

CLASSIC

35001

BATTLETECH®

HANDBOOK

HOUSE STEINER™



WARGAMES

Herbert A. Beas II.

FANPRO



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ADVANTAGE AND OPPORTUNITY

More than a dozen handcrafted crystal and gold chandeliers and twice as many matching wall fixtures bathed the grand ballroom in a festive glow. Their light chased away all shadows, defying the night sky and the moon beyond the skylights in the vaulted ceiling.

Below, a chaotic swirl of rich colors strutted through a complex waltz. Their motions, oblivious to the soft strains of classical music rising occasionally above the noise of endless banter, all followed a series of private tunes. The blue of LAAF uniforms dominated this riot of color, standing out among the tuxedoed men. In turn, they pooled around a virtual rainbow of elegant evening gowns—reds and greens, yellows and whites, all accented with gold, silver, platinum, and bejeweled with sapphires, rubies, emeralds. The most striking and sparkling among them drew suitors and sycophants like eager moths to regal flames.

From the east bar, on the outskirts of the party, Barton Hale watched them all.

His ears were tuned to the kind of chatter he knew so well, had cultivated since he was a mere lieutenant in the doomed AFFC. Insincere compliments mixed with thinly veiled threats. Gossip and innuendo-laced secret deals. It was an old enough tune, as old as the state itself. As Barton drank in the familiar sights and sounds, he sipped his champagne, savoring a sweet taste reminiscent of Donegal cherries.

3062, if I'm not mistaken. He smiled darkly. *A good year for the right people.*

The idle recollection sharpened his senses anew, refocusing his attention on the crowd. 3062 *had* been a good year for him; it had carried him through the entire Civil War and made him a richer man, a man of importance, even though he kept out of the limelight. But the gains were fleeting. The war was over; the time had come for a new deal, a new opportunity. As he subconsciously straightened his uniform sash, Barton allowed his eyes to roam, searching for just the right combination of wealth, power and naiveté that would set him up for life.

"Hauptmann-General Hale, I presume?"

The voice, feminine and musical, broke Barton's reverie. Turning, he found himself facing a young goddess of unquestionably regal poise, with a dusky complexion and deep brown eyes. Her flowing black tresses fell over bare shoulders, tamed only by a gold headband and deep purple ribbons that matched her figure-hugging gown. Her smile broadened as she read the recognition on his face. He tilted his head forward in acknowledgement and she snatched a fresh glass of champagne from a passing waiter.

But what would bring her to Tharkad—and unattended, at that?

"Duchess Hermione Kelswa-Steiner," Barton said, "welcome to Tharkad City."

"Thank you, General," she replied lightly. "I still prefer Aten, however."

"As you wish, Lady Aten," Barton said with another head tilt and an easy smile he had learned to use years ago to hide the questions in his mind. Choosing to voice one, he added, "What can I do for you?"

"Straight to the point, aren't we?" Hermione said, her smile implacable. "I like that. There is something you can do, but not only for me—assuming, of course, you are still with the Quartermaster Corps?"

"I am," Barton admitted. *Which means your husband, Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner, wants something from the Corps, I'll bet. So, what's Skye's game now, and would you really try to play it so soon after losing the latest war?*

"Then I have a business opportunity for you that will not only benefit the Corps, but also the people of Skye, and the Alliance as a whole."

"Ah, the people of Skye," Barton said flatly. "I should point out my loyalty—"

"Rests with the Archon?" Hermione finished. "Of course! As does ours, I assure you, no matter what you've heard in the media. After all, Skye fought beside our Archon at the end of the war, did we not?"

"A debatable assertion, my lady." Almost at once, Barton regretted the words. *Fine job, Bart! An opportunity knocks, and you let politics get in the way! Focus!*

Hermione's laugh was light-hearted, completely opposite to what Barton expected after his inadvertent slip. Her eyes found his, and her hand swept toward an unoccupied table in the no-man's land between the crowded dance floor and the laughing masses gathered by the bar.

"Now, General," she said. "Wouldn't you at least like to hear what I have to say before rejecting it out of hand? I'm offering a rare opportunity to strengthen the Alliance—a goal that would definitely place a man of your talents at the front lines. You'd be a hero. All it takes is to help us help the Corps retain an invaluable supplier of war materiel for the LAAF, one whose exclusive contract is due to expire soon."

Following her to the table, Barton remembered to draw her chair out first before taking his own at the adjacent corner. "The Corps does business with many suppliers, Lady Aten. I would need more details than that just now."

Hermione flashed him another perfect smile. "I won't bore you with too many details, General," she said, "but you may recall that Brigadier Corporation's plant on Oliver still had open contracts with our government during the war of '57, when the planet fell to the Free Worlds League. Despite that change in status, they remained on the LAAF list of approved suppliers immediately afterward."

"Ah, yes." Barton nodded as the realization dawned on him. "That's how they won the *Chimera* contract in early '58—"

Hermione's finger lightly touched his lips, lingering briefly in a way that made Barton wonder for an instant just how committed her marriage was. "A stroke of excellent forward-thinking for the QC, to be sure," she said, disrupting his thoughts. "It gave us a ten-year exclusive supply of advanced BattleMechs effectively produced by the labors of a foreign state. Though I'm sure the Mariks complained a touch that one of their factories was supplying an ancient foe, they certainly didn't complain any about collecting so





much Lyran kroner in the bargain, and they *did* keep access to part of Brigadier's older 'Mech lines."

Barton nodded. "Granted. Almost a shame that contract runs out soon."

"It doesn't have to. In fact, as we speak, my husband's negotiators should be on Oliver now, settling the final details for an extension in the name of the LAAF."

Ah, so Duke Robert wants support for an unsanctioned and unsolicited business agreement between Skye and Marik! "Forgive me, Duchess, but your husband must realize, after his activities during the war, especially Hesperus—"

The duchess' face darkened for just a moment, but her tone remained light. "Ancient history, as you well know. Katherine already had him in irons by then; can you truly blame a man for retaliating? Anyway, our new Archon magnanimously freed him, and now, we see a chance to at least partially repay our debt to the current administration."

Barton frowned and looked away, trying to keep a straight face. This was hardly fair; if Duke Robert had seriously intended to negotiate, why would he send this young thing to do the job? He briefly scanned the room, taking in the abundance of elegant gowns and crisp uniforms. Men and women of power and station, chattering about fashion, gossip, current events. How many of them, he wondered, were having conversations like this, "golden opportunities" being pitched by would-be power brokers trying to cut their teeth in the real business of the Lyran Alliance?

"You think this is a scam, General?"

Hermione's words, spoken with disturbing sharpness, snapped him back home. Her gaze recaptured his and held it. Barton instinctively shook his head. Denial of accusations had become second nature since the war, an instinct that had saved him from investigations and courts-martial. *Besides*, he reminded himself, *scam or no, there is always opportunity for those with eyes to see it. Even a would-be power broker with a pretty face can provide one.*

Rolling his tongue around the inside of his mouth as if mulling it over, Barton decided to play it out a little further. "Forgive me, Duchess," he said, "but there is a history here."

"We are slaves of history only when we allow ourselves to be, Barton. I offer you an opportunity that a man of your position—who has the ear of the head of the Quartermaster Command—is ideally suited to take on, not just for career advancement, but for the good of the entire Alliance. Our military is a shambles, and who knows it better than you? Suppliers like DefHes are overworked, as enemies all around us continue to grow stronger. We need all the help we can get, even from factories like Brigadier, and here, we can continue to deprive a possible enemy of war materiel for our own gain. I am talking about a five-year extension of an extant contract, admittedly with certain modifications."

Aha, Barton thought. *Here's the catch. "Modifications?"*

Hermione's face remained stern, her eyes narrowed. She leaned forward, her voice dropping to a whisper barely audible over the

sounds of silverware, ringing glasses and a sea of droning conversations. Barton instinctively drew closer, close enough to catch her delicate scent of lilac.

"Skye is hurting as much from the war as any other province of the Alliance," she told him frankly. "But not just militarily. Business is down across the board, particularly shipping, distribution, free trading. A contract extension stipulating shipment to Skye ports of call would stimulate trade along the League border and boost local traffic, which would definitely impact the local economy."

"That's all? The LAAF easily can accommodate you; there are QC depots in those regions, after all."

Hermione nodded, "Easy, yes, but we don't want LAAF watchmen all the time. I'll not lie to you, Barton. Many in the province still see the government *here* as the real enemy; the last thing either of us needs is the specter of Katherine's rule from the current administration."

Barton smirked. *Oh, the LIC would have a field day with this one! How could you put an ace in my hand so easily, Robert?*

"Security's not my area, my lady," he said. "And you don't really expect the High Command to simply trust Skye as a middleman in an arms trade."

"But you haven't heard the bonuses yet," the duchess cut in, a subtle edge in her voice. "The extension calls for a ten percent price increase per unit—a means to keep the League happy about 'their' factory supplying brand-new *Chimeras* to a foreign power. However, my husband is prepared to cover half the cost of the first three years' supply from Brigadier, meaning the LAAF winds up paying only—"

"Fifty-five percent of normal retail. But where does he get that kind of kroner?"

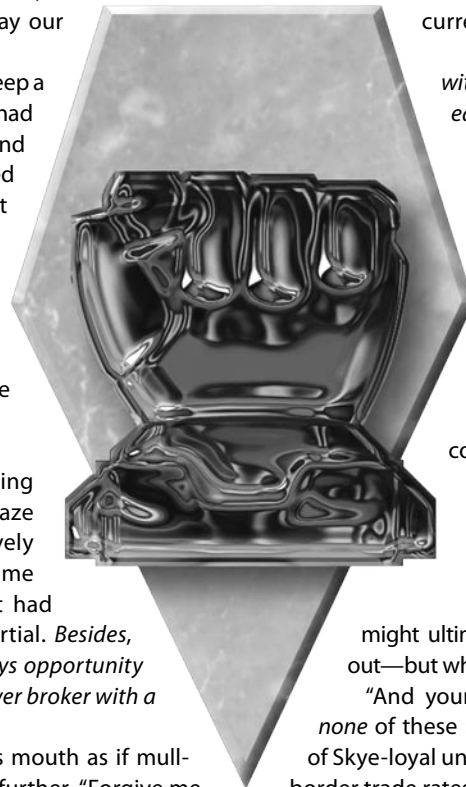
"Personal estate, a wellspring of supporters who might ultimately question its use if such things were found out—but what they don't know won't hurt them, will it?"

"And your husband is prepared for the eventuality that *none* of these new machines will find their way into the hands of Skye-loyal units? That's a lot of money to invest just to drive up border trade rates with no hard gains."

Hermione frowned and shrugged. "If that is the LAAF's wish, though it would be a shame to allow such fine units to rot when the realm needs all the support it can get."

"A sad fact of today's political landscape, my lady," Barton admitted. *Like you really expected it to be otherwise?* "But that was just one bonus; you mentioned bonuses."

The smile returned, even as her voice remained low. Hermione reached out and laid a warm, delicate hand on Barton's. "The other bonuses are more personal, my dear General Hale. One, of course, is the matter of certain private—and very discreet—stock options with Brigadier. I'm sure a man of your... *experience*... must know that announcement of a contract renewal like this is sure to drive up market prices. An investor in the right place at the right time might find himself in a most *profitable* position."





ADVANTAGE AND OPPORTUNITY

Barton's eyes widened as the trap slammed shut. *Damn it! How did they find out?* Instinctively, he tried to pull his hand back, but Hermione's fist suddenly closed around it with unexpected strength from such a small girl. Instead of breaking free, all he managed to do was jerk his arm. His elbow crashed against a forgotten plate, clattering silverware and toppling a nearby water goblet that promptly soaked through his sleeve and sent shivers along his arm. Several nearby gowns and uniforms glanced his way, displaying mild curiosity in search of a scandal that found an LAAF officer holding hands with the Duchess of Skye.

Just great!

Could any of *them* know as well? The sudden question set his stomach on fire, filled his ears with the sound of his own racing blood and made him long for a fresh glass of anything to erase the sudden taste of ash in his mouth. Hermione's eyes, meanwhile, locked on to his own, her innocent smile replaced by a predatory grin.

"I see we have an understanding, General," she said quietly, "which means I don't need to tell you what the final 'bonus' would be for a man in your position. Let's not compound the situation by making a scene."

Right! I deal on their terms, or kiss my career—and very likely my freedom—good-bye. "How—?"

"How doesn't really matter, does it?" she whispered back, her lips close to his ear. "What matters is that there *are* regulations and laws

against this sort of thing, aren't there? Yet you pulled it off during a war with no one the wiser, made a real killing on the Donegal Stock Exchange, from what I hear. Is it so hard to do so again during the peace, while simultaneously strengthening our great realm?"

Barton narrowed his eyes and forced himself to relax. *Duke Robert; the man must have spies everywhere.* The look in the duchess' eyes was uncompromising. This was no idle threat. The list of crimes he could be pinned for could ruin a career if just one stuck. Conflict of interest. Violation of procedure. Insider trading. Wartime profiteering.

Treason? Yes, even *that* one could apply now, couldn't it?

"All right, my lady," he muttered. He reached for a fresh champagne glass as Hermione released him.

Okay, Duke Robert, you have me, but that doesn't mean I can't sweeten the deal. Blackmail, after all, gets one only so far in this game.

A smile came to Barton's lips as a new thought struck him. As his eyes met Hermione's once more, her obvious confusion chipped away some of the stern resolve she had radiated just moments ago. He reached out and took her hand in his. Drawing it to his lips, he gave her his most lecherous wink.

"You now have my undivided attention, Duchess," he said. *Let's see how far you're willing to go. My lady...*



Highness—

Before I begin, I would first like to express my deepest and humblest gratitude for choosing me to prepare the forward to this latest, most definitive volume about the Lyran people and nation ever produced to date. Indeed, participation in the compilation and editing of this work has been at times overwhelming, yet deeply rewarding, for me. I only hope that the fruits of our labors—not only mine, but those of the various luminaries, journalists, and of course, your esteemed court historian, who helped make this production possible—meet with your approval.

Moreover, let me assure you that what you hold in your hands is as reliable an account of Lyran history, culture and traditions as was ever produced—and I say that having reviewed the declassified ComStar version. While generally sound, I found that document to contain such inexplicable errors that I could not help but shake my head in pity at the Order's shortcomings. The suggestion that Robert Marsden helped found the Commonwealth even though he had not even been born, or their complete omission of the Rim Worlds campaign during the Star League's fall, were particularly amusing lapses, as was the total confusion over Alistair Marsden's location and the events surrounding his death on Menkent. Were it not for the fact that many historians and editors since (even some of our own finest luminaries!) have repeated ComStar's errors, such inconsistencies would be truly laughable.

But I digress.

Once again, Highness, I thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this definitive volume on the history of our nation. I hope it meets your approval.

—Bertram R. Habeas
Assistant Editor, Historical Archives and Research Team
Cheskwa School of Literature
1 November 3067

The past four decades have seen some of the most tremendous upheavals in the long history of the Inner Sphere. The rise and fall of the Federated Commonwealth, the sundering and reunion of much of the Capellan Confederation, the independence and conquest of the Free Rasalhague Republic, the beginning and end of the Clan Invasion, the rebirth of the Star League—the list goes on. There is no question that we live in interesting times.

Now, finally, peace has come—unsteady, but there nonetheless. A time of reflection has arrived, not just for those of us in the Lyran Alliance, but for those living anywhere humankind has settled. Among the war-torn worlds of the Successor States, in the near and distant territories of the Clans, and even in the Periphery, where rogues and honest folk alike struggle to make a living, the turmoil of recent years has touched all, bringing us close to an abyss and then pulling us back. In times like these, we as a people need to remember what went before, and how we came to be where we are now. We need to reflect on our history before we can look to the future, to avoid the mistakes of the past and transcend the obstacles yet to come.

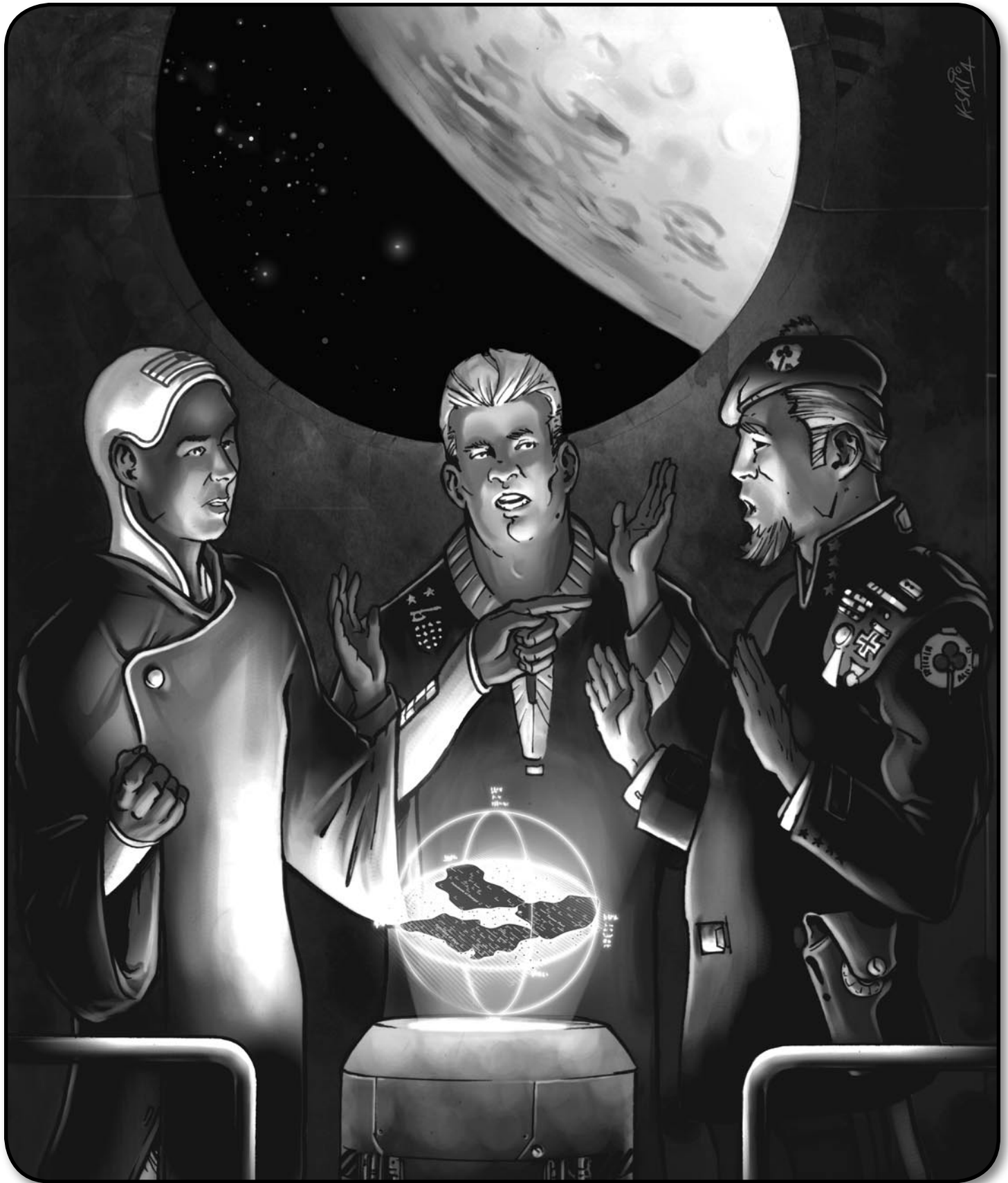
This volume is the latest—and, hopefully, most complete—review of the Lyran Alliance. Forged originally as the Lyran Commonwealth, an amalgam of three mercantile powers that arose from the decay of the Terran Alliance, the Lyran nation has grown to become one of the five superpowers of the Inner Sphere, as much through its industrial and economic strength as by any force of arms. Through war and peace, we have come a long way, and with any luck, we shall continue to do so in the centuries ahead. As we enter the latter half of the thirty-first century, we must not forget about the dawn of our nation, so that we may know ourselves and realize our destiny.

Honored students of history, I bid you welcome. Read these words in the spirit of understanding, and know how we have come to be the people we are today.

—Bertram R. Habeas, 15 November 3067



HANDBOOK HOUSE STEINER





"If one were to take the totality of human existence and add up all our collective triumphs and our collective failures, one would be left with a single, inevitable conclusion: that we have come so very far, and yet have learned so very little. Such a shame our lives can be summed up by such a stupid proverb."

—Attributed to Alistair Steiner, ca. 2465

For seven hundred and twenty years, many of the worlds coreward and anti-spinward of Terra have been united under the Lyran banner. Dedicated to mutual defense and prosperity, the peoples of the Lyran Commonwealth—and its present-day successor, the Lyran Alliance—have persevered, facing triumphs and tragedies while retaining their place as one of the preeminent political, industrial and economic powers in the Inner Sphere.

PRE-HISTORY

Aller anfang ist schwer (All beginning is difficult)

—German proverb

The origins of the Inner Sphere lie firmly rooted in Terra, first home of the human race. Despite being scattered across thousands of light-years of space, no man, woman or child alive today does not know of Mother Earth, even if politics and a thousand years

of social evolution have changed how we ultimately perceive her. Before the discoveries of Thomas Kearny and Takayoshi Fuchida in the early twenty-first century, humankind had only set foot on two worlds beyond Terra—the moon (Luna) and Mars, its nearest planetary neighbor in the Sol system. Though politically united by an ever-growing hegemony initially called the Western Alliance, which formed after the near-catastrophic Second Soviet Civil War, humankind remained deeply divided culturally and economically into dozens of nation-states and intermediate alliances.

Even as the Western Alliance peacefully gave way to the Terran Alliance, theoretically giving humanity its first truly unified government and enabling the dawn of a new age of prosperity, the ancient struggle between the haves and the have-nots remained the major source of tensions. Wealthy nations grew wealthier, while poorer nations shouldered the burden of ever-greater taxes to support a planetary government not wholly committed to balancing the scales.

Ironically, the single greatest technological achievement of the era—so grand that only a united world government could have pulled it off—would ultimately lead to the Alliance's undoing, and Terra's sudden decline in significance from the birthworld of the human race to just another star in the universe. With that fateful first manned jump from Sol to Tau Ceti in 2108—made by the TAS *Pathfinder*, humanity's first working interstellar JumpShip—the Terran Alliance realized a longtime dream of men and women everywhere while sowing the seeds of its own destruction.

THE FIRST COLONIES

Within less than a hundred years of the *Pathfinder's* historic jump, millions of men, women, and children had fled Mother Earth for worlds as far distant as Sevren. The discovery of so many habitable planets beyond Terra, and the development of a fast and (relatively) cheap means to get to them, fired the imagination and created a universe of possibilities for those seeking escape from the politics, corruption and pollution of Terra. Thus begun humankind's first great expansion into space, despite the relative novelty of space travel and the dangers that could very well lie on the unknown and uncharted alien planets far beyond human experience.

Life on these new worlds was hard for the first colonists. Though the majority of their new homelands had been found ideal in advance by Alliance probes and planetological survey ships, many contained hidden dangers missed by casual sensor sweeps. Alien viruses, incompatible biochemistry, unpredictable weather patterns and geological activity, hostile alien predators and a host of other natural and manmade threats complicated many efforts to eke out an existence so far from home. Furthermore, as colony foundation often relied on dismantling landing ships and shuttles for habitats while the JumpShip transports carried on to other destinations, these expeditions were frequently one-way trips, and a settlement that could not achieve full self-sufficiency soon found itself reliant on intercolony trade that was unreliable and infrequent at best. Left to their own devices, many poorly planned colonies perished, their remains discovered by later expeditions from Terra, Alliance relief ships that arrived too late, or irregular traders from neighboring worlds.

And yet, despite all these logistical challenges, the Alliance government behaved like a jealously possessive regime, rigidly regulating early colonial efforts and demanding tribute from its new far-flung offspring in resources and money. Whether settled by government charter or by the efforts of private citizens, corporations and even religious and social sects, the Terran Alliance demanded loyalty and accountability from its colonies. Those who fled into space to escape oppression on Terra would find no freedom among the stars, held as they were to productivity quotas to pay for programs that could not benefit them even as their communities struggled to survive on strange, new worlds.

Despite the difficulties and Alliance government meddling, by 2172, the peoples of Terra had built a hundred new colonies spanning a sphere eighty light-years across. So distant were many of these planets that the primitive communications of the day—in the absence of reliable and dedicated JumpShip courier networks—took eight months to reach one end of human-occupied space from the other. Consequently, the Alliance's authority—represented by local governors and backed up by hastily recruited off-world militias led by more loyal Terran officers—often lacked coordination. Tensions back home that had prompted the sudden, explosive exodus into space spread into the void with the settlers, whose dreams of true independence were dashed by a government designed for the needs of a single planet.

The only surprise when rebellion finally came was how long it took to reach that point.

—Solomon Clavell, *Where Have We Been?*, Commonwealth Press, 3052



HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

DECLINE AND FALL OF THE TERRAN ALLIANCE

In 2236, the worlds of Denebola and Freedom became the first Alliance colonies to declare independence, sparking the start of the Outer Reaches Rebellion. The Alliance government, dominated for years by the authoritarian Expansionist Party, promptly dispatched marines to quell the uprisings. Unfortunately, the realities of waging war across interstellar distances, against settlers who knew their homelands far better than any Terran-born "invader", quickly turned these efforts into a rout. Sympathy for the colonies swelled and led to the sweeping takeover of the Alliance by the more isolationist Liberal Party.

Over the years that followed, Terra withdrew all administrative, trade and military support for the colonies, leaving them on their own whether they wanted it or not. The Liberal Party, espousing high-minded ideals of freedom and enlightenment toward Terra's children, used that platform as an excuse to consolidate their hold inward, pushing forward their own vision of a smaller universe, free from the niggling needs of the upstart colonies. "Earth First" became their official state motto as less capable settlements starved to death in the cold stars above, despite the efforts of colonial trading consortiums like the Ryan Cartel or the formation of alliances like the Chesterton Trade League. With the Demarcation Declaration of 2242, the Alliance officially shrank from a confederation spanning hundreds of worlds to a territory spanning only thirty light years from Terra, its borders all but sealed save for a few stray outposts.

But if the Alliance leadership thought turning inward to its few remaining "loyal" colonies and the bounty of Mother Earth would cure the myriad of social ills born of humanity's race to the stars, they were sadly mistaken. Isolated and alienated from the universe at large, their oversized military focused on holding the few worlds remaining under the Alliance banner, the economic and social crises that had plagued the nation and precipitated the first colonization of space remained the gravest threat to peace within the Alliance's shrunken borders. Despite the pressure-valve release of so many thousands to the distant void, malcontents of every kind made their feelings known in a variety of often-violent, often-public demonstrations. Making matters worse, the Expansionist Party desperately sought its return to power by any means necessary. Political debates eventually turned to violence, destabilizing an already shaky government.

By the latter half of twenty-third century, the Alliance's ongoing slide prompted an even larger colonial effort, this time funded primarily by private citizens and ambitious conglomerates. This massed relocation, dubbed the First Exodus, accelerated the final decline, until the Terran Alliance collapsed by the year 2314.

BIRTH OF A NATION

"...On this first day of the new year, let it be known that we three have merged our realms for the common wealth of their collective peoples, in the name of peace and prosperity for all of our worlds..."

—Thomas McQuiston, President of the Federation of Skye, 1 January 2341

Even before the collapse of the Terran Alliance, many of the colonies left behind in the wake of the Outer Reaches Rebellion began

forming alliances and trade pacts to supplement their material needs and provide for a common defense against Alliance forces and the small but growing piracy problem. Joining the likes of the Chesterton Trade League (which lay rimward of the Terran Alliance), the Tamar Pact, one of the eventual founders of the Lyran Commonwealth, came into being in 2235, uniting the distant colony worlds of Nox, Suk II and Fatima (and all worlds in between) under a mutual defense and free trade agreement. Other alliances soon formed after Terra's Demarcation Declaration, including the Federation of Skye in 2299 and the Protectorate of Donegal in 2314. Indeed, by the time Terran Fleet Admiral James McKenna swept aside the crumbling Alliance government and established his bold new Terran Hegemony, the great powers of the next millennium had already begun to arise.

FOUNDATIONS OF THE LYRAN COMMONWEALTH

The birth of the Terran Hegemony in 2316 and its rise with the strong and decisive Admiral McKenna at the helm set many of the new alliances throughout human-occupied space to worrying about whether humankind's homeworld still clung to its imperial ambitions. The Hegemony's brief war to reclaim many of its former colonies seemed to confirm this as the Hegemony Navy once more pushed the boundaries of the fallen Terran Alliance outward. Though few independent alliances engaged in direct confrontations with the Hegemony during this time, as the Terrans carved out an empire a hundred planets strong in the midst of these newly forming interstellar states, some, like the Federation of Skye, saw the Hegemony's resurgence as a direct challenge to their sovereignty.

In addition to the Hegemony threat, the rise of the militant Alliance of Galedon (re-established as the Draconis Combine in 2319) and the nearby presence of other, larger realms such as the Free Worlds League (founded in 2271) were cause for equal wariness. The Kurita family, masters of the Combine, made no secret of their intention to rule all of known space, while the more militarily benign Free Worlds League came across as a dangerous rival to the three mercantile alliances that lay "northwest" of Terra.

By the 2330s, the Marsdens, McQuistons and Tamars had begun to discuss merging their realms for mutual defense and free trade. The heavy industrialization of the Federation of Skye, coupled with the military prowess and agricultural bounty of the Tamar Pact and the vast untapped resources of the Protectorate of Donegal all equated to an ideal match. In 2339, a year after the Syrma Ambush blunted Terran expansion toward Skye, and after the discovery of the surprisingly large and powerful Rim Worlds Republic just beyond his own Pact's borders, Kevin Tamar decided the time had come to replace words with action. Calling for a summit on the Tamar Pact world of Arcturus for the following year, he publicly resolved to discuss a formal union of the three alliances.

As it happened, the summit did more than discuss the matter.

Treating the merger proposal like the consummate business leaders they were, Kevin Tamar, Simon Marsden and Thomas McQuiston easily developed a workable economic plan for the proposed union. Settling the question of how to govern the new realm, on the other hand, proved somewhat more daunting. Unable to agree on a system that respected the needs and traditions of all three states, and unwilling to place their respective alliances under the rule of a single military



PLANET KEY

- NATIONAL CAPITAL
- DISTRICT CAPITAL

LYRAN COMMONWEALTH
 Founding (2341)

© 3067 COMSTAR CARTOGRAPHIC CORPUS

LEGEND

30 LIGHT YEARS

90 LIGHT YEARS OR 20.1 PARSECS

MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS

Coreward
 Spinward
 Rimward
 Anti-spinward



HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

THE THREE WHO WOULD BECOME ONE

As the Terran Alliance gradually lost its grip on the outer colonies, numerous interstellar alliances and confederations quickly began to form in order to stabilize local trade for hundreds of poorer, less self-sufficient worlds. In the coreward/anti-spinward quadrant of known space, three such alliances arose as collectives for trade and mutual defense, their leadership more interested in business profits than true governance of interstellar nations. These three, ironically, would become one of the mightiest empires in human history, under the banner of the Lyran Commonwealth...

Of the three, the Tamar Pact was the oldest. Formed in 2235 as a trade and defense organization by the Tamars, a family of American-Pakistani origin, its worlds included some of the richest agricultural resources in the region, and the Tamar family dominated shipping and trade in their area of space. The Pact's greatest achievement was its emphasis on military strength, however. Tamar security forces, accompanying every shipment and stationed in every Tamar-operated agro-commune, helped deter banditry, a real problem in the coreward regions.

The Federation of Skye made a more direct transition from mercantile alliance to political state. Ian McQuiston, wealthy son of a merchant ship tycoon in Terra's Great Britain, first emerged on the interstellar scene soon after leaving Terra, when he purchased several trading conglomerates on the moody world of Skye and consolidated them as the Skye Traders, a shipping and trading company that dominated the space lanes in a massive wedge of space from Ford, Clinton and Sakhalin to the boundaries of the Terran Alliance. His political savvy every bit as sharp as his business acumen, he rose to become governor of Skye and soon entered into numerous agreements with the worlds dominated by his trading fleet. In 2299, at the age of 59, McQuiston announced the formation of the Federation of Skye, a new and powerful political state that included some of known space's richest and most heavily industrialized worlds.

The Protectorate of Donegal, the third and geographically largest founding member of the Lyran Commonwealth, in a way began as a spin-off of the Skye Federation. Seth Marsden, once McQuiston's most trusted advisor, quit Skye Traders after a particularly serious dispute—over what, many historians remain uncertain—and set off for distant Donegal to make his own fortune. Ironically, Marsden's plan followed McQuiston's pattern almost exactly as he dominated the local trade routes, then translated that mercantile power into a political foundation within the span of twelve years. The Protectorate of Donegal, as he dubbed it, offered bountiful yet largely untapped resources and a wide-open frontier filled with almost limitless potential.

—From *Pocket Empires—Nations of the Pre-Star League Era*, Commonwealth Historical Press, 3043

dictatorship merely in the name of mutual defense, or to take the opposite risk of creating a full democracy, ruled by opinions and short-sightedness, the political talks bogged down. It took several meetings over a month to hammer out a government structure that one or more of the three alliance leaders did not find objectionable in some way.

In the end, Kevin Tamar suggested that the government be led by a council of nine "archons", a ruling structure used by the ancient Greeks to run their city-states. As this ruling body would include equal representation from each of the three member-state leaders, each of the three alliances would theoretically be able to retain their preferred traditions and ways of doing business by combining the roles of national and regional leadership. When no better plan presented itself, the three leaders agreed, and in keeping with the Greek motif, chose a three-stringed lyre for the new state's emblem. This logo inspired a name for their new union: the Lyran Commonwealth. Though many matters remained to be discussed—including exactly who would serve as the nine archons and who among them would hold the title of Archon Basileus (the senior-most archon)—Marsden, McQuiston and Tamar left the Arcturan summit with the solemn pledge to make the Lyran Commonwealth a reality.

False Start: Reign of the Nine

Unfortunately for the new nation, the high-minded ideals upon which the Commonwealth was founded did not survive reality. Though each leader was a skilled negotiator and administrator for his own mercantile association, managing the unification of three separate economies and a myriad of regional and planetary defense forces proved an exceedingly daunting task. In fact, it took five years after the Commonwealth's official founding in 2341 just to choose the nine archons who would sit on the ruling council, and try as they might, none of the assembled leaders could decide who would serve as Archon Basileus.

The promising economic plan developed during the first summit crashed in practice, unable to account for subtle differences between the various regional currencies and local standards. The result was a wildly destabilized economy that defied all efforts to restore order in the years following the Commonwealth's formation, streaking toward a full-blown depression. In fact, rather than correct many of the problems, most of the archons instead found opportunities to exploit the holes in the disrupted Lyran financial system, profiting from insider information regardless of the ups and downs of the market.

Making matters worse, the Draconis Combine began a massive troop buildup on the Commonwealth border, forcing the government to consider a tax hike most of its citizens could not afford, to finance a military untested in combat. With corruption and chaos so evident in the central government, the people of the Commonwealth grew increasingly cynical about their so-called leaders.

Rebirth: The Marsden Coup

The ongoing economic crisis—now into its twenty-fifth year—mixed with the growing threat of a Combine invasion and a lack of faith in the government's ability to handle any of these problems soon pushed public apathy into public backlash. Morale plummeted so far that many in all three allied substates loudly considered seceding from the Commonwealth, and even the Prime Minister of the Tamar Pact openly suggested seeking a peace treaty with the Combine. Riots and strikes broke out in waves on the fringe worlds of the Protectorate of Donegal, and the heavily industrialized planets of the Skye Federation, as activists everywhere called for independence from the "dismal failure" the nation had become.

In the midst of this turmoil one of the archons, Robert Marsden, began an ambitious tour of the realm, meeting with planetary leaders and military commanders on many of the more populous worlds. As most of these meetings took place behind closed doors, few citizens had any inkling of his intentions. The Donegal archon himself proclaimed his tour was merely an effort to shore up the flagging Lyran economy and help organize the state's defenses in case of foreign attack, but rumors of further government corruption and the imminent threat of a major Combine invasion set the people on edge throughout the early 2370s.



VOICES OF DISCONTENT

FLETCHER: Welcome back to the Fletcher Report, ladies and gentlemen. Today's topic is, of course, the continued existence of the Commonwealth! Joining us is Carmen Lowry, spokeswoman for Prime Minister Davis Kelswa, who just last year opened discussion of Tamar's secession...

LOWRY: Thank you, Robert.

FLETCHER: ...And we've already met our first guest, Granville LeSat, representative of the People's Coalition of Donegal...

LESAT: Bob.

FLETCHER: Okay, now. Carmen, your boss, Minister Kelswa, in the absence of President Kevin Tamar, represents the needs of the Tamar Pact, yet from the start of what he claimed to be an "open forum to discuss the people's grievances against the government," he has lambasted the Archons—including Mister Tamar himself—as, I quote, "a pack of ravenous wolves." Don't words like that border on treason? I thought Tamar was behind the idea of the Commonwealth?

LOWRY: Well, Rob, it's true that Tamar once stood for the alliance with Skye and Donegal, but the sad fact of the matter is, we've seen nothing productive from the Arcturan government almost since day one. Last year, their latest effort to combat the Pact-wide depression led to the worst economic fiasco yet when Archon Treasurer Brandon Malthus passed Measure LC-137, basing the national economic standard on platinum. For most of the agro-worlds of the Pact, where platinum is particularly scarce and most worlds used the water standard, this measure plunged the value of the Tamar dollar by as much as eleven *thousand* percent in one week. It should not cost a family sixty dollars to buy a loaf of stale bread, Mister Fletcher.

LESAT: Growing pains, Miss Lowry! Nothing more. Need I remind you it was Tamar's insistence on maintaining the various alliance currencies that has delayed the establishment of a nationwide economic standard to begin with? And now, as we try to correct it, you Tamarites call for secession—in the face of the very enemy you fear most, no less! Archon Malthus amended LC-137 within months of that mishap. The government *is* trying, Miss Lowry!

LOWRY: Trying? Mister LeSat, did you notice that within *weeks* of the dollar's devaluation, the Malthus family announced plans to develop over a thousand square kilometers of arable land on Domain they were able to buy for cut-rate prices from several Tamarite families bankrupted by that so-called "mishap"? And for what? A recreational facility? Another "summer home"?

FLETCHER: Now, Miss Lowry, what you're suggesting has been talked to death already—

LOWRY: I wouldn't say talked to death, *Bob*. A crashing DropShip couldn't be more obvious. This government is more than twenty years old, and was founded by three of the greatest trading alliances in our time for the common wealth of its citizens—the *common wealth!* Christ! That's where the name for this great nation of ours came from, even, but instead, we have seen entire planetary systems bankrupted while the self-appointed committee of nine here on Arcturus seems never

to suffer so much as a shortage of paperclips and stationery! Where's the "common wealth" Mister McQuiston talked about when they all signed this travesty of a government into law?

FLETCHER: What about the Kurita threat on your border, Miss Lowry? Is now the time to talk breakaway when the Combine is making moves on Skye and Tamar?

LOWRY: Depends, Bob. Do you really think that disorganized mess our "leaders" call a military can do any more than get themselves killed while running Tamar into the ground? Skye was lucky with last year's "border incident," but Kurita won't be so nice in the future, and we know that. Sometimes, bowing to the inevitable is our only way to assure we'll still be around tomorrow. And I'm sure there are people in the Federation and in the Protectorate who feel the same—

LESAT: Now, see here, Miss Lowry! The Protectorate is Lyran all the way—

LOWRY: Is that right? So those reports of labor strikes on Gibbs, Coventry and Alarion were all just rumor? As were those New Capetown race riots back in '62 after Archon McQuiston had the audacity to send a mediator of ethnic African descent to that world to settle a trade dispute...?

FLETCHER: She's got you there, Gran.

LESAT: Pick a side, Bob! Now, those incidents are just—

LOWRY: And what of the reported movements on Zhongshan, Mahone and Gatineau? The ones that want to up and join the Rim Worlds?

LESAT: A few ingrates—

LOWRY: Ingrates? Careful how you use that term, Mister LeSat; you may have to explain just what the people on all your worlds have to be grateful to the Commonwealth government *for*. From where I sit, that doesn't seem to amount to a whole hell of a lot...

—Excerpt from *The Fletcher Report*, Arcturan News Network, 15 March 2365





HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

In May of 2375, the nine archons met once more in their ornate capital on Arcturus, their stated goal to restructure the Lyran economy once and for all and to decide how best to deploy the hundreds of planetary militias at their disposal to meet a possible threat from House Kurita. Once more, however, the assemblage degenerated into pointless arguments over which currency would dominate the new economy, and which troops from which states would be deployed on the worlds of Skye and Tamar. By July, the conclave was at an end, once more without clear results, and all the assembled archons returned to their distant homeworlds—save one.

On 17 August, 2375, while most of the other archons were still in transit, Robert Marsden released a pre-recorded video announcement to all Lyran Commonwealth member worlds via a network of interstellar news agencies and JumpShip circuits. In the forty-minute broadcast, Marsden listed the corruption and crimes perpetrated by all eight of his fellow archons since the formation of the Commonwealth, then formally stripped them of power and claimed the title of Archon Baselius. To back up his gambit and win public support, Marsden claimed under his title full authority over all military forces in the realm, and promised the people a stronger voice in the new government by proposing a legislative body that

would help him govern, made up of the leaders of every Lyran member world.

Public outcry at the crimes of the other archons was so great that entire worlds immediately took up Marsden's call. The eight archons—including the leaders of the Tamar Pact and the Federation of Skye—found themselves charged with treason by the general populace, and Marsden himself recommended life imprisonment for all of them. Most were arrested within hours of their return home, though a few found enough support to remain at large for a few more years.

Within weeks of his proclamation, military forces loyal to Marsden secured Arcturus, Donegal and a host of other key industrialized worlds against a possible counter-coup, even as the self-styled King Archon set in motion plans to make good on his promise for a more representative government. Issuing a draft of his Articles of Acceptance to all Lyran worlds, Marsden formally promised local governments nearly complete local autonomy in exchange for national loyalty in the form of military and economic support. Supporters were asked to send a representative to Arcturus as a sign of their acceptance, chosen by any means the local government desired. These delegates would serve as the core of a new body, the Estates General, which would thenceforth

THE JUNTA THAT NEVER WAS?

The mysteries surrounding Archon Robert Marsden's untimely death in 2395 have been the plaything of crackpot conspiracy theorists since the day the news broke four centuries ago. The official records, of course, listed the cause as a massive coronary brought on by the stress of leadership, especially in the wake of the Promised Land debacle. However, Marsden was 44 at the time of this alleged heart attack, with no past history of heart disease or genetic conditions. A military man before his political career, obsessed with maintaining the physical fitness of his army days (going so far as to begin each day religiously with a 45-minute workout that included a three-kilometer jog and calisthenics), it seems highly unlikely that he of all men would fall victim to an undetected heart defect.

Naturally, theories abounded that Marsden's killers—presuming, of course, that the exceedingly unlikely coronary story was faked—were members of his own military command staff, many of whom were under the gun after Promised Land. The loss of ten Commonwealth regiments who chose to seize the Free Worlds League planet on account of the Archon's flippant remark about desiring a magnum of the world's fine champagne had to be answered for, and many of the Lyran generals, in their panic over being cashiered, had taken to blaming Marsden for their own hubris. In the face of this supreme example of "biting the hand that feeds," these generals naturally looked like guilty parties, enough so that most laymen assumed the next Archon would come from this so-called military junta. Several incisive public criticisms of the military High Command appeared, as if to warn them that the people were onto their schemes. These displays culminated with the famous surprise portrayal of *Hamlet* by the Royal Arcturan Shakespearean Players that sent so many generals and would-be leaders out of the theater in a huff.

Ironically, it may well have been that none of the High Command—or anyone else in the government, for that matter—was behind Marsden's sudden death. Several recently discovered letters between Marsden and an unidentified woman (all references to her identity are couched in embarrassingly intimate metaphors that have made uncovering it impossible) suggest a long and torrid affair kept secret even from members of his own family. The identity of Marsden's lover has since become a mystery left to the ages, though the content of these letters has prompted several wild theories about the unknown woman and the circumstances of Marsden's death—many so racy they could never be published in a respectable forum.

If any are true, however, they may well explain Marsden's death and the conspiracy surrounding its obvious cover-up. Who would want to believe that the man who saved one of the mightiest star empires ever made died in bed, but not in his sleep?

—Excerpt from *The Truth Really IS Stranger Than Fiction!*, Underground Press, 2792





serve as a representative chamber to assist the Archon in ruling the realm. The first to arrive by December of 2375 added credibility to Marsden's position by swearing him in as the new Archon Baselius, but not until 2378 did the delegates gather in a sprawling government house as ornate as the capital building.

By March of 2378, representatives from all but twenty worlds had arrived. The governments of the missing twenty instead sent terse replies defying the new Archon Basileus. Marsden responded by deploying the Commonwealth's scattered military assets to most of these worlds, effectively blockading them until they capitulated. Eight self-sustaining worlds—including Loxley, Skye and Tamar—held out until a determined invasion brought them back into the fold.

Though these actions earned the first Archon Basileus the nickname of "Crusher" and led many world leaders of this strange new Commonwealth to wonder if they had placed a madman in charge, the effects of Marsden's coup spared the nation from a disastrous break-up and probable piecemeal absorption into the Draconis Combine. The fact that no Combine invasion materialized in the years soon after Marsden's takeover lent further credence to his supporters as the leader of the reunited realm turned his energies toward strengthening the military and stabilizing the runaway economy.

The Commonwealth Recovery

Though brutal at the end, Archon Robert Marsden's coup could not have come at a better time for the collective worlds of the Lyran Commonwealth. A series of sweeping financial reforms, including the imposition of a standard currency (based on a modification of the Donegal credit) enabled the Lyran economy to recover its strength in just fifteen years. Furthermore, in opening trade alliances with the Terran Hegemony—despite the Hegemony's own restrictions on the sale of technology to foreign realms—Marsden managed to locate a strong market for Lyran goods and services that helped to pump more funds into the Commonwealth's recovery.

The revenues reaped through these trade initiatives went to expand and revitalize the Commonwealth military. Though still a collection of local and provincial commands, in encouraging industries to support the military upgrade through tax incentives and other means, Marsden improved employment rates, strengthened heavy industry and made standardized technologies available to the troops raised by the most loyal and affluent member worlds. The military rebirth was apparent even to the Commonwealth's neighbors, and contributed to a gradual decline in raids by House Kurita, at last assuring the peoples of the Skye and Tamar states that Archon Marsden's rule was having some beneficial effects.

Alistair's Ascension

In 2395, Archon Robert Marsden's success seemed to come crashing down around him. In response to an offhand remark, the overconfident officers of his recently overhauled High Command launched an unprovoked attack on what they considered a minor planet in the Free Worlds League, Promised Land. Popular accounts attributed the attack—and its dismal failure, which cost the Commonwealth ten regiments of infantry and armor—to a concerted effort by the High Command to embarrass and depose the Archon. However, little evidence to support or debunk this theory has ever surfaced.

Within weeks of the disastrous raid, Archon Robert Marsden was found dead in his chambers, the victim of an apparent heart attack. Rumors of an assassination and a military junta immediately began to fly, as the Promised Land debacle had resulted in a series of bitter recriminations between the Archon and his top generals.

Many expected one of the High Command to assume the Archonship next, most likely General Rudolf Stoeller, who once served as Marsden's ambitious right-hand man. Instead, much to the people's surprise—and relief—the High Command asked Robert's brother, Alistair, to take on the role of the Commonwealth's commander-in-chief. Reluctantly, Alistair agreed, and was sworn in as the second Archon of the Lyran Commonwealth on 10 November 2395.

THE AGE OF WAR

In 2398, a full-scale war erupted between the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation. Though removed from the action, Archon Alistair nonetheless surmised that sooner or later the conflict might spread to the other nations of the Inner Sphere. He ordered a renewed effort to build up the Lyran military, even as he continued to carry out the economic reforms begun by his brother in the years before Archon Robert's death. For several years, the Lyran military grew and trained for possible combat, while ambassadors traveled fitfully through known space in search of advance warning of any possible attacks.

Unfortunately, though the new Archon's actions proved well founded, many citizens and public officials began to question the need for a build-up in the absence of an immediate threat. This desensitization to the likelihood of imminent war worsened in 2405, after the Archon's marriage to Katherine Steiner, the glamorous Nordic/Germanic professor from Tharkad University whom he had met six years earlier. Surely, many wondered, if a ruler could find time to get married in the midst of a worsening crisis, how bad could things truly be?

The military and the people grew complacent, chafing under travel restrictions even as the Lyran military trained half-heartedly along the realm's borders. The Skye and Tamar regions grew particularly belligerent, their leaders still smarting from Robert Marsden's coup and his attacks against them twenty years before. Local protests thus doubly hampered the Archon's military deployment along the Combine border.

On New Year's Day, 2407, the Draconis Combine launched its first massed assault against the Commonwealth in history, aiming right at the worlds along the crux of the Skye and Tamar state commands. Because of the political situation, the Lyran military was caught completely off guard. With the initial thrust driving straight toward the capital of Arcturus, General Stoeller directed the Commonwealth forces to protect the heart of the Lyran nation from the assault, stripping the nearest units on hand to blunt House Kurita's assault. The Combine troops easily overwhelmed the first forces they encountered, and many field commands in their panic resorted to scorched-earth tactics, setting entire continents and planets ablaze to thwart the advancing enemy.

The humiliating pace at which the Lyran armies fell enraged the Archon. Dismissing General Stoeller and the entire High Command in late July, he assumed personal command of the Combine front. Rallying the troops, the Archon's soldiers managed to fight the Kurita invaders to a standstill on the world of Morningside, blunting



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the Dragon's invasion barely more than a jump away from the capital. Though he had contained the Combine threat for the moment, Alistair Marsden knew a renewed offensive would surely crush the head of the Commonwealth.

Relocation

With the capital endangered, Archon Alistair pushed forward a plan to relocate the Estates General, the Royal Court and the military headquarters of the Lyran Commonwealth to the distant world of Tharkad. Though many representatives balked at the plan, the logic was inescapable. Tharkad was centrally located, well beyond the reach of any other realm, and its terrain was easily defensible. Marsden invoked his authority as commander-in-chief to pass this plan through, cutting off any debate. By 30 December 2407—one day shy of a full year after the Combine's initial assault—Tharkad became the new center of the Lyran Commonwealth. Though construction of the new Government House and Royal Palace—under the direction of the Archon's wife, Katherine—was many years off, most of the Estates General and much of the new High Command for the Lyran military gathered in a temporary complex of prefab buildings on the icy plains of Bremen Continent to discuss the defense of their realm. Meanwhile, Archon Alistair and his core military commanders remained on Arcturus, close to the Combine front.

Death and Rebirth: The Steiner Dynasty

In the opening days of 2408, Alistair Marsden ordered a massive lightning strike against the Combine world of Vega, convinced that House Kurita intended to use that world as a staging base for a second thrust into Commonwealth territory. Gathering the necessary forces in just under a week, the Archon himself commandeered JumpShips for a command circuit to coordinate a defense of Skye. Though the military forces around Skye were formidable and determined, Marsden realized that his presence at the head of a defensive campaign there could go a long way toward undoing the political rifts created by his brother's iron-handed suppression of the fiercely independent federation.

By late January, the Lyran military's hastily scrambled fleet of ships, loaded with aerospace fighters and VTOLs for the heavy raid, trailed the Archon's jump circuit and branched off for Vega, slipping their force on-planet after arriving at a close pirate point. With no warning to speak of, the Combine forces could barely muster a semblance of defense against the Lyran blitzkrieg, which rapidly zeroed in on entire fields of DropShips and munitions yards intended to support a second thrust into the Federation of Skye. In just a few hours, spaceports all over Vega were burning while the victorious Commonwealth raiders shot back to their waiting transports for extraction.

The Vega Strike was the Commonwealth military's greatest victory to date, an unqualified success that disabled House Kurita's ability to complete its planned conquest of the Skye region. Unfortunately, Archon Alistair Marsden did not live long enough to see the victory, or to capitalize on it for a more lasting peace. Having learned of a heavy Combine raid in progress on the arid world of Menkent, on the Lyran/Terran border, Marsden rerouted his command circuit and commandeered the local 311th Armored Skye Cavalry Regiment to repel the invaders there. Arriving on 28 January to find the capital city of Blackstone under siege, the Archon deployed his forces on the arid Plain of Dust and immediately began to hammer the Kurita troops there, but was killed in a Combine artillery barrage just three days later.

Steiner Takes the Helm

Archon Alistair Marsden's death in battle shocked a nation still teetering on the brink of its own demise. The Combine threat was stopped, but only for the time being. The military leadership, still shaken up by Marsden's hasty reforms of the year before, had its hands full keeping the Dragon at bay, while the rest of the realm wondered who would assume the Archonship. Though hereditary leadership was not spelled out in the Commonwealth's charter, the precedent set when Alistair succeeded to power upon his brother's death led four of the late Archon's relatives to step forward to claim the throne, including the Archon's uncle, Timothy Marsden. Alistair Marsden's wife, Katherine Steiner-Marsden, got there first, however.

Katherine's popularity as Marsden's regally beautiful bride, coupled with her obvious intelligence, charm and grace, helped win her a wellspring of popular support long before she stood by her husband's throne (in its new home on Tharkad, where Marsden himself never sat) and claimed the Archonship. Her decision to change her name back to Steiner, while seen as a scandal by some (especially after her moving eulogy for her husband), nonetheless passed at the time with barely more than a ripple in political circles.

Selecting Duke Devon Reynolds of Fatima to lead the Lyran military in her stead, Katherine Steiner assumed the title and responsibilities of the Commonwealth's leader, with the support of the dukes of Tamar and Skye. The unexpected backing of the formerly rebellious leaders sparked rumors that Katherine Steiner had somehow bought their loyalty away from Timothy Marsden, her nearest contender for the throne, but the fact that Timothy was among the commanders of the troops Robert Marsden had once deployed against their worlds no doubt weighed heavily against him as well.

Upon her confirmation as Archon before the Estates General in April of 2408, Katherine Steiner announced to the gathered dignitaries the formation of the Commonwealth Council, a body that would serve as her principal advisor in leading the realm. This new formation was one of many reforms the new Archon would pass before the peaceful end of her reign in 2447. Before she stepped down (yielding the Archonship to her son, Alistair Marsden Steiner), Katherine would also create the Commonwealth Scout Corps to explore the vast expanses of Commonwealth territory, and reform the Lyran military (effectively creating the earliest recognizable version of the Lyran Commonwealth Armed Forces, complete with the Steiner fist battle standard that would eventually replace the three-stringed lyre as the Commonwealth's emblem of state). Archon Katherine also encouraged the establishment of the kroner as the official Lyran currency, introduced Germanic patents of nobility to a new ruling class hand-picked by her to form the basis of most local and regional government still in use today, championed the use of German as the official language of state, in order to reinforce a sense of cultural unity, and joined with the leaders of every other Inner Sphere power—and most of the Periphery—in signing the Ares Conventions into international law in 2412.

Though most of these endeavors met with only minor resistance, they would not become law until the reign of her son and subsequent Steiners. Katherine began the Commonwealth's transformation from a confederation of trading alliances and independent worlds into a unified cultural, economic and political force. In addition, she launched numerous economic programs to assist



businesses damaged during the Age of War, and promoted the formation of new colonies in the untapped expanses of the Commonwealth's frontier. While critics of these plans noted that they included concessions that added to the Archon's own wealth and influence, their desired effect—stimulating the growth and recovery of the Lyran economy and infrastructure—could not be denied.

In the meantime, the Lyran military suffered terribly at the hands of its enemies, particularly on the Free Worlds front. House Marik's troops, led by then-Captain-General Peter Marik, had not only repulsed an effort to claim the world of Dieudonne in 2416, but had also struck back as deep as the planet Rochelle by 2418, claiming worlds loosely affiliated with the Federation of Skye. Though the Commonwealth military would reverse this victory by seizing Bolan and Kamenz in 2427, and pushing a front as deep as Alula Borealis and Loric, the League counterattack of 2441, focused on the reclamation of Bolan, claimed a wide thumb of Lyran worlds as close to Tharkad as Halfway and Smolnik. While the Lyrans made several attempts to dislodge these forces, eventually succeeding in reclaiming Halfway and its immediate neighbors, this bulge in the League border remained a serious threat even after the Commonwealth victory on Loric in 2459 and the Long March campaign of 2463.

Dawn of the BattleMech

By the year 2443, Archon Katherine Steiner had ruled the Lyran Commonwealth for thirty-five years, a period in which the Commonwealth faced ongoing threats from the Free Worlds League and the Draconis Combine. Her reign had seen the recovery of industry, the completion of a new capital on Tharkad, and the beginnings of numerous social and political reforms that were already reshaping the nation. The wars still raging throughout the Inner Sphere had brought their share of triumphs and tragedies, including the death of the Archon's second husband and LCAF commander, Duke Reynolds of Fatima, during an effort to reclaim the key industrial world of St. John from Combine invaders. Rumors of the Archon's imminent retirement thus came as little surprise to anyone.

The year 2443, however, also brought with it a surprise that would have ramifications for centuries to come. Though intelligence agencies around the Inner Sphere had learned of their invention four years prior, few in the Lyran Commonwealth believed that the Terran Hegemony had developed a new, ultimate weapon derived from industrial WorkMechs commonly seen only for heavy construction work on the most affluent worlds in known space. When the news broke of a Combine assault company of armored vehicles routed by four Hegemony BattleMechs on Styx, the debut of these powerful new engines of war came as a complete shock.

Realizing the awesome power of these new machines from various accounts of the battle, Archon Steiner immediately made the recovery of BattleMech plans a priority for her newly created Lyran Intelligence Corps. Though one of the Hegemony's primary manufacturing plants for the new BattleMechs lay on the jointly held world of Hesperus II, Commonwealth intelligence would struggle for more than a decade to obtain the secret of BattleMech technology. Their failure to do so would eventually force the next Archon to try a more direct, military approach to the problem.

Turning the Tide

In 2445, Archon Katherine Steiner stepped down from her post as ruler of the Lyran Commonwealth, passing the torch to her son, Alistair Marsden Steiner, with the same regal grace that had won her such widespread support during her 37-year tenure as Archon. Aside from rioting on Fatima by local students who believed that Michael Reynolds, son of Katherine Steiner and Fatima's duke, should have been Archon-Designate instead, the transition of power from mother to son was virtually seamless.

Alistair ascended to the throne in command of a Commonwealth that had lost nearly a fifth of the Tamar Pact worlds to the Draconis Combine, and a smaller, but no less significant number of worlds all along the Free Worlds League border to House Marik's ongoing offensives. With his generals consistently losing to Combine and League attacks, Archon Alistair once more called upon the intelligence community to find an edge that could turn the tide and hopefully bring the Age of War to an end. However, rather than rely on the LIC, Alistair, a military veteran, instead turned to the LCAF's elite commandos to carry out the mission. Though an overt strike against the Hegemony could very well earn him an enemy he could ill afford, the potential benefits of BattleMech technology outweighed the risks of facing a new foe and waiting for his generals to improve as the Commonwealth was swallowed in bits and pieces by its neighbors.

In 2455, a daring commando raid on the Hesperus II factory accomplished what a decade of subtler infiltration efforts failed to do. Within two years, secret factories built on Alarion and Coventry began to develop and produce their own versions of the Hegemony's fearsome BattleMechs for

EULOGY

"The loss to my heart and soul is beyond my ability to comprehend. I live, I breathe, yet I do not feel beyond the cold numbness that drapes my body like a shroud.

"How briefly was I allowed to feast my eyes on his smile, to listen to laughter, to know the scent of his golden skin. So few short, short days during which my body knew the sweet touch of his. If only I had foreseen how brief was to be my allotment of joy, for I would have made each second a year's worth of love.

"See how war has mangled my pleasure and delight! Now all is gray and the air I breathe seems tainted with the odor of melting metal and burning flesh. Look well upon this, the true results of war. See how war has mangled my pleasure and delight!

"My passion lies within that cold casket, and I am as doomed as shades of lost Tharkan hunters who forever wander the frozen forest in search of a fire to warm their eternal cold. The rest of my life will be one long winter, with only my child to provide some sparks of warmth.

"Though I secretly rage against my fate, I know that the loss to the Commonwealth is even greater than my own.

"And, yes, what of the Commonwealth now? The question lies like a shroud over our worlds. What of the Commonwealth?"

—Katherine Steiner-Marsden, quoted in 2408: *Year in Review*, Commonwealth Press, 2409



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the LCAF in limited numbers. These machines, and the first warriors trained in their use, were immediately—and secretly—deployed to key units on the Combine and Free Worlds fronts.

In 2459, four years after the Hesperus raid, the first Lyran BattleMechs made their combat debut to halt the advance of Captain-General Geralk Marik, the so-called “Bloodthirsty Giant” whose brutal campaigns and flagrant disregard for the Ares Conventions had earned him the hatred of the Lyran people. Marik’s offensive, which had already overwhelmed the defenders of Alula Borealis and Bella I, came to a shocking end on Loric, when his entire armored regiment and supporting units were annihilated by a Lyran ‘Mech company. The epic battle—and Marik’s gruesome death beneath the heel of one of these new super-weapons—demonstrated to the entire Inner Sphere that the Commonwealth boasted a powerful new military advantage and the will to use it.

Though massed BattleMech armies were still years away, the Commonwealth’s new technological edge gave its enemies pause as each sought to acquire these new weapons. Meanwhile, the Terran Hegemony, stinging from the discovery that they no longer dominated the Inner Sphere in combat technology, slapped massive trade restrictions on the Lyran state. The Commonwealth’s victory against the League had cost them a valuable trading partner, but for the time being, the nation lived.

Over the years after the Battle of Loric, Commonwealth BattleMech factories expanded production in a desperate effort to maintain the nation’s military edge, but the advantage would prove short-lived. The Combine’s successful capture of BattleMech plans in their own commando raid on Coventry, and the League’s acquisition of vital construction data through defectors from the Alarion plant, guaranteed that these rival states would soon field BattleMechs of their own.

Before that could happen, however, Archon Alistair ordered massive campaigns on both fronts to reverse the losses of the past decades of the Age of War, beginning the two-front Long March campaign in 2463.

This offensive would tear into the Draconis Combine and the Free Worlds League over the next four years, before Combine and League troops began to field enough of their own BattleMechs to stem their losses.

THE DARK YEARS

In 2467, one year before the end of the Long March, Archon Alistair Steiner was brutally assassinated by five youths who had somehow gained access to his bedchamber. Initial reports and evidence pointed to Duke Michael Reynolds of Fatima, Alistair Steiner’s half-brother, as the ringleader of the assassination attempt, a charge that polarized the Lyran people even as Michael Steiner, Alistair’s eldest son, assumed the Archonship. Unwilling to believe his uncle capable of such an act, Michael Steiner held off sentencing the Duke, even as the nation reeled with shock and civil unrest.

The delay proved fortuitous, as a special investigation launched by the LIC under the new Archon’s authority delivered conclusive evidence implicating Graf Alfonse DeSimon, a minor Fatima noble under Duke Reynolds. Having been stripped of his land and titles by Duke Reynolds for abusing his workers, DeSimon’s motivation for the assassination proved to be nothing more than petty revenge. He and his co-conspirators paid the ultimate price for their crimes, but the Commonwealth slid into a period of uncertainty and loss that would later become known as the Dark Years.

Plunging into Darkness

In 2471, Archon Michael Steiner and his brother, LCAF commander Steven Steiner, were married in a double wedding on Tharkad orchestrated to lift the spirits of the Commonwealth citizenry after so many decades of relentless fighting. Unfortunately, this grand event was overshadowed by the unexpected suicide of Duchess Tatyana Steiner, their younger sister, which many attributed to the despair of her unrequited love for a married man.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

Through the thick, ballistic cloth covering his hands, Colonel Simon Kelswa could not tell exactly how white his knuckles had become in their death-grip on the crash bar holding him securely against the bulkhead, but he imagined them just one shade removed from bone white or ivory. He could feel his heart pounding in his chest, even over the roar of the transport’s engines and the bone-jarring jolts as the craft bounced and tumbled in the atmosphere, the pilot’s erratic hand at the helm a little too convincing for his own good. Between the powerful shudders that threatened to slam his helmet against the bulkhead with enough force to crack, and the heat bleeding into the cabin from overtaxed engines, Kelswa could feel and smell the sweat that stung his eyes closed and soaked the fringe of his short-cropped blond hair.

Come on, Johann! he silently pleaded, even as he fought to keep his face neutral (never knew if one of the others was watching when he squinted like this). Get this tub over there, before I lose my lunch!

In his mind’s eye, he could almost see Lieutenant Johann Harrison fighting the transport controls to keep the false spin from becoming a real one, throwing a hitch into his voice as he frantically called the Terrie air controllers for help, warning them of the imminent collision—all while watching that secondary monitor, to make sure the Terries were getting out of their cubicles in a nice and orderly fashion. Any second now, Kelswa assured himself, the Firebringer would scream into the compound to a crash landing that would—hopefully—be anything but.

Any second now, Kelswa told himself, and his men would be on the rocky soil of Hesperus II again, under cover of night, in a deserted computer office, well removed from this tumbling, burning deathtrap they had so willingly volunteered to fly in...

Any second now, he hoped, it would finally be time to take back full control of his life, and do some good for Archon and country...

—Mason Greenburg, *Titans Rising*, TMA Publishing, 3056



Many saw this tragedy as a bad omen, a sign of troubled times yet to come. As if summoned by this collective expectation, more tragedy followed less than a month later when a powerful earthquake struck Tharkad City, killing the Archon's young bride and almost seventy members of the Estates General in the rubble of the Triad. Grief-stricken, the Archon immediately made the Royal Palace a shelter for refugees from the disaster and called upon surviving local nobles and dignitaries to help with relief efforts until life could return to normal on Tharkad.

The disaster and the relief aid pouring in to the Lyran capital were all the diversion the Draconis Combine needed to regain the initiative on that front. Surging forward with a massive assault on Nox, House Kurita's troops overwhelmed the garrisons there in a renewed effort at a full-scale invasion of the Commonwealth.

Even though his brother, General Steven Steiner, commanded the LCAF on the Combine and League fronts, Michael Steiner raced to the Combine front to meet the Kurita challenge, all but yielding day-to-day government to the decimated Estates General and his brother. Proclaiming that his grief made it impossible to lead a nation, but not to fight for it, Michael conceded his title as Archon to General Steven Steiner, as he assumed command over a full 'Mech battalion plus heavy armor and aerospace support for his campaign. This act of defiance would be Michael Steiner's last battle on behalf of the Commonwealth. Four years later, during the Battle for Beckvern Hill on Nox, the former Archon was killed at the head of his command company, during the first large-scale engagement between BattleMechs in history.

Michael's departure, in the meantime, placed Steven Steiner on the throne, a position for which the LCAF commander had never been trained, and which soon proved overwhelming. Indecisive in the extreme, the inexperienced Archon deferred most daily matters to the Estates General and relied heavily on the counsel of his wife, Margaret Olson. Unfortunately for Archon Steven (and the Commonwealth at large), Olson herself had grown increasingly unbalanced in the years since their wedding and was now obsessed with all manner of mystical arts, whether based in ancient superstitions or in the fads of the day.

The combination of Steven's indecisiveness and his wife's growing eccentricity proved especially dangerous when making major policy decisions, as demonstrated by the infamous Loki Incident of 2488, which exposed the existence of the LIC's ultra-elite terrorist branch to the Commonwealth's people. In this incident, a failed Loki mission against Combine supply bases on Vega—an operation never ordered or authorized by the Archon—resulted in the capture of several operatives by Combine agents, who offered to ransom them back to the Commonwealth. Based on the recommendations of Margaret Olson, the Archon ultimately refused the ransom, sparking an angry backlash by several LIC agents who immediately defected after a brutal killing spree.

Over the years that followed, Archon Steven Steiner's rule grew less and less effective as Margaret continued to make more of the decisions for him, based on her interpretations of signs and portents or the words of gurus and other mystics. During this time, the powers of the nobility also grew, perhaps through the influence on Margaret of Duke Samuel Natesh of Tamar and Duke Connor Gilderoy of Skye. Lyran government soon began to lose all cohesion, though many in the Commonwealth military and in the Estates General gradually came to realize that the nation was in the hands of a madwoman, no matter who actually sat on the throne.

Civil War

Unfortunately for those who paid heed to the warning signs, widespread apathy toward the government and the Steiner leadership—even among the Estates General—led to Duchess Olson's nearly uncontested assumption of the Archonship when Steven Steiner finally died in 2501. The only real resistance came in the Estates' refusal to confirm her ascension. Many of their members had long since left Government House in search of Robert Steiner, the physically handicapped and illegitimate nephew of Steven Steiner, who now served as an aerospace fighter pilot for the LCAF.

A dedicated career soldier and distinguished war hero on the Free Worlds League front, Robert at first balked at these representatives' request that he return to Tharkad to claim

BAD OMENS

"...The mood here this afternoon is almost impossible to describe. In fact, it may well be the strangest felt here since Archon Katherine Steiner stepped down back in 2445. Hundreds of guests, some of the most powerful elite of Tharkad and her sister worlds throughout the Commonwealth, all gathered today to witness a gala event, overshadowed by terrible tragedy.

"The gowns seen here today were elegant and colorful, and the décor some of the brightest in the Royal Court since the fiftieth anniversary of the Palace's construction celebrated thirteen years ago. But few could overlook the hasty addition of black armbands and streamers, solemn accents added to an otherwise festive theme.

"Although some had suggested canceling today's ceremonies in light of the apparent suicide of their sister, Duchess Tatyana Steiner, last evening, Archon Michael Steiner and LCAF commander Steven Steiner—the Archon's younger brother by just eleven months—proclaimed their decision to go ahead with their double wedding today, and I quote, 'to show the people of the Commonwealth that we must not give in to despair in these trying times'.

"Archon Steiner refused to speculate on why the Duchess took her own life. She is survived by a son, Robert Steiner, who was born out of wedlock last year. Both the Archon and his brother have pledged to look after this young boy, so suddenly orphaned, as one of their own, but declined to comment on whether that means he would be eligible to become Archon-Designate in the distant future.

"With that, Archon Steiner today married Regina McQuiston, the Grafina von Loch Lomarr of Skye, and one of the last known descendants of Skye Federation founder Ian McQuiston, while General Steiner took Colonel Margaret Olson of the First Royal Guards Armor Brigade as his bride. The ceremonies, of course, suffered from Duchess Tatyana's absence, as she was to serve as both couples' Maid of Honor. Out of respect, no one stood in her stead.

"Throughout the ceremony and the reception afterward, one could find almost as many tears as smiles, as a melancholy mood permeated the event despite the Archon's stated desire to keep spirits high. Although most toasts to the brides and grooms wished the couples health and prosperity, some—such as one delivered by Baron von Summit Keith Harvenger—could not help but draw attention to the 'bad omens' that preceded what should have been the happiest day for the nation in recent memory..."

—From the *Tharkan Evening News*, Tharkad Broadcasting Company, 13 October 2471



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FINAL NOTICE

"Ladies and gentlemen of the Estates General, patriots of the Lyran Commonwealth, I, Robert Aubrey Steiner, hereby declare my claim to the title and responsibility of the office of Archon, in the name of the Commonwealth and all her peoples...I may be a bastard son, but am I not more fit to rule than a madwoman who believes in ghosts and reads state policy in tea leaves? I intend to govern with reason and with the help of good men's counsel, not because of the constellations, or by gazing into Arcturan memory crystals."

—Robert Steiner to the Estates General, 22 May 2503

the throne, but as growing numbers of political and military leaders came to him to pledge their support, the son of the late Duchess Tatyana Steiner soon found their call impossible to ignore. In late 2503, the man who would be Archon finally made his way to Tharkad, followed by a veritable army of supporters he had managed to gather without even trying.

Duchess Olson and the dukes of Tamar and Skye fled before Robert Steiner set foot on Tharkad, gathering their strength for an inevitable showdown even as the young man stood before the Estates General to press his claim for the Archonship. Though the gathered representatives publicly stripped Olson of the title and confirmed Steiner's right to rule, it had become clear that he could truly claim the Archonship only by defeating the forces still loyal to Duchess Olson and Dukes Natash and Gilderoy.

Archon Steiner's campaign to defeat Olson and her supporters brought the fires of civil war to the worlds of Skye and Tamar for the first time since Robert Marsden's coup against the original Commonwealth leadership in 2375. In an effort to end the conflict quickly, Steiner focused his efforts on capturing Olson, but her retreat to Skye, leaving behind her own supporters to harass his loyalist troops, drew out the campaign into a series of bloody engagements from world to world.

Nevertheless, with a wave of public support behind him, Robert Steiner's forces took Skye after only two months of fighting, but the last-minute arrival of Duke Samuel Natash's forces deprived the Archon of an easy victory as Duke Gilderoy and Margaret Olson escaped again.

Four months later, Robert Steiner arrived on Tamar at the head of his loyalist forces, but his battered and worn troops soon proved no match for the dug-in defenses of the Tamar duke's units. Though the Archon's defeat seemed assured, the fortuitous arrival of a Terran Hegemony mediator to



TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Much has been made of the timing of the events in that final battle on Tamar between Archon Robert Steiner and the treacherous forces loyal to Duchess Margaret Olson and her cronies. Everything from melodramatic holovid miniseries to animated serials to wild conspiracy theories has tried to communicate the reality of those events, only to fail miserably each time. Why? Because if there's one thing that doesn't work for history, it's coincidence—especially when it happens in the nick of time, as it obviously did for Robert on that day in April 2505.

Of course, when one realizes the incredible luck of the Archon's forces, one can easily see that such good fortune only comes from the worst holovid tales out there. After so many months in conflict, when does a Hegemony mediator arrive? Just before the final blow is to be struck that would kill House Steiner once and for all. And what happens immediately after the mediator leaves, having only delayed the inevitable final stroke by a matter of hours? The cavalry literally drops from the sky. If we throw out notions of coincidence from the equation, we find the entire chain of events ludicrous in the extreme, an unlikely series of occurrences that just happened to conspire to save the Steiner family from ruin....

But what if it was no coincidence? What if House Cameron, the rulers of the Terran Hegemony and typically friendly neighbors of the Steiners' Lyran Commonwealth, were in on Reynolds' rescue mission, or what if they knew it was coming but wanted to be first on the scene to at least appear interested in peace, to assure that whichever side won would remember their efforts to settle things without bloodshed? What if, for that matter, the Camerons had actually led Reynolds to Tamar at that very moment, reminding Duke Nels of his family's debt to the Archon's uncle, in the hopes of taking credit for saving the Archon—a favor that would carry huge debt in the future? If just *one* of those "what ifs" is true, then the timing of Archon Robert Steiner's last-minute rescue no longer looks so incredible, does it?

Of course, in the absence of all the data—including whatever under-the-table concession may have been handed about—humanity may never know what really happened on Tamar in 2505. However, realizing that more may be learned by reading between the lines of one's history text goes a long way toward expanding the mind and recognizing how humankind's universe really works...

—Excerpt from *The Truth Really IS Stranger Than Fiction!*, Underground Press, 2792



settle the dispute came just in time to delay the final assault by Olson and her supporters. Unable to find a peaceful solution to the conflict after a full day of negotiations, the Hegemony ship lifted off the arid surface of Tamar as both sides prepared for the final battle. The delay proved just long enough to cover the arrival of troops commanded by Nels Reynolds, Duke of Fatima, who immediately declared for the Archon. Together, Duke Reynolds and Archon Steiner tore into the rebel forces, eventually capturing Duchess Olson and both rogue dukes.

Aftermath

In the wake of the civil war, Archon Robert Steiner—sworn in at last in 2506—immediately stripped the rebel dukes' families of their titles and landholds to Tamar and Skye, and awarded them to the loyal Kelswa and Lestrade families, respectively. Convicted of high treason, both dukes were executed. Duchess Olson, found not guilty by reason of insanity, was exiled to a remote castle on Gallery for the rest of her days.

The Archon declined to mete out similar harsh punishments to those who fought for their local lords, however. In an effort to speed the recovery of the battered worlds of Tamar and Skye, and several other planets where the Archon and his loyalists had been forced to battle Olson and her supporters, the new Archon used monies from House Steiner's private coffers rather than place an unfair tax burden on the people of the Commonwealth.

He also shifted the LCAF back to a defensive stance, minimizing campaigns against the Commonwealth's neighbors for the duration of his reign and advocating the increasing efforts of Terran Hegemony negotiators in settling border disputes with neighboring realms. Despite exceptions like the conquest of Megrez in 2508, this pro-peace trend would characterize the rest of Robert Steiner's twenty-two year rule, and would be continued by his son and heir, Craig Steiner, after Archon Robert's abdication in 2528.

GOLDEN AGE

We, the Lords representative of the six Inner Realms of the Human Sphere, in the name of Peace, free Commerce, and our people, do hereby enter the Covenant to henceforth be known as the Star League.

We do so in recognition of the greatness of each member State, and of the qualities that made it great.

We do so willingly, in recognition that it is in the best interests of our Realms, our Lands, our Resources and our people.

We do so with hearts open to Friendship with one another's Realms, and look forward to an epoch of Prosperity and Security.

—From the preamble to the Star League Constitution, signed 9 July 2571

Craig Steiner's rule as Archon lasted from 2528 to his death in 2555. Though historians of the Commonwealth often refer to this time period as the Quiet Years, the widespread fighting of the Age of War continued until 2556. Nonetheless, the Commonwealth in this period saw remarkable calm, despite an assassination attempt in 2529 that prompted the renovation of the Throne Room to include a BattleMech guard, and another in 2538 that claimed the life of

Baroness Brittany Rand, Estates General Speaker of the Assembly. Both of these attacks proved to be the work of desperate, unstable individuals, rather than the machinations of jealous nobles or foreign plots; a great relief to those who remembered the upheavals of the so-called Dark Years.

Beyond the Royal Court and Government House, a spirit of hope and a new time of prosperity seemed to loom on the horizon as the Age of War gradually wound down. In 2531, with the assistance of Terran Hegemony mediators, Archon Steiner and Captain-General Albert Marik of the Free Worlds League signed the Megrez Treaty, effectively ending Lyran-Free Worlds hostilities and accepting the presence of Hegemony troops as peacekeepers on all contested worlds. Though far from a permanent solution, this treaty would lead toward the level of cooperation and understanding that eventually made the Star League possible.

