

BATTLETECH



JIHAD HOT SPOTS: 3076



RISE OF THE COALITION!

Nine years since the death of the Second Star League, the Word of Blake's holy war against all of humanity rages on. But new heroes, and new alliances have been forged between interstellar nations of the Inner Sphere and the Clans, setting aside centuries of distrust and hatred to unite as never before against the common enemy. Emerging from shattered realms, the allied coalition has finally found the strength to turn the tide, and now the Word and its allies are on the defensive. But even as the allies prepare for the inevitable finale, the Word's unseen Master and his fanatical minions won't fall without a fight!

Jihad Hot Spots: 3076™ continues the Jihad plot book series started with *Blake Ascending*, bringing readers into the raging conflict of the war between the Word of Blake and the Inner Sphere. Seen from the eyes of those who fight and die in this epic struggle, this book includes articles and intelligence excerpts from across the Inner Sphere, along with additional rules and campaign tracks for both *BattleTech* and *A Time of War: The BattleTech RPG* games, from the unwilling allies of the Blakist war machine, to the experimental technologies that gave the Word its incredible—if costly—edge for years, to several new BattleMechs, vehicles, and combat spacecraft that debuted in the midst of this turning point in the war.

TI-2P TITAN II



PHALANX BATTLE ARMOR



THUMPER ARTILLERY VEHICLE



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INN NEWS UPDATE...

Jihad Hot Spots: 3076



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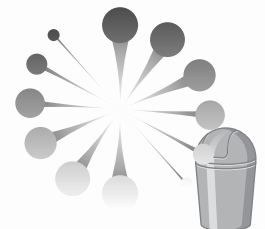
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SINS OF THE FATHER



MASTERSTON MEMORIAL SPACE PORT
REGULUS CITY, REGULUS
PRINCIPALITY OF REGULUS
4 APRIL 3076

It should have been a landing like any other, a long aerodyne DropShip coming to rest at the end of the designated runway, oblivious to the attention it drew. But the way the newly constructed air-defense towers continued to track the vessel with their gun sights—even after it had stopped—gave lie to any trappings of innocence. Large, yet sleek, and bristling with guns, the *Assault Triumph*-class DropShip was a powerful threat by itself, but what its fading scarlet to black hull represented—and whom it carried within—added an air of malevolence that amplified its threat a hundred fold. Several geysers of steam, jetting from cooling vents and pressure releases, announced the end of the craft's rolling journey, close enough for the hated image of its downturned broadsword insignia to be seen clearly from the ground.

The Word of Blake.

In perches surrounding the landing pad, fingers tightened involuntarily within their trigger guards—their owners catching themselves instants before they reached the pressure point. Despite everything that had happened, despite all the suffering, and despite the utter despair that had gripped the heart of the Regular nation since the last time that broadsword showed itself here, the soldiers held their fire. Because this vessel had landed under a flag of truce.

Colonel Michelle Cameron-Jones of the First Regular Hussars could sense the tension among the “honor guards” on the tarmac as keenly as she could within herself. Though she sat inside a heated limousine, tapping her fingers on the smooth upholstery as the vehicle passed yet another camouflaged bunker, she felt the chill in the air outside, where the infantry guardsmen stood behind plastic snowshields. Ever since the Night of Fire, the weather around the capital had been erratic; the meteorologists blamed it partly on nature, but they didn't discount the effects of the ash clouds that rose from the city on that day, and the jet black smoke that darkened the sky for hundreds of kilometers, for weeks on end.

The legacy of the Word's last visit.

The limousine was part of a long convoy that slowly snaked towards the grounded DropShip. Her husband, Prince Titus Cameron-Jones, was in a different vehicle for security reasons. And their son, Lester, was safe back at the palace, in the Hall of Serenity with his minders—along with his grandfather and *his* minders.

The thought of the former Prince of Regulus made Michelle's eyes narrow slightly as she watched the Blakist DropShip loom ever closer.

What has your arrogance cost us, Kirc?

Michelle looked over the units deployed on the tarmac, nodding her approval. The heavy Merkava tanks were not a credible threat against the Blakist DropShip, but they acted as both honor guard and local security force, drawing the casual observer's attention toward them while presenting a credible threat to the Blakists' dignitaries. The squat vehicles also shielded the convoy from the gun ports on the heat-scorched DropShip's flank. It was a small measure, but it showed her subordinate was thinking. Force Commander Hunter would replace her at the head of the First if she fell today, and the man's competence reassured Michelle that both her nation and her son were in capable hands. The Night of Fire would *not* happen again.

And just in case the Blakists violated their own truce flag, Michelle knew a hidden reinforced artillery battalion lay in wait amongst the many yellow construction vehicles scattered about the spaceport. If the Blakists started something, they wouldn't leave the planet alive.

At least we can match them here, on the ground.

Panic had gripped the planet when the former FWLS *Corinth* had appeared in orbit above the planet five days ago, escorted by a veritable swarm of fighters and combat DropShips. RSS analysis had calculated the attendant fleet could hold as many as two regiments' worth of troops, and while the growing Regular Defense Force could match those numbers, the depleted Regular fleet—which had immediately moved to intercept the Blakist flotilla—could not. General Orfelt had ordered the fleet back to a more defensive posture, and the command staff had argued on how to stop the Blakists from landing.

And then the Blakists had made their demands known.

A meeting.

Titus Cameron-Jones, Michelle's husband and erstwhile commander-in-chief of the Regular Defense Forces had invested heavily in Regulus' reconstruction, assuaging its people's fear in the wake of that Night. Fear of the Blakist reprisals, fear of persecution for real and imagined slights against the State—and by “State,” Michelle naturally thought of “Captain-General” Kirc Cameron-Jones—had deeply scarred the Regular psyche. It would take years to heal the wounds the brutal assault and the resulting crackdown had caused, and Titus believed the best policy to help encourage this healing was one of honesty between government and citizens. Telling the truth—no matter how painful.

The thought made Michelle smile wistfully.

Titus was a good man and had the potential to be a great one, but he was not a warrior. She had imposed a news blackout to prevent further panic from spreading, something that was almost impossible with the blocky shape of the *Thera*-class WarShip silhouetting itself against the bright disc of Zamzama, Regulus' moon. The more uninformed news organizations—*were there any other kind?*—had proclaimed the arrival of allied forces, ignorant of the fact Regulus stood alone.

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And then Kirc had mentioned his own contingency plans. Tiger Hill. Michelle knew the thought had revolted Titus, but for the good of his people, he had been at least willing to consider it. Kirc's on-planet stockpiles were brought in, and a wing of intrepid pilots briefed on the importance of their upcoming mission. It was suicide, but every Regular knew the price of acquiescence to fear. The blackened corpses of multi-story buildings still stood on the eastern side of Regulus City as silent witnesses of the cost.

The Blakist truce flag was so out of character that everyone immediately suspected a trap. The old hands—those officers who served with Kirc (and were later pardoned for their roles in the Purge)—quickly advocated rejecting the invitation out of hand and launching the first strike. Michelle felt an impulse to agree with them; the Word used deceit time and again to hammer its foes.

But Titus had been adamant: No first strike. No treachery.

Michelle couldn't fault his logic. Every time Regulus had fought the Blakists, Regulus had lost. Since the Second Hussars had fallen on Wallis, the characteristic Regular martial swagger had slowly eroded, until it had been washed away in the brutality of Kirc's so-called "filtration" camps. The best units in League space had devolved to the point where they saw their own neighbors as enemies, and BattleMechs spent years serving as enforcers for Kirc's paranoia. Another defeat at Blakist hands would unleash a new round of Regular self-recrimination and hate.

If it didn't kill them all outright.

The limousine's sudden braking shook Michelle from her reverie, and one gloved hand slipped forward into her lap. Her old FWLM uniform was gone, too closely associated with the excesses of the Purge. She wore the new uniform now, a double-breasted jacket the same burnished orange as the units under her command, with her command ankh riding on the wide lapel. She didn't expect it to impress the Blakist delegation, but it wasn't meant to. It was a symbol of the Principality's rebirth. She knew Titus hated the phoenix metaphor, but she thought it was apt. She checked her reflection, making sure her flaxen blonde hair was tucked underneath her peaked cap. Normally, she tended not to be overly concerned with her appearance, but since little Lester had been born, Michelle had noticed a few extra grams creeping onto her normally svelte figure, and crow's feet expanding at the corners of her amber eyes. She smoothed her pants leg, picking at a piece of lint that managed to avoid her trimmed nails while she waited for a guard to open her door.

The well-insulated limousine vibrated as a bass tone sounded across the landing tarmac, and she winced in sympathy with the unprotected infantry lining the approach. This was the pre-arranged signal. The closest Merkava to the DropShip sounded off its own horn, a pathetic reply to the Blakists' blast. Michelle held her breath as the limousine door swung open. The subaltern who opened it managed to keep his posture straight, fighting

his urge to look up at the imposing spacecraft that hissed and popped as its armored shell cooled.

Michelle quickly stood, snapping off a palm-out salute at the subaltern. A quick glance down the line of vehicles showed others doing the same, polished boots hitting the ground in unison, while the more delicate wingtips of the diplomats took slightly longer. Flakes of snow were falling, but nothing heavy. The spaceport lights were dimmed to help hide the nighttime arrival from prying eyes. Only a few spotlights had been rigged up around a makeshift dais, but Michelle knew none of the attendees wanted to see their opposite number. She picked Titus out of the mass of faces exiting the sleek black vehicles, the Regular ankh emblazoned on each flag snapping to attention.

Titus wore his mask well, but she could see the unease rolling off him.

Kirc had been almost apoplectic when he'd heard about the meet, adamant it was a trap. Titus had reminded him that had the Blakists wanted him dead, they'd had plenty of other opportunities. And Michelle, despite her own reservations, was inclined to agree. Besides, with the *Corinth* and its coterie of attendants virtually blockading the planet, it was not as if Regulus had much choice. So they would greet the Blakists as diplomats and hope for the best.

The large mass of one of the DropShip's main bay doors rolled back and into the ship's upper hull with a low, droning hum. At the same time, a ramp extended from the ship's hull, gliding swiftly and quietly to rest on the tarmac. With a dull thud, the ramp locked itself down at the very moment the bay door completed its ascent. Dazzling interior lights from within the DropShip flooded the area as a few Hussar tankers slewed their turrets to face the cavernous bay, unsure what might come out.

Michelle peered intently into the DropShip's main bay, and she almost sighed audibly with relief when the lights dimmed enough to reveal empty bays. No BattleMechs or vehicles on board that she could see at this vantage point; the Blakists were holding up their end of the agreement so far. The tank gunners let their crosshairs linger on the target, but where Michelle had half-expected to see one of those infernal Blakist Celestials striding forward, she instead saw only the silhouette of a single man—a veritable giant—striding forth.

Several of the gathered Regular diplomats gasped at the sight of him, a wall of muscle clad in a form-fitting red and gray jumpsuit with a hooded cowl hanging loosely at the base of his neck. His shadowed eyes swept the audience without passion as he marched down the ramp. He acknowledged no one.

He was unarmed, so far as Michelle could see, but she'd seen enough reports about these Manei Domini cyborgs to know not to trust her eyes. The footage brought back by the surviving Hussars of the Gibson debacle was now a motivational tool for the new recruits streaming through Aitutaki's basic training program, and the RSS had dived into Kirc's coffers to accumulate

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as much information about these techno-modified warriors as possible. His feet thunked heavily on the ramp, and it occurred to Michelle—who was still looking at the man's hands for any telltale sign of weapon prosthetics—that perhaps it was not his meaty fists she should be inspecting. Then another man-giant appeared at the top of the stairs. He, too, stalked down the ramp with heavy footsteps, just like his companion, but this time Michelle caught the glint of dark metal poking out the end of his left sleeve.

Which one is the subject? she wondered, as she cautiously maneuvered through the ranks of her fellow Regulans, moving to stand closer to Titus.

Without warning, both men snapped to attention and snap-turned to face the assembled Regular delegation.

"Blake Eleison!" they cried out as one.

The simultaneous bark sent a jolt of electricity through Michelle. Their deep baritones were filled with such conviction and fervor it almost made up for the fact she had no idea what they were saying. The one with the metal arm continued.

"Apollyon," he shouted, "Prince of Scars, Thrice-Blessed of the Master!"

Apollyon!

Michelle knew the name well. In the aftermath of the Night of Fire, investigators had found unsent diplomatic missives that detailed Precentor Apollyon's appointment as governor of Gibson. Apollyon had led the defense of Gibson that shattered the Fourth Hussars and had called upon the various flotsam mercs Kirc had hired to quit the field, an act that left the Fourth to its fate alone. It was a name well known in Regular military circles—and likely across the entire Inner Sphere.

She wasn't sure what the rest of his title meant—until another large figure emerged from the DropShip and started descending the ramp. This one was clearly senior to the first two, judging by the way they dipped their heads in respect. He wore a crimson facsimile of a ComStar acolyte's robe, trimmed in gold, with an embroidered cowl that hid most of his face in shadows.

But the robe failed to hide the metal limbs that emerged from under the cloak's ornate folds. The ramp trembled with each step, as if a BattleMech, not a man, walked upon it. As Michelle watched, she caught the glimpse of metallic feet that ended in vicious looking talons, sharpened tips grating slightly over the ramp's non-slip contours. But where Michelle expected to hear the whine of prosthetic servomotors, she heard only a discomfiting silence and the tap of metal feet on metal ramp.

As the man reached the bottom, he raised his head, revealing a face only half-covered by cocoa-colored skin. Michelle found his face almost noble, were it not for the metal and ceramic inserts filling the space where his right eye should have been. A faint glow emanated from the deep recess, adding a spectral quality about him, but it was a glow without warmth—the electric blue of a machine within a man's body.

Apollyon, I presume?

The Blakist faced the crowd, not moving from his position at the base of the stairs.

"Leaders of Regulus," he spoke in a deep, almost reverent tone, "I greet you with Blake's Peace."

One of the diplomats began to step forward, awkwardly, but Titus moved faster.

"There is no welcome for you here Apollyon," Titus said. "You requested a meeting, and here it is."

Titus had eschewed the more martial attire of the office of Prince and wore a simple business suit instead. His voice was strong and forceful, the voice of command, but Apollyon simply looked bemused.

"Naamah told me about you, Prince Titus," he said. "I was expecting something more ... *grandiose* ... in your greeting."

The sneer he directed at her husband caused Michelle to ball her fists, but she caught herself before she took a step forward. Still, her motion didn't go unnoticed by the monster's electronic eye.

"I see your woman has a more direct approach in mind," he said.

"Enough!" Titus snapped before Michelle could respond or even move. "Say what you came to say, Precentor, then leave our realm."

The cowed Blakist nodded approvingly, a slight smile on his face suggesting a measure of respect for the Prince.

"Very well," he began, pausing just a moment to slowly sweep his gaze across the assembled throng. "I notice that the senior Cameron-Jones is not here?"

This time, Michelle answered before her husband could.

"Titus is Prince now, Blakist," she said. "Kirc's whereabouts are irrelevant."

If Apollyon noticed her reply, his expression didn't show it as his eyes swept the delegation yet again, perhaps scanning the defenses. Michelle felt her mouth go dry; the Blakists expected the honor guard, but many of her other surprises had been hidden. Could this cyborg sense them anyway?

"Oh, but his whereabouts are quite relevant, Princess," he finally said, briefly spearing Michelle with a look that could wither steel.

Apollyon's dark human eye and electric blue lens returned to Titus. "Your father's actions have not gone unnoticed, Prince Titus," he declared. "But as your wife says, *you* are the leader now. That means you are responsible for *all* your subjects, so heed my words: Should Regular forces—either by themselves, or by proxy—ever deign to interfere with matters outside your borders again, you will face the full wrath and fury of the Master.

"And when that happens, *all* of Regulus will pay the price."

His message delivered, Apollyon crossed his arms, awaiting Titus' reply. Michelle nodded slowly, as she hit the communicator stud hidden in her gloved hands.



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"So that's it, huh?" Michelle asked. "Do as we're told or pay the consequences?"

Apollyon did not reply. His gaze remained fixed on Titus. Warring emotions crossed the new Prince's face, and Michelle felt a small pang of remorse for what she was about to do.

I'm sorry honey, but you're too good a man to do what's necessary ...

I, on the other hand, am a bitch.

Snapping her arm up, she barked into the tiny commlink slipped into the cuff of her sleeve. "Hunter! On Target!"

Titus blinked and spun to face her, an incredulous look on his face an instant before she tackled him to the ground.

The first whip crack of Gauss projectiles smashing the sound barrier assaulted her ears, and the staccato bark of small arms fire erupted as service manholes beneath the DropShip sprang open to reveal her commando troops. The crowd scattered as the gunfire started, with most diving for the ground amid screams of alarm.

The ricochet of metal on metal rang loud in Michelle's ears as she protectively straddled Titus, shielding him from any stray rounds.

She raised her head an instant later, only to see one of the uniformed Blakists—now standing before his master—ripped open with a sonic boom and a spray of blood.

Titus cried out from underneath her, but his voice was lost in the deafening firefight.

"Cease fire!" he screamed impotently. *"Cease fire!"*

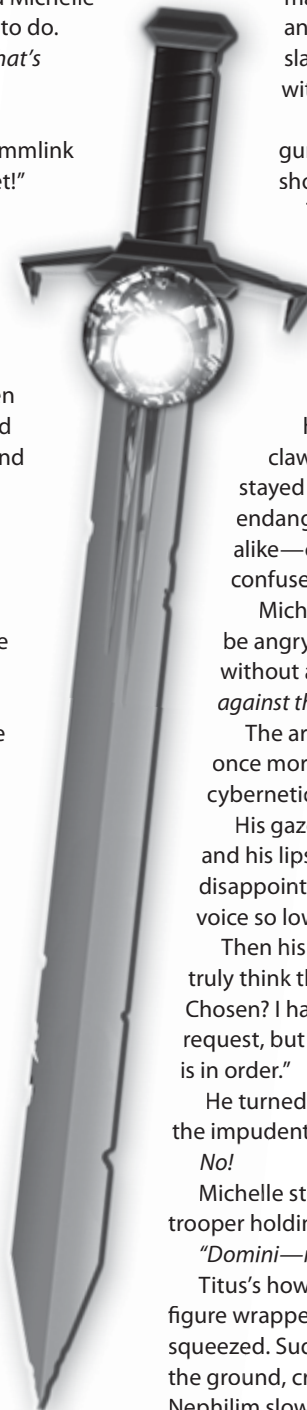
A shimmer of light suddenly appeared in front of Michelle and she felt herself thrown back, landing hard on the ferrocrete tarmac. One of the black-clad commandos, moving around behind Apollyon and up the DropShip ramp, suddenly grasped his throat before he too was lifted off the ground. Michelle shook her head to clear the image, but she felt only throbbing and pain and dizziness. As she watched, the commando's head suddenly bent to an unnatural angle and his body abruptly dropped.

Titus!

Michelle whipped around to where her husband had been, only to see him similarly lifted in the air by a hazy, dark blur. In a panic, she reached for her non-existent sidearm, cursing at Titus' insistence than none of the delegates be armed.

Titus! No!

"Domini! Desino!" Apollyon's voice boomed across the spaceport.



Resolving from insubstantial blurs to dark, metallic forms, six suits of black and red battle armor, each one demonic in appearance, revealed their presence around their master. Apollyon disappeared behind their bulk, and Michelle watched incredulously as a Gauss slug slammed into one of the suits' armored carapaces without crashing through to the trooper inside.

The shock of their appearance caused the Regularan guns to falter for a second, and this time Titus' shouted cease-fire command was heard.

The Blakist guns remained silent, but trained outwards. They had formed a cordon around their leader but had not moved to retaliate.

Michelle's four-man commando team lay dead on the tarmac, their black-clad bodies twisted and broken.

"Cease fire!" Titus repeated at the top of his lungs, even as he remained held aloft in the claw of one of the Blakist troopers. The Regularan guns stayed quiet, unsure how to proceed with their Prince endangered. Several of the officials—military and civil alike—climbed slowly to their feet, looking around at the confused scene.

Michelle felt the fire in her cheeks, knowing Titus would be angry, but more upset that her ambush had failed—and without a single Blakist shot fired. *Yet another debacle against the Word.*

The armored bodies parted, allowing Apollyon to emerge once more, his fury evident in the burning red fire of his cybernetic eye.

His gaze found Michelle, even as she struggled to rise, and his lips writhed into cruel grin. "I would have been disappointed if you had tried nothing, Princess," he said in a voice so low it was nearly lost in the ringing in her ears.

Then his eyes flashed over the crowd. "Pathetic *Frails!* You truly think that you can hope to stand against the Master's Chosen? I had hoped that you would see the logic in my request, but now I understand a more practical demonstration is in order."

He turned to face the dangling Titus. "We could crush you like the impudent bug you are."

No!

Michelle started forward before Apollyon's next words to the trooper holding her husband cut her off.

"Domini—manus."

Titus' howl of pain pierced the night as the battle-suited figure wrapped its armored gauntlet around his left forearm and squeezed. Suddenly released, the Regularan prince collapsed to the ground, cradling his shattered limb with his other arm as the Nephilim slowly stepped backwards. Michelle rushed over to her husband, ignoring the suits as tears streamed down her face.

SINS OF THE FATHER

It wasn't supposed to be like this!

Apollyon stared down at them, impassive. His expression lacked any of the arrogance Michelle expected, reflecting neither triumph nor satisfaction. If there was any emotion on the Manei Domini's shadowy face that she could discern, it was vague disappointment.

"I regret that such theatrics are necessary," he said, "but there had to be retribution. Understand this, Regular Prince: we could lay this entire spaceport—and everyone within it—to waste in the time it just took to break the bones in your arm. Do not mistake our restraint for weakness. As surely as we have the power to shatter Frail bones, we have the power to shatter your entire Frail nation."

Apollyon looked up to scan the entire assembled crowd once more before turning back to them. "And just as your vaunted

military and 'warrior tradition' failed to protect you, they will fail to protect your realm if the full fury of Blake's Word descends upon it."

Pulling himself ramrod straight, Apollyon looked imperiously down at the wounded prince. "So, Prince Titus, one last time: do you understand?"

Titus remained silent for a moment, then he turned to face Michelle. His pain-stricken face softened for a second, before setting into a mask of stone. When he turned and spoke again to Precentor Apollyon, his voice was devoid of any feeling, despite the pain she knew he felt.

It was a voice Michelle had never heard Titus use, and it unnerved her.

"Yes," he spat out. "I understand."

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our INN special report, "State of the Sphere: 3076". I'm your host, Bertram Habeas.

We at INN would like to begin today's retrospective with a salute to the late Michael Bosworth, who died in the performance of duty, in the career that he loved, nearly four years ago on Arc-Royal. May his loss—and that of so many millions who have perished in these last ten years—serve us all as a reminder of the grim cost of war.

In the last four years, we have seen the ravages of conflict burning across the entire Inner Sphere virtually unchecked. Chaos and confusion have reigned, but through it all, we have seen the lights of hope, burning ever brighter in the darkness. Indeed, these last four years may well have been the turning point in the Jihad, but only time will tell us if that is true or not. Through it all, INN continues in its commitment to offer its readers and viewers bi-annual reports to help record and examine the ongoing conflict so that we may get a glimpse of the bigger picture unfolding before us.

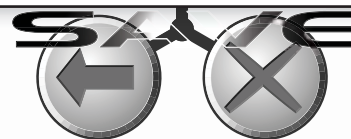
Presented here is a summary of events since our last special report. As ever, we have striven to accumulate data from a variety of sources—most through partnerships and unprecedented access within several organizations—to provide the widest possible view in the most personal and understandable ways. This is done without heavy analysis, as none of us can claim clairvoyance in these dangerous times. But through these snippets, we hope to show the complex and common fabric of this horrifying war and to understand its meaning not just for one people or group, but for all of humanity.

Before we begin, I'd like to take one more moment to thank our ComStar affiliates, the Interstellar Associated Press, and a host of national media outlets throughout the Inner Sphere for their help in this compilation. A heartfelt "thank you" also goes out to all of the freelance reporters, underground authors, network administrators, and others who have taken it upon themselves to not only give us reports from their own struggles, but who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to get the latest and best information to our viewers and readers.

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 a summarized perspective on the events from 3073—our last compilation report—through 3075.

—Bertram Habeas, INN Special Correspondent, Skye, Lyran Alliance, 20 January 3077





HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Jihad Hot Spots: 3076 (JHS: 3076) is a sourcebook for *BattleTech* that continues where *Blake Ascending*, *Jihad Hot Spots: 3072* and *The Blake Documents* left off, providing players and gamemasters with an ongoing first-hand look at the events of the Word of Blake Jihad from the start of 3071 through the end of 3074. 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 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 *War Without Borders*, *Jihad Hot Spots: 3076* reviews the events that led up to and through *Blake Ascending* and *Blake Documents*. A review of known events—removed enough from the immediate chaos to be considered fact by nearly everyone in the *BattleTech* universe—is also provided here.

The following sections take readers forward in six-month increments, using the same format as *JHS: 3072*, with a more chronological focus. Each of these sections includes scenario tracks (called *Chaos Overwhelming*) compatible with the *Chaos Unbound* and *Chaos Unleashed* campaign systems outlined in *Blake Ascending* and the *Chaos Rampant* tracks featured in *JHS: 3072*. These tracks are also compatible with those found in the *Jihad Turning Points* e-book series available through www.battlecorps.com. 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 *Dawn of the Jihad/Blake Ascending*, 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 3076, covering a few remaining key happenings between early 3075 and the end of 3076.

The final section, *Jihad Hot Spots: 3076 Rules Annex*, highlights new special rules and spotlights a few new units for *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)/Blake Ascending*. A free electronic version of this—*Chaos Campaign*—is also available on www.battlecorps.com. Players and gamemasters will also find these rulebooks handy, depending on the type of campaign run: *Total Warfare (TW)*, *TechManual (TM)*, *Tactical Operations (TO)*, *Strategic Operations (SO)*, *CBT: RPG*, and *Merc Supplemental: Updates (MSU)*. References made to aerospace units in the Tracks will refer to those aerospace unit types featured in *Total Warfare* (such as fighters and DropShips) or those covered in *Strategic Operations* (such as JumpShips, space stations, and WarShips). Additional cited sources may include *Jihad Hot Spots: 3072 (JHS72)*, *Technical Readout: 3075 (TR3075)*, and *Technical Readout: Vehicle Annex (TRVA)*.

If a track does not specify certain parameters, the gamemaster decides what is fair for his or her particular player group. The overall intent 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 *Roman Candle*, *Dante's Dream*, or *Acid Rain*. Player groups begin this campaign arc with 1,000 Warchest points or whatever they had remaining at the end of the *Chaos Rampant* campaign from *Hot Spots: 3072 (JHS72)*.

Special Note: Because of its extreme nature, the *Dante's Dream* track is recommended only for groups that have already completed a minimum of three Tracks in the Jihad Chaos campaign.





connection/JIHAD HOT SPOTS:3076/section03: WAR WITHOUT BORDERS





WAR WITHOUT BORDERS

David:

Much of the information contained within this packet covers several years' worth of summaries and rundowns across the Inner Sphere. You'll find Bosworth's three complete programs as well; they are jammed full of material that he and his staff culled from news organizations and even military networks from pretty much every corner of known space. Even now, three years after his death, his incredible organizational and analytical skills are sorely missed.

I've done what I can in breaking down information on a year-by-year basis. There's a lot to cover, and I'm sure your team would appreciate a blanket overview of the situation so far; I doubt the Blakists let their "guests" tune in to INN on a daily basis.

Below is a scattering of notes and articles that caught Chandrasekhar's and Peter's eyes during his intel gathering efforts in '73 and '74. INN is picking up the torch that Bosworth left behind with a rundown of 3075-76, so I'll let you scan that at your leisure. It's these two years I'm sure you're most interested in, since it involves the faltering coalition that Victor was cobbling together in the bombing's aftermath. Uncle seemed to be fond of what Stone was trying to accomplish, so I'm sure if this data is of use to him, then Uncle would approve of my passing it to you.

Much thanks for retaining me and my Seeds after Uncle's unfortunate death. We won't fail you or Stone.

—Marcel Webb

ON THE PRECIPICE

>>FILE CK-52735a

>>BEGIN FILE /amended

Agents within the Principality of Regulus noted an oblique reference to "Operation Vijay" while negotiating a highly restrictive contract to build nuclear and fusion power plants on Cameron. *[No idea what this means, though Kirc certainly seems more unstable ever since the incident. —PA.0373]*

"New Legacy Assured With Prince's Birth" <<file

THARKREG.120273.vol2>> The Alliance today celebrated the birth of a new Prince in the Steiner line. Archon Peter Steiner-Davion and his wife Marie Hussfield Steiner-Davion welcomed their firstborn Hanse into the world after a 28-hour delivery ... *[Happy days. We could use some joy in the universe. —CK.0373]*

Rumors of HPG signal loss from deep within the Falcon OZ. My merchant contacts have gone quiet, with no reason given. Nearly half of the OZ is silent; I've attempted a few operative missions within the Falcon's space, but to no avail. I can only wonder if the Word has effectively cut the Clan off at the knees. *[Which may explain why Khan Pryde was so willing to talk with Khan Kell recently. —PA.0473]*

HOUT BORDERS

THE ARCHONETTE POLICY: STEINER'S FOLLY?

Although best intentions surely guided his drastic decision, Archon Peter's assessment of the Alliance's state at the time was utterly flawed.

Richard's Commonwealth stood at the end of years of fighting—broken, battered, and depleted but ready to rebuild. Today's Alliance finds itself still in the midst of a gruesome war. An inferno with no end in sight occupies all of our resources—manpower, materiel, and dedication alike.

It is in exactly these situations where lumbering, bureaucratic empires spanning the stars provide an advantage: Due to their size they are bound to have some reserves, providing pause and relief for hard-pressed parts of their territory.

Smaller organizations—like these Archonettes—obviously have fewer resources put aside, less breathing room, and practically no maneuvering space under such pressure. Natural reaction: withdrawal. The borders are drawn closer and closer, leaving a lot of Alliance worlds alone to fend for themselves in what can be called none other than a "governmental vacuum."

What makes matters worse in the current situation is the incomprehensible assignment of the Archonettes themselves: Covering just a fraction of Lyran space—which is bad enough—they are roughly arrayed in a circle, with a big, fat, gaping hole centering on Coventry between them.

How irresponsible for a nation priding itself on its merchant tradition! Whatever interaction the Archonettes might have with others is cut short due to immensely long jump-routes through "rogue" territory. It's just as well that most of our BattleMech industry landed in enemy hands; any manufactured machines would probably not see their destinations in years.

As regrettable as it is, the conclusion is evident: In copying Richard Steiner's revolutionary directive of little, self-sufficient kingdoms, Archon Peter might have unwillingly signed the Alliance's death warrant.

—Alliance Monthly OpEd, SBC News, December 3072

"Passing of the Heart" <<file VOICE.200373.vol3.2>>

By order of the Coordinator, tomorrow is designated as a day of mourning to honor the passing of Abbess Tomade Yamiro. The Abbess left the Dragon's presence during her visit to New Samarkand ... *[I'm not convinced this was as quiet as suggested. However, Jerrar's security around this has been extremely tight, which only sets off more alarm bells. Something to ponder. —CK.0473]*

The news reports in the Alliance regarding my activities on Arcturus are happily nearly non-existent. Still, the losses the Blakists handed us are very worrisome. I'm not sure I can adequately cover the heavy losses to the Irregulars or the Star Guard; Keller assured me that the Brigade has other resources he

WAR WITHOUT BORDERS



can use to rebuild. Despite the surprise, the Blakist attack proved to me that I'm on the right trail regarding this "Gabriel" outpost, so while we rebuild here, I shall begin preparations for Odessa. -CK.0573

My contacts in the Star have informed me that Stone cleared their extensive background check. I'm fairly sure Davion will talk with him, considering that reports have Alys's resistance hooked with Stone, not to mention the Cats that have attached themselves to his hindquarters. Considering that Davion's star is continuing to freefall among many commanders, it may be time to look to another to find a way to pull a coalition together. Or they could look to Uncle, considering what he's done in the last couple of years ... -PA.0673

Reports from Dangan Dao on Shuen Wan are disturbing; the entire Isesaki Shipping dockyard was wiped out by Capellan nuclear artillery strikes. I'm not entirely sure what game the Confederation is playing here, assaulting hurting League worlds, but it is disconcerting the way the Capellans are tossing tactical devices with little restraint and no thought to collateral damage. -CK.0773

The news from Gibson is horrifying. The Regular task force was almost completely slaughtered; I suspect the Blakists there let the survivors escape only to tell the nightmare they witnessed. -PA.0873

Word has reached me through contacts on Caledonia of the massacre of the 22nd Skye Rangers. While the loss of a Lyran unit

isn't universe shaking, what is disturbing is the single-minded focus by the Word's 52nd Shadow in killing them to the last man. I've pieced together intel that suggests this is the same unit that wiped out the Regular task force at Gibson. -PA.1073

Rumor that Naomi Centrella was aboard the DropShip that exploded on the pad at Sian was apparently false; agents have reported seeing the Chancellor's wife in the company of heavy MIM escort a few days later. -PA.1173

Our meetings with Khan Kell have gone well. The mirza presented the evidence we had regarding Odessa, and after some consideration the Exiles have agreed to provide naval and ground support for the operation I have in the planning stages. Kell has made several suggestions, which I have taken under advisement. With Lyran support assured, it appears our Odessian campaign will go forward. -CK.1173

Stone is an interesting man. His presence demands respect, though I don't think he's really in charge of his group (and I have my suspicions as to who is). Davion is certainly enamored with him, but more so the Nova Cats. So much so that I am afraid of a full-scale defection of the Clan from our Irece Prefecture border. Hohiro took my advice and forced the demand that half the Clan return to the Dragon; they didn't take kindly to that (and I suspect we'll pay for it later). Stone won the inevitable Refusal trial, so the Clan must abide. His actions have also gained the grudging respect of the Falcon representative, and Hohiro seems to trust him. As ordered by my Coordinator, I shared with Stone my Odessian plans, and I received his full support, though no troops

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

**Jan. 3071 to Dec. 3074**

The following timeline summarizes the major confirmed details covered by our last Jihad overview publication (*Jihad Hot Spots: 3072*), as well as events that unfolded since that time to the end of 3074. For a more complete and contiguous timeline of events throughout the war, please check out our INN "Chronology of the Jihad" net-site.

3071

(4 January) As part of a growing effort to contain the various border conflicts and coordinate a mutual defense strategy, Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion meets with General Adam Steiner and Khan Phelan Kell of Clan Wolf (in-Exile) on Arc-Royal.

(13 January) Clan Jade Falcon attacks Great X, but the fortified world quickly becomes a quagmire.

(21 January) The Word of Blake attacks Robinson.

(27 January) Magestrix Naomi Centrella gives birth to Daoshen Liao(-Centrella). As the first legitimate child born of the union between Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao and Magestrix Centrella, Daoshen is named heir to the Capellan Confederation, slating the couple's older child, Ilsa Centrella(-Liao), for the Canopian throne.

(28 January) In an apparent act of spite aimed at the retreating Blackhearts mercenary command, Word of Blake forces on Wasat detonate a nuclear weapon in the capital city, killing an estimated 30,000 civilians.

(31 January) In the fringes of Lyran space, the Democracy Now movement led by Calvin Strauss moves to establish the Alarion Province as a democratic stronghold, with Novara as its center.

(4 February) Khan Vlad Ward of Clan Wolf, reporting a "scouring" on Tamar, proposes a truce with the Lyrans. Also on this date, the Word of Blake attacks and seizes Pesht.

(8 February) Clan Jade Falcon assaults Morges.

(12 February) The world of Arkab suffers a devastating asteroid strike that kills tens of thousands. The Azami appeal to the embattled Combine government for aid but receive no reply.

(21-28 February) Clan Hell's Horses' attacks Steelton, New Caledonia, Star's End, and Outpost, seizing all worlds from Clan Wolf



ODESSA: HOW?



[File POL::ODES::STEIN::252004.342]

... Odessa is a system of four worlds; the primary world of habitation is the third—Odessa III. Heavily scarred by the First Succession War, the planet has slowly fought its way back and is considered an important world in the Alliance's agricultural chain, as well as the homeworld of the popular Odessian raxx ...

... fourth world, Odessa IV, is a gas giant on the extreme edge of the system. An extensive debris and asteroid field litters the broad space between the orbits of III and IV; astronomers have long theorized that two larger bodies had collided during the system's formation. As a result, IV has accumulated hundreds of moonlets and other small orbital bodies; while its official moon count is fourteen, it was calculated at one time that there were in excess of 219 bodies of various sizes in some type of orbit around the planet ...

... little record of exploration to Odessa IV due to unpredictable lunar bodies, high debris count, and remote location ...

[File ANALYSIS::WEBB::ODES11.238]

... Fisk family has had control of the system for nearly four hundred years in service to the Lyran Commonwealth. The First Succession War nearly killed the planet; a determined core of survivors remained. I believe it was at this time that ComStar must have taken possession of the fourth planet; the First War would have completely obscured any records of pirate point visits or other unusual traffic amid the chaos so far from the primary. On top of that, ComStar was replacing local information with inflated records of gravity anomalies and other

astronomical data. Make no mistake, the info swap only needed slight tweaking, as current studies of the system still show that data to be accurate ...

... Count Nicolas Fisk was restored to power under Victor's pardon, though Luther Fisk was disinherited by his father. Actually, the actions of the Count during the FedCom Civil War stripped Odessa of any defenses; with a bad reputation from the Highlander debacle and a downgrading by the MRBC, it became incumbent upon Odessa to beef up its own planetary defenses. Leon Fisk, the younger son of the count who was installed as the Planetary Guard's commander on his 23rd birthday in 3072, was a key component in rebuilding the planet's defenses ...

... no true Word presence on Odessa; much of their touch came through shell corporations in the agricultural and heavy machinery fields. I found evidence in Fisk's personal datafiles of constant contacts with the heads of these corporations, including kickbacks and preferred contract arrangements. It looks as if these Blakist shell companies actually ruled Odessa through the Count, whose greed was well known among the upper echelon of planetary society ...

... similar setups throughout Odessian history; we've found no evidence of Word or overt ComStar involvement aside from the fortified HPG station in New Bealton. With no true challenge to the family's authority, it seems that ComStar had a solid grip on the planetary government that can date back to the rebuilding efforts after the First Succession War ...

—Excerpts from "The Odessa File," compiled by Marcel Webb, HTE Head of Security; 14 January 3075 (veracity unconfirmed)

are forthcoming. I need to discuss with Marcel the possibility of getting someone into Stone's circle, if only to keep tabs on his plans in case he has the threads of deceit within him that could hurt the Dragon. —CK.1273

We were a jump away when the news of Archon Peter's assassination at Tukayyid reached us. His appointment of General Adam Steiner as the new Archon is not a surprise, however, and I know that I will continue receiving Lyran support for the upcoming campaign; it was through General Steiner's office that the initial plans were forged. Peter was a good Archon for the Alliance and became an inspiration for many during his years staying one step ahead of Blakist hunter groups on Tharkad. I think, even now, he will continue to remain a more respected leader of the Steiner heritage than his sister and brother. —CK.1273

Odessa. Our plans came to full fruition, including "duping" my StarCorps mercs into carrying out reconnaissance for us in the month leading to it, and my ad hoc coalition hit the world hard. Our hopes that the planet's forces would alert the hidden naval base were realized, and the Exile and Steiner task force located Gabriel quickly. However, the Word must have been prepared for us—I assume the spies on Arcturus told them more than we thought—as the *Yggdrasil* suffered serious damage [again! —PA].

The Gabriel base, however, was already devoid of any important information, which means that the time I spent rebuilding after Arcturus saw the Word abandoning Gabriel and stripping it down. No workable WarShips remained; the partially operable *Naga* was destroyed by the Exiles, and not even the drone fighters used in its vigorous defense were salvageable, thanks to apparent self-destruct programming. Still, a major base has been removed from play. —CK.0174 [What of the fact that the Word poisoned the planet after we pulled out? Our losses were too great to maintain a hold upon the system; the Word was apparently so upset with the Lyran governor due to our assault (and his apparent giveaway of Gabriel) that they unleashed a bioweapon similar to the one that wiped out Alarion. Can we lay such devastation upon our own heads? —PA.0174]

"Sian Torn Apart in Blakist Ambush" <<file SIANREG.090174.vol1>> ... forces declaring allegiance to Kali Liao tore into the Blakist rear lines, though several witnesses report that the two Warrior houses fell upon themselves and CCAF forces during the brutal fighting. Reports of tactical nuclear strikes remain unconfirmed, though losses on all sides are severe. WoB forces managed to escape the system, though reports are still unconfirmed as to how many ... [Still sorting out the situation here. Davion intel is spotty and the Confederation is extremely tight-

BLAME GAME

[Voice 1]: Name and rank.

[Prisoner]: *[Mumbling]*

[Voice 2]: Name and rank, you miserable bag of shit!

[Prisoner 1]: *[Screaming] Adept Markus Porter, you hatchet-faced mothe— [Sound of flesh meeting a hard object]*

[Voice 1]: *[Calm]* You will speak only when spoken to. Answer the questions and you will find us accommodating. Failure to respect us will result in more unfortunate meetings with my associate's fist.

[Prisoner 1]: Burn in hell, you psyc— *[Loud smack, sound of bone breaking, screaming]*

[Voice 2]: Tell us how you arrived on Sian.

[Prisoner 1]: In your Chancellor's ass.

[Voice 1]: Most unfortunate.

[Voice 2]: Bring in the next prisoner, please. *[Door opening, closing]* Your defiance does nothing for your Blake's will. *[Pause with scrape, click in background]* One last time. How did you arrive on Sian?

[Sound of scuffling, sobbing]

[Prisoner 2]: Markus! Blake's Blood, Markus, what did the— *[Wet smack]*

[Voice 1]: Silence. Speak as spoken to. Answer our questions, or you will find the same fate as your friend.

[Prisoner 1]: Don't you dare, Stephanie! Remember your oa— *[Gunshot]*

[Voice 2]: Tell us how you arrived on Sian.

[Prisoner 2]: *[Whispering]* Blake save me ... Blake save me ...

[Voice 1]: Answer the question.

[Prisoner 2]: *[Choking sobs]* On ... on ... Ceres Metals cargo ships ... as construction crews ...

[Voice 2]: Who was your commander's liaison?

[Prisoner 2]: Kali ... Kali Liao ...

[Voice 1]: *[Low volume]* Bring in the next prisoner. This one is uncooperative.

[Voice 2]: *Liar!* You lie, you miserable Blakist slut! *[Scrape, click]* Who was your liaison?

[Door opening, scuffling]

[Prisoner 2]: *[Sobbing]* Kali...Li— *[Gunshot]*

[Voice 1]: You will answer the questions and speak only when spoken to.

[Voice 2]: Who was your commander's contact here on Sian?

[Prisoner 3]: Johnny Tseng, you miserable *pizda*.

[Voice 1]: It seems we have a situation here. Stop recording.
—Unmodified recording posted to the Sian underground newsnet; 9 Feb 3074

lipped. This article is one of the most candid, considering the iron grip the Mask has on the press within the Confederation these days. —PA.0274]

"Brion's Legion Saves Duke Umayr" <<file BOLTIMES.200274.vol2a>> ... heroic last stand against the

RECONSTRUCTION DECONSTRUCTION

[Jim Reordon]: ... and the Diamond Shark warrior merely replied "Tainted."

[Lars Olafson]: Thanks, Jim. And now, with the local news, here's a report from SBC's award-winning reporter, Kiva Cooper.

[Kiva Cooper]: The Word of Blake scourge has touched many worlds across the Inner Sphere. On our own Solaris VII, the fighting was perhaps worse than many others, but despite their many differences, the people of Solaris came together to drive the Robes from our soil. No coalition came to our rescue, nor did any elite mercenary regiment rush to aid in our struggle. Instead, we come together—people from different backgrounds, ethnicities and social status—to fight off a common threat, working and bleeding together.

But now, where has that unity gone? Looking behind me you can see the Steiner Coliseum, rebuilt even more luxurious and cutting edge than ever. Yet, just to my right, we can see both a hospital and an apartment complex, lying in shambles. These structures would be condemned were it not for the recent war and the accompanying need for housing and medical care. How many people continue to suffer and die because Solaris has thrown off its solidarity for profits?

The Inner Sphere looks at Solaris and sees that everything looks fine. The fights are back on trivid, the casinos are taking bets, and the trash-talk shows crawl up in the ratings. But the eyes beyond our world refuse to see the cracks in the infrastructure, the factionalism that has returned—alive and well as ever. The Tongs and Yakuza are fighting again. Silesia and Montenegro refuse to contribute money to common needs. The phrase "hang together or hang separately"—once a mantra of the Solaran resistance—has already become a lost catchphrase, mere lip service to a Solaran brotherhood.

Through it all, some embers of hope may remain, but like the clouds of the rainy season, the networking, corruption, and nepotism will continue to return to the ways of old. As the hard-working common folk of Solaris once more scratch and fight to survive while a new generation of fat cats prospers at their expense, the *real* common enemy has been forgotten.

Solaris, one of your own offers hope—but little optimism.

—SBC Nightly News broadcast, 17 August 3074

rampaging 52nd Division. While the Legion itself was completely shattered in its last-stand defense against the Blakist terror troops, Duke Umayr was able to escape from the planet's surface and Blakist clutches. The loss of the capital is a deep wound to the Bolan people, but one that can be healed ... *[I'm fairly certain at this point that the 52nd Shadow is being led by none other than Precentor Apollyon, whom we've tentatively identified as the commander of the Manei Domini. Their ruthless and brutal attacks seem to have two purposes: to smash prominent line units and to execute planetary nobility. It's their way of sending a message to the rest of the universe. —PA.0374]*



WAR WITHOUT BORDERS

“StarCorps Facilities Suffer Crippling Damage” <<file SONHOABLUS.250474.vol14g>> ... suspected chemical weapons usage in the massive damage on the facilities and personnel of StarCorps’ main complex. The death toll is still unknown, but hope for survivors is extremely slim at this point. The Word’s attack came without warning ... *[Most unfortunate, indeed. No one survived the chemical attack and the facilities were firebombed from repeated DropShip-supported aerospace flyovers. The damage to the corporation is sizeable, as the Board of Directors was meeting there at the time. Contingency plans are being put into play. –CK.0574]*

Word has reached me of the massive asteroid strikes on Taurus. Is it possible that the Word could be behind it? Or are we looking at every shadow expecting to see a Blakist boogeyman? –PA.0574

So Adam is going to marry Heather Fyhne, Baroness of Arcturus? Interesting. She’s not the sharpest sword in the rack, though I suspect decorum demanded Adam marry royalty, rather than his commoner friend Spector. –CK.0574

The fact that Robert didn’t throw down the nukes we know he has on the Blakists during the bitter fight for Skye speaks volumes about Stone’s charisma. No doubt if anyone else was there leading the defense, Robert would’ve used his nukes without reservation, even on his own people, to defend the dirt he stands on. –CK.0774

Our investments on Glengarry have been destroyed, thanks

VICTOR AND ISIS: THE TRUTH?

(12 December 3074)

Arc-Royal [DBC]—After weeks of speculation Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion has issued a formal press release confirming that he and Isis Marik are indeed married. The ceremony likely took place aboard the Com Guard’s flagship above Tharkad on the eve of the final meeting of the Star League.

“We had planned to announce our marriage during the council meetings, but the dissolution of the Star League and the subsequent Word of Blake attack pushed such concerns onto the back burner,” Precentor Martial Steiner-Davion said. “With the Blakists on the warpath I felt it best to delay any announcement indefinitely. Of course, thanks to the efforts of certain journalists now we don’t have to hide the truth.”

And the truth is that Victor and Isis’ union has been a fruitful one, presenting the former First Prince of the Federated Commonwealth with daughter Jade in 3068, and twin sons Burton and Lee in 3072. The Precentor Martial is unequivocal about where his children stand in relation to the thrones of the Lyran Alliance and Federated Suns.

“When I abdicated in favor of Yvonne and Peter I also declared that any children I may have in the future would be excluded from the lines of succession,” Steiner-Davion said.

Interestingly, Precentor Martial Davion made no comment about possible claims in the Free Worlds League.

to the efforts of the Blakist’s special Shadow Hunter group. The factories I’d purchased are nothing but girders and ashes, and Brewer’s Legion is no more. I wonder if these Hunters are scouting out my assets, or if their attack is just coincidence. They’ve been IDed as the unit that destroyed the HTC compound on Thorin, so I wonder ... —CK.1074

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

before annexing the nearby systems of Skallevoll, Icar, Chateau, and The Edge.
(6 March) Regulus’ Prince Kirc Cameron-Jones orders an attack on Oriente in an effort to destroy the false Thomas Marik and his host, Duke Christopher Halas of Oriente.
(7 March) Andurien raiders launch a failed attack against the Capellan world of Principia. Also on this date, a major protest against the Ghost Bear-Rasalhague détente breaks out at the Frihet Training Facility on Grumium. The First Grumium Armored Militia is forced to remove their own countrymen after rebel cadets take over the academy grounds.
(10 March) Democracy Now proponents stage an open rebellion on Enzesfled, storming the planetary duke’s palace and sending numerous secondary nobles into hiding.

(11 March) During a conclave in the Dante system, a Clan Snow Raven flotilla is attacked by a suspected Blakist assault force that destroys the Snow Raven flagship, critically injures saKhan Broderick Sukhanov, and wipes out a full Galaxy of Raven forces.
(18 March) With the help of David Lear, Devlin Stone and a band of resisters escape from the RBMU 105 reeducation camp on Kittery.
(24 March) Capellan troops secure Detroit on behalf of the Magistracy of Canopus.
(7 April) Frustrated by Taurian resistance on Electra, Hansen’s Roughriders use fuel-air explosives to clear out a Taurian base camp dug into a canyon on Electra. Taurian nuclear weapons are recovered after the battle.
(7-14 April) Clan Hell’s Horses seizes Kirchbach,

Verthandi, Rodigo, and New Oslo from Clan Wolf and consolidates gains on all worlds up to the Kirchbach line (including Chateau, Csesztreg, Lovinac, Alleghe, St. John, Bruben, Svelvik, Balsta, New Bergen, and Hermagor). Meanwhile, Jade Falcon forces attack Steelton.
(11 April) The Word of Blake’s Forty-first Shadow Division sets the capital city of Crimson ablaze on Canopus. Also on this date, a Regularan attack group sent to Oriente is defeated by heavy naval and aerospace resistance centered on the Thera-class FWLS *Santorini*.
(12 April) Clan Jade Falcon sends a small force to Arc-Royal under a flag of truce.
(21-30 April) Clan Ice Hellion assaults the coreward worlds of the Jade Falcon Occupation Zone with a force of

WAR WITHOUT BORDERS



Luthien is free! So Stone's secret conference with the Bears has indeed born fruit. It is a relief that the capital is finally free of Blakist taint; if the *Kokuryu-kai* can be eliminated, then the Dragon can roar once more. —CK.1274

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TAURIAN WARSHIP BOMBARDS MIDALE

(22 June 3074)

Midale [ISAP]—The haze, smoke, and dust has yet to settle, and fires still rage across a valley that was once home to three thriving communities here on Midale. All are the most recent casualties of the Taurian Concordat's latest "berserker frenzy" against the Federated Suns. Launched by a refurbished missile frigate identified as the TCS *Vendetta*, the nuclear-tipped missiles—each one estimated at fifty kilotons—rained down upon the landscape in less than five minutes' time. But it was five minutes of hell that killed an estimated six million FedSuns citizens and wounded millions more.

Most analysts have attributed the Taurian savagery to little more than a tantrum on a grand scale, using overwhelming firepower upon the warehouses and settlements below to vent their rage over the alleged FedSuns bombing of Taurus. But others suggest that it may be a lack of ground troops—rather than a lack of willingness to commit them—that has driven the methods of the Taurians' newest campaign.

Still, there may be a personal factor to this. The Hansen's Roughriders mercenary command—which has been waging its own private war with the Concordat since 3067—has reportedly received unprecedented naval support from the Federated Suns,

with clearance to strike deep at the enemy's heart since this latest Taurian advance began. Considering the Roughriders to be war criminals for their actions in the Pleiades, the Concordat may have chosen a campaign of brutality against the realm supporting their mercenary foe.

FedSuns officials contacted have made it clear that the Taurians' "genocidal campaign" will not be tolerated and have said steps are already being taken to deal with these assaults. While details are sketchy, reports place an AFFS naval task force en route to the troubled region to counter the Taurian WarShip threat.

NEW AVALON RECOVERY: A LONG ROAD

Blog Entry December 12, 3074

My apologies, loyal readers; four days with nary a post to my blog. Of course, those of you farther away from New Avalon will probably be reading these in batches so I guess it only seems a long time for me. When last I wrote, I'd just landed on New Avalon. I have not been idle since then. I was able to hook up with a survey team from the Government Accountability Office in my first day, and I'm just now preparing to put the finishing touches on my interview with Jon Davion, the Federated Suns' newly minted Marshal of the Armies.

I won't leak the interview—for that you'll need to watch INN Interstellar for the exclusive vid. I'll say one thing from the interview—with the strength of character and aura of command and the loyalty Jon Davion and the memory of the late Jackson Davion engender, I have to wonder why the Victoria or Argyle Davions do not lead the Federated Suns.

As I said, I just spent the last three days continent hopping

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD



four Galaxies and thirteen WarShips. Encountering relatively light resistance, the Hellions claim thirteen coreward Falcon worlds, including Bone-Norman through Toland.

(25 April) The Kaumberg Planetary Guard mobilizes in response to urgent pleas from the embattled Enzesfled government, an act that further inflames the militant Democracy Now movements on Batajnica on Calafell.

(3 May) After months of "low-intensity resistance," the Solaris Home Defense League executes a daring assault on Solaris City, securing the city's International Zone.

(20 May) A new "Warrior House" of cybernetically enhanced Thuggee fanatics attacks Chesterton, suggesting a link between Kali Liao and the Word of Blake's

Manei Domini. Chancellor Liao later denies authorizing the attack.

(22 May) An attack by apparent FWLM troops (later revealed to be the Forty-ninth Shadow Division) destroys the Second Regular Hussars on Wallis, leaving no survivors.

(25 May) Kaumberg Planetary Guard troops land on Enzesfled as Democracy Now riots break out on Batajnica and Calafell.

(6 June) The Word of Blake annihilates the city of Nova Roma on Alphard using a series of neutron bombs seeded throughout the Marian capital city.

(7-28 June) Clan Hell's Horses reclaims Steelton from the Falcons even as the Falcons hit back on Seiduts. The Horses also seize Liezen, Harvest, and Planting from Clan Wolf. Meanwhile, Clan Ice Hellion invades the Falcon-held worlds of Golandrinas,

Wotan, Winfield, Persistence and the installation in the Dark Nebula.

(11 June) The Word of Blake forces in Solaris City are forced out by the SHDL, but not before destroying the planetary HPG.

(17 June) Without warning or explanation, "Warrior House Rakshasa" abandons Chesterton.

(25 June) Clan Ghost Bear—on behalf of the Free Rasalhague Republic—requests ComStar to prepare for relocation out of Republic space.

(July) Clan Ice Hellion's advance into Jade Falcon territory stalls with heavy fighting on Bone-Norman, Somerset, Golandrinas, Wotan, Derf, Trell I, and Romulus.

(21 July) Clan Hell's Horses sends a special envoy to the Ghost Bears in an apparent act of reconciliation for their past feud.



WAR WITHOUT BORDERS

with a GAO team that was taking part in an audit of the global economy. New Avalon faces a long grueling road to recovery. Nowhere is this more evident than in the smoking ruins of Avalon City, silhouetted by the now strangely peakless Mount Davion. Even in the remote regions of New Scotland, the scars of occupation still linger. Check out my slide show for images of a ten-meter deep crater in a remote area 300 km north east of Avalon City. It is all that remains of a NAIS atmospheric research center, blasted to dust by orbital fire in the first days of the invasion. Brunswick, with its energy production and industry, saw extensive damage, often finding itself at the front lines of the battle. Only on Rostock was the devastation far less evident. The continent's predominantly agrarian foundation and lack of industry shielded it from the worst of the Blakist occupation. I reveal more in my upcoming article in INN's syndicated news magazine.

Still, it is the farm and ranchlands that really give a true beacon of good news. With eighty percent of New Avalon's agriculture industry intact, no one will starve. Some farmers may even have to curtail spring planting if merchant shipping does not pick up again.

This is Nadia Pryce, INN reporter, writing from New Avalon.

HELL'S HORSES STALLED

(18 January 3075)

Donegal [DBC]—Bursting back onto the stage of Inner Sphere affairs in late 3070, Clan Hell's Horses drove deep into the Wolves' holdings on the Periphery border. At first, it appeared that the Horses would overrun Clan Wolf's Occupation Zone completely, but the intervention of Clan Jade Falcon diverted the new invading Clan from what appeared to be a private war with Khan Vlad Ward. The arrival of the Ice Hellions further confused the situation, and many experts felt it was only a matter of time before the Ghost Bears would involve themselves. But events took a surprise turn in mid 3071, for not only did the Bears refrain from joining in the fighting, but the Wolves, Falcons, and Horses settled into some kind of informal truce to eject the Ice Hellions from the Inner Sphere.

Apparently, that action may have been the last gasp of the Horses' offensive strength. Now in possession of twenty star systems, the Hell's Horses are in danger of becoming over-extended. There continue to be reports of skirmishing between the Horses and the Falcons and Wolves—effectively little more than Clan Trials for limited objectives—but their advance into the Inner Sphere appears to be at an end.

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

(August) Clan Ice Hellion successfully captures Evciler from Clan Jade Falcon.

(9 August) The Free Worlds League government on Atreus cedes the world of Gibson to the control of Manei Domini Precentor Apollyon.

(11 August) In the Draconis Combine, the Azami population leadership declares a state of emergency and recalls all remaining Arkab Legions to Algedi against the orders of the Coordinator.

(14-28 August) Clan Hell's Horses' advance into Wolf Clan territory stalls at a line of worlds from Ferleiten to Zoetermeer. Meanwhile, Ghost Bear forces launch Trials on Balsta, Hermagor, and Dawn.

(17 August) The Word of Blake forces on Solaris reclaim the International Zone in a blitzkrieg assault.

(20 August) All communications from the Capellan world of Necromo fall silent. Later investigation reveals the world was struck by several rogue asteroids and at least one Word of Blake Shadow Division.

(25 August) An AFFS force sent on a punitive raid to Highspire is reportedly eradicated by two hybrid Manei Domini-Thugee "Warrior Houses" on planet.

(27 August) Democracy Now upheavals continue to spread through the Lyran Alliance's Alarion Province, with Mercedes, Aiguebelle, Mezzana, Vermezzo, and Virtue all experiencing demonstrations.

(30 August) On Canopus IV, the Ramilie's Raiders mercenary command is destroyed while helping MAF commander Hadji Doru escape from the occupied capital city.

(September) Clan Jade Falcon reclaims Erewhon from Clan Ice Hellion.

(6 September) In an apparent split within the movement, Democracy Now leader Kelvin Strauss denounces the more extremist policies of fellow leader Lindon Ashley.

(14 September) The world of Savannah declares independence from the Free Worlds League. Also on this date, Alys Rousset-Marik's Free Worlds Resistance raids pro-Blakist garrisons on Hamilton and Pollux.

(15 September) Taurian mercenaries briefly capture the FedSuns world of Brusset.

(27 September) After years trapped on Tharkad, Peter Steiner-Davion abdicates his authority as Archon of the Lyran Alliance to Adam Steiner, his General of the Armies.

(October) Clan Hell's Horses attempts to assault several Wolf Clan positions on Ridderkerk, Basiliano, and Hohenems but succeeds only in establishing footholds on Basiliano and Hohenems. The Wolves counterattack on Ridderkerk, Mozirje and Unzmarkt. Meanwhile, Clan Ice Hellion takes Gotterdammerung, Here, and Evciler from the Jade Falcons, even as the Falcons retake Anywhere and Lackhove.

(2 October) The Screaming Eagles mercenary command launches an unsanctioned attack on the Outworlds Alliance world of Ramora, engaging Outworlds and Snow Raven forces.

(7 October) Richard Steiner—an apparent Blakist plant and LAAF deserter—assassinates Free Worlds League Marshall Jeremy Brett with an implanted suicide device.

(12 October) Devlin Stone's resistance movement on Kittery succeeds in neutralizing the last of the Blakist forces on that world.

(15 October) The Solaris Home Defense League manages to force the Word of Blake back out of Solaris City and into the Reaches.

EARLY 3075: THE RAZOR'S EDGE





EARLY 3075: THE RAZOR'S EDGE



Like ripples on a violent river, events whipped forward across the whole of the Inner Sphere. The Ghost Bears' inexorable momentum refused to slow down, battering aside even nominal allies in their single-minded quest to avenge their fallen Khan. In Lyran space, Democracy Now added their own momentum by re-igniting their drive for a greater voice and possible independence through any means.

The Capellan nation, meanwhile, forged its own path with only Canopus at its side while stretching their arms out to let their fragmenting Free Worlds League neighbors know that aggressions against the House of Liao would reap only sorrow. This same stubbornness also showed in the Arkab Brotherhood's defiance against their former masters in the Draconis Combine.

The fragile alliances among realms threatened to shatter, pushed to the limit by Blakist terror tactics.

It was the perfect time for new heroes to rise.

At odds with the nations surrounding them, the Confederation stood—alone yet united—even with their HPG network in shambles. As if fueled solely by the personality of its

Chancellor (and to a lesser extent, the beauty and integrity of his bride), the Confederation presented the Word with an immobile object to test their unstoppable force.

For the rest of the Inner Sphere, the growing "cult of personality" around Devlin Stone—a virtual unknown—spawned rumors, lies, and speculation. Yet it also seemed to draw together the scattered leaders of war-torn realms to unite against the common enemy. With so many of the Inner Sphere's hopes for a united front dashed at the fateful Arc-Royal summit of 3073, the new face on the scene—one capable of motivating and leading armies to victory as well as any House general—promised everyone a second chance to survive the horrors of the Jihad.

With fracture lines growing amid the ongoing torrent of the Word's holy war, the Inner Sphere teetered on the razor's edge, and to a very real extent, the fate of millions laid in the hands of a few extraordinary leaders.

—Bertram Habeas, *INN Special Correspondent*

FRAYED AT THE SEAMS

As war raged on throughout the Inner Sphere, many of the Great Houses began to feel the strain on their infrastructure and their sense of unity. Acts that would be seen as treasonous in more stable times became viable courses of action for once law-abiding citizens. Faced with the greater threat of the Jihad, many of the House Lords chose to ignore these internal divisions, often with grave consequences.

BROTHERHOOD UNITED

(2 January 3075)

Algedi [THE DRAKE]—A visitor to Algedi might be shocked initially when not properly prepared in advance. Entering the Azami domain is like stepping into a whole new world. The looks, smells, and behaviors are nothing like the realm of the Dragon. Azami customs—often followed in seclusion, so as to not stand out—are now a part of everyday life on Algedi. While the Azami have followed the laws of a different culture for centuries, the differences buried just below the surface have grown more and more apparent since the Arkab Crisis began a few years ago.

