[Vincenzo]: [whispers] "Ohmygodtheyfoundme..."

[Another crash, then a grinding squeal. Suddenly, a twisted metal vault door flies into the background of the camera's view and slams into the ferrocrete wall.]

[Voice, Out-of-Frame]: "There you are, my frail little mouse!" [Low chuckle] "I told you it was impossible to hide from my hunters."

[Vincenzo]: [Blood drains from his face. Mutters incoherently.] "Nonononononono...."

[Impossibly fast, a hand catches the man by the throat. The camera view de-pixelates, then re-forms. It is showing the full room now, from a high corner. A soldier in scarlet body armor holds the man aloft by his cybernetic left arm.]

[Vincenzo]: [Choking] "I'll ta...ta...talk, I sw...swear..."

[Voice, Out-of-Frame]: "Let him down, filii. I shall hear this Frail's words."

[The soldier lowers Vincenzo to the floor and steps to the side. Vincenzo drops to his knees, his hands around his stomach.]

[Vincenzo]: [Sobbing] "You killed them. You killed them all. You demon bastard!"

[Vincenzo explodes into motion, drawing a pistol from under his shirt, but before he even gets it halfway up, the red-armored soldier moves with incredible speed, seizing Vincenzo's arm and breaking it with an audible snap in his left hand. Pulling upward, he elevates the rebel, grabs his neck and throws the man back against the ruined vault door. The soldier then draws a pistol and takes aim, pausing only to look back at someone still outside the camera's view.]

[Soldier]: "Sir?"

[Voice, Out-of-Frame]: "He is only Frail, Berith. Unworthy of any more of our time. Come; we have more vermin to find."

[Berith]: "Of course, Precentor Apollyon." [The soldier fires, blasting Vincenzo between the eyes. With an incredibly smooth motion, he then turns to the camera, aims and fires again. The screen goes blank.]

—Video file distributed to all resistance cells within 50 light-years of Gibson, July 3071

more the Blakists thoroughly destroyed any equipment they were forced to abandon.

Capellan forces may have fallen victim to a similar attack, but the CAAF are remaining characteristically tight-lipped.

Analysis of the *Pride of Argyle's* sensor logs suggests the same task force was involved in both known incidents. Evidently the Word of Blake has an excellent intelligence network and has established an extensive command circuit to be able to move ships from threat to threat so rapidly.

FALLING INTO CRIMSON

(31 August 3071)

Canopus IV [ISAP] – Beatrice Vetter here, with the InterStellar Associated Press. I'm speaking with Captain Peter Trajun, a survivor from the mercenary unit Ramilie's Raiders, which yesterday assaulted Blakist troops located just outside the capital. So, Captain, what happened yesterday?

[Trajun]: "We jumped into a close pirate point and came in hot and fast. Our mission was to spring Doru and Centrella from Crimson."

[Vetter]: "You're speaking of Senior General Hadji Doru and Magestrix Emma Centrella."

[Trajun]: "That's right. Anyway, we saw plenty of Wobbies arrayed around the city, including a Level III from the 41st Shadow. It was too much for us, but our CO figured we'd have a chance if we took 'em by surprise."

[Vetter]: "So you jumped."

[Trajun]: "Yeah, we went with vertical envelopment. Dropped from low orbit in pods. Figured the Damn Toaster Humpers wouldn't be expecting that."

[Vetter]: "Please, Captain, your language."

[Trajun]: "Uh, yeah, sure. Sorry. Anyway we came down on the Toa—uh, *Blakists*, pretty hard, but we were still overmatched. They chewed us up pretty good—hit us with LRMs when we were still coming down, peppered us with artillery as we hit the LZ. Once we got down, we were badly outnumbered. Still, we gave 'em hell. In the end, we fought nearly to the last man."

[Vetter]: "But you got away, Captain."

[Trajun]: "Look, lady; I don't care what you're implying here. I was there. I fought. You should see my *Grasshopper* now. Between the armor I lost and the hunk the Wobbies took outa my left arm, I dropped about five tons."

[Vetter]: "Then how'd you make it out?"

[Trajun]: "Newt—the CO—put us on a special detail. While he was rocking the Robes, we escorted Doru out of the city."

[Vetter]: "So, Senior General Doru got out alive?"

[Trajun]: "Damn straight. And believe me, he's going to make the Wobbies pay."

[Vetter]: "What about the Magestrix?"

[Trajun]: [Shakes head sadly.] "No, we didn't pull her out. Story I heard was that the bastards got her when they firebombed Crimson the first time."

[Vetter]: "The Magestrix is dead? Can you confirm that?"

[Trajun]: "No. All I know was she didn't come with us."



DEATHLY SILENT

[Sagan Control]: "Welcome to New Sagan, *Dynasty's Sun*. You are fourth on queue for recharging."

[Dynasty's Sun]: "Thank you, Control. Umm, is the station supervisor available? Have him contact the captain on channel 40-2, Secured Green."

[Control]: "Copy that. Switching now. Engaging secure-line transmission protocols."

[Ying]: "This is Harbormaster Duvalis Ying. How can I be of assistance?"

[Cho]: "Master Ying, this is Captain Cho. I have information to relay regarding Necromo, in accordance with Confederation Merchant Code Alert Fifteen."

[Ying]: "Stand by...Recording initiated. Go ahead, Captain Cho. Please make your statement."

[Cho]: "This is Captain Evan Cho of the *Dynasty's Sun*, current destination: Gei-Fu via Armamax. Our last transit point was the nadir jump point at Necromo. We recorded no transmissions from the system, nor noted any traffic at the jump point."

[Ying]: "Citizen Cho...no disrespect, but that's hardly relevant information..."

[Cho]: "No, you don't understand. We recorded *nothing at all* there! Zip. Nada. There was *nothing* coming from the planet. Not just a dead HPG system; no radio, beacons, broadcasts of any kind. It was as if the world was just...gone. Shipyard systems like that are *always* humming with background noise. There was nothing at all coming from the planet. It felt...like we were floating above a graveyard..."

—Communications intercept from the State Trader *Dynasty's Sun*, New Sagan Zenith Recharge Point, 28 August 3071

CRACKS IN THE FAÇADE

DEMOCRACY HOW?

What do we hope for now?

I used to enjoy mocking Lindon Ashley—I've seldom seen anyone with so little faith in the values he claimed to support. It seemed a comic-opera spectacle, and derision was an appropriate response.

But it's not funny any more. The plot is now tragedy. Kelvin Strauss, one of the truly good people in the Inner Sphere, is losing his organization. He gave us hope, presenting a novel idea—respect for all people, from the highest noble to the lowliest beggar. His vision included everyone. The sheer power of his idea brought him followers, and his movement grew.

But now it all seems lost. The machinations of power followed their inevitable course—Strauss gathered power, and it was taken from him by people more ruthless, more Machiavellian. Corruption moves so fast.

Lindon Ashley is a plague. If Enzesfled didn't prove it, then keep your eye on Virtue, Mezzana and Vermezzo. Ashley is working hard on those worlds, and chaos will follow him.

Ashley will find more places to spread his dogma. His followers are already here. And if you don't believe me now—if you still think he's using his tactics to promote a greater good—just wait until he arrives. Wait until you see what he'll do. Then tell me how much you like it.

—from Annalise Guillaume's "Passing Parade" column, *Calafell Examiner*, Calafell, 14 September 3071

ANNIHILATION

[Moore's Sunburst]: "This is *Moore's Sunburst*, Jessica Moore, Master. Transmitting ID codes and jump authorization."

[Axtion Aerospace Control]: "Roger, *Sunburst*. ID received and...verified. And jump authorization is...Hey, this code is ten days overdue."

[Sunburst]: [sighs; weary voice] "But still valid."

[Control]: "I—Yes, *Sunburst*. The code is valid. Our records show you inbound from—Jesus, from Highspire? There should be two more JumpShips with you."

[Sunburst]: "No." [Moore's voice sounds even more tired.] "There aren't any more Jumpers coming."

[Control]: "Ah, *Sunburst*, please switch to encrypted frequency 2437."

[Sunburst]: "Switching..."

[Control]: "Confirmed. Now tell me, what the hell happened?"

[Sunburst]: "We hit Highspire all right. Our Droppers went in hot, looking to take out those Rakshasa Thuggees. They grounded and engaged according to plan, but guess what? Turns out there are *two* of those 'Thuggee Warrior Houses' on Highspire, not one. The Rakshasa and something called the White Tigers. They ripped into our people like we weren't even there, and their ships came for us..." [A trace of horror creeps into her voice.] "It was...brutal. We barely made it out ourselves."

[Control]: "We have you in our telescopes, *Sunburst*. Hey, uh, you're carrying no DropShips. Where are your troops?"

[Sunburst]: "Troops?" [The woman suddenly sounds enraged.] "Weren't you listening, Control? There are *no more troops!*"

—Communications intercepts between Axtion Control and the JumpShip *Moore's Sunburst*, New Syrtis, 15 September 3071, three weeks after the attack on Highspire was launched.

LATE 3071: CRACKS IN THE FAÇADE

SERPENT IN EDEN

—Tamarind State Media (Channel 545) broadcast, Tamarind, 7 October 3071

Patty: "So where'd Bouncer put the ball?"

Joe: "Who cares about the damn dog. What about us?"

Patty: "What about us? We're just friends. You know I like Danny."

Joe: "But I can't go on without y—"

[Screen goes black for five seconds. Tamarind News insignia appears on screen and holds for another ten seconds. Sudden cut to a newsroom, where a male anchorperson appears, looking shocked and pale.]

[Anchor]: "We apologize for interrupting this morning's broadcast of *On Creaking Doors*, but news is breaking regarding a major incident in Padaron City about which a government official is about to speak. We go live to the Tamarind legislature..." *[Holds hand to ear and listens]* "We're cutting to that feed momentarily."

[Sudden cut to show a podium with the Tamarind legislature insignia behind it. Security troops are in evidence. A door opens and Tamarind's official press secretary, Lisane Helm, emerges.]

[Helm]: "Ladies and gentlemen, matters are still developing, but here's what we have so far. Ninety minutes ago—"

[The door opens again, and a new figure emerges.]

[Helm]: "Ladies and gentlemen, Duchess Therese Marik."

[Marik moves the podium. She is ashen-faced, and the mascara around her eyes is streaked.]

[Marik]: "People of Tamarind, at 9:15 this morning, my husband, Jeremy Brett, was assassinated by Richard Steiner. As a former Lyran marshal and opponent of my husband, Steiner requested—and was granted—the opportunity to discuss alleged military information in his possession that he insisted was of vital interest to the Tamarind government. It appears, however, that Steiner had become a living weapon..."

[Marik's eyes are full of tears and she takes a moment to dab them clear]

[Marik]: "Initial forensics suggest that explosives were somehow grafted to Steiner's skeletal structure, evading even our most stringent security scans. The sophistication and nature of this attack would be clue enough as to the perpetrators, as would Steiner's history before he returned to the Lyran Alliance, but with his dying breath he finally admitted who was pulling his strings. Show it..."

[Sudden cut to security holocamera footage. The timestamp reads: 09:11 hours, 7-10-71...]

PHOTON TO COMMAND TAMARIND'S FORCES

(19 November 3071)

Tamarind [TSN] – Duchess Therese Marik-Brett today declared the Duchy of Tamarind fully independent from the Free Worlds League government. At the same time, she also installed her son, Photon Brett-Marik, as the Duchy's Marshal and commander of its overall military force.

A MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

[A video screen springs to life with a feed from a security camera, showing Jeremy Brett sitting behind a desk in an ornately decorated office. Two aides in FWLM dress stand before him.]

[Brett]: "He is here, then?"

[Aide]: "Waiting in the next room, sir."

[Brett]: "Clean?"

[Aide 2]: "We did a thorough scan; no weapons, no electronics that we could find. He's clean."

[Aide]: "You sure about that? He's sweating like a pig, and I haven't seen Wobbie robes that white."

[Aide 2]: "If his story's true, he's been on the run from the Blakers for months now, and his own government still has a bounty out on his head."

[Brett]: "There's no point in delaying this any longer, then... Send him in."

[The aides usher in a haggard-looking Richard Steiner, clad in simple coveralls two sizes too big and adorned with the Marik eagle. Steiner's gaze shifts about the room as he enters.]

[Steiner]: "Jeremy Brett, we meet at last."

[Brett]: "Richard Steiner—"

[Steiner]: "About *verdamnt* time, Marshall. Your people had me waiting for hours."

[Brett]: "My people take no chances, Richard. Your record—what we know of it—doesn't inspire trust."

[Steiner]: "Point taken. What I have to say concerns your wife as well; the Word is planning to bring you both to heel. Where is she, anyway?"

[Brett]: "Therese keeps her own schedule. What you have to say can surely be repeated at her convenience."

[Steiner]: *[Irate, stepping closer to the desk.]* "First things first. I have terms. I didn't come all this way to trade information for free. I want amnesty, protection. From the Word, from my own government and from your friends on Atreus."

[Brett]: *[Rising]* "You're hardly in a position to make demands, Richard."

[Steiner]: "And you're hardly in a position to pass up what I know about that witch on Atreus, or her master." *[Pause.]* "Ah, that got your attention, *ja*? So, do we have an accord?"

[Brett grimaces, then nods.]

[Steiner]: "Excellent!" *[Offers his hand. The aides tense, but relax when Brett reluctantly extends his own.]*

[Brett]: "What the—?"

[Steiner]: "Oh, the Word was right about you, Jeremy. All honor and optimism..." *[A grimace contorts Steiner's face as his grip tightens on Brett's. His left hand comes across, adding extra pressure. One of the room guards raises his weapon.]*

[Steiner]: "Blake's Vengeance be done!"

[There is a flare, then the recording stops]



LATE 3071: CRACKS IN THE FAÇADE

FROM HELL

>>>Transmission Corrupted // Sequence Baker-Baker-Marik<<<

"...ibson Freedom League has confirmation of several Domini training camps in and around Fort Masters. They are more than just a cause of concern. They are frightening. Almost daily now, they have been executing 'operations' around the capital, rounding up anyone who has espoused open support of the League. They just...come in the middle of the night..."

<garbled>

"...took a full blast from one of the NGFL's J. Edgar tanks, then just got up and tore her way through the cockpit. Not only did she eject parts of the crew, she somehow merged with the tank, used it to hose down a nearby safehouse—one the League swore was untraceable! I don't know how much lon—..."

<garbled>

"...ights ago we captured stills of a new armor we think the Blakists are testing. It silhouetted on the Wall for nearly five seconds, as if daring someone to take a shot at it. It...it's like one of those bad holovid horror movies-of-the-week, only these are real walking nightmares. Taking a sleeping pill doesn't erase it from your mind..."

>>>Transmission Cut at Source // Sequence Ended<<<

—Excerpt from an (unverified) Oriente Intelligence Report, dated 10 October 3071

These moves come less than six weeks after the stunning assassination of Therese's husband, Marshal Jeremy Brett, by Richard Steiner. Sources close to the Brett-Marik family note that Steiner used a suicide bomb to carry out the attack and that he declared his loyalty to Word of Blake immediately before setting off the explosion that killed both himself and Marshal Brett.

Therese made the announcement speaking to a gathering of press. The self-declared Duchess wore no make-up and dressed entirely in black. Observers described her appearance as severe.

"The murder of my husband demonstrates the lengths to which the Word of Blake is willing to go to achieve its ends," she told the assembled reporters. "I am deeply saddened to say that the Blakists have the support of Atreus. Paul and Corrine Marik have shown themselves to be little more than the Word's puppets. And so I have little choice but to separate Tamarind from the Free Worlds League.

"I do this, not to destroy the League, but to save it.

"Tamarind will join with the people of the true Free Worlds. We stand ready to oppose the Blakist terrorists with our last breath and our final drop of blood.

"To that end, I am assuming leadership of Tamarind as Duchess and appointing my son, Photon Brett-Marik, Marshal of Tamarind. Marshal Brett-Marik will assume command of all FWLM forces formerly under the command of my husband. Tamarind's enemies will find that the new Marshal will defend the Duchy with all the tenacity, ingenuity, and resolve of his predecessor."

THE FALL OF NIGHT

From: [ComStar ROM Station Chief on St. Ives, Name Redacted]

To: [ComStar ROM Station Chief on Kathil, Name Redacted]

Date: 7 November 3071

[Name Redacted], Events in the Confederation are forcing me to report outside normal channels. Please forward this report to those in ROM you can trust.

The Capellans have wrested their HPG network from the Word of Blake, but it has done them little good. A virus of unknown origin has knocked most of the network down.

Things are starting to unravel here. Liao's grip on his realm is slipping. Military units cannot report to higher authority or receive new orders. Businesses are failing because they are cut off from suppliers and customers in other systems.

Civilization depends on communication, [Name Redacted]. If the Blessed Blake was right about anything, he was right about that. Almost overnight darkness has swept across the Confederation.

Please, [Name Redacted]. I can trust no one else. Please alert our superiors to what is happening here. I fear the importance of our situation may be lost on them in the midst of the maneuver of BattleMech regiments and the fall of nuclear fire. But there is no truth greater than this.

Humanity is afraid of the dark.

—BT

DAVID LEAR LIVES!

(24 December 3071)

Sian [SINS] – Joyous news for the Allard-Liaos and the whole Confederation! David Lear, son of the hero of the Confederation, Duke Kai Allard-Liao, is alive! Previously thought to have perished along with the crew and passengers of the *Capellan Star* when she vanished without a trace in 3070, David (a brilliant student here at the University of Sian) and his shipmates were in fact captured by Word of Blake raiders.

Imprisoned on the world of Kittery, David demonstrated typical Capellan ingenuity in escaping from his captors and organizing a resistance movement to overthrow their puppet government. David plans to remain on Kittery where he is working with the rightful government to repair the damage wrought by the invaders and prepare the population for reintegration into the Capellan Confederation.

We look forward to welcoming David Lear and the people of Kittery home.

CHAOS RAMPANT: NACHT BLITZ



NACHT BLITZ

Entry 482-8

Talk about one malfed-up planet.

Just as the SHDL manages to gain the upper hand, they revert to type and start the same old bravado crap we used to see on "Fight Night Tonight" or "WarriorScape". One guy thinks another's out to sabotage his ranking (how can they even keep up with such nonsense during a war?), so he hangs him out to dry during a raid. Or one stable decides to eliminate a rival and either gives shoddy parts as a "gift" or conveniently "forgets" to hit their objective on time.

Only when the Blakists surge back with some victories does the pettiness subside. But never for long. I wonder how bad it'll be here once the Blakists get pushed off...

SITUATION

Long-term storage facilities, International Zone

Solaris VII, Lyran Alliance

17 August 3071

Though they've managed to hold the IZ for nearly three months, rumors of Blakist reinforcements arriving on-planet suggest the Word is gearing up for a major assault. With inter-alliance fighting on the rise, it only makes sense that the Word would push hard at the IZ to re-establish a base of operations in order to regain control of the capital.

Some of the more pragmatic stables approached your unit and hired you to operate as a rear guard for the more valuable supplies still in the storage yards. Your orders are to hold off all attempts at taking the supplies, even if it means taking down some of the more desperate of the SHDL members.

CHAOS RAMPANT: NACHT BLITZ



GAME SETUP

CBT: Use maps from the Light and Heavy Urban tables (see p. 263, *TW*). If *Free-Fire Zone* was the prior track, use the map setup from that track, including any previously damaged buildings.

AT2: Use maps from the Light and Heavy Urban tables (see p. 263, *TW*).

RPG: The gamemaster should have a blueprint of the area for player reference. The International Zone is a mix of warehouses and DropShip landing pads; for more detailed information, gamemasters may wish to refer to the *MapPack: Solaris VII* information book. If *Free-Fire Zone* was the prior track, use the map setup from that track, including any previously damaged buildings.

Attacker

The Attacker consists of a mixed force of Word of Blake and Blakist sympathizers. The Attacker's total deployed force should be 100 percent of the Defender's total deployed force, with at least 75 percent being Word of Blake units.

The Attacker's entire force enters from the map edge of their choosing. All battlefield edges are considered the Attacker's home edge for purposes of withdrawing.

Aerospace units enter the battlefield at a Velocity of 4 or less.

Defender

The Defender consists of up to 75 percent of the players' total force. The Defender begins the track set up anywhere on the battlefield, but each unit must be at least four hexes apart.

Aerospace units begin the game at a Velocity of 2 or less.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 600

Optional Bonuses (all bonuses cumulative):

+200 Previous Contacts: Apply this bonus if the group gained a Total Victory in *Free Fire Zone* (see p. 42).

+300 Storm: Use the following rules for this option:

All Units: Apply a +3 to-hit modifier to all missile weapon attacks and a +2 to-hit modifier to all direct-fire ballistic weapon attacks. Apply a +3 modifier to all Piloting Skill Rolls.

Aerospace Units (except Airships): Apply a +2 modifier to all Control Rolls.

Battle Armor: Apply a -1 MP to Ground movement for all battle armor, to a minimum of 0; any such units can either move or make a weapon attack in a turn, but not both (see p. 213, *TW*). No jumping movement allowed.

Airships and Conventional Infantry: Cannot operate in Storm conditions.



CHAOS RAMPANT: NACHT BLITZ

Victory Bonuses (bonuses not cumulative):

+500 Partial Victory: Completing two objectives.

+800 Total Victory: Completing all objectives.

OBJECTIVES

1. Denial. Keep the Attackers from destroying 600+ CF of buildings.

2. Justice served. Destroy/cripple all of the Attacker's forces that are not Word of Blake.

3. Prove yourselves. Destroy/cripple at least 75 percent of the Attacker's total deployed force.

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Forced Withdrawal

All forces must follow the Forced Withdrawal rules (see p. 258, *TW*).

Salvage

Salvage may be claimed by the players' force if they can claim at least a Partial Victory.

AFTERMATH

Sooner or later the Blakists would hit back. But no one predicted they'd go for the total-destruction angle. They cleared out quite a bit of the IZ, and SHDL overflights confirmed later the Word was setting up several artillery batteries on the ridges closest to Montenegro.

They were shelling Solaris City before midnight.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

As the SHDL frantically pulled back from the IZ, several stables abandoned valuable equipment. Enterprising mercenaries can take advantage of the situation and sneak a few valuables from under the Word's noses...

Expansion Ideas

The Word's attack is coordinated across the entire SHDL front, so a running battle throughout the massive DropPort is possible, including units from other stables as the SHDL pulls back from the Word's destructive onslaught.

NEXT TRACKS

Severance, Reaching the Limit

CHAOS RAMPANT: OPPRESSION

OPPRESSION

"So basically, you just want a couple of my boys to go run around in the hinterlands and blow up an agro processing plant. And you'll pay us double the garrison rate, plus expenses."

"That's right. And I want proof of the site's destruction."

"Well, that's easy enough. So tell me, what's so important about some backwoods fruit-packing plant that you have to hire mercs to do your dirty work?"

"You wouldn't understand."

"Oh, I get it. Because I'm a stupid merc. Not because it's one of your boss' political rivals' key industries that makes enough profit to fund his campaign against you. And that having it get trampled by stupid "pirates" only makes it harder for him to combat you in the public relations war you two are waging here and on Aiguebelle. Not to mention that the 'wanton destruction' of such a key civilian factory only adds to your campaign points regarding inadequate militia defense and poor allocation of troops."

"Well, those are important. But there's one other thing."

"Hmm?"

"Plausible deniability."

"Riiiiight. You were never here."

SITUATION

Bullfighter, inbound vector

Mercedes, Lyran Alliance

27 August 3071

Work in Alarion Province is scarce at the moment, with much of the Alliance still reeling from several nasty blows on nearly every border. While a merc unit can easily find work closer to Terra, the more lucrative jobs sometimes end up being on these backwater worlds farther from the more vicious fighting. And local politicians pay extremely well for some really easy operations.

CHAOS RAMPANT: OPPRESSION

GAME SETUP

CBT/AT2: Use maps from any of the following tables: Hill, Wetlands, Flatlands and/or Coastal. The gamemaster should place six heavy Level 1 buildings (CF: 70) on one map, within a nine-hex radius.

RPG: The gamemaster should have a general terrain map ready for player reference. The buildings are typical light factory and warehouse designs.

Attacker

The Attacker is the player group, and they may use up to 20 percent of their total force. The Attacker enters from the edge farthest from the buildings. This edge is also considered the home edge for withdrawal purposes.

Defender

The Defender is made up of elements of the local security force and civilian defenders. The Defender's force is no more than 75 percent of the Attacker's total deployed force. Equipment for the Defenders should be of older origin (no units featured in *Technical Readouts: 3055, 3058, 3060, Project Phoenix* or *3067*) and may include Support Vehicles and conventional infantry. Half of the Defender's force is Green and half are Regular.

The Defender sets up anywhere on the map within the factory complex.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 500

Optional Bonuses (all bonuses cumulative):

+200 Electromagnetic Interference (EMI): Apply a +2 to-hit modifier for all ranged weapon attacks and a -2 penalty to rolls on the Cluster Hits Table (regardless of the weapon system used) made by all units operating within an affected area. This area of effect covers the entire playing area.

In addition, all active probes within an EMI-affected region are rendered useless, while ECM systems double their effective range.

+300 Mercs!: Add an additional mercenary force that is 50 percent of the Attacker's total deployed force, with Regular experience.

Victory Bonuses (bonuses not cumulative):

+300 Partial Victory: Completing one objective.

+750 Total Victory: Completing both objectives.

OBJECTIVES

- 1. No more, no less.** Destroy all six buildings.
- 2. No witnesses.** Destroy or cripple all opposing forces.

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Pit Traps

Scattered across the fields around the agro-plant are a number of natural sinkholes that have been expertly covered and set as traps. Before the game begins, the Defender selects two hexes for each of the Attacker's ground units and secretly records their location.

Whenever an attacking unit enters a designated hex, roll 2D6. On a result of 9+, the trap is successful. The attacking unit suffers a two-level fall and its movement ends in that hex. If the result is 8 or less, the trap still goes off, but does not catch the attacking unit (the unit spotted and dodged the trap at the last second, winding up on its outer rim), which may then continue its movement. A hex with a triggered pit trap is considered to be 2 levels below the original height of the hex.

AA Guns

Place one AA gun for each aerospace unit fielded by the Attacker. Each emplacement is a Level 2 building with a CF of 30 and contains one LB 5-X autocannon on a 360-degree swivel mount. Each gun has 10 rounds of ammunition.

The buildings with AA guns do not count toward the first objective.

AFTERMATH

It seems someone also pegged a few of Strauss' other assets during your little backwoods firefight. Normally politics in the Alliance aren't all that interesting—watching sand decay is more fun—but this little brouhaha seems to be fanning some serious fires all around the province. Enterprising commanders should keep an eye on this neck of the woods, as opportunities abound—as long as you pick the right side of the fence to back.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Now really, just WHAT did a wee little agroplex have that warranted such elaborate defenses? And did the farmers know you were coming, or is that their usual force complement? Something seems a tad off. Either "Mr. Mysterious" has more far-ranging plans up his sleeve...or Strauss isn't the goody-goody he looks like to the public.

Expansion Ideas

An ammunition manufacturing facility disguised as a simple agroplex would certainly raise some eyebrows, depending on to whom the information is brought. And why are politicians suddenly spending money on "deniable operations" like a drunken Loki agent on the Clan border? Democracy certainly isn't their primary concern...so what is?

NEXT TRACKS

Corporate Ties, Going Nova



CHAOS RAMPANT: SEVERANCE

SEVERANCE

[Announcer]: "Repeating our top story once again, planetary governor Adeile Sweringen announced today that Savannah has severed its ties to the Free Worlds League government on Atreus and is now considered a free and independent world. All League government personnel have been offered transitory positions in the new Savannah government. Negotiations are under way with the local League militia and Word garrisons in Macon City, Governor Sweringen will address the public this evening.

"We will update you as more information becomes available."

SITUATION

Fort Loudon Training Facility
Savannah, Free Worlds League
14 September 3071

Hired via your Galatean agent a few weeks ago under vague contract guidelines (the money was stellar), you only recently discovered the exact parameters of the contract. Pretty simple: kick the stubborn FWL / WoB garrison off Savannah.

How, when and where was pretty much up to you. As long as the stubborn malcontents were removed, the governor and her cabinet didn't really care.

CHAOS RAMPANT: SEVERANCE

GAME SETUP

CBT: Use maps from the Flatlands, Light Urban and/or Wetlands table (see p. 263, *TW*).

AT2: The players may choose to play this track in space or in the atmosphere. If in space, use the *Atmospheric Movement* rules (see p. 78, *TW*). If in atmosphere near ground level, use maps from the Flatlands, Light Urban and/or Wetlands table (see p. 263, *TW*).

Attacker

The Attacker consists of up to 75 percent of the attacking player's total force. The Attacker must choose one map edge as a home edge; attacking units enter the battlefield from that direction.

Defender

The Defender consists of 150 percent of the Attacker's total deployed force and is a mix of Regular and Veteran units: one Veteran unit for every three Regular units.

The Defender's home edge is opposite the Attacker's chosen home edge.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 600

Optional Bonuses (all bonuses cumulative):

+300 Reinforcements: Add an additional amount of planetary militia (Green experience) equal to 50 percent of the Defender's total deployed force. These units enter from any edge at the beginning of Turn 4 and assist the Defender. These units operate under Forced Withdrawal rules (see p. 258, *TW*).

+350 Level 1 Foliage: Designate all woods hexes as rising only one level above the underlying terrain (rather than two levels). All other rules concerning woods remain the same, including movement penalties. Because the woods only rise one level, their interaction with various units and line of sight will change accordingly (see p. 100, *TW*).

Partial Cover: Level 1 Foliage never provides partial cover for 'Mechs.

Victory Bonuses (bonuses not cumulative):

+450 Partial Victory: Completing one objective.

+800 Total Victory: Completing both objectives.



CHAOS RAMPANT: SEVERANCE

**OBJECTIVES**

- 1. Expedient removal of force.** Destroy or cripple all of the Defender's original deployed force.
- 2. Information.** Capture or cripple the commander's unit.

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Enemy Commander

The gamemaster should secretly designate one Defender unit as the garrison's commander. This unit has Veteran experience and is assigned separately from the Defender's standard force build. The Defender receives a +1 bonus to all Initiative rolls for as long as the unit remains operational. This bonus is lost when the commander's unit is crippled (unable to move) or destroyed.

Salvage

The Attacker may receive battlefield salvage if he completes at least one objective.

AFTERMATH

Surprisingly, little reaction to Savannah's declaration of independence has come from the rest of the League. Either League forces are extraordinarily tied up at the moment, or the planet was

never much of anything to begin with. Thankfully—at least for your unit—a few neighboring systems offered a mutual-defense pact, giving you the option of staying or leaving. Good thing, too; the contract's fine print mentioned being on station “until the safety and defense of Savannah is assured.” Worst thing for most mercs craving action is being stranded on a tiny world acting as a glorified police force.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Savannah's planetary government may try to convince the players to stay, to help train the sorely lacking militia and provide protection to the small system alliance. Or maybe those Leaguer military types called for reinforcements that finally showed up....

Expansion Ideas

Stubborn garrison troops may take to the hills and wage a minor guerrilla campaign. Pirates operating nearby may decide that such a small world is ripe for the plucking, possibly even catching the player group off guard. And that commander you captured—someone important just might want him back....

NEXT TRACKS

Corporate Ties; Spark

CHAOS RAMPANT: REACHING THE LIMITS

**REACHING THE LIMITS**

Officially designated as a resort town, famous for its hot springs and exotic spas, Nowhere is an anachronism for most Solaris natives. Several large weapons firms have office parks in the area; though most admit that the complexes are “retreat centers,” few of them actually have any such amenities.

Ever since the Word of Blake invasion, however, the truth of the matter has become more prominent. A major base of operations for the second-largest SHDL cell, at least three weapons companies have openly admitted and accepted MechWarriors and their machines for refit and repair, often revealing new prototype designs such as the Valiant for battle use. Though the Word has yet to hit this tiny mountain resort town, it is only a matter of time before the Blakists turn their attention from Solaris City and come for the riches hidden away in Nowhere.

—Posted on the Solaris Gaming Network intrasite (removed shortly afterward)

SITUATION

*VEST Bay 4, Nowhere
Solaris VII, Lyran Alliance
15 October 3071*

Despite fragmentation along familiar rivalry lines, the SHDL manages to maintain operational control long enough to finally push the Word of Blake out of Solaris City and into the Reaches. Unfortunately for some SHDL alliance members, the Word is content to strike out at existing facilities still standing in many of the suburbs and outlying towns. One of the larger conglomerates is in Nowhere, where VEST, Blue Shot Weapons, Defiance Industries and GM all have as-yet-untouched facilities. These are the last remnants of major repair bays and depots on the planet, and so the SHDL is loath to see these sites destroyed.

The Word, however, is more than happy to spread chaos and destruction everywhere they go.



CHAOS RAMPANT: REACHING THE LIMITS

GAME SETUP

CBT/AT2/RPG: Use maps from the Heavy Urban and/or Coastal tables (see p. 263, *TW*). The gamemaster may designate up to 12 non-Hardened buildings of any size as the objectives and inform both sides of their location.

Attacker

The Attacker consists of a mix of Word of Blake troops and sympathizers. The Attacker's total force should be 125 percent of the Defender's total deployed force. The Word troops consist of 80 percent of the Attacker's force. One of every six units has Elite experience; the rest are Veteran troops. The WoB sympathizers have Regular experience and should make up no more than 20 percent of the Attacker's total force.

The Attacker may enter from any edge, and should declare one edge as its home edge for withdrawal purposes.

Defender

The Defender may consist of up to 100 percent of the players' total force. In addition, a smattering of SHDL units accompanies the defending forces; these units should be no more than 30 percent of the players' deployed force. The SHDL units are Regular, with one in five having Veteran experience.

The defending units may begin the track anywhere on the battlefield.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 700

Optional Bonuses (all bonuses cumulative):

+400 Blowing Sand: Apply a +1 to-hit modifier to all energy and pulse weapon attacks.

WiGE/VTOL Vehicles: During the End Phase, each player rolls 1D6 if they control any WiGE or VTOL vehicles that were airborne that turn. The result is the number of units damaged by the blowing sand. If the result is more than the number of such units a player controls, ignore the excess number. Randomly determine the WiGE/VTOL vehicles affected and then roll 1D6 separately for each unit and apply that amount of damage to the appropriate units, in a randomly determined location.

+200 Previous Contacts: Apply this bonus if the group gained a Total Victory in *Nacht Blitz* (see p. 62).

Victory Bonuses (bonuses not cumulative):

+600 Partial Victory: Completing one objective.

+1,000 Complete Victory: Completing all objectives.

-300 Total Defeat: Completing no objectives.

OBJECTIVES

1. Stand and deliver! Destroy or cripple at least 75 percent of the Attacker's force.

2. Justice. Destroy or cripple all WoB sympathizer units.

3. Preservation. At least half of the objective buildings must survive to the end of the track.



CHAOS RAMPANT: REACHING THE LIMITS

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Forced Withdrawal

The Word of Blake units (not sympathizers) follow the Forced Withdrawal rules (see p. 258, *TW*).

Heavy Industrial Zone

A heavy industrial zone hex is assigned to all non-paved, non-building hexes (and replaces marked terrain in that hex). This represents the convoluted infrastructure (power lines, generators, cooling ponds, water towers and so on) that makes up a heavy industrialized sector.

All Units: Apply a +1 to-hit modifier to all weapon attacks made into or through a heavy industrial zone hex; this line of sight interference rises two levels above the underlying terrain. Just as with woods hexes, 3 intervening hexes of heavy industrial zone block line of sight.

'Mechs: Apply a +1 MP for a 'Mech to enter a heavy industrial zone hex.

Unintended Explosions: Every weapon fired into a heavy industrial zone hex that does not strike its intended target (including missiles, if the maximum number fired did not strike) may cause a potentially devastating explosion of some sort; likewise, area-effect attacks (such as artillery strikes) and attacks to reduce the hex may cause such an explosion. Roll 2D6 for every qualifying weapon attack; on a result of 8 or higher, apply 20 points of damage to any unit occupying the target hex or in an adjacent hex. All damage is applied to the appropriate hit locations table facing the explosion (or the Front facing if the unit is in the same hex as the explosion). Damage is inflicted to each trooper in a battle armor unit, and doubled against any conventional infantry units in the exploding hex, with damage assigned as though the attack originated from another infantry unit.

Non-Spheroid Aerospace Units: If a unit is landing or taking off and enters a heavy industrial zone hex, immediately roll for unintended explosions for each hex entered and apply any damage before finishing the unit's landing. If the landing unit is an aerodyne DropShip, add a +2 modifier to the die roll.

Spheroid Aerospace Units: If a Spheroid DropShip lands in a heavy industrial zone hex, immediately make a roll with a +4 modifier (apply a +2 modifier for Spheroid Small Craft); a separate roll is made for each heavy industrial zone hex the landed DropShip covers.

AFTERMATH

Plagued by a few years of hard fighting and constant warfare, even the outlying manufacturing facilities have seen better days. The major piece of real estate you were fighting over just happened to be the last one on the continent still fully functioning.

Seems the Word isn't quite ready to roll over and die. Hopefully the SHDL will remain cohesive five minutes longer than it takes to put the Blakists down once and for all.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

If the facilities are still functioning, then the Word may press one more attack. Or they may try the more subtle route and just go for the "explosion in the night" option. Best be wary while you're still here....

Expansion Ideas

Already fragmenting, the SHDL is on its last legs. One alliance may hire some "independent contractors" to raid a rival so they can field their machines and get the rankings boost. Or maybe the Word captured some valuable tech intact, and everyone wants a piece.

NEXT TRACKS

Corporate Ties; Spark; Going Nova

EARLY 3072: DESPERATE TIMES



EARLY 3072: DESPERATE TIMES



For the Jihad, the opening months of 3072 proved to be a precarious time. At the moment when everything in every realm seemed ready to come undone, several key victories—many long overdue—finally occurred. The Lyran Alliance celebrated even as it mourned, with Tharkad and Donegal liberated at a terrible cost, and Peter Steiner-Davion reinstated as Archon in a show of Steiner solidarity. Meanwhile, ComStar and the FedSuns, in a show of respect and cooperation, reclaimed Robinson even as New Avalon remained under an oppressor's guns.

BREACHING THE LINE



[Camera does a 360-degree turn. Smoldering buildings and craters pocket a snow-covered horizon crowded by mountains and black, blasted ruins. Battered BattleMechs, pulling themselves and each other off the ground, appear at various intervals]

[Voice 1]: "—eat, sound off..." *[Pauses. Continues in a mutter.]*
"...Scheisse, that was a rough one!"

[Voice 2]: "Sir, we lost three on the fall, another four on the landing, including Horseman Three. The rest are reporting as scattered all over. We ain't even close to our DP, and we got incoming WoBs. Lots of them."

[Voice 1]: "Roger, Horseman Two. Call in our air support to cover our regrouping. Form up on me and we'll meet up with the rest at Point Reckoning."

[A pair of Nightskys eventually pull in front of the camera and the group marches toward the city horizon. A group of BattleMechs and vehicles painted in shades of black and gray crest to trade shots with the Lyrans.]

[Voice 2]: "Horsemen One, rear guard reporting Toads on our backs! Looks like those cyber men. Horseman Four is down and his company is pulling in."

[Voice 1]: "Gottverdammte Scheisse, where is our air support? Horseman Two, take over the front and bring up Three's group; I'll take over the rear."

[A final volley of missiles is launched from the camera's host and hits a vehicle, causing it to explode. The camera pans around, catching Lyran BattleMechs steadily firing and taking counter-fire. Several drop amid rippling explosions. The camera begins to make its way through the large formation of BattleMechs in its rear.]

[Voice 2]: "I've got air contact bearing down one-eight zero, coming in low and fast. Our boys are here, Horsemen!" *[Hushed tone]* "About verdammte time."

[Voice 1]: "Sir, I've got word from command! The main LZ is under heavy fire and all fighters are being withheld to secure the area. *Those aren't our birds!*"

—BattleROM footage salvaged from a group of destroyed Lyran BattleMechs after the retaking of Tharkad, dated 11 January 3072

Yet even as the news of these victories spread, reports of escalation and crisis mounted. The Draconis Combine faced widening rifts with its own population, much of it brought on by a random tragedy. ComStar, former protector of another culture, was evicted from its only haven by a respected and powerful foe without a shot fired. HPGs once run in confidence by the venerable organization had become the routine targets of boycotts and attempted takeovers.

On the heels of these crises came more war. The Word of Blake's new, elite Divisions burst from the silent Protectorate to hit worlds across the Inner Sphere, blazing a trail of terror and fear. The Periphery joined the fray as Taurian battled Taurian (and Davion). Finally acting on its commitments, the Capellan Confederation hit several Canopian worlds to free them from a common threat. And the Ravens found another foe in the nearby Federated Suns, while tensions skyrocketed and itchy fingers convulsed.

Upheaval and defections ran rampant across the Alliance and the Federated Suns, as citizens began to take matters into their own hands. In some cases, new nations and alliances formed. In others, new governments were imposed at gunpoint. At the same time, more worlds were liberated from Word of Blake control as a once-minor resistance group on Kittery rode its momentum to overthrow the Jihadists on neighboring planets.

During these months, the Nova Cats on Irece threw off a massive space-borne assault aimed at their capital, even as Combine renegades targeted their shipping fleets. Regulus, once an apparent front-runner to lead a reunified Free Worlds League, found itself sundered and stripped of its defenses, to face a nightmarish assault.

Through it all, the Word of Blake continued to solidify its Protectorate while sowing chaos and terror among its neighbors. The war was by no means over, but for some, it seemed as though a turning point had been reached.

BITTERSWEET VICTORIES

REFLECTIONS OF HELL

It's over, and I'm still sweating. I suspect I'll have another bout of insomnia from all the adrenaline and stims coursing through my blood.

But, by God, it was worth it. Utterly and completely.

I'd heard snippets about the Battle of Trafalgar that Serpent executed against the Bears. When was that, more than ten years ago? (Has it been that long?) Anyway, this battle makes that one seem like a bathwater combat some kid hashes out in a tub.

Sure, the old girl got hammered—but good!—but no one can say that every blast to our portside systems wasn't worth the loss. Our diversion forced the *Invincible's* hand...and bought the *Ygg* some time to get clear. Never in all my life would I have imagined seeing such an old girl—our nation's pride, sullied by the Word—

EARLY 3072: DESPERATE TIMES

so close, much less on the wrong end of *my* guns. But, damn it, we faced her, and we won. And for the untold thousands—millions?—who've died on Tharkad's soil these five long years, every single life lost to retake the world and that ship were worth it.

We've lent most of our engineers and salvage repair crews to Kell to see if we can save the *Ygg*, but it's not looking good. She took a lot of damage to her aft, and the fires that swept her despite the containment systems... She's our sister ship; we know just how bad she took it. It will be so sad to watch those scuttling charges set off.

But I'll say this—and lord knows I'll never hear the end of it if the marines catch wind: I have a ton of more respect for our "space cowboys" who managed to board and take back the *Invincible*. I am completely at a loss for words that not only did nearly two hundred marines try, but more than three-fourths of them will have their names inscribed at the Triad's memorial (if it still exists). Such dedication and sacrifice. And such loss.

But thank God Almighty, Tharkad is free! The Archon is free! And the *Invincible* is ours again! Let the Word see this victory for what it is and tremble!

—Personal log, Kommodore Katarina Johannsen, *LAS Fylgia*, 12 January 3072

BLOOD OF THE SHEPHERD

Donegal [DBC] – The following excerpts are from the notes taken by the late ARNN reporter Thomas Beggs, who was found dead yesterday from what Blakist officials ruled a suicide:

13 SEPT 71: Heard Precentor Regan dictate a message to Terra today. Complaining about recent escape attempts. Something about how it was funny in some old vid but now that he had to deal with it, it was terrible. He didn't want blood spilled, but he had to teach them a lesson. He told them he was going to start with lashings. Then someone came by and I had to keep moving. The WoBbies never give me a second glance. I guess playing a retarded man isn't much of a stretch for a reporter. They even pay me above minimum wage. Got to hand it to them there, they take care of their own.

22 NOV 71: Today he was linked up via HPG to someone. Live feed; sophisticated. Oh, how he was yelling. He wanted more men and supplies, not just for his soldiers, but also for the prisoners. He said the conditions were deplorable and it was easier to control them if they had fewer real complaints. Two men got killed last week trying to escape, and the resistance took care of four guards in town. Keep up the good work, folks, we can wear these Robes down. Whoever was on the other line was tough to hear, but they kept giving him the same old, same old—make do, get by with what you have, there aren't any more resources available. Oh, and more prisoners were inbound. The Precentor sounds like he's working for my old copy editor.

15 JAN 72: Should've been an actor or something. Regan had me cleaning his office while he recorded his status report. He even paused it to direct me to get under his rugs; never suspected I was spying on him. Or maybe he didn't care. The prisoners had been rioting all week, plus another half dozen of his men got killed by the local resistance and hung up by the gates. And supply shipments have apparently stopped coming. He said if he doesn't get more support from HQ in the next month, he's going to have to use the "final solution" on his prisoners and evacuate the planet. I hope that doesn't mean what I think it does. I have to warn someone.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY VICTORY

[Scene opens on a man dressed in MechWarrior togs. He is short and obviously middle-aged, but his khaki shorts reveal heavily muscled legs. When he reaches the ground and turns, the viewer sees that his eyes are an alert blue. He wears a look of grim determination, on one of the most recognizable faces in the Inner Sphere: The face of Victor Steiner-Davion.

[Camera pans to an overweight man in his fifties with a pockmarked face. He wears military fatigues and press credentials clipped to a shirt pocket.]

[Russo]: "This is Joseph Russo. I'm here talking with Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion about the liberation of Donegal. Sir, can you tell us how it was accomplished?"

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT, II

Great news, Mom!

I'm coming home! They agreed to some sort of POW exchange or something. I can't say this is how I wanted to return home when the shooting started, but I can't wait to get back to Lyran soil. The Wobbies came back a few weeks ago, but they left pretty quickly. I think stuff is really going down in the League. We even got out to a nearby town for a few days to get all cleaned up; these Eagles don't want us to look like the poor guys who're surviving those toaster camps. I was right; we were being held on [censored].

They say I'm slated for an April 7 arrival back home, so I hope you can all meet me at the spaceport. Maybe you can see if Lani Jacobs can come, I'd sure like to see her pretty smile again. Well, I've got to go get my uniform ready and fill out a bunch of forms. Everywhere you go, the military is a damned bureaucracy. Oh, and see if the plant still has my job open. I'm not sure what else to do now, seems like all the organized battles are cooling down and now it's just rebellions and other people's battles. I'm done with war. See you soon!

Love, Jeremy

—Private letter attributed to Leutenant Jeremy Minderhoff (POW on McAffe, 27 November 3069), dated January 3072

FOOTNOTE

For Immediate Public Release

This message is being disseminated across Robinson to stem rumors and inform the public of a Level Six Quarantine now in effect.

DMI agents have indeed seized a Star League-era storage facility in the northeast quadrant of Purki, located nearly 500 kilometers from Beuller. While the nature of the facility's contents will remain classified for public protection, the DMI can safely disclose that no weapons of a catastrophic nature are currently stored there.

All reports of a Blakist assault on the town and facility are false. ComStar officials and military personnel are at the site, which explains public confusion. ComStar and local militia commanders are in control and retain full authority over the area.

Be advised that a Level Six Quarantine protocol is in effect for the town and its environs for the immediate future. The Quarantine has been extended to the ten-kilometer mark—all traffic into or out of the area must have authorization by ComStar and AFFS command. Civilians in the area are being evacuated to the nearby town of Oris Minor, where government officials are handling the refugee centers.

Anyone caught within the Quarantine Zone will be arrested and detained by the DMI, in accordance with the War Laws Act of Robinson, Article III, section vii.

—Electronic posting to the Robinson planetary government newsite, 4 March 3072

[Steiner-Davion]: "This was a coalition victory. Without the joint strength of ComStar, the LAAF and the Wolf-in-Exile forces, we would not have prevailed."

[The picture switches to combat footage of a ghost-white Toyama battling a ghost-white Crab. Russo's and Steiner-Davion's voices can be heard over the clip.]

[Russo]: "So you cobbled together enough forces to defeat the Blakists."

[Steiner-Davion]: "I would say, rather, that we could only defeat the Blakists by working together."

DESPERATE TIMES

[The screen shows a Mad Dog A painted in the red-brown and gray of Clan Wolf, tearing into the Toyama with its LB 5-X followed by a flight of SRMs. The Clanners' attack gives the wounded Crab time to withdraw.]