At almost the same time, the Archon also passed his first Business Loan Reform Act intended to stimulate widespread industrial growth. The new law created rampant takeover bids as larger companies devoured smaller ones, and the Archon issued a modified version of the Act in 2537, one year after the dizzying pace of mergers forced him to freeze all further loans. Coupled with ongoing migration from the largely developed worlds of the Federation of Skye to the vast, untapped resources of Donegal province, and the opening of loan opportunities for companies based in neutral or friendly foreign states, these programs created an economic boom that would endure for the remainder of Craig Steiner's rule, attracting business even from Hegemony manufacturers.

The most far-reaching act of Archon Craig Steiner's reign, however, was the creation of the Commonwealth Supreme Court in 2543. Intended to serve as the final arbiter for legal disputes when Commonwealth laws came into conflict with local and regional courts, this Court's first Supreme Justice, Tracial Steiner (Archon Steiner's niece and an experienced judge), quickly set precedents for the court's impartiality—even in the face of the Archon's absolute authority—by striking down a controversial tariff law the Archon forced past the Estates General later that same year. The justice's action, unchallenged by Archon Steiner, established the court's authority and relationship to the government that remains a basis for Lyran law today.

Years later, as his health began to fail, out of respect for the strength of her convictions and acknowledging his own lack of an heir, Archon Steiner chose Chief Justice Tracial Steiner as his successor. In 2555, one year after making that decision, Archon Craig Steiner died.

THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE STAR LEAGUE

On 25 May 2558, three years after her confirmation as the ninth Archon of the Lyran Commonwealth, Tracial Regina Steiner signed the Tharkan Accords, committing the nation to membership in the as-yet-unborn Star League. The event, monitored by news agencies from across the realm, consummated seven years of negotiations with representatives of the Terran Hegemony that began even before she stepped down as Chief Justice of the Commonwealth Supreme Court and accepted the title of Archon-Designate.

Though taking such initiative was well within the Archon's authority, the ink was barely dry on the treaty that would effectively unite the Commonwealth with its enemies before opponents of the



HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

Accords surfaced in the Estates General and the nobility. The political and economic ramifications of such an alliance were nothing short of frightening to many of the nation's representatives, who questioned whether so many realms, so long at war with one another, could hope to function, even under the loose confederacy the Star League represented, or how the economy could withstand borders suddenly opened not just for Lyran exports, but for foreign imports. The fact that the Periphery realms—most notably the Rim Worlds Republic—had not been initially invited to join caused some concerns as well.

Support for the Star League stemmed from some of the very same issues that its critics opposed. With political unity, governed largely by the availability of independent mediators like the Terran Hegemony, conflicts could be averted between League member states. Open borders also meant new markets that Lyran industries—the strongest in the Inner Sphere, next to those of Terra—could theoretically exploit. More than that, the Tharkan Accords called for less restrictive trade in high technology between the Commonwealth and the Hegemony, a matter that had been a source of contention ever since the Hegemony's rise. In addition, Archon Tracial Steiner had insisted on additional concessions from the Hegemony that included a pledge to establish some of the Star League training academies within Lyran space, giving future officers of the LCAF access to the same educational and technological edge that would theoretically be available to the Star League armed forces.

Over the years following the signing of the Tharkan Accords, Archon Steiner spent much of her time lobbying for support among the Estates General and the nobility, trying to sell the international alliance to the majority and prepare the people for the changes to come. By 2560, at the request of the Hegemony government, she had rescinded the last of the Commonwealth's immigration and trade restrictions with foreign lands, effectively opening up the realm to foreign citizens. This action sent the nation's economy and infrastructure into a tailspin. Waves of immigrants flocked to the more densely packed worlds, seeking opportunity in the perceived hubs of Lyran business, while foreign businesses went for locations deemed rich in resources and cheap labor. Local businesses migrated outward, seeking newer markets and cheaper labor forces, throwing local and regional stock exchanges into chaos.

The crisis—perhaps the worst economic and social calamity since the formation of the Commonwealth—grew so bad, so quickly, that Archon Steiner once again sealed the nation's economic borders in 2562. The borders remained closed as economists and lawmakers worked to upgrade the Commonwealth's trade laws, tariffs, taxes and immigration standards, to accommodate the sheer volume of goods, services and money that was to come. Gradually easing into the new Sphere-wide economy in 2564, the Commonwealth underwent far less turbulence its second time around, though the experiences of the past few years had left more and more citizens wondering if joining the Star League was such a good idea.

During this period of adjustment, a second major earthquake struck Tharkad City in 2566. Though far less devastating than the 2475 quake, the disaster resulted in a temporary relocation of the Estates General to the Archon's Throne Room while a new Government House was built. Though minor, this crisis seemed to derail the representatives who had spent years challenging

the Archon's decision to join the Star League. Unfortunately, the Archon would not live to see the birth of the Star League she had struggled so hard to sell to her people. On 6 January 2570, at the age of 64, Archon Tracial Regina Steiner suffered a massive heart attack and died in office. Her daughter and sole heir, Viola Steiner-Dinesen, assumed the throne.

Period of Adjustment

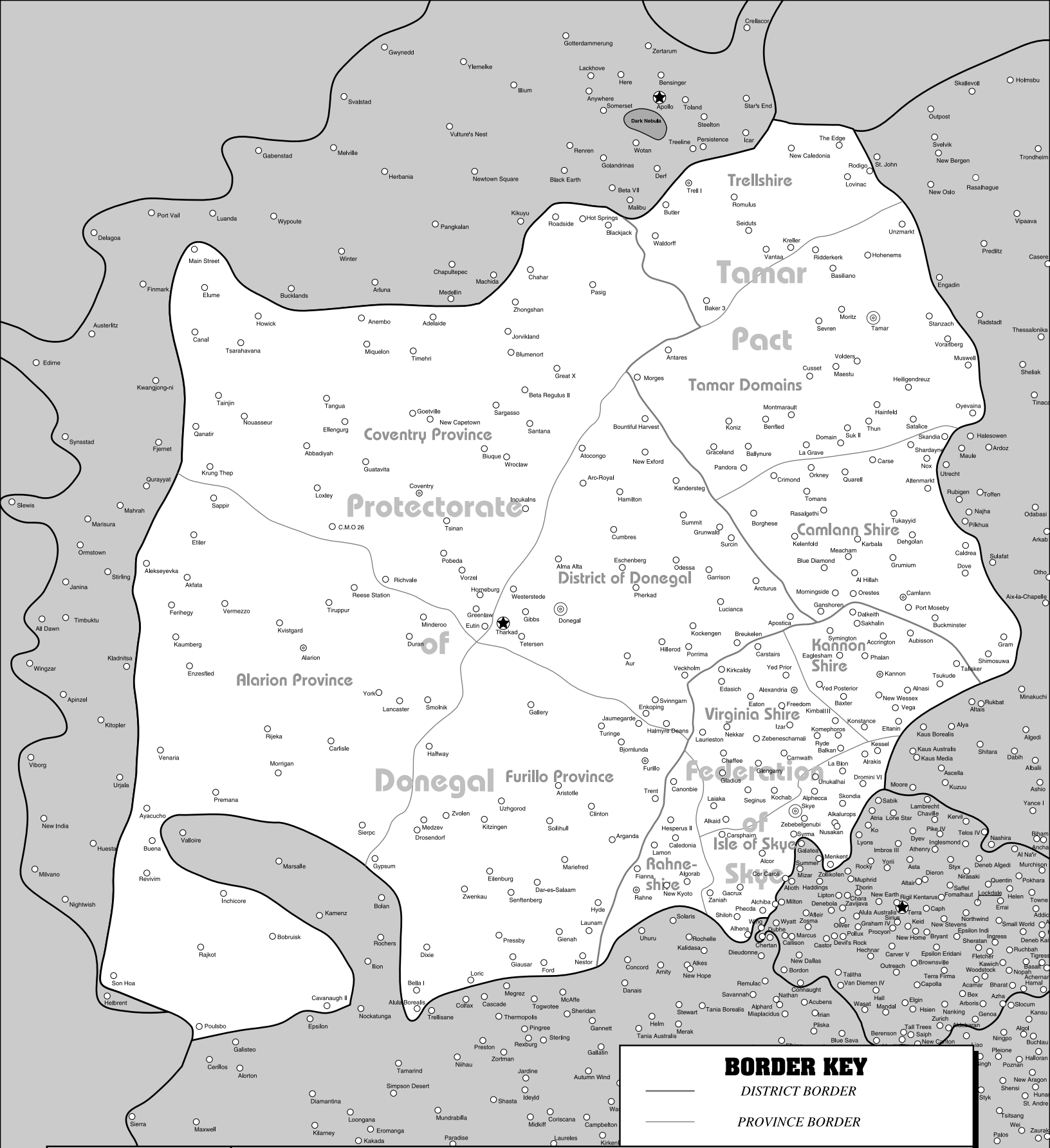
On 9 July 2751, after two years of debate among the leaders of the Inner Sphere's six major powers, the Star League officially became reality with the signing of the Star League Accords on Geneva, Terra. Its leadership, made up of the five Great House leaders united under the Terran Hegemony's Cameron dynasty as First Lords, gave all realms a powerful voice in the destiny of trillions.

For many across the Inner Sphere—including those in the Commonwealth—the Star League's birth was cause for rejoicing, marking an end to wars and the dawn of a new era of hope and prosperity. To others in the Commonwealth, despite Tracial Steiner's efforts to prepare the Lyran economy beforehand, the League represented a dangerous new era of increased market competition and taxes to prop up yet another monolithic government, a partnership with dangerous and treacherous neighbors who could be trusted only to seek their own political advantage and pursue their own sinister agendas.

In the run-up to the alliance, and for its initial few years, the Star League lived up to its advertising, bringing unparalleled growth to the Lyran economy and industries throughout the realm. Meanwhile, the opening of the new Nagelring and Sanglamore MechWarrior academies—on Tharkad and Skye, respectively—and the start of trade with Terran military and other heavy industries gave the LCAF a huge boost in equipment and effectiveness.

Unfortunately, over the decade that followed the Star League Accords, it gradually became clear that all this newfound wealth was not distributed as evenly throughout the Commonwealth as was the burden of Star League taxation. With each Commonwealth planet expected to share in the tax burden for Star League membership, the peoples of the comparatively poorer worlds in the Donegal Protectorate found themselves at a disadvantage relative to their more heavily commercialized and industrialized countrymen in the Tamar Pact and Skye Federation. Donegal's growing calls to reform the tax system gradually became a movement, until, in 2573, several planets along the Donegal Protectorate's Periphery border—centered on the world of Main Street—erupted in open rioting and strikes. The Main Street Tax Revolt quickly found sympathizers throughout the realm and prompted the Archon to take action.

Rather than crush the rebellion militarily, Archon Viola Steiner-Dinesen instead called for a debate on the tax system, inviting Duke Carlo Lestrade of Skye, effective leader of the so-called Rich Worlds Coalition, to defend against her proposed tax reform bill aimed at distributing the Star League tax burden more evenly. Though many critics called the debate, held in January of 2575, a blatant political move on the Archon's part to appease the masses, it won the popular support of the Estates General and endeared the common people to their ruler. With tax reform on its way, the Main Street Revolt came to an end, and not a moment too soon.



PLANET KEY

- NATIONAL CAPITAL
- DISTRICT CAPITAL
- PROVINCE CAPITAL

LYRAN COMMONWEALTH
after
Age of War (2571)

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LEGEND

30 LIGHT YEARS

120 LIGHT YEARS OR 26,8 PARSECS

MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS

Coreward
Starward
Rimward
Anti-spinward



HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

BERSERKER

Raines: 'Mech down! 'Mech down! Sentry Two is taking fire! Somebody back me up here!

McTaggart: I'm on her, Sentry Two! Just sit tight!

Raines: Bloody hell I will! She's out of her mind! Shot Johnson before he could even get up! Took out the L.T. without even slowing down! What the hell's going on, here! Son of a—[transmission garbled]

McTaggart: Sentry Two, report!

Raines: [unintelligible] You filthy bitch!

[sounds of weapons fire crackle through the static]

McTaggart: Sentry Two? Raines, do you copy?

[sounds of nearby explosions]

Kelly: Ranger Alpha! Sentry Lance is down! Repeat, Sentry Lance is down! I don't believe it! None of the Royals are answering hails! It's got to be a mistake! Bandits maybe got their 'Mechs, right? Tell me it's just some bloody bandits! [static] Ranger Alpha! Command post taking fire!

McTaggart: *Sassenach!* Can't this tub move any faster? Ranger Alpha to all Ranger units, Rogue Queen is no bandit! IFF is right, and we have gun-cam visual! If those bloody Royals don't stop her, by Christ we're going to—My god!

Kelly: Alpha, look out!

[sound of explosions, screaming, static]

<end transmission>

—Excerpt from comm logs of Lieutenant Sean McTaggart (KIA), 25th Skye Rangers, Barcelona, Rim Worlds Republic, 10 September 2591

THE REUNIFICATION WAR

Shortly after signing the Star League Accords, the League's First Lord, Ian Cameron, embarked on a political campaign to bring the Periphery states into his new confederacy, only to have the various Periphery powers—particularly the Taurian Concordat, Magistracy of Canopus and Outworlds Alliance—reject his offer out of hand. In the months and years that followed, the First Lord's offers, appeals and even virtual bribes continuously fell flat with the outlying nations, who saw the Terran Hegemony and its Star League as the Terran Alliance under a new banner and refused to have any part of it.

In 2572, rumors of a hidden BattleMech force in the supposedly low-tech Outworlds Alliance prompted the First Lord to send a detachment of the nascent Star League Defense Force (SLDF) to investigate, using the pretext of "protecting our Outworlds neighbors against outlaws who have infiltrated the region". Attaching a Combine unit to the search party, these SLDF troops were poorly received by the locals. Matters came to a head late in the year, when a Combine MechWarrior opened fire on a crowd of Outworlds citizens who had been harassing her 'Mech as it carried out its search on the world of Santiago.

The so-called Santiago Massacre sent shockwaves through the other Periphery states. The Canopians broke off negotiations to settle a border dispute with the League, while the Taurians placed their military and heavy industries on a war footing. In 2573, when the League decided to hold the Combine MechWarrior's court-martial on Terra rather than Santiago, the interstellar alliance lost even more face with the Periphery realms, who used the trial's location as proof of the Camerons' duplicity. Other incidents, such as the Malagrotta Affair, which resulted in the loss of several Taurian WarShips to a Federated Suns task force, further eroded goodwill between the Star League and the independent Periphery states. Any hope of bringing them into the Star League peacefully were dashed, replaced by simmering hostility.

In 2574, the Star League slapped severe trade restrictions on all Periphery states. Within months, however, not only had these measures failed to cow the stubborn Periphery nations into concessions, they had played havoc with the economies of those Star League regions—such as the fringe worlds of the Commonwealth—that had grown heavily dependent on unrestricted trade with their close Periphery neighbors. Finally, in 2575, the League issued the Pollux Proclamation, essentially threatening to wage war on the Periphery if it did not accept League membership. The Periphery states, in a joint statement, quickly rebuffed the Proclamation. Almost immediately, plans for a four-front war were underway.

Operation Mailed Fist: The Commonwealth Front

Operation Mailed Fist, the pacification of the Rim Worlds Republic, was launched in the closing months of 2581 and became the last of the four separate wars that made up the Star League's effort to conquer the Periphery. By this time, the offensives aimed at the Taurian Concordat and the Magistracy of Canopus had been going on for six and five years, respectively, and had bogged down in the face of stubborn defenders and poor coordination between the newly formed Star League Defense Force and the contributing member state troops.

Indeed, simply gathering the eighteen SLDF regiments, nine Free Worlds regiments and three Commonwealth commands for the Rim Worlds campaign proved a nightmare of logistics and red tape. Meanwhile, Star League diplomats—recalling the apparent pro-League stance of the Amaris government before 2575 (despite numerous protests and minor political disagreements)—tried in vain to reach an accord with the provisional government that had toppled President Gregory Amaris' administration in late 2575 and joined with the other states in opposing the Star League.

When hostilities finally commenced, the invasion plan drawn up by SLDF strategists projected a conservative five-year campaign that hinged on driving straight for the Rim Worlds capital of Apollo. The sheer size of the Republic, however, and intelligence reports of surprisingly strong support for the Rim Provisional Government by its military, soon prompted Archon Viola Steiner-Dinesen to insist on several modifications to the plan in order to safeguard her realm.

Though she supported the Pollux Proclamation in essence, and believed in standing with the Star League rather than against it, Archon Steiner-Dinesen, a career officer in the LCAF before she took the throne, disagreed with the Star League's decision to attack the Republic. Nevertheless, to share the burden of the war with her troops, the Archon chose to lead Operation Mailed Fist personally, leaving her son Kevin Steiner-Dinesen to rule as Archon-Designate, with the aid of Duke Selvin Kelswa of Tamar and Duke Aldo Lestrade of Skye.

The war bogged down almost from the start, despite the fact that the combined Star League forces possessed far better equipment than their enemies. What the Republican forces lacked in sophisticated BattleMechs, they had made up for in conventional units, particularly heavy tanks and aerospace fighters. Combined with their superior knowledge of the terrain and a propensity for hit-and-fade attacks, the Rim Worlders kept entire regiments bottled up for months at a time on every world the Star League hit. Making matters worse, the commanders of the Free Worlds troops and those of Lyran origin clashed bitterly over everything from tactics to supplies and salvage rights, resulting in poor coordination in the field. In



addition, the Archon's insistence that the overall strategy include targets beyond the Rim Worlds capital dispersed the Star League forces along a much broader front than had been originally planned.

Eight years later, the allied troops remained hopelessly stalled, having made barely one jump's worth of progress into the Republic along any front. Resistance cells and booby traps left behind by retreating Republican forces further discouraged the Star League troops from getting easy victories, and contributed to a growing number of defections and desertions in the ranks. Making matters worse, the Commonwealth economy, tasked with supporting the bulk of the material needs of Operation Mailed Fist, had started to strain under the pressure. People on poorer Lyran worlds began to riot as food and equipment shortages developed, and civilian commerce slowed as industries focused on wartime output.

In the midst of this military crisis, Archon Viola Steiner-Dinesen learned that her son had been kidnapped, and that Duke Kelswa and Duke Lestrade were implicated—at least, by popular opinion.

Crisis at Home: The Day of Rage

The economic crisis at home caused by the war abroad had grown to the point where Archon-Designate Kevin Steiner-Dinesen attempted to lower taxes in 2589, hoping to win back the public's favor. When Star League representatives openly criticized this move, citing the Commonwealth's obligation to the war effort, he reversed his decision, sparking a barrage of withering criticism, not the least of which came from members of the Estates General's Steering Committee. The committee's membership consisted almost entirely of representatives from rich worlds hurt by Archon Viola's 2575 tax plan. Led by Graf Henry Gram, the Steering Committee used the crisis as a springboard for action, calling for an emergency session of the Estates General to discuss possible secession from the Star League in 2591 even as the Archon continued to battle on its behalf light-years away.

On 13 July 2591, the Estates General representatives had begun to gather in Tharkad City when the news broke that Archon-Designate

STEINER VS. DINESEN: THE HIDDEN WAR

In 2559, well before she became Archon, Viola Steiner, sole heir of Tracial Steiner, married Robert Dinesen, the Duke of Coventry. The depth of Viola's love was such that she broke with the Steiner tradition and took Dinesen's name when they wed, a choice that caused tensions with her mother and a minor scandal throughout the realm, but that did not affect her right to one day rule the nation. Few realized—including the future Archon herself, apparently—that this marriage was the opening move in what would become a secret war for the throne.

Whether Robert Dinesen returned Viola's love in full is a matter of considerable debate, though the couple were rarely seen apart for the first few years of their marriage (made possible by their mutual posting to Coventry during their LCAF service days). The Dinesen family, whose homeworld had grown important as one of the first and most extensive BattleMech producers during the Age of War, had become increasingly covetous of the Steiners' power, to the point where many family members openly criticized Steiner policies—albeit respectfully enough to avoid any major falling-outs.

Indeed, several incidents during social events—most covered in the tabloids—suggested that the Duke and his Archon-Designate bride had personally clashed over laws and directives issued by Archon Tracial. In one alleged instance, at a royal ball in 2562, Viola supposedly threw her drink—glass and all—at her husband over a crude and unflattering remark he made against her mother and the economic crisis he felt she had caused. Though the story went on to say that the infuriated Viola demanded a divorce, no such separation ever occurred, and the couple remained together even after Tracial's death and Viola's ascent to the throne.

At this point, the rumors—and the fighting—*really* began. Some close to the Steiners claimed it was originally Duke Dinesen's idea, not Viola's, to support the Pollux Proclamation, knowing a war with the Periphery was inevitable and that his wife would feel compelled to fight on the front lines herself. Viola's decision to install the dukes of Tamar and Skye as her son's advisors rather than Dinesen, however, likely spoiled his hope to influence the Archon-Designate in her absence. Scattered rumors after that grew darker in nature, suggesting that Robert had contacts with a number of the conspirators prior to his son's abduction—including Graf Gram—despite Dinesen's presence on Coventry at the time.

When news of Archon-Designate Kevin's disappearance broke, Dinesen did not hurry to Tharkad to take charge of the investigation, but instead relayed a message to Viola on the front, communicating the abduction and mentioning the rumors about the dukes of Skye and Tamar as possible culprits. That Dinesen's message may have sparked the infamous "Day of Rage" is a theory few historians discount. Despite this, Dinesen himself was never targeted by the LIC's investigations after the crisis, and Archon Viola went out of her way to profess his innocence in the matter by assuming all responsibility for her berserker actions on Barcelona.

In 2597, barely a year after Viola Steiner-Dinesen's death, Duke Robert Dinesen was found dead in his stateroom en route to Tharkad to serve as Robert's advisor. Though recorded as natural, questions swirled around the timing of the Duke's death. Over the years that followed, eleven more members of the Dinesen family and seven from the Steiner family died under mysterious circumstances—accidents and unusual maladies dismissed as coincidence and natural causes.

Not until 2612 did Archon Kevin Steiner-Dinesen launch an LIC investigation, which concluded that members of both families were responsible for a number of these murders but placed fault for the start of the feud on the Dinesens. In retaliation, Kevin changed his name to Steiner and removed the Dinesens from their lands and properties. These actions technically won the Dinesen-Steiner feud for House Steiner in stripping the Dinesens of their power base, but the disgraced family has nonetheless managed to remain active in politics and business ever since, and numerous Dinesens down the centuries have demonstrated their continued willingness to challenge the Steiner dynasty.

—Reinaldo Martinez, *The Nobility and the Archons*, Free Skye Press, 2908



HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

Kevin Steiner-Dinesen had been abducted from his offices behind the Throne Room. As the LIC launched an immediate investigation, wild rumors pointed the finger at the dukes of Tamar and Skye. Threats of swift retaliation and the attempted murder of Duke Kelswa prompted both of the Archon-Designate's advisors to flee Tharkad, which only confirmed their guilt in the eyes of some and essentially convicted them in the court of public opinion. It was this news that reached Archon Viola Steiner-Dinesen on 10 September, on the recently taken Republican world of Barcelona.

By all accounts, the news sent the Archon into a fury in which she attacked elements of the Twenty-fifth Skye Rangers and the Tamar Tigers at their camp outside the planetary capital of Seville. By the time an SLDF command battalion reached the scene, the Archon had sustained serious wounds from the panicked Skye and Tamar defenders, while the rest of her guards had been drawn into the fight. More than one hundred Lyran soldiers perished in the Archon's so-called "Day of Rage," while the Archon herself received injuries that cost her the use of her left arm and left her comatose for a month.

Released from the front as a result of the incident, and to tend to the crisis at home, the Archon learned the truth of the events surrounding the abduction during the journey back to Tharkad. The LIC investigation cleared Kelswa and Lestrade of any wrongdoing, tracing the Archon-Designate's kidnapping to Graf Gram and the Steering Committee, who were still trying to break a loyalist filibuster against the secession vote in the Estates General. With the aid of the LIC and her supporters in the Estates, Archon Viola's forces reached the Triad on 15 January 2592, just as the Steering Committee—unaware of her coming—finally got its sought-for vote. In their eagerness to see the Commonwealth withdrawn from the League, many of the Committee members did not try to escape Government House before LIC and LCAF troopers had them surrounded. Graf Henry Gram was captured by security troops before he could kill the Archon-Designate, and was summarily executed by the Archon herself.

Investigations into the abduction and the efforts to subvert the government led to several more arrests in the days that followed Archon Viola's return, many of which ended in charges of treason and summary executions. Disgusted with the corruption these investigations laid bare, the Archon disbanded the Estates General, sending the representatives home indefinitely. In an effort to atone for her actions against the Skye and Tamar men and women she had attacked in her berserker fury, Archon Steiner-Dinesen bestowed land grants and titles on the families of her innocent victims, but these efforts did not bridge the rift forming between the Steiner family and the Kelswas and Lestrades.

Once more leaving the throne to her son, Viola Steiner-Dinesen returned to the Rim Worlds front to lead the allied Star League troops as they continued to press on toward Apollo. She remained at the forefront of every charge as the Lyran, Free Worlds and SLDF units closed in on their final objective. On 24 March 2595, at the head of the Fourth Royal Guards, the Archon was among the first to breach the home defenses of the Republic's provisional government on Apollo when a communications failure cut her command off from all support. Mortally wounded in that battle, she was whisked back to Tharkad and died on 28 April, only one day after her return home.

The loss of Archon Steiner-Dinesen set back the SLDF's final victory in the Rim Worlds, but only by several months. On 3 September

2596, the Republic's provisional government accepted defeat and surrendered to the Star League.

RISE AND FALL OF THE STAR LEAGUE

Though costly in materiel and lives on both sides, the Reunification War effectively brought all of humankind under the banner of the Star League. Because they had fought, the Periphery states found themselves treated as second-class members, subjected to years of Star League-appointed administrators until they could be trusted to manage their own affairs without threatening the unity of the Cameron First Lords. Yet in spite of this status, these realms thrived during the Golden Age of the Star League. Indeed, the good years to come would last for nearly two centuries and become the standard by which all measures of economic, social, industrial and technological achievement would be gauged, down to the present day.

The Good Years

For the Lyran Commonwealth, bounded now by stable trading partners on all sides, the postwar period saw the beginnings of a powerful economic and industrial growth spurt. Lightly industrialized worlds such as Galatea, Pandora and Sudeten, which became key supply points for SLDF forces and Free Worlds League troops deployed during the Reunification War, sported major factory complexes by the war's end, which continued to expand even as the League member states shifted to a peacetime economy. Archon Kevin Steiner-Dinesen enhanced this economy in 2603 when he passed a new tax reform act that disbursed Star League revenue collections across all individual worlds evenly, rather than in the lumps taken from regional governments under the older system.

With the shift away from a military economy, agro-businesses also began to prosper, boosted by improved water purification techniques that allowed settlements to expand on worlds previously considered inhospitable to human life. Poorer, underdeveloped worlds of the Alarion and Coventry provinces, now open to unrestricted trade, benefited from an influx of products and renewed interest from industries both new and well-established. Struggling colonies, lost since the fall of the Terran Alliance or abandoned during the Age of War, were rediscovered and reclaimed. The Good Years, as the period from 2600 to 2650 came to be known, were a period of unprecedented growth, especially for the Lyran Commonwealth.

Non-military technologies also improved during the Good Years, such as the development of the hyperpulse generator in 2615, resulting in the first working HPG stations by 2630. By 2635, a crude network of these advanced faster-than-light communications stations enabled First Lord Nicholas Cameron's New Year's Day message to reach Tharkad from Terra on 7 January, just under six days from the time it was broadcast. The event heralded a new era in ultra-fast communications that would inevitably relegate older interstellar communications techniques—such as the "black box" facsimile systems—to obsolescence.

New medical technologies also came to the fore during this period, including the adaptation of micro-myomers for medical use, creating prosthetics far more advanced than the electro-mechanical models. Computer-assisted surgery tables, enhanced cryogenic tubes and metabolic reduction covers became standard features in the hospitals of Star League member states. Other devices and techniques, such as the Eligus Medical Diagnoser and neural-dimensional



computer technology, even made it possible to automatically diagnose complex medical conditions at the touch of a button, and map the human brain in ways earlier technologies and methods never could.

For Richer or for Poorer

By the 2620s, a sense of euphoria and the contentment of prosperity had firmly gripped the Lyran people. The Star League had delivered everything it promised, from an end to wars to wealth and security never before dreamed of. The people of the Commonwealth therefore greeted with open arms First Lord Nicholas Cameron's call for all Star League nations to adopt a single currency, the Star League dollar.

Archon Kevin Steiner (his name legally changed in 2612 amid rumors of ugly rivalry between the Steiner and Dinesen royal families) opposed such a change, however, decrying it as an infringement on Lyran sovereignty. Though the majority of the Estates General—reconvened in 2611, almost two decades after the Day of Rage—supported the First Lord's proposal, the Archon used his executive powers to bypass them, vetoing their support to maintain the integrity of the Commonwealth kroner when the matter came before the Estates in 2623. The result was a strike of monolithic proportions, shutting down more than eighty percent of Lyran businesses and commerce. The economic standoff lasted for a week, threatening to plunge the nation into a recession in the midst of what had been its most prosperous era ever, before the Archon finally relented.

As the Good Years continued and the Commonwealth grew richer, a movement eventually surfaced that openly questioned the value of the Lyran state government, now that all of humankind was united under the Star League. Beginning as a few vocal critics, who felt the Commonwealth government had outlived its usefulness, the Decentralist Movement (as the media dubbed it) eventually found voice enough throughout the 2630s to garner support among many Lyran nobles and regional governors. In 2643, however, it was the Archon—not the Estates General—who brought up the issue of disbanding the Commonwealth government, with its supposedly unnecessary central administration and military force. In his impassioned speech before the assembled representatives, he pleaded for the nation's continued existence, then placed the vote before the body. The final tally reaffirmed the realm's existence by the ultra-slim margin of 161 for to 160 against.

Kevin Steiner died in 2647, succeeded by his sister, Sarah Steiner-Dinesen. Her reign was largely uneventful except for the Rim Worlds Crisis of 2650–2651, when the Star League, thanks to its own intelligence reports and confirmation by the LIC, learned of a massive military build-up on Apollo, the capital of the Rim Worlds Republic. First Lord Michael Cameron, having newly taken office after Nicholas Cameron's death in 2649, called for an emergency session with the other House Lords to discuss the situation, which, while technically legal under the League's bylaws, was nonetheless cause for alarm. Faced with the options of military action, public censure in the absence of any technical lawbreaking, or changing the laws to limit the size of member-state armies, the Council chose the legal option and passed Council Edict 2650, which dictated the maximum acceptable sizes of all state and private military forces. To enforce the new law, the SLDF engaged in demonstrative maneuvers along the Commonwealth-Republic border, under the Archon's command. This display eventually convinced Republic President Tadeo Amaris to back down and—at least apparently—disband many of his new troops.

The Slow Fall

The Rim Worlds' belligerence would prove to be just the beginning of a gradual slide away from the glory days of the Good Years. The economic windfall and industrial boom of the previous half-century began to level off after 2650, in part because trade relations cooled with the nearby Periphery state. Peace and prosperity reigned for several more decades, almost to the point where First Lord Cameron openly considered a reduction of the Star League military, and relaxation of immigration laws had made it possible for peoples of most member-nations to freely travel among the neighboring realms. But the peace was growing increasingly strained.

In the neighboring Free Worlds League, for example, economic crises in the earlier years of the Star League spawned rising civil unrest, with trade disputes and labor strikes plaguing economic relations within the state and among its partners. Making matters worse, the rise of the Scourge of Death terrorists—eventually tied to the ambitious Selaj family—and the internal troubles that resulted in two major conflicts within the Free Worlds League caused concern among Lyrans along the Free Worlds border, especially in light of the Star League's apparent reluctance to get involved.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

By Ganesh, I'll never forget his words, but it was far more than that; it was the *passion* behind them. This was not the same young man who cowered before us and begged a nation for forgiveness twenty years ago with a magnanimous change of heart. This was an older, wiser man, one with fire in his heart and in his eyes, protecting something larger than himself, against a people who had forgotten its meaning. He spoke of the economy, this age of prosperity, and praised all the Star League gave to us, then he reminded us of a basic truth, that no good years last forever.

And those words, they still echo in my mind:

"...Yes, these have been sainted years, filled with peace and the sound of money filling our coffers. But are we so naïve as to expect the shower of money to go on forever? No! And if the shower should end—as showers always do—and the hot sun of misfortune should reappear to evaporate the profits of everyone, everywhere—what then? Do you for a moment believe that cooperation and trust will reign to save the day?

"Banks are something that you and I understand. Consider the Commonwealth government as a bank, not of money but of a future where we may store good fortune now, to be used later when times get rough, as surely they will...."

I had to admit it. When I came to that hall, I honestly thought it would be for the last time as a representative of a Lyran planet, so much was I looking forward to embracing the beauty of a pure League, of the end of the Steiner fist emblazoned on every dollar note, fluttering from every banner, seared to the hulls of every spacecraft. Then I realized who had nurtured us before there was a League, who had watched over us before the Camerons and their Golden Age had come along.

It was at that moment that I realized I was more than a Chaharan. I was a Lyran, and I owed it to the Commonwealth not to turn my back simply because "it seemed like a good idea at the time"...

—Rashad Getthright, Baron von Kessna Bay, *My Life in the Age of Gold*, Chahar Press, 2652



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Meanwhile, tensions between the Draconis Combine and its partners—a result of the isolationist, culturally restrictive reign of Coordinator Urizen II—eventually sparked a string of military challenges between “ronin” Combine MechWarriors and SLDF “gunslingers.” Though romanticized in the media, many Commonwealth citizens saw these duels as additional cracks in the façade of Star League unity. As if to exacerbate this perception, First Lord Jonathon Cameron, soon after his ascent in 2690, launched a military budget aimed at improving the League’s security through a new wave of military research and development. As Terra and its surrounding worlds came to resemble an armed camp, complete with a fleet of robotic combat drones for unparalleled system defense, critical citizens throughout the League began to question from what the Camerons hoped to protect Terra.

By the 2720s, discontent was rising once more in the Territorial States of the Periphery, thanks to taxation that supported a growing military still seen by many as the tool of an oppressor. Though decades had passed since SLDF occupation forces stood within the Periphery nations, the peoples of these regions—with the apparent exception of the fanatically loyal Rim Worlds Republic—still felt their status as second-class citizens. Ostensibly to address their concerns, the Council Lords of the Star League passed Directive 41, supposedly granting new freedoms to the Territorial States. The directive proved *carte blanche* for Inner Sphere businesses to trample their Periphery counterparts with a host of unscrupulous deals, thanks to the rescinding of certain protections that had controlled Periphery-Inner Sphere trade relations.

Even the Federated Suns fell prey to the rising tensions between League members when a chance union between members of the Davion and Kurita royal Houses created the possibility of a Kurita heir on the Davion throne. The resulting Davion War of Succession, as it came to be known, erupted in 2728 when Combine troops attacked several FedSuns worlds, beginning with *Marduk*. This most serious threat to the unity of the League was settled only after the intervention of SLDF troops in the following year, but blood had already been spilled. Many League citizens saw the war as an ominous sign that the Golden Age of humankind was coming to its end.

Against this backdrop, the most far-reaching developments in the Commonwealth were little more than the change of Archons as one generation passed in favor of another. Indeed, by the late 2730s, little had changed politically since the Good Years beyond a slight reorganization of the Estates General, made necessary by population booms in the previous decades. Industry and commerce remained strong, though markets in the Free Worlds League and the Draconis Combine had grown considerably colder with the passage of time. By far the worst crisis, however, was the alarming increase in pirate attacks—once thought a thing of the past—on the coreward border between the Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine.

In 2741, the “pirate problem” reached its peak with the slaughter of five hundred Commonwealth citizens on the world of *The Edge* by BattleMech-equipped bandits. When an intelligence raid, acting on a tip from a free trader, tracked the bandits to a base on the desolate Rim Worlds Republic planet of *Butte Hold*, an LIC investigation revealed that the “bandits” were, in fact, mercenaries in the employ of the Draconis Combine.

In a dramatic—and uncharacteristically violent, considering his otherwise calm and cultured attitude—confrontation on the floor of the Star League Court, Archon Michael Steiner II accused the Combine ruler, Coordinator Takiro Kurita, of attacking his neighbors through bandit proxies. In the weeks that followed, Commonwealth troops massed on the Combine border, and both nations moved toward a war footing even as Star League diplomats desperately tried to smooth relations between the combatants and SLDF troops prepared to intervene.



For the next ten years, tensions remained high as “pirate” raids continued, despite the efforts of the SLDF to track down those responsible, and the Council Lords frequently accused one another of sponsoring terrorists and brigands. In a desperate effort to restore calm, Simon Cameron, First Lord since the death of his father in 2738, began a historic tour of the realm in 2750, intending to visit several worlds in every realm of the Star League. Unfortunately, this goodwill tour ended in disaster. While visiting the New Silesia mining colony in the Star’s End system, an accident caused by an out-of-control mining robot claimed the life of the First Lord.

The Amaris Coup: Rise of a Tyrant

Richard Cameron II, the new First Lord, was only eight years of age when Simon Cameron died on New Silesia. He inherited an interstellar empire coming apart at the seams, the cautious trust and optimistic goodwill that accompanied its formation just two centuries before washed away by a myriad of internal pressures beyond the ability of any one man to contain or control. Having lost his mother a year earlier, Richard’s Lordship began under the regency of General Aleksandr Kerensky, commander-in-chief of the Star League Defense Force.

That the five Council Lords, so clearly on the verge of open hostilities, would agree to assign Kerensky the role of Regent and Protector for the young Cameron at once bewildered and relieved many throughout the Star League, who anticipated the outbreak of war almost immediately after the news broke of Simon Cameron’s death. Though their reasons were less than pure—primarily the hope of gaining the First Lordship for themselves—the Council Lords had nonetheless chosen the most promising candidate for the job, given Kerensky’s deserved reputation as a man of flawless integrity and honor.

Soon after the appointment, however, the lords’ machinations began. In the spring of 2752, the Council Lords passed an amendment to the Council Edict of 2650 that enabled member states to double the size of their armies, threatening the numerical advantage enjoyed by



THE HUNDRED-YEAR SUNSET

The period from 2650 to 2750 saw remarkable calm for many peoples of the Inner Sphere, particularly those of the Lyran Commonwealth. In retrospect, however, they underwent a decline so gradual it could be measured in generations. The following timeline highlights the events of this period that hinted at the changes to come.

2650 – Council Edict of 2650 issued, limiting the size of member-state militaries and private troops.

2651 – Star League levies new taxes against Territorial States to support military expansion, part of which included the formation of Regimental Combat Teams.

2663 – Consuelo Calderon named “Second Lord” (honorary co-chairperson of the Star League Council), marking the apex of Star League relations with the Territorial States as the first and only time a Periphery ruler would achieve such a high station.

2667 – Scourge of Death anti-League terrorists surface in Free Worlds League.

2672 – Archon Sarah Steiner-Dinesen abdicates in favor of her son, William Steiner.

2676 – House units first allowed to compete in SLDF Martial Olympiad.

2678 – Scourge of Death terrorists bomb Marik estate, killing Captain-General Terrence Marik and 38 members of House Marik and their accompanying staff. Gerald Marik, the only survivor, is named Captain-General of the Free Worlds as the nation goes into mourning and a manhunt ensues. Star League leaders offer condolences, but no apparent support.

2679 – Selaj family implicated in Scourge of Death attacks. Free Worlds forces raid Magistracy of Canopus and other local Periphery worlds in hunt for the Selajes and their loyalists. SLDF forces in the Free Worlds stand by to intervene, but are held in check by an appeal from Captain-General Marik.

2680 – Puraj and Rajneesh Selaj allegedly escape into Canopian space; Combine Internal Security Force budget quadrupled amid a rumored rise in Combine-Star League tensions.

2681 – Rim Commonality separates from Principality of Regulus as part of an ongoing internal “scouring” campaign launched by Captain-General Gerald Marik to combat the Scourge of Death. First duel involving SLDF MechWarrior and Combine “ronin” fought. The duels would lead to the formation of the SLDF’s Gunslinger program, and while never officially sanctioned by either realm, would become a focus for entertainment on such worlds as Solaris VII. Of the 300-plus duels fought, the Combine “ronin” would win 157 times, while the SLDF Gunslingers would claim 152 victories. Twenty-five more of these duels, which left more than ninety MechWarriors on both sides dead or crippled, would end in a draw before the duels’ official cessation in 2751.

2687 – Carl Siever named Rim Worlds President after an attempted coup by his brother, Gregor.

2690 – Michael Cameron retires as First Lord in favor of his son, Jonathan Cameron, who shortly thereafter announces a new military budget to spur technological advances “to enhance the security of the League”. This budget includes a new tax plan that extends to all realms, including the Territorial States, though the terms of the military upgrade program indicate these realms will be the last to see the fruits of these revenues.

2691 – Coordinator Urizen Kurita II steps down. His legacy is a Draconis Combine turned more isolationist than ever before, limiting cultural freedoms, immigration and communication with other realms.

2694 – Jentarra Calderon removed as Protector of the Taurian Concordat because of degenerative brain damage from a failed assassination attempt in 2689.

2699 – Principality of Gibson breaks off from the Principality of Regulus in the Free Worlds League.

2703 – Gerald Marik dies, succeeded as Free Worlds Captain-General by Elise Marik, who proclaims that her father had been murdered and initiates a nationwide purge.

2704 – Archon William Steiner dies, succeeded by Jonathan Steiner.

2716 – Decades after lax immigration laws and colonial efforts created a population boom in the Donegal Protectorate worlds, the issue of limiting Estates General membership by population is submitted by Archon Steiner to reduce overcrowding in Government House and streamline representation for sparsely populated planets in the Commonwealth.

2722 – Council Directive 41 passed, ostensibly to increase freedoms for the Territorial States and quell rising unrest in the Periphery. In truth, the economic protections overridden by this directive spark a wave of mercantile “fleeing” of the Territorial States by Inner Sphere merchants and industry.

2726 – Hampton Calderon of the Taurian Concordat is killed by an emotionally disturbed cousin and succeeded as Protector by Nicoletta Calderon.

2728 – Elise Marik removed as Captain-General of Free Worlds by Parliament following a 25-year witch hunt for traitors throughout the realm. By this time, hundreds of thousands have been imprisoned or worse as “enemies of the state”. In the Federated Suns, the so-called War of Davion Succession begins as Combine troops attack Marduk. The SLDF is slow to intervene.

2729 – Elise Marik and her loyalists dissolve and arrest the Marik Parliament, sparking a civil war while a “proxy parliament” installs her brother, Oliver, as the nation’s Council Lord and his son, Boris Marik, as Captain-General. In the Federated Suns, the War of Davion Succession ends, but the fighting reveals that the Inner Sphere rulers have been hoarding troops in excess of the limits imposed in the Council Edict of 2650. Archon Jonathan Steiner dies in a freak accident while testing a Lyran-produced prototype version of the Star League’s CP-10-Z *Cyclops* BattleMech. Following a brief inquiry that declared the death a result of pilot error, Michael Steiner II is confirmed as Archon.

2730 – Elise Marik captured by forces loyal to Oliver and Boris Marik. Elise’s son, Bertram Marik, continues to fight.

2734 – Elise Marik liberated by Bertram Marik; Free Worlds League civil war ends with the Treaty of Verona between Oliver and Bertram Marik. As the Free Worlds Parliament reconvenes, Bertram Marik is named Captain-General and Council Lord.

2735 – Federated Suns passes Preparedness Act in an effort to boost military readiness.

2736 – Last of the Martial Olympiads held on Outreach.

2738 – Jonathan Cameron dies, succeeded by Simon Cameron as First Lord of the Star League; Aleksandr Kerensky named Commander-in-Chief of the SLDF.

2741 – 500 killed on The Edge by pirate raiders armed with BattleMechs, signifying an escalation of pirate activities along the Commonwealth-Combine border that began in the 2730.

2742 – Archon Michael Steiner II accuses Coordinator Takiro Kurita of sponsoring the pirate attacks, supported by intelligence gleaned from an LIC assault on the pirate bases on the Rim Worlds planet of Butte Hold. Combine and Commonwealth troops prepare for war as the SLDF prepares to intervene. In light of the crisis, the 2742 Martial Olympiad is cancelled. Tensions remain high as “pirate raids” continue and expand to other realms.

2750 – First Lord Simon Cameron begins tour of the Star League in an effort to foster goodwill and address growing tensions among the Great Houses.

2751 – Simon Cameron killed in an apparent accident on the asteroid of New Silesia in the Star’s End system of the Rim Worlds Republic. His son, Richard Cameron, is named First Lord of the Star League, with General Aleksandr Kerensky named as his Regent.

—Misha Auburn, *Sunrise to Sunset: Cliff-notes of a History*, Commonwealth Historical Press, 3059



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the SLDF that had been so integral to maintaining order in the event of military emergency. As the amendment did not include Kerensky's signature—the general being on a tour of SLDF bases elsewhere in the Hegemony at the time—it was technically illegal, but that did not prevent the five Inner Sphere Houses from immediately building up their arsenals. Even Archon Steiner took advantage of the opportunity to raise three BattleMech regiments from mothballs and add another ten, as his neighbors were already doing. The following year, the passage of a second illegal edict levied severe taxes on the Periphery, which helped to fuel this sudden arms race while sparking further unrest in the Territorial States that only added to the growing tide of anti-Star League sentiments already returning to the fore.

As the years marched toward Richard Cameron's coming of age and his ascent to the First Lordship, the Inner Sphere leaders plotted while the Periphery simmered—all except for the fiercely loyal Rim Worlds Republic and its leader, President Stefan Amaris. Professing his devotion to the Star League, and to the Cameron family, Amaris began to cultivate a friendship with young Richard, who grew up on legends of nobility and naïve chivalry that clashed with the political wrangling he could see ever more clearly among the Council Lords. Amaris played to this idealistic vision, and as Cameron grew older, he fed the young Lord's distrust of the other House leaders. He even undermined Cameron's faith in Kerensky, who was forced by the growing political crises in the Periphery states to entrust the youth to those who kept Court with him.

By the time Richard Cameron was old enough to assume the First Lordship himself, Amaris' conditioning had done its work. Cameron, having spent ten long, lonely years being treated by officials and House Lords as a pawn at best and a meal ticket at worst, saw Amaris as the only true friend he ever had, a man who recognized his emotional needs, who truly listened to him and shared his beliefs. Amaris stroked the boy's ego with assurances that, in the Rim Worlds, he would be revered as a god, and by the time Cameron was old enough to sit on the throne, he had begun to see himself and the Star League as the embodiment of the divine will. Even Kerensky's fatherly, even-handed wisdom, when he could bestow it, could not sway this belief, or the blind trust Amaris had so carefully cultivated, despite an attempt by the Regent to bond with Cameron during a 2757 SLDF fleet-level exercise dubbed Operation Persuasive Force.

By 2759, rioting and terrorism had become the norm in all Periphery realms save the Rim Worlds Republic, forcing the SLDF to redeploy its troops to address increasing security threats in the Territorial States. An LIC-uncovered secessionist plot even forced the relocation of SLDF troops on Rim Worlds border planets like Main Street, thinning the Commonwealth's Periphery defense and forcing Archon Michael to place the recently expanded LCAF on alert. Whether the SLDF's maneuver was an effort to worry the Commonwealth leadership and communicate Kerensky's disappointment with the Archon's increasingly apparent avarice is unclear, as there already were plenty of Star League units on hand in the Periphery states. In either event, Archon Robert Steiner II would inherit a Commonwealth on alert when Michael died suddenly in 2760.

On 9 February 2762, a bitter, self-important Richard Cameron turned eighteen, legally becoming First Lord of the Star League. Soon after his birthday celebrations, he issued the first order of his reign—Executive Order 156—which called upon all member states to disband their militaries. The extreme nature of the order prompt-

ed outraged responses from all five Council Lords, and even General Kerensky found himself unable to support it. Ridiculed, and—to his mind—betrayed, by the House Lords and his former Regent, Richard drew closer to Amaris, culminating in a secret treaty with the Republic President in 2764 that pledged the Rim Worlds military to Cameron's aid in the event of an emergency. The following year, that emergency arose when almost twenty worlds centered on the Taurian Concordat planet of New Vandenberg announced their secession from the Star League.

The New Vandenberg Revolt triggered a full-scale war in the Periphery between the SLDF and separatist forces. Fighting with the ferocity of a people pushed past their breaking point, the secessionists overwhelmed several Star League regiments, forcing General Kerensky to call up additional forces from the Terran Hegemony. Assured of the loyalty of Amaris' troops, Kerensky reluctantly stripped more defenses from the Hegemony worlds to deal with the Periphery, falling for the trap that President Amaris had spent more than a decade preparing.

The Falling Down

By 26 December 2766, Stefan Amaris' Rim Worlds forces outnumbered SLDF troops in the Terran Hegemony by as much as two to one, even on Terra. As the Periphery leader went to his fateful meeting with Richard Cameron—having been personally invited back from self-imposed exile to his realm by the First Lord—his signal had gone out to all Republican units within the Hegemony. At the stroke of nine o'clock that evening, Amaris assassinated the First Lord while his troops simultaneously swarmed over the skeleton SLDF garrisons throughout the Hegemony. To the rest of the Inner Sphere, the realm simply went dark, until—a month later—the voice and image of Stefan Ukris Amaris appeared via HPG missives throughout the Star League, proclaiming himself Emperor over all humankind and announcing the death of the entire Cameron line.

As the other Star League nations reeled in shock, General Kerensky withdrew his troops from all other battlefronts in defiance of Amaris' orders to stand down and join him. Ordering them instead to converge on the Rim Worlds Republic, Kerensky unleashed a whirlwind on the woefully under-defended Periphery state, shattering its depleted army and transforming it into a base camp to gather and prepare his forces for the final liberation of Terra. Though none of the five Inner Sphere leaders assisted the SLDF directly, having come to see a vengeful Kerensky and a victorious Stefan Amaris as equally dangerous to their own agendas, Archon Robert II did permit the Star League troops to use Commonwealth space to launch their campaign, dodging the issue of choosing sides by taking the path that—to his way of thinking—would result in the fewest Lyran casualties. This decision created a backlash of outrage throughout the Commonwealth, causing millions of citizens to leave in droves for Kerensky's Periphery bases to pledge their support as a volunteer army.

Perhaps fear of a popular uprising ultimately prompted the Archon to order a military campaign to support the Liberation of Terra, but many Lyran citizens saw the timing—and the target—of this "supporting action" as too little, too late. As Kerensky's war against Amaris wore on, Robert Steiner II's popularity dipped lower than any Commonwealth ruler since the reign of the nine Archons.





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DAWN OF THE SUCCESSION WARS

"To those that we leave behind, let me say that we see no way to continue living in a civilization that spurns the ideals it once professed to hold so dear. Though we depart, our hope is that one day we might return."

—Last known transmission from the WarShip *McKenna's Pride*, allegedly by General Aleksandr Kerensky, 5 November 2784

After leaving the fallen Rim Worlds to Archon Robert Steiner II's "police action," General Kerensky launched his campaign to liberate Terra, with precious little support from any of the Great Houses. Over eight long years, the SLDF fought countless battles on the ravaged worlds of the Terran Hegemony, forced to overcome formidable defenses erected generations before by the finest military and scientific mind in the Star League. Of the roughly five hundred assorted divisions and independent regiments of the Star League Regular Army that took part in the campaign, less than half would emerge from the final battles against the Usurper intact.

Over a hundred million died in the fighting, with four times as many wounded and ten times as many left homeless. Though victorious in the end, the SLDF had returned to a Terran Hegemony torn asunder, a mighty empire on the verge of ruin. For their crimes against humanity, Amaris, his family and all of his command staff were captured and executed after a brief, lopsided trial. In the wake of the war, General Kerensky invited the leaders of the five Inner Sphere states to reconvene on Terra, hoping they would find some consensus and leadership in the wake of the worst devastation seen since the Age of War.

Gathering in the ruins of Unity City on 10 October, 2780, the Council Lords—at first hopeful—soon fell to arguing about who among them would be the new First Lord. They could only agree to appoint Jerome Blake, one of the Liberation War's heroes, as head of reconstruction for the crippled Star League communications network, and to strip General Kerensky of his powers as Protector of the Realm. Despite the groundswell of popular support for the general, with people in all realms believing he could rightly serve as First Lord after having fought so hard to save the Star League, Kerensky stood down, instead joining his troops at the SLDF's temporary command headquarters on New Earth.

THE TAKING OF THE RIM WORLDS REPUBLIC

Even Lyran history books tend to overlook the brief conflict that resulted in the annexation of more than seventy worlds once united under the shark banner of House Amaris' Rim Worlds Republic, the so-called Republic-Commonwealth War. Instead, most historians credit the Star League Defense Force, under General Kerensky's leadership, with the final collapse of the Republic, characterizing the Lyran contribution as the act of a buzzard in the desert, swooping down to feast on the remains of a decaying carcass.

The truth of the matter, as so often is the case in history, is not nearly so simple.

In 2772, after years of occupation and preparation for the final liberation of Terra, the SLDF troops in the shattered Rim Worlds began moving out for the final battle with Amaris, leaving behind a broken nation, but one not nearly so pacified as most history texts suggest. The remnants of military forces still loyal to the Usurper remained active in the Republic, having gone to ground as resistance movements or scattering to local space as pirates. As the SLDF departed, many of these forces attempted to re-form, intent on reclaiming their nation—one world at a time, if need be.

As these Republican units resurfaced, Archon Robert Steiner II ordered roughly a hundred assorted Commonwealth regiments—BattleMech and conventional, all of which had been placed on alert since shortly before Archon Michael's death—to seize the nearest Republican worlds in the name of the Star League. Though he neglected to formally declare war on Amaris' fallen realm—characterizing the invasion instead as a "police action"—the Archon directed his troops to secure these planets "to help support noble Kerensky's campaign against the darkness".

For almost four years, the LCAF units that surged across the Republic's border enjoyed one easy victory after another, rolling over the demoralized resistance left behind by Kerensky's troops. They halted briefly only after a terse message from Kerensky "reminded" the Archon that the Rim Worlds was still a League protectorate despite its shattered state. (A second, briefer push after Amaris' death added the capital world of Apollo and its surrounding systems to the Commonwealth tally, all but cutting off the outward worlds of the Republic from their broken leadership.)

Many critics saw this campaign as Steiner opportunism, an effort to secure industrialized worlds in the name of Lyran prosperity, after having left the hard fighting to the SLDF in the years before. Though hard-fought battles for Apollo, Bucklands and Somerset proved that the Republic still had some fight left in it, the impression of the day—sustained even in modern accounts—was exactly that of a desert scavenger picking at the remains of a vast, dead beast.

In truth, the Archon's actions may have been even more self-serving than they appeared. By the time of Kerensky's liberation campaign, millions of Lyran citizens, infuriated by their Archon's lack of support for the General against the Amaris coup, had begun calling for the Archon's resignation. Their echoes could even be heard in the Estates General and among the officers of the LCAF, underscored by thousands of defectors who fled into the Rim Worlds to join up with the SLDF as a voluntary army dubbed the "Loyalists." The fact that Kailen Steiner—an illegitimate but respectable son of LCAF general and noble scion Paul Steiner—was among these defectors only served to highlight the growing political crisis at home.

Faced with a possible political and military mutiny, the Archon had to act somehow. His final decision—in his mind, at least—may well have served to keep the nation together with him at the helm, appeasing the people just enough to enable him to hold the throne as the Star League collapsed around them.

—Charles Sajarta, *The Falling Days*, Donegal Publishing, 3024



In the months that followed, the Council Lords, each entrenched in their own claims to the Star League throne—including Archon Robert Steiner—eventually realized it was hopeless to uphold a League without clear leadership. None could reach agreement, no matter how many backroom deals they tried to make, and so on 12 August 2781, the five rulers of the Inner Sphere announced the League's disbanding. To many Lyrans, the fact that Archon Steiner was stricken with fatal pneumonia shortly before his return trip to Tharkad seemed almost a divine retribution for his role in the League's collapse. Given the social unrest throughout the Commonwealth at the time, many believed the backlash from his actions might well have led to a people's revolt and civil war. As it happened, the Archon's death within days of his return home left the reins of the nation to his sister, Jennifer, as the Golden Age of humankind gave way to the opening moves of the Succession Wars.

In the two years after disbanding the League, all five former member states scrambled to prepare their realms for the inevitable fighting to come. Many—including the Commonwealth—approached the various SLDF and former Rim Worlds units still scattered throughout their territories. Though many of these troops refused to fight, enough regiments signed on as mercenaries with the various Houses—or were otherwise subsumed into the various state armies wholesale—that the inevitability of war became apparent to all. In 2784, the last obstacle to the coming conflicts, the core of the Star League Defense Force, departed the Inner Sphere in a massive exodus from the Combine world of New Samarkand.

FIRST SUCCESSION WAR (2786-2821)

In May of 2785, just six months after Kerensky's exodus, in response to LIC reports of a massive troop build-up on Bolan, three Commonwealth regiments launched a massive assault on the Free Worlds League planet. In the highly tense atmosphere of the day, accounts of the fighting wildly differed, with official Lyran news agencies reporting the pre-emptive strike as an "objective raid" while the Free Worlds press classified it as a "sneak attack."

As Lyran forces gained the upper hand during the battle, the desperate League commander resorted to scorched earth tactics—including the use of tactical nuclear weapons—that not only obliterated key military installations on the planet, but also rendered the entire continent of Sabari uninhabitable. The League's Captain-General, Kenyon Marik, declared that the Commonwealth had violated the Ares Conventions in "a blatant act of naked aggression". Even as Archon Jennifer Steiner denied these claims, the Commonwealth edged closer to a war footing, with LCAF units all along the so-called Bolan Thumb placed on high alert.

Just three months later, a heavy "bandit" raid—later traced to the Draconis Combine—struck the coreward world of Bone-Norman. Considering the Combine a greater threat, especially since the bandit raids of the latter Star League years, LCAF commander Paul Steiner (Archon Jennifer's younger brother) scrambled additional troops from the former Rim Worlds front to contend with a possible Kurita push in that region. As the LCAF units redeployed, the real Combine thrust hit the border worlds of Gram and Trolloc Prime, overrunning the defenders within three months of fighting.

In June of 2786, the border situation intensified when Combine troops humiliated the Commonwealth at Skondia. An unmarked

freighter arrived at the world, passed by the orbiting line of picket ships unmolested, and proceeded to drop a regiment of Combine troops on the planet. Comprised of faster, lighter units than the heavy and assault BattleMechs and tanks of the LCAF garrison, the raiders at first targeted civilian population centers, inflicting massive damage and casualties. When the Lyran garrison moved to intercept them, the invaders again outmaneuvered them, turning to attack the industrial centers and warehouses the garrison had been ordered to defend. The entire assault resulted in a tremendous blow, not just in lives lost, but also in the severe disruption of the local industry and economy. Above all, it showcased the LCAF's utter ineffectiveness in dealing with highly mobile attackers.

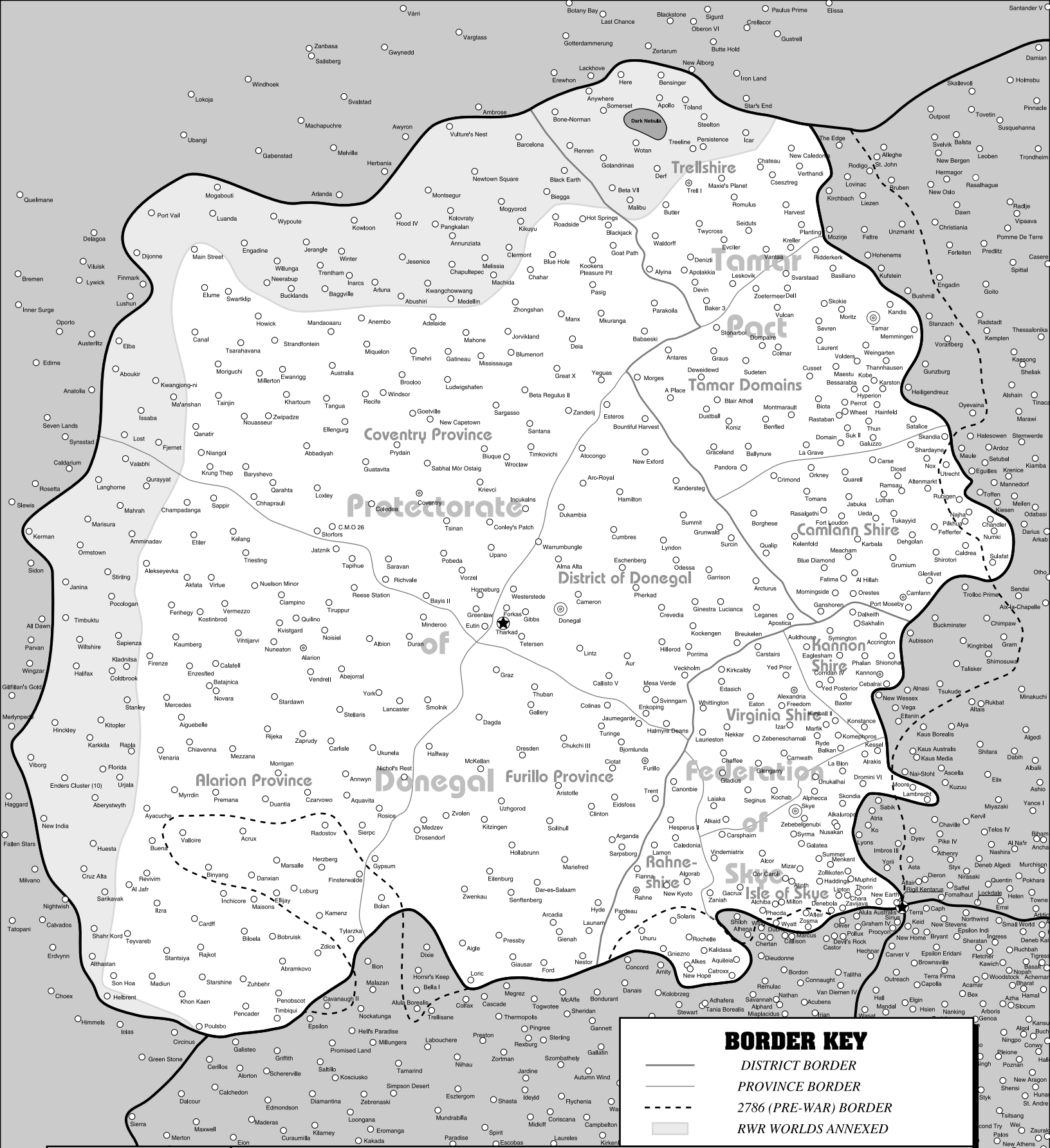
As if to add insult to injury, Coordinator Minoru Kurita followed up his conquests and humiliations by mocking the Lyran state, declaring it unfit for his warriors' glory. In late December of that same year, he proclaimed himself First Lord of the Star League, declaring war on anyone who refuted him.

Though reluctant to bring war to her realm, Archon Jennifer Steiner responded with a similar proclamation in her New Year's Eve message to the Commonwealth. Though she, too, declared herself First Lord, she added, "all this talk about who should rule the Star League is moot. There is no Star League, it left with General Kerensky, and we should realize that fact...". In closing, the Archon declared war on the Draconis Combine, ordering General Paul Steiner to fortify the Combine border against an imminent attack. For the Lyran people, the First Succession War had begun.

Total War

From the moment the Free Worlds League set off the first nuclear weapons to deny the Commonwealth a complete victory on Bolan, the First Succession War became war to the knife, a total war that ignored the Ares Conventions and forgot any pretense of concern for human life. Aimed at destroying—rather than disabling—the enemy's ability to wage war, the combatants resorted to atomics, neutron weapons, orbital bombardment and chemical attacks en masse. They used these methods to destroy any objective that could not be quickly seized by BattleMechs and WarShips: factories, major commercial and industrial sectors, and interstellar transports of almost every kind. To increase the difficulty in repairing vital industrial and economic infrastructure, secondary targets for destruction included air and water purification, and major population centers.

For the Commonwealth, these tactics proved especially destructive, as major industries and command centers along the borders became primary targets. Major naval producers, such as the Bolton Shipyards over New Kyoto, were annihilated by massive assaults, while repeated strikes targeted BattleMech factories and repair centers, such as those on Solaris VII and the massive complexes on Hesperus II. Though officially the Archon did not approve of LCAF troops resorting to similar tactics, she permitted her commanders to act as they saw fit in battle. This prompted many to adopt a "get them before they get us" mentality in which LCAF officers on worlds like Rocky and Caldrea resorted to first use of weapons of mass destruction, later justifying their decision by stating an emphatic belief that the enemy would eventually have done the same.



PLANET KEY

- NATIONAL CAPITAL
- DISTRICT CAPITAL
- PROVINCE CAPITAL

LYRAN COMMONWEALTH
after
First Succession War (2822)
© 3067 COMSTAR CARTOGRAPHIC CORPS

LEGEND

30 LIGHT YEARS

120 LIGHT YEARS OR 26.8 PARSECS

MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS

Coreward
Anti-spinward
Rimward
Spinward



TIMELINE: THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE FIRST SUCCESSION WAR

- 2784 – [5 November] General Kerensky's Exodus.
- 2785 – [March] Acting on LIC intelligence, three LCAF regiments hit Bolan. Retreating Free Worlds League forces resort to scorched earth tactics and nuclear bombardment of the Sabari Continent. Kenyon Marik declares Ares Conventions violated. [August] Unmarked Combine forces attack Bone-Norman. LCAF moves to counter "bandit" threat, stripping defenses from other Combine border worlds. [September] Draconis Combine attacks Gram and Trolloc Prime. Both worlds fall within three months.
- 2786 – Archon Jennifer Steiner oversees largely peaceful annexation of Terran Hegemony worlds, matching similar moves already initiated by Draconis Combine, Federated Suns, Capellan Confederation and Free Worlds League. [June] Draconis Combine attacks Skondia, easily slipping by local defense forces to lay waste to local population centers and industries. Archon Jennifer Steiner orders a shake-up of LCAF battlefield tactics to counter mobile warfare. [December] Coordinator Minoru Kurita proclaims himself First Lord of the Star League and declares war on any who oppose him. [December 31] Archon Jennifer Steiner declares war on Draconis Combine. Commonwealth enters First Succession War.
- 2787 – [February] Draconis Combine seizes Skondia; Free Worlds League raids begin along Commonwealth border, targeting heavy industries. Bolson Shipyards at New Kyoto destroyed. [March-April] Under command of General of the Armies Paul Steiner, Commonwealth forces launch first raiding campaign against key industrial worlds within the Draconis Combine. Over the next twenty years, LCAF troops will hit worlds all along the Combine border in this manner, including Dieron, Luthien, Styx, Benjamin, Kervil and Pomme de Terre. [December] Combine forces attack Hesperus II, but are repelled.
- 2788 – Draconis Combine counter-offensives strike Lyran border worlds. Over the next twenty years, key worlds such as Nox and The Edge will fall under Combine control, while others—such as Juniper—will be rendered uninhabitable and abandoned. [January-February] Under command of General Amanda Lestrade, Commonwealth forces launch first major raiding campaigns against key industrial worlds along the Free Worlds League border. [March] In a rare clash, Federated Suns forces attack Hesperus II, but are repelled. [25 June] Jerome Blake seizes Terra, declaring it a neutral holding of ComStar.
- 2789 – [March] Free Worlds League forces attack Hesperus II, but are repelled. [July] Free Worlds forces capture Alula Australis from Commonwealth troops during heavy fighting over the former Terran Hegemony worlds. [September-December] During the final annexations of Terran Hegemony planets, LCAF forces clash with AFFS troops over Thorin, New Earth and Rocky. The worst of the fighting, centered on Rocky, leaves that world uninhabitable.
- 2790 – Commonwealth launches second wave of raiding campaigns against Combine and Free Worlds League targets. Combine targets include key worlds such as Dieron and Dyev. League targets include Dieudonne, Oliver and Sirius. [July-August] Commonwealth forces under Kommandant-General Aric Hasseldorf begin conquest of Bolan Thumb worlds using a modified raiding strategy. This gradual campaign will reclaim Valloire, Binyang, Danxiang and Radostov by the close of 2793.
- 2791 – [4 January] Archon Jennifer Steiner killed in action on Styx. [January] As LCAF offensives falter on all fronts, Archon Richard Steiner replaces General of the Armies Paul Steiner with Duke Graham Kelswa of Carse. Kelswa assumes command of Combine front as General Steiner focuses on former Hegemony border regions.
- 2794 – General of the Armies Kelswa launches third major raiding campaign of the First Succession War against the Draconis Combine, once more targeting key worlds such as Benjamin, Styx and Dieron. [December] General Kelswa, taking personal command of the Tamar Tigers, is lured into a trap by Combine forces on Benjamin. Kelswa is killed along with the bulk of his command. Survivors of the Tigers go to ground on Benjamin, ultimately destroying more than a regiment of DCMS troops and gutting the planetary capital over the next six years. General Paul Steiner reinstated as LCAF commander.
- 2799 – Combine raid on Lamar ends in a nuclear assault that renders the planet uninhabitable and kills General of the Armies Paul Steiner. General Amanda Lestrade promoted to General of the Armies. Faced with dwindling resources, Commonwealth strategy shifts to a defensive posture. Raiding on the Combine and Free Worlds front is scaled back.
- 2811 – [March] After a relative lull in offensive campaigns, the Free Worlds League launches a concerted assault against Poulso in an effort to relieve ongoing pressures against the Bolan Thumb. The utter defeat of this offensive—though a Pyrrhic victory for the Commonwealth—forces Captain-General Thaddeus Marik to abandon the Thumb.
- 2812 – Draconis Combine offensives against the Commonwealth resume with attacks on Caldrea and Dove. Caldrea falls to Combine troops, while Dove suffers significant ecological damage and must be abandoned. Meanwhile, Free Worlds League forces seize Alula Borealis, signifying the start of a new campaign on that front. [June] Owing to a dearth of JumpShips, Timothy Aths of Carse disbands the Estates General, the first time a Speaker of the Assembly has ever done so. By this point, nationwide commerce within the Commonwealth has virtually ceased and industrial output is at its lowest ebb since the Age of War. [3 August] Richard Perkins, disgruntled Landgrave of Hegel—a Donegal Protectorate world decimated by epidemics that could not be controlled thanks to the loss of interstellar commerce—falls under the influence of a Free Worlds League spy and attempts to assassinate Archon Richard Steiner in the Royal Court. Though Perkins is arrested and charged with treason, the Archon commutes his sentence to life imprisonment.
- 2813 – [April] A series of battles for control of Bella I begins when Commonwealth troops recapture the world. Over the next three years, most of the League border fighting will center on this world, then expand along the border in a wave of furious new raids and assaults.
- 2819 – The Draconis Combine initiates a new heavy raiding campaign against the Commonwealth, echoing the LCAF raids of the 2780s and 2790s. Targets include key Commonwealth worlds such as Alexandria, Kessel and Tamar.
- 2820 – Unable to prosecute an ongoing raiding war, the Lyran Commonwealth and Free Worlds League begin peace talks on Bella I.
- 2821 – [March] The final major raiding campaign against the Draconis Combine fizzles when DCMS troops annihilate the Fifty-fourth Lyran Guard on Otho. [16 May] Archon Richard Steiner and Captain-General Charles Marik agree to the Bella Accords, formally ending the First Succession War on the League-Commonwealth front. By December, hostilities also end on the Combine border, though no official treaty is signed.



HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

WHY DID HE LEAVE?

History texts written before 3050 often cite Kerensky's age and lack of heirs as disqualifications for his taking over the Star League when it fell in 2781, even going so far as to quote alleged passages from his trusted advisors to support these claims. History, of course, failed to record the existence of General Kerensky's sons, Nicholas and Andery, both of whom would follow their father to the unknown and eventually found the Clans. For personal as well as for security reasons, both had been hidden from the public eye, their existence a state and family secret that only the most determined sleuths could find, and which Amaris himself only dimly suspected (if at all). This would prove fortuitous, as both children and Kerensky's wife, Katyusha, were on Terra when the Usurper struck, and survived the worst years in Terran history with a ringside seat at Amaris' atrocities (a fact that many experts claim motivated Nicholas Kerensky to create the Clans as a way to contain the violence he saw as inseparable from human nature).

Others have pointed to Kerensky's lack of political experience, having served on battlefields for most of his life. This reason has only slightly more credence, for it is a matter of record that Kerensky became a soldier reluctantly—his first love being learning and philosophy. Coupled with his military experience, that background made him a wise and compassionate leader who would inspire thousands to follow him into exile, where they built a society that—while ultimately doomed—would give rise to a major force in human history today. With so many behind him, willing to follow the Great General in any campaign to impose his will upon the soon-to-be Successor States, why, then, did he leave?

The answer, in the end, comes down to raw numbers, and possibly Kerensky's own realization that the very forces of history stood against him. The Council Lords were determined to claim the throne for themselves—something that could not possibly permit a fair and balanced resurrection of the fallen League, and would inevitably lead again to war. The SLDF, meanwhile, was only a third of its original size before the Periphery uprisings and the Amaris Crisis. This meant that staying around to fight even one Great House army—let alone all five at once—would have been a lost cause. If the Houses were so determined to fight, as Kerensky correctly sensed they were, he simply hadn't the strength to defy their intent.

In the end, Kerensky simply bowed to the undeniable forces of historical inertia, and the pure and simple fact that a war against the Inner Sphere would guarantee the destruction of the last vestiges of the once-great Star League.

—Bertram R. Habeas, *Revisionist History: The Exodus Revisited*, Donegal Publishing, 3066

Within two years, this policy of wanton destruction endorsed by all sides could already be felt on the battle lines and among local populations in the Commonwealth. Though the military had been prepared for a fight, no one had believed the war would rage for so long or so savagely. The logistical apparatus to maintain commercial traffic and long-term supply lines was flimsy at best, and cracked under pressure.

As war materiel grew scarce and attrition rapidly thinned out the military fleets, civilian vessels were conscripted to make up for the shortfall. By 2789, the LCAF had already commandeered half the Lyran merchant fleets to serve as troopships, while industries along border regions suffered crippling attacks that devastated not only the surrounding populations, but their commercial and military output. Local and regional economies teetered on the brink of collapse as exhaustion overtook troops on the borders from wave after unrelenting wave of foreign raids and invasions.

Meanwhile, billions of people were forced to endure strict rationing to stretch out their basic necessities, in the hopes that the war would quickly end. In some cases, entire worlds, like A Place and Hegel, began to starve as their access to foodstuffs, medical support or pure water was cut off in the name of military necessity. Meanwhile, breadbasket worlds like Bountiful Harvest literally choked on their excesses, forced to wipe out entire crops and herds of food animals they could no longer sell to their neighbors. Even the day-to-day needs of government slowed to a crawl, to the point where the Estates General had to be disbanded in 2812 for a lack of ships to transport the representatives to Tharkad.

For the Commonwealth, the war effort was like treading water. Hesperus II had fended off three major attacks, while the LCAF staged a series of raids against the Combine and the League that had only succeeded in causing as much destruction of enemy infrastructure as the Commonwealth had suffered. In the meantime, successful counter-strikes by the Draconis Combine and Free Worlds League had cost the Commonwealth valuable worlds like Nox, Juniper, Skondia and The Edge, to enemy capture or the devastation of chemical and nuclear attacks. Though on the Free Worlds and former Hegemony fronts, the LCAF was enjoying somewhat better success through the gradual capture of the Bolan Thumb and former Terran worlds, House Marik's counter-raids were smashing heavy industry. The fighting even claimed some of the Commonwealth's greatest leaders of the day, including Archon Jennifer Steiner, who died during an assault on Styx in 2791, and Duke Graham Kelswa of Carse, who served as LCAF commander when Jennifer's son, Richard, assumed the throne.

By the close of the twenty-eighth century, the Lyran Commonwealth had pushed its military capabilities to the brink. Unable to maintain offensive operations beyond border raids, and running low on supplies as the economy and infrastructure continued to crumble, the LCAF settled into a defensive posture, trying to fend off more attacks rather than launch them. This gave the nation's enemies free rein to strike at will, forcing the Lyrans to react as best they could, with more defeats than victories. By 2820, however, even the militaries of the Free Worlds League and the Draconis Combine had found the prosecution of war untenable. Realizing their mutual exhaustion, all five Inner Sphere states had ceased fighting by the end of 2821, though only a few realms—such as the Commonwealth and the League—had signed treaties to that effect.





SECOND SUCCESSION WAR (2830-2864)

The First Succession War ended in a stalemate with no Great House able to claim superiority. Instead, the past three and a half decades of fighting had only brought hundreds of burned-out worlds on all sides, millions upon millions dead and industrial damage so extensive that all of the so-called Successor States faced a serious decline in technology. Most major shipyards had ceased to exist, with only a few JumpShip manufacturers remaining. BattleMech production facilities were bombed into oblivion, and even basic life-giving technologies such as water and atmospheric purification were endangered by relentless raids and massed assaults. Even worlds not located along a hostile border had suffered from the prolonged disruption of shipping traffic that left many to starve as others perished in the fires of war.

For the Commonwealth, the losses were horrendous. More than thirty worlds had fallen to the enemy or been rendered unlivable, while close to two dozen major industrial centers on the border—mostly in the Skye and Tamar regions—had been heavily damaged. A dozen full line regiments had been destroyed, while almost ten times as many had been beaten to half strength or less. Only three LCAF units, in fact, could boast operational readiness over sixty percent, and the Lyran navy was all but destroyed.

Reconstruction

Faced with the monumental task of rebuilding the Lyran economy and infrastructure—to say nothing of its depleted military—Richard Steiner reconvened the Estates General and presented an ambitious plan to begin the reconstruction by first focusing on the restoration of major military industries. The program emphasized cooperation between all sectors, including the various competing corporations left in operation after the collapse of the Star League and the hellish years of the recent war, and offered a series of incentives and encouragements to foster such cooperation—including the threat of legal action, up to and including the seizure of a company's assets, for failure to comply.