Obviously, this newfound self-awareness and identity rises from the Azami's recent discord with the Dragon's decisions. Local citizens generally feel neglected and mistreated when asked about off-world topics. Frustration and disappointment aimed at our Combine still run high, and every Algedian asked would gladly—and with an impressive flow of words—prove this. This is an interesting fact, and a somewhat disturbing one, given the slowly thawing relations between the Dragon and the Azami elders.

At the same time, this Azami negativity toward outsiders

unites them as a people as much as our own feelings toward the *gaijin* of other realms. And the positive effects of this change of mind cannot be discounted. Forced to stand alone, the Arkab now operate heavy industry in quantity as well as quality, attaining a self-sufficiency thought impossible a mere decade ago. It is truly impressive what a shot at independence and self-sufficiency enables a world's inhabitants to do.

Awe-inspiring as well is the visual reinvention of the Arkab Legions in true Azami fashion. Gone are the Regiments of the line adhering to DCMS book and law, replaced by a style and code of conduct unique to the Arkabs' culture and fierce warrior tradition. Whether these changes are merely cosmetic or run much deeper into their mindset remains to be seen, but either way, the "new" Arkab Legions are heroes in the eyes of the common Azami, fervently welcomed wherever they go.

A PIRATE'S LIFE FOR ME

[*Vid wipes to conversation area. Sitting to the left is a thickset man in a high-quality suit. To the right, a burly man clad in frayed leathers, sprawled across his chair. The view zooms in on the well-dressed man.*]

[Byron Waters]: Welcome back to Wheeler Nightly News. I'm your host, Byron Waters. Tonight, we have a special interview with Bailey "Barbarossa" Reis, one of the new recipients of a Filtvelt Letter of Marque. [*Turns to man seated to his left*] Mr. Reis, welcome to the show.

[*Camera zooms onto a stylish gentleman with short-cropped hair and a gleaming silver tooth*]

[Barbarossa]: Barbarossa, please. [*Smiles.*] Thank you for having me.

[Waters]: So, Barbarossa, what compelled you to petition and

EARLY 3075: THE RAZOR'S EDGE



accept the government's Marques program?

[Barbarossa]: *[Crosses legs and steeples fingers]* Business opportunities, Mr. Waters. The Marques program allows me and my corporation to take advantage of looser shipping and engagement rules while being able to defend the Coalition from the enemies that surround her.

[Waters]: Such interesting corp-speak for what is in essence a legal excuse to steal at gunpoint.

[Barbarossa]: Color it as you wish, Mr. Waters. The bottom line is, the Filtvelt government has deemed it a necessary service because training and recruitment efforts over the last two years have been slow, at best. I believe there are many citizens still waiting out the return of the Federated Suns.

[Waters]: That may well be, but is it necessary to give such carte blanche to space ruffians such as yourself all in the name of national defense? Especially when we did not have border violence until the program was rolled out two years ago?

[Barbarossa]: While it is unfortunate that some souls have deemed it necessary to stretch the rules in order to feed their own carnal desire, by and large the program has been successful. The "border violence" you so carelessly toss out like many pundits was not the effect of the program's actions, but more the continued cause from Trevaline and her unified pirate bands. And let's not forget the bald-faced piracy from the Calderon Protectorate, stealing Coalition supplies at gunpoint.

[Waters]: Ah, but it's public fact that the pirate attacks from the Tortugans only began after the Marques program was instigated.

[Barbarossa]: *[Smiles]* And yet, the Taurians have been pressing various border worlds since before the Filtvelt Coalition

was born. In fact, wasn't that the real impetus for the whole breakaway?

[Waters]: *[Coughs]* So Mr. Reis, what does a pirate do with all the booty they claim from their unarmed victims?

[Barbarossa]: *[Slowly stands]* I see. Thank you, Mr. Waters, for your *unbiased* and *uninformed* journalism. For the record, I'm a privateer—but I can't expect a Broken Wheel-schooled reporter to know the difference between a pirate and a businessman. That whole "education gap" thing; I suppose breaking from the mother Suns had to have some consequences. *[Waves down a rising Waters]* No, no, don't get up. I believe I can find my way out.

[Waters]: How dare you.

[Barbarossa]: *[Stops]* How dare I? *[Faces Waters]* An interesting question, from one still of volunteer age. Before you paint the criminal brush on those who spill their blood for the defense of your home, why not look in your dressing room mirror and repeat that question? If men and women like you had a spine and signed up to do your duty for the Coalition, maybe the "uncouth" services of "scum" like me wouldn't be needed. So stick your high-and-mighty intellectual pseudo-babble and shove it up your exhaust pipe. *[Waters stands and rushes Barbarossa. As the camera goes dark, Barbarossa's voice can be heard]* Truth hurts, doesn't it?

—Unaired trivid footage leaked to Broken Wheel networks, originally filmed 4 January 3075

FERIHEGY CAPITAL ARCOLOGY BOMBED, THOUSANDS DEAD

(4 March 3075)

Kaumberg [KNN]—Terrorists struck the capital of Ferihegy

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD



(21 October) Clan Nova Cat finally comes out of their isolation to support Devlin Stone.

(22 October) Marik Commonwealth troops invade Savannah, crushing the local resistance.

(1-14 November) Clan Wolf forces the Hell's Horses off Basiliano and Hohenems, and retakes Mozirje, Feltre, and Unzmarkt, while additional strikes carve footholds on Planting. The Horses, meanwhile, turn on the Ice Hellion-controlled worlds of Apollo, Bensingler, Toland, and Von Strang's World.

(3 November) A joint Snow Raven/Outworlds Alliance force launches a reprisal strike on the FedSuns world of Kilbourne. Both sides suffer heavy losses.

(12 November) Coordinator Hohiro Kurita issues an ultimatum to the Azami on Algedi to "mobilize for the Dragon's defense or

face the Dragon's wrath." The Azami do not reply.

(15 November) Omniss terrorists on Alpheratz set off a thermonuclear device in the heart of the Outworlds Alliance capital city of Famindas. Clan Snow Raven declares its WarShips a "safe haven" for the Alliance leadership.

(17 November) The Com Guard forces remaining in the Free Rasalhague Republic begin preparations to depart. Meanwhile, as part of a mutual defense pact, the Rasalhague KungsArmé prepares for a series of Trials against Ghost Bear champions.

(19 November) Therese Brett-Marik declares the Duchy of Tamarind independent of the Free Worlds League, names herself Duchess of Tamarind, and places her son, Photon

Brett-Marik, in command of all FWLM forces previously commanded by Marshall Brett.

(29 November) The Marik Commonwealth begins a blockade of Augustine.

(December) The Ice Hellions' advance into the Inner Sphere is shattered by attacks from the Hell's Horses and Jade Falcon Clans. The Horses assault Botany Bay, Last Chance, Gotterdammerung, Lackhove, and Here, while the Falcons strike worlds from Winfield and Persistence to Evcler. The Hellions strike back at the Horses on Seiduts and Vantaa.

(11 December) The Word of Blake forces on Solaris finally withdraw from the planet after a long and bloody campaign.

(21 December) In the Lyran Alliance, Democracy Now's movement leaders, Kelvin Strauss and Lindon Ashley, are both



EARLY 3075: THE RAZOR'S EDGE

DISASTER'S WAKE

Mom,

By now you know I survived and Tony didn't make it. Don't be too sad about Tony. I think he went good, you know what I mean? I don't think he felt anything—he was pretty much right on top of the first flashpoint. Probably went without noticing.

Me, I'm pretty lucky, too. I'm here. I won't pretend it don't hurt to breathe. The medicos say my lungs'll never be one hundred percent, but the burning should go away in time. Feels better, and it's only been a week.

What pisses me off is the guys who didn't make it. Who could have made it if the damn Ferihegy militia had gotten in there fast enough to pull some of them out. They held back, doing nothing, for nearly an hour, making sure the coast was clear before risking their precious hides. The coast was clear—the bombs pretty well cleared the coast—and I saw men die while they were hiding safe on the other side of the airlocks.

But mostly what I mean, Mom, is don't worry about me. I'll be laid up here for a couple of weeks and after that I'll be sent home. Lot of cutbacks with the dome half gone. So keep an eye out for me; I'll be wanting to do something to pay my half of the rent.

—Personal letter from Kenneth ("Ken") Stetton to his mother, Ferihegy Tet Arcology, Ferihegy, 5 March 3075

in the predawn hours this morning, killing an estimated five thousand civilians. At five minutes before six o'clock—the heart of the morning shift change—a sequential series of fourteen explosions shattered flex points along one face of the arcology. An estimated three hundred agricultural, food production, and maintenance personnel died in the explosions, while four and a half to five thousand more died from cyanide poisoning before the emergency bulwark and lock system succeeded in sealing off the heart of the city.

Ferihgy Primus is a self-contained ecology, protected from Ferihegy's nitrogen-cyanide atmosphere and weather corrosion within a six-sided pyramid of ferroglass plates over a steel-alloy frame. Flex points allow the frame and plates to adjust to thermal expansion and contraction, maintaining atmospheric integrity under all conditions.

The southern face of the pyramidal arcology has been fractured in several places, and entire sections of ferroglass were destroyed. The inward trajectory of all fragments indicates the explosives were placed on the outside of the structure. The greatest damage was done to the airponic and yeast production zones responsible for feeding the 63,000 residents of the enclosed city. Rendering this vital region uninhabitable does more to wound the city than the structural damage alone. The Ferihegy Primus Infrastructure Office estimates it will be four to five years before the city is once again completely self-supporting.

Ferihgy Tet and Ferihgy Gamma arcologies have pledged aid. Ferihgy Geh, still under construction, has offered free space and employment to any Primus residents wishing to relocate.

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

attacked by assassins of unknown origins. Strauss is killed during a campaign rally on Novara, but Ashley narrowly escapes his attackers on Calafell.

3072

(11 January) A Lyran attack force led by Archon Adam Steiner and augmented by elements of Clan Wolf (in-Exile), the Kell Hounds, Wolf's Dragoons—and even a token Jade Falcon force—assaults and liberates Tharkad. Once Tharkad is liberated, Adam Steiner transfers the Archonship back to Peter Steiner-Davion.

(14-31 January) Clan Wolf pushes the Hell's Horses off Planting, Mozirje, Feltre, and Unzmarkt before accepting cease-fire terms from the Horses' Khan. Meanwhile, Clan Ice Hellion loses Persistence, Winfield,

and Romulus to the Falcons. Also on this date, the Combine WarShip *Siriwan* is destroyed by nuclear weapons over Algedi after issuing a final ultimatum to the Azami from *Kanrei* Minamoto and bombarding two Azami cities.

(21 January) ComStar's military forces begin to leave the Rasalhague Republic.

(2 February) A joint Com Guard-AFFS force liberates Robinson.

(14 February) Under the command of Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion, a coalition force composed of ComStar, LAAF, and Exiled Wolf troops successfully liberates Donegal from Word of Blake blockade forces.

(14-28 February) The Jade Falcons retake Evciler while the Hell's Horses reclaim Seiduts. Also by this point, reports from

the Clan Occupation Zones confirm a complete shutdown of communication between the invading Clans and their homeworlds.

(20 February) The Filtvelt Coalition declares its independence from the Federated Suns.

(March) Devlin Stone's resistance topples the Blakist puppet governments on Scituate and Spica. Also at this time, Clan Hell's Horses assaults the Ice Hellion positions in the Dark Nebula, while Clan Jade Falcon and Horses troops land on Vantaa.

(15 March) Lindon Ashley resurfaces on Novara to take up the reins of Democracy Now's movement. At the same time, Kaumberg Planetary Guard forces land on Batajnica amid public outcry that the Lyran government is targeting the movement's leadership.

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Democracy Now has claimed responsibility for the bombing. In a recorded communiqué released to news sources on Kaumberg, Firenze, Pocologan, Akfata, Vihitijarvi, and Batajnica, Lindon Ashley, leader of the militant organization, declared that no government that had the willing support of the people would have been victim to such an attack. The act was possible, Ashley contends, only because the people, the citizens whom government supposedly serves, are disenfranchised to the point of fatalism. Witnessing preparations for the attack, they took no action to defend an oppressor state in which they had no voice. Ashley declared that under a true democracy, such an event would be impossible—that a government accountable to its people engenders people who take responsibility for their government and their worlds. The loyalty the government showed its people would be reciprocated in its vigilant defense by the people.

This is a clear iteration of Ashley's oft-repeated "true democracy will end crime" speech.

Analysts on several worlds have pointed out that neither Ferihegy nor explosions are mentioned in the prerecorded speech. It is speculated that the recordings had been distributed to Democracy Now cells on several worlds with the instructions that it be released if and when a catastrophic event of this nature took place.

Despite Ashley's claims, Ferihegy authorities refuse to speculate on parties responsible for the attack until all evidence has been examined.

WELCOME TO THE NEW AGE OF SAIL

Entry 816:30

Welcome to the new Age of Sail. JumpSails have replaced the Tall Ship sails of Terra's 18th century, but when it comes to piracy it is nice to see that little has changed in 1,300 years.

At the height of Terra's Age of Sail, piracy was rampant, a plague on shipping to all nations. But it was the nations themselves that allowed the piracy to flourish and grow. Ever on the move for their own advantages, nations would legitimize these outlaws, paying them off and sending them after their enemies. A neat and tidy little shadow war that ultimately benefited only one party: the pirates themselves.

It worked so well in the 1700s that we just had to try it again. Filtvelt has grown her army through the issuance of Letters of Marques. Essentially, these letters sanction outlaws and brigands to attack Filtvelt's enemies in the name of peace and freedom. What does a murderer need to do to acquire one of these letters and avoid prison or firing squad? Just promise not to murder Filtvetians, of course.

It's such a fine idea that worlds bordering our wonderful little coalition have taken up the idea, issuing their own letters and adding such dubious soldiers as the Arsenic Raiders and Mad Jack O'Malley to their TO&Es.

Not that Filtvelt even needed to hire such stalwart support. In the last year we've been attacked by pirates how many times? Oh right none. It's like whistling to keep the pink elephant away.

Just keep whistling my friends, that way the rest of us will know right away when one of our able defenders slits your throat.

—OpEd by "MyOpinionDoesn'tCount," syndicated columnist, Filtvelt Digital Press, 6 March 3075

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

(22 March) A Word of Blake attack force sent to Arc-Royal is defeated after a major engagement in space and on the surface.

(28 March) The Word of Blake raids Buenos Aires, deploying another of their so-called "Magic Bullet" bio-weapons in the process.

(12 April) DCMS forces equipped with tactical nukes breach Algedi to liberate the captives taken during the *Siriwan's* failed assault.

(14-30 April) The Hell's Horses and Jade Falcons shatter the last of the Ice Hellion troops in the Inner Sphere on Vantaa. In the midst of the weeks-long struggle, however, the planet's vital life-support industries are compromised. At the same time, Devlin Stone announces the formation of the "Kittery Prefecture" after defeating Blakist

troops on Gurnet.

(1 May) A JumpShip loaded with ComStar HPG administrators expelled from the Outworlds Alliance arrives at Sterlington and is destroyed by local aerospace forces believing them to be a Blakist trick.

(5 May) Democracy Now leader Lindon Ashley calls for the secession of the Alarion Province from the Lyran Alliance.

(12 May) Word of Blake forces seize Benjamin.

(23 May) Calderon Protectorate forces raid the Taurian Concordat worlds of Celano, Mirfak, Carvajal, and Charleston.

(6 June) The Word of Blake's Forty-ninth Shadow Division executes a surprise combat drop in the middle of Regulus City on Regulus and sets the provincial capital ablaze.

(12 June) Forces sporting AFFS colors attack Taurian defense forces on Althea's Choice and Jansen's Hold.

(19 June) A Blakist nuclear raid on Irece is thwarted by Clan Nova Cat's defenses.

(20 June) Kirc Cameron-Jones, leader of the Principality of Regulus, declares a purge throughout his realm.

(21-28 June) AFFS forces launch a "heavy raid" on the Outworlds Alliance world of Tellman IV in search of suspected Blakist command centers. The Snow Raven and Outworlds defenders, however, quickly defeat and capture the Davion troops. Also at this time, a spate of pirate raids strike at the Calderon Protectorate.

(25 June) The Democracy Now movement unveils its own army in the form of the



EARLY 3075: THE RAZOR'S EDGE

VERMEZZO FIGHTING CONTINUES

(2 May 3075)

Vermezzo [KNN]—Until yesterday, Cidade de Óleo, Vermezzo, was a bustling city of fifty thousand on the edge of the Óleo Reserve, one of the richest petroleum fields in the Kaumberg Archonette. A town proud of its gritty, blue-collar, no-nonsense reputation, home to riggers and pump men and haulers known for their self-reliance and determination.

Yesterday, Democracy Now forces, reeling before determined units of Kaumberg Archonette armor and infantry, fell back across the Reserve and into the city. Strategically, the maneuver seemed to be a straightforward ploy to gain time and distance without taking more damage; retreating through the vital oil field and populated city prevented their pursuers from firing. However, Ashley and his forces had a much darker intent.

When the Kaumberg troops were in the center of the oil field, the Democracy Now rebels detonated charges strategically planted at pumping stations across the Reserve. The Archonette's forces were immolated instantly.

Ashley's followers continued their retreat through the city, closely followed by the towering wall of the inferno they'd unleashed. Though well equipped with personnel carriers and other vehicles, the Democracy Now militia made no effort to aid the helpless civilians in the path of the raging flames. In fact, determined to prevent pursuit, they blasted roads and bridges behind them as they fled.

Cut off from all escape, tens of thousands of Vermezzi perished in the flames.

Today rescuers—including this reporter—labor beneath the double burden of fatigue and fading hope as we dig through the

rubble of Cidade de Óleo searching for survivors. The pumping stations of the Reserve burn like torches, their pillars of flame isolated only because every flammable thing around them has been consumed. Thick soot covers everything—puffs of it fill the air as we turn over each hopeful rock. We fight to not think about what or who we might be breathing in as we probe for life in the ruin.

Democracy Now must pay.

AKFATA RECLAIMED

(3 May 3075)

Akfata [KNN]—In simultaneous assaults timed to coincide with Friday midnight here at the planetary capital of Cuir Vert, the Kaumberg Planetary Guard—core of the Kaumberg Archonette Militia—under the rare direct command of Baron Erich Sheridan engaged the Democratic People's Army on Aftkata along multiple fronts. Without warning or even establishing orbit, the first wave of the assault struck the four primary DPA strongholds with brutal efficiency.

Initial fighting was fiercest at Bois Mort DropPort at the westernmost edge of Vallée Mortelle where the bulk of the DPA BattleMechs were stationed. Official accounts of the combat have not been released to civilian news sources, but observers near the scene report that the DPA deployed an unexpected number of BattleMechs and that many of the 'Mechs were of advanced design. This is inconsistent with the mercenary assets Ashley's forces have deployed in the past, sparking speculation that Democracy Now may have other unsuspected assets.

The advanced weaponry did the DPA little good, however. Coordinating the assault from orbit while his military chief, Baron

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

mercenary Eriksson's Einherjar mercenary command.

(5 July) In an effort to calm the worsening situation on the FedSuns/Outworlds border, Duke Tancred Sandoval of the Draconis March offers a formal apology to the Snow Raven and Outworlds leaders.

(21 July) Nova Cats forces from Irece attempt to assault the Blakist forces on Luthien, but suffer severe losses in the process. Also at this time, the Hansen's Roughriders mercenary command succeeds in shattering the Taurian-backed Lone Star Regiment in the Pleiades.

(16 July) Word of Blake forces raid Guatavita.

(24 July) In the Avon system, the renegade DCA WarShip *Urizen II* is destroyed by the Nova Cat WarShip *Severen Leroux*.

(7 August) Archon Peter Steiner-Davion

announces the reactivation of the "Archonettes" policy, delegating broad powers to regional leaders in troubled peripheral areas in an effort to stem the tide of chaos as the LAAF and government infrastructures remain strained.

(13 August) A Word of Blake raiding force strikes at Markesan in an effort to destroy the FedSuns leadership there but is thwarted by the Princess Regent's aerospace and naval defense forces.

(15 August) The Kaumberg Planetary Guard assaults Novara and shatters the Democratic People's Army, but not before Democracy Now's leader, Lindon Ashley, escapes.

(5-20 October) Under the guise of the long-missing Northwind Highlanders, a Word of Blake assault force hits Galatea and swiftly

occupies Galatean City and its outlying areas.

(1-15 November) The DCMS attempts and fails to break the Word of Blake siege on Benjamin.

(12 November) ComStar-backed insurgents, supported by elements of Alys Marik's Free Worlds Resistance, briefly shatter the Blakist-controlled government on New Home and manage to rescue a host of "political prisoners" from an apparent reeducation camp, including Fritz Donner, the long-missing commander of the Circinus Federation's Black Warriors. Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion uses this victory and others as a rallying call for a summit meeting on Arc-Royal.

(29 November) The Word of Blake's latest push against New Avalon's remaining defenders ends indecisively.

EARLY 3075: THE RAZOR'S EDGE



Trent Hasseldorf, led additional KPG forces against Vermezzo, Baron Sheridan was able to divert the bulk of the second wave to Bois Mort. Though composed primarily of conventional forces, the KPG overwhelmed the rebel forces with sheer numbers. Early reports indicate that a surprising number of DPA troops fought to the death, refusing to surrender or be captured. Particularly shocking were several suicidal self-destructions, evidently intended to deny the victorious KPG possession of the more modern BattleMechs.

By midday Saturday the KPG had secured the primary DropPort, destroying the majority of the DPA's BattleMechs in the process.

Leaving a defensive contingent to discourage counter attack, Baron Sheridan directed the forces that had taken Bois Mort to reinforce the assault on the Pectole strongpoint in the mountains of Oest Sauvage. Here the DPA displayed no suicidal bravado, quickly surrendering in the face of overwhelming odds.

Continuing Baron Sheridan's sequential strategy, the combined KPG forces then moved to support the assault on Cuir Vert, the planetary capital. Here the DPA fought more fiercely and took heavy losses before attempting to break and run. Democracy Now troops set fires in several residential and industrial districts in an attempt to distract the KPG, then broke for the north toward the DPA's last defensible stronghold.

The KPG left fire control to the civilian authorities to pursue the fleeing DPA but were unable to prevent them consolidating their forces at Le Peuplier de Saint Antony. The DPA contingent at Le Peuplier possessed both the advanced weapons and the no-surrender attitude of the forces at Bois Mort. The KPG took heavy losses, but by nightfall on Sunday, 2 May, the last of the Democracy Now rebels had fallen.

Baron Sheridan and the Kaumberg Planetary Guard had liberated all of Akfata in thirty-seven hours.

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER

(23 May 3075)

Filtvelt [FDP]—When Colonel LeBeau formed the Filtvelt Guardians, the Princess Regent was understanding and did not countermand the orders. When Marquess Trempeleau declared the formation of the Filtvelt Coalition, the Regent issued strongly worded protests but took no action. When the leaders of Malagrotta formed their own cooperative, New Avalon was upset but did nothing, and when Yvonne Davion stood on New Avalon, she sent words of "peace and understanding" to our "wayward and lost worlds."

THUMPERS TO RENEW CONTRACT



(12 May 3075)

Arc-Royal [MERCNET]—Major Buck Tripp (commander of the Thumpers Assault Battalion) has formally accepted a new contract with the government of Filtvelt. Since 3069, the Thumpers have supported the cadets of the Filtvelt Military Academy Training Battalion and local forces on neighboring Wetumpka and Marielund against the depredations of Periphery bandits. Tripp's command will continue working with the faculty members of the Filtvelt Military Academy to establish a unified local defense force. With military supplies scarce, the Coalition has fallen back on local resources. As a result, the Coalition's growing 'Mech force makes extensive use of homegrown "RetroTech" designs and even armed IndustrialMechs.

With the AFFS bogged down in the campaign on New Avalon and in the Terran Corridor many worlds—particularly those in the Davion Outback—have increasingly found themselves on their own. The newly formed Filtvelt Coalition is only one of several alliances that have sprung up across the Inner Sphere. These "pocket empires" provide excellent medium-term opportunities of employment for a new mercenary command. One cautionary note however: once the Great Houses have dealt with the current crisis their full military might will inevitably be brought to bear against these struggling "upstarts."

NEWS DOWNLOADED



Date & Title

(25 January 3075)
"Taurians Nuke Brusett, Millions Dead!"

(5 February 3075)
"The Bears—Gone for Good?"

(18 February 3075)
"The Magestrix is Coming Home!"

Service

[NSNN]
[DRAKE]
[CNS]

Status

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EARLY 3075: THE RAZOR'S EDGE

Actions—not words—have been the truth of our relationship with New Avalon. While officially we have been decried, even called traitors, New Avalon has left us to our own course, with what some may even call their quiet support.

So how should we now take the relocation of two March Militias to our very borders? One might understand the placement of Remagen's Militia at Gurrnazovo, since the Death's Consorts coup has effectively turned Malagrotta into an extension of Pirates' Haven. But the movement of Islamabad's militia to within jump range of Filtvelt? New Avalon says they are to shore up the border defenses against rising pirate activity. But if so, why are these units stationed on our border and not the Periphery itself?

In the three years of our independence, we have known peace and prosperity not seen in the last thirty. No pirate raids have marred our soil in that time. Filtvelt has stood strong and steadfast, even in the face of rising chaos, and yet our motherland stands guard along our borders.

So what are we to believe? New Avalon's words or her actions?

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Like a microcosm of the Inner Sphere beyond its borders, the Free Worlds League continued its slow slide toward collapse in 3075. Indeed, each passing day seemed to be rife with reports of secessions or sparring between the League's member states.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES

[Talbot]: And we're back. You're watching *Politico This Week* with our special guest, Professor Boyce Godard from the Saltillo Educator's Academy. *[Turns to his right]* Boyce, before the break, we were discussing last week's attacks on Khon Kaen by what appeared to be a Circinian force and the possibility that the Administrator should look to alliances with nearby worlds for a mutual self-defense pact.

[Godard]: Right, Mark. *[Turns to camera]* It's obvious after what we saw from Khon Kaen and Poulso that the Circinians have replenished themselves from the Marian attacks a few years back, and they appear rather eager to grab more systems while Atreus fools around figuring out who's in charge.

[Talbot]: So you believe Therese should be looking more to expand the Duchy to provide additional defense rather than working with the Mariks in rebuilding?

[Godard]: Yes. There are several worlds that could benefit from the Duchy's guidance, rather than holding out against the Federation or other predators.

[Talbot]: So you believe the League is not worth saving?

[Godard]: No. I believe it is, but Tamarind needs to take care of itself first. With renewed aggression from the Federation taking advantage of the League's internal issues, who knows how far those pirates will push toward the Duchy?

SAY NO TO DAVION!

(27 Feb 3075)

Regulus [REGULUS FREE PRESS]—As if there were not enough people vying for the position of Captain-General of the Free Worlds League, the news that Isis Marik and Victor Steiner-Davion are not only married but have a daughter and two sons really muddies the waters! For although the man the universe thought was Thomas Marik has no legitimate claim, Isis is the illegitimate daughter of the real Thomas. The result of a liaison with Amandine Ruiz before the 3035 bombing that allowed ComStar to substitute their impostor for Thomas, Isis consequently has as strong a claim as anyone. At least technically. And that claim would be equally strong for her children.

And there is the important question. Do we really want to live under the rule of Jade Marik-Steiner-Davion? Could the people of the League stomach the thought of being under the thumb of somebody with Steiner blood in their veins after centuries of contention with the Lyrans? And let us not forget the Davion hand in meddling with the League's internal affairs, when Hanse did so to further his campaign of conquest against us and our Kapteyn allies.

So I urge you all! Say yes to sanity! Say NO to Davion!

[Talbot]: The Trinity worlds are there—

[Godard]: And they're excellent allies, if not members of an enlarged Duchy.

[Talbot]: It all makes sense, Boyce. Now, what about the rumors from Poulso of "suicide bombers" sowing chaos, especially if it's true that these are unwilling victims themselves?

[Godard]: Considering that one took our own Marshall Brett away from us, I'd not put it past the Circinians. But I don't know about "unwilling," however. How can one miss the fact that they're wired to explode?"

[Talbot]: Something to consider. By the way, viewers, Saltillo Port Authority is quarantining all shipments from Khon Kaen and Poulso until thorough checks can be done. The Administrator is concerned of possible terrorists and these "unwilling" suicide bombers, so shipments and crews will be detained for the foreseeable future.

[Godard]: Agreed. Interesting times, Mark. Interesting times.

—From *Politico This Week*, Saltillo (first aired on 23 March 3075)

THE RIM COMMONALITY STANDS ALONE

(13 April 3075)

Lesnovo [RCNN]—Six years and three weeks after the Free Worlds League withdrew the Second Regular Hussars and left the Rim Commonality to stand alone against pirates, Blakists, and predator nations of the Periphery, the Parliament of Commons and Council of Nobles have unanimously agreed to invoke the provisions of *Camlann vs. Free Worlds League* and declare the Rim Commonality an independent domain.

EARLY 3075: THE RAZOR'S EDGE



In formal call for the vote in today's open session of the Council, Viscountess Tiffany Barfield, Tertiary Representative of Tematagi cited the lack of military and materiel support from the federal government and military of the Free Worlds League, and stated that only through the formation of an autonomous domain could the Rim Commonality provide for all of its citizens.

In a commemorative gesture honoring the Rim Commonality's history, the charter for the newly autonomous region names the "lost worlds" of Izmir and Stettin as full members—though there has been no contact with either colony for nearly two centuries.

Sources report membership was also offered to Gatchina, but the former Rim Commonality world chose to retain its independent League status.

With the declaration of Rim Commonality autonomy it becomes apparent that the decision to enact *Camlann vs. Free Worlds League* was not arrived at hastily. Many recent changes to the economic and military infrastructure of the region, as well as the Judicial Mutual Coordination Act, passed without debate in January and can be seen as clear precursors to today's historic vote. Nor were all arrangements internal. The

THE PURGE: TITUS' DIRTY SECRET



(12 April 3075)

Regulus [ANDURIEN CHRONICLE]—The image of the Regular Royal Wedding has for weeks occupied the attention and psyche of this shattered nation, but in the hills surrounding the once picturesque city lies a past that threatens to unravel all the goodwill and bonhomie that Prince Titus has managed to garner since his ascension to the throne.

Prince Titus Cameron-Jones, aware of the emotion surrounding the issue, has detailed a team of forensic anthropologists from Aitutaki Academy to attempt to identify and inter the remains of the numerous victims of the Purge. Team Leader Doctor Ravi Singh said the

project might help heal some of the wounds of the Purge.

"We hope that we can at least offer some comfort to those who lost loved ones in the regrettable actions of prior regimes by returning their remains," Doctor Singh said.

But some members of the Regular community are upset that Prince Titus has not further pursued those seen as the main perpetrators of the Purge, the First Regular Hussar regiment led by his paramour. The Hussars were the face of the Purge, with several of the regiment's ranking officers installed as commandants at the brutal "Filtration" Camps former Prince Kirc Cameron-Jones created to

detain his insurgents. Not only have no charges been laid, but Prince Titus explicitly issued a blanket pardon to the Hussars for their actions, citing "the continued need from a strong military deterrent against expansionist forces."

Regardless of the politics of the situation, it is apparent that Dr. Singh and his team have a lot of work in front of them: "Early estimates put the casualty total at just over eighty thousand. We know now that it's closer to one hundred thousand on Regulus alone. But Prince Titus has promised us the funding and support to make sure every Regular is returned to their family. Only then can we properly heal as a nation."

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD



(16 December) A Nova Cat flotilla and ground forces suddenly attacks Benjamin and overwhelms most of its defense forces before moving on. The assault enables DCMs forces still trapped on-world to overcome the remaining Blakist forces and reclaim the planet.

3073

(11 January) The Word of Blake reclaims the capital of New Home.

(22 January) During the long-anticipated international summit meeting between Lyran, FedSuns, Combine, Clan, and ComStar leaders, a sophisticated suicide bomb implanted within Fritz Donner—a key witness to Blakist operations within the Blake Protectorate—is detonated, killing and injuring many of the

assembled delegates and paralyzing allied coordination efforts against the Word.

(27 January) In the Draconis Combine, a fresh purge of the Black Dragon Society nets officials as high as the Abbess of the Order of the Five Pillars.

(February) Amid reports of fighting throughout its Occupation Zone, much of Clan Jade Falcon's HPG network inexplicably shuts down.

(4 February) The Third Battle of New Avalon effectively ends in a Word of Blake victory after AFFS Marshall of the Armies Jackson Davion is killed and the Word of Blake forces under the command of Precentors Avitue and Geoffrey Zucker seize Mount Davion.

(18 February) With the blessings of Archon Peter Steiner-Davion, Combine business

leader Chandrasekhar Kurita sets up a base on Arcturus for a multi-national coalition force he has assembled.

(March) Attacks from the Circinus Federation and opportunistic rebellions in the Lothario and Illyrian Provinces add to the destabilization of the Marian Hegemony.

(19 March) Following Filtvelt's example, most of the Malagrotta Combat Region declares its independence from the Federated Suns. Though protests from the Princess Regent and her command staff are sharp, no military action is taken.

(3 April) In an unexpectedly harsh reaction to a contract dispute, the Word of Blake's Fifty-second Shadow Division eradicates the Martian Cuirassiers mercenary command on Hall.

(17 April) The White Tigers "Warrior House"



EARLY 3075: THE RAZOR'S EDGE

A CALL TO VOTE

—From the text of Viscountess Barfield's call for the vote, Lesnovo, 13 April 3075

"The course of human history is filled with fateful moments—points of decision when those who rule must consider their moral course. The choice we face today—between loyalty and duty to those we are called to protect and obedience to a distant and unresponsive government we are pledged to serve—is not an easy one. It is a choice between honor and oath. Couched in the abstract, it is a question that cannot be resolved. Our honor and our duty are the heart and foundation of what it means to be noble; they define who and what we are. There can be no conflict between the two. But today this question is not couched in the abstract. It is firmly rooted in the concrete of recent history.

"In March of 3069, raiders of unknown origin ravaged my homeworld, destroyed our industry, and killed tens of thousands of innocent civilians. When we called on those charged with our defense, they chose to abandon us, returning to defend their own homes rather than those under their sworn protection. We have all heard that the Regulans fled in direct disobedience to the Captain-General's orders, and we do not fault him nor the League for their cowardly actions.

"And we are grateful to the valiant men and women of the Eighth Orloff Grenadiers for their steadfast loyalty in remaining at their posts without support or relief.

"But the fact remains that in the six years since the Hussars withdrew, the Free Worlds League Military has made no effort to replace them. The FWLM has made no effort to provide the Rim Commonality with adequate defense. Nor have we received nonmilitary aid—even basic medical supplies are denied us, denied our people. As individual worlds, we cannot stand. Only in unity can we muster the resources to provide for our own defense, to give the men, women, and children who depend upon us the protection and security they need.

"Forty years ago, the Internal Emergency Act stripped the rights of member worlds to form associations for mutual support, governance, defense, and trade. However, that Act—intended to be temporary—is still subordinate to the provisions of the Camlann Decision. That decision ensures that core groups of worlds with a demonstrated common interest and unity of purpose can form autonomous domains—domains with the authority to form independent militaries, to negotiate diplomatic and trade relations with neighboring world-states—in short, to do all things necessary to provide for the well-being and security of their people.

"And that is what we must do today. For justice. For honor. And most of all, for our people. The time has come for the Rim Commonality to stand. Alone. Not by choice, but because we must stand alone if we are to stand at all."

announcement, made within hours of the declaration, that both the Niops Association and the caliphates of Astrokaszy recognize the autonomy of the Rim Commonality indicates diplomatic efforts have been underway for weeks at the very least.

It is unclear how representatives of the Free Worlds League federal government still within the Commonality are reacting to the news. Trade and information offices have responded to inquiries with a blanket "no comment." Some sources speculate their lack of reaction indicates they were caught by surprise while others believe it indicates the federal government simply does not regard the citing of *Camlann vs. Free Worlds League* as particularly noteworthy in this region.

Colonel Sandra Relph, commander of the Eighth Orloff Grenadiers on Lesnovo, was not available for comment following the announcement. Grenadier garrisons on Campoleone and Tematagi redirect all questions to their central command on Lesnovo.

REGULAN PRIDE

(5 May 3075)

Regulan [RFP]—And finally the time has come. Titus has grown up.

The wedding marks the first time the Regulan people can be proud of Kirc's wayward son.

Yes, the last few years have been a trying time as we have watched the family squabble in a public setting. The public display has been an unpleasant distraction since the Night of Fire, punctuated by Titus' failed attempt to teach the Blakists a lesson on Gibson. While the Hussars have since rebuilt and Titus has sired a son, the tortured family drama has remained a stain on Regulan pride.

Especially since it replays itself to the guffaws of the Oriente and Marik-Stewart crowds. We have become laughingstocks to our peers.

Yesterday, however, has done much to assuage our Regulan pride.

In an understated royal wedding ceremony, the Cameron-Jones' have taken the steps to put the glory back into Regulus. It took the minds of viewers back to the days of power where the League bowed to our greatness—not partnerships with pseudo-religious imagery or Machiavellian corporate politics.

Even the bride was radiant; her military status gave gravity to the Parade of Officers and the martial bearing bespoke of the unbridled power of the Regulan armed forces. Titus looked much like Kirc during his younger years as he accepted the Oath of Covenant, but the weight and humility he lent to the ceremony may have communicated his continued displeasure of his father Kirc's dalliances.

To Titus and Michelle Ryan Cameron-Jones. May the Principality achieve the greatness we saw in your eyes on your day of matrimony.

EARLY 3075: THE RAZOR'S EDGE

ROYAL WEDDING

(15 May 3075)

Regulus [RNS]—On 4 May, in a surprisingly low key event, Prince Titus Cameron-Jones married the mother of his son, newly promoted Colonel Michelle Ryan of the First Regular Hussars, in a small ceremony at the secluded White Chapel on Regulus' northern continent. Ryan, better known as one of the few Hussar officers to oppose former Prince Kirc Cameron-Jones' orders during the so-called "Purge," is seen by many as an odd choice for the Prince, especially given his occasional vocal disparagement of the "maladjusted military machine."

In what Royal observers have called a "cheeky twist," Prince Titus wore his seldom-seen martial attire, while his bride looked glowing in a satin gown trimmed with selkie fur. *[Click Here to Download the Pictures for Free!]* In a further twist, Colonel Ryan was seen nursing the couple's infant son Lester soon after their modest ceremony. The former Prince was noticeably absent, and surprisingly few military officers outside of those from the First Hussars were in attendance. When asked, a source close to the palace stated that the Prince and his bride wanted just their "closest personal friends" to be present at the event.

The wedding has divided the already splintered Regular populace, with local polls showing that many in the community remain concerned over the Prince's lack of action against the so-called "Blake Menace." Colonel Ryan's past is also a matter of concern, serving as she did alongside the many perpetrators of the Purge—although the polls on the new princess' homeland of Cameron show a groundswell of support for the wedding.

"He's done well," said Cameron resident Nancy Carver. "She's a gem of a woman, and he should treat her like it. Good on them, though I wished they'd got married before little Lester was born. He's a Prince; he needs to act proper."

Seemingly oblivious to the furor generated over their union, the happy couple left for their honeymoon with a first stop at Aitutaki Academy. Princess Michelle, a graduate of the military

college, was apparently keen to show her new husband the sights, and possibly to test-drive her wedding present from the RDF Command—a new *OstWar* BattleMech.

THE HILL

(6 June 3075)

T, I just got this forwarded from one of my contacts in the RSS. Seems the DG wasn't going to pass it your way. Might want to have a word with him? Love you—M

[RSS SHODAN Intercept 3562-a, HARM30750511]

[Voice One]: So he got married.**[Voice Two]:** Yeah, to that bitch Ryan of all people.**[Voice One]:** Probably because he knocked her up.

[Voice Two]: Yeah, we should have sorted her out before she joined the Hussars. Was a damned cow at Aitutaki, and then she turned on us when they busted golden boy out.

[Voice One]: Chump still thinks he's calling the shots. Probably doesn't even know about the Hill.

[Voice Two]: Nah, the Old Man covered his tracks well. Let the little bastard find out when he was "deposed." Had a cry about when he went to Irian—didn't have the stones to use them. Even the Ice Princess told him to use them, and he still bottled it. Nah, he probably thinks the Hill is still shut down. It's off the grid.

[Voice One]: Yeah, pity it wasn't fully operational in time for Gibson. Would have wiped a few smiles off the Blakies' faces.

[Voice Two]: Too true. The malfing peacenik would pitch a fit if he knew what the Old Man was planning.

[Voice One]: Someone needs to make them Blakies sorry. Golden boy doesn't have the balls. You saw the way he rolled over to the Mariks. Nah, the Old Man is playing the long game. You watch. Soon he'll be back on top and we'll make sure everyone knows not to mess with Regulus.

[Voice Two]: Looking forward to it. Then we can teach that bitch why you don't rat out your mates.

NEWS DOWNLOADER v3.7

**Date & Title****Service****Status**

(24 February 3075)

"Aur Still Plagued by Suicide Bombers"

[INN]

COMPLETED

(20 March 3075)

"Circinus Federation on the Move"

[INN]

DOWNLOADING

(3 April 3075)

"Ruins of Gabriel: More than Meets the Eye?"

[DBC]

ACCESSING

EARLY 3075: THE RAZOR'S EDGE **ALONE AGAINST THE UNIVERSE**

With conflict swirling around them, and cloaked in distrust, the Capellan Confederation grew even more isolated in 3075. With but one ally left to rely upon—the Magistracy of Canopus—House Liao found itself facing the storms of jihadist fire virtually alone.

YOUR NATION STANDS WITH YOU!

"Citizens of the Glorious Capellan Confederation.

"We have faced numerous enemies, both within and without our beloved nation, these last trying years. And yet we, the People of the Confederation, continue to survive.

"We survive not because of the actions of those outside our borders. We have survived these trials and pains personal to us because of our belief in ourselves. Of a new order. Of Xin Sheng!

"You are too irritating," comes the response from the elitist plutocrats on one side of us. Are we? Do our neighbors find us so annoying because of our continued success in our survival, because we do not seek help from so-called allies—who were enemies only a few years before!—or because we are not reliant on super-technology to leverage our small military? If that is irritating to those who deign to ignore us, then so be it.

"Victory is possible only with interstellar help," is the cry of others. Not so, Citizens! Look only to our crown jewel of Sian, where we have rebuffed multiple attacks from outside enemies and those inside our borders who wish to impose their will upon us! Victory is possible for the Capellan people ONLY with ourselves. We have proved we have no need for those who clamor on our fences.

"Why must things be done this way?" call our detractors. Is it not obvious? If we fail to live by Xin Sheng—the very thing that has sustained us these dark years—then our revolution will fail, we will suffer, and the great Confederation will be conquered.

"An ancient Chinese writer once said that 'Though death befalls all men alike, it may be weightier than a mountain or lighter than a feather.' To die for the nation is a death weightier than the mountains around us. To work, to fight and die for those around us who only wish to exploit our work, our spirit, is a death lighter than a feather. I see the graves of those who died here on Sian, defending our people, and I say to you that Imperial City is lifted up on the backs of many mountains.

"We are the Confederation, and we will live and die for our nation. We will not die for others. The Capellan state stands alone in the universe, and we alone will prevail against the trials arrayed against us. Do not despair, my people, for behind you stands the full weight of the glorious Capellan Confederation.

"Xin Sheng, my Citizens. Xin Sheng."

—Full text of the Chancellor's HPG address, 15 January 3075.

CAPELLANS ON THE ROPES? 

D[ototd fodvbrtrf pit gptvrd' sddi,r ;pdy

The repoty on thr Cap[rlan Congrderation: While attacks upon Sian have fa*led, the overall picture of morale in the Confederation is one of a populace near defeat. Had it not been for Lady Liao's treachery, we believe that the Confederation would have sued for peace by now. As it is, we currently control over a dozen of their planets, have assaulted or raided at least another dozen and destroyed at least two. Both civilian and military casualties have been high. In addition, the fighting against the Feder@348 Suns took its toll as well.

As has been pointed out, all of our loyal followers have been driven out of HPG facilities in the Confederation, most slain by the ungrateful populace. While Demi-Precentor Yoth may feel that this has harmed our cause, I beg to differ. The lack of an "enemy" within everyday sight has spent the rage of the mob. Additionally, the lack of m19ntenance has resulted in sporadic, at best, lines of communication, further hampering the nation. Agents planting subversive messages (we found St. Ivan, can you believe it? And are putting it to good use), suicide attacks, and general terror strikes have left the average Capellan shell-shocked and war-weary.

Plus the command economy, not terribly strong even at its peak, is in danger of going from recession to depression. Lack of food and basic supplies is rampant. A few more good strikes and an offer of peace will have Sun-Tzu unable to whip his people any harder. The position of this group of analysts is that the Conf0doration is in no way able to sup#ort any sort of campaign ag19nst our holfings. Su1010es^ fo!t16uing Ero smf f93jf3hns1

[Dev—We were able to get this out of the garble. If only part of it is true it could be time to approach the Chancellor. —DL]

—Unverified communiqué, leaked to INN from unidentified sources, Hesperus II, 12 January 3075



EARLY 3075: THE RAZOR'S EDGE



SNAKES OR SAVIORS?

Unless you've been living under a rock lately, you know all about Magestrix Naomi Centrella-Liao's impending visit to our fair planet. What we don't know is why.

Why are we suddenly worthy of a visit from Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao's puppet ruler? How convenient he married the heir-

apparent to the Canopian throne, after Emma Centrella went missing and died under Blakist fire. How convenient she suddenly decides to visit on the way to her home, now that Canopus is no longer infested with enemies. After our own declaration, any recognition from Sian has been very obviously missing.

But of course, we are "enemies" of the Capellan state. Ever since Romano's mad power plays, using us and the Canopians to keep her own borders safe, we have never had reason to trust them. Sun-Tzu claims to have the interest of the people at heart, yet he closes his borders to the Andurien nation, ignoring our requests for trade and commercial ties.

And now—from the softness of his cold heart, no doubt—his bride and puppet ruler of our rimward border suddenly decides we're worth notice.

SILENCE IN THE HEAVENS



Miguel:

I've attached the relevant data in condensed form. In summary, we've been unable to ascertain what exactly is happening on several Capellan worlds along the Protectorate border.

With only few exceptions, nearly all of our agents assigned on Aldebaran, Liao, Gan Singh, Shensi, Tsitang, Palos, St. Andre, Second Try, Ulan Bator, Matsu, and Hunan have gone silent. At first, we believed that part of our intel network was compromised, but after some research we've confirmed that all of these worlds have indeed gone completely silent. There's been no HPG traffic from any of them for upwards of a year—and in many cases, closer to three!

Although it was clear the Capellans were using a modified "pony express" system to move message batches, our own agencies were slow to realize the full extent of the reasons beyond a presumed case of extreme paranoia. With our own border issues along the Protectorate, it wasn't readily apparent to our department that the Confeds simply had no other choice.

The degradation of communications has become more obvious as even this system of dispatching has broken down due to Word predation. With such a large swath of worlds now cut off from standard communication, it's unknown whether these worlds have since been invaded by the Blakists or are just cut off from the rest of the Confederation. There are scattered reports of fighting on Liao, Gan Singh, and Hunan, but little concrete information to piece together any patterns.

We're in the process of scraping together some signal assets, but with the Marshal's reassignment of resources to other theaters, gaining any credible intel from this section of the Confederation is going to be difficult. We may need to open some dialogue with our SAFE counterparts—if they even exist anymore—or possibly look at recruiting some commercial shipping for grunt intel work.

The good news is that as far as we can determine from other Confederation worlds in the area, an invasion from the Capellans is the least of our worries at the moment.

Steven

—Unconfirmed letter from the MIIO branch office on Almach, dated 10 February 3075

CANOPUS UNITED



"Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentleman. I'm Colonel deSummersVille and I'll be briefing you on what has befallen our realm while we've been in the Confederation. As many of you know, on 16 October of 3067, Blakists hit Canopus and soon thereafter a communication blackout began. You may have heard rumor and conjecture since then, but far more happened than a blackout. In early 3069, Blakist forces on Canopus moved on the palace and placed our leadership under house arrest. Officially, the Canopian national authority surrendered but in truth, they worked in secret with forces throughout the realm.

"The Blakists attempted to control the worlds surrounding Canopus, but our brothers in arms fought them. By 3071 it was all-out fighting, mainly on the local level. The lack of communication prevented strategic operations, but we hampered the enemy so much that they sent in the Forty-first Shadow Division. At the same time our forces and Capellan troops freed Detroit, the Forty-first hit Canopus and firebombed Crimson. Ramillie's Raiders freed Doru but were virtually wiped out, with survivors joining the resistance.

"The Forty-first since managed to savage Bass, Lindenmarle, Megarez, Adherlwin, and Borgan's Rift since their arrival. The joint task force that freed Detroit hit the Forty-first on Asproirigos, in League space, and smashed them hard. But it's hard to tell how hard, because before the Blakists pulled out, they firebombed the task force.

"That's where we are folks, moving in to finish up the fight. We're going to drive the Robes out of our nation and then make them pay dearly for what they've done. The worlds surrounding Canopus have been hit hard. We need to move in and secure things before we can find out about your families.

"Thanks, you're all dismissed."

—Recording of a MAF briefing session, date uncertain, provided to INN 16 March 3075



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Am I willing to hear what she has to say when her DropShip arrives a few days hence? Of course! If for nothing more than amusement value! I'm sure her speech will be riddled with veiled threats to keep us from their borders, or to remind us that we owe the Canopian nation our soul. Conveniently forgetting the pains and wounds that the Capellan nation has not only given us, but her own people!

How can such a person of nobility, the child of the talented and intelligent Emma, be so duped by the Chancellor of the totalitarian Liao nation? Are we so blind to Sun-Tzu's ambition and greed that we would sell our Andurien souls for promised aid and security? I remind you, dear reader, that we have survived much, and much worse. We have suffered under the iron thumbs of the Captain-Generals, even the illegal one, so the League could play nice with its Capellan neighbors. And never for our gains. Never in our interests.

Our capable leaders may instead wish to consider assisting the Canopian people from exiting under the Capellan thumb. Because let's be honest, when Naomi married that snake-in-the-grass, the Magistracy ceased to be an independent nation. It ceased to be a reasonable voice on the border of the infinite dark beyond. Naomi is a mouthpiece only, and one that will presume to threaten and cajole the noble Andurien people.

Let her have her say. See if she indeed parrots the would-be "god-king" on Sian and his empty-headed blather. See if we are threatened with violence for being who we are, for protecting our own, for keeping the peace the only way Andurien knows how.

Go home, Naomi. Pick your nation, and stand by it. Maybe one

day Andurien will back your play but it will not be in making a pact with a Liao.

—OpEd "My Turn" posted on the Andurien interweb, 21 April 3075

MAGESTRIX ARRIVES ON ANDURIEN WITH PRAISE, WARNINGS

(25 April 3075)

Andurien [INN]—Amidst enthusiastic crowds of well-wishers and Humphreys loyalists, Canopian Magestrix Naomi Centrella-Liao officially began her visit to the capital of the Duchy of Andurien with a brief tour, followed by a speech on the steps of the Andurien Parliament, and finally a brief summit meeting with Duchess Humphreys. The events touched off a three-day visit by the Magestrix and her entourage aimed at "renewing and strengthening long-held ties" between the peoples of Canopus and Andurien.

Centrella-Liao's speech was met with early cheers, especially when she stressed the historic cooperation and mutually beneficial results that past Canopian-Andurien ventures have produced. However, those cheers quickly turned to a smattering of boos, and eventually near silence as her remarks left them with a grim reminder of conflicts past and present:

"While the people of Canopus treasure and value the friendship of the people of Andurien," Centrella-Liao said, "we can never forget that we live in the most troubling and chaotic of times. Those who cling to the ambitions of the past are already fading into history. No longer does a strong authority on Atreus, Regulus, or Oriente stand poised to support any foolish or

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

launches a brutal raid against the Oriente world of Les Halles.

- (11 May)** Word of Blake forces attack Arcturus, specifically targeting the coalition of mercenaries and "independent forces" gathered there by Chandrasekhar Kurita. Both sides suffer heavy losses, but the Word withdraws abruptly, despite holding a tactical advantage.
- (23 May)** The Duchy of Oriente launches reprisal raids against the Capellan worlds of Jasmine, Eom, and Boardwalk.
- (29 June)** A joint Capellan-Canopian attack group hits the Free Worlds League planet of Aspropirgos, disrupting a major staging ground for Blakist operations against the Magistracy of Canopus. Over the course of twelve days, the Capellan-Canopian forces systematically destroy the Blakist

staging grounds and most of the Forty-first Shadow Division's infantry support.

- (15 June)** Word of Blake forces raid Atocongo, inflicting heavy damage to the LAAF troops stationed there.
- (29 June)** The Word of Blake's Fifty-second Shadow Division destroys the survivors of the Legion of the Rising Son on Alphard.
- (30 June)** After weeks of wrangling, representatives from the rebelling Azami worlds agree to come to Benjamin to discuss the crisis between themselves and the Combine leadership.
- (17 July)** Capellan forces raid the Free Worlds League planet of Shuen Wan and employ several tactical nuclear weapons in the attack, ostensibly as a warning against further League aggression.
- (21 July)** The Azami delegation en route to

Benjamin is attacked and all of its envoys killed by a small force of Word of Blake fighters. The attack further imperils Combine-Arkab relations as the Azami accuse the Combine of deliberately failing to protect their emissaries.

- (1 August)** In a daring move, Devlin Stone arrives at Tukayyid and requests safon from the local Ghost Bear garrison, stating that he wishes to fight a Trial of Possession for the use of Tukayyid's ComStar HPG compound for a period of one year. The Bears reluctantly agree, and Stone personally defeats the Bears' defending Star with a lance of his own 'Mechs.
- (13 August)** A Regularan attack force attacks Gibson. Though they meet no resistance entering the system, the force is virtually eradicated on the ground by the defending

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unnecessary moves against the Capellan Confederation or her Canopian allies. Such an action would invoke a terrible tragedy on the realm responsible, and in the deepest corners of my heart, I would see such a terrible curse of events avoided at any cost."

Despite the ominous warning, Magestrix Centrella-Liao's closing remarks slowly began to revive the crowd, and she entered parliament for her summit meeting with Duchess Humphreys to a rousing ovation. It seems clear that this "goodwill" visit is aimed as much at warning the Duchy of Andurien against strikes into Capellan or Canopian space as much as it is aimed at re-forging the close ties which ones bound these two struggling states.

COALITION-BUILDING

In the wake of the so-called "Donner Bombing," there were many leaders in the Inner Sphere who came to view the concept of cooperation akin to painting a Word of Blake target on one's own back. But while Victor Steiner-Davion alone found himself unable to muster the allies together again so swiftly, he found unexpected aid in the form of Devlin Stone. A mystery to many, but one with a clear dedication to ending the Word threat, Stone came to symbolize a new age of hope in these dark times.

NEVER AGAIN!

[Princess Regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion steps up onto the platform before a blue backdrop, emblazoned with the Sword and Sun. Her reddish hair is secured in a tight bun and her dark colored pantsuit is highly reminiscent of the Davion Assault Guard's dress blues. Coming to the podium she grasps its edges as if they were the controls of a BattleMech. Scanning the assembled reporters, she pauses to nod here and there in personal acknowledgement of one reporter or another.]

"Thank you all for coming, it is good to be finally standing here with you all.

"We have faced a long and tortuous decade, first at the hands of my sister and then even more barbarically at the hands of those who claim to be seeking the light of mankind.

[She pauses and looks back over her shoulder, nodding to a man in a Davion Heavy Guards uniform.]

"But thanks to brave men like Marshal Jon Davion and his cousin Jackson—may the Unfinished Book light his way in death—I can stand on a free New Avalon and watch the blanket of darkness slowly roll back from our realm.

"I apologize to you my fellow citizens of the Federated Suns, for all that has befallen you. I am not my father, I am not the warrior you should have. But though I am creature of the court; I tell you I have the heart of a Davion and I tell you this ...

[The Princess-Regent leans forward, knuckles whitening as she grips the podium.]

"Never again!

"Never again shall New Avalon know the tread of invader! Never again shall we allow the heart and soul of the Suns to be held hostage while our nation is ravaged.

"Today I have signed orders to ensure the defenses of New Avalon. Over New Avalon now flies one of our greatest achievements ever, the *Lucien Davion*. For five years she has kept me safe from harm, but now she takes her new home and pledges herself forever and always to the defense of New Avalon. And as is New Avalon so protected, the same measures are being taken for New Syrtis and Robinson. The Federated Suns will never again be without her heart or leadership, this I so pledge to you.

"With the heart of our nation defended, we will martial every resource we have to rebuild. Avalon City will rise once more, a phoenix from the ashes of the old. Rebuilding will be a long and arduous journey, but we will not falter. In five years time I

NEWS DOWNLOADER v3.7



Date & Title

Service

Status

(6 April 3075)

"Nellis' Inaugural Speech a 'Full Success'"

[NIOPS NEWS]

COMPLETED

(17 April 3075)

"Gabriel Facilities Overrun by Word of Blake!"

[SBC]

DOWNLOADING

(6 May 3075)

"Hyalite Assaulted, Roughriders Safe"

[MERCNET]

ACCESSING

(8 June 3075)

"Bryceland Attacked, Black Dragon on the Run"

[VOTD]

ACCESSING

RULES OF WAR

This message is to all Wolf commands being reassigned to assist Devlin Stone's coalition of forces.

As you know by now, the Abjured Nova Cats and the bandit Exiles are part of this "grand army" that Devlin Stone is assembling. Though many of you are against our participation in such a cause, the Clan Council has spoken and we will do our duty for the Clan. At this time, all Trials of Refusal regarding this issue are put on hold by order of Khan Ward.

It is inevitable we will find ourselves fighting alongside the *dezgra* units and Inner Sphere forces. While operating under the command aegis of General Stone, you will follow the orders given to you by your coalition superior. Failure to do so will result in reprisals by the Khans and Loremaster of the Clan. Do

not break the will of the Warrior Council; Wolf is the superior Clan, and we will not mirror the insipid and inept example of the Grand Council in our Clan's actions.

During periods of inactivity, all Clan Wolf castemen assigned to the coalition are restricted to our pre-assigned enclaves and transports; this will keep them removed from the taints and temptations of others and should not be deemed as punishment. We must remain as untainted as possible from the *dezgra* forces that will surround us.

Keep your focus on the Blakist threat and we will be triumphant.

—saKhan Ivan Kerensky, Clan Wolf
(Message dated 20 January 3075)

shall oversee the opening of a new session the High Council, its home rebuilt. And even as I speak, the mountain behind us stirs. The heart of the AFFS will beat beneath the mountain again. We will rebuild and we will ensure that 'Never Again' takes its place beside 'Remember Kentares!'

"With our heart secured, I send Marshal Davion forward to push the invaders back. He shall be our Saint George, our sword and shield, driving the dragon of Terra back to its lair and forever securing the safety of our borders until we can finally and definitively say—

"Never again!"

—Transcript of Princess Regent Davion's first speech after landing on New Avalon, 11 January 3075.

WHAT TO GIVE THE FREEDOM FIGHTER WHO HAS EVERYTHING?

Devlin,

Though we have not met in person, the words with which my brother and my husband have described you paint the picture of a man I could envision calling brother. It is through my trust in both of them that I place trust in you.

While I can offer such trust, I am unable to offer you much more than that. My nation has suffered greatly and my people desire nothing greater than to withdraw into our own borders. I know that we cannot, that the threat we face will not simply go away if we shelter our head in the sand, but if I do not heed the will of my people, there may not be a Suns for you to call ally for long.

I fear my news is even less wanted when it comes to the Snow Ravens, who have taken roost in the Outworlds. While they have accepted my words of peace and seem content with a neutral border with the Suns, they hold no interest in your coalition or driving back the threat that is the Word of Blake. Time may alter their minds, but if they drink of the Outworlds font I doubt even that; they seem quick to adopt the isolation of the Outworlds.

I can offer you one ray of light in dark times. A blade broken

and forged anew, once held at our throats and now a weapon you may use to push back the darkness of the Word. We have rechristened her the *Excalibur*, a blade wielded by a noble heart that forged order from chaos. The ship I give to you—her crew, veterans all, I lend to you so that she may serve you well. It is not what my nation should be able to offer, but I fear my father's nation is but an echo of its past.

In 3067, we all made a terrible mistake on Tharkad in forgetting how our realms can be stronger together than apart. I see in you, Devlin Stone, the chance that we can redeem ourselves by learning the lesson anew.

—Personal message sent from Yvonne Steiner-Davion to Devlin Stone announcing the gift of the FSS *Excalibur* (formerly the captured WBS *Dark Light*/FWLS *Ixodida*), 23 February 3075

NEW COM GUARD RECRUITMENT DRIVE A SUCCESS

(3 May 3075)

Arc-Royal [INN]—This week, Martial Davion's recruitment program (aided greatly by the efforts of his wife and the taciturn support of many Inner Sphere leaders) has passed a major milestone. The influx of new recruits has surpassed the rate at which the Guards were losing personnel—both to combat losses and natural turnover.

Over two decades of battling the Clans and the Word of Blake have exacted a terrible toll from the Com Guards. Once boasting twelve permanently established armies, the Guards' diminished forces were recently reorganized into six armies. The ongoing operations against the Word of Blake have made further casualties inevitable. Knowing that it was critical to maintain the Guard's strength if the fight against the Blakists was to be won, Precentor Martial Steiner-Davion (known to his troops as Martial Davion) instigated his Inner Sphere-wide recruitment drive.

With the Guards roster coming up to full strength and with new allies, sources say that Martial Davion is "quietly confident" that his plans to take the fight to the Blakists will be the first steps on the road to ultimate victory.

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CHAIN OF COMMAND

To: Field Marshal Christian McCarthy

Fr: Field Marshal Acabee Zardetto

I've looked over the file requests for the various units that Yvonne wants reassigned to this Stone character and, frankly, I'm appalled. Why are we sending so many of our elite commands over to this untrained and unknown "leader"? I have the utmost respect for Victor, but this request borders on the ludicrous.

Come on, Christian! The Third Guards? The First FSAC? Second Ceti? The Davion Assault Guards? These forces were *just* rebuilt to nearly full strength by pulling from other line units—and now you're asking us to hand them over to some upstart from Kittery who, for all we know, is some amnesiac Blakist or Capellan waiting for our guard to drop?

Oh, I've signed the orders. But I think we need to lay some ground rules down for this Stone guy if he wants to use our boys

STATUS REPORT

My Lord Kurita:

By your request, I have compiled a quick summary of the assets we have available to provide to Devlin Stone and his coalition. My staff is preparing a more detailed report for you on these assets, including transportation and critical resources necessary to divert from the Dragon.

At your disposal are the following units for use with Stone's coalition:

1st and 2nd Genyosha

All of the Ryuken regiments

7th, 11th and 12th Ghost

2nd and 22nd Dieron Regulars

5th and 7th Sword of Light

7th Pesht Regulars

I would request that we set some conditions for the use of the Dragon's

claws, as we cannot afford to send our troops out to die on foreign worlds with no gains for the Combine. To that end, we must insist that Dieron be reclaimed in the first wave of any planned attacks. It is important we regain the capital of one of our most important Prefectures as soon as possible, for manufacturing use and public appearances.

Additionally, it has been mentioned among some of the Warlords that Combine units not be under the authority of any Federated Suns commands. While I cannot vouch for these commands, it is not out of the realm of reason that troops under such authority will operate at less than optimal efficiency.