[Russo]: "You place a lot of importance on the fact that this was a joint operation."

[Steiner-Davion]: "Believe me, Joe. If the Inner Sphere is ever to recover from this madness, we will have to finally find a way to work together."

—Taken from an INN broadcast, Donegal, 14 February 3072

KITTERY FREEDOM FIGHTERS ADVANCE

(10 April 3072)

Numenor [FSNS] – The activities of the enigmatic Devlin Stone continue to raise eyebrows as his followers strike out at Word of Blake forces in the Capellan March region. Spearheaded by an ad-hoc formation calling itself Stone's Lament, the self-styled Kittery Freedom Army has liberated Spica and Scituate from Blakist-sponsored forces.

On Scituate, the Lament succeeded in cornering the disreputable Black Angus Boys and forcing the mercenaries to surrender. Other Word of Blake troops have proven more stubborn, with many fighting to the death. The latest report is that Stone's troops have linked up with the Paladins—an independent force led by David McKinnon and based on Beid—to free the world of Mentasta, and that this combined force is now moving against other Word of Blake targets in the region.

That the Word of Blake has failed to move more forcefully against Stone's forces has been taken as a sign that their forces are becoming critically overstretched. The liberation of Tharkad and the continuing battles on New Avalon and other key Inner Sphere worlds may at last be taking their toll on the Blakist war machine.

Meanwhile, many continue to view Devlin Stone's activities with suspicion as his supporters unilaterally replace local rulers and officials, regardless of whether they are operating under Blakist sponsorship or duress. Only time will tell if this is merely an interim move necessary to reestablish order, or whether Stone is capitalizing on the local Great Houses' current distraction to build his own personal kingdom.



(14 June 3071)	"Hegemony in Disarray Amid Reports of Alphard Bombings" [INN]	COMPLETED
(27 June 3071)	"Solaris Triumphant, Blakists in Retreat" [FSP]	DOWNLOADING
(12 July 3071)	"Five Months Later, Azami Calls for Aid Still Unheeded" [Drake]	ACCESSING

HERO OF THE HOUR OR TRUE SAVIOR? 

No one can know the darkness that those who passed the Jihad on Kittery endured. The camps were...unspeakable. Thousands crammed together in squalid conditions. The lucky ones living on field rations, the rest struggling to keep themselves alive on crusts of bread and fetid water until they melted into an emaciated bag of skin.

And then there were the mindcrackers. They came at us from every angle: they lectured while we ate and barraged us with subliminals while we slept. There was "good cop, bad cop," of course, and drugs—terrible, psychotropic drugs that would leave you woozy and disoriented for days at a time.

And there was pain.

Most terrible of all, there was the knowledge that all you had to do to get out, all you had to do to get out *right this very moment* was accept the vision of Blake into your heart.

But somehow, *somehow*, Devlin Stone beat the mindcrackers. He walked out of the camps and then he kicked the bastards off Kittery.

Is he the real deal? I don't know. But I do know that he managed to bring a glimmer of hope to a very dark place.

Maybe he can do it again.

—Taken from the *New Dawn* blogsite, Kittery interweb, 9 March 3072

Ever since the days of Rome, every demagogue, every puffed-up thug, every two-bit tyrant has styled himself as Cincinnatus, the Roman farmer who accepted the role of Dictator to save the Republic, and then—when the crisis passed—promptly returned to his fields.

Who, me? Want power? No, no, I couldn't. Well, if you insist.

And so it is with Devlin Stone, just one more would-be savior, stepping forward with nothing but honorable intentions, I promise. Hell, he even named his MechWarriors Stone's Lament, as if to decry violence at the very moment he uses it. (Nice touch!)

So, who *is* Devlin Stone? What's his real name? Anyone hear of him before he stepped out of RBMU 105? Nobody knows. *Nobody!* Now, doesn't *that* just inspire trust?

Don't get me wrong. I'm just as glad to be free of the camps as anyone. But no horror is so bad that it can't be replaced by something worse. Believe me, citizens, this Devlin Stone is no Cincinnatus and he's not going to lead us into some grand interstellar republic.

Next time someone tells you he is, I'd check your wallet.

—Taken from the *Truthspot* blogsite, Kittery interweb, 11 May 3072

JUSTIFICATIONS

(11 May 3072)

Tharkad [ISAP] – While it is easy to dismiss the Word of Blake as "a bunch of religious fanatics," no large human organization is so monolithic in motivation. So ISAP set out to discover how members of the Word of Blake Militia justify their actions in this war. This reporter caught up with Adept Sievert Rogers, with the 37th Word of Blake Division, to ask him why he fought for an employer that used nuclear weapons.

"What, it's not obvious?" Rogers began. "No, maybe it's not. I'm from Caph. And I'll tell you what that means.

"Amaris was bad for Caph, but he was a *saint* compared to the so-called Great Houses that came after him. The Hegemony was pulling itself together when that coward Kerensky fled and the Houses just raped and pillaged their way toward Terra. And if they couldn't hold onto a stolen planet, they didn't want to let

anyone else have it, either. Caph was nuked, gassed and plagued by the League, the Capellans, the Feddies and even the Snakes. Then they spent two hundred years robbing our world of anything valuable because they'd blown up all their own factories. And then came '57, when they just left us hanging in the new back alley of the Sphere they called the 'Chaos March.' Hell, they destroyed the Star League a second time, and that meant even *more* bad times for Caph.

"The only folks who did right for us in the end were the Robes, who had the sense to set up this defensive alliance. I signed up for the Protectorate Militia to defend Caph, but it couldn't fight its way out of a paper bag. So I transferred to the WoBblies, and now I'm getting something done. Active defense, you know, kicking the feet out from under the Houses before they try to rape their way across Caph again. Yeah, we use tacticals. We're outnumbered at least ten to one. What, turnabout's not fair play?"



EARLY 3072: DESPERATE TIMES

**TARNISHED HONOR****DEATH FROM THE HEAVENS—AGAIN**

(31 January 3072)

Algedi [ARKAB ISLAMIC NETWORK] – On 14 January 3072, the Combine WarShip *Siriwan* took up station in low orbit over Algedi. The vessel broadcast a “final ultimatum” from *Kanrei* Kiyomori Minamoto, ordering the Arkab Legions to return to duty on the Combine border.

The Algedi government refused to capitulate and the WarShip bombarded two cities, utterly destroying them. Even two weeks after the attack, a final death toll has not yet been assessed, but local officials report that casualty figures are likely to run into the tens of thousands.

The brutal Combine assault made Algedi the second Azami world to be struck by disaster from space. Arkab was hit by an asteroid on 12 February 3071, a natural disaster that resulted in more than 600,000 dead and billions of ryu in damages. The Algedi government and citizens were enraged by the coincidence, and the heartlessness of the heavy-handed DCMS response.

Said Algedi Defense Minister Shamil Merzuyeva, “After suffering death from the sky, we called to the Draconis Combine for help. Instead, they too attacked us from the sky. The government on New Samarkand has broken all faith with the Azami people. I promise you, this perfidy shall not go unanswered. We have informed Minamoto that his betrayal will have disastrous consequences.”

Azami defense officials responded immediately to the attack, launching two Peacemaker-class missiles armed with nuclear warheads, which destroyed the attacking WarShip. The *Siriwan*’s two surviving DropShips were subsequently destroyed by a combination of Azami aerospace fighters and attack DropShips.

Those few DCMS troops that survived are being held prisoner by the Algedi government.

THE CATS BREAK RANKS

(24 February 3072)

Unity [THE DRAKE] – Rumors of major movements by Nova Cat forces within the Irece Prefecture are now fact. Our investigators have uncovered evidence of massive deployments by most of the Nova Cat merchant fleet. From all indications, it appears the Nova Cat Clan—in its entirety—is preparing for a mass exodus from the Draconis Combine. However, while the ships and troops are moving about—and many civilians were seen boarding DropShips—things don’t seem to be changing all that much in their prefecture. We are still investigating what is truly going on at this point.

In another developing situation dealing with the Nova Cats, *The Drake* has confirmed that two front-line Galaxies—Xi and Lambda, according to sources—have left their bases. Virtually no

one in the Nova Cat command has answered calls for explanation. Unsubstantiated rumors and whispers say these two Galaxies have gone rogue. Each stripped their bases completely of all supplies—including massive amounts of munitions, replacement and repair materials—necessary for extended missions. If this is true, the Dragon may have more problems, as relations between the Nova Cat and the Dragon remain strained. This incident bears certain similarities to the disappearance of Zeta Galaxy during the Ghost Bear War.

RENEGADES



(February 3072)

Honored father:

I’m not sure you should be reading these, now that I think about it. I don’t know if you would be ashamed of me or not. I know you fought for the same cause back in ‘34, Dad. I still remember the stories—even the shame you still feel for taking the amnesty offer and returning to the DCMS. This isn’t any different, I suppose, but for some reason I feel shame deep inside when I consider how you might react.

But I believe what we’re doing is right. Actually, most of the crew went along with the Admiral. We only marooned twenty people; most of us truly believe the Dragon is failing in its pledge to keep the Clanners in their pens. Those genetic freaks are bred for war, right? That’s what we’re told, over and over again. Back when they hit us in the ‘50s, remember? If that’s their purpose, then we have every right to use them in that manner. Dogs—or rather, Cats—have no business slipping their leashes and leaving their pens. “Free-thinking” isn’t a Clan trait. That’s what cousin Jarma said when we visited Lucerne, right?

When we tore apart that *Carrack*...I think we all cheered. I’m pretty sure you could hear us the next star system over; the Admiral outdid himself taking that fat cat down. We even nabbed two of the DropShips, though I heard we didn’t bother marooning the survivors. We only did what a good owner would do to a disobedient pet. We put them down.

Maybe those Nova Cats will get the hint.

Ok, duty time. More gunnery training today. Scuttlebutt says we’re going to meet up with another WarShip and make a statement somewhere soon. Maybe now the Dragon will get the message: Clanners should be used, or destroyed. There’s no in-between anymore.

None.

—Private message from unidentified DCA WarShip crewman (veracity unconfirmed)



EARLY 3072: DESPERATE TIMES

RONIN!

****Transmission Priority One: Broadcast All Frequencies/
Priority Rotation****

To the honored people of the Combine:

We have traitors among us. As I speak to you, rogue WarShips are preying on a people to whom we gave sanctuary in their darkest hour. In this time of tribulation, is it right for us to stoop so low and destroy those who look to us for protection? Does it honor our dead on Luthien, Dieron, Benjamin, Pesht and other worlds?

The Dragon has entered a new era. As we look ahead to the future, we are saddened by those who only look behind. For the Dragon to move forward, we must shed the shackles that bind us, limiting our power and holding us back from true greatness. By allowing the Nova Cat people to be slaughtered wholesale by those who have weapons of power, we have stained our honor with shame that could last for centuries.

There are those who believe that to hearken to the worst in our past, when rash actions were carried out by the sword to further the purpose of the Dragon, is a virtue. They are wrong. The Dragon endures because it thrives on the honor and duty of its people. These acts of wanton destruction are not honorable. They heed not the Dragon's call of *giri* before *ninjo*.

These soldiers who oppose the will of the Dragon are therefore declared *ronin*, masterless warriors who think only of their own selfish desire and not the will of the Combine.

To these *ronin*, I say: Lay down your arms and accept true honor, or follow your selfish course to a disgraceful and ignoble end. This time, the Dragon will not suffer the stain of honorless warriors. This time, there is only one remedy for such dereliction of duty.

Accept your duty and walk the path of samurai. Or face your death on the poles that line the stairs to Damnation.

This ends now.

To the Dragon's true people: Do your duty, honor the Dragon. It is all we can ever aspire to.

—*Gunji no kanrei* Minamoto, 28 March 3072

THE DRAGON'S BENEVOLENCE

(16 April 3072)

New Samarkand [VOTD] – Today is a glorious day in the Combine, citizens. Three months ago, disloyal elements among the Azami viciously attacked a Combine WarShip in orbit above the world of Algedi. These thugs used nuclear weapons to destroy the Dragon's vessel and then took loyal DCMS soldiers hostage.

But today, a team of elite DEST forces landed on Algedi and liberated our captive sons and daughters, bringing them home. Despite opposition by the Second Arkab Legion, our troops showed mercy to the people of Algedi, working hard to reduce civilian casualties, a sign of the Dragon's great love—even now—for the wayward Azami.

The people of Algedi are *our* people, and the Dragon knows that the great majority of the Azami are loyal Combine citizens. It

ALGEDI'S LAMENT

[Nassir]: "...and we're here on Ottoman's Peak, a strategic observation post overlooking the Saracen Plains, where below us, most of the Second Arkab Legion is moving into position. We don't have confirmation yet of what forces the Legion faces to the east; we have confirmed that several DCMS DropShips grounded early last night about forty kilometers from our current position. Several companies of armor and BattleMechs converged on the two facilities that were holding the prisoners from the *Siriwan*—our latest information, from fellow AIN reporter Salinda Roberts, indicated that the Combine forces were victorious in bre— Hold on a minute."

[Nassir looks to his left, gesturing to the camera. Camera rotates, revealing the beginnings of an artillery barrage on the still-forming Arkab Legion. As smoke begins to cover the far flank, several red and gold BattleMechs burst from a ravine and charge the Arkab line. Withering fire from several tank companies stops the assault cold, and four Legion 'Mechs surge from the ground, encircling the Combine 'Mechs, which fall to a man in a matter of seconds.]

[Nassir]: *[Slightly off camera]* "It seems the Combine forces are beginning to press the Legion line. From what we can see here, the DCMS may be trying to forge a pathway so they can link up with the rescue force that, at last report, is roughly ten kilometers from here."

[Camera pans across the battle line, focusing briefly on several brutal engagements. Kanazuchi armor lumbers out of an exploding Maxim hovercraft, as a Legion Akuma takes several autocannon hits to the head. The camera pulls back, showing the Legion forces surging forward to repulse the DCMS attack. Within moments, the battlefield is once again empty of Combine forces.]

[Nassir]: *[Excitedly]* "Look there—it seems the Combine is launching an air strike...No, wait, that's not right; there are only three contrails, and they're not maneuvering like fighters..."
[Camera zooms in, catching three small reflections in the blue-green sky.]

[Nassir]: *[Panicked]* "They're not fighters! Those are missiles...trajectory's too high for artille— In Allah's name! I hope those aren't n—"

[Bright flash polarizes the camera, followed by a bang, then static. "CAMERA ONE OFFLINE" blinks slowly in the corner of the frame.]

—Last known transmission from AIN Team One, Algedi, 12 April 3072

is time to heal this rift within our family. It is time for the Azami to return home.

[This is a surprisingly accurate piece from VOTD. We've heard from independent sources that the DCMS was very careful not to kill civilians or destroy planetary infrastructure. However, there is no mention of the DEST's use of Davy Crockett nukes to clear away a battalion of Second Arkab Legion troops during their escape. We need to find a way to work that fact in. –Editorial by The Drake]

EARLY 3072: DESP

BENJAMIN'S FALL

(12 May 3072)

Benjamin [INN] – The world of Benjamin fell today to Word of Blake forces. Benjamin is the capital of the Benjamin Military District in the Draconis Combine.

The Blakist attack was spearheaded by surviving elements of the Twenty-eighth Division as well as the Forty-fifth Shadow Division—the latter apparently now named Arioch's Avengers—and supported by mercenary forces.

The Word of Blake Militia began by destroying nine of Benjamin's twenty orbital semi-suns that supplement the dim light of this world's M1V sun. The action left Benjamin in a twilight that threatens to destroy Terran crops and may have a profound psychological impact on the local population.

The Blakist forces quickly secured Political Park in Deber City, the district's administrative capital, and then mopped up DCMS resistance from orbit using Pocket WarShips—DropShips outfitted with capital weapons.

Organized military opposition was largely stamped out within the first 24 hours of the attack, with the surrender of the Sixth Ghost Regiment to the Twenty-eighth Division's Precentor David Baughman. Meanwhile, the Forty-fifth Shadow began hunting for the hit-and-run guerilla resistance that surfaced almost immediately, comprised of several companies of BattleMechs apparently piloted by Combine citizens who were training on the Osaka Fields when the fighting began. The heavily wooded Fields are the largest proving grounds in the Benjamin Military District. Blakist mercenary forces are combing the Fields now to eliminate the guerrillas.

AGENTS PROVOCATEURS

[Irece Control]: "Combat alert, all commands. Jump detection, pirate point. Multiple JumpShips. DropShips detaching and accelerating to combat velocities. I say again, multiple inbound contacts. DropShips are not responding to our attempts to communicate."

[Future Triumph]: "I bid away a Star of aerospace fighters for the honor of intercepting."

[Vision Quest]: "I bid away two Stars of aerospace fighters and half my forward batteries."

[Future Triumph]: "I concede."

[Irece Control]: "Vision Quest will intercept the incoming DropShips. Future Triumph will maintain high orbit above the planet."

[Future Triumph, Vision Quest]: "Seyla."

[Vision Quest]: "Initiating combat burn. We will make the freebirths pay for their impudence..." [Long pause] "We have the *surats* in our telescopes now. DropShips are marked with the Kurita dragon. Transmitting images."

[Irece Control]: "Still no response from the DropShips. Analyzing images."

[Vision Quest]: "Closest contact is a *Union*. Detecting missile launch. Wait...it is a Killer Whale. These DropShips are armed with capital weapons."

BENJAMIN FALLS!

This just in, dear readers! We at *The Drake*—ever responsible for giving you the straight skinny and not that watered-down loyalist pap the Voice has peddled the past two years—have snagged an intercept from our beleaguered brothers on Benjamin. And no, it's not looking good.

It seems our boys and girls there, after dealing with Freddie incursions, have finally given up in the face of the Word's arrival. According to the message, the Sixth Ghosts just surrendered en masse to the Word's 45th Shadows, which effectively gutted the system's defense. Rather than fight to the bitter end, as any good Dragon warrior would do, they surrendered "to fight another day," as I'm sure the excuse will go. Some locals are still fighting, but without DCMS aid, they don't stand a chance.

So that's that, eh? First Luthien, then Dieron, then Galedon, now Benjamin. How many other District capital worlds are we going to hand over to the Men in White? Pesht? New Samarkand?

Why don't we just throw the white flag out now? Maybe the Blakists will leave and hit the Feddies instead, ending the real threat to all humankind.

Oh, no, wait. That kinda flies in the face of the *Kanrei's* request. Well then, that tears it. I'm going to sign off right now and get me to the DCMS recruiter's station. Can anyone point me in the direction of Benjamin?

—OpEd XCVII, Drake Underground, Quentin netsite; 24.05.3072

[Irece Control]: "Something is wrong. The images show large Kurita markings, but the warning and technical are in English, not Japanese."

[Vision Quest]: "Five seconds to first impa—"

[Future Triumph]: "Freebirth!"

[Irece Control]: "I have dropped link with Vision Quest."

[Future Triumph]: "Moving to engage leading DropShips."

[Irece Control]: "DropShips launching missiles. I have video separation."

[Future Triumph]: "Overlord is destroyed."

[Irece Control]: "Nuclear detonations over the capital."

[Future Triumph]: "First the merchants and now this! Why would the Dragon use nuclear weapons against civilians?"

[Irece Control]: "Neg. We are monitoring their communications. Their encryption patterns do not match Combine protocols. Pocket WarShips, English markings, foreign encryption. This is not the Dragon."

[Future Triumph]: [Whispers.] "Word of Blake."

[Irece Control]: "Intel notes nearest known unit is probable. Forty-second Shadow Division."

[Future Triumph]: [Clearly enraged.] "42nd Shadow? If this is so, we shall visit them on Luthien. They shall pay and pay and pay. And the first payment is due *now*."

—Intercept of Nova Cat communications, Irece, 19 June 3072



EARLY 3072: DESPERATE TIMES

PASSING THE GEM

Minamoto:

Yes, I use your name for once. Indulge an old man. You need to know that you are more than a codename to me. More than a protégé. More than a son.

I am declaring you my heir.

I have no riches to bestow. No lands. Not even a title, but a mockery of one. A flimsy shell from decades ago, when my title and my name brought fear to many.

No longer.

Yes, I am regarded as anathema. A fool. Psychotic, imbecilic, even senile. I only need to look to you, my honored son, and know the lies these words mean.

You are my heir of more than titles, land and even power. You are the heir of the future. The promise of what is to come and what the Dragon can truly be. Through you, the old ways will never die. They will be reborn, reformed, hardened. Through you, the crippling death grip of the Kurita family will finally pass from the Dragon, as a snake sheds its skin.

Through you, the mighty Draconis Combine of old shall rise from the ashes and strike fear and respect through the Inner Sphere once again.

Through you, the Combine shall finally regain her rightful place as the new inheritor of the Star League and all the ideals of that glorious age.

Through you, the future is bright. I have brought you this far. It is time for you to mount up and take the fight to the heart of the corrupted soul of our Dragon. And remove that stain once and for all.

Be warned: Jade is not pleased. He knows of this, of course; I cannot deny my own flesh and blood the truth of my intentions. But he, at heart, cannot be what you are. And that revelation, once it dawns on him, will create your greatest obstacle. He is a tool. When the tool is dull, you replace it.

Do not hesitate, my honored son. The Dragon stands at the cusp of greatness. Usher in the New Era. And may the Inner Sphere tremble once more when the Dragon roars.

—Personal message attributed to “the Red Duke,” posted on the Pesht netsite *LocalDrake*, June 3072 (veracity unconfirmed)



(20 July 3071)
“LAAF Seizes Fylgia, Strips Skye Defense”

(17 August 3071)
“Wolf, Ghost Bear Resistance Slows Horses to Standstill”

(3 September 3071)
“Blakist Fanatics Enslaving Gibson?”

HASEKS DEMAND REPARATIONS

(3 January 3072)

New Syrtis [NSNN] – Capellan March Duchess Angela Hasek yesterday issued a long-awaited statement condemning Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao and his Capellan Confederation for the unprovoked, month-long invasion of Chesterton that cost tens of thousands of lives and billions of pounds in damages. The condemnation comes after eight months of ineffectual efforts to get the FedSuns government to intervene or force the Confederation to pay reparations for the devastating assault.

“Sun-Tzu Liao claims he is abiding by the cease-fire,” Duchess Hasek said, “but his actions on Chesterton speak for themselves. That was no raid, but a deliberate attack on the Suns, aimed at causing the maximum amount of death, pain and misery to civilians and military forces alike. For all the lofty posturing that Chesterton is still a Confederation world, Sun-Tzu’s terror troops clearly were not above committing atrocities against the people they claim are their own.”

Eyewitnesses on Chesterton and other supporting data indicated that the Warrior House troops used in the attack were cybernetically augmented, to a degree only seen previously in the Word of Blake’s Manei Domini elite. Noting this fact, Hasek further charged that the Capellan Chancellor also lied about not still being in league with the Jihadists, and that his statements concerning a united front in the face of Blakist terrorism were “a sham to lull the Suns into a false sense of security.”

“But perhaps I judge too harshly,” Hasek conceded at one point, “I will offer the Chancellor one opportunity to prove where he stands. He must surrender to Federated Suns custody every member of this so-called ‘Warrior House Rakshasa’ so they may be properly tried for war crimes. He must also compensate the people of Chesterton for the material damages suffered, and the senseless loss of so many loved ones at the hands of his troops. If Liao truly desires peace, actions such as these will demonstrate his credibility, which is currently bankrupt.”

The duchess went on to warn that any Capellan failure to meet her demands would provoke “the most terrible retaliation,” though she did not explain exactly what that retaliation might entail.

[FSP] COMPLETED

[ARNN] DOWNLOADING

[RNN] ACCESSING



EARLY 3072: DESPERATE TIMES

STANDING APART

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

Today, the twentieth of February, will be known hereafter as "Freedom Day." On this day we, the free worlds of the Filtvelt Coalition, sever our allegiance to and dependence on the Federated Suns and stand alone as a new nation against these dark times.

It is only after long and earnest discussion that we take this bold step forward. While we do not wish to sever all ties to House Davion and the Federated Suns, we need the crown on New Avalon to understand that we will no longer tolerate the status quo. We hope to reunite with our interstellar parent at some point in the future, but for the good of the people, we cannot stand back and wait.

We take this step as a matter of principle. The ruling House of the Federated Suns has a duty to protect all of its citizens and provide safety, opportunity and freedom. Sadly, for the past five years, we, the listed worlds below, have been neglected despite our pleas for assistance.

Therefore, to stand against the increasingly violent and disruptive war that the Tortuga Dominions has declared upon these worlds, and to protect against Taurian aggression, we must do what is right and honorable.

At this time, all AFFS military assets on the following worlds are to be handed over to Coalition government representatives: Filtvelt, Gillingham, Mararn, Jaboatao, Sodertalje, Redondo, Eustatius, Mejicanos, Moultrie, Hephzibah, Vaucluse, Broken Wheel, Marielund, Ebro, Skepтана, Lackland, Wetumpka, Cogdell, Morven, Memphis and Sherwood. Any personnel willing to resign their commissions from AFFS command will be welcomed into the Filtvelt Defensive Army at the same rank and pay scale. All planetary militias on the aforementioned worlds will likewise be integrated into the FDA; those who wish to resign their commissions may do so, but will forfeit their pensions.

Today is the dawning of a new day in the Filtvelt Coalition. May we continue to stand against the dark tide of our enemies and hold a light to others who feel abandoned by their leaders.

Further information regarding the integration of planetary governments and infrastructure within the Coalition will be forthcoming.

Vive le Coalition!

—Transcript of live press conference, broadcast by Filtvelt National Broadcasting, 20 February 3072, distributed to affiliates in the Minette PDZ

IS DEMOCRACY WORTH IT?

[Schultz]: "Good evening and welcome to another episode of *Face the Experts*, I'm your host, Uri Schultz. Today, I have economist Dr. Kevin Pfizer, political analysts Anita Turkleson and Jon

Jackson, and media personality Tina Carleton. Today we'll begin with a discussion of the recent democratic movements sweeping the Inner Sphere. Jon, do you think the citizens of the Inner Sphere are ready for democracy?

[Jackson]: "Well, to an extent many have it. At the local level, most planets are more heavily reliant on their democratic governments for self-administration. Well, unless you live in the Capellan Confederation." *[Laughs]* "But I don't think the people really want that; they just want a change. The big movement is happening right now in the Lyran Commonwealth, which ranks just behind the Free Worlds League in elected representation."

[Carleton]: "Lyran Alliance, Jon. You need to catch up with the times."

THE SAVAGE FIGHT

Leutnant Stephen Johannes
Kaumberg Planetary Guard
24 February 3072

To Sylvie Johannes-Little
Novara

Sylvie,

First, it was good to see you. And no matter what you or anyone else believes about our world, I still love you. Hell, I have to—you're my sister.

The big news for me was a recent role I had escorting a landing force on Batajnica. Zeals Squadron along with Trece Panic—you remember Trece, right? I had the biggest crush on her—rode out protecting the transports until they got close enough to drop the 'Mechs.

Sylvie—I don't have much love for 'Mech jocks—mostly all blow and no real metal, you know? I mean, how hard can it be move a huge walking tank around and stomp on the enemy, or shoot them. Now aerospace—that's a real man's way of war.

Or so I thought, till I watched this one jock. His name was Hermann Sebastian. Real whiner. Space travel made him queasy—and heavy-G landings? Forget it. I listened to him freak out over the channel—some piss-scared 'Mechjock going to pee in his pants!

Sorry, Sylvie, but I was disappointed to have my theories about them proven wrong. I did a low-angle tilt below atmo—and once that jock had his 'Mech's feet on the ground, there was no stopping him. I nearly crashed watching him take down one enemy after the other. It was pure spiritual healing, Sylvie.

I need to get some sleep. Hope this finds you well, and let me know what Rachael's up to. It must be nice having a three-year-old to keep you company.

—With all my love, Stephen

**FILTVELT ANNOUNCES FORMATION OF CITIZENS' MILITIA**

(23 March 3072)

Filtvelt [FFC] – Mere weeks after proclaiming independence from the Federated Suns, the leaders of the Filtvelt Coalition declared a state of emergency amid the turmoil of the Word of Blake Jihad and announced the institution of an interstellar draft. Citing regional security, the Coalition rulers announced the move as part of a plan to jump-start the formation of their own military defense force.

“Now that we are independent, we must immediately begin addressing the many problems that affect our daily lives after decades of Davion neglect,” said Councilman Eduardo Longshore in the wake of the declaration.

The Filtvelt Coalition’s call for a draft—or rather an “enlistment quota”—met with some resistance among member worlds, but the terms of the draft, which affects only a narrow age range and contains many exclusions for persons engaged in other tasks of “importance to the Coalition’s future prosperity,” have been in public review ever since it was leaked to citizens two weeks ago. Support for the measure has since been broad; many citizens see the Filtvelt Citizens Militia as a suitable response to pirate incursions while also providing employment and ensuring that no single world in the Coalition carries more of the defense burden than another.

Though the Citizens’ Militia has received a steady influx of volunteers since its formation on 20 February, delays in getting news of the Coalition’s independence and the militia’s formation to lesser-developed portions of the breakaway state have hampered the militia’s growth.

The Coalition expects the draft to be a temporary measure until it can fill out the militia’s ranks with volunteers. Critics argue that insufficient weaponry is available to arm the militia at full strength, making the draft an unnecessary and avoidable drain on the stressed economy.

[Pfizer]: “Whatever it’s called, it is a Commonwealth. And while the Estates General has been a good check on the Archon in the past, they don’t handle much of the day-to-day running of the government. That’s what that gargantuan bureaucracy does. The people, for the most part, have had success with the Archons.”

[Turkleson]: “Well, now they aren’t, and we need a change. No more of this ‘stay the course’ crap.”

[Jackson]: “Change for change’s sake is no better. How does anyone expect hundreds of worlds to effectively function as a democracy? It hasn’t worked that well for the League. Just because the six planets of the Rim Collection can do it doesn’t mean much.”

[Carleton]: “This isn’t about...”

[Pfizer]: “Nobles, common men, this is all about a fight for power, not the fight for the people.”

[Carleton]: “Well, it’s time for the people to decide and like always, it’s going to take a fight because the powers that be don’t want to see a change.”

DESPERATE TIMES

[Schultz]: “And I think this group has shown that after ten thousand years of civilization, humankind still hasn’t figured out what it wants. On to our next topic, the capital worlds sieges: what should we do...?”

—From *Face the Experts*, Skye Broadcasting, 4 March 3072

RALLYING CRY

(5 May 3072)

Novara [ANN] – Lindon Ashley, radical leader of the Democracy Now movement championed by the late Novaran elector Calvin Strauss, surfaced this week for the first time since his disappearance on Calafell. Claiming an assassination attempt drove him into hiding for the past five months, Ashley wasted no time accusing the Kaumberg nobility of conspiring to kill both him and Strauss.

Strauss, who was running for the office of Novara’s planetary governor on a platform of establishing the world as a new provincial capital, was killed in a vehicle explosion that remains under investigation.

“The nobility [of Kaumberg] is just a symptom of a much larger problem, one that has paralyzed the Alliance in the face of fanatical enemies bent on our collective destruction,” Ashley said in a pre-recorded address. “But the voices of a failing social order cannot silence the will of the people. Nor can the actions of some blueblood Gestapo terrify us into surrender...”

Ashley called upon all “like-minded disciples of freedom” to rise up against what he called the “tyranny of blood,” and vowed to take up Calvin Strauss’ banner “for the freedom of all.”

There has been no response yet from the Kaumberg leadership.

ISLANDS IN THE VOID

As you can see behind me, the Affron Memorial Spaceport is empty and looks like it hasn’t been used in weeks. It hasn’t.

Like many worlds not directly caught up in the various conflicts, the tiny Lyran world of Abejorral has refocused its energies. Many local industries are capitalizing on interstellar trade disruptions to offer cheaper prices and more reliable availability over extra-planetary firms. With so many planets focusing more and more on self-reliance, a wave of isolationism is sweeping not only the Lyran Alliance, but all of the Inner Sphere. Here, the spaceport only opens once a month, when a private DropShip arrives, is quickly reloaded and sent on its way. Will there be an end to this local focus? Some economic forecasters think it will take full-scale depressions to shift local views back to the interstellar stage, given the chaos throughout the Sphere. Until then, they say, the minds of many more each day turn away from the big picture, drowning out the concerns of others in a dangerous trend toward xenophobia.

—James Smith, INN field correspondent, Abejorral, 21 May 3072

TINFOIL DECEPTION

>>>ISF intercept/decode key nine-nine-four<<<

Loremaster:

Further investigation into the Irece incident has proven conclusively that the weapon detonation was caused by the Word of Blake and not by the Combine. Watch agents have managed to track down data that shows the operation was sanctioned by Terra and not by New Samarkand. While the current loss of four Nova Cat vessels to rogue DCA WarShips in the Prefecture is alarming, it is not proof that the ISF is involved at this time, as originally believed.

In addition, please reference the attached report from our scientist team. Further testing is required, but if the results are true...Perhaps your vision is more accurate than we ever dared to dream in our nightmares.

—Watch Star Captain Nicholas

>>>comment/ISF994a: possible contamination of project. Initiate burn procedures.<<<

(Reported ISF communiqué intercept, Irece, dated 28 June 3072, leaked to ISAP by *The Drake*, veracity unconfirmed)

DEMOCRACY NOW UNVEILS "ARMY"

(30 June 3072)

Novara [ANN] – Militant Democracy Now leader Lindon Ashley defiantly announced last week the birth of the "Democratic People's Army" on Novara. The move comes amid growing tensions that have so far seen elements of the regionally based Kaumberg Planetary Guard on numerous nearby worlds. The announcement—coupled with the identity of the alleged Word of Blake-backed mercenaries used as the core of this new military force—has produced an uproar on nearby Kaumberg, bastion of pro-Steiner loyalist efforts.

"The anarchist [Democracy Now] movement has finally demonstrated its true intentions," said Anton Gustaf, an official close to Kaumberg's Lord of Lords Erich Sheridan. "Not only have they formally taken up arms against the lawful rule of the Archon, but they have armed themselves with Blakist lucre warriors."

The remarks came after the revelation that the core of the People's Army is in fact Eriksson's Einherjar, a mercenary force last known to be in the employ of the Circinus Federation following a Word of Blake overthrow of the pirate regime there. The Einherjar are one of dozens of mercenary commands since blacklisted by the MRBC for failing to adhere to an international hiring ban imposed against the Word of Blake in 3068.

The controversial ban—the most sweeping of its kind ever imposed by the Mercenary Commission—was intended to isolate the Jihadists from what many see as a critical part of their military might. Yet even today, years after the ban, many units still fight under the Word's command.

Though Ashley himself did not acknowledge the charges of Blakist collusion, he did issue a grim warning to Tharkad and Kaumberg that any effort to disband his new army would be met with deadly force:

DESPERATE TIMES

"The days of the so-called 'nobles' are numbered," said Ashley. "Let any who dare threaten the free will of the people here on Novara face the cold, hard consequences of their foolishness."

THE OUTER REACHES

LIBERTY UNDER FIRE

(13 March 3072)

Wildwood [CNA] – It is only with great caution that we begin to think of the future of the Magistracy of Canopus. For too long we have struggled to believe that we had any future at all, as the Blakist horrors visited on our nation have ravaged our capital, killed our leader and left the rest of the Inner Sphere blind to the depredations occurring here. In our darkest hours, it seemed likely that we would become nothing more than a Blakist protectorate.

Yet after four years of hardship, we are still here. We have survived. And the efforts of people like Erde Centrella and Hadji Doru, as well as the advances of Capellan troops into Blakist space, give us the luxury of dreaming of a future for our nation.

But what sort of a future will it be? While the Capellans are certainly more welcome within our borders than the Blakists, no Liao—not even Sun-Tzu—has ever offered any degree of assistance without extracting a heavy price. If he helps us remove the Blakist threat, what will he ask for in return, especially as he already has taken our new Magestrix herself for his bride?

Beyond that lies a larger question: How much of our native idealism will survive the onslaught we have endured? We have all heard the voices urging change, claiming that the very thing that made us unique also made us vulnerable. When we emerge on the other side of this unholy nightmare, will there be any room for the dreams that first made us a nation?

HEGEMONY HUSTLE

Message to Prefect Josef Vasicek//V Legio Command// Lothario

04043072

Reads: Dragonslayer discovery of pirate/rebel collusion confirmed. Data indicates one leadership cell on Valerius. Seven total networks active in Palatinate. Mercenaries ordered to blockade Vale to assist Cohors in exhaustive search. Anticipate cell closure in approx. five days.

Other networks: Lindassa, Lummatii, Maximillian, Blantleff, Illyria, Trasjkis, Lordinax. Suggest additional Cohors forces and/or mercs to handle systems. Networks on Trasjkis and Blantleff extensive; excessive force required.

Will attempt to apprehend Vale subjects for extensive questioning. More information to follow. Data appended.

For the Caesar, for the Hegemony!

Legatus Francisco Kelley // Tertia Cohors // Valerius

>>>93.3Gatt//vid/aud/dat<<<



ET TU?

(5 January 3072)

Alphard [ISAP] – Friends, Marians, countrymen, lend me your ears!

The Hegemony has suffered a terrible loss, but I do not appear here today to bury it—I come rather to offer hope. I, Senator Quintus Pullo, have survived the destruction of our leaders. As the sole survivor of the civilian government, I call upon all citizens of the Hegemony to help me lead our nation through this dark age. Now is no time to follow a military junta, nor to surrender to despair. Together, we will find a way to restore peace, order and prosperity to our nation. We have suffered, yes, but we will rise.

To those who fear that the ones who have wronged us will escape. I ask you, is it not more wrong to let them continue to harm a nation destined for greatness? Will history look back and see that we chose to react like a mad dog rather than a wounded lion? No! We shall fight our enemies on our terms—not theirs.

A good warrior knows when to concede defeat in the battle to win the war; but in this battlefield, let diplomacy be our sword. Who better to lead us now, in our darkest hour? The day of the bloodthirsty butchers must pass! My people, I seek your support and pray that you not condone the foolish actions of warmongers. And to our glorious military, I call for you to defend your people like a mother bear, rather than striking out like the raging wolverine.

Our enemy is spread far too thin to occupy the proud Marian Hegemony and they know this. Their attack on Alphard was scarcely more than a raid. They can be made to understand that they cannot hope to conquer the Hegemony, and once they have left, we shall re-elect a Senate and find a wise, capable Caesar to lead us. We will restore our government. We will not cave in to fear.

I ask you now to lend me not your ears, but your hearts and minds as I lead our realm out of the darkness.

(12 January 3072)

Alphard [ISAP] – Despite rumors to the contrary, the Marian Hegemony is far from dead. While the neutron bombing of Nova Roma surely decapitated this nation, it—like the legendary Green Knight—continues to fight its would-be destroyers. ISAP has learned that the surviving generals of the Hegemony military have forged a small council to direct efforts against the Circinian and Blakist invaders while maintaining order at home.

Meanwhile, reports indicate that the Senate has stepped in to govern in the absence of a Caesar, but General Ivy Ward of the HAF disagrees. “That blowhard can talk pretty,” she said, “but he’s a coward. We’re not backing down and we’re capable of pushing the enemy out of the Hegemony without giving them the kitchen sink. [Senator Pullo] wants to form committees and studies, but the time calls for action, so we’re acting.” While the senator seems to be seeking some sort of virtual Caesarship, the Marian generals insist they have no wish to govern and only want to restore order so that the government may be re-elected in a fair and just manner while the people and state remain safe.

Surveying the population, Ward’s words seem to echo the thoughts of many common citizens. However, a few patricians flock to Pullo’s banner, hoping to at least retain their wealth and power, if not increase it in the current power vacuum. As all adult males and many women have received at least militia training, reserve units are being formed faster than they can be supplied or used. Even with jury-rigged machines and improvised weapons, these units are helping the resilient military to give the invaders all they can handle as the attack has bogged down into a standstill.



<i>Date & Title</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>Status</i>
(9 September 3071) “Strauss-Ashley Rift Widens over Democracy Now Extremism” [ANN]		COMPLETED
(29 September 3071) “Deposed Archon Peter Steiner-Davion Slain!” (“Renegade... [VoT]		DOWNLOADING
(30 September 3071) “Bounty Hunters Capture Cutthroats’ Commanders in... [MercNet]		ACCESSING



SURKAI

Khan Montose –

I wish to explain my actions before you gather wind of this from the Watch.

I have accepted Khan Cobb's offer of *hegira*. The rest of my forces are at this moment gathering together with the *Coterie*; unfortunately, we have lost the *Whelp* and the *Cold Hunter*.

I suspect Khan Cobb offered *hegira* only because he must have heard the same report I did: The Coyotes and Vipers are moving against our holdings at New Kent. With everything here, our people are defenseless.

We stand to lose everything, Raina. Everything our Founders have worked for, bled for, died for. All of it—it stands now on the brink of annihilation.

Khan Cobb has told me he will offer you *hegira* as well when he arrives at Vantaa. He knows the Falcons are ripping you apart, my Khan. And his compassion—though vile and poorly timed—offers us an escape.

I ask you to consider the offer, my Khan. I will step down as saKhan once we reunite near Nouveaux Paris as my *surkai*. You may even challenge me to a Trial of Grievance, as is your right.

Do not let our Clan die, so far from our people. For once, Raina, do not mimic Asa Taney and his psychotic ways.

I will see you shortly. Until then, I will prepare for what we shall do when we get back to Hector.

—saKhan Connor Rood

(Decrypted intercept by Wolf-in-Exile, dated 25 March 3072, passed to LAAF High Command)

LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER

[Glorious Departure]: "I'm telling you, we're a ComStar vessel that's been ejected from the Alliance. I've got three hundred technicians and support personnel attached to this JumpShip! For Blake's sake, we're unarmed!"

[Liverpool]: "Yeah, and I'm telling you, you're full of it! Everyone around here knows the Alliance is cozy with ComStar, so why would they boot your ass out?"

[Departure]: "Damn it, listen to me! Get your head outta your ass, you ingrate! The Snow Ravens have taken over Alpheratz! We are simple HPG technicians and staff, trying to work our way to Woodbine!"

[Sterlington Control]: "DropShip *Liverpool*, I'm not so sure they're Blakists. I'm reading no weapons on her DropShips—they're just *Mules*."

[Liverpool]: "Yeah, just like those ones that wiped out the nadir station at Kirbyville? I'm not buying it, Control. We've got operational command here, and I'm getting pretty convinced this is another one of those traps."

[Departure]: "You know what? Screw you. We'll go elsewhere. I'd heard the Suns' Outback was woefully uneducated, but I never—"

[Liverpool]: [Faint] "Captain, K-F field forming!" [Loud] "Shit! *Suicide jump!* I knew it! *All Lancers, attack!* Protect the re-charge station!"

DESPERATE TIMES

[Departure]: "The hell? All hands, brace for impact! Brace fo—"

[Air Lancer One]: "Direct hit, command module..."

[Air Lancer Three]: "Direct hit, aft. Internal explosions detected..."

[Air Lancer Two]: "DropShip attempting to detach..."

[One]: "K-F drive's reaching critical..."

[Control]: "*Liverpool!* Break off vector! She's gone catastrophic!"

[Liverpool]: "—four by seventy by one hundred! Get us out of tha—" [Horrendous shriek, static]

[Air Lancer Four]: "Holy shit, did you see that?"

TURNING THE BLIND EYE

—Alleged Internal AFFS Memo, intercepted and transmitted by Capellan state media on Yuris (30 September 3072)

From: Department of Mercenary Liaisons

Recipient: Captain Aleksander Knightburg (Hansen's Roughriders liaison)

Date: 29 June 3072

Re: Conduct Report – Hansen's Roughriders

While my department technically agrees that the Roughriders are in violation of generally accepted laws of warfare, in addition to the questionable treatment of captured Taurian and mercenary insurgents in the Pleiades, several factors and circumstances mitigate this situation:

First and foremost, the Taurian Concordat was never a signatory to the Ares Conventions, and has always maintained a nuclear option in combat. Because of this condition, opponents fighting them are not obligated to follow any of the re-implemented standards of said Conventions presently observed in accordance with AFFS doctrine.

Second, the Concordat has demonstrated—both on Bromhead (against Roughrider dependents) and in the active smuggling of weapons of mass destruction into the Pleiades Cluster—that they do not intend even to try to follow such Conventions themselves.

In addition, the recent use of the Blakist-backed Lone Star Regiment, a command that has regularly broken every rule of warfare, underscores the Taurians' "war to the knife" policies. Colonel Hansen can too easily claim he is merely giving these fools "a taste of their own medicine."

Considering the state of conflict raging across Federated Suns space and across her borders, Captain, we simply cannot afford to withdraw the Roughriders from the Taurian border. There is no one left to replace them, and their effectiveness in keeping the Pleiades Cluster and surrounding territories secure has surpassed our own battered House troops. Until we can get a better handle on this Suns-wide chaos, no action can be taken and we must continue to prevent what is left of the MRBC from punishing the Roughriders.



EARLY 3072: DESPERATE TIMES

[Three]: "Gawd, yeah. It's like space just bubbled and sucked it through..."

[Four]: "Uhh, Control, you may want to get somebody out here. I don't think there's any survivors, but...holy hell..."

[Control]: "Roger that, Air Lancer Four. Guess we were wrong. Looks like the Blakists struck again."

— Intercepted communications chatter, Sterlington nadir jump point, 1 May 3072

AND IN OTHER NEWS...

CLAN FORCES COMSTAR OFF TUKAYYID

(21 January 3072)

Tukayyid [ISAP] – Almost twenty years after the Battle of Tukayyid that ended the Clan invasion, the Clans are pushing ComStar off this world and out of the Rasalhague Republic—and all without firing a shot.

ComStar troops began evacuation of the Free Rasalhague Republic today, leaving at the request of the Rasalhagian government and Clan Ghost Bear. For nearly two decades, they have guarded the small nation, but the Ghost Bear Clan—following years of ComStar's declining popularity—recently usurped the Order's role as Rasalhague's protector. The Bears and the Rasalhagians agreed on a mutual defense pact last year that left no obvious role for ComStar. Unnamed sources within the government report that the Clanners were uncomfortable with ComStar's presence and their evacuation was a precondition of the pact.

It will take months for the last of the ComStar troops to jump clear of Rasalhague space, but the majority of forces will depart the realm in the next two to four weeks. According to ComStar sources, the evicted troops will assemble at a staging area in the Lyran Alliance's Arc-Royal Theater. It is not clear where they will go after that.

RISE UP AND BE COUNTED!

Fellow citizens, it is time to rise up and be counted! We are the *Free Worlds League*, not the Word of Blake's League! We make our own choices! We have our own lives, our own destinies! Rise up and be counted as those who aim to keep it that way.

The Word assassinates those we believe in, those who try to protect us from enemies without and within. They send their terrorists onto our worlds to spread fear. Their Sixth of June has bombed entire cities into ruin on Oriente and countless other worlds, killing innocent civilians by the tens of thousands to enforce their will.

Stop taking this lying down!

Do not give them the tips that lead to ambushes and dead civilians. Do not turn over the freedom fighters in hiding. Do not surrender hope for a benevolent government! Salvation is within our reach. Even the other Houses have begun to liberate their capitals. If they can do it, we can too!

The Free Worlds League must free itself from this cycle of terror and death! For the sake of our future, and of our children, *Rise Up and Be Counted!*

—Transmission from the Free Worlds Resistance, broadcast on Holt, 2 February 3072

MISSING PERSONS OF INTEREST

Oh, now here's an interesting bit of gossip I'm sure you folks are going to love! Snagged this one off the local RobeNets on New Earth. Don't ask how; I won't be explaining. –Starling

>>>Message Begins; Level Alpha-One-One Priority; Disseminate by Need ONLY<<<

To: All Mu/Iota Personnel and Affiliated Functionaries

From: Office of the Director (Alexander Kernoff)

Date: 16 March 3072

Subject: Missing Persons of Interest

The Office of the Director ROM has issued an agency-wide discretionary alert. All active agents in the field are to be on the lookout for any clues as to the whereabouts of a high-priority "person of interest" (POI) believed lost in or near the Protectorate annexations within the Lyran Alliance. Subject of interest is one Victoria Pardeau, former Precentor ROM of ComStar and friend to Our Blessed Order. Person of Interest, if encountered, is to be taken alive and moved to a secure location to await transfer to designated personnel. Agents are advised to maintain discretion while seeking this POI at all times; hostile interference is suspected.