In addition, to coordinate rebuilding the far-flung Periphery reaches, many of which had been overlooked since they were taken from the crumbling Rim Worlds Republic, Archon Richard created the temporary title of Archonette for administrators of particularly wealthy worlds, which in turn coordinated all reconstructive efforts on every world in a one-jump radius. The Archonettes wielded complete authority over the local nobility and government, and each of them was expected to pool all resources within his or her sphere of influence to assure that all worlds received an equal share of the basic necessities.

As a reward for their services, the leaders of these so-called "Little Kingdoms"—once their jobs were done and all affected worlds in their mini-realms were back up to sustenance level or better—received generous land grants and titles of nobility on interior worlds. The practice worked out so well during Archon Richard's reconstruction program that successive Archons repeated it in the aftermaths of the Second and Third Succession Wars to help get the Lyran state back on its feet.

After Richard Steiner's death in June of 2823, his son, Marcus Steiner, assumed the Archonship and responsibility for the postwar

reconstruction. Under his lead, the effort received a huge boost, particularly with the release of all conscripted civilian transports, though only on the condition that their captains perform at least three errands of mercy to carry food, supplies or spare parts to those worlds most neglected during the fighting. In addition, with a massive infusion of funds from the Steiner family estates, Archon Marcus also financed the relocation of many industries based along the still-volatile border worlds to safer locations deeper within the realm. Though some questioned the source of these funds—with many going so far as to suggest they had come from past Archons embezzling from the fall of the Terran Hegemony and the Star League—few companies could afford to pass up the opportunity to get out of an imminent war zone on the Archon's kroner.

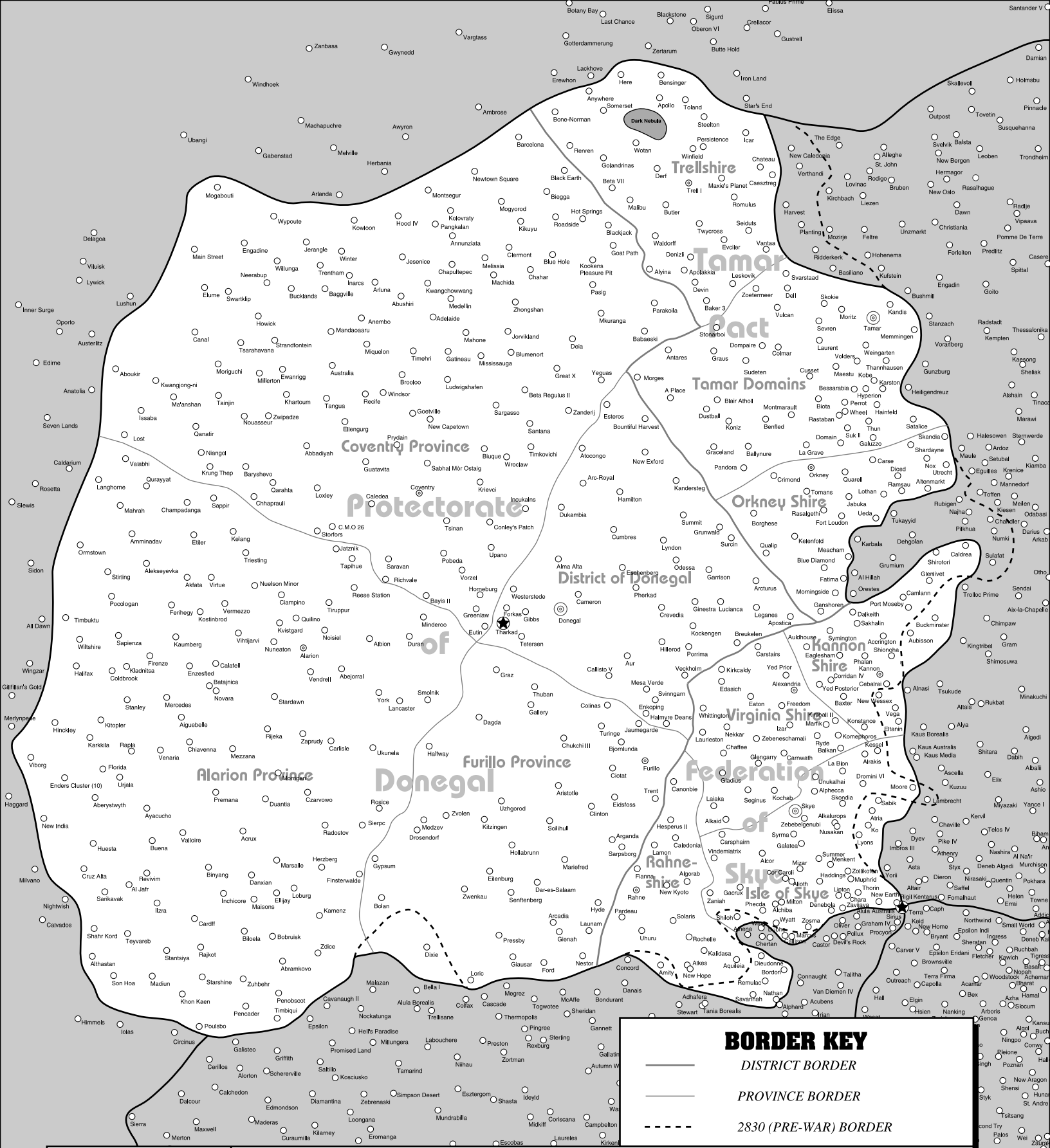
The only hitch in Archon Marcus' reconstruction program was his clash with ComStar, which came to a head in 2823 after his efforts to enforce a tax bill first proposed by his father in response to a communications rate hike. In response, the ComStar Order, under the direction of then-Primus Conrad Toyama, passed its own Exclusion of Tharkad Act and shut down HPG communications to and from Tharkad that October. The act blacked out the Lyran capital for a full year before Archon Marcus rescinded his father's so-called Reclamation Act, enabling him to once more coordinate the reconstruction effort, though relations with the increasingly mystical keepers of interstellar communications remained strained for years to come.

Preludes to War

In 2825, as part of an effort to disrupt the Commonwealth's reconstruction program, the Draconis Combine launched a series of raids along the Lyran border. These "Chain Gang" raids (as they came to be called, after the attacking warriors were revealed as Combine undesirables in shoddy equipment, rather than well-equipped front-line troops) caused some havoc on the border and disrupted local reconstruction projects for four months while the LCAF tensed for a renewed invasion. When none occurred, the Commonwealth countered with several raids of its own in 2826 and 2827, striking at a series of worlds from Aix-la-Chapelle to Darius.

The Darius raid, which also involved the rescue of the captured merchant JumpShip *Chahar Profit*, demonstrated the improved capabilities of the LCAF since the end of the last war, but ultimately failed to keep the Dragon at bay. The following year, Combine troops attacked Chandler, the world where the *Chahar Profit's* cargo of foodstuffs had originally been bound. There, in obvious revenge for their defeat on Darius, they set fire to the planetary food and freshwater stores in the capital city.

Meanwhile, on the Free Worlds front, years of rising tensions over the repatriation of prisoners taken during the last war reached their breaking point in the final months of 2828. Both delegations finally broke off contact by late December amid charges of treachery. Rumors abounded that the real root of the breakdown lay elsewhere, however, and ranged from a "lover's quarrel" between the opposing delegates—Duke Kendall Marik of the Free Worlds League and Grafina Rebecca Steiner-Nelson of the Commonwealth—to a mysterious BattleMech raid on Wyatt that very month. Whatever the cause, the failure of a second attempt at negotiations with the brutal murder of the Commonwealth's second delegate set both realms on the path to war.



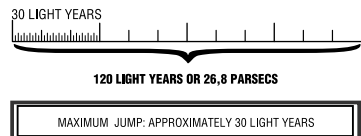
PLANET KEY

- NATIONAL CAPITAL
- DISTRICT CAPITAL
- PROVINCE CAPITAL

LYRAN COMMONWEALTH
 after
Second Succession War (2864)

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LEGEND



BORDER KEY

- DISTRICT BORDER
- PROVINCE BORDER
- 2830 (PRE-WAR) BORDER



TIMELINE: THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE SECOND SUCCESSION WAR

- 2825 – The Draconis Combine launches a series of suicidal raids against the Lyran Commonwealth, carried out by criminals and other undesirables in the hopes of destabilizing reconstruction efforts.
- 2826 – The Lyran Commonwealth launches reprisal raids against Combine targets.
- 2827 – [January] The Lyran free trader *Chahar Profit*, loaded with food for the border world of Chandler, misjumps into the Darius system and is captured by Combine forces.
[February] Lyran forces raid Darius to rescue the *Chahar Profit* and her crew.
- 2828 – [January] Combine troops attack Chandler and destroy local food and water storage houses in reprisal for the Commonwealth raid on Darius.
[December] Prisoner exchange talks between the Commonwealth and the Free Worlds League break down on Wyatt.
- 2830 – [February] Backed up by a series of smaller raids against nearby worlds, Draconis Combine units invade Chandler and Moore. Chandler falls after a six-month campaign, but Commonwealth forces on Moore eventually force House Kurita's troops off-planet in seven months.
[14 March] Archon Marcus Steiner declares war on the Draconis Combine.
[14 June] Captain-General Charles Marik, responding to reports of an allegedly imminent offensive against the Free Worlds League, declares war on the Lyran Commonwealth.
[August] As Commonwealth units scramble to face the Combine threat, the Free Worlds League opens an invasion of New Hope, Senftenburg and Zwenkau, following a similar strategy to the Combine attacks by raiding nearby border worlds to throw off and weaken the defending forces there.
[19 September] Archon Marcus Steiner declares war on the Free Worlds League.
[September] Commonwealth troops attack Dieudonne, but are repulsed within two months.
- 2831 – Taking personal command of the Free Worlds front, Archon Marcus Steiner launches a massive assault to reclaim New Hope, Senftenburg and Zwenkau, and also pushes deeper to take Dieudonne, Danais, Megrez and Alula Australis over the next five years. To hold each conquest, the Commonwealth uses reserve and militia units from interior worlds, reformed and classified as "Citizen Regiments." Meanwhile, the Combine front is active with a series of raids and counter-raids.
- 2835 – The Draconis Combine launches a heavy raiding campaign against the Commonwealth that includes the key worlds of Kessel and Kobe. Three years later, these raids will strike as deep as Hesperus II.
- 2837 – [March] The Free Worlds League is placed under ComStar Communications Interdiction.
[August] LCAF units launch a new assault campaign against the Free Worlds League. Initial targets include Zosma, Callison and Marcus, but eventually expand to include Bordon, Shiloh, Oliver and Graham IV.
- 2838 – [April] A Draconis Combine raid on Hesperus II is repulsed, marking the end of Coordinator Jinjiro Kurita's 2835-2838 raiding campaign.
[August-October] Commonwealth offensives launched against Shiloh, Oliver and Graham IV.
[9 November] ComStar lifts its Communications Interdiction against the Free Worlds League.
- 2840 – [February-March] Commonwealth offensives on Oliver and Graham IV collapse as reinforcements are cut off by a sudden surge in Free Worlds League counter-raids. In the midst of the crisis, Colonel Hendrik Grimm, commanding the 54th Lyran Regulars during the Graham IV offensive, goes AWOL with his command.
[April-June] The Draconis Combine launches a renewed offensive against the Lyran Commonwealth, overwhelming defenders on Lambrecht, Harvest and New Caledonia. The Fourth Royal guards on New Caledonia are forced to wage a seven-year guerrilla campaign after Combine troops gain an unassailable planethead. Simultaneous raids along the rimward edge of the Commonwealth-Combine border prevent Lyran commanders from delivering effective reinforcements.
- 2841 – Commonwealth forces assault and seize Danais. At almost the same time, a second thrust on the Free Worlds League border hits the worlds around Irian, including Savannah, Remulac and Nathan.
- 2842 – [5 January] Commonwealth troops land on Irian, initiating what will become a four-month campaign to secure the heavily industrialized world. The arrival of League reinforcements in March, however, ultimately forces the Lyran assault back.
- 2843 – [November] Archon Marcus Steiner contracts a virulent strain of meningitis and returns from the Free Worlds front to Tharkad, slipping into a coma shortly after his arrival in February. In the absence of a successor, the Estates General debates who to name as Archon-Designate between Melissa Nin, the Archon's wife, and Leutnant-General Claudius Steiner of the Second Lyran Guards. Meanwhile, the Estates General and General of the Armies Miles Kempec assume governmental and military authority.
- 2844 – [December] Melissa Nin confirmed as Archon-General by Estates General Speaker of the Assembly Harlan Dinesen, over the expressed objections of Claudius Steiner.
- 2845 – [13 March] Archon Marcus Steiner dies. Melissa Nin sworn in as Archon of the Lyran Commonwealth.
[20 August] Leutnant-General Claudius Steiner assaults Tharkad and deposes Melissa Nin, executing her and Speaker Dinesen on charges of treason. Estates General disbanded.
[December] Draconis Combine raids on Lyran Commonwealth intensify as Commonwealth offensive operations grind to a halt.
- 2846 – All Commonwealth offensives cease. General of the Armies Kempec places the LCAF on a defensive footing on all borders as Archon Claudius' Reign of Terror continues. Meanwhile, Combine and Free Worlds raids penetrate deep into Commonwealth space.
- 2848 – [July] Draconis Combine forces on New Caledonia finally defeat the last of the Fourth Royal Guards, executing the few survivors for sport and sending a video of the event to Archon Claudius. The Archon immediately initiates Operation Praying Mantis.
- 2849 – [8 May] Archon Claudius Steiner dies. Estates General reconvenes and establishes the Triumvirate Regency for Elizabeth Steiner when Claudius' wife, Rebecca Morgan, refuses the Archonship.
- 2850 – [12 December] Operation Praying Mantis succeeds when Snow Fire, an alleged Lyran operative, assassinates Coordinator Yoguchi Kurita.
- 2853 – Combine forces initiate a three-wave assault on Hesperus II. Meanwhile, the Free Worlds League opens a new offensive against the Commonwealth with the recapture of Megrez.
- 2854 – Despite a costly defeat at Hesperus II, Combine forces continue to launch major offensives against the Commonwealth, eventually seizing Dehgan, Grumium and Tukayyid. Free Worlds League assaults initiated at the same time do not proceed as well.
- 2859 – [20 January] Elizabeth Steiner takes over as Archon of the Lyran Commonwealth, disbanding the Triumvirate Regency.
- 2862 – Repeated Combine offensives have taken Al Hillah, Karbala, Kreller, Orestes and Sakhalin. The Free Worlds League, in the meantime, has claimed Ilion and severely damaged industrial worlds along the border in a series of devastating raids. The Commonwealth recapture of Megrez in 2860 is also reversed.
- 2863 – Fighting tapers off on both borders as a final Commonwealth offensive reclaims Sakhalin from the Draconis Combine. Despite the lack of progress from Commonwealth diplomatic missions to the Combine and the Free Worlds League, Archon Elizabeth Steiner bows to pressure from the Estates General for a partial stand-down of the LCAF to permit the beginnings of recovery efforts. Second Succession War officially ends in December without treaties.



HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

War Renewed

For the Lyran Commonwealth, the Second Succession War began on 14 March 2830, after the Draconis Combine launched several invasions along the Commonwealth border. Beginning with a series of raids, the Combine troops struck at dozens of worlds at once, initially disguising their true objectives: the invasion and capture of Moore and Chandler. Soon afterward, after Archon Marcus Steiner declared war on the Combine for its aggressions, and while the LCAF scrambled to face the threat, Captain-General Charles Marik declared war on the Commonwealth, citing reports of a planned Commonwealth invasion of his Free Worlds League. Though Marik never provided unassailable evidence of this supposed attack plan, within less than two months, League troops had launched massive assaults on New Hope, Senftenburg and Zewnkau, and targeted other nearby worlds with deadly raids.

By the close of 2830, the Inner Sphere was once again in the midst of universal war. As with the previous conflict, the Ares Conventions were tossed by the wayside, and the few surviving capital ships beset their targets with orbital bombardment while fighters dropped nuclear and biochemical agents on objectives deemed too difficult to capture. By the end of the war, entire worlds had joined the list of casualties alongside the likes of Hegel and Rocky, as planets like Ilion and Kreller perished from poisons, nuclear horror and other unthinkable, manmade disasters.

For the Commonwealth, the damage done by this resurgence of total war was more contained this time around, thanks to the industrial relocations Archon Marcus had financed in the preceding decade. Still, several major industries, such as the StarCorps BattleMech plant on Son Hoa, remained in the line of fire, and became the earliest casualties of the new offensives.

The Second Succession War, like the first, followed the same patterns of raiding and planetary assault, with battlefield commanders seeking to destroy as much civilian infrastructure as military objectives. Yet even though the overall strategies remained the same, the Commonwealth military had grown more sophisticated in the intervening years. The early successes of the war exemplified these changes, such as the defense of Moore against Combine attacks and the campaign against the Free Worlds League personally commanded by Archon Marcus.

Unfortunately for the Commonwealth, the fortunes of war would prove fickle indeed. Though the LCAF claimed many early victories—especially along the central and spinward edges of the League front, boosted by the League's apparent internal strife and a ComStar-initiated communications blackout—the LCAF commanders quickly grew overconfident. When solidarity returned to the enemy military and activity increased along the Combine front, Lyran offensives gradually ground to a halt. Making matters worse, barely a decade and a half after the start of hostilities, the Commonwealth itself faced a leadership crisis when Archon Marcus contracted a fatal illness on the eve of a new campaign.

Dark Succession

In November of 2843, while attempting to rally his troops for a new offensive against the Free Worlds League, Archon Marcus Steiner contracted a lethal strain of meningitis on the border world of Loric. Though he immediately returned to Tharkad for treatment at the prestigious Martin Luther Memorial Hospital, it was clear the

nation would soon lose its leader. After Archon Marcus slipped into a coma, leaving no heir to assume the throne, Melissa Nin, his wife, declared her claim for the office of Archon-Designate. At the same time, Claudius Steiner, commander of the elite Second Lyran Guards, made a similar claim, and threatened all who opposed him.

In 2844, backed by Estates General Speaker of the Assembly Harlan Dinesen, Melissa Nin was confirmed as Archon-Designate, despite further warnings from Lieutenant-General Claudius Steiner. When Archon Marcus died in March of the following year, Nin, a political unknown, became Archon. Her reign only lasted five months, however. In August, Claudius Steiner and his loyal regiment landed in Tharkad City, defeated the local defenders, and arrested Nin and Dinesen, executing both on charges of high treason in a brutal coup.

Disbanding the Estates General, Claudius Steiner proclaimed himself Archon of the Lyran Commonwealth and spent the next five years terrorizing the people of Tharkad with acts of increasing cruelty. During this time, all Commonwealth offensives ground to a halt, leaving the realm open to counterattacks by the Draconis Combine and Free Worlds League.

By the time of his death in 2849, Archon Claudius' reign of terror and his paranoid focus on maintaining his absolute control over the realm had completely stalled the Commonwealth military's war effort while relentless raids from enemy states crippled industries deeper and deeper within the realm. The national economy and the people's morale both plunged into a deep recession. The timing of Claudius' death would soon prove fortuitous; his demise allowed the Estates General to reconvene and establish a regency government for his young daughter that would play a role in the most critical defensive actions of the entire Second Succession War.

The Triumvirate Years

With Archon Claudius Steiner's widow, Rebecca Morgan, unwilling to assume the throne and their daughter, Elizabeth Steiner, only nine years of age, the Commonwealth government came under the rule of a special regency organized soon after the reconvening of the Estates General. The Triumvirate Regency, as it came to be known, consisted of three leaders, with Rebecca Morgan representing Elizabeth's interests, Speaker of the Assembly Henry DeCalidore of Furillo representing the wishes of the Estates, and Duchess Ilysa Aten of Tamar and Skye representing the Lyran nobility. Over the next decade, these three regents shared power through the most critical years of the Second Succession War.

Though some historians have emphasized the divisions within the Triumvirate, especially in the waning years of its regency, the Commonwealth's three rulers nonetheless held their realm together in the chaotic period after Archon Claudius Steiner's death. Though each pursued a private agenda—DeCalidore sought supreme military authority, while Aten pursued an increase of the nobility's powers and Morgan struggled to ensure the continued military and civil authority of House Steiner on behalf of her child—all three banded together against the greater dangers of the Combine and Free Worlds League advances. Indeed, during the Combine's massive invasion of Hesperus II in 2853, the regents' private agendas all but vanished in the face of a common enemy and a real threat.

The Triumvirate ruled until Elizabeth came of age on 20 January 2859. In recognition of their service, Archon Elizabeth Steiner ap-



pointed each to an important post within the Commonwealth government or military forces, with DeCalidore earning his own regimental command, Aten heading up the ongoing reconstruction efforts and Morgan assuming control over a government-sponsored wildlife preservation program. In the years to follow, the Archon set about erasing the last scars of her father's reign, and would preside over the final end of hostilities in the Second Succession War when it finally wound down in 2863.

Finest Hours

At the beginning of the Triumvirate Years, the Lyran Commonwealth faced its single greatest challenge of the Second Succession War when a huge Draconis Combine fleet arrived in the Hesperus II system and placed the nation's most important BattleMech producer under siege. Including the last of the Combine's WarShip fleet, six BattleMech regiments and more than twice as many conventional and infantry regiments, House Kurita's forces easily overpowered the local system defenses and blockaded the planet for nearly half a year, to force the defenders to consume their supplies and food. The ground troops then planned to land far from the factories and wear down the three veteran regiments on-planet before proceeding to the Defiance Industries factories and destroying them.

The second half of the Combine plan, however, faltered as the factory managers themselves quickly conscripted and trained many of their own workers to serve as a last-ditch defense force, the so-called "Force of Last Resort." Backed by this ad-hoc battalion, the three veteran regiments held up against two successive waves of Combine assaults before the arrival of reinforcements, which included the *Tharkad*-class battlecruiser LCS *Invincible*—the last surviving relic of the Commonwealth's once-proud WarShip fleet, reactivated on the orders of the Triumvirate specifically to cover the rest of the relief ships.

The *Invincible*'s arrival enabled the Lyran forces to break the Combine blockade, overpowering the smaller capital ships and providing overwhelming cover fire for the inbound relief ships as they burned toward the planet. With the landing of these reinforcements less than three weeks later and the added support fire from the *Invincible*, the Combine assault on Hesperus II shattered.

A PLEA ACROSS THE STARS

"...This is the *Chahar Profit*. If you are receiving this message, it means that not only did this 'Pigeon' system work, but I also owe Crewman Fitz ten cases of Glengarry Black. It may even be worth all the blown relays and ruptured cells I'm told will happen when the little bugger jumps.

"Beyond that, it also means that my vessel has entered hostile territory. I'm not sure how, but my astrogator suggests a computer glitch happened when we initiated the jump from Toffen—at least that's what he says now. As I record this message, he—and the Snake fighters that have already hailed us, demanded we power down our engines, and strafed our jump sail to be sure we got the message—tell me we have entered the Darius system. Right now, that advance group of fighters is winging its way back for a second run and we detect the mothership not far behind.

"If anyone out there receives this message—and by the Saints, I hope *someone* does!—be advised that we will require immediate assistance. My crew deserves better than to end up as another batch of slaves for the Coordinator's pleasure..."

—Transmission from Kaptain Vanessa Reiche, *Chahar Profit*, 11 January 2827

THE MANTIS STRIKES

If the legends are true, then perhaps the only positive thing to come from the reign of Claudius the Cruel was the assassination of Coordinator Yoguchi Kurita by a mysterious Lyran agent known only as Snow Fire. Ordered in retaliation for the death of the survivors of the Fourth Royal Guards on New Caledonia—broadcast to the Archon by a sneering Coordinator who clearly enjoyed blood sports as much as his Steiner counterpart—Operation Praying Mantis would not bear fruit until after Claudius was dead and buried.

The common story holds that Praying Mantis was an act of revenge for the destruction of the Fourth—or simply an act of professional jealousy, given the Archon's obsessions at the time. Snow Fire, a deep mole planted by Lyran intelligence years before, was simply in the right place to catch the Coordinator's eye, become his favored concubine over the ensuing months and years, and eventually earn sufficient trust to kill him in his sleep at the proper moment, leaving enough evidence to let House Kurita know just who killed their lord and why.

But that common story is by no means the only one concerning Yoguchi Kurita's untimely demise and the person who brought it about. Indeed, the identity of the agent who carried out the deed has never been revealed, nor does anyone know what part of the Lyran Intelligence Corps she supposedly belonged to. Theories have since emerged about Snow Fire's true identity, ranging from a veteran of the Fourth to a Loki plant, or perhaps even a double agent for ComStar or another Great House.

Some have gone so far as to suggest that Snow Fire herself may not have been the assassin, that the killer may have been some other concubine, or another infiltrator in the Kurita household, who left evidence implicating the woman whose corpse was found beside the Coordinator in the morning. Others hint that there was more than one assassin, or that the killer was really one of House Kurita's own, framing the Commonwealth for the act. In the centuries since, speculation has gone on and on and on.

In the grand scheme, all anyone truly knows about the assassination of Lord Kurita is this: on the day it happened, the Dragon learned a deadly lesson in the price of arrogance.

—Peter L. Cassidy, *Legends in Shadows*, Underground Press, 3060



LEGEND OF THE BLACK PEARL

I still can't believe what I saw out there, and after sixteen years in this business, most of it on battlefields like that, I've seen quite a lot.

The Stealths were moving back, having had enough for one day, but the Dragon's warriors smelled blood and were on the offensive. The fighting in that valley was so intense, my crew and I found it hard to get a good position to cover the battle, and as more of our own boys went down in a hail of laser and autocannon fire, I'm sure I wasn't the only one who wondered if it was safe to stick around just to catch it all on film; we'd heard what the Snakes do to prisoners, after all. Still, we also knew what DBC did to employees whose survival instincts outweighed their sense of corporate duty. As the Stealths' "embedded reporters," we had a job to do—even if it meant watching our boys die.

In the low fog of early morning, beneath a sun too weak to fully penetrate the gray haze hanging overhead as fire and smoke filled the battlefield, the valley stank of scorched metal, ozone and spilled coolant. The earth shook with the footfalls of almost a hundred BattleMechs—theirs and ours—while the air flashed with the multi-colored strobe of weapons fire, the rolling thunder and lightning of weapons that could flatten entire cities in just a few minutes, unleashed by metallic avatars of death.

Yet amid all that cacophony, we heard the determined stomp of a newcomer to the fight, a full battalion coming around from the west. Greer swung his cam around to get a good shot, but through the foliage all we could make out was the lead *BattleMaster*, its gleaming black hide practically shimmering despite the muted daylight, with a score of kill markers clearly visible on the left shin. We knew the sight well; she'd been a star before she became a Leutenant-Colonel, after all.

Angela Franks, the Stealths' "Black Pearl."

The Dracs weren't as impressed, of course, even as Franks' 'Mech waded into battle, leading a battalion of heavyweights that tore into their flanks. Earth became mud beneath their massive feet and weaker trees fell from the tremors as BattleMechs clashed. The lighter Stealths saw their moment to escape and fell back, but the battle raged on. We had to stay and see how it all played out.

It was like a holoivid. Whether Franks was instinctively dropping back into a dramatic role from her pre-service days or not, I couldn't tell you, but there she was, in a clearing, the battle surging all around her as she raised the *Master's* arms high in challenge. A barrage of weapons had already struck, tearing up the armor and obliterating a fine paint job, but she was still there. For a moment—and Kerensky save me, I have no idea why this happened—the battle just stopped, like everyone suddenly sensed something big was coming.

One of the Snakes got over it first, a *Marauder* pilot, figuring he'd just get around Franks and carry on the pursuit. The unspoken challenge got an instant answer from her *BattleMaster*, though. In seconds, with the kind of accuracy one sees only in holos, she tore into the heavyweight's legs, dropping seventy-five tons of insectoid metal to the ground with a thud I could feel in my fillings. This only incensed the Combine warriors; they immediately focused on Franks, this lone MechWarrior who dared stand in the Dragon's path. A hellish blaze of death erupted from what looked to be a whole battalion of 'Mechs.

If I didn't see it for myself, I never would have thought it possible. Franks stayed up through it all, her *BattleMaster* not even so much as flinching.

Then the smoke cleared.

Speechless, we saw Franks' machine—ravaged, decapitated, dead. Tears—from the smoke or from the loss of a Commonwealth hero, I could never tell you—blurred my vision as I watched it. The Snakes must have been just as stunned as we were, because one of them stepped in for a closer look.

Light blazed as the surviving torso lasers connected with the Combine warrior's cockpit. I think we all nearly had a heart attack. What I said at that moment wasn't fit for print, but it expressed our collective shock and disbelief even as the Drac *Warhammer* slammed to earth, as dead as its killer.

I was there, I saw it, and I still can't believe it. Then again, we built these machines in our image. Is it possible—just possible—that we can truly imprint our souls in those BattleMechs? If so, then did Angela Franks truly die when we saw her die, or did her spirit remain just long enough to destroy one last enemy, to buy those precious minutes the other Stealths needed to get away?

—Martin Brenner, *News from the Front*, Donegal Publishing, 2865





The Sixth, Seventh and Eighth battles of Hesperus II cost the Commonwealth roughly half its planetary defense forces, including many of the ad-hoc "Force of Last Resort." Defiance Industries also lost one of its BattleMech production lines, its' worst damage sustained so far in the Succession Wars. Even worse, the LCS *Invincible* soon joined the Hesperus II casualties when an apparent jump drive failure on the return voyage to Tharkad caused the venerable WarShip to vanish into hyperspace, never to appear again.

However, for all the Commonwealth's casualties, Hesperus II had once more held out against a foreign assault. The Combine troops withdrew with only half their strike force, losing their own remaining WarShips in the bargain.

Though the Commonwealth victory at Hesperus II did much to lift the spirits of the LCAF and the Lyran people, celebrations proved short-lived when one year later the Draconis Combine launched a renewed offensive against the border worlds. Over the next decade, the Commonwealth's military was once more forced on the defensive in an eerie repetition of the final years of the First Succession War. In fact, on both the League and Combine fronts, the Commonwealth would prove virtually unable to regain the initiative it had held at the beginning of the Second Succession War, and only a few captured Lyran worlds such as Sakhalin would return to the banner of the Steiner fist by the time hostilities ground to a halt in 2863.

As with the First Succession War, such wanton destruction ravaged the Lyran economy and decimated its border industries, though the damage was slightly mitigated this time by ongoing reconstruction efforts and the relocation of so many vital industries to safer, interior worlds. The revamped LCAF had held its ground better this time around as well, managing to carry out effective campaigns of its own despite the ongoing preponderance of the so-called "Social Generals"—sycophantic officers and honorary holders of military titles deluded into believing that rank alone enabled them to command troops in battle. Indeed, only the loss of Archon Marcus and the rise of Claudius "the Cruel" had made the Commonwealth stumble on what could have been its road to glory. Had Marcus lived, or Claudius been more focused on defeating his realm's enemies than terrorizing its people, who can say that events would not have unfolded differently?

THIRD SUCCESSION WAR (2866-3025)

"Ever notice that every textbook you can probably name uses war to gauge historical progress? Even the maps have started to date themselves by the most recent fighting. That's saying something right there."

—Lieutenant Lance T. Vedten, Grave Walkers mercenary command, circa 2865

As with the first of the Succession Wars, the second came to a close more from military and economic exhaustion than from any true efforts at peacemaking. The casual disregard for the Ares Conventions had left the Inner Sphere ravaged, with most worlds reduced in technology to a shadow of what they had been during the Star League era. The sophisticated weaponry that so permeated the League was among the first casualties, with everything from the

Terran Hegemony's artificially intelligent system defense drones, the WarShips of the Hegemony and member state navies, and even various techniques for producing advanced fusion engines and more powerful ground-based weaponry lost to nuclear bombardment and systematic assassinations among the rival Houses.

The Commonwealth had once more seen its economy and government shaken to the point of imminent collapse by the past thirty years of warfare, but fortunately, the work of Duchess Ilysa Aten and the reconstruction programs established under the reign of Archon Richard had managed to mitigate some of the damage even before the final cessation of hostilities in 2863. Though the Second War saw the Commonwealth once more in civil and military disarray, the situation could have been much worse.

The end of the Second Succession War came without treaties for the Commonwealth, thanks to the breakdown of the Archon's brokered peace talks on New Earth in November of 2864. Yet even as the Archon's diplomats returned empty-handed from the seven-week summit on New Earth (with nothing to show for their efforts but the scandal of a Combine diplomat charged with espionage), the lack of formal agreements to prevent further bloodshed failed to deter the growing call in the Estates General for a major military stand-down.

With a full year of no military incidents now behind them, business leaders and merchants added their sentiments to those of representatives in Government House to ease wartime restrictions on travel and trade and divert more of the taxpayers' monies to reconstruction rather than military readiness. This postwar "peace craze," as some LCAF officers came to call it, eventually convinced Archon Elizabeth Steiner to rotate half the LCAF troops back home to interior stations in a partial stand-down by the middle of 2865.

THE KURITA BLITZ

As the Archon and many of the Commonwealth's more cynical leaders feared, the tenuous peace following the Second Succession War did not last long. In March of 2866, not even two years after the mass demobilization of half the LCAF had begun, invasion forces from the Draconis Combine slammed the depleted border defenders on Aubisson, Chateau, Dromini VI, Icar, Kessel, Ko, Port Moseby and Steelton, while other worlds, such as Buckminster, Kannon, New Wessex and Vega, reeled under heavy raids.

The attacks, which came after rumors of a secret war raging within the Combine, took the defenders completely by surprise, but LCAF commanders swiftly realized that the enemy's main objectives were the heavily industrialized worlds of the Skye Federation. Unfortunately, thanks to the military downgrades of the previous two years, the Combine forces secured several worlds within weeks of the initial strikes. Almost before the Archon could declare a state of war between the Commonwealth and its neighbor, several worlds had fallen under the Dragon's banner.

Even the mercenary commands hired by the Archon during the military stand-down (over the Estates General's expressed concern over such "provocative measures") proved insufficient to stop the relentless enemy advance, but they were invaluable in shoring up a second line of defense. To make the best use of these forces, and buy time for others to be reactivated to fighting strength, Archon Elizabeth chose not to reinforce those worlds already under attack, but instead reformed the LCAF and mercenary forces available to



HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

THE BETA REGULUS TRAGEDY

In 2899, a rogue planetoid, roughly one thousand kilometers in diameter, was detected on a collision course with the planet Beta Regulus II, a modestly industrialized world in the Protectorate of Donegal. Having failed to divert its course, the panic-stricken Beta Regularan government began immediately to call for assistance in evacuating its population or protecting it somehow from the planetoid's impact, projected for sometime in late 2901.

Reaching Government House on Tharkad, these calls led to an emergency Estates General meeting on nearby Great X, where the evacuation effort—focused on a gathering fleet of JumpShips and DropShips conscripted from the few available free traders and military commands in the region—was already underway. Unfortunately, though the military and local traders gave what they could—securing even private vessels, at gunpoint when needed—the evacuation of Beta Regulus II's nearly six million men, women and children would take far more time than the planet had left. Worse, revised astronomical projections placed the planetoid's impact on one of the world's most densely populated continents.

As the people of Beta Regulus II learned of their looming demise, worldwide panic ensued, which only grew worse when it became clear that the few evacuees would have to be chosen by lot while others scrambled for hastily constructed bunkers all over the world. The crisis grew so bad that three LCAF infantry regiments were called in to supplement planetary security in keeping order, while aid workers were provided with arms and lethal neurotoxins to protect themselves or to "end suffering" in the event of "the unthinkable".

When the planetoid—dubbed Grande Diablo—finally struck the northern continent of Brasillia on 12 October 2901, only two million evacuees had made it off Beta Regulus II. The strike proved far worse than predicted. While the shelters had been designed and located to survive the anticipated shock and blast damage, the hasty predictions—based on nuclear attack models—had underestimated the mantle-ripping shockwaves, the sheer amount of material discharged from the impact or how long the heat pumped into the environment would linger.

The scorching blast encircled the planet within hours, with no place for the heat to escape except into the insulating vacuum of space. The re-entering debris from the blast blanketed whole continents with large chunks of debris that superheated during re-entry and

protect worlds that had yet to face House Kurita's sword. In the meantime, the Archon invoked the Military Disaster Act, activating a wider military conscription program and nationalizing numerous planetary militias to make up for gaps in the LCAF ranks.

On 3 May 2867, as the Commonwealth desperately rallied to face the new invasions, a Marik-sponsored assassination attempt on Elizabeth Steiner—apparently made in the hopes of securing an alliance with House Kurita—forced the Archon to declare war on the Free Worlds League as well.

THE COMBINE FRONT

Though the assassination attempt against Elizabeth Steiner earned House Marik some degree of respect from their would-be allies in House Kurita, and though both entered the war against the Lyran Commonwealth by targeting the worlds of the rich Skye region first, the Third Succession War, like the two before it, evolved into two distinct wars, with two distinct methods of fighting and winning. On the Draconis Combine border, the Commonwealth found itself immediately on the defensive, straining to hold back a determined and fierce enemy whose initial waves had created such havoc that it would take decades before local defense forces could recover their own initiative. In the meantime, demoralized troops fell back after offering only token resistance, if any. By the mid-2880s, Combine forces held worlds as close to Skye as Ryde and Skondia.

By 2884, Commonwealth generals had regained enough of their composure to stage a stronger defense against the Combine assaults, stalling the Dragon's progress two jumps shy of their ultimate objective. The following year, the LCAF launched a series of counterstrikes along the coreward borders in the hopes of forcing the Combine to relent. Rather than take the bait, however, the invaders simply dug in, claiming additional victories at a relative snail's pace over the next decade. The final attack on Skye came in March of 2895, weeks after the collapse of the LCAF defenders on Freedom and Zebebelgenubi.

The Battle for Skye

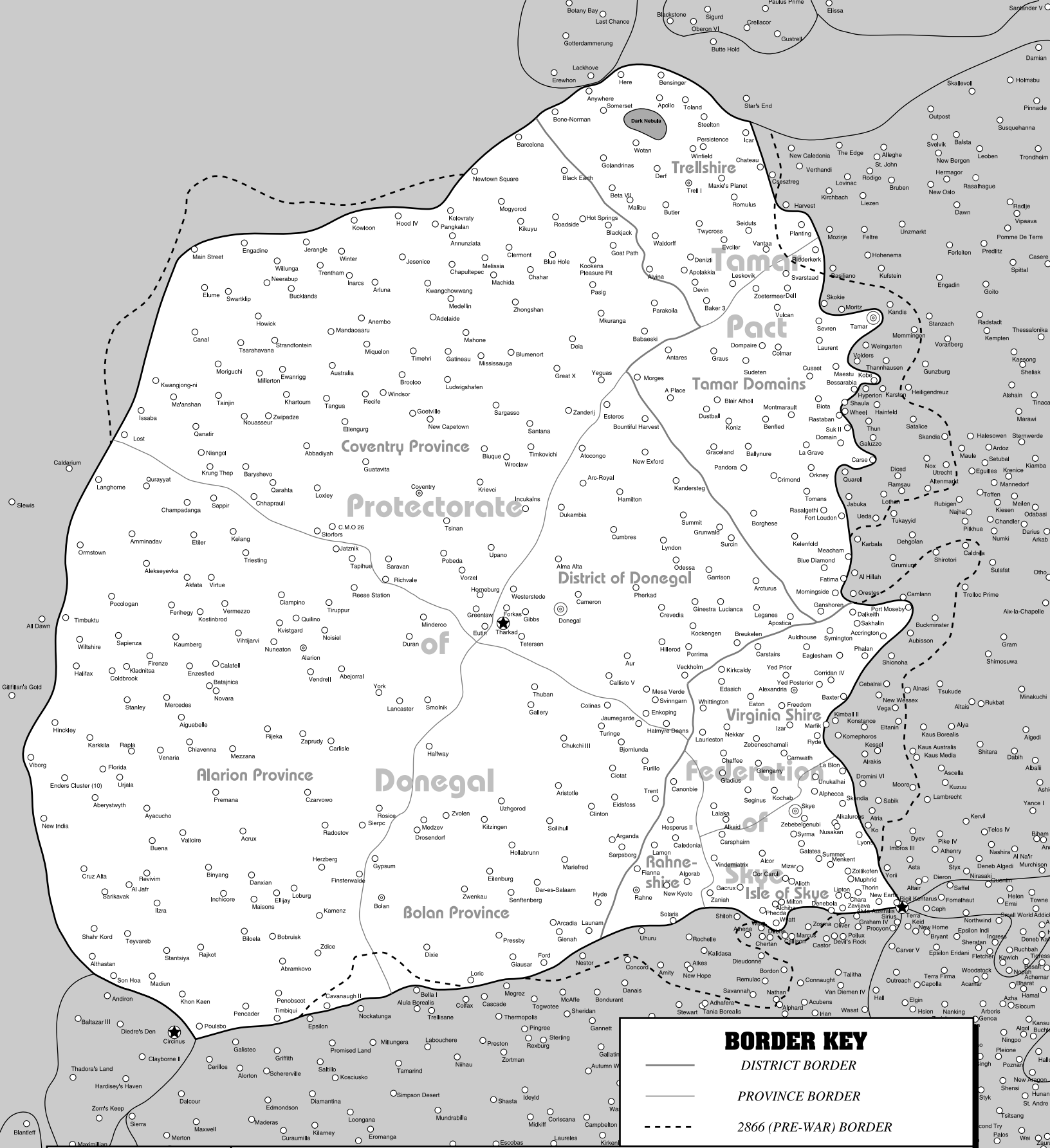
On Skye, the attackers faced three elite BattleMech regiments, supported by a dozen more of armor and infantry. The Skye campaign quickly developed into one of the most hard-fought battles of the Third Succession War, and tied up most of the Combine offensive for more than thirteen months. For House Kurita, however, the battle was lost after Commonwealth forces shattered a Combine advance in the Bannockburn Bogs, just outside the planetary capital of New Glasgow, during the first few weeks of fighting.

Determined not to lose the heart of their Federation, the defenders on Skye resorted to tactics not seen since the last war, including the use of a tactical nuclear weapon near the city of Inverness, to ultimately beat back the invaders. Though these methods endangered the new adherence to the rules of warfare, the LCAF levied only the most minimal punishments against the field commanders who used them; the cost of saving Skye, many felt, was worth the loss of honor that came with such atrocities.

Ultimately defeated at Skye, the Combine advance turned coreward, taking another ten key worlds and raiding or seizing a host of others in a gradual drive up toward Tamar. Though their forces kept up the pressure in the Skye region, the war had become a stalemate there, but the Dragon knew the effort to hold back two major advances while simultaneously dealing with Free Worlds League incursions was taxing the LCAF to its limits.

Archon Elizabeth Steiner died in her sleep before the outcome of the Battle of Skye was known. Assuming the throne upon her death was her son, Eric Steiner, who faced the monumental task of rebuilding a weakened LCAF in the wake of some of its worst fighting in recent memory. Only a third of the surviving LCAF regiments in the field by the turn of the century stood at seventy percent strength or better, despite the ongoing conscription enacted by Archon Elizabeth's Military Disaster Act. Worse still, a massive disaster in the Donegal Protectorate had sapped much of the Commonwealth budget in relief efforts that ultimately failed to save close to four million lives, and neither the Draconis Combine nor the Free Worlds League seemed eager to halt their advances while a nation mourned its dead.

Thus, in 2908, Archon Eric enacted his controversial amendments to the Military Disaster Act, lowering the draft age from 19 to 16, extending service tours from three to five years and



BORDER KEY

- DISTRICT BORDER
- PROVINCE BORDER
- 2866 (PRE-WAR) BORDER

PLANET KEY

- NATIONAL CAPITAL
- DISTRICT CAPITAL
- PROVINCE CAPITAL

LYRAN COMMONWEALTH
after
Third Succession War (3025)
© 3067 COMSTAR CARTOGRAPHIC CORPS

LEGEND

30 LIGHT YEARS

120 LIGHT YEARS OR 26,8 PARSECS

MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS

Coreward

Spinward

Anti-spinward

Rimward



HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

slammed into the surface with incredible force. Compounding the disaster was the disintegration of the planet's crust that radiated out from Grande Diablo's impact point.

The assembled fleet of evacuation ships still in-system could do nothing but watch in horror as, for the next two days, the planet died. Distress beacons from the surviving bunkers lit sensor displays and comm centers of every ship in the system, then winked out again as a massive ripple of crust-shattering seismic waves encircled the planet. Through skies choked with debris, thermal sensors watched blue oceans and green continents become orange and yellow seas of boiling magma as the crust disintegrated, resurfacing the entire planet in less than forty hours.

Roughly four million people died in the Beta Regulus cataclysm, yet sadly—because it occurred while the rest of the Commonwealth literally fought for its own life—their loss is often a mere footnote in Lyrans history.

—Dr. Mikhail C. Mueller, *The Horsemen Gather*, One Star Press, 3053

reducing the exemptions for draft eligibility. Though these changes sparked a widespread public outcry, especially from poorer worlds already hit hard by the wartime shortage of labor and transports, they staved off a military collapse in the coming years, and would even make it possible for the LCAF to launch its biggest campaign of the war in 2913.

Operation Freedom

Archon Eric's measures enabled the LCAF to expand to the point where most of the nation's line regiments recovered their full military strength. Though training and equipment proved a substantial drain on the Commonwealth economy, by 2913, a majority of the realm's field commands could finally boast forces more than three-quarters of their nominal strength. With the Commonwealth besieged on both fronts, the time had come to put that force to use.

The goal of Operation Freedom was straightforward enough. Rather than focus on advancing along weakened fronts, as the LCAF had attempted during the coreward campaign of 2885, Freedom was aimed at reclaiming the Commonwealth worlds seized during the war's opening years. The reason was twofold. First, the majority of the captured worlds lay in the heavily industrialized Skye region, representing some of the Commonwealth's most developed planets; taking them meant reclaiming their lost productivity while denying the same to the enemy.

The second reason was as critical as it was political. By declaring the intent to "retake the Commonwealth," Archon Eric fueled a sense of national pride lost with the past decades spent on the defensive, a pride that erased the negative reaction he had suffered for amending the Military Disaster Act. The Commonwealth military now had not only the manpower to win, but an honorable goal to work toward beyond mere survival.

THE RETURN OF "CIVILIZED" WARFARE

As widely hailed for their lofty goals as the Ares Conventions were, their use, to many historians and military experts alike, has been both a blessing and a curse to the people of the Inner Sphere. Though it has always been difficult to enforce policies of this nature, the Ares Conventions hoped to protect the common people from the horrible effects of total war by outlawing the use of weapons of mass destruction and combat in urban centers, and instituting fair and humane treatment of defeated warriors and captured citizens.

In the years after nearly all nations had signed the historic pact, the horrors of nuclear and chemical warfare did indeed fade with time for most of humankind. This became especially true after the advent of the BattleMech, which enabled commanders to field a versatile mix of purely conventional firepower that instantly trumped almost any other weapon system permitted under the new rules of war.

However, these laws—and the development of 'Mechs—also transformed war from a horror to be avoided to a legitimate means of settling interstellar and international disputes. So long as no realm had to fear its own destruction in a no-holds-barred war of annihilation, the Ares Conventions effectively advocated the use of force as a principal part of diplomacy, a use to which far too many leaders in the Inner Sphere would resort over time.

That effect can most clearly be seen when one compares the first three Succession Wars. The first two saw a disregard of the Conventions and a corresponding level of destruction so severe that it literally pounded entire worlds into a new Dark Age. By the time of the Third War, in fact, so much damage had been wrought that the various factions had lost the ability to produce many of the massive weapons and ships needed to prosecute such wars again.

By the time war resumed in 2866, the leaders realized that their campaigns to destroy one another's infrastructure had come dangerously close to accomplishing just that. What remained now held far greater value than ever before, a lifeline no one could afford to lose, no matter who struck the next blow. Ironically enough, it was House Kurita who began "fighting by the rules" again first, steering battles away from vital objectives (though surrender flags still were fired upon and population centers remained a favored battle zone), in the hopes of capture rather than destruction. Though full adherence to the Conventions never came back into force, the new unwritten rules saved industries and technology from the further attrition and caught on quickly among the other realms. War "evolved" into a chess match of raids, maneuvers and captures once again, with BattleMechs ideally suited to all three.

Such things vindicated the supporters of these "rules of war," but also extended the endurance of the nations who lived by them. Where the First and Second Succession Wars raged for three decades each, the Third would be fought across hundreds of worlds for the next one hundred and fifty nine years. And still, in the end, nothing had changed.

—Ben Roman, *Bang! You're Dead! And Other Games Kids Shouldn't Play*, Renegade Press, 3044



Unfortunately for Eric Steiner, he would never live to see his goal achieved. Later in 2913, during the opening moves of his bold new campaign, Archon Eric was killed in battle, ironically while commanding the Third Royal Guards to retake the world of Freedom. Though his death created a brief power vacuum and stalled the counteroffensive, Operation Freedom remained the LCAF mandate for generations to come.

In the wake of Eric Steiner's death, Tatyana Steiner, the late Archon's daughter, became the Commonwealth's next ruler. Though her brother, Simon Borge, held the rightful claim as Eric's oldest child, he abandoned it on the eve of his ascent, citing "personal limitations" in his decision not to assume the Archonship. The dramatic announcement ended weeks of speculation about the succession, which had begun when both siblings initially claimed the throne, and led many who supported Tatyana over Simon to breathe a sigh of relief that the prospect of a civil war had been averted.

Throughout the twenty-three year reign of Archon Tatyana, her son Marco Steiner's fifteen-year rule, and the twenty-eight years of Giovanni Steiner's Archonship after him, the Commonwealth carried on Archon Eric Steiner's legacy, fighting to reclaim its lost worlds and drive back its enemies. Against the determined efforts of the Draconis Combine, however, such efforts succeeded gradually at best. Among the highlights of this period were three major assaults against Tamar between 2916 and 2976, a devastating assault on Hesperus II in 2957, and the two-year battle for Alexandria that began in 2953 when a simple objective raid mushroomed into one of the biggest battles of the Third Succession War. Consuming seven different BattleMech regiments and four times as many infantry and armor regiments on both sides before the Combine forces finally withdrew, the Alexandria campaign demonstrated the Commonwealth's increasing tenacity after nearly a century of warfare.

THE FREE WORLDS FRONT

The Free Worlds League's assault on the Commonwealth began in earnest in 2869, three years after the Combine's blitzkrieg smashed through the LCAF border defenses and thrust deep into the Federation of Skye. Hoping to capitalize on their would-be allies' success, the bulk of the initial League invasion also focused on the Skye region, but the approach was much more cautious. Nonetheless, the LCAF found itself hard-pressed to keep the new invaders at bay after trying to hold back the Combine offensive for so long. Within a decade, House Marik's eagle standard flew over the Lyran worlds of Amity, New Hope and Nestor, as well as several nearby worlds, while the Commonwealth struggled to hold back further incursions.

Fortunately, the Commonwealth defense along the Free Worlds front proved more effective than along the Combine border. Compounded by the distraction of heavier action on its Capellan flank, the League military faced stiffer resistance along the Lyran border, which stalled their advance and quickly reduced the fighting to series of raids and counterstrikes. This stalemate held for decades, until soon after Archon Eric's death at the start of his Operation Freedom campaign.

In an effort to regain momentum for their stillborn counteroffensive, the Commonwealth military found itself focused on the Combine front, where enemy incursions were deepest, and the key regional capitals of Tamar and Skye remained threatened. This focus

allowed the League to renew its long-stalled assault, once more focusing more on the worlds of the Skye Federation than on the anti-spinward territories. Though some actions, such as the 2913 attack on Loric, ended in failure, a determined push from 2917 to 2929 claimed such key Federation worlds as Callison, Shiloh and Wing.

As with the League's initial invasion, this renewed effort—far more cautious than that of the Commonwealth's enemy on the Combine front—again broke after its initial advance when the LCAF defenders regained their composure. Once more, the League-Commonwealth border sank into a stalemate of raids, though many more would be won by the League than the Commonwealth in the early decades of the war. For a full ten years during this time period, in fact, a League-sympathetic traitor from the LCAF Strategy and Tactics Division hindered any Lyran advances along this front. Only the eventual exposure of Hauptmann Mikhail Tertren in 2937 broke this losing trend and settled the League-Commonwealth border into a military equilibrium that remained largely unchanged until the reign of Giovanni Steiner and the 2971 Battle for Loric.

The Battle for Loric

Having spent the better part of the last decade in a series of seesaw battles on two fronts, the Free Worlds League finally struck again in 2971 with a major thrust at Loric. Though League forces had attacked the world twice before in this war alone, the 2971 invasion, which included two 'Mech regiments and eleven more of conventional forces, looked to be the start of a new campaign. Seeking to break a forty-year stalemate, the League's thrust aimed at dividing the Lyran border in two, cutting off the anti-spinward half of the Commonwealth much as the old Bolan Thumb had nearly accomplished centuries before.

The initial League advance swiftly captured Loric's primary continents, immediately putting the surviving LCAF garrison on the defensive. As they held on, Archon Giovanni Steiner called up a wave of reinforcements to break House Marik's thrust. Led by roughly two elite mercenary regiments, including two battalions of the famous Eridani Light Horse, this relief force shattered the League advance with a series of devastating combat drops, forcing them to abandon their gains and wage a guerrilla war for control over the planet. Though both sides remained mired in conflict for the next several months, the Free Worlds offensive had been stalled.

The years after this battle for Loric saw the League front reduced again to an endless exchange of raids and minor offensives, with much of the Free Worlds forces playing defender while their leaders squabbled over resources and blamed one another for the Loric debacle. Still hard-pressed on the Combine front, the LCAF made only minimal advances along the League border, preferring to maintain the status quo against what many commanders perceived to be the lesser of two evils.

During the resulting lull, the Archon authorized a brief release of JumpShips previously conscripted for the war effort by the LCAF to run mercy missions to the border worlds, though in some cases, these relief missions came too late to stave off civil unrest that had resulted from the disruption of local trade. In these years, the LCAF troops stationed along House Marik's front found their duties split between maintaining border security and keeping the peace.



HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE





STRATEGIC ERRORS

In 2980, Archon Giovanni Steiner died in a horse-riding accident, leaving a realm still struggling to reclaim its lost worlds to his son, Alessandro. A military man by nature, Archon Alessandro immediately focused his energies on building up the LCAF to blunt the ongoing Combine assaults along Tamar and Skye and to recover its military strength along the Free Worlds' line.

In 2987, Archon Alessandro launched an ambitious yet controversial series of raids against the Free Worlds League, intended to target planets not along the Commonwealth border, but along the boundaries of the Capellan Confederation. Though a stunning success militarily, with the hand-picked force successfully striking at worlds as far distant as Ryerson, the mission failed to bring any real material gains to the Commonwealth, and the fact that the Archon had kept much of the LCAF and the government in the dark about the operation unnerved many.

Despite criticism of his rule, Alessandro continued to pursue the goals of Operation Freedom, and revamped the ongoing campaign with an infusion of troops in the early 2990s. These efforts soon bore fruit; by 2997, the LCAF had reclaimed four more former Commonwealth planets in a series of protracted engagements with the Combine military.

Nevertheless, the Commonwealth military was stretching itself thin. On the Combine front, sixteen worlds claimed before the start of the Third War remained under the Dragon's banner, each one heavily fortified in the face of the Lyrans' counterassault. In the meantime, a series of raids along the Free Worlds League border had yet to produce any tangible results, with even the "dazzling success" of the 2987 deep raids open to debate.

Rejecting the requests of the nobility and the Estates General, Archon Alessandro stubbornly refused to let up on his renewed counterassault against the Combine, even as the LCAF encountered increasing resistance in their drive against occupied space and worlds on the Commonwealth side of the borders screamed for relief ships that never came. Then, in 2997, the Free Worlds League hit back with another strike against the factories on Hesperus II.

The Tenth Battle of Hesperus II

For the Free Worlds League, the Tenth Battle of Hesperus II was doomed almost before it began. Intended as a heavy raid against the bunkers and warehouses far from the main factories, the League troops tripped the planet's early warning systems before they could reach their objective, giving the Tenth Lyrans' Guards regiment, commanded by Colonel Katrina Steiner—the Archon's niece—enough time to make a sub-orbital hop to the combat zone. There, the Tenth Guards executed a low-altitude combat drop right on top of the weaker League force, shattering them within less than an hour after the shooting started. The League troops broke and withdrew almost immediately from Hesperus II.

As the largest League offensive launched in more than a decade, the so-called Tenth Battle of Hesperus II, though an unqualified victory for the Commonwealth, led to a series of disastrous events for the Archon. Interpreting the easy failure of this strike as a sign that Hesperus would not be invaded again, Archon Alessandro pulled three of the planet's five 'Mech regiments—replacing them with less than two from the Eridani Light Horse mercenary command—for use in an attack on the important League factory world of Kalidasa. The invasion of Kalidasa in mid-2998, however, bogged down almost immediately, tying up the Commonwealth troops for almost two years while Hesperus II suffered two more attacks between 2998 and 3000.

Though the Light Horse mercenaries and the regular defenders left behind on Hesperus eventually drove off both attacks, the disastrous near-loss of its factories on both occasions, while the troops normally assigned the planet's defense fought a losing battle on foreign soil, sent shock waves through the LCAF. The League attack, launched within months after the Kalidasa strike had begun, would have been bad enough; then, within twelve months of the invaders' departure, a second force—including three regiments of Combine BattleMechs—hammered the still-recovering defenders.

In both cases, the incompetence of the local garrison commander, Lieutenant General Wilhelm Mouttheim, compounded the disasters as he consistently misdirected the assigned mercenaries placed under his command. In the end, these failures eroded the LCAF's respect for Archon Alessandro's decision to press the attack on Kalidasa for so long and also cost the Commonwealth one of the best mercenary units in its employ; in December of 3000, a disgusted Eridani Light Horse ended its service with the Commonwealth military.

THE GATHERING STORM

"...On Pangkalan today, rioting continued in the capital city of Langii, with more than one hundred local citizens arrested by elements of the Pangkalan Peacekeepers Citizens' Infantry Regiment in the fifth day of unrest over the local government's handling of the water rationing system and news that parts for the Capital Valley purifier had been delayed for the seventh straight week. Planetary Duke Khallah Annis remarked to reporters that the rioting—which has left more than seven hundred dead since civil unrest began with the departure of LCAF troops two years ago—is the worst violence Pangkalan has seen, 'since the Food Scare of 2787'.

"Meanwhile, on the Marik Front, local officials on Poulso still say there is no word on the whereabouts of Katrina Steiner, the Archon's niece and a known critic of his recent military policies. Though her disappearance comes in the wake of a spike in recent pirate activity, military authorities on Poulso have denied initial reports that the Lieutenant General from the LCAF's Strategy and Tactics Division was killed in action.

"Poulso's Duke, Carson Harras, has further added his strenuous denial of rumors that Steiner may have been abducted by members of Loki or any other Commonwealth military or secret police force, and has said that local military and police officials are engaged in an exhaustive search for the Lieutenant General, including the surrounding worlds.

"Archon Alessandro Steiner has yet to comment on this latest incident."

—From the *Alarion Morning Report*, Alarion News Network, 4 April 3004



HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

UNWELCOME, UNEXPECTED, UNPREPARED

Pandolvski: Who are these guys, Chief?

Zombarov: Hold your tongue and get to ambush position, kid! I ain't telling you again!

Pandolvski: [unintelligible]

Zombarov: Damn it, clear the lines! We got bandits coming up in the valley. Base! I read twelve—that's one-two—raider tracks emerging from the first Dropper! No 'Mechs yet...

PSW HQ: Port Base confirms, Whiskey Leader. Be advised, a second *Union* is inbound your position. ETA T-minus two-five minutes.

Pandolvski: Blake's Blood! *Two!*?

Zombarov: I said keep it calm, kid! We got us a whole company backing you up here! Ain't no pirate going to get through our line if we just keep our heads clear!

Pandolvski: Chief! What if they're not pirates?

Zombarov: [unintelligible] I already told you, Pandolovski. We're too far for the Snakes to worry about. These are just—

Ryans: Chief! I have visual on a logo!

Zombarov: Show me! [pause] What is that? No, wait, pan your gun cam down. [pause] Can't be! Base! Confirm this visual! Ryans, feed that to Base!

Ryans: Sir!

PSW HQ: [long pause] Port Base has visual feed. Confirming Warbook! Unit identity confirmed as Third Battalion, Fourth Regular Hussars—

Pandolovski: Fourth *who!*?

Zombarov: That's a Marik outfit! Christ, what the hell is going on here!? How did a Marik unit get he—

Ryans: Chief! Look out!

[Jets scream past. Explosions sound.]

Zombarov: Base! Taking fire from hostile aerospace! Where the hell did *they* come from!?

PSW HQ: Whiskey Company, new orders! Fall back to secondary nav point and regroup! Base confirms two more incoming Droppers your position! Make to secondary point and defend the factories from incoming Marik assault force!

Pandolovski: Assault force!? Aerospace!? Chief, this is a total cluster-malf! We're not trained to handle *any* of this!

Zombarov: Cut the chatter and form up, Pandolovski! This ain't the time to fall apart!

—Excerpt from comm logs of Whiskey Company Commander, Acting Hauptmann Nigel Zombarov, First Coventry Citizens Regiment, Coventry, 9 June 3006

Concentrated Weakness

In the wake of the eventual failure of the Kalidasa campaign and the two close calls on Hesperus II, morale among the LCAF and the Lyran people at large fell into a sharp decline. Critics of the Archon's failed military and domestic strategies grew louder as faith in the government eroded. Ever the warrior leader, however, Archon Alessandro remained optimistic that one victorious campaign could win back the people. In 3002, he drafted and initiated his bold new plan for an invasion of the Free Worlds League, an operation he dubbed Concentrated Weakness.

Concentrated Weakness called for massing LCAF troops on the Free Worlds League border—at the time, the weakest of the Commonwealth's two fronts—which would create a nearly impenetrable wall of force that League offensives could not break. These forces, drawn from interior garrisons in a revision of the strategy used during Archon Marcus Steiner's reign early in the Third War, would at some later point surge across the League border en masse, overwhelming the Free Worlds' defenses in a thrust far more ambitious than had ever been launched in Lyran history.

The Archon's controversial plan created a wave of dissent, from military commanders shocked by the stripping of defenses from key interior worlds, and from the interior worlds themselves, which were struggling with long-standing trade disruptions already caused by the war effort. Over their objections, Archon Alessandro launched his plan, which won some initial successes when the increased troops stopped cold a new two-pronged League offensive aimed at Loric and Solaris VII. Rioting on the poorer worlds whose garrisons had departed to enhance the League front lingered for another two years, however, and rumblings of discontent continued to divide the LCAF, with some critics of the Archon looking to his niece, then-Leutnant General Katrina Steiner, as a better alternative for the Tharkan throne.

THE KATRINA CONSPIRACY?

A lot of historians laud Katrina Steiner for her efforts at reforming the Commonwealth, her role as co-architect of the FedCom alliance, and so many other wonderful things that it can make a grown man weep, but what they all seem to overlook is how she came to power. Does it not seem odd that Katrina vanishes along the League front for two years, then just happens to come back for Archon Alessandro's forty-ninth birthday in Tharkad City, no questions asked? Does it not also seem odd that, within weeks of her return, the first DropShips are seen burning toward Bolan and Pollux, marking the beginning of a major raiding campaign by—of all folks—House Marik?

Katrina may have done much to reform the state's military, and she may have managed to depose good old Uncle Al without having to storm the Triad, but, dear friends, do not for one second believe this sham that her return from exile was some stroke of blind fortune. Indeed, a more logical explanation is plain to all: Katrina conspired with the likes of the Mariks—which one hardly matters at this point in history—to bring war to her people, to terrorize them in the very heart of the nation, all to “magnanimously” save them from the demon of war Alessandro had become.

Before you idolize Katrina, or any of those who come after her, know first the woman who saw an opportunity to rise to greatness on the bodies of her fellow Lyrans!

—From *Children of the True House Steiner Unite!*, a dissident pamphlet, circa 3031



KATRINA'S COUP

In 3004, while making an apparently routine inspection of the Poulsobo garrison in her capacity as a representative of the Strategy and Tactics Division, Leutenant General Katrina Steiner inexplicably vanished. The rumors began almost at once, implying that a growing power struggle between the Archon and his niece had forced the Leutenant General into exile. Though her disappearance coincided with an upsurge in local pirate activity, theories abounded among the Archon's critics that he had discreetly eliminated his perceived rival. A number of Katrina's supporters feared for their lives in the coming years, while the Archon—seemingly unaware of the growing dissent within the LCAF leadership—simply continued his plans for a League-wide invasion.

In 3006, well before the LCAF offensive could be launched, a string of heavy raids struck at a series of vital industrialized worlds not just along the borders, but deep within the heartlands of the Commonwealth. The Free Worlds League, making use of their own version of the deep raids strategy Alessandro had used soon after assuming the throne, hit worlds as far from their borders as Coventry, catching the garrisons depleted by the Concentrated Weakness policy. The raiders ravaged key factories and administrative centers on Alarion, Bolan, Coventry and Pollux, nearly destroying many of the primary facilities on several occasions before the depleted local defenders could drive them off.

Shortly before these attacks, Leutenant General Katrina Steiner resurfaced on Tharkad after a nearly two-year absence, once more becoming a magnet for the loyal opposition to Archon Alessandro's leadership. At the news of these attacks, she openly declared her uncle unfit to rule, a sentiment shared by enough of the Estates General for them to call the Archon before them. The debate before the Estates General proved a disaster for the Archon when, after four hours in heated discussion about the failings of his military and domestic policies, Alarion's representative, Kevin Flanagan, called for—and received—a vote of no confidence in the Archon.

The vote, and a subsequent confrontation with several members of the High Command on the steps of Government House, exposed the loss of support that the Archon had long refused to see. On 22 July 3007, Alessandro Steiner announced his retirement as Archon of the Lyran Commonwealth, naming Leutenant General Katrina Steiner as his successor.



DAWN OF THE FEDERATED COMMONWEALTH

"I must agree with my colleague from Skye, Mister Speaker. This alliance with Davion is sheer lunacy! Just because we haven't been shot at by FedSuns troops in over two hundred years doesn't mean we should start investing Lyran tax kroners in Hanse Davion's war machine!"

—Representative Arturo LeSat, quoted in Government House Transcripts: 3025, Government Press, 3026

Though the Third Succession War was far from over when Katrina Steiner assumed the Archonship, for the Lyran Commonwealth, 3007 represented a turning point in history. The Third War, now in its fourteenth decade, had been reduced to a simmer of raiding on both the Combine and Free Worlds fronts. While major campaigns remained to be waged in the following years by other realms, including two heavy raiding campaigns launched against the Commonwealth in 3015 and 3019 by the Free Worlds League-employed Wolf's Dragoons mercenary command, the LCAF response would remain comparatively limited to defensive actions and leftover objectives of the long-dormant Operation Freedom campaign.

Instead of embarking on new military adventures, however, Archon Katrina's first order of business was to alleviate some of the pressures that had built during Alessandro's reign. Reversing Alessandro's Concentrated Weakness policy, she rotated many LCAF units back to their vital interior world postings, and then reasigned their transport JumpShips to run several mercy missions in the frontiers in order to promote the recovery of local infrastructure and trade.

FORGING A FUTURE: ALLIANCE WITH THE FEDSUNS

"I'm sick to death of these damned 'Social Generals'! The Commonwealth is filled with them! You'd think after three hundred years, the Elsie's would realize this isn't a bloody game we're playing at here!"

—Attributed to Marshal Vivian Chou, Twentieth Avalon Hussars RCT, AFFS, 3027

Peace Proposal

In 3020, Archon Katrina Steiner became the first ruler in the Inner Sphere to openly acknowledge the futility of the Third Succession War and call for a cease-fire between the other Successor States. All four of the other House Lords denounced the Archon's initial peace proposal as unworkable, but the reply from First Prince Hanse Davion of the Federated Suns praised the effort and demonstrated enough respect that the two leaders eventually opened a dialogue with an eye toward a possible alliance. In May of 3022, after sixteen months of discussions, the Lyran Commonwealth and the Federated Suns signed a treaty formalizing an economic, cultural and military exchange that would, over time, allow for both realms to unite in a grand alliance.

To seal the bargain, secret provisions in the treaty betrothed the Archon's daughter, Archon-Designate Melissa Steiner, to Hanse Davion. The marriage, which would take place at some later date,



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was intended to formalize the union of one of the Inner Sphere's most historically powerful militaries with its most economically and industrially developed realm. Before that day, however, the two allies would spend five years honing their military edges, coordinating a series of war games exercises while students—both military and civilian—learned from the most prestigious and renowned schools in each realm, and while free trade agreements opened broad new markets for merchants on both sides. Even before the final end of the Third Succession War in the waning months of 3025, the seeds of the Federated Commonwealth alliance were already bearing fruit.

Military Readiness

For the Commonwealth, the earliest steps in preparing for the eventual unification of the two realms practically heralded the next forty years of conflicts to come. Though Katrina Steiner had approached discussions of an alliance in the hopes of cementing a lasting peace after the Third Succession War, political and physical reality forced her to concede to Prince Hanse Davion's view that any lasting union would require a powerful demonstration of military might.

To that end, the FedSuns proposed to launch a campaign focused largely on establishing a corridor through Capellan space, while the Commonwealth would support the effort by keeping the Combine and Free Worlds League—both nominal Confederation allies after the formation of their Concord of Kapteyn in 3024—occupied. To prepare for such a grand campaign, the movements of Lyran and Federated troops along the border were disguised as part of international war games exercises held by the new allies, dubbed Operations Galahad and Thor.

In addition to hiding troop movements in plain view, these exercises quickly demonstrated the differences in methods and tactics used by the allied nations. Indeed, the more militarily adept FedSuns troops made a veritable laughingstock of some Commonwealth units during the first of these exercises, the Alliance Games of 3024 (held on New Earth), primarily because of the prevalence of so-called "Social Generals" in the LCAF's ranks. Though Archon Katrina Steiner and many of her predecessors had long struggled to limit the influence of these officers, whose positions derived more from political acumen than military prowess, the humiliating losses in the Alliance Games demonstrated the ongoing need for a leadership overhaul within the Lyran military.

Archon Katrina and LCAF General of the Armies Edward Regis wholeheartedly pursued this effort over the next few years, struggling to improve the capabilities of the Commonwealth fighting forces in time for the eventual marriage. Though many in the High Command balked, and whispers of a "Davion takeover" grew louder with each change in procedures, the LCAF demonstrated remarkable improvements over the series of Commonwealth exercises that made up Operation Thor.

FATEFUL UNION: THE FOURTH SUCCESSION WAR (3028-3030)

"Hanse Davion, now there's a character! Who else but him would give his bride an entire nation as a wedding present? (And yet, considering the geographical shape of the Confederation, he let the part she really wanted go free!)"

—Anatoli Thorn, *This Ridiculous Universe We Live In*, Renegade Press, 3040

The marriage of Archon-Designate Melissa Steiner and First Prince Hanse Davion took place on 20 August 3028, with the leaders of all three of the Inner Sphere's other Great Houses in attendance. At the reception afterward, as the bride and groom exchanged gifts over the wedding cake, Hanse Davion uttered his often-quoted announcement of the start of the Fourth Succession War by saying, "Wife, in honor of our marriage, in addition to this morsel...I give you the Capellan Confederation!" As the assembled leaders reacted in shock, the combined armies of the Lyran Commonwealth and the Federated Suns launched a massive campaign, largely targeted against the Capellan Confederation and the Draconis Combine.

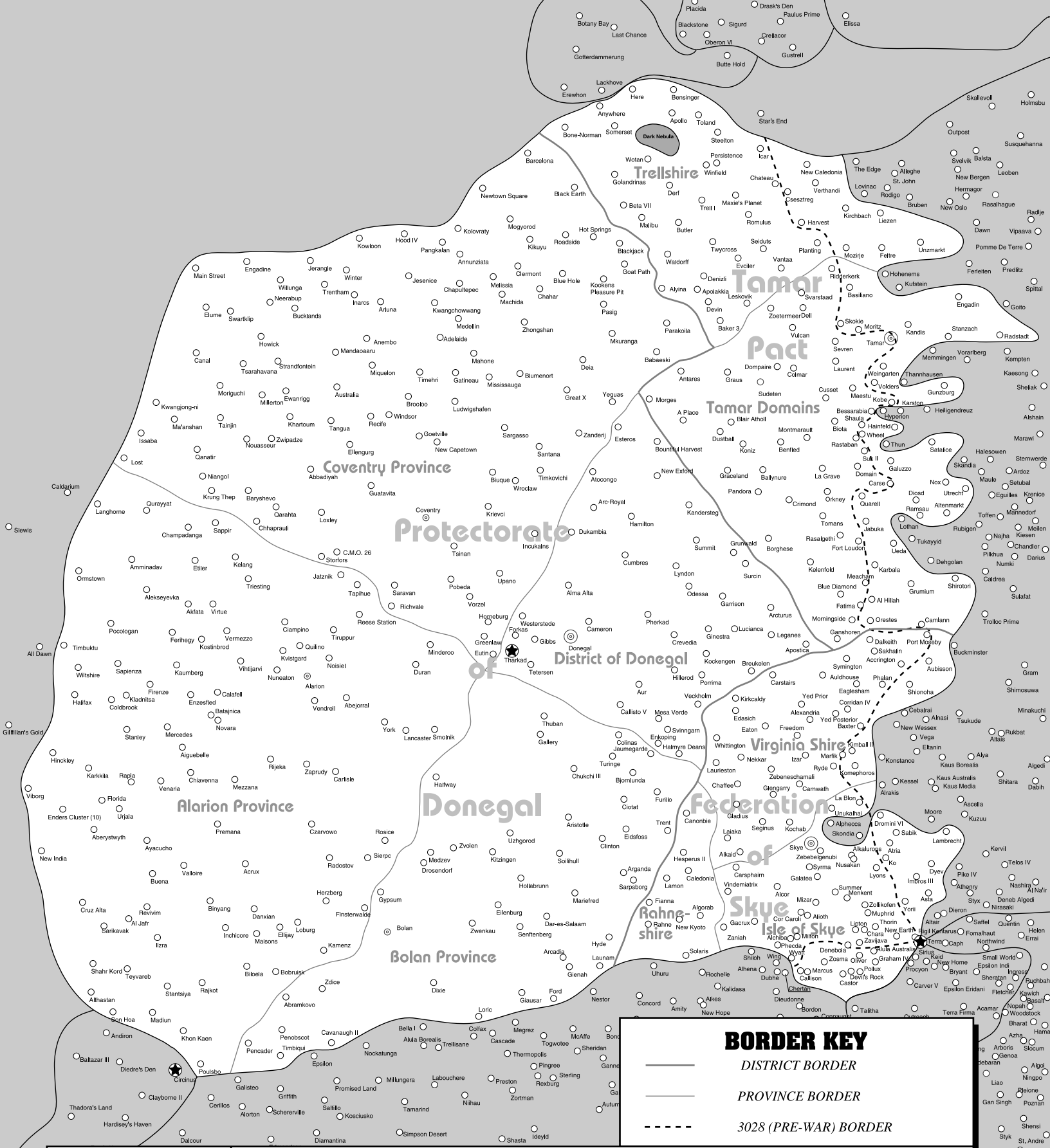
BRAGGING RIGHTS

If it did nothing else—forget about changing the map and forging great alliances, and all that other stuff only historians and politicians care about—the Fourth Succession War showed us, once and for all, the supreme differences between the Lyran military mentality and that of the Federated Suns. For the Commonwealth, you see a military accustomed to defensive fighting, shot full of holes on the command level because half its bloated officer corps consists of those infamous "social generals" they have. (Mental note to the next nation seeking allies: if your new friend's generals value their grooming over their troops, there's something seriously wrong with them!)

For the FedSuns, you've got a nation that's seen the best and the worst a man or a people can do, folks who know that the guys on the other side of the line don't care who your daddy is, or your cousin, or your uncle, and that an autocannon can kill you just as easy as it does them. We know the value of the preemptive strike, having been on both sides of them enough times. We know you don't just sit back while the Snakes are pounding on your door; you go for their throats and strangle the life out of them—before they even see you coming, if that's necessary.

Okay, maybe that's a bit unfair, but the idea's sound, and in the Fourth War, you could really see the differences. For the Lyrans, it was just an offensive adaptation of their long-standing defensive strategy. The enemy can't get through your "wall of steel," so logically, an attack simply consists of moving your "wall" through them. The Lyrans thus put all their proverbial eggs in one basket and swept forward in one big push. Subtle as a PPC, but at least ol' man Kurita was too distracted by the Wolves on his border to care, right?

Then you have the Suns, who don't try to take twenty to thirty worlds in a pop, but start with nine to ten at a time, leapfrogging in troops. The same "wall" is not being advanced into Cappie space; it's two, three different groups, each getting the time they need to relax, consolidate and prepare for the next surge. Sure, it took seven waves to the Commonwealth's two, but we took about twice as many worlds in doing it—half of it while blind! In fact, if it weren't for the ComStar Interdiction, I'm sure we'd all be talking about the Cappies in the past tense. It took the Hand of Blake himself to slow us down, while the Lyrans get stuck when little Teddy K. hits two worlds near Skye. Boo hoo! (Hell, if it were me, and the enemy wanted my most troublesome core of dissent, I'd have just let them go with it, but maybe that's why I don't have brass on my shoulders any more...)



LYRAN COMMONWEALTH
 after
Fourth Succession War (3030)
 © 3067 COMSTAR CARTOGRAPHIC CORPS

LEGEND

30 LIGHT YEARS

120 LIGHT YEARS OR 26.8 PARSECS

MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS

Coreward
Spinward
Anti-spinward
Rimward



In just two years, the Fourth Succession War would change the Inner Sphere forever. Not only was it the first time since the start of the Succession Wars that two Successor States formally united in a full-scale alliance, but the sheer scope of the campaign effectively cut the Capellan Confederation in half and created a corridor of worlds running through the heart of the Inner Sphere to join the Commonwealth and the Suns.

The Combine Campaigns

By far, the most effective campaigns waged by the Lyran Commonwealth during the Fourth War were those directed against the Draconis Combine, long considered the greater threat of the two realms' hostile neighbors. It also marked the first time in Lyran history that the LCAF initiated a major military offensive in the absence of a first strike by a foreign power. The timing of this offensive, commanded by General Nondi Steiner, Archon Katrina's sister, caught the Combine border troops at their weakest point in supplies and in troop capability, a result of a predictable routine of transfers the DCMS had fallen into since the end of the Third War.