I still believe this action is not in the

Combine's best interests; my efforts in finding more information on this Stone character have met with little success. Offering fifteen of our best regiments up to such a relative unknown (the assurances of Victor Davion notwithstanding) has the potential of polarization. I would caution you, my Lord, in how much trust and support we give to him because we can ill-afford another Black Dragon-esque contamination.

As always, the will of the Dragon is your command.

Your humble servant,

Shakir Jerrar

—ISF internal memo, published by the Drake on Bicester; 16 March 3075 (veracity unconfirmed)

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

Word of Blake forces led by the Fifty-second and Forty-ninth Shadow Divisions. Blakist WarShips in turn appear to shatter the Regular naval forces, leaving few survivors.

(21 August) The "false" Thomas Marik arrives on Sian under a flag of truce to negotiate a cease-fire between the Capellan Confederation and the Free Worlds League. Word of Blake operatives attempt to assassinate the deposed Captain-General but are thwarted by Capellan security.

(21 September) At the urgings of his son, Titus, Kirc Cameron-Jones abdicates his throne to the Principality of Regulus. Titus Cameron-Jones becomes the new Prince (and Captain-General) of Regulus.

(30 September) The Word of Blake's Fifty-

second Shadow Division attacks Caledonia, destroying the Twenty-second Skye Rangers.

(9 October) Captain-General Corrine Marik orders Regulus to abandon all claims to the Captain-Generalcy and stop resisting Atrean authority.

(12 October) Victor Steiner-Davion leads an entourage of Lyran, Exiled-Wolf, and ComStar representatives to meet with Devlin Stone on Tukayyid.

(14 October) Sun-Tzu Liao releases the remaining Canopian troops in Capellan space to return to their homelands.

(17 October) Hohiro Kurita agrees to meet with Victor and Stone on Tukayyid and prepares for immediate departure from Benjamin.

(22 October) A freak fuel explosion at the Forbidden City spaceport—ultimately

attributed to Word of Blake assassins—destroys Magestrix Naomi Centrella-Liao's DropShip before she can board it.

(9 November) Chandrasekhar Kurita wins naval support from the Exiled Wolf Clan and the Lyran Alliance for a strike mission aimed at the elusive "Ruins of Gabriel."

(19 November) Rogue ISF operatives fail in an assassination attempt on Gunji-no-Kanrei Minamoto on Benjamin.

(25 November) Jade Falcon and Wolf Clan envoys, along with Duke Tancred Sandoval, Archon Peter Steiner-Davion, and Coordinator Hohiro Kurita, meet with Stone and other Inner Sphere leaders on Tukayyid. Coordinator Kurita offers Combine support for Stone on the condition that he refuse aid from half of the Nova Cat troops still defecting to his

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and girls. I think he owes us that at the least, considering he's stripping our most elite forces from our realm—and a sizeable chunk of our current operational command.

I'd strongly recommend to Yvonne that our forces NOT be under the command of any Capellan or Combine officers. Finding out which Steiner officers might be posted would be ideal, so we can check to see which side of the line they were on back during the conflict. Being under a League officer would be acceptable, as well as a Rasalhagian; if they're on Stone's side, they're not fighting for the Robes. Though I would question their competence as a commander.

Putting a FedSuns command under a Periphery officer is just utterly inconceivable.

Honestly, I don't trust anyone outside our border at this point. It would be light-years better if we could just assign them to Victor's command and be done with it, since we know we can trust him with our men and women. He would respect them for their heritage and duty to the Suns. I'm still not clear on why he's not leading this party, but I'm sure you'll enlighten me in your reprimand.

Attached is the complete list of all the units being assigned, including force lists and other data, as requested. You cannot say I don't do my duty, despite my misgivings about this whole mess.

—Communiqué received a week after Zardetto's death on Logandale (published by Logandale Free Press, 19 May 3075)

AND IN OTHER NEWS...

The following articles range across the Inner Sphere, spotlighting other hot spots and local conflicts that further fanned the flames of war. Although the blame for many might be laid at the feet of the jihadists, local opportunism cannot be denied as a contributing factor.

SUICIDE BOMBER

[Cars and light trucks litter an intersection, two of them ablaze. A young woman in a sporty red hoverjeep lies slumped over her steering wheel.]

[Kane, off-camera]: This is Cathy Kane reporting for Buena News Service. Dateline: Khon Kaen. We are in the midst of a standoff between planetary militia and troops from the Circinus Federation. The Federation has been on the move in the last month, attacking Blantleff and Maximillian in the Marian Hegemony and Poulso in the Lyran Alliance. Two weeks ago they brought the war to this world.

[Soldiers sporting the Steiner fist over their gray urban camo take cover behind the crashed and broken vehicles. Their assault rifles are pointed at a rectangle of darkness cut into a bank's pink granite facade. Something stirs within the open door.]

[Kane]: Something's happening ...

[A soldier steps out of the door, hands on top of his head. He

HOUNDS AND WOLVES

We present to you a small excerpt of the ninety-minute special with Jessica Fraser, head of Public Relations with the Kell Hounds. We were talking to her about the Jihad in general, the involvement of the Kell Hounds and the Wolves in Exile in particular, her views on modern warfare, and a lot more.

<<<

[Franklin]: Ms. Fraser, you have met Mr. Stone in person. What can you tell us about him?

[Jessica]: Indeed, Franklin, I met him once or twice. He is a very silent man, doesn't talk much and keeps mostly to himself. He is a brilliant tactician and strategist. And before you ask me this ... No, he is NOT Arthur Steiner-Davion. *[Smiles]*

<<<

[Franklin]: When did the Kell Hounds join Mr. Stone's resistance?

[Jessica]: Morgan Kell and Khan Phelan Kell met him after that terrible bombing on Arc Royal. I wasn't there, but I heard the stories. They didn't leave the conference room for fifty hours. Mr. Stone made an impression that day. He had cunning plans on how to save Skye, how to liberate Coventry and Hesperus, and the Hounds and Wolves pretty much agreed then and there that they would do everything in their power to help Mr. Stone.

<<<

[Franklin]: What do you think about the situation with the Clans? Some of them seem to participate in the campaign against the Word of Blake, some sources say, that communications with the Homeworlds have been shattered, some claim it's all a big ruse to start a new run for Terra?

[Jessica]: Well, the Hounds and the Wolves keep a good eye on things back on the borders. Yes, the Ghost Bears, the Nova Cats, and even Wolves and the Jade Falcons sent some small contingents to back Mr. Stone. But I am afraid I know as much as you about the situation in the Occupation Zones and the Homeworlds—we just don't get any information.

<<<

Tune in for the full interview at 2100 hours!

—ISAP broadcast advertisement, 14 April 3075

doesn't appear to be armed. He's big, pushing two meters, and heavy, a black half-skull tattoo dominating the left side of his face. He'd look tough—if tears weren't streaming down his cheeks.]

[Kane, whispering]: Looks like one of the Feds is surrendering. This is a dangerous moment. Federation troops have been known to blow themselves up in a last-ditch effort to kill our troops.

[LAAF officer]: Get down!

[The soldier sinks to his knees. His face contorts with grief. He cries out, his voice shrill with desperation.]

[Federation soldier]: Please! I'm wired to blow!

[LAAF officer]: Show me the trigger! Throw it out!

EARLY 3075: THE R

[Federation soldier]: The trigger? I don't—I mean I can't. The trigger is—

[LAAF officer]: I'm not kidding! I have snipers on the rooftops! Throw out the trigger or we're going to take you out!

[The soldier shakes his head back and forth, his eyes wide with panic.]

[Federation soldier]: You don't understand. I don't *have* the trigger. It's not us. It's *not*—

[He is cut off by the crack of a gunshot. The soldier's body slowly topples forward. Lyran soldiers slowly climb to their feet.]

[Kane, hesitant]: He didn't have a dead-man switch. That was a lucky break.

[One of the Lyran soldiers walks toward the downed trooper. Suddenly the intersection is filled with molten orange light followed by a bass roar. After the explosion fades to silence, all that can be heard is the reporter, softly crying.]

—BNS Broadcast from Khon Kaen, 17 March 3075

CHASING SHADOWS

Colonel Rockwell:

The standard intel from Whitehorse is on the following datapacket, as well as a few operation suggestions that Peter would like to implement. I've tacitly given my approval to run them.

I've been tapping our resources to keep taps on that Domini unit we've run afoul of the last few years. That bastard and his demons nearly eviscerated the Spiders back on Gabriel and I'm not going to let him think he's beaten us.

Thing is, something's not quite right.

The reports we got from Glengarry back in '74 had them operating just as efficiently as the last times we tussled with them on Procyon, Rigel Kentarus, and Gabriel. Lethal and operating like they were extensions of Emory himself.

I think something happened on Towne back in January that shook them up, however. Oh, they were still lethal—they wiped out all of the rebel cells we'd inserted back in '74—but something happened there.

The last known location of the Opacus Venatori had them on Isesaki soon after Towne, and that mission apparently went south fast. The few vids I've seen only had half of the unit leaving the destruction of Ukonsoi; oddly, it was only the Opacus half. I can't believe that some corp's security team took down five hardened special-forces troops, but that's all I can come up with.

Since Isesaki, Emory's Opacus has disappeared. There's a pattern here that I'm not seeing yet, but something is up. I doubt the bastard's gone in hiding to lick his wounds; the Spiders have some unaided grievances left that need tending to.

I'll keep you informed on this little side project of mine.

—Alleged Wolf's Dragoons intel report from Stacy Church, Black Widow Company, leaked to ISAP by anonymous sources, 22 April 3075

NOTICE TO SHIPPING

This is an automated message. The marker beacon will not reply to attempts at communication.

Assistance will not be rendered.

By the order of the Lyran Alliance Transit Authority on 6 February 3075, the Odessa system is under Level One medical quarantine.

All vessels arriving at standard jump points will prepare for general boarding. The following vessels will be fired upon: all vessels failing to heave to for boarding, all vessels not displaying standard Lyran Alliance registry markings or broadcasting Lyran Alliance transponder codes, all vessels arriving at nonstandard jump points, all vessels heading for the planet Odessa.

Any vessel reaching the planet's surface will be immediately destroyed along with all cargo and passengers.

There will be no special dispensation from these rules for humanitarian or medical missions. Humanitarian efforts are unnecessary. Odessa's entire population is assumed to be either dead or infected with contagion.

Message repeats. This is an automated message. The marker beacon will not reply to attempts at communication.

Assistance will not be rendered.

—Warning buoy message, Odessa system, 3075

ISESAKI HEADQUARTERS RAZED

(23 March 3075)

Isesaki [VOTD]—The peace of the Dragon was disrupted last week when Ukonsoi City was rocked by a series of explosions. An unidentified force (believed to include elements of a Word of Blake Shadow Division) struck the city in the early hours of the morning. It is believed that the raiders employed captured Isesaki Shipping vessels to penetrate the planetary airspace, giving the valiant planetary militia and Isesaki Shipping security personnel little time to react.

A spearhead of BattleMechs and battle armor pushed through the determined defense, leaving the streets of Ukonsoi littered with fallen fighting machines. The Militia rushed in reinforcements and finally contained the assault on the east side of the Black River in the city's commercial district. Fighting continued for several hours before *Tai-sho* Chris Moran led his troops in a counterattack that routed the invaders and sent them fleeing back to their DropShips.

In a final senseless act of destruction, the invaders triggered booby-traps hidden within their many fallen BattleMechs. The resulting explosions destroyed Isesaki Shipping's headquarters, inflicted heavy damage on the rest of the commercial district and claimed the lives of an estimated 6,400 citizens of the Dragon.



NELLIS WINS HEATED ELECTION

(2 April 3075)

Niops VII [NNN]—Rayanne Nellis stove off attacks from both challengers to retain her position as Director of the Niops Association.

Three days after the last of the polls closed, the final tabulation has been vetted by the Niops Election Commission, ending the most contentious struggle for leadership of the Association on record.

In upholding the final count, the NEC rejected Chairperson Howard Olson's demand for a recount in the contested northern provinces of Niops VI.

Chairperson Gary Tran withdrew his allegations of voter irregularities on Niops V on Thursday, 01 April. His campaign had maintained that an unknown number of refugees had cast votes using falsified citizenship documentation provided by one or both of his opponents. According to Willard Wood, Chairperson Tran's campaign press secretary, the NEC office on Niops V had provided the Tran campaign with "convincing evidence" that identities and citizenship status had been adequately verified before individuals were permitted to vote.

The campaign of 3075 ended as it began, with accusations that bordered on the slanderous, exaggerations to the point of misrepresentations, and rumored use of strong-arm tactics to intimidate voters. It has been noted that there was little discussion of political positions, much less intended responses to the various problems and issues currently plaguing the Association. More than one commentator has mourned the passing lively debate over sociologic and economic philosophies that were long the hallmark of the Niopsian political process.

Instead the people of Niops were subjected to three months of mudslinging. Attacks and counterattacks on everything from character to personal tastes that enlightened no one. The tone struck by every major candidate was one of moral outrage without evidence. Exit polls uniformly revealed an electorate passionate about their candidate—and/or passionately opposed to the alternatives—but unable to identify where any of those running for Directorship stood on any of the issues.

Particularly disturbing to political observers is the fact this tactic of emotionally charged accusatory campaigns that emphasized sensation over substance has produced the highest voter turnout in the history of the Niops Association. Indeed, the sheer volume of votes, more than the closeness of the numbers, contributed to the unprecedented seventy-two hour delay in final declaration of Rayanne Nellis as the victor. It is feared that rather than an anomaly, the contentious—even cantankerous—campaigns of 3075 may be the new norm for the Niopsian elective process. What Kimberly Case, Chair of Niops University's Social Sciences Department, characterized as "a new dark age in Niopsian politics and government."

Inauguration and instillation of Rayanne Nellis for her fourth term as Director is scheduled for Monday, 19 April 3075.

THE RAZOR'S EDGE

ROGUE BEARS HIT ODESSA!

May 20. The Blakists still have us pinned down. We would have been overrun if it wasn't for Potter's Pounders. A merc lance is saving our bacon. Granted, they have 380 tons of PPC and Gauss hurling death, but damn; we're Lyrans! We should be able to match that! Command has requested reinforcements to clear the Blakists out. Not only would we stop the constant trickle of losses, but we might actually find something in whatever parts of Gabriel the Robes came back to protect. Maybe something to help combat the plagues that keep sprouting up over on Odessa. What is Archonette Fyhne up to that she can't figure out how to get some relief here? That's why she was appointed, wasn't it? Heck, even more naval support would be nice. We have a *Black Lion* here and we're stuck in a stalemate with the Toasters.

May 22. Unity, I can't believe it! As bad as things have been, it's not getting any better. The *Implacable* is gone. The Archonette is snug on Arcturus, and our best naval support was slapped aside like an annoying bee. A trelling *Leviathan* showed up. That's right, not only are we stuck fighting the Robes with nary enough forces, but the Ghost Bears have decided to join the party. What are they doing here? Between diplomacy, poor leadership, and this Archonette ki-rian shit, apparently anyone can attack the Alliance these days. We hope that someone grows a pair and helps us out, but in the meantime, we'll defend those fat cats, only because they live near the folks we love.

—Journal excerpts from Lieutenant Mohammad Chestnut, LAAF Special Security Detail, Odessa System, May, 3075

INSULTS AND INJURY

TO: LYRAN NAVAL COMMAND, THARKAD
RE: ODESSA SITUATION

AS PER ORDERS, TASK FORCE MANDRAKE IN OBSERVATION OF GABRIEL SITUATION. MORNING OF 22 MAY, CLAN GHOST BEAR NAVAL FORCE AGGRESSIVELY JUMPED IN AND BEGAN ASSAULT PROCEDURES DESPITE REPEATED WARNINGS. *IMPLACABLE* DESTROYED BY *LEVIATHAN* AFTER WARNING SHOTS FIRED. GHOST BEAR FORCE PROCEEDED TO GABRIEL.

OBSERVED BLAKIST WITHDRAWAL. MINIMAL CASUALTIES NOTED. GABRIEL BASE AND ANCILLARY FACILITIES DESTROYED DURING RETREAT. GHOST BEAR FORCE STILL OCCUPYING SYSTEM. MULTIPLE CONTACTS NOTED WITHIN EXPANDED WRECKAGE.

ONLY 68 SURVIVORS FROM *IMPLACABLE* RECOVERED.

REQUEST IMMEDIATE REINFORCEMENT. BEARS MUST PAY.

SIGNED ADMIRAL STEINWAY, CMDING

—Verified communiqué from the *Robert Marsden*,
22 May 3075; printed by the Tharkad IntelNews Net

EARLY 3075: THE RAZOR'S EDGE

**BURIED DRAGON**

Entry 1233, 6 June 3075

They offered me officer's tabs today ...

What a crock of bull, like I'd take on that kind of responsibility after what happened to General Haig. Not a chance in holy hell I ever want to make that kind of call. Next recruit that ever badmouths officers for being useless, I'll kick his teeth in.

Still don't even know what unit the snakes were from, spooks say Black Dragon renegades, but a snake's a snake if you ask me, and they don't come any sneakier than these ones. They hid their *Overlord* in the shadow of the civilian *Mammoth* all the way in, and their commandos had to have been on world at least three months. We didn't even know they were there until the FAE bomb went off in the barracks. Half of Alpha Command wiped out before the first snake 'Mech hot dropped. Must have had at least two regiments of mixed infantry in that cargo dropper, even some of those ubersuits of theirs, the Kanazuchi.

It's not like the General had much damn choice. Let them make off with enough salvage-quality equipment to fit out more than a regiment or stop them anyway he could. He might have let them get away with it, but then they found the nukes. Oh yeah sure, no one likes 'em, no one wants them, but they still exist. After the war, command gathered all they could find and dropped them in deep holes here and on [CENSORED].

When they found the nukes, the General didn't have a damn choice.

I saw the pain in his eyes. He knew what had to be done. He knew he'd not only be destroying vital supplies, but killing hundreds of his own men. He knew he'd be killing his own son.

And he did it, ordered the whole depot brought down on those damned Black Dragon bastards, his men, his son ...

And they want me to be an officer? Hell no.

—Personal journal of Sergeant Major Alicia Constanza, recounting the destruction of the Bryceland Mothball Storage fields.

LYRAN, LEAGUE TROOPS REPEL CIRCINUS INVADERS

(30 June 3075)

Tamarind [TNN]—In what may be a harbinger of things to come, elements of the Free Worlds League Military and Lyran Alliance Armed Forces made a joint assault against Circinus and Word of Blake forces holding Poulso and Khon Kaen. Both Lyran worlds were liberated with the occupying forces either destroyed or driven off planet with heavy losses.

Though the Free Worlds League and Lyran Alliance have coordinated overall strategies in the past, this is the first time line troops of the two nations have fought shoulder to shoulder. According to sources in the FWLM who spoke on condition of anonymity, the liberation force was ad hoc—created from elements of several units so that no homeworld would be left defenseless by the campaign. Exact size and composition of the liberation force has not been made public for security reasons, but it is believed core elements of the First Brigade of the Fusiliers of Oriente formed the backbone of the FWL contingent. The Lyran contingent was drawn from units within the Buena Archonette.

Details of the liberation itself are sketchy, but it is known the numerically superior League/Lyran force struck both worlds simultaneously on 21 July.

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD



banner.

(30 November) To meet the Kurita delegation's requirement for their support, Stone fights a Trial of Refusal against the Nova Cats on Tukayyid's moon. Stone's victory forces half of the Nova Cat Clan to remain in Combine space. Also on this date, Capellan Death Commandos arrest Duchess Kali Liao on Highspire.

(10 December) Proclaiming a successful purge of Black Dragon elements in the ISF and local DCMS forces, Warlord Minamoto once more invites Azami representatives to Benjamin to resume negotiations.

(11 December) Devlin Stone details plans to liberate Coventry, Luthien, and Pesht, as well as plans to defend Skye from an inevitable Word of Blake attack.

(20 December) Archon Peter Steiner-Davion is assassinated by a Blakist operative while leaving Tukayyid. On his deathbed, he names General Adam Steiner his successor in a recorded last will. The reformed Estates General on Tharkad ratifies Adam Steiner's position by the end of the year, and his first act is a promise to uphold Peter's support of Stone's alliance.

(26 December) Stone convinces Skye to accept allied aid in the defense of the vital world in the face of an imminent Word of Blake attack.

(28 December) Kali Liao is presented to Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao on Sian and is formally charged with treason against the realm and collaborating with the enemy.

(29 December) The Word of Blake's Fiftieth Shadow Division raids Bountiful Harvest

but encounters stiff resistance from the Second Wolf Strike Grenadiers and the Fourth Wolf Guards Cluster and retreats with heavy damage.

3074

(5 January) Chandrasekhar Kurita releases his coalition force—under Lyran and Exiled Wolf Clan naval escort—to attack Odessa, suspecting the system to be the location of the secret Ruins of Gabriel. Word of Blake defense forces emerge to defend the base, which is revealed to be a moon orbiting the system's farthest planet. Though the Blakists manage to beat back the allied troops, however, their forces nevertheless poison the world of Odessa and withdraw to scuttle their now-exposed facilities.



EARLY 3075: THE RAZOR'S EDGE

The occupying forces yielded the population and industrial centers of Khon Kaen quickly. The planetary capital of Pattaya was freed within hours. The primary DropPort at Waeng Yai was liberated two days later. From that point the campaign consisted of driving the Circinus and Blake forces into the unpopulated badlands region of the central continent and destroying them piecemeal.

The liberation of Poulsbo proved more difficult. The occupying forces had the advantage of Bangor—a fortified military base established by the Lyran Commonwealth over five centuries ago—and the natural defenses surrounding the planetary capital of Bangor Heights. The planet's violent seas and mountainous terrain limited the liberators' tactical options, allowing the dug-in occupiers to anticipate their assaults. However through valor, determination, and what was characterized as "brilliant innovation," Colonel Chapman-Potemkin was able to prevail. The last pocket of resistance was eradicated in the early hours of Monday, 28 June.

A small contingent of the invaders—an estimated ten percent of the occupying forces—was able to escape, launching from the heavily armored military DropPort as Bangor fell. It is unlikely they were able to leave the Poulsbo system, and their fate is unknown.

Sources report that Circinus/Word of Blake forces on both Khon Kaen and Poulsbo employed the same tactics. In every engagement, irregular and evidently conscripted units engaged initially, fighting with what was described as "furious abandon and little science." Only when these units had exhausted themselves or been destroyed did the second wave of more disciplined and organized forces deploy. None of the occupying forces wore recognized colors or insignia, but the more disciplined units fielded BattleMechs of recent design. There is much speculation as to what these tactics and assets indicate

about the organization and resources of the Word of Blake and Circinus Federation.

In another first of potentially momentous implications, units composed of equal measure Free Worlds League and Buena Archonette troops have been established to garrison both Khon Kaen and Poulsbo.

TAURIANS ATTACK BRUSETT

(30 June 3075)

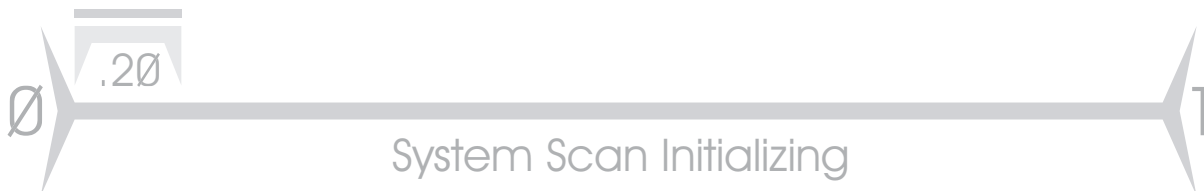
Brusett [NSNN]—A month after a Word of Blake raid shattered the meager defenses here on Brusett, the Taurian naval task force anticipated by the AFFS High Command has reportedly arrived. The marauding fleet—centered on a *Quixote*-class frigate likely restored and provided by the Word of Blake—jumped in-system less than four hours ago, according to planetary defense officials, with several supporting DropShips and fighters in close escort.

This is the second major Taurian assault against Brusett in the last two years. The first was thwarted by the presence of the Hansen's Roughriders mercenary command, who managed to outmaneuver and destroy the attacking Taurians with a sustained artillery strike soon after their ground forces landed. When Blakist troops struck the world again in May, the AFFS—recognizing a correlation between their raids and the Taurian assaults—anticipated the Concordat's move and dispatched its own task force, centered on the FCS *Kathil*. Stationed within Brusett's lunar orbit, the *Fox*-class *Kathil* is reportedly already moving to intercept the inbound Taurian ships.

The *Kathil*'s presence, it is hoped, will eliminate the Taurian naval advantage in this region and blunt the spearhead of the Concordat's entire unprovoked campaign against the worlds of the Federated Suns.

We at NSNN will keep our viewers posted as this latest development unfolds.

KIRI-J(F) SYSTEM SECURITY SCANNER (12.3.89 BUILD 505)



SECURITY LEVEL AMBER



CHAOS OVERWHELMING: ROMAN CANDLE

ROMAN CANDLE

By the order of the Caesar, all armed hostility in the Lothian and Illyrian regions will cease and desist immediately. Those forces that surrender to Marian authorities by midnight tonight shall receive amnesty. Those who persist in using violence against the rightful rule of the Caesar after this time shall be shot on sight. This is a time of war against our Circinian foes, not a time to fight against fellow citizens of the glorious Hegemony.

So it is stated, so it will be done.

—Excerpt from Decree #291, issued 2 March 3074

SITUATION

*Trasjkis, Marian Hegemony
20 March 3074*

After some serious downtime and repair, you're getting itchy to get back into the fight. War is a lucrative business, after all. Your old contact, Mr. Askai, easily sets up a contract with you to conduct a heavy raid on Trasjkis. With the Marian command in disarray, resistance would be low and the pickings high. Just the type of contract your unit needs to get back into the game.

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: ROMAN CANDLE

GAME SETUP

Players may use any mix of forces for a ground combat offensive.

Set up a mix of mapsheets from the Light Urban table (see *TW*, p. 263). The Defender declares their home edge first, with the Attacker's home edge on the opposite side. If no buildings are present on these mapsheets, the Defender must place up to 12 Building counters of any size and CF per mapsheet.

Attacker

Players may use up to 25 percent of their total force to enter the battlefield at the beginning of Turn 1. The Attacker's units may only use Cruising / Walking MPs during Turn 1's Movement Phase.

Defender

The Defender consists of scattered elements of the IV Legio and make up 75 percent of the Attacker's deployed force. The Defender is of Regular skill level and may roll on any Periphery or Mercenary RAT.

Before play, the Defender selects two buildings and secretly marks their location; this represents the IV Legio's HQ.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 300

Optional Bonuses

+100 City Ruins: Mark half of the buildings present as destroyed. Each destroyed hex is converted into an Ultra Rubble terrain hex (see *TO*, p. 39).

+200 Smoke: Each player adds 1d6-2 Light Smoke and 1d6-3 Heavy Smoke hexes (to a minimum of 1 each) to the battlefield;

these may be placed on any hex not occupied by an intact building. Use the *Smoke* rules in *TO* (see *TO*, p. 47).

OBJECTIVES/VICTORY BONUSSES

Forces receive the indicated victory bonuses for achieving the following objectives:

Party HQ: The Attacker must locate and destroy the Marian HQ buildings. **(+300 point bonus)**

Guillotine: Cripple or destroy at least half of the IV Legio present. **(+100 point bonus)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Forced Withdrawal

The IV Legio is operating under Forced Withdrawal rules (see *TW*, p. 258).

Radio Emissions

Any attacking BattleMech unit with undamaged Sensors can make a dedicated radio band scan once every two turns. Scans are declared and resolved in the End Phase. When scanning, roll 2d6; on a result of 11 or 12, the location of one of the HQ buildings is revealed as the rebel commanders transmit from their encrypted equipment.

AFTERMATH

The fighting took a vicious turn the deeper you got into the city; fortunately, through some triangulation and a little luck, the IV Legio's temporary HQ was located and wiped out.

It wasn't until you were packing up and prepping for lift



CHAOS OVERWHELMING: ROMAN CANDLE

when you figured out what was going on. Seems the Circinians were attacking along a broad front across the Hegemony. Using mercenaries hired through blind fronts, they hit the larger choke points, then rolled in their state troops to mop up the rest with minimal losses.

Whatever the case, it looked as if the Marian-Circinian conflict is reaching new heights in brutality.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Undoubtedly, some of the Marian commanders escaped as soon as the fighting began. Your employers may wish to continue pursuit, from building-to-building searching or setting up roadblocks to storming the DropPort or raiding nearby firebases. Sooner is better, as word comes down that more Marian reinforcements are on their way.

NEXT TRACKS

Dante's Daydream, Acid Rain

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: DANTE'S DAYDREAM

DANTE'S DAYDREAM

Journal entry J74-285:

Cakewalk. That's what good ol' Kinchuhara promised us. A cakewalk on Gibson, hammering Word defenses and visiting some seriously divine retribution. We signed on partly for the pay, and partly to exact some much-needed vengeance.

Wasn't until the building exploded next to Roy's Gunslinger and those Demons from the 52nd—supposedly light-years away from here—boiled out, cutting down Armand's Eagle in no time flat that I knew we were screwed.

Seriously, horribly screwed.

SITUATION

Gibson, Free Worlds League

13 August 3074

It seemed like a really good idea at the time. The contracted pay was astounding, the orders simple. Even the drop was smooth as silk; the intel the Regulans had provided on Gibson's current defenses seemed to be spot-on for once.

Then, without warning, Kinchuhara's Fourth Hussars disappeared under waves of Demons, like they'd stepped into an anthill filled with armored, enraged insects. When the rest of the task force moved forward to assist the Stalking Horse, those red and white fade jobs showed up out of nowhere.

That's when Hell opened up and swallowed everyone whole.

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: DANTE'S DAYDREAM

GAME SETUP

Set up a mix of Heavy Urban Terrain mapsheets (see *TW*, p. 263), adding additional buildings (of any type and CF) to any Clear, non-paved hexes.

Attacker

The Attacker consists of the Fifty-second Shadow Division, should be 200 percent of the Defender's deployed force, and may be placed anywhere on the map. Up to half of the Attacker's units may be set up using the Hidden Unit rules (see *TW*, p. 259). Treat each unit as an Elite pilot. Though all pilots are Manei Domini, cybernetic enhancements are considered an Optional Bonus for this track.

Designate two units as Demi-Preceptors; these units may not begin play as Hidden Units.

Defender

The Defender consists of up to 100 percent of the player's total force. Select one map edge for the Defender to enter the battlefield; this is also their home edge.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 1,000

Optional Bonuses

+300 Heavy Industrial Zone: Treat all paved hexes as if they had the Heavy Industrial Zone terrain modification (see *TO*, p. 31).

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: DANTE'S DAYDREAM



+500 Manei Domini: Outfit each Attacking unit with up to three cybernetic enhancements of any level (see *JHS72*, pp. 120-131). The units controlled by the two Demi-Precentors may have four enhancements of any level.

OBJECTIVES

Forces receive the indicated victory bonuses for achieving the following objectives:

Give 'em Hell: Destroy at least three-quarters of the Attacker's forces. (+1,000 point bonus)

Delaying Tactics: Destroy or cripple both Demi-Precentors before Turn 6. (+600 point bonus)

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Fanatics

The Fifty-second will fight to the death. If a unit reaches a condition that normally calls for a Forced Withdrawal, do not follow those rules but instead assign a +1 modifier to all Gunnery and Piloting skill rolls.

Salvage

The Defender may claim half of the battlefield salvage only if they achieve both objectives. Otherwise, no salvage is available.

AFTERMATH

It was a nightmare, pure and simple.

The Stalking Horse and Wild Geese were completely wiped out; the Wild Geese sold themselves dearly for what scattered few mercenary units could escape to the too-few surviving DropShips. No unit left dirtside was untouched; losses were horrendous on a scale rivaling the initial days of the Clan invasion.

How Kirc would explain this debacle wasn't your concern. Getting as far away from Gibson as soon as possible was.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

There are other mercenary units out there in serious trouble, having also been ambushed by the Fifty-second and other Blakist units. Rescue missions can be attempted, as well as a fighting retreat (chase scenario) all the way back to the surviving Regular DropShips.

Or the players may go underground and try to hook up with the scarce remnants of the New Gibson Freedom League in order to survive and escape the Blakist hunter-killer squads.

NEXT TRACKS

Acid Rain, Heat Lightning

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: ACID RAIN

**ACID RAIN**

[Mosquito One]: *Confirmed, control. Seems the Blakists have modified some of the observational platforms into armed towers.*

[Control]: *Copy that, Mosquito One. Do another pass with full scan of the area—*

[Mosquito Two]: *Break starboard, One! Taking fire from below!*

[One]: *Oh crap in a can ... Control, looks like we've got some additional— [squeal]*

[Control]: *One, come in! One, report!*

[Two]: *Sorry control, One's on his way down. No chute.*

[Control]: *Malin' hell. Return to base, Two. We'll deal with what we've got.*

SITUATION

Tikonov, Blake Protectorate

4 October 3074

At first, a raiding contract in the heart of the Protectorate didn't seem like a reasonable proposition—more like an invitation to get killed. But the rebels offered up some sweet salvage rights; with the way things are right now, you and your team can use all you can get.



CHAOS OVERWHELMING: ACID RAIN

GAME SETUP

The battlefield uses a mix of Light Urban and Flatlands mapsheets (see *TW*, p. 263). Set up four watchtowers (Level 8 Medium buildings, CF 40) spaced at least eight hexes apart. Each tower contains a weapon hardpoint (see *Special Rules*, below). Both sides may use ground and air units.

Attacker

The players may deploy up to 50 percent of their total force and enter the battlefield from the edge farthest from the watchtowers.

Defender

The Earthwerks facility is defended by several Veteran security forces from the Tikonov Protectorate Militia. The Militia is 100 percent of the Attacker's total deployed force.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 450

Optional Bonuses

+200 Light Fog: Use the Light Fog rules for this track (see *TO*, p. 57).

+200 Security Chief: One Defender is an enhanced Veteran pilot using a VDNI system (see *JHS72*, p. 129).

OBJECTIVES

Forces receive the indicated victory bonuses for achieving the following objectives:

'Ware the watchtowers: Destroy all four watchtowers before the end of Turn 8. **(+200 point bonus)**

Bang-bang: Cripple or destroy at least half of the Defending forces. **(+400 point bonus)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Forced Withdrawal

The Protectorate Militia is operating under the Forced Withdrawal rules (see *TW*, p. 258).

Watchtowers

Each tower mounts a single laser weapon system. All four towers have the same weapon, but the Defender may choose from any of the Inner Sphere laser weapons listed in *Total Warfare*. Each tower has a weapon crew with 4 Gunnery, and the crew is destroyed when the building is destroyed.

AFTERMATH

Got to hand those rebels some serious credit; they managed to use your door-busting tactic to great effect, sweeping in and seizing the entire Earthwerks facility. Holding it would be another matter entirely and not something in the contract.

They didn't seem to mind you packing up to go, however. This didn't make any sense until a couple hours after boosting when your comms officer detected some serious radio chatter from the facility. The Word didn't wait long sending in the reinforcements.

And the four bright miniature suns erupting on the horizon near the Word's reported position as your DropShip cleared into orbit told you why the rebels weren't concerned about defending the facility. Seems someone had brought some nuclear backup to the party ...

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

The Tikonov rebels may add additional clauses to retain the unit as the Earthwerks facility is ransacked, since there are other Protectorate Militia forces in the area. Or perhaps hire them out to deliver relief supplies and weapons to other rebel cells on-planet while evading detection or capture.

NEXT TRACKS

Heat Lightning, Mortis Rictus



CHAOS OVERWHELMING: HEAT LIGHTNING

HEAT LIGHTNING

Journal J75-321

Passing through Alliance space we caught the rumors surrounding the resurgent Democracy Now group. I swear I thought that group died off a couple years back; I remember a few contracts we'd done for someone that were tied into the whole mess. Pretty lucrative, until Ashley bolted with most of our money.

Apparently someone else remembered, as Baron Hasseldorf ended up contracting us (oh, the irony!) to help his Kaumberg Planetary Guard defend Vermezzo from a highly anticipated move by DN forces. Turns out they were half-right. The DN boys hit all right but acted more like terrorists by taking hostages and setting off a nasty "scorched earth" policy even the Blakists might have been proud of.

SITUATION

Vermezzo, Lyran Alliance

1 May 3075

Lindon Ashley isn't dead by any means. Even with his power diminished, he nevertheless decided that striking out at his "nemeses"—Baron Hasseldorf and Archonette Sheridan—is the best way to assuage his wounded pride. Hitting back-end worlds like Vermezzo is a petty move; setting mass fires on the drought-riddled forests in order to wipe out KPG forces is just plain desperate.

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: HEAT LIGHTNING

GAME SETUP

The battlefield uses a mix of Wetlands and Woodland terrain (see *TW*, p. 263) and is primarily a ground-based battle. This track is dependant on the Fire and Smoke rules from *Tactical Operations* and cannot be accurately played without them.

Attacker

The Attacker consists of Democracy Now (DN) paramilitary forces of Regular experience. The force is predominately vehicular, with one 'Mech for every five vehicles, and uses the Lyran and Mercenary RATs. The Attacker's force is 75 percent of the Defender's deployed force. The DN force enters the battlefield from any edge at the beginning of Turn 3.

Before play, the Attacker may set two fires on each map sheet. Fires may only be set on flammable terrain, such as buildings or wooded hexes. The Attacker then conducts one Fire and Smoke Resolution Sequence (see *Fire and Smoke*, below) before play begins.

Defender

The Defender consists of up to 50 percent of the player's total force and a mix of KPG armor and infantry units equal to 100 percent of the player's deployed forces (units determined using the Lyran RAT). The KPG forces are of Regular experience.

Place all of the KPG units on the board after the Attacker has placed the fire hexes but before the Fire and Smoke Resolution Sequence (see *Fire and Smoke*, below). The KPG units must set up

as close to the center of the battlefield as legally possible. Select one map edge as their home edge.

The player's force enters from any map edge at the start of the game.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 300

Optional Bonuses

+200 Light Gale: Use the rules for Light Gale (see *TO*, p. 61). Additionally, add a +1 to all Spreading Fires rolls.

+200 Moonless Night: Use the rules for Moonless Night (see *TO*, p. 58). Additionally, any unit within two hexes of a hex on fire operates as if it has an active Searchlight due to the amount of light coming from the fire.

-400 Prior Engagement: Assign this penalty if the players successfully completed the *Going Nova* track (see *JHS72*, p. 108); this penalty applies even if no objectives are achieved in this track.

OBJECTIVES

The players force receives the indicated victory bonuses for achieving the following objectives:

Rescue: Save the KPG from the encroaching fire by destroying or crippling at least half of the Attacking force. **(+300 point bonus)**

Salvation: Make sure as many KPG units exit along their designated edge as possible. **(+50 point bonus per surviving unit)**

**CHAOS OVERWHELMING: HEAT LIGHTNING** **SPECIAL RULES**

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Salvage

Salvage is only possible if the Defender achieves the Rescue objective.

Fire and Smoke

Use the Fire and Smoke rules found in *Tactical Operations* (see *TO*, pp. 43-48).

AFTERMATH

Lighting raging brush fires wasn't the only tactic the desperate DN forces used; word came down through the Vermezzo press that they also set off an entire oil field, wiping out nearly a battalion of local militia tanks and infantrymen. The DN's public relations officers must be dead or on vacation, as their support erodes as the news gets out.

Lindon Ashley is much less a politician for change and more a desperate domestic terrorist looking for revenge. Loki's probably looking at this case as more of a fun side project, considering the war raging along the Skye front.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

The DN boys are hell-bent on wiping out all KPG forces on Vermezzo and aren't afraid of using unconventional tactics to do it. There is little doubt that survivors from the firestorm will be targeted again, perhaps on their way back to safety. And now that the mercs have rescued them, they certainly have a mark on their backs as well.

Sabotage, ambushes, and other surprise attacks will be common during the rest of the player's contract on Vermezzo.

NEXT TRACKS

Mortis Rictus, *Iron Giants*



LATE 3075: THE TURNING TIDE



**LATE 3075: THE TURNING TIDE**

If there is ever a defining moment of the Jihad—and perhaps of civilization as a whole—decided upon by the historians of the future, the latter half of 3075 will be a strong contender.

Capellan strikes across the Blake Protectorate's rimward border coincided with the Dominion's activities along the coreward front—even if neither power planned it that way. Internal rebellions came to a head on Irian and Tikonov, so powerful that not even the Voice of Truth propagandists could wave it away. And with rumors of infighting between Protectorate forces and the elite Shadow Divisions, it seemed possible the Word had finally begun to fracture from the pressure.

But even as the Word faced opposition within and without, the Great Houses continued to face their own internal struggles. Ongoing troubles in the Malagrotta region sent ripples through the more stable Filtvelt Coalition, while the Capellan March faced increased pressure from its people as pirate activity and the Taurian presence produced a sense of near panic.

Yet despite the ongoing struggles across the Inner Sphere, the words of victory spread across the newsnets. Canopus wrenched itself from the fiery grip of its Blakist tormentors, bringing relief and hope to all. With this news of another capital freed from the Jihad, leaders across the Inner Sphere could taste the expectation in the air.

In late 3075, there were few who could deny that the tide was, indeed, turning.

—Bertram Habeas, INN Special Correspondent

COLLECTIVE FURY

For many, late 3075 was the time when it seemed that the Inner Sphere and even the local Clans really began to pull together against the common threat. Stone's followers—including some of the most influential military commanders of the day—began to coordinate strikes with cooperation not seen since the defeat of Clan Smoke Jaguar. The rays of hope grew brighter as news of worlds reclaimed first trickled and then flowed.

CEBALRAI FREE, BUT AT WHAT COST?

(23 August 3075)

Cebalrai [ISAP]—Five flashes of light. Five rising clouds of death and destruction. That is what it took to turn the successful campaign by the Ghost Bears on Cebalrai from triumph to tragedy. Since the middle of August the Ghost Bears have conducted a thorough and at times brutal campaign to root out the guarding forces of the Word of Blake on Cebalrai. City after city fell to the liberators, the defending forces either being totally annihilated, or—as word spread of no quarter given—slipping away to avoid certain destruction. The Ghost Bear forces,

TURNING TIDE

identified as the First and Seventh Bear Regulars and the Sixty-ninth Provisional Garrison Cluster, rapidly cleared their landing zones, pushing the Blakists off the continent of Lennori within days. Keeping the pressure up, they hounded the Blakists across Sarrina and reclaimed the capital city of New Wade on 18 August after a brutal three-day campaign.

At this point, the Ghost Bear forces were divided, and the First Bears stayed on Sarrina to recuperate losses and guard against rogue Blakist elements attempting to hit the re-established government. Meanwhile, the ragged elements of the enemy mercenaries and Protectorate Militia forces pulled back to the three main cities on Dragga. Striking the Blakists at the throat, the Ghost Bear forces launched an all-out assault on the main stronghold of Kamrin, location of the main Blakist Militia forces. On the morning of 20 August, the Bears had driven halfway through the industrial metropolis when the desperate Blakists detonated five neutron bombs hidden throughout the city. The powerful blasts ripped through both defenders and attacks, utterly devastating the Ghost Bear forces. Only a handful of survivors escaped. The remainder of Dragga was eventually secured by the Ghost Bear reserves, the Tenth Provisional Garrison Cluster. Operations by Omicron Galaxy are currently on hold as they recover and assess the situation.

FIGHTING ON GALATEA CONTINUES

(18 November 3075)

Arc-Royal [MERCNET]—After the initial success of the Coalition landings, fighting has bogged down on Galatea between allied forces and their Word of Blake adversaries. The heavy house-to-house fighting to secure Galatean City bought the Word of Blake's Eleventh Division vital time to regroup and maneuver to meet the first attacks by Com Guard Precentor Louisa Draga's Seventy-ninth Division. Attempts by the First Skye Jaegers to flank the Blakists were stunted when the Lyran troops ran into a new weapon—the Bolla Stealth Tank. The coalition advance resumed only once Precentor Styven Kimmelry and his 103rd Division made planetfall, providing critical reinforcements at just the right moment.

Securing Galatea is a critical step for the coalition, both strategically and politically. With their hold on the Mercenary's Star, the Blakists were able to apply a veneer of legitimacy to the contracts under which they recruit and employ mercenary troops. That soldiers-for-hire were willing to serve the Word of Blake did inestimable damage to relations between House and mercenary troops during the early months and years of this war. With Outreach effectively out of the picture, the importance of Galatea as a mercenary hub has grown markedly.

Progress continues to be slow—sometimes measured in meters—and many here suspect that the coalition will probably need to call in additional forces to secure this critical world.

LATE 3075: THE TURNING TIDE

VIVA LA RESISTANCE!

Whether waged in open battles or in the boardrooms of corporate offices, open rebellion against the Word of Blake surged in late 3075, even to the point (some sources say) of infighting within Blakist ranks. Side by side with assault forces and national armies, the rebels rose up in late 3075, strong enough to defy their mutual enemy, damn the cost.

THE LIVING MUST ENVY THE DEAD

[Bronco Three]: One, I'm at six clicks from ground zero and still hitting 95 rems an hour on the radiation detector.

[Bronco Two]: Must have used dirty bombs on top of the nukes. They didn't want anything to be rebuilt at all. Jesus, Skipper did we step into a time machine? This looks like something out of a First War vid.

[Bronco One]: No such luck Danny. Stay focused people, the mission is to check the bomb shelters for survivors and tag them for recovery teams to come in.

[Bronco Two]: Yeah, 'cause we wouldn't want the SAR boys to spend too much time in the radiation. Hell boss, our 'Mechs are gonna be in quarantine for weeks, the tech boys will have to wear radsuits just to reload our ammo. Are my underpants glowing yet?

[Bronco Three]: Only because you had seconds on that inferno chili last night.

[Bronco One]: Let's focus people! Joan, how soon until you get to Shelter Y19, the Kiev Elementary school? We've got a lot of parents who are worried about their kids.

[Bronco Four]: Almost there, I can see the main complex from

here. Shelter entrance is on the far side, behind the playground area.

[Pause]

[Bronco Four]: Oh dear god... no no no no!

[Bronco One]: Joan, what is it?

[Bronco Four]: *[Choked sob]* ... Tra ... transmitting ...

[Embedded video image: The shadow of Bronco Four's 'Mech falls across the black-paved playground. The image shifts left and zooms in on a lighter-colored cracked walkway. Etched into the walkway are shadows of more than three dozen child-size shapes. Each shadow captured in motion as if the child had been running when his shadow decided to stop and rest.]

[Bronco Three]: Sweet Kerensky are those ... ?

[Bronco One]: Blast shadows. They must have been caught in the open. Vaporized almost instantly, only their shadows left.

[Bronco Two]: I hate this job.

—Intercepted AFFS relief force communications traffic, Tikograd, Tikonov, July 3075

FISSURES OF FIRE

[File ISF-SHIM-254Xr8k]

Situation: Notable increase of activity on Castor, Pollux, Graham IV. Word Militia forces there engaged units from Steiner and League military, as shown by attached video data. However, notable inconsistencies have arisen.

Metsuke analysis confirms that combat patterns match that of previous disturbances on New Home and Caph in June.

While unit markings are different in each case, there are several parallel datum points that cross, suggesting that at least

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

(7 January) Two Divisions of Blakist forces—augmented by Kali Liao's Warrior Houses—launch a surprise assault against Forbidden City on Sian. At the peak of the fighting, however, one of Kali's Warrior Houses turns on the other, effectively eliminating both from the battle, turning the tide in favor of the defending CCAF forces and forcing the Word of Blake forces into a rout.

(18 January) A Regular force led by Titus Cameron-Jones raids Irian, inflicting heavy damage and receiving heated condemnation from Atreus.

(21 January) A second delegation of Arkab leaders agrees to make one more attempt to meet with Minamoto to settle the Azami Crisis.

(10 February) Under threat of severe reprisals against Regulus, Prince Titus Cameron-

Jones formally renounces his claim to the Captain-Generalcy and officially forbids any Regular forces or intelligence apparatus from interfering in "the greater affairs of the League and its allies."

(15 February) Word of Blake forces destroy Warrior House Lu Sann during an ambush on Herotitus.

(17 February) The Word of Blake's Fifty-second Shadow Division assaults Bolan, shatters the Second Brion's Legion mercenary regiment, and razes the Bolan capital city. Bolan's ruling family flees, leaving the planet in political turmoil. Also on this date, DCMS forces and Azami fighters repel a Word of Blake attack on the Azami delegation to Benjamin.

(7 March) Clan Ghost Bear moves to disrupt a Blakist Shadow Division covertly operating

on Radstadt. In the fighting, the Blakist forces unleash several biological weapons and neutron bombs, poisoning critical parts of the planetary ecosystem.

(16 March) A joint Jade Falcon-LAAF task force attacks Coventry from Word of Blake blockade forces.

(21 March) The Coventry liberation is completed. At the same time, roughly three regiments' worth of allied troops arrive on Skye.

(25 March) The Azami delegation arrives safely on Benjamin. Although the ten-day discussions fail to bring the Arkab worlds fully back into the Dragon's fold, the two sides agree to focus all military energies on the common threat of the Word of Blake. The Combine promises to direct relief efforts to their stricken worlds.



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one or two Shadow units are masquerading as aforementioned House military units.

At this time, it is unknown why Shadow forces are engaging on worlds inside the Protectorate. And why such pains are being taken to hide identities. There are a few conclusions put forward by *Metsuke* regarding said actions:

1. Shadow units are an OpFor for WOBM training, including elaborate visual and sensor illusions to make simulation as real as possible.

2. Shadow units are engaging in an elaborate plan to fool opposing intel agencies known to be operating within the Protectorate.

3. Shadow units are engaging Militia forces with intent to kill. The third possibility seems the least likely, as it does not mesh with current known politics and procedures within Blakist high command. It has been posited that the first two conclusions are in play.

Action: Suggest security be redoubled in light of ongoing WOB preparedness. Avoiding another Galtor gambit would be wise at this juncture.

—ISF internal memorandum posted on Shimonita underground, 2 October 3075 (veracity unconfirmed)

THE SCIENCE OF MASSACRE

[An unsteady camera settles on a picture of Hell. Pieces of burnt and twisted wreckage dot a grassy steppe, and the grass itself is burning. Columns of choking black smoke stab into a gunmetal sky. But the real horror is that there are figures moving down below, figures moving through hell.]

[A man speaks. His voice is deep and firm but carefully quiet.]

"This is Ken Rope, bringing you the Voice of the Dragon from Kaus Borealis. Nine days ago, on August 20, Clan Ghost Bear landed on this world. They came down hot, ignoring DCMS hails, repeating a pattern that has held from Cebalrai to Vega, Eltanin to Alya."

[Most of the figures moving through the battlefield are giants, Elementals in battle armor, but the camera zooms in on a middle-aged woman wearing gray pants and a matching frock, picking through the smoldering wreckage.]

"The Bears leave Combine forces and civilians alone as long as we stay out of their way, but they ruthlessly slaughter any Blakists they encounter. The Bear hatred of the Word is unexplained.

"But undeniable."

[The Ghost Bear woman squats down and raises a prize out of the destruction. Heat rises from the blackened object in the chill morning air. Its shape marks it as a human cranium.]

"What happens next is mysterious. The Ghost Bears comb through the wreckage. This isn't normal battlefield salvage and they aren't looking for prisoners—the Bears haven't taken any Blakist prisoners. It's unclear what they're doing, especially since they attack anyone who questions them or even tries to observe."

[The Clanner scrapes the blackened skull with a small knife, shaking the scrapings into a clear plastic bag. She handles the sample gingerly, almost reverently. But at the same time her face is twisted into a rictus of hatred.]

"They're searching for something, but only they know what they want."

—VOTD vid report, Kaus Borealis, 28 August 3075

BEARS STALLED AT ASCELLA

(16 October 3075)

Ascella [ISAP]—Striking out from Kaus Borealis and their already pacified neighboring worlds, the Ghost Bear Dominion forces continued their offensive after a short lull. After the meeting on Kaus Borealis between the Ghost Bears and Devlin Stone, rumors have been going around that the Ghost Bears might be halting their campaign in order to coordinate closer with the Coalition, but recent events have put a stop to those rumors.

Hitting the worlds Kaus Media, Kaus Australis, and Ascella, the Ghost Bears are intent on capturing the rimwards thumb of the Blake Protectorate. Already fallen to their juggernaut are the worlds of Cebalrai, Vega, Eltanin, Alya, and Kaus Borealis. The disaster that struck the Ghost Bears on Cebalrai, where two Clusters were wiped out in a nuclear last stand, seems to have done little but fan the fires of Ghost Bear vengeance.

Operations on Kaus Media and Kaus Australis have gone well, according to all reports. The few Word of Blake forces encountered there have been dealt with quickly and brutally. The fighting on Ascella has been more troublesome, as the Word of Blake forces managed to ambush the Ghost Bear invasion fleet. Pocket WarShips struck from pirate points and managed to make several attacks on the incoming DropShips before the Ghost Bear aerospace forces managed to destroy or drive them off. With the Ghost Bear WarShips deployed to Kaus Borealis, Media, and Australis, only assault DropShips and aerospace fighters were available to defend the Ghost Bear forces. Official word on the amount of losses is not available, but sources have informed us that roughly a full Cluster was destroyed in the furball, and the invasion halted until the *Leviathan* was recalled from Kaus Borealis to clean up the remaining pocket WarShips and aerospace forces still lurking in the system. The invasion is scheduled to resume in the next couple of days.

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MARKETWATCH

Interesting news from the League business sector, with IrTech stocks plummeting in a headlong dive across the Donegal, Atrous, and Victorian markets. The news is unusual, since IrTech has been on an unprecedented five-year rise, netting a minimum yearly fifteen percent increase across the period. Investors have been enjoying tremendous profits as the stock has split multiple times, giving a nearly 1,000-percent increase to stockholders hanging on since before 3069.

The IrTech slide has been decreasing stock values across the Irian conglomerate for nearly a week, already erasing gains achieved at the end of 3074. Momentum continues to grow as new investors quickly bail from the market.

It's been conjectured that news of Irian's sudden split from the Word of Blake Protectorate has affected its stocks across the band, which was the opposite reaction from initial predictions. Rumors of a massive loss of production and manufacturing facilities in the system has only added fuel to the sell-off, though Irian's central corporate offices have not commented on the situation at this time.

Long-term investors are advised to hold on to their stocks as their value yield is still high; once flash-investors have bailed out, IrTech stocks are expected to stabilize near their 3072 value. Stay tuned to the BBR for continual updates.

—*Bolan Business Review* commentary on BIFD trivid network, 29 December 3075

BEST-LAID PLANS

For the smaller, breakaway states—particularly those of the Malagrotta and Filtvelt regions of the Federated Suns—the latter half of 3075 saw the grim reminders of fringe life. Pirates, once feared, then taken in as allies, soon showed their true colors in Malagrotta—an eerie reminder of the darkness in some men's souls.

FEUDING CHILDREN

[Precentor Martial, lately we were able to intercept some of the communications between Gibson and Terra. Unfortunately, we only got snippets. The spyware Uncle Chandy provided is still not working as expected. But what we got is quite interesting –HK]

[Cameron St. Jamais (CSJ), 1 Sep 75]: ... I need ... tell me ... going ... lately! I ... reports of at least ... different incidents here. Out of the ... units under the color of Stone and his coalition appear, smack my troops and ... they are gone again. Do you really think I ... stupid ... get the message when Caph, Epsilon Indi, and New Home were raided on June 6 by "mercenaries"? A pity that I have intelligence reports that put the One-Eyed Jacks over 250 light-years from Caph—and I have [pretty huge gap –HK] Apollyon! Stop this! Tell the Master that we need to fight together and not against each other. We can maybe—*maybe*—still win this thing if we ... Or at least hold out long enough to come up with ...

[Apollyon (A), 19 Sep 75]: ... cleansed. The Third Transfer is still upon us. All those not worthy ... be ... of and we must make sure that ... Your mind is too ... to understand the reasons ... The Master ... assured ... Terra ... All the filth must be ... [They're still on about the "Third Transfer"? Didn't that dream die on Tharkad? Or did someone decide to reinterpret his tea leaves? –HK]

[CSJ, 30 Sep 75]: ... again! One of your Sha ... stor, Pollux and ... I saw the ... I know a Sha... sion when I see one. And I bet ... Eligos and his ... again. Their tactics are unique. You should ... sure ... kill everyone next time! We don't need this, damn it! What's next? Azrael ... streets in Geneva? I demand an expla ... to me what you try to ... with this! I demand...

[A, 4 Oct 75]: ... Transfer is upon ... We ... ready for it ... cleanse us or the dream is in peril ... The Mas ... Gibson ... Terra ... You will follow orders. Precentor ... the Master is trusting in your ability to hold ...

[We have only to be able to confirm that there has been fighting on a variety of worlds in the Protectorate lately, but not the full extent of the units involved. Among these actions, all the worlds St. Jamais mentioned have been raided by unknown forces—and mostly not anyone working for us. This could be the real deal, or it could be another ruse. I am continuing my investigation. -HK]

—ComStar Field intelligence report to Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion, dated 31 October 3075

NEWS DOWNLO



Date & Title

(8 July 3075)
"Kirkpatrick's Invaders' Return Met by M

(23 July 3075)
"Tikonov Free!"

(31 July 3075)
"Pleione, Menkar Nuked by CCAF! Millions Perish!"

[VOT]

ACCESSING



LATE 3075: THE T

CORPORATE REBELLION

(9 December 3075)

Irian [ISAP]—As the dust settles, worlds—and the Word—wonder what just happened on Irian. One day, this was a pacified, loyal planet with modest rebel activity; the next, it was a rampaging beehive, with local forces scouring away all Blakist presence.

In a concerted effort on the morning of 5 December, rebel scout formations probed all main positions and regional headquarters held by Irian Protectorate Militias. At the same time, Irian Corporate Security seized control of all automated defense systems and put all key facilities into lockdown. Completely taken by surprise and unsure how to interpret the sudden surge in rebel activity, the militia units fell into disarray. Then the real hammer fell.

While massive rebel forces burst out of hiding and charged openly at Kirin River, INI and local media stations switched from their usual programming to resistance propaganda, inciting the populace to openly oppose the Word in the city streets. Included in the broadcast, according to some sources, were also a series of “wake-up orders” to sleeper cells in the Protectorate Militia. Pure mayhem ensued.

Of the occupation forces, only the First Irian Protectorate Militia was able to mount some kind of coordinated defense. While not enough to win the fight, it bought the Blakist regime enough time to initiate a scorched-earth retreat. On 8 December, they finally left for good—but not without employing several nuclear warheads to level industrial complexes across the planet.

As the dust settles, worlds also wonder “*Quo Vadis, Irian?*” Is it possible that IrTech’s leadership really outsmarted the Word of Blake at its own game? That they never were turncoats or loyal Blakist, but merely played the Word for profit and expansion possibilities? Then why do all IrTech’s other assets stay put? Why isn’t there a full rebellion on every corporation-controlled planet?

Rumors have it that the tried-and-true “IrTech is Irian” axiom simply is no more. That the once unified business front has actually crumbled, with its “homeland” departments pitted against their far-flung branches. If that were the case, the fallout on the interstellar market scene could be far-reaching indeed.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

“Citizens of Malagrotta.

“This is to inform you that as of midnight yesterday, the world of Malagrotta is now under the domain of the Death’s Consorts. Due to a misunderstanding and a complete lack of respect, your former *Voorzitter*, Marion Whillshire, decided to murder

MARSIN, CRMM DEFEND SUNS AGAIN!

(3 September 3075)

Baranda [CMM]—Apparently not content with a simple military victory, Major General Raymond-Roger Marsin of the Remagen CrMM today launched a blistering public denunciation of the pirate forces infesting the worlds of the so-called Malagrotta Cooperative. It was just two days ago that General Marsin led his troops in defense of the city of Villareal on Baranda and repulsed a battalion-sized force of invaders keen on pillaging the textile factory on the outskirts of the city.

In his speech before the crowd assembled in Villareal’s central square, the General addressed the concerns of not only Baranda but also of many worlds throughout the region.

“The free peoples of the Federated Suns have suffered much these past few years, and though other, wealthier worlds may receive all the news coverage and aid packages and military defenses, know that you have not been forgotten. Five months ago, I led the Remagen March Militia to the Outback and promised to protect every citizen of the Suns. Two days ago, the first down payment on that promise was made,” General Marsin said.

Major General Marsin, a native of June and scion of a family with ancient (though distant) ties to the ruling Davion line, is a long-time and outspoken advocate of increased economic development in the Outback worlds. Since being appointed to command of the Remagen CrMM a little over nine months ago, Marsin has made no secret of his intentions to curtail pirate activity and bring stability and prosperity to the region, a position he reiterated in today’s speech:

“New Avalon may now be free,” Marsin said, “but they have their own problems to deal with. We cannot sit by and wait for help; we must defend ourselves against those who would take our livelihood, our land and our lives. Baranda was just the beginning.”

Lady Trevaline. As per Consort law, this made Willshire our new commander.

“However, your former president decided instead to sentence us to death simply because we were attempting to fulfill the Letters of Marques negotiated in good faith with your appointed officials. I decided to exercise my right as second-in-command and challenged Whillshire to a duel, as per Consort law.

“I stand before you now as your newly appointed *Voorzitter*.

“Rest assured that your day-to-day lives will not change with the exception that challenges to my authority will be met with swift reprisals. As an aside, I will be introducing your new Ministers of Finance, Education, Mining and Communications later today.

“Don’t mess with me and I won’t fuck with you.

“That is all. For now.”

—Press statement by “*Voorzitter*” Gary Tiquahme. Malagrotta, 25 October 3075 (veracity confirmed)

LATE 3075: THE TURNING TIDE

AND IF BILLY JUMPED OFF THE CLIFF ...

Entry 1694.33

Oh look! A thousand rodents are running off a cliff to their death, quick let's join the procession! Why not? It can't be any worse of a decision than our fair leaders have made for us. Why I'm positively filled with a great and deep sense of well being knowing that we have secured the protection of Lady Death and her Consorts.

Certainly there can be some logic to the formation of Malagrotta Cooperative. After all, when Filtvelt formed their coalition, piracy all but evaporated in their borders. Odd that, don't you think? Like the pirates get to the border and see a sign "We're not FedSuns, pirates not allowed" and they actually listen. Oh, but I digress.

Filtvelt's Letters of Marques to known pirates stinks of a Solaris protection racket. And we thought it was a good idea to copy them?

I'm reminded of an argument I had with my mother, I was five at the time. My brilliant comeback to her not wanting me to climb the twenty-meter-tall tree in our backyard was "But Billy Jones does it." To which she replied, "And if Billy Jones jammed a stick in his eye would you?"

So here's to a sharp poke in the eye.

—OpEd by "Mala-justed" underground blogger, Malagrotta Interweb, 5 November 3075

FILTVELT FORCES REDEPLOY

(4 December 3075)

New Syrtis [NSNN]—In reaction to the deteriorating situation

on Malagrotta, the Filtvelt Coalition is rumored to be redeploying forces. The Thumpers Assault Battalion has been relocated to Sodertalje to support the Second Filtvelt Defenders. Meanwhile the newly activated Third Filtvelt Defenders have been rushed into service and are reportedly moving to posts on Redondo or Jaboatao. Filtvelt is also rumored to be courting the services of a number of mercenary commands to stiffen up its defenses.