>>>End Message<<<

NEWS DOWNLOADS



Date & Title

(2 October 3071)
"Taurians Invade Brusset"

(12 October 3071)
"Combat WiGEs: Teaching Old Dogs New Tricks"

(25 October 3071)
"Twenty-Second Avalon Hussars Bound for New Earth"



EARLY 3072: DESPERATE TIMES

**BROKEN CONTAINMENT**

I'm writing this just in case. So if the worst happens someone will know what happened here on Buenos Aires. But the worst won't happen, of course, because we're implementing a containment plan that's going to stop this damn bug in its tracks.

I guess the real reason I'm writing this is just to have something to do.

It all started when a Wobbie raiding party set down. They didn't do much damage at first, but they released something from their ships before they left—something that took the fight to us long after they had jumped out-system.

It showed up first as a kind of super-rust that attacked our winter wheat. Then it spread like wildfire. In the first day we lost a million hectares of crops. By the end of the first week the figure was twenty million hectares.

Somehow the blight mutated—or maybe what the Blakies used was some kind of bio-chem cocktail—because while we were watching the planet's cereal crops wither, animals started dying. Cattle, hogs, poultry, *everything*, falling victim to some kind of aggressive prion. The Ag Ministry was too slow to respond. Before they ran down the connection between the rust and the prion, it was too late.

Buenos Aire's food found its way to 25 billion customers on six different worlds—no more.

But as bad as that was, the worst was yet to come. The plague cocktail released a new weapon.

It manifested as an influenza variant, something to which no one had any immunity. First pass mortality rate was approximately 72 percent. Whole families died. Whole towns died. Whole *cities* died.

But not any more. All members of the population have been isolated, remaining at home where possible, or gathered together in schools, libraries, sports stadiums. The Wobbies have won the first round.

But we're not done.

—Crumpled note recovered from one of 273 dead citizens found in the Marcus Hadley High School gymnasium, Buenos Aires City, Buenos Aires, 12 April 3072

RASALHAGUE WITHDRAWAL COMPLETED

(21 May 3072)

Arc-Royal [ISAP] – Today marks the end of an era. As of 1400 hours, the last Com Guard troop ships boosted away from the world of Tukayyid in the Free Rasalhague Republic. In a symbolic gesture, the last DropShip departed the planet exactly twenty years to the day after the massed might of the Com Guards defeated the Clans in the Battle of Tukayyid. In the aftermath of that historic battle, the Republic had appealed to ComStar for aid, and since that time the Com Guards had served as the realm's elite guardians.

But now ComStar has fallen out of favor. Inexorably linked with the Word of Blake in many minds, ComStar is faced with increasing hostility from the citizens of the Inner Sphere. Many blame the Order for its failure to deal with the Blakists when they first broke away. Following the unmasking of Primus Sharilar Mori and former Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht as foreign agents, ComStar has been plagued by another round of mass defections, with many choosing to rejoin their one-time brethren in the Word of Blake. The time ComStar required to repair the HPG network after the Blakist "White-Out" in 3068 has also raised suspicions. For the Rasalhague Republic, these concerns have culminated in the people choosing the Ghost Bear Clan—their would-be-conquerors—as their new guardians.

ComStar is maintaining a diplomatic mission on Orestes, but Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion and Primus Gavin Dow have temporarily relocated the First Circuit and Com Guard headquarters here to Arc-Royal. Over the past three months, Com Guard divisions stationed on Republic worlds have relocated to this region, centered on the Clan Wolf (in Exile) enclave on Arc-Royal.

WHILE ROME BURNS...

(14 June 3072)

Andurien [AFP] – Sometimes all your chickens come home to roost...though, in this case, perhaps it should be eagles. The disastrous Regular campaign against Oriente left the Principality weak and ripe for predation by bigger hunters. Like sharks drawn to blood they came, but the first blow came from within. Evidence has emerged that elements within the Regular government have colluded with the Blakists, possibly since the incident on Tharkad. These elements crippled the Regular defense network and aided military forces to stage a lightning assault on the heart of the Regular capital. Planting explosives and using inferno weapons, they systematically reduced the capital to a flaming ruin.

With one exception. The Prince's palace remained untouched during the assault and is the only building of note still standing in the capital, an island of soot-stained marble amid the burnt-out remains of the once-great city.

The Prince is said to have witnessed the attack from his balcony, attended by his mistress and close confidants. He is said to have made no effort to intervene in the carnage or to alleviate the suffering inflicted on the people. Is he a modern-day Nero, fiddling while his capital burns around him? Or was he—as the official media have begun to put about—a prisoner of "enemy forces" during the devastation? (There are many people out there, I'm sure, who would like to be held prisoner with Sonja Amora!)

Regulus and Cameron-Jones are no friends of the Blakists, to be sure, but was this action the culmination of a long plot by the Blakists (as the rumor mill suggests) or merely the opportunistic elimination—attempted, if not actual—of one of the Free Worlds' factions that are their rivals for control of the state?



EARLY 3072: DESPERATE TIMES

FALLEN IDOLS

[Kirc Cameron-Jones]: "Sonja! Get packed! We must leave at once! Mark, find out what's going on! And where is the First?!"

[Mark Brandhauber]: "Force Commander Grovesnor is engaging the enemy on the Esplanade now, Captain-General! But they're closing in on the palace; we have to get to the secondary post now!"

[Cameron-Jones]: "I know, Mark! Damn it, I know! Sonja, what are you doing? Hurry up!"

[Sonja Amora]: *[Muffled]* "Calm yourself, Kirc, dear. This is no time for panic..."

[Cameron-Jones]: "No time—? The city's under attack! Please, love—hurry! We must get you out of here!"

[Amora]: *[Muffled]* "Oh, don't worry about me, my dear. I'm not going anywhere."

[Cameron-Jones]: "What? Dearest, I love you with all my heart, and I know you love this city, but I'm not leaving you here! These Nightwalkers killed everyone on Wallis! Don't worry about your things; once we're safe, I'll make sure you have everything you've ever desired!"

[Amora]: *[Muffled, light laughter]* "Oh, my dear Kirc, but everything I desire is right here. And this opera is just reaching its crescendo."

[Cameron-Jones]: "My love, what are you talking about? The city—"

[Brandhauber]: "Ms. Amora, I must insist you come with us. I don't want to have to use force."

[Amora]: *[The click of a door opening, no longer muffled]* "Oh, I'd advise against that, Colonel."

[Brandhauber]: "L-listen, lady! I don't care what His Majesty feels for you, but there's no time for me to molly-coddle you. If you're not packed within the next ten seconds, we're leaving without you!"

[Cameron-Jones]: "Mark, how *dare* you speak to her that way?"

[Brandhauber]: "Forgive me, my lord, but we don't have any time left. We can hear the 'Mechs right outside. My duty is to see you both safe—"

[Amora]: "Oh, we're quite safe here, Colonel. Though I can't say the same for you."

[Brandhauber]: "What? Are you're *threatening* me? Fine! Stay here! Try your charm on these pirates as they burn the palace down around you! Sir—"

[Amora]: *[Mocking laughter, voice hardens]* "Oh, you Frails do amuse me. You're too late. Naamah is already here."

[Brandhauber]: "Who? Oh—"

[Cameron-Jones]: "Naamah? W-what? Sonja, what are you saying? I don't understand!"

[Amora]: "Oh, you truly *are* pathetic, Kirc, *dear*. Even now I can see the light dawning in Mark's eyes. Naamah is the harbinger of your capitulation. Naamah is the bringer of destruction upon all you hold dear. And Naamah's Nightwalkers—*my* Nightwalkers—are the instrument of His will."

[Brandhauber]: "His will? Halas? You've been setting us up for this all along, haven't you! What they failed to accomplish with an assassin, they attempt with a seductress?"

[Amora]: "Your stupidity should not surprise me, Colonel, and yet it still does. I serve no one so frail as the Impostor or his confederate. Lord Apollyon commands me, but I am simply a Hand of the Master."

[Sound of rapid laser fire outside, followed by screams. Sound of doors being blasted open and the roar of wind.]

[Amora]: "Ah, and here we must part, *my dearest*."

[Brandhauber]: "What the hell? Guards! Take it down—*now!*"

[Sound of gunfire, reports of automatic rifles punctuated by the snap of lasers. A heavy gasp drowns out the other sounds, and the sharp intake of breaths is the loudest sound for a few seconds.]

[Cameron-Jones]: "Mark!"

[Voice Four, Unidentified Male]: *[Modulated]* "The palace is secured, Precentor. The 49th is yours to command once more."

[Amora]: "Thank you, Dantalion."

[Cameron-Jones]: "S-sonja?"

[Amora]: "A pity about Colonel Brandhauber; we had such plans for him. Aha, and now I see the understanding finally dawns upon you. You may try to glare at me with hatred, but remember always that it was *you* who brought this upon your people. *Your* power play gone wrong. *Your* insurgency that ends in nuclear fire. Sound familiar? It should; it was the invitation that brought me into your life. Farewell, *Captain-General*, and as you look upon the smoldering corpse of your beloved city, and your shattered realm, remember always that it was your perfidy that caused it."

[Cameron-Jones]: "Sonja? Dearest? Please tell me w—" *[Sound of sudden choking.]*

[Amora]: "No! Release him, Dantalion. Let him savor the devastation he has brought upon himself, his people, his city. Let him understand that no matter what he does, no matter where he goes, he cannot hide from the Word's retribution. Leave the Palace. Burn the rest to the ground. Let's go."

—Recording found on the body of Col. Mark Brandhauber, Regulus, 6 June 3072



CHAOS RAMPANT: CORPORATE TIES

CORPORATE TIES

To most people of the Inner Sphere, today is just another day. A normal day, with just a hint of looking over one's shoulder in case the Jihad bogeyman happens to be behind them. So many worlds...their days began like this one and became a twisted nightmare from which they cannot wake.

Not today. Not here on Donegal.

Our first big step forward, taking this war back to those who, for whatever reason, decided to inflict such pain and misery on us all.

Today, Donegal's freedom begins.

Tomorrow, the rest of the Sphere.

Maybe now the Blakists will start looking over their shoulders.

For us.

—From the personal journal of Victor Steiner-Davion

SITUATION

Task Force Copernicus, Nadir Point

Donegal, Lyran Alliance

14 February 3072

In their haste to pull together a coalition of forces, the Kell Hounds and ComStar approached several mercenary units for assistance. After a stringent background check—called “the Broadsword enema” in merc vernacular—those cleared and accepted were transported to an unlisted star system, where the task force was hastily forming.

The main assault force comprises mostly Wolf-in-Exile, LAAF and ComStar units, with a few smaller mercenary commands attached mainly as support. While you're happy not to be the spearhead of this one, there is a sense of jealousy that the Exile Wolves are at the forefront of yet another high-end operation.

Then again, it is the Word waiting below. Anyone in that much of a hurry for an execution is more than welcome to charge first through the door.

CHAOS RAMPANT: CORPORATE TIES

GAME SETUP

CBT: Use any mix of terrain from the Terrain Tables (see p. 263, *TW*). Gamemasters should place/designate a building as the HPG station (at least a Heavy Level 3 building) and two buildings as hangars/repair bays (at least a Hardened Level 2 building).

AT2: Use at least two Space maps. The *Atmospheric Operations* rules apply (see p. 78, *TW*). Gamemasters should place one *Olympus*-class station (see p. 178, *TRO: 3057, Revised*) within 10 to 13 hexes of the Planet Interface row.

RPG: Gamemasters should use a similar setup as described for either a ground or a space battle. All station personnel should use the standard Soldier NPC template (see p. 207, *CBT: RPG*).

Attacker (Naval)

The Attacker consists of elements of Clan Wolf-in-Exile's Star Wolves Naval Star and ComStar's 116th Division, as well as up to 100 percent (minimum 25 percent) of the players' total force. Both the WIE and ComStar forces are of Veteran experience. The WIE and Com Guard forces may number up to 50 percent of the players' force strength, respectively.

The Attacker may choose two map edges from which to enter, but must declare one edge as their home edge for any forced withdrawals. Starting Velocity should be less than 6.

Defender (Naval)

The Defender consists of elements of the Word of Blake's Eighteenth Division and Fiftieth Shadow Division. All of the Defender's units are Veteran. The Defender's force is 100 percent of the Attacker's total deployed force and should include the *Essex*-class WarShip *Righteous Honor*.

The Defender enters from any map edge, but at a maximum of 8 hexes from the planetary edge.

The *Olympus* station has a crew experience level of Regular and is ignored for the purposes of building the Defender's force.

Attacker (Ground)

The Attacker consists of elements of Clan Wolf-in-Exile's First Wolf Legion and ComStar's 116th Division, as well as up to 100 percent (minimum 25 percent) of the players' total force. The WIE units are Elite; the Com Guards are Veteran.

The Attacker enters from the map edge farthest from the HPG station. This is also considered their home edge.



CHAOS RAMPANT: CORPORATE TIES

Defender (Ground)

The Defender consists of elements of the Word of Blake's Fiftieth Shadow Division with Elite experience. The Defender's force is 100 percent of the Attacker's total deployed force. The Defender may begin the track anywhere on the battlefield, with at least one unit within 2 hexes of each of the objective buildings.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 1,000 (singular)/1,400 (if combined as AT2/CBT)

Optional Bonuses (all bonuses cumulative):

+300 High Speed Insertion! (CBT only) The Attacker may deploy up to all of their available force through a type of combat drop maneuver (see below).

+400 High Speed Interception! (AT2 only) The Defender enters the battlefield at a minimum Velocity of 7 and receives a +2 bonus to Initiative rolls for the first two turns.

-200 Prior Intelligence: If the player group successfully completed *Click, Click, Boom* (see p. 98, *JHS:3070*), the Attacker receives a +1 Initiative bonus for the duration of the track.

Victory Bonuses (bonuses not cumulative):

+600 Partial Victory: Completing two objectives.

+1200 Total Victory: Completing all objectives.

-400 (cumulative): If objective 1A or 1B is not completed.

OBJECTIVES

- 1A. Eliminate WoB support.** Destroy the *Olympus*-class station.
- 1B. Eliminate WoB network.** Destroy the HPG station and attendant maintenance/repair buildings.
- 2. We need information...** Capture enemy soldiers by crippling their units without killing the crews or pilots in the process.
- 3. Bring the pain.** Destroy or cripple at least 75 percent of the Attacker's deployed force.

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

50th Shadow Division

One of every four units in the Defender's force is a Manei Domini soldier equipped with a VDNI system (excluding DropShips, JumpShips and WarShips). All other Shadow Division warriors may make use of Level 4 (or lower) implants other than VDNI, at the gamemaster's discretion. Follow the rules in the *Rules Annex* (see p. 118) for information on using Manei Domini implants and warriors in combat.

Salvage

The level of battlefield salvage turned over to the player group is equal to half the percentage of the players' force brought to the battle. For example, Steve used 50 percent of his total force as part

of the Attacker's force, making him eligible for 25 percent of the total salvage left on the field ($50 \div 2 = 25$ percent).

Forced Withdrawal

Both the Wolf-in-Exile and Com Guard forces operate under the Forced Withdrawal rules (see p. 258, *TW*).

High Speed Insertion (optional)

If this optional bonus is in play, use the following guidelines:

The insertion occurs at the beginning of the Movement Phase, before all other movement takes place. The controlling player designates the target hex for the unit's arrival. The opposing player rolls 2D6; on a roll of 6+, the unit lands safely and may face any hexside as determined by the controlling player. The unit may move normally at the beginning of the next turn.

On a roll of 5 or less, the unit lands 1D6 hexes away from its intended hex in a random direction and suffers damage as if it had fallen from a Level 4 height (see *Falling*, p. 68, *TW*). Units scattered off the map area in this fashion are considered destroyed. In addition, the unit may not move during that turn, but may fire as normal.

AFTERMATH**After Action Report 89-1-CS**

The fight for Donegal was incredibly brutal. We didn't expect the Word to be so firmly entrenched...and we underestimated the sheer power and will of their Manei Domini troops, as they're called. While the intel we've gained here is invaluable, if this type of victory is going to be the norm, then we're in for several more years of hard, system-to-system fighting.

This war has only just begun, it seems.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Just because one side declares victory certainly doesn't mean the other side acquiesces. The Word may be more firmly entrenched on Donegal than originally thought and continue to bring the fight to the new conquerors, despite the coalition's overwhelming presence.

Expansion Ideas

Planetary invasions are sometimes made of more complex operations and parts than a simple "fly in, land, win" strategy. Gamemasters may feel free to expand the space and ground battles into longer, more drawn-out affairs if they desire. However, no reinforcements are forthcoming for either side, so battlefield salvage and captured equipment may play a more important part in such a campaign than usual.

NEXT TRACKS

Going Nova; Burning Bridges

CHAOS RAMPANT: SPARK

SPARK**Entry UH-338**

I'm not entirely convinced of the President's action here. True, Spica's been pretty quiet during this whole "Sphere-wide" war—despite it sitting here on the border of the Federated Suns—but there's just something about all this that doesn't feel right.

I think it's the gazillion layers of bureaucracy around here. I've had to deal with it long enough now that it looks (to my jaundiced eye, I'll admit) as if there's some sort of "shadow government" going on. Though the planet was conquered in the name of the Word for the Confederation back in '68, there's no Blakist militia here, except for the HPG compound and some biotech research complex located in the sands of the Ugandi-zeti Desert. There's no flag flown, no embassies, nothing. It's weird.

President Igantio and his cabinet seem ambivalent toward any government, really—Blakist, Suns or Confederation (one member mentioned that they only allied with the Protectorate to gain the economic kick-backs offered to certain resource industries, of which Spica has more than a few), but really, all signs just don't point right for my taste. It's like ever since the Blakists took the world, they've left it for the vultures. Or the dead.

Regardless, the President is paying us well to garrison the place, so we'll fulfill our end of the contract. Don't think we'll be renewing, though.

SITUATION

Research Facility 48-K, Ugandi-zeti Desert

Spica, Protectorate Annex

25 March 3072

Ever since the Word conquered Spica and then slowly pulled off, no force from the Federated Suns or the Confederation has swooped in to claim the system, despite its abundant mining resources in the outlying belts and several higher-tech industries scattered across the smaller continent of Inessia. Concerned over recent rumors of rebellion and high-casualty attacks occurring in nearby Kittery, the planetary government recently hired some mercenaries as a defensive measure, nominally to protect the planet—but mainly to safeguard its HPG complex and a few research facilities.

Their paranoia proved prescient when a military force calling itself Stone's Lament arrived in early 3072, declaring Spica "liberated" and a new member of the Kittery Prefecture—whatever that was. Content with self-rule, the Spica government has refused to acquiesce to the unknown marauders' demands.

CHAOS RAMPANT: SPARK

GAME SETUP

CBT: Use maps from the Badlands terrain table (see p. 263, *TW*).

AT2: Use at least one Space map. The encounter can occur outside the planet's gravity well or within it, as the gamemaster chooses.

RPG: Set up the track according to the players' choice of setting.

Attacker

The Attacker is a small military force called Stone's Lament. They may use the C, D or F columns of any Inner Sphere Random

Access Table except for the Lyran Alliance, Draconis Combine and Free Rasalhague Republic. The Attacker's deployed force is 100 percent of the Defender's total deployed force and has Veteran experience.

The Attacker enters the battlefield from any map edge not selected as the Defender's home edge. Two edges are declared as the Attacker's home edge.

Defender

The Defender consists of up to 75 percent of the players' total force. The Defender enters from any map edge and declares that edge as their home edge before the Attacker deploys.

CHAOS RAMPANT: SPARK **WARCHEST**

Track Cost: 800

Optional Bonuses (all bonuses cumulative):

+500 Tornado (CBT only): Apply a +3 to-hit modifier to all direct-fire ballistic weapon attacks, and a +2 to-hit modifier to all direct-fire energy and pulse weapon attacks; missile weapon attacks cannot be made.

Apply a -2 Walking/Cruising MP and +3 modifier to all Piloting Skill Rolls.

Aerospace Units (except Airships): Apply a -1 Safe Thrust MP and a +3 modifier to all Control Rolls.

Hover, VTOL, WiGE, Airship and Conventional Infantry Units: Cannot operate in Tornado F1-F3 conditions.

+400 Rock Storm (AT2 only): Prepare 2D6 asteroids to use as meteors. To determine when the rock storm occurs, roll 2D6 in every turn beginning with Turn 3. The storm occurs on a result of 8 or greater. When the storm occurs, divide the number of meteors in half. Each side picks a map edge and then enters a meteor at Velocity 6, alternating between the two sides until all the meteors have entered. Treat the meteors as asteroids under the optional Asteroid rules on p. 47, AT2.

Victory Bonuses (bonuses not cumulative):

+550 Partial Victory: Completing one objective.

+1,000 Total Victory: Completing both objectives.

OBJECTIVES

1. Defensive measures. Destroy or cripple at least half the Attacker's force.

2. Smackdown! Destroy or cripple all attacking forces.

SPECIAL RULES

For this track, the Attacker operates under the Forced Withdrawal rules (see p. 258, TW).

AFTERMATH

Interesting. While you're out there, defending the planet from an unknown invader, the President and his gang get spooked and disappear? Just like that, they executed some "failsafe" plan and bolted as soon as your boys and girls were committed. And they absconded with half your payment, to boot.

So why? What is it about this Stone's Lament that frightened such hard-core politicians into abandoning the very people they were safeguarding from the war?

And why did the Lament's leader just pay you—despite being on the other side of the gun only hours ago—the rest of the debt owed you by Spica? There's more here than meets the eye...

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Tracking down and finding the fugitives might be easy or hard (and may even involve the very unit so recently across the battlefield from you). The Lament didn't come here to conquer, but to capture. Apparently, not only was the facility's staff a target, but also the planetary officials. It seems the Lament's leader—a guy named Devlin Stone—has a plan up his sleeve regarding the Blakists and his self-proclaimed Kittery Prefecture. Just what that plan is remains to be seen.

Expansion Ideas

Just how far will the Lament go to reach their objectives—and are they willing to assist the troops that were recently firing at them in order to find the fugitives?

NEXT TRACK

Clean Sweep; Burning Bridges



CHAOS RAMPANT: CLEAN SWEEP

**CLEAN SWEEP****Intercepted transmission:**

"...ernment commands: The Suns have come! I repeat, the Federated Suns are attacking! All planetary commands go to full alert! Let's put these damned pigs back in the barn and slaughter them but good!"

SITUATION

Bannson's Bane, Lilac Island

Althea's Choice, Taurian Concordat

12 June 3072

Mr. Askai's associates have offered you another well-paying contract—and the transportation logistics to make it on station in time. This one has a bit of a twist to it—you're to masquerade as an AFFS unit and obliterate the mercenary garrison on the out-of-the-way world of Althea's Choice. The pay is extremely good—and the fact that Mr. Askai himself delivered a nice DropShip full of brand-new AFFS toys was a particularly healthy bonus.

Some mercs balk at bait-and-switch jobs, but to the prudent mercenary businessman, it's all about the bottom line. You're a prudent businessman...so who needs ethics?

CHAOS RAMPANT: CLEAN SWEEP

**GAME SETUP**

CBT/AT2/RPG: Use maps from the Mountain and/or Wooded terrain tables. The gamemaster designates one map edge as the objective edge.

Attacker

The Attacker consists of up to 100 percent of the players' total force; half the equipment may be the player group's own, and the rest should be made up of House Davion units. To determine what units are available from House Davion, use any House Davion Random Access Table in any published product. All of the pilots and crews, however, are from the players' force.

The Attacker may enter from any map edge and must declare one side as their home edge.

Defender

The Defender consists of the Clean Kill mercenary command. The Defender's force should be 125 percent of the Attacker's total deployed force, with Veteran experience, and may use the House Liao, House Davion, Periphery and Mercenary Random Access Tables when determining equipment.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 1,500

Optional Bonuses (all bonuses cumulative):

+400 Weapon Malfunction: On any failed to-hit roll result of 2, 3 or 4 (or a Margin of Failure of 4 or more), consider that weapon jammed/damaged for the rest of the track.

+200 Ultra-Heavy Woods: Convert all heavy woods hexes to ultra-heavy woods. Moving through an ultra-heavy woods hex costs a total of 4 MP.

For purposes of determining line of sight, ultra-heavy woods rise three levels above the underlying terrain. A single ultra-heavy woods hex lying between an attacking unit and its prospective target will block line of sight. Attacks against a target that occupies an ultra-heavy woods hex suffer a +3 to-hit modifier.

Clearing Woods: For the purposes of clearing woods (see p. 112, *TW*), a hex of ultra-heavy woods has a Terrain Factor (TF) of 120. Once successfully reduced to heavy woods, the trees in that hex are considered to rise only two levels above the underlying terrain, rather than three.



CHAOS RAMPANT: CLEAN SWEEP

Victory Bonuses (bonuses not cumulative):

- 600 **Total Defeat:** No objectives completed.
- +1,000 **Partial Victory:** One objective completed.
- +2,500 **Total Victory:** Both objectives completed.

OBJECTIVES

- 1. Decapitation.** Destroy or cripple the Clean Kill's commander.
- 2. Elimination.** Destroy or cripple at least 80 percent of the Clean Kill.

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Clean Kill Mercenary Command

The Clean Kill's recent internal struggles have put them on thin ice with the government of Althea's Choice. Because of their desperate need to prove that they are indeed worth the money being spent, they will not retreat from the battlefield until they have taken at least 60 percent casualties. At that point, they follow the Fighting Withdrawal rules (see p. 258, *TW*).

The Clean Kill is led by Major Shahna Richman, from the cockpit of her BNS-3S *Banshee*.

AFTERMATH

Once again, Mr. Askai and his associates seem to be playing at wheels-within-wheels. While you were dirtside piling on to some down-and-out mercenaries, another raid—executed by more

"AFFS troops"—managed to hit the capital and set off a series of massive explosions. Wild panic and speculation from outlying cities and officials claim a chemical weapons strike occurred in the midst of the chaos, but until communications with the capital and government are re-established, this rumor remains just that.

Regardless of the truth, the local population has gone blood-thirsty, demanding the heads of the "Davion Satan." What Taurus' reaction to the news will be, only time will tell. Whatever the case, it doesn't look good.

And you, unfortunately, helped fire the rage.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Just what game is Askai playing here? How deep are his pockets? And who the hell are his "associates"? Time's coming for some reckoning, and maybe an intel op or three.

Expansion Ideas

A prolonged battle can turn into a series of raiding attacks and recon moves, trying to pin the opposing force down. The Clean Kill will not give up until the players are destroyed or captured, meaning that this track could take a long time if the players keep running...and the longer it goes, the bigger chance of some serious Concordat reinforcements showing up to finish off the attackers.

NEXT TRACK

Burning Bridges



LATE 3072: THE CURTAIN FALLS





LATE 3072: THE CURTAIN FALLS

As the last half of 3072 drew to a close, the end of the war seemed as far away as ever. The few major victories won by Inner Sphere forces were quickly countered by equal or deadlier Word of Blake counterstrikes. For every action, a more violent reaction. Pressures continued to mount, and those nations with cracks found themselves on the cusp of disintegration.

Clan Nova Cat had sustained its first major losses with the nuclear strikes on Irece even as events continued to escalate, with rogue Combine WarShips decimating their fleet and enclaves. Elsewhere, the Combine suffered further destabilization as the Azami practically declared all-out war against their former sovereigns. Coupled with still-simmering internal dissent, the Combine faced its darkest hours since the Clan Invasion; even a failed attack by the Nova Cats to free Luthien could not stem the Dragon's tide of despair.

While the Lyran Alliance—led now by a free Archon on a free Tharkad—headed off its own internal crises by facilitating control through local leadership, the Federated Suns continued to face the fragmenting of its own central authority. As the threat of renewed raids and even an invasion by Clan Snow Raven grew, more Davion worlds openly considered secession, taking Filtvelt's cue to reorganize as independent states for self-protection while casting

their countrymen to the winds. With New Avalon facing another terrible assault, only the Blakists' failure to capture the Princess Regent and her consort offered the Suns a glimmer of hope.

The successes of various resistance cells continued across the Sphere, with the discovery of a fugitive thought lost on New Home, the rescue of DCMS forces on Benjamin and rumors of a deadly new force arisen from the ashes of Outreach. These cells faced their toughest challenge yet, however, as rumors of new Blakist weapons punctuated the eradication of all resistance on Gibson.

Yet despite the severity of attacks on several key worlds, fighting across the Inner Sphere as a whole began to dwindle in 3072. Many worlds, braced against further aggression, saw no forthcoming invasions by either their immediate neighbors or the Blakists. As the Great Houses finally found time to take stock, all eyes turned to New Avalon, as one of the last major capitals still in Blakist chains, and the proverbial pivot point between light and dark.

The horrific brutality and swiftness of the Jihad has taken its toll, numbing billions as a state of universal shock finally sets in. Indeed, the Inner Sphere has changed, and not for the better. Though victories come, they come at high cost. As a new year dawns, we hope our final victory also rises before us.

DAY OF INFAMY

This is a Voice of Regulus special release: 2 July 3072

[Prince Cameron-Jones looks directly into the camera. Plumes of smoke can be seen rising into the sky behind him. The prince is disheveled and clearly shaken, looking tragically old and worn.]

[Cameron-Jones]: "More than a thousand years ago, a nation was attacked treacherously, by an enemy who sought an easy victory through a pre-emptive strike. That 'Day of Infamy' was enshrined in military annals for tens of generations to come.

"The attack upon the people of Regulus, mounted last month by the Word of Blake's Forty-ninth Division, was no less devastating to us—and just as much a failure in breaking our spirit. The Word sought to sow disarray with their carnage, but they have miscalculated. To the Blakists, I say this:

"You should have killed me when you had the chance, rather than taunting me with your 'visions of the future.' That will be your future, now; not mine."

[Cameron-Jones' eyes narrow and a snarl curls his lips as he seems to come to life with rage.]

[Cameron-Jones]: "Sonja. Naamah. Whatever you call yourself now, my little succubus, beware. Regulus is coming for you and that abomination you call a 'Master'. Your armies of cyber-zombies will be no match for a people fired by justice and a cry for vengeance. There will be no mercy. There will be no escape. We will not rest until you and all your inhuman kind are wiped from the universe, until Gibson is a glassed ruin and all of your other nests are smoking wastelands."

[Cameron-Jones draws himself up to his full height.]

[Cameron-Jones]: "Let it be known that from this day forth, Regulus will use every weapon in its arsenal against the Word of Blake and its allies. Every weapon—rules of war be damned—and this time, you won't have Paul Masters and Thomas Marik riding to the rescue.

"You've shown me the future if you are victorious, Naamah. I'll promise you a future where you are not."



MALAGROTTA NEXT?

(11 July 3072)

Malagrotta [FSNS] – The Malagrotta Combat Region, once a fairly quiet section of the FedSuns' Outback, is suffering from increased pirate attacks since the secession of the nearby Filtvelt Coalition and its recent major victories against local bands. While the Malagrotta CrMM is doing an admirable job of protecting as many worlds as possible, even Major General Raul Jimenez Besoba admits that the unit is stretched thin.

"It's basic math," Besoba said. "There're too many bases to cover. The scum of late have wised up, and they consistently hit multiple worlds at once. We do what we can, but to do the job right, we need additional personnel and hardware that simply have not been coming from New Avalon."

While awaiting a response from any centralized authority, many in the Malagrotta Combat Region have begun to express their support for a Filtvelt Coalition-style solution to the problem, championing a breakaway from the rule of the embattled House Davion. According to Prime Minister Honorer of Malagrotta:

"While [we are] not in favor of full-scale secession, we do believe there are enough provisions within existing Federated Suns law to enact many of the beneficial reforms executed by the Filtvelt Coalition. Our main objective, then, would be to raise sufficient local troops to free up the Malagrotta CrMM's 'Mechs and aerospace fighters and resume pirate-hunting operations."

Sources within General Kirk DeYoung's staff have expressed to FSNS that DeYoung is reviewing whether he can declare himself Military Governor over the region, in order to gain a legal mandate to address the crisis. However, his aide, Major General Garman Doucette, denies such claims.

FRAGMENTS OF POWER**RETURN OF THE ARCHONETTES**

(7 August 3072)

Tharkad [DBC] – In a special news conference, Archon Peter Steiner-Davion announced today the reintroduction of the "Archonettes" policy, an historic emergency government measure that effectively divides the Archon's power base among minor blocs throughout the Alliance. The act comes within months of Steiner-Davion's return to the throne, which followed General Adam Steiner's successful bid to recapture Tharkad after almost four years under Blakist occupation.

"It's clear the Alliance remains besieged on all sides, with the Word of Blake on the attack—both overtly, on our front lines, and covertly, within our midst," Steiner-Davion said. "Though we have begun to strike back, our infrastructure remains vulnerable, our leadership plagued with inefficiency. I am thus reactivating the titles and policies of Richard Steiner's Emergency Reconstructive

E CURTAIN FALLS

Powers Act of 2822, and am designating several worlds to act as central administrators for the purposes of resource coordination and military command."

The controversial maneuver establishes the creation of several mini-states within the Alliance, led by specially chosen local rulers whose responsibilities include maintaining and fostering social stability, trade, industry and military security for multiple worlds. Though the powers granted these "Archonettes" will be broad, they remain under the ultimate command of Archon Peter Steiner-Davion.

"Nobody needs a crystal ball to see that we're still in trouble," Steiner-Davion candidly admitted, "but the leaders I have chosen have my utmost confidence in their loyalty to the state and their dedication to their own fellow citizens. In these difficult times, the people of the Alliance need to see leadership that is more responsive to their immediate concerns, rather than rely on shattered communication lines to a capital dozens of light-years away."

The Archon said the transfer of executive control to these regions—which have been centered on Arcturus, Inarcs, Halfway and Kaumberg—will take place immediately, but also pointed out that despite the sweeping powers granted them, the Archonettes realize that they remain politically and economically bound to the Alliance as a whole.

Most peculiar of all, the Archon designated himself as head of the Arcturus Archonette, and installed General of the Armies Adam Steiner as the "Archonette" for Tharkad. When questioned why, Steiner-Davion refused to comment.

DECLARATION OF WAR

(17 August 3072)

Kaumberg [INN] – Citing his newly expanded powers under the Emergency Reconstructive Powers Act of 2822, invoked just ten days ago by Archon Peter Steiner-Davion, Archonette Erich Sheridan, Lord of Lords on Kaumberg, formally announced today that "time has run out" for the radical Democracy Now movement led by Lindon Ashley on Novara. The declaration came as little surprise to Lyran citizens across the Kaumberg Archonette, especially since the revelation of the so-called Democratic People's Army in June of this year.

"The time has come to finally secure this region—and specifically, the world of Novara—in the name of the Alliance," Sheridan announced today at a special session of the House of Lords in Stuttgart. "The outlaw mercenaries and their fugitive leader, Lindon Ashley, have been given more than enough time to stand down and accept the rule of law."

The Kaumberg Planetary Guard, as the largest locally based military force, has effectively become the sole legitimate army of the Kaumberg Archonette. Currently deployed across the region, with companies on Calafell, Batajnica and Kaumberg, the Guard is expected to unite for a definitive push against Ashley's forces on Novara any time now.



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WILL THIS NEVER END?

Entry 28-08-72

I knew it was coming. It had to, I guess.

Stupid Lindon and his stupider mercs just *had* to make their stand, didn't they? And for that, I get to make another "quick hop" to Novara, another trip through space in a tub that can pop any minute. Another jump through hell...

Oh, yeah, if—no, *when*—I hit dirt again, those bastards are gonna pay for all this.

But the worst part? The Old Man is sending his kid out for this drop. Company Charlie's been mobilized now. And guess who gets to play babysitter?

Right; the Johann they put in the Old Man's *Zeus*, Hermann "Chickenshit" Sebastian.

What did I ever do to deserve this?

When will this madness *ever* end?

—Private journal entry by Hauptmann Hermann Sebastian, Kaumberg Planetary Guard, Batajnica, 28 August 3072

LINE IN THE STARS

(17 September 3072)

Arkab [AIN] – Let this warning be a beacon to any who would threaten the blessed worlds of Arkab or Algedi. We Azami have lived in peace with the lords of the Draconis Combine for centuries, content in our place beside the Dragon's children. We have dealt honorably with them, and they with us.

That time is over.

Let it be known that the Azami are an independent people, faithful in Allah's grace and subject to His will. Let it be known that we will defend our independence with every means possible. Let it be known that any who interfere in the affairs of the sovereign worlds of Arkab and Algedi will be dealt with according to the laws of Allah and humankind. We will not surrender our dignity and our honor any longer. We will not sit idly by and pretend to be pawns of a government that abandons and then attacks us.

We are now and forevermore a haven of peace among the stars.

But know that peace is not free, and we will defend it.

If you doubt us, ask the crew of the *Siriwan* and her DropShips. Ask those forces sent to attack us on Algedi, who brazenly employed weapons of mass destruction against our people first. We will defend what is ours, because our defense is no longer anyone else's responsibility. We will not allow infidels who condone the same tactics as the hated Blakists to defile our soil. Our *brothers* in the DCMS are no better than the zealots. We saw the nuclear weapons deployed on Algedi, a planet of peace and pristine beauty. Our records are complete. We are now, as was always intended, alone.

Allahu Akbar.

HIGHLANDER SURVIVORS?

****FLASH PRECEDENCE****

DATE: 2030Z 2 SEP 3072

FROM: CINBLAKPROTECT

TO: ALLFORBLAKPROTECT, CINCWOBM

SUBJ: STATUS OF OPERATIONS IN 8k&</ST PROTECTORATE

1. ADVANCES CONTINUE APACE. WE HAVE SECUR3*%A3 QW38 99+ W31 #5@ &40 ^D%F6\$2 DESPITE SERI&8K SUPPLY SHORTAGES.

2. OPERATIONS FOCUSED ^9 NORTHWIND AND SURRO7&oGH% SYSTEMS.

3. CINBLAKPROTECT IS SEEKING SEVERAL ESCAPED JUMPSH8! MARKED Y#8) NORTHW6*(HIGHLANDER COLOR&. ALL BLAKE PROTECTORATE FORCES ARE ORDERED TO IMMEDIATELY REPORT ANY SIGHTING 6\$ X4#5E +8MPSHIPS, HIGHEST PRIOR\$%@2.

4. ALL 5@)&7 PROTECTORA4E FORCES ARE ORDERED TO 7#GAGE, AND DESTROY THESE 8+MPSHIPS ON CONTACT. ROE: IMMEDIATE PROSECUTE.

5. DESTRUCTION OF 83\$HWIND HIGHLANDERS IS KEY TO SECURING BLAKIST 2j46@CTORATE.

6. CODE SAFFRON, ALL PRECEDING.

CINBLAKPROTECT SENDS

—Message intercept partially decrypted by LAAF, accidentally released to TBC 4 September 3072 (Originally withheld from publication at LAAF request.)

WHERE ARE THE HEROES?

Maybe it's just the weather. I've always hated November here, so gray and blank. But I've been down lately, and it's not just a personal thing. I mean, come on, with all the shit going on in what used to be the League, who's got time to worry about dates and jobs?

The League—or all the damned little bitty pieces that are left of it—is an infinite source of depression. In times of crisis, leaders are supposed to step forward and show us what they're made of. And if you look at some of the other Successor States, you'll see this happening over and over. Victor Steiner-Davion stood up to the Clans, Theodore Kurita brought the Combine into a new era of prosperity, and Sun-Tzu Liao pulled the Confederation out of a huge funk and made them a legitimate power.

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You see how bad it's gotten? I'm envying *Capellan* leadership, for God's sake.

Here in the League, we've had one leader of any significant ability, with the slight handicap that he was a total fraud. And who else have we got? The faker's family, who probably couldn't even agree on what kind of chicken to serve at a family reunion; Kirc Cameron-Jones, who thinks people adore him, but only because he spent most of his time looking at a mirror and let some Blakist slut lead him astray; and Jeremy Brett, who seemed decent enough but unfortunately got blown up into a few thousand pieces.

So who's next? Isn't there someone out there who can save the League from the Blakists—and from ourselves? How long do we have to wait before we're a nation again?

—Private journal entry posted by AngryBeeZee, *HomeSpace* (Niihau planetary net site), 5 November 3072

THE TEETERING EDGE

THE WRECKAGE OF HISTORY

(22 July 3072)

Luthien [VOICE OF BLAKE] – Yesterday, the universe received yet more proof that those who oppose the blessed word of Blake are destined for doom. On 14 July, representatives of the almighty Clans jumped into the Luthien system, intent on smashing the Word of Blake's mission of mercy to Luthien.

Who could expect to stand up to the military might of the Clans? The treacherous Nova Cats arrived with three WarShips, a squadron of DropShips and three Clusters of ground forces—all planning to vent their bloodlust on the Word's noble defenders.

The traitorous Cat did not count on the bravery of our aerospace forces, nor the effectiveness of the Forty-second Shadow Division.

Using Alamo and Santa Ana missiles, the Word's aerospace smashed the leading elements of the Nova Cat assault. The brave men and women of the *Sword of Promise* and the *Light of Hope* sacrificed themselves to hold back the Clan invaders, crippling one of their *Aegis* vessels and badly damaging the other two.

The Cats managed to get some of their duplicitous spawn down on the planet, only to be crushed by the Hands of the Master amid the ruins of the Buda Imperial Weapons Factory.

How often have the citizens of the Draconis Combine or the Lyran Alliance quaked before the unstoppable power of the Clans? But we—the Word of Blake—are not afraid. We benefit from Blake's holy vision and this makes us invincible. If the Nova Cats' attack on Luthien proves anything, it is that all who oppose the Word shall be consigned to the wreckage of history.

[*Despite the obvious bias, this is a pretty good account of the Nova Cat attack on Luthien. However, they failed to mention the almost complete destruction of the planet's satellite defense network. Maybe we can use the piece from The Drake to even out the account. –Ed.*]

NOVA CATS ASSAULT LUTHIEN

Drake News Flash – 24 July 3072

Ten days ago, a task force entered Luthien space via a pirate point a mere seven hours from the planet's orbit. The invaders—identified as Xi Galaxy of Clan Nova Cat—declared a Trial of Annihilation against the Forty-second Shadow Division for their nuclear attack against Irece on June 19.

Supported by the remnants of Luthien's battlesat defense system, the Blakist WarShips *Sword of Promise* and *Light of Hope*, backed by a regiment of fighters, intercepted the inbound armada. The Nova Cats met them head-on with nearly a Cluster of fighters and a squadron of assault DropShips supported by three *Aegis*-class cruisers: *Chronicle*, *Blade* and *Vision Quest*.

Blakist fighters attempted to launch Alamo and Santa Ana missiles at the Nova Cat WarShips, but the attacks inflicted minimal damage thanks to the Cats' effective defensive maneuvers and anti-missile screens. Only the *Vision Quest* suffered a hit, but the glancing blow failed to destroy the ship outright. The assault DropShips then engaged the enemy-controlled Battlesats and Blakist DropShips, enabling the WarShips of both sides to engage. Blakist fighters and WarShips damaged the Nova Cat troop carriers, but at least four Clusters managed to survive the insertion, forcing the Blakists defenders to divide their fighters among the space and ground battles. Nearly two dozen Battlesats, half the Blakist fighter defense, and—most importantly—their WarShips *Sword of Promise* and *Light of Hope* were lost to the Nova Cat attack. The Nova Cats in turn lost half their aerospace screening forces, including all of their assault DropShips, and all three of their WarShips suffered heavy damage, with the *Vision Quest* rendered unable to jump.

On the ground, the battle was even more brutal. Xi Galaxy hover-dropped into the Kado-guchi Valley amid a swirling atmospheric dogfight, right on top of the Forty-second Division, at which point the five Clusters spread out and systematically tore into the Blakist Shadow forces. Nova Cat fighters joined the attack, giving support where needed until more enemy fighters arrived from a secret base. A Cluster of Clan troops managed to break through the Blakist lines to enter Imperial City, while the remaining Xi troops doubled their efforts to kill everything in their wake, often taking as many losses as they inflicted.

Inside the city, Blakist reinforcements pushed Galaxy Commander Steiner and his troops back. Forced to withdraw and regroup into the Waseda Hills, the Cats reportedly were in the midst of preparing for a second wave attack when a flight of tactical nuclear weapons—six in all—caught the Clan force in the midst of its regroup. Only a Cluster's worth of Nova Cats survived to withdraw to their DropShips and lift for orbit, leaving behind an all-but destroyed Forty-second Shadow Division and a ravaged Blakist defense screen around Luthien.



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DUKE SANDOVAL DENOUNCES LANCERS ATTACK

(5 July 3072)

Markesan [INN] – In an effort to defuse a political crisis on the Outworlds border, Duke Sandoval of the Draconis March today issued a statement to the Outworlds Alliance and the Clan Snow Raven governments, formally apologizing for the Third Crucis Lancers’ recent attack on Tellman IV. Sandoval’s denunciation of the Lancers’ attack also called for a united effort against the Blakist menace, hoping to remind the Ravens and the Periphery state leaders who the real enemy is:

“President of the Outworlds Alliance and Khan of Clan Snow Raven, greetings. I am Duke Tancred Sandoval, Lord of the Draconis March and commander of its military forces. The Third Crucis Lancers fall under my authority, and for their recent attack on the world of Tellman IV, I deeply and humbly apologize. The Lancers did not launch their strike under my orders, nor with my consent—either expressed or implied. General Melissa Coulier informed me via courier that she was responding to rumors of a Blakist plot originating from Tellman IV. Concerned that the world was serving as a base for future Blakist terror attacks, she took the initiative and organized a pre-emptive strike.

“It is clear to me—and to those under my command—that the Outworlds Alliance and Clan Snow Raven are not enemies of

the Federated Suns. We have both suffered at the hands of the Blakist scourge, and the Third Crucis Lancers’ well-intended but unfortunately misguided actions are a symptom of the Word’s evil campaign. By fostering a climate of interstellar paranoia and disinformation, they are truly the ones responsible for this horrible turn of events.

“The Federated Suns does not seek war with either the Outworlds Alliance or the Snow Raven Clan. As I acknowledge our errors, I beseech the leaders of both peoples not to engage in retaliatory strikes at this time.

“I would like to hope that something good may yet come from the Tellman IV incident. None of us can afford to permit mistakes like this to happen again. Perhaps, if we can engage in structured and open dialogue, we may avoid repeating this tragedy.”

Sandoval’s declaration, released to press agencies throughout the region, sparked immediate protest from several critics and local leaders, who claimed that the apology sends the wrong message to the Suns’ many enemies. On Sterlington, the Lancers’ last base world, protesters gathered to demand the release of the Third Crucis survivors still being held at Tellman IV.

CONCORDAT FORCES ON HIGH ALERT

(9 July 3072)

Taurus [TNS] – Defense Ministry officials today released casualty estimates from the recent attack on Althea’s Choice, as well as revised damage estimates from last year’s assault on Jansen’s Hold. We caution our readers that these numbers are not final, but they are the most complete numbers available to the Taurian Defense Force given the time and manpower available for investigation during this crisis.

On Althea’s Choice last month, the Clean Kill mercenary unit was effectively obliterated by an attacking force sporting the colors of the Federated Suns’ Islamabad CrMM. Recovered battleROMs confirmed several Davion transponder signals moving in

and around the engagement zone, and salvage taken from the attacking units left behind proved the attackers’ FedSuns origins.

The information from Jansen’s Hold proved to be more the same, as TDF officials feared. Longwood’s Bluecoats managed to avoid disintegration, but sustained extremely heavy losses. A report from an unnamed Bluecoats officer echoes what we’ve been able to learn about the strike: A large number of AFFS-affiliated units, identified both by ROM evaluation and visual sighting, mauled the Bluecoats before plundering the vulnerable armor production facility the mercenaries were assigned to protect.

It appears our hopes for a clean campaign limited to the fractured worlds of the Pleiades have been dashed. Clearly, the long arm of the Davions has begun to sweep around.



(15 November 3071)	“Manei Domini Loyalists Eradicate Gibson Insurgency”	[VoT]	COMPLETED
(29 November 3071)	“Standoff: Can the Azami Break the Dragon’s Leash?”	[Drake]	DOWNLOADING
(6 December 3071)	“Official: Millions Dead in Alpheratz Nuclear Strike, Omniss...”	[ISAP]	ACCESSING



LATE 3072: THE CURTAIN FALLS

PLEIADES IN PERIL

—Excerpt from a TNS reporter embedded with the mercenary Lone Star Regiment, Merope, 18 July 3072

"...No, Larry, I am not allowed to say where exactly we are at the moment; the men I'm with are worried that our pursuers may listen in, hence my silence for the past three months. We only have another two days to go before we can rendezvous with the DropShip picking up the remaining planet-side troops, and these MechWarriors do not want to take any chances.