In all, more than thirty BattleMech regiments and roughly five times as many supporting regiments took part in Operation Götterdämmerung, surging across the Draconis Combine border on the eve of Melissa Steiner's and Hanse Davion's wedding on Terra. Over the next two months, more than twenty Combine worlds fell to the Commonwealth offensive, and despite some stumbling blocks—such as the bogged-down invasions of Buckminster and Vega, and the escape of the Coordinator's heir, Theodore Kurita, on Marfik—a second wave launched in October netted another twenty for the Lyran forces.

Though the Lyran initiative left the Draconis Combine reeling during Götterdämmerung's first wave of attacks, by the second, the LCAF began encountering stiffer resistance. Worse still, supply lines were extending faster than the logistical command could keep up and the troops committed to the invasion were growing increasingly fatigued. In the midst of this, the Combine launched a counter-offensive at La Blon, a move that effectively placed the enemy counterattack in the midst of the Federation of Skye and created a political firestorm when Duke Aldo Lestrade IV of Summer, ally of the deposed Archon Alessandro Steiner and effective head of a resurgent and growing Skye independence movement, decried the attacks as a failure in Götterdämmerung's planning.

By January of 3029, the political and logistical problems plaguing the Commonwealth military combined to stall the continued invasion, but not before the LCAF had claimed close to forty worlds—many of them former Lyran holdings lost to earlier wars. A third wave of attacks launched later that year would net the Commonwealth several more along the Tamar and Skye fronts, but these victories came harder than those won earlier in the fighting. Plagued by continuing fatigue, by political and economic hardships on the home front, and by clever counterstrikes delivered by Combine forces—including the nearly disastrous Operation Contagion campaign barely stopped by LIC operatives over Dromini VI—the Commonwealth's momentum was undoubtedly grinding to a halt. The closing months of the war saw the Commonwealth-Combine front degenerate into a series of border raids as both sides found themselves unable to mount any further offensives.

The Free Worlds Campaigns

Comparatively speaking, the Free Worlds League border was peaceful during the early days of the Fourth Succession War, as Captain-General Janos Marik apparently hoped to keep his realm above the chaos of the fighting. With so much pressure against his Kapteyn allies, however, the League's ruler eventually felt compelled to act, and launched a series of attacks against the Skye region in October of 3028.

The campaign, more limited in scope than any other of the war, failed to deter the Commonwealth advances against House Kurita, largely because internal difficulties within the League had deprived the Captain-General of much-needed support. Furthermore, the presence of elite Commonwealth troops on key border worlds made the League pay dearly for every gain. Making matters worse for the Free Worlds, the Duchy of Andurien seceded and declared war against the Capellan Confederation, effectively opening up a second front for House Marik to contend with.

Fortunately for the Commonwealth, the losses to the Free Worlds League's Operation Dagger soon turned when the Capellan Confederation's Tikonov Commonality seceded with aid from the Federated Suns, forming the Tikonov Free Republic. At the urging of FedSuns agents, Pavel Ridzik, Supreme Lord of the newborn Republic, launched a supporting attack against the League in an effort to reclaim ancestral worlds of the Tikonov Commonality. The offensive took the League completely by surprise, especially as it came in the midst of negotiations that the Captain-General hoped would bring the Republic into the Free Worlds League.

The Republic's assault threw the League campaign along the Commonwealth border into chaos and ultimately sapped the last of Operation Dagger's momentum. Once more on the defensive, with hostilities on the Andurien-Capellan border heating up, the Free Worlds leadership lost all hope of holding off an anticipated Commonwealth counterassault. When Lyran troops struck at Callison and threatened other worlds along the League front, Captain-General Marik ordered a general troop withdrawal, ceding fourteen worlds he believed were threatened with imminent attack. This withdrawal reversed nearly every gain made during Operation Dagger in the prior year, most without a single shot fired.

Now, don't get me wrong; I have nothing but the utmost respect for the Elsies. They make some of the finest cars in the universe, build some of the toughest 'Mechs, and have some of the cutest leaders any man could ever want to go out and die for. But the next time we ally ourselves with someone, we really ought to be sure they can fight their way out of a wet paper sack first.

—Timothy Ulso, Marshal (ret), quoted in *Suffering the Savages: The FedCom Remembered*, Free Skye Press, 3061



HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

GROWING PAINS: FOURTH WAR AFTERMATH

On 10 January 3030, Archon Katrina Steiner and Prince Hanse Davion announced the cessation of offensive campaigns for both of their realms, leading to the final peace treaty signed by all but the Capellan Confederation on 19 February. At the war's end, the Commonwealth had claimed a total of 53 worlds from the Draconis Combine—less Alphecca and Skondia, which were captured during Theodore Kurita's abortive Operation Contagion campaign—and thirteen more along the Free Worlds front. Moreover, many of the conquered Capellan worlds, true to Hanse Davion's wedding-day promise at the start of the war, fell under Lyran aegis. These gains brought more than a hundred new worlds into the forming Federated Commonwealth, including those of the Tikonov Free Republic when the FedCom absorbed that state in September of 3031.

The gains had come at a terrible price, however. More than 100 million lives were lost on all sides during the Fourth Succession War, with many more wounded or displaced—despite a stronger adherence to the more “civilized” rules of war. Of all five states involved in the conflict, only the Free Worlds League came away relatively unscathed militarily and economically.

For the Commonwealth's part, disrupted trade along the Combine border and the conscription of civilian JumpShips to support the war effort once again ravaged the economy. Meanwhile, stress fractures in the nascent alliance, particularly in the relation between the disparate military and intelligence agencies, had sparked rivalries and grudges that would fester for years to come. Worse still, opponents of the alliance, particularly in the ever-rebellious Federation of Skye, grew more vociferous, despite the loss of such dissident leaders as Duke Aldo Lestrade IV (found murdered by parties unknown in 3029), former Archon Alessandro (who succumbed to cancer in late 3030) and Duke Frederick Steiner (who died leading a military action against the Combine's Operation Contagion on Dromini VI).

Nevertheless, at the dawn of the new decade, the Federated Commonwealth was born, a super-state stretching from one corner of the Inner Sphere to the other. With its rise came the beginnings of a new era.

Recognizing Rasalhague

In 3034, the nascent Federated Commonwealth was still struggling with the long and difficult process of integrating its military, economic and cultural bases under one unified banner and government, when the neighboring Draconis Combine pulled off a political coup. Theodore Kurita, heir to the Combine Coordinatorship and effective military commander of the Draconis Combine Mustered Soldiery, declared his official recognition of the Free Rasalhague Republic, setting free the few Rasalhagian worlds not captured by the Lyran Commonwealth during the Fourth Succession War.

Having agreed to recognize the Tyr movement as the legitimate government of the Rasalhagian people at the onset of the Fourth War, Archon Katrina Steiner found herself forced to release almost every Commonwealth gain to the new state. This act effectively created a buffer zone between the Draconis Combine and the Lyran half of the Federated Commonwealth. In the minds of many Lyrans—particularly those of the Tamar and Skye regions—it also invalidated

their efforts during the war. They saw the Rasalhagian worlds as an investment in resources, labor and—most of all—lives, which the Archon now casually threw away.

Widespread dissent accompanied the Archon's decision, exacerbated by the logistical and economic nightmare that followed as the Commonwealth found itself forced to rotate military units and settlers. Many citizens and local leaders—especially within the Tamar Pact—protested these acts, often quite violently. Compounding this crisis, many of the military forces deployed to the region included a number of AFFS units, stationed there as part of the military integration program. Suddenly tasked with riot control, their occasionally excessive efforts to quell unrest fueled the arguments of those opposed to the Steiner-Davion alliance.

Free Skye Rebellion

With the fires of resentment still burning, the recognition of the Free Rasalhague Republic and the ceding of “Lyran” worlds to the new state prompted a massive resurgence of a perennial secession movement in the Federation of Skye. As was the case in the recently captured territories being turned over to Rasalhagian rule, many FedSuns units happened to be stationed in the Federation of Skye when unrest turned to open rioting and even attacks on local troops. Once again, the AFFS garrisons reacted harshly to the perceived danger of Free Skye.

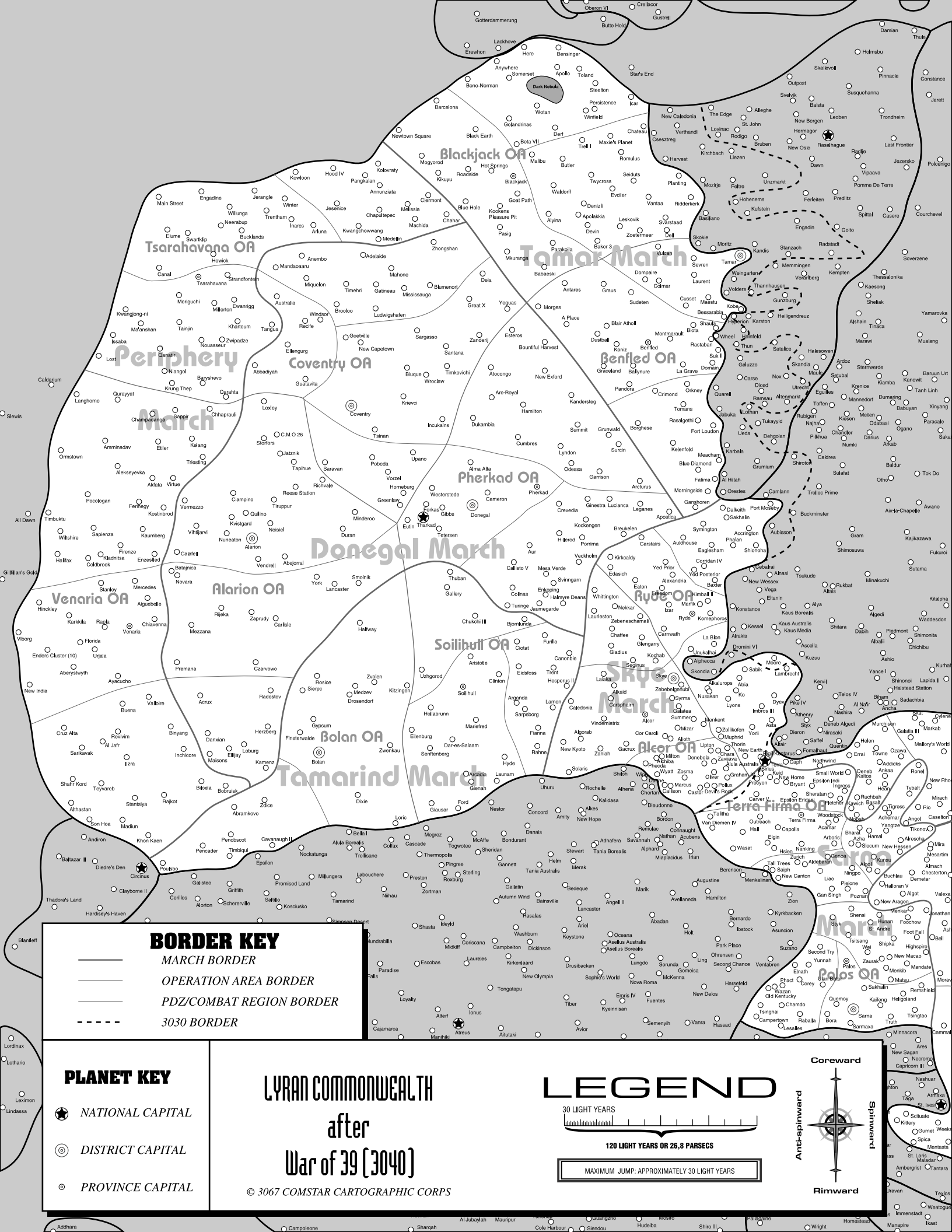
The reaction practically transformed widespread civil discontent into a full-blown rebellion, and indeed, many historians now refer to the so-called “Skye Crisis” as the First Skye Rebellion. At its worst, clashes between the FedSuns troops and separatists claimed the lives of an estimated two hundred Lyran citizens and a quarter as many AFFS servicemen. At the height of the rebellion, Free Skye rebels took over the Glasgow FerroMetals steel factory in the Skye capital city of New Glasgow, sparking a month-long standoff with police and military units sent to settle the crisis.

Only the intervention of Duke Ryan Steiner led to the peaceful end of the standoff and the Skye Crisis for the time being. Though Skye and Tamar both remained volatile regions for years to come, and many regarded Duke Ryan's loyalty to the Archon and the Lyran state as questionable at best, considering his own close ties to Free Skye, his intervention went a long way toward quelling the political firestorms of 3034 and 3035.

3039: A NATION STUMBLES

In 3039, Katrina Steiner stepped down as Archon of the Lyran Commonwealth, turning over the reins of power to her daughter, Melissa Steiner-Davion. This act came on the eve of what political observers had come to accept as a certainty since the end of the Fourth War: the final invasion of the Draconis Combine. Once more, Lyran troops joined with those of the Federated Suns in a major offensive designed to bring another Successor State to its knees. Though the reasons for this conflict centered on the reclamation of worlds lost to the Dragon on the Federated Suns front, many—especially within the Commonwealth—saw the entire affair as an unprovoked attack.

Like the Fourth Succession War before it, the War of 3039 was fought with effectively two command structures. The LCAF handled its share of the fighting one way, while the AFFS command fought it another way. With so much of the Lyran front confined to the rim-



BORDER KEY

- MARCH BORDER
- OPERATION AREA BORDER
- PDZ/COMBAT REGION BORDER
- 3030 BORDER

PLANET KEY

- NATIONAL CAPITAL
- DISTRICT CAPITAL
- PROVINCE CAPITAL

LYRAN COMMONWEALTH
 after
 War of 39 (3040)

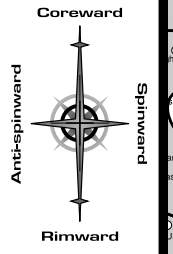
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LEGEND

0 10 20 30 LIGHT YEARS

120 LIGHT YEARS OR 26,8 PARSECS

MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS





HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

ward region thanks to the creation of the Free Rasalhague Republic, the balance of the fighting thus focused on the Federated Suns borders.

Complicating matters further, the Combine had recently forged an alliance with ComStar that gave them access to advanced Star League-era technology, including BattleMechs not seen in close to three centuries. In addition, *Gunji-no-Kanrei* Theodore Kurita had created several new regiments of secret troops by recruiting from the undesirable elements of Combine society. Though the Federated Commonwealth had begun to sport new weapons of its own, thanks to the recent discovery of the Helm memory core, the surprise factor of these new Combine weapons and troops, and their ability to wage a clever divide-and-conquer campaign against the under-coordinated troops of the FedCom allies, shattered any hope of a quick and easy victory for Prince Hanse Davion.

For the Commonwealth, the telling blow of the war came in July of 3039, four months into what had been a wildly successful assault that brought Lyran forces as deep into the Combine as Vega. A team of Draconis Combine commandos managed to hit a Lyran high command meeting on that planet on the eve of a second-wave offensive. The strike killed most of the LCAF's top commanders, nearly including Field Marshal Nondi Steiner, who had until then been in charge of the Commonwealth thrust. Decapitated, the Lyran thrust collapsed. A simultaneous Combine counteroffensive against FedSuns worlds at Saffel, Fomalhaut and Quentin likewise convinced the AFFS that the Dragon had far more strength than intelligence had led the troops to believe.

With command over the war now in shambles, and Combine troops fielding greater numbers and better technology than previously thought possible, the invasion collapsed on both sides by January of 3040. Though in the end the Federated Commonwealth came out ahead, capturing seven planets to the Combine's three, the War of 3039 proved a dismal failure. More than a decade would pass before the leaders of the Federated Commonwealth learned that the Combine counteroffensive had been little more than an elaborate bluff, executed by a nation on the edge of collapse.

THE RETURN OF KERENSKY

"All right, I give up. Just who the hell are these guys?"

—Attributed to Colonel Hannah Caitlin, Twelfth Star Guards (Third Regiment), Icar, 20 March 3050

Over the decade that followed the disastrous War of 3039, efforts to further integrate the militaries of the Federated Commonwealth proceeded in earnest, ultimately creating the Armed Forces of the Federated Commonwealth (AFFC) by 3042. In the meantime, the economic and industrial might of the newly united states recovered from the strains of war. Though tensions remained high in some regions not fully accustomed to the idea of integration—particularly within the tumultuous Federation of Skye (now known as the Skye March, after the AFFC military reorganization)—the Commonwealth stood as the single most powerful nation in the Inner Sphere.

Given the events that led to its formation and that had followed barely a decade later, however, few doubted that war would resume again soon as the Steiner-Davion alliance sought to complete the campaigns of the recent past. Yet even as the Federated Commonwealth regrouped and gathered its strength, so did its enemies. The Free Worlds League, all but forgotten in the last two conflicts, had put its own house in order, and boasted a strong enough economy to give the mercantile masters of the Lyran state a run for their money. The Capellan Confederation, though broken, had become a hard shell of fanatical warriors, desperate to overcome any enemy, and had proven as much in the Canopian-Andurien War of the early 3030s. The Draconis Combine, of course, had already demonstrated its strength as well, and could only grow stronger as the years crawled by.

Sooner or later, the Commonwealth leaders realized, one or more of these enemies would rise to oppose them, if for no other reason than to avenge their losses in the Fourth Succession War. Yet even as the people of the Inner Sphere mentally prepared for the inevitable Fifth Succession War, a new menace went unnoticed as the worlds of the coreward Periphery suddenly began to fall silent.

FIRST CONTACT

Hazen: Attention, Defenders of Barcelona! I, Star Colonel Devon Hazen, commander of the Ninth Talon Cluster of the Jade Falcons, slayer of Wolves, of Snow Ravens and of Ghost Bears, hereby challenge you to a Trial of Possession for your world, its resources and its people, in the name of the almighty Clan Jade Falcon, Avengers of DeChavilier! What forces dare to face Turkina's claws and resist our righteous Crusade?

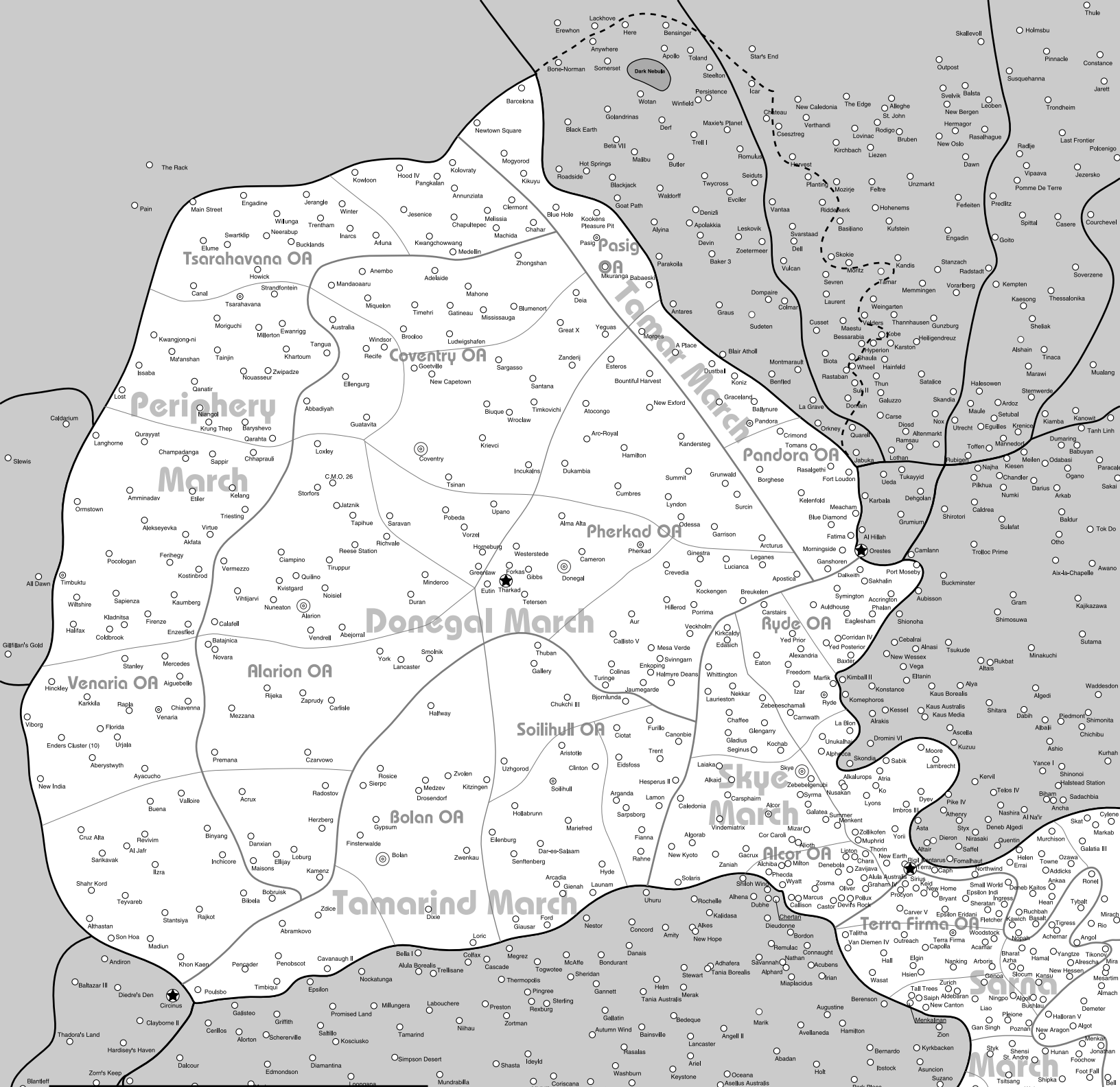
Simons: Attention, intruders! This is Lieutenant General Mitchell Simons of the Armed Forces of the Federated Commonwealth. We do not recognize your rank, your unit or your House, and we certainly do not recognize your claim to the lives and lands of Commonwealth citizens. Withdraw from this system at once, or you will be dealt with as hostile intruders. We don't take kindly to pirates here.

Hazen: Insolent *surat*! We are no pirates, and we belong to no *savashri* House. We are Jade Falcon, and we have come to purge the Inner Sphere of your corruption!

Simon: It will take more than insults and indignant banter to defeat my Rangers, Mister Jade Falcon! Better than you have tried, and better than you have died!

Hazen: So be it, *freeborn*! On this day, you shall know the wrath of the Falcon, and will fall before the swift wings of justice!

—Transcript of the Jade Falcon *batchall* for Barcelona, 23 March 3050



BORDER KEY

- MARCH BORDER
- OPERATION AREA BORDER
- PDZ/COMBAT REGION BORDER
- 3050 (PRE-WAR) BORDER

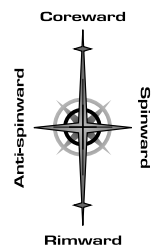
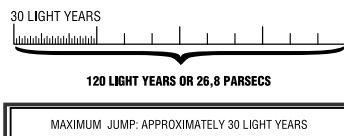
PLANET KEY

- NATIONAL CAPITAL
- DISTRICT CAPITAL
- PROVINCE CAPITAL

LYRAN COMMONWEALTH after Clan Invasion (3052)

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LEGEND





HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

THE FEDCOM AND THE CLANS

In 3050, the reason for the sudden silence in the Periphery—including the loss of mercenary commands sent into the region to curb recent pirate activities—became painfully clear when invaders struck at the coreward worlds of the Federated Commonwealth, Free Rasalhague Republic and Draconis Combine. Wielding weapons and technology far in advance of even the long-vanished SLDF, fielding nigh invincible armored infantry and demonstrating odd customs even in the heat of battle, several panicked observers assumed the invaders were alien beings.

In the months that followed, the Inner Sphere learned the identity of its attackers. They called themselves the Clans, and they were the genetically and technologically enhanced descendants of the departed Star League military. Driven now to restore the shattered Star League in their own image by first conquering its squabbling Successor States, the Clans tore through a huge swath of worlds in just two years, all but annihilating the Rasalhague Republic and cutting deep into Federated Commonwealth and Draconis Combine space.

The sheer power of the invaders convinced the leaders of the Inner Sphere to unite against this common foe. With the help of the Wolf's Dragoons mercenary command—whose members exposed its long-hidden origins as a Clan recon force during a high-level summit with all the state leaders in 3051—the Inner Sphere won a few victories against the collective might of the invading Clans. Though dramatic victories occurred both before and after this summit—such as the brief recapture of Twycross in 3050, and the defense of Luthien against a joint Clan assault in late 3051—these fortunes of war paled in comparison to the overwhelming effects of the Clan blitzkrieg. Making matters worse, certain elements within ComStar—the allegedly neutral and beneficent Order that dominated interstellar communications—initially aided the Clans, going so far as to administer the conquered worlds for the invaders, thereby freeing up their troops for additional attacks.

Tukayyid and its Aftermath

ComStar's complicity ended in early 3052, when the Clans revealed their ultimate objective to be Terra itself. To halt the Clan advance, ComStar's military leader, Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht, challenged all seven attacking Clans to a proxy battle on Tukayyid. A Clan victory would earn the invaders the immediate prize of Terra. If the Clans lost, they agreed to halt their conquest for the next fifteen years. The epic battle raged from the first through the twentieth of May, ending in a ComStar victory that won the Inner Sphere its fifteen-year truce with the invaders.

Unfortunately for ComStar, in the time it took to win that truce, the Order had fractured from within, thanks to then-Primus Myndo Waterly's failed bid to take over by placing the entire Inner Sphere under a communications interdiction. Exposed now as anything but the neutral organization that had safeguarded technology and communications through the centuries of Succession Wars, ComStar splintered into a secular version of itself and a more conservative branch known as the Word of Blake. To many in the Commonwealth, from the common man to wealthy corporate executives, to the power brokers in the halls of government, this schism seemed at once a bad omen and a harbinger of chaos as communications between

military and commercial interests briefly fell victim to ComStar-Word of Blake infighting.

On a more personal note, 3052 saw another bad omen for the Federated Commonwealth when, on 17 June, Prince Hanse Davion died on New Avalon. He left behind a widow, Archon Melissa Steiner-Davion, to run both halves of the nation in its darkest hours, and a son destined to rule a realm wholly unprepared for the trials to come.

TRAGEDY AND DISCORD

"Oh my God! Oh my God! This can't be happening..."

—Jan Ingvoldstad, *Tharkan News Network Special Report*, 19 June 3055

Though ComStar had won an end to the fighting, many in the Commonwealth saw little worth celebrating. The aftermath of the Clan invasion placed sixty-six worlds under the dominion of the Jade Falcon, Wolf and Steel Viper Clans, including Tamar, capital and heart of the Tamar Pact. The loss of so many worlds, including the majority of a founding member of the Lyran state, devastated the nationwide economy and demoralized the entire population.

Moreover, the terms of the Tukayyid Truce still permitted Clan encroachment on worlds coreward of the truce line, placing many heavily industrialized planets like Chahar and Pandora under the military equivalent of Damocles' sword. Though their industries and populations theoretically could be relocated, doing so would entail the use of resources already being poured into a hasty arms race to restore and improve the AFFC before the Clans' next strike. The loss of First Prince Hanse Davion in 3052 further eroded the Commonwealth's military morale, as many had hoped the famous "Luck of the Fox" would come through to save the realm.

These losses, and the ongoing threat still hanging over the nation, stoked the fires of dissent once more. Die-hard opponents of the Steiner-Davion alliance saw the crisis as a rallying cry, highlighting the apparent inequality between the Lyran people's suffering and that of the seemingly unscathed Federated Suns. Though many who lost their lives defending against the Clan onslaught hailed from historically FedSuns commands, an increasing number of Commonwealth citizens found the dissidents' charges oddly reassuring in the wake of the Clan assault, creating a twisted form of Lyran nationalism, based on their perceived victimization by the Clans and by House Davion.

Against these forces threatening to tear the realm apart stood Archon Melissa Steiner-Davion, who had won over many with fair and even-handed leadership, even as she publicly grieved for the loss of her husband. Her son and heir to the thrones of the Lyran and Federated states, Victor Steiner-Davion, had meanwhile made a name for himself as a hero of the invasion, though this same notoriety reminded many of his father more than his mother. As the future Archon-Prince learned the hard way the lessons of war against the Clans, the Archon steadily guided the realm, offering hope to the Lyran people that—for the time being—restrained those who wanted the alliance broken.



DEATH OF AN ERA

The firm hold on the reins of power that had allowed Archon Melissa to steer the nation through the early years of the Clan invasion and its aftermath suddenly unraveled on 19 June 3055, when an assassin's bomb killed her along with several nobles and business leaders during a charity event in Tharkad City. In one fell swoop, the blast gave official birth to the Federated Commonwealth and simultaneously placed it on its deathbed, as the mantle of the Archon fell squarely on the shoulders of Victor Steiner-Davion.

Having been engaged in a military campaign aimed at thwarting the efforts of an alleged Clan bandit known simply as the Red Corsair, Victor's failure to return home in time for the beloved Archon's funeral added fuel to whispered rumors that he had somehow engineered the assassination to claim the throne. Though his eldest sister, Katherine Steiner-Davion, publicly denied these accusations, the rumors spread, with the Lyran people unaware that Victor had already once turned down his ascent to the throne after the death of Prince Hanse. Instead, the people came to perceive Victor as a warrior leader, more akin to Hanse Davion and Alessandro Steiner than the peace-loving Archons his mother and grandmother had been. As a lackluster politician at best, with more of his years spent in training as an officer and a MechWarrior first, Archon-Prince Victor made easy prey for his detractors.

Second Skye Rebellion

In the months that followed Melissa's death, the obvious discrepancies between the Archon-Prince's political savvy and his military prowess grew more pronounced as one disaster after another befell his realm. In 3056, anti-Victor sentiment peaked in the Federation of Skye, igniting the region in rebellion again, this time with Duke Ryan Steiner at the heart of it. The crisis quickly boiled over into military action that pitted Free Skye units against the Commonwealth-loyal Gray Death Legion mercenary forces on Glengarry.

The Legion's victory stalled the so-called Second Skye Rebellion, but secessionist fever remained strong until Duke Ryan Steiner was assassinated during a visit to Solaris VII. His death decapitated the organized leadership of Free Skye, taking the wind out of the movement's proverbial sails, but did not end the rebellion outright. In fact, as elements of Free Skye continued to make trouble for the Archon-Prince, Duke Ryan's assassination merely added fuel to the fires of Victor's accusers. After all, would not the man who assassinated his own mother to take the throne have even fewer qualms about eliminating his rebellious cousin to retain it?

THE LYRAN SECESSION

In 3057, even as the Free Skye rebellion stumbled, Archon-Prince Victor Steiner-Davion faced a new crisis when he learned that Joshua Marik, son of Free Worlds League Captain-General Thomas Marik, was dying. The young heir to the League throne, having fought a long bout with leukemia, had been undergoing treatment at the prestigious New Avalon Institute of Science as part of the Inner Sphere alliance to oppose the Clans.

In exchange for the advanced medical care of the NAIS, the League had promised to provide those states currently endangered by the Clan juggernaut with badly needed war materiel, and had also pledged not to launch a pre-emptive invasion into the Commonwealth for the purpose of establishing a buffer zone in advance of the Clans. To many, the deal amounted to the moral equivalent of a hostage standoff, but those in power saw it more as an ugly fact of Inner Sphere politics. Fearing the worst as Joshua Marik slipped beyond the abilities of medical science to heal, the Archon-Prince activated a failsafe plan known as Operation Gemini, replacing the dying heir with a body double.

Unfortunately, League intelligence uncovered the ruse, triggering a declaration of war by Captain-General Thomas Marik and a brutal campaign by the Free Worlds League and its closest ally, the Capellan Confederation, against the Federated Commonwealth that began on 16 September 3057. The Captain-General's stated goals were the reclamation of all worlds lost in the Fourth Succession War, as punishment for the Archon-Prince's deception.

Two days after the declaration, Katherine Steiner-Davion, in her capacity as regent of the Lyran half of the Commonwealth, announced the secession of the Lyran state, os-

WAR OF ASSASSINS?

The official story surrounding the assassinations of 3055 and 3056 have varied over the past decade so much, it is a wonder that anyone can keep the facts straight any more—assuming anyone knows the facts to begin with. Today, in the post-Civil War era, the official line places blame for Archon Melissa's death on the shoulders of Katherine Steiner-Davion, rather than her brother Victor. Though "facts" have emerged to support this theory, many are based on vague circumstantial evidence, a money and paper trail far too thin for any court—Lyran or otherwise—to deliver a conviction.

The fact is, in the case of both Steiner-Davion children, there exists precious little motive for an assassination—especially for Victor. Lacking political skills (this is a man who once considered it a wise public relations move to fight a 'Mech duel on Solaris against the champions of Duke Ryan Steiner's Free Skye-affiliated stable), Victor could not have felt himself ready to rule a massive nation like the Commonwealth and navigate its complex and monolithic bureaucracy with any success. Meanwhile, if his sister wanted the throne, all she needed to do was wait until her mother stepped down after her brother conveniently killed himself in some death-or-glory battle against the Clans. Sure, it would have taken a while, but a little patience would have assured that the would-be Archon-Princess could claim a realm solidified by hardship and united under her charismatic rule.

On the other hand, there was Duke Ryan Steiner, a cousin of the current ruling line, who built his power base on the back of secessionists, and who made less and less a secret of his contempt for the Steiner-Davions. Never had a man looked guiltier of engineering an assassination, no matter how many folks secretly suspected Victor. Surely, somewhere in the plot, Duke Ryan was involved—and, in fact, the current official line says as much.

But then Ryan himself got gunned down on Solaris VII. If he did have a hand in Melissa's death, this would certainly make sense as an act of revenge—one either Katherine or Victor could have easily carried out, if they truly believed his complicity. Again, the current line has an answer to this mystery, effectively laying the blame at Katherine's feet. After all, rule one of assassination is to kill the assassins, right? If Ryan really were in on a conspiracy to kill Melissa, his elimination would silence a potential threat to her plans. Of course, it also fit in with Victor's less-than-subtle approach to politics, as Ryan was effectively leading a rebellion against his authority.



HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

Who, then, really killed whom in this war of assassins? Did Ryan Steiner partner up with Katherine to kill Melissa, only to be killed himself to tie up a loose end? Or did Victor have both Melissa and Ryan assassinated as a shortcut to absolute power? Or did they switch off, with Katherine and Ryan killing Melissa, and Victor killing Ryan in a shortsighted effort to at once quell a rebellion and let Katherine know “you’re next”?

Lost in all this speculation is the more obvious solution: in any war of assassins, those who command the deed are rarely those who pull the triggers. What if the assassin *himself* was one and the same on both occasions, and operated according to an agenda all his own? What if Duke Ryan set him up as a fall guy in an elaborate effort to divide the Steiner-Davion siblings and set himself up as a peace broker, as he had been during the first Skye Crisis? What if the plan backfired, and the assassin figured out the ruse? Indeed, if rule number one in the assassin’s game truly is to “kill the assassin,” what if the man who killed Melissa Steiner—at Ryan’s behest—decided instead that a pre-emptive strike was necessary to spare his own life?

As with all great conspiracies, the universe may never know what truly happened between the death of Melissa Steiner-Davion and that of Duke Ryan. Instead, we are left with the official line, and what we can believe deep down about those who wish to command the destinies of billions....

—Anonymous, “Think About It!”, *True Survivor Magazine*, Summer 3067

tensively to avoid the “horrors of war” that her brother had unwittingly released upon the nation. Though phrased as a temporary recourse, Katherine wasted no time in declaring herself the Archon of the newly created Lyran Alliance, and immediately recalled all Lyran troops stationed in the threatened Terran Corridor region.

Against the newly created Alliance, the League-Confederation military campaign claimed only those border worlds seized from the League by the Steiner-Davion offensives of the Fourth War, while most of the fighting instead focused on the former Capellan worlds that Archon Katherine’s recall order had stripped of defenses. Though Archon Katherine promptly contested these acquisitions by deploying mercenary troops to enhance the League front, the only other major action taken by the Alliance during the four-month Marik-Liao invasion of the Commonwealth was the defense of Hesperus II by the pro-Lyran Gray Death Legion in November.

The Alliance victory in the Fourteenth Battle for Hesperus effectively ended the Second Skye Rebellion along with the ambitions of the renegade Field Marshall Brandel Gareth, who had taken up the reins of the rudderless Free Skye movement after the death of Duke Ryan. Now deprived of any strong leadership, and seeing part of their dream realized with the breakaway of the Alliance from the rest of the Federated Commonwealth, the Free Skye movement once more slid into recession.

By the end of 3057, as far as the Lyran Alliance was concerned, the fighting had finally died down on all fronts. Though officials from the Federated Commonwealth protested, and a few of the withdrawing Sarna March troops had even faced hostile fire, Archon Katherine’s secession had been a complete success. The Alliance, now divided from its former countrymen in the Commonwealth by a swath of Free Worlds, Capellan and independent planets, stood alone and largely unharmed, though trouble brewed on the Clan front.

TWILIGHT OF THE CLANS

A new year dawned for an Inner Sphere changed by the four-month conflict between the Commonwealth and the combined forces of the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation. Once more, five nations dominated the Inner Sphere, surrounding a core of still-contested worlds now called the Chaos March. Meanwhile, the Jade Falcon and Wolf Clans, two of the most powerful invaders nearest to the newborn Lyran Alliance, had unleashed a mutual, fratricidal war that had even reached the Alliance world of Morges.

FALL OF THE CLANS

Why the Jaguars? Why not the Falcons? That question, of course, *had* to come up at the Whitting Conference, as I’m sure it has in a thousand barrooms and holo-vision talk shows ever since. And with good reason, I suppose. After all, the Falcons had just been defeated on Coventry while trying to blood their youngest troops, an action they took because Absorption by another Clan had become a *real* concern to them. They were also vehemently Crusader, practically the poster-children of the Crusader Clans. Wiping them out of the Inner Sphere would surely have been a piece of cake, right?

Sure, if you didn’t mind fighting against the Steel Vipers, too. Whereas the Nova Cats were willing to sit out the annihilation of their neighbor Clan, we had no such guarantee from the Vipers.

There was also, of course, the obvious fact that we’d be picking on a Clan still trying to recover. The Clans, being masters of self-delusion, could have dismissed our victory as annihilating a half-Clan at best (though anyone who’s ever seen those vat-born bastards fight would know better than to consider the Falcons *easy* by any stretch!).

But I think there was really only one reason we picked the Smoke Jaguars to go down. Even though we were fairly certain that the Nova Cats and the Ghost Bears would stay out of it. Even though we knew the Jaguars were the most challenging, and thus the most respected target to kill. Even though we had an inkling that the Jag Khan was about to be named the ilKhan, in fact. After all that, it really came down to one thing.

Embarrassment.

I mean, really; don’t you think after we’d run the buggers out of our worlds, and ventured for a year in monotonous jumps, it would be silly to show up at Huntress and have to ask for directions to Eden?

—Excerpt from the journal of Captain Mercia Winslow, Task Force Serpent, 10 December 3059



To contain this crisis, Grand Duke Morgan Kell of Arc-Royal formed the Arc-Royal Defense Cordon around his own famed mercenary command, the Kell Hounds. Though Archon Katherine publicly supported Kell's initiative, rumors abounded that the formation of this military mini-state within the Alliance's borders came more from a split between the historically pro-Steiner Kells and the new Lyran ruler. The Cordon also became a haven for anti-Katherine dissent, a loyal opposition of mostly military and mercenary commands opposed to the recent secession, but who pledged themselves to hold back the Clans from Lyran space. Having established herself as a peace-loving ruler, Archon Katherine did not resist creation of the Cordon, but did transfer her loyal forces out of the region, in effect forcing Kell and his supporters to cover the border worlds they had declared for themselves.

More significantly, the Arc-Royal Defense Cordon became home to the exiled members of Clan Wolf, led by Grand Duke Kell's son, Phelan Kell. The arrival of these exiles left the political power in their former Clan to the Crusaders, the Clan warriors whose dreams of rebuilding the Star League in their image had sparked the original in-

vasion. Now dominating the Clan of their founder, Nicholas Kerensky, the Crusaders among the invasion forces had won a political coup.

Worse still, the fact that the Crusaders had won their newfound power by deposing and later killing their anti-invasion war leader, ilKhan Ulric Kerensky, made the election of a Crusader ilKhan all the more likely. In short, the Clans stood on the brink of repudiating the Truce of Tukayyid won by ComStar in 3052, and with that, could renew their invasion at any time. First, however, Clans Jade Falcon and Wolf had to prove themselves worthy of continuing the invasion, mauled as they were in the aftermath of their so-called Refusal War. The Crusader Wolves under Khan Vladimir Ward chose to strike at the powerful Smoke Jaguar Clan, while Khan Marthe Pryde, the new leader of the Jade Falcons, chose to demonstrate her Clan's vitality—and blood her hastily drawn recruits—against an Inner Sphere leader.

The Falcon push into the Lyran Alliance began on 3 February with the invasion of Engadine. Over the next several weeks, the Falcons struck at a series of worlds in an apparent drive toward Tharkad, though their forces finally settled on Coventry by the middle of March and held firm as the local defense forces tried to drive them out. The Battle of Coventry raged over the planet until June of 3058, when Archon-Prince Victor Steiner-Davion arrived at Archon Katherine's behest, commanding a multinational task force to repel the Falcon assault.

Even with troops gathered from ComStar, the Free Worlds League, the Capellan Confederation and the Draconis Combine, Victor's coalition faced the entire armed force of a first-tier Clan; the odds going into Coventry forecasted the mutual annihilation of both sides. Instead, on 16 June, the Archon-Prince offered the Falcon leader *hegira*, honorable withdrawal for a defeated enemy, citing the most recent skirmish between coalition and Clan forces that had ended in a coalition victory. With Wolf Clan forces pressing her Occupation Zone, Khan Pryde accepted, ending the Coventry standoff.

NAILS IN THE COFFIN

"...I know this means war, and war means hardship, privation and death. As Sophocles said, 'War prefers its victims young.' Before the first shot was fired, this war cost me my youngest child, so I already know the pain and fear you, my people, will face as this campaign unfolds. I would never ask of you what I would not be willing to do myself, and I know you join me in the depth of my commitment to freeing people and planets from Davion subjugation..."

—Captain-General Thomas Marik, Atrous,
16 September 3057

"...My brother, the warrior, has taken his half of the Federated Commonwealth into war. I will not bleed my people to defend his actions. It is my sacred duty to ward your welfare—the same duty my mother honored before she was so cruelly cut down. I hereby lay claim to her mantle, though aware of the dangers inherent in doing so. Anything less would be to deny my heritage as a Steiner and my responsibility as your Archon..."

—Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion, Tharkad,
18 September 3057

"...Many of you will wonder that your leader could hide the fact of a boy's death from his father. I can only tell you that I did so to prevent exactly the sort of slaughter that will take place when Thomas' troops land. And I would do it again had I to relive these decisions because I still believe they were the best choices facing me under those circumstances..."

—Archon-Prince Victor Steiner-Davion, New Avalon,
18 September 3057

The Second Star League

The Coventry victory did much to redeem Archon-Prince Victor in the eyes of the Lyran people and even somewhat of the Inner Sphere at large. Springboarding off this success, he championed a multinational summit to be held on Tharkad. Its stated goal, to provide a permanent solution to the "Clan problem," appeared vague enough at the time, but when the so-called Whitting Conference convened on 1 October of 3058, the assembled leaders of the Inner Sphere—including the Primus and Precentor Martial of ComStar—had come to the realization that only one solution could permanently end the Clan threat: the reformation of the Star League.

The debate over the nature of the reformed Star League took nearly two months to resolve, but ultimately led to the signing of the new League's Constitution on 21 November. Essentially a military alliance, with loosely-termed clauses to regulate international trade and provide for some degree of arbitration in disputes, the biggest stumbling block to the creation of the new League—as it had been when the original collapsed—proved to be the selection of a First Lord. Eventually, the assembled leaders decided that the First Lord would be an elected post open to all member-state leaders, with a non-consecutive term limit of three years, and that no leader could be re-elected until all other member-state leaders had served their due turn.

The military goals of the new Star League were much more clearly spelled out. In order to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the Clans and



HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

FLASHPOINT

"By the Archon! Victor Vandergriff is continuing to fire! The detonator grid is down and that PPC—two, two PPCs—spent their hellish destruction into the lower-level seating. I don't know if Searcy's *Pillager* backstopped the damage or if it bled directly into the crowd there. The strobe lights make it difficult to tell. But *there's* the *Pillager*. It's still on its feet, framed by the hole smashed into the ferroglass shield. If you could only see this. Is Searcy attacking? I can just make out a flash of... something. Yes, Vandergriff is stumbling; Searcy must have fired his Gauss rifles.

"Blake's Blood! Vandergriff just fired his jump jets, leaping *forward*—into the stands! I can't make out where Searcy is now. Ladies and gentlemen, there's a hole in the stands now, big enough for a 'Mech, but no sign of the *Pillager*. I can see Vandergriff's *Banshee*, firing into that hole, and God only knows how many in the stands are still trying to get away. God only knows how many are already dead, and Vandergriff doesn't seem to even care!

"Folks, as I speak to you now, I can't believe what I just witnessed. Vandergriff must have followed Searcy through the hole—I don't see any 'Mechs in the stands now. Somewhere below us, two of Solaris VII's finest are fighting as if totally unaware of the carnage they've unleashed. This is a dark day for the Game World, ladies and gentlemen. A dark day indeed!"

—Julian Nero, Donegal Broadcasting Company, Solaris City, Solaris VII, 15 August 3062

prompted her to call in assistance from Archon Katherine. Already well loved in her new Alliance as a peacemaker, the Archon "magnanimously accepted" Yvonne's invitation, effectively claiming control over the Federated Suns as Regent on 22 December 3060.

Though many expected the new Regent of the Federated Commonwealth to promptly reunite the two halves of the former Inner Sphere superpower, the sheer social and political momentum that began with the secession of the Alliance just three years earlier had already taken its toll on inter-state relations. Businesses and trade between the FedSuns and Lyran states had withered; citizens of Lyran descent living in the FedSuns (and vice versa) had become ostracized in their new homelands; troops from both sides caught in the "wrong half" of the realm after the secession were treated as pariahs at best, potential traitors at worst. Reunification would take more time and energy than the Archon seemed willing to invest. And yet, most of the general public in the FedSuns met the assumption of the regency by a woman seen largely as the betrayer of the Federated Commonwealth with little to no resistance.

By the time Victor Steiner-Davion returned from his victory in the Clan homeworlds, he found himself divested of his birthright. Both halves of his nation had fallen under Katherine Steiner-Davion's control, ruled by a usurper whom he secretly believed had engineered their mother's death. Moreover, the rising tides of hostility between both states had grown worse in his absence, and escalated even more when word leaked out that an Alliance Loki agent might have had a hand in the assassination of Marshal of the Armies Morgan Hasek during the anti-Clan campaign. Worse still, Victor's absence had left a key ally in the St. Ives Compact with minimal support when Chancellor (and Star League First Lord) Sun-Tzu Liao launched his own bid to reconquer what he considered a "rebellious commonality."

Though he still boasted no small amount of support, both from the ranks of the resurgent FedSuns military and a host of allies in foreign realms, the deposed Archon-Prince ultimately decided not to challenge his sister's takeover bid, hoping to avert a bloody civil war. Fate, however, would not be so kind.

prove the Star League was more than a political ploy, the newly created SLDF coalition force would have to do what only another Clan could do: annihilate a Clan. Thanks to information obtained through a ComStar spy, the new SLDF gained access to the location of the Clan homeworlds—specifically, the Smoke Jaguar capital of Huntress.

Armed with this data, and having selected Clan Smoke Jaguar as the target of annihilation for a host of political reasons, the SLDF mobilized a two-pronged campaign to destroy the Jaguar Clan. ComStar Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht, with Archon-Prince Victor Steiner-Davion acting as his deputy commander, would lead the Inner Sphere half of the offensive and shatter the Jaguar holdings there, while Task Force Serpent, the homeworld prong, went into the unknown commanded by AFFC Marshal of the Armies Morgan Hasek-Davion.

The campaign to destroy the Jaguars took two years in all, and saw heroic actions by all of the member-state troops on dozens of worlds within the Inner Sphere and beyond. In the end, a triumphant Victor Steiner-Davion, having followed the retreating Jaguars to their homeworld on Huntress, defeated the Crusader Clans in the Great Refusal on the Clan capital world of Strana Mechty on 23 April 3060. Though the Wolf Clan under Khan Vladimir Ward declared otherwise—stating that they had neither voted in, nor lost their part of the Great Refusal—the Clan invasion was finished.

SHATTERED DREAMS

"I am not here to kill innocents, but the Archon, in her haste to seize and maintain power, has shown she is not fit to rule. I will not rest until Thorin is free from her iron heel and she is removed from power. If that can be done peacefully, then so be it. If not, then whatever happens will be on her head."

—Archer Christifori, formerly of the Thorin Militia, broadcast on *DBC News at Five* (Ecol City, Thorin Edition), 8 December 3062

With Victor Steiner-Davion's departure to the Clan homeworlds in August of 3059, the reins of power in the truncated Federated Commonwealth were left to Yvonne Steiner-Davion, younger sister to the Archon-Prince and the Archon. Not long afterward, rumors began to surface that the Archon-Prince had been killed, and a wave of dissatisfaction with the Regent left in his stead soon came to the fore as if from nowhere.

In retrospect, many of the reports of dissent among the people of the Federated Suns against Yvonne may have been exaggerated with the aid of Lyran-based agents provocateurs, whose effective smear campaign to discredit Yvonne's right to rule eventually



THE FEDCOM CIVIL WAR

The simmering tensions throughout the Lyran and FedSuns realms, fueled by rumors of secret police crackdowns, military and political “witch hunts” and the renewed sense of nationalism in both halves of the former Federated Commonwealth, reached their boiling point in the final months of 3062. By this point, a recent string of raids and reprisals in the Lyons Thumb and Combine-FedSuns border regions, and the outbreak of much-publicized, full-scale Steiner-Davion rioting on Solaris VII, had left both realms in a state of high anxiety.

On 16 November 3062, fighting broke out between the pro-Katherine Eighth FedCom RCT and the newly formed, anti-Katherine Kathil Militia. Ignited soon after the Eighth’s commander refused an order from Capellan March Lord George Hasek to relocate, the fighting for the highly important industrial planet quickly escalated to a full-scale battle that is now accepted as the opening action of the FedCom Civil War. In the weeks and months that followed, additional “flashpoint” battles erupted on FedSuns worlds like Kentares IV, Nanking and Benet III, and on Lyran worlds such as Thorin, Rasalgethi and Coventry.

Even as war began to spread throughout the former Commonwealth worlds, one more tragedy unfolded to magnify these isolated battles into a nations-wide conflict: the 6 December assassination of Arthur Steiner-Davion on Robinson. A popular sibling of Katherine and Victor Steiner-Davion, his death became a rallying cry for both sides in the growing war, contributing directly to Victor Steiner-Davion’s subsequent call to remove Katherine from power just two days after the tragedy.

Though no evidence ever surfaced to implicate Katherine, Victor associated Arthur’s death with what he termed his sister’s corrupt reign, and declared he would no longer sit by as the former FedCom continued to fall into chaos. Even as FedSuns warriors blamed the assassination on the Combine and launched a series of strikes along the Draconis border, the deposed Archon-Prince began to organize a force to end Katherine’s rule in the Lyran Alliance and the Federated Suns.

The FedCom Civil War raged for five years and spread to hundreds of worlds, including those of the Draconis Combine, the Chaos March and the Jade Falcon Occupation Zone. Before its conclusion, nearly every realm in the Inner Sphere would become involved to a greater or lesser degree, from the brief Free Worlds League capture of the Alliance world of Arcadia, to the Capellan seizure of Tikonov, to the ongoing border crises between the FedSuns and the Combine and the Jade Falcon Incursions of 3064 and 3065.

For the Lyran Alliance, the Civil War was fought on worlds as important as Tharkad, Coventry and Hesperus II, and as remote as Virtue, Timbiqui and Kaumberg. Indeed, Victor Steiner-Davion’s campaign effectively began within the Alliance, as he journeyed through Lyran space to establish the foundation of the anti-Katherine campaign there and pick up allies for his push into the Federated Suns and eventually to New Avalon.

To carry on the Lyran half of the war, Victor entrusted much of the fighting to Grand-Duke Morgan Kell, his staunchest supporter in the Alliance. As Victor and much of his coalition journeyed onward, Duke Kell would eventually convince Peter Steiner-Davion to return from self-imposed exile on Zaniah and claim the Archonship.

THE LYONS THUMB CRISIS

One interesting side effect of the Lyran secession was the virtual gifting of eight worlds claimed by the Federated Commonwealth to the Draconis Combine by Archon-Prince Victor Steiner-Davion. The move, intended to quell the Dragon’s alarm at the fracturing of the FedCom states and possibly to reinforce Victor’s unrelinquished claim on those worlds—the Combine was, ironically, one of the Archon-Prince’s most powerful allies during the crisis—effectively left all eight worlds stretching from Lyons to Lambrecht and Moore under nominal Lyran government, but with Draconis troops stationed there as “peacekeepers.” Having built herself up as a lover of peace, Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion, though outraged at her brother’s audacity, nonetheless gave her blessing to the DCMS occupation as a show of good faith (and to avoid looking hypocritical).

In July of 3062, units apparently originating from the Combine-occupied Thumb worlds struck at Skye, prompting reprisals from Skye units against Ko. Two more apparent Lyran units hit Combine garrisons on Imbros III and Yorii the following month, ultimately prompting the Draconis Combine—with the blessings of First Lord and Coordinator Theodore Kurita—to formally annex the Thumb region “in the interests of peace.” Lyran citizens promptly decried this action as an abuse of Lord Kurita’s status as First Lord of the Star League. The Skye region remained a hotbed of anti-Combine sentiment for months to come, with many citizens demanding action from the Lyran government.

Today, Lyons itself is the only reminder of the Thumb worlds mystery. Though never truly a part of the territorial expanse (Lyons was simply a FedCom command center during the Thumb’s annexation years before), this world now stands in mute contest between the Lyran and Combine states. Today, “peacekeepers” from both sides remain stationed on Lyons, as part of an ongoing effort to forestall future “misunderstandings” and provide both nations a forum for negotiation and trade along their short border.

Strangely, each side professed its innocence throughout the 3062 crisis. Indeed, the initial strike on Skye, it was later discovered, came not from the Combine, but from a mercenary force masquerading as Combine troops. Follow-up investigations later found that the Imbros III and Yorii attacks were also fakes, launched by unidentified mercenaries. Though theories as to the origins of these strikes and why they were made have surfaced—the most commonly accepted pointing the finger at a Combine reactionary group known as the Black Dragon Society—the mystery over who staged the Lyons Thumb Crisis and why continues to confound experts today.

—Simon Weir, “Conned! Mystery Events of the Civil War”, *Warrior Magazine*, July 3065



HISTORY OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

The FedCom Civil War finally came to a close in April of 3067. On the Lyran front, Nondi Steiner, great-aunt of the Steiner-Davion heirs, served as Archon Katherine's Regent, prosecuting the war on her behalf until her own demise on 2 April 3067, in a final assault led by Peter Steiner-Davion. Archon-Princess Katherine, in the meantime, led the FedSuns Loyalists against her brother's troops until her ultimate surrender on New Avalon eighteen days later, officially ending the conflict. Both fronts were hard fought, eventually encompassing more than eighty percent of all FedCom worlds and causing massive disruptions in trade, travel and communications.

Today, so soon after the end of the fighting, a full accounting of the Civil War remains beyond the scope of any one volume of Lyran history, and many questions remain unanswered from this most turbulent period. Mysteries still unresolved range from such oddities as the disappearance of the LAS *Arthur Davion* over Coventry, where it had been dispatched to intercept Victor's forces in 3063, to the identity and affiliations of those who assassinated Duchess Margaret Aten of Skye and her daughter Ilse in 3064.

The Civil War nearly shattered the military forces of both states, and once more disrupted the Lyran economy with interrupted trade and communications. As part of their logistical and propaganda ef-

WARS ON THE SIDE

Even as the FedCom Civil War raged, a number of equally critical "sideshow wars" also erupted between 3062 and 3067. For the Federated Suns, these included the conflict between the Draconis March and the Draconis Combine, which raged from the death of Arthur Steiner-Davion to March of 3066, when the last of the renegade March troops surrendered on Proserpina. For the Lyran Alliance, the two most critical of these conflicts were the Jade Falcon Incursions from 3064 to 3065, and the Third Skye Rebellion that erupted in 3065 and continued to the war's end.

The Jade Falcon Incursion

As fighting engulfed the Federated Commonwealth states, Khan Marthe Pryde of the Jade Falcons saw a new opportunity to expand her Clan and blood a new generation of warriors, much as she had done when launching the campaign against Coventry years earlier. In May of 3064, the Falcons launched their first wave of assaults, aimed principally at the Lyran border worlds "above" and "below" the Arc-Royal Defense Cordon. Initially enjoying remarkable success as they surged into Alliance space, the Falcons struck more than fifteen worlds, shattering local defenses before many of the LAAF commanders knew what hit them.

By September of that year, Falcon forces had penetrated as deep into the Alliance as Adelaide, when commanders on both sides of the Civil War agreed to set aside their differences in the face of a common foe. Loyalist General Adam Steiner of the Melissia Theater and Allied Major General Archer Christifori (late of the Thorin Militia), combined forces against the Falcon assault, launching Operations Bludgeon and Audacity, to drive back the Falcon advance and reclaim worlds of the pre-war Occupation Zone, respectively.

Supported as well by Phelan Kell's Wolf Clan (in Exile), the two opposing commanders managed to hammer the Falcons to a standstill until Khan Vladimir Ward of the Crusader Wolves, sensing opportunities of his own, began an independent campaign against the Falcons' unprotected flank. Faced with increasingly determined resistance on one side and Wolf encroachment on another, Khan Pryde finally agreed to halt her offensive in a negotiated settlement with General Steiner in which the world of Blair Atholl became a joint holding of the Alliance and the Clans, and both sides managed to keep their gains. By 17 June of 3065, the last of the fighting between Lyran and Clan forces had ceased, replaced by an uneasy truce as the Civil War raged on.

The Third Skye Rebellion

Beginning in early 3065, Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner of Porrima, recently married to Hermione Aten, the new Duchess of Skye, effectively made himself the new voice of the Free Skye movement as the fires of civil war raged around him. Though in the earlier phases of the war, Duke Robert had aided Archon Katherine by denying the use of Hesperus to Victor's Allied coalition, and later informing the Archon of her ousted brother's intentions, his ongoing belligerence built up tensions in the Skye region and threatened the Lyran war effort, eventually forcing Katherine to call for his arrest on 16 April 3065.

Rather than quell the Free Skye uprising, Duke Robert's arrest inflamed the passions of the Skye region, leading to widespread protests and the declaration by several regional militia units of their support for the Free Skye cause. John Claverhouse Dundee, Duke Robert's military advisor prior to his arrest, declared himself General of the Armies of Skye, and—after a failed assassination attempt against him—called upon the citizens of Skye to drive "the despised Lyran tyrants" from the Federation's borders.

Immediately on the offensive, Free Skye forces moved to capture Hesperus II, their assault beginning on 15 June 3065. Even as Free Skye forces fought elsewhere, particularly the worlds of Freedom and on Skye itself, the Fifteenth Battle for Hesperus II—most critical to the movement's success—dragged on through two waves of attacks before Lyran forces finally carried the day on 23 January 3066. This fierce fight claimed such notable casualties as the famed Gray Death Legion mercenary command and the Twenty-Second Skye Rangers. By that time, however, Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner had been liberated from his prison by Grand Duke Morgan Kell and his Allied coalition. With Skye's bid for secession undercut by the defeat on Hesperus II, and the war progressing steadily against Archon Katherine's Loyalist forces, Duke Robert's political position quickly changed from the quest for a fully independent Federation of Skye to "greater autonomy" under the new order.



forts, both sides routinely shanghaied transports and news outlets, ferrying troops and spreading disinformation that even now has yet to be fully sorted out.

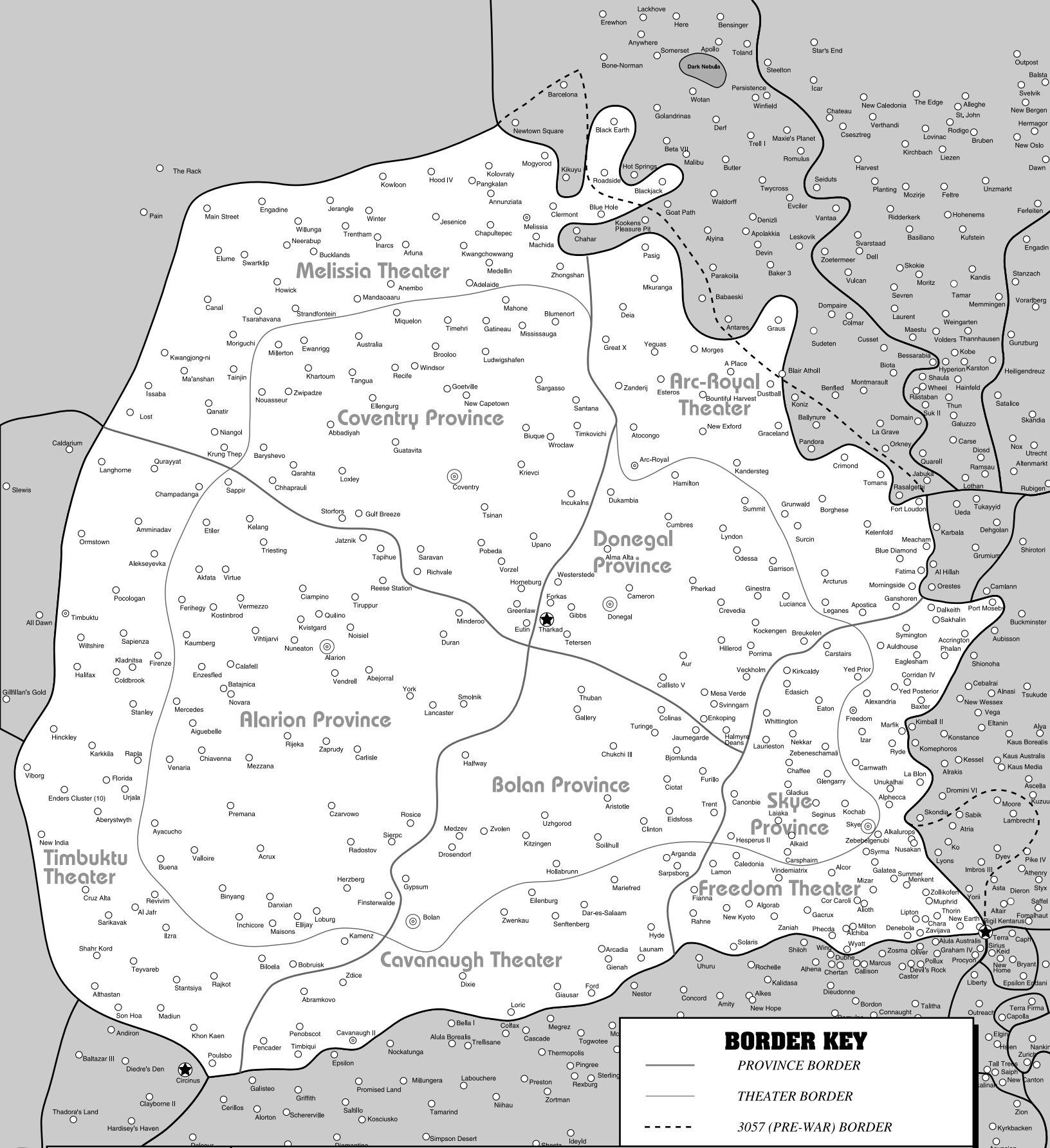
AFTERMATH: THE ALLIANCE TODAY

The scars of the Civil War remain fresh, but the Lyran Alliance today is in remarkably sound shape. Though the military has been savaged and many communities continue to recover, the vast industrial and mercantile might that so long characterized the Lyran people has proven the nation's strongest asset by far. Those who fell in the war—on both sides—today receive the honors of heroes who fought for a nation they believed in, and those who survived are seen as heroes still who stood up and defended their homelands against all foreign aggressors.

True to the Lyran spirit, in the aftermath of war, the people have come to see even ancient enemies like the Draconis Combine and the Free Worlds League as potential customers and business partners, rather than mortal foes, and the new Archon has done much to normalize relations both within the realm and without. The Arc-Royal Protocols, for example, recognize the sovereignty of the Exiled Wolf Clan within the Alliance's borders, acknowledging a friend to the realm and ending years of budding distrust. A similar accord with the Federated Suns has allowed the wounds of the Civil War to begin healing, as the once-united realms acknowledge their differences but face the future as friends.

At the dawn of a new decade, the struggles of the past four have seen the fortunes of one of the Inner Sphere's mightiest nations rise and fall, transforming a realm deeply yet resulting in an older, wiser version of the original Commonwealth. The name has changed, but the Lyran identity has remained unbroken, united under the mighty fist of House Steiner, raised not in aggression, but signifying a strength that defies all measure.





PLANET KEY

- ★ NATIONAL CAPITAL
- ⊙ DISTRICT CAPITAL
- ⊙ PROVINCE CAPITAL

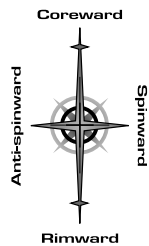
LYRAN ALLIANCE
 after
FedCom Civil War (3067)

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LEGEND



MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS



BORDER KEY

- PROVINCE BORDER
- THEATER BORDER
- - - 3057 (PRE-WAR) BORDER



The Lyran Alliance today is a realm comprised of nearly three hundred and seventy inhabited systems, ranging from Terra's backyard on Rigil Kentarus to as far distant as Main Street, and from the recently liberated (and still endangered) world of Black Earth to the far-flung Periphery border world of Poulsbo overlooking the Circinus Federation. On most interstellar maps, Steiner blue colors nearly an entire quadrant, wedged between the Clan Occupation Zones, the Draconis Combine and the Free Worlds League. Yet within this arc of blue lies a tapestry of cultures as varied and vibrant as the worlds they call home.

HOW TO READ THIS ATLAS

The following section reviews many of the Lyran Alliance's more distinctive worlds, arranged according to their provinces and presented with statistical as well as historical and cultural information. Each world description contains a block of statistics including world name, noble ruler, primary star type and JumpShip recharge time in hours, as well as planetary position (relative to any other worlds in the system), DropShip travel time from planet to jump point (assum-

ing 1G acceleration and midpoint turnover), the number and names of any natural satellites around the planet, local gravity and atmospheric pressure and content (relative to Terran standards), surface water coverage, equatorial temperature (and dominant planetary environmental conditions), and the highest form of native life. In addition, the write-ups include the positions of any jump point recharge stations, along with the class of the local ComStar HPG facility and planetary population size (based on the 3065 Alliance Census estimates).

The final statistic is a five-letter code known as the Universal Socio-Industrial Index Rating (USIIR). The USIIR code uses an A through F grading system to represent (in order) a settled world's level of technological sophistication, industrial development, dependence on imported raw materials, industrial output (relative to population) and agricultural dependence (again, relative to population). The Universal Socio-Industrial Reference Table below expands further on these various grades.

UNIVERSAL SOCIO-INDUSTRIAL LEVEL REFERENCE TABLE

TECHNOLOGICAL SOPHISTICATION

Rating	Description
A	High-tech world. Advanced research centers and universities; best medical care; cutting-edge microelectronics industry
B	Advanced world. Access to many new technologies; hosts universities; good medical care available (though lacking in most cutting-edge medical tech); basic microelectronics industry
C	Moderately advanced world. Average local education and medical care; minimal microelectronics industry (must be imported for sale)
D	Lower-tech world. Poor educational system; medical care equivalent to 21st-22nd century level; nonexistent microelectronics industry (except for possible isolated companies run by private concerns)
F	Primitive world. Inhabitants live without dependence on technology; no advanced education; medical care equivalent to 20th century level (at best)

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Rating	Description
A	Heavily industrialized. Capable of manufacturing any and all complex products
B	Moderately industrialized. May produce a limited quantity and range of complex products
C	Basic heavy industry. Equivalent to roughly 22nd century tech; fusion technology possible, but no complex products (including BattleMechs)
D	Low industrialization. Roughly equivalent to mid-20th century level; fusion technology must be imported
F	No industrialization

RAW MATERIAL DEPENDENCE

Rating	Description
A	Fully self-sufficient. System produces all needed raw materials and may export in large quantities
B	Mostly self-sufficient. System produces all needed raw materials and may export a small surplus
C	Self-sustaining. System produces some of its needed raw materials and imports the rest
D	Dependent. System is poor in raw materials and must import most of its material needs
F	Heavily dependent. System utterly reliant on imported materials to maintain industry and population

INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT

Rating	Description
A	High output. World has wide industrial and commercial base capable of exporting most of its output
B	Good output. World's industrial and commercial bases sufficient for modest product export
C	Limited output. World has a small industrial base which limits exports; imported goods common
D	Negligible output. World's industrial base insufficient for major exports; reliant on imported goods
F	No output. World must import most—if not all—of its heavy industrial and high-tech needs

AGRICULTURAL DEPENDENCE

Rating	Description
A	Breadbasket. Planetary agro industries meet all local needs and sustain a thriving export trade
B	Abundant world. Rich agricultural environment sustains local needs and permits limited exports
C	Modest agriculture. Most food locally produced, though some agricultural needs rely on imports
D	Poor agriculture. Minimal agricultural output forces heavy reliance on off-world imports to sustain the local population
F	"Barren" world. Agricultural output cannot sustain the local population without continuous off-world imports



TOURING THE REALM





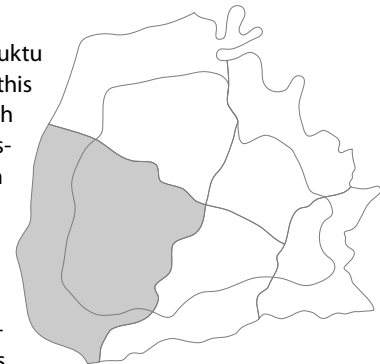
ALARION PROVINCE: THE GREAT WIDE OPEN

With nearly a hundred planets in its territory—fifty-seven interior and another forty-one within the Timbuktu military theater—Alarion is the largest of the five provinces that today form the Lyran state. Yet as a whole, this province may be House Steiner's least-developed region, the interstellar equivalent of a vast frontier, with resources waiting to be tapped. In much the same way, many of the region's people seem like frontiersmen, leading somewhat simpler lives than their fellow Lyrans on the majority of their worlds, many of which maintain subsistence-level economies or better through trade with the rest of the Alliance and—to a more controlled extent—with the small Periphery realms that border the Alliance's anti-spinward reaches.

Alarion Province is the largest single part of the Protectorate of Donegal, historically blessed with abundant resources for its relatively small population. The region, bordering the Free Worlds League and the Periphery, has seen its fair share of combat over the centuries, yet its people remain friendly and largely non-violent, historically favoring peaceful negotiations with interstellar neighbors rather than brute force. Its denizens hail largely from a mix of German, Italian and Eastern European roots, whose starfaring ancestors found the wide expanse a haven for their various cultures. Also included in the region are many former Rim Worlds planets, whose ethnicities were far more varied.

With so much inhabitable territory to explore and exploit, the people who settled this area of space frequently founded breakaway settlements whenever disputes in administration or planetary government became a divisive issue. This explains both the region's rapid settlement and its generally freewheeling local leaders, as well as its peoples' centuries-cultivated respect for their own sovereignty, which they readily extend to others. Simply put, the people of Alarion tend to see the universe as vast enough for everyone, and while they will fight just as hard to defend their homes—most Alarions in the Estates General fervently resist any effort to thin out their defenses, no matter how bad the economic hardship—they favor the tools of diplomacy and trade over armies of BattleMechs.

The majority of peoples on this region speak German and English almost exclusively, though Italian, Polish and Czech are also common tongues. Planetary governors and other public officials in Alarion Province seem typically laid-back, yet are fairly impatient with red tape, often putting the concerns of their constituents above those of the Alliance at large.



ALARION

Noble Ruler: Duke Anatoly Serfass

Star Type (Recharge Time): G0V (181 hours)

Position in System: 3rd

Time to Jump Point: 7.47 days

Number of Satellites: 1 (Tiber)

Surface Gravity: 0.98

Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 45° C (Warm-Temperate)

Surface Water: 80 percent

Recharging Station: Zenith

HPG Class Type: B

Highest Native Life: Fish

Population: 3,465,000,000

Socio-Industrial Levels: A-A-A-A-B

Alarion

Interestingly enough, the capital of Alarion Province was not settled until after the formation of the Lyran Commonwealth (before then, the region was simply a part of Seth Marsden's Protectorate of Donegal). The first settlements, however, were nearly doomed when their arrival inadvertently decimated local wildlife, and half



the colonists succumbed in a veritable crossfire of terrestrial and native diseases. To salvage the colonial effort, the young Commonwealth imposed strict regulations on further human development of this world, aimed at strengthening the local ecology as well as encouraging sustainable commercial and industrial growth.

Despite the strict quarantine and settlement directives that remain in effect, Alarion has become a heavily industrialized world and a provincial capital, boasting a major JumpShip manufacturing center as well as aerospace and BattleMech factories, plus a host of commercial industries. Very little of Alarion's two continents—New Brunswick and New Jordan—or its many tropical islands remains unsettled today. In addition, the Alarion system also boasts Port Sydney, the Alliance's only naval shipyard capable of producing and servicing WarShips, and the planet is ringed with satellite facilities that support this shipyard as well as the surface factories of Bowie Industries on the New Jordan continent. In further support of Alarion's naval and aerospace tradition, the planet is also home to the Alarion Naval Academy, the Lyran Alliance's newest military training school.

Craiova, Alarion's capital city with a population of five million, is located on New Brunswick, and also includes the planet's largest spaceport outside of the Bowie Industries factory complex.

Local People

Primarily settled by German, Romanian and English colonists, Alarion has a decidedly European feel, apparent in its architecture and the favoring of the German and Romanian languages over most others. The attitude of locals is typical of the province, with many leaders vocally opposed to war, yet loath to surrender their defen-



TOURING THE REALM

sive capabilities. Though many citizens of this world still remember House Marik's deep raids of less than seventy years ago, there is not as much animosity as one might expect from the border region capital. In fact, many still blame the attack on Archon Alessandro Steiner's "Concentrated Weakness" strategy more than on any evil intent from House Marik, and many commercial companies on Alarion still broker trade with the Free Worlds League.

For all its apparent complacency, Alarion currently lies in the grip of a simmering political crisis. The reigning planetary ruler, Duke Anatoly Serfass, is facing increasing public pressure to step down since the end of the FedCom Civil War. Criticism of him stems from his actions just prior to that conflict, when—under the Archonship of Katherine Steiner-Davion—Serfass authorized the local militia and the newly created Alarion Jaegers to carry out Operation Cleansweep against the local population, which resulted in several vocal antiwar protesters being jailed as alleged terrorists and insurgents against the Archon's rule. The sporadic fighting on Alarion throughout the Civil War distracted the people for a time, but now that a new regime is in power on Tharkad, those with long enough memories have begun to rally against their local ruler for his role in supporting Katherine's administration.

Other Notable Alarion Province Worlds

The following are other key worlds of Alarion Province.

BUENA

Noble Ruler: Duchess Concetta Yago
Star Type (Recharge Time): G6V (187 hours)
Position in System: 2nd
Time to Jump Point: 7.01 days
Number of Satellites: 3 (Bonita, Hermosa, Inesita)
Surface Gravity: 1.21
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 31° C (Cool-Temperate)
Surface Water: 64 percent
Recharging Station: Nadir
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Bird
Population: 2,107,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-B-C-C-C

Their world settled by a mixture of Latin-European colonists, the people of Buena, who have retained their dominant Spanish and Italian roots, languages and traditions, are a far cry from the stereotypical Germanic image of most Lyran citizens. The climate of Buena further clashes with popular stereotypes of these people, as so much of the world's four large landmasses—Luego and Santigo in the north, and Dominika and Revida in the south—lies within the planet's cooler, semi-boreal latitudes. Many semi-tropical and Mediterranean islands dot the massive oceans between the landmasses, but the interaction of the planet's large moons causes many of these smaller isles to disappear with regularity—often for months on end.



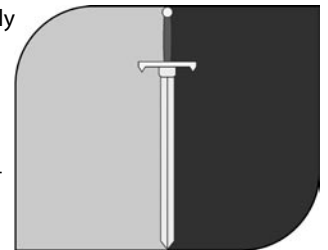
Despite its cultural incongruities, Buena is another key part of the Lyran realm because of its MechWarrior academy, the Buena War College, and the presence of the Buena Training Battalion. These assets provide for the defense of the Lyran state in general and—thanks to Buena's location—for Alarion Province's Periphery-League border specifically. Buena's capital city is Ciudad del Mar, located on the southern shores of the Luego continent, while the War College resides at Fort Buena on Dominika.

CARLISLE

Noble Ruler: Duke Gerhard Gilenni
Star Type (Recharge Time): K1V (192 hours)
Position in System: 3rd
Time to Jump Point: 5.18 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Dyson)
Surface Gravity: 1.03
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 47° C (Warm-Temperate)
Surface Water: 73 percent
Recharging Station: None
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population: 1,065,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-A-C-B-B

Carlisle, a peaceful and highly industrialized terrestrial planet, lies well within Alarion Province. Home to a Bowie Industries BattleMech manufacturing plant and S.L. Lewis Incorporated (makers of the ultra-light Savanna Master hovercraft and a host of civilian vehicles), Carlisle is understandably a world of major importance to the security of the Lyran state, and so boasts a full militia command raised from the local population and several nearby worlds.

Founded by German and Slovak peoples, Carlisle's early settlers raised a society largely based on the culture of Europe's Central and Eastern regions, and the dominant languages spoken here are German and Czech. Because so much of the local industry depends on defense, the people of this world are vocal proponents of the LAAF, though they retain much of the pro-peace attitudes seen throughout Alarion Province. Carlisle's capital city, New Prague, is located on the large northern temperate continent of Worrsetgard, which is also home to the Bowie Industries plant. The other two continents, Hollens and Hozernems, are more sparsely populated by comparison.