Additionally the Filtvelt Coalition has announced that it is closing its borders to traffic out of the Malagrotta Cooperative. As a consequence, the negotiations to expand trade agreements between the two breakaway regions have been abandoned.

PERIPHERAL CONCERNS

With the Word suddenly shifting to a defensive stance, late 3075 became the turning point of the war. In the Periphery, and especially the battle ravaged Magistracy of Canopus, this shift proved particularly striking, as joint Canopian and Capellan forces finally drove the bulk of the Blakist invaders into a general retreat.

CANOPUS FREE!

[Kylee Tremont]: In a day many Canopians feared might never come, we are proud to report the occupation of Canopus by Word of Blake forces is finally over! The people of Canopus can once again breathe in the air of freedom. While there can be no doubt that unspeakable hardships remain in the aftermath of the Word's barbaric actions here, there is also hope that a free and strong Canopus will rise from these ashes.

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

(1 May) Several asteroids strike Taurus, obliterating the capital city of Samantha and killing Protector Grover Shraplen. Evidence recovered from the asteroid remains and Taurian asteroid field implicate FedSuns espionage, a charge House Davion vehemently denies.

(14 May) Archon Adam Steiner announces his engagement to Baroness Heather Fyhne, daughter of Arcturus' ruling Duchess, Arielle Fyhne.

(19 May) The Taurian Concordat relocates its rimward forces to the FedSuns border, along with its newly unveiled *Quixote*-class WarShip, *Vendetta*.

(29 May) The Taurian Concordat launches a renewed invasion of the Federated Suns.

(15-30 June) The first wave of Taurian assaults captures Bromhead, Midale, Brockway,

Hyalite and Lothair. At Bromhead, Brockway, and Midale, nuclear weapons are used to support the incursions, laying waste to several FedSuns military pickets. Within two weeks of the first strikes, over ten million FedSuns citizens and troops are dead.

(27 June) The Word of Blake launches its long-anticipated assault on Skye.

(21 July) The Word of Blake's Fiftieth Shadow Division hits Bolan again, seizing control over the Quetta City State.

(21-28 July) Taurian forces continue to advance into FedSuns territory, taking Lindsay, Carmichael, Diefenbaker, Lothair and Warren, creating two pincers aimed at the Pleiades Cluster.

(22 July) In an effort to break the weeks-long stalemate for Skye, Devlin Stone personally

leads an ad hoc battalion into a flanking action that slams the Word's Third Division command center, capturing Precentor Callen at the peak of the fighting. The thin-stretched and leaderless Blakists quickly withdraw. A victorious Stone vows that the next target for liberation will be Hesperus II.

(15 August) After almost two years in hiding, Lindon Ashley resurfaces on Virtue and rallies the Democracy Now movement once more. The Kaumberg Planetary Guard, already scattered to train a credible defense force for the Kaumberg Archonette, is slow to respond.

(10 September) The Word of Blake forces on Bolan suddenly depart, but not before abducting thousands of Bolan citizens.

(14 September) The Word of Blake forces on New Avalon are recalled.



BANG, YOU'RE DEAD



[Hoonaar Official 1 (Unknown)]: Yes, yes I think we understand.

[Captain Marcell Grange, Tiquahme's Consorts]: Good. We're making progress. To sum it up: long as you play by our rules, things will go smoothly.

[Hoonaar Official 2 (Unknown)]: Why?

[Grange]: I'm sorry, do you have a real question or are you just blurting out your own stupidity?

[Hoonaar Official 2]: What I'm asking is why you think you can stomp in here and take control. You're just a half dozen 'Mechs, some tanks and a motley collection of armed hooligans with guns. We fought our own fellow Sunners off this rock when Gronholt tried to take our resources. In my employ alone I have three armed MiningMechs and every man on my payroll has at least three rifles. What's to keep us from kicking you off our planet like we did the Gronholts?

[Grange]: First off, we have real military DropShips that can move us anywhere on this godforsaken dustball in under two hours and level any structure you have in under a minute.

Two, we bombed your sorry excuse for a militia air wing into scrap metal at the same time we wiped out your militia battalion, so the four aerospace fighters I forgot to mention are more than enough to cover where our DropShips can't go.

Reason three should be obvious, MiningMechs against *real* 'Mechs is no contest. Anyone who thinks so has been watching too much *Immortal Warrior*.

And finally four ...

[The report of a large caliber weapon drowns out the recording. In between the fading echoes of the gunshot and sudden screams of panic can be heard the dull thud of a heavy object landing on the wood floor.]

[Grange]: Four, because I have absolutely no compunction against killing anyone who so much as looks at me cross-eyed! And my men have even less restraint than I!

Next question?

—Excerpt from a secret recording of a "Town Hall" meeting on Hoonaar, 27 November 3075. (Smuggled to ISAP affiliates on June.)

At 0605 hours GST yesterday, Magestrix Naomi Centrella-Liao personally led a combined strike force of Capellan Red Lancers and Canopian Guards against the last remaining elements of the Word of Blake's Thirty-fourth Division. It has been speculated that reports of the Forty-first Shadow Division's return to Canopus were, in fact, false radio transmissions made by the Thirty-fourth in a desperate attempt to confuse and delay the liberating forces as they advanced.

The fighting was brief, bitter and decisive. Short on supplies, including food and water, the beleaguered Blakist forces could mount only a single wave of counterattack. The speed and power of the Canopian and Red Lancer attacks broke through the Thirty-fourth's lines at several key strategic positions along the western approaches to Centrella Interstellar Spaceport. With no way to evacuate, the Word of Blake Division was quickly surrounded and eventually destroyed, but—

[Rex Kinnson]: Kylee, I'm sorry to interrupt, but I'm being told we have a special report from Dane Kirkwood, who is in the field reporting from the Highway of Enlightenment leading into the Spaceport. We take you there now.

[Dane Kirkwood]: Yes, thank you, Rex. All along the highway, grateful Canopians are cheering at this hour, throwing gifts and shouting words of gratitude and encouragement. We can see a long line of BattleMechs coming up the road from the east. Wait! I think I can ... yes! Yes! We can see the royal insignia right there, painted on the left shoulder of the leading *Cataphract*! The Magestrix herself is personally leading the column, to reclaim her rightful place as the ruler of Canopus! This is indeed a wonderful and historic day!

—Transcript of CNA News Special Report, Canopus, 4 August 3075

ASSOCIATION COUNCIL BOMBED!

(13 November 3075)

Niops VII [NNN]—At 1620 yesterday a bomb exploded beneath the speakers' rostrum of the Niops Association Council in Niops City.

Association Director Rayanne Nellis was killed instantly. Also killed were Chairperson Gary Tran and an estimated forty to sixty Council members, staff, and observers. Names of the victims are being withheld pending identification and notification of families.

Over one hundred more people, including Chairperson Howard Olson, were injured in the blast. Chairperson Olson is listed in serious but stable condition at this time.

Relatives and friends of Council members, Council staff, or others who may have been present at the time of the explosion are instructed to contact the Council Information Office. Information will only be released to individuals who can document their identity and right to know.

Captain Alicia Carmichael of the NAM, connected to Council security and the ongoing investigation, has stated that the bomb was evidently a "low-yield explosive device."

While the placement of the device and its effectiveness indicate both careful planning and sophisticated design, the materials involved—including black powder—were not weapons grade and are no longer regulated. The use of archaic materials thwarted security and detection systems designed and calibrated to counter state-of-the-art incursions.

Less than twenty hours into their investigations into what has already been dubbed the Friday Massacre, authorities have released no information on whom they believe may be responsible or how the device was planted.

HAUNTED HILLS

Kilometer after kilometer of ash and ruin stand now where once there was a paradise of human achievement and aspiration. My mind simply numbed in an effort to match the images of my memory and youth to the bleak and barren wasteland that I found myself picking through so cautiously. I was not alone in my silence. All around me, members of the security detail and advisors to the Magestrix walked in a painful, wordless daze. What was the point to all of this destruction? What had we done to earn such wrath?

The Garden of Contemplation is now a blackened field, littered with the charred rubble that had once been statues of great philosophers. The Spires of Centrella University, once the city's most recognizable landmark, are shattered, and the hall itself half-collapsed into a sea of gravel and debris. Crimson had always been the memory in my heart, even as I wandered long and far. No other city had ever seemed quite as serene, quite as beautiful, or quite as far removed from the harsh warfare and politics of the Inner Sphere. Now it is a victim, raw and scarred. Torn asunder and left ravaged, naked against the elements and awaiting its death from the vultures left circling its remains.

I saw tears in the eyes of hardened battle veterans that day. Even the Capellan officers, who had no emotional ties to this place, were stunned into silence by the sheer scope of destruction left in the wake of their "victory." I saw others driven to near insanity trying to grasp the mind that could visit such atrocities upon their fellow man without regret.

I followed the Magestrix most closely. She alone never faltered. She never stopped to cry, or gave in to the overwhelming sadness around her. She remained calm. Ethereally quiet, she took in every sight with stoic poise and a distant look in her eyes. At one point, I found us removed enough from the pack to ask her in a low voice, "Magestrix? Are you well?" She turned to me almost instantly, and I saw fire in those steely eyes. Her voice was icy and cutting as she simply said, "Whatever else I do in my lifetime, *this* will never happen again."

—From the private memoirs of Brianna Del'Aren, aide-de-camp to Magestrix Naomi Centrella-Liao, entry dated 5 September 3075

The Council was in late session attempting to craft unified legislation to address the growing refugee/immigration crisis. Niops V—the population of which has nearly doubled with the influx of undocumented refugees—advocates closing Niops to outsiders. Refugee demands for services have overwhelmed the Niops V economy and infrastructure. Niops V protests the decisions by Niops VI and VII to declare their situation "an internal matter" and withhold aid and resources.

Complicating the refugee issue are thousands of newcomers petitioning for citizenship. Petitions which Niops VI—benefiting

THE TURNING TIDE**FALLON DECLARES MARTIAL LAW**

(14 November 3075)

Niops VII [NNN]—Brigadier General L. Jamison Fallon, commander of the Niops Association Militia, has declared martial law throughout the Niops Association for the duration of the current emergency.

"Civil authorities have not responded effectively or in a timely fashion to the terrorist attack on the Association Council Friday," Fallon stated in making his declaration. "The loss of elected civilian leadership has made any response difficult, but civilian efforts have been hampered by partisan infighting and a deplorable lack of cooperation among political factions. This failure of responsibility on the part of those charged with administering the Association leaves me with no choice but to do all I can to stabilize the situation and to ensure the safety and security of all the people of Niops until this crisis is past."

General Fallon has ordered that all cases involving suspected espionage, terrorism, sedition, or other crimes against the security of the Association are now under the purview of NAM Intelligence. Civilian authorities will retain jurisdiction over all non-security crimes. Mercenary commands such as the Black Heart Roses and Gieshen's Grenadiers will be reassigned exclusively to refugee control and civil safety. The NAM will take full responsibility for defending essential resources and potential military targets.

The declaration of martial law states that authority will be returned to the civilian government as soon as duly elected civilian representatives demonstrate the ability and willingness to resume a united and focused response to the difficulties facing Niops and a unified response to the Association's objectives.

from the much-needed influx of cheap labor—supports. The Council was slated to remain in session until consensus was reached and a uniform response to the crisis enacted.

It is believed the bombing was related to the refugee/immigration crisis. However it is unclear which side of the issue would benefit from the assassination of the Association leadership.

So far no organization or individual has claimed responsibility for the blast.

MAGESTRIX CENTRELLA-LIAO VOWS SWIFT RETURN

(15 December 3075)

Canopus [CNA]—Praising the efforts of her hand-selected regency and citing the encouragingly rapid success of several reconstruction efforts, Magestrix Naomi Centrella-Liao announced today her intention to return to the Capellan Confederation. Due to security reasons, the date of her departure



LATE 3075: THE T

and her route cannot be released. However, the Magestrix pledged that her absence “will not in any way hamper the efforts of the Canopian people to rebuild our proud nation in the wake of the Word of Blake occupation.”

In addition, the Magestrix told her fellow Canopians the following:

“Until I return, the Red Lancers of the Capellan Armed Forces will assist the Canopian military in defending our nation. It is my hope that my people will view this assistance in the spirit in which it is intended. Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao views the Magistracy of Canopus as an equal and an ally—not as a puppet realm to be used for the machinations of his own ambition. I would hope that my people would have the faith in myself and in the heroic individuals who worked to liberate us from tyranny to entrust that never again will Canopus be left bare and exposed to the predations of barbaric men.”

AND IN OTHER NEWS ...

On other fronts, of course, the wars continued to rage. Disasters—both manmade and natural—struck across the Inner Sphere, as other realms struggled for survival. Amid the chaos, it was easy to forget about these “minor hot spots”—unless, of course, one happened to live among them.

NORTHWIND: THE FORGOTTEN FRONT

(3 July 3075)

New Avalon [NANS]—Just what is happening on Northwind? Since the start of this conflict, Northwind has all but fallen off the map. Aside from the use of their name in the Blakist ruse to infiltrate Galatea, the famed Northwind Highlanders have been notable only by their absence from the battlefield. This silence has many speculating that Northwind had suffered the same fate as Outreach. Did the Word of Blake again use nuclear weapons to eliminate a threat on their Protectorate’s doorstep? Reports that the Blakists were blockading Northwind continue to leak out

A SKY FULL OF FIRE

“Brusett’s sky is blue, a beautiful robin’s egg blue and I can see everything, everything. For over an hour, now, the Taurian fleet—led by their WarShip *Vendetta*—has been facing off against the *Fox*-class corvette *Kathil*. I can see them, I can see them. Not just the sparks of the lasers and the little lightning-bug flashes of explosions, but the ships themselves, specks of gray in that pale blue sky.

“About forty minutes ago the speck that was Davion was swallowed by an orange flare of fire about the size of a burning match head. Just a match head. But consider the scale. It must’ve been a nuclear hellfire. Nothing else would be visible to us here on the world’s surface.

“Our boys and girls launched their own nuclear flare of light, and now I can see *Vendetta* moving off.

“But not before casting her spores upon the wind. The sky is gravid with DropShips. The Taurians are coming, the iron-gray specks growing into ball bearings and marbles and baseballs and—

“My God, my God. A half-dozen DropShips were just swallowed by a ball of—God, there’s another one. Our forces are taking out the DropShips with nukes. Directly overhead. I can feel a hot wind blowing. I see three more balls of fire, little suns engulfing the invaders.

“We’re saved, we’re saved, we’re sav—”

[Transmission cut off.]

—Unknown eyewitness recording, Brusett, broadcast by the New Syrtis News Network, 2 July 3075

[Ed— Reports indicate the Taurians withdrew from Brusett in disorder. Sources indicate civilian casualties measured in the millions.]

of the Protectorate, but if true it remains unclear why the Word of Blake would maintain this course of action as they fight now on every front. Why would they stop short of an all-out assault against a reportedly hostile mercenary force on par with Wolf’s Dragoons themselves?

TIMELINE OF THE JIHAD

(27 September) While departing New Avalon, the Word of Blake’s Forty-fourth Shadow Division detonates high explosive charges that partially collapse Mount Davion and seal up the entrances to the Fox’s Den.

(1-14 November) An allied coalition assembled by Devlin Stone—and including forces from Clan Wolf, Skye, and ComStar—launches its assault on Hesperus II, taking on three defending Word of Blake Divisions.

(11 December) Archon Adam Steiner and Baroness Fyhne of Arcturus are wed in an understated ceremony on Tharkad. Within days of the wedding, it is announced that the Baroness is pregnant with the couple’s first child.

(15 December) Clan Ghost Bear forces unexpectedly assault and overpower the Word of Blake defenses at both Luthien and Pesht. Ignoring all hails, the Bears eradicate the Word of Blake troops on both

worlds (as well as any Combine forces that attempt to interfere) without once offering zellbrigen.

(20 December) The coalition forces finally shatter the last Blakist fortifications around Maria’s Elegy on Hesperus II.

(29 December) The Ghost Bear forces on Luthien and Pesht have destroyed all Blakist presence on both worlds at this point, leaving very few survivors to flee or be captured.

LATE 3075: THE TURNING TIDE

As more information has come to light, it appears that Northwind caught the Word of Blake on the horns of a dilemma. Their moves against Outreach could be somewhat justified in the terms of self-defense; Wolf's Dragoons' assault on the Terran system was not something that could be easily ignored. But Northwind was a different matter; apparently—at the time, anyway—the indiscriminate bombardment of this heavily populated world was deemed counterproductive to the image the Blakists wanted to project in the Protectorate. At the same time, they could not just ignore the threat of the Northwind Highlanders. Swooping in, the Word of Blake's assault DropShips thus captured the Highlanders' JumpShips and isolated the world itself. But then the rapidly developing situation on other fronts drew off the forces the Blakists needed to finish the task.

Thus Northwind degenerated into a stalemate. The Highlanders lacked the transport to get out of the system, but the Word could never muster the ground forces to crush them without prohibitive casualties. With direct naval action against their world now probably too costly for the Blakist leadership to justify, Northwind remains in limbo, and its Highlanders awaiting only the JumpShips necessary to escape.

HEAVENS AFIRE

"And we're live from the Hatomi sub-orbital platform, where we can see asteroid SH017378-A on its final approach. As you can see from the secondary monitor feeds we have linked to your viewing station, dozens of small craft and larger DropShip transports are still streaming from the planet below in an attempt to escape the coming disaster. A large portion of the citizenry, however, still remains in the projected impact zone despite repeated warnings and even threats by the local government. Their stubbornness comes from the repeated assurances of the Prophet Musashi, whose visions have been known to be highly accurate in the past. His proclamation to the people via public trivid, calling upon all to participate in a mass *Kagura* dance in the impact zone, has brought Shintoists from

here and nearby systems over the last several months. Despite their elaborate *kami no kura*, the asteroid has not altered its course. It appears now that the Prophet is sadly mistaken and the government is doing everything it can to evacuate the area, even through violence.

"Religious rituals aside, the planetary government has done all it can in attempting to avert this disaster, ever since asteroid SH01378-A was detected on an intercept approach a mere ten days ago. So far, two attempts at diverting the eight-kilometer long rock have failed miserably. The first claimed all lives on board the DropShip *Bright Sun*, who perished while trying to use their vessel's engines to push the rock off its trajectory. The second—a swarm of nuclear-tipped rockets fired from an assortment of DropShips and small craft—succeeded only in blasting a cloud of debris off the asteroid, which now trails SH01378-A, and will most likely burn up in the atmosphere a few scant seconds after the initial strike.

"The asteroid's projected course will bring it very close to our observation window, I'm told. But while there is some risk of collision, we've been assured it is minimal. However, all non-essential personnel have been relocated from the platform, just in case.

"And there it goes ... As the asteroid streaks by the initial layers of atmosphere, you can actually see the reddish glow from the remote thrusters still left on its surface after the initial effort, still burning four days after they were planted. The asteroid will be passing below us here, with only about five kilometers to spare, in just a few moments. We're expecting some turbulence soon ... and now the trailing portion has struck the upper atmosphere ... that's odd. Jim, could you check this? It looks like a ... cloud or something ...

"Um, it seems the asteroid is trailing a hail of fragments that are larger than we expected, and ... oh, God. Marissa? Jim? Abandon the facility! It's headed right for us! Go, people, now! Now!"

—Last transmission from the Hatomi Observational Platform, Shinonoi, 18 July 3075

NEWS DOWNLOADER v3.7



Date & Title

Service

Status

(17 August 3075)
"Why help Shinonoi?"

[AIN]

COMPLETED

(16 September 3075)
"Roughriders on Grossbach Plagued by Terrorists"

[MERCNET]

DOWNLOADING

30 October 3075
"Stalemate on the Taurian Front"

[NSNN]

ACCESSING



LATE 3075: THE TURNING TIDE

TELL-TALE HEART

—Excerpt from the Drake network news forum, *Dragonsphere*, 15 August 3075

“The disaster on Shinonoi is tremendous and heart-rending; a clear reminder that not all of our tragedies are from war and the evils of men. During this time of universal struggle, it is important to remember that we are all still human and subject to the wiles of nature.

“To that end, I am sending an emergency task force, originally destined for military operations elsewhere, to provide aid and support to the victims of the horribly tragic events on Shinonoi. With the full authority and permission of the Combine government, we will begin assistance procedures until the

Combine can deliver full and complete aid in the near future.

“While the planet may be forever altered by this stellar tragedy, we will not allow such circumstance to defeat us. The same perseverance that helped the Dragon overcome the trials of the last several years will see the citizenry of Shinonoi recover and rebuild. The spirit of the Dragon is strong and will not break.”

Those, dear reader, are the closing remarks of Devlin Stone just a few days ago, during a press conference on Hesperus II. Our glorious *Kanrei* had a statement posted shortly thereafter, accepting Stone’s offer of assistance and pledging a large relief force as well from New Samarkand.

We’ll bring you more on the unfolding Shinonoi crisis as we have it.

>Do you have a comment? Include below with LTN. (Showing 4 of 1,233 comments)

<> My, my, how quick the Dragon is to help out sycophant worlds. So where was the pledges of help when Arkab got slammed by such a “stellar tragedy”? —Yoshi

<> You’re missing the point, Yoshi. It’s Stone forcing the Dracs’ hand. K-bill to C-bill that good ol’ Minny would’ve preferred to just let Shinonoi rot like Arkab. Diverting material to such humanitarian effort has to rankle the ol’ Warlord. —MrDracBac

<> This clearly shows continual prejudice by the Combine ruling class. How fast would’ve they reacted if Stone hadn’t jumped in first? I mean, where was the vaunted Dragon when the asteroid was first discovered on a collision trajectory? How come no assistance arrived from the Admiralty, or no additional DropShip transports from nearby military bases? No, the only reason the Kanrei jumped in is to show Stone that he also cares for the common man. No doubt nothing would’ve been done otherwise. —GoodOIDrac

FROM THE FRONT

Chin Ai (my beloved),

I hope this letter finds you well. I also hope that these words quell some of your fears for my safety. I am alive and well, although I must confess that things are not as I imagined they would be.

The news feeds we used to see before holovids on Friday nights do not fully explain the truth of what we face. I have been deployed to [CENSORED], although I am not certain if that is something we are allowed to reveal in our letters home. I was eager to arrive here, and even more eager to strike back on the murderous Blakists who have ravaged our peaceful nation. On the day our DropShips touched ground, I felt as if with rage alone we could liberate this world from their clutches.

Sadly, the war we are waging to take back [CENSORED] from the Blakists seems to be doing as much damage as their invasion did. Our officers seem to have a standing policy of “nuke first and ask questions later.” We are mostly involved in mop-up and humanitarian operations. We see very little in the way of actual combat. Perhaps that is just as well. I cannot express to you the horrors that these weapons visit upon the living. I have seen people burned beyond reason and sick with radiation in ways that make the most gruesome stories seem tame. I have seen a world blasted by nuclear fire, left black and broken to die a slow and torturous death.

They tell us it is all for the best and that we are doing what must be done in order to liberate our Capellan brothers. I have to believe that. If these extreme measures are not required, then we are no better than the Word of Blake. I cannot take such thoughts to heart. Sadly, I now know all too well what words such as “liberation at any cost” truly mean.

—Personal Correspondence of *San-ben Bing* (Lance Corporal) Shan Xiao, (deployment unknown—possibly Wei) dated 27 July 3075

NLOADER v3.7

	Service	Status
Malagrotta Border”	[MERCNET]	COMPLETED
ce on Sterope!”	[TBC]	DOWNLOADING
e Technical Difficulties”	[TBC]	ACCESSING



CAUTIONARY REPORT

I have come to the conclusion that despite our initial successes, we may have made several serious mistakes in our rush to punish the Federated Suns. Even with the assistance of the Word of Blake's forces stationed in the proximity, raiding Suns systems may not be enough to buy us time to consolidate our holdings.

Many of the worlds we have taken are now next to useless in the short term. Both sides have destroyed the existing infrastructure and poisoned the natural resources around inhabited areas. My own command has suffered nearly fifty percent casualties in the pursuit of our main objectives on Wrentham back in April, and only half of those were wounded.

The Hansen's Roughriders' assimilation of the Longwood Bluecoats on Perdition and their destruction of both our facilities

there have only worsened our already serious logistical issues. Reports have them inflicting on average fifty to seventy percent casualties to each of our defensive units they encountered, which puts our militias below the amount needed to mount a credible defense against opportunistic pirate bands operating in the area.

Even our last ace in the hole, the *Vendetta*, has been seriously damaged during our attempt to take Brusett and needs major repairs to be battle worthy again. This has led me to the decision to withhold further major offensive operations within my sphere of responsibility until I can bring both ground and naval forces to at least seventy percent of our original force unless overruled by the rest of the military council.

—Summary of a report filed by TDF Marshal Kal Shoguwā, 29 October 3075

<> Face it, Azami. Shinonoi's a rich breadbasket world in minerals and natural wealth. We're desert scum with nothing to offer but warrior blood to grease the DCMS. Such as it is, and such it will remain until we do something about it. Too little, too late I say. —DesertWind

TAMING OF THE BEARS

So what is it about this Devlin Stone guy that even the mighty Ghost Bears obey? They had their way with us back in the early Sixties; what does Stone have that Minamoto and Hohiro don't? I mean, the Bears never came to our aid when the Blakists started trashing Benjamin, Pesht, Luthien, Dieron and other worlds—so why now, years after the fact? Why are they moving to our worlds and "cleaning up" the Blakist war machine at the behest of some unknown from Suns space?

From what I understand about Clan culture, you can't blackmail them, but Stone has got to have *something* on the Clan, to get them to work so energetically on our behalf.

And whatever it is that he's got, I wish our *Kanrei* and Coordinator would get it. The Dragon would be better off with such big brass ones.

—OpEd posted on the *Drake Underground*, Gram, 28 December 3075

AID FOR SHINONOI

(24 December 3075)

Shinonoi [THE DRAKE]—It is a wonderful sight, uplifting, heartwarming—like the smell of cherry blossoms on a balmy spring day at Benjamin Gardens. Row after row of DropShips are already anchored on the barren plains off Marimasu. And day after day there are more incoming, bringing desperately needed supplies to this fate-struck world. Food, medicine, relief workers—the stream of help and love from offworld seems nearly endless.

But what makes this picture really different is the fact that this is a truly collective mission. For the first time in what seems like an eternity, a Combine world receives help not only from the Dragon, but from all over the Inner Sphere!

The Davion sword stands beside a Steiner fist, a Rasalhagian bear easily shoulders the burden laid on him by a loadmaster bearing the Marik eagle crest. Just a couple of minutes ago a young nurse—clad in Steiner blues—walked past a pair of Wolf Clan security guards, exchanging kind words (muffled only by their filter masks).

Experiencing these different characters from literally everywhere joined together in one positive task makes the looming threat of war fade out. In fact, every thought that there ever was or could be war between our nations seems far-fetched and a waste of precious time.

But why again, this sudden harmony? A simple answer suffices: Devlin Stone. A simple man of the people, he not only managed to rally the leaders of empires, but his visions also bring out the best in everyone.

In this case, the desire is to lend aid. To help a shattered planet stand up again, to guide it back into the light, for the Inner Sphere, and even for the Dragon.



CHAOS OVERWHELMING: MORTIS RICTUS

MORTIS RICTUS

Journal O75-828

Not sure how much longer we're going to take contracts from Askai. On the one hand, his money's always good and the intel is top-notch. On the other, his contracts border on insane; I can't get a true feel for where this guy really stands. Some operations benefit the Blakists and their allies, others are directly against them.

What game is he playing? And more importantly, why are we still listening to him?

SITUATION

*Malagrotta, Malagrotta Cooperative
22 Oct 3075*

Mr. Askai brokered an easy deal for you on Malagrotta, supplementing some "privateer" unit in garrison defense of the region that had been hired under a Letter of Marques. In the middle of the night, a change of power occurred within the Death's Consorts—the aforementioned privateers—and a firefight broke out around the Malagrotta capitol building.

Suddenly, all bets were off as Gary Tiquahme, the Consorts' new leader, made his bid for power on a planetary scale.

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: MORTIS RICTUS

GAME SETUP

The battlefield consists of a mix of Light and Heavy Urban terrain (see *TW*, p. 263) and may be a mix of ground and atmospheric combat.

Attacker

The Attacker consists of a portion of the Death's Consorts. The Consorts should be 125 percent of the Defender's deployed force and are a mix of Regular and Veteran skill levels, with one Regular pilot/crew for every one Veteran pilot/crew. They may not deploy any battle-armored forces. Use any Periphery, Federated Suns/ House Davion, or Mercenary RAT to determine forces.

The Attacker may enter from any two sides of the battlefield, determined in secret, and may enter any number of units (with a minimum of one) between Turn 1 and 3.

Defender

The Defender may consist of between 75 percent and 100 percent of the player's total force. The Defender may set up anywhere on the battlefield.

WARCHEST**Track Cost:** 500

Optional Bonuses

+200 Tiquahme: Add Gary Tiquahme to the Attacker's forces in any heavy or assault Inner Sphere 'Mech with Elite skills. Tiquahme operates under Forced Withdrawal rules (see *TW*, p. 258), but only after any two attacking units have been crippled or destroyed.

+200 Betrayal: One of the defending units betrays the player's force. To determine which unit, roll 2d6 for each unit in the End Phase, starting in Turn 4. A unit switches sides on a result

of 11 or 12. Once a unit has been determined as the traitor, no more rolls need made. Roll in every End Phase until a betrayer has been determined. If the game ends before a traitor has been determined, roll a 2d6 for each surviving Defender. The first unit to roll a 9 or better has deserted the unit and is no longer part of the player's force.

If the unit rolled is controlled by a player-character in a role-playing campaign, the nearest NPC-controlled defending unit becomes the traitor instead.

OBJECTIVES

The player's force receives the indicated victory bonuses for achieving the following objectives:

Hold the Line: Cripple or destroy at least 50 percent of the Attacker's force. **(+300 point bonus)**

Intel: Capture as many enemy 'Mech pilots as possible for interrogation. Consort pilots will surrender if their 'Mech's movement is reduced to 1 MP or less, receives one sensor hit, or suffers two engine hits. Crippled units (as defined in *Total Warfare*; see *TW*, p. 258) will only surrender if they are in 9 hexes or more away from any map edge in the End Phase of the turn they are crippled. Destroyed units are not considered available for capture. **(+100 point bonus per each captured pilot)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Salvage

Salvage is only available if the *Hold the Line* objective is completed.

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: MORTIS RICTUS

AFTERMATH

The attack came out of nowhere; guess Tiquahme decided you were a threat without even consulting you first. With the regime change, your contract became null and void. You decided to “beat feet” as quickly as possible, with the Consorts nipping at your heels all the way to the DropShip.

Seems Tiquahme was interested in more than just seizing planetary power, as within days of your jumping away he declared himself the new leader of the Malagrotta Cooperative.

Which caused neighboring Filtvelt to immediately cut ties and go to war footing.

Who said the Feddie Outback was a boring place to live?

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

The Death’s Consorts pirates are feeling quite bold about their “new regime” and may dog the players all the way back to their DropShip, possibly setting up ambushes and other nasty traps to entrap them and take their equipment.

It is also quite possible a deal can be brokered with the new management and the players get their own Letter of Marques for privateering inside the Filtvelt Coalition.

NEXT TRACKS

Comes the Reaper, Slugger’s Paradise, Starfall

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: IRON GIANTS

IRON GIANTS

Journal D75-751

Everything seems to be settling into a lull; massive assaults and counterattacks have been few and far between lately. I suppose the Word’s seriously beaten up the grand armies of the Houses or scared them into a restless submission. All the contracts out there right now are for instigating rebellion or training insurgents on border worlds.

Dangerous work for light pay. What I’d give for a planetary assault right now. Maybe this Stone guy will get things rolling, since Victor Davion seems to be cowering off on Arc-Royal helping his wife spit out babies.

Meantimes, Irian’s come calling. With lots of C-bills.

SITUATION

Irian, Blake Protectorate

8 December 3075

Corporate contracts are usually full of legalese and low on action, but this one was different. They didn’t try too hard to hide the fact they were from IrTech, and they took pains to prove they weren’t blind-hiring for the Word. They even arranged to get you and your unit dirtside with minimal Blakist interference. All you had to do was beef up an underground rebel cell based around a former Blakist merc unit, the HeavyHell Raisers.

Oh, and overthrow the government.

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: IRON GIANTS

GAME SETUP

This battle occurs underground among the myriad of passageways and caverns that make up a portion of the Irian BattleMech Works; all VTOL, WiGE, and aerospace units are unavailable for use.

Use any combination of maps that have paved hexes, such as those on the Light and Heavy Urban map tables (see *TW*, p. 263), or the Ishiyama maps from the *Solaris VII Map Pack*. All building hexes are considered impassable solid rock formations that stretch from floor to ceiling, and all wooded hexes are considered Level 1 rubble terrain. The tunnels are considered a uniform 4

levels in height and do not change with any level changes to the surface. Any terrain Level 4 or higher is assumed to instead connect to the cavern ceiling.

Attacker

The Attacker’s forces consist of up to 25 percent of the player’s total force and a portion of the HeavyHell Raisers, which equals to 100 percent of the player’s deployed force. The HeavyHell Raisers are of Regular skill level and may use units on the Word of Blake and Mercenary RATs.

**CHAOS OVERWHELMING: IRON GIANTS**

The player's force enters from one map edge, the Hell Raisers from a different map edge.

Defender

The Defender consists of Irian Corporate Security. These forces equal 100 percent of the total Attacker's force, employ the Free Worlds League and Word of Blake RATs, and are of Veteran skill level. The Irian force is an even mix of BattleMech and vehicular forces; Battle Armor may not exceed 10 percent of the Defender's total force.

Designate one defending unit as the commander; this unit has Elite skills, uses a buffered VDNI system (see *JHS72*, p. 129) and enters the battlefield at the beginning of Turn 2. The rest of the Defender's forces set up anywhere on the battlefield; up to 25 percent may set up as Hidden Units (see *TW*, p. 259).

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 600

Optional Bonuses

+200 Mines: Add 3d6 mines (see *TO*, p. 207) of any type (may be a mix) to the Defender's force; these mines are placed before play begins and locations secretly recorded.

+200 Labyrinth: Use the *Tunnel* rules (see *TO*, p. 141) combined with *Rolling Maps* (see *TO*, p. 214).

OBJECTIVES

Forces receive the indicated victory bonuses for achieving the following objectives:

Topple: Cripple or destroy at least 75 percent of the Defender's force. **(+500 point bonus)**

Takedown: Cripple or destroy the Irian Security Forces commander. **(+300 point bonus)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Salvage

Salvage is possible only with the completion of the *Topple* objective.

Forced Withdrawal

The Heavy Hell Raisers are operating under Forced Withdrawal rules (see *TW*, p. 258). If used in conjunction with the *Rolling Maps* option, the Raisers' home edge is considered the side of the battlefield they originally entered from.

AFTERMATH

A long and bloody fight later, the IrTech rebels succeeded in taking the IBMW facility with the help of the Heavy Hell Raisers. The mercs took it hard, facing down at least two companies of their former comrades deep in the complex. The fall of the complex capped off a bloody purge in Irian's planetary government offices as well; within twenty-four hours the entire planet declared their independence from the Blake Protectorate.

The Blakists didn't let the planet go without a response; less than six hours after their declaration, the headquarters complex for the company, as well as the IBMW facility you'd just liberated and several other factory complexes, disintegrated under a nuclear firestorm, followed by some precision orbital bombardment that effectively cut the entirety of the world's total factory output in half.

Seems the Word decided that if they couldn't hold Irian, no one would.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Determined to keep intruders from the core of the main IBMW complex, the Irian Security force may pursue the retreating mercs or call for assistance from the nearby Word of Blake Militia forces if things get dicey. Fighting may end up raging inside the volatile forging works.

NEXT TRACKS

Comes the Reaper, Infestation



EARLY 3076: DOMINOS FALLING





EARLY 3076: DOM

THE COALITION RISES

The early months of 3076 saw the allies in Devlin Stone's coalition pressing their advantages across the Inner Sphere. Amazing acts of heroism and courage drove men and women from all nations to fight back against the Blakist threat. Although the iron curtain of the Protectorate still loomed, the armies of the Great Houses proved their mettle time and again.

GALATEA SECURED

(21 January 3076)

Arc-Royal [MERCNET] Three months of heavy fighting on Galatea came to an end yesterday with the retreat of the remaining Blakist occupiers. Since the landings in November of last year, coalition forces (consisting of the Seventy-ninth and 103rd Divisions of ComStar's First Army, supported by the First Skye Jaegers) faced fanatical resistance from the Word of Blake's Eleventh Division and assorted mercenary supporters. Early signs promised a rapid end to the fighting as the Blakists were driven from Galatea City, but once in the countryside, the coalition advance bogged down in protracted fights to dislodge the enemy from prepared positions and strategic locations across the planet.

Following the death of Precentor Styven Kimmely in a Blakist "Headhunter" attack in mid-December, command of the combined force fell to Precentor Louisa Draga. Rethinking the coalition strategy, Draga called in more support. In response Arch-Duke Morgan Kell released the Knights of St. Cameron and the Tooth of Ymir, and the two mercenary commands arrived just short of the new year. Pulling most of her Seventy-ninth Division from around Paphos—leaving the First Skye Jaegers to keep the two Level Ills stationed there occupied—Draga moved on Pygmalion to confront the largest concentration of remaining Blakists. The forces in Paphos attempted to relieve the pressure on their comrades, but their counterattack was blocked by the vigilant Skye troops.

Yet even with added firepower from Kell's mercenaries, it still took Draga three days to crack the Word's defenses around Pygmalion. When a breach was forced, the 103rd Division streamed in to rout the Blakists at last, and their subsequent attempts to link up with the forces still in Paphos were thwarted. As the coalition ground the main body into powder, the Paphos defenders broke out and fled to their DropShips.

INTO THE PROTECTORATE

(3 April 3076)

Arc-Royal [INN]—Today, INN can confirm that the valiant Com Guards and their coalition allies have commenced operations in the region of space claimed by the Word of Blake Protectorate. In a bold move, Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion is leading

DOMINOS FALLING

Even as allied victories mounted with the liberation of Galatea, the early months of 3076 brought tragedy to the allies' cause with the shocking death of Chandrasekhar Kurita. A principle behind-the-scenes player in the allied war effort, "Uncle Chandy's" death galvanized the rest of Stone's nascent coalition. As the allies fought onward, the Word's retreat hastened behind the borders of its surrounded Protectorate and their remaining safe havens in the Free Worlds League.

As Stone harnessed the storm to prepare for the inevitable assault on the Protectorate, other powers—from the Principality of Regulus to the Capellan Confederation and the Magistracy of Canopus, continued to fight the Blakist scourge in their own way.

The enigmatic Clans, in the meantime, launched their own campaigns, despite rumors of severe internal troubles. The Hellion threat, diminished but not removed, reared its head again in the fringes of the Occupation Zones, while the Diamond Sharks seized the opportunity to expand their mercantile influence with new enclaves and trade deals.

Although challenges lingered in all corners of the Inner Sphere, the war against the Word continued to coalesce with each new alliance formed and each new victory won.

—Bertram Habeas, INN Special Correspondent

his troops in a series of strikes against heavily defended targets. Operational security prevents us from giving full details at this time, but Primus Gavin Dow hails this as the beginning of the end for the Blakists.

"The tide of this awful conflict has turned," said Dow, "and we are now solidly on the offensive. We have thrown back the most savage attack it has been mankind's misfortune to experience. Now it falls on us to hunt down those who claim to follow the true Word and its unseen 'Master' like the rabid animals that they are. We shall liberate the worlds now suffering under the yolk of this so-called Blake Protectorate and reclaim the cradle of mankind, for all of humanity's sake."

In a prepared statement, Martial Steiner-Davion expressed confidence in his troops, along with his belief that the Inner Sphere has reached a momentous turning point.

"The only real hope that the Word of Blake ever had was that we would remain divided while they ruthlessly attacked in every sector. Had we allowed fear and confusion to dictate our policies, then they could have run roughshod over all of known space. But we learned a valuable lesson when fighting the Clans, and in our new coalition of forces, we can reclaim the same kind of unity that ensured our success then. It is my hope that our actions will serve as an example to the rest of the Inner Sphere. Now, once more in the spirit of the Star League, we have reunited, and together we are going to take back the Protectorate."

WE ARE NOT ALONE

People of the Free Worlds League!
Today I wish to talk to you about our home.

Once, not very long ago, it was the greatest and the most liberal state in the Inner Sphere. With a thriving industry, a Parliament ready to end the constant state of war, and the perspective to finally repeal Resolution 288 and bring back the true democracy promised us centuries ago. The Free Worlds League—your Free Worlds League—was a bastion of political freedom, philosophy, arts, and science. Billions were living a happy life beneath the League standard.

But then things changed.

When the Word of Blake launched their so-called “holy war” against the Inner Sphere, they promised my cousin Corrine and her father—Paul Marik—the throne of the Free Worlds League. They bribed them and I am ashamed to say that they were successful. Today, Corrine rules an Atreus where far too many citizens of the League believe in Blakist propaganda, and she claims a title that, by rights, should no longer need to exist.

This must end! It is time to reunite against our enemies. The Free Worlds League cannot continue to look away from the terror, tyranny, and peril at its own heart. Do we want to wait for others to come to our aid? Do we want to stand aside while others fight? Do we want to sit idle while Devlin Stone and Victor Steiner-Davion take the fight back to the Word on our behalf? Or do we dare stand up and take our destiny in our own hands and fight back?

People of the Free Worlds League, look around! We are not alone out here! We are not the only ones suffering from the Jihad. We have friends out there, allies. They are happy to help if we let them. And we could help them the most by standing together to fight for ourselves. We need to remember that together we are mighty, together—as a League—we can win this war for ourselves and help our allies across the Sphere do the same!

So I ask you—every citizen on every planet of the Free Worlds League—to stand up and fight against the Blakist regime. Join us in the war against the Word. It is time to take our homes back! Today!

—League-wide broadcast by Alys Rousset-Marik,
1 February 3076

GAIA SPEAKS

[The audio only broadcast is of a silky woman's voice that is almost a purr.]

“Hello brave and stalwart warriors of New Hessen, this is Gaia, your voice of Terra here to play you the classics once again. Music from the heart of Terra, coming to you without interruption or corruption. But first my brave New Hessens, let me of whisper softly into your ear.

“I must congratulate you for your alliance with Devlin Stone. I

THE THIN STEEL LINE

[Major Dominic Temple, AFFS]: All right sergeant. Then what happened?

[Sergeant Alexi Viscof, Panpour Militia]: Well sir, after my squadron was wiped out, Captain Hollins ordered me onto his wing. Well, not really a captain, he retired and became a tes—well, was a test pilot ... ah hell, sir.

[Temple]: I understand, sergeant, but I need you to continue.

[Viscof]: Yeah right. So I snuggled up to Hollins and we kicked for the mesosphere heading to take out the second one. Christ sir, an *Overlord* never looks so big as when she's driving right at you. Her hull was glowing white, pieces of armor running off like a wax on candle. Cap'n Hollins knew what he was doing; he sent Second Squadron's *Centurions* cutting across the screening flight the Bulls sent in first. We were clear to drive right in on the DropShip ... huh ...

[Temple]: What is it, sergeant?

[Viscof]: You know, I think he knew before we even started climbing. Knew we couldn't stop it. We'd only had a half dozen of those new air-to-air missiles, used five of them just to take down the *Union*, he knew. Damn well knew it was one way. Hell, I was just there to keep the riff raff off him long enough... Long enough to bury his *Stuka* nose-first into that beast.

[Temple]: Captain Hollins' actions diverted the ship just enough to save Amritsar from total destruction. You really believe he did what he did on purpose?

[Viscof]: Yes sir, yes I do ... Sir, the Wobbies put them up to this, didn't they?

[Temple]: There's a good chance of that, son. We know they got the *Vendetta* from the Blakists, and chances are they are pulling puppet strings in the background.

[Viscof]: You said I might be able to get a transfer to a line unit, sir?

[Temple]: Damn good chance, son. You did a good job up there, damn good.

[Viscof]: Good! Soon as I'm out of this cast I'm requesting a transfer to a line unit. I want to kick those damn Robes in the teeth. Give 'em hell for the Cap'n.

—Transcript of posthumous Medal Excalibur candidate interview for Captain Stephen Hollins, Panpour, 16 March 3076

hear he came personally to speak with General Hampton. Surely your world will prosper and benefit, now that you are part of the great coalition. Why, just ask the people of Galatea how well they are faring now that Stone has liberated their world. I hear you still have to wear an environmental suit to stand outside at Galaport.

“I'm sure there is nothing to the shining Federated Suns sending their Second Ceti Hussars to New Hessen. After all, you've kept your world safe and out of this ugly war for six long years. Gaia has the greatest respect for the calm and safety you brave men have brought to your homes. The followers of Blake have held your world up as a shining example of peace in this



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wretched time. So why would the great Stone see fit to send the Suns army to your world? They were unable to safeguard you during their Civil War, and where have they been for the last eight years?

"But they certainly will not bring war to your home now, will they? Of course not. Men like Major John Jameson would not stand for that, would they? He wouldn't allow anything to happen that would result in he and his men ending up in a prisoner of war camp again now, would he?

"No, certainly General Hampton has only your best interests at heart. New Hessen will not become the next battlefield of this horrible war, Gaia is certain of that. You brave soldiers wouldn't allow that to happen to your families. Would you?

"But enough talk, now here is a timeless tune from the twenty-eighth century: Bob Sall and his Dark Star Orchestra performs *Star Crossed* ..."

—Voice of Truth pirate broadcast, New Hessen, 2 June 3076

SHADOW PLAY

In the Free Worlds League, the dramas of a House divided continued into 3076. Whether for greed, glory, or the genuine desire for freedom from Blakist control, the League's various sub-factions continued to scheme and clash against one another. Yet for all the shadow plays and shadow wars, it was the Word who still held Atreus—and with it, the League—in its iron grip.

COMSTAR DENIES USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON CAMPBELTON

(1 March 3076)

Atreus [ANS]—Following the disturbing reports from the fighting on Campbellton, ComStar has categorically denied that it deployed Com Guard troops to that world. ComStar has also vehemently denied employing nuclear weapons to obliterate Word of Blake forces then present. These denials conflict with

THE FRAME-UP

[ROM Surveillance recording, 30760227, Locus: Campbellton Divisional HQ. POI: Precentor Tiffany Rogers, CO 20th Division.]

[Voice One—Subject: Adept III-delta Ian Davies, deceased]: Precentor, the Com Guards are falling back.

[Voice Two—Subject: Precentor IV-iota Tiffany Rogers, deceased]: Not surprising; these heretics are well below their former standards. Even their equipment is substandard. Davion must be scraping the bottom of the barrel if this is all he can afford to throw at us.

[Davies]: Precentor Falton is requesting permission to pursue.

[Rogers]: Granted. Tell him the boundary is their LZ, but he has free reign until they reach that.

[Voice Three—Subject: Unknown, presumed deceased]: Precentor, We have multiple fighters incoming! Vector predictions suggest target is here. Ready Five fighters spinning up now.

[Rogers]: Belay that last, Adept. Let the locals handle the chase. I doubt the heretics are willing to bomb an entire civilian city simply to get at us.

[Voice Three]: Acknowledged, Precentor. Local militia notified of threat and responding.

[Davies]: A good victory, Precentor. Heavy losses inflicted on the enemy with not much return against us.

[Rogers]: Make sure this BattleROM goes to Atreus. It'll be a good tool for the Fifteenth [Division based on Atreus]. [Extended pause] Davies, call up Falton and have him withdraw. The locals can handle the clean-up. No point in risking his forces.

[Davies]: I doubt the Precentor will see it that way. [Extended pause] Precentor, I'm unable to raise Precentor Falton, or any of his command.

[Rogers]: Might be the weather. Change to satcom, and boost the signal.

[Voice Three]: Locals report mushroom cloud on the horizon! No wait! Multiple detonations!

[Rogers]: What?

[Davies]: Where the hell are those fi—

[Recording ends—transmission terminated at source]

Addendum [06MAR3076]: Orbital reconnaissance shows evidence of approximately 37 separate detonation sites, though the possibility of airbursts and multiple warheads suggests upwards of fifty sub-100 kiloton devices used. Primary analysis notes extremely high levels of cobalt in particulate fallout. Likelihood of Com Guard origin deemed extremely low.

NEWS DOWNLOADED



Date & Title

(16 January 3076)	"NAM Captain Carmichael Arrested, Charged with Treason"	[NIOPS NEWS]	COMPLETED
(15 February 3076)	"Breaking News: Chandrasekhar Kurita Murdered"	[VOTD]	DOWNLOADING
(22 February 3076)	"Ravens Send Naval Forces to Aid Coalition"	[INN]	ACCESSING



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reports by local observers who have presented images and sensor data showing Com Guard troops in action against elements of the Word of Blake's Twentieth Division prior to a series of nuclear strikes which not only decimated the Twentieth but inflicted an estimated two million civilian casualties.

This leads to the disturbing possibility that there are now rogue Com Guard units operating in the Inner Sphere, and that they have chosen to fight fire with fire, indiscriminately deploying weapons of mass destruction against Word of Blake troops wherever they are encountered. ComStar denies the existence of such troops, but it cannot be ignored that a goodly number of Com Guards have chosen to abandon ComStar in the past, either going over to the Blakists or becoming Mercenary troops. It takes little stretch of the imagination to believe that some Com Guards would be willing to discard all pretenses of prosecuting a civilized war against their erstwhile brothers.

ANDURIEN, MOSIRO SIGN DEFENSE PACT

(10 March 3076)

Mosiro [ANN]—The Mosiro Archipelago today signed a treaty of mutual defense with the Duchy of Andurien. In exchange for protection against raiders and predatory nation-states during the current upheaval, the three worlds of the Archipelago—which together field only minimal planetary militias of their own—will provide the Third Andurien Rangers with bases of operation and all requested materiel support, free of charge.

The Rangers were created by Duchess Dalma Humphreys in 3073 on the twenty-fifth anniversary of her resumption of her grandmother's throne. As a fighting force composed entirely of natives from the Duchy, the Rangers are not recognized by the

federal government on Atreus, but the FWLM has not interfered with their deployment, tacitly acknowledging Andurien's right and need to defend itself. The Third Andurien Rangers, under the leadership of Force Commander Cassia Faulkers, is comprised of three BattleMech companies with full infantry and technical support. According to one senior Andurien official, the worlds of Mosiro, El Giza, and Hudeiba will each benefit from the protection of one of the Third's BattleMech companies plus its attendant ancillary forces.

The Third Andurien Rangers are the first Andurien command to be stationed outside the borders of the Duchy. By positioning on these key worlds athwart the Oriente corridor, Duchess Dalma is both protecting our otherwise defenseless neighbors and establishing a clear deterrent to any ambitious provinces considering expanding their borders during the present crisis.

Because effective military response in an emergency requires close communication and coordination, the mutual defense treaty places all constabulary and military institutions of the Mosiro Archipelago under direct command of the Third Andurien Rangers. The Khilafat, or parliament, of the Mosiro Archipelago also recognizes the need for detailed cooperation at all levels to ensure careful management and timely distribution of resources during these uncertain times. To that end they have asked the Duchy of Andurien to assume responsibility for both infrastructure and legislation of their three worlds for the duration of the crisis.

The signing ceremony was held on the Portico of the Sunna—the open-air assembly of the "Jurists" (as members of the Mosiro Khilafat are called). The Portico is a broad balcony of fitted stone and graceful sculptures that extends from the Great Barrier, a cliff

THE HILL IS GONE



(18 March 3076)

[RSS Intercept 3758-b HARM30760318; OVERRIDE CODE ACCEPTED—DirGen Evans. No further action required.]

Sir,

Your foresight as always has proven invaluable. The site is gone, not leaving enough for even Titus' investigators to determine the total output. The stockpile was moved after Campbelton, and the secondary facility has been activated, so production should not be affected greatly.

We lost the mercenary forces detailed with protecting it; the Domini 49th Division again—they'll get theirs soon enough) wiped them out to a man before nuking the site from orbit. Unfortunately, because of the site's location, there were extensive civilian casualties, mostly from the ground assault.

The Blakists have actually helped us here without knowing

it. The residual radiation from the Blakist WMDs should throw off Titus' hounds for a little while at least. You can tell your son that Tiger Hill is quite inactive and that nothing stored here survived the Blakist strike. It's true, after all.

I'm satisfied that the site has been sterilized and am moving to the secondary facility. My job on Harmony is done. Also, the funds held in escrow for the mercs has been transferred back into the discretionary fund. Given the lack of evidence of the secondary facility, I'm willing to forgo the protective detail and rely on secrecy to the dogs off the scent.

As always, it is an honor to serve you, Captain-General.

The veracity of this document can't be verified. I cannot even identify the sender. I'm ordering it destroyed lest it spark more paranoia.

—Director-General Brendan Evans



FAMILY AFFAIRS

(21 March 3076)

Regulus [REGULUS INSIDER]—Royal watchers' tongues were set wagging today when an unusually public argument broke out between Prince Titus and his father, former-Prince Kirc Cameron-Jones. The two princes were at the dedication ceremony of the new Dombrell Memorial Hospital, having just finished posing for press photos, when a vocal exchange was heard between them. The argument, according to witnesses, swiftly moved to the privacy of their official limousines.

While the details of what were said remain unclear, it was apparent that Prince Titus was chastising his father for something when the elder Cameron-Jones responded angrily, audibly calling his son a "useless bastard." The only other words that local observers could make out were Prince Titus asking his father "Where are they?" and Prince Kirc's response of "Somewhere safe."

Tensions between the royal family have always been high, especially since Prince Titus allegedly forced his father to step down in the wake of the brutal Purge, but never before have they aired this tension so visibly in public.

A spokesperson for the palace downplayed the issue, calling the row "nothing more than the standard agitation male family members feel towards each other as they grow older." The rift between the two men has been commented upon in the past, most noticeably so when Prince Titus neglected to invite his father to his wedding.

A spokesperson for former-Prince Kirc stated only that the elder Cameron-Jones was "enjoying his retirement and looking forward to playing with his grandson."

of white stone nearly three kilometers high. Framed by cascading waterfalls, the Portico overlooks kilometers of rolling forest and farmland, stretching to the distant ocean.

Ambassador Count Lendwice declared the setting symbolic: civilized people rooted in certainty, surrounded by beauty and power, looking out toward a future of prosperity and hope.

OMINOUS WARNINGS

(2 April 3076)

Regulus [RNS]—Citizens of Regulus are resting easily tonight after fears about the arrival of an invasion force proved to be unfounded.

A large JumpShip fleet entered the system nearly three days ago, sparking panic in a populace still recovering from the horrific Night of Fire less than four years ago. But initial fears were allayed when the Regularan Defense Force Command issued a statement saying that the fleet was diplomatic in nature, and that no one should be alarmed. So far, the RDFC has not released the identity of the foreign vessels and has declared an exclusion zone around the close-orbit path the fleet has assumed over Regulus.

Nevertheless, several news agencies have reported that the

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fleet is, in fact, the *Sardis* battlegroup, a force known to have ties to Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik's resistance movement against the Word of Blake. The veracity of this statement remains unconfirmed, but if it is the *Sardis* and her attendant fleet, it raises the question of Atreus' response to what they might see as "aggressive postures."

The recent assault on the planet of Harmony by suspected pirates also raises the issue of what Regulus would be forced to commit to any burgeoning alliance. The RDF is sending mixed signals, unveiling yet another new regiment, yet somehow failing to provide adequate protection for the people of Harmony. Several observers have thus questioned the wisdom of devoting time and resources to an alliance that has no ability to protect the Principality itself.

More disturbing, however, are scattered reports by various merchant sailors who witnessed the fleet's arrival, claiming that the vessels bore Word of Blake markings. This suggestion has been angrily denied by RDF Command, with one unidentified spokesman calling the claims "the obvious baiting of a media hungry for paranoia." The populace has certainly accepted the RDFC's denial, pointing towards the lack of fighting as evidence of the fleet's benign nature.

Regardless of the fleet's identity, it has served to remind Regularans that—despite all the turmoil they have experience in the last few years—we are not alone.

THE KNIGHTS' LAST STAND

[Commercial]: ... And my cabinets look like new! Thanks, Gleem-O-Shine!

[Static interrupt, fade to shadowed figure in front of a holoscreen that shows a scene of BattleMech combat.]

[Announcer]: Attention, citizens of Atreus City! Your help is desperately needed against the Blakist oppressors who have occupied our world for the last eight years!

[Screen shows Word of Blake Deva savaging a Grand Titan painted in the worn colors of the Second Knights of the Inner Sphere.]

[Announcer]: Minutes ago, we received word that inbound forces thought to have been dispatched from Oriente were defeated in orbit around the planet. Reports have the survivors fleeing towards their JumpShips at various pirate points around the system. The assault has failed.

[Screen shows a Knights Apollo, smoke rising from its faceplate, crashing backwards through a small building.]

[Announcer]: Our comrades here on the ground have been left helpless, facing the full force of Blakist retribution. Even as I speak, they are being hunted down and murdered in the streets—in *your* streets.

[Screen shows a Knights Thunderbolt staggering under an assault by several battle armor troops.]

[Announcer]: They are dying! I call on all loyal citizens of the Free Worlds League to flood the streets, do whatever you can

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to hamper the Blakist attack. Some of our brave MechWarriors may be able to get away on foot. Please give them shelter and protect them. If you have a vehicle, do not hesitate to sacrifice it to distract the foe.

[Screen shows two Knights 'Mechs obliterated in a hail of missile fire.]

[Announcer]: Take up arms, people! For Atreus! For the League!

—Emergency broadcast by Atreus Underground, 6 April 3076, 08:17:22

HONOR AND DUTY

Among the Clans, the early half of 3076 was a time of change. Emerging from a mysterious wave of internecine fighting, the warriors of Kerensky who had carved out a niche in the Inner Sphere faced challenges both from within and without. Though the Jihad still grabbed the headlines day after day, few who recalled the horrors of the 3050s turned a blind eye to those who once threatened all of humanity in the same way the Blakists now do.

CLAN ETIQUETTE

Thank you for downloading PSA no. 3115. Your PLN has been logged and your compliance to the information included is expected. You have 72 hours to pick up your new ID locators at your nearest neighborhood security station. Failure to pick up your locator carries heavy penalty.

Welcome to the Ghost Bear Dominion. The following PSA is to assist you in acclimating to the new governmental regulations that are currently imposed elsewhere in the Dominion; these rules and regulations are a fusion of Clan and Rasalhagian laws that carry the full support of Elected Prince and saKhan Ragnar Magnusson.

FOOL'S ERRANDS

Thomas,

What the hell were you thinking? Did you not think the Blakists would have significant defenses on and around Atreus? I figured you had a better grasp on things than that. I wish you had coordinated with my people before attempting such a ridiculous stunt. I don't know if old Christopher talked you into an assault or if it was your own idea, but it was a bad one either way.

I know it must be hard to have Sherryl not only so far away but also at the mercy of Paul and his robed cronies, but all my intel people assured me that she was safe under Corrine's protection. Luckily, that still appears to be the case, though who knows how your rash actions may have damaged her ability to keep things that way.

Believe me, Thomas, had I thought she was in danger, I would have gotten her out myself. Even *you* don't deserve to suffer her loss!

And those troops! I could have used their strength elsewhere, but instead you just threw them away. Whatever our differences, I never thought of you as the kind of man—the kind of *leader*—who'd carelessly waste lives like that. Not only the mercs you sent in, but also the remnants of the Knights on the ground. They were your legacy, Thomas, and now they are gone. Some day, when this is all over, I hope you find a way to honor their sacrifice.

Please consider joining Devlin Stone's coalition. I truly feel that he is our best hope for victory in this war and I know your knowledge would be useful to the cause. Just meet with him; I can arrange it.

—Intercepted communication attributed to Alys Rousset-Mark (veracity unconfirmed), 22 April 3076

NEWS DOWNLOADER v3.7



Date & Title

Service

Status

(14 March 3076)

"Gronholt: Prelude to 'Reconquista?'"

[FILTVELT DIGITAL PRESS]

COMPLETED

(20 March 3076)

"Dantalion's Dirge Attacks Harmony"

[ABC]

DOWNLOADING

(8 April 3076)

"Duchess Denies Involvement in George Hasek Assassination"

[INN]

ACCESSING



EARLY 3076: DOMINOS FALLING

The fundamental law you must remember is that the warrior caste is the ruling caste. When a warrior gives an order, it is essential that you cooperate to the fullest extent you are able. Failure to comply with a warrior's direct order may carry consequences that can be detrimental—if not harmful—to yourself and society.

Clan society is broken into a rigid caste system. As the Ghost Bear Clan has found through societal evolution, a modified caste system has been implemented with great success among Dominion worlds. As your world is new to the Dominion, efforts to bring societal function in line with this new caste system will be implemented shortly. Report for testing when you are notified, so that proper placement can be achieved. Currently, those with proper science and technical backgrounds are asked to volunteer for testing in order to fill needed gaps within the Clan. Future caste placement will be implemented by region over the next twelve months. Understand that this is to streamline society for the betterment of the Dominion; this eliminates waste and maximizes personal opportunity as benefiting the Clan.

To understand Clan societal mores is to understand the Clan.

—Excerpt of a Public Safety Announcement series on Ueda, 5 February 3076

AN OFFER NOT TO REFUSE

Note: The following audio transcript could not be independently verified as of this publication.

>>>ROM Intercept of Targets Alpha and Bravo Nova—
Prosecution Untenable at time of recording<<<

[V1—Tentative ID: Target Alpha AKA DEVLIN STONE]:

Alright, David, let's hear it.

[V2—Tentative ID: Target Bravo Nova AKA DAVID LEAR]:

They're offering us some help.

[STONE]: No Trial?

[LEAR]: Not even bothering this time. Something's going on, Devlin—in all my experience, research, and even the stories Dad told, Clanners don't bargain without at least a token Trial.

[STONE]: But the Sharks have always been different; we accounted for that in the strategy meeting with the other Clans.

[LEAR]: Yeah, they've sold us stuff in the past, but it's always been very ritualized. Even when no blood is spilled, everyone involved knew they'd been in a fight. This time, it's almost like they're *threatening* us to agree to their terms.

[STONE]: Hmm. What's your take on their mindset?

[LEAR]: I really don't know. I've been hearing some rumors about the Clan Homeworlds. Whatever happened there has the Sharks running ... well, not scared, but they're certainly behaving differently.

[STONE]: Elaborate.

[LEAR]: Look at their strike on Tukayyid. Scene of one of their most humiliating defeats, and here they are, actively expanding their holdings there. Talking to the Bears is like talking to a wall, and every time I've offered to talk to the Sharks for them, they've shut me down.

[STONE]: Hmm ... All right. What help are they offering? And, more importantly, what is it going to cost us? By that, I mean logistically; I'll handle the political fallout of more Clanners. They've had dealings with most of the Coalition in any case.

[LEAR]: Shipping and transport—with their WarShips.

[STONE]: What in Blake's name do they want in exchange for that?!

[LEAR]: That part you're not going to like ...

>>>Transcript Ends—Record Date: 20-Feb-3076<<<

RAVEN RUMBLES

By now I'm sure everyone here's read the report uploaded by RavenEye. We're still trying to determine if it was a real O5P piece or just some half-baked electron jockey making noise; though it's pretty damning that the server it was on got potholed by "outside interference," the claims made within it are pretty outrageous as well.