"Three months ago, we were six MechWarriors, a platoon of tanks, a hundred infantry and a supply convoy...but the Roughriders have been relentless in their hunt for our mercenary freedom fighters. Some of our forces got whittled away over that time, but most were killed and captured in last week's ambush when explosives collapsed portions of a nearby waterfall. Morale here is plummeting almost daily. At the mere sight of Roughrider tanks, the MechWarriors and infantrymen scattered, abandoning those trapped in the collapse. We escaped via jump jets over the canyon wall, but the surrendering infantrymen were ruthlessly cut down by the Davion vehicles' guns. The few communications we've had with the other demi-companies on the move have indicated equally low morale and reduced combat effectiveness, even with the advanced Blakist technology at our disposal. Most allied troops are now eager to cut their losses and head for friendly territory.

"This is a vast departure from eight months ago, before the battle of Merope Run. Confident of stretching out the slower Roughrider forces and then rolling up the scattered war criminals in a two-week long running battle, the Lone Stars were taken off guard by the surprise vehicle parachute drop the Riders used to cut off lead elements, while strafing DropShips and fighters dropped fuel-air explosives on the field. Pinned, the Lone Stars lost more than a battalion in combat before splitting up into demi-companies and scattering, hoping to harass the Fedrats' mercs until reinforcements arrived.

"But no reinforcements have turned up, forcing the most senior officers to call in the transports for extraction. The one sliver of good news is a rumor that during the battle of Merope Run, the Roughriders' Colonel Wolfgang Hansen was seriously injured and—Larry, I am being informed I have to go, my pilot has picked up a sizeable group of hunter-killers bearing down on us and we are—"

[Loud explosion. Transmission ends.]

CALDERON FORCES SUFFER SETBACKS

(27 July 3072)

Errod's Escape [CFP] – The Marshal's office today informed us that the new priority of the Protectorate military is defense, at least for the near future. Despite our fervent desire to return to Taurus and see the despot in the Protectorship deposed, we cannot, in good conscience, leave the peaceful worlds of the Calderon Protectorate undefended in the face of increasing pirate attacks.

Recent assaults on several of our worlds have forced us to look homeward first, before we resume our righteous crusade to put the true heir of Jeffrey Calderon's legacy back on the throne. Criminals and pirates from across the stars—some certainly from Pirate's Haven, but others possibly from as far away as Tortuga and even the Fronc Reaches—have continued to strike at Protectorate worlds in waves.

Every attack on Protectorate soil hampers the military's efforts to return to the Concordat and topple the dictator Shraplen from his gilded throne. Protectorate military liaisons tell us that Marshal Cham Kithrong is concentrating his efforts on containing these treacherous bandits. "Once we can keep our own borders safe," the report stated, "then we can return to the task at hand."

Though the details of military deployment are classified, we can report that a number of DropShips with the markings of the Taurian Pride lifted off from the military cantonment on Errod's Escape last evening. Our spotters counted three *Union*-class DropShips and enough attendant cargo vessels to transport a battalion into combat. Where these troops are headed, however, is anyone's guess.

FIGHT OR DIE!

(7 August 3072)

Avon [VOTD] – The *ronin* WarShip *Urizen II* has finally succumbed to the destiny her crew chose when they began their treacherous path. In the Avon system, the *Urizen II* came under attack by the might of the Nova Cat fleet and its wayward journey ended.

The *Urizen II* destroyed several Nova Cat JumpShips and at least two heavy merchant WarShips gathered at the nadir point. Salvage crews reported that the *ronin* destroyed four Clan JumpShips in all, as well as the *Carrack*-class WarShips *Nebula* and *Void* before being brought to heel by the nearby Nova Cat WarShip *Severen Leroux* and her escorts.

While the loss of a valuable WarShip is lamentable, the Dragon sheds his bitterest tears for the lost souls of the Combine's wayward children. Mourn the *ronin* who died fighting for an honorless cause and offer your incense and prayers that the remaining *ronin* out there finally come back to the path the Dragon walks.

The Admiralty requests that anyone with information regarding the whereabouts of the *Winds of Heaven* and the *Sabre Cat* immediately contact local ISF or DCMS offices.



LATE 3072: THE CURTAIN FALLS

ALL FOR ONE!

**Federated Suns Defenders Accomplish
Major Victory at Markesan!****Attack by Word of Blake WarShips, Ground Troops Repelled!**

(13 August 3072)

Markesan [FSNS] – In a brief statement today, Admiral William Bruecker confirmed that AFFS naval and aerospace assets drove off a Word of Blake task force—including one WarShip and two so-called Pocket WarShips—over the world of Markesan. The two Blakist capital missile DropShips, according to Bruecker, were destroyed by fighters from the Fourth Crucis Lancers almost immediately after the enemy vessels deployed at the L1 LaGrange point, while two AFFS Fox-class corvettes—the *Admiral Michael Saille* and the *Brest*—successfully engaged, disabled and boarded the Blakist WarShip. The AFFS WarShips had been located at an undisclosed location within the Markesan system, and jumped to the L1 LaGrange point shortly after the Word of Blake forces started to regain the initiative. The Blakist troop carriers immediately dispersed and retreated to their JumpShips after the two Federated Suns WarShips vanquished their as-yet-unidentified WarShip escort.

The reason for such a heavy attack remains unknown, but it is generally assumed that Princess Regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion, her consort Tancred Sandoval, and their child (or children) have been staging from Markesan for some time now. This speculation appears to be supported by the presence of the two Fox-class corvettes, which represent a significant portion of the Suns' naval strength today. The Fourth Crucis Lancers, based on Markesan, have neither confirmed nor denied this scenario.

"I don't mean to be glib," Bruecker stated when pressed on the matter, "but it should be obvious that to confirm or deny any information concerning the Princess Regent's whereabouts would be completely irresponsible. Likewise, I will not explain the nature of or the reasoning behind the fleet's movements."

Rumors of Blakist landings on Markesan have abounded since the pitched naval battle, with numerous townships and citadels reporting sightings and mobilizing militias in defense. According to Admiral Bruecker, however, no Word of Blake vessels made planetfall during the attack, and likewise no Blakist bio-weapon can have been delivered to the planetary surface. Bruecker added that, while he applauds the Markesans' vigilance, he encourages calm now that the attack has been successfully repelled.

DEATH AT CLOSE RANGE

[BattleROM footage shows a Blue Flame darting out from behind a copse of willow trees and firing its Streaks. As the missiles hit home, the picture shakes, followed by a particle projection cannon's shriek as the Combine 'Mech fires back. The sky above the Blue Flame carries the gunmetal stamp of dusk, even though it is closer to noon than to twilight.]

[Frost Crane Three]: "We can't hold these heavies back! We need naval gunfire support at Grid Point Six-Nine-Four-Seven. Over!"

[A bright star explodes in the sky above the Blue Flame, splashing cold, actinic light across the heavens.]

[Frost Crane Three]: "What the hell was that?"

[Frost Crane One]: "That was one of our WarShips."

[A Toyama stalks out from behind heavy tree cover to support the Blue Flame. Like the Flame, it is painted coal black on the bottom, fading to a dusky gray on top and trimmed in dull yellow highlights.]

[Frost Crane Three]: "I need that naval support!"

[Frost Crane One]: "lie, Three. There will be no NGFS. Low orbit is an abattoir. The fleets have torn each other apart."

[A Grand Titan stalks forward to take its place beside the Flame and the Toyama. The camera shakes.]

[Frost Crane Three]: "They've cut my striker company to pieces and they're cutting into the others. We can't go toe-to-toe against big machines like this We're falling back. Regroup at the Second Skirmish Line."

[Frost Crane One]: "We fall back now and we'll lose the city."

[Frost Crane Three]: "If we *don't* fall back now, we're going to lose Third Battalion, and *then* we're going to lose the city."

[A long pause. Then a heavy voice breaks in.]

[Frost Crane Actual]: "Hai. We cannot hold without aerospace support. We'll fall back to the Second Skirmish Line and re-form. Execute fighting withdrawal by battalions."

—Intercepted DCMS comm chatter, Benjamin, 15 November 3072

GATHERING FORCES**BATTLING NIGHT**

(6 July 3072)

Alphard [HNS] –The following is a statement delivered to our office on Illyria by an anonymous courier.

[Alexander]: "Citizens of the Hegemony, my name is Prefect Michael Alexander. Thirteen months ago, agents of the Word of Blake attempted to destroy our nation by carrying out a brutal and treacherous attack on our capital. Who can forget what happened on June sixth, 3071? On that day, Blakist bombs flooded Nova Roma with a shower of neutrons, killing hundreds of thousands of Marian citizens—including our first citizen himself

"Julius O'Reilly.

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"Our enemy clearly intended to break our will. For some Blakists, the battle cry is 'Ave, nox'—Hail, night. The Word of Blake intends to bring darkness to the Marian Hegemony, in the hopes of forcing us to huddle in fear. But, my fellow citizens, I have news for them:

"We are not afraid of the dark.

"I announce today that I pledge my life and my loyalty to Cassius O'Reilly, son of Julius. I will serve as regent of the Hegemony until such time as Cassius is ready to rule in his own right.

"With me by his side, young Cassius will push back the night.
"Hail, Caesar!"

CRAWLING FROM THE ASHES

(3 September 3072)

Arc-Royal [INN] – As 3072 draws to a close, a momentary lull has settled over the Inner Sphere. An unexpected change in the tempo of military operations has given the Com Guards a much-needed opportunity to rest and reorganize. With the casualties suffered in the fighting in and around the former Chaos March and in the Case White operation, the Guards' former organizational model now bears little resemblance to reality. Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion and his staff have therefore drafted plans to consolidate ComStar's remaining troops into six Armies.

Though his command is less than half the size of the one Anastasius Focht led into battle on Tukayyid twenty years ago, Martial Davion (as his troops call him) remains confident of their ability to face the fighting to come.

"It is undeniable that our ranks have been thinned by the trials of the past two decades," Steiner-Davion conceded. "But those battles have also served to refine and temper the base metal from which the Guards were forged. I do not belittle the sacrifices made by the fallen, but through an inexorable process of military Darwinism the Com Guards you see today are easily a match for the untested army that faced the Clans on Tukayyid."

The new First and Fourth Armies are deployed in the Lyran Alliance, while the Second and Fifth Armies are forming in the Federated Suns. The Third Army is now covering the Draconis Combine, while the Sixth Army will undertake Periphery operations.

MYSTERIOUS RECALLS



From: Sang-Shao Meridian Auks, Raballa Home Guard
To: Strategic Military Directorate, Sian
Subject: Raballa area, bi-monthly report (July 72)

Situation: Raballa Aerospace Support installation secured. Enemy forces (Jacob's Juggernauts) initiated full retreat shortly after breaking the underground defenses. Reasons unknown. Site not compromised. Aerial reconnaissance reports staging zone deserted. Space command confirms all enemy assets have left the system. Regrouping. Please advise.

Status: Vehicles: 20 percent operational, 5 percent in repair, 10 percent salvageable. Weapons: 52 percent stocked. Munitions: reserves depleted, production in progress; resupply needed.

Troops: 40 percent operational, 35 percent wounded; recruiting in progress; reinforcement needed. Morale: Determined for the Chancellor!

Intel (verified):

Yunnah: Resistance reports Forty-fourth Shadow Division vacated spaceport last month after taking dozens of hostages from surrounding hospitals and convalescent homes.

Lesalles: Sang-Shao Tao reports raiding by mercenary elements (Martian Cuirassiers suspected). No direct enemy contact. Hostiles lifted off shortly after establishing a beachhead and executing preliminary reconnaissance strikes.

Bora: Unknown forces, cybernetically augmented, have successfully been repelled by Rivaldi's Hussars. Estimated casualties to enemy: 5 percent. To defenders: 30 percent. Enemy retreat in progress.

Analysis: Impossible due to insufficient data. What is going on outside? Is the Word in retreat? Are we winning? Please reply. Anybody.

CANOPUS FIRST!



Canopians, hearken to my words! We have long endured occupations and depredations, but now we sit back and let another power slowly become our master. Of course I am glad the Capellans helped free our worlds from the oppressive Word of Blake. I rejoice whenever our people regain their freedom and livelihood. But why are we relying on a foreign power to fight our battles? Why are some of our best units guarding House Liao's real estate? And our leader is still held hostage with her heir while her regents are fighting for their lives. My fellow citizens, we must stop worrying about the concerns of other nations and their peoples until the Magistracy is itself no longer under duress.

I call upon you to petition your local leaders to recall our troops abroad and send the foreign armies back to whence they came—by diplomacy or force, whichever is needed. Call for our Magestrix to be returned to her home soil. We have fought off the forces of the entire Star League; surely we can resist the current interlopers. My friends, I say Canopus First!

—Underground pamphlet by "The Fox of Royal Foxx," distributed on various worlds within sixty light-years of Canopus, circa August 3072



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BREATHER

—Alleged DCMS internal memo, distributed to all senior field commanders circa 6 October 3072

>>REPEAT TO: ALL COMMANDS IN ALBIERO / BJARRERD / NINGXIA / QANDAHAR PREFECTURES

DESPITE LACK OF PIRATE AND OTHER BANDIT ACTIVITY ACROSS THE PERHIPERY BORDER, NO COMMAND AT THIS TIME IS AUTHORIZED TO CONDUCT ANY REDEPLOYMENT PROCEDURES. COMMANDS THAT DO SO WILL FALL UNDER GUNJI-NO-KANREI MINAMOTO'S RONIN EDICT AND BE SUBJECT TO IMMEDIATE COURT MARTIAL AND HONORLESS DEATH.

While the Dragon appreciates the concerns and powerful will of her subordinates, the situations on Pesht, Benjamin and Dieron remain under the Dragon's control. It is vital that our coreward and spinward borders be protected from possible attack. Intelligence reports indicate there is another Clan force in the area, as well as an unknown Blakist force in the vicinity of Alfirk.

When additional force is needed to remove certain obstacles, the Dragon will call upon your iron will and devotion to obliterate it. Until then, honorable warriors, patience is our most formidable weapon. Hone it. Stand ready for the Dragon's call.

By order of the *Kanrei*.

—*Tai-shu* Howard Mencio, Pesht

ALL QUIET IN THE OUTBACK?

Entry 522:19

So today, let's address the elephant in the room that no one seems to notice.

It's been several months since we declared our "**independence**" from the Federated Suns—a move, I might add, that seems to have gone over well with the people but has bugged the excrementals out of our **corporate citizens**—and what really do we have to show for it?

One of the founding "**principles**" for this whole mess was to form our own army and protect our butts from the "Unified Pirate Psychopaths" (I made that up, let's see if it sweeps the planetary net, eh? Goal: get it on the **weekend news!**). Yet...I dunno about everyone else, but I've not seen a **pirate ship** hit our tiny little backwater since a week after our **agreement** to join this little party. Please correct me if I'm wrong.

Now, the scuttlebutt on the station (I've got a few 'friends' up there on duty) is that **Paula "The Bitch Death" Trevaline** has finally gone to meet her Maker (and **his name is Hanse!**) and left us alone. This is the rumor mill swirling across the merchies, shipping back and forth between our little **Filtvelt Coalition** and the Malagrotta region, mind you.

On one hand, it makes sense. Bitch-lady was one helluva personality—she could easily keep those ragamuffin down-and-outs

in line, no sweat. I mean, who else could keep what, twenty pirate bands, all cohesive and practically **loot all of Broken Wheel** a couple of years back? That "raid" (read: **invasion!**) cost billions in BW's GNP, not to mention obliterating an entire factory complex. Seen any new **Tibultian SideRacers** from BW lately? Nah, thought not.

So...if she's dead, and the threat is no more...then shouldn't we get back to the Suns? Or were our '**coalition members**' really just jonesing for an excuse to carve out their own power niche from the Suns, just like **Georgie did** over in the **Cappie March**?

I'm leaning more to my **paranoid conspiracy side**, though. I think Paula finally offed Grover and took legit control of those **half-assed Taurians**. Which would do them good. Being led by an old bitch who used to be hot (c'mon, admit it, guys, back in the day...) is **a step up for the Bullies...**

Hasta, people! More **truth and entertainment** tomorrow! We'll be looking at Shawnee and their **screwed-up parliamentary electoral dictatorship** system...

—OpEd by "*MyOpinionDoesn'tCount*," syndicated columnist, Filtvelt Digital Press, 20 October 3072

RENDEZVOUS AT QUATRE BELLE

What follows is an excerpt from the master's log of the *Quatre Belle Carrier*:

"My gut is telling me that the Snow Birds are up to something. Their fourth fleet—the Fleet Command Star, supposedly—just jumped here to Quatre Belle. That, in and of itself, doesn't mean too much. The Snow Birds are moving their naval forces around to take charge of their enclaves in the Raven Alliance.

"What *does* surprise me, though, is the number of Jumpers they contracted. Including the *Carrier*, they brought along six freighters loaded down with cargo Droppers. There isn't an empty docking collar in the bunch. What's more, the DropShips are all loaded up with civilians and equipment that look almost like refugees. I'm hearing the Snow Birds have even tied up almost all the civilian jump capacity within thirty light years of Quatre Belle.

"It wouldn't be so bad, but the Ravens are paying shit. They're using 'emergency powers' to press civilian ships into service.

"Sure, they need a lot of force to secure the Outworlds Alliance. But I can't help thinking there's enough raw naval power and logistics support left over to give the Wobbies one hell of a black eye."

—Taken from *The Raven Watch*, a Quatre Belle net site, 16 September 3072

NUCLEAR DAWN

[Camera shows a clear night sky. The stars are unnaturally bright.]

[Voiceover]: "Ladies and gentlemen, you're looking at footage smuggled out of the University of North Albion.

[A small white light flares. Then another. Like fireflies on a summer night.]

"This is our best view of the space battle taking place near New Avalon. Unknown forces are engaging the Wobbie fleet. God bless the—"

[A brilliant white nova erupts in the night sky, instantly washing out the stars. Fifteen or twenty seconds later a second nova goes off, not far from the first.]

[Voiceover]: [Shouting] "Are you getting this, Benny? What the hell is happening?" [Whispers] "Holy God."

—NANS vidclip, spammed to every e-mail address on New Avalon, 10 December 3072. The accompanying message claims two vessels destroyed were the *Riga*-class WarShip *Red Angel* and the *Union*-class Pocket Warship *Holy Dagger* (both Word of Blake). The unknown force that broke through the blockade is identified as the Fifth FedCom RCT.

OUR GRATITUDE TO THE CAT

(16 December 3072)

Benjamin [VOTD] – Two days ago, Nova Cat forces, arriving via a pirate point with a flotilla of DropShips, JumpShips and WarShips, landed troops on the world of Benjamin. The Cats savagely attacked Word of Blake forces on the planet, giving the embattled DCMS forces there the vital edge they needed to turn back the Blakist invaders and retake their world.

Within hours of their victory, however, the Cats departed, never even acknowledging the gratitude of the people of Benjamin and the Draconis Combine.

This operation shows the power of the Dragon and the Cat working together. If only the Cats would honor *all* their commitments to the Combine, we would defeat the Yellow Bird.

CHRISTMAS AT GROUND ZERO

(23 December 3072)

Donegal [DBC] – The Sixth Lyran Guard—better known to some as "the Saucy Sixth"—may have helped free Donegal from the grip of the Blakist armies, but the world they now call home must still recover from the sheer destruction left by the occupation and repatriation. As the holidays approach, Donegal today shows the worst and best in humanity.

Conditions are not good here. Twenty million civilians were reported killed since the start of the Jihad, with roughly twice as many injured. Almost half a billion people are homeless, while roughly fifty percent of the planet's heavy industry has been destroyed. Half of Donegal's major cities are virtually without power and a third don't even have running water. To call the situation here dire is an understatement, but what resources the planet does have are being turned to combat these problems.

As bad as things are, as gloomy as the outlook is, rays of hope do exist. It's as if the spirit of the holidays has multiplied the spirit of rebuilding to bring people together. Where many of us are used to seeing wealth buying privilege and scarce resources, this is rarely the case on Donegal. Owners of mansions have opened their doors to people whose homes were destroyed, expensive bottled water is being donated to areas where no potable water is available. Rather than electronics or jewelry being the big choice for gifts this year, it's hot meals to starving refugees.

Perhaps the most amazing thing to this reporter is not man helping his fellow man, but mega-corporations like Nashan—long regarded as faceless, soulless entities—donating not only a cut of their profits, but also of their resources. Construction companies that once focused entirely on luxury condos, offices and retail properties are building simple yet functional housing. Frills are disappearing as everyone focuses on providing the basic necessities for all. Even as the war-torn, weary soldiers of the Sixth offer their assistance, I can say this may not be everyone's favorite Christmas, but it will go down as one of the most generous in Donegal's history.

For DBC, this is Juliette deSade.

FOR KING AND COUNTRY

DARK OF NIGHT

We've been holding on by our fingertips. Giving everything we have to push the bastards off New Avalon. I wake up in the morning exhausted and wired at the same time. We're always moving. Always watching the sky.

The Tenth Lyran Guard has fought with all the courage one would expect of such a storied unit. But now it seems like it might not be enough.

Rumor has it that five days ago another Robe task force jumped in-system. Their *Invader* carried a *Mule* and a *Mammoth*, no doubt loaded down with munitions and spare parts.

And a *Union*.

Shady Charlie knows a girl in the DMI who says the *Union* is one of the Blakists' Pocket Warships. Just what we need: more capital weapons pointed our way. And Robe units with full load-outs again.

Somehow it doesn't seem like the normal grapevine B.S. I see the truth in the worried faces of our commanders.

Maybe it's just because I never get enough to sleep, never get a bloody home-cooked meal. Maybe it's because my body aches for Robert. I dream of his arms around me and wake up crying, wondering if he's survived the killing field.

Maybe it's just these things.

But another storm is coming.

And I'm afraid I have nothing left to give.

—Excerpt from the personal diary of Sergeant Mildred Kuvocic of the Tenth Lyran Guard, wife of Sergeant Major Robert Doucette, New Avalon, 4 December 3072



CONVERSIONS OR COERCIONS?

As we find ourselves entering the fifth year of this conflict with the Word of Blake, we have seen horrors unknown in the Inner Sphere since the time of Amaris and the First Succession War. But one of the most insidious developments—perhaps beyond even Amaris’ capabilities—has been the wholesale turning of defiant enemies (or worse, innocents) into the Word’s broadsword. Last year saw the most dramatic example of this with the assassination of Tamarind Marshal Jeremy Brett, Free Worlds League hero and a man well on his way toward patching up Lyran-League relations when he met his death in a suicide bombing. Most surprising of all, however, was the bomber himself, a FedCom Civil War fugitive and noble scion of our own realm: Richard Steiner.

To discuss the implications of this and other apparent conversions, DBC News contacted renowned political analyst Errol Christian and noted psychologist Doctor Melinda Sako.

DBC: Doctor Sako, I suppose the first question one asks in situations like these is: why?

Sako: There’s no quick and easy answer to that one, I’m afraid. Historically, many suicide bombers have been desperate individuals or fanatics backed into a corner—people convinced that no other option existed.

DBC: But now?

Sako: It’s easy to assume that the Blakist zealots somehow found a way to tap into whatever demons drive these latest bombers we’ve seen, and a man like Richard Steiner likely had more than the average store of personal demons. Nevertheless, the suicide bombing on Tamarind was just off the scale for Richard’s character.

DBC: Then you suggest he was somehow coerced?

Sako: Again, this is hard to say, especially since the only evidence produced to date is fragmentary audio and video recordings from somewhat unreliable sources. But given what we knew about Steiner’s character—a man who fled the end of the FedCom Civil

War to save his own life—I’d certainly not discount the possibility. He could even have been duped and unaware that he was rigged to explode, an unwitting assassin—though his use of a common Blakist mantra before he died would seem to put the lie to that.

DBC: Interesting. Mister Christian? Thoughts on this and the political situation?

Christian: Terror tactics like this actually serve quite a few purposes when you examine them. For one, they demonstrate in a very real way that no one is safe from the Word. In showing that a high-profile target like Brett can be easily removed by a “Trojan horse” like Richard Steiner, we also see that the threat can come from anywhere, and anyone who claims to be an informer could actually be a ticking time bomb. Pretty soon, intel agencies will never know if they can trust a white flag, and even if we see real breaks in the enemy’s ranks, we will be too hesitant to exploit them in the future.

DBC: So it’s about spreading distrust and effectively countering any turncoats in advance. But how are the Word getting people with no prior ties to them to perform such acts?

Christian: I doubt they’re willing converts to the cause—not all of them, anyway. Most are likely conscripts in some way, captured by the enemy and brainwashed or blackmailed into doing something. It’s not all that much different than what spy agencies have done for thousands of years, but the Word is turning more and more of them into weapons rather than sleeper spies for their side. Thus—again—we come back to the fact that we cannot trust anyone. The man who surrenders today could have a kidney bomb waiting to go off when he shakes your hand. The ultimate message we get is simple: trust no one.

—“Ask the Experts” syndicated column, *DBC Monthly News Recap*, Commonwealth Press, July 3072

NEWS DOWNLOADER v3.7



Date & Title	Service	Status
(17 December 3071) “SHDL Victorious, but for How Long?”	[Warrior Magazine]	COMPLETED
(22 December 3071) “Assassins Kill President Strauss During DN Rally”	[ANN]	DOWNLOADING
(4 January 3072) “Horses Turn on Hellion Allies” (“Invading Clan Stymied by W... [INN]		ACCESSING



LATE 3072: THE CURTAIN FALLS



NOVA CATS SEEN ON CAPELLAN FRONT

[Ian]: "This is Charles Ian, reporting for NSNN from the Government Briefing Room here in Saso on New Syrtis. Today the DMI reported a startling new development on the Capellan front during this afternoon's briefing. We're replaying that recording for our viewers who missed the live broadcast..."

[Scene fades and returns to the same room, as a tall, blonde AFFS officer enters, taking a position behind the single podium at the front of the room.]

[Starnes]: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I am Lieutenant Colonel Stacy Starnes. I have a statement to make, then I will take a few questions.

"About a month ago, the DMI began receiving numerous yet unsubstantiated reports of a large unknown force in the area known as the 'Kittery Prefecture.' Consequently, orders for a reconnaissance mission were authorized by the Capellan March command, which sent a team into the Kittery

Prefecture to assess the disposition and whereabouts of this mystery unit.

"Our specialists identified a number of WarShips in orbit over Kittery. Much to our surprise, after several cross-references and double-checks, we have determined that these newcomers are actually part of Clan Nova Cat's Delta Galaxy."

[Murmurs and sharp intakes of breath resound throughout the room.]

[Starnes]: "Yes, you heard me correctly. Delta Galaxy, along with three WarShips and a number of support ships, are now in the so-called 'Kittery Prefecture,' under the apparent command of Nova Cat saKhan Devalis. However, our team was unable to ascertain why they are there. Questions?"

[The room explodes in cacophony.]

[Fade to commercial]

—NSNN Special Report (planet-wide live broadcast), New Syrtis, 30 December 3072

ARMIES OF BLOOD AND STEEL



Ten years ago, if you had mentioned the words "Manei Domini" to anyone, you could expect either a confused head-tilt reaction or a correction for your bad Latin.

Today, they are the ultimate expression of the Word of Blake's elite forces, raised seemingly out of nowhere—though theories abound. While their origins remain open to debate, one can't help but notice that their cyberware, their strange rituals and their fight-to-the-death-and-beyond mindset made them a perfect match for the Clans they claim to despise so much.

The Manei Domini represent our common enemy's pinnacle of skill, terror and technology all rolled into one, an unstoppable force that may never rest until it has imposed its techno-corrupted dystopia upon us all.

As if to add insult to injury, these machine men have apparently been gifted with an entire series of OmniMechs and battle armor straight from the nightmare visions of their unseen masters. They call these machines Celestials and Demons—as if they somehow needed to invoke mystical fear with the nomenclature alone.

Fortunately, unless you are an A-rated command with a known Clan leadership structure and a penchant for interfering with the Word's best efforts—or if you're just unlucky enough to be assigned to defend a major world that the Word *must* take out—you will not likely encounter too many Manei Domini in combat. If you do, however, know that you're going to be in for a tough fight.

The Manei Domini have made even conventional infantry a fearsome component on the battlefield. Armed with enhanced

myomer implants that have to cost as much as a medium tank (per trooper!) or prosthetic limbs specially made for anything from close-quarters fighting to scaling and stealing a target 'Mech, these guys are a nasty surprise to the unwary merc. Pack machine guns, infernos or lots of Inferno missiles—just don't be surprised if you need to hit them twice.

At the vehicular level, things get even tougher. Those Celestials are custom-made for these cyborgs—armored better than typical Blakist fare and able to take massive damage before going down. Add in the Domini thugs who can wire directly into their machines and these Celestials can move with a most unholy grace in combat, and shoot with deadly efficiency. For those guys, your best hope is overwhelming numbers or heavy artillery.

Just bear in mind that while they may be Clanner-tough, the Manei Domini don't fight like Clanners *at all*. They won't call you out for a one-on-one, winner-take-all duel, and they have no qualms about massing fire on your scouts or burning cities to negate their cover.

Stay tuned, dear reader, for there is hope. In our upcoming issues, *MercNet Magazine* will discuss likely methods for leveling the playing field if you ever find yourself on the wrong side of a Domini warrior.

—Armande Lightfoot, *MercNet Magazine*, MRBC Publications (Arc-Royal), November 3072



LATE 3072: THE CURTAIN FALLS

AND IN OTHER NEWS...

SEEDS OF CHAOS

[CargoMaster Three]: "Dax, you read that? Galatean Control's got good news, man! Un-malfling-believable!"

[Ordinance Four]: "Sorry, Jaz, missed it. Damned track is giving me fits again..."

[CM Three]: "See them Droppers? Those're the Highlanders!"

[O Four]: "No shit? Jerry, you catching this?"

[LoadMaster Twenty]: "Yeah, just caught it from the supervisor. Man, are they a welcome sight. Those ships are a vision indeed! Maybe now, we can stick it back to those Wordies!"

[O Four]: "Wonder how they got away?"

[CM Three]: "Heard that ex-Cappie Jaffray's been out pulling a battalion together..."

[LM Twenty]: "Really? I—Hey, why're they splitting off? Control's got pits four through ten set for them..."

[Port Supervisor]: "Charlie, find out what the hell..."

[O Four]: "Hey, guys? Ummm, why are their cargo doors opening? What the hell are they—?"

[LM Twenty]: "*Heilige Scheisse!* They're hot-dropping! Wha—?"

[Port Supervisor]: "All ground crews, clear channels! We've got 'Mechs coming down on—!"

[CM Three]: "Christonacrutch—*Those aren't Highlander—!*"
[Explosions]

[O Four]: "JAZ! Blessed Virgin, they're WORD O—!"

[Port Supervisor]: "All spaceport personnel, we are under atta—!"
[Fighter engines roar by, punctuated by more explosions.]

[LM Twenty]: "Ain't no WAY they're taking us down! Loadies! Get to the hangars! Get to the God da—!"

[O Four]: [Whispering] "OhmygodlvegotaKingCrabcharg—!"
[Squeal, static]

[Port Supervisor]: "Whoever's listening, notify the city...the Word ha—"

—Transcript of Galaport comm traffic, 6 October 3072

SPARTA HABITAT VANISHES

(6 November 3072)

Taurus [FREEDOM PRESS] – Today the TDF has confirmed the shocking rumor that the massive Sparta habitat, constructed in the Burton system, has vanished without a trace. A meticulous analysis of the L5 point where the station has been under construction for the past twelve years found no debris, seeming to rule out any possibility of the station's destruction by an asteroid collision or catastrophic reactor failure. However if Sparta has not been destroyed, then what has become of the 1.5-megaton structure and its population of more than 100,000? The last confirmed sighting of Sparta was made by the *Mary Dear*, a *Mule*-class DropShip delivering a Far Looker zero-g technical team last week. All communications with the station remained normal until four days before it vanished, when the facility suddenly fell silent.

The Sparta station has not merely drifted out of position, as some first believed. A search of the region around Burton's L5 point turned up nothing. Neither could it have departed under its own power. Its weak station-keeping thrusters could not possibly have moved it out of the search area before TDF DropShips arrived.

The most obvious solution to this mystery is also the most unlikely—that somebody somehow moved the entire structure. Such a feat would require a small fleet of tugs (which surely would have been detected by now), or a large WarShip or a military transport JumpShip of the kind employed by the First Star League. However, the few WarShips of sufficient size are nowhere near the Concordat at this time, and none of the large SLDF transports survived the fall of the First Star League.

Considered by many to be the greatest feat of engineering of the thirty-first century, the loss of the Sparta habitat must come as a great blow to the Far Lookers' ambitions. Meanwhile, we are left with a mystery that ranks with the Minnesota Tribe and the Vandenburg White Wings.

CENTAURI LANCERS – DOWN BUT NEVER OUT

Wrecked in the Word of Blake firestorm that engulfed Tukayyid, many thought that the Inner Sphere had seen the last of the famous Twenty-first Centauri Lancers mercenary command. Despite the odds, however, the Lancers have hung on. A handful of survivors endured two years of Blakist occupation before Clan Ghost Bear liberated the Rasalhagian world. Others escaped with the aid of the Killer Bees—another mercenary command that had enjoyed the confidence of ComStar and the SLDF during the short years of the Second Star League.

Free at last, Colonel James LeMonds (formally commander of the Lancers First Battalion and surviving senior officer) issued a general invitation to all surviving members of commands destroyed on Tukayyid, and to the Killer Bees, offering them a place in rebuilding the Twenty-first. Springing from this bold initiative comes a reinforced combined-arms battalion that incorporates a colorful mix of personnel, including Lancer veterans, the surviving Killer Bees and Rasalhague expatriates, as well as a gaggle of disaffected Com Guards. Colonel LeMonds is now declaring his command ready to entertain offers of employment, with preference given to any that include opportunities for combat against Word of Blake forces or their proxies.

Interested parties can contact Colonel LeMonds through the MRBC offices here on Arc-Royal.

—From *MercNet Magazine*, MRBC Publications (Arc-Royal), November 3072

LATE 3072: THE CURTAIN FALLS

UNEXPECTED SURPRISES

[Bosworth]: "...so to summarize, your whole take with Duke Steiner is that he purposefully blew himself up as a statement for Skye freedom?"

[Dr. Thames]: "Absolutely."

[Bosworth]: "Thank you, Doctor Thames, for your viewpoint. If you don't mind, would you stay a moment and give your thoughts on my next bullet?"

[Thames]: "I'd be happy to, Michael."

[Bosworth]: *[Addresses camera]* "Earlier today, INN sources on Alkalurops received a short message from Word-occupied Muphrid. Though the message packet was truncated—suggesting that the HPG transmission was accidental—it does reveal some disturbing information. We'll play that for you now. Captions are provided for our audio-impaired viewers."

[Static dissolves to a Word Precentor. Caption underneath image states, "Precentor Travis Green."]

[Green]: "...such an immediate response. Consider this a 'Fugitive Alert' threat for all systems within the Protectorate. Forces outside the border should be on the lookout as well. The fugitive, Prisoner number 113-822-T, escaped from the New Home Enlightenment Center before his scheduled departure date. He is wanted for questioning for the events surrounding the death of two Word Adepts and is to be considered armed and dangerous, and without sound mind. Known aliases include Fritz Donner, Franco Dennis and Frank Donegal. If seen, please do not approach, and notify the proper..."

[Static dissolves with the words "Transmission Incomplete."]

[Bosworth]: "So, Doctor. Your initial thoughts?"

[Thames]: "Interesting, to say the least. Fritz Donner, as some of your viewers may not know, was once labeled as the leader of the Circinian military and quite well known to many Lyran and League intelligence agencies. I seem to recall a furor many years ago about his sudden disappearance with many of his men..."

[Bosworth]: "According to unconfirmed reports at the time, he was under a Death Warrant by President McIntyre for abandoning his post. I believe pundits posited after the Jihad began that he might have valuable information regarding the Word of Blake in the Circinus Federation."

[Thames]: "Well, it certainly seems the Word captured him and didn't turn him over to the Federation. Which may well show a split between the pirate nation and the genocidal Word. An interesting bit of news. Perhaps the Word is fracturing with regard to its allies..."

[Bosworth]: "Food for thought. Well, that's about all the time we have for this segment. Thank you for joining us."

[Thames]: "My pleasure. I hope Mr. Donner finds his way to our side of the fence; I'm sure several people would love to pick his brain..."

—INN *Week in Review* newscast, INN Arc-Royal affiliate, 30 November 3072

DISCORDANT DRAGON

So wait, we're supposed to welcome the idea that our esteemed DCMS command actually embraces this method of cowardice? What load of *gaijin* bullshit is this?

Benjamin holds on through THREE separate attacks over the past few years: the Feddies and the Word before the latest smack-down with the Blakists. Our boys over there just SLAMMED those white-robed pansies off-planet last time, even without the emasculated Feddies' help (which really, what the hell were they doing there, anyway? Did Sandoval finally step off the deep end?).

So here they come again, with as much metal as before, and this time—THIS TIME!—our idiot *Tai-shu* (I will NOT print his name, he is not *worthy!*)—just gives up?

Dekashita! Shimatta.

So now we can chalk up another Combine world gone down the toilet. First Dieron—and man, did we hold out there for QUITE the distance, even pulling our beloved Heir out of harm's way, thanks to the *yonninsu*. It doesn't matter to the DCMS that the Word is just HAMMERING our prefecture capitals? At all? Where's our vaunted navy we were told we needed to protect us? Why didn't our multi-trillion-bill defense system save Luthien from the dark? (And yeah, I still argue it's under Blakist rule, despite the Voice's propagandist tripe.)

So now, to add INSULT to our dishonorable injury, the malfing NOVA CATS have to rescue us? What kind of crudstunk plan is that?

We don't need to feed the Clanners' ego any more than we have to. Bad enough they've absorbed most of our industry in the Irece Prefecture and brainwashed our people. Now they're flying around in their oh-so-special WarShips, saving our DCMS boys from tripping over Blakist bodies.

Buddha save us, how embarrassing! Saved from honor by a damned honorless Clan.

—Anonymous unsolicited opinion post on Fukuroi WorkNet forums, reprinted by *The Drake*, 28 December 3072



(10 January 3072)

"Reborn Black Widows Humiliate Widowmakers in Daring P... [Voice of the Free]

DOWNLOADING

(16 January 3072)

"Tharkad Free!" ("General Steiner returns Archonship to Gre... [INN]

ACCESSING

CHAOS RAMPANT: GOING NOVA **GOING NOVA**

[Announcer]: "...with Mr. Ashley's response."

[Lindon Ashley]: "These charges made by Sheridan are laughable at best and treasonous at worst. My actions have been wholly for the people of Alarion Province, in a time when no real leadership exists—even now, we have no real governmental authority from Tharkad, nor from Alarion! It is high time we took cues from Duke Steiner in Skye and stood on our own, as the foundation of our beloved Alliance—and the Commonwealth before that—has shown. Democracy is the ultimate right of all citizens, and to take that away by force of arms is tyranny at its height. If Sheridan and Hasseldorf want to remove me and destroy the ideals of freedom, then they need to come to Novara and do the deed themselves."

SITUATION

Chimera Rock, Burberry Isle

Novara, Lyrans Alliance

15 August 3072

Having whipped up several worlds into a frenzy of democratic fever, nationalist pride and secessionist ferment, Lindon Ashley has made a name for himself—for good and for ill. Disgusted with what he sees as no more than a political power play in the power vacuum of Alarion Province, Kaumberg's Lord of Lords Erich Sheridan has stepped forward as the designated leader of the Kaumberg Archonette to challenge Ashley and his newly formed "Democratic People's Army."

Defending his use of mercenaries in actions around the province, Ashley refutes the accusations that he has been using MRBC-wanted mercenaries and all but dares Sheridan and his field commander, Baron Trent Hasseldorf, to take him down. Meanwhile, he secretly hires extra muscle to hedge his bets.

Baron Hasseldorf calls Lindon's bluff and arrives on Novara at the head of the KPG, determined to take Ashley down and bring him to justice in the new Kaumberg Archonette.

CHAOS RAMPANT: GOING NOVA **GAME SETUP**

CBT: Use maps from the Badlands, Mountain and/or Hill terrain tables (see p. 263, *TW*) set up in a Chase format. Use at least two maps. The gamemaster designates the Attacker's and Defender's home edges.

AT2: Use at least two maps from the Badlands, Mountain and/or Hill terrain tables set up in a Chase format. The gamemaster designates the Attacker's and Defender's home edges. Alternatively, the gamemaster may run this track as a fully space-based mission and should use at least two Space maps.

RPG: Gamemasters should have a map for reference, but may use any type of terrain for this track, based on the player group's choices.

Attacker

The Kaumberg Planetary Guard (KPG) is the Attacker; they possess an equal mix of Regular and Veteran troops and should comprise 100 percent of the Defender's deployed force. The Attacker may enter the battlefield from any map edge; one side must be chosen as the home edge.

Aerospace units begin the track at a minimum Velocity of 5.



CHAOS RAMPANT: GOING NOVA

**Defender**

The Defender consists of the players' force and additional security and mercenary units from Ashley's Democratic People's Army. At least 75 percent of the players' total force should be used. A small contingent of local security (Green) and mercenary (Regular) forces are added; both of these forces combined should not exceed 30 percent of the players' deployed force.

The Defender begins the track deployed on one map as decided by the gamemaster. Aerospace units begin the track with a maximum Velocity of 4.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 1,400

Optional Bonuses (all bonuses cumulative):

+400 Heavy Fog: Apply a +2 MP cost to enter each hex and a +1 to-hit modifier to all direct-fire energy and pulse weapon attacks.

+500 Torrential Downpour: Apply a +2 to-hit modifier to all weapon attacks and a +2 Piloting/Driving Skill modifier.

-400 Reinforcements (CBT only): If Baron Hasseldorf's forces are not routed after ten turns, the Defender may call up additional BattleMech-only reinforcements equal to 50 percent of the players' deployed force. These units, composed of elements of the Eriksson's mercenary command, roll on the F column for the Mercenary Random Access Table and have Regular experience. The Einherjar 'Mechs enter from the opposite map edge as the Attacker.

Victory Bonuses:

+900 Partial Victory: Completing one objective.

+1,400 Total Victory: Completing both objectives.

OBJECTIVES

1) None shall pass! Allow no more than one attacking unit to exit the battlefield before Turn 8.

2) Not today, bub! Destroy or cripple at least 75 percent of the Attacker's total force.

SPECIAL RULES

For this track, the KPG and all player-allied units operate under the Forced Withdrawal rules (see p. 258, *TW*).

AFTERMATH

Seems like you were sold out anyway—that bastard Ashley slipped off-planet while you were facing off with Hasseldorf's party crashers. He even bolted with the rest of your money and emptied his party's coffers. Maybe Hasseldorf's got the right of it.

Wonder if he's hiring?

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

So where would Lindon Ashley run to, now that he's been called out and his momentum halted? Would Baron Hasseldorf or Archonette Sheridan be interested in hiring someone to do some tracking, vigilante-style?

Expansion Ideas

Going on an interstellar hunt for one man is a tough mission for even the most elite units, but it can be rewarding. Hasseldorf may also seek additional help to put down insurrectionist groups planted on other Kaumberg worlds.

NEXT TRACK

Burning Bridges



CHAOS RAMPANT: BURNING BRIDGES

BURNING BRIDGES

[Control Tower] *Say again, Tartan Master?*

[Tartan Master] *I saih, luv, th' Northwin' Highlanders ha' finallah come to th' fight. Weir bluidy readah t' take it t' those Blakist bastards.*

[Control Tower] *Unbelievable! We thought you guys were shit-for-toast! Welcome to Galatea!*

[Tartan Master] *It's right bluidy glad we are t' be here, laddie. Are y' ready f'r us?*

SITUATION

Galaport

Galatea, Lyrans Alliance

5 October 3072

Ships bearing Northwind Highlanders colors and codes appeared at Galatea's zenith point, shocking everyone. Claiming to have escaped Northwind and the clutches of the Blakists, they burned in to Galatea, intent on grounding and resupplying before taking up arms against the Word. The DropShips were allowed to enter Galatean airspace, because they were, after all, the famed Northwind Highlanders. And their arrival was backed up with reports coming from other systems regarding the Blakists' urgent messages describing their escape.

The ruse was brilliant. And a nightmare.

Behind the façade of the famed mercenary regiment was the Word of Blake. Using authentic Highlander codes and IFF, the Word caught the mercenary world with its pants at its collective ankles.

A wolf in a sheep's tartan.

The Word had come. And Galatea was to be the next Outreach.

CHAOS RAMPANT: BURNING BRIDGES

GAME SETUP

CBT: Use any combination of Light Urban, Heavy Urban and Flatlands terrain (see p. 263, *TW*).

AT2: This track is designed primarily for ground combat, though aerospace forces may be used to augment both sides. Use the appropriate rules in *Total Warfare*.

RPG: Gamemasters may prepare an appropriate environment according to the player group's plans. All WoB troops should use the standard Soldier NPC template (see p. 207, *CBT: RPG*).

Attacker

The Attacker consists of elements of the Eleventh Division and the Forty-seventh Shadow Division from the Word of Blake, as well as the mercenary units Bullard's Armored Cavalry, Gray's Ghosts and Martian Cuirassiers. All the mercenary soldiers are Regular. Units from the Eleventh Division are Veteran, while units from the Forty-seventh are Elite. The Attacker's force should be 150 percent of the Defender's total force. Any mercenary units enter the battlefield from one gamemaster-designated edge at the start of Turn 4. The Word of Blake units begin the track with a high-speed insertion (see below).

Defender

The Defender consists of 100 percent of the players' total force and fragments of other mercenary commands. For every 8 player units, add 2 Regular units and 1 Veteran unit.

The players' deployed force begins the track anywhere on the battlefield. Other mercenary units enter the battlefield at the beginning of Turn 5.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 4,000 (2,500 if previous track was *Spark*)

Optional Bonuses (all bonuses cumulative):

+1,000 Strong Gale: Apply a +2 to-hit modifier to all missile weapon attacks and a +1 to-hit modifier to all direct-fire ballistic weapon attacks. Apply a +1 modifier to all Piloting Skill Rolls. The following restrictions also apply:

Airships: Apply a -1 modifier to Safe Thrust and a +3 modifier to all Control Rolls.

Hover, WiGE and VTOLs: Apply a +2 modifier to all Piloting Skill Rolls.

Aerospace Units (except for Airships): Apply a +1 modifier to all Control Rolls.



CHAOS RAMPANT: BURNING BRIDGES



Battle Armor: Apply -1 Ground MP to all battle armor, to a minimum of 0; any such units can either move or make a weapon attack in a turn, but not both (see p. 213, *TW*).

Conventional Infantry: Apply -2 Ground MP to all conventional infantry, to a minimum of 0; any units reduced to 0 MP can either move or make a weapon attack in a turn, but not both. No jumping movement allowed.

+1,000 Complete Chaos: Add a third force that equals 75 percent of the Defender's total deployed force. This group follows the *Pandemonium* special rule, below.

Victory Bonuses (bonuses not cumulative):

+3,000 Partial Victory: Completing one objective.

+5,000 Total Victory: Completing both objectives.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) **Violence.** Destroy or cripple all Word of Blake units.
- 2) **Survival.** At least 50 percent of the players' deployed force must survive after Turn 15.

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

High Speed Insertion

All of the Attacker's WoB units begin the game with a high-speed insertion. The insertion occurs at the beginning of the Movement Phase, before all other movement takes place. The controlling player designates the target hex for the unit's arrival. The opposing player rolls 2D6; on a result of 6+, the unit lands safely and may face any hexside as determined by the controlling player. The unit may move normally at the beginning of the next turn.

On a result of 5 or less, the unit lands 1D6 hexes away from its intended hex in a random direction and suffers damage as if it had fallen from a Level 4 height (see *Falling*, p. 68, *TW*). Units scattered off the map area in this fashion are considered destroyed. Also, the unit may not move during that turn, but may fire as normal.

Fanatical Devotion

If a Word of Blake unit (Eleventh Division and Forty-seventh Shadow Division units only) is reduced to a point where a forced withdrawal is called for, that unit instead receives a -1 bonus to all Gunnery and Piloting Skill rolls and will fight until destroyed or unable to function. Neither unit follows the Forced Withdrawal rules. For *CBT: RPG* games, all enemy units that receive a Severe Wound or higher gain +2 to Willpower and all WIL-associated skills, and a +3 bonus to three other skills. These bonuses only last for the duration of the track.