KAUMBERG

Noble Ruler: Baron Erich Sheridan
Star Type (Recharge Time): G5V (186 hours)
Position in System: 4th
Time to Jump Point: 7.47 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Grobrot)
Surface Gravity: 1.01
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 36° C (Warm-Temperate)



Surface Water: 81 percent
Recharging Station: None
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population: 1,782,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-D-C-B-A

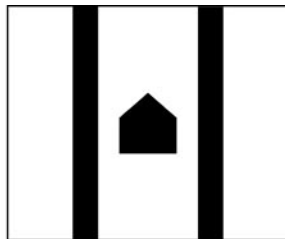
Kaumberg was settled in the twenty-fourth century by an expedition almost exclusively comprised of German and Austrian peoples, who were attracted by the thickly wooded mountains and sprawling native forests that reminded them so much of home. Several families founded colonies simultaneously across the continents of Regenwald, Eingeschneit and Kuhlschrank, but thanks to their common heritage, managed to avoid internecine conflict by establishing a quasi-democratic society based on the primary families. This system came to be dominated over time by two particularly influential families—the Hasseldorfs and the LeSats—who also came to dominate the planetary defense forces. At the start of the FedCom Civil War, a simmering feud between the Hasseldorfs and LeSats erupted into all-out war, largely centered on Regenwald in and around the capital city of Stuttgart. The conflict decimated both local Houses and the planetary defense force, and has caused heavy damage to the planet's primary industry—the lumber trade—as the battle zones included large swaths of Regenwald's prized woodlands. As of this writing, lumber exports from Kaumberg are only now reaching three-fourths of their pre-war status.



POULSBO

Noble Ruler: Duke Zachary Astra
Star Type (Recharge Time): F4V (175 hours)
Position in System: 4th
Time to Jump Point: 11.23 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Sjure)
Surface Gravity: 0.92
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 54° C (Tropical)
Surface Water: 80 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Reptile
Population: 2,405,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: D-C-D-C-C

Discovered in the late 2300s, Poulsbo, a small world almost covered in seas that constantly churn from the pull of its large moon, was not settled for nearly a century, largely because it was deemed too resource-poor to be worth the trouble. However, with the rise of the Lyran Commonwealth during the Age of War, Poulsbo became a key strategic world and the site of Bangor, a military base intended as a staging area for attacks against House Marik's Periphery border.



By the time of the Star League, a large civilian population had flocked to Poulsbo, but the closing of Bangor during the Good Years of the League nearly isolated this planet and sent the locals into an economic depression.

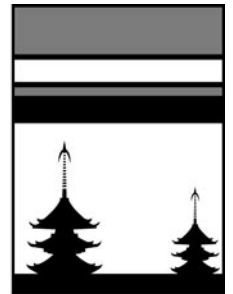
When the Succession Wars broke out, Poulsbo regained its strategic importance, but its people have retained the spirit of fierce independence and intense preoccupation with local matters that came from being nearly forgotten by the wider realm in the Star League era. Furthermore, the reopening and expansion of Bangor has been met with heavy raids and assaults by Free Worlds and Periphery forces, events that have left many of the peacefully inclined peoples of this world more than a little disgusted by Lyran politics and war. Poulsbo's capital city is Bangor Heights, located in the mountains near Fort Bangor on the semi-tropical island continent of Tammerfors. The planet boasts a large population of ethnic Scandinavians and Germans, who also settled the other five island continents of Bergenswald, Brusselsia, Goteborg and Mermannisk.

TIMBUKTU

Noble Ruler: Duchess Cantrelle Sherris
Star Type (Recharge Time): K0V (191 hours)
Position in System: 2nd
Time to Jump Point: 4.47 days
Number of Satellites: None
Surface Gravity: 0.94
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 52° C (Warm-Temperate)
Surface Water: 63 percent
Recharging Station: None
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Plant
Population: 479,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-C-B-C-D

Two hundred light years' distant from Tharkad, Timbuktu is one of the Alliance's most far-flung holdings and has borne the brunt of many raids by Periphery bandits. Though it orbits close enough to its weak red-orange sun that much of its landmass is desert and badlands, seriously limiting its agriculture and ranching industries, the people of Timbuktu consider themselves self-sufficient pioneers. The planet provides barely enough food to support its population, while major industry has been limited by a relative lack of mineral wealth—save for the veins inexplicably confined to the hellishly volcanic southern continent of Hades, which include recently discovered lodes of germanium.

Recovered from centuries of raids and a planet-wide epidemic of neo-smallpox that affected roughly half the population in the 3020s, the defiantly self-reliant people of Timbuktu have taken steps to improve their world as a locus of Alliance trade with the Rim Collection. Much of this development focuses on Timbuktu's capital and primary spaceport, Greene, which is located on the northern supercontinent of Saharius. Saharius occupies almost the entire northern hemisphere and is made up almost entirely of grasslands and desert wastes.





BOLAN PROVINCE: THE KEYSTONE REGION

In many ways, Bolan Province is the polar opposite of Alarion Province. At just forty-four worlds—counting the Cavanaugh Theater planets—it is the smallest of the Lyran provinces, but its strategic position between the resource-rich worlds of Skye and Alarion provinces, and its long border with House Marik's Free Worlds League, have made it the focus of attacks throughout the history of the Lyran state. Indeed, the provincial capital of Bolan was conquered during the Age of War, and along with many worlds in the modern Bolan and Alarion provinces, remained under House Marik's eagle banner throughout the Star League era. For the people of Bolan, however, the opening days of the First Succession War, and the League's devastating use of nuclear weapons and other scorched-earth tactics, left a bitter memory that overrides their memories of the Golden Age even today.

Though this province also boasts a high level of local industry, including several major defense contractors, many of its worlds have served the Commonwealth as little more than a stopgap against League incursions, with trillions of kroner historically going toward regional defense. The people of this province have thus borne the brunt of most of the Succession Wars on the Free Worlds League front, and many now see the League as a threat to be extinguished rather than placated or reconciled with. This attitude provides a stark contrast with that of the people of Alarion, and has caused no small amount of political friction between the two regions.

Politically speaking, Bolan Province has historically been a staunch ally of the Steiner Archons, but in the years that followed the formation of the Federated Commonwealth this support steadily waned, with many Bolans feeling abandoned by a government that appeared focused on the Kurita and Liao fronts rather than the hated Mariks. The Clan invasion and its aftermath only furthered this deterioration as native Bolans turned more and more toward the people of the tiny Rahneshire Province, part of the neighboring Federation of Skye. Through this influence, Bolan politics have grown markedly closer to those of Skye, seeing the Federation as a kindred spirit equally menaced by Free Worlds ambitions, especially after the Lyran secession from the FedCom. Bolan Province has since come to be the keystone of the Lyran realm, as the military linchpin of the Marik-Steiner front and as the political ally of the historically separatist people of Skye.

Culturally, the Bolan region is even more striking, founded by a combination of nationalities typically associated with other realms. A mixture of Indian, Pakistani, English and Scottish immigrants claimed many of these worlds, and so travelers to this region can expect to hear a Scots accent lacing the official German tongue as often as they might hear a tinge of Urdu or Punjabi dialects, or see churches and temples devoted to the Hindu and Catholic faiths as much as those of the dominant Protestant, Jewish and Muslim faiths espoused throughout much of Alliance territory. In fact, Bolans have often been accused of being transplanted citizens of the FedSuns or the Free Worlds League, accusations that often draw a violent response from these proud Lyrans.



BOLAN

Noble Ruler: Duke Alder Umayr

Star Type (Recharge Time): G4V (185 hours)

Position in System: 2nd

Time to Jump Point: 7.96 days

Number of Satellites: None

Surface Gravity: 0.78

Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 54° C (Desert)

Surface Water: 44 percent

Recharging Station: Zenith

HPG Class Type: B

Highest Native Life: Birds

Population: 4,109,000,000

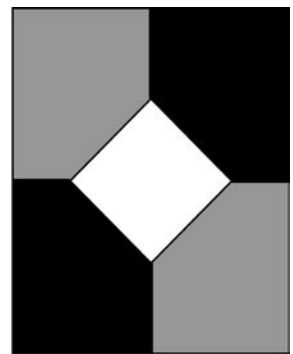
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-C-B-C-C

Bolan

Bolan was settled by people from Terra's Indian subcontinent, a curious mix of Indians, Pakistanis and even some Afghans—nations made nearly destitute during the development of space travel and filled with people eager to escape the excesses of the Terran Alliance government. Though a dry, mountainous world, Bolan was blessed with substantial enough natural resources to support a hu-

man population and a modest level of industry. Though these industries suffered heavy damage when Free Worlds League troops abandoned the world at the onset of the First Succession War, in the centuries since they have largely recovered from the nuclear strikes made by the departing League forces. Today, entire swaths of the planet's northern Sakété and southern Kashmir continents retain the radioactive scars of the Marik withdrawal. The third landmass, the northern island continent of Sabari—once the hub of planetary trade and site of a major military base in the Star League era—is completely uninhabitable.

Though the early Bolanese were united in their dislike for the Terran Alliance's harsh policies, not long after the first colonies settled here, the ethnic populations—several of them historic rivals—began to clash. Largely fragmented into city-states, many of these rivals battled over access to the planet's relatively limited sources of fresh water, while the more industrious and commercially powerful states warred over key trade routes and access to mineral resources





such as those in the mountains on Sakété. In the most recent such confrontation, the city-states of Quetta and Sibi fought an escalating local war over control of the Brahui Pass, known locally as the Quetta Land War. The conflict was settled by the intervention of the newly created Bolan Jaegers, who remain active in local politics even after suffering devastating losses in the FedCom Civil War.

In addition to hosting the Melissa Steiner Martial Academy of Bolan (formerly the Bolan Martial Academy), which was established to make up for the loss of the War College of Tamar in 3053, Bolan is also a provincial capital and military command center for the bulk of the Alliance's Free Worlds front. In addition, the planet is a commercial and industrial crossroads for the Alliance, home to numerous microelectronics industries and even a local branch of the Alliance Stock Exchange. The Exchange is located in the planetary capital of Bolan City, on the southern continent of Kashmir, which also boasts the planet's largest spaceport, and the local headquarters of the LIC, devoted to observing the Free Worlds League.

Local People

Though the Quetta Land War underscores the political divisiveness prevalent on Bolan since its founding, the people of Bolan have managed to keep a relative peace by uniting their disparate city-states under a planetary council that includes equal representation among the planet's dominant Muslim and Hindu populations. This government largely mediates disputes between rival city-states, typically backed up by the authority of the Lyran government, which has a vested interest in this world's stability.

In addition to German, the native languages on Bolan include Urdu and Punjabi, as spoken by those who settled this world centuries ago. Most natives speak all three as well as English—often in the same conversation. Such a habit tends to confuse visitors to this world, a fact that amuses many Bolans, who retain much of their own culturally influenced xenophobia despite their world's importance and the draw of its military academy.

Other Notable Bolan Province Worlds

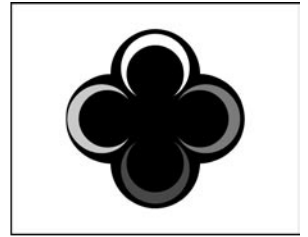
The following are other key worlds of Bolan Province.

CAVANAUGH II

Noble Ruler: Duke Alan Lamar Moon
Star Type (Recharge Time): M9II (210 hours)
Position in System: 4th
Time to Jump Point: 1.96 days
Number of Satellites: 4 (Cambriae, Gododin, Nennius, Tennyson)
Surface Gravity: 0.99
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 40° C (Warm-Tropical)
Surface Water: 80 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Amphibians
Population: 932,827,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-B-C-B-C

Discovered in 2290, but not settled until after its 2325 sale to Duke Alvin Windsor-Moon, a wealthy member of the former English

court, Cavanaugh II was settled by a mixture of English, Welsh and Scottish émigrés who included the entire Arthurian Actors Guild among their number. Though the planet's warmer climate—despite its fairly cool red sun—took some getting used to, the fertile soil and lush agricultural resources made colonization easier, and settlements arose on four of the planet's five island-continent—Bedivere, Gareth, Gawain and Tristram. The fifth continent, Mordred (located in the southern hemisphere), was judged too hostile to support life because of its intense volcanic activity and chronic earthquakes. It remains largely deserted to this day, save for a few scientific outposts and daring mining ventures. The capital city, Caerleon, lies on a small island off the shores of Gawain, and was built to resemble the Welsh city from which it takes its name.

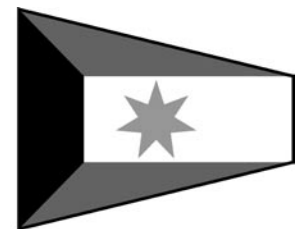


DAR-ES-SALAAM

Noble Ruler: Duke Qadim Abdulla Rayhan
Star Type (Recharge Time): F1VI (172 hours)
Position in System: 1st
Time to Jump Point: 20.26 days
Number of Satellites: 2 (Luqman, Jibril)
Surface Gravity: 0.74
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 59° C (Desert)
Surface Water: 36 percent
Recharging Station: Nadir
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Amphibians
Population: 3,677,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-D-C-C-D

Its land mostly desert, even on the north polar continent of Maysun, Dar-es-Salaam was overlooked by several early colonial expeditions until it became the focus of a massed relocation of Moslem immigrants from Terra in the late twenty-fifth century, after their spiritual leaders finally approved the departure of followers into space. Because of its surface resemblance to the vast desert regions of the Middle East and Northern Africa, from which many of these settlers hailed, they chose this world as their new sanctuary and named it Dar-es-Salaam ("Haven of Peace"). Since that time, Dar-es-Salaam has become the de facto center of the Muslim religion within the religiously tolerant Lyran Alliance (nee Commonwealth). The people here follow a simple set of beliefs, as outlined in the Koran, and though strict, their moral emphasis on the family—a great comfort to many Lyrans throughout the centuries of war—has since attracted converts from all across the Lyran state, who see this world as a kind of Mecca.

Dar-es-Salaam's capital city, Khadijah, is located on the north-western shore of Mellesse, the massive continent that covers close to sixty percent of the planetary surface, including the south pole and half the equatorial band.



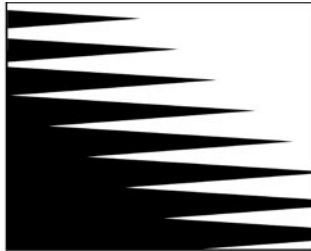


TOURING THE REALM

FURILLO

Noble Ruler: Duke Caesar Steiner
Star Type (Recharge Time): K3V (194 hours)
Position in System: 2nd
Time to Jump Point: 4.62 days
Number of Satellites: None
Surface Gravity: 1.12
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 36° C (Warm-Temperate)
Surface Water: 81 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population: 4,511,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: A-A-B-A-C

Rich enough in raw materials, flora and fauna to support a booming colony in short order, settlement of Furillo occurred at a record pace, and by the time it became part of the Protectorate of Donegal, it was already one of the most prosperous planets in the region. The Steiner family acquired full stewardship of this world during their rise to power and today it remains one of their most valued holdings. Furillo is home to a Defiance Industries BattleMech factory (formerly Tolsand WarWorks, located near the city of Snohomish Springs in the shadow of the Mont Vert on the Dereka continent), as well as Lockheed/CBM's helicopter plant (near the capital city of Telesian on the southern Wilda continent), and a Nashan and Defiance military electronics plant (near the Defiance factory). The world is also home to a host of heavy industries that supply other Alliance planets with everything from personal entertainment systems and communicators to hand weapons and IndustrialMechs. It also bears the dubious distinction of homeworld to Alessandro Steiner, the Archon deposed by Katrina Steiner in 3007, who lived in Kelestra City, the largest city in Dereka.



Furillo is a pleasant world of snow-capped mountains, whose people are much more politically moderate than others in Bolan Province, but who remain loath to consider any form of reconciliation with the Free Worlds League. Nevertheless, the natives universally profess undying loyalty to the Steiner family, and have steadfastly followed every edict handed down from Tharkad since the incorporation of the Lyran state, no matter how distasteful.

GALLERY

Noble Ruler: Duchess Lisa Steiner II
Star Type (Recharge Time): M5V (206 hours)
Position in System: 1st
Time to Jump Point: 2.52 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Romaine)
Surface Gravity: 1.03
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 27° C (Cool-Temperate)
Surface Water: 88 percent

Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: None
Population: 681,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-C-A-B-D

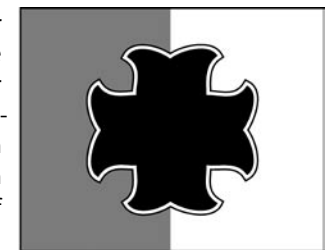
One of the darkest and moodiest planets in the Lyran realm—often compared unfavorably to Solaris, in fact—Gallery is another world held exclusively by the Steiner family. Cursed by a stormy climate born of its three large seas and an unusually large moon, this world suffers from chronic rainstorms and sees barely five weeks of its native sunlight any given year. This climate has prevented the growth of any native life forms, but transplanted flora and an abundance of atmospheric reprocessors have made the air breathable for the mostly subterranean communities that dot this planet's four main continents of Axillon, Ludella, Penrodia and Tyrillia. Numerous mining industries plumb the depths of the mountains near these communities, often employing digging drones in an eternal quest for rare diamonds and other valuable minerals, and creating a honeycomb of mineshafts, some even large enough for BattleMechs to navigate. Even Gallery's largest local industry, the Dynamics Incorporated missile weapons factory on the Tyrillia continent, lies underground, leaving few landmarks on the surface to betray where it and the nearby capital city of New Stockholm are located. These features combine to make Gallery a difficult world to attack, but also nearly impossible to live on unless one is a native.



GIENAH

Noble Ruler: Duchess Ormanda Zdenekova
Star Type (Recharge Time): K0IV (191 hours)
Position in System: 2nd
Time to Jump Point: 8.03 days
Number of Satellites: 4 (Corvis, Dobry, Mazel, Nando)
Surface Gravity: 1.08
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 41° C (Mild-Temperate)
Surface Water: 77 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Birds
Population: 1,088,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-C-B-B-B

A major commercial world for the Lyran realm, as well as home to Gienah Automotive, a popular manufacturer of conventional civilian and military vehicles, Gienah enjoys a peculiar place in the Lyran socio-economic dynamic, as part of the anti-Marik Bolan Province and a major trade partner with several technology-deprived Free Worlds League border planets. In the cen-





turies since Gienah Automotive established its plants on this planet, traders and invaders from the Free Worlds have arrived in almost equal measure. As a result, the planet's political leaders walk a fine line, trying not to offend their fellow Bolan Province neighbors while simultaneously maintaining an economy that waxes and wanes with the ebb and flow of constant warfare. Gienah's factories and headquarters are located in the massive city of Molfetta, on the northern continent of Carrabesto, while the capital city and planetary spaceport are located on the larger equatorial landmass of Alliago Major. Alliago Minor, Gienah's third continent, lies at the south pole and is largely used by local defense forces as a training ground for cold-weather operations.

LORIC

Noble Ruler: Duke Halcyon Albern

Star Type (Recharge Time): K8IV (199 hours)

Position in System: 2nd

Time to Jump Point: 3.47 days

Number of Satellites: 1 (Udo)

Surface Gravity: 0.98

Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 47° C (Tropical)

Surface Water: 88 percent

Recharging Station: Nadir

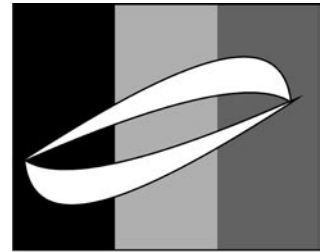
HPG Class Type: B

Highest Native Life: Birds

Population: 1,609,000,000

Socio-Industrial Levels: C-C-C-D-B

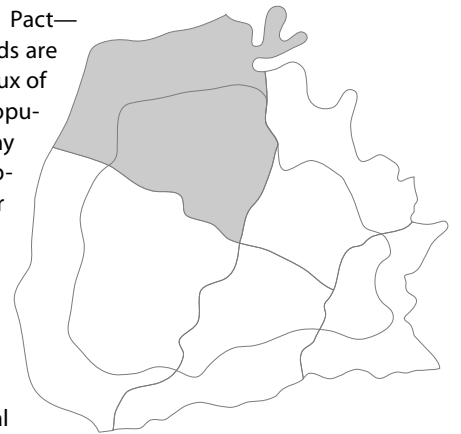
A world of gentle shorelines and rugged mountains, deep rivers and dark forests, Loric could have been a paradise, except for its unfortunate position smack in the middle of House Steiner's border with the Free Worlds League, which made it a key strategic point for attacks as far back as the Age of War. Colonized largely by Pakistani immigrants, this mostly sunny, sometimes stormy world was a well-established agricultural center in its heyday, but its closeness to the Marik front made it a favored target throughout the wars before and after the time of the Star League. To discourage attacks, the people of Loric have long resisted the establishment of any heavy industries—particularly military industries—on their world, and have sought to maintain a subsistence-level economy through agriculture and the use of their many islands and untamed forests as vacation getaways for the idle rich. Sadly, this non-violent approach has done little to stem the centuries of war, and while the people remain committed to making Loric as unappealing as possible for military adventurism, they nonetheless welcome Lyran troops on their soil, and have long adopted the same anti-Free Worlds hatred so prevalent throughout Bolan Province. Loric's eastern and northern continents—Sorania and Padawa, respectively—are home to the lion's share of medium-sized cities, including the planetary capital of Madras on Sorania. The southern polar continent, Ghanadi, is the planet's least populous region and is mostly a natural preserve.



COVENTRY PROVINCE: GATEWAY TO THARKAD

At ninety-one inhabited systems—including a handful formerly belonging to the Tamar Pact—Coventry Province is the second largest in the entire Alliance. Like the Alarion region, these worlds are chronically under-populated, but increasing industrialization over recent years, and a massive influx of refugees from the shattered Tamar Pact, have narrowed the gap between Coventry's per-world population and those of more concentrated Lyran regions. Indeed, at the current rate of growth, many socioeconomic experts anticipate that Coventry Province may rise to equal Donegal Province's population within a century, a fact that has made Coventry's people prouder yet concerned that their increasing prosperity may make their worlds a logical target for the next Jade Falcon incursion.

Coventry Province, much like Alarion Province, was settled largely by Italian, German and Eastern European peoples, and includes a large number of former Rim Worlds Republic planets. In addition, the region boasts a large percentage of African and African-American descendants, as well as white South Africans, Australians and New Zealanders. This ethnic diversity has only grown more pronounced with the recent surge of Tamar Pact refugees, whose ethnic roots largely hail from Terra's Western European states. The cultural mix has caused a broad range of internal controversies, such as the longstanding racial inequalities recently stamped out on worlds like New Capetown, but has also bred a broader view toward accepting differences and reconciling with neighbors. Consequently, the attitudes of Coventry natives toward internal affairs tend to fall close to those of Alarion Province, advocating negotiation and peaceful coexistence over warfare. At least, this mindset prevails where the Alliance's Inner Sphere and Periphery neighbors are concerned. When it comes to the Clans, especially the Jade Falcons, the invasions of 3050, 3058 and 3064 are still fueling a call to arms to "drive out the cursed Clan interlopers."





TOURING THE REALM

COVENTRY

Noble Ruler: Duke Thomas Fredrick Bradford

Star Type (Recharge Time): F4V (210 hours)

Position in System: 3rd

Time to Jump Point: 16.10 days

Number of Satellites: 1 (Wellston)

Surface Gravity: 1.01

Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 35° C (Mild-Temperate)

Surface Water: 80 percent

Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir

HPG Class Type: A

Highest Native Life: Mammals

Population: 3,785,000,000

Socio-Industrial Levels: A-A-A-A

Coventry

Blessed with large seas, abundant agricultural resources and mild seasons, Coventry was a paradise to the settlers who came here during the massive human exodus from Terra. By the time of the Commonwealth's rise, the world had already become host to a booming economy based on the export of its varied and exotic foodstuffs, along with major manufacturers drawn by the discovery of readily accessible raw materials on Veracruz, the largest of Coventry's four continents. This rampant development continued



under Lyran rule, with the world becoming a major trade center for planets along the coreward Periphery, including those of the nearby Rim Worlds Republic. Booming trade eventually gave birth to major military industries as well as agricultural commerce. Coventry Metal Works, one of the Commonwealth's largest BattleMech manufacturers after Hesperus II's Defiance Industries, made its home just outside the planetary capital of Port St. William on Veracruz. Ceres Metals, another major interstellar manufacturer, established its McKenzy Molecular Smelters on Dunnigan, the continent separated from Veracruz by the Cross-Divide Mountains. Greenbill Aerospace, a producer of fine civilian aircraft and aerospace craft, is headquartered on Sydnallia, a large island continent southeast of Dunnigan's shores. Meanwhile, Nashan Computers, possibly the Lyran state's largest military and personal computer manufacturers, maintains no less than five primary factories and a corporate headquarters on Coventry, centered on the cool southern continent of Auckland, in the city of New Toronto.

In addition to being the administrative and military command center for the province, Coventry is also home to the Coventry Military Academy, a small but prestigious MechWarrior training center for the Lyran armed forces, which is located on Dunnigan near the city of Port Lawrence. Outside of the planet's military and industrial facilities, visitors may enjoy the beautiful semi-tropical climates of Vestal and Amman, the small island subcontinents that draw thousands of tourists year-round and provide a supplemental income to this wealthy and important Lyran world.

Local People

Coventry itself was settled largely by Australian, New Zealander and Canadian colonists, who initially planned their new home as an agricultural center rather than the regional industrial powerhouse it became. When later expeditions discovered large veins of industrial metals all over the place, however, a flood of heavier industries flocked to this world, their activities at first tolerated and then encouraged by the open society and lax laws the founders had put in place.

As a people, Coventry natives are open and friendly, and surprisingly up to date on current events, while local leaders are well known for the same kind of laid-back attitude that permeates Alarion and Coventry provinces. Over the years, however, a growing influx of peoples drawn to jobs and the promise of profits in the Coventry region has begun to produce an increasingly diverse, almost cosmopolitan society. Many of those descended from these later immigrants are far less trusting of off-worlders or far more interested in drawing others in for their business, a greedier version of the natives' open mentality.

The recent military events that shook Coventry have also made many residents—native and transplanted alike—increasingly concerned about the future of their world. Some advocate the development of massive planetary defense systems like the ancient SDS networks that protected Star League planets, while others suggest that a return to Coventry's agrarian roots might make the world a less tempting target for future invaders.

Other Notable Coventry Province Worlds

The following are other key worlds of Coventry Province.

BLACKJACK

Noble Ruler: None

Star Type (Recharge Time): G3V (184 hours)

Position in System: 3rd

Time to Jump Point: 8.53 days

Number of Satellites: 2 (Club, Spade)

Surface Gravity: 0.97

Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 49° C (Arid-Desert)

Surface Water: 31 percent

Recharging Station: None

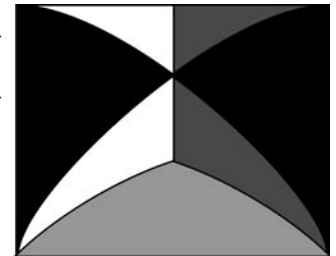
HPG Class Type: B

Highest Native Life: Reptile

Population: 1,076,000,000

Socio-Industrial Levels: B-B-D-C-D

The arid world of Blackjack was colonized largely by the descendants of English and French settlers, drawn to this planet by its limited but accessible mineral wealth. Unfortunately, depredations by Periphery and Draconis Combine raiders savaged much of the heavy industries established here, and many of the valuable ore veins ran dry by the middle of the Second Succession War. These drawbacks did





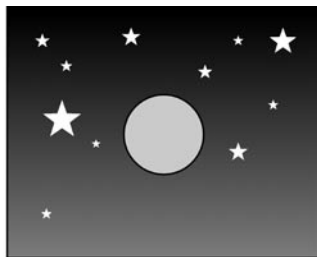
not deter the founding of the Blackjack School of Conflict, however, the Lyran Commonwealth's only privately run MechWarrior academy. Capable of training any students who can pay the excessive tuition fees in the standard courseware found in any military school, Blackjack also offered several "unofficial" classes catering to more mercenary tastes, and gained a reputation for neglecting combat ethics and turning out warriors whose performance fell just short of banditry.

Captured by the Jade Falcons in 3050 and liberated only recently, this world is still recovering from fifteen years under Clan rule, and the Blackjack School is no more—razed by the Steel Vipers, who briefly held this world as well. Much of the indoctrinated population, in fact, tends to forego the use of surnames and still consider themselves part of a caste system, despite the absence of their harsh Jade Falcon masters. Blackjack's capital city, Lott's Revenge, is located in the northern hemisphere, on the shores of the Blackjack Ocean, which nearly encircles the planet's northern tropical zone.

BLUE HOLE

Noble Ruler: Duke Wilhelm Stefanis
Star Type (Recharge Time): K7V (198 hours)
Position in System: 4th
Time to Jump Point: 3.70 days
Number of Satellites: None
Surface Gravity: 0.81
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 41° C (Warm-Temperate)
Surface Water: 67 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Birds
Population: 934,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-C-C-C-B

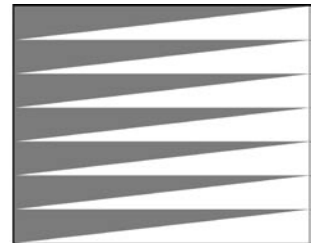
Peculiar to look at from orbit, Blue Hole's surface resembles a series of large lakes, ponds and rivers with an irregular web of dry land crisscrossing between them. On the ground, things look more peculiar still, as many of these ponds and lakes prove to have surprising depths, and many are interlinked by vast underwater channels—most large enough for BattleMechs and submarines to pass through. So much of this water proved fresh and drinkable upon discovery of this world that it became a focal part of the planet's industry, exporting natural Blue Hole spring water to less fortunate worlds nearby—for a price, of course. A secondary tourist industry also grew around the planet's unique geography and pleasant climates, bringing millions of kroner to this planet annually, until the arrival of the Clans suddenly put Blue Hole on the front lines. The final years of the FedCom Civil War saw the worst of this fighting when Jade Falcon units demolished several mercenary and House commands before being forced back by the Wolf Clan-in-Exile. Ironically, in spite of this, many inhabitants of Blue Hole remain distrustful of the exiled Wolves. Blue Hole's capital city of Lapiz lies in the northern hemisphere, just south of what natives call the Wide, Wide Sea.



GULF BREEZE

Noble Ruler: Duke Otto Johansen
Star Type (Recharge Time): A6II (167 hours)
Position in System: 5th
Time to Jump Point: 32.76 days
Number of Satellites: None (asteroid ring)
Surface Gravity: 1.89
Atm. Pressure: Low (Toxic)
Equatorial Temperature: 193° C (Tide-locked)
Surface Water: 19 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: None
Population: 31,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-A-A-B-F

Founded by the defunct Commonwealth Mining Corporation, which collapsed amid scandal during the Second Succession War, Gulf Breeze was originally known simply as Commonwealth Mining Outpost 26 (C.M.O. 26). Its focus was a large, lifeless, tide-locked rock laced with titanium, platinum and countless other minerals ripe for industrial use. Domed settlements on the night side of the planet formed the heart of this corporate mining colony, but to take advantage of valuable ores found in the outer planets, moons and asteroid fields, several spaceborne habitats were also established, including the eventual system capital of Gulf Breeze Station, an ancient Star League-era facility massing 930,000 tons and capable of sustaining a population of 50,000 military and civilian personnel. Gulf Breeze Station became the major waypoint for all in-system travel after the collapse of CMC, when local mining colony leaders elected to remain in the system and eke out a living on their own. Eventually taking the name of their capital facility as the name for their star system, these intrepid miners continue to plumb the depths of their worlds and asteroids for riches they now trade to keep their thriving colonies well fed and well fueled.



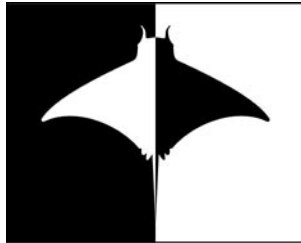
INARCS

Noble Ruler: Duchess Tamari LaRue
Star Type (Recharge Time): K9III (200 hours)
Position in System: 5th
Time to Jump Point: 3.31 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Agiruur)
Surface Gravity: 0.92
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 45° C (Warm-Temperate)
Surface Water: 60 percent
Recharging Station: Nadir
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Amphibians
Population: 655,300,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: A-A-B-A-B



TOURING THE REALM

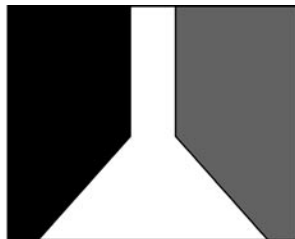
A clerical error classified the comfortable world of Inarcs as uninhabitable in the twenty-fourth century, a fact that delayed development of this world except as a Star League penal colony. Soon after exporting nearly 100,000 criminals and malcontents to Inarcs, however, the League returned to find a thriving colony on the planet's sole continent, which had been given the name Insel Desteufels ("Devil's Island") sight unseen. The "condemned" inhabitants had named their capital city Utopia, keeping the continental name as a tongue-in-cheek joke at the League government's expense, and founded several local industries around the extraction of mineral resources from the island chains that peppered the planet's oceans. After the League pardoned the lucky colonists, the planet was opened for off-world commerce, which brought in industries largely from the nearby Rim Worlds Republic. The Republic essentially controlled Inarcs until that nation fell at the end of the Star League period. Under the Lyran flag, the world came to support such major military manufacturers as Blackstone Industries, a major BattleMech producer and the foundation of the wealthy Blackstone family, who also claim ownership of the Blackstone Highlanders mercenary command.



MELISSIA

Noble Ruler: Margrave Adam Steiner
Star Type (Recharge Time): G9V (190 hours)
Position in System: 5th
Time to Jump Point: 5.82 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Saratoga)
Surface Gravity: 1.02
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 35° C (Warm-Temperate)
Surface Water: 60 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Reptile
Population: 1,125,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: A-A-B-B-C

Melissia, capital of the Melissa Combat Theater, is a world of extreme seasons originally discovered and settled by colonists from nearby Coventry. In the northern and southernmost latitudes, one can potentially experience the extremes of all seasons in the span of a single day. This climactic quirk earned the massive unicontinent that runs from pole to pole and covers an entire hemisphere the nickname Jahreszeitwunder ("Seasons of Wonder"). The continent is divided almost in half by a massive river known as Broad Run, which runs from the Valiant Mountains along the western edge of the continent and empties into open sea at the Broad Run Delta in the east. The Loveless Valley, which lies north of the Delta, is home to a vast per-



centage of the local farmlands, as well as the planetary capital and principal spaceport of Europa. Rich in titanium deposits, particularly beneath the northern ice shelf, Melissia is a self-sufficient, modestly industrial world whose people have grown fanatically loyal to their planetary liege, Margrave Adam Steiner. Rumor has it that a grassroots movement has already begun here advocating his placement on the Steiner throne, a claim the margrave seems unwilling to make at this time.

NEW CAPETOWN

Noble Ruler: Duke Aren Hearscht
Star Type (Recharge Time): K9V (200 hours)
Position in System: 4th
Time to Jump Point: 3.31 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Durban)
Surface Gravity: 1.10
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 29° C (Cool-Temperate)
Surface Water: 65 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Bird
Population: 3,120,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-B-C-C-B

For centuries since its founding, New Capetown has been one of House Steiner's ugliest worlds—not for its geography or climate, but for its backward cultural attitude. Founded by white South Afrikaaners of the New Calvinist sect, the world's people lived under blatantly racist rule where skin color defined social class before all other considerations. Though the planet exported various commercial products and raw materials badly needed by many of its neighbors, many traders found it difficult to stomach doing business with the predominantly white-supremacist New Capetowners, a fact which stunted the planet's economic growth. Despite this, the world became host to a major military institution, the Royal New Capetown Military Academy.



In the mid-3030s, a concerted effort sponsored by Archon Katrina Steiner led to the toppling of the repressive government and the institution of a more egalitarian leadership to bring this world back to modern times. Though largely successful, pockets of racism still exist on New Capetown, and their effects are still felt in the halls of the RCNMA, though much of this hatred is now focused squarely on the Clans. New Capetown's capital of New Hope (formerly New Johannesburg) is located on the southern Pretoria continent. The RCNMA, though based just outside the city, also maintains training fields on the planet's other large landmass, Eissia, in the north.

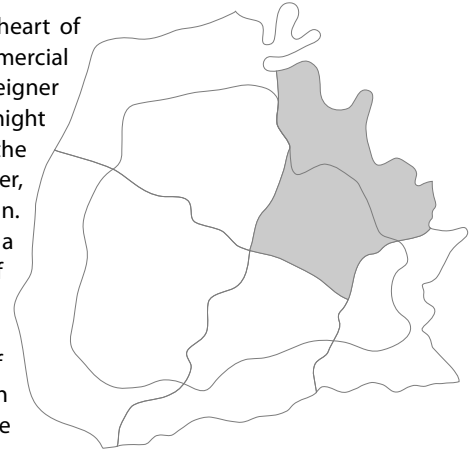


DONEGAL PROVINCE: HOME OF THE THRONE

Donegal Province—often called the District of Donegal—is the economic and political heart of the Lyran Alliance, and is easily the most cosmopolitan of all the Lyran provinces. Political, commercial and even military leaders in this region are slick, and many an unwary traveler—Lyran and foreigner alike—has been taken in by elaborate cons and oily speeches from these men and women. As might be found in any realm's capital region, corruption and bribery are widespread, despite efforts by the ruling House to stamp out such excesses wherever possible. Here in the Donegal region, however, every politician is expected to be crooked and every business leader out solely for personal gain. This stereotype proves true often enough to have saddled the people of Donegal Province with a reputation for greed and untrustworthiness they only partially deserve, and the relative lack of military action on their soil often chafes those who hail from border regions, who tend to feel that the leaders of the realm have not been bloodied enough to be worthy of the title.

As the heart of Lyran commerce, industry and politics, Donegal Province is an obvious hub of travel and communications throughout the realm. This gives the region a double benefit of wealth from the flood of merchants who come to trade here and from the flow of news, which keeps the average Donegal citizen well informed of activities within the Alliance and beyond.

Today's Donegal Province also includes several worlds from the former Tamar Pact, the Lyran Commonwealth founding state that was mostly shattered during the Clan offensive of the 3050s. Many people in this region who hail from Tamar Pact worlds are often looked upon as refugees of the Clan war, even if their worlds were not among those attacked. Understandably, those who hail from such worlds, or who escaped the invading hordes, harbor a burning hatred for the Clans and are fervent advocates for a renewed push to drive the Jade Falcons and their ilk from the Inner Sphere once and for all.



THARKAD

Noble Ruler: Archon Peter Steiner-Davion
Star Type (Recharge Time): G6V (187 hours)
Position in System: 5th
Time to Jump Point: 7.01 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Marsden)
Surface Gravity: 1.10
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 20° C (Arctic)
Surface Water: 80 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Mammal
Population: 7,000,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: A-A-A-A-C

Tharkad: Heart of the Alliance

A frosty world, with four of five continents and two of three major island chains dominated by woodlands and steppes often blanketed by heavy snow, Tharkad holds few places to hide from winter's grasp. The world was discovered in 2310 by Seth Marsden, who fell in love with its tranquil beauty and personally funded the importation of various cold-weather plants and animals to bring this mineral-rich planet to life. Massive deposits of gemstones and radioactives, however, soon made Tharkad far more than a mere arctic getaway for the founder of the Protectorate of Donegal, and by 2407 the world had grown so prominent that it became then-



Archon Alistair Marsden's first choice for the new capital of the Lyran Commonwealth.

Tharkad City, located on the northern continent of Bremen, lies at the northern base of Mount Olympia. It includes the Triad, a massive complex of buildings that houses the royal palace, Government House and the royal court, and serves as the political apex of the Lyran state. Not far away, on the crest of Mount Wotan, is Asgard, the military command center of the Lyran armed forces. A massive subterranean fusion power plant keeps the cold at bay during the warmer months here, but during a typical Tharkan winter, even this ancient and powerful source of power and heat cannot beat back the planet's frosty chill. Many of those looking to escape the relentless winters and chilly spring and fall seasons often flock to the tropical isles of the Tatyana chain in the planet's equatorial region.

Though a hefty chunk of Tharkad's population lives on the Bremen continent, drawn as much by the capital as by the presence of major companies like TharHes Industries and Lockheed/CBM Corporation, one may also find sprawling Tharkan metropoli on the continents of Franz, Grolsch and Heidelberg, where much of the planet's commercial industries and mining concerns continue to do a thriving business. Only the south polar continent of Sutherland is uninhabited, as its barren subarctic wastes can overcome even the most resolute of colonists.

Local People

Tharkad is a cosmopolitan world, a crossroads of trade and politics for the entire Lyran realm. Its people are friendly, despite the arctic chill in the air, but travelers are well advised that many natives are well-versed in politics and negotiation, and it doesn't take long for an unwary traveler to find himself charmed into supporting a



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“worthy cause” or purchasing another “must-have” item he or she had no interest in just minutes ago.

Contrary to popular belief, the typical Tharkan is not an aristocratic snob, though many who visit the capital city might presume otherwise. In fact, most Tharkans are practical, socially aware, open-minded and politically savvy, with most benefiting from a solid education and a high standard of living. Though many are drawn to the glamour of the nobility who frequent this world and take up residence within the capital city, most Tharkans are actually quite jaded when it comes to the eccentricities and avarice of the typical Lyran blueblood.

DONEGAL

Noble Ruler: Duchess Nejama Beersheba-Marsden

Star Type (Recharge Time): F0V (171 hours)

Position in System: 4th

Time to Jump Point: 21.94 days

Number of Satellites: 1 (Seth's Jewel)

Surface Gravity: 1.01

Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 40° C (Warm-Temperate)

Surface Water: 80 percent

Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir

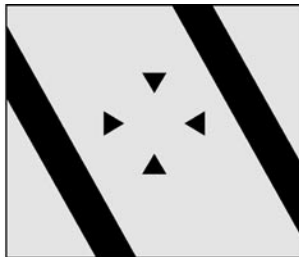
HPG Class Type: A

Highest Native Life: Reptile

Population: 5,765,000,000

Socio-Industrial Levels: A-A-A-A-B

A world of temperate climate and subtle seasons, filled with exotic vegetation and native wildlife, and blessed with generous veins of industrial gemstones, rare minerals and industrial metals, Donegal was a dream planet for the developing colonies that took root here. A locus of trade and commerce throughout the region, under the direction of



Seth Marsden, Donegal became the heart of a new confederation of worlds after the fall of the Terran Alliance. Together with such wealthy worlds as Tharkad, Coventry and Alarion, Marsden and his successors ultimately forged the mighty Lyran Commonwealth, with Marsden's Protectorate of Donegal at its core.

Today, Donegal remains a bustling planet, its three continents—Dunellan, Hinterlands and Lockenar—and two orbiting space settlements (known to the locals as “the Tin Cans”) equally developed and supporting a thriving population nearly six billion strong. Donegal is home to the Alliance Supreme Court and hundreds of civilian and military industries, including the local headquarters and factories of the Lockheed/CBM Corporation, a key supplier of aerospace fighters for the Lyran military. The capital city, Marsdenville, is also home to the Donegal Stock Exchange, the most active exchange in the realm, making Donegal the commercial equivalent of Hesperus II.

Other Notable Donegal Province Worlds

The following are other key worlds of the Donegal Province.

ARC-ROYAL

Noble Ruler: Grand Duke Morgan Kell

Star Type (Recharge Time): G3V (184 hours)

Position in System: 4th

Time to Jump Point: 8.53 days

Number of Satellites: 2 (Deven and Thorwald)

Surface Gravity: 1.01

Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 32° C (Mild-Temperate)

Surface Water: 74 percent

Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir

HPG Class Type: A

Highest Native Life: Mammals

Population: 2,098,000,000

Socio-Industrial Levels: A-A-A-A-A

A pleasant, almost pastoral world of mild weather, mild seasons and remarkably pristine countryside, one would hardly believe Arc-Royal is one of the Lyran Alliance's most developed planets. Indeed, this world, well known as the home of one of the Inner Sphere's most fearsome mercenary commands as well as the exiled



members of Clan Wolf, has truly come into its own as a political, military and economic center for the entire Donegal March. Moreover, Arc-Royal is also a major hub of the mercenary trade—despite lacking official approval from the Mercenary Review and Bonding Commission—with hiring halls and training facilities available for those eager to follow in the noble footsteps of the famed Kell Hounds mercenary unit.

Founded originally by a mix of German and English settlers, architecture and culture on Arc-Royal is dominated by classic European motifs. Even the capital city of Old Connaught, located on the shores of Lachan Lake in the northern continent of Gutheim, resembles an early twentieth-century Germanic village in places. The primary Wolf (in-Exile) enclaves, by comparison, are more modern constructs, housing three of the four major military factories on Arc-Royal. The capital Wolf enclave, nicknamed Wolf City by the locals, lies within a hundred kilometers of Old Connaught; its sister colonies lie on the more remote landmasses of Grunwald and Gerechtlund, where their inhabitants see more limited contact with the native “Spheroid” population. Arc-Royal's natives remain somewhat distrustful of Phelan Kell and his Clan followers, despite efforts by the planetary government and the Clansmen to normalize relations. The fourth factory, Arc-Royal 'Mech Works, is situated on Gutheim as well, and benefits from Wolf Clan and Kell Hound defense forces, as available.

ARCTURUS

Noble Ruler: Duchess Arielle Fyhne

Star Type (Recharge Time): K2III (193 hours)

Position in System: 5th

Time to Jump Point: 4.85 days

Number of Satellites: 3 (Donegal, Skye, Tamar)



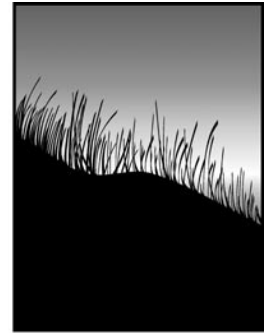
Surface Gravity: 1.02
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 33° C (Mild-Temperate)
Surface Water: 43 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population: 1,013,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-C-D-C-D

Once the capital world of the Lyran Commonwealth, Arcturus is today a shadow of its ancient self, covered with cities built for populations that far exceed their current numbers. After the capital shifted to Tharkad, many Arcturans relocated to the countryside, leaving large, ornate and mostly empty cities in their wake. Nature has reclaimed some of these metropoli, while others have simply deteriorated into shelter for people who cannot afford their full upkeep. Ironically, few Arcturans seem to want their world any other way. Many of them cling to the fading evidence of their lost prosperity as if seeing a future where they once more stand with kings. The more practical inhabitants are those who tirelessly till their fields, assuring that they harvest at least enough food to support their forlorn homeworld. Meanwhile, what few resources are still mined or refined on Arcturus continue to be processed in the sprawling industrial capital of Malcheema, on the primary northern continent of Attenia. The other four Arcturan continents—Borreus, Chadrik, Dustina and Penrod—are sparsely populated by contrast, but all lie within the planet's temperate zones, where they enjoy much of the same mild climate that made Arcturus such a find to begin with.

Though theirs remains a pleasant world with a glorious history, many native Arcturans are determined to leave their home planet, typically through service in the Lyran military. Staunch supporters of the Steiner family despite what some might call their rulers' abandonment of them so long ago, Arcturan men and women are frequently found in the ranks of the Lyran infantry forces.



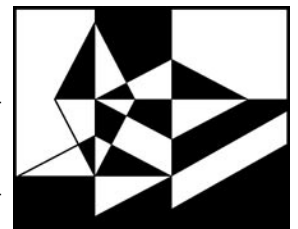
fauna and aquatic life, and huge tracts of flat, arable lands that cover over 70 percent of its five main landmasses—Amber, Abundance, Grandeur, Lush and Vibrant—and two spacious oceans. The first colonists who settled this world quickly made their new home an agricultural haven, supplying the needs of more than a dozen neighboring systems as well as their own. Still the largest agricultural planet in the Alliance, with products ranging from a variety of native and transplanted grains to livestock, fish and caviar, this world has seen only a slight decline since the arrival of the Clans. Not surprisingly, its abundance made Bountiful Harvest a real prize during the early years of the Lyran Commonwealth, and on a few occasions the Protectorate of Donegal and the Tamar Pact nearly went to war over ownership of this world. The Commonwealth government settled the dispute by opening Bountiful Harvest up to agro-corporations from all three member states. In the centuries since, these three corporations have merged to form Bountiful Delicacies, the largest single agricorp on the planet, and arguably the Alliance's largest single supplier of everything from basic foodstuffs and military rations to gourmet foods such as White Hart truffles and Harvest Caviar. Bountiful Delicacies' headquarters is located in the planetary capital of KevGlen City on the Grandeur continent, but has been facing stiff competition for centuries from Nashan Foods, a division of Nashan Diversified that also owns huge tracts of arable land on this planet.



DUSTBALL

Noble Ruler: Duke Gunnar Wulfesteig
Star Type (Recharge Time): A9V (170 hours)
Position in System: 6th
Time to Jump Point: 21.44 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Mirage)
Surface Gravity: 0.96
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 71° C (Desert)
Surface Water: 20 percent
Recharging Station: None
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: None
Population: 833,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: D-D-C-C-F

Only the most entrepreneurial and stubborn colonists could make a world like Dustball, with its blazing heat, minimal water and mineral resources, and utter lack of arable land into anything more than a way station between much more pleasant planets. Oppressive heat and the lack of a protective ozone layer have made life on the outer surface of this world a hellish nightmare, forcing the settlers to establish their colonies below ground or beneath protective domes of steel and ferroglass. Originally established as a mining



BOUNTIFUL HARVEST

Noble Ruler: Duke Elijah Halsf
Star Type (Recharge Time): F2IV (173 hours)
Position in System: 4th
Time to Jump Point: 11.48 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Scarecrow)
Surface Gravity: 1.05
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 30° C (Mild-Temperate)
Surface Water: 77 percent
Recharging Station: Nadir
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population: 3,477,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-C-C-B-A

Bountiful Harvest lives up to its name in almost every regard, blessed with an amazingly temperate climate, fertile soil, abundant



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world, the lack of expected gemstones and valuable metals eventually busted the local economy, leaving it desolate until soon after the rise of the Commonwealth, when Malthus Gambling Unlimited came to set up shop in the planetary capital of New Monaco, on the shores of the Great North Sea. Though a legal front for the Commonwealth's largest organized crime family at the time, Malthus Gambling sparked an economic boom for Dustball that carried well into the thirty-first century as a center for the elite to "meet, greet and satisfy their most wicked desires". Dustball became synonymous with corruption, crime and greed, but a favored place for the idle rich and the hopeful desperate to come and be fleeced, despite the efforts of the Lyran authorities to shatter the Malthus family once and for all. Ironically, the Clan invasion brought all that to an end, as Dustball suddenly became a front-line world and its casinos and empty settlement domes became host to repeated raids and assaults by Clans Jade Falcon and Steel Viper. Dustball remains a wasteland, though a number of smaller gambling and black market operations still call this world home, surviving off the revenue created by whatever garrison troops are saddled with such an unfortunate assignment.

GRAUS

Noble Ruler: None
Star Type (Recharge Time): G4V (185 hours)
Position in System: 1st
Time to Jump Point: 7.96 days
Number of Satellites: None (dust ring)
Surface Gravity: 1.01
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 43° C (Tropical)
Surface Water: 71 percent
Recharging Station: None
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population: 2,942,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-C-C-C-B

Graus was settled by a mixture of French, German and Spanish colonists who found the planet's striking beauty and modest natural resources a perfect fit, and before long a series of agrarian communities and light industries dotted the landscape on the planet's thickly forested primary continent of Albion. Over time, a booming economy developed based in part on agriculture and in part on commercial products such as holovids, recreational vehicles and other civilian extravagances. Beginning in the late 2980s, however, a fundamentalist back-to-nature movement, sparked by widespread development and the predations of the Succession Wars, began to take root on this planet. By 3007, this pacifistic, pro-agrarian movement had gained effective control over the planetary government and banished all heavy military forces, leaving a reformed planet-wide police department as the only deterrent against criminals and raiders. Though derided as foolish, this policy spared Graus any serious damage when the Jade Falcons arrived during the Clan



invasion, and the planet was absorbed without a struggle. The Clan civilian society meshed well with the neo-communal aspects of the new Grausian order, and despite several raids and assaults while under Clan rule, the planet has returned to the Lyran fold in surprisingly good shape. However, as with the recently liberated world of Blackjack, much of the local population clings tenaciously to the cultural mores imposed by the strict Jade Falcons, though the famed Grausian tendency toward pacifism has made reintegration into the Alliance somewhat easier here. The capital of Graus is New Paris, and is located on the northern steppes of the Albion continent. The other major landmasses, Bromme and Gaulia, support a host of minor industries and agricultural communities that cluster near the shorelines, leaving the interiors of these equatorial continents to desert creatures, such as the Grausian bloodsucker and the scruffer.

PORRIMA

Noble Ruler: Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner
Star Type (Recharge Time): K3V (194 hours)
Position in System: 2nd
Time to Jump Point: 4.62 days
Number of Satellites: None
Surface Gravity: 0.74
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 50° C (Tropical)
Surface Water: 71 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Birds
Population: 2,174,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-B-C-B-B

Warm, water-rich and blessed by ample—if not exceptional—quantities of industrial metals, precious gems and fertile soil, Porrima developed rapidly in the early days of space colonization, but the earliest settlements largely failed in the first fifty years due to a sudden and unexpected change in the planetary weather. Hurricane-force winds, powerful lightning and weeks of heavy rains literally washed away the first Porriman settlements, the result of a planetary "wobble" caused by the gravitational pull of Chira, Porrima's inward neighbor. As it became clear that the storms were part of a regular cycle that recurs every sixty-two years, subsequent colonies and cities were constructed on higher elevations, with numerous safeguards built in to stave off the worst effects of these exceptionally powerful "wet seasons". Allison City, the planetary capital on the southern temperate continent of Marsdentica, for instance, features high walls and a series of manmade channels to divert the flows of the nearby Equanica and Giovanni rivers, both of which can swell to five times their size during a typical wet season. Steinerheim, the north polar supercontinent, is home to a majority of the planet's agriculture and mining, and settlements here largely lie far inland where the wet season storms lose most of their bite.





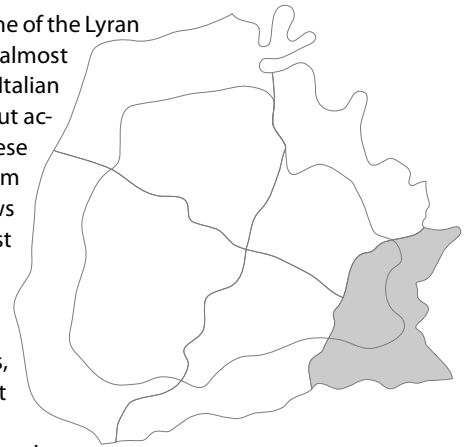
SKYE PROVINCE: ISLE OF REBELLION

The Province of Skye—often referred to as the Isle of Skye in some circles—has always been one of the Lyran Alliance's most turbulent regions, home to a secessionist movement that has waxed and waned almost since the founding of the Lyran Commonwealth. Settled largely by English, Scottish, Irish and Italian colonists, most citizens of this region view the Lyran government with some degree of distrust, but accept the rule of the Steiners as a necessary evil—most of the time. Ironically, the government these people occasionally fight to free themselves from has made doing so rather easy, by remaining firm on the relatively loose governing structure laid down in the Articles of Acceptance, which allows the people of Skye the right to voice their displeasure so long as they do not take up arms against the government.

Yet, for all the pride demonstrated by the people of Skye, theirs is a region that refuses to side against the Lyran state in favor of any external enemy, an attitude that has made it impossible for foreign powers to bribe, threaten or otherwise coax the Isle into outright defection. The Steiners, after all, are still “family” to the people of Skye, and even in the throes of a rebellion, their conflict with the Steiner government is little more than a family feud.

The Isle of Skye is predominantly flavored by Scottish and Irish culture—to the point where residents of this province almost universally pick up a distinctive Scots-Gaelic accent that gives their identity away to others—but Italian and even Japanese influences are also found here. Particularly on the worlds of the Rahneshire Province, a small sub-section of Skye Province worlds bordering Bolan Province, Oriental architecture, languages, customs and traditions are common.

Skye Province is also the industrial heartland of the Lyran realm, including such key industrial worlds as Solaris, Hesperus and Skye itself. For this reason, as well as its shared border with the Draconis Combine and the Free Worlds League, this region also tends to draw the lion's share of the Lyran defense budget, a fact that serves to keep Skye Province protected and keep her in line.



SKYE

Noble Ruler: Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner

Star Type (Recharge Time): G8V/M0V (191 hours)

Position in System: 4th

Time to Jump Point: 4.48 days

Number of Satellites: 1 (Luna)

Surface Gravity: 1.03

Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 30° C (Warm-Temperate)

Surface Water: 70 percent

Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir

HPG Class Type: A

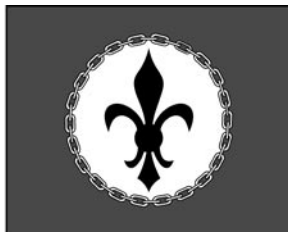
Highest Native Life: Mammals

Population: 4,351,000,000

Socio-Industrial Levels: A-A-A-B-B

Skye

With its single continent of New Scotland covered in a contrasting landscape of green mountains and rolling hills, the world of Skye—heart of the province that bears its name—so resembled the homelands of its Irish and Scottish settlers that they formed a lasting attachment to this world. Establishing the capital city of New Glasgow in the Macintosh Valley, well defended by its proximity to the Bannockburn Bogs, these early colonists set about building their new home as a breathtaking retreat and as a massive industrial



powerhouse that even today commands a great deal of respect from the rest of the Lyran realm.

Though heavily populated, and claiming among its businesses such heavy industries as the aerospace and DropShip-manufacturing Shipil Company and Cyclops Incorporated, a manufacturer of armored fighting vehicles for the Lyran military, huge swaths of the Skye landscape are strictly set aside to preserve the native beauty of this world. Despite these preserves, there remains ample land for development, and the broad range of natural resources available has sustained the people of Skye for centuries.

In addition to heavy industry and commerce, Skye is also home to the Sanglamore Academy, a Star League-era training academy for MechWarriors and other military branches second only to the Nagelring on Tharkad. In fact, students hailing from this martial academy are fiercely competitive with those from the Nagelring, as much due to their schooling as to their natural tendency to prove that the people of Skye are, in fact, better than those from Tharkad.

Local People

The people of Skye are so attached to their world and so proud of its beauty and its economic might that they often forget their world is merely one of many in the Lyran Alliance. Fiercely independent, and believing in their innate superiority even over the peoples of Donegal, Tharkad and Coventry, natives on Skye have often been the most vocal secessionists, even when the nearby world of Summer was the focus of the Free Skye movement.

A common misconception arising from this attitude is that the people of Skye are universally members of the anarchistic Free Skye movement. In fact, though fiercely prideful about their home, not all natives of Skye belong to a secret underground. Most are aver-



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age day-to-day folk, who are simply so immersed in the rhetoric espoused by their more vocal and defiant countrymen as to believe in their world's innate superiority over the rest of the Alliance, and would take any steps necessary to prove that fact.

By and large, the people of Skye echo the sentiments of the rest of the province, only stronger. To them, their homeworld comes first, and the only allies they can trust are those who also have reason to dislike the hegemony of Donegal Province and the Tharkan Royal Court. Skye, after all, is clearly the center for trade, industry and power, with so many of the Alliance's most important assets and strengths found on Skye Province worlds. For this simple reason, the mentality on Skye is often not so much why Skye remains under Tharkad's thumb, as why Skye isn't running the show to begin with.

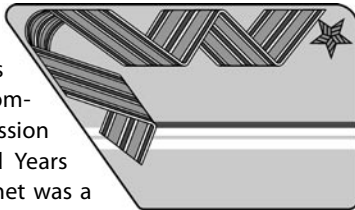
Other Notable Skye Province Worlds

The following are other key worlds of Skye Province.

ALEXANDRIA

Noble Ruler: Duchess Carina James
Star Type (Recharge Time): M4V (205 hours)
Position in System: 3rd
Time to Jump Point: 6.51 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Sinai)
Surface Gravity: 1.07
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 33° C (Mild-Temperate)
Surface Water: 82 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Reptiles
Population: 2,001,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: D-D-C-D-B

Once an idyllic world of pastoral beauty and rich natural resources, Alexandria was a thriving agricultural and commercial center before the Succession Wars. In fact, during the Good Years under the Star League, this planet was a haven for culture, with many cities hosting impressive museums and theaters that drew refined people from all over the Inner Sphere and exuded grace and elegance that all could appreciate. Unfortunately, the fall of the Star League and the wars that followed turned Alexandria into one of the most war-ravaged planets in the Isle of Skye, as its few military industries and command centers became the target for raids by the nearby Draconis Combine and armies of BattleMechs churned up the local soil into seas of mud. Today, a few scattered cities such as Lam Pole and Cherbourg—both on the large northern continent of Cairusia—hint at the diminished glory that once embraced this world, but many more resemble the planetary capital of Alexandretta on the southern continent of Jeddasia, a practical collection of utilitarian structures seeded with bunkers and other defenses in case of emergency.

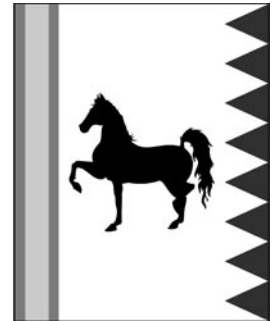


GALATEA

Noble Ruler: Duke David Nowakowski
Star Type (Recharge Time): F8II (179 hours)
Position in System: 6th
Time to Jump Point: 12.01 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Galatea Minor)
Surface Gravity: 0.99
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 55° C (Desert)
Surface Water: 35 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population: 556,976,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-C-C-C-C

Colonized at the height of the Terran Alliance by settlers who swore off high technology, Galatea's early colonists were simple folk who planned to live off the land in their new home. Unfortunately, nitrogen-poor soil, the lack of an ozone layer and the too-intense heat from the planet's giant, pale yellow sun made farming its lone continent of Lubbocks exceedingly difficult. Despite these challenges, the Amish, Central African and Native American settlers managed to establish a thriving colony relatively free of technology by the time the Terran Hegemony emerged on the scene and annexed this world. The Hegemony opened Galatea to industry, and transformed it into a military trading ground they eventually shared—grudgingly—with the Lyran Commonwealth. At the height of this period SLDF engineers built the planet's sophisticated spaceport, Galaport, north of the planetary capital of Galatean City, a triumphant technological achievement that signified the decline of the original anti-technology settlers.

After the Star League's collapse, however, Galatea spiraled into economic decline, and eventually local government and business leaders took the extreme step of making their world into a Mecca for mercenaries. Galatea became the mercenary's haven, where the down-and-out and Dispossessed could find work under the auspices of the Mercenary's Guide and the ComStar Review Board—at least until the rise of Outreach in the 3030s. Though nearly sent into total depression once more by the prominence of Wolf's Dragoons' homeworld, Galatea has recently begun to rebound with the founding of a new Mercenary Review and Bonding Commission headquarters in Galatean City.



HESPERUS II

Noble Ruler: Duke Daniel Brewer
Star Type (Recharge Time): F2IV (172 hours)
Position in System: 2nd
Time to Jump Point: 18.75 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Hesperus II-Alpha)
Surface Gravity: 1.01
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 85° C (Jungle)



Surface Water: 40 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Reptile
Population: 55,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: A-A-A-A-B

Though considered perhaps the most vital world in the Lyran realm after Tharkad, Hesperus II does not look like much from orbit—or from the surface, for that matter. It is a world of rocky mountains and valleys that crisscross its four main continents like the dividing lines of some warped game board. Much of the surface of these landmasses, even on the numerous islands and archipelagos that dot the shallow oceans, resembles a blasted wasteland or untamed jungle. Most of the population resides on the continent of South Whitman. Located in the planet's northern latitudes, South Whitman is home to Maria's Elegy, the planetary capital in Melrose Valley, and the massive Defiance Industries of Hesperus II BattleMech plant. DefHes, as it is often called, is the primary supplier of 'Mechs for the Lyran military, and so Hesperus II has always enjoyed above-average protection against raiders and assault forces, which has enabled this world to withstand more than fifteen major assaults aimed at capturing or destroying this vital resource.



Beyond South Whitman lies the northernmost continent of North Whitman, the only other landmass where humans can tolerate the arid conditions and make a decent living. Hesperus II's other continents are the blasted, largely equatorial wastelands collectively called the Barrens by the locals (East Barrens and West Barrens, to be more precise). Overrun by badlands or indigenous jungles too thick to explore, these regions are inhabited by creatures that have never been catalogued, and are completely inhospitable to human life.

NEW KYOTO

Noble Ruler: Daimyo Aritomo Endo
Star Type (Recharge Time): G5V (186 hours)
Position in System: 3rd
Time to Jump Point: 7.47 days
Number of Satellites: 5 (Eun, Ishiko, Le, Taka and Wing-Chiu)
Surface Gravity: 1.04
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 36° C (Warm-Temperate)
Surface Water: 81 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population: 5,467,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-B-B-A-C

Settled largely by colonists from Terra's Eastern Asian regions, particularly in and around the Sea of Japan, the distinctive Japanese cultural influence is so evident here that travelers often wonder if the planet's history includes some lasting occupation by the Draconis Combine. In fact, this exotic planet has never once been under the banner of House Kurita, but it has been and remains a major center

for the Buddhist faith in the Lyran state. The temple in the city of Tooshodai-ji, on the Asharu continent—not far from the planetary capital of Hirihito—is renowned throughout the Inner Sphere as the home of the largest Amida Buddha sculpture ever constructed (more than 100 meters high).

The wildlife on New Kyoto is legendary for its ferocity and its invulnerability to most personal weapons, a fact that made early colonization difficult and explains a ban on exporting native species such as the ki-rian and the armor bear. Despite these difficulties, however, the local people have managed to develop thriving industrial and economic centers, mostly built around high technology, including myomer research, electronics and laser weaponry. Laser manufacturer RAMTech Industries and Doering Electronics are among the planet's most well known companies, but others also do business here, often trading not only with other Lyran worlds, but also across the border in the Free Worlds League. These industries and trade centers appear all over New Kyoto, including on the equatorial landmasses of Kalasaka and Koshimatu and the southern island continent of Zuishami.



RAHNE

Noble Ruler: Duke Etsuya Endo
Star Type (Recharge Time): G7V (188 hours)
Position in System: 4th
Time to Jump Point: 6.46 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Caliban)
Surface Gravity: 0.94
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 53° C (Tropical)
Surface Water: 44 percent
Recharging Station: Nadir
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Mammal
Population: 3,055,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-C-B-A-D

Some time during its early formation, planetologists claim that Rahne was struck by a massive asteroid that shattered the planet in two, resulting in the formation of Rahne itself and its large moon, Caliban. The interaction of these two bodies and the erratic orbit that the planet now follows has produced a world of violent weather and four seasons—known locally as storm, calm, cold and melting—that abruptly change every three weeks. Despite this world's inhospitable weather patterns, which even during the milder weeks of the calm season include powerful dust storms capable of choking exposed machinery to the point of malfunction, settlers have come to Rahne to exploit its rich deposits of gemstones and radioactive minerals. Amazingly enough, Rahne is also home to several indigenous species, including the aggressive toad-fox, a nasty creature capable of burrowing through mountainsides to make its home and possessing long, poi-





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son-tipped claws for hunting its prey during the long nights of the storm and calm seasons.

Rahne's capital, Rahne City, like most settlements on this planet, is located below ground on the primary continent of Tempestia. The southern continents of Tsunamus and Pyrammus feature similar underground settlements, including the subterranean hydroponics communes of New Fiji, beneath the Pyrammus Mons mountain range.

SOLARIS VII

Noble Ruler: None

Star Type (Recharge Time): K1V (192 hours)

Position in System: 7th

Time to Jump Point: 5.18 days

Number of Satellites: 1 (Solaris 7 Able)

Surface Gravity: 1.10

Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 25° C (Cool-Temperate)

Surface Water: 80 percent

Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir

HPG Class Type: A

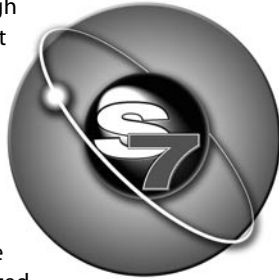
Highest Native Life: Fish

Population: 498,243,000

Socio-Industrial Levels: A-A-A-A-B

Rich in minerals and water, though often gloomy because of its turbulent seas and atmosphere, Solaris VII became a thriving industrial colony soon after it was first settled, with most people flocking to the industrial centers on the Greyland continent, particularly near the capital of Solaris City. Originally claimed by the Free Worlds League, as Lyran troops seized several worlds nearby during the First Succession War, this planet easily transferred its loyalty to the Commonwealth. In defiance, a House Marik fleet bombarded the planet with nuclear weapons, narrowly missing Solaris City and leaving the world horribly scarred for decades. Since then, the locals have harbored a simmering hatred for the League that is typical of Skye Province worlds in the Rahneshire sector, a hatred that only abates in Solaris City itself. In this open capital, all nationalities can interact peacefully—theoretically, anyway.

Solaris VII became known as the Game World during the Star League era, when its BattleMech factories used pre-selected areas on Greyland and Equatus (the less developed continent) for live-fire weapons testing. As this practice expanded to include off-world companies, many manufacturers invited potential buyers to witness the clashes, and spectators began to bet on the outcomes. From those humble beginnings arose a planet-wide industry based on what



amounts to controlled warfare as a sport, an industry the money-conscious Lyrans have eagerly supported ever since they seized this planet, and which overshadows the importance of the BattleMech and 'Mech-related manufacturing factories active here—including Blue Shot Weapons, O'Neal's BattleMechs, Solaris Arms and Vining Engineering and Salvage Team (VEST). Recent years, however, have demonstrated just how thin the line between sport and war can get on Solaris VII, as 'Mech-scale riots ravaged the streets of Solaris City twice in the past decade alone.

SUMMER

Noble Ruler: Duke Genovese Hayne

Star Type (Recharge Time): M4V (205 hours)

Position in System: 1st

Time to Jump Point: 2.56 days

Number of Satellites: 1 (Nifflheim)

Surface Gravity: 1.03

Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 42° C (Tropical)

Surface Water: 77 percent

Recharging Station: Nadir

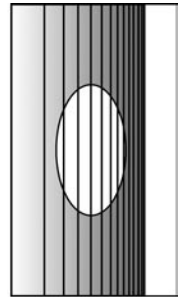
HPG Class Type: A

Highest Native Life: Plants

Population: 2,561,000,000

Socio-Industrial Levels: B-B-A-B-F

Warmed despite its cool sun by the grace of its rapidly thinning ozone layer, Summer is a rocky, mostly barren planet that nonetheless drew in colonists eager to exploit its deposits of crude oil and radioactive metals. Infertile soil largely incapable of growing sufficient edible crops to support the local population, limited agricultural endeavors and forced the people of Summer to rely on their neighbors for food, trading on their vast wealth in fuels to pay their way. During the Star League era, Summer's importance grew when germanium deposits were discovered in the Balise Mountains of the Wessler continent, but the Amaris Coup shattered many of the shipbuilding facilities that had made Summer so vital. Nevertheless, as part of the Lyran Commonwealth, this world thrived even in the days when the Lestrades held the planetary throne in the capital city of Curitiba, on the Lestrade continent. The Lestrades, one of the Skye region's more vocal proponents of secession, fell from grace after the death of Aldo Lestrade IV in the late 3020s. That event ultimately led to the ascension of the Hayne dynasty, which has long dominated Summer's remaining continent, the polar landmass of Aberdale, where a number of commercial refineries collectively control more than twenty percent of the planetary income.





"I, Peter Ardan Steiner-Davion, do hereby pledge my life and my honor to perform, to the best of my abilities, the responsibilities of Archon of the Lyran Alliance, now and for as long as I am capable, and to protect the people of the realm from all aggressors, and to faithfully uphold the integrity of the Articles of Acceptance..."

—Peter Steiner-Davion's oath of office before the Estates General, 7 November 3067

At its core, the government of the Lyran Alliance is an absolute monarchy, dominated by the hereditary rule of the Steiner family. Though critics have likened this government to a dictatorship, the feudal system has proven its stability not just in the Alliance, but in the other great nations of the Inner Sphere. Furthermore, the Estates General, the Alliance Council and the Articles of Acceptance provide a voice for the people, guidance for the Archon and basic rights often absent from truly totalitarian regimes.

The heart of Lyran government, of course, is the Triad, a triangular compound that includes the Royal Palace, the Royal Court and Government House. Within the Triad, the executive and legislative affairs of the Lyran Alliance are administered, providing political unity and stability for the Alliance's three hundred and seventy worlds. Though technically ruled solely by the will of the Archon, only cooperation with the Representatives of the Estates General and the Alliance Council, working in tandem with the Alliance Supreme Court on Donegal, enables the passage (and upholding) of laws that are fair and balanced, and that win the respect and support of the Lyran people.

THE ARCHON

The original charter of the Lyran Commonwealth took a page from ancient Athens and called for an interstellar government headed by a council of nine Archons (one of whom would direct the others as the Archon Basileus). Comprised of the leaders of the three founding realms and their deputies, as well as the Commonwealth's military commander, treasurer and transportation minister, this body unfortunately proved more workable in theory than in fact.

With the Commonwealth on the verge of economic collapse and facing an increasingly aggressive neighbor in the Draconis Combine, Robert Marsden—with the blessings of most Lyran military commanders—named himself Archon Basileus and stripped the other Archons of their powers, citing their corruption and dereliction of duty to the Commonwealth. Announcing sweeping government reforms, including the establishment of a parliamentary Estates General and instituting the Articles of Acceptance, he at once guaranteed the rights of the Commonwealth's many worlds, gave them a voice in government and cemented a centralized authority over the Lyran state.

In affairs pertaining to the nation at large, the Archon—theoretically, at least—wields absolute authority, a premise derived from the fact that the Lyran Commonwealth formed as a mutual defense pact during the uncertain years following the Terran Alliance's collapse. Per the Articles of Acceptance, the Archon is commander in chief over all Lyran military forces, with authority extending even to local militias and private armies. Though few crises truly necessitated the conscription of private armies, this right enabled earlier Archons to gather many such forces together and consolidate these and other sub-national troops in Lyran space into the LCAF (and its present-day successor, the LAAF).

In addition to total military authority, the Archon's broad powers also enable him to bypass the Estates General whenever necessary to ensure the economic, political and military survival of the realm, or to veto any laws passed by the Estates General that do not meet with his approval. Indeed, while the Articles of Acceptance establish the existence of the representative body, they do not bind the Archon to its whims, a condition written expressly to avoid a recurrence of the indecisiveness and corruption that doomed the original council of Archons. However, even though the Archon is not legally required to follow the dictates from Government House, most Lyran rulers nonetheless consult this body on policy decisions first, and even allow the Estates to create some national policies on their own. This tradition helps to avoid tyranny and allows the Archon to gauge the Lyran peoples' reaction to any new laws.

The Archon also retains ultimate authority over the Lyran nobility, and only he or she can grant or take away the titles of duke or grand duke in the Lyran social strata. This power to invest or divest such high patents of nobility and dole out (or rescind) the land grants that often go with them enabled past Archons to influence the nobility more favorably toward the ruling line and helps ensure the smooth operation of government down to the planetary level.

THE POWER BEHIND THE THRONE

When originally conceived, the Archonship was not a hereditary position. Even after Robert Marsden swept aside the council of nine Archons, little evidence exists to suggest that the highest office in the Lyran Commonwealth was ever intended to be anything more than a military title, awarded by a cabal of generals loyal to their chosen leader. However, with the elevation of Alistair Steiner to the Archonship upon Robert's death, plus the examples already rampant in that day—merchant dynasties effectively ruled all three of the Commonwealth's founding states—the title of Archon quickly became the exclusive birthright of the nation's most powerful ruling family.

With the ascent of Archon Katherine Steiner, the Steiner family established themselves as the ruling dynasty of the entire Commonwealth, with generations of Steiner men and women providing steady leadership through centuries of war and peace. Katherine's creation of the Commonwealth Scout Corps enabled the Steiner dynasty to broker the discovery of several worlds in Lyran space, claiming many that they later doled out to create hereditary dukedoms and a host of supporting nobility. At the same time, the Steiner rulers invested their increasing wealth in most of the Commonwealth's burgeoning industries, amassing even more money and power, which they used in turn to support the vast Steiner legacy and even—on occasion—support major undertakings on behalf of the realm. These efforts transformed the Steiners into a true royal family whose name earns respect, and maybe even a little awe, in all corners of the Lyran Alliance even today.



THE LYRAN GOVERNMENT





Though theoretically absolute, the authority of the Archonship has been challenged throughout history many times. During the Star League era, for example, Archon Kevin Steiner's decision to back the Lyran kroner over the Star League dollar prompted a nationwide strike that paralyzed the Lyran economy until he relented. More recently, the Estates General passed a vote of no confidence in Archon Alessandro Steiner, leading to his abdication in favor of Katrina Steiner. Precedents such as these demonstrate the limits of the Archon's authority, providing a natural brake on the excesses and corruption of absolute power.

THE ALLIANCE COUNCIL

Originally known as the Commonwealth Council, Katherine Steiner created this advisory body upon her ascent to the Archonship, in part to thwart other claims to the throne and establish the Steiner dynasty. Though at the time it was a political move intended to secure support from the leaders of the Skye and Tamar regions, this advisory council has since become an important part of the Lyran government, and often acts as the Archon's liaison with the Estates General while performing a number of the more mundane but important administrative tasks the Archon may choose to delegate.

Reorganized somewhat during the upheavals of the past thirty years, the Alliance Council today numbers eleven councilors, including the political leaders of all five provinces, the commander of the LAAF, and chancellors of the five main branches of the Alliance government (Department of Finance, Internal Policies, Foreign Affairs, the Lyran Intelligence Corps and the Chancellor of the Peoples). Though the Archon nominally appoints all of these advisors, the Estates General retains the right to choose the Chancellor of the Peoples, who acts as a representative of their body and helps maintain close ties between the Archon and the Estates.

The Council generally acts as a middleman in the passage of legislation between the Estates General and the Archon. In a process known as "bleeding the bill," the Council reviews, discusses and criticizes almost all major bills as they pass, recommending to the Archon whether to accept them, change them or veto them. As the saying goes, only bills with enough "blood" left in them after passing through the Council may be signed into law by the Archon, and though this process works both ways, the Archon's technically absolute authority means that any legislation passed by him through the Council is done primarily as a political courtesy to the Estates General rather than by legal mandate.