Do we really want to believe that there's nothing going on over in the Outworlds Alliance? That just over the border—less than two jumps away—there's not a wounded Clan sitting there, plotting another genocidal campaign? If you believe that, then you missed the news from Valentina, Niles and Galedon (to name a few) just a few years ago. Brutal bombardments, killing thousands of Combine citizens, all for some imagined slight?

The Ravens have brainwashed the Alliance leadership—which isn't hard to do, considering the pacifist idiocy of the Avellar family. But while the relative quiet has been nothing but good for us over here, ever since the Ravens arrived, the Alliance has become more a threat to our worlds on the border than the far away Blakies have been. I doubt any Galedonians—if any of those poor souls survived the virtual glassing of the planet—would disagree.

No, the Ravens are there, watching us. Waiting. Looking for the opening they need to strike and take yet more worlds from us—either by possession or by the guns of a WarShip. I'm sure the whole cryfest of "we're fleeing home because some other Clan stomped

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on us" is one big bullshitter, designed to make us feel sorry and open our arms for them. After all, the Alliance did that, and look what it got them. Reduced to a shell of their former glory, taken over by Clansmen with pretty words and "straight talk."

Keep watch, people. The Raven isn't done by a long shot and they're still out there, plotting our demise. Mark my words: they'll be coming for us again soon enough.

—Posted on the Sinope ConspiracyNetwork, 19 February 3076 (removed on 21 February 3076)

HELLION RENEGADES TEST RASALHAGUE DEFENSE

(14 March 3076)

Arc-Royal [INN]—Flurrying out from their hiding places amongst the pirate nests among the Near Periphery, the tattered remains of the Ice Hellion Clan recently took advantage of the Clan Ghost Bears' preoccupation with the Word of Blake to test the defenses of the Bears and their Rasalhague allies.

Ever since the apparent mobilization of the entire Ghost Bear touman for the Dominion's war against the Word of Blake, defense of the Ghost Bear Dominion has apparently fallen to a handful of native Rasalhagian garrison Clusters—including the only partially integrated Rasalhague KungsArmé. This has left the Dominion vastly under strength on the home front—with unreliable forces to boot.

First contact with the Hellion forces reportedly came as they descended upon Holmsbu. There, the Hellions sacked a newly raised—and mostly untrained—garrison force before looting several warehouses of industrial products and departing before the ex-KungsArmé forces could send in reaction forces. Next, they struck at Constance, where the same scene repeated itself in virtually every detail.

Not until after the Hellions had struck Pinnacle did the KungsArmé-derived defenders manage to pin down the renegades on Damian. There, the under-strength Second Kavalleri Cluster used their superior aerospace forces to ground the Hellion DropShips and engage the Cluster-sized force of mixed Hellion units in a series of hit-and-run actions until reinforcements arrived in the form of the Third Drakøn and Second Freeman Clusters.

Together, the three KungsArmé Clusters held the Hellion forces in check. But during a pitched battle in the woods just outside Damian's capital city, several dozen square kilometers of woodland were set ablaze, and the Hellions managed to take apart the Second Kavalleri in the close-quarters brawl. Nevertheless, it was the ex-KungsArmé who carried the day, putting down the Hellions before they could escape. Mimir and Watch investigators are trying to track the base of operation for the Hellion forces to ensure no further attacks are forthcoming.

DIAMOND SHARKS EXPANDING INFLUENCE

(3 May 3076)

Arc-Royal [MERCNET]—Clan Diamond Shark's merchants have become a common sight in the Inner Sphere in recent years. Indeed, with the savage damage suffered by the Inner Sphere's military industrial base at the hands of the Word of Blake, many mercenary commands (and—to a lesser extent—the misguided nations of the Inner Sphere) have found their most reliable source for vital weapons and equipment to be from the merchant-warriors of the Clans.

VOID RUMORS



So here's one for you conspiracy hunters out there:

Remember the hubbub back in '64, when that Jaguar ship *Osis Pride* was supposedly sighted by a JumpShip crew outside Nyserta? Where it tangled with some Wolf fighters before it disappeared?

Yeah, I know. Newlines didn't pick it up because the report was riddled with holes—the *Funkhouse's* crew was apparently drunk thanks to the captain's birthday or something and ended up pissing off the locals, not to mention why a salvage team was even within sneezing distance of a Wolf naval flotilla deep within the Wolf OZ.

But y'know rumors of that "Flying Dutchman" of a WarShip keep popping up here and there, all along that Periphery band from Erehwon to Farstar. Yet no one's got conclusive proof of it; no vid, no radio signals, not even a PPC crater. So yeah, it's about as real as hyperspace squids and cybernetic demon soldiers.

Until now.

We at the *Arc-Royal Gabber* have recently obtained actual holovid evidence of the *Osis Pride* and, even more curiously, an Ice Hellion WarShip.

As you can see from the image [File: SJ.IH.Osis.extdat.238], the *Osis Pride* is clearly seen (as if the giant Smoke Jaguar emblem doesn't give it away) alongside a massive *Potemkin* troop carrier. The markings aren't immediately visible, but as you can see in a zoomed-in image of the bottom quarter of the hull [File: SJ.IH.Osis.exdat.243] the name "Coterie" is just visible below the curve of the hull.

Yeah, it raises a lot of questions—and opens up new threads for you conspiracy buffs. Our thanks to the crew of the *Nightwalking Penguin* for snagging these images during an exploratory mining run near Bazaar.

So there you go: definitive proof that the *Osis Pride* exists. But the big question remains, of course. What are the Smoke Jaguars up to now?

—Transcript from the *Dark Mysteries* trivid show, broadcast on Arc-Royal 9.9; 16 March 3076

**CONTROLLING INTERESTS**

(9 May 3076)

Tukayyid [ISAP]—In what looks to be an increasingly common event in the Inner Sphere's current political climate, troops from the Diamond Shark Clan have engaged and defeated the local Rasalhagian garrison force to expand their trading enclave on the stricken world.

Despite their new ClanTech equipment, the former KungsArmé soldiers were no match for the veteran Shark warriors, who easily accounted for their foes in the combat Trial held on Przno Plain. The result of the battle has left locals questioning the Ghost Bears' ability to provide the protection they once promised, especially now that

the majority of the Clans' touman is on an "extended absence" battling Blakist forces.

This fear materialized briefly in a strike on the Sharks' naval assets, including a strafing run by KungsArmé fighters against the Shark flagship, the *Nagasawa*. The Diamond Shark vessel suffered severe damage, and only intervention by Shark merchant caste spokesmen prevented further retaliation. Shark warriors are pressing for reparations, but so far the Ghost Bear liaisons on Tukayyid have not committed to anything.

Regardless of the outcome, the simple fact that so-called "friendly" Clans are openly engaging in Trial warfare

on civilian worlds has many observers concerned. But what is most intriguing for Clan military observers is the abundance of designs traditionally seen in the rosters of homeworld Clans like the Star Adders and Steel Vipers. This development suggests to some observers that either the Sharks have salvaged or traded for these designs, or that they still have a conduit to the Clan homeworlds.

Ultimately, the Ghost Bears' ability to deliver on their promises of support and security for its adoptive Rasalhagian populace has been called into question, and for the foreseeable future, it is apparent that the Rasalhagians are on their own.

For their part, the Sharks have been more than happy to keep supplies flowing—at a price, of course. Now the Diamond Sharks have announced plans to extend their operations even further, with new trade missions established on Ramora, Tukayyid, and Halfway. Rumor has it that this move is the result of an agreement with Devlin Stone and his Coalition forces. This may be true, since the Sharks have been vital to the effort of keeping the forces facing the Blakists operational.

Mercenaries are advised to avoid Diamond Shark convoys, however. Paradoxically, this mercantile Clan holds little regard for troops who sell their services, and the heavy escorts seen protecting their transport fleets are reputed to be very aggressive. Inquiries by mercenaries seeking escort duty contracts with the Sharks have been curtly rebuffed. There are also scattered reports of nasty incidents from vessels that have crowded Diamond Shark convoys, graphically illustrating the Clans' continued willingness to shoot first and dispense with later questions. Ultimately, the Diamond Sharks are a predator best given a wide berth.

KHAN MARTHE PRYDE SLAIN!

(15 May 3076)

New Avalon [ISAP]—Stunning reports coming out of the Clan Occupation Zone bring the news that Khan Marthe Pryde has died. Attempts to get a clear account from the Jade Falcons have been rebuffed, but the Clansmen who did speak to reporters have at least confirmed that Pryde has fallen. This ends the career of one of the Falcons' more intriguing leaders to date.

From among the wild rumors and speculation surrounding Pryde's death, the most common elements suggest that the Falcon Khan died from some kind of malfunction at the controls of her 'Mech. Another—and particularly ominous—thread further suggests that the incident was the result of sabotage.

If true, then the Falcons will be looking to the Inner Sphere for a likely suspect, as the Clans are reportedly not given to such intrigues. Several Inner Sphere states have already issued formal denials of any involvement.

Samantha Clees, the Falcon's saKhan, is expected to win the senior Khanship, but it remains to be seen whether this event will prompt the Falcons to withdraw support from the allied coalition against the Word of Blake.

Furthermore, the Falcons are reportedly convening a conclave on Sudeten to choose a new saKhan. The Crusader cause may have died on Strana Mechty fifteen years ago, but the Falcon's relations with the Inner Sphere have been mercurial at best. Whatever choice the Clan makes for its second in command will undoubtedly have a profound impact in Inner Sphere-Clan relations for years to come.

AND IN OTHER NEWS...

On many other fronts, the first half of 3076 was also a time of endings. For the distant Kaumberg Archonette, the last chapter of Democracy Now reached its final conclusion, while nations across the Inner Sphere mourned the passing of Chandrasekhar "Uncle Chandy" Kurita. For others, the new year simply brought a continuing struggle to bring an end to chaos and terror.

DEMOCRACY NOW TRIALS BEGIN ON KAUMBERG

(21 January 3076)

Kaumberg [KNN]—It is early spring here in Stuttgart, a city of some forty thousand nestled in the piedmont of the Regenwald Range. To the east, below the Speaker's Portico, which stretches the length of the Kaumberg Supreme Court building, is the narrow coastal plane with the stormy Aelon Sea a gray smudge along the horizon. Behind the courthouse, Mount Kohlmann

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and the Regenwalds rise like a living backdrop to the legal and political drama about to unfold. The hardwoods for which this world is famous are resplendent in new spring leaves, rustling in a hundred shades of green. A more beautiful setting for ending what many call “the darkest time of Lyran history” could not be imagined.

Today begins the trial of Lindon Ashley, charismatic and militant leader of Democracy Now. Four months after his defeat and capture on Virtue by Baron Trent Hasseldorf, the self-proclaimed “beacon of humanity and righteousness” faces over half a hundred charges of murder, terrorism, and treason.

Ashley’s attorneys argued unsuccessfully that it was impossible for Ashley—whom they characterized as a freedom fighter—to receive a fair trial on the homeworld of his enemy. Most observers believe they overplayed their hand when they drew a parallel between Ashley in the hands of Hasseldorf and the persecution and murder of Hasseldorf’s family when Baron Franklin LeSat attempted to seize control of Kaumberg less than two decades ago.

Though Ashley is visibly stooped and moves with the uncertainty of nerve damage, physicians retained by his defense failed to convince the High Court that he was too ill to stand trial. The Tribunal also refused the defense’s motion that Ashley’s injuries—which they characterized as “extensive” and attributed to brutal beatings he received from Hasseldorf’s troops after his surrender—constituted full and proportionate penance for any crimes of which he might be accused.

The streets of Stuttgart have taken on a macabre carnival air. Camps of protestors and supporters have staked out sections of the municipal square. Ever mindful of the Kaumberg Planetary Guard, stationed nearby in full riot armor, the many groups taunt and provoke each other with banners, curses, even songs. Local hotels and even private homes have filled with tourists; observers have come from as far away as Noisiel to witness—or at least be in the same city as—history in the making. Street vendors hawking everything from food to handicrafts to replicas of the Democracy Now manifesto crowd the sidewalks and parks.

The trial is expected to last for weeks. Through it all KNN will be here, our reporters separating the noise from the news, the show from the substance. Stay tuned to this feed for all the clear, concise, and accurate information you need as it happens.

ROGUE MERCENARIES TURN ON NIOPS

(7 February 3076)

Niops V [ISAP]—After two weeks of bloody combat, the capitol of Niops V is in flames.

The fighting began in the predawn hours of 28 January when elements of the Briar Patch Guard, the infantry contingent of the Black Heart Roses, blasted their way into Niops’ only maximum security prison and liberated—or abducted, accounts vary—Captain Alicia Carmichael of the Niops Association Militia.

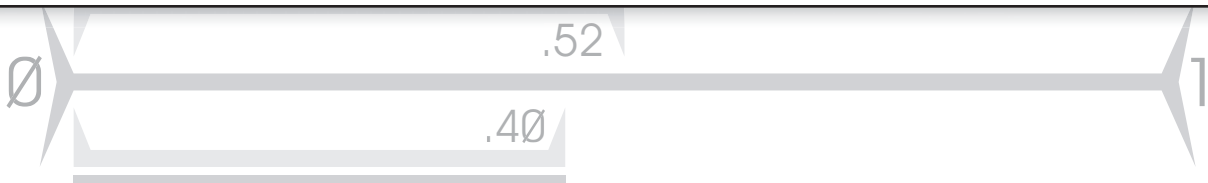
Captain Carmichael was awaiting trial on charges of treason, terrorism, and murder in connection to the bombing of the Niops Association Council on 12 November 3075. Niops Association Director Rayanne Nellis, Chairperson Tran, and forty-seven other legislators of the Association were killed in the explosion.

All major cities on the three primary worlds of the Niops Association—already overcrowded with refugees from dozens of planets throughout the Periphery, Free Words League, and Lyran Alliance—erupted in riots at the news. Brigadier L. Jamison Fallon, commander of the NAM, was forced to enact drastic measures to contain and quell the violence. Only his swift implementation of martial law and extensive deployment of both the NAM and mercenary forces prevented a descent into complete and bloody anarchy.

The unexpected arrest of Carmichael, commander of the Council security forces, came as a general shock, as she had been popular as the public face of the efforts to keep the peace. Lt. Colonel Rose, commander of the Briar Patch Guards, had made one evidently outraged protest at the time of the arrest, demanding the NAM make public its evidence. However Rose’s wife and co-commander Colonel Heart-Rose prevailed on him to withdraw his demand. She promised Fallon the complete cooperation of the Black Heart Roses.

That cooperation lasted until the unexpected prison raid. Colonel Heart-Rose joined Brigadier Fallon in demanding Lt. Colonel Rose return Captain Carmichael immediately. Rose claimed to have no knowledge of the raid, but he denied the NAM’s authority over his command.

Fallon brought the same decisive action that had held the Association together to bear on the recalcitrant mercenaries. The Black Heart Roses were stationed at several key points on Niops V, positioned both to defend the planet and to maintain



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order among the refugees. Unable to determine which unit was holding Carmichael, Fallon attacked them all simultaneously.

Colonel Heart-Rose protested that her BattleMechs had nothing to do with the actions of the infantry. Fallon countered that he could not trust her word and that—as overall commander of the Black Heart Roses—Heart-Rose was responsible for the actions of everyone under her command. More than one unconfirmed report of their exchange maintains that Fallon ordered Heart-Rose to prove her honor by ordering her MechWarriors to fire on the Briar Patch Guard—a command she refused.

With the Black Heart Roses scattered and lacking transport assets, Fallon ordered the NAM to target public transportation and highways, destroying civilian infrastructure to hobble and isolate the mercenaries.

For their part, the Black Heart Roses and Briar Patch Guards have defied traditional wisdom by not linking their forces. The infantry currently holds the eastern third of Cinquièmeville, a heavily industrial zone replete with easily defensible strong points. The BattleMechs have pulled into the foothills of the Norway Range, using their heavy firepower to good advantage. Though Fallon and the NAM report daily victories in what is officially described as a clean-up action, eyewitness accounts and battlefield debris indicate the mercenaries are selling themselves dearly.

Neither the mercenaries nor the NAM seem concerned about

collateral damage or even civilian casualties. Battles have raged through townships and without apparent concern for possible occupants, and there is at least one report of a firefight rolling through a Capellan refugee camp.

Given the deeper resources of the NAM there is little doubt the Association forces will put down the rogue mercenaries. However, given the wholesale destruction, they may find their victory Pyrrhic.

A VICTORY AGAINST TERROR

(13 March 3076)

June [JUNE PRESS]—Citing the continued presence of Death's Consorts on nearby Great Gorge, Major General Raymond-Roger Marsin announced this morning that he would be leaving a garrison in place on Gronholt after he returns to June later this month. This move, he proclaimed, is designed to extend the picket line established last November and provide further support to the beleaguered worlds of the Malagrotta Cooperative following the recent coup there by pirate leader Gary Tiquahme.

In his announcement, General Marsin downplayed concerns coming out of Filtvelt. "I have no intention of violating the territory of the [Filtvelt] Coalition. If they wish to forego the benefits of being a part of the Federated Suns, that's their business. My sole concern at this time is to choke off the vile pirate bands who threaten the stability of not only these wayward states but of the Suns itself."

Just one week ago, General Marsin and his Remagen CrMM successfully assaulted two companies of pirate forces that had set up operations on Gronholt. Regional observers had been expecting such an attack since October's routing of a suspected pirate base on June and the subsequent establishment of picket forces in a line of systems from Estuan to Adelson. Many were quick to speculate that this is the opening move in Marsin's plan to retake the secessionist worlds of Malagrotta, and perhaps even Filtvelt. Though there has yet been no indication of any further actions, local betting parlors are running seven-to-one odds that the General will continue on to Great Gorge next.

A spokeswoman for Marsin's office refused to comment on future actions.

REMEMBERING UNCLE

[The camera zooms in on a man in a black suit holding a microphone. He is standing somewhere outside, behind him one can see a variety of battle armor troopers as a Firestarter walks by, its head turning from left to right to left again, scanning the street. The man takes in a deep breath and starts talking.]

"Takiro Musamote, ISAP. I am reporting live from outside the Chandrasekhar Memorial Complex here on New Samarkand. The Sphere hasn't seen so many important people gathered in a single place since the bombing on Arc-Royal in 3073. Extreme

THE DRAGON'S LOSS

(21 February 3076)

New Samarkand [VOTD]—Today, we reflect on the life of a Kurita with respect and sadness. Chandrasekhar Kurita will be best remembered for his ability to inspire those around him to greater heights in the service to the Dragon. His support and aid was prized highly by Coordinator Theodore Kurita, and he was greatly respected by his peers even as they competed in the commercial endeavors that keep the Combine strong. Even as the Arm of the Dragon was defeating our enemies on the battlefield, the honorable Kurita was besting their merchants and businessmen in the markets and boardrooms.

The Kurita was no stranger to danger. In a foreshadowing of events to come, the honorless Word of Blake targeted him on several occasions, but in each case their assaults were foiled by the heroic warriors of the DCMS. Only when the Kurita bravely dispensed with the protection of the Combine's finest—putting his trust in mercenary troops to free up our brave soldiers to strike at our enemies—did the Blakists succeed. Martial excellence may have been denied him, but the Kurita met his end like a true Samurai, fighting the Combine's enemies to the last.

EXECUTION FOR ASHLEY, CONSPIRATORS



—KNN Morning News Special Report (live from Stuttgart), 26 February 3076

[Arne Stoller, KNN]: Good morning fellow citizens, it is now 0615 here at the House of Lords here in Stuttgart. Any time now, Lindon Ashley—former leader of the Democracy Now movement—and several of his co-conspirators will be walking out into the inner courtyard where his short and violent life will meet a matching end.

The building and the premises are heavily guarded by police and militia troops, as if subject to martial law. It is obvious that the Stuttgart government is taking no chances on there being an incident. For this same reason, only a select handful of reporters were invited to report on the proceedings, and then only in audio. Video and holo filming has been strictly forbidden.

[Pause]

[Stoller]: We can now see movement around the main entrance to the courtyard ... I think ... yes, that's them: Lindon Ashley and his former lieutenants are being led out by a KPG detail. Shackled, but still walking on their own power, they slowly descend the stairs. Security in riot armor are leading them to concrete poles erected along the back wall—a gray, ugly wall, just like this morning, by the way—before which stands a squad of hooded infantry at rigid attention. Fifteen riflemen, representing the fifteen worlds of the Kaumberg Archonette. Each one has been assigned a specific target of the six conspirators, the choices drawn by lot.

Following Ashley's group is Archonette Sheridan, and several other planetary officials, including Baron von Stuttgart Trent Hasseldorf, commander of the KPG.

[Pause]

[Stoller]: The Archonette is now taking the dais located off to one side of the firing line, beginning the recitation of the crimes these Democracy Now leaders have been convicted of. His voice is loud, clear, and steady.

[Muffled, amplified voice speaks solemnly in the background, but in the foreground, Stoller's commentary blots out the words.]

[Stoller]: Civil disorder, coercion, extortion, fraud, manslaughter, willful homicide, theft, misuse of governmental property, crimes against humanity, treason, tax evasion—the list goes on and on. The Kaumberg Tribunal found Ashley and his followers guilty of over forty charges in all, with no plea bargains or counter-charges accepted.

[Stoller's voice trails off as Sheridan's voice pauses. Still amplified and unwavering, Sheridan continues a moment later.]

[Sheridan]: For these crimes against the people of the Kaumberg Archonette, the Alarion Province, and the Lyran Alliance, and by the power vested in me by Archon Adam Steiner as Archonette von Kaumberg, the sentence is death by firing squad, to be carried out immediately. May God have mercy upon all your souls.

[Pause for several moments]

[Stoller]: An eerie silence has descended in the House Courtyard. Neither

Ashley nor any of his conspirators seem to be reacting in any way. Gone is their fervor, their inner fires, their condemnation of government.

[Pause]

[Stoller]: Ashley now accepts the offered blindfold. Is he crying now? His shoulders are shaking, but I can't really make it out from my viewpoint. The firing squad is stepping into position.

When everyone has fallen silent, the commanding Guardsman turns his head toward the Archonette, receiving the approving, final nod.

[Guard Commander]: *[Muffled, distant] Feuer!*

[Shots ring out. Long, silent pause]

[Guard Commander]: *[Muffled, distant] Feuer!*

[Another volley, followed by silence]

[Stoller]: A second volley, pre-arranged to ensure the killing shots. The state coroner is advancing now, as the riflemen are signaled to stand down. The air is heavy with anticipation and gunsmoke, awaiting the confirmation..."

[Long pause. A muffled, distant voice shouts out in German, reciting names and time of day. Lindon Ashley's name is barely coherent, the last one called out.]

[Stoller]: *[Sighs]* Yes. That's it. He's dead. Lindon Ashley, leader of the outlawed Democracy Now movement, is dead.

[Sighs again] The cancer, the plague that was Democracy Now is now consigned to history. We go now, back to the studio, for commentary on this momentous event.

security measurements have been taken to protect against another terror attack, with the whole site shielded and screened against external communications of any kind. Only the highest-ranking members of government and military will be granted access to the memorial, and then only after extensive medical examination. Not even the press has been allowed to get within one hundred meters of the complex walls.

"We were, however, able to obtain a copy of a pre-recorded speech delivered today by Devlin Stone. The effective leader of the allied coalition against the Word of Blake, Stone—reportedly preparing plans for the next phase in the campaign against the Word's Protectorate—could not attend the memorial service in person, but sent this speech along via a special courier to the heart

of the Dragon. As there won't be a viewing of the speech itself, ISAP has been given special permission to air Stone's words here.

[Musamote takes out a sheet of paper and starts reading]

"Today, we say good-bye to Chandrasekhar Kurita, one of the bravest men I had the honor to know. When we were facing our darkest hours, he was there. He took the rudder when others failed, never forgetting who the real enemy was. With wits and determination, he forged an alliance to take on the greatest enemy humankind ever faced, and though he was no warrior or general, he never once faltered, despite the odds.

"Uncle Chandy—as he was called by those who knew him better—was like a spider in its web, always watching, always anticipating, and swift to act when the time was right. I never

**'OH MY GOD, IT'S PINK!'**

[Grouse Four]: Hey ElTee I think I just got eyes on that contact.

[Grouse One]: About time, Parker. I didn't send you on a picnic, is it real? 'Cause if not get your butt back here to help herd these jumpers towards the Airedale's staffing run.

[Grouse Four]: Checking ElTee, saw movement at 500 meters but it ducked the corner. Almost there ... whoa! Hey ElTee I've got a pink Demolisher, just cut the corner at Vine and Argyle.

[Grouse One]: Parker, I'm not sure you noticed when that *Wraith* took the paint off your chest, but these mercs are in tan and blue, not pink!

[Grouse Four]: I swear, sir, it was pink.

[Grouse One]: No more beer for you, Parker, seeing pink elephants is not even funny one little bit. You get me gun camera footage or you get your sorry ass back over here now!

[Grouse Four]: Wilco, sir.

[One minute of comm chatter follows between Grouse One, Two, and Three as they pursue mercenary 'Mechs through city streets.]

[Grouse One]: Parker, where are you?

[Pause]

[Grouse One]: Parker, I swear to God if you are jerking around I'll shove you in my cannon and select cluster shot!

[Pause, static]

[Grouse One]: Two, you and Three keep the pressure on these jumping beans, I'm swinging south and kick Four in the ass.

[Grouse Two]: Affirm, ElTee.

[No clear transmissions for three minutes]

[Grouse One]: Damn it! Grouse Four is down, looks like he ran into a shredder. I've got something on seismic, one-fifty meters on the right. Looks like someone shelled out a building. Got motion ... seismic is pegging red. Jake, start cutting south, I'm calling the Pointers to push up in support.

[Grouse Two]: Affirm, the jumpers are making a beeline for their eggs. Moving to support.

[Static]

[Grouse One]: Sweet holy mother of... It is pink! *[Static washes out the transmission.]*

[Grouse Two]: Say again, ElTee? ElTee? Brian, talk to me!

[Grouse Three]: Jake, they're coming back at us, and there's eight of 'em now!

[Grouse Two]: Ah crudstunk! Pull back! Back!

—Intercepted comm chatter between members of the Holt's Bird Dogs (employed by Word of Blake), Rochelle, 26 March 3076

really had the chance to get to know the man outside of the struggle. But while we met only briefly, in strategic and political conferences, I knew him as a kindred spirit, a man as devoted as any of us to the struggle against a common foe.

RAID ON ASTROKASZY

(22 April 3076)

Astrokaszy [MNN]—Earlier this month, Canopian forces assaulted Astrokaszy, targeting suspected Blakist bases on this lawless world. MAF High Command believes that both Blakist forces as well as pirates backed by the Word have been using Astrokaszy to stage attacks against the Magistracy, the Marian Hegemony, and parts of the Free Worlds League. Two battalions of the First Canopian Light Horse dropped in two-company groups against three suspected bases. Using the element of surprise, the Light Horse secured all three sites with minimal losses and quickly resupplied before converging on the Sultanate of Srin Obbaka Rashier.

The Sultanate, occupied by a regiment of the Order of the Faithful pirate band, boasted superior numbers but only fought the more experienced Light Horse to a stalemate before unexpected local resistance forces hit the Sword of the Faithful Hussars, possibly killing Rashier. The panicked Faithful units allowed the Light Horse to punch through their defenses, after which the battle quickly devolved into a rout. The Hussars reportedly scattered into the wastelands of Astrokaszy with less than half of their initial forces intact.

Remaining in the Sultanate for less than a week, the Light Horse left half of the salvage with the local resistance before returning to Magistracy space. Local forces have reportedly been able to seize control over Rashier's former Sultanate and have been attempting to hunt down the Faithful's survivors since the operation. With another regiment of the Order unaccounted for, however, it remains to be seen what will happen on Astrokaszy in the months and years still to come.

"Without this great man, perhaps none of us would be standing here today, still in the fight. Perhaps the Word's hidden Gabriel outpost would have remained hidden, the Word might still be winning, and we wouldn't now start to see a light at the end of this long tunnel. Without Uncle Chandy, we would—perhaps—still be fighting one another, rather than the greater evil that is the Word of Blake."

[Musamote stops reading and faces the camera again.]

"Although brief, Stone's speech has already left an impact among many of the Kuritan dignitaries gathered for Lord Kurita's memorial today. For the benefit of our reader-viewers at home, a full transcript of his and other memorial remarks on Kurita's behalf will be uploaded to ISAP's interstellar site later today. But no matter the words, the message is simple as it us universal: Chandrasekhar Kurita will be deeply missed.

"For the Interstellar Associated Press, this is Takiro Musamote; now back to you, Kevin."

—ISAP coverage of Chandrasekhar Kurita's memorial service, New Samarkand, 15 May 3076

STONE, FEDSUNS WIN NEW HESSEN'S SUPPORT

(2 June 3076)

New Hessen [NHN]—The first convoy of transports carrying troops and materiel arrived in system two days ago, a mere two weeks after Commanding General Hampton finally agreed to allow the New Hessen system to be used as a base of operations for relative newcomer Devlin Stone and his multi-national coalition of forces. Sought for its strategic location and already-hefty defense forces, the New Hessen system was approached by Stone's emissaries earlier in the year.

Since the return of his Hampton's Hessens mercenary command in 3069—after a long battle through Protectorate space from Galatea—then-Colonel Hampton first lobbied, then mandated a massive rise in defense spending and weapons production after wresting planetary control from the system legislature in a bloodless coup. But while the anticipated attack by the Word of Blake has yet to materialize, proponents have pointed out that it was the massive buildup of conventional forces along with extensive static fortifications that likely deterred the Blakists from expending their resources on an effort to conquer this world.

In exchange for the use of the system as an interstellar waypoint, units stationed on New Hessen, in case of a Word of Blake raid, will be under the command of New Hessen's local commanders, bolstering the planetary defenses many times over. Also, many of the government-owned "defense factories" currently producing RetroTech *Hammerhands*, *BattleAxes*, and the locally designed *Rook BattleMechs* will receive stockpiles of armor, engines, and other components produced offworld, allowing them the ability to offer limited upgrades to their existing production lines.

Polls indicate that New Hessen's citizens solidly favor the measure to support Stone's coalition, sixty percent to thirty-eight, with twelve percent unsure. However, seventy-four percent of those polled also feel that this act will increase the chances of a Word of Blake attack on New Hessen, a grim possibility that few Hessens can discount.

A CRISIS AVERTED

Times were so incredibly chaotic and constantly in flux that it seemed like every hour brought a new crisis to the Duchess' attention. In fact, deciding which issues to address often required much more resolve than the actual solutions she would have to enact. In other moments, the course of actions was thankfully more obvious.

In early February, 3076, the Duchess' intelligence officers identified a JumpShip falsely flying Capellan colors. It seemed an obvious Word of Blake ploy, but no target of interest was in the ship's path. At least, not until it was also discovered that Magestrix Centrella-Liao's path back to Sian would go through the Furud System. At that moment, their sinister intentions became all too clear.

The Duchess didn't hesitate to order her own ships scrambled to Furud with a full fighter compliment. To Naomi Centrella-Liao, the timely rescue must have seemed like the Hand of Fate itself. The Blakist ship was easily crippled, and her crew either killed or captured by Andurien marines. Duchess Humphreys herself went aboard Centrella-Liao's vessel, and it was now her turn to subtly chastise Naomi for traveling though hostile space with such a small contingent of bodyguards. After Naomi's public warning to Andurien during her official visit, the Duchess enjoyed turning the tables on the Magestrix.

However, Dame Humphreys also used the moment to offer a quiet olive branch to the Capellan-Canopian alliance. She made her ships and fighters available to the Magestrix as an escort force, to protect Lady Centrella-Liao all the way home to Sian's Celestial Palace.

The Magestrix had to make another of those monumental decisions that plagued rulers during the Jihad, namely: "Who can you trust?"

In the end, she chose to accept Duchess Humphreys' offer. Perhaps she was grateful for the rescue the Duchess had orchestrated. Or perhaps she realized that Andurien was indeed a trustworthy neighbor after all.

Or perhaps, given the insanity of these dark times, she simply felt she had no other choice.

—Excerpt from *Trying Times: The Living Biography of the Duchess of Andurien* (Chapter 12), Andurien Periodicals, May 3076



(27 April 3076)

"BattleCorps Legion Strikes Rochelle"

(30 April 3076)

"Stone, Chancellor Liao Begin Negotiations"

[SINS]

COMPLETED

(5 June 3076)

"Revenge for George' Movement Gains Momentum"

[INN]

DOWNLOADING

(15 June 3076)

"Taurians Attack Warren with *Vendetta*"

[NSNN]

ACCESSING

(20 June 3076)

"MIIO Lands Devastating Blow Against Anti-Gov Movement"

[MERCNET]

ACCESSING



CHAOS OVERWHELMING: COMES THE REAPER

COMES THE REAPER

Journal J76-684

A call was put out to all nearby merc units looking for some serious combat pay; after a grueling "Broadsword Enema" we were added to the rolls in Stone's little coalition. Target? Galatea.

Oh God, not again ...

SITUATION

Galatea, Lyran Alliance

2 January 3076

The "liberation" of Galatea has been quite a strain on Stone's allied task force; the Eleventh Division refused to fight a stand-up battle and instead scattered itself around the planet, conducting raids and terror attacks in defiance of Stone's authority. Then, in late December, a small Word task force showed up to reinforce the world with supplies and aerospace support for the besieged Eleventh. They also managed to recapture the Bastion station from Stone's forces and began using it to orbitally support their ground-bound brethren.

Stone quickly hired a smattering of mercenary commands, augmenting them with additional Com Guard reserves, in order to break the stalemate.

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: COMES THE REAPER

GAME SETUP

This battle can be run from space insertion to ground assault. Use at least two of the BattleSpace mapsheets for near-orbit combat; the ground combat zone assigned to the players consists of Plains and Coastal terrain (see *TW*, p. 263). Add a *Bastion* SDS (see *TRO57R*, p. 180) with a Regular crew for space combat and four two-hex hardened level 1 buildings (CF 150 each) with one automated weapon (up to 15 tons in weight, not including ammunition) per building hex (see *TO*, p. 133). The SDS should be placed within 3 hexes of the planet's atmosphere; the buildings placed near the center of the battlefield.

Attacker

The players may use up to 100 percent of their total force for deployment. In addition, they may increase their force by up to 10 percent with Com Guard units (vehicle or fighters only); these units have Veteran skill levels.

The Attacker enters from any one edge at the start of the battle; this edge is then considered the Attacker's home edge. All attacking units may only use Walking/Cruising/Safe Thrust during the first turn of movement.

Defender

The Defender consists of elements of the Word of Blake's Eleventh Division and should be 100 percent of the Attacker's total combined deployed force. These units may use any Mercenary, ComStar, and Word of Blake RAT and are of Veteran skill level.

The Defender sets up anywhere on the battlefield after the

Attacker has declared their entry edge.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 600 (space or ground battle only); 1,000 (combined)

Optional Bonuses

+200 Debris (Space only): Add 2d6-2 (to a minimum of 2) DropShip wrecks to the board; use the Debris rules in *Strategic Operations* (see *SO*, p. 45).

+300 Heavy Rainfall: Beginning in the Initiative phase of Turn 5, a heavy rain begins to fall. Use the Heavy Rainfall rules in *Tactical Operations* (see *TO*, p. 59).

+200 Payback: If the players successfully participated in the *Burning Bridges* track (see *JHS72*, p. 109), the Attacker's units may ignore the movement limitations for Turn 1.

OBJECTIVES

Forces receive the indicated victory bonuses for achieving the following objectives:

Might of Heroes: Destroy 75 percent of the Defender's total forces. Only available if the track is done for both space and ground combat. **(+1,000 point bonus)**

Revenge: Cripple or destroy at least half of the Defender's forces. (Available for both space and ground battles.) **(+400 point bonus)**

Smash and Grab: Destroy the SDS or command bunker for Stone's intel analysis teams. **(+400 point bonus)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: COMES THE REAPER

Forced Withdrawal

The Com Guard forces are operating under Forced Withdrawal rules (see *TW*, p. 258).

Salvage

Salvage is available for the ground portion of combat only.

AFTERMATH

The last-minute mercenary insertion was exactly what Stone's task force needed. The fresh infusion of troops broke the tenuous hold the Word still had on Galatea and enabled Stone's forces to finally rout the Eleventh Division. Only a few DropShips managed to break orbit and escape a few weeks later.

With the reclamation of the system, the Mercenary's Star reopened for business in February of 3076. As a debt of gratitude, those merc commands that helped liberate the system were

given rewards and discounts for a variety of services across the planet.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Galatea proves to be a longer and bloodier affair than initially supposed; someone's going to have to go in there and dig out the Eleventh Division in what could be costly "house-to-house" searching.

It's likely that a nearby coalition force has gotten "stuck" against a particularly nasty nest of Blakists and someone needs to save their bacon with a well-timed orbital drop or high-speed flanking maneuver.

NEXT TRACKS

Infestation, Slugger's Paradise, Starfall, Wave of Confusion

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: INFESTATION

INFESTATION

Nahoni's primary exports include zinc, copper, and coal from its numerous mountain chains, as well as rich Nahonish darkwood pine and chembuli sap from the equatorial forests. Sparsely populated, as opposed to the breadbasket systems of the Avalonian core, Nahoni is also known for its rugged lifestyle and is a favorite world of many outdoorsmen seeking a stint in the wild forests and mountains of the Nahoni landscape ...

—From the *Federated Suns Encyclopedia Travelogue*; New Avalon Press, 3067

SITUATION

Nahoni, Federated Suns

14 June 3076

Not your run-of-the-mill operation, this one. Officially contracted out as a "third-party enforcement unit" by some obscure department in the bloated Federated Suns bureaucracy, it seems like a simple smash-in-smash-out op. Something you and your team desperately need after all the recent hard-core fighting.

Rumors running across many of the backwater Suns worlds has it that small groups of protesters have popped up, fomenting unrest and discord against the scions ensconced on New Avalon. With the capital freed of Blakist occupation, little has been done to address the issues and grievances these worlds have, and some people are taking the situation into their own hands.

That is, until the government decided to step in.



CHAOS OVERWHELMING: INFESTATION

GAME SETUP

This battle is a ground-only operation.

Use maps from the Mountain and Wooded terrain tables (see *TW*, p. 263). Add two Level 1 heavy buildings (CF 90 each) of one to two hex sizes to each mapsheet. One building from each mapsheet pair contains an automated weapon up to 15 tons in weight, not including ammunition (see *TO*, p. 133). Each building hex also receives the bonuses of the underlying terrain when determining movement and line of sight.

Attacker

The Attacker consists of up to 10 percent of the player's total force. Select one map edge to enter from; that edge is also considered the Attacker's home edge.

Defender

The Defender equals 125 percent of the Attacker's total deployed force; only 25 percent of it may consist of BattleMech units and may not contain any battle armor. The Defender's forces are of Regular experience and may use the Federated Suns, Mercenary, and Periphery RATs.

The Defender sets up all units on the battlefield after the Attacker declares his home edge. All units must be within 3 hexes of a building.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 400

Optional Bonuses

+100 Hot Drop: The Attacker may choose to enter the battle as per the Dropping Troops rule in *Strategic Operations* (see *SO*, p. 22).

+300 Nest of Vipers: Add an additional 25 percent of the Defender's force; these units are of Elite skill level (both objectives need to be completed in order to gain this bonus).

OBJECTIVES

Forces receive the indicated victory bonuses for achieving the following objectives:

Squash the Nest: Cripple or destroy at least 75 percent of the Defender's forces. **(+300 point bonus)**

Exfoliate: Destroy all of the Defender's buildings. **(+200 point bonus)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Salvage

If only one objective is reached, all salvage is halved.

If both objectives are reached as well as the *Nest of Vipers* option, all salvage may be claimed; in addition, the Attacker is awarded two vehicle units (rolled on a Federated Suns RAT) that are discovered in the ruins of one of the bunkers.

AFTERMATH

Sometimes, simplicity is really that—simple. The mission was a cakewalk and a thankful Davion governor sent you on your merry way soon after.

Only during the outbound flight did it become obvious that the mission was really an execution of some "free speech" advocates who had dared to challenge the governmental status quo. Seems the Davions are just as devious and corrupt as the rest of the Inner Sphere. Who knew?

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

So who was the mystery bureaucrat that contracted you out? Some investigation may be warranted. And what if some of those "rebels" had escaped the carnage? Would they swear revenge, or contract out the players to exact some retribution?

NEXT TRACKS

Slugger's Paradise, Wave of Confusion, Steel City





connection/JIHAD HOT SPOTS:3076/section07: LATE 3076: TOTAL WARFARE

LATE 3076: TOTAL WARFARE





LATE 3076: TOTAL WARFARE

LATE 3076: TOTAL WARFARE

The war against the Word finally began in earnest as 3076 drew to a close. Led by Devlin Stone, Victor Steiner-Davion, and others, the multi-national coalition launched the first dedicated blows against the Word of Blake's Protectorate, facing immediate challenges on nearly every front. Despite hiccups and headaches—many caused by the cross-factional nature of the coalition attack groups—the allies' successes brought hope to the masses and helped to shatter the long-standing rivalries and distrust that had resurfaced since the fall of the Clans, if only for a short while. Although

internal divisions still loomed among the allies, their first major victories had finally placed the Word on the defensive.

Yet even as Stone's coalition united forces from the Federated Suns, Lyran Alliance, Draconis Combine, the Free Worlds Resistance, and even the Clans, some realms—like the Capellan Confederation and the Principality of Regulus—continued their own, independent crusades against the Word's borders. Desperate for quick victories at any cost, forces on both sides of these conflicts unleashed their nuclear options, risking the horrors of mutually assured

destruction on an interplanetary scale. Years of Blakist terror and treachery had finally come full circle as their one-time allies illustrated the true nature of total warfare.

By the end of 3076, it became clear that the Word was finally on the losing end of their Sphere-wide war, but to end the threat once and for all, the cost would be high indeed. For each victory, the allies would pay a heavy price as the Word's defenders grew increasingly desperate to stave off the inevitable.

—Bertram Habeas, INN Special Correspondent

CONVERGENCE

By the latter half of 3076, the coalition gathered by Devlin Stone, David Lear, and Victor Steiner-Davion had proven its worth to the leaders of the Lyran Alliance, Federated Suns, and Draconis Combine. Forces from ComStar, the Free Worlds Resistance, and even the Clans committed troops to the grand alliance, seeing Stone as the best hope for victory since Steiner-Davion's rallying cry for a second Star League.

But to truly defeat the Word of Blake, to end their threat to all of humanity once and for all, the allies would need to break through a wall of steel thrown up on the worlds surrounding Terra, worlds that lay in the borders of the Blake Protectorate. Worlds that had been fortified against the very onslaught the allies would now unleash.

BELLE LEE ON THE MOVE

[Dubinsky]: I'm here on the *Templar's Promise* with General Belle Lee, commander of Stone's Lament, a strike force headed for [CENSORED]. General, welcome and thank you for taking a few moments of your busy schedule for this interview. *[Camera pans to a younger-looking woman with flaming red hair and sparkling blue eyes, dressed in plain green combat fatigues.]*

[Lee]: One of many, I'm sure, Alan.

[Dubinsky]: Yes, quite. *[Smiles]* So General, tell us a little about who you are. Like your commander, you seem to be a relative newcomer to the military stage of the Inner Sphere.

[Lee]: Oh, I wouldn't put it quite like that, Alan. My roots—much like my family—go pretty deep into the military history of humanity. And before you rock hounds go digging, I will say that yes, I am a former commissioned officer of the Armed Forces of the Federated Suns.

[Dubinsky]: Which unit?

[Lee]: I'd rather not say at this time, Alan. In fact, I'd like to look forward at this time; history can come later, after we've made our own.

[Dubinsky]: An interesting perspective, though I will admit that many of our viewers and myself included are disappointed in your—and your commands'—reluctance to tell us where you've come from. How can we truly judge this coalition if we're unsure of your past?

[Lee]: *[Angry]* I'm not a Blakist, if that's what you're angling at. Why should it matter, really? We're willing to put our lives on the line for each of you and our commander, Devlin Stone. He saved us from a living nightmare that even now, I still revisit in my dreams.

Each day we fight for Lyran, Drac, Freddie, Leaguer and even Cappie and Clanner—but all you reporters seem to care about is who we are and what dirt you could possibly dig up. Is that really important when the entire fate of our humanity is threatened by the machinations of the Word of Blake?

[Dubinsky]: Well, I mean, I nev—

[Lee]: *[Infuriated]* Of course you never intended to do that, but that's what today's journalism is all about, isn't it? It's not good news until you've reported on casualty figures and gross mistakes, sitting in your little armchairs and dissecting battles that cost me my men and women like it's some Tri-bowl competition?

It's little wonder that the common man has such drek-low respect for you camera hogs, primping and preening for your own ratings and ego and yet never quite sticking it out there to do anything about the horrors these people are facing across the Sphere. When's the last time you rode in a military vehicle that wasn't parading through the streets like some conquering hero?

[Dubinsky]: Miss Lee, I mea—

LATE 3076: TOT

[Lee]: And that's "General" to you, *Mister* Dubinsky. You are here not because I wanted you to be, but because Devlin knew the only way you scum-dragging reporters would learn is if you were in the thick of it yourselves.

[Dubinsky]: You—I—well, I'm—

[Lee]: Outraged? Save it. Bottle up your prissiness and direct it at the Blakists when we hit [CENSORED], Alan. Maybe for once you'll report the news and not your own personal brag sheet.

[Palms the camera lens] Interview's over.

—Archived footage, recorded on 3 July 3076

THE NEW EARTH RAID

(14 August 3076)

Devlin,

Attached are the various reports from the unit commanders regarding the raid on New Earth. We expected it to be well defended, but I don't think anyone was prepared for how fortified it was. If this is an indication of the Blakists' interior defenses, we're in for a tough fight. To save you some trouble, I'm including an excerpt of Precentor McClellan's report here. It should give you an idea of what they faced before you dive into the rest of the reports. Congratulations on the first wave too; that SDS on Rochelle was a damned scary surprise.

... The Com Guard took the heaviest losses coming through the space/atmosphere barrier. The Blakist commander concentrated fire on the Lyrans only after they secured the LZ, with two Ills nominally belonging to the Thirty-ninth WoBM providing their spearpoint. Marshal Kendrick had to abandon the LZ before she could offload her entire complement, and the Blakists surrounded and eliminated the forces that were left behind.

The Federated forces fared better, driving right from their beachhead to the objective, but without any heavy artillery and conventional infantry support, they were unable to penetrate or reduce the Blakist fortifications [Dev, These fortifications are apparently widespread; our forces on several worlds have run into this problem -VSD] General Houghton ordered a fighting

COALITION D-DAY

(10 August 3076)

Donegal [DBC]—The following interview was originally recorded on 12 July 3076:

[Karen Silverford]: Hello, Leutenant General Hogarth. Thank you for speaking with us again, and congratulations on your promotion.

[Thomas Hogarth]: Not at all, Karen. It is always a pleasure.

[Karen]: Events have certainly taken some surprising turns since we last talked. The liberation of Coventry and Hesperus II, and of course your own defense of Furillo. And now the Alliance and its allies are on the offensive. How do you see the campaign progressing?

[Hogarth]: Coventry and Hesperus II were essential first steps. Hesperus II, especially. The assault 'Mech production lines there are absolutely vital to keeping our troops properly equipped. The new *Atlas II* is a fine example of what our troops need to take the fight to the enemy. Why, I even believe Devlin Stone pilots one. Have you met Devlin? Delightful fellow! He was most interested in getting my input on dealing with these Blakists.

[Karen]: What did you tell him?

[Hogarth]: Well, obviously the spearhead of our efforts will ultimately be aimed towards Terra, but both Devlin and the Archon agree that we cannot ignore our flanks. Have you met Adam Steiner, by the way? Marvelous chap. Absolutely the best man for the job. Great shame he was not given it back in '67. I'm sure we would have weathered things far better with his experienced hand on the tiller.

[Karen]: Errr ... Thank you for that insight. So this strike on Rochelle is intended to guard the flank of the main assault?

[Hogarth]: Exactly! The Archon clearly knows just how important it is. Any troops we pin down can't be used to resist our main assault and can't launch counterattacks or raid out rear areas. The Archon even insisted I accompany the strike force. Just to keep an eye on things for him, you understand?

[Karen]: Umm ... Yes, General. I think I do.

NEWS DOWNLOADER v3.7



Date & Title

Service

Status

(23 July 3076)

"Al Na'ir Liberated"

[VOTD]

COMPLETED

(15 August 3076)

"The Price New Hessen Pays for Joining Stone"

[VOT]

DOWNLOADING

(22 August 3076)

"AFFS Confirms Roughriders Relocated from Taurian Front"

[MERCNET]

ACCESSING



LATE 3076: TOTAL WARFARE

withdrawal when approximately two Division-sized Blakist elements converged on his position. BattleROM analysis suggests there were largely composed of conventional forces with only light 'Mech support, which enabled the Seventh Crucis to disengage without further incident, while their extensive aerospace coverage helped to deter further pursuit.

Precentor Martial, the First Division performed as well as can be expected for a newly formed unit. We were lucky in that the Blakist commander committed largely before we grounded, leaving only a single Level III to harass our pickets. The predominance of Clan equipment suggests further elements of the Thirty-ninth Division, but their identity remains unverified.

My major concern is Tai-sa Mitchum's disregard for civilian casualties and his inability to work in a coalition setting. Combined with the lack of combat engineers required for reducing the Blakist fortifications and suitable artillery support, the situation became untenable within hours of our initial landings and cost us the entire offensive. We've got to work together better than this, sir!

FOR THE GREATER GOOD

[Hansen]: Unbelievable! First you refuse to re-supply while we defend your systems, and now that we finally can pick up supplies and replacements, you say we can't go back!

[Knightburg]: It was decided your hardened forces would be better suited breaking the back of the Blakists' home turf, so you'll be part of the groups underneath the Stone coalition that will be marching to Terra. Absorbing the Bluecoats only helped so much bolstering your strength, but you can't deal with an entire power on your own for much longer. Most of your men carry more prosthetics than those damn toasters just so they can keep on fighting.

[Hansen]: Are you saying we aren't doing a good enough job? Damn it, we had them running around like chickens—

[Knightburg]: Colonel, you did damn good! Their offensive forces are crippled, and they can only take on minimal resistance anymore if they do try. It's only that damn WarShip we have to worry about, and that's not something you are prepared to deal with. If we had just two more RCTs to spare, we could not only have taken back all our worlds, but ripped a few off them as well! But we have nothing left to give, and ironically enough right now, it's *your* presence that's keeping those cows fired up. *[Pauses]*

Hasek feels that if we move you there and rotate fresh troops on the Concordat front, we can retake most of those systems because their most-wanted target will be out of reach and their morale will plummet.

[Hansen]: So this is the thanks we get? You think my men won't take this the wrong way?

[Knightburg]: How they take it is irrelevant. This is a direct order from your contract holder. The JumpShips you use are ours. Unless you want to break contract get stranded in deep space, you *will* comply.

[Hansen]: I just hope Mary will forgive me for this.

[Knightburg]: Wolf, it's been almost ten years now. How bad have those nightmares gotten?

—Excerpt from an alleged conversation between Colonel Wolfgang Hansen and FedSuns Liaison, Captain Aleksander Knightburg, 17 August 3076

MARTIAL DAVION REPORTS

(1 September 3076)

Arc-Royal [INN]—Today Martial Davion issued a brief statement from his headquarters aboard the *Invisible Truth*.

"I'm pleased to announce that the first phase of our new campaign has been completed successfully. Since April this year coalition forces have been preparing the way, raiding targets in the Word of Blake Protectorate to gather intelligence and to stretch enemy forces. Both difficult and dangerous for the Com Guard and Coalition forces assigned, this duty was carried out with courage and professionalism.

"Now the second phase of operations has commenced. Obviously I cannot go into details at this time, but Coalition forces, spearheaded by the Com Guards Third and Fourth Armies, have launched the first assaults on Protectorate worlds. These are no mere pinprick raids intended to annoy or distract—although other commands are continuing to perform such duties to keep our foe guessing. Our troops have landed in force and are there to stay.

"There is no disguising our ultimate goal. Terra has always been the key to defeating the Word of Blake. The road to Terra will be a long and hard journey, but we have now taken the first steps down that road."

TERRORIST STRIKES THREATEN RECOVERY EFFORTS

(10 September 3076)

Hunan [CSN]—The cowardly barbarians of the Word of Blake have found a new and even more deplorable way to strike at the peaceful people of the Capellan Confederation. Forced off several worlds by the might of the Chancellor's armies, the Blakist savages refused to withdraw entirely.

Masking their various terror cells in falsified JumpShips and DropShips, these fundamentalists smuggled organized strike teams and weapons onto several Capellan worlds that had recently been liberated from their ruthless, blood-soaked campaign.

Across Wei, Tsitsang, St. Andre, Styk, and Hunan, the Word's terrorist cells unleashed a new round of nuclear attacks. Fortunately for the citizens trying so valiantly to rebuild their homes and lives, these weapons were much smaller and more tactical in nature. Their destructive capabilities, while still loathsome and horrifying, were notably less powerful than the full-force attacks that have been so savagely delivered across the Inner Sphere in recent years.

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Capellan officers reacted to the new wave of terror attacks with cunning and bravery. Without hesitation, brave Capellan warriors struck back with their own tactical nuclear devices, demonstrating with finality that those who live by the sword will die by it as well. Though costly and savage, these counterstrikes in equal force shattered the enemy terror cells as quickly as they emerged, cleansing our worlds with the righteous might of the CCAF.

Civilian authorities were quick to praise the actions of the liberating forces, while acknowledging that the extreme damages caused in these exchanges set back reconstruction efforts considerably. Nevertheless, the people of the Confederation must agree that any military efforts to preserve our unity must be embraced, no matter how repugnant.

Mandrrin Wei Tsu Li spoke via broadcast to the people of Wei and said, "Any hardship we must endure pales in comparison to the pain the Chancellor endures from the murder of his people, or the horror of losing our beloved realm to savages like the Word. Whatever the cost, no matter how many times we must rebuild, we will not fail our nation, our people, or our ruler."

GHOST BEARS ADVANCE IN PROTECTORATE

(14 September 3076)

Hesperus II [INN]—After months of relative quiet and an unofficial cease-fire between Stone's Coalition and the Word of Blake, fighting broke out again in July as the Coalition launched a series of assaults on key Protectorate worlds. Later that month, the forces of the Ghost Bear Dominion joined the fight again, this time with apparent reinforcements in the form of several Clan Snow Raven WarShips. Striking hard, the Ghost Bear forces struck along a long sector of the Protectorate border, hitting every world at once. Intelligence reports about the organization of the Protectorate defenses prompted a huge force—three Galaxies strong—to strike at the key defensive world of Dyev, while a fourth Galaxy of troops split off to hit Sabik, Moore, Lambrecht, Kervil, and Ko.

Fighting on Dyev has been brutal and protracted. The years of Blakist occupation having seen a large system of defensive lines and bunkers being built along key sites on the planet, making any direct assault a long and bloody campaign. Resistance on other target worlds has been lighter, with fighting on Lambrecht, Sabik, and Ko mainly being done. Garrison forces directed by Devlin Stone's coalition, mainly Kurita militia forces, have moved in to occupy the worlds, as past experience has shown that the Ghost Bears are unwilling to leave any forces onworld after they have assured that all Blakist resistance is eliminated.

Reports are that the Ghost Bears forces freed up from the first targets already have struck their newest objectives—Skondia, Pike IV and Lyons—slowly moving to cut off all the border worlds around Dyev. Resistance to the Ghost Bears has been

light on these worlds, reinforcing the belief that the allies' push against the key defense worlds of the Protectorate convinced the Blake Protectorate to shuffle forces from less critical worlds to counteract them.

MASSACRE ON KESSEL

[Camera pans across the hills and valley below, littered with burning tanks and the sprawled forms of BattleMechs. It stops on a lean and haggard reporter standing in front of the smoldering remains of a Cyrano helicopter.]

[Bremin Sorvil]: *[Speaks quietly, with reverence]* I'm standing on Blossom Hill, overlooking the Valley of Sweet Blossoms. What was once an idyllic park for families to celebrate life events is now a smoldering battlefield where the remains of the Fortieth Dieron Regulars reside.

[Vid flips to a collage of battleROM and aerial shots of the battle, punctuated with explosions and laser fire as Sorvil continues.]

[Sorvil]: Less than a week ago, two Word of Blake DropShips landed nearby and began moving on the LAW warehouses located in nearby Inchiba. The remains of the Fortieth, brutally ripped apart from an internal dispute back in 3069, mobilized their two remaining battalions and air wing in an attempt to stall the Blakist forces until reinforcements could arrive from nearby Dromini IV.

[Camera returns to reporter, zooming in on his face.]

[Sorvil]: Despite their valiant defense, the Word forces decimated them, picking them apart on the valley approach and over there—*[Turns, pointing back towards two distant mountain peaks]*—dropped two tactical nuclear warheads on the bulk of the Fortieth's command and supply chain.

[Sorvil stops, visibly shaken, biting his lip. Camera pans and zooms into the valley, focusing in on a standing Akuma missing most of its right side. Smoke continues to billow from it.]

[Sorvil]: As a result, the Fortieth rushed the Blakist defenses here along the hill. And here they died.

[Camera zooms out and refocuses on Sorvil.]

[Sorvil]: One cannot fathom the complete destruction executed here. *[Stops, tears rolling down cheeks.]* And honestly, this reporter can only wonder just how successful the Fortieth could have been if those traitorous sons of bitches hadn't left Kessel back in '69 to pursue their own selfish goals. To hell with the *Kokuryu-kai!* They have only succeeded in gutting the life of this world and who knows how many more!

[Silence. Camera slowly pans across the brutal landscape once more.]

[Sorvil]: Who will stand in the gap for the faithful of the Combine? Who will come to defend Kessel if these *gaijin* return? Tell me, dear Dragon, *who?*

—Voice of the Dragon field report, Kessel, 22 September 3076



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THE PROTECTORATE CURTAIN: WHAT TO EXPECT?

(1 November 3076)

Galatea [INN]—So just what can Coalition troops expect to encounter as they push into the Word of Blake Protectorate? In the last decade the Blakists have unleashed a stream of very nasty surprises: phantom armies, ghost ships, cyborg warriors, and of course a fanatical devotion that has allowed their commanders to unleash a host of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons without a flicker of conscience. And the recent fighting to liberate Galatea introduced yet another Blakist secret weapon—stealth tanks!

Rumors of ships with enhanced jump range have proven to be true, though the system has severe drawbacks. It still gives the Blakists a significant advantage, for they can shift troops rapidly to meet any assault. Stories that the Word of Blake were buying up old JumpShips prior to the collapse of the Second Star League suggest that they are in possession of a significant number of expendable vessels with which to deliver troops or squadrons of their Pocket WarShips to any system that is attacked.

As the Coalition penetrates deeper into the Protectorate, who knows what other rumors may be proven true? Zombie armies with their ranks full of chem-controlled civilians packed with explosives, making them living bombs? Giant BattleMechs far bigger than anything seen before that can convert into tanks or DropShips in a manner somewhat akin to Land-Air-Mechs? Orbital platforms armed with weapons that can smash even the most powerful WarShip in a single salvo? Sophisticated AI systems that can control vehicles, fighters or even BattleMechs?

We have to put things in perspective. True, the Blakists hid much of their strength in an elaborate shell game that they later used to inflate the numbers once they launched their attack. Surely whatever awaits the Coalition cannot be as bad as the wild rumors would have us believe.

VICTORY ON NEW HESSEN!

(10 December 3076)

New Hessen [NANS]—Word came late last night that the final stronghold of Blakist raiders has been overrun by forces under the command of New Hessen's own General Hampton. The facility, known to be the lynchpin of Blakist insurgency on New Hessen, was captured after a brutal fifteen-hour struggle. Unfortunately, the material taken in the recent Blakist raid on New Hessen WorkMechs was not recovered; General Hampton has indicated that the Word may have smuggled them off the world shortly after that successful raid.

Damage to the surrounding area was substantial; the Blakist stronghold was within the Agripole Mining Complex. While rumors of tactical nuclear strikes have yet to be verified, the local militia is limiting civilian traffic to the area for the duration.

SCORCHED EARTHExalted *Sang-shao* Daurov,

1. Recent allied incursions into Word of Blake territory have resulted in brutal Blakist counterstrikes. The Blakists have struck along all points of the compass, hitting New Kyoto and Algorab in the Lyran Commonwealth; Amity, Bordon, and Connaught in the Free Worlds League; Kessel and Alnasi in the Draconis Combine, and Ronel and New Hessen in the Federated Suns.

2. Between 7 and 21 September 3076, Word of Blake struck the Capellan worlds of Styk, Tsitsang, Wei, St. Andre, and Hunan.

3. Blakist attacks were characterized by (a) small forces (none larger than a III) and (b) willingness to employ weapons of mass destruction.

4. We would do well to consider Styk as a case study.

5. On 14 September, the Blakist raiding party landed just outside Pealung on the continent of Gowan, drawing out the local militia to defend the city and then shattering the force with the battlefield employment of tactical nuclear weapons. At this point, Word of Blake secured effective control of the planet.

6. On 19 September, our forces deployed a neurotoxin at the Blakist-occupied DropPort outside Pealung. Our analysis indicates that the WoBM III suffered approximately forty percent casualties, with incidental civilian exposure. (See attached appendix for civilian death totals and projections for future impact on population growth.)

7. These steadfast demonstrations of Capellan resolve forced the Blakists to withdraw that very evening.

8. It is unlikely that the Word of Blake Militia intended to hold an entire world with no more force than a III. However, it is also clear that they were not prepared to deal with the level of resistance they encountered on Styk and that it hastened their departure. Such attacks will give the Blakists pause before attacking Capellan targets and cause them to focus their attention on other Successor States, especially, one would hope, the Federated Suns.

9. It is my recommendation that Styk be employed as a template to respond to future WoBM raids, since our use of force there was entirely successful with very little meaningful cost.

10. Word of Blake has often been described as fanatical, but their fanaticism pales in comparison to the dedication of the Capellan people. None can stand against us.

Your Humble Servant,

—Intercepted report by *Sao-shao* Esther Li, CCAF (veracity unconfirmed), 24 September 3076 (report received 13 December 3076)

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Militia Colonel Brian Andrepov verified that several prisoners were taken from the facility after its fall. Currently, they are being held in an undisclosed location as allied commanders discuss what to do with them. Public officials are demanding a summary execution after the mass destruction caused by the nuclear strikes near the Munich Interstellar Starport back in August, but it is unknown who of those being detained are responsible for those actions.

"We'll begin interrogation procedures shortly and in due course the true villains will be known," said General Hampton in a short statement.

GRIM PORTENTS

Even as the allies converged on the Word of Blake's Protectorate, the shadow war for the Word's second haven—the Free Worlds League—raged on.

SELASYS YARDS ATTACKED

ATTN: PMARIK@FWLP.ATR.INS

CC: JGARDNER@OCG.ATR.INS

RE: SELASYS YARD (LOYALTY) PROGRESS REPORT

DATE: 08SEP3076

Minister, you'll be forwarded a more thorough report once the investigation is complete, but here are our initial findings.

At approximately 0230 hrs LIMA on 01SEP3076, a falsely registered *Merchant*-class JumpShip [JS1] entered the Loyalty system at the nadir jump point and declared an emergency. The yardmaster directed the JumpShip to one of the free berths and repairs were undertaken using funds from a dummy corporation. The JumpShip and her attendant DropShip [DS1] were given cursory checks, but as the damage was evident, further investigation was delayed until the arrival of a customs team.