Forty-seventh Shadow Division

One of every four units from the Forty-seventh is a Manei Domini soldier equipped with a VDNI system (excluding Drop-

Ships, JumpShips and WarShips). All other Shadow Division warriors may use Level 4 (or lower) implants other than VDNI, at the gamemaster's discretion. Follow the rules in the Rules Annex (see p. 118) for information on using Manei Domini implants and warriors in combat.

Pandemonium

Chaos rules, with Blakist sympathizers, opportunists and others all hitting the field in one massive jumble.

For each non-player mercenary unit in the Defender's force, roll 2D6 at the beginning of every turn, starting with Turn 6. On a result of 10+, that unit turns "chaotic." Immediately roll 1D6 and consult the following table to determine the unit's new loyalty. Once a unit has turned chaotic, it no longer performs this check.

Roll Loyalty Result

- 1-2 Unit sides with Word of Blake and targets all Defender units
- 3-4 Unit panics and attempts to flee the battlefield, following the Forced Withdrawal rules (see p. 258, *TW*)
- 5-6 Unit decides to look out for itself and fires on any available nearby target, regardless of side.

Units beginning the game from the Complete Chaos option (see above) roll their loyalty result before the track begins. These units enter the battlefield from any edge, as determined by the gamemaster.

AFTERMATH

It was pure hell.

You're still not sure how you survived that swirling bloodbath; all that matters is that you got off that hellhole. Last you heard from your agent before he got "arrested" was that the Word had started rounding up all the MRBC Commissioners and was holding them prisoner in the main building complex. So far, no executions...so the Word's got *something* up their sleeves.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Units wishing to conduct more suicide missions may try to rescue the imprisoned Commissioners or even attempt to smuggle some officials off-planet. Of course, ROM is bound to find out about some attempts, since they have eyes and ears everywhere...

Expansion Ideas

A massive chaotic battle like this one can range through many mini-clashes, as multiple sides are drawn and everyone on Galatea looks out for their own Number One.

NEXT TRACKS

None! Time for rest and refit while you await the next campaign!



TAKING STOCK

As with our previous reviews, several additional articles surfaced as we were compiling this volume that helped to better underscore the developments of the past two years. Though many of the articles received have yet to be confirmed, some—those that provided unique retrospectives on the events that have shaped and continue to shape the war to date—have been included here, for the benefit of broadening reader insight into the Blakist Jihad.

—Michael Bosworth, INN Special Correspondent

WALL OF SILENCE

>>>LOKI COMMAND CODE NULL-SECHS-FÜNF<<<
<<<Decryption Successful//Message begins>>>

...essing indeed. Marshall was lost in December—nothing remains of the Second Velites, as the Vipers did not even claim bondsmen. The same reports come from Eden, though the scientist in charge of the Maltese Project did report that a handful of warriors survived. The Vipers did not offer *hegira*; they died worthy of their Pryde bloodline.

Most distressing, however, is the silence from Ironhold. According to the last known information we had from the Emerald Talons, the Vipers brought several of their WarShips into the fray and lost half of them before the *Ironhold Provider* and *Emerald Tornado* withdrew. I suspect they are already en route to Glory, though with the Vipers' determination, that last bastion may likewise fall before this crusade of theirs is over.

While it is comforting to know of Khan Pryde's foresight in having the scientists transport most of our genetic repository to the Inner Sphere, the very thought of some of our unborn genetic legacies in the hands of the *dezgra* Vipers makes me want to vomit.

Most disturbing, however, are the rumors of a new Viper Wa...

<<<Decryption FAILURE!//Message truncated>>>

—Unconfirmed text of intercepted Falcon Watch transmissions (circa January 3070), leaked to the Skye Free Press



(19 February 3072)
"Mercenaries' Miscalculation Endangers Outworlds Border..." [Iron]

(7 March 3072)
"Official: Filtvelt Secession 'Grave Concern' to Princess Reg..." [FSNS]

(29 March 3072)
"Nova Cats Accuse DCA of 'Piracy' After Loss of Transport W..." [Drake]

FINAL FLIGHT

Precentor Stephenson:

As suspected, our mission to Columbus was a failure. There's nothing left, sir. May God have mercy on their souls.

We did, however, manage to coax the TF9 relay system back online, and downloaded the few remaining messages we couldn't access last time. As we were finishing up, the relay picked up another transmission. Not sure where it came from—80 percent chance it's from relay TF8—but I thought you'd want it to pass on, considering the last message I'd pulled from TF4 a bit back.

We'll be heading out as soon as we reload the relay's software.

—Precentor Stephan Mijos, TF9 Expeditionary Team, 25 September 3071

>>>Message Date 03/01/70

To: Colonel Andrew Redburn, SLDF

Not sure this'll even get to you, Colonel. Hopefully the rest of the staff has filled you in. After careful reconsideration, I decided to stay here on Strana Mechty with a few volunteers—the rest went on to Columbus. I'm pretty sure I've overstepped my bounds, but I felt duty-bound to honor my orders, even if support is now nonexistent. I will serve as long as I can.

I don't have much space for any lengthy reports; I was lucky to win a Trial against the Diamond Sharks to let me get this much down for you. So I'll be quick and to the point. Maybe in the near future I'll win another Trial and get you some harder data.

It seems the Vipers are on a political and military rampage here. Though I don't see much from the Clans in general (they view me as a necessary evil, though they continue to honor the Refusal) I do pick up things from time to time.

The main thing is that the Falcons seem to be losing some type of war with the Vipers. They just lost their enclave here on Mechty—so I suspect a good chunk of the Falcon army will be pulling up stakes and coming back to these parts. I overheard the Shark Khans mention that Khan Pryde vowed to make the Vipers pay for their insolence, so if the Lyrans plan on evicting the Falcons from their space, now's probably the best time to do it.

I will try to communicate what I can from this point out, but I'm not hopeful. Tell my family I miss them and that I served the Star League to the best of my ability.

—Lt. Colonel Edward J. Lynniss, acting Star League ambassador



TAKING STOCK

CRESCENT HAWKS FLY AGAIN!

[Trish McInnis]: "...so local businesswoman Molly Foote has returned home with her tail between her legs, as her latest venture to sell artillery units in the Periphery went bankrupt for lack of demand. Will she rebound yet again? We'll see. Justin?"

[Justin Freikopf]: "Thanks, Trish. In local news, reports of the Kell Hounds' imminent demise as a mercenary unit are much exaggerated. Witnesses from Luvon Spaceport have spotted DropShips attached to the famed Crescent Hawks Company leaving the planet today for an unknown destination. Rumors have the recently re-detached company—now under the command of Captain Jeremiah Youngblood, the son of renowned Crescent Hawks' leader Jason Youngblood—going everywhere from Hesperus II to New Avalon. Whatever the case may be, the deployment is further proof that the Kell Hounds—on the ropes since the loss of Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Allard in June of 3069 and significantly damaged during the recapture of Tharkad last month—are steadily rebounding to face the ever-broadening war against the Word of Blake.

"When contacted for a statement, the Kell Hounds informed ARNN that unit deployments were not open for disclosure but that the Wolfhounds Battalion was also in discussions with an as-yet unnamed client. Both units are reported to have the latest equipment, including the locally produced *Verfolger*. While stories about the Hawks may have been scarce since their rough patch on Luthien in 3052, we now know they've reformed and are working hard to get back into Falcon-kicking shape.

"Best of luck to our boys, the Crescent Hawks are back! Back to you, Trish.

[McInnis]: "Thanks, Justin. Exciting news there! Also locally, Dr. Deirdre Nakamura's book tour kicks off this week in the city of New Hannover..."

—Excerpt from *Arc-Royal Live*, ARNN holo-broadcast, Arc-Royal, 23 February 3072

RIKSDAG

[Star Colonel Ragnar]: "Do you not agree, *Valdherre*?"

[Valdherre Miyogi Thomasin]: "It's not a matter of whether I agree or not, Star Colonel. The question you are asking is not an easy one to answer."

[Ragnar]: "Stop using rhetoric, Miyogi. It does not become a Rasalhagian patriot."

[Valdherre Richard Stembetti]: "Calmness, my Prince. We are all friends here, are we not?"

[Ragnar]: "It is *Star Colonel, Valdherre*. Or Ragnar, if you prefer. I am not the Elected Prince."

[Stembetti]: "But—"

[Valdherre Emily Iowe]: "Now is not the time, Richard." [Shuffling] "Star Colonel, your proposal is sound. I think we can safely say the Riksdag will indeed go along with this. Though we will need to be cautious as to who should serve on this 'Unity Council'."

[Ragnar]: "Understood. I will leave that selection to you, as it is not my place to dictate. My desire is for the Clan to embrace the Rasalhague people. We wish to be more than conquerors here—despite Miyogi's interpretations."

[Thomasin]: "I never! I mean, that is to—"

[Stembetti]: "Stow it, Thomasin. This really is the best course of action. I think we can coexist with the Dominion; the benefits are much too great to ignore."

[Thomasin]: "But the cost..."

[Iowe]: "Is not high enough to change things. Look, Miyogi...we know your past. But you have to understand—it's our *future* at stake here. At least, in this, we can achieve peaceful coexistence, unlike our time with the Combine."

[Ragnar]: "Exactly. Together...together we can be more than each of us individually."

[Thomasin]: [Sigh] "All right. I'll make sure my party supports this. But don't blame me if we have problems down the road..."

—Reputed transcript of a sidebar discussion at the Rasalhagian Riksdag, source unverified, dated June 3071



Date & Title	Service	Status
(5 April 3072) "Kittery Resistance Movement Gains Momentum, Followe..."	[MercNet]	COMPLETED
(11 April 3072) "Blakist Invasion Turned Back over Arc-Royal with Heavy Ca..."	[INN]	DOWNLOADING
(28 April 3072) "The Roughriders Equation: When Good Mercs Get Dirty"	[MercNet]	ACCESSING



TAKING STOCK

HELL'S HORSES: HERE TO STAY?

(18 November 3072)

Arc-Royal [INN] – Reports of a détente with their ages-old enemies in Clan Ghost Bear have all but confirmed that the Hell's Horses Clan—a minor homeworld Clan best known for its military preference toward infantry and conventional vehicle forces—has indeed returned to the Inner Sphere to stay. Still unknown, however, is whether this Clan—which once fought alongside the Crusader Wolves in a brief war with the Ghost Bear Dominion—intends to expand beyond its holdings in the Clan Occupation Zones.

Previously known as a Crusader Clan, the Horses' return just a few short years ago startled many Inner Sphere observers, who did not expect them to attack the Wolf Clan they once apparently served. Wolf (in-Exile) officials on Arc-Royal, however, painted a different picture.

"While [the Horses] are often seen as 'the follower Clan' by us, Kerensky himself taught that no warrior should ever be discount-

ed out of hand," said Star Colonel Derek Sradac of the Second Wolf Guards Cluster. "And alliances between Clans can often be the most tenuous of all. If the Horses felt wronged by [Khan] Vlad's Wolves in the past, it would not be unheard of for the two Clans to wage war on each other, regardless of recent alliances."

Indeed, a puzzling turn of events since the Horses' return has been reports of an accord with the Ghost Bears, with whom they supposedly feuded for centuries. According to several reliable accounts, in fact, the Horses have returned a celebrated Ghost Bear warrior to Rasalhague as an envoy, and have even staged "token Trials" with the Bears to allow their ancient enemy holdings on three former Wolf Clan conquests.

This curious effort, some say, is a continuation of the Horses' shift to the "Warden" Clan philosophy, which makes them political allies with the Bears, against the common Crusader Wolf foe. This philosophical shift may also account for sightings of Hell's Horses merchants in the Arc-Royal region. Wolf (in-Exile) officials, however, have not confirmed these reports.

TURNING POINT?

—From *Sphere Watch*, INN Broadcasting, Atocongo, 11 November 3072

[Turner]: "We're back with more *Sphere Watch*. Joining us now is Professor Bertram Habeas, historian, political analyst and spokesperson for the Lyran Alliance. Professor, you've been with us several times now, but as always, thank you for joining us."

[Habeas]: "Always glad to be here, Jim."

[Turner]: "Now, earlier this year you went on record with claims that the Inner Sphere may have reached a turning point in this war with the Word of Blake. Would you care to elaborate on that for us?"

[Habeas]: "Certainly, Jim. The short form, of course, is that we're seeing a rise in coalition fighting now, where we began this war very isolated and confused. It's much like how the Clan invasion began—"

[Turner]: "With each side trying to turn back the attackers unassisted."

[Habeas]: "Yes. In the Clans' case, of course, it was sheer surprise. But the Word had a greater advantage in their access to HPG networks and a web of spies across the Sphere. This made their efforts far more effective, both far-reaching and directed with almost surgical precision in some cases. The result was a higher level of sheer panic and confusion, but the outcome—as we're starting to see—is the same: an Inner Sphere united."

[Turner]: "Aren't we getting ahead of ourselves? The Free Worlds League is smashed, and the Capellans and FedSuns continue to raid one another, for instance."

[Habeas]: "Very true, but this rebirth of coalition fighting is only just beginning. And by that, I don't merely mean states and the

mercenaries with a few convenient allies thrown into the mix for spice, but real forces with real complementary abilities, crossing real national lines. For instance, there were Exiled Wolves and even a small Jade Falcon force involved in General Steiner's liberation of Tharkad, and Victor Steiner-Davion led a combined Lyran and Com Guard force to retake Donegal a mere month later. These are combinations we wouldn't have thought possible just a year before."

[Turner]: "The Lyran Alliance would not have fought alongside ComStar?"

[Habeas]: [Chuckle] "Well, let's face facts here, Mister Turner. Since the FedCom Civil War, the Precentor Martial has had a rather stormy relationship with the realm of his birth, and ComStar's track record against the Word *has* been rather dodgy since the war began. I'm not meaning to give offense here, but these factors are considered when planning a major operation like planetary conquest, as I'm sure you know."

[Turner]: "Points taken. So, you believe there will be more such victories in the future? Perhaps more allies in the mix?"

[Habeas]: "Oh, undoubtedly. Of course, to truly survive this war, we need a real leader, a real unifier."

[Turner]: "Someone like Victor?"

[Habeas]: "Well, that I could not say. Does he have it in him for one more pass? And would he truly manage to get a Sphere-wide coalition going again after his past few decades' luck?"

[Turner]: "If not him, then who?"

[Habeas]: "I truly cannot say for sure, Mister Turner, but wars of this magnitude, throughout history, have had a habit of surprising us. Maybe our savior is someone we simply have not yet met..."

TAKING STOCK

WHO IS DEVLIN STONE?

(21 November 3072)

Numenor [FSNS] – In just under two years, Devlin Stone—an anti-Word freedom fighter on the Capellan/FedSuns border—has risen from total obscurity to overthrow the Word of Blake’s hold on the entire Kittery Thumb and create his own “Prefecture.” But just who is this man? Where did he come from? And what does he really want?

Devlin Stone’s past is a mystery. No records of him exist in FedSuns genealogy archives prior to 3071, when he escaped from RBMU 105—a Word of Blake prison camp established on the site of the McKinley Ranch wildlife preserve on Kittery. His fanatical followers claim that Stone has no memory of his life prior to being incarcerated at RBMU 105. Even his name is an assumed one—the original lost with his forgotten past, he allegedly uses the one assigned him by his Blakist captors. Unfortunately, any records that could have shed some light on this man’s identity were destroyed when his resistance group later returned to liberate his former prison-mates.

So, without records, what do we know about Devlin Stone? Standing two meters in height and powerfully built, with black hair and mahogany eyes, Stone presents an imposing figure. There are indications that he has undergone reconstructive surgery, making dental records, fingerprints and other biometric data suspect. Estimates place him somewhere in his late twenties to early thirties. Voice analysis appears to support previous reports that he is not a Kittery native, and experts have placed worlds such as Caledonia, Firgrove, Glasgow, Kilmarnock and Mackenzie as the most likely candidates for Stone’s homeworld. What else do we know about this man? His aptitude at hand-to-hand combat and with small arms clearly indicates military training, as do his proven skills at the controls of captured Blakist BattleMechs. It is quite possible that he graduated from one of the Inner Sphere’s military academies—a supposition supported by the strategic and tactical acumen he has displayed.

But all of these questions about Stone’s mysterious origins pale in significance next to the one we have to ask next: What does he want? With the AFFS and CCAF apparently engaged on every front, Stone appears to have free rein to do as he pleases. In single-handedly overthrowing the Word of Blake and its supporters on a cluster of worlds centered on Kittery, he has become the de facto ruler of a mini-state poised on the Federated Suns-Capellan Confederation border.

THE END OF THE BEGINNING

“There is no need for me to dwell on our defeat over Terra, or the irresistible onslaught that drove us from the Chaos March. Just as the Clans taught us a new way to fight, and we in turn taught the Clans the true meaning of war by annihilating the Smoke Jaguars, the Word of Blake has added a new chapter to the dark tome of warfare.

“Once again we have been forced to learn a costly lesson. We are not fighting the same war as our forefathers. That is the wrong war.

THE DICHOLOGY OF THE WORD

(11 December 3072)

Arc-Royal [INN] – As we near the close of another year of total warfare, the strategy of the Word of Blake—a group now clearly recognized by many as the common enemy of the Inner Sphere—has left countless field commanders baffled. A recent analysis of the Word’s Sphere-wide campaigns, however, may shed light on the mystery surrounding their so-called Holy War.

“What we are seeing appears to be a distinct difference between the [Word of Blake’s] offensive and defensive approaches,” reported Major Alberta Oberschulte, a senior official with the allied planning staff on Arc-Royal.

“On the one hand is the defensive line—representing worlds actively seized by the Word of Blake and occupied on the ground—which has seen a distinct lack of terror tactics by the occupiers. Meanwhile, most offensive operations—particularly those beyond a roughly 100 light-year distance from Terra—have seen far more extremes.”

One explanation for these “extreme” actions, according to Oberschulte, may be the sheer distances involved, which would make logistics difficult even for the Word of Blake. This explanation, however, pre-supposes that there are major drawbacks (as yet undetermined) to the demonstrated “super-jump” capabilities demonstrated by some Blakist JumpShips.

“We believe this is not an ability [the Word] finds completely reliable, as many reports continue to filter in about Blakist ships arriving by conventional jumps. This leads us to conclude that they’re driven to win as quickly as possible, lest they be stranded and heavily outnumbered in hostile territory.”

And the reason for these two wholly different strategies? Though analysts are quick to suggest deep divisions in the Blakist ranks, Oberschulte says the finding may yet indicate a single goal at work.

“The Word is outnumbered on all sides and faces threats from every realm—but only if said realms can recover enough to do them harm. Their entire campaign is therefore aimed at sowing the maximum amount of chaos and industrial damage abroad while building up their own lines for an eventual showdown.”

We should not fight for an advantageous position or a few hundred square kilometers of some planet’s surface. This is a war with no front lines. A war with only one objective. We must fight with one single idea: to destroy the armed forces of our enemy, to strike with irresistible force at such a place and time that the disaster we visit upon our foe will be the most far-reaching and irrecoverable.

“Until now, we have denied the Word of Blake their final victory through the simple expedient of survival. But that which does not kill us has made its last mistake! All I can promise you is blood, tears, toil, sweat and the knowledge that there is only one battle we have to win—the final one. The road to that battle will be long and hard, but today we take the first steps on that road. Today the Com Guards are back!

“A great leader once said, ‘Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.’”

—Precentor-Martial Victor Steiner-Davion’s address to the Com Guards, Arc-Royal, 24 December 3072

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TAKING STOCK

DEVELOPING STORY: ALLIED SUMMIT UNDERWAY IN OLD CONNAUGHT

[Kyle Edgars]: "...And INN has confirmed that the allied summit has already begun at this hour. We go live to our special correspondent at the scene, Michael Bosworth. Michael?"

[A young woman—clearly not Bosworth—replaces the image of a well-groomed reporter in the INN newsroom; looking only mildly flustered—even a bit amused—she smiles at the camera. Behind her, the large dome of a modern-styled ferrocrete-and-steel conference center rises amid the downtown cityscape.]

[Sonia Ives]: "Ah, sorry, Kyle. Mike can't come to the vid right now."

[Edgars]: [voice only] "Woops! Oh, hey, Sonia, what can you tell us down there?"

[Ives]: "Well, as you can see, Kyle, the vid crew and myself are out here in front of the Steward Conference Hall, where we have been able to confirm that an extensive list of VIPs from across the Inner Sphere—and even the Clan Occupation Zones—have gathered in response of Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion's call for a summit meeting. The purpose of the meeting, of course, is to discuss the current conflict with the Word of Blake, and to plan strategy, with Steiner-Davion clearly hoping to form the same kind of international unity forged after the Falcon attack on Coventry back in '58."

[Edgars]: "I gather they're not allowing the press to transmit from within the summit, however?"

[Ives]: "That's correct, Kyle. In fact, with very few exceptions—including Michael and Professor Bertram Habeas, who has become something of a spokesperson for both the Lyran Alliance and INN alike—there have been very few members of the press who have been allowed into the initial proceedings at all. In fact, as one of Steiner-Davion's aides put it: 'This is a war council, not a court ball'. Indeed, early on, it could be seen that tensions among the delegates were quite noticeable, even as they arrived for this summit—many fresh from their arriving DropShips. And several delegates made pointed remarks, all but accusing their neighbors—or ComStar—of having failed to do enough to avert the current conflict entirely."

[Edgars]: "Have there been any other tidbits at all, Sonia? Any ideas who's on the guest list?"

[Ives]: "Well, yes, Kyle. In fact, we witnessed a Free Worlds delegation arriving that included both Alys Rousset-Marik and Reginald Brett-Marik—both representing splinter factions of the League who have recently allied against the Word of Blake. A small Jade Falcon detachment also made its appearance, and the two representatives were identified as Star Colonel Diana Pryde, leader of



(1 May 3072)
Steiner: Com Guard to Reinforce Falcon Border" [ISAP]

DOWNLOADING

(14 May 3072)
"Outworlds-FedSuns Tensions Remain High After Sterlingto... [NSNN]

ACCESSING

TAKING STOCK

the Falcon Guards Cluster, and Star Captain Tara Helmer, who you may recall participated in the Tharkad Liberation."

[Edgars]: "Wow!"

[Ives]: "Wow indeed, Kyle, but the most tantalizing arrival of all came in an armored vehicle and was escorted into the summit under heavy guard via a rear entrance. According to rumors, this man was none other than Colonel Fritz Donner, one-time commander of the Black Warriors, who went missing in 3067, shortly before the start of the Jihad and after the fall of the Circinus government to Blakist-backed rebels. According to reports that came out two months ago, Donner was among the prisoners liberated from a Blakist prison camp on New Home. His flight from the Circinus Federation in '67 reportedly included an ominous warning about Blakist plans, but it was widely believed that he had been killed during the attempt."

[Edgars]: "So, it's possible this summit is being held to discuss what Donner knows?"

[Ives]: "Entirely possible, Kyle. Of course, after the much-publicized assassination of Jeremy Brett, it's been said that the ComStar security detachment responsible for Donner completed a thorough battery of tests to verify he was not implanted with suicide charges like Richard Steiner was. His—esen...wo...ji... Kyl..? Can y...r me?" [Video suddenly becomes grainy and distorted.]

[Edgars]: "Sonia? Can you hear us? We seem to be getting some interference there..."

[Ives]: "I...kl...ar y... Ky..? Wh...?" [Images dissolves completely into snow, then suddenly snaps back to the INN newsroom and Edgars' awkwardly smiling face.]

[Edgars]: "Well, it seems we have some technical difficulties to work out downtown. Stay tuned, ladies and gentlemen. INN will be back with more on this late-breaking story as it happens..."

—Live broadcast, ARC-7 (INN Arc-Royal Affiliate), Arc-Royal, 22 January 3073 (1748 hrs GST)

BROKEN HOPE, SHATTERED DREAMS

—Realtime Message [HOT!], From: "rolandassheldono1", Sent: 1837 hrs on 30730122

God in heaven, man! You're not going to believe this! I'm still shaking here! There was another bombing in Old C! Only about 30 minutes ago! Looks like they hit that summit somehow! ARNN supposedly grabbed this footage from the rescue efforts, but they're not gonna run it! You're NOT gonna believe this, buddy! I still can't and I'm watching it live! —Rol

[Smoke obscures the video as two yellow-clad paramedics race up barely-visible stairs and into a dimly lit room littered with chunks of blackened and broken masonry. The image jerks wildly as the cameraman clumsily tries to keep pace, brushing past a ruined double-door frame as his breath comes in ragged, audible huffs. Small fires flicker about in the background as the two paramedics race towards a screaming voice coming from a small form among the ruins.

The keening wail of the emergency vehicles somewhere outside pierces the background noise.

[Paramedic One ("Paul")]: "Mein Gott! Steve! I've got one over here!"

[Paramedic Two ("Steve")]: "Aw, hell...Miss, can you hear us? Miss! Paul, check her airways."

[The cameraman slows, moves around the paramedics; a bloodied and pale face comes into view. The woman wears a green uniform gashed open in several places. A Jade Falcon patch is visible on her shoulder.]

["Paul"]: [bending over] "Airway's clear, shallow breathing. Scheiße! Steve, look at her neck..."

["Steve"]: [to camera] "You! You've done the course right? Hold her neck steady. Steady, okay! We need to brace her..."

[Camera jerks slightly, catches more of the bruised and battered face of a woman, her right eye swollen shut as a gash on her forehead pools blood in the left eye-socket. Two shaking, blackened hands enter the frame as the cameraman stoops to support her head.]

[Cameraman]: "My god! Guys, is this who I think it is? Is she—?"

["Paul"]: "Easy, pal! Right now, she's just someone who needs medical attention. Steve, you got that brace? Good. Now, you, when I say the word, gently lift her head, and I'm going to slide it in underneath. Okay?"

[Cameraman]: "Y-Yeah. I got it."

["Paul"]: "Okay, then...now! Gently!"

[The cameraman's hands slowly raise the woman's head, and the paramedics swiftly slide a blue brace beneath, closing the padded plastic with a snap. The camera stirs and then whirls around as the operator stands again. The image pans, catching more smoke, while the microphone picks up more sirens, more screams and coughing. A woman's voice moans close by and the view settles again on another figure emerging from the smoke, dressed in a black uniform with Dragoon insignia. The camera zooms in on her name badge: "Wolf"]

["Steve"]: "Christ! Easy, lady! Come with us; you're going to be alright—"

["Wolf"]: [Unsteady, almost pulling away as "Steve" approaches to offer her support, she speaks between several wet coughs] "Don... Donner...he—"

["Paul"]: "Shhh. Don't say anything, General. We'll have you out of here in a—"

[Paramedic Three]: "Need some help over here!"

[The camera jerks upright, just in time to see the two more paramedics checking another body. This one is dressed in simple fatigues, and slumped against a wall, but even so, his shorter-than-average stature is apparent, as are the features on his ashen face.]

[Cameraman]: "Mother of Jesus! That's the Precentor-Martial!"

[Filtered Voice]: "Turn that malfing thing off, surat!"

[Cameraman]: "But, I—!" *[The image whirls one last time when suddenly all audio and video signal blanks out as the shadowy blur of an armored hand passes over the lens.]*

TAKING STOCK

BREAKING STORY: BOMBING HITS ALLIED SUMMIT IN OLD CONNAUGHT!

[Edgars]: "We interrupt this broadcast with the latest on the unfolding tragedy in Old Connaught. Sources in the capital city have confirmed for INN that the allied summit which began almost two hours ago was struck by an apparent terrorist bombing. Details remain sketchy at this hour, but according to witness reports, at least four of the delegates who arrived for the summit were killed or at least grievously injured in the attack, including Leutenant-General Sabine Steiner, chief aide to LAAF General of the Armies Adam Steiner, and Rhonda Snord, long-time leader of the famed Snord's Irregulars mercenary command. With more from the scene, we go live to INN field correspondent Sonia Ives..."

[A young reporter, pretty despite smudges of soot on her off-white jacket and blouse, focuses intently on the camera, her expression one of combined shock and concentration. In the background, a thin haze of smoke partly obscures the motion of fire crews and police, while sirens wail in the distance, overlapping many indistinct shouts and cries for help.]

[Ives]: "Kyle, I'm standing here at Ground Zero, outside the Steward Conference Hall here in downtown Old Connaught, and the scene here is just heart-wrenching. At this time, we still don't have a reliable casualty estimate, but some officials at the scene have said that as many as thirteen of the VIP delegates gathered for this closed summit remain unaccounted for, and several others are confirmed dead at the scene. Police and government officials are refusing to release a list of the victims, however, in the hopes of averting panic."

[Edgars]: [voice only] "Have they at least determined a cause for the blasts, Sonia?"

[Ives]: "No, Kyle, Not at this time, anyway, but judging by the damage, which has left most of the Steward's outer structure in tact, it is clear that the explosion took place from inside the Hall itself, likely within the conference itself. That fact leads many here to believe that the attackers managed to either smuggle the bomb in somehow, or—as in the case of the Brett assassination in '71—that one of the delegates themselves was the bomber. But no hard evidence yet."

[Edgars]: "Did they say at least that it was the Word?"

[Ives]: [Looking somewhat troubled] "Nobody's saying for sure here. What is known about the bombing—at least from several corroborating witness accounts here—is that, in the moments before the attack, all communications signals to and from the Hall were overwhelmed by a powerful signal, and that at that time, many of the delegates were involved in a very intense argument over the war and its conduct."

[Edgars]: "Say again, Sonia? The delegates were arguing?"

[Ives]: "Yes, Kyle. According to the reports from several staff members who did emerge from the disaster, several of the VIPs summoned here blamed either neighboring states, ComStar, or Victor Steiner-Davion personally for the current crisis across the Inner Sphere, and that the air in the summit had become almost chaotic in the moments before the explosion."

[Edgars]: "So, is there a feeling that one of the delegates—?"

[Ives]: [Holds hand to her earpiece, whispers] "Oh my God."

[Edgars]: "Sonia?"

[Ives]: "Kyle, we're being asked to cut this broadcast short; military forces from both the Kell Hound barracks and the Wolf enclaves are converging on the city and the local governor is declaring a state of martial law."

[Edgars]: "One more question, Sonia! Has there been any word from Mike on the ground there? Anything at all?"

[Ives]: [Distracted] "Nothing, Kyle. In fact, none of the small INN team we had inside the summit have reported in since the explosion, and rescue crews are not allowing us to enter the building at this time."

[Voice, off camera]: "Attention, citizens! In the name of the city of Old Connaught and the planetary government of Arc-Royal, please clear the area immediately to permit the passage of rescue and recovery units! Media personnel must cease all transmissions at once, or security forces will be forced to take action!"

[Ives]: [Eyes darting toward something off camera] "We have to go now..."

[Image blanks out abruptly. The words "Technical Difficulties: Please Standby" flash across the screen, before the return to the INN newsroom and Edgar's momentarily stunned expression.]

—Live broadcast, ARC-7 (INN Arc-Royal Affiliate), Arc-Royal, 22 January 3073 (1908 hrs GST)



(17 August 3072)	"The Backwoods Solution: Kaumberg Refit Facilities Breat...	[Warrior Magazine]	COMPLETED
(21 August 3072)	"Return of the Archonettes: Archon Peter's Latest Folly"	[Brotherhood Press]	DOWNLOADING
(17 September 3072)	"Seeds of Rebellion: The Reborn Widows Inspire Defiance Th...	[Voice of the Free]	ACCESSING

RULES ANNEX



RULES ANNEX

The following section provides additional rules for the *Classic BattleTech* board game that cover new units and equipment.

Terminology: In these rules, the term unit is used as it is in *Total Warfare (TW)*, to refer to a single battlefield unit such as a 'Mech, vehicle or infantry platoon. The term *force* is used to denote a large combat formation, such as a regiment or Galaxy.

THE MANEI DOMINI

Since their original appearance in *Interstellar Players* (see pp. 12-21 and 131-134), the Manei Domini have proven to be more than the cyborg bogeymen of the Word of Blake's Sixth of June movement. Even before the onset of the Jihad, unconfirmed reports placed hundreds of these man-machine hybrids in the Chaos March and beyond. When full-blown war erupted in 3068, entire legions of these self-described "Hands of the Master" were unveiled, often spearheading assaults against the most entrenched targets in the Inner Sphere.

Though hyper-elite, cybernetically enhanced operatives are not unknown to the intelligence agencies and covert ops teams of every Great House military, the Manei Domini are the most extensively modified, and are unique to the Word of Blake. Even ComStar and the Clans have no equivalent to them. In *Classic BattleTech* games, Manei Domini—regardless of their type—are always considered Elite-rated warriors, and may only be fielded by forces with a Word of Blake affiliation.

The following rules define the capabilities of the Manei Domini in game play, including how Manei Domini non-player characters may be created for RPG settings, and the impact of their implants in *CBT*-scale combat.

MANEI DOMINI CREATION RULES

In role-playing games, Manei Domini should be used *only* as non-player characters (though player characters with a deep and proven loyalty to the Word of Blake may—through the course of a role-playing adventure—be inducted into their ranks). Remember that Manei Domini are rare in the extreme. In fact, outside of their Shadow Divisions (where the combat personnel are comprised entirely of Manei Domini soldiers), Manei Domini are almost never seen in numbers greater than six.

The Manei Domini Character Creation Table below provides an expanded form of that used in *Interstellar Players*. The system used here for creating a Manei Domini operative employs the basic rules for creating NPCs in the *CBT Companion* (see pp. 218-220), but with certain modifications to reflect the nature of the Manei Domini and underscore their elite status.

The table lists the Manei Domini in order of their "level" within the organization (and its corresponding Word of Blake/ComStar rank). This rank uses a Greek letter designation (which does not follow the actual sequence of the Greek alphabet), and roughly establishes the number of NPC character points (CPs) that can be put into the individual's Attributes, Traits and Skills.

Attributes: Remember that unlike point-based player character creation, NPCs spend an equal amount of CPs for their desired Attribute scores, rather than a cumulative amount. For example, 6 points spent on a Manei Domini operative's Charisma (CHA) will produce a final CHA of 6. Thresholds are not used in NPC creation. For Manei Domini, all Attributes except Willpower (WIL) and Social Standing (SOC) must meet a minimum value of 6. Manei Domini have incredible willpower, and so have a minimum requirement of 7 in WIL, while Social Standing is far less important to them, yielding a minimum requirement of 2 for SOC. Manei Domini maximum values in all Attributes—before implants—are those of a typical Inner Sphere human, and thus use the Normal Human column for maximums (see p. 56, *CBT:RPG*).

Traits: Manei Domini characters may spend the listed number of CPs on any number of Traits in accordance with the standard NPC creation rules, including the purchase of negative-value Traits to gain additional points for more positive-value Traits. For example, an Alpha-level Manei Domini (8 Trait Points) with the Fast Learner (3 CPs), Exceptional Attribute (2 CPs) and Ambidextrous (2 CPs) traits (a total of 7 CPs, leaving only 1 point remaining for Traits) must take a negative Trait worth 3 CPs if he desires the 4-CP Combat Sense Trait as well.

Manei Domini may *not* take any of the following Traits: El Neural Implant, Sixth Sense, Clumsy, Combat Paralysis, Dependents, Disabled (above Level 1), Glass Jaw, Gremlins, In for Life (beyond Word of Blake), Lemon, Lost Limb, Low Endurance, Thin-Skinned, Timid, Transit Disorientation Syndrome or Unhealthy. Manei Domini characters *automatically* receive the Lost Limb Trait for any natural limb replaced with prosthetics, but receive no point benefits from this Trait as all such limbs are automatically replaced. They also always receive the In For Life: Manei Domini, Quirk (3): Loyalty to Master, Quirk (2): Hatred of Clans, and Quirk: Hatred of Nobility traits. No Trait may be taken that will clash with these free Traits.

Skills: The skill values listed for Manei Domini operatives provide a range of relevant skills the operative may possess for his or her duties, followed by the number of CPs that may be spent on such skills (in parentheses). Once more, unlike player character creation, the CPs spent on these skills provide one level per point spent—regardless of whether the skill is standard or difficult—starting at level 1 (with a Skill Bonus of +0). For example, a single CP provides a skill with a +0 bonus, while 5 CPs provide a +4 bonus to a skill.

The recommended skill sets for Manei Domini operatives vary with their class, which is identified in their hierarchy by a secondary designation. These designations are based on mythical creatures of an undead nature, as many Manei Domini consider their previous lives ended once they are inducted into the organization. See *Manei Domini Classes*, below.

Implants: The final values provided are those of the maximum number and "level" of cybernetic implants the Manei Domini op-

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erative may receive, as well as the minimum number of implants the operative must have. This determines how “enhanced” the operative is, and abstracts the cost in time and resources spent on receiving such implants. The number to the left of the slash indicates how many implants the Manei Domini NPC may receive, while the number to the right indicates the level of the implant. An Omega-rated Manei Domini may thus install up to four implants, each of which may have an Implant Level of 3 or less.

All Manei Domini cybernetic implants receive explosive or chemical self-destruct components automatically, which may be triggered remotely by other Manei Domini, or by the operative himself. These self-destruct modules also activate if the NPC is killed or incapacitated by Head or Torso wounds, and typically are either explosive, chemical or incendiary. Explosive self-destruct implants produce an RPG Damage of $8 \times 5D6$ (Type X, Blast [Quarter radius]), or a CBT Damage of 0.4 per trooper to enemy units at Range 0 at the time of death. Chemical and incendiary implants cause $2 \times 3D6$ RPG Damage (Type E, Blast with a 6-turn effect duration; Incendiary implants have a half-radius blast and incendiary effects), or 0.15 CBT Damage per exploding trooper at Range 0 (to enemy units only). Implants may also be cosmetically enhanced, either to resemble human flesh or to produce a more nightmarish and intimidating effect.

The implant descriptions below outline the full range of significant cybernetic implants available to Manei Domini operatives, both in RPG settings and CBT game play.

Manei Domini Classes: In addition to levels of implantation and experience, Manei Domini also fall into several distinct classes, which define their primary function in the organization. These classes, identified by an “undead” nomenclature, describe the operative’s basic function (battlefield infiltrator, reconnaissance, assault, defense, vehicular pilot, command or special operative). Combined with the rank level, a Manei Domini may thus be identified with a simple combination of Greek letter and class code (such as “Alpha Ghost” or “Omega Specter”). The chosen class also defines any required implants the operative must include, as well as a few recommended skills.

Because Manei Domini implants can lead to rapid specialization, the class given to an operative tends to remain the same throughout his career, though enough overlap exists to allow for “cross-classing” Domini operatives. However, in particularly rare instances (or simply due to the development of newer technologies), some Domini have changed classes by having their implants removed and new ones installed that are better suited to their new function.

Creating Manei Domini for CBT Game Play

In CBT game play, Manei Domini forces are always fielded as combat units, be they conventional infantry, battle armor, combat vehicles, fighters or BattleMechs. These units do not require full character creation, and so only the implant levels and combina-

tions need be determined for each Manei Domini unit (by platoon, where applicable, for the sake of simplicity).

For base Gunnery and Targeting skills (before any implant augmentations are applied), Manei Domini units are always considered Elite, and receive a +1 roll modifier when determining random Gunnery and Piloting skills.

For vehicle, battle armor, fighter and BattleMech selections, Manei Domini may use any units fielded by the Free Worlds League or the Word of Blake. If operating as part of an occupation force within another realm, Manei Domini may field $1D6 - 1$ units per each 6-unit Level II from the faction tables of the occupied world’s native realm instead (using the A or B columns, where applicable). For example, on a roll of 4, a Manei Domini Level II operating on Hesperus would roll 3 units from the Lyrans Random Assignment Tables instead of the Free Worlds or Word of Blake tables ($4 - 1 = 3$). If the roll had been a 1, however, all 6 of the Level II units would be from League or Word sources ($1 - 1 = 0$).

The CBT capabilities of all Manei Domini implants are cumulative unless otherwise noted (so long as any applicable conditions noted in their rules descriptions are met). These effects apply as indicated to all Mech, fighter and vehicular units (but not particularly large units, such as Large-sized Support Vehicles, Rail Support Vehicles, DropShips, JumpShips, Space Stations or WarShips).

Infantry (battle-armored and conventional) may receive a varying degree of benefits based on how much of the unit is comprised of modified troopers. For added weapons and damage, benefits are generally based on the actual number of troops so modified. Other benefits may be applied only if *all* troopers are so enhanced.

Still other benefits indicated for a unit type may apply only if a “significant portion” of the infantry unit is comprised of Manei Domini equipped with the selected implant. This “significant portion” is equal to two-thirds of the unit’s trooper count (rounded down). For example, a Word of Blake battle armor squad of 6 gains any applicable infantry-specific special abilities of a given implant only if at least 4 of its members ($6 \times [2 \div 3] = 4$) receive such implants. Meanwhile, a conventional platoon of 28 troopers would need 18 troopers so equipped to achieve the same effects ($28 \times [2 \div 3] = 18.667$, rounded down to 18). Because the “significant portion” abstracts the capability proportionately across the entire unit, an infantry unit reduced by damage below its minimum “significant portion” number does not lose any special abilities as a result.

Battle Value: In CBT gameplay, Manei Domini warriors do not have individual Battle Values per se. Instead, they act as “force multipliers” to the units they operate in combat, based on the how sophisticated their implants are. Although implant effects can vary wildly, this “force multiplier” value can be abstracted in Battle Value form in order to establish a Manei Domini warrior’s relative combat potential. The Manei Domini “Force Multiplier” value equals 0.75 plus the Domini warrior’s highest implant level divided by 4 (without rounding), so a Domini whose highest-level

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implant has a value of 2 would have a “Force Multiplier” of 1.25 ($0.75 + [2 \text{ implant level} \div 4] = 1.25$). This multiplier applies to all non-infantry Manei Domini-piloted combat units 200 tons and under, and infantry units comprised of a significant portion of Manei Domini. Infantry units comprised of less than two-thirds’ worth of Manei Domini warriors and units larger than 200 tons receive no multiplier for Manei Domini presence.

The Manei Domini Force Multiplier applies *after* the unit first determines its skill-modified Battle Value, and the skills used to determine this skill-modified Battle Value must be those of the warrior *before* factoring in any implants. Thus, a 1,655-BV *Deva Invictus* piloted by a Manei Domini whose highest-level implant has a value of 2 and whose base Gunnery/Piloting skills (before implants) are 2/3, would multiply the ‘Mech’s BV first by 2.08 (the skill multiplier for a 2/3 MechWarrior), and then by the 1.82 for a Domini with Level-2 implants. The *Deva*’s final BV would thus be 3,765 ($1,655 \text{ BV} \times 1.82 [\text{skills}] \times 1.25 [\text{implants}] = 3,765$).

Manei Domini in Action

In role-playing settings, Manei Domini of most classes may be encountered only in battle, and then only for key worlds or other objectives deemed critical to the Master’s plan (some of which may seem quite obscure to others). Poltergeist-class Manei Domini may appear anywhere, operating in conjunction with ROM or independently, while Specter-class Manei Domini could appear as advisors or representatives of the Master’s will—usually voiced by Precentor Manei Domini Apollyon—alongside “ordinary” Blakist field commanders and administrators.

Frequency of Encounters: Manei Domini should be used sparingly. They are extremely elite, and correspondingly few and far between. However, their nature makes them ideal for leaders of major offensives, key combat actions, highly dangerous covert missions and such, often commanding and manipulating much more conventional forces. Some can appear normal, even attractive, and so it is possible for Manei Domini to appear to be everywhere at once or completely non-existent.

Players interested in pre-Jihad games should note that the Manei Domini did not publicly surface prior to their covert actions against Wolf’s Dragoons and the Allied Mercenary Command forces in the Chaos March during the early to mid-3060s, and were not seen organized into their “Shadow Divisions” until after the start of the Jihad. Gamemasters therefore should avoid using Manei Domini characters in events prior to 3060, and should avoid using Manei Domini units in formations larger than a single Level II for any CBT-scale combat scenarios set prior to 3065.

Manei Domini Attitude: Toward most of the Inner Sphere, the Manei Domini generally display an attitude of dispassionate superiority. These people see themselves merely as humble servants of their unseen Master, servants whose lives have already been forfeited in the name of redeeming all humankind. The Manei Domini’s true hatred is reserved for the Clans (whom they

see as humankind’s greatest threat and were originally trained to destroy) and the House Lords (who collectively destroyed the Star League). Thus, Manei Domini rarely mistreat captives out of cruelty, unless they see a tactically beneficial reason to do so, or the captive maintains either noble or Clan blood. Indeed, most Clan captives taken by Manei Domini face summary execution the moment they are identified as such.

Manei Domini among other (non-Domini) Word of Blake forces and personnel affect an air of superiority that verges on the arrogance the Clan warrior caste directs toward the rest of Clan society, underscoring the fact that they do not truly serve in the standard Blakist chain of command, but are somehow removed from it. This attitude can cause friction between regular Blakist forces assigned to work with Domini, though the Manei Domini themselves do not demonstrate more than a passing interest in such internal rivalries. To the Manei Domini, they serve alongside “common” Word of Blake forces and personnel at the behest of their Master—almost as a favor to such “frails”. They will thus appear responsive to a conventional Word of Blake officer’s orders only as long as they see them in the best interests of their own Master’s will.

At the same time, Manei Domini placed in command of non-Domini forces and personnel tend to expect complete and immediate obedience to their commands. It is not uncommon for Domini to shoot normal “subordinates” for failing to comply with their orders—especially when they perceive time is of the essence.

Manei Domini Interaction: In confrontations, Manei Domini are fierce, fearless and immune to the charms of others. Their indoctrination makes it almost impossible to talk these fanatics out of anything they set their minds to, or to turn them against one another, as Manei Domini implicitly trust one another and harbor few ambitions beyond serving their hidden Master. To reflect these realities, CHA-based skills such as Negotiation and Fast Talk automatically suffer a +8 TN modifier when attempting to sway or bribe them, unless the speaker can manage to appeal to the Manei Domini’s belief in his or her Master’s will and get by the automatic distrust of all non-Manei Domini.

In ceremonial occasions—most shrouded in intense secrecy, where only other Manei Domini may be in attendance—Domini (as they occasionally refer to themselves in shorthand) will interlace their normal speech with a language they call “High Dominus.” This language, a corruption of ancient Greek and classical Latin, is used to intone specific greetings or chants that appear to have intense meaning to the Manei Domini, but which often confound outsiders (requiring a Linguistics Action Check at a +2 TN modifier to decipher).

Manei Domini in Combat: In combat, Manei Domini are utterly ruthless, but efficient as well. To maximize their potential, they often take out multiple targets as quickly as possible, but occasionally add one or two “grisly kills” to the mix in an effort to

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demoralize and terrify their remaining opponents. Manei Domini in combat *never* retreat out of personal fear, but they have been known to make strategic withdrawals. When cornered—with no apparent avenue of escape—Manei Domini always fight to the death. They *never* surrender or allow themselves to be captured (unless they somehow deem it beneficial to the Master's will, such as to get close enough to an enemy commander for a suicide bombing). Even unconscious operatives taken in battle have been known to self-destruct, either by their own will (usually upon awakening) or with the aid of a remote trigger by friendly operatives.

Manei Domini Nomenclature: Manei Domini characters with a ranking other than Sigma or Omicron bear names similar to most citizens in the Inner Sphere, but invariably refer to each other—and insist on being referred to—in a formal manner using their Word of Blake military rank (sometimes modified by their Manei Domini Level rank) and their last name. Occasionally, this title can be preceded by the Domini's function designation as well, though few Manei Domini use this full form. For example, a Manei Domini assault trooper with the birth name of James Schmidt who holds an Adept's rank and a Manei Domini level of Omega would refer to himself and answer to "Adept Schmidt," "Adept Omega Schmidt" or "Zombie Adept Omega Schmidt."

Upon achieving Sigma-level rank (or the higher Omicron-level), exceptional Manei Domini are rewarded with a "true name" in a ceremony they refer to as their "ascension" (the most elite Manei Domini are often referred to as "Ascended"). This "true name" (or "ascended name") is commonly taken from those of demons or angels (fallen or otherwise) found in a variety of ancient religions (but never the names of gods). These names are usually (if often obscurely) related to their duties as soldiers of the Master. These "true names" replace the Domini's birth names (to the point where "ascended" Domini will not even acknowledge their birth names openly). Ascension also commonly brings with it a Division-level command or major sub-command in the Word of Blake Shadow Divisions or ROM.