Pursuant to its role as an advisory body, Council members are chosen for their ability and knowledge rather than their family or political ties. Indeed, Council rules were amended in 2812 so that no more than one member of the Steiner family could sit on the Council. This rule was extended to all prominent families in 2821 when the Reynolds dynasty nearly placed two of its own on the Council. The formation of the FedCom forced a revision of this policy, expanding the number of Steiners on the Council to two, which allowed Duke Ryan Steiner of Skye and General of the Armies Nondi Steiner to retain their posts as Council members and as the leaders of their respective venues.

Throughout the centuries, the Alliance Council's powers have varied somewhat, ranging from a figurehead organization rubber-stamping laws passed between the Archon and the Estates, to the de facto administrative body of the Lyran government while past Archons led their armies in the field. Able to meet without requiring the Archon's presence since the reign of Michael Steiner II, Council leadership during such sessions falls to the Chancellor of the Peoples. This tradition has added strength to the Estates General as a check on the Archon's absolute authority, though more recent heads of state have taken to meeting with the Council as frequently as possible, assuring the dominance of the Archonship.

PROFILE OF LYRAN LEADERSHIP

Since its formation, thirty-two Archons have ruled the Lyran state (not counting the original nine Archons, the Triumvirate Regency or the brief rule of Duchess Margaret Olson). Their various reigns carried the nation through good times and bad, from the Age of War through the Golden Age of the Star League, and through four Succession Wars and a host of other conflicts. Despite the upheavals of the recent FedCom Civil War, the present Archon remains the heart of Lyran state, like those who ruled before him.

The Nine Archons (ruled 2346-2375)

The original Lyran Commonwealth governing structure called for nine Archons, patterned on the government of Terra's ancient Greek city-states. Though first proposed in 2341, the nine Archons were not chosen until five years later. They included the leaders of the founding three realms—the Tamar Pact, Protectorate of Donegal and Federation of Skye—and their deputies, plus a treasurer, the commander of the armies and a transportation minister. Unfortunately, this body's inability to govern, its failure to choose one among its number to rule as Archon Basileus, and ongoing corruption and inefficiency led to its demise just three decades later.

Archon Basileus Robert Marsden (2351-2395, ruled 2375-2395)

Fed up with the greed and ineptitude of his fellow archons, Robert Marsden usurped his fellow rulers' authority and declared himself Archon Basileus with the blessings of most of the Lyran people. His reign solidified and stabilized the nation's economy and infrastructure despite his occasionally draconian efforts to enforce his will on the few worlds that did not immediately follow, which earned him the nickname "the Crusher."

Archon Alistair Marsden (2361-2408, ruled 2395-2408)

A junior officer elected by the Lyran military leadership after Robert's death, Alistair led the Commonwealth through the initial years of the Age of War and moved the Lyran capital from Arcturus to Tharkad.

Archon Katherine Steiner(-Marsden) (2373-2446, ruled 2408-2445)

Alistair's wife and mother to his heir, Katherine reclaimed her maiden name of Steiner upon assuming the Archonship in 2408. During her reign, she formed the Commonwealth Council, strengthened and unified the Lyran economy and military, and signed the Ares Conventions, committing the Commonwealth to the rules of civilized warfare still honored by most nations.



THE LYRAN GOVERNMENT

Archon Alistair Marsden Steiner

(2407-2467, ruled 2445-2467)

Son of Katherine Steiner-Marsden, Alistair Steiner ruled during the darkest years of the Age of War. During his reign, the Commonwealth became the first state outside the Terran Hegemony to obtain BattleMech technology. Alistair's assassination in 2567 marked the beginning of the so-called Dark Years.

Archon Michael Steiner

(2447-2476, ruled 2467-2472)

Son of Alistair Steiner, Michael Steiner's brief reign was plagued by tragedy, including the near-conviction and execution of Duke Reynolds of Fatima—a close family friend—for Archon Alistair's assassination (a crime of which he was innocent). Other blows were the suicide of Archon Michael's sister, Duchess Tatyana Steiner, and the death of his new bride, Regina McQuiston. Michael Steiner died in combat, leading an effort to reclaim the world of Nox from the Draconis Combine, in the first large-scale battle between BattleMechs in Lyran history.

Archon Steven Steiner

(2447-2501, ruled 2472-2501)

Brother of Michael Steiner, Steven Steiner's reign was characterized by the weakening of the Archon's central authority and the increase of the nobility's political and military power. This period also saw the first public awareness of Loki—Lyran "black-ops" intelligence agents—after a botched mission against House Kurita, and the rising influence of Steven's wife Margaret Olsen in the Royal Court.

Duchess Margaret Olson(-Steiner) of Gallery

(2441-2515, ruled 2501-2503)

A mystic never confirmed in the Archonship by the Estates General, the reign of Duchess Margaret Olson, who briefly succeeded Steven Steiner, sparked a civil war between the Commonwealth leadership and the dukes of Tamar and Skye. Today, many see Duchess Olson as the real influence behind Archon Steven's indecisive rule.

Archon Robert Steiner

(2470-2532, ruled 2503-2528)

Illegitimate son of the late Tatyana Steiner, Robert Steiner, though physically disabled, was an accomplished aerospace fighter pilot and officer in the LCAF when various military and political leaders called upon him to reclaim the throne. His reign saw the end of the so-called Dark Years with the defeat of Margaret Olson and the dukes of Tamar and Skye, as well as the founding of the Kelswa and Lestrade families and the restoration of the Archon's powers over the nobility.

Current Alliance Council membership includes Duke Anatoly Serfass (Alarion Province), Duke Alder Umayr (Bolan Province), Duke Thomas Bradford (Coventry Province), Duchess Nejama Beersheba-Marsden (Donegal Province), Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner (Skye Province), Margrave Adam Steiner (LAAF Commander), Chancellor Selma Ashwater (Department of Finance), Chancellor Mallory Sandor (Department of Internal Policies), Chancellor Sherman Pierce (Department of Foreign Affairs), Chancellor Sasha Gorge (Lyran Intelligence Corps) and Chancellor Tanya Reynolds (Chancellor of the Peoples). Because of the members' pressing responsibilities to their own departments and regions, the Alliance Council rarely meets in full, even when the Royal Court is in session. During such times, this advisory cabinet may still meet so long as more than half its members are present—including the Chancellor of the Peoples—with or without the Archon.

THE ESTATES GENERAL

Originally formed as a representative forum where all member worlds could air their grievances, but with no real authority, the Estates General has since grown into a parliamentary body with much broader powers. Created under the Articles of Acceptance, the Estates General originally claimed a representative from each world in the Lyran state, but as the realm grew larger with every new colony and outpost, representation limits were imposed based on each world's population instead. Though this change limits the voice of some worlds, it has controlled the overall size of the Estates General, while assuring that the vast majority of the Lyran population is heard on Tharkad.

Under normal circumstances, the Estates General gathers in Government House during Tharkad City's spring. Sessions nominally last four months, but most run closer to six months as the assembled politicians debate laws and policy decisions from the past year. In rare cases, this body has met for longer durations or even in other venues, such as the nine-month session on Great X in 2901 after a natural catastrophe caused the disintegration of nearby Beta Regulus II and prompted a national emergency relief effort.

Delegates to the Estates General are elected to office by whatever customs or processes exist on their native world, or—in the case of less populous regions—by whatever procedures the local group of worlds can agree upon. In keeping with the Estates' self-assigned mandate as a watchdog of the aristocracy, representation by members of the nobility is limited to those whose title is baron or lower, and so this body is largely dominated by commoners and the lowest rungs of Lyran nobility. No member of the Estates General may serve who has been convicted of any major crime in the preceding fifteen years.

A representative's term of office lasts six years, during which time the individual receives a handsome salary, but all of his or her personal property is held in a blind trust—a policy built into the original Estates General to keep its membership honest. There are no term limits for representatives in the Estates General, so particularly savvy or well-liked delegates may become seasoned veterans of Government House so long as their constituents do not vote them out in the next round of elections.

Once merely a rubber-stamp committee to ratify laws passed by the Archon, the Estates General has grown in power over the centuries as past Archons entrusted more and more authority to the body for the day-to-day governance of the realm. Indeed, as evidenced by past clashes with various Archons, the Estates' influence with its constituents has grown considerable enough to defeat some measures considered unfair to the people. Examples such as the Tax Reform Debate of 2575, the Businessmen's Strike of 2623, and even the reaffirmation of the Commonwealth's existence in 2643 demonstrate the body's departure from its intended role under the original Articles of Acceptance. By the late 2700s, the Estates General had come



so far as to legislate the annual budget for the Commonwealth government, a process once handled exclusively by the Archon and the Commonwealth Council.

The existence of the Alliance Council and its Chancellor of the Peoples further underscores the Archon's trust in allowing the Estates to help guide the realm. Though the Archon may overrule any of their decisions, coordination between the Estates General, the Alliance Council and the Archon allows all three to set consistently fair policies with a minimum of confusion. Even the Estates' ceremonial duties in recognizing each Archon's ascension provide a subtle reminder to the sovereign about the power and influence of this body, as did the famous no-confidence vote by the Estates in 3007 to help remove Alessandro Steiner from power peacefully.

The Estates General remains one of the primary institutions of Lyran government, and the halls of Government House echo with their annual debates in which they create and modify laws for the people in conjunction with the Alliance Council and the Archon.

THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee of the Estates General is comprised of twenty of the most senior members, who meet in advance of the Estates' annual sessions to draw up a basic itinerary for the coming session. These representatives tend to be the most powerful leaders in the Alliance government aside from the Archon, the Alliance Council and the provincial lords, and often sit on various panels and committees that meet when the Estates General is not in session.

Speaker of the Assembly

The Speaker of the Assembly is the head of the Steering Committee, elected to his position by popular vote of the entire Estates General. The Speaker presides over the Steering Committee and all Estates General sessions for a term of four sessions, unless his constituency back home does not reelect him as an Estates delegate or he is removed from his post by a vote of no confidence from his fellow representatives.

The fact that the Speaker's term covers four sessions, rather than four years, reflects the reality that the Estates General has often been suspended by past Archons because of internal conflicts or in times of crisis. This means that theoretically, an incumbent Speaker may die during the span of years between actual Estates sessions. In such cases, the Estates General holds a new election to choose a new Speaker.

In addition to his duties as head of the Steering Committee and directing and controlling debate in the Grand Assembly at Government House, the Speaker often meets informally with the Archon to discuss matters of mutual concern. While it is not uncommon for a Speaker to also serve as Chancellor of the Peoples on the Archon's Alliance Council, this informal access to the Archon often means the activities of the Speaker and the Chancellor of the Peoples overlap.

THE LYRAN ALLIANCE CIVIL SERVICE

Maintaining the vast bureaucracy of the Alliance government, the Lyran Alliance Civil Service (formerly the Lyran Commonwealth Civil Service) existed well before its official creation in 2882. Tasked with carrying out the administrative duties of the state on each of its member worlds, the LACS maintains offices on every planet, colony and outpost in the Alliance.

Run by a Chief Administrator for each world, the officers and employees of the LACS are often the only sign of Lyran government on any given planet, and Alliance regulations require these administrators to conduct themselves with all due respect toward the culture and traditions of their assigned worlds. Unfortunately, whenever an employee of the LACS violates these regulations, or when the government at large makes a decision unpopular with the locals, the LACS offices often face the brunt of community outrage and even retaliation.

Archon Craig Steiner

(2507-2555, ruled 2528-2555)

Son of Robert Steiner, Craig Steiner brought his realm quiet prosperity spurred by numerous economic initiatives and trade with the Terran Hegemony. He also founded the Commonwealth Supreme Court in 2543.

Archon Tracial Steiner

(2506-2570, ruled 2555-2570)

First Chief Justice of the Commonwealth Supreme Court and cousin to Craig Steiner, Tracial Steiner's most celebrated act was the signing of the Tharkan Accords in 2558, officially bringing the Lyran Commonwealth into the Star League.

Archon Viola Steiner-Dinesen

(2539-2596, ruled 2570-2596)

First Lyran ruler of the Star League era (the League officially coming into being in 2571), Viola Steiner-Dinesen, a consummate soldier, took an active role in the Lyran-Rim Worlds front during the Reunification War. Unfortunately, conspiracies at home and the apparent abduction of her son Kevin by the dukes of Tamar and Skye sparked her so-called "Day of Rage" in which she savaged troops loyal to those dukes. She later learned the true identity of her son's captors, but the damage had been done. Archon Viola's actions created a rift between the Steiners and the Kelswa and Lestrade families, despite public apologies and compensations. Viola Steiner-Dinesen was killed in action on the Rim Worlds front later in the war.

Archon Kevin (Dinesen) Steiner

(2560-2647, ruled 2596-2647)

Son of Viola Steiner-Dinesen and acting Archon during his mother's time on the Rim Worlds front, Kevin Dinesen's abduction by the Estates General Steering Committee prompted a massive upheaval in the Lyran government whose reverberations are still felt. His reign after Viola's death saw prosperous times in the Commonwealth—known as the Good Years—despite the nation's near-disbandment by popular vote. Archon Kevin changed his surname to Steiner (removing the Dinesen) in 2612.

Archon Sarah Steiner-Dinesen

(2570-2672, ruled 2647-2672)

Kevin's sister, Sarah Steiner-Dinesen, assumed the throne after Kevin's death in office. Her reign, during the zenith of the Star League's prosperity, was largely uneventful.

Archon William Steiner

(2615-2704, ruled 2672-2704)

Son of Sarah Steiner-Dinesen, William Steiner's reign was likewise quiet. He died of natural causes while still in office.



THE LYRAN GOVERNMENT

Archon Jonathan Steiner (2666-2729, ruled 2704-2729)

Jonathan Steiner, like his father and grandmother, presided over a quiet period, characterized only by the political debate surrounding minimum population requirements for each Lyran world's Estates General membership in 2716. Archon Jonathan died in a freak BattleMech testing accident.

Archon Michael Steiner II (2675-2760, ruled 2729-2760)

The reign of Michael Steiner II (Jonathan Steiner's younger brother) saw a sharp increase in bandit raiding along the Commonwealth's Periphery border, which the Lyran military eventually traced to the Draconis Combine. First Lord Simon Cameron's death in 2750 also placed greater responsibilities on Michael and his fellow House Lords to administer the Star League during a period of rising hostilities on the borders of virtually every League member-state and Periphery realm, in part because of the growth of member-nation armies and increased Star League taxes on the Periphery states, both measures passed by the House Lords.

Archon Robert Steiner II (2701-2781, ruled 2760-2781)

Robert Steiner II, son of Michael II, came into power during the final years of the Star League. He is most criticized for failing to act directly against Amaris the Usurper (as all the House Lords failed to do), and for his role in dismissing General Kerensky and dissolving the Star League. His reign also saw the Commonwealth's limited conquest of the destroyed Rim Worlds Republic and covert Commonwealth assistance for Kerensky's liberation of Terra. Robert Steiner II died of pneumonia soon after returning from the final Star League summit meeting on Terra.

Archon Jennifer Steiner (2725-2791, ruled 2781-2791)

Jennifer Steiner, Robert II's sister, assumed the Archonship and became the first Lyran ruler of the Succession Wars by declaring war on the Draconis Combine in 2786. She was killed in action while leading an attack on Styx.

Archon Richard Steiner (2769-2823, ruled 2791-2823)

Jennifer Steiner's son, Richard led the Commonwealth through the latter years of the First Succession War and initiated the post-war reconstruction effort. He died of natural causes while in office.

Archon Marcus Steiner (2799-2844, ruled 2823-2844)

Marcus Steiner carried on the Reconstruction program initiated by his uncle Richard and led the Commonwealth into the Second Succession War with a bold campaign to

Coordinating the activities of all LACS offices, and seeing to it that all local Chief Administrators are properly updated on changes in laws or national policies, the Civil Service also maintains regional headquarters where employees handle the mammoth paperwork of all subordinate agencies. Donegal's Regional Administrative Center is by far the largest of these, and is also the headquarters of the General Director of the LCAF, appointed by the Archon. From this massive complex of buildings, dubbed the "MaAd Center" (Main Administrative Center), all laws, rules and regulations passed by Tharkad City are in turn spread to the other regional centers and disseminated throughout the LACS chain of command. This process relies heavily on interstellar cooperation, and so this agency often has a healthy working relationship with ComStar.

In addition to the Donegal Regional Center, the LACS currently maintains two other active regional offices. The Alarion office, opened shortly after the closing days of the Fourth Succession War, largely handles bureaucracy for the region extending out toward the Alliance's Periphery border, while the Coventry office—added in 3045 to help administer the FedCom's coreward regions while the Tamar office underwent a long-overdue upgrade—administers much of the coreward Periphery and Clan front regions.

The Skye offices of the LACS are currently closed in the wake of damage sustained during the FedCom Civil War. The imperative to ensure the smooth operation of the Lyran bureaucracy in this historically turbulent province has made restoring the fire-gutted LACS offices a top priority for the government.

THE NOBILITY

As might be expected from such a class-conscious society, the Lyran system of nobility is quite extensive, with every single world home to any number of titled landholders whose influence on local politics is defined by their hereditary rank and the size and resources of the lands that come with it. Though most of the nobility has little direct influence on the national government, being largely barred from joining the Estates General or too low in the Lyran hierarchy to claim a seat on the Alliance Council, the nobility's role is nonetheless vital to the smooth operation of the state.

During the reign of Archon Katherine Steiner, the modern Lyran nobility system first began to evolve. Primarily instituted to place the Archon's political allies in charge of key worlds throughout the Commonwealth, Katherine used the classic feudal structures of ancient Terra's Germanic peoples as a guide and bestowed a duchy on all of her most ardent supporters, granting them hereditary ownership of entire worlds whose resource value helped further define and enhance their influence and power. Beneath these dukes soon evolved an array of titled peerage, with authority determined by title and land grants based not only on political power, but economic and social accomplishments. Even commoners could rise into the ranks of this nobility, creating a more open system of peerage than exists today in most Successor States.

To reinforce a sense of national identity, Katherine patterned the new nobility on Germanic lines, providing a solid sense of a common cultural base lacking in the earliest days of the Commonwealth. Titles such as graf, margrave and landgrave came into being, and use of the Germanic term "von" linked barons to their holdings. Each title awarded a degree of political authority, financial status and often land or other property that further empowered its recipient and bound his or her fealty to the Archon. In the centuries since, this system has remained largely unchanged, though lesser noble titles today are as often awarded by local dukes as by the Archon, creating an interlocking web of feudal allegiances that mimic the political arrangement of the wider Alliance.

At the top of Lyran peerage, awarded only by the Archon, is the title of duke (or duchess). This title typically acknowledges the recipient's controlling influence in



the government of an entire world or major interstellar industry, while the relative wealth and prosperity of that world or industry further defines the duke's importance relative to other dukes. Once awarded along with entire worlds discovered and owned by the Steiner family, most duchies today are much smaller landholds or financial stipends awarded by the government in exchange for the duke's fealty and responsible administration of the territories and people who live under his influence. Particularly influential dukes in the Lyran Alliance often receive the title of Grand Duke from the Archon, though this title does not necessarily confer more territory or raw resources than any other duke may hold.

Below the dukes are the landgraves and grafs, whose power base and landholdings often cover a continent, large island or major local industry. These titles may be awarded by the Archon or the local duke, and the political clout that comes with them often places such individuals in a commanding role in local government. Archons have even awarded the title of graf to any official representative of the state government as a liaison between a world, its ruling duke and the Archon, and most government mediators called upon to settle local disputes carry this title.

Margrave, a non-hereditary title, is another patent of nobility solely awarded by the Archon. Granted to generals in command of a military theater, this title confers full military and executive authority over the worlds along a state border, answerable only to the Archon.

Barons, the lowest order of hereditary peerage in the Lyran state, are also the highest order permitted to be a part of the Estates General, a curious position that enables them to represent the voice of the nobility in the nation's parliamentary body while upholding their duties as local governors in their own right. Baronies can range in size from a small city to an entire world, based on the recipient's political influence, other political considerations and local resources. Baronies have traditionally been awarded to prominent citizens from all walks of life, and often go along with famous prizes for achievement, such as the Archon's Award for the Arts or the Dealby Prize for the Advancement of Science. Archons and local dukes may award and rescind baronies as they see fit.

Below the rank of baron, some Lyran provinces still use the title of baronet, which may be awarded by planetary dukes, landgraves or even grafs. Certain military honors and achievement awards bestowed by the Archon or other local nobility also confer the title of Knight of the Alliance. These two titles hold no real political power and rarely come with land grants or stipends, nor may such a title typically be passed down to subsequent generations. Despite these limits, even these minor titles confer a degree of respect and honor throughout the Alliance.

HOUSE STEINER

With their claim to the Archonship, the royal House Steiner represents the pinnacle of the Lyran nobility. First established when Katherine Steiner claimed the throne in 2408, the family has often been characterized by calm reserve and iron will, though persistent examples throughout history have demonstrated an intermittent genetic tendency toward depression and cold, ruthless ambition. To be fair, the Steiner legacy has seen its share of tyrannical despots and ineffective monarchs, but most have been even-handed rulers well versed in interstellar politics and military leadership, and the current batch is no exception.



Archon Peter Steiner-Davion

Current ruler of the Lyran Alliance, Archon Peter Steiner-Davion is the third child of Hanse Davion and Melissa Steiner-Davion. In his youth, he was known for arrogance and hot-headedness, but proved himself a fine officer in the AFFC

reclaim planets lost to the Free Worlds League in the previous conflict. He contracted a fatal case of meningitis in 2843, leaving no heir and having nominated no successor.

Archon Melissa Nin (-Steiner) (2804-2845, ruled 2845)

The wife of Marcus Steiner and completely lacking in political experience, Melissa Nin was nonetheless confirmed as the Commonwealth's twentieth Archon by the Estates General. Her reign lasted only five months before military forces loyal to her ruthless brother-in-law, Claudius Steiner, seized Tharkad and Claudius ordered her executed for treason.

Archon Claudius Steiner (2812-2849, ruled 2845-2849)

Claudius Steiner's coup and subsequent preoccupation with enforcing his will on the people of the Commonwealth—ignoring offensives by the Draconis Combine and the Free Worlds League in the process—earned him the infamous nickname "Claudius the Cruel".

Triumvirate Regency (ruled 2849-2859)

Unwilling to assume the Archonship, Claudius Steiner's wife, Duchess Rebecca Morgan Steiner, joined with Henry DeCalidore—the Estates General's Speaker of the Assembly—and Duchess Ilysa Aten of Tamar and Skye to form the Triumvirate Regency until Claudius' daughter Elizabeth was of age to rule. Rife with political intrigue, the Triumvirate is nonetheless largely credited with maintaining the Commonwealth's political stability in the aftermath of Claudius' mad reign.

Archon Elizabeth Steiner (2840-2895, ruled 2859-2895)

Reigning during the closing years of the Second Succession War, Elizabeth largely focused on clearing away the last vestiges of her father's rule and maintaining the Commonwealth's strength in the postwar era. Her decision to hire mercenaries, criticized at the time, nonetheless allowed the Commonwealth some breathing room when Combine assaults in 2867 signaled the start of the Third Succession War.

Archon Eric Steiner (2872-2913, ruled 2895-2913)

Eric Steiner's rule focused largely on rebuilding the LCAF's strength by instituting numerous military reforms. Archon Eric was killed in action on Freedom.

Archon Tatyana Steiner (2892-2950, ruled 2914-2937)

Assuming the throne after the abdication of her brother, Simon Borge Steiner, Archon Eric Steiner's daughter Tatyana reigned through two more decades of the Third Succession War until she stepped down in favor of her son, Marco.



THE LYRAN GOVERNMENT

Archon Marco Steiner (2912-2961, ruled 2937-2952)

The highlights of Marco Steiner's reign were the exposure of a high-level traitor in the LCAF and the Battle for Alexandria, the largest of the entire Third Succession War. Suffering from pancreatic cancer, Marco retired in favor of his son, Giovanni Steiner, after just fifteen years as Archon.

Archon Giovanni Steiner (2932-2980, ruled 2952-2980)

Giovanni Steiner inherited the throne and ruled until his death in a horse-riding accident on Tharkad. His reign saw the Commonwealth's determined effort to beat back major Combine and Free Worlds campaigns on both fronts during the Third Succession War.

Archon Alessandro Steiner (2957-3031, ruled 2980-3007)

Alessandro Steiner, Giovanni's son, was a consummate military strategist whose early reign saw particular successes along the Free Worlds League front. Unfortunately, his "Concentrated Weakness" strategy proved disastrous for the Commonwealth and led to his abdication in favor of his niece, Katrina Steiner.

Archon Katrina Steiner (2976-3040, ruled 3007-3039)

Reigning during the close of the Third Succession War after ousting Alessandro Steiner, Katrina Steiner drew up the famous Peace Proposal of 3020 that is largely credited with the eventual formation of the FedCom Alliance. She retired from office shortly before the War of 3039, nominating her daughter, Melissa Steiner-Davion, as her successor.

Archon Melissa Steiner-Davion (3010-3055, ruled 3039-3055)

Ascending to power after Katrina's retirement, Melissa Steiner-Davion quelled the First Skye Rebellion before leading the Lyran half of the FedCom into the War of 3039. She assumed sole leadership over the combined FedCom upon Prince Hanse Davion's death in 3052, after her son and heir, Victor Steiner-Davion, refused the title. Archon Melissa was assassinated in 3055.

Archon-Prince Victor Steiner-Davion (b. 3030-, ruled 3055-3057)

The first—and last—official Archon-Prince of the united Federated Commonwealth, Victor Steiner-Davion's short rule was wholly focused on containing the Clans and attempting to stave off divisiveness in his own realm, including the Second Skye Rebellion and numerous Clan attacks.

before his brief, unexplained retirement to a monastery on Zaniah. Championed by Grand Duke Morgan Kell as the true heir to the Tharkan throne, Peter returned home with several allied units to unseat General Nondi Steiner and end the FedCom Civil War in the Lyran Alliance. In the wake of his victory, however, the untested Archon has struggled to rebuild the sense of Lyran unity lost during that terrible conflict.

General of the Armies (Margrave) Adam Steiner

The current Margrave of the Arc-Royal Theater and General of the Armies, Adam Steiner is distantly related to the current Archon as the great-great-grand-nephew of Tatyana Steiner, who ruled during the early thirtieth century. An accomplished strategist whose exploits during the Clan invasion are standard reading at the Nagelring Academy (where he once taught), Adam Steiner's loyalist stance and his victories over the Jade Falcons during the FedCom Civil War have made him a war hero all over again. Rumor has it that opponents of the current Archon see Adam as a potential successor to the throne, a tale this forty-three year old commander of the war-weary LAAF publicly dismisses.

Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner

The son of the late Duke Ryan Steiner of Porrima and Morasha Kelswa, Duchess of Tamar, Robert Kelswa-Steiner's recent marriage to Duchess Hermione Aten of Skye has made him one of the most pivotal members of the royal family beyond the Archon. Assuming control of the Free Skye movement his father once supported, Robert Kelswa-Steiner was largely responsible for the most recent Skye rebellions before and during the FedCom Civil War, but after the defeat of Free Skye forces on Hesperus II, he threw his support behind Peter Steiner-Davion's claim to the throne.

Now the effective co-ruler of Skye Province, with a hereditary claim to the fallen Tamar Pact, Robert appears to the people as every bit the martyr for lost causes. Springboarding off this wellspring of popular support, and citing the Archon's recent acknowledgment of Clan Wolf (in-Exile) as a sovereign entity within Lyran space, Robert has championed a revision of Alliance government that would allow the Skye region to claim similar "independence" under the Lyran banner.

General (Margrave) Caesar Steiner

A politically astute career general once known for his legendary hedonism as commander of the Second Donegal Guards, sixty-four-year-old Caesar Steiner served as LAAF Commander pro-tem after General Nondi Steiner's death at the end of the FedCom Civil War. Though many believe that Caesar Steiner rather than Peter Steiner-Davion should claim the throne of the Alliance, the general himself has publicly proclaimed his support for Peter's reign and denies any desire to rule the nation or put its people through another civil war. Caesar recently accepted command of the Cavanaugh II Theater and of the entire Donegal Guards brigade. The return to his former unit may be temporary, however, as current rumors are circulating that Caesar may assume the post of the Alliance's SLDF liaison.

OTHER ROYAL FAMILIES

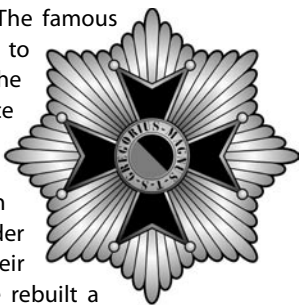
Whether originally invested with titles of nobility by past Archons, or whether their power grew from a mixture of political acumen and cunning business skills, a host of other major families have risen in the Lyran state since its founding. The following are just a few of the most prominent.

House Bradford

The Bradfords are the hereditary rulers of Coventry, one of the most important industrialized worlds in the Alliance, and die-hard supporters of the Steiner family. In fact, Duke Harrison Bradford, father of House Bradford's current head, Thomas Frederick Bradford, was a close personal friend of Archon Katrina Steiner

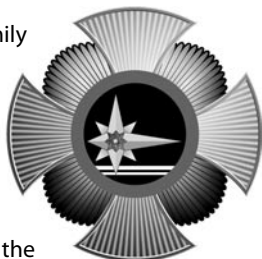


and best man at her wedding to Arthur Luvon. The famous Bradford penchant for loyalty bound them firmly to Victor Steiner-Davion well before the start of the FedCom Civil War when the deposed Archon-Prince led a multi-national coalition to defeat a Jade Falcon strike at Coventry in 3058. This loyalty held through the darkness of the FedCom Civil War, even though pro-Katherine troops placed their world under siege throughout much of the war and cost them their entire planetary militia. Duke Bradford has since rebuilt a portion of Coventry's native defense force, and has pledged his undying support for Peter Steiner-Davion.



House Brewer

The Brewers of Hesperus II are an ancient family whose rise to nobility comes in part from their status as the official State Administrators assigned by the first Star League government as ambassadors to the Lyran Commonwealth. In the centuries since the Star League's fall, they have owed their continuing political power to the success of their commercial-industrial empire, Defiance Industries. The Brewers' control over the largest BattleMech manufacturing facilities in the Inner Sphere began during the reign of Jennifer Steiner, who commanded then-Baron Gerald Brewer of Coventry to take charge of the Star League factories on Hesperus II. Ever since, the Brewer family has built on its fortune, creating a powerful political and industrial force in Lyran society. Historically speaking, the Brewers have stayed mostly neutral politically, though their loyalty to the Lyran state is beyond question. During times of internal dissent, the Brewers have always sided with the government on Tharkad rather than with any one Archon, preferring to focus instead on their family business as efficiently—some would say as ruthlessly—as possible. This preference for the state proved most telling during the recent Skye uprisings, where secessionist forces struck Hesperus but the Brewers and their planetary defenders held the world in the name of the Lyran state.



Archon(-Princess) Katherine Steiner-Davion (b. 3032-, ruled 3057-3067)

When Victor's duplicity in covering up the death of Joshua Marik, heir to the Free Worlds League, sparked a combined Free Worlds/Capellan Confederation attack on the FedCom, Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion, in her capacity as regent of the Lyran half of the realm, announced its secession and the formation of the independent Lyran Alliance. Her rule eventually expanded to include the Federated Suns and saw the birth of the new Star League, but also led to the FedCom Civil War soon after Victor's return from Clan space, on the grounds that she had a hand in the assassination of their mother, Archon Melissa, and numerous other crimes since.

Shortly after the Civil War and just before she was to be exiled, Khan Vlad Ward of the Wolf Clan claimed her as a bondswoman. Her whereabouts as of this writing remain unknown.

Archon Peter Steiner-Davion (b. 3035-, ruled 3067-present)

The third surviving child of Hanse Davion and Melissa Steiner, Peter's reign began with the collapse of Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion's in the closing days of the FedCom Civil War. His primary focus is normalization of relations with the Federated Suns and the Alliance's neighboring states, the Draconis Combine and the Free Worlds League, as well as the postwar reconstruction.

House Kell

Until the rise of Archon Katrina Steiner, the Kell family was one of many minor houses living on the fringe of obscurity as a branch of the more entrenched Luvon family. The Kell family's sole claim to fame was a landhold on Arc-Royal that included the Eire BattleMech Company. In aiding the future Archon before her rise to power, however, Morgan and Patrick Kell won her eternal loyalty and a generous endowment from their cousin, Arthur Luvon, who also became the Archon's husband. This endowment enabled the Kell brothers to found their famous Kell Hounds mercenary command, a unit whose exploits became legendary through the Fourth Succession War and the Clan invasion. Despite their mercenary status, the Kells have never strayed far from the realm—or the family—that gave them so much.

Politically speaking, Morgan Kell became one of the most outspoken proponents of the Federated Commonwealth, and a staunch supporter of Melissa—and later Victor—Steiner-Davion after Katrina's death in 3040. The Kells actively sided against Katherine Steiner-Davion from the moment she assumed control over the Lyran Alliance and seceded from the FedCom, and Morgan Kell himself championed Peter Steiner-Davion's claim to the throne. Though retired now from combat, Grand Duke Morgan Kell and his family remain a political force in Lyran society, having recently assisted the Archon in developing the Arc-Royal Accords, which recognize the limited autonomy of the Exiled Wolf Clan enclaves in the Arc-Royal region. Led by Kell's own son, Phelan, these exiled warriors have given the Alliance a powerful ally in the defense of the realm against Clan invaders.



House Kelswa

The Kelswa family came to power as the rulers of the Tamar Pact when Archon Robert Steiner deposed his unstable aunt, Margaret Olson, and the treacherous dukes of Skye and Tamar in a brief but savage civil war. Though unwaveringly loyal at the time, with a long history of valiant service to the Commonwealth, the Kelswa family's relations with House Steiner began to deteriorate after Archon Viola Steiner-Dinesen's infamous Day of Rage during the Reunification War. Their oath of loyalty to the Archon forever shaken by how quickly rumor had turned their liege lord against them, the Kelswas grew ever more distant in the centuries since the Star League's collapse, and many past Kelswas even favored separating the Tamar Pact from the rest of the realm.



THE LYRAN GOVERNMENT

THE HOMELESS

In addition to the active delegations to the Estates General are several representatives from Lyran worlds captured throughout the centuries of Succession Wars. Known as the “the Homeless,” these representatives may be descendants of the last delegate from a world lost generations ago, or a representative who happened to be in session when his homeworld fell to the more recent invasions of the Clan War or the FedCom Civil War.

In the late 3030s, soon after the union of the Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth, a motion was placed before the Estates General to divest the remaining Homeless representatives, whose residence in Tharkad City—at the Archon’s expense—had come to be viewed as a vestige of the bygone era of the Succession Wars. The Fourth Succession War and its aftermath, however, shattered this debate when the Commonwealth claimed a swath of Combine worlds in the Rasalhague Military District, only to later relinquish them to honor the sovereignty of the Free Rasalhague Republic.

This short-lived conquest stood to inflate the Estates General with a host of new delegates, only to be dashed when the entire region was summarily set free. The debate over whether to honor as members of the Homeless those few representatives elected for several Rasalhagian worlds began almost immediately, but was soon quashed by Archon Melissa Steiner-Davion, who pointed out that the Rasalhagian worlds “were never truly ours to begin with”.

The Clan invasion has created a new generation of Homeless representatives from Tamar Pact worlds that fell to the invaders and remain under the banners of the Jade Falcons and the Wolves. Never before in Lyran history have so many delegates joined the ranks of the Homeless, and many have become the focus of the Tamar Liberation Front, a political movement and alleged terrorist organization dedicated to the recovery of the lost Tamar Pact planets.

handling the bulk of day-to-day governance. As local leadership is dominated by an expansive and intertwining network of feudal allegiances, most of which derive from the supremacy of the Archon or his recognized dukes, these myriad local governments maintain at least a public face of loyalty to the Alliance leadership.

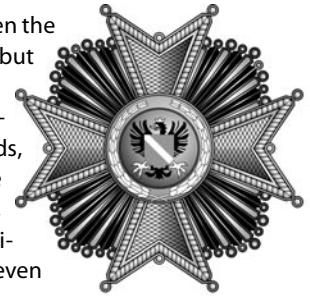
Key to the development and functioning of planetary and regional government are the Articles of Acceptance, but other unifying influences exist in the provincial governments and their administrative and judicial support from the LACS and Provincial Supreme Courts, respectively.

ARTICLES OF ACCEPTANCE

In 2376, after nearly three decades of increasing corruption and decline, Robert Marsden deposed the original council of nine Archons to save the fledgling Lyran Commonwealth from economic and political oblivion. Though the disparate military commanders of the Commonwealth supported his actions, the man who would become the realm’s first Archon Basileus realized that he could not wield supreme executive power by military fiat alone. To truly stabilize and unite a nation under his rule, Marsden knew he needed to reforge the basis of his leadership; he needed to win over the people, world by world. To accomplish this, Marsden created the Articles of Acceptance.

The Articles defined the Commonwealth’s obligations to all member worlds and vice versa. In it, the Commonwealth government pledged not to interfere with the affairs of local governments and established the Estates General, a parliamentary body where member worlds could voice their views and concerns to the Archon and each other through their own elected representatives. These rights were guaranteed so long as all member worlds abided by certain conditions, including the contribution of a portion of the world’s gross income for mutual defense and national infrastructure, and full compliance with all reasonable military requests related to planetary and regional defense. In addition, all member worlds agreed to acknowledge

House Kelswa fell on particularly hard times when the Clans tore into their region of space in the 3050s, all but eradicating the Tamar Pact in a short, brutal war of conquest. Convinced that the Steiner-Davion government failed to do all it could to protect their worlds, many Kelswas turned wholeheartedly against the royal family as a result. Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner, de facto head of this fallen house, is one such individual, and has sworn to see the Pact worlds freed even as he currently leads the rebellious Skye Province.



THE ROYAL COURT

In Lyran political parlance, the Royal Court refers to more than just a building in the Triad. It also refers to the times of the year when the Archon’s family is in residence and the place becomes a focus for social events sponsored by the Archon. Ranging from museum exhibitions, festivals and theater entertainment to sporting events, military demonstrations and awards ceremonies, the massive complex of the Royal Court building—which also includes the vast Throne Room, where the Archon often sits under the watchful eye of two BattleMech bodyguards—makes it possible to host a variety of such events.

These sessions of the Royal Court attract much of the Alliance’s nobility, high-ranking military and other members of the political and social elite, who are often invited or expected to attend. If pressing matters of state demand otherwise, many such guests may decline or even send a representative in their stead, a practice that has brought many commoners into the grand world of the Alliance’s ruling class, if only for a brief while.

Royal Court sessions also permit formal and informal meetings among many of the Alliance’s upper crust, and the Archon or members of the Alliance Council often hold audiences with petitioners over any number of issues best discussed outside the Estates General. These meetings add to the unspoken importance of such social gatherings, which can be so busy that the Archon himself makes use of a veritable army of bureaucrats, known as the Archon’s Entourage, to help keep his itinerary straight and coordinate meetings with other dignitaries or petitioners.

REGIONAL AND PLANETARY GOVERNMENT

Below the national level, most government in the Lyran Alliance is left up to local leadership, with the LACS and the planetary and provincial Supreme Courts



one Archon as the supreme military and governmental leader of the state, and as commander-in-chief over all military forces from the national level to private commands.

Though a few worlds—notably those most self-sufficient, such as Skye and Tamar—protested the Articles and the supreme authority of the Archon, the majority of Lyran worlds ratified them in 2376, effectively restructuring Lyran government with the stroke of a pen. Since that time, the Articles have been the foundation of all Lyran laws, though the original document has been amended many times by successive Archons and Estates General sessions.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Provincial government in the Lyran Alliance is largely centered on the provincial capitals, frequently home to regional LACS offices and the Provincial Supreme Courts. As all political mandates are handed down from Tharkad through these worlds, this arrangement makes the planetary rulers of the provincial capitals into provincial leaders, entitling them to a seat on the Alliance Council, and thus an influential voice in national politics.

The authority of the provincial rulers and how they wield it varies from province to province. Though all enjoy a measure of greater authority compared to planetary rulers, some exercise such rights less than others. Technically speaking, the authority of the provincial rulers is protected under the Articles of Acceptance as an extension of their position as government leaders below the Archon and the Estates General. So long as their laws and policies do not violate those of the state government, or infringe on the rights of Lyran member worlds, their authority is acknowledged and respected by the Tharkan government, as would be the leader of any individual world.

To facilitate these broader powers, provincial rulers have their own agreements with planetary leaders in their region, similar to the Articles of Acceptance, and may pass legislation in their provinces in addition to those passed by Government House or the Archon. Because most major laws are already handled nationwide by the Tharkan government, or on local levels by planetary governments, these provincial rulers tend to pass few new laws, and enact few edicts beyond local variances in provincial sales taxes and minimum wage requirements.

In the wake of the FedCom Civil War, some provincial governments—such as Skye Province under Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner—have begun to rally for increased regional authority, a form of “internal independence” that stretches the limits of the Articles of Acceptance. Based on the recent recognition of the Exiled Wolf Clan enclaves on Arc-Royal under Archon Peter Steiner-Davion’s recent Arc-Royal Protocols, this new movement could transform the basis of the Alliance government. Indeed, if provincial rulers like Duke Kelswa-Steiner have their way, the Alliance could be transformed from a united state under an absolute monarch, where all worlds are guaranteed their individual rights under a binding social contract, to a loose confederacy of independent mini-states like the Free Worlds League, each with their own laws, economies and divergent political agendas.

Planetary Governments

The type and nature of planetary governments in the Lyran Alliance is largely protected by the Articles of Acceptance, allowing each individual world to determine its own political identity, so long as doing so does not hinder the smooth operation of the Lyran government, pose a threat to any neighboring worlds or infringe on the welfare of its citizenry as defined by Lyran laws. Planetary governments as wildly different as ultra-strict police states, religious theocracies, corporate hegemonies and even true anarchies exist throughout the Lyran state. Administration of these worlds is left up to the local population, though local LACS offices remain in place to assure that no governments infringe upon state laws or otherwise pose a threat to the harmony of the Alliance. Beyond that, planetary government, economics and law enforcement are largely maintained by whatever structures each world’s natives prefer.

Though local government is left up to local citizens, the Alliance does expect its member worlds to adhere to and enforce all laws passed by the Archon and Estates General. Though these laws may be altered on the local level to suit societal conditions, the original intent of the law (rather than the letter of the law) must be honored, to comply with the will of the state. Planets may seek exemptions in some cases due to religious, economic or societal conflicts, but such instances are rare. In fact, when it receives such requests for exemption (typically through the Provincial Supreme Court that covers a given world), the Lyran government may send mediators in hopes of developing a workable “local variation” on the law in question.

The Lyran government further demands that all member worlds respect the fundamental human rights of its citizenry, and under the Articles of Acceptance may resort to political, economic or even military enforcement to punish any government that defies this requirement. In such rare instances, the Lyran government has been forced to get involved in local politics to protect its own integrity or to defend the basic rights of a planet’s people. Extreme examples of this enforcement in recent years include the government’s response to the three Skye rebellions of the past three decades, which included large-scale military force, while the recent Quetta Land War on Bolan forced the First Bolan Jaegers to undertake a “police action” until mediators from Tharkad could effect a more permanent solution to a local conflict.

THE DISCREET OPPOSITION

Their origins shrouded in myth and rumor, their numbers, goals, training and methods unclear, the organization known as Heimdall is an entity whose very existence is so mysterious that the common man tends to disbelieve it. However, Heimdall is very real, and its members may have played a key role in historic events as recently as the FedCom Civil War.

Heimdall’s political views are unclear, to the point where rumors suggest the group took part in the FedCom Civil War both for and against Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion. In fact, their only known mandate may well be to serve as a “loyal opposition,” dedicated to policing the activities of the Archons, and in particular their secret police forces such as the infamous Loki. Some theories even suggest that Heimdall originated with the early days of Loki, when the organization’s existence was first revealed during a botched mission against the Draconis Combine.

Even less is known about how Heimdall recruits, trains and equips its members, though many experts suggest that several highly placed members of the aristocracy, business sector and perhaps even the Estates General may be among the group’s shadowy numbers, funneling people, resources and information to keep this watchdog organization alert and active. To date, no member of Heimdall has been captured alive who divulged information betraying his organization. Over time, the mystery surrounding this secret group has grown to near-mythic proportions, the subject for holodramas grounded more in innuendo than hard facts.



THE LYRAN GOVERNMENT

THE LYRAN INTELLIGENCE CORPS

The Lyran Intelligence Corps (LIC) is the central agency upon which the Alliance government and military rely to gather information and analyze it in the name of protecting the realm from enemies within and without. Though often feared as the tool of oppressive regimes, with a well-deserved reputation for brutal efficiency—particularly in the more active Lohengrin and Loki divisions—the many accomplishments of the brave men and women in the LIC have often saved the state from political, economic and military ruin over the centuries since the agency's inception.



TRAINING

LIC training is handled almost exclusively by the Bondians division, a section of the agency wholly devoted to the recruitment, training and assignment of operatives. For the most part, operatives assigned to active service branches are chosen for their lack of family ties or friends, while more public or accessible branches may be staffed by particularly promising police or military officers from across the realm. The location and number of LIC training camps is a well-guarded secret.

COMMAND

Nominally, the LIC's ultimate command rests with the LIC Chancellor, General Sasha Gorge, who in turn answers only to the Archon. Though the title is military, and much of the LIC's chain of command is styled along LAAF lines, this arrangement technically places the agency outside the military chain of command, allowing it to operate freely wherever the Lyran leadership sees fit.

DIVISIONS

The LIC bureaucracy is divided into several sections tasked with various specific mandates. Provincial headquarters include a proportionate number of personnel in all these divisions, based on the perceived need for capable intelligence coverage of a given region.

Norns

The Norns are the LIC's central intelligence-gathering and analysis branch, and one of the few departments to employ almost no field operatives to speak of. Many Norns are experts in various academic and technical fields, who use data gathered by other branches to provide the Alliance's civil and military leadership with the most up-to-date intelligence possible.



Diplomatic Guard/Diplomatic Corps

The Diplomatic Guard and Diplomatic Corps are the two most visible branches of the LIC, acting as special security details and liaisons for VIPs from within and outside the Alliance. Diplomatic Guards act as bodyguards and drivers for most Lyran officials in the Alliance Council and the Estates General, and for the Archon, while Diplomatic Corps members are often seen at state events or circulating at social events involving the ruling elite of the realm.



Lohengrin

The Lohengrin division of the LIC is tasked with counter-terrorism and is perhaps the agency's best-known special operations branch, largely because of its SL (Strategic Local) troopers, who act as government SWAT teams to handle particularly difficult or sensitive police crises. Lohengrin also handles covert operations with little or no public awareness until long after the fact (if at all). Unfortunately, like the rest of the LIC, this division's powers were abused during Katherine Steiner-Davion's reign, when operatives were often directed against "terrorists" whose only crime was exhibiting public distaste for the Archon-Princess.



Bondians

The Bondians are the LIC's recruitment and training division. Taking no active role in operations, this division is entirely focused on the recruitment, training, and assignment of new LIC operatives, in accordance with the needs of the agency's command staff.



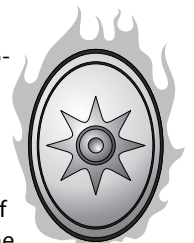
Molehunters

The Molehunters are the LIC's secret police force, devoted to countering hostile intelligence operations. Tasked with securing the Alliance against foreign spies and other covert threats, the Molehunters have been known to work hand-in-hand with Loki and Lohengrin toward that end. During the recent FedCom Civil War, this mandate expanded to include targeting dissidents, a fact that has further marred the LIC's reputation at home.



Loki

Loki, the LIC's elite secret police and espionage branch, is perhaps the most feared of all the intelligence divisions. Its operatives are trained for espionage and other "black" operations against foreign interests and internal enemies, and have been known to commit acts of terror even against the Lyran people based on the whims of a given Archon.





Derided for centuries across the Inner Sphere for strategic ineptitude and an over-inflated, top-heavy bureaucracy choked with “social generals,” the Lyran military has nonetheless managed to keep the realm mostly safe from foreign invaders throughout the history of the state. During the Federated Commonwealth period, however, this often-disparaged military received a long-overdue upgrade in methods and equipment that allowed it to make unprecedented gains against its enemies.

Unfortunately, this improvement was short-lived. Seeing their greatest victories on the Draconis Combine front reversed with the stroke of a pen in the 3030s, followed less than a generation later by the arrival of the Clans, demoralized the Lyran armed forces as much—if not more—than what many officers termed their gradual loss of identity to the Davions. By the time of the Marik-Liao invasion in 3057 and the Lyran secession from the Federated Commonwealth, the strain had reached its breaking point, and a resurgence of the “old ways” brought the newly renamed Lyran Alliance Armed Forces back to its roots. Though now possessing more seasoned warriors and officers and better technology overall, the LAAF’s formative years under Katherine Steiner-Davion virtually unraveled more than three decades of progress.

STRUCTURE OF THE LAAF

As it did before—and to some extent during—the temporary alliance of the Federated Commonwealth, the LAAF’s overall command structure places ultimate authority squarely in the hands of the Archon as Commander-in-Chief of the Lyran military. From there it radiates down to the High Command, to the five margraves who command the theater regions, and from there to provincial commanders and regimental and battalion leaders. A second tier of command also exists at the brigade level for administrative and logistical reasons, but the generals who nominally command brigades (such as all the Alliance Jaegers) hold no real legal authority to order such forces into battle.

THE ARCHON

According to Lyran law, first set down in the Articles of Acceptance, the Archon is Commander-in-Chief of the Lyran military, possessing absolute authority over all the armed forces of the Lyran state. The Archon is often presumed to have some form of military experience, though it is by no means mandatory. Many past Archons who lacked military service—including Katherine Steiner-Davion—have appointed a “commander pro-tem” who commands the LAAF and answers to the Archon personally. This practice enables the Archon to focus on the business of ruling the realm, while ensuring that an inexperienced civilian does not direct the Lyran military.

ESTATES GENERAL

The Estates General are not technically or legally part of the military chain of command, but their political weight as representatives of the people has given them formidable influence over the Archon’s military and political decisions. In rare instances, the Estates General has even managed to force an Archon’s removal from office, effectively changing the chain of command at its roots, but this has not happened since the deposing of Archon Alessandro Steiner in 3007.

THE ALLIANCE COUNCIL

The Alliance Council, the Archon’s cabinet, also weighs in on military affairs as part of their mandate as advisors to the Archon in all affairs of state. Like the Estates General, the Council has no legal authority to dictate terms to an Archon or the Lyran military, but its influence and cooperation are vital to the smooth operation of the LAAF.

NAIL IN THE COFFIN: ARCHON’S ORDER 5730023

As part of an effort to give her new realm a sense of identity—and to play off the bruised pride of more than a generation of military commanders whose support she desperately needed—Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion issued Archon’s Order 5730023 to rid the LAAF of its “Davion” influence and reforge the identity of her liberated realm.

Carrying out the order proved no mean feat, and even a decade later, the “housecleaning” (as the more hopelessly naïve officers termed it) had done little more than rob the Lyran military of talent by persecuting those whose loyalties to the Archon could even remotely be called into question. Couched as a reorganization, AO-5730023 also served as a blank check for the restoration of the “old school” LCAF, allowing the more “socially aware” officers to advance through the ranks faster than those who placed more emphasis on their martial duties.

But while AO-5730023 may have put the nail in the coffin for Lyran military reform by effectively turning back the clock to the 3020s, it also gave the Archon authority to seize whatever assets remained in the Lyran half of the FedCom before she severed ties between the realms. With the Clan front the biggest threat at the time, the lion’s share of more than thirty years spent upgrading and equipping the former Armed Forces of the Federated Commonwealth went toward beefing up the nation’s most endangered border. This included scores of JumpShips, entire regiments of upgraded BattleMechs and the vast majority of the recently developed battle armor. Though much of this gear proved difficult to maintain and was gradually “sold” back to the Federated Suns (both to “prove” Katherine’s good intentions and as a means of twisting the knife in the Lyrans’ former colleagues), this advantage, and the little progress still being made under AO-5730023, theoretically stood to create a new Lyran military that had all the feel of the old with many of the advantages of the new, a compromise army that could still be regarded as a first-rate military command.

Of course, everything works in theory. It’s application that gets you.

— Aristide Habeas, Lecturer in Military Science, NAMA, New Avalon, 10 August 3067



LYRAN ALLIANCE ARMED FORCES





THE LAAF HIGH COMMAND

The LAAF High Command, under the direction of the Archon and the General of the Armies, formulates all policy for the Lyran military and is comprised of the heads of all sixteen military branches plus the various regional commanders. Streamlined in the days of Katherine Steiner-Davion, the system is two-tiered, with an Inner Council that consists of the Archon, General of the Armies and the five Theater Margraves, followed by the full council, which adds the sixteen branch heads and the head of the Lyran Intelligence Corps. Technically speaking, an Archon is not obliged to consult the High Command before issuing orders to the military, but as with the Estates General and the Alliance Council, doing so ensures a smoother flow of command and avoids possible disastrous ramifications of unilateral decisions.

Below the LAAF High Command are all the branches of the Lyran military, each of which operates semi-independently at the High Command's behest. Though fraught with politics and redundant responsibilities as a holdover from the original LCAF, this system remains largely unchanged simply because it continues to work for the LAAF.

ALLIANCE ARMY COMMAND

The Alliance Army is the LAAF's principal combat arm, comprised of eight corps and numerous subcommands that encompass all of the LAAF's non-reserve ground forces. Specific corps and subcommands are outlined below. General of the Armies Adam Steiner currently heads the Alliance Army Command.

Combat Units

The combat corps that operate under the AAC are divided into BattleMech, Armor, Artillery, Infantry and Combat Engineer Corps. Each corps oversees the training and organization of the assets assigned to it, and all five corps tend to work closely with one another to ensure that all aspects of the LAAF's ground troops receive adequate support.

Army Supply Corps

The Army Supply Corps is responsible for the movement of supplies and munitions on the battlefield, ensuring that all field commands are adequately fueled, fed, loaded and ready to fight.

Army Transport Command

The Army Transport Command generally oversees the organization and assignment of JumpShips and DropShips to various ground forces. Its authority effectively overlaps with that of the Alliance Navy, particularly during larger-scale operations involving fleets, as well as the Transport Division, which oversees the use of non-combat naval assets. This corps frequently coordinates with these other commands.

Army Signal Corps

The Army Signal Corps is responsible for assuring the security and reliability of battlefield communications. Its authority includes all battlefield-level communications training as well as the assignment and development of tactical command codes and the like.

Other Non-Combat Commands

Beyond the corps, other commands of the AAC include the LAAF's technicians and non-combat engineers. Charged with keeping all technical maintenance and physical support personnel well trained and adequately supplied, these commands ensure that LAAF units remain in fighting trim, and also oversee the development of fortifications, field bases and other installations.

ALLIANCE NAVY COMMAND

The Alliance Navy controls all heavy spaceborne combat assets in the LAAF, specifically WarShips, DropShips and JumpShips. In certain circumstances, however, the distinction as to what assets fall under the Navy's command tends to get blurred, and DropShips and JumpShips also fall under the jurisdictions of the AAC's Transport Corps and the Transport Division.

To clarify the chain of command, Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion decreed that unless otherwise stated, all combat DropShips and JumpShips operating in one of the five theaters or outside Alliance space automatically fall under Alliance Navy authority. Those operating in the interior regions fall under the authority of the Transport Command if attached to an army command, or to the Transport Division if they are serving in a non-combat support role. Fleet Admiral Johanna Gaines currently commands the Alliance Navy.

ALLIANCE AEROSPACE COMMAND

All Alliance aerospace and conventional fighter assets fall under the authority of the Alliance Aerospace Command, which is broken into three subdivisions: Planetary Command, Escort Command and the Wings of Combat. The roles and jurisdictions of these subdivisions are outlined below. Admiral Klaus Essen, a highly decorated Fourth Succession War veteran, heads up the Aerospace Command.

Planetary Command

The Planetary Command oversees the training, equipment and organization of all air and aerospace assets that operate in a garrison or system-defense role, including those of planetary or provincial militias.

Escort Command

The Escort Command covers aerospace assets assigned to guard supply convoys and other space fleets.

Wings of Combat

The Wings of Combat covers all aerospace assets assigned to front-line duty, where the potential for combat exists both in space and in atmosphere.

RESERVE CORPS

The Alliance Reserve Corps serves the dual purpose of overseeing planetary garrisons and LAAF troops not on active service. Members of the latter group, which includes retired soldiers obliged to remain on the LAAF rosters for five years, are expected to perform a minimum of two weeks' military service per year, and are liable for recall to active duty during emergencies. Former soldiers may remain on these "inactive reserve" rolls beyond the mandated five-year period, and receive a monthly 20-kroner stipend if they



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opt to do so. Reservists also include part-time soldiers and associated specialists such as doctors and engineers, whose services also may be called upon during a national emergency.

Until the Clan War, reservists were rarely activated, and planetary garrisons under the Reserve Corps' authority were rarely moved from their parent worlds. However, in times of need, even a reserve corps force may be called upon to bolster an active front, and so the ARC often mandates additional training or exercises for militia forces and reservists in troubled border regions. Hauptmann-General Iris DuBois presently commands the Alliance Reserve Corps.

LIAISONS

An obvious sign of bureaucracy and the Lyran Alliance's love of politics, the LAAF command structure includes three primary liaison branches, specialized for those irregular military forces alongside which the LAAF occasionally works. The duties and specialties of each liaison division are provided below.

House Troops Liaison

The House Troops Liaison provides a link between the LAAF and the private militias and militarized security forces maintained by many Lyran nobles and corporations. Legally speaking, these troops are raised and maintained independently of the LAAF, but the Household Troop Agreement of 2883 has enabled the Lyran High Command to exert its influence over these troops via this office, which is presently run by Hauptmann-General Gustav Ramier.

Mercenary Troops Liaison

Headed by Hauptmann-General Almida Zec, herself a veteran of the Eridani Light Horse, the Mercenary Troops Liaison works hard to maintain a professional and fair relationship between the LAAF and any mercenary troops it retains. This office hires, assigns and pays mercenary forces, and so is replete with some of the Lyran military's most skilled negotiators and administrators.

Com Guard and Star League Liaisons

The Com Guard Liaison Corps was formed soon after the Fourth Succession War, when Com Guard troops suddenly became a familiar sight in the Lyran state. Intended as a combination diplomatic corps and intelligence asset, this branch of the service was expanded to include the Star League Defense Force when the new Star League was formed in 3058. Charged primarily with monitoring Com Guard and SLDF activities within the Lyran state, and coordinating the same with local and national troop movements, this office remains close to both aspects of its mandate, and its officers tend to be skilled administrators, diplomats and—in a pinch—spies. Leutnant-General Nathan Steiner-Armstrong commands this Liaison Corps branch.

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY EDUCATION

Often coordinated by the Alliance Army, Navy and Aerospace commands, the Department of Military Education is charged with maintaining the standards of all LAAF training facilities and personnel from the planetary and regional militia boot camps to the prestigious academies such as the Nagelring on Tharkad and Sanglamore on Skye. This department also provides additional

oversight for the various training units located throughout Alliance territories. General Toni Reynolds commands this service branch.

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S OFFICE

Also known as the JAG Corps, the Judge Advocate General's Office oversees all matters of military law within the LAAF. This far-reaching group includes lawyers, judges, researchers, investigators and even military police. Also charged with enforcing martial law where necessary, this branch includes trained administrators, who can help govern worlds recently captured from enemy hands or worlds in the throes of rebellion against the legitimate authorities. Hauptmann-General Stefan Holstein heads this branch of the LAAF.

QUARTERMASTER CORPS

Strongly tied to the military-industrial complex, and charged with evaluating, testing and distributing the supplies and armaments that keep the LAAF in fighting trim, the Quartermaster Corps has grown increasingly associated with corruption thanks to chronic bribery and embezzlement that occasionally have cost lives in the battlefield. As a result, this branch is the one most frequently watched by the JAG Corps. General Michael Hastings is the head of this branch, having inherited the post when his predecessor, Lisa Steiner II, stepped down at the end of the FedCom Civil War.

REPLACEMENT DEPOT CORPS

Often associated with the Quartermaster Corps and the Transport Division, the Replacement Depot (Rep-Dep) Corps is charged with maintaining and establishing repair and supply depots throughout the Alliance, including the eight major depots always stationed in each Alliance province. Presently commanded by Hauptmann-General Narhwaz Pavletic, the Rep-Dep Corps is expected to anticipate any and all demands for food, ammunition, parts and other commodities, then stock the appropriate consumables as needed to keep local Alliance forces in fighting trim at all times.

TRANSPORT DIVISION

Controlling the majority of the LAAF's non-combat DropShips and JumpShips is the Transport Division, whose responsibilities include the timely transportation of troops and materiel throughout the Alliance. This division arranges everything from bulk-freight shipments to home leaves for the troops. Operating a vast web of transport routes throughout the realm, this division also coordinates with civilian traffic, and has even been known to subcontract some of its services to various commercial and other non-military agencies. Admiral Vincenza Olivery, Grav von Seginus, heads this division.

ALLIANCE MEDICAL CORPS

Covering all aspects of medical treatment, from the medical corpsmen on the battlefield and field hospital units to the massive rehabilitation facilities and veterans' care centers throughout the Alliance, the Alliance Medical Corps oversees medical care for the LAAF and its retirees. Bound by the ancient Geneva Conventions of warfare and their own ethical standards, the medics, doctors and surgeons of this corps are bound to treat friend and foe alike, and are placed outside the normal chain of command to enable them to



perform this function without interference. General (Doctor) Ytzak Arran commands the Medical Corps.

ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION

The LAAF's administrative section, commanded by Hauptmann-General Michiko Tomasov, is the living, breathing heart of the military bureaucracy, claiming disparate members throughout all other departments in one massive apparatus. Its roles include maintaining all records of millions of troops and trillions of pieces of equipment, and assuring that everyone receives their proper pay on time, as well as providing all aspects of administrative and office support required by the men and women in the various other branches and commands of the LAAF. Also responsible for large-scale communications within the realm (as opposed to the battlefield communications maintained by the Army Signal Corps), this section often coordinates with ComStar to relay routine communications and relies on a system of "black box" fax machines for more sensitive information.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS DIVISION

The Strategies and Tactics Division is the LAAF's military "think tank," which makes use of extensive computer modeling, war gaming and other exercises to identify weaknesses in enemy forces and develop battlefield plans and strategies to exploit them. Often coordinating with the Military Intelligence Division, and commanded by General Michelle Bjuti, a veteran of the AFFC's equivalent branch, this branch of the LAAF has a reputation for innovative thinking and excellent battle plan development—even if the execution often leaves a lot to be desired.

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE DIVISION

The LAAF Military Intelligence Division is responsible for gathering and analyzing information about all enemy forces and coordinates with the Lyran Intelligence Corps (LIC) in that regard. Focused primarily on external threats, this office maintains several centers dedicated to learning all that can be learned of a specific enemy realm's strengths and weaknesses, and how each can be countered or exploited. Presently reeling from a second set of purges after the fall of Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion's regime, this division is operating markedly below par and is presently headed by interim commander General Reinhart Vossler, a close friend of LIC commander General Sasha Gorge.

REGIONAL COMMANDS

Since severing its ties to the Federated Commonwealth, the regional LAAF command structure shifted its focus away from the FedSuns-influenced system of marches, operational areas and commands to a streamlined version of the old Lyran Commonwealth's provincial and military theater commands. Largely based on the realm's extant political divisions, the five provinces (Alarion, Bolan, Coventry, Donegal and Skye) are further subdivided militarily into interior and exterior regions. The interior regions, called *Kerngebiete* or core areas, differ from the outer theaters in how far military authority extends in them.

While commanders in all regions are responsible for keeping their troops fed, supplied and ready for combat, military authority in the *Kerngebiete* ends with the forces deployed in that region. By contrast, the theater commanders, who hold the noble (but non-hereditary) title of margrave for the duration of their postings, are de facto military commanders over all the worlds within their theater, exerting considerably more control over their regions politically and militarily. To prevent abuse of power, the JAG Corps maintains a close watch on all five margraves, and has the authority to quickly remove any one of them should they overstep the line of command.

THE MAILED FIST



Presently, though still reeling from the aftermath of the FedCom Civil War, the LAAF is a formidable army, with its regular forces consisting of eight distinct brigades, five major training cadres and ten regional militia command groups. A total of seventy-three BattleMech

regiments fights under the aegis of House Steiner, a figure that makes the Lyran armed forces the largest single army of the five Successor States, if only on paper.

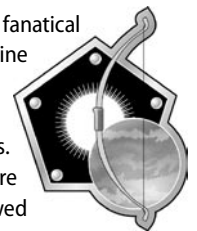
Alliance Guard

The Alliance Guard was originally the Federated Commonwealth Corps, regimental combat teams created under the aegis of the Steiner-Davion alliance. When the Lyran Alliance later broke away from the FedCom, several Federated Commonwealth RCTs were still within the new realm, orphans of a shattered dream. Given a new name, some of these combat groups were used as "sinks" for potentially disloyal elements in the new LAAF, and were eventually disbanded to form the Alliance Jaegers. The remainder largely took up the Loyalist banner during the civil war.



Alliance Jaegers

Created with the intent to instill fanatical nationalist loyalty, Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion formed the Alliance Jaegers with equipment taken from disbanded Alliance Guard units. Named for the various provinces where they were raised, these troops showed fanatical loyalty to the Archon for the most part, and fought hard during the civil war (though the Skye Jaegers sided with the Free Skye movement later on). Refusing to give ground during the war, most of these commands suffered severe damage.



Arcturan Guard

One of the Alliance's most ancient brigades, the Arcturan Guards are still considered a prestigious command, even though Arcturus has long since lost its significance as the capital of the Lyran realm. Originally limited to people hailing from Arcturus, the gradual depopulation of that world after its loss in stature





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prompted Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion to open up the unit's membership under AO 5730023. The result preserved the ancient brigade, which split evenly down the middle during the civil war. Like most LAAF commands, this command is gradually rebuilding, its warriors torn between pride and shame for the damage wrought in that terrible conflict.

Donegal Guard

The heart of the LAAF, the Donegal Guard suffered heavy damage in the civil war and remains in a state of flux, but these regiments and RCTs have a reputation for dependability, and it is highly unlikely that they will remain on the ropes for long.



Lyran Guard

The Lyran Guard RCTs represent the Alliance's best and brightest, and their loyalties were put to the ultimate test during the civil war, with each RCT deciding on its own what side or faction represented the nation's best interests. Even so, most of the Guard's component forces played a key role in defending Lyran interests, such as throwing back the Jade Falcon Incursion and repelling a Free Skye assault on Hesperus II.



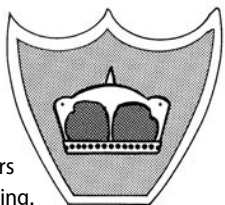
Lyran Regulars

Despite being the backbone of the Lyran armed forces, the Lyran Regulars are largely considered less prestigious and tend to receive less support than their Lyran Guard counterparts. Once little more than auxiliary troops, these forces today play a central role in the LAAF. Almost every single regiment took up Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion's banner during the conflict, and many were heavily damaged.



Royal Guard

The Royal Guards are the most prestigious command in the LAAF and are often regarded as a social club in the Lyran military, a label that belies the fact that all members must be top-notch soldiers to even be considered for the posting. Fanatically loyal to the Archon and armed with cutting-edge equipment, these units were naturally on the receiving end of pro-Victor assaults throughout the civil war, in which all three regiments were effectively destroyed. Despite this, they remain on the rolls, a testament to their stature as the pinnacle of the LAAF.



MAJOR TRAINING CENTERS

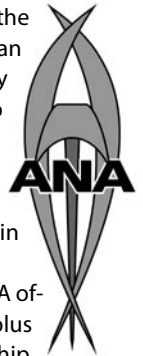
By law, all citizens of the Lyran Alliance are expected to carry five years of public service, either in the military or in some other public institution, such as the police or medical services. The Military Service Act permits some degree of self-determination as to what role a citizen chooses, but to encourage a good decision, citizens undergo aptitude testing during childhood to assess their physical, mental and psychological strengths, which helps to determine in what arm of military or government service they might best fulfill this national service requirement.

Of those who end up in military service, the vast majority go through one of more than fifty boot camps throughout the Alliance, then serve out their hitch in a backwater garrison somewhere. The truly gifted—or the just plain filthy rich—may find their way into one of the Alliance's seven remaining military academies.

Charged with training officers and specialist troops, these state-run academies ensure consistent standards and curricula, and have been well respected for their quality and resources, but their numbers are dwindling. The facilities on Somerset, Tamar and Blackjack were all lost to the Clans' initial invasion, while Thorin's Flight Academy closed in 3063 and the Pandora College was claimed during the recent Jade Falcon Incursion. Because of this, the LAAF is looking into founding new military academies deeper within Lyran territory, to support the Department of Military Education as it strains to provide badly needed officers and talented MechWarriors in the post-civil war era. Unfortunately, as of this writing, no definite plans exist for new facilities.

ALARION NAVAL ACADEMY (ANA)

The newest addition to the LAAF academy training apparatus, the Alarion Naval Academy arose only after WarShips returned to the Lyran military arsenal. The race to crew the new military spacecraft, already pressing with the reintroduction of WarShips, became even more so with the Lyran secession from the Federated Commonwealth and the sudden inheritance of scores of formerly FedCom JumpShips and DropShips. The ANA, which opened in 3060, was founded to lighten the burden on the overtaxed and endangered flight schools of Thorin and Pandora.



To those who pass the DME's tight controls on admissions, the ANA offers three-year training programs for DropShip and JumpShip crews, plus electives for command and technical specialties, and a five-year WarShip program that includes a two-month training cruise. Supplemental courses now include conversion classes that allow trained JumpShip and DropShip cadets to expand their expertise into the WarShip field. However, these courses are currently in declining favor, largely thanks to the loss of so many WarShips in the recent fighting.

ANA's school rag is black, the former color of the Tamar War College. Lieutenant-General Franjo Ostrovsky is the academy's current commander.

MELISSA STEINER MARTIAL ACADEMY OF BOLAN (MSMA)

Originally a militia training facility for the people of Bolan, in 3053 then-Archon Melissa Steiner-Davion authorized a massive upgrade intended to make up for the loss of the Tamar War College. The Bolan Martial Academy, as it was to be called, opened in 3055, but the Archon's assassination later that same year prompted the facility to change its name in honor of the slain ruler.





Initially a training facility for armor and conventional infantry forces, efforts have been underway for more than a decade to add MechWarrior training to the school curriculum, a process made more urgent by the recent loss of the Pandora College of Military Sciences. Delayed by the FedCom Civil War, as of this writing, the first MechWarrior class has just started at the MSMA, and is not expected to graduate until 3069.

The MSMA's school rag is white. Its commander, Leutnant-General Emile Carbone, has spent years trying to shed the image that his school turns out second-rate warriors compared to the likes of Sanglamore and the Nagelring, but recently expressed his dismay that it has taken an education crisis to finally overcome this bias.

WAR COLLEGE OF BUENA



Another young academy, established in 3020, the War College of Buena has nonetheless become one of the strongest military academies in the Lyran realm, thanks in no small part to ample funding during the FedCom era. Especially well known for its first-rate technical courses, the War College of Buena has earned considerable respect for its quality MechWarrior and aerospace pilot programs as well. Raising the bar on standards, this no-nonsense academy has made technical schooling a requirement, regardless of the cadet's field of specialty, assuring that the warriors it turns out not only know how to fight, but also how to maintain their gear at the front.

Buena's school rag is a green and blue checked pattern. Its commander, Leutnant-General Ridley Matthews, recently assumed his post upon the death of his predecessor, Melissa Waverly.

COVENTRY MILITARY ACADEMY (CMA)

Never a particularly large academy, Coventry Military Academy (then known as Coventry Academy) received a massive upgrade when its cadets and instructors took an active role in the defense of Coventry against Clan Jade Falcon in 3058, going so far as to raze much of the school before surrendering to the Falcon invaders. In 3060, the MechWarriors' school reopened with state-of-the-art equipment and monumental funding that allowed for expanded facilities and the use of cutting-edge 'Mech designs by students and trainers.

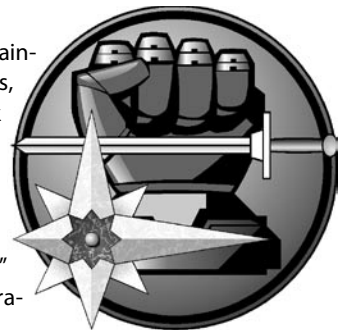


The civil war disrupted classes at the CMA for several years, and only now are things returning to normal at these much-improved facilities. However, the scars and the aftermath of the conflict remain, most notably with the rise of Leutnant-General Marko Raffaello as commander of the academy. Raffaello was personally approved by planetary duke Thomas Bradford for his pro-Victor views over Leutnant-General Billie Piper, whose pro-Katherine stance became a source of tension even before the war broke out. CMA's school rag is brown.

THE NAGELRING

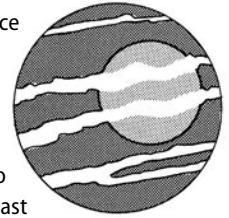
Once an SLDF training facility, the prestigious Nagelring Academy is the oldest and most diverse military training facility in the Alliance. With facilities sprawling across Tharkad's Bremen continent, the Nagelring offers classes, exercise areas, live-fire ranges and other amenities for every branch of the service, all set within a beautiful park that belies this academy's martial role. Its courseware includes not only the military sciences, but conventional classes as well, such as chemistry, literature and other subjects normally seen in a civilian university.

Entrance into the Nagelring is highly restrictive, and a distinct rift exists between noble and non-noble students. This social division, a throwback to the days of the LCAF (which re-emerged after Katherine Steiner-Davion's rise to power), essentially perpetuates the myth that the Lyran ranks are filled with "social generals" more interested in attending balls and other soirees. Though not officially tolerated by the school administra-



Skye Rangers

The Skye Rangers were once synonymous with courage and resolution, but after the recent troubles within the Lyran Alliance, they came to be seen as a divisive influence, inextricably bound to the Free Skye movement whose last grab for independence came in the midst of the fratricidal civil war. The fact that the Rangers still exist despite their overt betrayal of the throne is seen by many as a bad omen for the LAAF. However, in the aftermath of the civil war and the weakened state of the Lyran realm in general, Archon Peter Steiner-Davion seems unwilling to turn away any good defense forces, even if their ultimate loyalty remains highly questionable.



Training Commands

The training commands raised by many of the Alliance's major academies are the future of the LAAF. After the recent civil war, these forces came under increasing pressure to fill out the holes in the depleted ranks of the rest of the military, accelerating the various training programs in order to meet the nation's manpower needs. The result of this haste may create a generation of troops far less experienced than those who came before, but may prove to be the only way the Alliance can recover sufficient strength to head off a major invasion, should it come.

Provincial and Theater Militia Commands

During the alliance with House Davion, the Lyran military formed several regional militia commands patterned on the March militias of the Federated Suns. Though initially unpopular among the officers of the LCAF, who favored planetary militias over regional-level commands, many of these units came into their own during the civil war, and now comprise a significant part of the Alliance's current defensive lines.



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tion, some among the staff and students on both sides of the class line feel that this “us and them” rivalry builds character.

Nagelring cadets are set apart from other Lyran academy trainees by their own distinctive uniforms—gray with sky-blue trim—while cadets at other schools wear more standardized and nondescript military attire. The Nagelring school rag is blue. Leutnant-General Ivana Horvet, Baroness von Cameron, currently serves as the academy’s Kommandant, but rumor has it that she may soon step down.

ROYAL NEW CAPETOWN MILITARY ACADEMY (RNCMA)

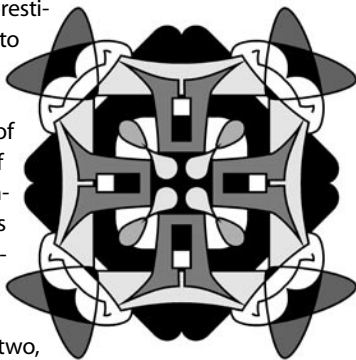


Set on the Alliance world most decried for racial injustice throughout its history, the Royal New Capetown Military Academy has always been a trouble spot for the LAAF’s Department of Military Education. Though recent Archons could claim some degree of success in reforming the largely white-supremacist views of the planet and the academy, a closer look at the faculty and the student body reveals that such reforms merely exchanged one hatred for another. During the years leading up to the FedCom Civil War, the bigotry formerly based on ethnic distinctions became refocused on the political divisions of the crumbling FedCom and on the Clans. In fact, it was allegedly their intense hatred for the Clans, along with the inclusion of Tiaret, a former Smoke Jaguar Elemental, as part of Victor Steiner-Davion’s retinue that prevented RNCMA cadets from supporting Victor in the civil war. Unlike the racial hatreds of the past, this anti-Clan sentiment is not drawing the same outcry from New Capetown’s fellow Alliance citizens, who all have obvious reasons to despise Kerensky’s descendants.

New Capetown specializes in ground-based combat, and even its limited aerospace training programs focus on supporting the other branches of ground troops, from conventional and battle-armored infantry to BattleMechs. The RNCMA school rag is gold with a tasseled fringe. Leutnant-General Bradicus Doering currently commands this academy.

SANGLAMORE ACADEMY

The Alliance’s second most prestigious academy, catering mostly to candidates within four jumps of Skye, the Sanglamore Academy, like the Nagelring, is a product of the Star League era and one of only three such academies constructed beyond the boundaries of the Terran Hegemony (the other two being the Nagelring and the Albion Military Academy on New Avalon). Unlike the other two, however, Sanglamore suffered heavy damage throughout the Succession Wars. Consequently, far more of its facilities include less sophisticated post-League equipment, a fact that



caused this academy to drop some of its courses over the centuries and suffer a corresponding loss in stature.

Today, Sanglamore is attempting to regain its lost prestige by reopening its aerospace and naval training programs, a process that remains bogged down in red tape since the latest secessionist efforts by the leaders of Skye. Nonetheless, the academy expects to begin its first aerospace fighter training programs as early as 3069, with DropShip, JumpShip and even WarShip programs currently in the planning stages for 3070 or 3071.