At approximately 2540 hrs on 06SEP3076, an Irian-registered *Invader*-class JumpShip [Istar357] entered the system and detached three *Leopard CV*-class DropShips [DS2-4], which then moved toward the yards in an aggressive posture. Yard defenses were dispatched to intercept the DropShips. At this point, all yard defenses were directed at the incoming threat.

At approximately 2657 hrs, multiple commando teams exited DS1 (investigation team posits they were concealed in false containers) for EVA deployment on several yard structures. Yard security was alerted at 2712 hrs to their presence when an incendiary device detonated prematurely. Security deployed battle armor assets, and all attackers were either detained or eliminated in the subsequent action. (Interrogation determined source of mercenary payment though not employer.)

At 2704 hrs, DS2-4 broke off forward movement, withdrawing to Istar357, and docked before local defense assets could prosecute targets. Istar357 exited system at 2754 hrs (Waiting

TRAGEDY AT LOYALTY

[Voiceover plays as images and video of explosions, gunfire, violent decompression, oxygen venting, and other equally tragic images play across the screen. The images are brutal, gut-wrenching and in your face.]

"To stand by and allow such barbaric brutality upon the peaceful enclaves orbiting Loyalty is what the House Lords have always done. Since the days of the Usurper, the high-and-mighty princes and lords of these realms have not cared what their actions do to the people who live and occupy human space.

"Witness the latest atrocity, conducted by the unfeeling murderers of Regulus. What was their motive? Why visit such horrible destruction on innocent men, women and children? The Loyalty habitats were the homes of mothers, fathers, technicians, bakers, teachers, and more. Their lives were snuffed out by the whim and will of Prince Titus, and his hatred of all that the innocent people of Loyalty possess.

"Our shipyards—dockyards and repair bays for merchant vessels all across League space (Regulus included)—are heavily damaged. Our people, everyday folks like you, have been killed by the hundreds, jettisoned like so much space garbage, simply because a boy wishes to enact his father's blind hatred of freedom.

"This is what the pettiness and greed of the so-called lords and leaders of the Inner Sphere does to the common man. Vengeance for the lives of Loyalty will be ours. We, the survivors, will rebuild.

"Join the hands of Loyalty and stop the predation of princes like Titus. Visit your local Word of Blake HPG station and find out how you can help rebuild the damage done to humanity by petty nobles and power-mad Houses.

"Word of Blake. For a brighter tomorrow and a better future."
—Voice of Blake "Public Service Announcement" circulated through the independent worlds of the Free Worlds League, 7 September 3076

on verification from Irian representatives re: Istar357's lithium battery; could be another false flag.) JS1 surrendered to yard security, claiming ignorance of passengers' intent.

At 0002 hrs 07SEP3076, multiple incendiary devices ignited throughout the yard, severing approximately twenty-seven support structures, and rupturing fuel lines attached to a *Venturer*-class prototype. [See attached Project: LEXICON]. Prototype suffered sympathetic detonations within superstructure and caused secondary damage to yard facilities attached. At 0012 hrs, prototype suffered catastrophic detonation, breaking vessel's spine. Order given to tech teams on board to abandon ship at 0015hrs.

Initial funds trace of JS1 transfer identified a suspected Regular front company, with parent organization having heavy ties with former Regular regime. Further investigation ongoing,



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but initial finding is that elements of RSS or RDF are responsible. I'll get the final report to you ASAP.
 —Intercepted Free Worlds government memo (Classified, veracity unconfirmed), posted by Free Worlds Resistance sources on Abadan newsnets, circa 9 September 3076

CAPTAIN-GENERAL CORRINE MARIK DECRIES REGULAN TREACHERY

"The Marik Commonwealth and the rest of the Free Worlds League decries and condemns the actions taken by the Principality of Regulus in their brutal attack on the SelaSys Shipyards at Loyalty.
 "Human tragedy and death is always painful, especially so for those caught in the binds of war.
 "It is tragedy on a scale that rivals the mass deaths on Atreus and other worlds touched by this Jihad. To be brought about in a manner that equals—and in the eyes of many, exceeds—the brutality visited upon Regulus, Stewart, Atreus, and other League worlds is inexcusable. We are one nation, the pinnacle of the Inner Sphere and upholders of honor, as demonstrated through the lives and sacrifices of the late Knights of the Inner Sphere.
 "While the Principality of Regulus may claim strategic initiative and contingency planning, we in the Marik Commonwealth and across the League find their actions reprehensible and childish. If Regulus wishes to strike back at our common enemy, then we invite them to submit to proper League authority and command.
 "That is all at this time."
 —Captain-General Corrine Marik, Atreus, 10 September 3075

DYEV HIT BY BLAKIST COUNTERATTACK!

(31 December 3076)
 Kessel [ISAP]—The brutal campaign on the Protectorate world of Dyev has apparently taken a turn for the worse. The allied campaign to seize this world—ongoing since late July—slowly ground down the entrenched Blakist defenders and looked

THE HANGING THREAT

(11 November 3076)
 Alys, I'm not sure how well you and the Regulans are getting along at the moment, but here's something they might want to know about. What you do with this information is up to you, but Stone says more allies never hurt. This is a transcript of a conversation that was picked up by one of the spysats my people managed to slip in-system at Gibson (before the Word chased our Jumper off). I've only included the basics; the usual price applies for the full deal. —C

>>>Excerpt Begins<<<

[Voice One—ID: Naamah, AKA "Sonja Amora"]: And the WarShip was lost too?

[Voice Two—ID: Apollyon (no known alias)]: Indeed. I had thought the new Prince would heed my warning, but it seems he's either incapable of running his realm, or thinks he can defy His will. In any case, this cannot go unanswered.

[Naamah]: *[Exasperated]* Why do we even care? The Frails can fend for themselves. The vaunted Precentor Martial despises us. It's not like we—

[Apollyon]: *[Stern]* Watch your words, Daughter! Ours is a sacred duty, to protect the Frails, even if they refuse to see it as such. And part of that calling is ensuring that they understand the consequences of defiance.

[Naamah]: We should simply erase the world. It would be fitting after all their efforts.

[Apollyon]: And punish billions of people for the impudence of a leader they had no choice in following? No, *filia*, I'll not condemn a world for the actions of a single man. That sort of thinking cost us Jardine. Cost *me* Jardine. No. *This* message must be clearly directed at the Prince. Something that will make sure he understands once and for all. Something ... visceral.

[Naamah]: He's weak. He was a fop when I stood in the palace. Only since his marriage has he shown any backbone. *[Pause]* I have something in mind ...

[Apollyon]: I don't need to know the details. Just make sure he knows who is responsible.

[Naamah]: Trust me, *Praetor*. He will.

NEWS DOWNLOADER



Date & Title	Service	Status
(13 September 3076) "Word Begins Guerrilla Campaign on New Hessen"	[FSNS]	COMPLETED
(19 September 3076) "Amity, Bordon, Connaught Assaulted by Word of Blake"	[INN]	DOWNLOADING
(2 October 3076) "New Syrtis, Vendetta Battle it Out"	[NSNN]	ACCESSING



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to be heading towards a last showdown, as intelligence finally managed to pinpoint one of the last two Blakist strongholds still unaccounted for. But before the Ghost Bear forces could launch their devastating assault, the situation changed. Appearing at a pirate point over Dyev, a Word of Blake relief force decided to run the gauntlet of Ghost Bear and Raven Warships.

Protecting the planet ever since the assault have been the *Leviathan II*-class *Rasalhague*, the *Nightlord*-class *Ursus Major* and the Raven *Aegis*-class *Scabbard*. Attempting to push through the Ghost Bear forces was a force of three Word of Blake WarShips, the *Aegis*-class *Righteous Fury*, *Whirlwind*-class *Fire Fang* and *Congress*-class *Hollings York*, supported by a dozen Pocket WarShips and assault DropShips. Engaging the Ghost Bear fleet in a brutal onslaught, they covered the arrival of a second force that launched an armada of troop DropShips. Over two-thirds of these reinforcements made it planetside and dispersed into several locations to escape the possibility of orbital bombardment.

The aftermath of the space battle saw the destruction of the *Aegis*-class *Scabbard* and all Word of Blake warships. The *Ursus Major* was heavily damaged, and a third of the aerospace fighters from the *Rasalhague* were lost in the fighting.

On the ground, elements of several Protectorate Militia forces have been detected, along with the Twenty-eighth and Thirty-second Word of Blake Militia Divisions. What seemed to be finally over has again turned into a long and bitter fight. The audacity of the Word of Blake braving the Ghost Bear blockade and the assets they have deployed to Dyev speaks volumes on how important this world is for the Word of Blake. Time alone will show the amount of sacrifice needed for either side to lay claim.

AND IN OTHER NEWS...

As ever, the tightening focus on the Blake Protectorate and the Free Worlds League often relegated major stories like the fighting on Niops and the rebellion of native Rasalhagians against the Ghost Bear Dominion out of the universal headlines. But no conflict occurs in a vacuum, and history regards all events—great and small—with equal import.

KITTERY MANIFESTO

[This so-called "Kittery Manifesto" began appearing on Terra Firma in June of this year and—despite attempts by Blakist officials to censor it—has rapidly spread across the planet. The original message was flash-spammed to every inbox, anonymous drop, and public bulletin board on Kittery on 9 July 3071.]

Five hundred years ago on this day, the Star League was born. And humanity has been paying the price ever since.

The League was born in violence, its first act one of naked aggression and territorial expansion. A mere two hundred years later it was dead, and the House Lords fought to claim its legacy, neither realizing nor caring that victory would gain them nothing but ash. The Clans sought to forcibly remake the League through conquest and subjugation, and millions died. The second Star League, founded for genocide, lasted not even ten years before collapsing amid selfishness and apathy.

The time has come to turn our eyes away from the failures of the past and toward a more promising future, to clear away the national and ethnic loyalties of old, to build a movement across old borders and older hatreds. Some will try to stop us and use force against us, but in resisting them we must not lose sight of our noble ends. For though our desire is a lasting peace, war is the crucible through which we must pass to achieve it. We do so in the hope that this generation shall be the last for whom war is a matter of policy and preference. This is the burden we willingly assume. This is the goal we seek to achieve. Not at some far off time beyond the perceptions of those who struggle today, but here and now.

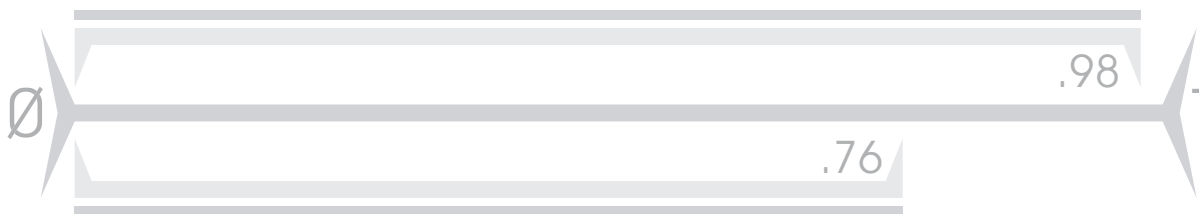
Now is the time for change and here is the place of its birth.

BLACK HEART ROSES DEAD

(11 July 3076)

Arc-Royal [MERCNET]—The rumors circulating since April have now been confirmed. In late February, the Black Heart Roses mercenary command was destroyed in the Niops Association.

Reconstructing events from a variety of sources, it appears that elements of the Black Heart Roses—particularly the Briar





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Patch Guard infantry detachment—became involved in their employer’s tumultuous politics. This local involvement generated internal strife that led to a breakdown in the unit’s cohesion. When the leader of a faction popular with elements of the Roses was imprisoned for treasonous acts, an undetermined number of Briar Patch Guards broke her out of prison. The unit commanders took opposing tacks in dealing with the rogue infantry troopers. Colonel Heart-Rose disavowed the renegades and ordered them to return the prisoner immediately, while Lt. Colonel Rose stood by his men, defying the criminal and military authorities of the Niops Association.

Matters came to a head when Col. Heart-Rose ordered her husband to submit to local authorities. When he did not, the Roses’ BattleMech commander held her companies aloof when the NAM finally moved against the Briar Patch Guard. Unfortunately, their employers did not recognize the Black Heart Roses’ neutrality and targeted the BattleMechs as well as the infantry. Colonel Heart-Rose had no choice but to defend her command against the NAM, and a full-scale battle reportedly ensued.

The capital city of Niops V and much of the planet’s infrastructure were damaged or destroyed in the fighting. Over two-thirds of the Briar Patch Guard were killed or wounded, and the Black Heart Roses were reduced to a single company, with no ‘Mech over seventy percent operational, but they accounted for over twice their number among the NAM. Lt. Colonel Rose chose to surrender to the NAM while the Briar Patch Guard was still a viable fighting force, using their potential for protracted combat as a bargaining chip to win amnesty for the troops under his command. Rose took full responsibility for the actions of the unidentified rogue units, though the local politician they’d abducted was never found.

When called on to surrender, Colonel Heart-Rose repeated her disavowal of her husband’s actions and declared that the Black Heart Roses had done nothing but defend themselves against

the unwarranted assault by NAM forces. Analysis of NAM combat records confirmed the Black Heart Roses had neither initiated engagements nor coordinated with the Briar Patch Guard. The Niops Association chose not to press charges, nor to dispossess Heart-Rose or her command.

While departing the Niops system, however, the DropShip carrying the Black Heart Roses was destroyed by a catastrophic explosion originating in the engineering section. Salvage tugs reported that while the hull was predominantly intact, the interior of the vessel was gutted. Investigating authorities posit sabotage, though by whom remains a mystery. Locally much is made of the fact no trace of Colonel Heart-Rose nor her BattleMechs was found, fueling speculation of a miraculous escape. In point of fact, the chances of anyone surviving such an explosion are vanishingly small.

The Black Heart Roses are declared dead, effective this date. Their name shall be removed from the hiring rolls.

DISASTER ON NEW KYOTO

[A portly, distinguished gentleman steps up to the podium. A large screen behind him shows the entire Rhine District, with still frame captures rotating through a sequence on one side. The frames show various scenes of devastation from flooding, collapsed buildings, and several fires.]

“Thank you for coming.

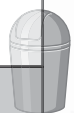
“As you are no doubt aware, last night at approximately 2045 local time a Word of Blake force tentatively identified as the Second Division dropped into the Tingel Quarry and was engaged by elements of the New Kyoto Militia. At some time during the engagement, several high-energy explosions went off in the vicinity of the Alessandro Dam. The destruction weakened the superstructure and at approximately 0325 local, the dam ruptured in four locations, spilling most of Tingel Lake into the Rhine agricultural plains.

“The current situation, as you can see on the panel behind

NEWS DOWNLOADER v3.7



<i>Date & Title</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>Status</i>
(13 November 3076) “New Hessen WorkMech Factory Raided”	[FSNS]	COMPLETED
(5 December 3076) “Deliah’s Gauntlet Reappears, Claims ‘Narrow Escape’”	[MERCNET]	DOWNLOADING



AVENGE YOUR FALLEN LORD!

After Professor Max van Stolz released his latest book *George Hasek: The Real Story of His Life*, we have seen an increasingly number of propaganda pamphlets emerging all over the Capellan March, Duchess. We are currently aware of twenty-five groups on eighteen planets who accuse you and Princess Steiner-Davion of conspiracy to kill Duke Hasek. This is getting out of hand. The MIIO is afraid that we will face a political uprising just like the Lyrans have had with their Democracy Now movement. I attached a file that was posted on New Syrtis interweb yesterday. We have already located the source and put him under surveillance:

>>>POST BEGINS<<<

Avenge your fallen lord!

Brothers and sisters of the Capellan March! We need to stand together and fight these oppressors that killed our beloved Lord, George Hasek. They told us the Robes did it. They told us the Capellans did it. They told us lies over and over again. The truth always comes out. And now we know the truth. Yvonne "The Bitch" Steiner-Davion, together with her "husband" Tancred Sandoval and our new so-called Duchess Angela Hasek—shame on her for staining this great name—conspired to kill him. They believe we wouldn't find out. They thought they could feed us to the Taurians and the Capellans and the damn pirates, just so they can keep fighting their own little war to save their precious Draconis and Crucis Marches.

Nobody gives a damn about us. "Uncivilized" they call us. "Dirty" and "dumb" they call us. "Useless" they call us. But we won't stand back and watch them feed us to the wolves. We will fight them with whatever means necessary. Join our growing ranks and let us show them what they have gotten into!

>>>POST ENDS<<<

This is one of the calmer virtual pamphlets out there, Duchess. Of course, all his accusations are baseless, as we have proof that the Word of Blake was behind the assassination. But as always, the masses will believe what the book says, no matter the evidence. I am afraid this is just the beginning.

—Memo attributed to Bill Postlyn, security advisor to Duchess Angela Hasek, leaked to the FSNN by unknown sources, dated 28 July 3076

me, is that most of the Tigel Lake's waters emptied into the region, washing out nearly twenty villages and towns and destroying nearly eighty-five percent of Rhine's croplands.

"The death toll is still unconfirmed but is expected to be in the tens of thousands.

"Supply points are being set up in all major cities across New Kyoto; if you wish to volunteer, please notify your county administrator.

CHOOSING SIDES

We made the final jump last night, crossing over the border into coalition space. Immediately approached by the patrols, we broadcasted every peaceful code and message we could think of, including "We come in peace; take us to your leader." Uncle figured using some old friends as references and our history of good behavior while working for Malagrotta would be enough to get a Letter of Marque from the Filts.

None of us really care if the bitch is still in charge or not; there is no way we will work under those scumbags. We've had run-ins with the Consorts several times before, and I shudder to think what they would do to us if they got their hands on us. We heard what happened when Brock's group took them up on the offer, only to be slowly tortured when he showed up to negotiations. And all Brock did was poke fun at the Consorts a few years back. How they ever got a Letter of Marque in the first place, I have no clue. And now they run Malagrotta!

You know its bad because even our Malagrotta Liaison, Mason, decided to come along with us instead of reporting to his new "superiors." He was there when we commandeered the shipment of heavy weapons headed for the Consorts' home base. Blake's logos still on the crates, and now he doesn't feel he has a home anymore. I personally think he still hopes to have a shot at getting me in bed, but he may as well jump out the airlock.

—Excerpt From ship-log of Captain Julie Van Mingo-Chambers, CO of the DropShip *Dragonfly* of the Van Mingo Pirate Band, 16 November 3076

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and aid appeals have been sent to the Archon and to Tharkad.

"Questions?"

—Press conference report by Daniel Redmond, New Kyoto Government Office, SBC Broadcasting, 20 September 3076

STYK DESCENDING

[Reginald Dawes]: ... and with me today to discuss it is columnist Clarence Samwells of the *Kathil News Weekly*. Clarence, thank you for being on the show.

[Samwells]: You're welcome, Reg.

[Dawes]: Back at the beginning of all of this, when former Duke Hasek was defending the realm—

[Samwells]: Pursuing a war of aggression, Reg.

[Dawes]: As you see it, yes.

[Samwells]: Quite. Duke Hasek was pursuing the greatness of House Hasek, not defending the realm as a proper lord of the Federated Suns.

[Dawes]: So even seven years of hindsight has not changed your mind?

[Samwells]: Absolutely not. Sovereign Justice was a war of



LATE 3076: TOTAL WARFARE

aggression on a preoccupied realm, designed to carve out his own star empire and secede from the Suns.

[Dawes]: And yet, even now with reports continually coming in regarding Capellan use of nuclear and chemical weapons—on their own people!—you cannot honestly say that maybe Duke Hasek was prescient in his plans to undercut Sun-Tzu's reach in the Capellan realm?

[Samwells]: Quite frankly, Reg, if the Liaos want to gas and radiate their own population, so much the better. What a realm does behind its borders is its own business. If that's the way the Capellan citizenry wish to be ruled, who are we to determine otherwise?

[Dawes]: You would suggest then, that the Federated Suns remain neutral if another realm is killing its own people?

[Samwells]: They were acting in defense of the realm. Notice that the areas hit—such as what happened recently on Styk and Wei—were primarily centered on the Blakist lines. And besides, the Word dropped them first.

[Dawes]: Um, you can't—

[Samwells]: *[Holds up hands]* Now hold on, let me finish. Capellan troops didn't open up the nuclear Pandora; the Word did. Apparently, Capellan doctrine dictates that like begets like; it's not a war doctrine our own AFFS follows, but that's the entire point. Remember, our forces exist to protect the interests of the realm. The Word has been our enemy since day one of this war, and Hasek abused his power by using our soldiers for his own power play. The Word is a blight on humanity, as can be seen from the reports of internment camps and brainwashing from inside the Protectorate.

[Dawes]: Even though "what a realm does behind its borders is its own business." Your words, remember.

[Samwells]: The Word is the exception. They're not really a realm, but a pseudo-technoreligious cult bent solely on "saving humanity from itself." Our focus should've been on them since '52.

[Dawes]: So basically, Hasek's policies are only good if they agree with your viewpoint. Got it. *[Turns to camera as Samwells sputters]* We'll be back.

—Segment from *Kathil Round-Up*, NSNA broadcast, 28 September 3076

AFFS RESTRUCTURING

(20 October 3076)

New Avalon [AVALON PRESS]—In light of losses suffered over the last decade in some of the heaviest fighting ever seen in the Federated Suns, the AFFS has announced the start of an extensive restructuring program. With some commands—most notably the Third Crucis Lancers and Twenty-second Avalon Hussars—existing more on paper than in reality, the decision has been made to deactivate some twenty percent of the AFFS and retire their colors.

In no way will this reduce the effective strength of the Federated Suns military. Troops and equipment from these deactivated units will reinforce others. Many regiments are also scheduled to receive a significant reinforcement of battle armor, combat vehicles, and aerospace assets. Like the Regimental Combat Team system, but on a smaller scale, this more homogenous mix of forces will better equip the AFFS to deal with the troop mix employed by the Word of Blake. It is expected that the March Militias—significantly under strength even after the FedCom Civil War—will be even more extensively reorganized. It is anticipated that each regiment will have its BattleMech element reduced to battalion strength.

RASALHAGUE REBELLION

(30 November 3076)

Pesht [ISAP]—Burning vehicles. Broken windows. Guttled BattleMechs almost casually tossed against buildings. This is the sight that met the citizens of Misby Flats, capital of Trondheim, as they emerged from their basements and shelters after a night that will be remembered long as a dark day for Rasalhague—23 November, when Rasalhagians fought each other.

The firefight between the rebellious core of the Second Freeman Cluster and the First Tyr Assault Cluster came as talks between the two sides broke down after a vicious exchange of insults. The First Tyr moved forcefully to disarm the mutineers, who resisted the attempts and opened fire, turning a police action into a brutal firefight. As dawn rose over the dark smoke of fires, none of the Second Freeman was left standing. Their gutted BattleMechs still lie where they fell amongst the warehouses of the industrial zone, and against, and in some cases inside, residential buildings in the nearby suburbs.

The mutiny started in late October when the members of the Second Freeman Cluster and First Kavalleri were ordered back to their bases to conduct the Trial of Positions mandated in the current transformation of the KungsArmé into the Ghost Bear Touman.

Earlier Trials had resulted in a dismissal rate of fifteen to twenty percent amongst the KungsArmé MechWarriors taking the tests, relegating them to armor, infantry, and even civilian roles. The warriors of the Second Freeman and First Kavalleri felt that they had more than proven themselves in combat over the years, and they resented the implication that they needed to be tested. In the end, both Clusters refused to stand down, and increased discontent was felt in several other units. This forced the Ghost Bear Dominion to return all three of their native Rasalhague frontline Clusters—the Rasalhague Bears, the First Tyr Assault Cluster, and the Gunzburg Eagles—to put pressure on the KungsArmé.

Arriving in mid-November on Trondheim and Satalice, the First Tyr faced down the Second Freeman, while the Rasalhague Bears put pressure on the First Kavalleri. After an intense

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weeklong standoff and negotiations, the First Kavalleri stood down and let themselves be taken into custody without a shot fired. Unfortunately, a series of insults and slights thrown between the First Tyr and Second Freemen ultimately turned violent. Only six of the Second Freemen MechWarriors survived the encounter, their entire arsenal of BattleMechs destroyed by the First Tyr. A series of courts martial were called against the ringleaders of the First Kavalleri and the surviving Freemen.

CHAIRPERSON OLSEN RECOVERING, MAY RETURN SOON

(19 December 3076)

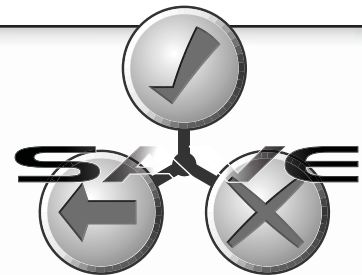
Niops VII [NIOPS NEWS]—This morning officials at Mt. Rainier Medical Center announced Chairperson Howard Olsen regained full consciousness on Friday, 16 December.

News of his waking was delayed until neurologists had thoroughly evaluated the extent of his recovery. It is not unusual for patients who have been comatose for prolonged periods to suffer a deterioration of their mental faculties. However, tests indicate that Chairperson Olsen has regained full cognitive acuity.

Thirteen months of physical inactivity has resulted in significant atrophy of his muscles and a loss of some twenty percent of his body mass. At present the chairperson cannot sit or stand unassisted, but a physical therapy regimen has been prescribed. Doctors characterize his full recovery as being "only a matter of time."

Chairperson Olsen had no sense of the passage of time while in his coma and no memory of events during his period of unconsciousness. However, he has been reading the log of visitors and plans to personally thank the hundreds of well-wishers and volunteers who spent time at his bedside reading or singing to him in an effort to stimulate his mind.

Brigadier General L. Jamison Fallon characterized his reaction to the news of Chairperson Olsen's recovery as both dumbfounded and joyous. He said that while hopeful, he had always been mindful that traditional medical wisdom held little hope for those who suffer long-term comas. He stated that he will be pleased to begin the gradual transition from martial to civilian authority of the Association if and when Chairperson Olsen is fully vetted as physically and mentally able to assume the burdens of leadership.





CHAOS OVERWHELMING: SLUGGER'S PARADISE

SLUGGER'S PARADISE

Journal J76-198

While being a mercenary has its benefits, sometimes a cause comes up that is greater than the almighty C-bill. This Stone guy's seriously impressed some people. And he pays well, too. Signing on seemed to be a no-brainer, especially since he seems to have a solid support system in place.

Which means no one gets hung out to dry when the crap hits the rotating paddle wheel.

SITUATION

Rio, Blake Protectorate

3 July 3076

After regrouping from operations on Skye, Hesperus II, and Galatea, Stone has apparently decided to take the fight into the Protectorate. Several operations are planned at various points around the Protectorate; small-scale operations designed to keep the Word reacting, rather than acting. He's also begun mixing and matching various units to particular strengths and weaknesses but with only marginal success. Seems factional loyalties die hard.

Except for mercs. Loyalty to the C-bill above all else, and Stone's paying well. Don't know where he's getting the cash, but as long as the credit's good, who really cares?

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: SLUGGER'S PARADISE

GAME SETUP

This is a combined arms battle on the surface of the planet. Choose maps from the Flatlands, Badlands and Mountain terrain tables (see *TW*, p. 263).

Attacker

The players may use up to 100 percent of their total force. For support, add either a Lyran 'Mech force or a Davion vehicle and infantry force; either force may not exceed 25 percent of the player's deployed force. The Lyran units are of Veteran skill level and may use the Lyran Alliance, House Steiner, or Mercenary RAT. The Davion units are of Elite skill level and may use the Federated Suns, House Davion, or ComStar RAT.

The Attacker's force may enter from two perpendicular map edges; one of these edges must be declared as the Attacker's home edge.

Defender

The Defender consists of a mix of the Blue Blazers mercenary unit and the Rio Protectorate Militia; the Defender's total force is 75 percent of the Attacker's deployed force and is of Veteran skill level. Use the Word of Blake, ComStar, and Federated Suns RATs. Up to 10 percent of the force may use units from the Clan Wolf RAT. Secretly designate one of the Defender's units as the overall commander; this unit has Elite skills.

The Defender enters from any map edge not selected by the Attacker.

WARCHEST**Track Cost:** 800

Optional Bonuses

+300 Little People: Add a Level II of Battle Armor to the Defender's force. These units have Regular skill levels and are set up as per Hidden Unit rules (see *TW*, p. 259).

+200 Sand: Treat each Level 0 Clear hex as possessing the Sand terrain modification (see *TO*, p. 39).

+200 Prior Service: For each of the following tracks that the players successfully completed, add this optional bonus: *Corporate Ties* (see *JHS72*, p. 86), *Spark* (see *JHS72*, p. 89), *Comes the Reaper* (p. 77).

OBJECTIVES

The players force receives the indicated victory bonuses for achieving the following objectives:

Headcap: Take down the field commander. **(+300 point bonus)**

Hammer down: Cripple or Destroy over 75 percent of the mercenaries. **(+400 point bonus)**

Soften 'em up: Cripple or Destroy over 50 percent of the Protectorate Militia. **(+300 point bonus)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Forced Withdrawal

The Protectorate Militia is operating under Forced Withdrawal rules (see *TW*, p. 258).

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: SLUGGER'S PARADISE

Salvage

The Attacker may gain salvage as normal only if the unit successfully completed at least one of the tracks listed in the *Prior Service* options.

AFTERMATH

Despite the horrible (or completely absent) communication between the Lyran and Davion forces assigned to the task force, Rio fell within a few days, crushing the Protectorate defenses.

The real battle—at least, to the attendant mercenary commands—was the slugfest between the LAAF and AFFS commanders during the debriefing. While the task force brings

some serious guns to the table, the question is whom exactly they'll be aimed at when the trigger's pulled.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Total pursuit of the retreating Protectorate and merc forces can lead to extended chases and hide-and-seek style missions. Or it's possible some of the allied forces decide to go after each other's throats. So which side will the players back?

NEXT TRACKS

Steel City

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: STARFALL

STARFALL

Journal J76-198

While being a mercenary has its benefits, sometimes a cause comes up that is greater than the almighty C-bill. This Stone guy's seriously impressed some people—and he pays well, too. Signing on seemed to be a no-brainer, especially since he seems to have a solid support system in place.

Which means no one gets hung out to dry when the crap hits the rotating paddle wheel.

SITUATION

*Van Diemen IV, Word of Blake Protectorate
10 July 3076*

After regrouping from operations on Skye, Hesperus II and Galatea, Stone has apparently decided to take the fight into the Protectorate. Several operations are planned at various points around the Protectorate; small-scale operations designed to keep the Word reacting, rather than acting. He's also begun mixing and matching various units to particular strengths and weaknesses but with only marginal success. Seems factional loyalties die hard.

Except for mercs. Loyalty to the C-bill above all else, and Stone's paying well. Don't know where he's getting the cash, but as long as the credit's good, who really cares?

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: STARFALL

GAME SETUP

This is an orbital support operation. Lay out at least two BattleSpace mapsheets with long edges connecting. For a larger scale battle, double the map size. Determine one of the shorter sides as the Planetary Atmosphere. Place one Large Habitat within 5 hexes of the planet's upper atmosphere.

Attacker

The Attacking force consists of up to 50 percent of the player's total force as well as elements of the Kell Hounds and the Forty-eighth mercenary units. The Kell Hounds' contribution should be no larger than 25 percent of the player's deployed force and is of

Veteran skill level; the Forty-eighth is no larger than 50 percent of the player's deployed force and is of Regular skill level. The Kell Hounds may use any Mercenary, Lyran, or Combine RAT to determine composition; the Forty-eighth uses any Combine RAT.

The Attacker enters from the map edge opposite the planet at a Velocity of 4 or lower.

Defender

The Defender is the aerospace elements of the Second Van Diemen Protectorate Militia Division and is 75 percent of the Attacker's total deployed force. The Second Van Diemen may roll on any Word of Blake, ComStar, or Free Worlds League RAT and



CHAOS OVERWHELMING: STARFALL

are a mix of Veteran and Elite skill levels, with one Elite for every two Veteran pilots.

The Defender enters from the five hexes along either edge near the planet at a Velocity of 5 or lower. Up to six fighters may also launch from the habitat in Turn 3.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 800

Optional Bonuses

+500 Upgraded System Defenses: Replace the habitat with a *Capitol*-class system defense station (see *TR:3057*, p. 180-181). The crew is of Regular skill level.

+200 Asteroids: Add 1d6 large asteroids; these are placed at least 10 hexes from the planet. Use the Asteroid rules in *SO*, p. 44.

+200 Prior Service: For each of the following tracks that the players successfully completed, add this optional bonus: *Corporate Ties* (see *JHS72*, p. 86), *Spark* (see *JHS72*, p. 89), *Comes the Reaper* (p. 77).

OBJECTIVES

Forces receive the indicated victory bonuses for achieving the following objectives:

Clear the Air: Cripple or destroy at least 75 percent of the Defender's forces. **(+600 point bonus)**

Initiate Landing Operations: At least 25 percent of the Attacker's force should successfully enter the planetary atmosphere and exit off that map edge. **(+300 point bonus)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Salvage

The Attacker may gain salvage as normal only if the unit successfully completed at least one of the tracks listed in the *Prior Service* options.

AFTERMATH

Forcing the door open was the hardest part of hitting Van Diemen IV; once you'd clear the way, Alys Rousset-Marik's task force had little opposition upon landing. Troubling, however, was the rumor of an incomplete ground-based system defense network here. Only a few site locations offered any evidence that the rumors were true. Hopefully such a system was not built and operational elsewhere in the Protectorate, or other task forces may not see such easy success.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

It's possible a small naval base is located on the primary moon; rumors from the local astronomers pinpointed a WarShip-sized object in orbit around it recently. Could this system harbor another Gabriel-like structure, or is it a wild goose chase?

NEXT TRACKS

Wave of Confusion, *Steel City*



CHAOS OVERWHELMING: WAVE OF CONFUSION

WAVE OF CONFUSION

... pride of New Kyoto, the massive Alessandro Hydroelectric Dam Complex. A series of interlinked dams that cover over 45 kilometers and holds the Enrich Sea at bay, the Alessandro Dam is a marvel of Star League technology. It watches over the vast acreage of fertile croplands that make the world a major breadbasket system for much of the Skye region...

—From the New Kyoto Tourism Board data file, dated June 3064

SITUATION

New Kyoto, Lyran Alliance

19 September 3076

Taking some downtime by filling a quick garrison contract is never as boring as expected these days. Only a week after settling in with a new garrison contract while awaiting a shift in LAAF assets, a small Word of Blake force popped into the system and slammed into the Alessandro Hydroelectric Dam Complex.

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: WAVE OF CONFUSION

GAME SETUP

This is primarily a ground combat battle. Use any non-urban map from the Mapsheet Tables (see *TW*, p. 263); at least two mapsheets must have a river present.

Attacker

The Attacker consists of elements from the Second Word of Blake Militia Division and should be 100 percent of the Defender's total deployed force. The Blakists are of Veteran skill level, with one Elite crew/pilot for every two Veteran crew/pilots. There are no infantry or battle armor units present.

The Attacker enters from any one map edge, declared before the start of the battle.

Defender

The Defender consists of up to 25 percent of the player's total force. The Defenders set up anywhere on the battlefield.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 600

Optional Bonuses

+200 Light Fog: Apply the Light Fog rules (see *TO*, p. 57).

+200 Dusk: Apply the Dusk rules (see *TO*, p. 58).

OBJECTIVES

Forces receive the indicated victory bonuses for achieving the following objectives:

Full Court Press: Cripple or destroy at least half of the Attacker's force before Turn 10. **(+500 point bonus)**

Survival: The Defender cannot lose more than 25 percent of their force. **(+300 point bonus)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Floodwaters

The Alessandro Dam has been broken due to excessive nearby combat and is flooding the plains around it. Beginning in Turn 3, expand all rivers present by two hexes on each bank (so a one-hex river becomes a five-hex river); the new hexes are at Depth 1. Every odd turn thereafter, increase the river size by two hexes, with the new hexes at Depth 1 and all prior water hexes increasing in depth by one.

All terrain Level 1 and higher remains above water; the water is spreading, not rising, due to the soil erosion occurring underneath the surface of the water. All woods hexes that are covered by water are cleared.

All water hexes are affected by the Torrent rules (see *TO*, p. 52). The direction of water flow is determined by the Defender at the beginning of Turn 3.

AFTERMATH

The battle quickly degenerated into a waterlogged race for safety. During the withdrawal, planetary services requested your assistance in rescuing those affected by the sudden onslaught. You did all you could, but the damage was widespread and devastating.

The Word clearly wasn't about to stop fighting dirty.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Attempting rescue operations in a raging flood is tricky at best and downright impossible at worst. Trying to do it in the middle of a long-range firefight? Well, that's what the bosses pay for, right?

NEXT TRACKS

Steel City



CHAOS OVERWHELMING: STEEL CITY

STEEL CITY

By no means have we won against the Word. Even now, they are entrenching, digging in to our mountains and forests, looking for ways to bring more hurt and pain to all of us. It is our duty to be ever watchful, vigilant for the attack that will come.

Because make no mistake, it will.

The Blakists will come because it is all they can do. They will not surrender. They feed on the misery and death of those opposed to them. This planet is opposed to their very presence, and we will excise their disease from New Hessen, one way or another.

–General Hampton, CO of Hampton's Hessens, 15 November 3076

SITUATION

*New Hessen, Federated Suns
23 November 3076*

Word's getting around, apparently. After hearing good things about your outfit, coalition folks contracted you to augment the defenses of the New Hessen WorkMechs factory against Blakist incursions. Intel says the Robes, entrenched since their attack in August, are decreasing in strength by the day. But with the renewed output of the factory, General Hampton is hedging his bets.

Turned out he was right; not three days after your redeployment to the eastern flank of the stronghold at Fort Berkinshire, the Word attacked with force and ferocity.

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: STEEL CITY

GAME SETUP

This is a combined-arms battle. Set up a mix of terrain using the Mountains, Wetlands, Badlands, and Hills tables (see *TW*, p. 263); at least one map should be off the Light Urban terrain table to represent part of Fort Berkinshire, the current headquarters of General Hampton and the defenders of New Hessen.

Designate one multi-hex building on the urban mapsheet as the camp's central command center (C3), and a second, single-hex, building as the communications center. Both buildings are converted to Hardened buildings (retaining original height) with a CF of 150.

Attacker

The Attacker consists of elements of the Thirty-third Word of Blake Militia Division, augmented with local sympathizers. The Word's force is 150 percent of the Defender's total deployed force and is of Veteran skill level, with one crew/pilot of Regular skill for every two Veterans. The sympathizer's force is 25 percent of the Defender's total deployed force and is of Green skill level. There are two vehicles for every BattleMech unit present in the sympathizer's force.

The Thirty-third Division uses any Word of Blake or Federated Suns RAT. The sympathizers use any Federated Suns or Mercenary RAT.

The Attacker enters from the edge farthest from the fort.

Defender

The Defender consists of the player's force augmented with base security forces. Players may use up to 100 percent of

their total force. Base security is 10 percent of the player's total deployed force and is of Regular skill level. The security force uses any Federated Suns, Mercenary, or Word of Blake RAT.

The Defender may set up anywhere on the map designated to represent the fort. Base security forces may be set up as Hidden Units (see *TW*, p. 259).

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 1,500

Optional Bonuses

+500 RetroTech: Use 3025-era technology for the sympathizer and base security forces. Also available to both forces are the *Hammerhands* (see *TR3075*, p. 226). The *Rook* design is available for base security forces only (see p. 115). Add to the Attacker's forces a Torrent heavy bomber (see *TRVA*, p. 120) for every four units deployed by the Defender.

+500 Castle Brian: Construct the Fort along the lines of a partial Castle Brian (see *TO*, p. 141), covering a maximum size of one mapsheet, with structures up to 6 levels above or below the map surface, and no more than 10 fixed weapon emplacements. Also, increase the Word of Blake's force to 200 percent of the Defender's deployed force and replace all Regular Word of Blake pilots with Elites.

OBJECTIVES

Forces receive the indicated victory bonuses for achieving the following objectives:

Defend command! The C3 and communications center must survive to the end of the battle. **(+1,000 point bonus)**

CHAOS OVERWHELMING: STEEL CITY

Undercut: Cripple or destroy all of the sympathizer forces.

(+300 point bonus)

Anvil: Cripple or destroy at least 50 percent of the Thirty-third Division forces. **(+700 point bonus)**

Sustainability: At least 25 percent of the base security force must survive to the end of the battle. **(+300 point bonus)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are in effect for this track:

Forced Withdrawal

The Word sympathizers operate under the Forced Withdrawal rules (see *TW*, p. 258) but only after at least two Thirty-third Division units are destroyed.

Anti-Air

If aerospace elements are present among the Attacker's force, at least 10 percent of the Defender's fielded force must incorporate Flak-capable weapons (such as LB-X Autocannon, Hyper-Assault Gauss Rifles, Artillery weapons, and so forth). If the Castle Brian option is used, at least two turrets must be dedicated AA platforms, featuring a minimum of two such weapons per turret.

AFTERMATH

The Word hammered General Hampton's position in a two-pronged attack, hitting critical support systems such as sensor clusters, power generators, and the like. Convinced this was a last-ditch assault by the beleaguered Word, the general pulled his security forces from the NHWM complex to hit the Word's flank.

Apparently the move was anticipated; it was discovered after the Word retreated that the Blakists snuck a strike team into the complex and made off with two DropShips carrying at least a company of new *Rook* BattleMechs and an assortment of supplies.

The fight for New Hessen was far from over.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

The Word is waging an intense guerilla campaign and is of no mind to leave any time soon. Contract details can include carrying out sorties against suspected Word hiding places among New Hessen's broken mountains or rooting out small nests of sympathizers in the foothills. A protracted campaign is very possible here, with little hope of any reinforcements for either side for the time being.

NEXT TRACKS

None! Time to rest and rearm for the next campaign!



TAKING STOCK



TAKING STOCK



It's often difficult to try grasp the grand scheme of universe-shaking events as they unfold, no matter how the report is organized. But while it remains impossible to achieve a God's-eye-view in the midst of this chaos that is the Word of Blake Jihad, we at INN have done our best to arrange this compilation for the greatest possible coherency, both chronologically and by focus on theaters of events.

Nevertheless, there are always those articles that simply slip through the cracks. These bits of information may help identify other trends and perceptions, and are important in their own right—yet somehow, they just weren't appropriate for the preceding sections we've provided. For the benefit of further broadening our insights into the Jihad, several of these extra pieces are provided here for our reader-viewers at home.

—Bertram Habeas, INN Special Correspondent

BOUNTY HUNTING BOOM

(5 March 3075)

Arc-Royal [MERCNET]—MRBC officials announced today that the busy bounty-hunting trade rose another 5.3 percent last month in terms of contracts settled, setting a new record in the eighth straight month of this once-fringe business' increase.

The rise in amount of bounties awarded not only reflects an increase in bounties posted Sphere-wide but also in the nearly two-fold increase in average bounty payouts, as well as the standard employer practice of offering full salvage rights whenever battlefield combat occurs. Even so, the number of actual bounty missions taken on by mercenaries of every stripe *has* increased dramatically, especially since many factions have begun offering bounties on more than just military figures but also on controversial political figures and nobility. Democracy Now operatives, anti-Blakist legislative figures in the Marik Parliament, and even a few underground interweb journalists have had prices placed on their head by authorities with the resources to hire mercs to bring them in.

Another surging new trend is the rise of bounty hunter teams, mercenary commands of anywhere from three to twelve (or more) warriors, equipped with anything from a conventional vehicle and some small arms to power-armor suits, or even BattleMechs (depending on their favored quarry). These groups quietly scour the planet as typical civilians until they can find and capture their pricey prey. Many of these smaller teams often partner up with larger mercenary commands in their travels, creating a symbiotic relationship that reduced overhead costs for the hunters while cutting their fellow mercs in on the market.

Edward Bishop of Team Revenant—a relatively successful bounty hunter company—explains the advantages behind these arrangements:

“Most armored commands don't find it economically feasible to just take on bounty contracts alone, as the awards would only pay for some spare parts and several tons of armor. In fact, unless

they find themselves a bounty-rich environment like Solaris, Antallos, or Galatea to hunt in, odds are that if heavy combat occurs, a big merc force trying the bounty-hunting gig may even incur a loss should the repair bill exceed the award.

“Still, a good bounty might cover the entire unit's personnel salary for a month or two if they can avoid the material losses. So, in exchange for free transport and use of their facilities, hunters like us will offer a merc unit that's heading our way a cut of the bounty, and we'll take on the job ourselves while the bigger force does whatever it was it was hired to do. Since the hunters are independent, the other mercs can keep their hands and reputation somewhat clean—especially if the bounty is particularly controversial.”

**BLACKWELL HIT AGAIN, DISSOLUTION POSSIBLE
Company Teeters on Insolvency after Latest Word Attack**

(12 June 3075)

New Valencia [FNS]—Last month's attack on the joint General Motors/Blackwell plant did more than shatter the still rebuilding factory complex and cost nearly eighteen months of production. When the AFFS destroyed the Word's cargo DropShips, filled with Blackwell's entire planned shipment to the AFFS, they may have destroyed Blackwell's last chance for solvency.

The Word of Blake raid was surgical. Over ninety percent of any infrastructure related to the production of Blackwell designed technology—including the *Marauder II* production lines—was systematically destroyed, while the remainder of GM's facilities only suffered a fifty percent drop in production and support output.

With the AFFS Quartermasters' office ruling today that Blackwell has not fulfilled their delivery contract and as such would not be paid, Blackwell lost a much-needed injection of capital. Still reeling from the destruction of Outreach, Blackwell had been relying on credit and goodwill from General Motors to keep their New Valencia factories operating. Left with little more than their intellectual property, (much of that now in the hands of the Word's pet defense contractors) Blackwell's future looks decidedly bleak.

BEHIND THE WALL OF STONE

“So just who is this Devlin Stone and, more importantly, why does his cabal of advisors shield him from the public eye?”

“Take the ever-present David Lear. Son of the Capellan hero, Kai Allard-Liao, Lear rarely speaks to anyone outside of Stone's little inner circle. Certainly a genius in his own right, the young 'doctor' (just don't ask for his degree) seems to be extremely shy, yet is almost always behind Stone whenever the man is in public. Is Lear really the brains behind Stone's tour de force, or is he some sort of daemon, hanging onto his master's shoulder like some scared child? He must be of use, since Stone seems to not merely tolerate but welcome Lear's presence, and more than



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once this reporter has observed how fidgety Stone seems if Lear isn't present.

"And what are we to make of Stone's obvious bodyguard, the enigmatic 'Pedro'? Very clearly, he's Stone's pet Clanner, being an Elemental—much like Victor had the services of his Amazonian bodyguard Tiaret during the Civil War—and very competent in his job. No less than two attempts on Stone's life when he was on Arc-Royal failed, singularly due to this Pedro's lightning reflexes and actions. But no Clan seems to lay claim to him, not even the abjured Nova Cats. He has no identifying marks, no 'codex' around his wrist. What does it say about Stone, to have someone so deadly and yet so enigmatic subservient to him?

"And let's not forget the firebrand Belle Lee. Even with a temper as blazing red as her hair, her troops still worship the ground she walks on. Stone relies on her to command his 'Stone's Lament'—his first regiment of resistance fighters born from the nightmare of Kittery—and she does it well. It's commonly assumed that Stone's military tactics come straight from her and are not really his own, but is that really the truth? Reportedly a NAMA washout—whose only failing grade was 'chronic insubordination'—Lee has wrapped the men and women of the Lament around Stone's finger. Do they fight for her, or for the man she obviously respects and admires? Rumors of her and Stone as lovers are so cliché as to be as absurd; their chemistry together is rigid and wrong, belying a history filled with bumps and bruises. And yet Stone implicitly trusts her and her troops to lead this growing coalition of forces.

"There are others within Stone's orbit—including our own former prince Victor Steiner-Davion, and Alys Rousset-Marik, leader of the Free Worlds Rebels, who both have apparently joined Stone's PR department—but the bottom line is simply, why? Why do these men and women surround this man, and listen to his words as if he was the Second Coming?

"It has to be his charisma. Yet, try as we in the press corps can, we cannot land an interview, even for a moment, with the man who is evolving into legend. Until we can connect with him, gauge his presence, we can only guess at who Devlin Stone is, and what power he holds to beat back the Word.

"I'm Lars Anders, New Avalon News."

—NANS *Around the Sphere*, New Avalon, 12 December 3075

KITHRONG QUILTS

This move was always clearly political, allowing those more loyal to Taurus than Kithrong and Little Erik to dirty their hands avenging the fallen on our old motherland through the same means the FedSuns employed to slaughter our innocent families there. Meanwhile, old Kithrong got to act like the white knight, coming in to put aside our differences for "the greater good of the Concordat."

Sure, most of us bought it at the time; we were all grief-stricken and sickened by the events that unfolded there, the

RUMORS OF THE HOMEWORLDS

SpaceCadet46 enters the room

Ravensfriend enters the room

Ravensfriend: Greeting fellow Ravens! How are we today?

Stoopkin22: You are not a real Raven, quineg?

Ravensfriend: Yes, ofc I am. U guys talking about Lum?

UnkindOne: It was a mistake to allow the Outworlders access to the Chatterweb.

Stoopkin22: Aff. Begone freebirth. Stay on the local channels.

Ravensfriend: No dood Im really a Raven like u 2.

Cardshark1 enters the room

Cardshark1: Greetings, Ravens.

Stoopkin22: Welcome back Shark.

Cardshark1: I trust you have improved your bid from last time?

UnkindOne: Aff. We will allow you Sharks to set up a trading post on Ramora in return for the technical plans we requested.

Ravensfriend: I bid a company of 'Mechs!

Ravensfriend has been kicked from the channel

Stoopkin22: thank you

UnkindOne: We must talk with the Khan about limiting their access.

Cardshark1: Well bargained and done. It is a bit more quiet here than the Homeworlds, quiaff?

Stoopkin22: I would not know. I have been here since before the Vipers went insane.

UnkindOne: I was at Lum when the Viper saKhan made her broadcast. But she left the Homeworlds shortly after. We should have known there was more to come.

Cardshark1: Stravag fools in the council! Bad enough they elected a Viper as ilKhan in the first place, even without saKhan Labov's death—but then the Wolves had to get involved!

UnkindOne: Oh? I thought you Sharks had been ejected?

Cardshark1: Aff, but I was there long enough to see the Mandrills' folly. After that I am not sure what happened.

Stoopkin22: From what I hear, the Mandrills deserved what they got.

Cardshark1: Aff, probably. They overreacted in any case.

Stoopkin22: The Coyotes and Cobras made them pay too.

UnkindOne: I just wish the Adders had stayed where they were, these Outworlders are enough to deal with without Adders sniffing about.

Cardshark1: Neg! Those were not Adders, those were B-
SpaceCadet46 kicked by UnkindOne—use the local channel Freebirth

—Excerpt taken from Lushann real-time Chatterweb chat session, dated 16 September 3076

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horrible images the Word beamed to us from the site of what used to be Samantha. But now? Now, we can see everything more objectively. Now we see that not everyone who says he is really *is* acting in the Concordat's best interests, after all.

Consider the possibility of this fighting continuing for another two years. Consider the thought of FedSuns death squads, grinding away already-thinned Concordat military and militia forces and devastating our defense manufacturers. Consider the thought of pirates from Malagrotta, Tortuga, and the Haven taking advantage of our lack of protection. Two more years of this, while Kithrong hangs back after first encouraging the Concordat military to launch an all out offensive with promises that "we'll bring up the rear."

One can't help but wonder at the simple brilliance of it all, and how much resistance a depleted Concordat could possibly put up against a dedicated assault from the rear.

Yes sir, that Baron Marshall of ours is a clever fellow, all right!

—Excerpted from *The Friar's Report*, a syndicated Calderon Protectorate Editorial, CPN, 3 July 3076

KNIGHTS OF ST. CAMERON VANISH

(1 November 3076)

Donegal [DBC]—In a baffling turn of events, the mercenary Knights of St. Cameron have disappeared from the Inner Sphere.

The regiment, recently returned to Galatea, had spent three weeks preparing for the next wave of attacks into the Word of Blake Protectorate when an ancient *Leviathan*-class JumpShip arrived in-system and dispatched a civilian DropShuttle to the surface. The shuttle landed at the Knights' encampment and a single passenger disembarked. From the few eyewitness reports on the incident, this unknown figure was clad in a simple brown robe of homespun material and carried a very large sword, a description that matches descriptions of the monk-like Believers of the Saints Cameron—a nearly dead sect long suspected of having connections with the Knights.

The visitor was greeted by Colonel Mortimer Dewey, and both men retired to the Knights' mobile headquarters. Unfortunately, no witnesses have come forward regarding the nature of the lengthy discussions that followed aboard that vehicle, but it is believed that the Knights' senior officers were summoned and

WHERE HAVE THE SHADOWS GONE?



(22 September 3076)

Hesperus II [INN]—If one were to take a map of the Inner Sphere from just a year or so ago and plot out the actions of the Word of Blake using little red pins, one would find their activities reaching far and wide, indeed. As recently as last year, Blakist raids were hitting Lyran and FedSuns worlds as far out from Terra as Kamenz and Wrentham (respectively). Blakist troops also held or assaulted key worlds across the Inner Sphere, like Sian, Bolan, Skye, and Canopus. At the forefront of some of the hardest fighting, though, were the Shadow Divisions, the distinctive, cybernetics-enhanced, hyper-elite warriors who seem as much a terror weapon as a sledgehammer for the Word's unseen Master.

But flash-forward just a year later, and those red dots beyond the Blake Protectorate are suddenly few and far between (unless you count the Free Worlds League, where the dots are clumped near Atreus). Even the vaunted Shadow Divisions disappear, save for a few that seem to be committing a string

of raids here and there.

While it's obvious the Word of Blake is now on the defensive, reports for the last few years have shown that they have always maintained a distinctive division of labor between their regular WoBM commands and those of the Manei Domini. In most cases, according to intelligence around the Sphere, the Shadows have acted as the Word's attack dogs, lashing out far and wide to keep the Houses and other powers stirred up, while the Militia maintained a more defensive role or acted as the backbone of a standard assault force. With the Shadows' command clearly based out of Gibson, and the regular WoBMs out of Terra, it also made a certain degree of sense that Terra, at the heart of the besieged Blake Protectorate, would pull back its main line forces to defend the realm. But the Shadows could still have been on the attack.

Or is the Word hurting even more than our wildest estimates suggest?

Before anyone starts cheering that the war is won at this point, it behooves us

all to remember how nasty the Shadow Divisions can be. In 3073, the elite Fifty-second Shadow—heretofore seen as more a bogeyman for its relative lack of action prior to that time—embarked on a ten-month campaign that destroyed several military commands (regular and mercenary alike) on five worlds in Lyran, League, and Protectorate space. That this force then came away largely intact speaks to how frightfully effective the Shadows can be. Though a few have died at the hands of allied actions, all accounts place at least ten fully operational Shadow Divisions at large.

But they're not marauding like they used to. Some have shown up in League space, and some have been spotted in the Protectorate (where some confused reports suggest they have *attacked* their own garrisons, while others have them defending). A number are simply MIA.

What does it all mean? Has the Word felt the pain of the allied coalition worse than we imagine? Or are they gathering for the next big push?

Can we afford to wait to find out?



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held counsel with their guest for extended periods over the next three days.

Then, just as suddenly as he arrived, the Knights' mysterious visitor returned to his DropShuttle and departed. Immediately afterward, the Knights' encampment became a hive of activity. Repair gantries were broken down, supplies packed, and everything loaded aboard the mercenaries' *Overlord* DropShips.

Inquires regarding the Knights' activities were greeted only with silence, the only communication made by the mercenaries was their request for launch clearance at dawn of the following day.

That day, the DropShips lifted off and rejoined their awaiting JumpShip. Last week, Galatean space traffic sensors confirmed that both the Knights' JumpShip and the unknown *Leviathan* jumped out. Both vessels had filed a flight plan for Alcor, but neither one ever arrived in that system. The MRBC and Lyran Transit Authorities have since declared the Knights of St. Cameron missing, and awards have been offered at Galatea and Arc-Royal MRBC offices for any information that may lead to regaining contact with the missing mercenary force.

Since then, however, there have been no confirmed sightings of the Knights of St. Cameron anywhere in Lyran space.

THE YAMATO CONSPIRACY

So get this, boys and girls. I've found another bedtime story for you to ponder.

Back in '61, there was that whole flap about the *Yamato*. Remember? Eh, probably not. Top-secret battleship and all that, she was barely mentioned even in the brass' top communications. (Remember, I'm the phantom in the network, baby. Here and there I go ...)

Anyway, some DCA hard-nosers got the bugger scrapped, but with all that superstructure laid, New Samarkand Naval Works wasn't exactly thrilled to see five years of work go spinning down the gravity well. Somehow, they got it moved off and POOF! The bloomin' thing disappeared like Takashi's body before it could be autopsied. Whisper-quiet, even the ISF (apparently) had no clue where the ship went off to. And with the Bear war raging, it wasn't exactly a top priority, considering it was really just a big pile of interconnected spars.

Well, in '70 I full-tilt ran into a restricted archive node out while I was touring the refurbished Togura orbital facilities (don't ask me how) and noticed a backlog of components earmarked for the cancelled *Kaga*-class still working a trail. As in, they were still sending parts—but that bugger got scrapped back in '62, remember? Right, so off to Dover, or thereabouts.

Me being the curious type, I did some more data-mining.

(Really, you ISF types need to upgrade. OSP's network is a bitch to break, but you ISF boys need some education.)

I'll boil the rest down for ya, since I see my time here is sinkin' (damned Snoopers need another run around the block). Okay,

so there's this big project going on out near the old Wakazashi orbital manufacturing facilities on the fringe. Supposedly shut it down decades ago. Couldn't scrap a name from the database (like I said, OSP's a bear to crack!) but did catch that a brand-new lithium-fusion job was delivered from Chatham back in '69. Along with several hundred tons of "repair equipment," "unpressurized modular support spars," and other whatnot. Curiouser and curiouser.

Fast-forward to last month, when that LAW suit blubbered out some nonsense, then backpedaled? (Which totally screams "cover up" to conspiracy hounds like me, by the way.) Something about "testing trials for several new orbital facilities, including Navalwerk's *Yamato* and Wakazashi's *Ryū* projects."

Put two and two together, people.

The only question I have is, so why isn't it done, and why the hell isn't it out there blasting away those fucking Blakists? Methinks I smell a rat!

—*Conspiracy spam posted on the Drake networks across the Oshika Prefecture, 18 November 3076 (veracity unconfirmed)*

KITTERY PREFECTURE, THREE YEARS ON

(9 December 3076)

New Syrtis [NSNN]—It has been three years since Devlin Stone ascended from mysterious obscurity to wrestle a cluster of worlds from the grasp of the Word of Blake and create the Kittery Prefecture. Officially, these systems remain part of the Federated Suns, but with its administrative resources stretched thin, the House of Davion has given taciturn approval of the Prefecture's existence as a separate political entity—at least for now.

So just what is life like in this so-called "Prefecture"?

For the general populace, life appears little different than the time before the Blakists arrived. During the Succession Wars, frontier worlds such as these became accustomed to a frequent change of management. Although Davion-Capellan vitriol has often been a major component of Kittery society, for the most part the locals would broadly accept whatever flag flew over their civic buildings, so long as the trains ran on time and the police and military avoided excess. But while Kittery residents still pay their taxes and go on about their business as ever, it is at the next level—the organization of the bureaucracy—that things have really changed.

The Word of Blake collaborators are gone, of course, but rather than install his own supporters within the existing government systems, Stone established a completely new system where each world was divided up into a number of "provinces"—a region, city, or even large industrial concern. Each province is in turn overseen by a legate, who in turn reports to the planetary governor. Each legate is responsible for overseeing all activities within his own province. Meanwhile, the governors provide oversight and coordinate activities where more than one province is involved, and in turn take their direction from a ruling

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Prefect, who apparently acts as Devlin Stone's champion, final arbiter of any conflicts between Prefecture worlds, and de facto ambassador of the Kittery prefecture to other realms.

Ernesto McHenry, a local industrialist-turned-freedom fighter, was appointed Prefect of Kittery upon Stone's departure, an issue that has rankled many of the Prefecture worlds. Indeed, the governing system has raised the ire of local nobles and industrialists, for while they have not been dispossessed of their holdings, they have been effectively cut out of the local political scene, since these legates and governors have been selected by Stone himself, based on their ability and respect within their regional communities. Unsurprisingly, the system has thus received widespread support from the general populace, who feel that their resources and leadership are actually targeting projects that serve their collective good.

Of course, history has shown that any dictatorship can make the trains run on time.



CONSPIRACIES OR COALITION?

POSIT: *What was Chandrasekhar's true motive with his "coalition" back in '74-'75?*

Theory: Galactic domination, baby. :::Seeker251

Theory: Love of *gaijin* tomfoolery. Got booted from Luthien after them Koku boys went nova on Luthien, so he needed something to do, eh? :::BadBlackDrac83

Comment: *Get real, BBD. Take the rod outta your ass and get a clue.* :::Yoshi

Theory: Doing what he could to help out the Dragon. Teddy dead, Hohiro captured. Minamoto running the show, and those two never got along. :::NukePhysicist

Comment: *Don't start that crap again, NP. We all know Teddy didn't die early. Why would the Voice sit on his death for over a year?* :::Seeker251

Comment: *I can see it. Chandy's got the softies for money, but he still lovin' the Dragon.* :::Gaijinboy
>>>see other 2,084 theories<<<

POSIT: *Bounty Hunter's silence. Does it confirm or deny complicity in Chandy's death?*

Theory: Abso-malvin-lutely. Silence = guilt. Bag and tag. :::CrazyDraggieRed

Comment: *Horseshit. Innocent until proven otherwise.* :::Toguran_Princess

Comment: *Take your Davionista propaganda and bolt, TP.*

Theory: Nah. BH's always been mute. Just business, right? If he whacked Uncle, then someone had the stones and the C-bills to make it happen. Ain't gonna change for him, nope. :::Yoshi

Comment: *That then raises the question as to who'd want Uncle whacked?* :::ConspiraNut47

Comment: *Word. Duh.* :::CaptObvious

Comment: *Doubt. Chandy's a small fish next to Victor-gaijin or Kai. Why whack the businessman?* :::Gaijinboy

Theory: Confirm. BH's gotten weird, though. Anyone else done a rundown on all the oddities? Don't think it's the same dude. :::Gladiator_wannabe

Comment: *You're kidding. You spent time actually chronicling minutia? Are you INSANE?* :::CaptObvious

Comment: *Someone's got to watch the details. Makes the world go round.* :::Petey

>>>see other 1,328 theories<<<

—Top postings on Yumesta's popular *PositPost* network; 29 December 3076



STATE OF THE HOMELANDS



My Khan,
 Following is the brief update on the status of the former KungsArmé forces and their dispositions. Also included are both Mimir and the Watch's appraisals of their loyalty ratings. As you are well aware of, the recent flare-up of skirmishes that was put down has resulted in some dismissals from the various KungsArmé units, reducing their operational strengths. We continue to rebuild them as fast as possible, but the mounting losses against the Blakists are putting a strong drain on our resources that giving lucrative contracts to the Diamond Sharks cannot dampen.

A fine balance between the Rasalhague troops and the rest of our touman must be found. Too much in one direction and the other will see it as a slight. Both the Second Freeman and First Kavalleri have been kept on the rosters for now and are slowly being rebuilt by new recruits passing their trials. Their names are too prestigious to the Rasalhague population, and removing them may cause further strife.