Becoming Manei Domini: Through role-playing, player characters with a Word of Blake affiliation may be inducted into the ranks of the Manei Domini, but to do so, they must have demonstrated fanatical, unquestioning devotion to the Word of Blake—even at the expense of their personal well-being—with no apparent desires beyond service to the Word. Extremely selective, Manei Domini choose only the most devoted to join their ranks, and then only after the applicant has already suffered severe injuries necessitating implantations (in their eyes, the first flesh sacrificed must be done without the promise of replacement).

Considering the extremist views and behaviors of the Manei Domini—not to mention the long "down time" experienced when one is inducted and "enhanced"—players who choose to have their characters join the Manei Domini should be "retired" to NPC

status. Newly inducted Manei Domini are rarely returned to their prior duties after they join the order.

Cosmetic Enhancements (Level: 0)

Either to create a disarmingly enticing effect for infiltration and seduction (or, in the civilian sector, sheer sex appeal and vanity), or to produce shock and terror at a glance (also seen in some aspects of the civilian sector), cosmetic enhancements are one of the more prevalent and inexpensive enhancements available to covert operatives and the likes of the Manei Domini. Combined with the operative's innate skills, the right appearance can loosen lips just as quickly as the right torture techniques, often with much less force and much more reliability than more basic methods.

RPG Rules: The two main types of cosmetic enhancements are Beauty Enhancements (intended to make the operative more attractive, such as plastic surgery to correct natural defects and enhance the human form) and Horror Enhancements (intended to create fear or revulsion, such as extensive scarring, gruesome tattooing or even more grotesque body modifications).

Beauty Enhancements effectively raises the operative's CHA Attribute by 1 point (reflecting generally improved appearance and appeal), and grants the character the Attractive Trait (even if the character already possessed the Unattractive Trait). When making Seduction or Negotiation checks, the operative with Beauty Enhancements receives an additional -1 TN modifier thanks to the enhanced physical features, reflecting the "beyond natural" beauty these enhancements provide.

Horror Enhancements also raise the operative's CHA Attribute by 1 point, to reflect the impact of a much more lasting—albeit terrifying—first impression than he might normally possess. The operative also receives the Unattractive Trait automatically (even if he previously possessed the Attractive Trait), and he gains a -2 TN modifier when making Interrogation or Intimidation checks, reflecting the unearthly fear a mere look from his misshapen form can bring about. These cosmetic enhancements may be amplified by the use of prosthetics enhanced for intimidation effects, but modifiers for only one such prosthetic enhancement may be added at any one time.

The bonuses for cosmetic enhancements do not stack, even if the operative chooses to have multiple enhancements (in which case, the "modified" body part—no bigger than a limb, the torso area or head—must be identified). Cosmetic Beauty and Horror enhancements cancel each other out and so cannot be combined on a single operative.

CBT Rules: Cosmetic enhancements have no impact in CBT game play.

Prosthetic Hand/Foot/Arm/Leg (Level: 0)

Standard Type 4 or Type 5 prosthetic limbs are a normal feature on Manei Domini operatives and are typically easy to spot. An operative may replace any or all limbs with prosthetics of an

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MANEI DOMINI CHARACTER CREATION TABLE

Manei Domini Ranking	Corresponding WoB Rank	Attributes	Traits	Skills (Points)	Maximum Cyber Implant Limit/Level	Minimum Implants
Alpha	Adept	55	8	12-15 (45)	3/2	2
Beta	Adept	57	9	13-16 (55)	4/2	3
Omega	Adept	59	11	15-18 (75)	4/3	3
Tau	Adept	61	12	16-19 (85)	5/4	3
Delta	Demi-Precentor	63	13	17-20 (95)	7/4	4
Sigma	Precentor	65	14	18-21 (100)	8/4	4
Omicron	Precentor	70	15	19-22 (110)	10/5	6

MANEI DOMINI CLASSES

Class Designator	Primary Function	Requisite Implants	Recommended Skills
Ghost	Reconnaissance	Cybernetic Eye or Ear*	Blades, Comms/Any, Interrogation, Navigation/Any, Perception, Security Systems/Any, Stealth, Surveillance, Survival, Tracking
Wraith	Infiltrator	Cosmetic (Non-Horror)**	Computers/Any, Cryptography, Deception, Demolitions, Disguise, Fast-Talk, Perception, Stealth, Security Systems/Any, Surveillance
Banshee	Defense	Full-Body Myomer*	Demolitions, Electronic Counter-Measures, Blade, Martial Arts/Any, Pistols, Rifles, Security Systems/Any, Sensor Operations, Support Weapons, Survival, Tactics/Any
Zombie	Assault	Enhanced Prosthetic*	Blade, Martial Arts/Any, Intimidation, Pistols, Quickdraw, Rifles, Shotguns, Submachine Guns, Support Weapons, Tactics/Any
Phantom	Vehicular Pilot	Vehicular DNI*	Comms/Conventional, Computers/Any, Gunnery/Any (3), Navigation/Any, Piloting/Any, Sensor Operations, Tactics/Any, Technician/Any
Specter	Command	Communications Implant	Administration, Bureaucracy, Communications/Any, Computers/Any, Cryptography, Intimidation, Interrogation, Leadership, Negotiation, Tactics/Any, Strategy
Poltergeist	Special Operative	Any*	Acting, Blades, Computers/Any, Disguise, Deception, Fast-Talk, Interrogation, Negotiation, Perception, Protocol/Any, Security Systems/Any, Seduction, Stealth, Surveillance, Streetwise/Any, Survival

*Any type

**Applies to making the operative appear as outwardly normal as possible.

equivalent type (legs for legs, arms for arms). Prosthetic arms always include the corresponding hand, and prosthetic legs always include the corresponding foot.

RPG Rules: These limbs function as described on p. 145 of *CBT: RPG*, and may be cosmetically enhanced to appear like normal flesh (a +8 modifier applies to any TNs to spot a cosmetically disguised Type 4 prosthesis, while a +12 modifier applies to spot a cosmetically disguised Type 5), left "bare" or may be cosmetically enhanced for intimidation effect (+2 to the Manei Domini's Intimidation or Interrogation skill checks as long as the limb is visible).

CBT Rules: Standard prosthetic limbs have no impact on *CBT* game play.

Enhanced Prosthetic Hand/Foot/Arm/Leg (Level: 1)

Type 4 or Type 5 prosthetic limbs, enhanced to carry a single weapon or tool per limb (though ranged weapons may incorporate a laser sight at no cost), are the most basic upgrades found on Manei Domini operatives. As with standard prosthetics, an operative may replace any or all limbs with enhanced prosthetics of an equivalent type (legs for legs, arms for arms). Enhanced prosthetic arms always include the corresponding hand, and enhanced prosthetic legs always include the corresponding foot.

RPG Rules: The Prosthetic Enhancement Table (see p. 130) provides statistics on prosthetic limb-mounted weapons, while the capabilities of other tools mountable within a cybernetic limb are listed under Other Prosthetic Upgrades. Beyond carrying these

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devices, enhanced limbs function as described on p. 145 of *CBT: RPG*. Additional rules for the tools and weapons appear on pp. 108-115 of *A Guide to Covert Ops*.

CBT Rules: Conventional infantrymen equipped with Enhanced Prosthetic Limbs that include weapons may add the *CBT* damage value of the weapon to the platoon's damage value for any Standard weapons (listed in parentheses beside the weapon's *RPG* damage). The limited range and punch of such weapons means that this bonus damage may only be applied against other units that the platoon engages in its own hex, and that the sum of the damage for all prosthetic weapons used must be rounded normally (rounding 0.5 up) before it may be applied against a target.

Prosthetics with the Grappler or Magnet enhancements may provide an infantry platoon with a -2 modifier for any Anti-Mech Leg or Swarm attacks made by the platoon, but *only* if a significant portion of the troopers in the platoon possess this enhancement.

The additional listed prosthetic enhancements have no impact in *CBT* game play.

Improved Enhanced Prosthetic Hand/Foot/Arm/Leg (Level: 3)

A more sophisticated variant of the standard Enhanced Prosthetics, these Type 4/5 prosthetic limbs may incorporate up to two weapons or tools (or combinations thereof) per limb (laser sights for ranged weapons remain available at no cost toward this limit). More enhanced Manei Domini operatives tend to receive these. As with standard and enhanced prosthetics, an operative may replace any or all limbs with improved enhanced prosthetics of an equivalent type. Improved enhanced prosthetic arms always include the corresponding hand, and improved enhanced prosthetic legs always include the corresponding foot.

RPG Rules: Improved Enhanced Prosthetic Limbs use the same Prosthetic Enhancement Tables for statistics on prosthetic limb-mounted weapons and tools. In *RPG* game play, the use of each weapon or tool in a limb counts as a separate Simple Action. Beyond that, these items function as their counterparts on standard Enhanced Prosthetics (shown above).

CBT Rules: The same rules apply for Improved Enhanced Prosthetics as for their standard kin, but if an operative uses two weapons per limb, the damage for both weapons may be added together. Additional magnetic or grappler enhancements do not improve a platoon's Anti-Mech Attack capabilities.

Secondary Power Supply (Level: 1)

Used by operatives with prosthetic implants, secondary power supplies augment the internal power supplies of standard prosthetics and thus reduce dependency on biological energy sources, like blood sugars. The result is a somewhat less headache-prone operative who can make greater use of installed equipment tied to implants and prosthetics.

RPG Rules: Only characters with prosthetic limbs or myomer implants truly benefit from secondary power supplies, which are installed directly on their existing prosthetics (and thus require an existing prosthetic limb to connect with). Myomer-implanted operatives may reduce their dependence on medication to stave off the chronic headaches caused by implant feedback (requiring doses every 24 hours, rather than every 6). Operatives with enhanced prosthetic equipment that uses power charges rather than ammo (such as lasers and computers) may treat each secondary power supply as an 80-point high-capacity power pack. Operatives may install multiple Secondary Power Supply units, as desired, though each one counts as an additional implant and must be installed on an existing prosthetic (hand, arm, foot or leg).

Any standard recharger or other compatible power source may recharge these secondary supplies as a standard power pack.

CBT Rules: Secondary power supply units have no impact on *CBT* game play.

Prosthetic Leg MASC (Level: 3)

A recent development in Manei Domini technology is the advent of a miniaturized form of BattleMech-style Myomer Accelerator Signal Circuitry (MASC) tailored to the functionality of prosthetic legs. This prosthetic implant—which requires the complete removal of the subject's legs to install (including the hips)—enables its user to deliver incredible bursts of speed. To offset the potential for critical actuator seizure, however, this system is designed to function in much shorter bursts, after which safeties engage to give the legs time to cool down before another burst can be delivered.

To install this system, the operative must have installed two prosthetic legs of the same type, paying the cost for each. Only one PL-MASC system may be installed per operative, but may not be combined with the Triple-Strength Myomer full-body implant.

RPG Rules: An operative must have two prosthetic legs installed in order to add PL-MASC. When engaged, the user can move at twice his or her normal Sprinting speed as a Simple Action. When sprinting in this fashion, the operative will not suffer Fatigue, but any actions performed while moving will suffer a +5 TN modifier. This sprint mode may only be engaged once for every two 5-second turns, however, as the system's safeties will swiftly slow the user down to normal movement rates. Prosthetic legs enhanced with PL-MASC may be cosmetically concealed or enhanced for intimidation (including the use of a reverse-canted design, though this makes the operation of battle armor and most vehicles impossible) in the same fashion (and for the same effect) as other prosthetic limbs.

CBT Rules: Manei Domini conventional infantrymen using PL-MASC may move at 2 Ground MP per turn, rather than the traditional 1 MP, but to do so, the unit must be traveling on foot and *all* troopers must be enhanced with PL-MASC. Mobility restrictions imposed by equipment modify the MPs provided by PL-MASC as

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normal (units that would otherwise be reduced to “move or fire” mobility will have 1 Ground MP and may make attacks with PL-MASC engaged). To reflect the targeting difficulties of their speed bursts, Manei Domini foot infantry using PL-MASC add a +1 to-hit modifier for all attacks.

PL-MASC does not enhance the mobility of battle armor in CBT game play, nor does it affect any other battlefield unit so equipped.

Pain Shunt (Level: 2)

Due to their extensive modifications, many Manei Domini suffer intense, chronic pain caused by their enhanced implants and prosthetics. For most, drugs control this pain, but some operatives have gone far enough to install a “pain shunt” instead. More a case of major brain surgery than implantation, this modification essentially bypasses the pain centers of the brain, rendering the operative largely incapable of sensing agony. The process, however, deadens virtually all tactile senses, which can make even the simplest of actions difficult, lest the operative break a valuable piece of hardware while simply trying to operate it.

An operative may receive only one pain shunt.

RPG Rules: Operatives with a pain shunt essentially gain the Pain Resistance Trait at no cost, but the shunt also imposes the Clumsy Trait for the first year after implantation, to reflect the time it takes for the operative to relearn how to manipulate objects correctly. If the operative already has the Pain Resistance Trait, the character may ignore all Stun effects, and the shunt also reduces the TN modifiers for all wounds by 3 rather than 1. Operatives with a Pain Shunt—with or without the Pain Resistance Trait—also multiply any Fatigue points they suffer by 0.5 (with no rounding), making Fatigue effects take twice as long to kick in.

CBT Rules: MechWarriors, pilots and VDNI-equipped vehicle crews with a Pain Shunt may ignore any pilot damage sustained from ammunition explosions, heat effects and VDNI feedback from internal structure or critical damage. Any other damage (such as that caused by direct hits to the head or falling) is recorded normally, but the pilot with a Pain Shunt does not make a Consciousness Roll.

Non-VDNI vehicle commanders, drivers and crew suffer the effects of the following critical hits only after taking two such hits: Driver Hit, Commander Hit and Crew Killed. Pain-shunted Manei Domini vehicle crews ignore the Crew Stunned critical hit. (In other words, it takes two Commander Hits on a Manei Domini vehicle commander with a Pain Shunt before the combat penalties apply; it takes two Crew Killed results to kill a non-VDNI crew equipped with Pain Shunts.)

Conventional infantry and battle armor units comprised of a significant portion of pain-shunted warriors reduce by half any damage caused by flame-based weapons, reflecting their deadened senses and fearlessness of fire.

Pheromone Effuser (Level: 3)

The Pheromone Effuser is an insidious device developed for Manei Domini operatives whose primary missions involve infiltration and gaining an enemy’s confidence. Essentially a chemical dispenser that can be hidden in the operative’s mouth or nostrils and blown as easily as one exhales, this implant secretes a concentrated, aerosolized mix of pheromones used to enhance seduction and lower the target’s mental and emotional defenses. This implant is almost never seen on “battlefield” Manei Domini, but is (presumably) common in those who operate more covertly.

RPG Rules: Though the Pheromone Effuser refines the agent’s own natural body chemicals, it requires two days to fully recharge its typical 10-dose supply, as well as a weekly infusion of a catalyzing agent the operative may consume orally (often rendered to appear as something innocuous, such as chewing gum, breath mints or even prescription medication). When used, the agent gains a –4 TN modifier on all Seduction, Negotiation, Fast Talk and Deception skill checks (as well as any other checks the game-master feels may be affected) against any subject of the opposite gender within 3 meters of the operative at the time of the dose. This effect lasts for up to 1D6 – 1 hours (to a minimum of 1 hour). Against subjects who are either of the operative’s gender or who are already hostile toward him or her, reduce the TN modifier and the effect’s duration by half.

Operatives may receive more than one pheromone effuser (to a maximum of four). Their effects, however, do not stack. Additional effusers effectively add 10 more doses that the operative may dispense without recharging.

CBT Rules: The Pheromone Effuser effects only impact CBT game play if the operative and a subject still under pheromone influence are engaged in combat against one another. In such a situation, the subject receives a +2 modifier to all attacks against the operative, reflecting the subject’s troubled emotional state and general uncertainty.

Toxin Effuser (Level: 4)

The Toxin Effuser takes the basic approach of the Pheromone Effuser and makes it far more deadly. Also developed for Manei Domini operatives whose primary missions involve infiltration, but with an eye toward inflicting maximum casualties without using explosives, the Toxin Effuser releases specialized chemical agents in much the same fashion as the Pheromone version (exhaled through the operative’s mouth or nostrils). Once inhaled, these chemicals can kill in seconds, making this effuser type effective in close-quarters combat on and off the battlefield. Most Manei Domini with this implant also make use of filtration implants to boost their own immunity, even though a certain degree of chemical reinforcement against poisoning is built into the recovery time after receiving this implant.

RPG Rules: Unlike the Pheromone Effuser, the Toxin Effuser does not draw on chemicals from the agent’s own body, and so

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cannot recharge its typical 10-dose supply. Instead, the operative must directly “reload” this effuser by a direct injection (typically administered right behind the jawbone or into the side of the neck). To avoid accidental self-poisonings, operatives receiving this implant undergo a series of chemical treatments designed to boost their immunity to toxins, granting them the Poison Resistance Trait (if they do not already possess it).

When used, the Toxin Effuser can deliver a poison chemical attack (with an inhalation vector) to any target within 3 meters of the operative at the time of exhalation. The type of toxins used can vary with the operative’s mission parameters, but the most common is a concentrated poison the Manei Domini call “Manei Mortis” (High Dominus for “Hands of Death”), which has the following statistics: [6D6; Lethal; Duration 4; Inhaled; Speed 1; Detection Difficulty +3]. The Toxin Effuser dissipates these chemicals quickly, however; for every full meter of distance between the operative and the target, the toxin’s damage decreases by 1D6, its duration decreases by 1 turn and its speed increases by 1 turn.

Operatives may receive a maximum of two Toxin Effusers. Their effects, however, do not stack. Additional effusers effectively add 10 more doses that the operative may dispense without recharging.

CBT Rules: The Toxin Effuser effects only impact *CBT* game play if operatives so equipped make up a significant part of a conventional infantry platoon, in which case, each trooper adds 0.27 damage points (assuming the use of Manei Mortis) to any successful attacks against other conventional infantry in the same hex. Disregard this effect if the infantry is prepared for hostile environment combat or chemical warfare (such as wearing environmental or vacuum-sealed suits).

Toxin Effusers have no effect non-conventional infantry units.

Cybernetic Eye/Ear/Speech Implants (Level: 2)

Cybernetic eyes enhance the vision of Manei Domini operatives, with available models featuring infrared, telescopic and laser sighting for better use in surveillance and targeting small arms fire. Cybernetic ears include enhanced audio ranges and even radio signal pick-ups to allow for eavesdropping on enemy communications. Cybernetic speech implants allow for either variable voice modulation or ultrasonic frequency speech easily received by enhanced ears. All of these are common tools for Manei Domini operatives, both in combat and for more covert missions.

An operative may install a maximum of two cybernetic eyes (of the same or different types), two cybernetic ears (of the same or different types) and one speech implant (of any type) at one time. Game play bonuses for multiples of any one implant type do not stack.

RPG Rules: The capabilities and game effects of cybernetic eye, ear and speech implants may be found under Cybernetic Upgrades in the table below, while more detailed rules appear in *A Guide to Covert Ops* (see pp. 108-115). As with prosthetic limbs, cybernetic eyes and ears may be cosmetically modified at no point cost. Such cosmetics can make them appear normal (impos-

ing a +8 TN modifier on any attempt to spot them), or enhanced for an intimidation effect—such as rendering ears pointed and alien, or giving eyes an ominous glow (+2 to the Manei Domini’s Intimidation or Interrogation skill checks as long as the enhancement is visible to the subject).

CBT Rules: Manei Domini with the IR or EM capability, or enhanced ears of any kind, may operate as though they have an Active Probe with a 2-hex range only as long as they are deployed as a significant part of any non-battle armored infantry unit. This capability does not apply to Manei Domini operating battle armor, vehicles, ‘Mechs or other non-infantry units—even if using VDNI systems.

Manei Domini infantry troops enhanced with laser sighting or telescopic vision apply a –1 to-hit modifier to ranged attacks made by any non-battle armored infantry unit of which they make up a significant part.

Enhanced speech implants have no impact in *CBT* games.

Multi-Modal Cybernetic Eye/Ear/Speech Implants (Level: 3)

More sophisticated than the standard sensory and speech implants are the so-called multi-modal implants, which may incorporate two different functions, rather than just one, such as infrared (IR) and electromagnetic (EM) scanning optics. These implants are uncommon in lesser-ranked Manei Domini.

As with standard cybernetic eyes, ears or speech implants, an operative may install a maximum of two cybernetic eyes (of the same or different types, including multi-modals), two cybernetic ears (of the same or different types, including multi-modals) and one speech implant (of any type) at one time. Game play bonuses for multiples of any one implant type do not stack.

RPG Rules: Multi-modal implants have the same capabilities and game effects as their single-function counterparts described above, but may switch modes as an Incidental Action each round. Multi-modal eyes and ears may also be cosmetically modified at no point cost, just like standard versions.

CBT Rules: Multi-modal implants provide the same benefits in *CBT* game play as their standard single-mode counterparts. Even if multiple features are present, they offer no additional benefits.

In addition, the enhanced nature of the multi-modal implants allows Domini equipped with them *and* any form of VDNI to synchronize these systems with the external sensors of any battle armor, vehicle or ‘Mech for a more sensitive “direct-to-brain” connection between the warrior and his external sensor systems. As a result of this connection, Manei Domini battle armor units that contain a significant portion of troopers using multi-modal eye or ear implants *and* VDNI, or Domini vehicle and ‘Mech units that use multi-modal implants *and* VDNI, also gain the advantages of an Active Probe with a 2-hex radius (if the unit does not already possess a functioning Active Probe system; if such a system *is* present and functioning, the Probe gains 1 more hex of effective range when used).

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Enhanced Multi-Modal Cybernetic Eye/Ear/Speech Implants (Level: 5)

The ultimate in sensory and speech implants, enhanced multi-modal implants may incorporate up to three different functions in a single installation, such as infrared (IR), electromagnetic (EM) and telescopic vision. These implants are seen only in the most elite Manei Domini.

As with standard and multi-modal cybernetic eyes, ears or speech implants, an operative may install a maximum of two cybernetic eyes (of the same or different types, including multi-modals and enhanced multi-modals), two cybernetic ears (of the same or different types, including multi-modals and enhanced multi-modals) and one speech implant (of any type) at one time. Game play bonuses for multiples of any one implant type do not stack.

RPG Rules: Enhanced multi-modal implants have the same capabilities and game effects as their single- and dual-function counterparts, and switch modes as an Incidental Action each round as the user desires. Enhanced multi-modal eyes and ears may also be cosmetically modified at no point cost, just like standard versions.

CBT Rules: Enhanced multi-modal implants provide the same benefits in *CBT* game play as regular multi-modal eye and ear implants. This including the 2-hex ranged Active Probe capabilities of battle armor and vehicle users also equipped with VDNI systems (if the unit does not already possess a functioning Active Probe system; if such a system *is* present and functioning, the Probe gains 2 more hexes of effective range when used). Even if multiple features are present, they offer no additional benefits.

Recorder/Transmitter/Receiver/Communications Implants (Level: 2)

Electronics to record, transmit, receive or carry on two-way communication via cybernetic eyes, ears or speech implants are used by select Manei Domini operatives of every type. These implants require at least one of the other sensory implants to function, however. An operative may receive a maximum of two such implants at once.

RPG Rules: The range of communications (including one-way transmission/reception) and the duration of recordings are listed for each of these enhancements under Cybernetic Upgrades in the table below. More detailed rules may be found in *A Guide to Covert Ops* (see pp. 108-115).

CBT Rules: Manei Domini equipped with a Transmitter, Receiver or Communications implant (but not a Recorder Implant) provide a +1 modifier to their force's Initiative Roll. This is a one-time modifier and does not stack even if the Manei Domini force possesses additional warriors so enhanced.

Boosted Recorder/Transmitter/Receiver/Communications Implants (Level: 4)

Boosted forms of the standard recorder, transmitter, receiver and two-way communication systems are typically found in more

enhanced Manei Domini, expanding on their utility in the field. As with standard implants of these types, they require at least one of the other sensory implants to function, but an operative may implant only two such devices at once.

RPG Rules: The range of boosted communications (including one-way transmission/reception) and the duration of boosted recordings are listed for each of these enhancements under Cybernetic Upgrades in the table below. These devices follow the same rules as in *A Guide to Covert Ops* (see pp. 108-115), except for their extended range and durations.

CBT Rules: Manei Domini equipped with a Boosted Transmitter, Receiver or Communications implant (but not a Boosted Recorder Implant) provide a +1 modifier to their force's Initiative Roll. This is a one-time modifier and does not stack even if the Manei Domini force possesses additional warriors so enhanced.

If a significant portion of a Manei Domini infantry unit (conventional or battle armored) consists of troopers who possess *both* a Boosted Communications Implant *and* a Multi-Modal (or Enhanced Multi-Modal) Eye or Ear implant, the infantry unit may be counted as part of a friendly C³i network.

Filtration Liver/Lung Implants (Level: 3)

Adapted from survival implant technologies originally mass-produced in the Taurian Concordat, some Manei Domini operatives have demonstrated the ability to withstand hostile atmospheres and ingested toxins by use of special filtration implants. Available for the lungs and for the liver, these implants have enabled operatives to function even in the face of chemical weapon attacks. An operative may install only one filtration implant for the lungs and one for the liver, but neither one is required to install the other.

RPG Rules: A Filtration Liver Implant grants its user the Poison Resistance Trait (or applies a -1 TN modifier to Poison Resistance checks if the character already has that Trait), but when the character sweats, he suffers a +1 TN modifier to all Action Checks involving Charisma (CHA) as well as a +1 to +3 TN modifier for any Stealth Action Checks (at the gamemaster's discretion). A Filtration Lung Implant grants its user an effective AV of 1 against gas attacks and the ability to function without impediment for up to 72 hours in tainted atmospheres. Both implants require 1 hour of "recharge time" for every 3 hours of use in order to be ready for re-use.

CBT Rules: Manei Domini equipped with Filtration Lung Implants ignore any damage taken by "Tainted/Poisonous" atmospheric conditions (see p. 164, *Handbook: House Marik*) and the effects of non-lethal chemical or gas weapons (such as tear gas). In Caustic, Radioactive or Flammable tainted atmospheres, they suffer half the damage described. In Toxic atmospheres of any type, Manei Domini forces equipped with Filtration Lung Implants suffer the effects of a Tainted atmosphere, and treat any lethal chemical weapon attacks as if under the influence of a Tainted/Poisonous atmosphere. This effect only works for vehicle, 'Mech and aerospace fighter pilot operatives, and for infantry units comprised *entirely* of operatives with this implant.

Filtration Liver Implants have no impact in *CBT* game play.

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Vehicular Direct Neural Interface (Level: 3)

The Manei Domini vehicular direct neural interface (VDNI) enables pilots, battle armor troops, MechWarriors and vehicle drivers to literally “jack into” their units. Though the system works in principle like Clan El neural implants, improved circuit breakers and a chemical agent regularly ingested by users of this technology allows these warriors to stave off the worst short-term effects of this technology.

An operative may possess only one VDNI system, which is incompatible with Buffered VDNI (see below).

RPG Rules: VDNI control systems are available to battle armor, BattleMechs, aerospace fighters and combat vehicles up to 200 tons in size, and are so extensive that non-VDNI piloting systems must be removed, making their operation impossible by those warriors not equipped with a neural interface implant. A single VDNI-implanted warrior operates vehicles that ordinarily require crews, so long as the warrior possesses the requisite Piloting and Gunnery skills for the vehicle type.

When plugged into a machine equipped for a direct interface, the operative equipped with VDNI receives a –1 bonus to all Piloting Skill Checks. In addition, the warrior halves all Gunnery Skill Check modifiers for Aimed Shot, Attacker Movement and Target Movement (rounding down).

However, whenever the vehicle suffers internal damage or a critical hit, the controlling character(s) must immediately make a BOD/WIL Attribute Check or suffer 2D6 points of damage (plus the roll’s margin of failure) directly to the head. Armor does not protect against this injury.

In the long term, VDNI can lead to madness—even death—for the user. While Word of Blake scientists have discovered a neural-inhibitor treatment that could theoretically stave off this outcome for as long as a decade, gamemasters may wish to account for this factor by giving VDNI-equipped warriors 1 level of any Madness Trait for every two full years the operative has been implanted (rounding down). Unless the operative has the VDNI implant removed beforehand, at the end of the tenth year with the implants, the operative will suffer terminal brain damage.

CBT Rules: Manei Domini units driven by warriors using VDNI receive a –1 modifier for all Gunnery and Piloting To-Hit Rolls. If the unit’s internal structure suffers any damage, however, the controlling player must roll 2D6 for each internal hit, taking 1 point of damage to the warrior on each result of 8 or more (unless the warrior has a Pain Shunt; see p. 126).

VDNI-equipped vehicle units use the MechWarrior’s Consciousness Table to track such damage to their pilots. For purposes of tracking manpower, any unit equipped with VDNI control systems requires only one pilot (Commander Hit, Gunner Hit and Crew Stunned results are treated as a pilot hit).

Buffered VDNI (Level: 5)

This enhanced form of VDNI emerged a few years after the start of the Jihad, representing the fruits of ongoing research complet-

ed by Manei Domini engineers. Buffered VDNI grants pilots, battle armor troops, MechWarriors and vehicle drivers the same direct control over their machines, but further enhances the fail-safes against neurological feedback to produce an even more potent version of the same technology with fewer side effects.

An operative may possess only one Buffered VDNI system, which is incompatible with standard VDNI.

RPG Rules: Buffered VDNI control systems are available to all units that can accommodate standard VDNI, but require even more specialized controls that render the two systems incompatible. Vehicles that ordinarily require crews need only a single VDNI-implanted warrior to operate them, so long as the warrior possesses the requisite Piloting and Gunnery skills for the vehicle type.

When plugged into a machine equipped for Buffered VDNI, the pilot receives no bonus for Piloting Skill Checks, but may ignore any penalties associated with the use of a Small Cockpit. In addition, the warrior halves all Gunnery Skill Check modifiers for Aimed Shot, Attacker Movement and Target Movement (rounding down).

Buffered VDNI controls resist the feedback caused by ordinary hits to a unit’s internal structure, but if the unit suffers a critical hit, the controlling player must make a BOD/WIL Attribute Check (per hit) to avoid sustaining 2D6 points of damage (plus the roll’s margin of failure) directly to the head. As with standard VDNI, personal armor does not protect against this injury.

Buffered VDNI also extends the time it takes for madness and brain damage to set in. Gamemasters willing to track this effect add and increase Madness Traits to the implanted warrior at a rate of 1 level for every 3 full years of this system’s use, rather than every 2 years. At the end of the fifteenth year with these implants, the operative will suffer crippling brain damage that leaves him comatose.

CBT Rules: Manei Domini units driven by warriors using Buffered VDNI may use a Small Cockpit with no Piloting skill modifier (Buffered VDNI cockpit designs are commonly far more compact than conventional control systems, and many Buffered VDNI warriors actually prefer the compact control systems to allow for more weapon room). Buffered VDNI warriors receive a –1 modifier for all Gunnery To-Hit Rolls, but no Piloting skill modifier applies except the ability to disregard the normal +1 for use of a Small Cockpit.

Warriors using Buffered VDNI do not check for pilot damage from simple internal structure damage; only when critical components such as weapons, actuators, engines and the like are hit does a possibility arise for feedback damage. If the unit controlled by a Buffered VDNI warrior suffers a critical hit, the controlling player must roll 2D6 for each critical hit sustained, taking 1 point of damage to the warrior for each result of 8 or more (unless the warrior also has a Pain Shunt; see p. 126).

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Buffered VDNI-equipped vehicles use the MechWarrior's Consciousness Table to track such damage to their pilots. Like standard VDNI vehicles, any unit equipped with Buffered VDNI control systems requires only one pilot (Commander Hit, Gunner Hit and Crew Stunned results are treated as a pilot hit).

Myomer Full-Body Implants (Level: 4)

An outgrowth of medical myomer applications, myomer full-body implants for combat eventually made their way to special field operatives in certain Inner Sphere intelligence agencies. Though hard to maintain when damaged, the advantages of dermal myomer armor and triple-strength myomer implants have given special operatives incredible strength, fighting prowess and resistance to injury. These effects, to many, are more than worth the excruciating pain of the implantation process and the constant headaches from their ongoing use. Manei Domini field operatives routinely make use of these modifications, and have even been known to combine the two to horrifying effect.

Operatives may mount either or both myomer full-body implant types, paying for each separately, but may not select two myomer full-body implants of the same type. Triple-strength myomer implants may not be installed if the operative already has the PL-MASC implant. The capabilities of each myomer type will stack, where applicable.

RPG Rules: The effects of Dermal and Triple-Strength Myomer implants are shown under the Cybernetic Upgrades header in the table below. Additional rules pertaining to their repair and maintenance may be found in *A Guide to Covert Ops* (see pp. 108-115).

CBT Rules: Each Manei Domini infantryman using full-body dermal armor implants may sustain 1 additional point of damage per trooper, whether in battle armor or out of it. (Manei Domini troops with dermal armor must be noted on the record sheet.) In addition, conventional infantry comprised *entirely* of Manei Domini with dermal armor implants may reduce any burst-fire damage sustained (see pp. 215-217, *TW*) by 1D6 (to a minimum of 1 point), and they do not sustain double damage when attacked

PROSTHETIC ENHANCEMENT TABLE

Enhancement Item Type	AP • Damage Skill	Range [CBT Damage]	Type	S/M/L/E	Shots*	RPG Gameplay Notes
<i>Weapons</i>						
Laser	PIS	3•2D6 [0.07(E)]	E	5/11/25/60	3 pps	Obvious Port (power)
Ballistic	PIS	2•2D6 [0.01(B)]	B	1/3/5/10	2	—
Dart Gun	PIS	1•1D6 [0(B)N]	B	1/2/3/5	1	May use Tranquilizer darts
Needler	PIS	1•3D6 [0.02(B)N]	B	1/3/6/10	5	Splash, AP o vs. barriers
Shotgun	SHT	1•4D6 [0.01(B)]	B	1/3/6/8	1	Splash, +1 TN (recoil)
Sonic Stun	PIS	0•3D6 [0.01(E)N]	S	1/2/3/5	2 pps	Subduing
Sub-Gun	SMG	2•1D6 [0.05(B)]	B	2/5/10/20	20	Burst (4/2), Jam on fumble
Laser Sight	—	—	—	90 (max)	0.05 pps	-2 to weapon attack TNs
Blade	BLA	1•1D6 [0.02(P)]	M	—	—	—
Needle	BLA	0•1D6 [0(P)N]	M	—	1	Effect as poison or medication**
Shocker	BLA	0•3D6 [0.04(P)N]	E	—	3 pps	—
Vibroblade	BLA	4•2D6 [0.14(P)]	M	—	1 pps	—
<i>Non-Weapons</i>						
Climbing Claws	†	1•1D6 [0.02(P)N]	M	—	—	-1 TN to Climb (per limb)
Electromagnet	†	—	—	1/2/3/5	2 ppm	15 kg max; -1 TN to Climb (magnetic, per limb)
Grappler	†	—	—	2/5/8/12	—	150 kg max; -4 TN to ensnare or Climb
Holster/Cargo	†	—	—	—	—	-3 TN to Quickdraw (holster only)
Lockpick	†	—	—	—	—	-1 TN to Security Systems
MicroComp	†	—	—	—	0.005 ppm	-2 TN to Computers; no Electromagnets
PL-MASC	†	—	—	—	—	2x Sprint (once per 2 turns); +5 to other actions

*Energy-based equipment uses HC micro power packs only; ammo is in power per shot (pps) or per minute (ppm) of sustained use.

**Capabilities of poison needles (one injected dose) are discussed in the rules for poisons and antidotes (see pp. 114-117, *Lostech*).

†The RPG Skill for such items varies with the item's use.

CBT Damage Key: E = Energy; B = Ballistic; P = Point-Blank Damage (+2 to-hit target at hex 0); N = Damage vs other conventional infantry only.



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CYBERNETIC UPGRADES TABLE

Item	RPG Game Play Notes
Cybernetic Eye (IR)	No darkness TN mods
Cybernetic Eye (EM)	May detect electronic/magnetic targets as a Radar Sensor (see p. 108, <i>LT</i>); Range: 2 km
Cybernetic Eye (Telescopic)	-2 TN modifier to M/L/E when used with weapons or surveillance skills
Cybernetic Eye (Laser Sight)	-4 TN modifier to M/L/E when used with weapons or surveillance skills
Cybernetic Ear (Enhanced)	-3 TN modifier to surveillance skills; +2 TN to stealth against the user
Cybernetic Ear (Signal Pickup)	100 meter range
Cybernetic Speech (Variable)	—
Cybernetic Speech (Ultrasonic)	—
Recorder Unit	Duration: 6 hours, looping
Boosted Recorder Unit	Duration: 24 hours, looping
Transmitter or Receiver Unit	Range: 100 meters
Boosted Transmitter or Receiver Unit	Range: 1 kilometer
Communications Unit	Range: 100 meters
Boosted Communications Unit	Range: 1 kilometer
Filtration Liver	Poison Resistance Trait; When sweating: +1 TN to CHA skills, +1 to +3 TN to Stealth
Filtration Lung	AV 1 vs. gas weapons
Vehicular Direct Neural Interface (VDNI)	-1 to Piloting, half all Aimed Shot, Attacker Movement and Target Movement mods
Buffered VDNI	Ignore Small Cockpit penalty; half all Aimed Shot, Attacker and Target Movement mods
Dermal Myomer Armor Implant	+2 BOD, +2 STR, +1 AV Increase: 3/3/3/3, Pain Resistance, -1 CHA, Unattractive
Triple-Strength Myomer Implant	+4 STR, +2 REF, Toughness, -1 CHA, Unattractive
Pain Shunt	Pain Resistance Trait and +1 TN to DEX (permanent); Clumsy Trait (1 year)
Pheromone Effuser	Range: 3m; 10 doses; -4 TN to Seduction and related for 1D6-1 hours (min 1)*
Toxin Effuser	Range: 3m; 10 doses; "Manei Mortis": [6D6 (-1D6/meter); Lethal; Duration 4 (-1/meter); Inhaled; Speed: 1 (+1/meter); Detection Difficulty +3]
Secondary Power Supply	80 points per supply; rechargeable; reduce pain med needs for myomer use to 1/24 hr
Cosmetic Beauty Enhancements	Attractive Trait; +1 CHA; -1 TN to Seduction and Negotiation
Cosmetic Horror Enhancements	Unattractive Trait; +1 CHA; -2 TN to Intimidation and Interrogation

Note: For additional rules and descriptions on prosthetic enhancements and cybernetic upgrades, consult *A Guide to Covert Ops* (see pp. 108-115)

*Half TN modifier and duration for subjects of same gender or hostile to operative. See description for additional rules.

in the open. Manei Domini vehicle, fighter and 'Mech pilots equipped with full-body dermal armor ignore any pilot damage from falls, Crew Stunned results or hits to the BattleMech's head/fighter's crew. However, they remain susceptible to neurohelmet feedback from ammunition explosions, heat-induced damage, Crew Killed results and cockpit destruction (unless other implants affect such conditions).

Each Manei Domini conventional infantryman using full-body triple-strength myomer implants can deliver an additional 0.14 damage points per enhanced trooper to other conventional infantry at a range of 0 hexes, reflecting their enhanced melee potential. If wearing battle armor, these troops may add 1 point of damage per trooper with TSM to any attacks made at a Range of 0, including anti-'Mech and anti-infantry attacks. TSM implants enable vehicle, fighter and 'Mech pilots so equipped to ignore any pilot damage from falls and crew hits, but not direct hits to the

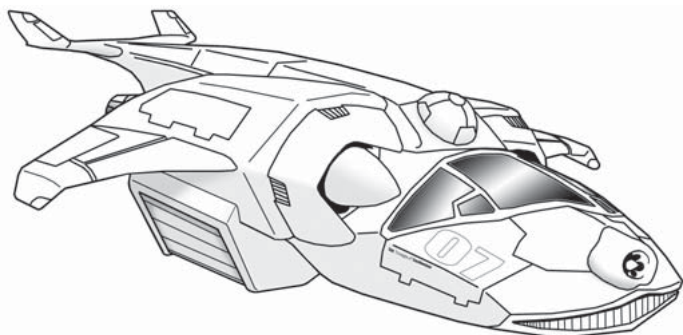
head/fighter's crew (unless the warrior also has the dermal armor implant). These warriors also remain susceptible to neurohelmet feedback from ammunition explosions, heat-induced damage and Crew Killed results on vehicles.

Regardless of the myomer implant type used, conventional infantry platoons comprised entirely of troopers using these implants reduce the crew needs of all support weapons carried by 1 (or 2, if both implants are used) to a minimum of 1 crewman. In addition, Encumbering weapons are considered non-encumbering. These platoons may carry up to three Support Weapons per squad (four if both full-body implant types are used). Platoons created under these conditions suffer no MP reduction, regardless of the number of Support Weapons carried, and the range bracket used by the infantry weapons carried is based on that of the Support Weapons if more than 1 implant per squad is used.

RULES ANNEX

NEW VEHICLES

The following section provides new battlefield units that debuted between 3070 and 3072.



HIRYO ARMORED INFANTRY TRANSPORT

Mass: 40 tons

Movement Type: WiGE

Power Plant: GM 205 Light

Cruising Speed: 86.4 kph

Flank Speed: 129.6 kph

Armor: New Samarkand Heavy Ferro-Fibrous

Armament:

1 Lord's Light 2b Snub-Nose PPC

Manufacturer: Pesht Motors

Primary Factory: Unity

Communications System: Neil 400

Targeting and Tracking System: Chichester ASR 26

Overview

Deploying an ever-increasing number of armored infantry units, the DCMS found itself critically short of suitable transports during the brief Combine-Ghost Bear War. Seeking to rectify this, the Procurement Department called on the Combine's vehicle manufacturers. Many offered variants of existing hovercraft or VTOL designs, but it was Pesht Motors Wing in Ground Effect (WiGE) craft that captured Procurement's attention.

Better known in the domestic market for civilian vehicles, Pesht Motors was embroiled in competition with Wakizashi Enterprises. By introducing their Kio transport WiGE, Wakizashi (a military aerospace manufacturer) was poaching on what Pesht Motors had long considered their private preserve. In response, Pesht had started to develop WiGE designs at their Unity production plant even before the call for a new transport came. In trials, the Hiryo (Flying Dragon) made an impressive showing, prompting the Procurement Department (despite aggressive lobbying by Wakizashi executives) to order fifty units for field evaluation.

Capabilities

Powered by one of GM's new light fusion plants, the Hiryo's range and endurance is limited only by its crew. Meanwhile, the

New Samarkand Heavy Ferro Fibrous armor is the strongest armor produced in the Inner Sphere to date. Outperforming the best the first Star League could offer, this technology was acquired in a secret technology exchange with the Free Worlds League. In return the League received design for new Combine-manufactured Particle Projection Cannon — such as the Lords Light 2b Snub Nose PPC mounted in the Hiryo's nose.

Well protected within the vehicle's core is a compartment large enough to transport eight troopers in full battle armor. While on board, the suits can charge off the Hiryo's fusion engine, and the compartment provides storage for additional ammunition and supplies. It even includes a limited maintenance facility where minor repairs and basic maintenance can be performed in the field. While grounded, troops use a rear ramp to enter and exit the craft, but eight extra hatches located along the Hiryo's underside allow for rapid airborne deployment of jump-capable suits in combat.

Deployment

The Hiryo's first live combat came when defending Pesht against the Word of Blake in 3069. Operating in support of the Fourth Pesht Regulars, a squadron of prototype Hiryos deployed Pesht security forces to meet Blakist raiders. Though suffering heavy losses, they successfully defended the Pesht Motors production lines. When the Blakists' 29th Militia and 42nd Shadow Divisions returned in 3071, fighters from the 42nd encountered the vehicles in greater numbers. Heavily armored and more agile at lower altitudes, the Hiryos damaged several low-flying *Defiance* and *Shiva* OmniFighters. Meanwhile the Hiryo's battle armor stalled the 29th's drive on the District headquarters, forcing the invaders to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in order to carry the day.

Despite the loss of Pesht, production of the Hiryo continues on Unity. Battle armor units attached to the Pesht Regulars and the Ryuken have received many of these craft. Meanwhile, the Procurement Department has expanded its original order to equip the Legion of Vega and the Ghost Regiments.

Variants

Since its introduction, Pesht have experimented with limited production runs of modified WiGEs. The first replaces the snub-nose PPC with a pair of light PPCs, making the vehicle slightly more effective at longer range. A second variant mounts an MRM 20 system and three tons of ammunition. Although this weapon is more effective than a PPC against soft targets, the loss of half the WiGEs transport capacity has limited deployment of this "gun-ship" version.

A number of field refits have experimented with replacing some or all of the Battle Armor compartment capacity with other weapons and equipment, but to date none have found favor with the DCMS.

RULES ANNEX

Type: **Hiryo Armored Infantry Transport**

Technology Base: Inner Sphere

Movement Type: WiGE

Tonnage: 40

Battle Value: 665

Equipment

Internal Structure:

Engine:

205

Type

Light Fusion

Cruising MP:

8

Flank MP:

12

Heat Sinks:

10

Control Equipment:

Lift Equipment:

Turret:

Armor Factor (Heavy FF):

119

Internal

Structure

Armor

Value

Front

4

34

R/L Side

4

30/30

Rear

4

25

Mass

4

10

0

2

4

0

6

Weapons and Ammo

Location

Tonnage

Snub-Nose PPC

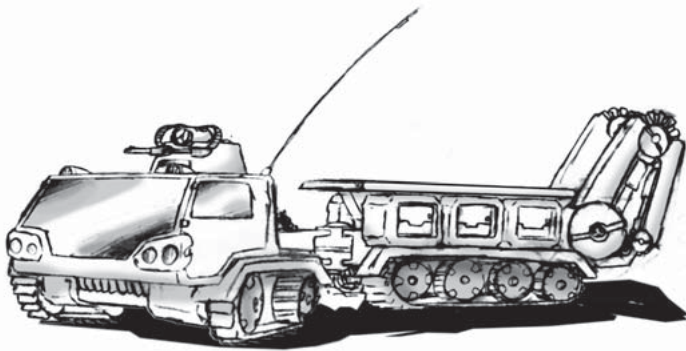
Front

6

Battle Armor Compartment

Body

8



JI-50 TRANSPORTABLE FIELD REPAIR UNIT

In a perfect universe, repair crews would have plenty of time to safely perform their task. But the battlefields of the 31st century

are far from a perfect universe. Though many repair and recovery vehicles aimed at this need exist throughout the Inner Sphere, Johnson Industries decided to fill a niche market by designing a Support Vehicle that could repair and refit combat units while in the field.

Early discussions called for a wheeled design to keep the engine smaller, but this approach was quickly dismissed in favor of a tracked vehicle's superior ability to overcome tough terrain. At sixty tons, the JI-50 Transportable Field Repair Unit (nicknamed the "Jifty"), can attain speeds over 60 kph on uneven terrain, and achieves a tactically unlimited range thanks to a fusion-based power supply. While not impressive for a combat unit, the JI-50 is quick enough to get in and out of a combat zone with minimal confrontation. A pair of light machine guns and 3.5 tons of industrial-grade armor (thick enough to withstand a medium laser strike without breaching) are all that keep the Jifty safe when autocannons and missiles start firing.

For its real mission, the JI-50 mounts a pair of lift hoists and boasts almost 20 tons of internal cargo space for parts and tools used in the field. This cargo varies with the units the Jifty is supporting; for 'Mechs, these vehicles usually carry ammo and armor, saving other repairs for proper facilities on the rear lines. Jifties supporting other vehicles often carry more varied equipment, such as spare tracks and tires to quickly service the motive systems in today's combat vehicles.

About half of the JI-50s sold to date have gone to the Federated Suns military and affiliated mercenaries, but purchase orders have come in from interested buyers across the Inner Sphere. Jifties supporting Hansen's Roughriders have extended the field time of the mercenaries' combat units, confounding the Taurian forces in the Pleiades Cluster by keeping more Roughrider units battle-worthy. In the Battle for New Syrtis, JI-50s supporting a lance of *Longbows* charged a company of Capellan infantry that ambushed the fire support 'Mechs. Two Jifties were lost, but the company was defeated.

No official variants of the Jifty exist, but many crews have tinkered with these vehicles in the field. The most common change is swapping out the light machine guns for heavier, standard machine guns. A few other crews who are less worried about infantry often take advantage of the Jifty's fusion engine to install lasers. Some have even cut into the cargo space to add a third lift hoist in an effort to increase hoisting capability. Johnston Industries, meanwhile, has begun proceedings against Blue Bull, Inc. for their ICE knock-off, the so-called Nifty.