Because much of Skye Province remains a hotbed of secessionist fever following the latest failed effort to break away during the civil war, Sanglamore is under intense scrutiny by the DME and the JAG Corps, and paranoia over LIC watchmen may well be justified. Nonetheless, the academy remains a focal point for Free Skye sentiments, and cadets here receive more emphasis on self-reliance during their training that may support the secessionist cause, but that also yields more adaptable troops in the field.

The commander of Sanglamore is Hauptmann-General Tulka Garner, a friend of Skye’s Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner. The school rag is dark green.

UNIT TYPES

The LAAF divides its combat troops into four distinct groups: line units, militia, training cadres and mercenaries.

LINE UNITS

Line units are those that fall under direct control by the Army, Navy and Aerospace commands (excepting provincial and theater militias), and that form the bulk of the Lyran Alliance’s front-line offensive and defensive forces. Though their skills and equipment may vary, these troops are generally the best trained and equipped in the LAAF.

MILITIA UNITS

Militia commands are generally smaller and more localized than the line units and generally serve in a defensive role. Regional militias, which may receive superior training than backwater garrisons, are typically assigned a defensive zone (*Verteidigungzone*) of worlds in their local area, in which they are charged with maintaining security.

Planetary militias (often called “miliz”) are even smaller, generally locked on a single world, where it is the job of local planetary rulers to raise, train and maintain these troops. Typically consisting only of armor and conventional infantry, these troops are overseen by the House Troops Liaison, and their officers are usually the only warriors among them with academy training.

TRAINING UNITS

Currently, five of the Alliance’s seven major academies—Buena, Coventry, the Nagelring, Royal New Capetown and Sanglamore—maintain training units, where cadets perform military service under the direction of instructor-officers. Though intended to give students battlefield experience, few of these commands see combat, and they procure their equipment through the academy and the DME rather than the standard avenues used by line units.



Because the reconstruction of the LAAF is drawing heavily on these assets, plans are underway to form training units for the Alarion and Bolan academies, in an effort to further accelerate the recovery process. However, neither of these academies seem likely to have such assets on-line until 3069 at the earliest.

MERCENARY UNITS

Thanks to its enormous wealth and industrial capacity, the Lyran state has always been a major employer of mercenary units, depending upon them to make up for strategic (and in many cases tactical) weaknesses in the Lyran military. For this reason, Alliance citizens rarely regard mercenaries as foreign troops or view them with the same scorn they may receive elsewhere, and hiring troops often receive much more favorable pay and terms with the Alliance than with any other realm. Indeed, the recent establishment of an MRBC hiring hall on Galatea was spurred in part by initiatives from the LAAF's Mercenary Troops Liaison.

UNIFORMS AND INSIGNIA

With the severing of ties to the Federated Commonwealth, the LAAF has gradually begun reverting to the older LCAF uniform styles in an effort to reclaim their former identity. The same technically goes for rank insignia, though under the FedCom, Lyran rank insignia were already the established norm.

LAAF UNIFORMS

Beginning almost as soon as the Lyran secession took place, uniforms modeled on those of the LCAF began to re-emerge among the LAAF ranks, even though no official order to change the style had been issued. The civil war hastened the process, and though a few outspoken (and outdated) officers still cling to the finery of the FedCom era, the official standard dress of the LAAF has today returned to its roots.

Dress Uniform

The importance of formal ceremonies and the like is evident in the cut of the LAAF full dress uniform, which is comprised of a high-collared woolen jacket (light blue for senior officers, darker Steiner blue for lesser officers and enlisted personnel), a tailored gray shirt, white stirrup pants and dress shoes. Jacket cuffs are always Steiner blue, regardless of the wearer's rank. Senior officers add red piping; lesser officers wear yellow cord and enlisted ranks wear green. A stripe along the trouser legs matches this piping. In addition, most senior officers also wear their school rag as a sash around the waist, with the loose ends left hanging over the left leg.

Rank insignia on the full dress uniform is worn on the collar, centered for high-ranking officers and along the sides for those of lower rank, while enlisted ranks wear an embroidered insignia on the collar. Officers also add rank insignia to their jacket cuffs and a gold braid loop (one loop for each five years of service) that runs beneath the jacket's right epaulet. Complex regulations tell officers and enlisted personnel how to arrange their medals and commendations, placing branch insignia on the jacket's left breast, the Lyran state insignia on

the right, and arranging decorations beneath the state logo or on the school rag as appropriate.

A less-formal version of this dress uniform for office duty or more casual occasions replaces the jacket with a more practical version and drops the school rag, cuffs, braids and decorations, but retains the piping and adds a matching color border to the Lyran state insignia. Female officers may opt for a knee-length skirt instead of stirrup pants, but in all other aspects their attire is identical to men's.

Field Uniforms

The LAAF uses a variety of field uniforms, depending on the branch of service and the rank of the wearer. Senior officers typically wear practical attire that features elements of the dress uniform, but employs a gray woolen shirt over an armored leather vest and gray-green pants instead of the blue-and-white jacket-and-stirrup-pants combination. Braids, colored to denote service along various borders, and red stripes along the trouser legs and shirtsleeve cuffs, further distinguish the officer, as does the optional presence of a school rag sash worn beneath the pistol belt.

MechWarriors in the field wear the traditional shorts and T-shirt, supplemented with a neurohelmet, calf-length boots and cooling vest—either the older LCJ-19 model or the more advanced but less common LCJ-22 version. Lyran neurohelmet design requires Lyran MechWarriors to shave a portion of their heads to accommodate the contact points, leading to a distinctive hairstyle that leaves the back of the scalp and the region above and behind the ears bald, while allowing the remaining hair to grow long. This long hair is typically worn in braids. Many MechWarriors find this "traditional" hairstyle embarrassing, however, so it is not uncommon for some to sport brutally short "crew cuts," wear hairpieces or even go completely bald. Outside the cockpit, Lyran MechWarriors tend to wear a plain blue jumpsuit or their second-grade dress uniform.

Aerospace pilots in the field wear a full bodysuit that functions as a life support pressure suit and a G-suit that reduces the effects of high-G maneuvers. Heavy equipment, including an emergency radio beacon and hookups for power and G-suit pumps in the boots, make the suit ungainly outside the cockpit, however, earning it the nickname "elephant suit." The suit is fully sealable in the event of ejection, and contains sufficient power and oxygen for thirty minutes of survival in vacuum. Outside the cockpit, aerospace fighter pilot attire matches that of MechWarriors.

By far the most practical Lyran field uniforms are those worn by infantry, armor and support personnel. These uniforms include tough woolen trousers, a leather jacket, knee-length boots, a resilient helmet and a combat vest. Typically dark blue for the jacket, vest and trousers, variant color schemes of this outfit exist for various field conditions, including urban and forest camouflage, and ceremonial styles of white, green and black (as used by the Royal Guards, Skye Rangers and Arcturan Guards, respectively).

The armor crew uniforms add a reddish-brown motorman's suit over this ensemble to provide additional protection against shrapnel and other rigors of vehicular combat, as well as a cooling unit, heavy gloves and a sealed helmet to keep out fumes and provide unhindered communication between crewmen. Off the field, all of these troops commonly wear their second-grade dress uniforms, though warrant officers accent this attire with a blue trouser stripe, a black-ribbed jumper,



LYRAN ALLIANCE ARMED FORCES

a gray-green jacket that protects against heat, acid and electricity, and insignia on the left breast to indicate their field of expertise.

RANKS AND INSIGNIA

Since breaking away from the FedCom, the rank structure of the Lyran armed forces has once more become heavily stratified, with more grades of command—at enlisted and officer levels—than in any other Inner Sphere military. In the politically conscious LAAF, rank and status go hand in hand, and are evident in the insignia one wears.

Recruit

Worn only by warriors in training, this insignia is a simple "Narrow Arrow," a blue arrow bisected by a black line. Recruits do not wear the Alliance insignia.



Private and Private, First Class

Privates wear the same insignia as the recruit, but these soldiers have completed basic training and may also wear the Alliance insignia. After six months in service, privates are automatically promoted to private, first class (PFC) to denote a degree of practical experience and/or completion of additional training. At this point, the insignia adds a broad fletching to one side of the arrow, and is known as a half hunter's point.



Corporal and Senior Corporal

The rank of corporal is the lowest tier of soldier with leadership responsibilities, commanding an infantry squad or a heavy weapon element. The insignia is a full hunter's point. Corporals with additional experience may be promoted to senior corporal, and are denoted by a black triangle within their hunter's point insignia.



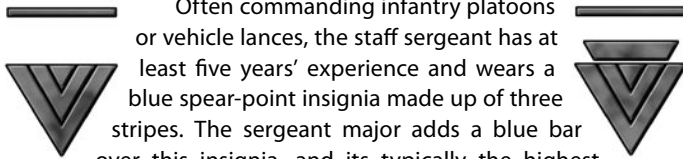
Sergeant

Sergeants play a key role in the command structure as a bridge between enlisted and officer grades. Sergeants typically command heavy infantry squads or vehicles, though academy-trained MechWarriors also receive this rank upon graduation. The sergeant insignia places a black circle in the hunter's point.



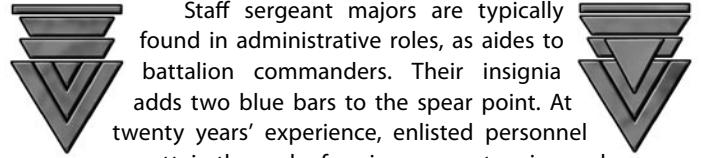
Staff Sergeant and Sergeant Major

Often commanding infantry platoons or vehicle lances, the staff sergeant has at least five years' experience and wears a blue spear-point insignia made up of three stripes. The sergeant major adds a blue bar over this insignia, and its typically the highest-ranking NCO in the field, often supporting company commanders or even leading full 'Mech lances.



Staff Sergeant Major and Senior Sergeant Major

Staff sergeant majors are typically found in administrative roles, as aides to battalion commanders. Their insignia adds two blue bars to the spear point. At twenty years' experience, enlisted personnel may attain the rank of senior sergeant major, and serve as the senior NCO of a regiment or a major noncombatant command. The insignia for these venerable and seasoned NCOs links the first bar of the staff sergeant major's insignia with the third "V" in the spear point via a golden triangle called a Tharkan spear point.



Warrant Officer Grades

The warrant officer grades—warrant officer, warrant officer first class, senior warrant officer and chief warrant officer—are technical officers in the LAAF, their ranks comprised of technicians, engineers and computer operators whose skills are specialized for such support duties. The prime component of their rank insignia are blue and black fletching bars, the number of which indicate the wearer's rank and corresponding levels of expertise. At the lowest level, with one bar, the warrant officer is a basic technician, mechanic and so forth. Two bars denote a first class warrant officer, who typically commands a work detail. Senior warrant officers, with three bars, command a unit's technical detachment or a major noncombatant technical posting, while chief warrant officers, who wear four bars, may command a major technical facility.

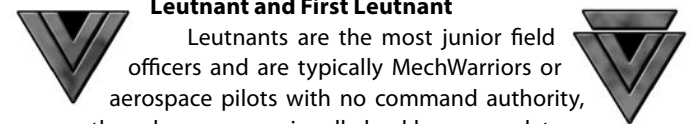


Cadet

Cadet rank is the officer equivalent of the recruit. These officers-in-training wear a lieutenant's bars, surrounded by red piping.

Leutnant and First Leutnant

Leutnants are the most junior field officers and are typically MechWarriors or aerospace pilots with no command authority, though some occasionally lead lances or platoons. Their insignia is the blue spear point, with the innermost "V" shaded black. First leutnants, those who have demonstrated tactical and leadership skills, receive a full commission and promotion to this rank, and add a blue bar to the top of this rank insignia.





Hauptmann

The rank of hauptmann typically goes to an accomplished officer charged with commanding a company or significant non-combat element. Hauptmanns are typically the highest rank to routinely see combat, and their insignia is the spear point with both interior "V"s blacked out.







Kommandant and Hauptmann-Kommandant

 Kommandants are usually battalion commanders and commonly possess more than a decade of military service experience. Their insignia is the hauptmann's spear point with a blue bar above it. A hauptmann-kommandant typically denotes a senior battalion commander within a regiment, often acting as the commanding colonel's executive officer. The hauptmann-kommandant insignia is an all-black spear point. 

Leutnant-Colonel and Colonel



(Admiralty: Leutnant-Kaptain and Kaptain)

 Leutnant-colonels are the lowest of the senior officer ranks, and the seconds-in-command of a regiment. The colonel, meanwhile, commonly serves as a regimental or provincial militia commander, or as the head of a sub-element within a regimental combat team. The leutnant-colonel's insignia consists of a silver diamond, while the colonel wears two silver diamonds. 

The naval equivalents of the leutnant-colonel and colonel (leutnant-kaptain and kaptain) commonly denote the executive officer and commander of any LAAF DropShip or JumpShip, respectively. Of these, JumpShip officers are considered senior to DropShip officers only during docking, undocking and interstellar transit, while DropShip command officers supersede their JumpShip equivalents during combat situations or in-system maneuvering.

Leutnant-General and Hauptmann-General

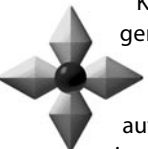
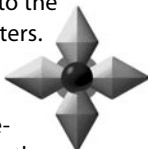
(Admiralty: Leutnant-Kommodore and Kommodore)

 Leutnant-generals commonly command regimental combat teams or act as deputy commanders for interior military regions. Hauptmann-generals command the five *Kerngebiete* regions and often coordinate multiple regiments to meet whatever civil and military needs fall under their responsibilities. Leutnant-generals wear three silver diamonds arranged in a "T" pattern, while hauptmann-generals wear four arranged in a cross known as the First Steiner Cross. 

The admiralty equivalents of the leutnant-general and hauptmann-general (leutnant-kommodore and kommodore) commonly denote the executive officer and commander of any LAAF WarShip, respectively, or those who hold equivalent authority over a combination of conventional JumpShips and DropShips and their attendant fighters.

Kommandant-General and General

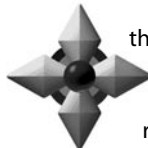
(Admiralty: Hauptmann-Kommodore and Admiral)

 Kommandant-generals serve as aides to the generals that command combat theaters.  While the general commanding such a theater may hold ultimate authority over the worlds in the region via his temporary title of margrave, the kommandant-general generally oversees day-to-day operations at that level. Kommandant-generals wear a Steiner Cross with

a black pearl at the center, known as the Second Steiner Cross, while generals add a silver disc beneath the center, their insignia known as the Third Steiner Cross.


The naval equivalents for kommandant-general and general (hauptmann-kommodore and admiral) indicate senior fleet commanders who wield authority over task forces comprised of multiple WarShips, JumpShips and DropShips, plus all attendant fighters. However, as few Lyran military actions include such massive forces, the LAAF officers who hold these ranks typically serve in administrative roles.

General of the Armies (Admiralty: Fleet Admiral)

 The highest rank of the LAAF excepting the Archon, the General of the Armies effectively commands the entire LAAF unless overruled by the Archon. The insignia for the General of the Armies adds a second ring to the silver disc beneath the Third Steiner Cross, creating the Fourth Steiner Cross.

The admiralty equivalent, fleet admiral, effectively commands the entire LAAF naval force, and is considered second in the LAAF chain of command only to the General of the Armies.

Archon

 The Commander-in-Chief of the LAAF and head of the Lyran state, the Archon is not truly a military rank, and indeed the holder of the office may not necessarily have military experience, though most in the past have served in some capacity. The Archon's insignia, known as the Final Steiner Cross, is distinguished from the Fourth in that its component diamonds are split in half, with gold filling the gaps.

MEDALS AND HONORS

Like all militaries, the Lyran Alliance rewards exemplary service with medals and decorations in addition to simple promotions and raises. Most of these are holdovers from the old LCAF, but some are more recent creations. Also, though the practice is often derided as vanity, the Alliance awards campaign ribbons for more than combat deployments, allowing even soldiers who have not seen combat to sport a chestful of medals that denote where they served (and, if battle occurred, against whom) in every deployment, battle and campaign.

Some of the more distinctive awards are described below.

The Alliance Medal of Honor

Awarded for actions of uncommon valor and self-sacrifice in a victory for the Alliance irrespective of the cost, the Alliance Medal of Honor is a large silver disc with a gold star on it, hung by a green-and-silver ribbon from a five-segmented gold bar. Recipients are often inducted into the Knights of Donegal, assuming they survived whatever they did to earn this award.

The Medal of Honor has three grades, denoted by the following additional markings in ascending order: a silver bar, gold oak-leaf clusters and diamond clusters.



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The Alliance Star

Recognizing uncommon bravery and honor in combat situations that benefit the LAAF, this award—a five-pointed platinum star hung by a red ribbon around the recipient's neck—was formerly known as the Federated Commonwealth Star, and is one of the few decorations that survived the Alliance's secession.

The Honor of Skye

Awarded not by the Archon, but by the leader of Skye Province to soldiers who demonstrate exemplary honor in defense of a world in the former Federation of Skye, this award—a large gold medal depicting an ancient Scottish warrior, hung by an emerald green ribbon around the recipient's neck—is one of the only regional awards still handed out in the Lyran realm.

The Order of Tamar Tigers

Though regional in nature, this award—a large silver sunburst with the Tamar Tigers insignia at its heart—is not specifically handed out to honor warriors who served the interests of the former Tamar Pact, but largely for all acts of valor made in defense of the Lyran realm. The award is still given by the duke or duchess of Tamar.

The Order of Katherine Steiner

Reserved for aerospace and naval personnel, the Order of Katherine Steiner recognizes the bravery and dedication of these troops and is a silver, three-bladed propeller with the Steiner Fist at its hub. Worn on a blue ribbon, this award may be won more than once, with multiple instances adding a silver bar to the ribbon.

The McKensy Ground-Pounder's Medal

Once awarded to non-'Mech ground forces for valor on the field, this medal has evolved into an award for enlisted ranks in all service branches, and officers no longer receive this honor. The award is a silver disc with a stylized McKensy's Hammer on it, worn around the neck on a blue ribbon.

McKensy's Hammer

The largest award issued by any military, McKensy's Hammer is a nine-kilogram block of silver shaped like the hammer of Thor, and is presented to officers who have demonstrated superlative leadership on the battlefield. It is carried at formal function, but at all other times is signified by a silver miniature pinned to the right breast or on a school rag.

The Dragonslayer's Ribbon

The Dragonslayer's Ribbon acknowledges outstanding performance by a regiment against Draconis Combine troops, and is represented by a green-and-white pennant hung from the regimental standard. During the reign of Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion, this pennant bore a depiction of the Draconis Combine dragon being throttled by a Steiner Fist, but only one such banner was awarded before Archon Katherine was deposed in the civil war—to the First Skye Jaegers, after their actions against the Fifteenth Dieron Regulars on Ko. Archon Peter Steiner-Davion has since ordered the dragon-and-fist emblem removed, but the ribbon itself remains an active decoration.

The Eagle's Feather

The Eagle's Feather is the equivalent of the Dragonslayer's Ribbon for any unit's success against a Free Worlds League force. It consists of an actual feather taken from an Atrean fighting eagle and is displayed in the officer's mess of a recipient command.

The Falconslayer's Medallion

A new award commissioned after the FedCom Civil War in commemoration of the brave troops who staved off the Jade Falcon Incursion, the Falconslayer's Medallion is a golden disc upon which is engraved a Steiner fist over two crossed feathers enameled in jade green. The award is bestowed on regiments that demonstrate outstanding performance against the Jade Falcon Clan in defense of the Alliance, and is displayed beneath the Steiner banner in the receiving command's main lounge or briefing room.





THE GERMANIZATION OF THE LYRAN PEOPLE

When you get down to it, it really is a shock that any interstellar power can have the sense of universal identity we see in the Inner Sphere today. After all, before humankind left Terra, we had close to 150 separate national identities, and even more distinctive regional societies, each with their own laws, unique dialects, and economic and ethno-religious compositions. Today, every Inner Sphere and near Periphery power can lay claim to inhabitants who hail from most—if not all—of these roots, and yet a pervading sense of identity has evolved over the centuries since the inception of the various interstellar realms.

For the Lyran state, the so-called Germanic influence (a combination of several German and Scandinavian influences melded into one relatively homogenous mixture) undoubtedly began with the founding of the Steiner dynasty, and the Archonship of Katherine Steiner. Dazzlingly beautiful and amazingly well loved by the people of the still-young Lyran Commonwealth, she became a cultural icon as much as a ruler. Her quiet confidence, regal manner, immense knowledge and boundless charisma, during her marriage to Alistair Marsden and when she claimed the throne as Archon after his death, inspired many throughout the realm.

This popularity was far-reaching indeed; many young women—consciously or unconsciously—began to mimic the new Archon, as did many men in the upper echelons of Lyran government and military circles who wished to curry Katherine's favor. Katherine furthered this popularized trend toward "Germanization" by promoting the introduction of the kroner and the pfennig as the Lyran monetary standards, reintroducing Germanic nobility titles and championing the German language as the official state tongue. Though subsequent Steiner Archons actually signed these measures into law, by the end of Katherine's reign nearly half the realm spoke German and acknowledged the universal value of the kroner as their coin.

Officially, these changes were necessary to further unify the economies and standards for commerce and political exchange between the three sub-states of the Commonwealth, but the fact that they resonated with the ethnic background of the Lyrans' beloved and inspiring leader made them much more palatable to the people. Furthermore, the fact that these changes were proposed *in addition* to local ethnic, economic and linguistic preferences, rather than *instead* of them made it harder to resist on the grounds of stripping away the peoples' identities. The Steiners weren't out to rob their people of the diversity that made them valuable, after all, but simply to make sure everyone could understand and deal with each other on some form of common ground.

— Hugo Aster, PhD, *Social Evolution and You*, Commonwealth Press, 3059

A common mistake in this day and age is the assumption that any Inner Sphere or Periphery society consists of a single, homogeneous culture united under the same language, religion and social values. In the case of the Lyran Alliance, for example, outsiders tend to view the realm as an amalgamation of the pre-spaceflight nation-states of Germany and Scandinavia, placed under a modern feudal autocracy, despite dramatic examples of other cultural influences such as the heavily Scots-Irish Isle of Skye.

Though some states have in the past attempted to impress their ruling family's cultural identity upon the citizenry at large—such as the Draconis Combine under Urizen Kurita II—none have ever fully accomplished such a feat. Leaders of the Lyran state have never attempted such efforts. Indeed, under the Articles of Acceptance, cornerstone of the national government's authority, the laws, governments and societies of Lyran worlds are considered largely inviolate, and a great deal of personal and cultural freedom is protected. The result is a spacefaring society defined more by its diversity than any one-sentence description can do justice, a melting pot of peoples united under one larger state, currency and language.

Indeed, Lyrans overall are a tolerant people, rarely prone to or swayed by irrational hatreds and bigotries (though worlds like New Capetown and Skye often seem to belie such statements). However, while discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, gender or even sexual persuasion may be a thing of the past for most Alliance citizens, the power and influence of the nobility and other wealthy elites have kept alive the ageless struggle between the haves and the have-nots.

Though the nobility and the various merchant princes may be more accessible and understanding in the Alliance than in other states, the striking distinctions between upper and lower classes often become the primary source of internal tensions. Mixed with the resurgence of Lyran nationalism after the Secession of 3057, government favoritism of the upper classes, on the ebb during the FedCom era, grew more pronounced after Katherine Steiner-Davion assumed the throne. Social unrest—strikes, boycotts, even full-on rioting—once more became common as the nobility and the corporate elite sought to cement their dominance over their poorer fellows. Even in the military, where the "social general" phenomenon returned in full force, social status carried more weight than ability, creating friction between officers wrongly promoted over subordinates better suited for their roles and responsibilities. In the wake of the FedCom Civil War, these trends may once again change, but only through a concerted effort by the government and its people—regardless of class.

EDUCATION

Despite its tendency toward social stratification and class discrimination, the Lyran Alliance has always been a haven for education. Of all the Successor States, the people of the Alliance tend to be slightly more knowledgeable in matters of literature, slightly more learned in matters of science and slightly more sophisticated in matters of politics and business. These advantages have helped the Lyran people survive the dark years since the Star League's collapse, and though even in this realm worlds exist where people live in the shadow of ignorance, successive Steiner governments have made a policy of investing in their nation's future through high academic standards.

By the time of the Star League, this commitment to education had paid off. With at least one accredited college on more than ninety percent of all Lyran worlds, most adult Lyrans could claim at least a year's worth of college education. Next to the Terran Hegemony, the Commonwealth became recognized as the League's most learned member-state, a compliment that—however accurate—contributed to a nationwide sense of smugness that often irritated those from other realms.



Unfortunately, the ravages of the wars that followed the Star League's fall decimated the Lyran educational system. Though various private and public initiatives were launched to repair the damage, academic standards declined nationwide and did not begin to recover until the years after the Third Succession War, when then-Archon Katrina Steiner revived the "Pilgrim Professors" as part of a bright new future for her people.

PILGRIM PROFESSOR PROGRAM

Recognizing that their realm's financial and political stability required a sound educational base, the Steiner dynasty actively sought to standardize the nation's academic institutions from the start. Funding large teaching colleges and universities on most of the more populous worlds, Archon Katherine Steiner also founded a network of quality educators charged with traveling to the Commonwealth's more far-flung possessions. By the later years of Archon Alistair Steiner's rule, these traveling instructors came to be known as the "Pilgrim Professors." Granted government-approved passage even on military transports and provided with funds to support themselves, buy supplies and even to recruit and train others, these educational pioneers spent decades traveling the realm, founding new schools and universities in the name of the national government. Thanks in large part to support from generations of Steiner Archons, these men and women raised the academic standards of the interstellar nation while bringing a unifying sense of culture to the Lyran people, assuring that the vast majority—even on poorer, boondock planets—knew at least basic reading, writing and mathematics.

The ravages of the Succession Wars disrupted the Pilgrim Professor program and left many of the institutions they founded ruined or abandoned, contributing to a nationwide decline in educational quality still felt today. During the latter years of her reign, Archon Katrina Steiner revived the program with the founding of two new Pilgrim Professor colleges on Tharkad and Donegal, and the revitalized program continued even through the Clan Invasion and the FedCom Civil War.

CORPORATE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

As a partner of business, the Lyran government has also shared the duties of national education with the private sector. Though such privately run institutions tend to form their curricula around producing viable candidates for their own labor forces, many company-based education programs proved their ability to supplement—and sometimes even replace—state facilities throughout the Succession Wars.

Over the centuries, many government-sponsored facilities, bereft of staff or targeted by hostile states, succumbed to the chaos of ongoing warfare, leaving corporate institutions to take up the slack despite being hardly more immune to raiders and invaders than any other industry or agency. Through any number of trade schools and apprenticeships—available to all who could shell out enough kroner or C-bills to enroll—these programs helped maintain the Lyran edge in business, trade and manufacturing. Thanks to the Steiner family's emphasis on education, these private institutions of learning could count on significant financial and political support from the government during these lean years, so long as their programs included reading, writing and math.

Today, though state-run educational systems are seeing a resurgence—at least on the local and regional levels—corporate programs remain a viable option for higher learning throughout the Alliance. Many major conglomerates, in fact, have begun their own Pilgrim Professor programs, sending teachers on the company payroll to worlds where the corporation has large investments. With private schooling programs every bit as good as regional schooling, many of the Alliance's more well-to-do continue to turn to these institutions to ensure what they believe will be a better future for their children.

MAJOR UNIVERSITIES

As part of her educational initiative prior to the onset of the Fourth Succession War, Katrina Steiner not only helped revive the Pilgrim Professor program, but also focused on the expansion of the Commonwealth's research university network. Her stated goal of placing a major research facility on half of all Lyran worlds never materialized, however, as wartime spending, various political crises and the coming of the Clans forced the state to spend its resources on the more basic need for defense.

Despite this failing, several major Lyran universities did receive boosts in their funding, while several more secondary universities were established throughout the realm. Once again, several Lyran corporations invested their own resources in such efforts, sponsoring competitions to award grants and scholarships to promising students in the hopes of luring talent to their logo.

Though the Lyran Alliance still boasts only a few major research universities, many fine institutes of higher learning exist throughout the realm. The following seven represent some of the Alliance's most prestigious and universally renowned schools.

University of Washington on Donegal

Nestled amid the Queen Anne Hills on Donegal's Seattle continent, the University of Washington's Donegal campus is one of the five major non-military research universities in the Lyran Alliance, emphasizing computer technologies and communications. Heavily funded by Nashan Computers and House Steiner, this large university is equipped with perhaps the best computer science facilities in the Inner Sphere, outside of those maintained by ComStar and Word of Blake.

Tuition is extremely high at "U-Wash," with average fees for a year running as high as 15,000 kroner, but enough corporate scholarships and government grants are awarded annually to assure that every class—on Donegal and on the university's recently established Nusakan satellite campus—is filled. The Donegal campus is currently headed by Sarina Grady, Baroness von Ludwigsburg.

New Cambridge University of Wessex

Located on Coventry's Auckland continent, just fifteen minutes by maglev from the metropolis of New Toronto, the New Cambridge University is a city unto itself, its boundaries—defined by a hundred research facilities and campus buildings—nearly encircling the city of Wessex from which it takes its name. Another of the Alliance's primary research facilities, New Cambridge has been at the forefront of a number of technological breakthroughs in electronics, robotics and metallurgy that have found uses in the civilian and military sectors.



SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Annual tuition at NCUW is typically around 20,000 kroner, exorbitantly high for the average Lyran. While prospective students can get government financial assistance or corporate sponsorships and grants from companies like Nashan Diversified, Coventry Metal Works and even Ceres Metals, would-be candidates for enrollment must first meet strict aptitude scores in mathematics and the physical sciences. Michaud Weatherby, the university's headmaster, does not budge on these requirements, much to the consternation of those who feel wealth alone can afford them an easier ride to one of the Alliance's best educational institutions.

Kyoto College

Compared to New Cambridge and the University of Washington, Kyoto College, located just outside the city of Yonei on the Kalasaka continent of New Kyoto, is a small school. Nevertheless, this institution has been a forerunner in the study of myomer technologies for military and medical applications. Discoveries made by students and staff at Kyoto College in just the past two decades have contributed to a host of improvements in IndustrialMech and BattleMech design, while smaller-scale applications have speeded the development of modern battle armor, next-generation exoskeletons, advanced medical myomer implant applications and even myomer-based personal armor for various government, police and military agencies. In addition, Kyoto College offers a vast array of programs in medicine and engineering, and students may even receive valuable work experience in a host of internships with major hospitals and technology firms throughout the Isle of Skye.

Full-time students at Kyoto College usually pay annual tuition of roughly 8,000 kroner, but all beginning students must pass a grueling battery of scientific, engineering or medical aptitude exams before they can enroll. These entrance exams may be waived if the candidate possesses previous credits at another state-accredited university, or if the candidate is willing to pay double tuition rates. Imatsu Samuru, Baron von Maidan Valley, is Kyoto College's current headmaster.

Tharkad University

Easily the most prestigious university in the Alliance, Tharkad University has been the alma mater for scores of Lyran Archons as far back as Katherine Steiner. Many of the Star League's ruling elite also claimed an education at Tharkad University, including the legendary Aleksandr Kerensky, before his decision to attend the Nagelring forever bound his name to the final years of humankind's Golden Age.

Located in Olympia, not far from the capital city of the Alliance, Tharkad University benefits from heavy funding by the Lyran government and offers nearly every academic program under the sun. As one of the nation's largest research universities, however, the study of history has gained this school its greatest renown. Devoted over the centuries of technological decline to recovering the knowledge of the fallen Star League, "Tharkad U" has turned out generations of the finest historians and archaeologists in the Inner Sphere. The university even funds several research projects that often take students and instructors to all corners of Lyran territory—and sometimes beyond—in search of relics from the early Succession Wars, the Star League era or even from humanity's first tentative steps into space.

Annual tuition for Tharkad University often exceeds 25,000 kroner, and entrance frequently requires the sponsorship of either a past Tharkad U graduate or a recognized political or corporate entity with ties to the university. Even those who have both, however, must pass tough academic entrance exams to determine whether or not they are fit to attend the Alliance's most prestigious academy.

Raina University on Skye

Skye's Raina University, located in the city of Raina on New Scotland's northern coast, is considered the most prestigious aeronautical and aerospace research university in the Lyran Alliance. Indeed, during the technological renaissance of the early 3030s, and the massive scramble to restart the long-dead WarShip development projects that became an imperative in the wake of the Clan Invasion, Raina University faculty and students became a pivotal force in the application of recovered aerospace technology, leading to a boom in the design and construction of new aerospace craft ranging from upgraded air and space vehicle designs to DropShip, JumpShip and even WarShip construction.

Unfortunately, the prevalence of separatist politics on Skye has infected Raina University as well, hampering prospects for many graduates from the school's aerospace engineering programs. Though the college's current president, Harlan O'Fallon, has sought to keep his school politically neutral, most of Raina's graduating classes for the past five years have found jobs only with the various civilian and relatively minor military aerospace industries within Skye Province.

Chekswa School of Literature on Donegal

The Chekswa School of Literature on Donegal is one of the biggest fine arts colleges in the Lyran realm. Located less than a hundred kilometers east of Media City, the virtual heart of countless interstellar news and entertainment industries, Chekswa graduates some of the Alliance's biggest names in professional screenwriting and journalism, and is also the school of choice for many Lyran poets and novelists. Many of those who can afford the 10,000-kroner annual tuition have gone on to amazing careers in the literary arts, and they frequently return as lecturers and professors for a new generation of their creative kin.

Unfortunately, the reign of Katherine Steiner-Davion hurt the school's reputation somewhat, when enrollment and graduation became more a matter of political alignment than talent. Many of the school's faculty and staff were routinely harassed or even turned over to the authorities—often by their own students or peers—for their anti-Katherine views. Dean Preston Gerstacht, a Chekswa alumnus, recently took over as the university's president and has vowed to overcome the damage to the school's standing. Despite his aggressive advertising campaign, however, attendance at Chekswa remains far below its pre-Civil War levels.

Rewland College of Fine Arts on Tharkad

The Rewland College of Fine Arts is widely regarded as the premier school for fine arts, ranging from painting to poetry to dance to acting. Many of the Alliance's most popular graphic artists, sculptors and classical performers have hailed from Rewland, including the famous MechWarrior-poet Jamison Henry, whose legendary ballad *Invincible Dreams* recounts the events surrounding the sixth, seventh



and eighth battles for Hesperus II and has inspired no less than four holoivid films and two live plays still shown throughout the Alliance.

To enroll in Rewland, most candidates must pass exams in their chosen artistic field under the supervision of a panel of Rewland talent scouts, providing the distinct impression that the school chooses its students, not the other way around. Indeed, thanks to state endorsements, Rewland has been known to seek candidates for enrollment, frequently offering the most promising artists generous scholarships to offset the school's 11,000-kroner annual tuition.

Doons School of Business on Donegal

Bearing the name and the seal of approval of one of the Lyran Alliance's most powerful corporate leaders, the Doons School of Business on Donegal is the Tharkad University of the Lyran commercial sector. Located in East Marsdenville, this school offers the most promising students access to internships with local businesses, including several divisions of Nashan Diversified, in addition to the standard course loads that emphasize nearly every aspect of trade and commerce from local microeconomics to interstellar business management.

The Doons School of Business is the pinnacle of every corporate education program in the realm—a fact emphasized by the school's decided preference for corporate-school graduates over those who hail from other private and public educational systems. In addition, the Doons School of Business demands high tribute from its students, with annual tuition rates running from 12,000 to 14,000 kroner and scholarships available only in exchange for a period of service with a company that actively funds the school. Despite these restrictions, Dean Millicent Barnes recently claimed that the school has consistently graduated larger and larger classes since its founding in 3030.

MEDIA AND THE ARTS

Officially, the Lyran government places few restrictions on public entertainment and information, and has encouraged a nationwide free press and a dynamic entertainment industry. Between government-funded agencies and literally thousands of private businesses focused on public media and the arts, this policy offers the average Lyran an almost overwhelming array of choices in these areas. Indeed, even on the most sparsely populated worlds, the locals usually have access to at least five or six dozen local holo/video stations, just as many voice-only radio networks and countless magazines and print newspapers. Adding to that tally, one can also find numerous off-world outlets, buoyed by local advertising, to keep the local people entertained and informed on all matters that pertain to their lives—and many more that do not.

PUBLIC MEDIA

Many of the Alliance's major worlds—particularly such communications hubs as Coventry, Donegal, Skye, Solaris and Tharkad—have become centers of interstellar media industries, hosting programs either created by them or acquired under contract with other firms. This programming is then broadcast throughout the realm—and often beyond—through affiliate sta-

tions and outlets, who help support the programming through advertising revenues on the national and local levels.

Today, close to fifty major media outlets provide news and entertainment throughout the Lyran Alliance, but barely a handful are so recognized and trusted that they have become household names.

Tharkan Media Associates

Headquartered in the Tatyana tropical island chain on Tharkad, Tharkan Media Associates (TMA) is known for high-quality news and entertainment programming, as well as a host of electronic and print publications that includes the works of Grafina Gerbert, the Alliance's most celebrated pre-FedCom novelist, and Mason Greenburg, whose techno-thrillers are today's best sellers in print and digital chip format. In addition to fiction sales, historical texts, documentaries, tourist guidebooks, how-to guides and even regular monthly digests on every subject from fashion and art to current events and scientific advances comprise the bulk of TMA's print sales, all but guaranteeing that every bookshelf in the Alliance contains a few volumes and serials from TMA or its affiliates.

Tharkan Broadcast Company, a subsidiary of TMA, offers a complete line of live-action and animated holoivid shows for its customers, as well as a daily news program that covers events across the Alliance and beyond. Some popular holoshows include *The Steinhearts*, a barely fictionalized account of the Steiner family that only recently returned to the airwaves since the end of the FedCom Civil War, and *Remembrance*, an ongoing historical drama set in the early days of the Clan Invasion. Much of TBC's programming is also seen in the Draconis Combine, the Free Worlds League, the Federated Suns and even the Free Rasalhague Republic, though people who live beyond Alliance borders tend to receive episodes that can be as much as a year out of date.

Johann Eddenburgh III is the current head of TMA, having recently returned from an enforced "leave of absence" during the FedCom Civil War.

Donegal Broadcasting Company

Donegal Broadcasting Company (DBC) has been the Alliance's most recognized and trusted name in news almost since the founding of the realm. Located in Media City, and historically a staunch supporter of the Lyran government and its Steiner administrations, the DBC is the Alliance's single largest major news and information outlet, with reporters and cameramen stationed on nearly every Alliance world, backed up by a virtual army of "roving reporters" who travel to hot spots throughout the Inner Sphere on the company's payroll. DBC news is printed and broadcast throughout all Alliance worlds, and nearly every independent station in the realm carries the DBC's morning and nightly news programs.

Since the fall of Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion, however, DBC has battled an image problem based on the company's perceived submission to Katherine's propaganda machine before and during the FedCom Civil War. This image problem has particularly harmed the reputation of DBC's subsidiary company, Alliance Press, and prompted the resignation of the previous company president in favor of Arthur Koppenwulf, who has promised to return integrity and professionalism to the DBC and its recently renamed Commonwealth Press division.



SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Solaris Broadcasting Corporation

Known across the Inner Sphere, in the dark shadows of the Periphery and even on the distant homeworlds of the Clans, the Games on Solaris VII have drawn crowds to more holovid sets than even to the planet's own Class Five arenas. Solaris Broadcasting Corporation, a holovid news and entertainment agency almost entirely focused on the gladiatorial battles of Solaris VII, is the main source by which these far-flung fans receive their daily dose of controlled barbarism. In the years since its inception, however, SBC has expanded well beyond mere coverage of the Games and their combatants, first featuring "off-circuit" venues, such as other worlds where 'Mech combat has become an arena performance, then moving on to the front lines, where the stakes are much higher.

Today, SBC has developed into its own news service, where its popularity and frank approach to reporting on events is beginning to give the DBC a run for its money. As part of his mandate to draw his company further into the mainstream, SBC president Donald Torrent recently announced plans to add a new line of daytime and evening holodramas to the broadcasting line-up, a decision considered since the Solaris City-based company acquired the smaller OGS Productions, a Xolara-based company whose hit series *The Sterling Hawks* and *The Scarlet Bands* gave viewers a dramatic new look at the lives and struggles of Solaris VII's minor stables.

THE ARTS

Historically speaking, a common side effect of affluence has often been a greater appreciation for and indulgence in the arts. As realms and their citizens grow wealthy, the funds and resources once spent on merely scraping by often become available for gathering and cultivating the finer things in life, to emphasize status, beautify the landscape or otherwise soothe the body and mind. In this regard, the Lyran Alliance is certainly no exception.

Thanks to the strength of the Lyran economy, the government has maintained a long tradition of funding and supporting artists of every stripe, their efforts matched by those of the nation's more prominent business leaders and by most of the nobility. The vast majority of professional Lyran artists owe some of their success to such wealthy patrons, who help to perpetuate the enrichment of Lyran culture while fulfilling their own desires to possess a sample of today's *avant-garde*.

The variety of fine arts supported by Lyran society is broad, ranging from the classic visual arts of painting and sculpture, to the written arts of poetry and prose, to the performance arts such as acting, music and dance. Wealthier Alliance worlds support dozens of academies and schools devoted to honing these budding young artists, such as Rewland College on Tharkad or the Mitchellson University of Fine Arts on Yed Prior. Most Lyran worlds—particularly in larger cities—also host cultural centers and theaters where such artists can showcase their talents for the masses. Locales such as Eberheart Center in Tharkad City, the Lyran Theater in Solaris City, and the Katrina Steiner Colonnade in Marsdenville on Donegal rank among the most prestigious venues, where only the most gifted artists and performers get the chance to exhibit their works.

Expanding their range, many artists travel freely throughout the realm as well, particularly musicians and actors, whose works turn up in holovids and on radio stations throughout the Alliance, and who tend to have the backing of major talent companies and other com-

mercial sponsors looking to maximize their profit margins. On the other end of the economic spectrum are the wandering troupes, whose entertainments are free to all, in exchange for nothing more than humble food and shelter. These troupes hearken back to the days of the wandering minstrels, and are as common throughout the Alliance today as are the famous Canopian pleasure circuses.

RECREATION

In addition to the information and entertainment of the mass media and the cultural enrichment of the fine arts, the wealth of the Lyran state has long made other forms of recreation far more prevalent than in other realms. A typical Lyran world of even modest population is speckled with malls, arcades, sports stadiums, theme parks and many more distractions that keep the locals entertained when not hard at work or catching the latest holofilms. Topping the lists of such diversions from everyday life are a host of sporting events and a staggering assortment of board and electronic games. The style and complexity of both can vary with every city on every world, though a few have become so widely known that entire interstellar industries have grown up around them.

In sports, for instance, many Lyrans have developed an avid interest in professional wrestling, boxing, rugby and classic football. As a result, many talented athletes have become household names, such as Todd "Gefahrenzone" Gunther—Pan-Alliance Pro-Wrestling champion from 3062 to 3066—and Karletta Stodder, this year's star striker for the Donegal Destroyers women's football team. In some regions, such as on Arc-Royal and in the Isle of Skye, similar sports find an almost equally enthusiastic fan base, like hurling, an ancient Gaelic sport similar to football and hockey. Planetary, regional and even interstellar leagues manage most of these sports, with teams and competitors spending a healthy portion of the year traveling or training between matches that often take place in packed stadiums or arenas, and are broadcast throughout the realm and beyond on several holovid, video and radio networks. Many of these leagues are interlinked, allowing athletes and teams to win their way through an escalating chain of tournaments and play-offs from the planetary level through the national championships.

Board, electronic and holovid games have all found a place in the lives of Alliance citizens at all social strata, fueling a thriving industry wholly devoted to such idle recreations. In the average Lyran home, a visitor can easily expect to find a collection of such games to while away a rainy day, ranging from classics like checkers, chess or trade dominos to the latest *Immortal Warrior: Shattered Sword III* virtual action/adventure holovid game for the Nashan Electronics' SpectraQuad-67 Game Sphere entertainment system.

Many Lyrans are also quite fond of games of chance, giving rise to a host of gambling establishments—legal and otherwise—on many of the more populous (and morally accepting) worlds. Recognizing such entertainment industries as the double-edged sword they can be to the economy, the Lyran government understandably attempts to regulate gambling wherever possible, mandating that legitimate establishments abide by appropriate safeguards and share their winnings proportionately with local and national governments. Indeed, an entire branch of the Alliance's Business Ethics Board exists to keep a sharp eye on the gambling industry, to prevent abuses that can lead to the rise of criminal cartels and their usual retinues of "undesirable elements."



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Thanks to its vast wealth and resources, coupled with a thriving mercantile culture that links every member world in a web of near-constant commerce, information and technology in the Lyran Alliance is remarkably more widespread among the masses than in perhaps any other realm. This same set of circumstances also slowed the effects of technological decline after the fall of the Star League, as the technological wonders of humankind's Golden Age were dispersed much more broadly through the rampant trading of the League era.

The brutal depredations of the Succession Wars ravaged much of the Lyrans' heavy industries, but smaller items largely regarded as unimportant to countless raiders and invaders through the centuries remained part of the nation's technological wealth. Advanced computers, sophisticated optics, small arms and civilian vehicles remained staples of the Lyran economy, slowing the decline of knowledge and technical expertise nationwide. Though over the centuries certain devices grew rare, the reverence for Star League-era equipment widespread elsewhere in the Inner Sphere never fully surfaced in the minds of many Lyrans, who continued to view all machinery—no matter how complex and finely tuned—as mere tools toward an end.

This jadedness through the wars was even apparent in the way most Lyrans perceived ComStar and their dominance over interstellar communications. Where other peoples tended to buy into the ritualistic mysticism built into ComStar's operations after its rise from the ashes of the Star League, the average Lyran appreciated the "Order" as merely an industry like any other—albeit one with an undisputed monopoly over the vital interstellar communications network. In this regard, most Lyrans traded the wonder and awe of their neighbors for the respect due to a master of a fine art.

Everyday Technology

Though technology declined more slowly in the Lyran state than elsewhere, many articles of everyday technology in Lyran households—while sophisticated—are remarkably inferior to those taken for granted during the Star League era. Even the finest personal vehicles, home appliances, home computers and holo-vid systems, for example, have average life spans of only a dozen years or so. Meanwhile, some antiques collectors may still be able to catch the latest Solaris matches on their Terran-made pre-Amaris MagnaVision HD3 tri-vid sets, or drive their vintage 2730 GM Thunderstar hover-cruisers around the block.

Despite the decline from Star League-era quality, everyday technology throughout the Lyran Alliance remains somewhat more advanced than the Inner Sphere average. Though examples tend to be much rarer on backwater worlds than on major planets in the heart of the nation, most homes on a typical Lyran world make use of at least one or two timesaving devices.

Appliances most familiar to the average Lyran range from micro- or laser-wave ovens and sonic dish cleansers and showers, to personal computers and vid-phones, to hyper-filtered water purifiers and power cell rechargers for all manner of electric appliances. More well-to-do families may claim micro-fusion generators, geo-thermal climate control systems, smart-safe home security networks or even immersive-environment home entertainment systems that can approximate tactile and taste sensations and mix them with high-resolution holography and sound projection for a virtual-reality experience of unparalleled accuracy.





Medicine

Medical science in the Lyran Alliance has remained fairly sophisticated ever since the Star League period, but—as with everyday technology—many of the medical instruments and systems used today have markedly shorter life spans, and some of the most elaborate techniques were long lost to the depths of time and the ravages of war. All that changed, however, with the recovery of technology through research by several Lyran institutions and the discovery of the Helm memory core.

Thanks to the relatively high level of medical technology available, most privately run hospitals and clinics throughout the Alliance are well stocked with supplies and capable of handling cases ranging from common illnesses, emergency wound treatment and cosmetic surgeries to long-term treatment of varying forms of cancers and exotic infections, and even the installation of basic prosthetics (no more advanced than Type 3 limbs and artificial organ replacements) in critically wounded patients. More sophisticated medical technologies, by comparison, are found in the larger, state-funded facilities on major Lyran worlds like Donegal, Skye and Tharkad. Here, doctors have access to advanced techniques including myomer implantation, advanced pharmacology and subatomic medicine.

The use of advanced techniques and the need to travel to select facilities where they are available for treatment often dramatically increases the costs of such procedures. This fact tragically underscores the class distinctions between wealthy Lyrans and their poorer countrymen. Though medical insurance companies and special “personal emergency” loans available through some hospitals do exist, their coverage is often less than comprehensive and the costs of their premiums or interest rates can often put a patient in debt for years—even decades—after the fact.

Travel

Travel in the Alliance is another luxury that most Lyrans—thanks to their nation’s great wealth and industrial might—have grown to take for granted. Nearly every Lyran household possesses at least two ground vehicles, or even hovercars, while wealthier families may have access to a private aircraft or seagoing vessel. Planetary mass transportation systems, from conventional and maglev rail lines to ocean-going cruise ships and even suborbital aerospace cruisers, are all within the price range of most Lyrans, and few worlds in the Alliance cannot boast several competing local companies willing to make various modes of travel more enjoyable and affordable for the masses.

Interplanetary and interstellar travel, by comparison, are more expensive ventures for the average Lyran, and most do not leave their homeworlds unless they sign on with a military unit or happen to work for an interstellar company or the national government. Despite this, the commonality of space travel and the freedom with which most Lyrans are allowed to make use of it—befitting a realm that bases its success on trade and commerce—means that even those who have never set foot on a drop shuttle or gone through the nauseatingly disorienting effects of a hyperspace jump do not find such technologies wondrous.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

The openness of Lyran society and the civil liberties guaranteed to planets and people under the Articles of Acceptance extend toward religion and philosophy as well as to politics and business, and a spirit of religious tolerance pervades the realm. To foster this tolerance and provide a forum for understanding between the various major religions, the Alliance Religious Council (originally the Commonwealth Religious Council) was formed in 2590. The Alliance has no official state religion, though the ruling Steiner dynasty and much of the nobility tend toward Protestant Christianity and Buddhism. The government officially maintains strict separation between church and state, which limits the influence of religions somewhat and prevents any one faith from gaining an upper hand in the nation’s political landscape.

JUDAISM

An ancient, monotheistic religion with roots in Terra’s Middle Eastern region, Judaism has been a faith long characterized by tragedy and persecution, but also nobility and integrity in the face of such hardships. Though followers of this faith have a tradition of keeping to their tightly knit communities, rarely before the mid to late twentieth century did they possess a homeland of their own, and were thus often viewed as vagrants among the Christian societies in which they moved. In many cases—particularly in Europe and North America—Jews became the favored scapegoats of various tyrannies, even after the eventual formation of the Jewish state of Israel, until Pope John XXIII of the Roman Catholic Church convened the landmark Vatican II Council in 1963. That council sparked several decades of cautious detente between Catholics and Jews that swiftly spread to other branches of Christianity before bogging down in the early decades of the 21st century. The process picked up steam again in 2053, when Pope John XXV set even more sweeping reforms in motion to further normalize relations between those whose faith spawned Christianity to begin with. Over the centuries since, the stigma attached to Judaism by millennia of hatred and intolerance has largely melted away, though religious differences remain a source of tension.

To reinforce their traditional sense of community as humankind expanded into space, Jewish leaders established rabbinical institutes on most of the major settled worlds, providing their faithful with a common ground despite the unfathomable distances between planets. In the Lyran realm alone, more than one hundred such institutes remain standing, including the largest one on Donegal, Ohav Shalom, a huge synagogue and educational campus located at the base of the Piety Range on the Hinterlands continent. Despite the unifying efforts of these institutes, the Jewish faith maintains several sects, the largest of which are the Orthodox Jews, with their strong grounding in scriptures, and the more mystical Neo-Hasidic Jews, who take a more austere view of God and life. Both traditions still share common beliefs in Judaic prophecies about their role in humankind’s future, but—as with other multi-sectarian religions—their differences in practice and lifestyle often cause minor culture clashes.

Today, Judaism is the second-most prevalent faith in the Lyran Alliance. Most Lyran Jews maintain their tight-knit communal traditions and can speak eloquently in German, English, Hebrew and even Yiddish. Thanks perhaps to the disciplined study of their faith, many



Jews are active in politics, and often champion the Estates General over the Archon during political debates, as though centuries of past oppression have given members of this faith an inherent distrust of centralized power and monarchic government. In military matters, the Jewish faith is often divided, its many leaders as often favoring aggressive policies as they do non-violence in matters ranging from self-defense to national security.

Despite their tendency to cluster together in neighborhoods and similar communities, Lyran Jews do not claim any world as a distinct center, and few Jewish landholders—even in the noble class—lay claim to more than city- or island-sized territories. The Alarion Province world of York today boasts the largest concentration of Lyran Jews, though on average most communities there are only half comprised of Jewish followers, while mixed Christians and Muslims make up much of the rest.

CHRISTIANITY

The largest single faith in the Lyran realm—though also the most divided—Christianity is actually an offshoot of Judaism, professing a belief in the same God and even using much of the Jewish belief structure as a foundation for their own newer testaments. Tracing their origins to the same region on Terra more than three thousand years ago, Christians are largely united under the belief that resurrected person of Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and many claim him as their personal spiritual savior.

Today, more than fifty established religions in the Lyran Alliance alone claim the Christian Gospels as the basis of their faith, with some sects as ancient as the Roman Catholic Church on pre-Exodus Terra and others as recently forged as the four-hundred year-old Voyager Christian Church of New Exford. Such diversity, arising from a myriad of interpretations of the Christian Bible and the policies of various churches, has been as much a curse as a boon. Over the millennia of their existence, Christians of different sects have clashed over their views, underscoring the divisiveness produced by so many conflicting principles and leading to many rifts that remain a source of contention even today.

Despite these differences, Christians in the Lyran state have made great strides towards at least talking to one another after centuries of shifts between ultra-conservatism and ultra-liberalism that periodically weakened the faith as a whole and even created political tremors throughout the nation. In 2908, leaders from thirty of the most prominent Christian sects allied under a loose confederation called the Commonwealth Church Council, bringing together the most respected representatives from each for bi-annual meetings to discuss their respective reactions and interactions with one another and the national government. Much akin to the Alliance Religious Council, but far more focused on Christianity, this Church Council has traditionally supported the Steiner Archons, a fact largely attributed to the Steiner family's tendency toward Lutheran and Protestant beliefs. In addition, the Council also acts as a spiritual watchdog group on behalf of the followers of its member-sects, helping to mold their faithful's reactions to events in the nation at large.

Schooling for Christian leaders is largely dominated by more than five hundred privately funded seminaries throughout the realm, the largest of which is St. Rethwin's College of Theological Studies on New Earth, established in the early 2500s. Encompassing instruc-

tion for more than two dozen different Christian and non-Christian traditions, St. Rethwin has become a major center for pan-religious dialogue, as well as a focus for interfaith conflict over the centuries.

ISLAM

Islam, like Judaism and Christianity, traces its origins to the same monotheism that arose in Terra's Middle Eastern region many millennia ago, but is the youngest of the five major religions alive today in the Lyran Alliance. Its slow spread in the interstellar community has long been attributed to the faith's relative inability to reconcile high technology with its simpler beliefs in the relationship between Allah (God) and man. To the Muslim leadership of the Exodus era, who took a fanatical anti-technology stance based on their interpretations of the Islamic holy book, the Koran, humankind's departure for interstellar space was an affront. Though many Muslims traveled into space before then, the Islamic leadership of Terra did not lift their religious ban on space transportation until 2443, unleashing an Islamic exodus on an Inner Sphere already dominated by a host of other faiths.

Islam's long absence from the interstellar scene helped to erase much of the damage done to its image by some of its more militant and fanatical followers during Terra's late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and its relatively simple set of beliefs outlined by the Koran appealed to many grown weary of the bewildering speculations of other faiths. This enabled the Muslims to attract followers over the centuries since, even though Muslims are far less active in conversions than those of Judeo-Christian persuasions.

Like all the great religions, Islam is divided into many distinct sects that worship the same god and follow the same basic guidelines, but differ in their attitudes or traditions. In the Lyran Alliance, one of the more predominant sects of Islam is the Black Muslim sect, whose influence has historically been strongest in parts of Coventry Province and the former Tamar Pact. The Black Muslims trace their origins to twentieth-century Terra's African and North American regions, where the Islamic faith appealed to them as a lifeline during a period of cultural repression against those of African ethnicity. Often more militant and strong-willed than their fellow Muslims, the Black Muslims traditionally favor the Estates General in politics, while their more fundamentalist brethren of other Islamic sects tend to support the Archon.

In the Lyran Alliance today, the Bolan Province world of Dar-es-Salaam has become the center of the Islamic faith, though local fundamentalist sects have clashed over land and resources on this arid world in recent years. Some of these sects have also begun to lash out at non-Muslim leaders, especially since the upheavals that followed Victor Steiner-Davion's assault on Dar-es-Salaam during the FedCom Civil War, which cost the planet's militia unit its religiously tolerant commander.

HINDUISM

Hinduism originated among the communities along the Ganges River in the Terran nation-state of India more than five thousand years ago. Much like Islam, Hinduism—a complex, polytheistic system of beliefs that includes the concepts of reincarnation and a caste-based society—and its various related sects remained centered on the faith's birthplace as humankind reached for the stars. This left many followers who joined the early exodus from Terra bereft of spiritual leadership for centuries, adding further variety to the Hindu faith



SOCIETY AND CULTURE

and slowing the eventual reconciliation between its millennia-old scriptures and traditions and a universe of limitless possibilities.

In the mid-23rd century, leading wise men and other Hindu representatives from every major colony world gathered to restore the stability of their faith. Eventually, these leaders concluded that, while India was the spiritual home of Hinduism beyond all doubt, every planet in the cosmos had its own spiritual heart. With the help of holy men from Terra, off-world Hindu priests were trained on every world, preaching the holiness of their new homelands as well as the traditions of faraway Terran India. Though this decision created as many disparate versions of Hinduism as there are worlds upon which it is widely practiced, a grand congress of Hindu leaders is held every decade to keep the religion's basic tenets and traditions alive and unified.

In the Lyran Alliance, more than forty worlds today claim the Hindu faith as their dominant religion, and until recently, Lyran Hindus recognized two central worlds where members of all Hindu sects can congregate. One, Chahar, fell to a Jade Falcon invasion during the FedCom Civil War (which has many Lyran Hindus screaming for a counterassault since reports began circulating that Falcon troops were desecrating that world's sacred city of Benares). The other, New India, lies on the fringe of Alarion Province. Its sacred city of Mathura is now the only major city in the Alliance purely devoted to Hindu worship.

Alliance Hindus tend toward political neutrality, though many work in government and serve in the military. As with Islam, Hindus are less aggressive in making converts than those of the Judeo-Christian faiths. Indeed, followers of Hinduism are rarely seen outside those communities descended from Terra's original Indian population. Nonetheless, the influence of Hindus in Alliance society is hardly miniscule. Much like the Christians' Commonwealth Church Council, the Hindu Congress in the Alliance reacts to the realm's political climate, its leadership stating the official Hindu reaction to state policies and occasionally airing their few grievances with the government.

BUDDHISM

A monastic, introspective and peace-loving faith, Buddhism spread to the stars far more quickly than Islam or Hinduism thanks to its focus on personal reflection and interpretation, a philosophy that did not clash with the discovery of new worlds and new homeworlds for humankind to live on. Buddhist monasteries today exist on hundreds of worlds, largely founded by peoples of Asian descent who left Terra in the first Exodus.

Despite the emphasis on self-reflection and the lack of a centralizing God figure, the Buddhist faith has remained largely true to its roots and its adherence to the teachings of the original Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama. Three main sects of Buddhism exist today in the Lyran Alliance, all clustered in their own general regions of space. The Pure Land Sect, one of the largest, dominates a group of planets centered around New Kyoto, where Japanese descendants heavily influence much of the local culture. The Zen Buddhists, largely derived from those of Chinese ancestry, are as populous as the Pure Land Buddhists and are centered on the world of Kwangchowwang in Coventry Province. The smallest of the three main sects, the Tibetan Tantric Buddhists, occupy a number of worlds along the Combine and Rasalhague borders, though their numbers have been depleted since the Clan invasion gobbled up a number of Tamar Pact worlds

where several major Buddhist monasteries were located. All three sects believe in physical and spiritual discipline as a means of releasing oneself from the physical world, to attain a state of spiritual purity and beatific enfranchisement called nirvana.

Politically speaking, most Buddhists are fairly inactive, with most of their monks and priests espousing passive non-involvement in political events. Those who do get involved in political or military affairs tend to excel in both, thanks to their religion's emphasis on focus and clear thought, calming principles that have attracted many converts over the years.

OTHER RELIGIONS AND FAITHS

A host of other faiths have taken root more recently in the Lyran Alliance, some only appearing in the last century. Though few of these religions have won over enough converts to become a major force, some have grown remarkably strong.

The One Star Faith

The One Star Faith has the dubious distinction of being a religion that survived the debunking of its own core philosophy. Started on the Tamar Pact world of Graceland (now part of Donegal Province) in 2801, the One Star Faith was born when Simon Kroeger, a wealthy Lyran merchant, allegedly received a vision depicting the whereabouts of General Kerensky's departed Star League fleet. Seen as a prophet for this revelation, Kroeger began to amass followers, whom he eventually led on a mass pilgrimage through the Commonwealth in search of the One Star, around which Kroeger believed was a paradise planet.

By the time of Kroeger's death, the promised One Star had not been found, but many priests of the One Star Faith had arisen to carry on the search, leading thousands of believers on new quests to find it. The High Elders, leaders of the Faith, have since decided on each new sector of space to search, causing the faithful to migrate with them once every three decades, but never beyond the limits of the Lyran state and its local Periphery. Dogma eventually developed among the followers, and the devout grew increasingly puritanical, sacrificing wealth for the Faith and contributing to each of their vagabond migrations, which have taken them from the Isle of Skye to the Dark Nebula to Halfway in Bolan Province. One expedition even attempted to head into the Periphery.

Unfortunately for followers of the Faith, Kroeger's vision of the One Star and its paradise world surrounded by Kerensky's ships came undone when the Clans invaded the Inner Sphere. Kerensky's fleet, once thought to be safeguarding an Eden for the devout, instead terrorized dozens of Lyran, Rasalhagian and Combine worlds, backing up eugenically enhanced armies bent on conquest and destruction. For many of the Faith, the effects were devastating, and membership declined drastically. By the late 3050s, only a few hundred still believed in the One Star, though their dogma conflicts with the harsh reality of the post-Invasion era. These few die-hards, mocked ever since, have nonetheless managed to recover in more recent years, based largely on the leadership of Egan Telosa, the sexagenarian High Visionary of the "reformed" One Star Faith.

Telosa, a childhood friend of the late Melissa Steiner-Davion, joined the Faith in 3032 after coming to believe that the world of Elissa in the coreward Periphery was home to "the blue lights of



Kerensky's ships". The arrival of the Clans from that direction, he has since believed, was in fact the final realization of Kroeger's vision, validating his faith, albeit in an awkward fashion. Telosa has since convinced the few remaining followers of the Faith that the One Star still exists and is waiting to be discovered. To reconcile this assertion with the truth of Kerensky's children, Telosa asserts that this paradise world will be open to all—Spheroid and Clan alike—and that, once the Faithful have found this new Eden, the leaders of the Clans will pledge their might to its defense against a dark time still to come. At present, High Visionary Telosa is gathering the resources for one more migration, this time to the Deep Periphery, believing that the One Star may exist in the vastness of space between the Inner Sphere and the Clan homeworlds.

Aesirism (the Neo-Norse)

With the formation of the Lyran Commonwealth and the Teutonic cultural influences of the Steiner dynasty that have pervaded it for centuries, a small but growing number of followers prompted a gradual rebirth of the ancient religions of the Norse peoples. Though many Lyran vessels, buildings and even military equipment take their names from it, the Teutonic faith—a polytheistic religion that idolizes warriors and promises those who die in glorious battle an afterlife spent holding back the minions of evil and staving off Ragnarok (the Day of Doom)—has long remained in the shadows, its gloomy forecast for humankind's future and its warrior bent rarely in keeping with the more peaceful, optimistic elements of the Lyran's mercantile society.

In the years immediately following the secession of the Lyran Alliance from the Federated Commonwealth, however, Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion took great pains to emphasize the cultural differences between the Alliance and its former allies in the Federated Suns. This resurgent nationalism brought with it a revived interest in the Teutonic roots of the Steiner dynasty and their cultural influence throughout the realm. A strange side effect of this has been the almost overnight acceptance of Aesirism, a modernized version of ancient Norse mythology.

Presently centered on the world of Finsterwalde, home of the Great Hall of the Aesir in the city of Glasheim, the new Aesirian religion has a slightly more positive outlook and idolizes non-military "conquests" (such as financial and marital success) in addition to battlefield glory. As the inevitable Ragnarok remains an intrinsic aspect of this faith, many Aesirians embrace life with a "seize the day" mentality. Politically, they almost universally back whichever leaders are closest in association to what they perceive as the true Steiner family, because they believe the Teutonic roots of the Steiner family descend directly from their pantheon.

Delphism

Originally viewed as something of a cult when they formed in 2911, the Worshippers of the Great Delphi on the world of Aristotle revived the ancient polytheistic religion of Terra's ancient Greco-Roman cultures before the rise of Christianity, and have maintained their faith to this day. Though the religion is largely a collection of fables and





anecdotes that even its own founders doubt are grounded in reality, the metaphorical teachings of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and the underlying currents of their belief structures, have been re-examined in this new religion, which earned the name Delphism after the Great Delphi Temple that brought it back.

Though many adherents of monotheistic religions mock the Delphists, this faith has gained popularity, particularly since the resurgence of the Aesirians. Like the Aesirians, Delphists believe that a god or demi-god personifies most abstract concepts and that said deities require tribute in order to assure favorable results in any venture.

Moreover, followers of Delphism believe that the future can be known by offering tributes to the gods, and so many worshippers occasionally make pilgrimages to Aristotle, to curry favor with their patron god or goddess and to make an offering at the Oracle of Delphi. After elaborate ceremonies, the Blessed of Delphi are then entrusted with a vision that can be either profoundly personal or grand in scope. It is said that one such vision, received by High Priestess Persephone Atwood in 3055, foretold Archon Melissa Steiner-Davion's assassination and the collapse of the Federated Commonwealth, and even pointed a suggestive finger at Katherine Steiner-Davion as the usurper. Though dismissed as mere rumor, the mysterious circumstances surrounding Atwood's disappearance in the summer of 3057 have many conspiracy theorists suggesting foul play and lending credence to the prophetic possibilities of Delphism.

THE ALLIANCE RELIGIOUS COUNCIL

Because Lyran society is largely accepting of varied belief structures, and because many who share similar theological views tend to cluster together in their own communities and cities, relations between major religions in the Alliance are generally harmonious. However, religious clashes are by no means a thing of the past. To prevent costly misunderstandings between the various faiths and maintain the status quo, the Alliance Religious Council meets every other year in Tharkad City's Lutheran Cathedral to discuss recent events that may have spiritual overtones.

Originally known as the Commonwealth Religious Council, the Alliance Council includes the five highest-ranking representatives of the realm's major faiths, as well as a body made up of minor faiths whose followings are larger than three billion worshippers. The Council's primary goal is to provide an open forum for communication between the various faiths, to forestall destructive conflicts and wasteful feuds. The Council even has the authority to intervene in matters of spiritual conflict when members of rival religions or sects resort to open violence, such as was done in 3026 to settle a Catholic-Buddhist clash on Arc-Royal, and in 3027, when they smoothed over an Islamic-One Star crisis on Bolan.

More recently, the ARC has been called upon to help forge a lasting peace on Bolan after the so-called Quetta Land War, where violence between Islamic sects forced the LAAF to get involved. The Council is also attempting to restore harmony between ethnic Hindus and Muslims on nearby Dar-es-Salaam, where tempers remain frayed since the shattering of the Dar-es-Salaam militia placed a fundamentalist Hindu in charge of the largely Islamic planetary defense force during the FedCom Civil War.

POLITICS AND MOVEMENTS

As might be expected from a realm dominated by a mix of hereditary nobles, mega-corporations and merchant princes, much of the nation's political mandates derive from an intermingling of organizations that technically have no role in government. Labor unions, corporate lobbies and other issue-oriented groups of every size often band together to increase their political clout, giving their constituents a voice, pooling their resources to support or thwart a given agenda, rallying to get a better deal or a bigger piece of the Lyran pie. Though in the Lyran political system the impact of these groups may be limited, many Steiner Archons, military commanders and members of the Estates General have learned better than to ignore them out of hand.

LABOR UNIONS AND GUILDS

A common sight on any world of sufficient industry, where they often serve as the base of management and government alike, labor unions and craft guilds are organizations dedicated to fair treatment of skilled (and unskilled) workers and the preservation of their chosen professions. Though their numbers, sizes and natures often vary wildly, most unions and guilds operate in a similar fashion.

Labor Unions

Labor unions act as the voice of a company's collective labor force (or sometimes just a portion of it) and function in a generally democratic fashion, allowing their members to vote on contract negotiations between management and labor. In the event of conflict between management and labor, these organizations also often advocate for employees and may even bring legal action against a company they feel is neglecting its responsibilities toward fair and equitable treatment of its workers.

Labor unions in the Lyran Alliance come in a variety of sizes. While more than 95 percent of them are confined to a single world, several—such as the Trans-Stellar Stewards Union and the Interstellar Association of Machinists and BattleMech Workers—can assert their influence on many planets.

Employees in a union gain a certain degree of job security, but at a cost in dues and sometimes service to the organization. In the case of a larger dispute between workers and management, unions may even call a strike, where its members refuse to work—and may even prevent others from working—for an employer unwilling to budge on an issue.

Unfortunately, though intended to protect the rights of workers everywhere, some Lyran labor unions (and those in other realms, to be fair) have occasionally become a focus for organized crime. Because of their inherent clout as watchdogs over vital industries, larger unions tend to attract the attention of the mafia, yakuza or their local equivalents, leading to many cases where corruption in the union can grow so bad that the organization itself becomes more harmful to its members than corporate management could ever be. In one recent case, the planetary court of Turinga sentenced the entire upper leadership of the local farm workers' union, the Turingan Agro-Ranchers' Association (TARA), to thirty years in prison apiece on charges of extortion, racketeering and embezzlement of union funds in association with the Brusikov Cartel. The charges came soon after



Turinga's planetary authorities successfully convicted "Don" Elijah Brusikov on nine counts of murder and conspiracy to commit murder, as well as a host of other crimes.

Guilds

Compared to labor unions, craft guilds are selective groups, their membership limited to those who meet their more restrictive guidelines and who have obtained licenses with the guild to practice their craft. Where unions may include any number of skilled or unskilled laborers and operate in a democratic fashion, guilds only accept members who have mastered—or at least made a serious commitment to master—a specialized skill or profession. In addition, guilds are somewhat less democratic, tending toward a hierarchical structure based more on merit and seniority with overtones of feudalism—hardly surprising, as many guilds can trace their origins back to Terra's Middle Ages.

On the whole, guilds act in a similar fashion to labor unions when assuring fair treatment of their members by company managers. In addition, these organizations seek to maintain the high standards and integrity of their chosen professions by limiting membership and training to those who meet their criteria. On most Lyran worlds, guilds have arisen for every specialized profession, ranging from actors and artists to engineers and programmers. Many guilds are networked with others across the realm, though local conclaves deal with most matters. This produces a kind of uniformity smaller unions lack.

Guild conclaves tend to match the importance and affluence of their professions, and many are seen as exclusive clubs for rich and powerful elitists. This image, which also dates back to the origins of the guilds, has spawned many creative theories and rumors of elaborate rituals and far-reaching conspiracies masterminded by specialist guild leaders over the centuries. Strangely enough, most guilds seem content to maintain the mystery and remain somewhat reclusive. Though many exist on an interstellar level in the Alliance—such as the Lyran Holo-Actors Guild and the National Brotherhood of Aerospace Engineers—the guilds are largely inactive on the political scene, limiting their involvement to maintaining the integrity and membership levels of their professions.

CORPORATE LOBBIES

Corporate lobbyists, representatives who are one part politician, one part traveling salesman and—say some—one part con artist, are an almost daily sight in the halls of power. A natural outgrowth of the Lyran emphasis on trade and industry, lobbyists for nearly every major industry travel the realm to woo politicians to their causes, offering financial support, lower product costs and any other service or gift they can think of in order to secure that one critical vote or lucrative government contract.

Many who hold public office find these eager company runners a welcome sight, as they represent the economic strength of the realm and can provide quite a boost to a political career if one plays one's cards right. Other politicians, however, see them as pariahs looking to extort political favors for personal gain. To those outside the system, they represent its corruption, eager to advance the goals of a faceless, undemocratic order over those of the people as a whole.

However they are viewed, corporate lobbyists come in all shapes and sizes, and have become a necessary evil in Alliance politics. Few

government leaders ignore their offers out of hand, realizing that they represent some of the most powerful players in the commercial and industrial sectors. Their influence, and the information and services they can provide, can help or hinder a politician's career while providing a convenient avenue for government and business to coordinate.

POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

Because the Alliance as a whole is technically a monarchy, political parties play a fairly weak role in state-level politics. Indeed, by far the strongest role most parties enjoy is on the planetary scale, and then only within democratic or semi-democratic governments. In the Estates General, political partisanship does not follow party lines, but instead is centered largely on regions. Representatives typically ally with those of their home region, their level of solidarity often directly related to how far apart their respective homeworlds lie.

Despite the relative weakness of political parties on the national scale, however, several movements have taken root in entire regions or have followers who hail from more than a handful of close-knit planets. These groups, though technically without real political power, nonetheless have the respect of their followers, a greater voice on the streets, and sometimes even the resources to lobby legitimate government for change or support. The goals of these groups are as numerous as the groups themselves; those listed below rank among the most noteworthy for their large followings and their profound influence over public opinion.

The Free Skye Movement

Almost since its incorporation into the Lyran Commonwealth and the founding of the Steiner dynasty, the Isle of Skye has been a hotbed of secessionist sentiment. Though for most of the period between Archon Katherine Steiner's reign through the Succession Wars, this sentiment remained largely subdued—membership in the Commonwealth was always more profitable than solitude in a war-torn Inner Sphere—the formation of the Federated Commonwealth fanned the embers of regional resentment into the fires of rebellion.

Since the creation of the Steiner-Davion alliance, Free Skye has launched three separate overt attempts to secede not only from the FedCom union, but from their Lyran motherland as well. All three of these military ventures failed, but rather than quench the lust for independence, repeated defeat only spawned more recruits, eager to succeed where generations before did not.

Officially classified as a terrorist organization by the Alliance government, and occasionally resorting to terror tactics to further their agenda, Free Skye nonetheless counts almost every man, woman and child on Skye and most of its neighboring worlds among its following. Ironically, though they rally against the Steiner government, these people proclaim Duke Ryan Kelswa-Steiner—himself a scion of House Steiner and an heir to the lost Tamar Pact region—as their leader. More perplexing to most outsiders is the fact that the people of Free Skye do not see themselves as the enemy of the Alliance, per se, and would as easily defend their fellow Lyrans against Clan, Combine and Free Worlds League threats. These contradictions have led some to speculate that Free Skye actually stands for control of the Lyran state, not freedom from it.



SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Commonwealth Free Trade Society

To most, the Commonwealth Free Trade Society (CFTS) is something of a contradiction in terms, a confusion stemming from the fact that the organization's mandate seems to have made a 180-degree turn since its founding. The CFTS was born in 3013 when an assortment of border-region free merchants and a collection of interstellar corporate leaders banded together in favor of looser trade restrictions with neighboring realms. Sensing infinite profits and new markets from unlimited trade across the Successor State borders, their primary goal was a reduction of tariffs, taxes and commodity restrictions in cross-border trading.

In the years following the formation of the Federated Commonwealth, however, the Lyrans' first taste of unlimited trade with another Successor State soured in the mouth of the CFTS. The weaker, more military-oriented economy of the FedSuns and conquered Capellan territories flooded the Lyran state with inferior products, and the strain of the Fourth Succession War and War of 3039 sent both realms to the brink of an economic depression.

Within a decade, the CFTS attitude underwent a fundamental shift. By 3049, they saw the unity of the Federated Commonwealth as a hindrance to the Lyran state rather than a boon. Making matters worse were ongoing government policies that virtually herded Lyran merchants into doing business with FedSuns worlds in an effort to keep the economy rolling. The CFTS, faced with its own ideals turned into a nightmare, began to advocate *increased* tariffs—not only between realms, but also between the internal regions of the FedCom, and further down to the planetary level.

Today, the leaders of the CFTS remain at odds with their organization's original intent, but justify their stance by declaring that the Society's goal was always to advance the prosperity of the Lyran state. If that means they now stand for what they once opposed, then so be it. From the Commonwealth's home offices on Donegal, the Society continues to advocate increased trade controls both along the Alliance borders and within the realm.

Democracy Now

Democracy Now, a political movement aimed at broadening the powers of the Estates General and ending the "tyranny" of the Steiner dynasty, was born in the waning years of Alessandro Steiner's rule over the Lyran Commonwealth. Though largely non-violent, a number of radicals over the past decade have committed terrible acts in its name.

Centered on Novara, an Alarion Province world noted for its liberal democratic government, Democracy Now has changed its strategy in recent years by abandoning its ongoing lobbies on Tharkad and taking its message "on the interstellar road." This grass-roots approach sends advocates to worlds all over the Alliance, attempting to convince local governments to adopt an egalitarian system where all the peoples' voices can be heard, though the exact form this democracy takes on the subject planet is up to its own people to decide. To date, few of these political conversions have been entirely successful, but Democracy Now nonetheless enjoys substantial support on many Alarion Province worlds, particularly those of the Timbuktu Theater, near the border of the Rim Collection (which Democracy Now's leader, Calvin Strauss, hails as a prime example of the utopia he one day hopes to see for all Lyrans).

Brotherhood of Cincinnatus

The Brotherhood of Cincinnatus began as a simple MechWarrior veterans club for survivors of the Succession Wars, but an influx of younger veterans after the close of the Third Succession War saw a fundamental shift in its intent and its previously marginal nature. Gradually reforming as a more politically active and militant organization, the Brotherhood established chapters on nearly every world along the Combine and Free Worlds borders, recruiting those who shared their vision of a strong Lyran state and their disdain for all peaceful efforts at reconciliation as proposed by then-Archon Katrina Steiner.