Another issue is the rank of the commanders of the Rasalhague Galaxies. So far they have sorted using a KungsArmé command structure, but sooner or later the question of fully integrating them into the Clan touman will arise. It would be advisable to wait until each general (Star Colonel) tests down to replace them with people raised from the Trial of Positions within the KungsArmé Galaxies. Attached is also the proposed roster of the Rasalhague Galaxy.

KUNGSARMÉ

(Deployments as of 15 December 3076)

Commander: Överbefalhavare (Galaxy Commander) Christian Månsdottir

Aide: General (Star Colonel) Margrethe Minuit

Strength: Approximately 9 Clusters

Tundra Galaxy

Commander: General (Galaxy Commander) Rhett Weaver

Aide: Star Colonel Hjalmer Olsen

	Exp/Loy (FRR)	Headquarters	Strength
1st Drakøn Cluster	V/R (F)	Orestes	70%
3rd Drakøn Cluster	V/Q (F)	Rasalhague	60%
1st Hussars Cluster	R/R (F)	Pinnacle	65%
3rd Hussars Cluster	G/Q (R)	Orestes	25%

Taiga Galaxy

Commander: General (Galaxy Commander) Jeffery Cizek

Aide: Star Colonel Signa Pegrem

	Exp/Loy (FRR)	Headquarters	Strength
1st Freeman Cluster	E/R (F)	Soverzene	60%
2nd Freeman Cluster	R/R (F)	Orestes	15%
3rd Freeman Cluster	V/Q (R)	Engadin	60%

Polar Galaxy

Commander: General (Galaxy Commander) Amy Findlay

Aide: Star Colonel Terje Pedersen

	Exp/Loy (FRR)	Headquarters	Strength
1st Kavalleri Cluster	R/Q (R)	Satalice	45%
2nd Kavalleri Cluster	R/R (R)	Krenice	70%
3rd Kavalleri Cluster	V/R (R)	Polcenigo	70%
4th Kavalleri Cluster	V/R (F)	Ueda	75%

Rasalhague Galaxy

Commander: saKhan Ragnar Magnusson

Aide: Star Colonel Hanssen Månsdottir

	Exp/Loy	Headquarters	Strength
1st Rasalhague Bears	E/F	Alshain	85%
1st Tyr Assault Cluster	V/F	Rasalhague	60%
Gunzburg Eagles	R/R	Gunzburg	85%

—Report leaked to ISAP by unidentified sources in the Free Rasalhague dissident movement, 21 December 3076





connection/JIHAD HOT SPOTS:3076/section09: RULES ANNEX

RULES ANNEX





RULES ANNEX

The following section provides additional rules for *BattleTech* covering new units and equipment pertinent to this phase of the Jihad.

Terminology: In these rules, the term “unit” is used as it is in *Total Warfare (TW)*, to refer to a single battlefield element, such as a single ‘Mech, vehicle, battle armor squad, or conventional infantry platoon. The term “force” is used to denote a larger combat formation, such as a regiment or Galaxy.

UNCONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

Outnumbered and surrounded by enemies, the Word of Blake’s strategy has relied heavily on the superior technology the Blakists enjoy over most of the Inner Sphere, as well as a broad range of unconventional weapons. While many of these technologies are not truly unique to the Word, their application on such a broad scale—such as suicide implants—has played havoc on the forces arrayed against them. In addition, the Word’s apparent innovations in Kearny-Fuchida principles has given rise to force deployments and communications that are even faster than ComStar or the Clans—factors that have made it possible to prosecute their war against humanity on a grand scale.

UNWILLING ALLIES

Although first seen in mass use during recent attacks by the Circinus Federation against the Lyran Alliance and Free Worlds League, the Word of Blake has made increasing use of forces that have been dragooned into serving their goals since the early years of the Jihad. Forced into battle against their will—and often wired with booby traps and surveillance equipment—these unwilling allies are often poorly trained and equipped, but their modifications can make them deadly and terrifying, particularly in the fierce urban combat that has characterized much of the Jihad.

The Unwilling Allies rules presented below offer a loose framework to reflect this element in gameplay. Due to their extreme rarity (even in the Jihad, there have been few large-scale actions relying on these forces), Unwilling Allies are considered Experimental-level rules.

Creating Unwilling Allies

The techniques used to create an Unwilling Ally tend to vary from subject to subject and have been used by covert agencies, government and military groups, and even criminal organizations for thousands of years. Subjects that become unwilling allies may be bribed, blackmailed, or even brainwashed to do so. The Word of Blake has been known to use any and all of these techniques to gain loyalty from civilians, warriors, and even entire worlds. But in the most extreme of cases—specifically, those who have been taken and unleashed by the Manei Domini—these Unwilling Allies (often referred to by the Domini as “Reclamations”) are those who have been coerced into service by the most insidious force possible: cybernetic implants.

Simple Coercion (Blackmail or Bribery): In gameplay, creating an Unwilling Ally using simple coercion (bribery or blackmail) is a matter of storytelling. Subjects pressed into service through bribery or blackmail are generally the product of a month or more of psychological efforts, designed to wear down their defenses and their will to resist. This effort can convert the subject into a basically effective agent for his handlers, be it as a simple soldier (or even a MechWarrior), or as a “sleeper” spy. Warriors converted in this method are often fielded with regular troops to ensure their obedience, or occasionally sent in as a vanguard to spring any enemy traps and ambushes. Non-warriors often have a handler observing them from remote locations (or perhaps closer), both to enforce their instructions, and to provide assistance as needed, while their unwilling operative serves as the scapegoat.

Brainwashed: An Unwilling Ally created using conditioning or brainwashing has been subjected to more insidious psychological efforts that shattered his will and replaced it with the controlling party’s own agenda. This effort results in a more thorough conversion of the subject, and thus a more effective agent who can perform all the same functions as one created using simpler coercion. A brainwashed Ally is more often fielded with fewer active handlers, through groups of brainwashed warriors will require a leader who is not an Unwilling Ally. Brainwashed non-warriors will still likely have a handler observing them, but this handler will be far more remote and may have orders to simply terminate the unwilling operative if mission security is compromised in any way.

Reclamations: A cyber-implanted Reclamation is an Unwilling Ally turned by more ruthless means. Though such subjects generally are given less of a psychological work-over from their handlers, they instead typically receive (or are led to believe they have received) cybernetic implants designed to track, observe, and—if necessary—destroy them by remote. These operatives live with the knowledge (real or imagined) that they are living bombs and are thus forced to obey their masters as slaves, performing acts that could be considered treason in their homelands simply to avoid their own summary execution. More extensively modified Reclamations have even appeared—often as shock troops or brute-force terror agents—that resemble the Manei Domini themselves.

Creation Rules: Unwilling Allies always have the same skills and abilities they possessed prior to their conversion, regardless of the methods used. As Unwilling Allies are simply a conversion of the “wetware” (personnel), there are no character creation or unit construction rules that specifically apply to such converts, except as noted below.

Combat (and Non-Combat) tactical units converted into Unwilling Allies via bribery or blackmail methods are functionally identical to their normal unit construction rules. Their RPG equivalents, however, may only possess a maximum WIL score

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of 4 and automatically receive the In For Life Trait to reflect their conversions. If a character with a higher WIL is later converted into an Unwilling Ally using the Simple Coercion method, the character's WIL automatically drops to 4.

Combat (and Non-Combat) tactical units and RPG characters converted into Reclamations are functionally identical to their normal combat construction rules. In addition, all Reclamations must receive 1 to 2 Manei Domini Implants at Implant Levels of 2 or less (see pp. 120-131, *JHS3072*). If the unit is an infantry unit (battle armor or conventional), all members of the unit must receive the same implants; if the unit is a vehicle or aerospace unit operated by a crew, only the commander or pilot receives the implants. If the unit is a 'Mech or single-pilot unit, the warrior can receive 1 additional implant at Level 3, but only if the warrior is of Veteran quality or better. All implants placed within a Reclamation are considered to incorporate explosive suicide charges.

Unwilling Allies in Gameplay

In non-RPG gameplay, only one side may employ Unwilling Allies per scenario. During the Jihad, only the Word of Blake used Unwilling Allies.

Unwilling Allies of any type may start gameplay either already in the thrall of their masters (and therefore counted among the forces used by the controlling player), or—if they are not Reclamations or infantry—they may be secretly designated as “sleepers” in the opposing force's roster. Reclamations and infantry may not be designated as sleepers in tactical play because they are generally too easy to identify, especially when deployed in platoons.

Sleepers: To determine which units in an opposing force may be sleepers, the player controlling the force with Unwilling Allies must make a 2D6 roll for each non-infantry unit the opposing player fields and must write down which units receive a roll of 10+. These units are sleepers. (If the scenario is part of an RPG campaign, player-characters who have not actually gone through the experience of being “converted” may ignore a sleeper result.)

Sleepers within a player's force function normally as part of that force until, during the End Phase of any turn after combat begins, the player controlling the force with Unwilling Allies elects to activate the sleeper. Activating a sleeper simply requires a unit in the force using Unwilling Allies to have a line of sight to a secretly designated sleeper unit, allowing that unit (dubbed the Handler Unit) to send the proper activation code to the sleeper. Only 1 designated sleeper may be activated per Handler Unit at one time, though the same Handler Unit may be used to activate additional sleepers in subsequent turns. Once activated, a sleeper is placed under the control of the force using Unwilling Allies, but suffers a target number modifier to all rolls for Piloting, Gunnery, and other Skill Checks, reflecting their unwillingness to fire on friendly units. If using the Morale rules from *Tactical*

Operations (see pp. 211-213, *TO*), activated sleepers receive the same modifier to their Morale Target number.

The Skill and Morale target number modifiers for a sleeper created using bribery or blackmail methods is +2, reflecting the fact that the subject is relatively unreliable to the Handlers. Sleepers created using brainwashing methods, on the other hand, suffer a +1 Skill and Morale Target modifier, reflecting their broken will.

Unwilling Allies (Simple Coercion and Brainwashing):

In tactical and RPG play, Unwilling Allies created using bribery, blackmail, or brainwashing methods that are not fielded as sleepers operate using the same rules as an activated sleeper, but all of these Unwilling Allies suffer only a +1 target number modifier to all Skill and Morale checks. For bribed and/or blackmailed allies, this reflects the more direct presence of their Handlers and less shock of becoming a spontaneous turncoat. For brainwashed allies, there is no significant difference between being an activated sleeper or an active part of a force's order of battle, due to the broken nature of the brainwashed ally's will.

Unwilling Allies (Reclamations): In tactical gameplay, Unwilling Allies created as Reclamations function as Manei Domini combatants (see pp. 120-131, *JHS3072*), but because they are forced into their role, rather than dedicated and indoctrinated to it, these Unwilling Allies suffer a +1 target number modifier to all Piloting, Gunnery, and other Skill Checks. Reclamations also will not fight to the death as actual Manei Domini do. However, the controlling player of any force that includes Reclamations may detonate a Reclamation-controlled unit in order to prevent its surrender or capture by enemy forces as long as one friendly non-Reclamation unit has a line of sight to the target Reclamation-controlled unit in the End Phase of the turn. If the Reclamation controls a non-infantry unit (vehicle, 'Mech, fighter, and so on), this detonation follows the standard rules for an engine explosion during the subsequent Movement Phase, and automatically kills the pilot/crew of the destroyed unit. If the unit is infantry, all troopers in the unit explode, inflicting 0.5 damage points per exploding trooper to all units within the same hex (rounding up).

Non-Combat (RPG) Rules: In a non-tactical setting, such as general role-playing, encounters with Unwilling Allies may vary greatly, from a direct attack by dragooned suicide troops to an attempt to conduct espionage or spying from within a friendly outpost. The ultimate nature of why the Unwilling Ally is present should be left up to the game master, and the subject should not be revealed as someone who has been forced to serve enemy masters unless he says or does something to expose himself.

Once exposed, many Unwilling Allies who have been converted using blackmail or bribery methods may be swung away from their masters if they believe the characters can truly help them escape their predicament. However, doing so requires more than a simple Negotiation Skill Check, as the paranoia of

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retribution—powerful enough to make these “converts” fire on their own friends and loved ones—and the very real possibility that a handler may be nearby, observing any effort to switch sides, makes the subject extremely hard to talk to.

Unwilling Allies produced through brainwashing already have a broken will and are not as easily reached by anyone trying to free them because they will not be able to seek such assistance for themselves. Attempts to attack or subdue a brainwashed ally will be met with a violent and fanatical defense, meaning that anyone trying to get through to a brainwashed subject must avoid arousing the subject’s self-defense programming or try to subdue the subject as quickly as possible. Deprogramming a subject can take weeks of intense psychotherapy, after which the subject may still suffer from post-traumatic stress, amnesia, or other forms of mental instability.

Unwilling Allies who are Reclamations are even more dangerous, as their bodies are typically wired to explode (although in some rare instances, it turns out their masters actually just scarred them and *told* them they had an implant, allowing the uncertainty to convince them to serve). When dealing with these Unwilling Allies in an RPG setting, the gamemaster should remember that such characters are as unwilling as those who have been merely blackmailed into serving, but that the intense fear keeping these agents in line may drive them to fight, rather than surrender (determine using a WIL Attribute Check, with a success resulting in a decision to surrender and a failure resulting in violence). If, however, such agents are observed by their masters when attempting to surrender (or when about to be captured), said masters can easily and remotely set off any implanted suicide devices, in the hopes that the resultant explosion would kill any would-be saviors as well.

KEARNY-FUCHIDA “SUPER-JUMP” TECHNOLOGY

Originally a subject of rumor and conjecture, the Kearny-Fuchida “super-jump” technology allegedly used by some Word of Blake naval forces was finally confirmed beyond doubt in 3073, after the Manei Domini’s Fifty-second Shadow Division struck a series of worlds with lightning-fast planetary assaults. The fact that the capability was employed both by ships originally in the Division’s assets and by other JumpShips captured later further confirmed the rumors that the system is actually more technique than technology.

The Word of Blake “super-jump” technology appears to be more of a series of shunts, bypasses and computers than it is a new drive system. The technology requires a jump-capable vessel that also features a functional lithium-fusion battery, essentially chain-linking those components together. By then disabling a series of safety systems that have been part of K-F technology since its inception, this technique effectively initiates two hyperspace jumps at once, magnifying the JumpShip’s range. Some estimates call the resulting range “unlimited,” but

hyperspatial physicists in ComStar and the Clans claim the actual distance is perhaps no greater than 900 light-years with any degree of accuracy.

Regardless of the distance, further analysis has pointed to a critical flaw in the system: the energies released using the technique are not only powerful enough to catapult JumpShips from one end of the Inner Sphere to another, but are also well beyond the tolerances of even the toughest K-F drive engines in existence. The surge released for even one jump using this technique is more than enough to fuse the drive and its battery into a useless lump of alloy, rendering the vessel incapable of hyperspace transit again until it receives a completely new drive system. In all recorded instances and simulations, the K-F super-jump is a one-way trip for the vessel.

Word of Blake K-F “Super-Jump” System

Rules Level: Experimental

Available To: JumpShips, WarShips

Tech Base (Ratings): Inner Sphere (F/X-X-F)

Game Rules (BT): The Word of Blake’s “super-jump” technology requires a pre-existing K-F drive and a lithium-fusion battery to function, and adds to this mix a few components of inconsequential weight and bulk that override certain safety protocols and such within the jump-drive systems. When engaged, the jumping vessel initiates a normal K-F jump sequence with the charge stored in the drive core and then—nanoseconds later—begins a second sequence using the charge in the L-F battery to magnify the jump by several orders of magnitude, effectively creating a jump within a jump.

An incoming super-jumper has an unmistakable emergence wave. What first appears as a massive burst of thermal radiation dissolves into a group of smaller signals, creating the impression of a massive JumpShip or WarShip coming in with an escort group in tight formation. Even more remarkable is the range of the Word of Blake super-jumps, which appears to be effectively unlimited.

The *actual* maximum range for a super-jump (in light-years) is 1,200 – (1D6 x 50) and is determined at the time the jump is made. If a super-jump is attempted beyond this range, the jumping vessel’s controlling player must make a Control Roll with a +1 target number modifier for every 25 light years (LY) beyond the ship’s determined super-jump limit. If this Control Roll fails, the super-jump fails, and the vessel is considered destroyed in hyperspace. This Control Roll is made separate from any other rolls determining the jump’s success.

The technique is dangerous and applies a +3 target modifier when computing jumps and executing them (dramatically increasing the chance of a misjump). More devastating, however, is the fact that the act of jumping automatically destroys the jumping vessel’s K-F drive *and* its lithium-fusion batteries. A vessel that executes a Word of Blake super-jump cannot jump

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again until it can get to a friendly space dock and have its drive and battery completely replaced. However, even though it is non-functional, the destroyed KF drive still interferes with KF fields generated by other jump-capable vessels (see *Strategic Operations*, p. 89), making it impossible to take such vessels out of the system until the drive is replaced.

Construction Rules: Word of Blake super-jump technology takes up no significant weight or space in JumpShip or WarShip, but it may only be installed on vessels that include both a K-F drive and a lithium-fusion battery system.

KEARNY-FUCHIDA “SUPER-HPG” TECHNOLOGY

In addition to the super-jump technique demonstrated by the Blakist Shadow Divisions, Inner Sphere intelligence agencies have determined that the Word of Blake has also attained vastly superior ranges in hyperpulse generator transmission as well, allowing for near-instantaneous transmission to any target world within an estimated 1,000 light-years of the transmitter. How exactly this is accomplished is not as clear as the super-jump principle, but what is known is that—unlike the super-jump technique—the so-called super-HPG system is a complete machine, and not a mere series of bypasses and safety cutoffs. It is also, apparently, extremely difficult to reproduce, and it is believed that at present there may be only six to twelve super-HPG transmitters in existence.

The super-HPG can transmit and receive signals from any super-HPG within its operational range, in the same basic fashion as a standard HPG, and it uses the same transmission protocols as standard HPGs, so signals from a super-HPG can be received by standard HPG receivers. However, the increased signal strength required apparently causes disruptions in local hyperspace that garble standard HPG transmissions and can even be felt in conventional wave communications in the form of a momentary electromagnetic pulse (such as the one felt just before the “Donner Explosion” on Arc-Royal). While data is sketchy, some have suggested that this side-effect helped the Word spread its HPG virus to ComStar’s A-stations in Lyran, FedSuns, and Combine space, effectively sparking the “White-Out.”

It remains to be seen if this same localized hyperspace disruption has any effect on K-F vessels, but given the fleet traffic to and from Gibson and Terra, where at least two such super-HPGs are believed to be in place, any threat may be minimal.

Word of Blake K-F “Super-HPG” System

Rules Level: Experimental

Available To: Buildings

Tech Base (Ratings): F/X-X-F

Game Rules: Super-HPGs are not truly mobile and must be mounted in Hardened fixed structures with a minimum CF of 120 and a minimum 100-ton fusion power supply. The intensity of their transmissions is too disruptive to spacecraft power systems and K-F drives to permit their use aboard spacecraft of any kind.

A Super-HPG may fire a signal burst a maximum of once per minute but may receive an HPG signal once per 10-second tactical combat turn. All transmission and reception of HPG signals occurs during the Weapon Attack Phase.

The transmission or reception of super-HPG signals includes an electromagnetic pulse that “blinds” nearby units. The burst of a super-HPG transmission blinds the sensors of transmitting building and all other units within 2,000 meters (67 ground hexes) of the transmitter (applying a +6 modifier to all Gunnery and Sensor-related checks required of any affected units within that range). In addition, units within 300 meters (10 hexes) of a transmitting super-HPG are treated as though struck by an EMP mine (see p. 365, *TO*), but with a +1 modifier to the EMP Mine Effects Table roll result. All EMP effects from a Super-HPG last for 1 full minute (1 turn in space or high-altitude combat; 6 turns in vehicle-scale ground combat).

Inbound super-HPG bursts are much less devastating and have an area of effect of only 900 meters (30 hexes) away from the receiving HPG, with EMP Mine-like effects (using the rules as noted above) occurring to any unit within 90 meters (3 hexes) of the receiver. If no HPG is available to receive the pulse, no effect occurs.

Unlike standard HPG signals, the bursts from Super-HPGs cannot be received by non-HPG systems. Super-HPGs cannot be used to deliver a pulse directly against a target unit other than another HPG, Super-HPG, or Mobile-HPG.

A Super-HPG can receive HPG signals from standard, mobile, and Super-HPG systems operating within their range, and can send a signal to any standard, mobile, or Super-HPG within the Super-HPG’s transmitting range.

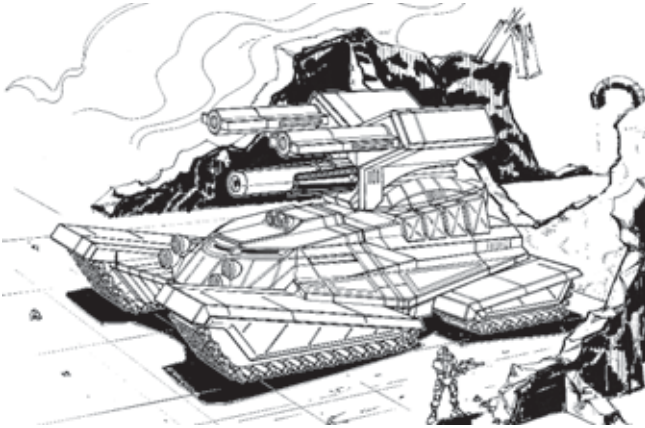
Construction Rules: Super-HPGs require a fusion engine with a minimum weight of 100 tons in order to operate, and a Hardened building with a minimum CF of 120, a minimum size of 60 meters by 60 meters, and a minimum height of 30 meters (5 levels). Super-HPGs are non-mobile and cannot be mounted on mobile units such as Large-sized Support Vehicles and Mobile Structures. In terms of Building construction, a Super-HPG has a weight of 2,400 tons.



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NEW VEHICLES

The following new vehicles recently debuted or came into noteworthy use during the past few years of the Jihad.



MOLTKE MAIN BATTLE TANK

Mass: 75 tons

Movement Type: Tracked

Power Plant: Vlar 300 XL Fusion

Cruising Speed: 43 kph

Flank Speed: 64 kph

Armor: Star Slab/7 Heavy Ferro Fibrous

Armament:

- 1 Diverse Optics Sunbeam Extended Range Large Laser
- 2 Imperator Automatic Weaponry Light Gauss Rifles

Manufacturer: Brooks, Inc.

Primary Factory: Andurien

Communications System: Maxell 650

Targeting and Tracking System: Maxell TA 85

Overview

Unable and unwilling to rely on other parts suppliers in the Free Worlds League, the Duchy of Andurien commissioned the Moltke as a means of filling in gaps in its growing defense forces. Requirements called for a vehicle with good long-range punch, heavy armor, and good mobility. Brooks Incorporated won the contract with their prototype Moltke MBT, a design based on the ancient Augustus A-3 tank of Age of War fame.

Despite its basis—a tank rendered obsolete seven centuries ago—the Moltke is a solid vehicle. Brooks upgraded the Augustus' old diesel engine with a far more powerful and lighter extra-light fusion plant, and traded in the Augustus' dual light autocannons for a pair of light Gauss rifles. A Sunbeam extended-range large laser provided more range and firepower than the Augustus' backup medium autocannon, offering the Moltke firepower that its obsolete progenitor could only dream of. Although the Moltke still retains the Augustus' Y-shaped turret and angled tread mounts, its improved firepower and twelve tons of heavy ferro-fibrous armor allows this vehicle to endure a long and fierce firefight.

With the smaller engine and nearly half the crew requirements of the Augustus, the Moltke is roomier than its ancestral original. Critics decry the cost of the tank, suggesting that the Duchy of Andurien would be better served by a simpler design that can be produced more quickly, but supporters believe that the Moltke's speed, armor, and firepower will more than compensate for its price tag.

All of the Moltkes produced to date have gone to Andurien militias and the few Free Worlds forces still stationed within the Duchy's borders, but orders have come in from other League states as well. Brooks has sought permission to sell the Moltke outside the Duchy but is awaiting word on which governments the Andurians will trust with their new machine.

Meanwhile, Brooks' engineers have begun looking into variants to compliment the standard Moltke (also known as the M-1 model). The so-called M-2 variant Moltke would swap out its laser for a snub-nosed PPC while each Gauss rifle would be traded in for a pair of seven-tube multi-missile launchers. An additional MML-7 would then be added to the front of the tank in a fixed mount, while all five launchers would carry a total of six tons of ammunition for variable-range options. Recently entering limited prototype stages, the M-2 Moltke is expected to hit the fields as early as 3077.

Type: **Moltke M-1**

Technology Base: Inner Sphere

Movement Type: Tracked

Tonnage: 75

Battle Value: 1,355

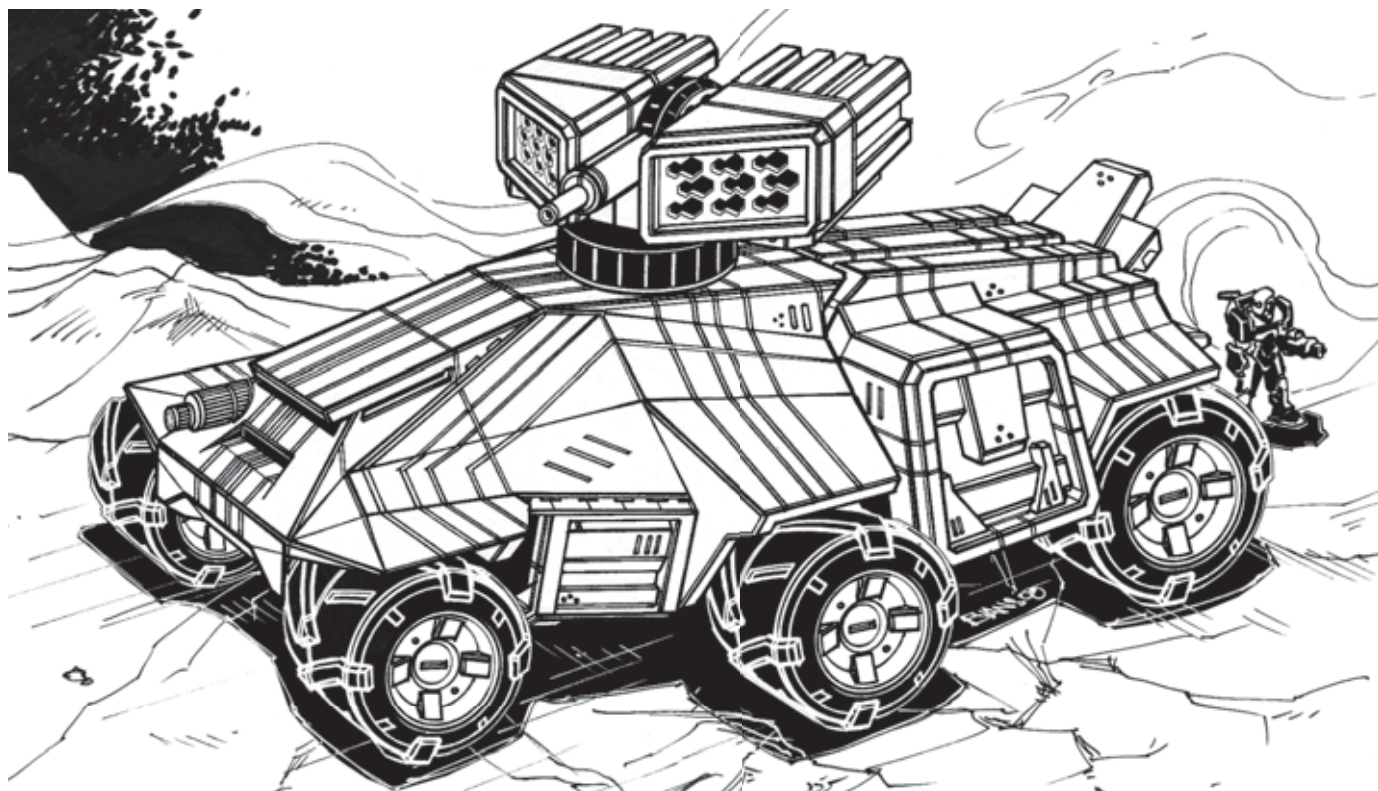
Equipment

		Mass
Internal Structure:		7.5
Engine:	300	14.5
Type:	XL Fusion	
Cruising MP:	4	
Flank MP:	6	
Heat Sinks:	12	2
Control Equipment:		4
Lift Equipment:		0
Power Amplifier:		0
Turret:		3
Armor Factor:	238	12
	<i>Armor Value</i>	
Front	62	
R/L Side	47/47	
Rear	32	
Turret	50	

Weapons and Ammo

	Location	Tonnage
ER Large Laser	Turret	5
2 Light Gauss Rifles	Turret	24
Ammo (LGR) 48	Body	3

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**BOLLA STEALTH TANK****Mass:** 60 tons**Movement Type:** Wheeled**Power Plant:** VOX 280 XL**Cruising Speed:** 54 kph**Flank Speed:** 86 kph**Armor:** Krupp Stealth**Armament:**

1 Volk's Machine Gun

15.5 tons of pod space available (maximum of 15 tons in the turret)

Manufacturer: Krupp Armament Works**Primary Factory:** Terra (Germany)**Communications System:** Master's Voice Serp-Alpha with Guardian ECM and Wisdom of Blake C3i Computer**Targeting and Tracking System:** Baltex K590**Overview**

Although they certainly salvaged some from the wreckage of shattered Capellan units in 3069, the Word of Blake has been slow to deploy vehicular stealth technology. Their new Bolla Stealth Tank—rumored to be the first in a series of new OmniVehicles collectively known as the Serpentus series—the Bolla is the first conventional combat vehicle to incorporate stealth armor.

Since the initial reports on this vehicle began to filter in, analysts have been completely baffled by the Bolla's capabilities. Too large to be a true APC or IFV (despite carrying infantry) and too slow for a reconnaissance unit (a role its stealth systems would have been perfect for), the vehicle also lacks the armament to make it a true main battle tank. Its chassis is shrouded by a faceted-armor shell of stealth technology, but this stealth armor system is incompatible with the use of the vehicle's own improved C3 computer system. Only when the Bolla began to appear on the battlefield did its true role become apparent as a support unit for Manei Domini infantry and battle armor engaging in deadly rear-area missions. Much like the "headhunter" tactics employed by the Clans during their invasion, this mission spec is intended to cripple enemy command, communications, and control capabilities, and the Bolla's combination of stealth, infantry transport, and improved communications enables this vehicle to sneak its troops to the enemy's rear and then uncloak to coordinate its firepower with



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other friendly combat units. The Bolla is equally dangerous as a defensive unit, employing its stealth capabilities to lie in wait before delivering a crippling blow at point-blank range. In this capacity, a loaded Bolla can soften up its prey before unleashing its swarm of infantry to finish off or capture the target. Indeed, the Bolla's first real combat debut on Galatea took the allies so much by surprise, the vehicle was credited with extending the fighting to liberate that world.

Of the four standard Bolla configurations encountered so far, the Invictus is the most well rounded, with twin nine-tube multi-missile launchers providing reasonable mixed-range firepower. After the initial landings drove the Blakists out of Galatea City, coalition troops repeatedly ran afoul of Bolla ambushes. After delivering one shattering SRM salvo, the Blakist vehicles raced away to their next ambush site, laying down cover fire with LRMs as they fled. These tactics bought the Word's Eleventh Division the time it needed to regroup and mount an effective defense against the coalition invasion.

Geared more towards infantry support, the Dominus uses its turret-mounted light autocannon to hammer bunkers and snipe back at incoming aircraft alike, while a back-up heavy flamer allows it to keep conventional infantry at bay.

The Infernus weapon mix is clearly built for pure urban ambush tactics. Concealed by its stealth systems, this Bolla configuration waits for a target to blunder into its sights and unleashes a whirlwind of highly accurate Streak SRMs. Even an assault 'Mech would be hard pressed to shrug off a missile swarm this powerful, and it only gets worse if the vehicle unleashes its complement of infantry to follow up on such a devastating first strike.

The Comminus is a sniper. Armed with a light Gauss rifle and plenty of ammunition, it harasses its targets from a distance while relying on its stealth systems (augmented by a turret-mounted anti-missile system) to defend against return fire.

Type: **Bolla Stealth Tank**

Technology Base: Inner Sphere

Movement Type: Wheeled

Tonnage: 60

Battle Value: 968

Equipment		Mass
Internal Structure:		6
Engine:	280 XL	12
Type:	Fusion	
Cruising MP:	5	
Flank MP:	8	
Heat Sinks:	10	0
Control Equipment:		3
Lift Equipment:		0
Power Amplifier:		0

Turret:		1.5
Armor Factor:	168 Stealth	10.5
	<i>Armor</i>	
	<i>Value</i>	
Front	34	
R/L Side	32	
Rear	30	
Turret	40	

Fixed

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Tonnage
Machine Gun	Front	.5
Ammo (MG) 200	Body	1
Guardian ECM	Body	1.5
C3i	Body	2.5
Infantry Compartment	Body	6

Invictus (Primary) Weapons Configuration

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Tonnage
2 MML 9	Turret	12
Ammo (MML) 39/33	Body	3
Machine Gun	Turret	.5

Dominus (Alternate A) Weapons Configuration

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Tonnage
2 Light AC/5	Turret	10
Ammo (Light AC) 40	Body	2
Heavy Flamer	Turret	1.5
Ammo (Heavy Flamer) 20	Body	2
Battle Value: 905		

Infernus (Alternate B) Weapons Configuration

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Tonnage
3 Streak SRM 6	Turret	13.5
Ammo (Streak) 30	Body	2
Battle Value: 1,076		

Comminus (Alternate C) Weapons Configuration

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Tonnage
Light Gauss Rifle	Turret	12
Ammo (Gauss) 32	Body	2
Anti-Missile System	Turret	.5
Ammo (AMS) 12	Body	1
Battle Value: 1,005		

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NEW 'MECHS

The following new BattleMechs recently debuted or came into noteworthy use during the past few years of the Jihad.

TUNDRA WOLF

Mass: 75 tons

Chassis: Mark XX Heavy Endo Steel

Power Plant: 300 XL

Cruising Speed: 43 kph

Maximum Speed: 65 kph (86 kph with MASC)

Jump Jets: BMP Series XV

Jump Capacity: 120 meters

Armor: Beta Compound (Standard)

Armament:

- 1 Type 9 Series Advanced Tactical Missile System
- 4 Series 2b ER Medium Lasers
- 1 Type XX "Long Bow" LRM-20
- 1 Series 7K ER Large Laser
- 1 Smartshot MkV Streak SRM-4

Manufacturer: W-7 Facilities

Primary Factory: Tamar

Communications System: Khan Series (Type 3a)

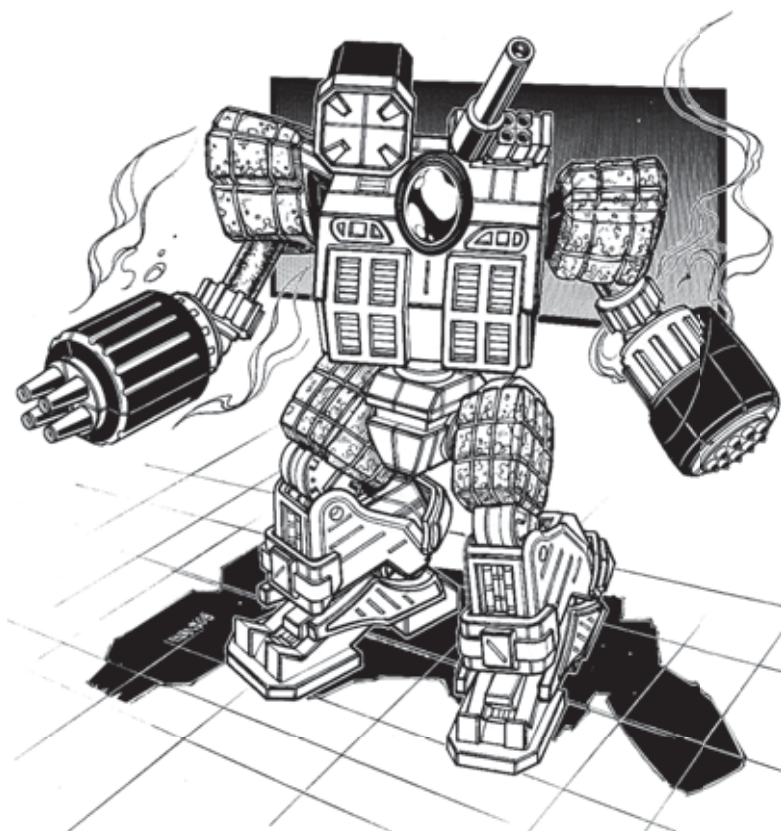
Targeting and Tracking System: Build 4 MadCat TTS

Overview

Cut off from homeworld industry and under constant pressure on multiple fronts, Clan Wolf found itself in dire need of hardware to keep its touman up and running. For some time, the merchant caste maintained the flow of supplies through deals with fellow Invading Clans, but the disruptions of the Jihad soon took their toll. As the supply problem became critical, Khan Vlad Ward authorized a crash course in production site upgrades, with an eye toward manufacturing Clan technology designs within the Wolf Clan Occupation Zone. This decision, delayed for decades before (perhaps to avoid putting superior Clan technology within reach of Spheroid insurgents), also forced the Wolf Khan to allow the engineering teams broader latitude in design.

The product of this unparalleled production drive was the *Tundra Wolf*, the first all-new Wolf Clan BattleMech to step off the W-7 assembly lines on Tamar in 3076. Heavy but capable of speed bursts of almost 90 kilometers per hour, the *Tundra Wolf* is well armored and equipped with a broad range of weapons, aptly suited for the ever-changing battlefields of the Jihad. Its ECM suite, specifically installed to counter Word of Blake electronics, helps to negate the one advantage Spheroid technology has offered against the Clans.

As the first Clan Wolf BattleMech designed and built entirely



in the Inner Sphere, the *Tundra Wolf* has become a symbol of the Wolves' new roots in the occupation zones. But since its limited production just started this year, only a handful of these machines have made it into the Clan's ranks. Most of these have been shipped directly to Delta Galaxy, the Wolf Clan force assigned to fighting alongside Devlin Stone against the Blakists.

Despite the design's recent inception and presently low production volume, however, Clan engineers have already produced two variants of the *Tundra Wolf*. The first addresses concerns about ammunition dependency of the base model, and replaces its arsenal with a single extended-range large laser, an extended-range PPC, and six extended-range medium lasers, plus an LRM-15 rack and some additional heat sinks. Although this variant sacrifices some armor, the inclusion of a targeting computer helps ensure this machine's accuracy in tight combat.

The second variant was clearly designed with Clan duelists in mind. This variant uses the *Tundra Wolf 2* as its baseline but sacrifices the targeting computer, three tons of armor, and two medium lasers. In this saved space, engineers have fit a second ER PPC and a four-tube Streak SRM launcher.



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Type: **Tundra Wolf**
 Technology Base: Clan
 Tonnage: 75
 Battle Value: 3,131

Equipment

		Mass
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	4
Engine:	300 XL	9.5
Walking MP:	4	
Running MP:	6(8)	
Jumping MP:	4	
Heat Sinks:	17(34)	7
Gyro:		3
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	231	14.5
	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Head	3	9
Center Torso:	23	34
Center Torso (Rear):		12
L/R Side Torso:	16	24
L/R Side Torso (Rear):		8
L/R Arm:	12	24
L/R Leg:	16	32

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
4 ER Medium Lasers	RA	4	4
Adv. Tact. Msl. 9	LA	7	5
Ammo (ATM 9)	LA	3	3
LRM 20	RT	6	5
Ammo (LRM 20)	RT	2	2
ER Large Laser	LT	1	4
Streak SRM 4	LT	2	2
Ammo (Streak 4)	LT	1	1
ECM Suite	CT	1	1
MASC	LT	3	3
2 Jump Jets	RL	2	2
2 Jump Jets	LL	2	2

NH-1A ROOK

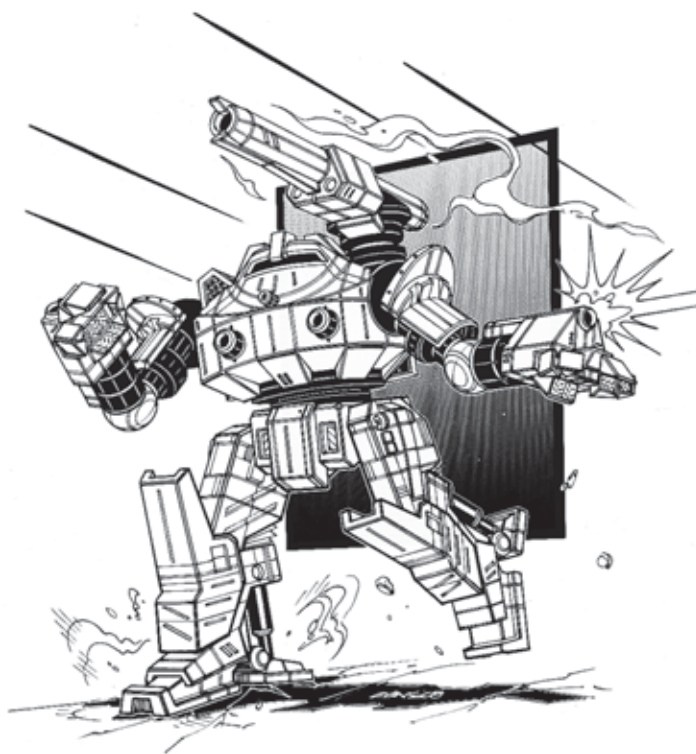
During his mercenary command's long trek home from Galatea through Blake Protectorate space, General Pat Hampton got a hard, firsthand look at the danger and oppression of the expanding Blake Protectorate. Upon finally returning to his home system of New Hessen, Hampton devoted his efforts to a massive buildup of the New Hessen defense forces. At first, this defense force consisted of conventional vehicles, fighters, and mass formations of unarmored infantry, backed up by the Hampton's Hessens. But when Hampton's command staff obtained a copy of the New Dallas Memory Core, the mercenary general quickly realized that New Hessen's extensive maintenance and repair

facilities could be retooled to assemble less sophisticated BattleMech designs such as the *BattleAxe* and *Hammerhands*.

Unfortunately, while the ancient heavyweights seemed promising, their reliance on ammunition-based weapons promised a burden on the RetroTech machines' logistical tail. General Hampton therefore requested that New Hessens' crude new 'Mech producers focus on a complementary design that did not rely on ammunition. In late 3074 under a veil of secrecy, the New Hessen Defense force began mass production of their first original design, the *Rook*.

Slow for its size, the fifty-five ton *Rook* relies on a battery of lasers for close-in city fighting, backed by a torso-mounted PPC for a solid long-range punch. While the *Rook* is prone to overheating, the lack of ammunition dependency allows this 'Mech to participate in protracted fights while others resupply, and two articulate hand actuators allow it to transport cargo and assist in civic activities during peacetime.

Although the *Rook* remains unable to stand up to modern designs on a one on one basis, its relative ease of construction and low cost have allowed New Hessen to assemble almost a hundred of these designs to date, bolstering their growing numbers of RetroTech *Hammerhands* and *Battleaxes*. In addition, a fair amount of these machines has been assigned to supplement conventional forces made up of fast strike vehicles, using the *Rook* as an anchor while hovercraft and combat WiGEs flank and surround enemy combatants—a tactic successfully



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used when the Word of Blake finally attacked New Hessen in August of 3076. Though the *Rooks* fell in large numbers, the damage done and time bought allowed New Hessen's defenders to break up and drive off the invaders' main force.

With Devlin Stone's coalition now repaying New Hessen's aid in modern supplies and parts, approximately a dozen *Rooks* have been upgraded to various degrees. Some have been constructed to a Succession Wars level of technology, while a handful has reportedly been tweaked to meet more modern standards, with significant increases in speed and firepower.

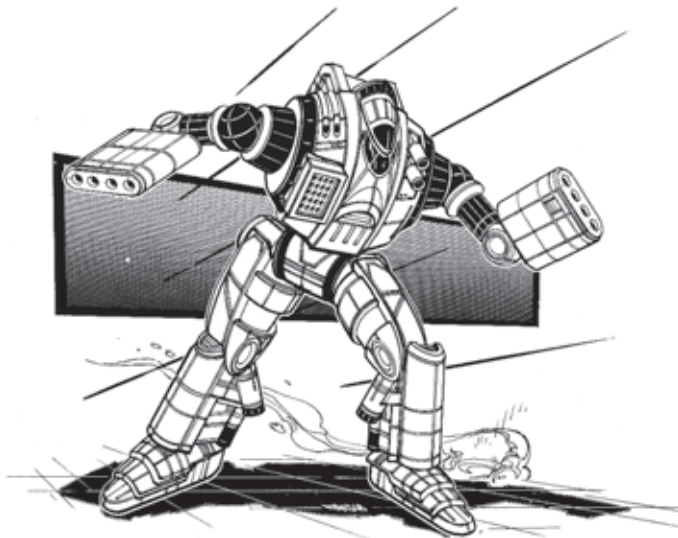
Battle Value: 1197

Equipment

		Mass
Internal Structure:	5	.5
Engine:	200 Primitive	8.5
Walking MP:	3	
Running MP:	5	
Jumping MP:	3	
Heat Sinks:	14	4
Gyro:		2
Cockpit (Primitive):		5
Armor Factor (Primitive):	160	15
	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Head	3	9
Center Torso	18	22
Center Torso (rear)		7
R/L Torso	13	20
R/L Torso (rear)		6
R/L Arm	9	17
R/L Leg	13	18

Weapons and Ammo

	Location	Critical	Tonnage
PPC	RT	3	7
Medium Laser	RA	1	1
Medium Laser	LA	1	1
Medium Laser	RT	1	1
Medium Laser	RT (R)	1	1
Medium Laser	LT	1	1
Medium Laser	LT (R)	1	1
Small laser	H	1	.5
Jump Jet	RT	1	.5
Jump Jet	LT	1	.5
Jump Jet	CT	1	.5



OWR-2M OSTWAR

Mass: 65 tons

Chassis: Ost-I

Power Plant: Hermes 235

Cruising Speed: 32 kph

Maximum Speed: 54 kph

Jump Jets: None

Jump Capacity: None

Armor: Regulus Basic

Armament:

- 1 Doombud Long Range Missile 20-Rack
- 2 Shannon SH-40 SRM 4 Launchers
- 2 Martel Medium Lasers

Manufacturer: Harmony MetalWorks

Primary Factory: Harmony

Communications System: Barret Party Line-200

Targeting and Tracking System: Wasat Watchdog W100

Overview

Almost forgotten today, the *Ostwar* was the first of the "walking pods" pioneered by Ostmann Industries. Although designed in 2470, Ostmann's limited resources delayed full-scale production until 2500—by which time their flagship BattleMech was already considered obsolete by the standards of the Terran Hegemony Armed Forces.

As orders to Ostmann began to dry up, the company's director, Ernst Ostmann, looked beyond the Hegemony's borders for new markets. Lagging behind the rest of the Inner Sphere's BattleMech technology, both the Free Worlds League and Capellan Confederation were more than happy to purchase older weapons from the Hegemony-based company. These foreign orders provided enough capital to save Ostmann from financial ruin and spawned the eventual debut of the improved *Ostroc*



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design. (Many of Ostmann's later 'Mechs—including the *Ostroc* and the *Ostsol*—benefited from so many design similarities to the *Ostwar* that it was not uncommon for parts from one to be used on another in a pinch; during the Succession Wars many of these later Ostmann machines were seen sporting limbs salvaged from this ancient progenitor—even though the *Ostwar* itself did not survive long after the fall of the Star League.)

In 3075, the Principality of Regulus was engaged in a simmering war against the Word of Blake and the Atrean government, and it called for an increased production from its few 'Mech factories to replace grievous losses to its BattleMech forces. Ronin Inc. on Wallis—one of the Principality's largest weapons manufacturers—could not even come close to meeting Regulus' demands for replacements at cutting-edge technology levels, especially after pouring resources into their new *Patriot* support-'Mech line.

With supplies of critical components drying up, SelaSys—Ronin's parent company—turned its attention to upgrading an old WorkMech assembly plant on Harmony. Stumbling over the schematics for the antiquated *Ostwar* and diverting experienced personnel from the booming Ronin facilities to aid the overhaul, SelaSys managed to activate a new BattleMech line at Harmony MetalWorks in less than a year's time. Although the obsolescence of these new designs was met with skepticism from Regulus' Prince Titus Cameron-Jones, the Principality's need for new weapons and Harmony's promise of boosted production overrode the Regulans' reluctance. Production of the new *Ostwar*s has steadily increased since the closing weeks of 3075, as several local industries have streamlined to produce more basic components.

Reasonably armored for its size, the resurrected *Ostwar* has proven itself a solid addition to the defensive 'Mech forces of the Regulan Principality. Even though the machine remains outclassed by modern designs one-on-one, it is cheap and quick to build—allowing the Regulans to throw two or even three BattleMechs against their enemies where previously they could field only one.

In conjunction with Ronin, Harmony MetalWorks has started to explore proposed upgrades. The most promising replaces the basic armor with over eleven tons of light ferro-fibrous material, adds CASE, and installs an ECM system in the center torso. Short range firepower is improved by upgrading the SRMs to Streak

racks and replacing the medium lasers with extended-range models. Similarly, adding an Artemis IV fire control system to the Doombud LRM system enhances long-range firepower. Finally, the power plant is replaced by a modern Hermes 260 unit and the heat sinks are upgraded to double efficiency models. Unfortunately, with so many upgrades, the design would require a new assembly line on Wallis, as the technologies required remain beyond Harmony's capacity.

Type: **OWR-2M Ostwar**

Technology Base: Inner Sphere (Primitive)

Tonnage: 65

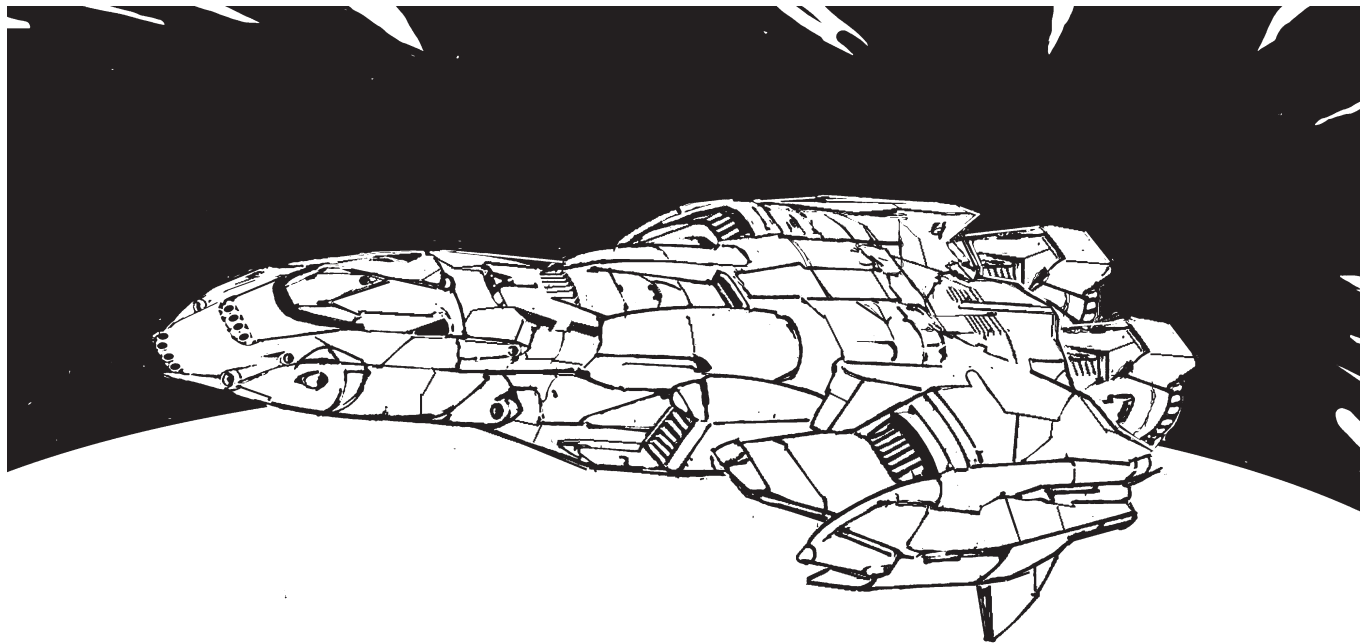
Battle Value: 1,205

Equipment		Mass
Internal Structure:	Standard	6.5
Engine:	235 Primitive	11
Walking MP:	3	
Running MP:	5	
Jumping MP:	0	
Heat Sinks:	12	2
Gyro:		3
Cockpit (Primitive):		5
Armor Factor (Primitive):	187	17.5
	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Head	3	9
Center Torso	21	30
Center Torso (rear)		10
R/L Torso	15	21
R/L Torso (rear)		7
R/L Arm	10	18
R/L Leg	15	23

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
SRM 4	RA	1	2
LRM 20	RT	5	10
Ammo (LRM) 18	RT	3	3
2 Medium Laser	LT	2	2
Ammo (SRM) 25	LT	1	1
SRM 4	LA	1	2



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NEW DROPSHIPS

The following new “Pocket WarShips” reflect new DropShips that recently debuted or came into noteworthy use during the past few years of the Jihad.

INTERDICTOR-CLASS POCKET WARSHIP

Following the naval defeats handed to them at Tharkad and Arc-Royal, the Word of Blake began taking steps to replenish their diminishing naval forces. While much of this effort included the outfitting of new “Q-Ships” such as the *Union* and the *Mule*, the Word also took advantage of newer technology just entering production. Though research and development was swift, development of the *Interdictor*-class Pocket WarShip was not finished until some time in 3073. In 3074, the first of these new ground-up designs was spotted over Gallery, leading the Blakist forces there to swat aside the initial meeting force.

Based in part on the widely renowned *Achilles* design, the Word’s engineers took the concept of a fast assault ship and expanded it, doubling the weight to hold a bevy of new equipment. Furthermore, as with many of the Word of Blake designs emerging since the start of the Jihad, the *Interdictor* has a sleek and fearsome appearance that is built to intimidate.

Key to the *Interdictor*’s success is its high thrust rate, combined with a pair of nose-mounted AR-10 capital missile tubes, backed by one of the Word’s new light sub-capital cannons on each wing. With almost two dozen capital missiles in the ship’s magazine—some of which are sure to be equipped with nuclear warheads—only the most dedicated combat DropShips can hope to evade or outgun an *Interdictor*. If caught alone, the only hope most other craft will have is to surrender

immediately to an *Interdictor* and allow themselves to be boarded by the three dozen battle-armored troops intent on seizing or commandeering any contraband or spoils on board. Its standard weapons armament is a largely medium-ranged mixture made almost entirely of weapon systems that debuted in the last ten years. Variable-speed pulse lasers, heavy particle projection cannons, and multi-missile systems make up the bulk of this firepower. Even its armor is state-of-the-art heavy ferro-aluminum and is thick enough to allow it to weather the kind of incoming fire typically reserved for the most important command ships.

Reports of a second, “sub-capital” variant on the *Interdictor* have also been confirmed. Though its hull, armor, engines, and heat sinks appear outwardly identical to the original model, this variant emphasizes its capital-grade firepower and seems more intended to destroy opponents rather than capture them. Central to this are the nose-mounted Killer Whale and Piranha missile launchers, which are backed by a medium sub-capital cannon and twin sub-capital lasers in each wing, in addition to an assortment of heavy PPCs, variable-speed pulse lasers, and anti-missile defenses. The identical flight and armor profiles make it difficult to know which *Interdictor* a vessel may encounter until the first volleys are fired.

Resistance cells attempting smuggling runs have found it exceedingly hard to avoid a confrontation with an *Interdictor* when detected. In the Gibson system, where the first *Interdictors* debuted, unauthorized traffic—including resistance reconnaissance—has been sharply reduced by a pair of these vessels. Only around thirty *Interdictors* have been spotted to date, mostly patrolling key systems still held by the Blakists,



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or operating with Shadow Divisions on offensive missions. The Word's brief recapture of the Ruins of Gabriel in mid-3075 employed two *Interdictors* to brush aside the Lyran picket ships. When the Ghost Bears later assaulted the site, the two vessels posed a significant challenge for the enraged Bears, who managed to destroy only one of them before the other—heavily damaged—managed to flee the scene and deliver a passing nuclear attack against a portion of the Gabriel facilities.

INTERDICTOR-CLASS DROPSHIP

Type: Military Aerodyne
Use: Pocket WarShip
Tech: Star League
Introduced: 3075
Mass: 9,400 tons
Battle Value: 21,836

Dimensions

Length: 175 meters
Width: 125 meters
Height: 53 meters

Fuel: 400 tons (1,200 points)
Tons/Burn-day: 1.84
Safe Thrust: 7
Maximum Thrust: 11
Heat Sinks: 244 (488)
Structural Integrity: 25

Armor

Nose: 685
Sides: 513
Aft: 342

Cargo

Bay 1: Small Craft (2) 2 Doors
 Bay 2: Battle Armor troops (36 troopers) 1 Door
 Bay 3: Cargo (566 tons) 2 Doors

Life Boats: 0

Escape Pods: 6 Escape Pods

Crew: 5 Officers, 10 Enlisted/Non-rated, 12 Gunners, 46 Bay Personnel

Ammunition: 240 rounds AMS ammunition (20 tons), 6 rounds Killer Whale ammunition (300 Tons), 14 rounds Barracuda ammunition (420 tons), 80 rounds Light Sub-Capital Cannon ammunition (40 tons), Between 396 and 468 rounds MML ammo—depending on composition (36 tons)

Notes: Equipped with 112.5 tons of Heavy Ferro-Aluminum armor.

Weapons: Arc (Heat) Type Nose (127 Heat)	Capital Attack Values (Standard)				Class
	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	
3 Heavy PPC	5 (45)	5 (45)	—	—	PPC
2 MML-9+Art IV (104 rounds)	1 (14)	1 (14)	1 (14)	—	MML*
3 Large VSP Laser	3 (30)	2 (21)	—	—	Pulse
2 AMS (48 rounds)	1 (6)†	—	—	—	AMS
2 AR-10 (6 KW, 14B)	**	**	**	**	Capital Missile

FL/FR (62 Heat)	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	Class
1 Heavy PPC	2 (15)	2 (15)	—	—	PPC
3 MML-9+Art IV (156 rounds)	2 (21)	2 (21)	2 (21)	—	MML*
3 Large VSP Laser	3 (30)	2 (21)	—	—	Pulse
2 AMS (48 rounds)	1 (6)†	—	—	—	AMS
1 Lt. Sub-Capital Cannon (40 rounds)	1 (10)	1 (10)	1 (10)	—	Capital AC

AL/AR (56 Heat)	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	Class
1 Heavy PPC	2 (15)	2 (15)	—	—	PPC
4 Large VSP Laser	4 (40)	3 (28)	—	—	Pulse
1 AMS (36 rounds)	1 (3)†	—	—	—	AMS

Aft (66 Heat)	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	Class
2 Heavy PPC	3 (30)	3 (30)	—	—	PPC
1 MML-9+Art IV (52 rounds)	1 (7)	1 (7)	1 (7)	—	MML*
3 Large VSP Laser	3 (30)	2 (21)	—	—	Pulse
1 AMS (24 rounds)	1 (3)†	—	—	—	AMS

*MML range and damage factored as if using LRM ammo
 **By missile type (Heat factored as for Killer Whale)
 †Only against missiles

ARONDIGHT-CLASS POCKET WARSHIP

In a bid to reinforce its shattered naval forces, the Federated Suns has taken a page from the Word of Blake's playbook and focused on cheaper, easier solution to WarShip construction. Already at the forefront of such designs even before the Jihad with the prototype *Excalibur* Pocket WarShip and the *Overlord-A3*, the appearance of the Word of Blake Q-Ships and Pocket WarShip upgrades spurred FedSuns naval engineers to produce their first ground-up design, the *Arondight*, in 3075.

Smaller than the refitted *Excalibur*, the *Arondight* is far faster and much better armored. Built on an elongated spheroid hull, this vessel's primary anti-WarShip weapon consists of a Kraken-T capital missile launcher, four AR-10 capital missile systems, and eight new Piranha-class sub-capital missile launchers. Furthermore, given the ever-present threat of Blakist aerospace fighters armed with nuclear payloads, the new *Arondight* is festooned with anti-fighter, anti-missile systems, and even aft-mounted screen launchers to deter enemy missiles and help protect any vessels this DropShip may be escorting. Intended to operate as part of a task force, the *Arondight* carries no fighters of

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its own. The vessel counts a reinforced company of battle armor as part of the crew complement. These troops are not carried for boarding actions, but as additional defense against such attempts.

The first few *Arondights* were rushed into service in late 3074, just in time to participate in the final battles over New Avalon. During that action, however, technical problems with the fire control systems were revealed that rendered the capital and sub-capital missile systems unreliable, particularly when fired in unison. Detailed after-action analysis allowed the engineers to modify the fire-control software to compensate, and subsequent updates have further improved the effectiveness of the system.

Of course, one of the most important elements of the *Arondight's* design is that it can be produced in quantity by almost any of the shipyards still operating in the Federated Suns. A prime example is the Clyde Shipyards over Firgrove. Originally a basic maintenance and repair center for merchant shipping, the yards have recently expanded to begin manufacturing military DropShips. The presence of the Medusans, a mercenary command that specializes in DropShip combat, proved especially valuable to the team developing the *Arondight*. With two of the converted *Excalibur*-class pocket WarShips in their company, the Medusans' extensive experience with the type helped shape the development of this new class. With at least three shipyards now gearing up to manufacture this vessel, it is anticipated that the AFFS may be able to deploy upwards of three squadrons of *Arondights* by end of the year.

ARONDIGHT-CLASS DROPSHIP

Type: Military Spheroid

Use: Pocket WarShip

Tech: Inner Sphere

Introduced: 3075

Mass: 12,000 tons

Battle Value: 28,819

Dimensions

Length: 92 meters

Width: 92 meters

Height: 105 meters

Fuel: 250 tons (7,500)

Tons/Burn-day: 1.84

Safe Thrust: 5

Maximum Thrust: 8

Heat Sinks: 200 [400]

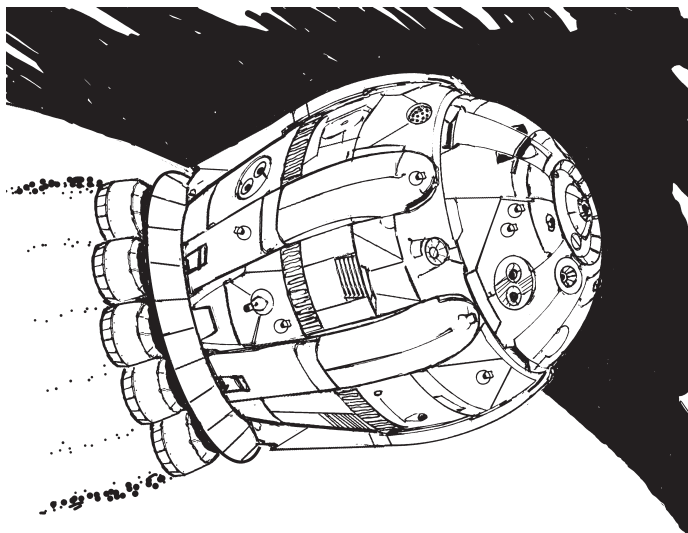
Structural Integrity: 20

Armor

Nose: 352

Sides: 322

Aft: 301



Cargo

Bay 1: Cargo (440.5 tons)

2 Doors

Bay 2: Small Craft (2)

2 Doors

Life Boats: 4

Escape Pods: 7

Crew: 5 Officers, 8 Enlisted, 22 Gunners, 24 Battle Armor Marines, 10 Bay Personnel

Ammunition: 10 rounds Screen Launcher ammunition (100 tons), 80 rounds Piranha ammunition (800 tons), 480 rounds Rotary AC/5 ammunition (24 tons), 384 rounds AMS ammunition (32 tons), 64 rounds Gauss ammunition (8 tons), 10 rounds Kraken-T ammunition (1,000), 10 rounds White Shark ammunition (400 tons), 16 rounds Killer Whale ammunition (800 tons), 14 rounds Barracuda ammunition (420 tons)

Notes: Equipped with 67.5 tons of ferro-aluminum armor.