RULES ANNEX

Type: **Jl-50 "Jifty" Transportable Field Repair Unit**

Chassis Type: Tracked (Medium)

Mass: 60 tons

Equipment Rating: D/X-X-D/E

Battle Value: 233

Equipment

		Mass
Chassis/Controls:		13.5
Engine/Trans:	Fusion	16
Cruise MP:	4	
Flank MP:	6	
Heat Sinks:	0	0
Fuel:	N/A	0
Turret:	0	
Armor Factor (BAR 6):	92	3.5
	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Front	6	27
Right/Left Side	6	20/20
Rear	6	25

Weapons and Ammo

	Location	Mass
2 Light Machine Guns	Front	1
Ammo (Light MG) 100	Body	.5

Crew: 4

Cargo

19.5 ton standard 1 Door (Rear)

Notes: Features Armored Chassis and Controls Modification and 2 Lift Hoists (6 tons, Rear)

CELESTIAL OMNIMECH SERIES

In the closing months of 3070, reports began filtering out of the Word of Blake Protectorate about a series of new 'Mech designs—six in all—that bore many of the same stylistic lines and seemed reserved for the most elite troops. By 3072, this new series had a name—the *Celestials*—and were the preferred rides of the most elite MechWarriors in the Word of Blake Militia and their Manei Domini "Shadow" Divisions.

Overview

Intelligence gathered from various sources indicates that the *Celestial* series was apparently the brainchild of a Doctor Devon Cortland, a military engineer who initially came into contact with the Word of Blake as an assistant on the teams that developed the *Toyama* BattleMech. How exactly Cortland came into contact with the Word of Blake's mysterious Manei Domini warriors—in particular their leader, Precentor Apollyon—is unknown, but Apollyon apparently requested that Cortland be placed in charge of a project to forge a new series of OmniMechs uniquely suited to the Word's hyper-elite.

What followed that assignment grows murkier still, as it appears the first *Celestials* began development at the Martinson Armaments factories on Terra and Mars, shortly after the Word of Blake's slaughter of the Com Guard fleet. By then, Doctor Cortland was becoming known as a curiosity: a favored non-Domini, non-warrior with a fanatical devotion to the so-called "Hands of the Master" and their Precentor Apollyon. Why the first *Celestials* went to Word of Blake Militia forces and non-Domini garrison troops on Terra—evidently at Cameron St. Jamais' request—remains a complete mystery.

Capabilities

The entire *Celestial* series is a masterstroke of Word of Blake military engineering and propaganda. Previously seen as lacking in OmniMech development since the floundering of the *Grand Crusader* Omni Project, it came as a complete shock to many observers to see six new designs emerge with similar core elements and a distinctive supernatural flair. Each model is tailored more to the Manei Domini in style, using compact cockpits, improved C³ computers and light fusion engines to enhance survivability and combat coordination while saving weight for weapons and armor. Named for angelic beings from a variety of classical religions—notably Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hindi—the *Celestials* cut a menacing image to boot.

As a further example of the exotic stylings given to these machines, Cortland named their various standard configurations using Latin terms, replacing the standard designations of "Primary," "Alpha" and so forth with "Invictus," "Dominus" and so on. The relation between these designations and the bastardized Manei Domini language called High Dominus further strengthens the ties between these machines, Doctor Cortland, and the Word of Blake's cyber warriors.



RULES ANNEX

Deployment

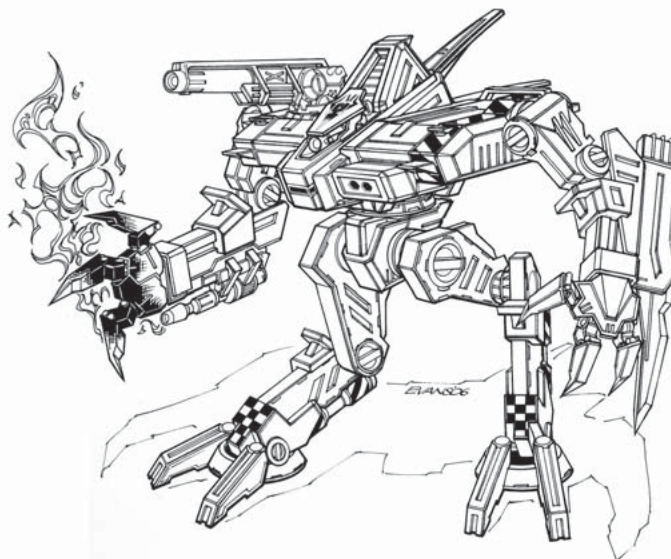
Since their debut in late 3069 among the forces defending Terra, the *Celestials* have appeared in gradually increasing numbers among the ranks of most of the Word's identified elite cadres, including their cybernetically enhanced Shadow Division forces. Reliable reports from Gibson indicate that the Word has begun production of all six OmniMechs there as well as on Terra and Mars, presumably in an effort to maximize the designs' proliferation, and supporting a theory some analysts have put forth that the Word may plan to eventually phase out all non-OmniMechs in their military in favor of units like these.

Rumors abound, however, that the machines coming out of Gibson—earmarked only for Apollyon's cyber-minions—are being developed with specific modifications meant to enhance their use by the Manei Domini alone.

Variants

Each of the *Celestials* is built with a distinctive role in mind, even though they can be configured for a variety of sub-roles as well. The lightest—the 30-ton *Malak* (Arabic for "angel")—is a dedicated recon unit, fast and well armored. The 45-ton *Preta* (a Hindu term for "ghost") is more of a skirmisher, used to harass or flush out heavier prey while sweeping away lighter forces. The 60-ton *Grigori* (for a fallen class of Christian angels), and the 70-ton *Deva* (a term used in Hindu, Buddhist and other religions for minor divinities or angels) both play complementary roles as the main brawlers, with the *Grigori* often acting as fire support for the *Deva's* close-in fighter. The 85-ton *Seraph* and the 100-ton *Archangel* (both named for angelic elements of Judeo-Christian religion) often serve as anchor units for *Celestial*-based Level IIs, whether as command elements or assault troops.

In the end, these machines accomplished everything Cortland set out to do for the Word of Blake and his "Lord Apollyon": they underscored the industrial might of the Word, infused their military with bold new units and filled the ranks of the elite with machines that can strike fear into an enemy's heart while providing a symbol the fanatics can rally behind. It is likely for this very reason that Apollyon inducted Cortland into his order of cyborgs, bestowing upon him (in addition to a king's ransom in cybernetics) a name culled from Christian demonology: Vapula.



Type: **C-MK-O Malak**
 Technology Base: Inner Sphere
 Tonnage: 30
 Battle Value: 837
 Pod Space: 9.5 tons

Equipment

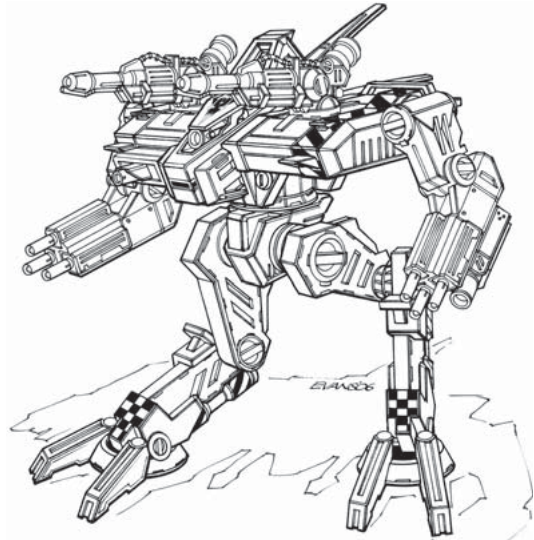
		Mass
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	1.5
Engine:	210 Light	7
Walking MP:	7	
Running MP:	11	
Jumping MP:	0	
Heat Sinks:	10 [20]	0
Gyro (XL):		1.5
Cockpit (Small):		2
Armor Factor (Light FF):	101	6
	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Head	3	9
Center Torso	10	14
Center Torso (rear)		4
R/L Torso	7	11
R/L Torso (rear)		3
R/L Arm	5	10
R/L Leg	7	13



RULES ANNEX

Weapon and Space Allocation

Location	Fixed	Spaces Remaining
Head	None	2
Center Torso	None	0
Right Torso	2 Light Engine 4 Endo Steel	5
Left Torso	Light Ferro-Fibrous 2 Light Engine 2 C <i>i</i> Computer 3 Double Heat Sink 4 Endo Steel	1
Right Arm	6 Endo Steel	2
Left Arm	3 Double Heat Sink	3
Right Leg	2 Light Ferro-Fibrous	0
Left Leg	2 Light Ferro-Fibrous	0



Weapons and Ammo Location Critical Tonnage

Invictus (Primary) Weapons Configuration

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
Flamer	RA	1	1
Retractable Blade	LA	3	2
Light PPC	RT	2	3
SRM 2	LT	1	1
Ammo (SRM) 50	RT	1	1
CASE	RT	1	.5
ER Medium Laser	H	1	1

Weapons and Ammo Location Critical Tonnage

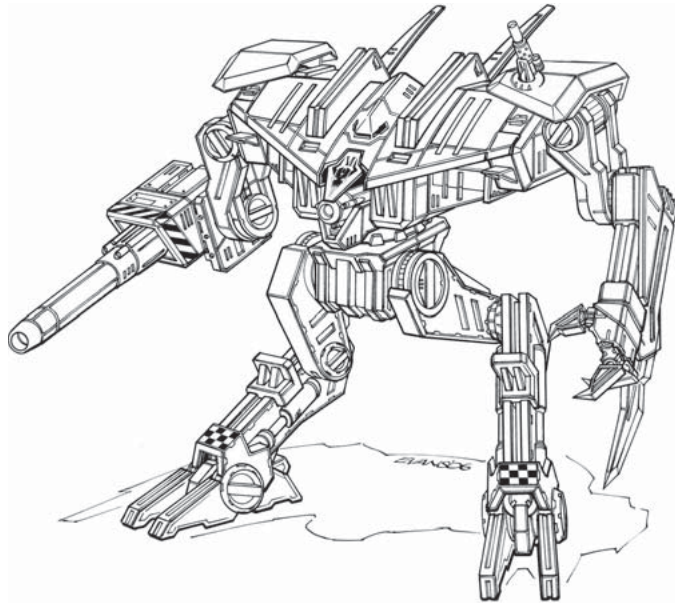
Dominus (Alternate A) Weapons Configuration

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
3 Light Machine Guns	RA	3	1.5
Light MG Array	RA	1	.5
Ammo (Light MG) 100	RT	1	.5
CASE	RT	1	.5
ER Small Laser	RT	1	.5
Flamer	RT	1	1
3 Light Machine Guns	LA	3	1.5
Light MG Array	LA	1	.5
ER Medium Laser	LA	1	1
Flamer	LT	1	1
ER Medium Laser	H	1	1

Battle Value: 869



RULES ANNEX



Type: **C-PRT-O Preta**
 Technology Base: Inner Sphere
 Tonnage: 45
 Battle Value: 1,122
 Pod Space: 15 tons

Equipment

Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	Mass
Engine:	270 Light	11
Walking MP:	6	
Running MP:	9	
Jumping MP:	0	
Heat Sinks:	10 [20]	0
Gyro:		3
Cockpit (Small):		2
Armor Factor:	144	9

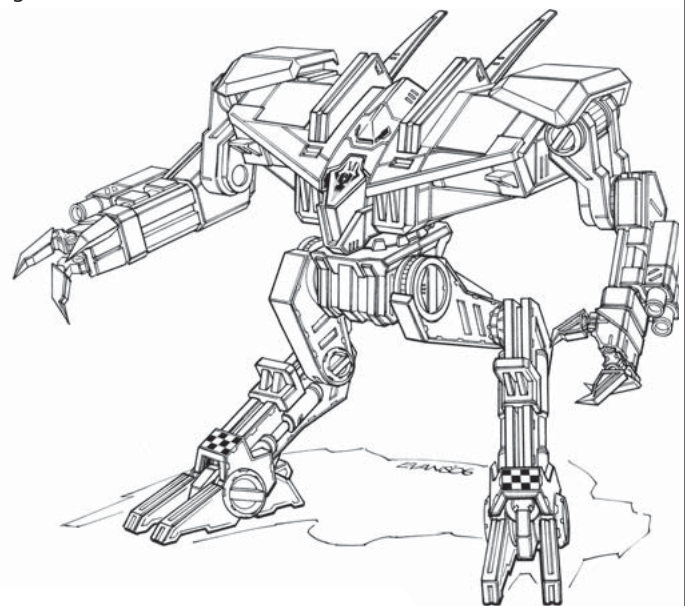
	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	14	20
Center Torso (rear)		7
R/L Torso	11	16
R/L Torso (rear)		5
R/L Arm	7	13
R/L Leg	11	20

Weapon and Space Allocation

Location	Fixed	Spaces Remaining
Head	None	2
Center Torso	2 C ³ i Computer	0
Right Torso	2 Light Engine	8
	2 Endo Steel	
Left Torso	2 Light Engine	8
	2 Endo Steel	
Right Arm	3 Endo Steel	5
Left Arm	3 Endo Steel	5
Right Leg	2 Endo Steel	0
Left Leg	2 Endo Steel	0

Weapons and Ammo

Location	Critical	Tonnage
<i>Invictus (Primary) Weapons Configuration</i>		
Snub-Nose PPC	RA	2
Double Heat Sink	RT	3
Retractable Blade	LA	4
Anti-Missile System	LT	1
Ammo (AMS) 12	LT	1
CASE	LT	1
Light PPC	H	2



Weapons and Ammo

Location	Critical	Tonnage
<i>Dominus (Alternate A) Configuration</i>		
Double Heat Sink	RA	3
2 ER Medium Lasers	RA	2
4 Improved Jump Jets	RT	8
Double Heat Sink	LA	3
2 ER Medium Lasers	LA	2
4 Improved Jump Jets	LT	8
Targeting Computer	H	1

Battle Value: 1,371

RULES ANNEX



Type: **C-GRG-O Grigori**
 Technology Base: Inner Sphere
 Tonnage: 60
 Battle Value: 1,313
 Pod Space: 28 tons

Equipment

Internal Structure:
 Engine: 240 Light
 Walking MP: 4
 Running MP: 6
 Jumping MP: 0
 Heat Sinks: 10 [20]
 Gyro (XL): 1.5
 Cockpit (Small): 2
 Armor Factor (Light FF): 186

Mass

6
 9
 0
 1.5
 2
 11

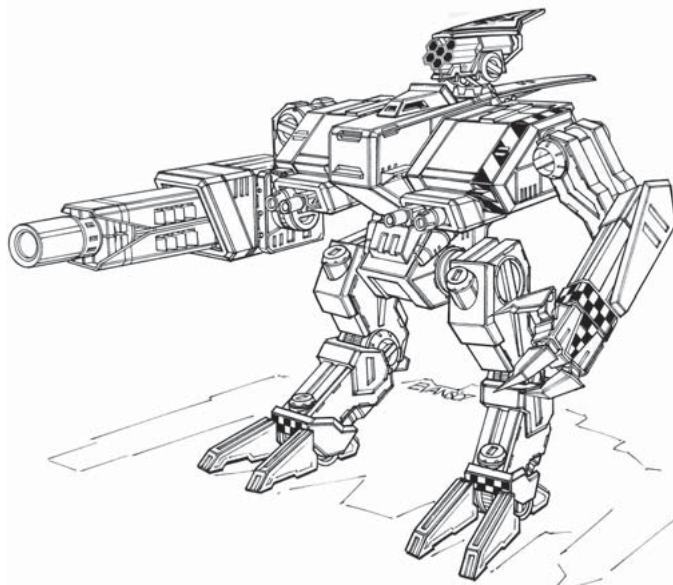
	Internal Structure	Armor Value
--	--------------------	-------------

Head	3	9
Center Torso	20	26
Center Torso (rear)		9
R/L Torso	14	20
R/L Torso (rear)		6
R/L Arm	10	19
R/L Leg	14	26

Weapon and Space Allocation

Location	Fixed	Spaces Remaining
Head	None	2
Center Torso	None	0
Right Torso	2 Light Engine	10
Left Torso	2 Light Engine 2 C ³ i Computer	8
Right Arm	3 Light Ferro-Fibrous	5
Left Arm	3 Double Heat Sink	5
Right Leg	2 Light Ferro-Fibrous	0
Left Leg	2 Light Ferro-Fibrous	0

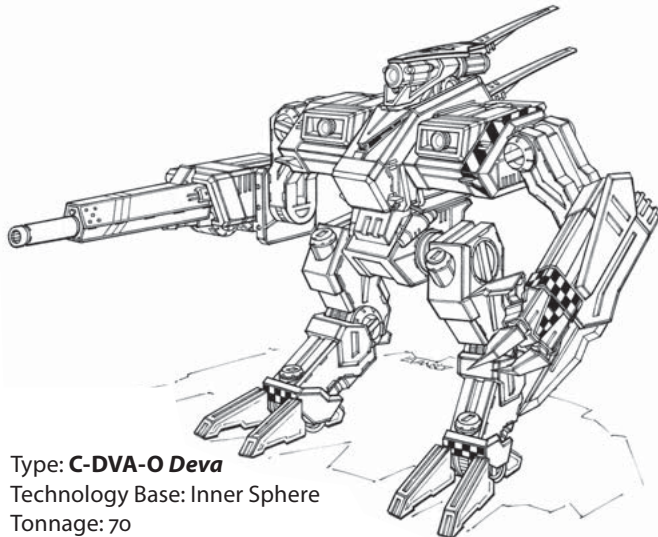
Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
<i>Invictus (Primary) Weapons Configuration</i>			
MRM 20	RA	3	7
Ammo (MRM) 12	RT	1	1
CASE	RT	1	.5
Retractable Blade	LA	4	3.5
LRM 15	LT	3	7
Ammo (LRM) 16	RT	2	2
Streak SRM 4	LT	1	3
Ammo (Streak) 25	RT	1	1
Light PPC	H	2	3



Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
<i>Dominus (Alternate A) Weapons Configuration</i>			
Heavy PPC	RA	4	10
2 Jump Jets	RT	2	2
2 Jump Jets	LT	2	2
ER Medium Laser	RT	1	1
Medium Pulse Laser	RT	1	2
Double Heat Sink	RT	3	1
ER Medium Laser	LT	1	1
Medium Pulse Laser	LT	1	2
Double Heat Sink	LT	3	1
Streak SRM 6	H	2	4.5
Ammo (Streak) 15	RT	1	1
CASE	RT	1	.5

Battle Value: 1,577

RULES ANNEX



Type: **C-DVA-O Deva**
 Technology Base: Inner Sphere
 Tonnage: 70
 Battle Value: 1,655
 Pod Space: 29.5 tons

Equipment

Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	3.5
Engine:	280 Light	12
Walking MP:	4	
Running MP:	6	
Jumping MP:	0	
Heat Sinks:	11 [22]	1
Gyro (Heavy Duty):		6
Cockpit (Small):		2
Armor Factor:	216	13.5

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	22	33
Center Torso (rear)		10
R/L Torso	15	20
R/L Torso (rear)		10
R/L Arm	11	22
R/L Leg	15	30

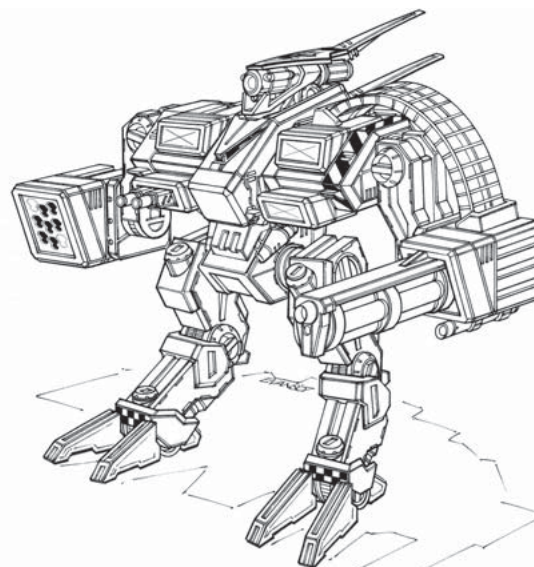
Weapon and Space Allocation

Location	Fixed	Spaces Remaining
Head	None	2
Center Torso	None	2
Right Torso	2 Light Engine 2 Endo Steel 2 C ³ i Computer	6
Left Torso	2 Light Engine 4 Endo Steel	6
Right Arm	2 Endo Steel	6
Left Arm	2 Endo Steel	6
Right Leg	2 Endo Steel	0
Left Leg	2 Endo Steel	0

Weapons and Ammo Location Critical Tonnage

Invictus (Primary) Weapons Configuration

Gauss Rifle	RA	7	15
Ammo (Gauss) 8	RA	1	1
Light PPC	RT	2	3
CASE	RT	1	.5
Retractable Blade	LA	5	4
Light PPC	LT	2	3
Light PPC	H	2	3



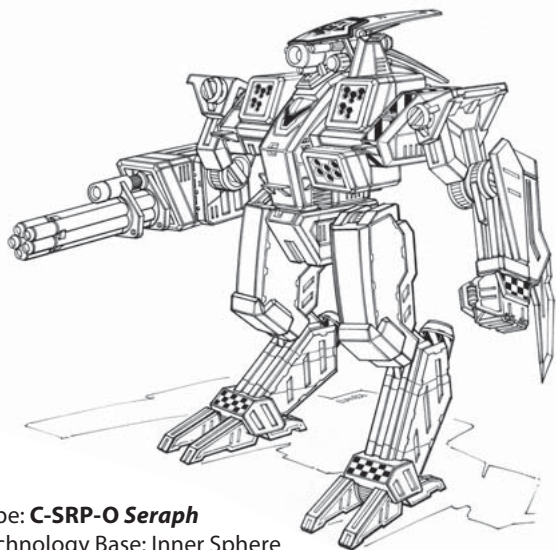
Weapons and Ammo Location Critical Tonnage

Dominus (Alternate A) Weapons Configuration

MML 7	RA	4	4.5
Rotary AC/5	LA	6	10
ER Small Laser	LA	1	.5
Ammo (RAC) 60	LT	3	3
Ammo (MML/LRM) 17	LT	1	1
Ammo (MML/SRM) 14	LT	1	1
CASE	LT	1	.5
Targeting Computer	RT	4	4
2 ER Medium Lasers	RT	2	2
Light PPC	H	2	3

Battle Value: 1,794

RULES ANNEX



Type: **C-SRP-O Seraph**
 Technology Base: Inner Sphere
 Tonnage: 85
 Battle Value: 1,888
 Pod Space: 43 tons

Equipment

Internal Structure:		Mass
Engine:	255 Light	8.5
Walking MP:	3	10
Running MP:	5 [6]	
Jumping MP:	0	
Heat Sinks:	10 [20]	0
Gyro:		3
Cockpit (Small):		2
Armor Factor:	256	16

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	27	40
Center Torso (rear)		13
R/L Torso	18	26
R/L Torso (rear)		9
R/L Arm	14	27
R/L Leg	18	35

Weapon and Space Allocation

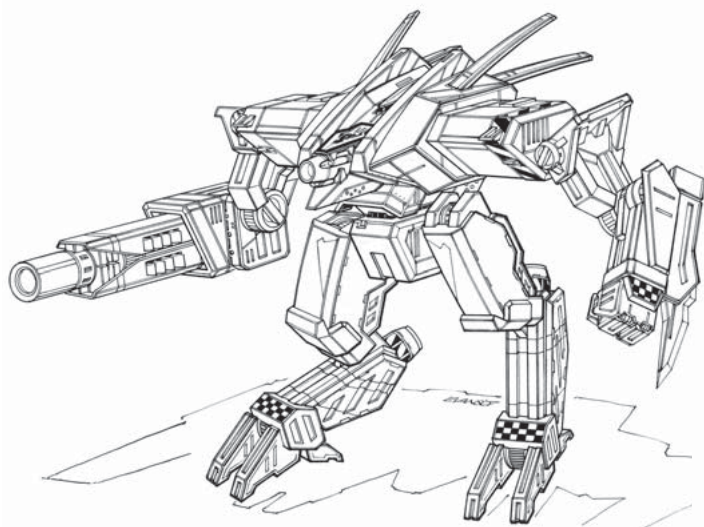
Location	Fixed	Spaces Remaining
Head	None	2
Center Torso	None	2
Right Torso	2 Light Engine	10
Left Torso	2 Light Engine	8
	2 C ⁱ Computer	
Right Arm	None	8
Left Arm	2 Triple-Strength Myomer	6
Right Leg	2 Triple-Strength Myomer	0
Left Leg	2 Triple-Strength Myomer	0

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
<i>Invictus (Primary) Weapons Configuration</i>			
Double Heat Sink	RA	3	1
Ultra AC/10	RA	7	13
MML 5	RT	3	3
Ammo (Ultra) 30	RT	3	3
Ammo (MML/SRM) 20	RT	1	1
Ammo (MML/LRM) 24	RT	1	1
Ammo (Streak) 15	RT	1	1
CASE	RT	1	.5
Retractable Blade	LA	6	5
Double Heat Sink	LT	3	1
MML 5	LT	3	3
Streak SRM 6	LT	2	4.5
Snub-Nose PPC	H	2	6



Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
<i>Dominus (Alternate A) Configuration</i>			
Double Heat Sink	RA	3	1
Heavy PPC	RA	4	10
2 Improved Jump Jets	RT	4	4
Targeting Computer	RT	5	5
Improved Jump Jet	CT	2	2
Retractable Blade	LA	6	5
2 Improved Jump Jets	LT	4	4
Medium Pulse Laser	LT	1	2
ER Medium Laser	LT	1	1
TAG	LT	1	1
Plasma Rifle	H	2	6
Ammo (Plasma Rifle)	LT	1	1
Ammo (Plasma Rifle)	RT	1	1
Battle Value: 2,641			

RULES ANNEX



Type: **C-ANG-O Archangel**
 Technology Base: Inner Sphere OmniMech
 Tonnage: 100
 Battle Value: 2,355
 Pod Space: 36 tons

Equipment

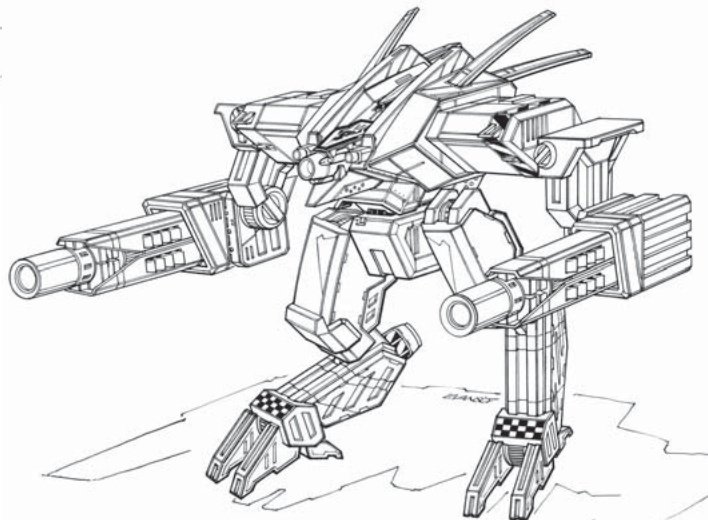
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	Mass
Engine:	300 Compact	5
Walking MP:	3	28.5
Running MP:	5	
Jumping MP:	0	
Heat Sinks:	12 [24]	2
Gyro (Compact):		4.5
Cockpit (Small):		2
Armor Factor:	307	19.5

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	31	47
Center Torso (rear)		15
R/L Torso	21	32
R/L Torso (rear)		10
R/L Arm	17	34
R/L Leg	21	42

Weight and Space Allocation

Location	Fixed	Spaces Remaining
Head	None	2
Center Torso	2 C ³ i Computer	5
Right Torso	5 Endo Steel	7
Left Torso	5 Endo Steel	7
Left Arm	None	8
Right Arm	None	8
Right Leg	2 Endo Steel	0
Left Leg	2 Endo Steel	0

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
<i>Invictus (Primary) Weapons Configuration</i>			
Heavy PPC	RA	4	10
Jump Jet	RT	1	2
Double Heat Sink	RT	3	1
Retractable Blade	LA	6	5.5
Jump Jet	LT	1	2
Targeting Computer	LT	4	4
Plasma Rifle	H	2	6
Jump Jet	CT	1	2
Guardian ECM Suite	CT	2	1.5
Ammo (Plasma Rifle) 20	CT	2	2



Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
<i>Dominus (Alternate A) Weapons Configuration</i>			
Heavy PPC	RA	4	10
2 Double Heat Sinks	RA	6	2
Snub-Nose PPC	H	2	6
2 ER Medium Lasers	CT	2	2
Double Heat Sink	CT	3	1
Heavy PPC	LA	4	10
2 Double Heat Sinks	LA	6	2
2 Double Heat Sinks	LT	6	2
Double Heat Sink	RT	3	1

Battle Value: 2,216

RULES ANNEX



Djinn Battle Armor

Accompanying the *Celestial* OmniMech series—supporting the prevailing theory that they were developed at the same time, but with *only* the Manei Domini in mind—a series of six distinct battle armor classes have also appeared in the Word of Blake's ranks. Dubbed the "Demon" series, these suits are another apparent brainchild of Doctor Cortland/Demi-Precentor Vapula, and come in a broad range of sizes and configurations. They have seen extensive use in various engagements since 3070, particularly the troubled worlds of the Blakist Protectorate, the mean streets of Word-occupied Galatea, and more recently the brutal suppression of the New Gibson Freedom League in 3071. At present, hard data has been gleaned for only one of these suit designs—the lightweight Djinn—but intelligence operators are continuing to accumulate data on the other five Demons as of this writing.

Stylistically, the Djinn is clearly custom-built for the Manei Domini, whose cybernetic enhancements lessen their need for the more robust physiques of most other battle armored troopers. This lends the suit a sleeker form, which uses a dog-legged design (apparently inspired by the Clan Salamander) and an adaptation of the partial wing system found on the Combine's Kage. The style of the Djinn is enhanced for a more terrifying appearance, lending it the distinctly demonic look that gave the series its name—making the suit as much a psychological weapon as a dedicated anti-infantry platform. Its armament consists of a devastating machine gun and a light TAG unit to spot for friendly artillery, making it ideal for supporting other units while sweeping built-up areas clear of enemy presence.

Type: Djinn (Demon) Battle Armor

Manufacturer: Gibson Federated BattleMechs

Primary Factory: Gibson

Technology Base: Inner Sphere

Chassis Type: Humanoid

Weight Class: Light

Maximum Weight: 750 kg

Battle Value: 27

Swarm/Leg Attack/Mechanized/AP: Yes/Yes/Yes/No

Equipment	Slots	Mass
Chassis:		100 kg
Motive System:		
Ground MP:	1	0 kg
Jumping MP:	4	75 kg
Manipulators:		
Left Arm:	Battle Claw	15 kg
Right Arm:	Battle Claw	15 kg
Armor:	Advanced	5
Armor Value:	5 + 1 (Trooper)	200 kg

Weapons and Equipment	Location	Slots (Capacity)	Mass
Partial Wing	Body	1	200 kg
Machine Gun (50 shots)	Right Arm	1	100 kg
Light TAG (60 shots)	Body	1	35 kg

CLASSIC BATTLETECH

ARMOR DIAGRAM

WIGE VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

VEHICLE DATA

Type: HIRYO ARMORED INFANTRY TRANSPORT

Movement Points: Tonnage: 40
 Cruising: 8 Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Flank: 12 3069
 Movement Type: WIGE
 Engine Type: Light Fusion

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Snub-Nose PPC	Front	10/8/5	-	9	13	15
			(DE/V)				

Battle Armor Compartment (8 tons)

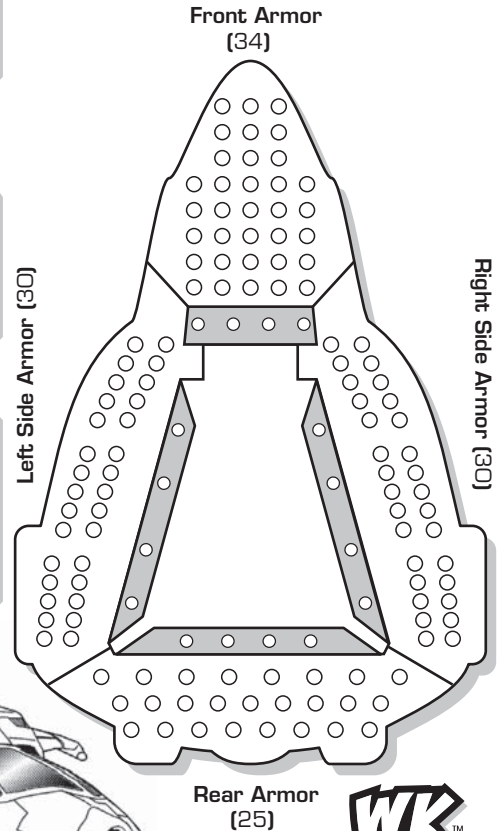
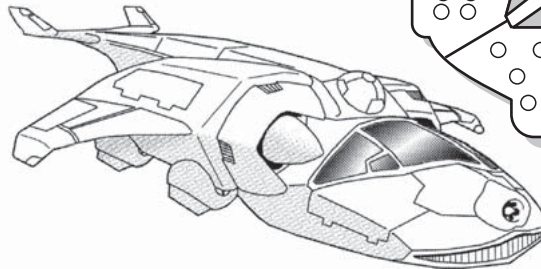
Cost: 6,110,000 C-bills BV: 665

CREW DATA

Crew: 3
 Gunnery Skill: ___ Driving Skill: ___
 Commander Hit +1 Driver Hit +2
 Modifier to all Skill rolls Modifier to Driving Skill rolls

CRITICAL DAMAGE

Turret Locked Engine Hit
 Sensor Hits +1 +2 +3 D
 Motive System Hits +1 +2 +3
 Stabilizers
 Front Left Right
 Rear Turret



GROUND COMBAT VEHICLE HIT LOCATION TABLE

2D6 Roll	ATTACK DIRECTION		
	FRONT	REAR	SIDES
2*	Front (critical)	Rear (critical)	Side (critical)
3	Front†	Rear†	Side†
4	Front†	Rear†	Side†
5	Right Side†	Left Side†	Front†
6	Front	Rear	Side
7	Front	Rear	Side
8	Front	Rear	Side (critical)*
9	Left Side†	Right Side†	Rear†
10	Turret	Turret	Turret
11	Turret	Turret	Turret
12*	Turret (critical)	Turret (critical)	Turret (critical)

*A result of 2 or 12 (or an 8 if the attack strikes the side) may inflict a critical hit on the vehicle. For each result of 2 or 12 (or 8 for side attacks), apply damage normally to the armor in that section. The attacking player then automatically rolls once on the Ground Combat Vehicle Critical Hits Table below (see *Combat*, p. 192 in *Total Warfare* for more information). A result of 12 on the Ground Combat Vehicles Hit Location Table may inflict critical hit against the turret; if the vehicle has no turret, a 12 indicates the chance of a critical hit on the side corresponding to the attack direction.

†The vehicle may suffer motive system damage even if its armor remains intact. Apply damage normally to the armor in that section, but the attacking player also rolls once on the Motive System Damage Table at right (see *Combat*, p. 192 in *Total Warfare* for more information). Apply damage at the end of the phase in which the damage takes effect.
 ‡Side hits strike the side as indicated by the attack direction. For example, if an attack hits the right side, all Side results strike the right side armor. If the vehicle has no turret, a turret hit strikes the armor on the side attacked.

MOTIVE SYSTEM DAMAGE TABLE

2D6 Roll	EFFECT*
2-5	No effect
6-7	Minor damage; +1 modifier to all Driving Skill Rolls
8-9	Moderate damage; -1 Cruising MP, +2 modifier to all Driving Skill Rolls
10-11	Heavy damage; only half Cruising MP (round fractions up), +3 modifier to all Driving Skill Rolls
12+	Major damage; no movement for the rest of the game. Vehicle is immobile.

Attack Direction Modifier:	Vehicle Type Modifiers:	
Hit from rear	Tracked, Naval	+0
Hit from the sides	Wheeled	+2
	Hovercraft, Hydrofoil	+3
	WIGE	+4

*All movement and Driving Skill Roll penalties are cumulative. However, each Driving Skill Roll modifier can only be applied once. For example, if a roll of 6-7 is made for a vehicle, inflicting a +1 modifier, that is the only time that particular +1 can be applied; a subsequent roll of 6-7 has no additional effect. This means the maximum Driving Skill Roll modifier that can be inflicted from the Motive System Damage Table is +6. If a unit's Cruising MP is reduced to 0, it cannot move for the rest of the game, but is not considered an immobile target. In addition, all motive system damage takes effect at the end of the phase in which the damage occurred. For example, if two units are attacking the same Combat Vehicle during the Weapon Attack Phase and the first unit inflicts motive system damage and rolls a 12, the -4 immobile target modifier would not apply for the second unit. However, the -4 modifier would take effect during the Physical Attack Phase. If a hover vehicle is rendered immobile while over a Depth 1 or deeper water hex, it sinks and is destroyed.

GROUND COMBAT VEHICLE CRITICAL HITS TABLE

2D6 Roll	LOCATION HIT				
	FRONT	SIDE	REAR	TURRET	
2-5	No Critical Hit	No Critical Hit	No Critical Hit	No Critical Hit	
6	Driver Hit	Cargo/Infantry Hit	Weapon Malfunction	Stabilizer	
7	Weapon Malfunction	Weapon Malfunction	Cargo/Infantry Hit	Turret Jam	
8	Stabilizer	Crew Stunned	Stabilizer	Weapon Malfunction	
9	Sensors	Stabilizer	Weapon Destroyed	Turret Locks	
10	Commander Hit	Weapon Destroyed	Engine Hit	Weapon Destroyed	
11	Weapon Destroyed	Engine Hit	Ammunition**	Ammunition**	
12	Crew Killed	Fuel Tank*	Fuel Tank*	Turret Blown Off	

*If Combat Vehicle has ICE engine only. If Combat Vehicle has a fusion engine, treat this result as Engine Hit.

**If Combat Vehicle carries no ammunition, treat this result as Weapon Destroyed.

CLASSIC BATTLETECH

ARMOR DIAGRAM

WIGE VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

VEHICLE DATA

Type: HIRYO B ARMORED INFANTRY TRANSPORT
Movement Points: _____ **Tonnage:** 40
Cruising: 8 **Tech Base:** Inner Sphere
Flank: 12 3069
Movement Type: WIGE
Engine Type: Light Fusion

CREW DATA

Crew: 3
Gunnery Skill: _____ **Driving Skill:** _____
Commander Hit: +1 **Driver Hit:** +2
Modifier to all Skill rolls Modifier to Driving Skill rolls

CRITICAL DAMAGE

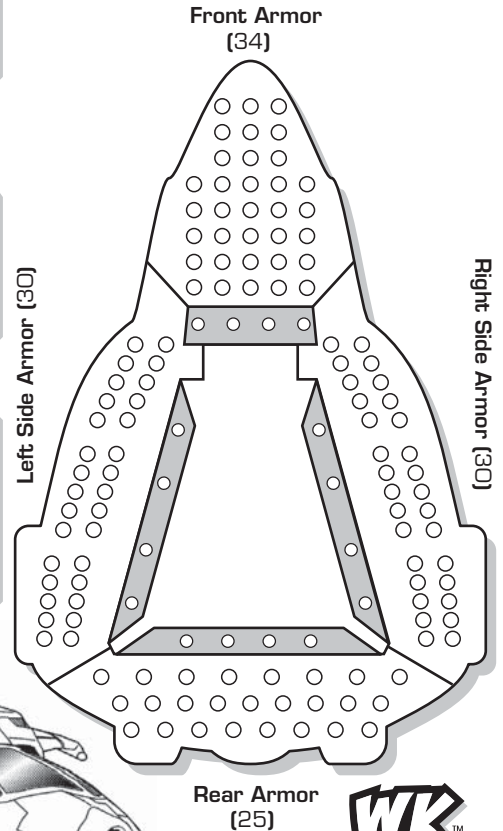
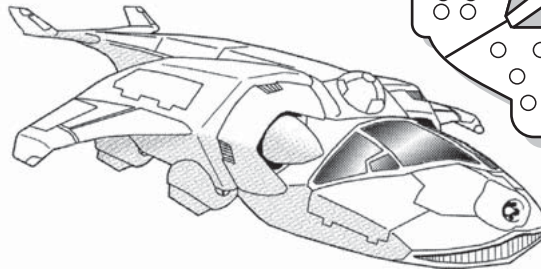
Turret Locked: **Engine Hit:**
Sensor Hits: +1 +2 +3 D
Motive System Hits: +1 +2 +3
Stabilizers:
Front: **Left:** **Right:**
Rear: **Turret:**

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
2	Light PPC	Front	5 [DE]	3	6	12	18

Battle Armor Compartment (8 tons)

Cost: 6,110,000 C-bills **BV:** 686



GROUND COMBAT VEHICLE HIT LOCATION TABLE

2D6 Roll	ATTACK DIRECTION		
	FRONT	REAR	SIDES
2*	Front (critical)	Rear (critical)	Side (critical)
3	Front †	Rear †	Side †
4	Front †	Rear †	Side †
5	Right Side †	Left Side †	Front †
6	Front	Rear	Side
7	Front	Rear	Side
8	Front	Rear	Side (critical)*
9	Left Side †	Right Side †	Rear †
10	Turret	Turret	Turret
11	Turret	Turret	Turret
12*	Turret (critical)	Turret (critical)	Turret (critical)

*A result of 2 or 12 (or an 8 if the attack strikes the side) may inflict a critical hit on the vehicle. For each result of 2 or 12 (or 8 for side attacks), apply damage normally to the armor in that section. The attacking player then automatically rolls once on the Ground Combat Vehicle Critical Hits Table below (see *Combat*, p. 192 in *Total Warfare* for more information). A result of 12 on the Ground Combat Vehicles Hit Location Table may inflict critical hit against the turret; if the vehicle has no turret, a 12 indicates the chance of a critical hit on the side corresponding to the attack direction.

†The vehicle may suffer motive system damage even if its armor remains intact. Apply damage normally to the armor in that section, but the attacking player also rolls once on the Motive System Damage Table at right (see *Combat*, p. 192 in *Total Warfare* for more information). Apply damage at the end of the phase in which the damage takes effect.
 ‡Side hits strike the side as indicated by the attack direction. For example, if an attack hits the right side, all Side results strike the right side armor. If the vehicle has no turret, a turret hit strikes the armor on the side attacked.

MOTIVE SYSTEM DAMAGE TABLE

2D6 Roll	EFFECT*
2-5	No effect
6-7	Minor damage; +1 modifier to all Driving Skill Rolls
8-9	Moderate damage; -1 Cruising MP, +2 modifier to all Driving Skill Rolls
10-11	Heavy damage; only half Cruising MP (round fractions up), +3 modifier to all Driving Skill Rolls
12+	Major damage; no movement for the rest of the game. Vehicle is immobile.

Attack Direction Modifier:	Vehicle Type Modifiers:	
Hit from rear	Tracked, Naval	+0
Hit from the sides	Wheeled	+2
	Hovercraft, Hydrofoil	+3
	WIGE	+4

*All movement and Driving Skill Roll penalties are cumulative. However, each Driving Skill Roll modifier can only be applied once. For example, if a roll of 6-7 is made for a vehicle, inflicting a +1 modifier, that is the only time that particular +1 can be applied; a subsequent roll of 6-7 has no additional effect. This means the maximum Driving Skill Roll modifier that can be inflicted from the Motive System Damage Table is +6. If a unit's Cruising MP is reduced to 0, it cannot move for the rest of the game, but is not considered an immobile target. In addition, all motive system damage takes effect at the end of the phase in which the damage occurred. For example, if two units are attacking the same Combat Vehicle during the Weapon Attack Phase and the first unit inflicts motive system damage and rolls a 12, the -4 immobile target modifier would not apply for the second unit. However, the -4 modifier would take effect during the Physical Attack Phase. If a hover vehicle is rendered immobile while over a Depth 1 or deeper water hex, it sinks and is destroyed.

GROUND COMBAT VEHICLE CRITICAL HITS TABLE

2D6 Roll	LOCATION HIT				
	FRONT	SIDE	REAR	TURRET	
2-5	No Critical Hit	No Critical Hit	No Critical Hit	No Critical Hit	
6	Driver Hit	Cargo/Infantry Hit	Weapon Malfunction	Stabilizer	
7	Weapon Malfunction	Weapon Malfunction	Cargo/Infantry Hit	Turret Jam	
8	Stabilizer	Crew Stunned	Stabilizer	Weapon Malfunction	
9	Sensors	Stabilizer	Weapon Destroyed	Turret Locks	
10	Commander Hit	Weapon Destroyed	Engine Hit	Weapon Destroyed	
11	Weapon Destroyed	Engine Hit	Ammunition**	Ammunition**	
12	Crew Killed	Fuel Tank*	Fuel Tank*	Turret Blown Off	

*If Combat Vehicle has ICE engine only. If Combat Vehicle has a fusion engine, treat this result as Engine Hit.

**If Combat Vehicle carries no ammunition, treat this result as Weapon Destroyed.

CLASSIC BATTLETECH

ARMOR DIAGRAM

WIGE VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

VEHICLE DATA

Type: HIRYO C ARMORED INFANTRY TRANSPORT
Movement Points: **Tonnage:** 40
Cruising: 8 **Tech Base:** Inner Sphere
Flank: 12 3069
Movement Type: WIGE
Engine Type: Light Fusion

CREW DATA

Crew: 3
Gunnery Skill: ____ **Driving Skill:** ____
Commander Hit: +1 **Driver Hit:** +2
Modifier to all Skill rolls Modifier to Driving Skill rolls

CRITICAL DAMAGE

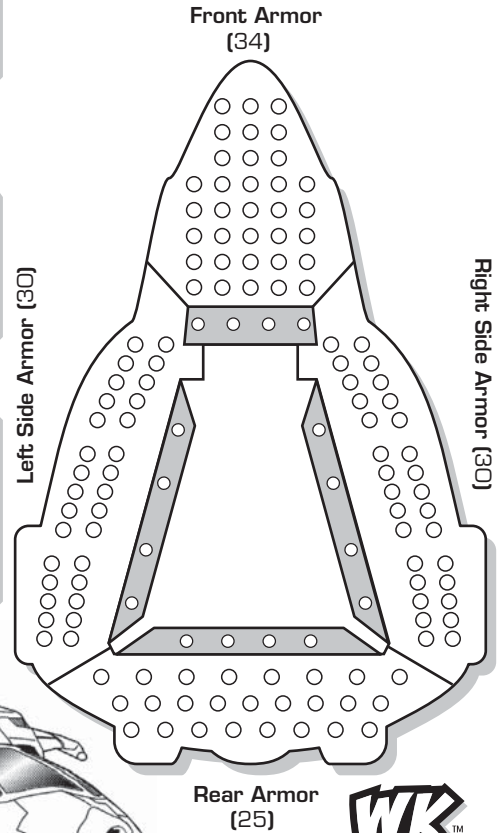
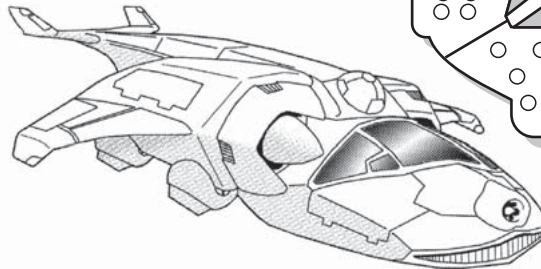
Turret Locked: **Engine Hit:**
Sensor Hits: +1 +2 +3 D
Motive System Hits: +1 +2 +3
Stabilizers:
Front: **Left:** **Right:**
Rear: **Turret:**

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	MRM 20	Front	1/Msl (M,C)	-	3	8	15

Battle Armor Compartment (4 tons)
Ammo (MRM 20) 36

Cost: 5,499,000 C-bills **BV:** 645



GROUND COMBAT VEHICLE HIT LOCATION TABLE

2D6 Roll	ATTACK DIRECTION		
	FRONT	REAR	SIDES
2*	Front (critical)	Rear (critical)	Side (critical)
3	Front†	Rear†	Side†
4	Front†	Rear†	Side†
5	Right Side†	Left Side†	Front†
6	Front	Rear	Side
7	Front	Rear	Side
8	Front	Rear	Side (critical)*
9	Left Side†	Right Side†	Rear†
10	Turret	Turret	Turret
11	Turret	Turret	Turret
12*	Turret (critical)	Turret (critical)	Turret (critical)

*A result of 2 or 12 (or an 8 if the attack strikes the side) may inflict a critical hit on the vehicle. For each result of 2 or 12 (or 8 for side attacks), apply damage normally to the armor in that section. The attacking player then automatically rolls once on the Ground Combat Vehicle Critical Hits Table below (see *Combat*, p. 192 in *Total Warfare* for more information). A result of 12 on the Ground Combat Vehicles Hit Location Table may inflict critical hit against the turret; if the vehicle has no turret, a 12 indicates the chance of a critical hit on the side corresponding to the attack direction.

†The vehicle may suffer motive system damage even if its armor remains intact. Apply damage normally to the armor in that section, but the attacking player also rolls once on the Motive System Damage Table at right (see *Combat*, p. 192 in *Total Warfare* for more information). Apply damage at the end of the phase in which the damage takes effect.

‡Side hits strike the side as indicated by the attack direction. For example, if an attack hits the right side, all Side results strike the right side armor. If the vehicle has no turret, a turret hit strikes the armor on the side attacked.

MOTIVE SYSTEM DAMAGE TABLE

2D6 Roll	EFFECT*
2-5	No effect
6-7	Minor damage; +1 modifier to all Driving Skill Rolls
8-9	Moderate damage; -1 Cruising MP, +2 modifier to all Driving Skill Rolls
10-11	Heavy damage; only half Cruising MP (round fractions up), +3 modifier to all Driving Skill Rolls
12+	Major damage; no movement for the rest of the game. Vehicle is immobile.

Attack Direction Modifier:	Vehicle Type Modifiers:	
Hit from rear	Tracked, Naval	+0
Hit from the sides	Wheeled	+2
	Hovercraft, Hydrofoil	+3
	WIGE	+4

*All movement and Driving Skill Roll penalties are cumulative. However, each Driving Skill Roll modifier can only be applied once. For example, if a roll of 6-7 is made for a vehicle, inflicting a +1 modifier, that is the only time that particular +1 can be applied; a subsequent roll of 6-7 has no additional effect. This means the maximum Driving Skill Roll modifier that can be inflicted from the Motive System Damage Table is +6. If a unit's Cruising MP is reduced to 0, it cannot move for the rest of the game, but is not considered an immobile target. In addition, all motive system damage takes effect at the end of the phase in which the damage occurred. For example, if two units are attacking the same Combat Vehicle during the Weapon Attack Phase and the first unit inflicts motive system damage and rolls a 12, the -4 immobile target modifier would not apply for the second unit. However, the -4 modifier would take effect during the Physical Attack Phase. If a hover vehicle is rendered immobile while over a Depth 1 or deeper water hex, it sinks and is destroyed.

GROUND COMBAT VEHICLE CRITICAL HITS TABLE

2D6 Roll	LOCATION HIT				
	FRONT	SIDE	REAR	TURRET	
2-5	No Critical Hit	No Critical Hit	No Critical Hit	No Critical Hit	
6	Driver Hit	Cargo/Infantry Hit	Weapon Malfunction	Stabilizer	
7	Weapon Malfunction	Weapon Malfunction	Cargo/Infantry Hit	Turret Jam	
8	Stabilizer	Crew Stunned	Stabilizer	Weapon Malfunction	
9	Sensors	Stabilizer	Weapon Destroyed	Turret Locks	
10	Commander Hit	Weapon Destroyed	Engine Hit	Weapon Destroyed	
11	Weapon Destroyed	Engine Hit	Ammunition**	Ammunition**	
12	Crew Killed	Fuel Tank*	Fuel Tank*	Turret Blown Off	

*If Combat Vehicle has ICE engine only. If Combat Vehicle has a fusion engine, treat this result as Engine Hit.

**If Combat Vehicle carries no ammunition, treat this result as Weapon Destroyed.

CLASSIC BATTLETECH™

ARMOR DIAGRAM

TRACKED SUPPORT VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

VEHICLE DATA

Type: JI-50 "JIFTY" TRANSPORTABLE FIELD REPAIR UNIT

Movement Points: **Tonnage:** 60
 Cruising: 4 **Tech Base:** Inner Sphere
 Flank: 6 3069
Movement Type: Tracked
Engine Type: Fusion

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
2	Light MGs	Front	1 (DB,AI)	—	2	4	6
2	Lift Hoists	Rear	—	—	—	—	—
1	Door	Rear	—	—	—	—	—

Ammo: (Light MG) 100
 Cargo: 19.5 tons

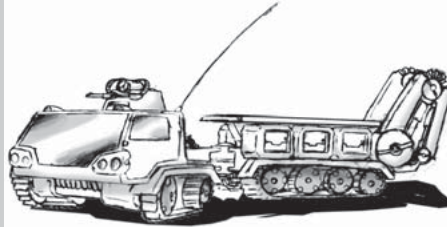
Cost: 1,324,400 C-bills **BV:** 233

CREW DATA

Crew: 4
Gunnery Skill: ___ **Driving Skill:** ___
 Commander Hit +1 Driver Hit +2
Modifier to all Skill rolls Modifier to Driving Skill rolls

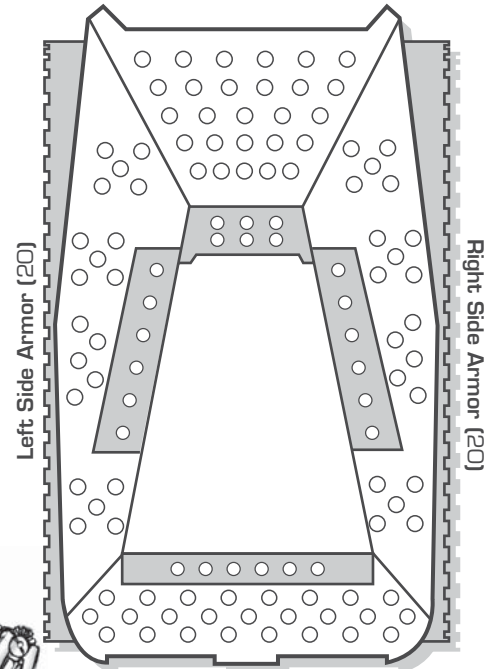
CRITICAL DAMAGE

Turret Locked Engine Hit
 Sensor Hits +1 +2 +3 D
 Motive System Hits +1 +2 +3
 Stabilizers
 Front Left Right
 Rear Turret



BAR: 6

Front Armor
(27)



Rear Armor
(25)



GROUND COMBAT VEHICLE HIT LOCATION TABLE

2D6 Roll	ATTACK DIRECTION		
	FRONT	REAR	SIDES
2*	Front (critical)	Rear (critical)	Side (critical)
3	Front †	Rear †	Side †
4	Front †	Rear †	Side †
5	Right Side †	Left Side †	Front †
6	Front	Rear	Side
7	Front	Rear	Side
8	Front	Rear	Side (critical)*
9	Left Side †	Right Side †	Rear †
10	Turret	Turret	Turret
11	Turret	Turret	Turret
12*	Turret (critical)	Turret (critical)	Turret (critical)

*A result of 2 or 12 (or an 8 if the attack strikes the side) may inflict a critical hit on the vehicle. For each result of 2 or 12 (or 8 for side attacks), apply damage normally to the armor in that section. The attacking player then automatically rolls once on the Ground Combat Vehicle Critical Hits Table below (see *Combat*, p. 192 in *Total Warfare* for more information). A result of 12 on the Ground Combat Vehicles Hit Location Table may inflict critical hit against the turret, if the vehicle has no turret, a 12 indicates the chance of a critical hit on the side corresponding to the attack direction.
 †The vehicle may suffer motive system damage even if its armor remains intact. Apply damage normally to the armor in that section, but the attacking player also rolls once on the Motive System Damage Table at right (see *Combat*, p. 192 in *Total Warfare* for more information). Apply damage at the end of the phase in which the damage takes effect.
 ‡Side hits strike the side as indicated by the attack direction. For example, if an attack hits the right side, all Side results strike the right side armor. If the vehicle has no turret, a turret hit strikes the armor on the side attacked.

MOTIVE SYSTEM DAMAGE TABLE

2D6 Roll	EFFECT*
2-5	No effect
6-7	Minor damage; +1 modifier to all Driving Skill Rolls
8-9	Moderate damage; -1 Cruising MP, +2 modifier to all Driving Skill Rolls
10-11	Heavy damage; only half Cruising MP (round fractions up), +3 modifier to all Driving Skill Rolls
12+	Major damage; no movement for the rest of the game. Vehicle is immobile.

Attack Direction Modifier:	Vehicle Type Modifiers:	
Hit from rear	+1	Tracked, Naval +0
Hit from the sides	+2	Wheeled +2
		Hovercraft, Hydrofoil +3
		WIGE +4

*All movement and Driving Skill Roll penalties are cumulative. However, each Driving Skill Roll modifier can only be applied once. For example, if a roll of 6-7 is made for a vehicle, inflicting a +1 modifier; that is the only time that particular +1 can be applied; a subsequent roll of 6-7 has no additional effect. This means the maximum Driving Skill Roll modifier that can be inflicted from the Motive System Damage Table is +6. If a unit's Cruising MP is reduced to 0, it cannot move for the rest of the game, but is not considered an immobile target. In addition, all motive system damage takes effect at the end of the phase in which the damage occurred. For example, if two units are attacking the same Combat Vehicle during the Weapon Attack Phase and the first unit inflicts motive system damage and rolls a 12, the -4 immobile target modifier would not apply for the second unit. However, the -4 modifier would take effect during the Physical Attack Phase. If a hover vehicle is rendered immobile while over a Depth 1 or deeper water hex, it sinks and is destroyed.

GROUND COMBAT VEHICLE CRITICAL HITS TABLE

2D6 Roll	LOCATION HIT			
	FRONT	SIDE	REAR	TURRET
2-5	No Critical Hit	No Critical Hit	No Critical Hit	No Critical Hit
6	Driver Hit	Cargo/Infantry Hit	Weapon Malfunction	Stabilizer
7	Weapon Malfunction	Weapon Malfunction	Cargo/Infantry Hit	Turret Jam
8	Stabilizer	Crew Stunned	Stabilizer	Weapon Malfunction
9	Sensors	Stabilizer	Weapon Destroyed	Turret Locks
10	Commander Hit	Weapon Destroyed	Engine Hit	Weapon Destroyed
11	Weapon Destroyed	Engine Hit	Ammunition**	Ammunition**
12	Crew Killed	Fuel Tank*	Fuel Tank*	Turret Blown Off

*If Combat Vehicle has ICE engine only. If Combat Vehicle has a fusion engine, treat this result as Engine Hit.

**If Combat Vehicle carries no ammunition, treat this result as Weapon Destroyed.

CLASSIC BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: **C-MK-O MALAK INVICTUS**

Movement Points: Tonnage: 30
 Walking: 7 Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Running: 11 3069
 Jumping: 0

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

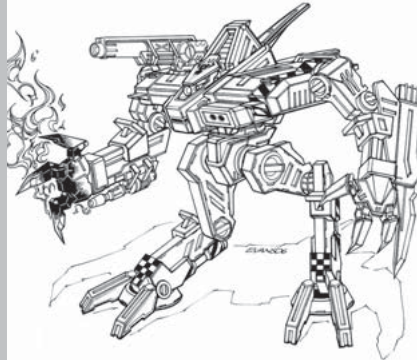
Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Improved C ³ CPU	LT	—	(E)	—	—	—	—
1	Flamer	RA	3	2 (DE,H,AI)	—	1	2	3
1	Retractable Blade	LA	0	3	—	—	—	—
1	Light PPC	RT	5	5 (DE)	3	6	12	18
1	SRM 2	LT	2	2/Msl (M,C,S)	—	3	6	9
1	ER Medium Laser	H	5	5 (DE)	—	4	8	12

Cost: 6,557,363 C-bills BV: 837

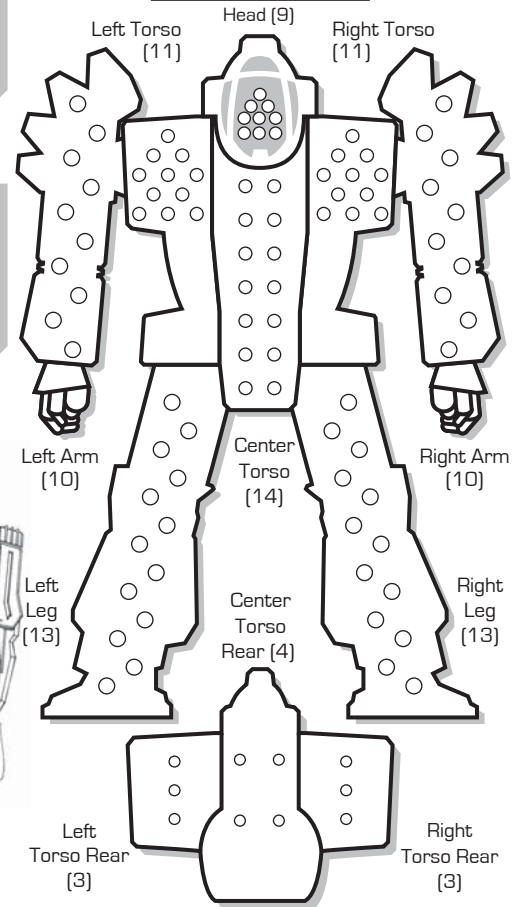
WARRIOR DATA

Name: _____
 Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____
 Hits Taken:

1	2	3	4	5	6
3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

<h4>Left Arm</h4> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Shoulder Upper Arm Actuator Lower Arm Actuator Hand Double Heat Sink Double Heat Sink <p>1-3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Double Heat Sink Retractable Blade Retractable Blade Retractable Blade Light Ferro-Fibrous Light Ferro-Fibrous <p>4-6</p>	<h4>Head</h4> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Life Support Sensors Small Cockpit Sensors ER Medium Laser Roll Again 	<h4>Right Arm</h4> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Shoulder Upper Arm Actuator Lower Arm Actuator Hand Flamer Endo Steel <p>1-3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Endo Steel Endo Steel Endo Steel Endo Steel Endo Steel Roll Again <p>4-6</p>	<h4>Center Torso</h4> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Light Fusion Engine Light Fusion Engine Light Fusion Engine XL Gyro XL Gyro XL Gyro <p>1-3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> XL Gyro XL Gyro XL Gyro Light Fusion Engine Light Fusion Engine Light Fusion Engine <p>4-6</p>	<h4>Right Torso</h4> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Light Fusion Engine Light Fusion Engine Light PPC Light PPC Ammo (SRM 2) 50 CASE <p>1-3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Light Ferro-Fibrous Endo Steel Endo Steel Endo Steel Endo Steel Roll Again <p>4-6</p>
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Engine Hits ○○○○

Gyro Hits ○○

Sensor Hits ○○

Life Support ○

Damage Transfer Diagram

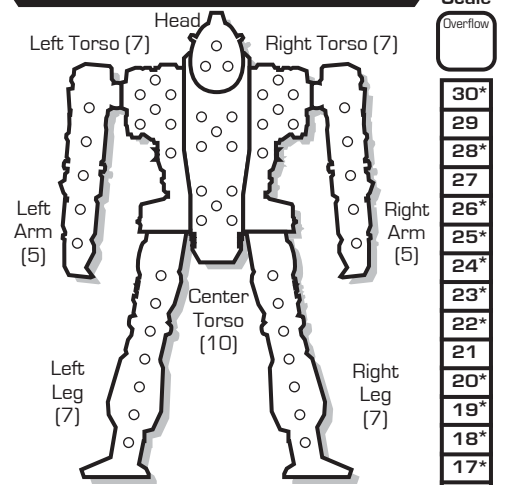
Left Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Light Ferro-Fibrous
- Light Ferro-Fibrous

Right Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Light Ferro-Fibrous
- Light Ferro-Fibrous

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 10 (20) Double
30	Shutdown	○
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	○
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	○
25	-5 Movement Points	○
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	○
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	○
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	○
20	-4 Movement Points	○
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	○
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	○
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	○
15	-3 Movement Points	○
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	○
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	○
10	-2 Movement Points	○
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	○
5	-1 Movement Points	○

Heat Scale

Overflow

30*
29
28*
27
26*
25*
24*
23*
22*
21
20*
19*
18*
17*
16
15*
14*
13*
12
11
10*
9
8*
7
6
5*
4
3
2
1
0

CLASSIC BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: **C-MK-O MALAK DOMINUS**

Movement Points: Tonnage: 30
 Walking: 7 Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Running: 11 3069
 Jumping: 0

WARRIOR DATA

Name: _____
 Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____
 Hits Taken:

1	2	3	4	5	6
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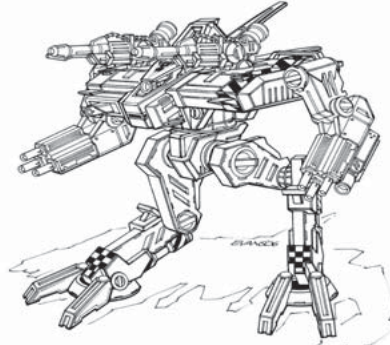
 Consciousness#:

3	5	7	10	11	Dead
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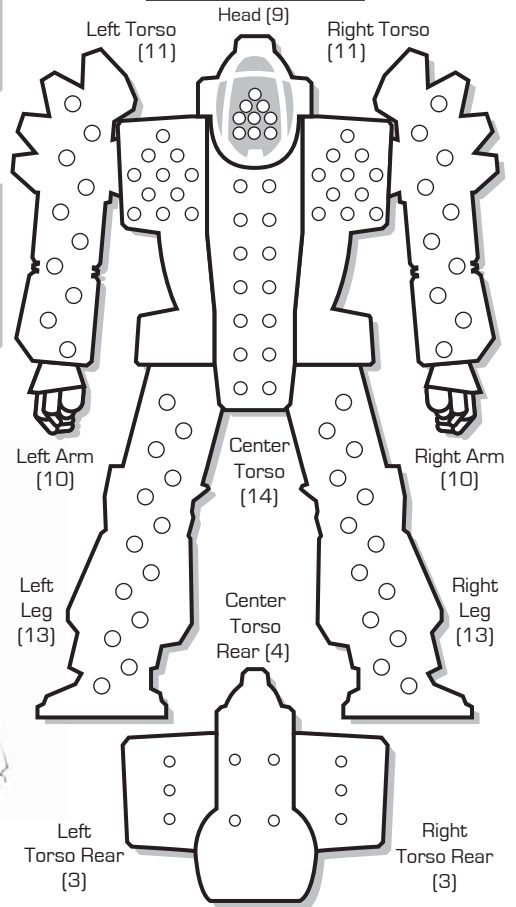
Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Improved C ³ CPU	LT	—	(E)	—	—	—	—
3	Light Machine Guns	RA	0	1 (DB, AI)	—	2	4	6
1	Machine Gun Array	RA	—	(T)	—	—	—	—
1	ER Small Laser	RT	2	3 (DE)	—	2	4	5
1	Flamer	RT	3	2 (DE, H, AI)	—	1	2	3
3	Light Machine Guns	LA	0	1 (DB, AI)	—	2	4	6
1	Machine Gun Array	LA	—	(T)	—	—	—	—
1	ER Medium Laser	LA	5	5 (DE)	—	4	8	12
1	Flamer	LT	3	2 (DE, H, AI)	—	1	2	3
1	ER Medium Laser	H	5	5 (DE)	—	4	8	12

Cost: 6,457,344 C-bills BV: 869



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- 1-3 Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- ER Medium Laser

- Light Machine Gun
- Light Machine Gun
- Light Machine Gun
- 4-6 Machine Gun Array
- Light Ferro-Fibrous
- Light Ferro-Fibrous

Left Torso

- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine
- 1-3 Improved C³ CPU
- Improved C³ CPU
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink

- Double Heat Sink
- Flamer
- 4-6 Endo Steel
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel

Left Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Light Ferro-Fibrous
- Light Ferro-Fibrous

Head

- Life Support
- Sensors
- Small Cockpit
- Sensors
- ER Medium Laser
- Roll Again

Center Torso

- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine
- 1-3 Light Fusion Engine
- XL Gyro
- XL Gyro
- XL Gyro

- XL Gyro
- XL Gyro
- XL Gyro
- 4-6 Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine

Engine Hits ○○○○
 Gyro Hits ○○
 Sensor Hits ○○
 Life Support ○

Right Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- 1-3 Light Machine Gun
- Light Machine Gun
- Light Machine Gun
- Machine Gun Array

- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel
- 4-6 Endo Steel
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel

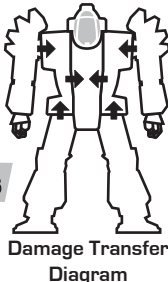
Right Torso

- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine
- 1-3 ER Small Laser
- Flamer
5. Ammo (Light MG) 100
- CASE

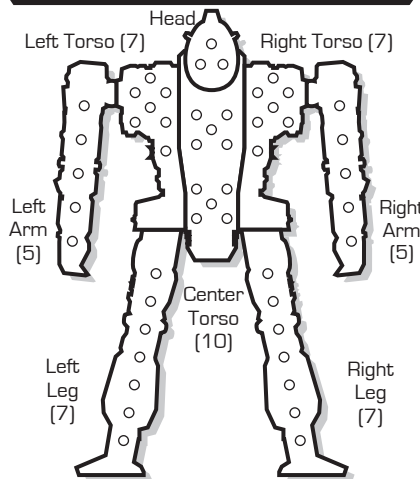
- Light Ferro-Fibrous
- Endo Steel
- 4-6 Endo Steel
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel
- Roll Again

Right Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Light Ferro-Fibrous
- Light Ferro-Fibrous



INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 10 (20) Double
30	Shutdown	○
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	○
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	○
25	-5 Movement Points	○
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	○
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	○
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	○
20	-4 Movement Points	○
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	○
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	○
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	○
15	-3 Movement Points	○
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	○
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	○
10	-2 Movement Points	○
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	○
5	-1 Movement Points	○

Heat Scale

Heat Level	Overflow
30*	○
29	○
28*	○
27	○
26*	○
25*	○
24*	○
23*	○
22*	○
21	○
20*	○
19*	○
18*	○
17*	○
16	○
15*	○
14*	○
13*	○
12	○
11	○
10*	○
9	○
8*	○
7	○
6	○
5*	○
4	○
3	○
2	○
1	○
0	○

CLASSIC BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: C-PRT-O PRETA INVICTUS

Movement Points: Tonnage: 45
 Walking: 6 Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Running: 9 3069
 Jumping: 0

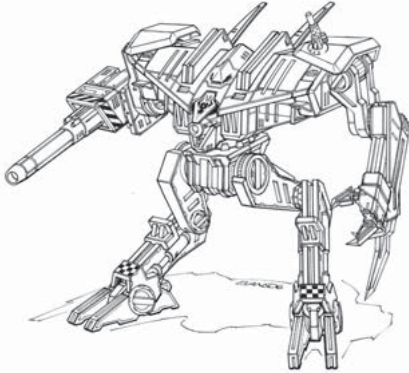
Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Improved C ³ CPU	CT	—	(E)	—	—	—	—
1	Snub-Nose PPC	RA	10	10/8/5 (DE,V)	—	9	13	15
1	Retractable Blade	LA	0	5	—	—	—	—
1	AMS	LT	1	(PD)	—	—	—	—
1	Light PPC	H	5	5 (DE)	3	6	12	18

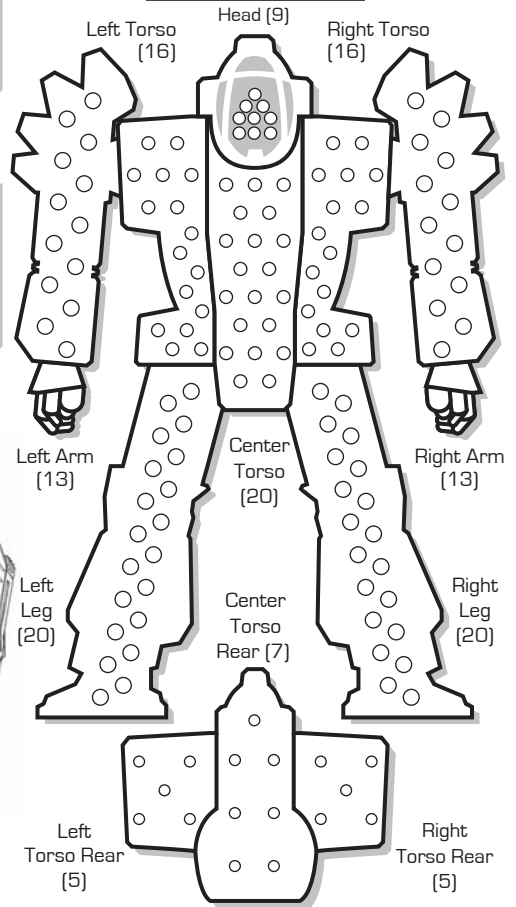
Cost: 9,777,259 C-bills BV: 1,122

WARRIOR DATA

Name: _____
 Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____
 Hits Taken: 1 2 3 4 5 6
 Consciousness#: 3 5 7 10 11 Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- Lower Arm Actuator
- Hand
- Retractable Blade
- Retractable Blade

- Retractable Blade
- Retractable Blade
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel
- Roll Again

Left Torso

- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine
- AMS
- Ammo (AMS) 12
- CASE
- Endo Steel

- Endo Steel
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Left Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel

Head

- Life Support
- Sensors
- Small Cockpit
- Sensors
- Light PPC
- Light PPC

Center Torso

- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine
- Gyro
- Gyro
- Gyro

- Gyro
- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine
- Improved C³ CPU
- Improved C³ CPU

Engine Hits ○○○
 Gyro Hits ○○
 Sensor Hits ○○
 Life Support ○

Right Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- Snub-Nose PPC
- Snub-Nose PPC
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel

- Endo Steel
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

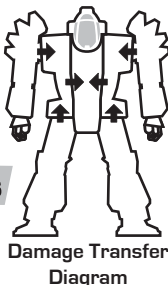
Right Torso

- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Endo Steel

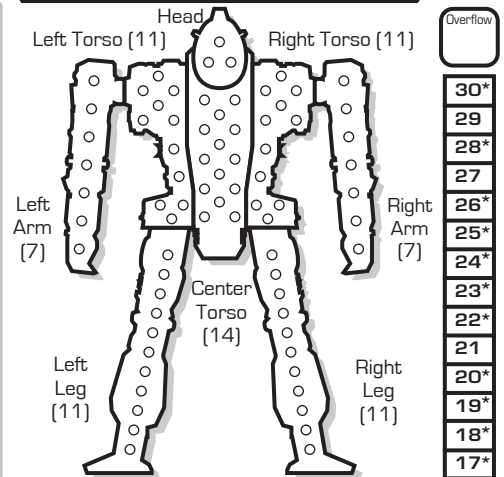
- Endo Steel
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Right Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel



INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 11 (22) Double
30	Shutdown	○
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	○
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	○
25	-5 Movement Points	○
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	○
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	○
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	○
20	-4 Movement Points	○
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	○
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	○
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	○
15	-3 Movement Points	○
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	○
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	○
10	-2 Movement Points	○
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	○
5	-1 Movement Points	○

Heat Scale

Heat Level	Overflow
30*	○
29	○
28*	○
27	○
26*	○
25*	○
24*	○
23*	○
22*	○
21	○
20*	○
19*	○
18*	○
17*	○
16	○
15*	○
14*	○
13*	○
12	○
11	○
10*	○
9	○
8*	○
7	○
6	○
5*	○
4	○
3	○
2	○
1	○
0	○

CLASSIC BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: **C-CRG-O GRIGORI INVICTUS**

Movement Points: **Tonnage: 60**
 Walking: 4 **Tech Base: Inner Sphere**
 Running: 6 **3069**
 Jumping: 0

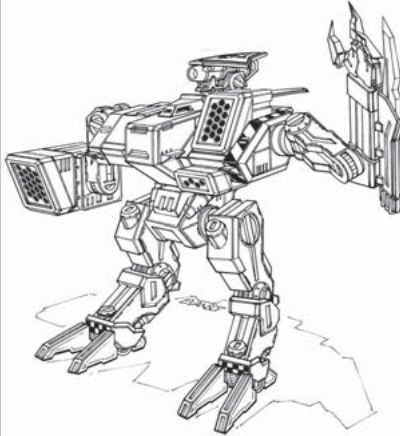
Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Improved C ³ CPU	LT	—	(E)	—	—	—	—
1	MRM 20	RA	6	1/Msl (M,C)	—	3	8	15
1	Retractable Blade	LA	0	6	—	—	—	—
1	LRM 15	LT	5	1/Msl (M,C,S)	6	7	14	21
1	Streak SRM 4	LT	3	2/Msl (M,C)	—	3	6	9
1	Light PPC	H	5	5 (DE)	3	6	12	18

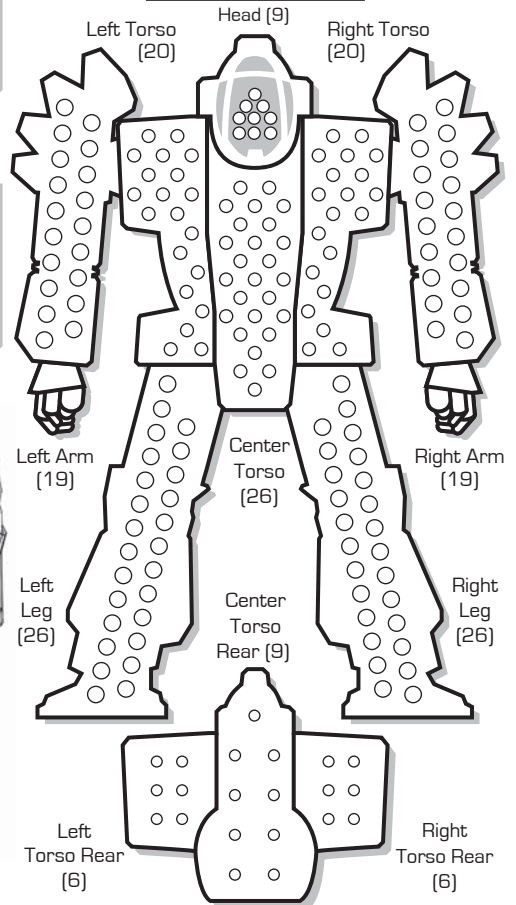
Cost: 12,327,600 C-bills **BV: 1,313**

WARRIOR DATA

Name: _____
 Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____
 Hits Taken **1 2 3 4 5 6**
 Consciousness# **3 5 7 10 11 Dead**



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- Lower Arm Actuator
- Hand
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink

- Double Heat Sink
- Retractable Blade
- Retractable Blade
- Retractable Blade
- Retractable Blade
- Roll Again

Left Torso

- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine
- Improved C³ CPU
- Improved C³ CPU
- LRM 15
- LRM 15

- LRM 15
- Streak SRM 4
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Left Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Light Ferro-Fibrous
- Light Ferro-Fibrous

Head

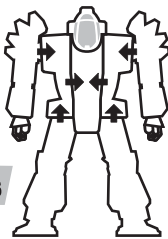
- Life Support
- Sensors
- Small Cockpit
- Sensors
- Light PPC
- Light PPC

Center Torso

- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine
- XL Gyro
- XL Gyro
- XL Gyro

- XL Gyro
- XL Gyro
- XL Gyro
- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine

Engine Hits ○○○○
 Gyro Hits ○○
 Sensor Hits ○○
 Life Support ○



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- MRM 20
- MRM 20
- MRM 20
- Light Ferro-Fibrous

- Light Ferro-Fibrous
- Light Ferro-Fibrous
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Right Torso

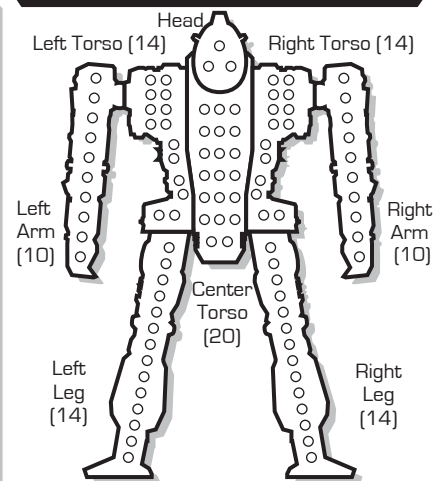
- Light Fusion Engine
- Light Fusion Engine
- Ammo (MRM) 12
- Ammo (LRM) 8
- Ammo (LRM) 8
- Ammo (Streak) 25

- CASE
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Right Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Light Ferro-Fibrous
- Light Ferro-Fibrous

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 10 (20) Double
30	Shutdown	○
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	○
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	○
25	-5 Movement Points	○
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	○
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	○
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	○
20	-4 Movement Points	○
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	○
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	○
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	○
15	-3 Movement Points	○
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	○
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	○
10	-2 Movement Points	○
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	○
5	-1 Movement Points	○

Heat Scale

Heat Level	Overflow
30*	○
29	○
28*	○
27	○
26*	○
25*	○
24*	○
23*	○
22*	○
21	○
20*	○
19*	○
18*	○
17*	○
16	○
15*	○
14*	○
13*	○
12	○
11	○
10*	○
9	○
8*	○
7	○
6	○
5*	○
4	○
3	○
2	○
1	○
0	○

CLASSIC BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: **C-ANG-O ARCHANGEL INVICTUS**

Movement Points: **Tonnage:** 100
 Walking: 3 **Tech Base:** Inner Sphere
 Running: 5 3069
 Jumping: 3

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Improved C ³ CPU	CT	—	(E)	—	—	—	—
1	Heavy PPC	RA	15	15 (DE)	3	6	12	18
1	Retractable Blade	LA	0	10	—	—	—	—
1	Targeting Computer	LT	—	(T)	—	—	—	—
1	Plasma Rifle	H	10	10	—	5	10	15
				(DE,H,AI)				
1	Guardian ECM	CT	—	(E)	—	—	—	6

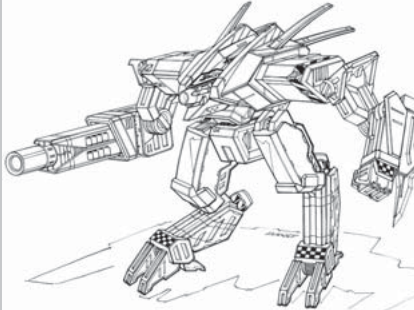
Cost: 21,752,500 C-bills **BV:** 2,355

WARRIOR DATA

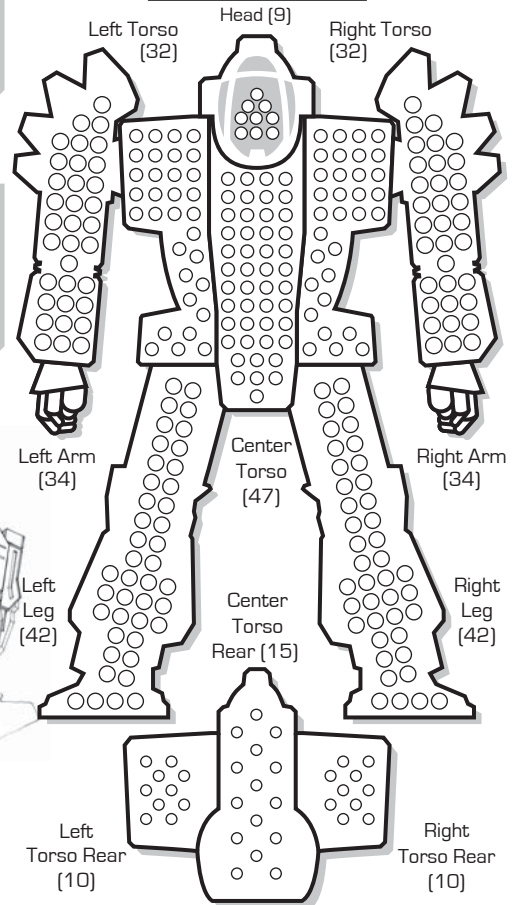
Name: _____
 Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____
 Hits Taken

1	2	3	4	5	6
3	5	7	10	11	Dead

 Consciousness#



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- 1-3 Lower Arm Actuator
- Hand Actuator
- Retractable Blade
- Retractable Blade

- Retractable Blade
- Retractable Blade
- Retractable Blade
- 4-6 Retractable Blade
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Left Torso

- Jump Jet
- Targeting Computer
- 1-3 Targeting Computer
- Targeting Computer
- Targeting Computer
- Endo Steel

- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel
- 4-6 Endo Steel
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Left Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel

Head

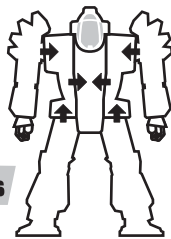
- Life Support
- Sensors
- Small Cockpit
- Sensors
- Plasma Rifle
- Plasma Rifle

Center Torso

- Compact Fusion Engine
- Compact Fusion Engine
- 1-3 Compact Fusion Engine
- Compact Gyro
- Compact Gyro
- Improved C³ CPU

- Improved C³ CPU
- Jump Jet
- Guardian ECM
- 4-6 Guardian ECM
- Ammo (Plasma Rifle) 10
- Ammo (Plasma Rifle) 10

Engine Hits ○○○○
 Gyro Hits ○○
 Sensor Hits ○○
 Life Support ○



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- 1-3 Heavy PPC
- Heavy PPC
- Heavy PPC
- Heavy PPC

- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- 4-6 Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Right Torso

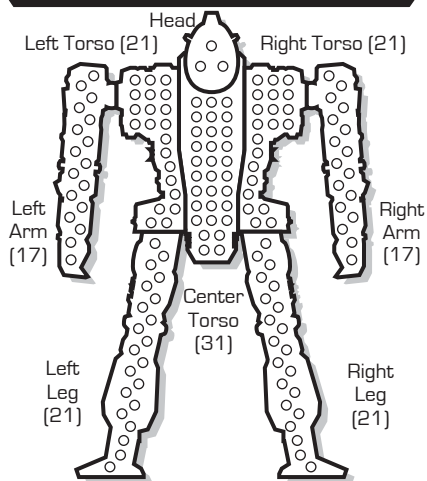
- Jump Jet
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- 1-3 Double Heat Sink
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel

- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel
- 4-6 Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Right Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 13 (26) Double
30	Shutdown	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
25	-5 Movement Points	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
20	-4 Movement Points	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
15	-3 Movement Points	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
10	-2 Movement Points	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
5	-1 Movement Points	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

Heat Scale

Heat Level	Overflow
30*	
29	
28*	
27	
26*	
25*	
24*	
23*	
22*	
21	
20*	
19*	
18*	
17*	
16	
15*	
14*	
13*	
12	
11	
10*	
9	
8*	
7	
6	
5*	
4	
3	
2	
1	
0	

CLASSIC BATTLETECH



BATTLE ARMOR RECORD SHEET

BATTLE ARMOR: SQUAD 1

Type: Djinn Light Battle Armor

Gunnery Skill: _____ Anti-Mech Skill: _____

Ground MP: 1 Jump MP: 4

Weapons & Equip. Dmg Min Sht Med Lng

Machine Gun 2 (DB,AI) - 1 2 3

Light TAG 0 (E) - 3 6 9

Partial Wing - - - - -

Armor: Advanced [0/0/0]

Mechanized: Swarm: Leg: AP:

1 ○○○○○○

2 ○○○○○○

3 ○○○○○○

4 ○○○○○○

5 ○○○○○○

6 ○○○○○○

Cost: 3,315,000 C-bills BV: 239

BATTLE ARMOR: SQUAD 2

Type: Djinn Light Battle Armor

Gunnery Skill: _____ Anti-Mech Skill: _____

Ground MP: 1 Jump MP: 4

Weapons & Equip. Dmg Min Sht Med Lng

Machine Gun 2 (DB,AI) - 1 2 3

Light TAG 0 (E) - 3 6 9

Partial Wing - - - - -

Armor: Advanced [0/0/0]

Mechanized: Swarm: Leg: AP:

1 ○○○○○○

2 ○○○○○○

3 ○○○○○○

4 ○○○○○○

5 ○○○○○○

6 ○○○○○○

Cost: 3,315,000 C-bills BV: 239

BATTLE ARMOR: SQUAD 3

Type: Djinn Light Battle Armor

Gunnery Skill: _____ Anti-Mech Skill: _____

Ground MP: 1 Jump MP: 4

Weapons & Equip. Dmg Min Sht Med Lng

Machine Gun 2 (DB,AI) - 1 2 3

Light TAG 0 (E) - 3 6 9

Partial Wing - - - - -

Armor: Advanced [0/0/0]

Mechanized: Swarm: Leg: AP:

1 ○○○○○○

2 ○○○○○○

3 ○○○○○○

4 ○○○○○○

5 ○○○○○○

6 ○○○○○○

Cost: 3,315,000 C-bills BV: 239

BATTLE ARMOR: SQUAD 4

Type: Djinn Light Battle Armor

Gunnery Skill: _____ Anti-Mech Skill: _____

Ground MP: 1 Jump MP: 4

Weapons & Equip. Dmg Min Sht Med Lng

Machine Gun 2 (DB,AI) - 1 2 3

Light TAG 0 (E) - 3 6 9

Partial Wing - - - - -

Armor: Advanced [0/0/0]

Mechanized: Swarm: Leg: AP:

1 ○○○○○○

2 ○○○○○○

3 ○○○○○○

4 ○○○○○○

5 ○○○○○○

6 ○○○○○○

Cost: 3,315,000 C-bills BV: 239

BATTLE ARMOR: SQUAD 5

Type: Djinn Light Battle Armor

Gunnery Skill: _____ Anti-Mech Skill: _____

Ground MP: 1 Jump MP: 4

Weapons & Equip. Dmg Min Sht Med Lng

Machine Gun 2 (DB,AI) - 1 2 3

Light TAG 0 (E) - 3 6 9

Partial Wing - - - - -

Armor: Advanced [0/0/0]

Mechanized: Swarm: Leg: AP:

1 ○○○○○○

2 ○○○○○○

3 ○○○○○○

4 ○○○○○○

5 ○○○○○○

6 ○○○○○○

Cost: 3,315,000 C-bills BV: 239

LEG ATTACKS TABLE

BATTLE ARMOR TROOPERS ACTIVE	BASE TO-HIT MODIFIER
4-6	0
3	+2
2	+5
1	+7

SWARM ATTACKS TABLE

BATTLE ARMOR TROOPERS ACTIVE	BASE TO-HIT MODIFIER
4-6	+2
1-3	+5

SWARM ATTACK MODIFIERS TABLE

ATTACKING ENEMY BATTLE ARMOR TROOPERS ACTIVE	FRIENDLY BATTLE ARMOR TROOPERS ACTIVE	MECHANIZED	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	+0	+0	+0	+0	+1	+1	+2	+2
5	+0	+0	+0	+1	+1	+2	+2	+3
4	+0	+0	+1	+2	+2	+3	+3	+4
3	+0	+1	+2	+3	+3	+4	+4	+5
2	+1	+2	+3	+4	+4	+5	+5	+6
1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+5	+6	+6	+7

BATTLE ARMOR EQUIPMENT

Claws with magnets -1

SITUATION*

'Mech prone -2
'Mech or vehicle immobile -4
Vehicle -2

*Modifiers are cumulative

SWARM ATTACKS HIT LOCATION TABLE

2D6 ROLL	BIPEDAL LOCATION	FOUR-LEGGED LOCATION
2	Head	Head
3	Rear Center Torso	Front Right Torso
4	Rear Right Torso	Rear Center Torso
5	Front Right Torso	Rear Right Torso
6	Right Arm	Front Right Torso
7	Front Center Torso	Front Center Torso
8	Left Arm	Front Left Torso
9	Front Left Torso	Rear Left Torso
10	Rear Left Torso	Rear Center Torso
11	Rear Center Torso	Front Left Torso
12	Head	Head

TRANSPORT POSITIONS TABLE

TROOPER NUMBER	'MECH LOCATION	VEHICLE LOCATION
1	Right Torso	Right Side
2	Left Torso	Right Side
3	Right Torso (rear)	Left Side
4	Left Torso (rear)	Left Side
5	Center Torso (rear)	Rear
6	Center Torso	Rear

TROOPER NUMBER	LARGE SUPPORT VEHICLE LOCATION*
1	Right Side (Unit 1/Unit 2)
2	Right Side (Unit 1/Unit 2)
3	Left Side (Unit 1/Unit 2)
4	Left Side (Unit 1/Unit 2)
5	Rear (Unit 1/Unit 2)
6	Rear (Unit 1/Unit 2)



*Unit 1 and Unit 2 represent two battle armor units

CLASSIC BATTLETECH™

CLASSIC BATTLETECH ERAS

The *Classic BattleTech* universe is a living, vibrant entity that grows each year as more sourcebooks and fiction are published. A dynamic universe, its setting and characters evolve over time within a highly detailed continuity framework, bringing everything to life in a way a static game universe cannot match.

However, the same dynamic energy that makes *BattleTech* so compelling can also make it confusing, with so many sourcebooks published over the years. As people encounter *BattleTech*, get hooked and start to obtain sourcebooks, they need to know where a particular sourcebook is best used along the *BattleTech* timeline.

To help quickly and easily convey the timeline of the *Classic BattleTech* universe—and to allow a player to easily “plug in” a given sourcebook—we’ve divided *Classic BattleTech* into five major eras. (For those that own the *Classic BattleTech Introductory Box Set*, the year dates in parentheses following each era’s title correspond to the maps found in the *Inner Sphere at a Glance* sourcebook.)

STAR LEAGUE (2570)

Ian Cameron, ruler of the Terran Hegemony, concludes decades of tireless effort with the creation of the Star League, a political and military alliance between all Great Houses and the Hegemony. Star League armed forces immediately launch the Reunification War, forcing the Periphery realms to join. For the next two centuries, humanity experiences a golden age across the thousand light-years of human-occupied space known as the Inner Sphere. It also sees the creation of the most powerful military in human history.



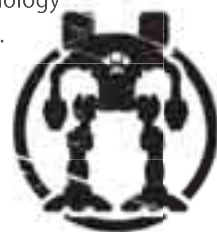
SUCCESSION WARS (3025, 3030, 3040)

Every last member of First Lord Richard Cameron’s family is killed during a coup launched by Stefan Amaris. Following the thirteen-year war to unseat him, the rulers of each of the five Great Houses disband the Star League. General Aleksandr Kerensky departs with eighty percent of the Star League Defense Force beyond known space and the Inner Sphere collapses into centuries of warfare known as the Succession Wars that will eventually result in a massive loss of technology across most worlds.



CLAN INVASION (3052, 3057)

A mysterious invading force strikes the coreward region of the Inner Sphere. The invaders, called the Clans, are descendants of Kerensky’s SLDF troops, forged into a society dedicated to becoming the greatest fighting force in history. With vastly superior technology and warriors, the Clans conquer world after world. Eventually this outside threat will forge a new Star League, something hundreds of years of warfare failed to accomplish. In addition, the Clans will act as a catalyst for a technological renaissance.



CIVIL WAR (3062, 3067)

The Clan threat is eventually lessened with the complete destruction of a Clan. With that massive external threat apparently neutralized, internal conflicts explode around the Inner Sphere. House Liao conquers its former Commonality, the St. Ives Compact; a rebellion of military units belonging to House Kurita sparks a war with their powerful border enemy, Clan Ghost Bear; the fabulously powerful Federated Commonwealth of House Steiner and House Davion collapses into five long years of bitter civil war.



JIHAD

Following the Federated Commonwealth Civil War, the leaders of the Great Houses meet and disband the new Star League, declaring it a sham. The pseudo-religious Word of Blake—a splinter group of ComStar, the protectors and controllers of interstellar communication—launch the Jihad: an interstellar war that will ultimately pit every faction against each other and even against themselves, as weapons of mass destruction are used for the first time in centuries while new and frightening technologies are likewise unleashed.



SOURCEBOOKS

As Catalyst Game Labs continues to publish new *Classic BattleTech* products (and reprint previously published products), easy reference logos—corresponding to those above—will be printed directly on their back covers. This will allow retailers and players alike to know at a glance what eras are covered by a given product. For additional ease of reference, era logos will also appear on product’s sell sheet, on-line products page and so on.

Note that if a CGL *Classic BattleTech* product does not contain an era logo, then it is considered a core rulebook or supplement to be used across all eras, such as the *Introductory Box Set*, *Total Warfare* and so on.