Weapons:

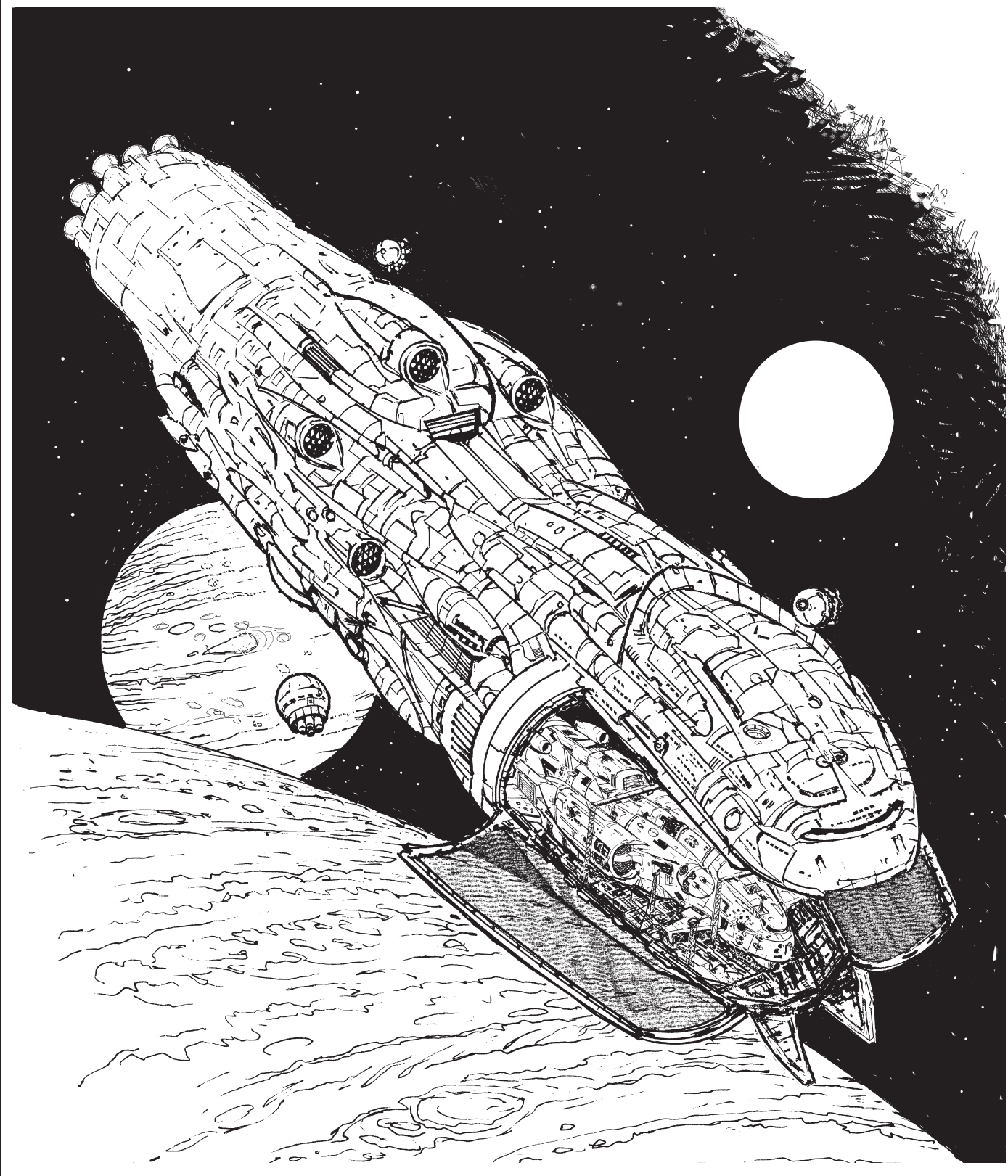
Arc (Heat) Type	Capital Attack Values (Standard)				Class
	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	
Nose (105 Heat)					
Kraken-T (10 missiles)	10	10	10	10	Capital Missile
2 ER PPC	2(20)	2(20)	2(20)	—	PPC
2 Gauss Rifle					
(32 rounds)	3(30)	3(30)	3(30)	—	Gauss
4 ER Medium Laser	2(20)	2(20)	—	—	Laser
3 AMS (72 rounds)	—	—	—	—	Point Defense
FL/FR (82 Heat)					
2 AR 10					
(8KW, 5WS, 7B)	*	*	*	*	Capital Missile
2 Piranha (20 missiles)	6	6	6	—	Sub-Capital Missile
2 ER Medium Laser	1(10)	1(10)	—	—	Laser



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2 Rotary AC/5 (120 rounds)	4(40)	4(40)	—	—	Autocannon	Aft (35 Heat) Screen Launcher (10 screens)	—	—	—	—	Screen
2 AMS (48 rounds)	—	—	—	—	Point Defense	2 Gauss Rifle (32 rounds)	3(30)	3(30)	3(30)	—	Gauss Laser
AL/AR (48 Heat)						4 ER Medium Laser	2(20)	2(20)	—	—	Point Defense
2 Piranha (20 missiles)	6	6	6	—	Sub-Capital Missile Laser	3 AMS (72 rounds)	—	—	—	—	*By missile type (Heat factored as for Killer Whale)
3 ER Medium Laser	2(15)	2(15)	—	—							
2 Rotary AC/5 (120 rounds)	4(40)	4(40)	—	—	Autocannon						
3 AMS (72 rounds)	—	—	—	—	Point Defense						

RULES ANNEX	
<p>NEW WARSHIP</p> <p>The following vessel reflects a Star League-era WarShip (YardShip) that resurfaced recently during the Jihad.</p> <p>NEWGRANGE-CLASS YARDSHIP</p> <p>In the days of the Star League, when military fleets were truly massive and naval industry booming, the <i>Newgrange</i>-class represented the pinnacle of mobile repair and refit support vessels; monolithic, jump-capable tenders known as YardShips. Easily the largest vessel of its type in both weight and sheer size, the <i>Newgrange</i> featured a mammoth, forward-mounted, unpressurized repair bay capable of housing and servicing WarShips up to 2.3 million tons in size, giving the vessel an impressive length of over two-and-a-half kilometers—nearly double the length of a <i>McKenna</i>-class battleship. But while the <i>Newgrange</i>'s size and its two point three million-ton mass made it quite an intimidating sight in Star League fleet formations, the YardShip itself was only lightly armed and armored for battle and would have to rely on its escorts to survive a dedicated attack.</p> <p>Equipped with enough cargo storage to house a dismantled destroyer and sufficient on-board manufacturing and assembly facilities to fabricate small parts as needed, the typical <i>Newgrange</i>-class YardShip was a self-sufficient factory in space, home to over seven thousand crewmen and passengers (most of whom actually served as the workforce for the ship's fabrication and repair facilities). For this reason, the ship also boasted somewhat luxurious recreation and exercise facilities on all four of its 500-meter grav decks, and maintained a fleet of small craft for transporting passengers to and from local bases and planetside facilities. A battalion's worth of WorkMechs were even featured, specifically intended to support repair work, although in many cases, actual BattleMechs were housed in these bays, either to augment the YardShip's defense or to receive their own repairs.</p> <p>Of the roughly 200 <i>Newgrange</i>-class YardShips constructed in the Star League's heyday, only about 45 remained after the war</p>	<p>against Amaris and General Kerensky's Exodus from the Inner Sphere. With shipyards and factories heavily targeted in the early Succession Wars, YardShips became easy prey, especially as these vessels could not jump or maneuver while servicing another vessel, and none were thought to have survived the Succession Wars until the Word of Blake deployed one at Coventry in a vain effort to repair the <i>Immortal Spirit</i>'s crippled drive system. (The captured <i>Newgrange</i>—<i>Blake's Mercy</i>—is still being held at an undisclosed location maintained by coalition forces.)</p> <p>ComStar reportedly based its much-smaller <i>Faslane</i> YardShips on the remains of two derelict <i>Newgrange</i>-class vessels kept at hidden shipyards near Terra, but mounting intelligence suggests that these hulls were both scrapped some time in the last century. The possibility persists that the Word of Blake has at least one more <i>Newgrange</i> in its possession, but this vessel might have been heavily modified some time prior to the Jihad for unknown reasons. Descriptions of a super-massive WarShip lurking in the Deep Periphery seem to lend credence to these reports, but the whereabouts of this vessel since its reported sighting in the late 3060s remain unknown.</p> <p>NEWGRANGE (YARDSHIP)</p> <p>Tech: Star League Introduced: 2600 Mass: 2,300,000 tons Length: 2,680 meters Sail Diameter: 3,000 meters Fuel: 10,000 tons (25,000) Tons/Burn-day: 39.52 Safe Thrust: 2 Maximum Thrust: 3 Sail Integrity: 9 KF Drive Integrity: 44 Heat Sinks: 787 Structural Integrity: 25 Battle Value: 23,920</p>

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Armor

Nose: 83
Fore-Sides: 81
Aft-Sides: 81
Aft: 91

Cargo

Bay 1: Unpressurized Repair Facility (2,100,000-ton capacity)	1 Door
Bay 2: BattleMechs (36) Cargo (12,000 tons)	0 Doors
Bay 3: Small Craft (72) Cargo (24,000 tons)	6 Doors
Bay 4: Cargo (461,788 tons)	5 Doors
Bay 5: Workshops/Manufacturing Equipment (250,000 tons of equipment)	0 Doors

DropShip Capacity: 4

Grav Decks: 4 (500-meter diameter each)

Escape Pods: 600

Life Boats: 600

Crew: 82 officers, 405 enlisted/non-rated, 35 gunners, 120 marines, 432 bay personnel, 180 first-class passengers, 2,000 second-class passengers, 5000 steerage-class passengers

Ammunition: 2,340 rounds AMS ammunition (195 tons)

Notes: Equipped with 601 tons of Ferro-Carbide Armor and Mobile HPG (50 tons)

Weapons:

Arc (Heat) Type	Capital Attack Values (Standard)				Class
	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	
Nose (73 Heat)					
2 Barracuda (100 missiles)	6	2	2	—	Capital Missile
4 ER Large Lasers	3 (32)	3 (32)	3 (32)	—	Laser
5 AMS (240 rounds)	**	—	—	—	Point Defense
FL/FR (165 Heat)					
2 NL 45	9	9	9	9	Capital Laser
2 PPC	2 (20)	2 (20)	2 (20)	PPC	
5 AMS (300 rounds)	**	—	—	—	Point Defense
LBS/RBS (413 Heat)					
2 Barracuda (100 missiles)	6	2	2	—	Capital Missile
4 NL 55	22	22	22	22	Capital Laser
4 ER Large Lasers	3 (32)	3 (32)	3 (32)	—	Laser
5 AMS (300 rounds)	**	—	—	—	Point Defense
AL/AR (165 Heat)					
2 NL 45	9	9	9	9	Capital Laser
2 PPC	2 (20)	2 (20)	2 (20)	PPC	
5 AMS (300 rounds)	**	—	—	—	Point Defense
Aft (73 Heat)					
2 Barracuda (100 missiles)	6	2	2	—	Capital Missile
4 ER Large Lasers	3 (32)	3 (32)	3 (32)	—	Laser
5 AMS (300 rounds)	**	—	—	—	Point Defense

BATTLETECH

TRACKED VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

VEHICLE DATA

Type: M-1 MOLTKE MAIN BATTLE TANK

Movement Points: **Tonnage:** 75
 Cruising: 4 **Tech Base:** Inner Sphere
 Flank: 6 3076
 Movement Type: Tracked
 Engine Type: Fusion

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	ER Large Laser	T	10 [DE]	—	7	14	19
2	Light Gauss Rifle	T	8 [DB,X]	3	8	17	25

Ammo: [Gauss] 48

Cost: 12,677,000 C-bills BV: 1,355

CREW DATA

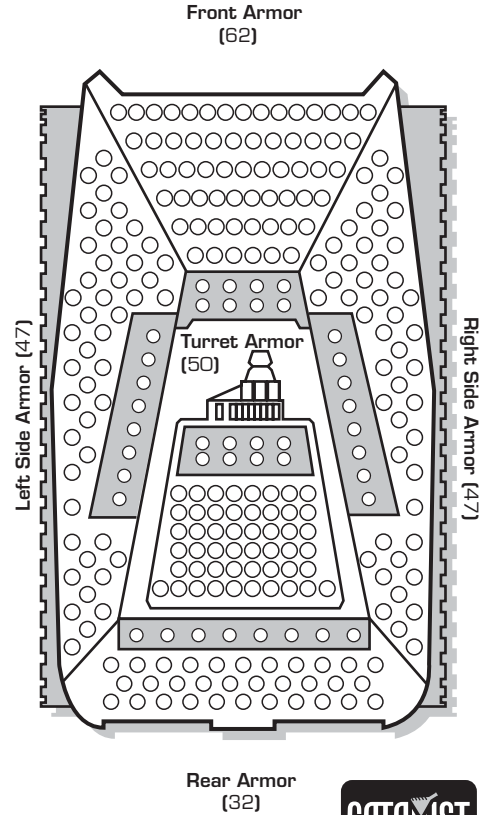
Crew: 5
 Gunnery Skill: _____ Driving Skill: _____
 Commander Hit +1 Driver Hit +2
Modifier to all Skill rolls Modifier to Driving Skill rolls

CRITICAL DAMAGE

Turret Locked Engine Hit
 Sensor Hits +1 +2 +3 D
 Motive System Hits +1 +2 +3
 Stabilizers
 Front Left Right
 Rear Turret



ARMOR DIAGRAM



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BATTLETECH

TRACKED VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

VEHICLE DATA

Type: M-2 MOLTKE MAIN BATTLE TANK

Movement Points: **Tonnage:** 75
 Cruising: 4 **Tech Base:** Inner Sphere
 Flank: 6 3077
 Movement Type: Tracked
 Engine Type: Fusion

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Snub-nosed PPC	T	10/8/5 [DE,V]	—	9	13	15
4	MML-7	F	[M,C,S]	—	—	—	—
	LRM [17 salvos/ton]		1/Msl.	6	7	14	21
	SRM [14 salvos/ton]		2/Msl.	—	3	6	9
1	MML-7	F	[M,C,S]	—	—	—	—
	LRM [17 salvos/ton]		1/Msl.	6	7	14	21
	SRM [14 salvos/ton]		2/Msl.	—	3	6	9

Ammo: [MML] 102/84

Cost: 12,744,375 C-bills BV: 1,363

CREW DATA

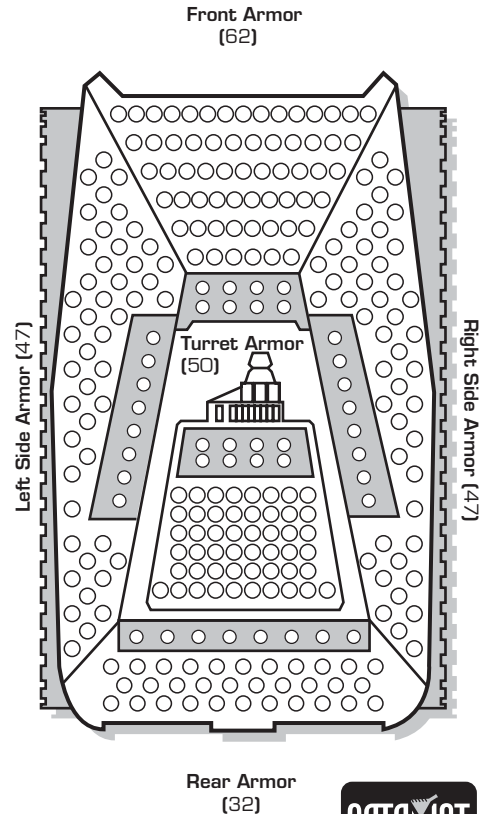
Crew: 5
 Gunnery Skill: _____ Driving Skill: _____
 Commander Hit +1 Driver Hit +2
Modifier to all Skill rolls Modifier to Driving Skill rolls

CRITICAL DAMAGE

Turret Locked Engine Hit
 Sensor Hits +1 +2 +3 D
 Motive System Hits +1 +2 +3
 Stabilizers
 Front Left Right
 Rear Turret



ARMOR DIAGRAM



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BATTLETECH

WHEELED VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

VEHICLE DATA

Type: **BOLLA STEALTH TANK (INVICTUS)**

Movement Points: **Tonnage: 60**
 Cruising: 5 **Tech Base: Inner Sphere**
 Flank: 8 **3074**
 Movement Type: Wheeled
 Engine Type: Fusion

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Machine Gun	F	2 [DB,AP]	—	1	2	3
1	Guardian ECM	B	[E]	—	—	—	4
1	C3i	B	[E]	—	—	—	—
2	MML 9	T	[M,C,S]	—	—	—	—
	LRM (13 salvos/ton)	1/Msl.	6	7	14	21	
	SRM (11 salvos/ton)	2/Msl.	—	3	6	9	
1	Machine Gun	T	2 [DB, AP]	—	1	2	3

Stealth Armor
 Infantry Compartment (6 Tons)

Ammo: (MG) 200 (MML) 39/33

Cost: 10,405,687.50 C-bills BV: 968

CREW DATA

Crew: 4
 Gunnery Skill: _____ Driving Skill: _____
 Commander Hit +1 Driver Hit +2
Modifier to all Skill rolls Modifier to Driving Skill rolls

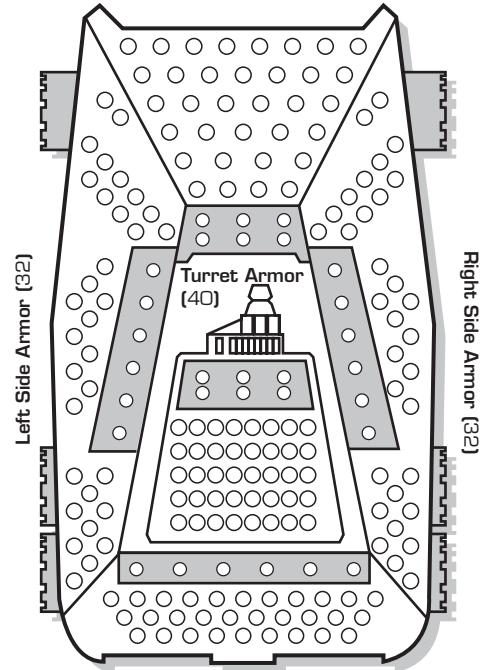
CRITICAL DAMAGE

Turret Locked Engine Hit
 Sensor Hits +1 +2 +3 D
 Motive System Hits +1 +2 +3
 Stabilizers
 Front Left Right
 Rear Turret



ARMOR DIAGRAM

Front Armor (34)



Rear Armor (30)



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BATTLETECH

WHEELED VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

VEHICLE DATA

Type: **BOLLA STEALTH TANK (DOMINUS)**

Movement Points: **Tonnage: 60**
 Cruising: 5 **Tech Base: Inner Sphere**
 Flank: 8 **3074**
 Movement Type: Wheeled
 Engine Type: Fusion

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Machine Gun	F	2 [DB,AP]	—	1	2	3
1	Guardian ECM	B	[E]	—	—	—	4
1	C3i	B	[E]	—	—	—	—
2	Light AC/5	T	5 [DB, S]	—	5	10	15
1	Machine Gun	T	2 [DB,AP]	—	1	2	3
1	Heavy Flamer	T	4 [DE,H,AI]	—	2	3	4

Stealth Armor
 Infantry Compartment (6 Tons)

Ammo: (MG) 200 (Light AC/5) 40 (Heavy Flamer) 20

Cost: 10,388,218.75 C-bills BV: 905

CREW DATA

Crew: 4
 Gunnery Skill: _____ Driving Skill: _____
 Commander Hit +1 Driver Hit +2
Modifier to all Skill rolls Modifier to Driving Skill rolls

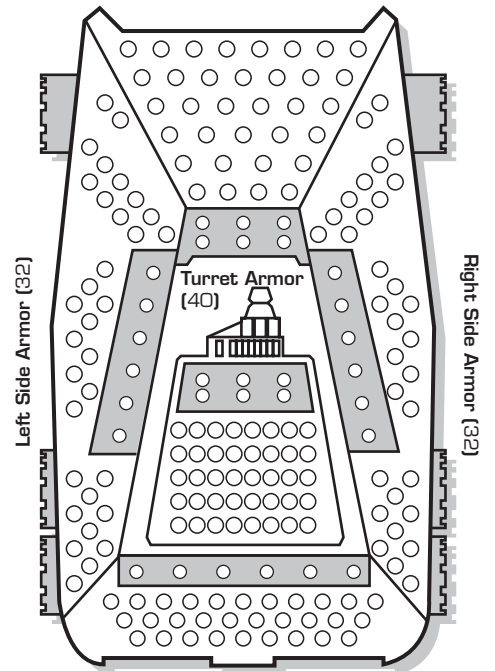
CRITICAL DAMAGE

Turret Locked Engine Hit
 Sensor Hits +1 +2 +3 D
 Motive System Hits +1 +2 +3
 Stabilizers
 Front Left Right
 Rear Turret



ARMOR DIAGRAM

Front Armor (34)



Rear Armor (30)



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BATTLETECH

WHEELED VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

VEHICLE DATA

Type: BOLLA STEALTH TANK (INFERNUS)

Movement Points: Tonnage: 60
 Cruising: 5 Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Flank: 8 3074
 Movement Type: Wheeled
 Engine Type: Fusion

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Machine Gun	F	2 [DB,AP]	—	1	2	3
1	Guardian ECM	B	[E]	—	—	—	4
1	C3i	B	[E]	—	—	—	—
3	Streak SRM 6	T	2/Msl. [M,C]	—	3	6	9

Stealth Armor
 Infantry Compartment (6 Tons)

Ammo: (MG) 200 (Streak) 30

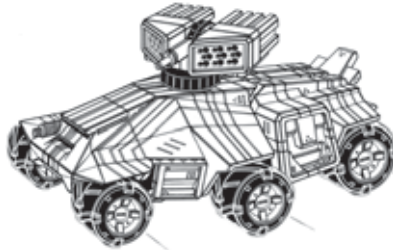
Cost: 10,605,562.50 C-bills BV: 1,076

CREW DATA

Crew: 4
 Gunnery Skill: ___ Driving Skill: ___
 Commander Hit +1 Driver Hit +2
Modifier to all Skill rolls Modifier to Driving Skill rolls

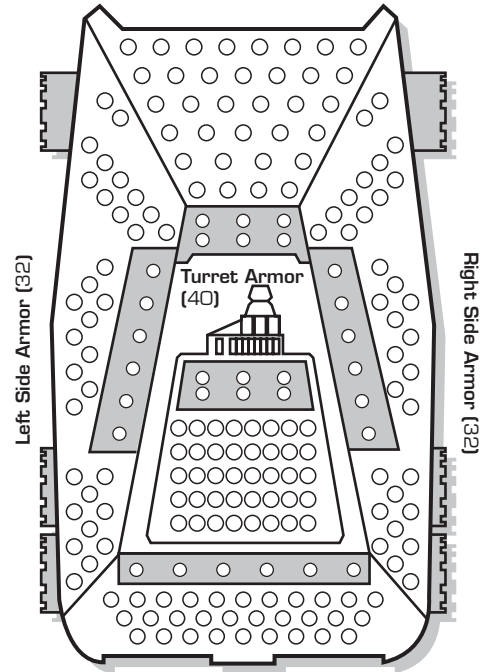
CRITICAL DAMAGE

Turret Locked Engine Hit
 Sensor Hits +1 +2 +3 D
 Motive System Hits +1 +2 +3
 Stabilizers
 Front Left Right
 Rear Turret



ARMOR DIAGRAM

Front Armor (34)



Rear Armor (30)



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BATTLETECH

WHEELED VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

VEHICLE DATA

Type: BOLLA STEALTH TANK (COMMINUS)

Movement Points: Tonnage: 60
 Cruising: 5 Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Flank: 8 3074
 Movement Type: Wheeled
 Engine Type: Fusion

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Machine Gun	F	2 [DB,AP]	—	1	2	3
1	Guardian ECM	B	[E]	—	—	—	4
1	C3i	B	[E]	—	—	—	—
1	Light Gauss Rifle	T	8 [DB,X]	3	8	17	25
1	Anti-Missile System	T	[PD]	—	—	—	—

Stealth Armor
 Infantry Compartment (6 Tons)

Ammo: (MG) 200 (Gauss) 32 (AMS) 12

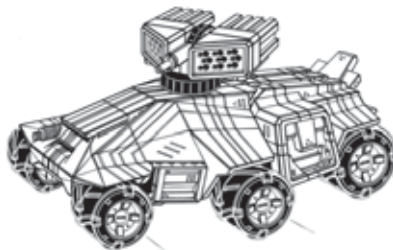
Cost: 10,510,500 C-bills BV: 1,005

CREW DATA

Crew: 4
 Gunnery Skill: ___ Driving Skill: ___
 Commander Hit +1 Driver Hit +2
Modifier to all Skill rolls Modifier to Driving Skill rolls

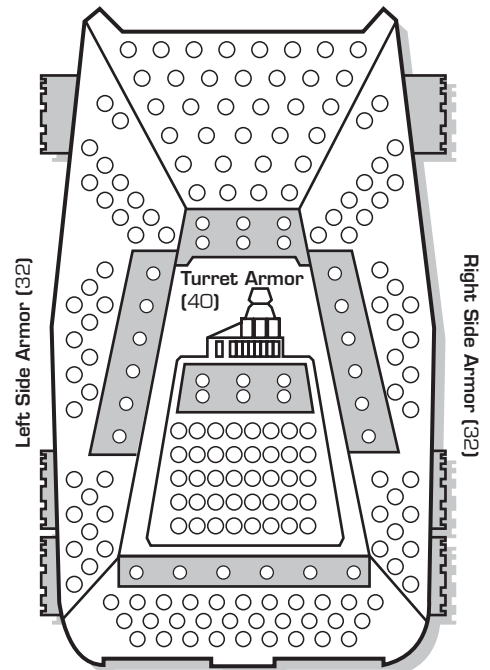
CRITICAL DAMAGE

Turret Locked Engine Hit
 Sensor Hits +1 +2 +3 D
 Motive System Hits +1 +2 +3
 Stabilizers
 Front Left Right
 Rear Turret



ARMOR DIAGRAM

Front Armor (34)



Rear Armor (30)



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BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: TUNDRA WOLF 3

Movement Points: _____ Tonnage: 75
 Walking: 4 Tech Base: Clan
 Running: 6 [8] 3076
 Jumping: 4

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	ER PPC	RA	15	15 [DE]	—	7	14	23
2	ER Medium Laser	RA	5	7 [DE]	—	5	10	15
1	ER PPC	LA	15	15 [DE]	—	7	14	23
2	ER Medium Laser	LA	5	7 [DE]	—	5	10	15
1	LRM 15	RT	5	1/Msl.	—	7	14	21
[M,C,S]								
1	ER Large Laser	LT	12	10 [DE]	—	8	15	25
1	Streak SRM 4	LT	3	2/Msl.	—	4	8	12
[M,C]								

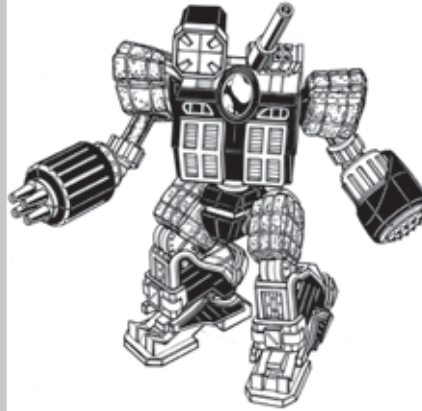
Cost: 18,564,000 C-bills

BV: 3,092

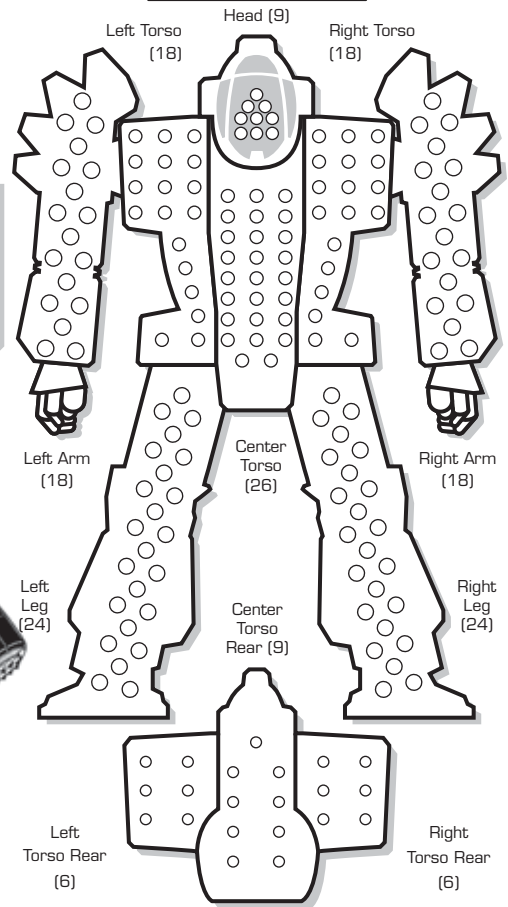
WARRIOR DATA

Name: _____
 Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

- 1. Shoulder
- 2. Upper Arm Actuator
- 3. Lower Arm Actuator
- 4-6. Double Heat Sink
- 1. Double Heat Sink
- 2. ER PPC
- 3. ER PPC
- 4-6. ER Medium Laser
- 5. ER Medium Laser
- 6. Endo Steel

Left Torso

- 1. XL Fusion Engine
- 2. XL Fusion Engine
- 3. Double Heat Sink
- 4. Double Heat Sink
- 5. Double Heat Sink
- 6. Double Heat Sink
- 1. ER Large Laser
- 2. Streak SRM 4
- 3. Ammo (Streak) 25
- 4. MASC
- 5. MASC
- 6. MASC

Left Leg

- 1. Hip
- 2. Upper Leg Actuator
- 3. Lower Leg Actuator
- 4. Foot Actuator
- 5. Jump Jet
- 6. Jump Jet

Head

- 1. Life Support
- 2. Sensors
- 3. Cockpit
- 4. Endo Steel
- 5. Sensors
- 6. Life Support

Center Torso

- 1. XL Fusion Engine
- 2. XL Fusion Engine
- 3. XL Fusion Engine
- 4. Gyro
- 5. Gyro
- 6. Gyro
- 1. Gyro
- 2. XL Fusion Engine
- 3. XL Fusion Engine
- 4. XL Fusion Engine
- 5. Endo Steel
- 6. Endo Steel

Engine Hits ○○○
 Gyro Hits ○○
 Sensor Hits ○○
 Life Support ○

Right Arm

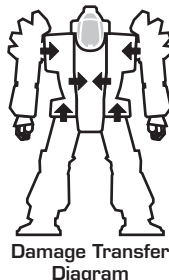
- 1. Shoulder
- 2. Upper Arm Actuator
- 3. Lower Arm Actuator
- 4. Double Heat Sink
- 5. Double Heat Sink
- 6. ER PPC
- 1. ER PPC
- 2. ER Medium Laser
- 3. ER Medium Laser
- 4. Endo Steel
- 5. Endo Steel
- 6. Roll Again

Right Torso

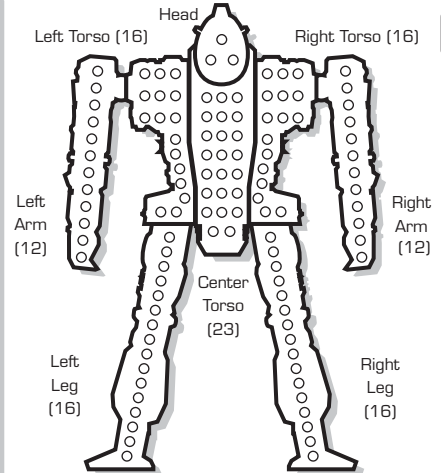
- 1. XL Fusion Engine
- 2. XL Fusion Engine
- 3. Double Heat Sink
- 4. Double Heat Sink
- 5. Double Heat Sink
- 6. Double Heat Sink
- 1. LRM 15
- 2. LRM 15
- 3. Ammo (LRM) 8
- 4. Ammo (LRM) 8
- 5. Endo Steel
- 6. Endo Steel

Right Leg

- 1. Hip
- 2. Upper Leg Actuator
- 3. Lower Leg Actuator
- 4. Foot Actuator
- 5. Jump Jet
- 6. Jump Jet



INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks:
30	Shutdown	19 (38)
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	Double
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

BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: OWR-2M OSTWAR

Movement Points: **Tonnage:** 65
 Walking: 3 **Tech Base:** Inner Sphere
 Running: 5 (Primitive)
 Jumping: 0 2470

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

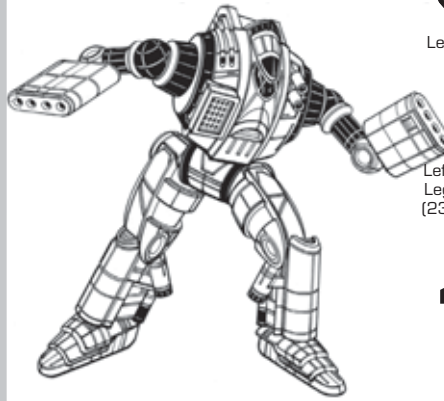
Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	SRM 4	RA	3	2/Msl.	—	3	6	9
				[M,C,S]				
1	LRM 20	RT	6	1/Msl.	6	7	14	21
				[M,C,S]				
2	Medium Laser	LT	3	5 [DE]	—	3	6	9
1	SRM 4	LA	3	2/Msl.	—	3	6	9
				[M,C,S]				

Cost: 4,999,143 C-bills BV: 1,205

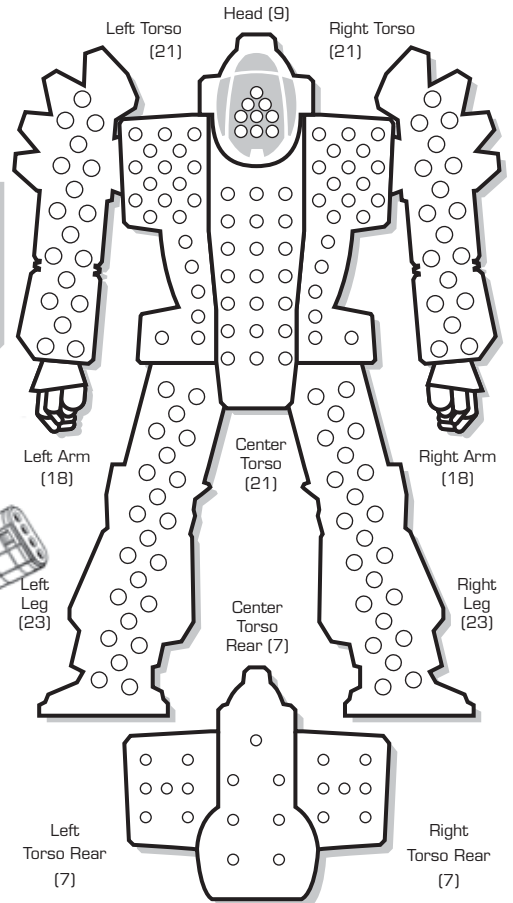
WARRIOR DATA

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
- 1-3 SRM 4
- Roll Again
 - Roll Again

Head

- Life Support
- Sensors
- Primitive Cockpit
- Roll Again
- Sensors
- Life Support

Right Arm

- Shoulder
 - Upper Arm Actuator
 - Lower Arm Actuator
- 1-3 SRM 4
- Roll Again
 - Roll Again

Center Torso

- Primitive Fusion Engine
 - Primitive Fusion Engine
 - Primitive Fusion Engine
- 1-3 Gyro
- Gyro
 - Roll Again

- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Left Torso

- Medium Laser
 - Medium Laser
 - Ammo (SRM) 25
- 1-3 Roll Again
- Roll Again
 - Roll Again

- Gyro
- Primitive Fusion Engine
- Primitive Fusion Engine
- Primitive Fusion Engine
- Heat Sink
- Roll Again

Right Torso

- LRM 20
 - LRM 20
 - LRM 20
 - LRM 20
 - LRM 20
 - Ammo (LRM) 6
- 1-3 Ammo (LRM) 6
- Roll Again
 - Roll Again

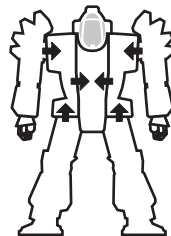
Engine Hits ○○○
 Gyro Hits ○○
 Sensor Hits ○○
 Life Support ○

Left Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Heat Sink
- Roll Again

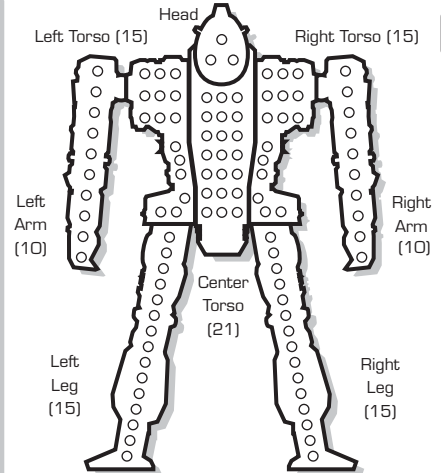
Right Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Heat Sink
- Roll Again



Damage Transfer Diagram

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



Heat Scale

Overflow	
30*	
29	
28*	
27	
26*	
25*	
24*	
23*	
22*	
21	
20*	
19*	
18*	
17*	
16	
15*	
14*	
13*	
12	
11	
10*	
9	
8*	
7	
6	
5*	
4	
3	
2	
1	
0	

HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks:
30	Shutdown	12 Single
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	

BATTLETECH

Nose Damage Threshold (Total Armor) 69 (685)

ARMOR DIAGRAM

Standard Scale



AERODYNE DROPSHIP RECORD SHEET

DROPSHIP DATA

Type: INTEDICTOR POCKET WARSHIP

Name: _____ Tonnage: 9,400
 Thrust: _____ Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Safe Thrust: 7 3075
 Maximum Thrust: 11
 Fighters/Small Craft: 0/2 Launch Rate: 4/Turn

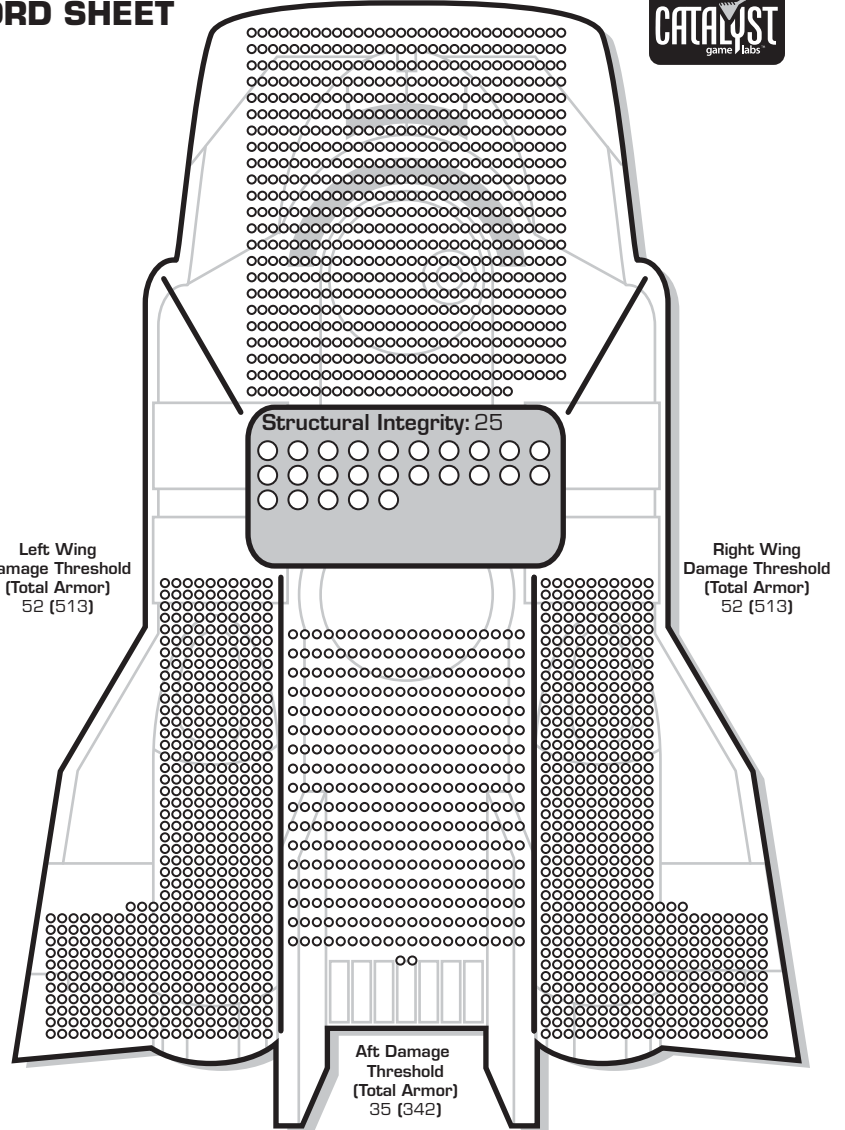
Weapons & Equipment Inventory

Capital Scale	Loc	Ht	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
Bay			(1-12)	(13-24)	(25-40)	(41-50)
2 AR 10	N	40	*	*	*	*
(6 Killer Whale, 14 Barracuda)						
1 Lt. Sub Cap Cannon (20 mds)	L/RW	12	2	2	2	—
Standard Scale	Loc	Ht	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
3 Heavy PPC	N	45	5(45)	5(45)	—	—
2 MML 9	N	10	1(14)	1(14)	1(14)	—
w/Artemis IV (104 mds)						
3 Large VSP Laser	N	30	3(30)	3(30)	—	—
2 AMS (48 rounds)	N	2	—	Point Defense	—	—
1 Heavy PPC	L/RW	15	2(15)	2(15)	—	—
3 MML 9	L/RW	15	2(21)	2(21)	2(21)	—
w/Artemis IV (156 mds)						
2 Large VSP Laser	L/RW	20	2(20)	2(20)	—	—
2 AMS (48 rounds)	L/RW	2	—	Point Defense	—	—
1 Heavy PPC	L/RW(A)	15	2(15)	2(15)	—	—
4 Large VSP Laser	L/RW(A)	40	4(40)	4(40)	—	—
1 AMS (38 rounds)	L/RW(A)	1	—	Point Defense	—	—
2 Heavy PPC	A	30	3(30)	3(30)	—	—
1 MML 9	A	5	1(7)	1(7)	1(7)	—
w/Artemis IV (52 mds)						
3 Large VSP Laser	N	30	3(30)	3(30)	—	—
1 AMS (24 rounds)	N	1	—	Point Defense	—	—

Cargo: Bay 1: Small Craft (2) (2 doors)
 Bay 2: Battle Armor (36) (1 door)
 Bay 3: Cargo (566 tons, 2 doors)

Ammo: Light SCC (40) AMS (240)
 MML 9 (468)
 Killer Whale (6), *AV=4
 Barracuda (16), *AV=2

Cost: 1,124,427,600 C-bills BV: 21,836



CREW DATA

Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Modifier	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	Incp.

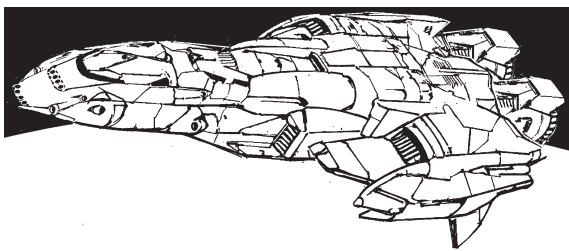
Crew: 27 Marines: 0
 Passengers: 0 Elementals: 0
 Other: 46 Battle Armor: 36
 Life Boats/Escape Pods: 0 / 6

CRITICAL DAMAGE

Avionics	+1	+2	+5	Gear	+5	
FCS	+2	+4	D	Life Support	+2	
Sensors	+1	+2	+5	K-F Boom	D	
Thrusters				Docking Collar	D	
Left	+1	+2	+3	D		
Right	+1	+2	+3	D		
Engine	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	D

HEAT DATA

Heat Sinks: Heat Generation Per Arc
 244 [488] Double
 Nose: 127 Aft: 66
 Fore-Left: 62 Aft-Left: 56
 Fore-Right: 62 Aft-Right: 56



VELOCITY RECORD

Turn #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										
Altitude										
Turn #	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										
Altitude										

BATTLETECH

Nose Damage Threshold (Total Armor) 69 (685)

ARMOR DIAGRAM

Standard Scale



AERODYNE DROPSHIP RECORD SHEET

DROPSHIP DATA

Type: INTEDICTOR SUB-CAPITAL POCKET WARSHIP

Name: _____ Tonnage: 9,400
 Thrust: _____ Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Safe Thrust: 7 3075
 Maximum Thrust: 11
 Fighters/Small Craft: 0/1 Launch Rate: 2/Turn

Weapons & Equipment Inventory

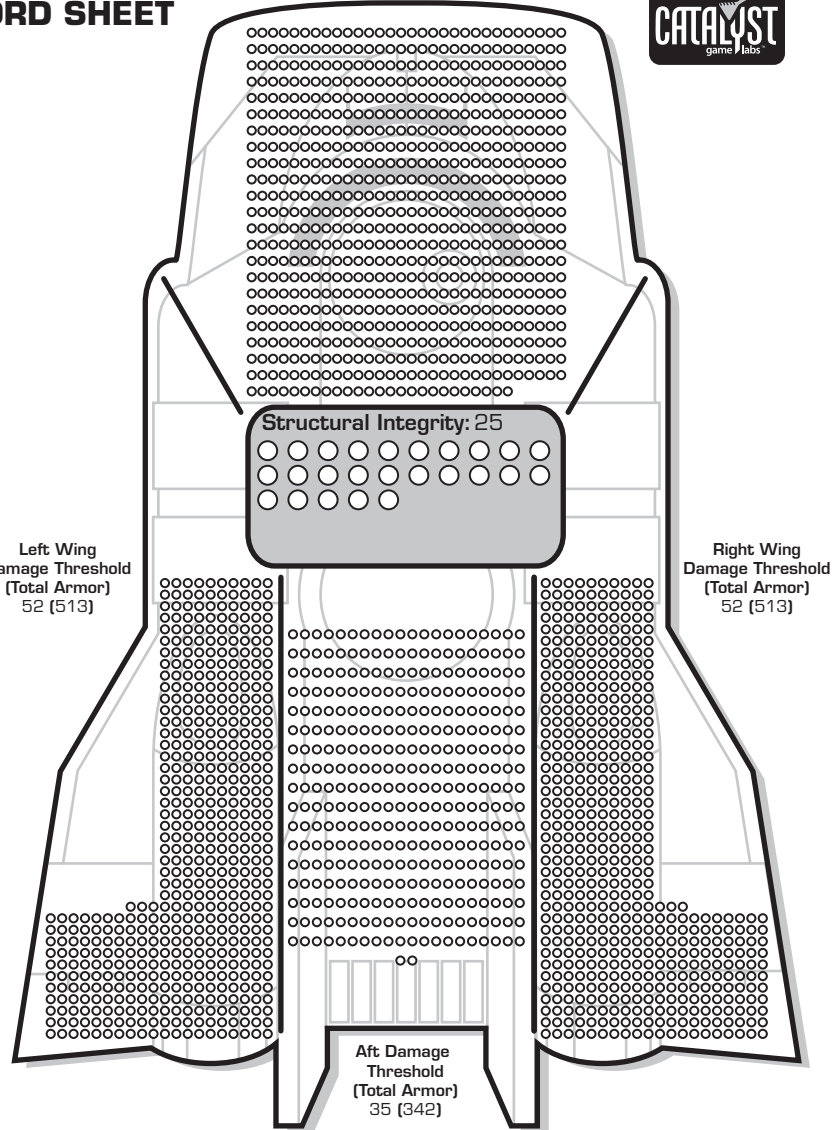
Capital Scale		(1-12) (13-24)(25-40)(41-50)				
Bay	Loc	Ht	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
1 Killer Whale (10 misils)	N	20	4	4	4	4
1 Piranha (10 misls)	N	3	3	3	3	—
2 Sub Cap Laser/1	L/RW	28	0(2)	0(2)	0(2)	—
1 Med. Sub Cap Cannon	L/RW	30	1	—	—	—

Standard Scale		(1-6) (7-12) (13-20)(21-25)				
Bay	Loc	Ht	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
3 Heavy PPC	N	30	3(30)	3(45)	—	—
2 AMS (48 rounds)	N	2	—	Point: Defense	—	—
2 Heavy PPC	L/RW	30	3(30)	3(30)	—	—
3 Large VSP Laser	L/RW	30	3(30)	3(30)	—	—
1 Heavy PPC	L/RW(A)	15	2(15)	2(15)	—	—
4 Large VSP Laser	L/RW(A)	40	4(40)	4(40)	—	—
1 AMS (38 rounds)	L/RW(A)	1	—	Point: Defense	—	—
2 Heavy PPC	A	30	3(30)	3(30)	—	—
3 Large VSP Laser	N	30	3(30)	3(30)	—	—
1 AMS (24 rounds)	N	1	—	Point: Defense	—	—

Cargo: Bay 1: Small Craft (1) [1 doors]
 Bay 2: Cargo (128 tons, 2 doors)

Ammo: Medium SCC (24) AMS (240)
 Piranha (10) Killer Whale (10)

Cost: 983,955,600 C-bills BV: 20,610



CREW DATA

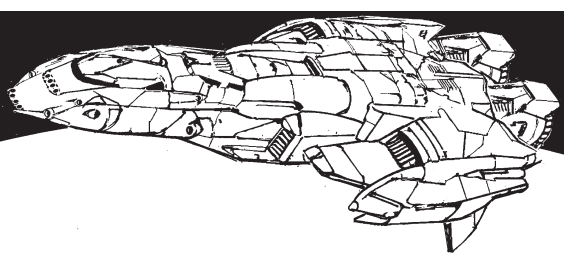
Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Modifier	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	Incp.

Crew: 27 Marines: 0
 Passengers: 0 Elementals: 0
 Other: 46 Battle Armor: 36
 Life Boats/Escape Pods: 0 / 6

CRITICAL DAMAGE

Avionics	+1	+2	+5	Gear	+5	
FCS	+2	+4	D	Life Support	+2	
Sensors	+1	+2	+5	K-F Boom	D	
Thrusters				Docking Collar	D	
Left	+1	+2	+3	D		
Right	+1	+2	+3	D		
Engine	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	D



VELOCITY RECORD

Turn #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										
Altitude										

Turn #	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										
Altitude										

HEAT DATA

Heat Sinks: 244 [488] Heat Generation Per Arc

Nose: 127 Aft: 66
 Double
 Fore-Left: 62 Aft-Left: 56
 Fore-Right: 62 Aft-Right: 56

BATTLETECH™

Nose Damage Threshold (Total Armor) 36 (352)

ARMOR DIAGRAM

Standard Scale



SPHEROID DROPSHIP RECORD SHEET

DROPSHIP DATA

Type: ARONDIGHT POCKET WARSHIP

Name: _____ Tonnage: 12,000
 Thrust: _____ Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Safe Thrust: 5 3075
 Maximum Thrust: 8
 Fighters/Small Craft: 0/2 Launch Rate: 4/Turn

Weapons & Equipment Inventory

Capital Scale		(1-12)	(13-24)	(25-40)	(41-50)	
Bay	Loc	Ht	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
1 Kraken-T (10 msls)	N	50	10	10	10	10
2 AR 10	FL/FR	40	*	*	*	*
(9 Killer Whale, 5 White Shark, 7 Barracuda)						
2 Piranha (20 msls)	FL/FR	18	6	6	6	—
2 Piranha (20 msls)	AL/AR	18	6	6	6	—
1 Screen Launcher (10 screens)	A	10	—	—	—	—

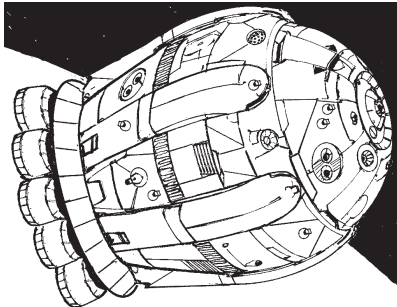
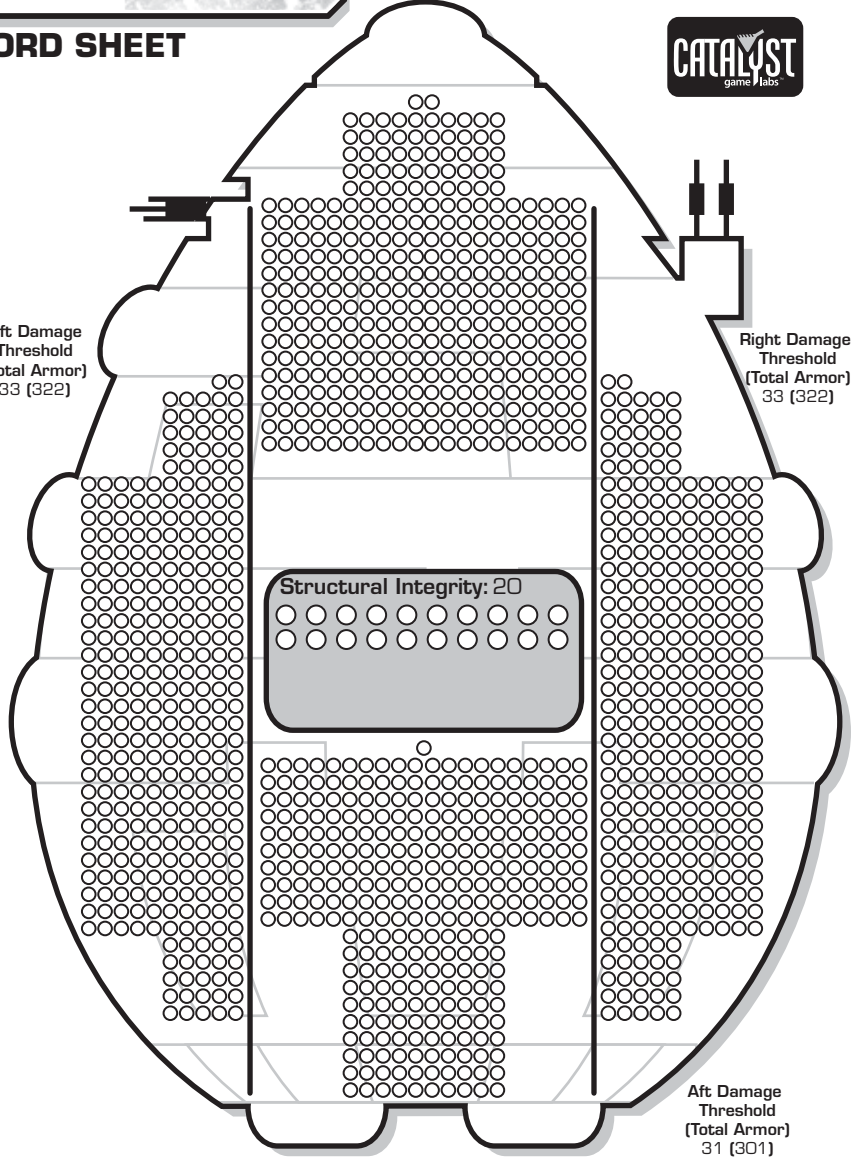
Standard Scale		(1-6)	(7-12)	(13-20)	(21-25)	
Bay	Loc	Ht	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
2 ER PPC	N	30	2(20)	2(20)	2(20)	—
2 Gauss Rifle (32 rnds)	N	2	3(30)	3(30)	3(30)	—
4 ER Medium Laser	N	20	2(20)	2(20)	—	—
3 AMS (72 rounds)	N	3	—	Point Defense	—	—
2 ER Medium Laser	FL/FR	10	1(10)	1(10)	—	—
2 Rotary AC/5 (120 mds)	FL/FR	12	4(40)	4(40)	—	—
2 AMS (48 rnds)	FL/FR	2	—	Point Defense	—	—
3 ER Medium Laser	AL/AR	15	2(15)	2(15)	—	—
2 Rotary AC/5 (120 mds)	AL/AR	12	4(40)	4(40)	—	—
3 AMS (72 rnds)	AL/AR	3	—	Point Defense	—	—
2 Gauss Rifle (32 rnds)	A	2	3(30)	3(30)	3(30)	—
4 ER Medium Laser	A	20	2(20)	2(20)	—	—
3 AMS (72 rnds)	A	3	—	Point Defense	—	—

Cargo: Bay 1: Cargo (440.5 Tons, 2 doors)
 Bay 2: Small Craft (2) (2 doors)

Ammo: Screen (10) RAC 5 (480/6) Piranha (80)
 AMS (384) Gauss (64) Kraken-T (10)
 Killer Whale (16), *AV=4
 White Shark (10), *AV=3
 Barracuda (14), *AV=2

Cost: 629,552,000 C-bills **BV:** 28,819

Left Damage Threshold (Total Armor) 33 (322)



CREW DATA

Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Modifier	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	Incp.

Crew: 35 Marines: 0
 Passengers: 0 Elementals: 0
 Other: 10 Battle Armor: 24
 Life Boats/Escape Pods: 4 / 7

CRITICAL DAMAGE

Avionics	+1	+2	+5	Gear	+5	
FCS	+2	+4	D	Life Support	+2	
Sensors	+1	+2	+5	K-F Boom	D	
Thrusters				Docking Collar	D	
Left	+1	+2	+3	D		
Right	+1	+2	+3	D		
Engine	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	D

VELOCITY RECORD

Turn #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										
Altitude										
Turn #	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										
Altitude										

HEAT DATA

Heat Sinks: 200 [400] Heat Generation Per Arc
 Double
 Nose: 105 Aft: 35
 Fore-Left: 82 Aft-Left: 48
 Fore-Right: 82 Aft-Right: 48

BATTLETECH™

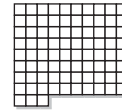
ARMOR DIAGRAM

WARSHIP RECORD SHEET

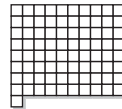
Capital Scale



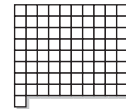
Nose Damage Threshold
(Total Armor)
9 (83)



Fore-Left Damage
Threshold (Total Armor)
9 (81)



Fore-Right Damage
Threshold (Total Armor)
9 (81)



WARSHIP DATA

Type: **NEWGRANGE YARDSHIP**

Name: _____ Tonnage: 2,300,000
 Thrust: _____ Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Safe Thrust: 2 2600
 Maximum Thrust: 3
 DropShip Capacity: 4
 Fighters/Small Craft: 0 / 53 Launch Rate: 12/turn

Weapons & Equipment Inventory

Capital Scale	(1-12)	(13-24)	(25-40)	(41-50)		
Bay	Loc	Ht	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
2 Barracuda (100 misls)	N	20	4	4	4	4
2 NL 45	FL/FR	140	9	9	9	9
2 Barracuda (100 misls)	L/R BS	20	4	4	4	4
4 NL 45	L/R BS	280	22	22	22	22
2 NL 45	AL/AR	140	9	9	9	9
2 Barracuda (100 misls)	A	20	4	4	4	4

Standard Scale	(1-6)	(7-12)	(13-20)	(21-25)		
Bay	Loc	Ht	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
4 ER Large Laser	N	48	3(32)	3(32)	3(32)	—
5 AMS (240 rounds)	N	5	—	Point Defense	—	—
2 PPC	FL/FR	20	2(20)	2(20)	2(20)	—
5 AMS (300 rnds)	FL/FR	5	—	Point Defense	—	—
4 ER Large Laser	L/R BS	48	3(32)	3(32)	3(32)	—
5 AMS (300 rnds)	L/R BS	5	—	Point Defense	—	—
2 PPC	AL/AR	20	2(20)	2(20)	2(20)	—
5 AMS (300 rnds)	AL/AR	5	—	Point Defense	—	—
4 ER Large Laser	A	48	3(32)	3(32)	3(32)	—
5 AMS (300 rnds)	A	5	—	Point Defense	—	—

Mobile HPG

Grav Decks:

Grav Deck #1-4: 500-meter

Cargo:

Bay 1: Unpressurized Repair Facility (1 door)
(2,100,000-ton capacity)

Bay 2: BattleMechs (36) (0 doors)
Cargo (12,000 tons)

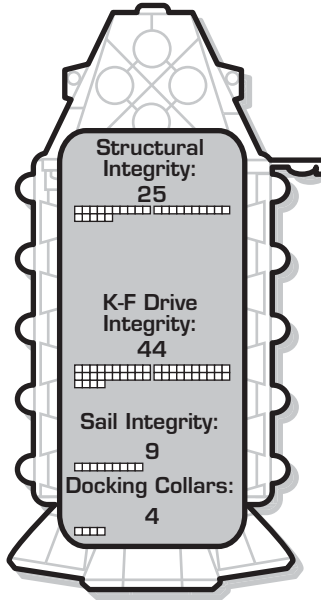
Bay 3: Small Craft (72) (6 doors)
Cargo (24,000 tons)

Bay 4: Cargo (461,788 tons) (5 doors)

Bay 5: Workshop/Manufacturing Equipment (0 doors)

Ammo: AMS (2,340) Barracuda (400)

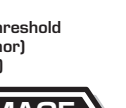
Cost: 55,091,104,000 C-bills **BV:** 23,920



Aft-Left Damage
Threshold (Total Armor)
9 (81)



Aft-Right Damage
Threshold (Total Armor)
9 (81)



Aft Damage Threshold
(Total Armor)
10 (91)



CREW DATA

Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Modifier	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	Incp.

Crew: 522 Marines: 120

Passengers: 7,180 Elementals: 0

Other: 432 Battle Armor: 0

Life Boats/Escape Pods: 600/600

CRITICAL DAMAGE

Avionics	+1	+2	+5	Life Support	+2	
CIC	+2	+4	D			
Sensors	+1	+2	+5			
Thrusters						
Left	+1	+2	+3	D		
Right	+1	+2	+3	D		
Engine	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	D

VELOCITY RECORD

Turn #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										

Turn #	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Thrust										
Velocity										
Effective Velocity										

HEAT DATA

Heat Sinks:	Heat Generation Per Arc
787	Nose: 73
Single	Left/Right Fore: 165 / 165
	Left/Right Broadside: 413 / 413
	Left/Right Aft: 165 / 165
	Aft: 73