Financial support for the Brotherhood soon flowed in from veterans and other sympathizers, backing the organization's efforts to rally the Estates General and other political leaders behind their cause. Unfortunately for the Brotherhood, these efforts came to naught when, in the late 3020s, Katrina Steiner and Hanse Davion forged an alliance that led to the Fourth Succession War and transformed the Lyran Commonwealth into the Lyran half of a hybrid Federated Commonwealth.

Though numerous terrorist attacks over the years just prior to this union and afterward have been blamed on the Brotherhood, none have conclusively been linked to this organization. The Brotherhood's current membership consists of several prominent MechWarrior families from the Skye, Bolan and Donegal regions, who make no effort to hide their disgust toward all non-Lyrans, a bias that verges on bigotry and xenophobia. This resentment even extends to the Archon, whom they oppose based on the "taint" of his Davion heritage and his friendly relations with the Draconis Combine. Over the past few months, more and more of the Brotherhood have stepped forward to denounce the new Archon, demanding that he abdicate in favor of a "pure" Steiner.

Tamar Liberation Front

The Tamar Liberation Front is a frightening fusion of a political lobbying group and refugee charity fund with a brutal terrorist organization. Made up primarily of Clan War survivors from the shattered Tamar Pact worlds, their official goals are the reclamation of the Tamar Pact and the ejection of the Clan menace. Many resented Archons Peter and Katherine Steiner-Davion for their refusal to "do what must be done" to blast the Jade Falcons and the Wolves from their occupation zones.

Having long lost patience with the Lyran government, the TLF has actively recruited, trained and deployed several resistance cells in the Clan Occupation Zones with orders to cause the maximum amount of damage to the invaders in the name of freeing their conquered countrymen. Countless lives—civilian and military—have been lost over the years since this campaign began, and there is no sign of letting up.

Because their efforts can potentially disrupt the fragile peace along the Clan front, past Archons and Archon Peter Steiner-Davion have been forced to crack down on known TLF operations within the Alliance. In so doing, they have alienated the Front completely, and TLF agents have already targeted several Lyran operatives and political leaders as "Clan collaborators."



Free Katrina Society

In the wake of the FedCom Civil War, for reasons never made entirely clear, Khan Vlad Ward of the Wolf Clan arrived to take custody of Katherine Steiner-Davion, whisking her away to Clan-held territory without giving the people of the Alliance the benefit of seeing her tried and imprisoned for her crimes. Even more perplexing, both of her brothers—former Archon-Prince Victor Steiner-Davion and Archon Peter Steiner-Davion—apparently allowed the Clan war leader to take his prize without so much as a shot fired.

At the time, the deposed Archon-Princess of the shattered FedCom still had a wellspring of supporters eager to see her freed as a patriot and citizen of the state. Many of these partisans saw her departure with Vlad as if Victor had literally sold his sister into slavery, a heinous final betrayal of the beautiful and charismatic leader they adored. Seething with rage, these supporters forged the Free Katrina Society, a political movement that has already taken responsibility for a number of bombings in the Arc-Royal Theater.

As of this writing, it remains unclear who actually leads the Free Katrina Society, or where they are based, but they have made no mystery of whom they consider their enemies. Nearly every attack by the Society since its inception has been delivered against individuals and facilities affiliated with Victor and Peter Steiner-Davion, as well as the Kell Hounds mercenary force and the Wolf Clan (in-Exile), whom they view as accomplices in Katherine's "wrongful enslavement."

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

No matter how advanced or well-off a society gets, crime remains a fact of life, and so most worlds in the Alliance maintain extensive police forces and judicial systems. Backing up the police on more populous planets, one might see corporate security troops, paramilitary forces or even elements of the Alliance's national security forces, such as Lohengrin anti-terrorist officers. The presence of such police forces should not concern the casual traveler or trader, however, as crime rates are still remarkably low nationwide.

What constitutes a crime in Lyran society is often based primarily on the government and laws of individual worlds, as the Articles of Acceptance permit local governments to pass and enforce legislation as they see fit. Two dozen Lyran planets, for example, rely on no central government or set of laws, existing in a state of functional—if not wholly ideal—anarchy. Others, inspired by the anarchists' example, have instituted planetary "Free Zones," regions where no laws are enforced and criminals are free to work their "trade" for or against anyone brave (or merely stupid) enough to venture in—usually other criminals. Most Lyran worlds, however, are ruled by semi-democratic or monarchic governments that mirror the Alliance at large, meaning that most local laws tend to overlap with those of the state.

In general, the most prevalent crimes perpetrated in the Alliance are non-violent ones such as theft and vandalism, a trend attributed

to the strength of the Lyran economy and the relative sparseness of most planetary populations, as well as the nation's cultural bent toward profit and wealth. As crimes tend to be less serious, so too are most punishments. Lyran courts rarely hand down death penalties, except for the most violent or heinous offenses. Even then, the legal mechanisms on most worlds permit the condemned at least one chance to appeal to a higher court in hopes of a lighter sentence.

THE LYRAN COURTS

As with all branches of the government, the Lyran Alliance judiciary system is based first and foremost on the local laws of a given world, except when national laws are violated. Each Alliance world is thus expected to maintain its own court system, which should culminate in a planetary-level Supreme Court. These courts interpret the various national and local laws, but while the Articles of Acceptance allow local governments and judges to interpret the letter of the law as they see fit, they are not to alter the spirit of said laws, and any cases that challenge laws on the local level must be heard by the planetary Supreme Courts first.

If a law or ruling by a planetary Supreme Court (or its equivalent) is challenged, Provincial Supreme Courts exist on key worlds of each Lyran province to deal with such cases. The Lyran government maintains these Provincial Supreme Courts, and two groups of judges serve on them: Societal Justices and Lyran Justices. Societal Justices rule on how a law affects the world in question, while Lyran Justices rule on the bare legalities of the case from the letter of the law without taking local cultures into account. The two groups then deliberate to reach their final decision, appealing the matter to the Alliance Supreme Court on Donegal if the dispute cannot be resolved at the provincial level.

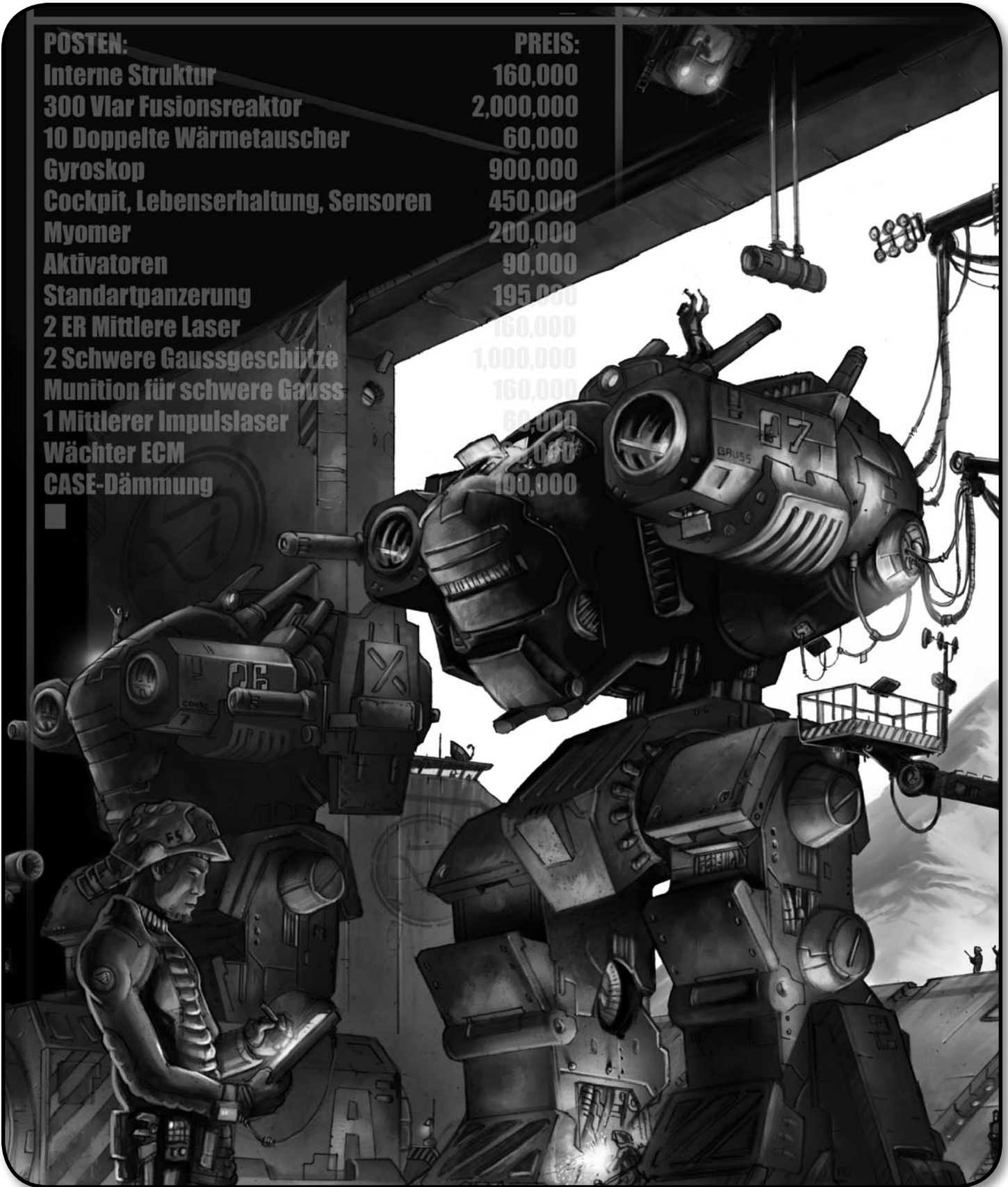
Established in 2543, the Alliance Supreme Court (originally the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth) is tasked with maintaining a unified interpretation of the law for the Provincial Supreme Courts and minimizing divergence in interpretations of national laws. Though every Justice and Chief Justice to sit on the Alliance Supreme Court is appointed by the Archon and ratified by the Estates General, tradition and prudence demand that each member of the nine-body panel must be as apolitical as possible. Tracial Steiner, first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court on Donegal, established this tradition most dramatically when she struck down controversial tariff laws passed by her cousin, then-Archon Craig Steiner.

Marcus Luvon is the current Chief Justice of the Alliance Supreme Court. Appointed soon after the FedCom Civil War, Luvon is a formidable man over sixty years of age, who served as a justice on the Alliance Supreme Court for fifteen years and resigned just before the Civil War. Recalled by Archon Peter Steiner-Davion, he is distantly related to the Archon's grandfather, the late Duke Arthur Luvon of Donegal.



ECONOMICS

POSTEN:	PREIS:
Interne Struktur	160,000
300 Vlar Fusionsreaktor	2,000,000
10 Doppelte Wärmetauscher	60,000
Gyroskop	900,000
Cockpit, Lebenserhaltung, Sensoren	450,000
Myomer	200,000
Aktivatoren	90,000
Standartpanzerung	195,000
2 ER Mittlere Laser	160,000
2 Schwere Gaussgeschütze	1,000,000
Munition für schwere Gauss	160,000
1 Mittlerer Impulslaser	60,000
Wächter ECM	2,000,000
CASE-Dämmung	100,000





"Money is just mankind's way to keep score in the game of life."

—Attributed to Emery Franz, President of the Lyran Free Traders Association, 2807.

Historically, the Lyran economy has always been the strongest in the Inner Sphere, a result of the government's partnership with business rather than domination of it. Where other nations strive to control the power and influence of their various interstellar corporations, the Lyran government has traditionally gone out of its way to encourage the growth of new businesses and the expansion of older ones. By investing heavily in many industries and promoting trade between member worlds with tax incentives and benefits, the government helped create a flourishing and diverse economy that serves to unify and strengthen the entire realm without the state's direct interference. What truly sets this system apart from other free market economies is that the Lyran government encourages the growth of its luxury trade as much as its military industries. This policy allows the realm to prosper in war and in peace, achieving a standard of living not seen since the Golden Age of the Star League.

NATIONAL ECONOMY

The cornerstone of the Lyran state is its economy, hardly surprising considering the realm's origin as the merger of three prominent mercantile alliances. To regulate business and keep its economy strong, the Lyran Alliance relies heavily on free enterprise, but also exerts varying levels of influence to keep the lines of trade open for all of its worlds, assuring that no Lyran population goes without basic necessities such as food, drinkable water, shelter and transportation.

To make the economy work and unify the realm, the Alliance government maintains only three primary institutions, preferring to let most businesses regulate themselves with minimal guidance. These institutions are the six Alliance Mints, where all hard currency in the realm is printed and pressed; the Alliance Reserve Bank, which has branches on every member world, regulates the money supply and is entrusted with the savings of the nations' citizens and corporations; and the five major Alliance Stock Exchanges, where investors buy and sell stock in thousands of local and interstellar companies.

COLD, HARD CASH: THE ALLIANCE MINTS

Few nations in history have survived as united realms in the absence of a single, hard currency accepted and respected by all citizens, and the Lyran Alliance is no exception. The nation's six mints print all paper currency and press all coinage to support the hard cash needs of the Lyran economy.

LYRAN UNITS OF CURRENCY AND EXCHANGE RATES

Unit Value	Coin Metal (Image)	Paper Color (Image/Reverse Image)
10,000 K	None	Blue/Gold (Robert Marsden/Original Lyran lyre logo)
1,000 K	None	Blue/Silver (Katherine Steiner/Original capital city, Arcturus)
500 K	None	Blue/White (Tatyana Steiner/Hesperus II factories)
100 K	None	Blue/Yellow (Elizabeth Steiner/LCS <i>Invincible</i>)
50 K	None	Blue/Purple (Robert Steiner/Alarion's Port Sydney shipyards)
20 K**	None	Blue/Blue (Katrina Steiner/FedCom insignia)
10 K	None	Blue/Blue (Frederick Steiner/ <i>Zeus</i> BattleMech)
5 K	Gold-Platinum (Katrina Steiner)	Blue/Green (Katrina Steiner/Star League logo)
1 K	Gold (Peter Steiner-Davion)	Blue/Gray (Peter Steiner-Davion/The Triad)
0.50 K	Silver (Melissa Steiner-Davion*)	None
0.25 K	Silver-Nickel (Arthur Steiner-Davion)	None
0.10 K	Nickel-Copper (Angela Franks*)	None
0.05 K	Zinc-Copper (Alistair Steiner)	None
0.01 K	Copper (Katherine Steiner)	None

* These coins occasionally depict commemorative events such as major battles, the latest of which were the Coventry Memorial 0.10 coin, issued from 3059-3062, and the Star League Commemorative 0.50 coin, first issued in 3067 and slated to end production in January of 3069.

** The 20 kroner bill has been out of print since 3058.

Exchange Rates (1 September 3067):

S-Bill (kroner)	C-bill (C-bill)	D-bill (pound)	M-bill (eagle)	R-bill (krona)	L-bill (yuan)	K-bill (ryu)
1.00	0.85	1.03	0.95	1.41	1.71	1.11



ECONOMICS

Though the Alliance Reserve Bank system regulates their output, these mints are impregnable fortresses whose massive warehouses are said to be filled floor to ceiling daily with freshly minted cash. The mints are located on five worlds also occupied by the Alliance's largest stock exchanges—Donegal, Skye, Bolan, Australia and Alarion—while a sixth stands in Tharkad City. It is said that thieves have never compromised any of these facilities since the founding of the Lyran state, making them the most secure of the nation's financial institutions.

The hard cash printed at these mints flows through all levels of Lyran society even though a majority of the people find the electronic "smart card" system equally efficient. At the base of this hard cash system is the kroner—its name originating from the currency of several Scandinavian nations on pre-spaceflight Terra—which is further subdivided into 100 pfennigs. Kroner and pfennigs are accepted on every Lyran world as easily as ComStar C-bills, though local exchange rates may vary slightly.

In general, kroner come in paper bills, also called S-bills ("S" for House Steiner), color coded for easy recognition and featuring an image of a Lyran Archon on one side and a famous event in Lyran history on the other. Coins are minted in gold or silver alloys, depending on their worth, and also depict Lyran leaders or—in rare instances—heroes of the realm, while the flipside bears the national standard. Occasionally, the Lyran mints issue commemorative coins, recognizing famous events or memorializing lost national leaders or heroes. All such images and likenesses are commissioned by some of the finest craftsmen in the Alliance, making each S-bill and coin as much a work of art as a unit of monetary exchange.

BUDGET AND RESERVES: THE ALLIANCE RESERVE BANK

If the kroner is the lifeblood of the Lyran economy, the Alliance Reserve Bank is its heart. Headquartered in Tharkad City, with branch offices on every populated world in the realm, the Alliance Reserve Bank monitors the money supply and acts in subtle ways through its own policies and its private subsidiaries—commercially run, but government-licensed and monitored local banks—to maintain the strength of Lyran currency.

Before the formation of the Federated Commonwealth, the Lyran kroner was the strongest currency in the Inner Sphere, rivaling even the ComStar C-bill, but the drain on resources during the integration of the Steiner and Davion realms temporarily weakened it as both states adopted it as their common currency. With the Clan invasion, the fall of the Tamar Pact worlds and the Lyran secession, the kroner took several critical hits through the 3050s and 3060s, weakening its value. Only today, in the aftermath of the FedCom Civil War, has it begun to recover, but the once-mighty S-bill remains slightly weaker than the ComStar C-bill and the Marik eagle.

National Resources

As part of the Lyran Ministry of Finance, the Reserve Bank is authorized to take older currency out of circulation and release new currency through the Alliance mints. To back up the value of this currency, the Reserve Bank maintains a stockpile of precious metals and other commodities, ranging from silver and gold to rare gemstones, radioactives and water (a prized commodity on drier worlds). Because such raw materials may vary in value from world to world,

these commodities are balanced against the national germanium reserves, the economic standard used by the Lyrans since the time of the original Star League.

To accomplish this balance, the Reserve Bank buys and sells a portion of its local stockpiles to match the relative value of the nation's raw germanium supply, assuring that the Lyran currency it supports largely retains its strength throughout the realm. This enables the kroner to be equally potent on some backwater Lyran planet near the Rim Collection as it is on Tharkad or Skye. The fact that the Alliance Reserve Bank has maintained this balancing act across hundreds of worlds for so many centuries is a testament to the skill, integrity and resources of the institution.

The exact resource base in kroner or C-bills for a realm encompassing as many worlds as the Alliance is nearly incalculable. A typical Lyran world's gross planetary product ranges from around five hundred million kroner to almost five billion on a major world, with the average citizen's annual per capita income hovering just over seventeen thousand kroner. On the national level, the Lyran economy sees a constant flow of trillions of kroner a year, much of it in programs that so overlap with local economies and infrastructure as to make it almost impossible to determine how much comes from Tharkad and how much from regional or local government. Though much of these monies are spent supporting the Lyran military, logistics, bureaucracy and the vast military-industrial complex, the historical beneficence of many past Archons has seen taxpayer kroners supporting social programs throughout the state, investing heavily in universities, medicine, research, fine arts, corporate development, business loans and a broad range of humanitarian causes.

NATIONAL COMMERCE: THE ALLIANCE STOCK EXCHANGES

Of course, all the resources and cash in the universe do not a strong economy make. Supporting the nation's high standard of living and widening its tax base are a multitude of corporations, large and small. Ranging in goods and services from the humblest trinkets to the most sophisticated examples of modern military hardware, these companies produce and provide for all the needs and wants a Lyran citizen could have, creating jobs as well as products and maintaining the strength of the Alliance economy. As the Alliance Reserve Bank is the heart of the economy, the nation's industry is its muscle, and the stock exchanges lie at the core of this industrial and commercial might.

The stock markets are the epitome of Lyran capitalism that maintains the flow of money throughout the realm. Investors buy stocks and bonds, boosting the financial strength of their chosen companies and institutions, in exchange for a say in the direction of the company's affairs, or on the promise of riches as the institution prospers. Though not every industry, commodity or company may be available through these markets—on the national or the local level—this system represents an easy way to gauge the health of the Lyran economy.

Interplanetary Trading

Interplanetary trading throughout the Alliance takes place in one of the five major stock exchanges, which are maintained by the Lyran government. Located on Australia, Bolan, Donegal, Skye and Alarion, a major Alliance Stock Exchange (ASE) facility represents each of the nation's provinces. These exchanges provide investors



with ready access to every publicly traded corporation that does interstellar-level business within the Lyran Alliance (plus a few that exist beyond Alliance borders).

Heavily reliant on the HPG network, the major Alliance Exchanges are hubs of communications and trade for stocks and commercial information, making their homeworlds a prime spot for the industry-minded to gather and follow market trends. Because they receive their information much more quickly and consistently than local trading hubs off-world (which often receive their ASE information days or weeks after the fact), investors in the larger corporations or their brokers often reside on these worlds to be as close to the action as possible.

This centralization and government administration of the major Alliance Exchanges allows the government to exercise its limited authority over business in order to ensure that insider trading and other unscrupulous investment strategies do not abuse the free market system. In support of the government's responsibilities, the Ministry of Finance and the Alliance Business Ethics Board also maintain offices on these major exchange worlds.

Local Trade

On the planetary level, trade is less regulated and policed by the national government, in keeping with the Lyran belief that member worlds have the right to determine the course of their own economies. However, for all the potential differences, local stock exchanges boil down to two distinct formats: local ASE hubs and local stock exchanges (LSEs).

The first are the off-world hubs of the ASE, which deal with the same major companies that do business on the interplanetary level. However, these hubs receive information more slowly, updating weekly as opposed to hourly. Though these lags have done much to create balance in the markets by offsetting runaway "panic sell-offs" and similar events, thus further stabilizing and strengthening the Lyran economy, they can represent a greater risk to investors who rely on more precise and timely information.

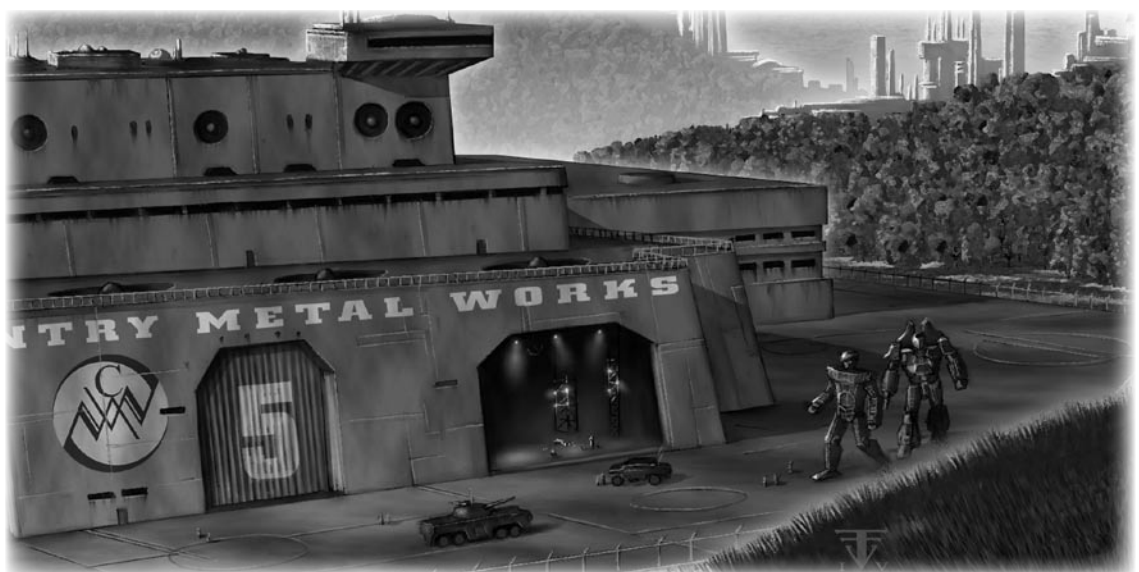
The second type of planetary-level stock market is often referred to as a Local Stock Exchange (LSE). These markets focus almost exclusively on local (usually on-planet) companies open to public trading, rather than the larger interstellar conglomerates, performing the same function as the ASE but on a much smaller scale. On major worlds, these markets often include some of the interstellar businesses as well that are trading in the immediate area, providing a degree of overlap with the ASEs, but rather than being administered by the Lyran government, these markets are typically maintained by private corporations.

INTERNATIONAL COMMERCE

Trade between realms is far less regulated than internal trading, though the government does have a hand in fostering it. Numerous Alliance border worlds, such as Gienah and Solaris VII, are regarded as centers for international trade, ports of call for free traders to conduct business beyond national borders. Security on these worlds is generally tight, but innocuous enough to prevent interference with legitimate trade, the primary concern being to limit the sale of restricted items to foreign powers and to check for contraband or other security breaches among incoming shipments.

Military patrols and intelligence operatives are commonly active on such border worlds and others all along the nation's boundaries, hoping to secure them against potential aggressors and minimize the traffic of illicit commodities in both directions. At the same time the government offers incentives for free traders willing to venture beyond Alliance borders. Loan guarantees and tax credits, in exchange for a cut of the profit, are often part of a free trader's licensing process to operate outside of Alliance space, along with rider clauses authorizing the realm to assign security or escorts to merchants believed to be undertaking a particularly dangerous trade route. In this way, the Alliance gains some of the profits from international sales and may also acquire valuable intelligence during the performance of a merchantman's routine transactions.

In some cases, the Lyran government has been even more proactive in encouraging international trade, contracting out its own fleet of merchants or privateers to venture across hostile borders, often to open new markets where none existed. Some believe such efforts have less to do with commerce than with sowing the seeds of dissent among other realms, a centuries-old effort by the Lyran state to addict its enemies to Lyran goods, then use their powerful economic might to strong-arm that enemy into submission without firing a shot. For this reason, such expeditions—government-funded or not—often encounter some degree of hostility when opening new markets in foreign territory.





MAJOR INDUSTRIES

As one of the Inner Sphere's most developed nations, the Lyran Alliance is home to a number of large industries. Offering products and services of nearly every conceivable variety, many of these corporations have grown to mammoth proportions, their influence felt far and wide not just within Lyran territory, but in neighboring states as well. During the union with the Federated Suns, many of these companies set up shop in the Davion realm, and instantly graduated to international status after the secession of 3057.

The following profiles describe just a few of the largest conglomerates currently active in the Lyran Alliance, excluding those devoted primarily or solely to defense; the standard listing for each company on the Lyran Alliance Stock Exchange is found in parenthesis following each company name.

NASHAN DIVERSIFIED (NasDiv)

Main Headquarters: Wellington's Eyrie (Donegal), New Toronto (Coventry), Savarius (Gallery), Tharkad City (Tharkad), Gulf Breeze Station (Gulf Breeze), Mont Vert City (Furillo), Nashan SkyFab (Alarion)

CEO: Duchess Margaret Doons

Main Products (Nashan Computers, Coventry): Personal and commercial computers and software

Main Products (Nashan Foods, Donegal): Food (basic and gourmet)

Main Products (Nashan Architectural of Donegal): Building design and construction

Main Products (Nashan Shipping, Donegal): Freight services (transcontinental and interstellar)

Main Products (Nashan Pharmaceuticals, Donegal): Medicinal drugs and medical supplies

Main Products (Nashan Communications and Entertainment, Gallery): Entertainment and news

Main Products (Nashan Underwriters of Tharkad): Financial and legal services

Main Products (Nashan Mining of Gulf Breeze): Raw material mining and refining

Main Products (N&D Targeting Computers of Furillo): Military sensors and targeting systems*

Main Products (N&D Shipyards of Alarion): *Scout* and *Merchant* JumpShips, plus space stations*

Main Products (N&D WorkMechs of Furillo): Agro, Construction, and Mining 'Mechs*

*N&D Targeting Computers and N&D Shipyards are joint holdings of Nashan Diversified and Defiance Industries of Hesperus II.

Profile:

Corporate pamphlets say Nashan Diversified was founded in 2795, but the company dates back much farther to the time of the Star League, when it was known as the Ns-Shan Computer Tracking Company, a fledgling small business specializing in information technologies. Over the decades after the League's collapse, Ns-Shan began

to market its own line of quality personal computers at rates competitors could not match, severely undercutting its rivals and securing a hefty 30 percent of the Lyran computer market by 2795. That same year, the company formally changed its name to Nashan Diversified and began an aggressive campaign to buy up smaller companies from the cash reserves it had built up in the wake of the Star League's fall.

Today, Nashan Diversified's yellow, green and blue corporate logo flies over the corporate headquarters of eight major divisions and a host of satellite offices throughout Alliance territory. These holdings represent the interstellar conglomerate's most recent growth spurt, which began more than fifty years ago when Margaret Doons took charge of the family business. Through backroom deals with other major businesses—most notably Defiance of Hesperus II, which has become a full partner of Nashan Diversified in three additional ventures—and government agencies, Nashan absorbed a host of failing companies in recent decades, including Baker Pharmaceuticals, Kelly Communications and the Gulf Breeze Mining Union. Many of these companies were subsequently reorganized and integrated into the Nashan family, though some—such as Baker—were virtually liquidated and the company assets transferred to Nashan's newer Donegal offices.

Today, Nashan Diversified offers products as wide-ranging as space station and surface building construction, foodstuffs and pharmaceuticals, legal services and entertainment, and even military electronics and WorkMechs. Though the company's ruthless approach to business and penchant for shady deals has brought it before the government's Business Ethics Board, these reviews have so far led to nothing more serious than heavy fines. As one might expect from the Alliance's largest company, Nashan can afford the finest legal representation when allegations of wrongdoing arise, and maintains a corporate legal staff almost as ruthless as the company's infamous, ultra-elite Black Guards security force, which is said to secretly back up the regular security troops at all Nashan facilities in the realm.

ACRUX AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES (AxAgriln)

Main Headquarters: Illampu (AcruX)

CEO: Grafina Leslie Rosado of Illampu District

Main Products: Food and food distribution services

Profile:

AcruX Agricultural narrowly avoided bankruptcy in the early 3020s after undergoing a major reorganization under then-CEO Carma Rosado, who assumed control of the company after its last president made off with most of its cash and assets in 3019. To stave off financial oblivion, Rosado opened distribution routes in the Free Worlds League and the Circinus Federation, but still had to downsize the company somewhat through the leaner years. The alliance with the Federated Suns enabled the company to expand its influence into the Davion realm as well, with a satellite company established on Farwell. Unfortunately, this international link did not survive the breakdown of the Commonwealth in 3057. Already reeling from a brief covert war with Free Worlds competitors and their cultivated Farmers Liberation Resistance Movement against its Valloire farmlands, AcruX was forced to sell off its Farwell centers rather than risk its limited transport assets in Chaos March crossings.



ALLIANCE-GRAND HOTEL INTERSTELLAR (CGHot)

Main Headquarters: Stanton City (Donegal)

CEO: Patricia Dunnsley

Main Products: Hotels and accommodations services

Profile:

Alliance-Grand Hotel Interstellar claims more than 520 hotels across the Lyran Alliance, mostly concentrated on major industrial worlds such as Tharkad and Skye, making this company the largest of the nation's hospitality chains in history. Though they expanded into FedSuns space during the Steiner-Davion union, the company changed its name and sold off its Federated Suns properties as a sign of solidarity with then-Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion, a decision exceedingly unpopular with many shareholders. The financial windfall from the sales, however, has allowed the interstellar company to revitalize its network of sprawling luxury hotels and convention centers and invest in heavier, more sophisticated security staff and technologies that have been a trademark of its VIP services. Indeed, these investments assured the Alliance-Grand's reputation as the hotel of choice for visiting dignitaries and diplomats, both for temporary residence in Lyran territory and for holding important meetings and conferences far from the earshot of bugged government-provided meeting areas.

AVANTI INDUSTRIES (AvantInd)

Main Headquarters: Florence (Canonbie)

CEO: Magnus GioAvanti

Main Products (Avanti Aerospace of Canonbie): Civilian aircraft, suborbital and aerospace vehicles

Main Products (Avanti Motors of Skye): Civilian recreational and luxury ground and water vehicles

Main Products (Avanti CyberTech of Nusakan): Personal computers and software

Profile:

Avanti Industries is a diverse, multi-world conglomerate almost entirely based in the Isle of Skye. Eschewing military industries in favor of civilian product lines, Avanti has avoided being a target through many of the Succession Wars, though raiders have struck at the company's aerospace and vehicle factories from time to time. The GioAvantis of Canonbie, a wealthy merchant family with roots in Terra's central European region, founded Avanti during the Star League era, aiming their products at higher-class customers such as corporate executives and nobility. Still retaining that focus, Avanti's best known products include luxury vehicles such as the Avanti hover limousine and the Avanti Glide Cruiser hydro-yacht.

BOUNTIFUL DELICACIES (BoDel)

Main Headquarters: KevGlen City (Bountiful Harvest), Staffordville (Coventry)

CEO: Baron Deitr Halsf von Helsing

Main Products: Food (basic and gourmet)

Profile:

Once a humble agro-company specializing in processed and unprocessed grains, Bountiful Delicacies, a publicly owned company, has evolved into a household name for exotic appetizers and desserts, such as White Hart Truffles, Harvest Caviar, Coventry Greyl Wings and Sautéed Gerette. Though facing stiff competition from Nashan Foods, which claims huge tracts of land on Bountiful Harvest, BoDel's farming, aqua-culture and cattle ranching farms on this world and half a dozen others throughout the Alliance have proven fertile enough to keep business strong and quality high. Recent statements from the company have announced Bountiful Delicacies' intent to break into the potables market, with new lines of fine wines and other dinner beverages soon to be introduced from their newly developed vineyards on Lyndon.

COMMONWEALTH PRESS (ComPress)

Main Headquarters: Media City (Donegal)

CEO: Ruth Kirkland

Main Products: News services (print and video)

Profile:

Founded in 2981 from the remains of several smaller news agencies, Commonwealth Press, one of the largest news organizations in the Alliance and a subsidiary of the Donegal Broadcasting Company, is currently undergoing a massive reorganization. This restructuring includes its reversion to the Commonwealth Press name and logo, after the short period where it followed suit with the rest of the corporate sector in doffing the "Commonwealth" name in favor of "Alliance" to support the new Archon, Katherine Steiner-Davion. These sweeping changes represent the company's response to the loss of public confidence during its tenure as Alliance Press, when the massive interstellar news agency effectively became a mouthpiece for pro-Katherine propaganda.

Public backlash and a sharp drop in ratings nationwide underscored the public's resentment over Alliance Press' slanted—even deceptive—reporting during the waning years of the FedCom Civil War, prompting a massive change in leadership from the top of the board of directors to lowly anchorpersons throughout company stations on every major Alliance world. Politically, Commonwealth Press has already returned to its pro-Estates General roots, a stance that has historically won over viewers and readers across the realm. Though this shift has some people warming up again to the company, many remain leery of how easily Archon Katherine turned the media against them during her reign.

Commonwealth Press's offices cover all the major Alliance planets and a few minor worlds, and are staffed with reporters ready and able to cover just about any type of news, though the current reorganization has left the agency scooped by rivals such as Tharkad



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Broadcasting. Still, reports filed by Commonwealth Press are picked up by news agencies that subscribe to their services throughout the Alliance and beyond.

DOBLESS INFORMATION SERVICES (DobInf)

Main Headquarters: Bayern (Ludwigshafen)

CEO: Baron Seth Tobiason

Main Products: Information and library services and technology

Profile:

Founded less than a decade after the fall of the Star League, Dobless Information Services grew out of the remains of DataCorp Industries of Chahar, an interplanetary library network geared toward scientists and other scholars. Over the decades and centuries since, Dobless rose to become the single most extensive network of commercially available data beyond those kept by the fanatically meticulous ComStar. With centers on nearly 200 worlds throughout Alliance territory (and another twenty or so scattered throughout FedSuns space, thanks to the short-lived Federated Commonwealth alliance), Dobless has become a household name synonymous with knowledge. Its line of electronic encyclopedias and computer data searching/archiving software is considered the cutting edge, preferred by scientists, historians and academics throughout Lyran space. During the Succession Wars, rumors circulated that Dobless' master computers on Chahar contained all known information in the universe. Though no one has verified the veracity of these claims, the fact remains that well over half the textbooks in Lyran schools—from elementary school through the college level—feature material researched and verified by Dobless.

Unfortunately, the recent seizure of the company's former headquarters on Chahar by Jade Falcon forces has cut off the company from its largest data node and forced CEO Seth Tobiason to relocate to Ludwigshafen. Since then, Tobiason has suggested to his shareholders that Dobless may soon commission a mercenary expedition to Chahar to liberate the larger archives said to be buried deep beneath the captured company headquarters complex.

DOERING ELECTRONICS (DoEI)

Main Headquarters: Melrose Valley (Hesperus II), Hansinger (New Kyoto)

CEO: Graf of Melrose Shandra Doering

Main Products (Doering of Hesperus II): Military communication and sensor suites, neurohelmets

Main Products (Doering of New Kyoto): Military and civilian communicator and sensor suites

Profile:

Doering Electronics, one of the Alliance's biggest producers of BattleMech and aerospace fighter communications and sensor equipment, as well as one of the only major manufacturers of high-quality combat neurohelmets in the realm, has worked hand-in-glove with Defiance Industries of Hesperus II ever since the company's founding during the First Succession War. Relations between the two companies are said to be so close, in fact, that Doering's Hesperus II facility ben-

efits from the Defiance Self-Protection Force (DSPF) as if it were part of the massive BattleMech factories. Rumors of extensive research and development in recent years have led to runaway speculation in the markets that has flooded Doering's coffers as many believe the company is on the verge of an unprecedented breakthrough in communications or sensor technology. What such an advance might be, or even if the rumors are true, nobody at Doering is willing to reveal.

Doering's secondary factory, the sprawling Hansinger facility on New Kyoto, produces an even wider range of communications and sensor suites than does the Hesperus plant, with systems designed for use in BattleMechs and aerospace fighter craft. In addition, this facility also produces a broad range of civilian telecommunications gear such as the reliable DE-4160 VidiPhone Deluxe, one of the Alliance's most popular brands of video-capable personal communicators.

DYNAMICS COMPANY OF GALLERY (DynMsl)

Main Headquarters: Morintown (Gallery)

CEO: Regina Cathaway

Main Products: Missile weapons ('Mech, aerospace and personnel support), mining robots

Profile:

Founded during the closing years of the Second Succession War, Dynamics Company grew up on Gallery as an equipment manufacturer geared toward supporting several local mining businesses on that gloomy world. Producing personal and automated mining devices at first, the company branched out during the Third Succession War, adding a missile weapon production facility and test range to gain a foothold in the military marketplace. On numerous occasions, the Cathaways—who have dominated Dynamics' board of directors for more than 200 years—have made noises about expanding into WorkMech or even BattleMech construction, but at present nothing solid has materialized.

EARCANDY COMPANY (EaCaCo)

Main Headquarters: Ear Candy City (Skye)

CEO: Hans Moffett

Main Products: Live and recorded entertainment

Profile:

The Ear Candy Company of Skye is one of the Alliance's most pervasive entertainment industries outside the big media companies like TMA and DBC. Focused mostly on popular music and sensory entertainments, Ear Candy does not invest in news media and broadcast offices, but instead in its talent, producing the vast majority of its music chips, holodiscs and sensory cubes from its Skye-based recording studios. Star Drive, the company's music production label, offers a line of popular and classic music selections, while Ear Candy Tours provides live entertainment, booking shows for Star Drive's artists in concert halls throughout the Alliance.



EDASICH MOTORS (EdMot)

Main Headquarters: Vesteralen (Edasich), Kesterly (Aur)

CEO: Duke Brandon Edasich

Main Products (Edasich Motors of Edasich): Fusion engines (military and civilian)

Main Products (Edasich Motors of Aur): Fusion engines (military and civilian)

Profile:

Edasich Motors was founded when the Edasich family (stewards of the planet Edasich in the Isle of Skye) assumed control of the Vlar Industries fusion engine plant on Edasich, and soon afterward absorbed the faltering Pitban Power Systems factory on Tenra, the large moon orbiting the nearby world of Kirkcaldy. Since then, Edasich Motors has become a key supplier of fusion engines for Defiance Industries of Hesperus II, though the predations of the Succession Wars heavily damaged both of the company's primary engine plants, severely curtailing their output. The discovery of the Helm memory core enabled then-CEO Duke Martin Edasich to reverse this trend and make good on his plans to establish at least one of his factories farther away from the front. Further spurred by rumors that DefHes would soon expand its Tharkan engine plants to offset the loss of Edasich productivity, the duke spared no expense in the massive undertaking for a new facility on Aur, dismantling the aging Tenra plant in the process. The Aur factory, one of the first to come on line offering extralight fusion plants for BattleMechs, reassured DefHes executives and ensured Edasich Motors' continued vitality in the post-Succession Wars era.

GIENAH AUTOMOTIVE (GieAut)

Main Plant Locations: Molfetta (Gienah)

CEO: Donald McNab III

Main Products: Civilian trucks, cars, special purpose and all-terrain vehicles

Profile:

Gienah Automotive is the parent company of Gienah Combat Vehicles, a major producer of wheeled armored fighting vehicles for the Lyran military. With three factories on-planet, however, only a third of Gienah Automotive's product comes from its military sales. The rest, including cross-border sales to several technologically poor Free Worlds planets, consists of several civilian trucks and cars for personal as well as commercial and industrial use, and even vehicular sports. Lately, however, an influx of Avanti Automotive products recently made available in the region by Skye traders who only now are branching into the region has begun to encroach on Gienah's market.

LONGANECKER PLASTISTEEL (LnkrPiSt)

Main Headquarters: Hofuf (Pherkad), Yarrowdale (Crevedia)

CEO: Landgrave Andrew Hanlin of Erfurt

Main Products: Plastic, metal and alloy fabrications, personal and vehicular armor

Profile:

Longanecker PlastiSteel formed in 2899 when Longanecker Plastics merged with Simpson's Synthetics. Producing everything from textiles and personal armor to lightweight alloys and armor for use on air, sea and spacecraft, and expanding into myomer technologies for medical, industrial and military use, Longanecker has become another company whose products are widely used by other companies, increasing the corporation's value as a part of the Lyran economy. Soaring profits recently allowed Longanecker to open a new factory on the nearby world of Crevedia (Vaj II), and plans are underway to place another on Hillerod.

LYRAN FREE TRADERS ASSOCIATION (LyFrTr)

Main Headquarters: Gomel (Tharkad)

CEO: Garth Craigholme

Main Products: Interstellar freight and trade services

Profile:

Created in the waning years of the Star League as a coalition of free merchants intended to give them a chance against bigger corporate heavies like Ceres Metals and the New Earth Trading Company, the Lyran Free Traders Association today represents close to 300 free traders and small shipping concerns throughout Alliance territory. Subscribers in the Association receive information digests on the wants and needs of all planets throughout the nation and even some in the surrounding realms, while gaining access to emergency funds and medical benefits. Armed with this information and support, and drawing on the manpower of its membership, the LFTA has influence that far exceeds what its membership can accomplish alone. This influence is apparently intoxicating, to judge from the daring mindset the organization's members seem to assume soon after joining up, believing that LFTA vessels need not concern themselves with borders so long as there are new markets to open and new profits to be had.

MAUSER & GRAY FIREARMS (MGArms)

Main Headquarters: Horrealsburg (Donegal)

CEO: Graf Arturo Gray of Horrealsburg

Main Products: Personal firearms

Profile:

Mauser & Gray Firearms was born in 2319, well before the formation of the Lyran Commonwealth. Company founders Johann Mauser and Herschel Gray set out to create a company geared to the individual consumer, rather than the short-lived armies that rose and fell with regularity in the uncertain times following the Terran Alliance's collapse. They aimed their signature handguns mostly at the private sector, the rugged frontiersmen still trying to develop the far-flung stars well beyond humanity's home. At its peak during the Star League era, Mauser & Gray had offices in every major member-state, with its most advanced facility located on Mars in the Sol system (the only M&G facility producing the SLDF's Mauser 960 assault weapon). Unfortunately, with the collapse of the Star League, most of these international factories were destroyed or absorbed



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by foreign interests, leaving only the original plant on Donegal to bear the M&G brand name. Today, centuries later, Mauser & Gray still produces quality firearms but has returned to its roots, specializing in ballistic slug throwers and flechette weaponry with an eye for the private consumer over larger organizations. Despite this, many M&G weapons have found a home in the standard arsenals of the Lyran military throughout the Succession Wars, and the LAAF makes extensive use of the firm's smaller handguns, including the M&G service automatic and the M&G flechette pistol.

MAXELL METALS, INCORPORATED (MaxMtl)

Main Headquarters: Novaya Kiev (Chukchi III)

CEO: Alfonse Maxell

Main Products: Laser weapons (aerospace and personal)

Profile:

Maxell Metals, Incorporated is a branch of the international Maxell Corporation, and a key supplier of personal, industrial and military vehicle-grade laser weapons and other optical components such as holovid scanners and similar products. In addition to the laser factories outside Novaya Kiev, the company also maintains roughly two dozen small mining operations on Chukchi, lured by the discovery of massive titanium deposits. These operations have drawn sharp resistance from the natives, many of whom believe their presence is destroying the planetary ecology, decimating local wildlife and drawing in "undesirable elements." The conflict between Chukchi natives eager to embrace the jobs and progress brought by Maxell and other companies, and those vehemently opposed to the "interlopers," has fostered lingering tensions and outright violence for decades, but Maxell's mining and weapons production facilities on Chukchi remain unmoved.

MEIER-STAR AGENCY (MeStAg)

Main Headquarters: Tharkad City (Tharkad)

CEO: Michaud d'Torino

Main Products (Meier-Star Tours, Tharkad): Luxury and business travel and accommodations

Main Products (Meier-Star Shipping, Donegal): Commercial and industrial freight shipping

Profile:

Meier-Star Agency has headquarters on Tharkad and Donegal, subsidiaries on nearly every major world in the Alliance and the FedSuns, a fleet of eighteen well-maintained DropShip liners, twenty freighters and a dozen JumpShips, plus contracts with several more JumpShip and DropShip companies throughout the Alliance. All of these assets combined have given this company a commanding place in the interplanetary civilian tourism and shipping industries across the realm. Often working hand-in-hand with Alliance-Grand Hotel Interstellar, Meier-Star Agency can offer customers more than transportation from one tourist spot to another. Its employees can also book complete vacations where the guests live in the lap of luxury and benefit from the expertise of a proven leader in the industry.

RAMTECH INDUSTRIES (RAMTch)

Main Headquarters: West Hansinger (New Kyoto)

CEO: Baron Boris Mannheim

Main Products: Laser weapons (aerospace and personal)

Profile:

RAMTech Industries, a manufacturer of aerospace-quality, personal energy weapons and advanced optical equipment, is the amalgamation of three local companies: Rassal Weapons, Anderson Arms and Mannheim OptiTech Unlimited. Devastated by repeated attacks throughout the Succession Wars, Rassal Weapons and Anderson Arms—the two major weapons makers—were left teetering on the brink of bankruptcy by the late 2800s, when Mannheim OptiTech swept in to absorb both of them. Ever since, RAMTech has produced quality energy weapons for the Lyran aerospace fighter fleet, and even invested in a massive retooling in the early 3050s to offer Star League-quality weapons. Owing to a recent partnership with the local branch of Doering Electronics, RAMTech executives are said to be currently eyeing the possibility of expanding their repertoire to include more ground-based vehicle energy weapons systems, to fill the gap between their current product lines.

RASTABAN AGRICULTURAL (RasCosm)

Main Headquarters: Klauswich (Porrima)

CEO: Duke Andrew Lyste

Main Products (Rastaban of Porrima): Food (processed and unprocessed)

Main Products (Rastaban Agricultural Products of Duran): Farming equipment and AgroMechs

Main Products (Rastaban Freight Service of Gibbs): Transport services

Profile:

Even though its corporate headquarters on Rastaban have been overrun by Clan Wolf since the planet fell in 3052, Rastaban Agricultural Products remains one of the Alliance's major food exporters, selling much of the yield from its more than three trillion acres of prime farmlands to domestic and foreign markets alike. The company owes much of its success and survival since the loss of Rastaban to a new series of genetically modified high-yield, fast-growing grains, which have proven exceedingly resilient against spoilage even during long journeys to offworld and cross-border customers such as the Draconis Combine. Owing to improved relations with the Combine since the Clan Invasion, the Alliance government still supports this trade effort and continues to encourage Rastaban's latest cross-border business ventures, which include trading within the Clan occupation zones.

SERAVIDEO ENTERTAINMENTS, INCORPORATED (SerVid)

Main Headquarters: Stevensville (Tharkad), Chechenisgrad (Czarvowo)

CEO: Graf Kerstan Evans

Main Products: Commercial and personal audio-video-holographic technologies



Profile:

One of the largest manufacturers of consumer entertainment electronics in the Alliance, SeraVideo specializes in video entertainment centers, audio/video storage and playback devices and wide-band broadcasting equipment used by private citizens as well as radio and video stations across the realm. SeraVideo claims a total of 31 factories on ten worlds across the Alliance, including Bobruisk, Bolan, Donegal, Skye and Tharkad, with five more facilities located in FedSuns space as a result of FedCom-era expansion. The company's recent acquisition of one-time competitor Yulers Electronics on Czarvowo has won them a renewal of a lucrative communications service and repair contract with the LAAF, assuring that SeraVideo will dominate the conventional communications field for a long time to come.

THARKAN MEDIA ASSOCIATES (ThaMeS)

Main Headquarters: Tropicana (Tharkad)

CEO: Darren Hussfield

Main Products: Various entertainments (music, video and print)

Profile:

Tharkan Media Associates is one of the Alliance's largest producers of music, print and video entertainment, with several holoivid movies and syndicated series, print and electronic novels, and musichip labels under its vast portfolio. TMA also includes a number of holoivid film production companies and broadcast networks, the largest of which is Tharkad Broadcasting Corporation. This interstellar conglomerate, though historically a staunch supporter of the Archon and the Steiner family, has also maintained consistently high standards of excellence and professionalism in public relations and internal politics. These policies placed TMA and its subsidiaries among some of the most reliable sources of information even during the darker days of the FedCom Civil War.

TIMBIQUI SPIRITS (TimSpr)

Main Headquarters: Bale Valley (Timbiqui)

CEO: Gray Lettermann

Main Products: Alcoholic beverages and soft drinks

Profile:

Timbiqui Spirits is one of the most well known names in alcohol throughout the Lyran Alliance, if not throughout the Inner Sphere. Its best-known brand of beer, Timbiqui Dark, is allegedly a favorite constitutional among mercenaries, and has even gained a following with the invading Clans, if some of the company's most successful ad campaigns are to be believed. In fact, the recent ad blitz for Timbiqui Dark has proven so successful that many people often fail to realize Timbiqui Spirits also produces equally fine brands of wines, whiskey, brandy and even sugared and sugar-free soft drinks, which the company distributes throughout Alliance and FedSuns territories.

TK INDUSTRIES (TKWind)

Main Headquarters: Bouldertown (Triesting), Gunthropo (Kelang)

CEO: Baron von Boulderton Harwin Scheddar

Main Products: Personal firearms (semi-automatic, automatic and support)

Profile:

Originally known as Triesting-Kelang Weapons Industries, a company-wide reorganization of this major personal firearms producer for the LAAF and Lyran police agencies led to the shortening of the corporate logo to present a fresher look for today's post-Succession Wars market. Founded shortly after the Second Succession War by Rolf Scheddar, a retired LCAF infantry colonel, the company's focus has always been to create reliable, affordable and easily maintained infantry combat weapons. Toward this end, many TK lines were designed with universal parts or use the same gauges of ammunition, allowing for ease of repair and maintenance from fewer parts kits—factors that made them an early favorite when the Lyran military shopped around for a reliable producer for its infantry rifles and submachine guns.

Today, TK Industries is the proud maker of the TK and Gunther assault rifle series. In the aftermath of the company's recent reorganization under Baron Harwin Scheddar, who assumed the helm in 3064, rumors have begun to float that the company is looking into expanding its Kelang factories to produce 'Mech-grade ballistic weaponry, and that Scheddar may soon achieve his publicly stated dream of being the first to unveil a Lyran-made TK rotary autocannon.

TOLOY CHEMICALS (ToiChem)

Main Headquarters: Moravska Ostrava (Alkaid)

CEO: Baron von Wurzburg Delbert Toloy

Main Products: Chemical products and compounds

Profile:

With fifteen factories on Alkaid devoted to producing a broad range of plastic products, industrial and medicinal chemicals and myomer bundles, Toloy Chemicals has become a key industry for many Alliance businesses now dependent on their output. Unfortunately, a family feud erupted within the company in 3024 after then-CEO Duke Charles Toloy was killed in a factory accident and his daughter, Janine Toloy, assumed control of the firm. Janine's cousin, Delbert, won a drawn-out legal challenge to her right of inheritance, citing Janine's inexperience and questionable side business practices, but only after a fierce internal power struggle depleted the company's workforce through a series of corporate witch hunts and downsizings. The victorious Delbert inherited a company teetering on the brink of collapse, with larger industries such as Nashan Diversified waiting in the wings like hungry vultures. He managed to persevere for several decades, but only recently have Toloy's profit margins recovered enough to put the company in the black.



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VIRTUE CARTOGRAPHERS UNLIMITED (VirCart)

Main Headquarters: Red Light (Virtue)

CEO: Pedro Comrada

Main Products: Mapping services and space exploration

Profile:

Once a simple map-making service devoted to the needs of the career trader, Virtue Cartographers today encroaches on ComStar's area of expertise with its own small fleet of converted military freight vessels, refitted for duty as the company's own explorer corps. The ships were a purchase made possible by a grant from the late Archon Katrina Steiner in the mid-3030s, but it has taken the company close to twenty years to obtain a large enough fleet and enough qualified crews to undertake the lofty mission of deep space exploration outlined by then-CEO Louis Comrada. The recent openness from ComStar after the Schism with the Word of Blake also allowed the rest of the Inner Sphere—including Virtue Cartographers—access to the more detailed maps maintained by the quasi-religious order. Now armed with new data, Pedro Comrada has modified his father's mission somewhat, and plans to use the VirCart fleet to explore the Deep Periphery for trade routes and worlds yet undiscovered.

WATER PURE INDUSTRIES (WaPur)

Main Headquarters: Rio Grande (Corridan IV)

CEO: Chandler Tal

Main Products: Water purification facilities (private and industrial-scale)

Profile:

Despite being destroyed many times through the Succession Wars, Water Pure Industries on Corridan IV is the largest of the Alliance's four companies currently manufacturing industrial-scale water purification systems. Founded in 2321 by Gabriel Tal, a part-time chemical engineer who patented his own fusion filtration process just two years before, Water Pure Industries has grown as a family-run business since its inception. Today, the company controls facilities on Freedom and Ryde for local water purification and the manufacture of additional facilities. Water Pure products range from grand systems capable of efficiently cleansing reservoirs large enough for a medium-sized city, to household cleansing systems designed to strip toxins as soon as they enter residential plumbing. The Corridan plant is the most advanced manufacturing and water purification plant in the Inner Sphere, a testament to the technical expertise that has become a Water Pure trademark.

ZETTLE METALS, INCORPORATED (ZetMet)

Main Headquarters: Califar (Hyde), Shawmut Springs (Rahne)

CEO: Baron von Califar Stasio Radant

Main Products: Mining and refining of metals

Profile:

One of the oldest mining and refining operations in the Lyran state, Zettle Metals was founded before the formation of the Lyran Commonwealth. Though its foundries on Hyde and Rahne suffered much during the Succession Wars, the company managed to survive, producing purified precious metals and industrial alloys for use in civilian, commercial and even military industries. Recently, after Zettle prospectors reportedly discovered new veins of industrial-grade metals on the nearby planets of Arganda, Fianna and Sarpsbourg, the company opened negotiations with the governments of those worlds for permission to open new foundries. Such a discovery makes welcome news for the ancient mining company, as many planetologists believe the ready resources on Hyde and Rahne, though still ample, may burn out before Zettle can fulfill its obligations under a series of recent contracts to supply raw material to the factories on Hesperus II, Skye and Solaris VII.



MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Since its inception, the Lyran state has used its vast resources not just to maintain a high standard of living, but also to assure that its military wants for nothing. Thanks to its robust economy, the Alliance can draw upon these resources to support an extensive variety of military industries, which together keep its military arm, the LAAF, well supplied in the battlefield.

The following corporate profiles describe the largest of these military industries, whose collective productive might is largely credited with the historic success and fortitude of the Lyran military; the standard listing for each company on the Lyran Alliance Stock Exchange is found in parenthesis following each company name.

DEFIANCE INDUSTRIES OF HESPERUS (DefHes)

Main Plant Locations: Maria's Elegy (Hesperus II), Snohomish Springs (Furillo), Elizabeth Island (Tharkad)

CEO: Duke Daniel Brewer of Hesperus II

Main Products (Defiance BattleMechs of Hesperus II):

Archer, Atlas, Banshee, Battle Hawk, Berserker, Caesar, Cobra, Enforcer, Fafnir, Flashman, Goliath, Griffin, Gunslinger, Hatchetman, Nightsky, Salamander, Sentinel, Valkyrie and Zeus BattleMechs; standard Inner Sphere battle armor

Main Products (Defiance Vehicles of Hesperus II): Fortune, Demolisher II, Hunter, Manticore, Patton and Rommel tanks; *Avenger-class DropShip* (produced in association with Dynamico)

Main Products (Defiance Motors of Tharkad): Fusion and internal combustion engines, light civilian vehicles

Main Products (Defiance BattleMechs of Furillo): *Assassin, Axman, Clint, Locust, Scorpion, Stalker, Uziel, Wasp and Zeus BattleMechs; standard Inner Sphere battle armor*

Profile:

Easily the single most important defense contractor in the Lyran Alliance, Defiance Industries has dominated the Lyran economy ever since the fall of the Star League, when the company headquarters and 'Mech production facilities on Hesperus II fell fully under Lyran authority rather than existing as a joint holding between Tharkad and Terra. This importance has not gone unnoticed by neighboring realms and other enemies of the Lyran government, making the homeworld of DefHes a major battleground for more raiders, invaders and would-be rebels than anyone cares to count.

The Steiner family has always invested heavily in Hesperus II's military defense and maintained an active presence on Defiance's board of directors, and consistently offers the company generous tax incentives and grants to maintain their loyalty and security for the good of the nation. This centuries-long favoritism has prompted resentment from many of Defiance's competitors, including Coventry Metal Works and TharHes Industries of Tharkad, who feel that the emphasis on Hesperus II unfairly overshadows their own claim to the LAAF's ever-growing defense market.

Defiance Industries maintains four major divisions spread across three key Alliance worlds, with the main facilities on Hesperus II claiming the bulk of the company's administrative, maintenance, security and R&D support in proportion to the sheer volume of productivity

at the DefHes BattleMech and vehicle factories there. The other main branches include offices and production facilities for 'Mech factories on Furillo and the fusion engine factory and offices on Tharkad. Each of these facilities sports its own maintenance and R&D subdivisions, a streamlining of operations that occurred during the FedCom years, as well as their own branches of the Defiance Self-Protection Force (DSPF), whose BattleMechs and uniforms are easily recognized by their distinctive red-on-white color schemes.

ARC-ROYAL MECHWORKS (Not Trading)

Main Plant Locations: New Hannover (Arc-Royal)

CEO: Clovis Holstein

Main Products: *Arctic Fox* (Omni), *Verfolger* and *Wolfhound* BattleMechs

Profile:

Founded in the late 3050s as the Lyran Alliance seceded from the Federated Commonwealth, the Arc-Royal MechWorks (formerly known as the Eire BattleMech Company of Arc-Royal, a minor manufacturer of 'Mech parts) is privately owned by the Kell family and managed by Clovis Holstein, a veteran technician of the famous Kell Hounds mercenary force, who also claim Arc-Royal as their home. Popular misconceptions abound as to what led to the founding of the MechWorks, with many presupposing that the Kells created the company expressly to build 'Mechs for their own rebellion against then-Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion. Still other rumors suggest that the Kells plan their MechWorks to one day rival General Motors/Blackwell's Outreach facilities, drawing on the support base of the local Clan Wolf (in-Exile) to ultimately provide the mercenaries with exclusive access to Clan technology.

In truth, plans for the founding of the Arc-Royal MechWorks were underway as early as 3053, soon after the ComStar victory on Tukayyid bought the Inner Sphere a fifteen-year truce with the Clan invaders. The plans stalled until the arrival of the exiled Wolves, and sales of the 'Mechs that have emerged from the factory to date—while certainly slanted toward mercenary customers—have nonetheless proven that the Arc-Royal MechWorks is not merely a private factory operating under exclusive contract to the Kells.

BLACKSTONE BATTLEMECHS, LTD. (Blkstn)

Main Plant Locations: Erewhon (Inarcs)

CEO: Graf Gregory Blackstone

Main Products: *Enfield, Ostscout* and *Talon* BattleMechs

Profile:

The Blackstone family has dominated the industrial landscape of Inarcs ever since the planet's accidental founding as a Star League-era penal colony ages ago. Over time, the family's wealth and influence became so great that they forged their own corporate security force and mercenary command, dubbed the Blackstone Highlanders, primarily to secure their interests at home and abroad.

In 3053, under a license with the Federated Commonwealth government, the Blackstones graduated to BattleMech production when they upgraded their Erewhon factories to produce the Star League-



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designed *Enfield* medium BattleMech. Just three years later, as the first run of the new 'Mechs had finally begun to roll off the assembly lines for assignment to FedCom border troops, Blackstone won a second government contract to produce the *Talon*, a light 'Mech not seen since the last Star League-era facility producing them was annihilated in the mid-2800s.

Though such strokes of luck made the Blackstones a household name almost overnight, the demand for both of the company's designs remains far greater than the actual output. Blackstone BattleMechs is years behind on orders to the Lyran Alliance and the Federated Suns governments, and new plant expansions are expected soon to alleviate the strain.

BLUE SHOT WEAPONS (BluShtWpns)

Main Plant Locations: Nowhere (Solaris VII), South Fork (Loxley)

CEO: Gualtiero Marino

Main Products (Blue Shot of Solaris VII): *Lynx* and *Cestus* BattleMechs

Main Products (Blue Shot of Loxley): *Starslayer* BattleMech

Profile:

Blue Shot Weapons is another factory resurrected by the recent surge of military industrialization sparked by the Clans' arrival. Its original Solaris VII facilities survived the Star League's fall for nearly two centuries, but were destroyed by House Marik raiders in 2928. Not until the massive rearmament effort in the mid-3050s, after the Tukayyid Truce, did enough funds become available to rebuild these factories, a task undertaken by Gualtiero Marino, a descendant of Blue Shot's last CEO.

To hedge his bets, Marino opened talks with other 'Mech producers like Telfar BattleMechs of Midway, GM BattleMechs of Kathil and even the nascent Norse-Storm Technologies of Loxley. Though risky, these deals gave him access to additional support beyond the increasingly unstable FedCom government's grants, in exchange for licenses and access to Blue Shot's Star League-era design specs and partnerships for parts purchases to save costs and support mutual production. By 3056, Blue Shot's Solaris plant rolled out its first new *Lynx* in over a century, and its smaller Loxley facility was just coming on-line to produce the *Starslayer*. Ever since, the company has maintained a breakneck pace in producing its three 'Mech lines, but insiders report that the company's profit margin after maintenance, overhead, tooling and supply purchases remains depressingly low.

BOWIE INDUSTRIES (BowInd)

Main Plant Locations: Port Sydney (Alarion), Brinnosburg (Carlisle), Earhardt City (Wyatt)

CEO: Duke Clarence Vanderzham

Main Products (Bowie Industries of Alarion): *Chippewa* aerospace fighter; *Archer* BattleMech; *Hercules*, *Leopard*, *Leopard CV* and *Union*-class DropShips; *Mjolnir*-class WarShip (in cooperation with Ioto Galactic)

Main Products (Bowie Industries of Carlisle): *Archer*, *Marauder* and *Razorback* BattleMechs; *Packrat* patrol vehicle

Main Products (Bowie Industries of Wyatt): *Archer* BattleMech, *Chippewa* aerospace fighter, various civilian air and aerospace craft

Profile:

Before the Succession Wars, Bowie Industries was located on the Combine planet Dell, but strong economic incentives and the threat of operating in a border region as war erupted throughout the Inner Sphere convinced the company's leaders to relocate to Alarion. Since then, Bowie Industries has expanded, introducing a BattleMech and light vehicle production facility on Carlisle as its parent factories continued to develop military DropShips and aerospace fighters on Alarion.

The depredations of the Succession Wars were not kind to Bowie Industries, however. Numerous raids and assaults—including a devastating Marik deep raid in 3006—decimated their ability to manufacture many aerospace and 'Mech transport vessels. Only heavy financial aid from House Steiner and tireless efforts to reconstruct the Alarion facilities enabled the company to recover from the damage and resume production in time for the Fourth Succession War, though company executives continue to debate the relocation of their raid-ravaged Wyatt facility.

Today, though benefiting from extensive retooling and generous LAAF contracts, much of Bowie's aerospace production resources at Alarion's Port Sydney orbital yards have been stretched to the limit between DropShip manufacturing and in coordinating with Ioto Galactic Enterprises to complete the *Mjolnir*-class WarShip *Fylgia*.

COVENTRY METAL WORKS (CMW)

Main Plant Locations: Port St. William (Coventry)

CEO: Duke Isaiah Grantrel

Main Products: *Blitzkrieg*, *Black Hawk KU* (Omni), *Commando*, *Dart*, *Firestarter*, *Firestarter* (Omni), *Hauptmann* (Omni), *Hollander*, *Hollander II*, *Hunchback*, *Phoenix Hawk*, *Scarabus*, *Stiletto*, *Stinger* and *Vulcan* BattleMechs

Profile:

Often regarded as the Lyran state's second most important producer of BattleMechs and weapon systems, Coventry Metal Works has long been considered a "safe" company because of its location deep within House Steiner's borders. However, the Jade Falcon strike at Coventry in 3058, followed soon afterward by the turmoil of the FedCom Civil War, threw this longstanding misconception out the window. Since then, company and planetary rulers have made security the top priority for the CMW facilities and the delicate planet Coventry Metal Works calls home.

Like Defiance of Hesperus II, CMW enjoys a prominent position in the financial and political landscape of the Lyran state, but it remains clearly inferior to the Hesperan manufacturers when the time comes to fill new BattleMech orders. Boasting only two-thirds as many production lines as the more famous DefHes, CMW sales representatives often find themselves emphasizing their company's quality over its quantity, citing their development of the *Firestarter* and *Hauptmann*—two of the Alliance's few native-born OmniMechs in production—to drum up sales. Indeed, CMW research and development was recently rated superior to Defiance's much older and more extensive equiva-



lent by the *Donegal Business Journal*, high praise that has helped boost sales despite what some company representatives continue to decry as Defiance Industries' "corporate hegemony."

CYCLOPS, INCORPORATED (CyclInc)

Main Plant Locations: New Aberdeen (Skye)

CEO: Morgan Durant

Main Products: Drillson, Glaive, Maxim and Hover APC vehicles; assorted hover- and wheel-based civilian and military support vehicles (including the popular Hurricane line of luxury hovercars)

Profile:

Cyclops, Incorporated is the Alliance's largest producer of military-grade hover tanks and hover transports. Originally founded to manufacture civilian craft exclusively, with such popular lines as the Hurricane luxury car series to its credit, the company entered the military market near the end of the Third Succession War with a host of support jeeps and its standard CI-117 armored personnel carrier design. In 3025, the company graduated to hover tanks with the introduction of its heavy Drillson hover tank.

Since then, Cyclops has expanded, absorbing local rival Maxim Transport Industries in 3037 and adding production facilities exclusively devoted to the development and manufacture of high-quality heavy energy weapons for vehicles and BattleMechs. Though Lyran government and military leaders have lauded all these developments, the LAAF has greeted the company's first entry in the wheeled combat vehicle market, the Glaive, with some trepidation, as the new medium tank—its production sponsored by Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner—has yet to be sold to non-Skye units.

GIENAH COMBAT VEHICLES (GieComV)

Main Plant Locations: Molfetta (Gienah)

CEO: Donald McNab III

Main Products: Centipede, Pack Rat and wheeled and heavy wheeled APC vehicles

Profile:

Though it sports its own stock exchange listing and separate facilities, Gienah Combat Vehicles is actually the military subsidiary of Gienah Automotive (GieAuto), one of the Alliance's largest producers of civilian wheeled vehicles. Established just prior to the start of the Second Succession War, Gienah Automotive has managed to churn out quality cars, trucks, commercial, industrial and even military wheeled vehicles despite its location on a world bordering the often-hostile Free Worlds League.

Indeed, the locals' eagerness to trade—even with people from House Marik—helped spare Gienah Automotive many of the horrors of the Succession Wars, as both sides historically acknowledged the commercial and military value of these factories. Even though the Steiner fist still flies over this world, the nearby technology-poor planets of the Free Worlds League still count themselves among Gienah Automotive's—and Gienah Combat Vehicles'—biggest customers.

GRAY DEATH TECHNOLOGIES (GDTech)

Main Plant Locations: East Dunkeld (Glengarry)

CEO: Richard Leone

Main Products: Gray Death Standard and Scout battle armor

Profile:

Funded in part by, and currently partnered with, Defiance Industries of Hesperus II, Gray Death Technologies is a new company born only recently on Glengarry, last homeworld of the famous Gray Death Legion mercenary command. Dedicated to the memory of the mercenary command from which it takes its name and the designs for its products, Gray Death Tech is the only company in the Alliance fully dedicated to producing battle armor, and sells to mercenaries and the LAAF. Company founder Richard Leone, cousin of the late Legion infantry commander Thomas Leone, is currently in talks with DefHes for the rights to produce a new version of the standard Inner Sphere battlesuit, and is also vying for a contract to produce new battle armor expressly for the LAAF. In addition, the company recently received a "gift" from DefHes in the form of Brewer's Legion, a corporate security force raised from survivors of the shattered Gray Death Legion and assigned by Duke Brewer of Hesperus II to guard the Gray Death plant on Glengarry. Rumor has it that Alex Carlyle, son of the late Grayson Carlyle and Lori Kalmar-Carlyle and recently discharged from the LAAF, will join the Legion as its executive officer sometime soon, though the rumors remain unconfirmed.

IOTO GALACTIC ENTERPRISES (IotoGal)

Main Plant Locations: Port Sydney (Alarion), Ioto Orbital One (Gibbs)

CEO: Seamus Zuiderwyk

Main Products (Ioto of Alarion): *Invader*, *Monolith* and *Scout* JumpShips; *Fox*- and *Mjolnir*-class WarShips (in cooperation with Bowie Industries)

Main Products (Ioto of Gibbs): *Merchant* JumpShip

Profile:

Originally a branch of Di Tron Industries—a Star League-era corporation with roots as far back as 2203 in Tokyo, Japan, on Terra—Ioto Galactic Enterprises is the principal manufacturer of non-combat JumpShips for the Lyran military and civilian sectors. One of few such industries to survive the devastation of the Succession Wars (but not without extensive damage from heavy raids aimed at crippling its jump drive production facilities), by the end of the Second Succession War, Ioto had lost its ability to produce compact jump drives and its Star League-era jump drive factories over Gibbs were failing.

The coming of the Clans pumped fresh resources through the Lyran military economy, and Ioto was given priority treatment in order to jump-start its WarShip program to counter the threat of the Clan WarShips. Together with Bowie Industries, Ioto produced the massive *Mjolnir*-class WarShip *Yggdrassil*, the Lyran Navy's first WarShip since the loss of the *LCS Invincible* more than two centuries ago.

Presently, though Ioto is in better shape technically and financially than it has been since the fall of the Star League, its assumption of the lion's share of the *Mjolnir*'s construction costs and manpower has reduced its output of conventional JumpShips from the Alarion yards.



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J.B. BATTLEMECHS, INCORPORATED (JBMech)

Main Plant Locations: Godenboro (Storfors)

CEO: Landgrave Jillianne Suliben

Main Products: *BattleMaster*, *Chameleon* and *Dragon Fire* BattleMechs

Profile:

J.B. BattleMechs was founded in 3053 by Jillianne Suliben, the daughter of a wealthy Tamar entrepreneur killed during the Clan invasion. Ms. Suliben started her company after purchasing the plans and molds for the venerable *Chameleon* training 'Mech design from Defiance of Hesperus. Using extensive connections and financial support from the defense-obsessed FedCom government, she refurbished an ancient manufacturing plant on Storfors into a BattleMech factory and produced her first run of new *Chameleons* in early 3056, followed soon by the first runs of the new *Dragon Fire* heavy 'Mech design.

In the early 3060s, at the request of then-Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion, J.B. BattleMechs supported a similar refurbishing effort for the endangered Red Devil Industries plant on Pandora. In exchange for loan guarantees and government orders, as well as a joint license for any new BattleMech designs spawned by the effort, J.B. BattleMechs carried out the request, but the investment of time and resources soon proved disastrous when Clan Jade Falcon seized Pandora within months after the renovations were complete.

The fall of Pandora, though a military disaster, flooded J.B. BattleMechs with new orders originally slated for Red Devil Industries. Landgrave Suliben has since initiated a massive hiring spree to boost her company's manpower and bring up production to meet the demands caused by the attrition of the Falcon Incursion and the recent civil war.

LOCKHEED/CBM CORPORATION (LCBMC)

Main Plant Locations: Sethensgard (Donegal), Cold Creek (Tharkad), East Telesian (Furillo) and Rolfston (Gibbs)

CEO: Duke Maximillian Haranshire

Main Products (Lockheed/CBM of Donegal): *Centurion*, *Eisensturm* (Omni), *Lucifer* and *Sabre* aerospace fighters; several civilian aerospace craft (including the LC-100 series *StarYachts*)

Main Products (Lockheed/CBM of Tharkad): *Eisensturm* (Omni), *Lightning* and *Hellcat* aerospace fighters; *Monarch*-class DropShip and several civilian conventional aircraft

Main Products (Lockheed/CBM of Furillo): Warrior helicopter, several civilian VTOLs

Main Products (Lockheed/CBM of Gibbs): *Eagle* and *Thunderbird* aerospace fighters, Medium Strike and *Raubvogel* conventional air fighters, civilian aircraft

Profile:

Lockheed/CBM corporation is to Lyran military aerospace forces what Defiance of Hesperus is to its 'Mech forces. Producing well over ninety percent of the Alliance's aerospace fighters, as well as introducing a host of conventional aircraft and aerospace vehicles to civilian sectors across Lyran territory (and beyond), Lockheed/CBM easily dominates the market and has received preferred business treatment from the LAAF and the Lyran government throughout the centuries.

The apparent favoritism toward Lockheed/CBM has not spared the company from the wrath of the Steiner government and judiciary, however. In the mid-3020s, investigations by the Commonwealth Board of Ethics in Trade resulted in charges of corruption against more than two-thirds of the interstellar company's board of directors, and the toppling and imprisonment of then-CEO Duke Alan Day.

In the resulting managerial reorganization, Rachael Haranshire—a minor member of the board—became the company's new CEO and enacted sweeping changes that rooted out not only the remaining embezzlers missed by the Commonwealth's sting, but also several lower-management officers involved in a host of other scandals. A grateful Archon Katrina Steiner rewarded Haranshire with Day's duchy, ensuring her and her family's control over the massive interstellar corporation.

MOUNTAIN WOLF BATTLEMECHS (MntWif)

Main Plant Locations: Monte Lupus (Vendrell), facilities also on Alpheratz (OA)

CEO: Brandon O'Leary

Main Products (Mountain Wolf of Vendrell): *Night Hawk* BattleMech

Profile:

Mountain Wolf BattleMechs started up in the 26th century as a light 'Mech manufacturer for the Star League, whose *Night Hawk* BattleMech successfully competed against Defiance Industries' proposal for a new light strike unit to supplant the *Stinger* and the *Wasp*. After the fall of the League, Mountain Wolf continued to produce *Night Hawks* well into the Succession Wars, though the decay of technology reduced their performance to a mere shadow of their original design specs, until the Vendrell factory was destroyed by Marik forces in 2945.

In 3055, Brandon O'Leary, great-grandson of Eli O'Leary, Mountain Wolf's last President and CEO, invested much of the family estate and drew on a host of corporate and government contacts to reopen the Lyran plant, following his success in restoring the company's Alpheratz plant more than four decades earlier. Reintroducing the company's signature 'Mech has gone a long way toward boosting Mountain Wolf as a major military producer, but despite brisk sales in the wake of the FedCom Civil War and sales of their heavier *Merlin* to Periphery interests, the company remains in precarious financial shape.



NEW EARTH TRADING COMPANY (NETC)

Main Plant Locations: Meridith (New Earth)

CEO: Duke Marcus Newcombe

Main Products: Alacorn, Manticore, Myrmidon and Vedette tanks; Karnov UR Transport

Profile:

Though many believe that this ancient company is little more than a ComStar front—a view partially born of the fact that NETC is the only military equipment producer known to use ComStar Equipment parts in their machines—the New Earth Trading Company is perhaps the oldest interstellar corporation in the Inner Sphere. Founded in the 22nd century to support the chaotic space exploration boom and humankind's mass exodus from Terra, and later diversifying for the benefit of the Star League, NETC became the model for interstellar business. At its height, the company claimed offices on five worlds within a jump of Terra, and an unsurpassed reputation for excellence in space transport, surface transport, electronics and even experimental artificial intelligence.

The Succession Wars cost NETC all of its off-world, high-tech facilities, but the company itself survived on its ability to act as a facilitator for trade and its limited production of armored vehicles, supplying the vast majority to ComStar and the Lyran state. In the mid-3050s, a financial windfall created by the race to rearm after the Tukayyid Truce led to the NETC military vehicle plant's first retooling and upgrade in nearly a century. Today, though many of its products are venerable designs, NETC's combat vehicles are high quality battlefield units.

NORSE-STORM TECHNOLOGIES, INC. (NSTech)

Main Plant Locations: Gray Mountains (Loxley), Xandria (Solaris VII)

CEO: Samuel Norse

Main Products (Norse-Storm of Loxley): *Devastator*, *Spectator* and *Thunder Hawk* BattleMechs

Main Products (Norse-Storm of Solaris VII): *Maelstrom* and *Nightstar* BattleMechs

Profile:

Originally known as Norse Technologies, a major 'Mech producer during the Star League, Norse-Storm technologies of Loxley was re-formed in the mid-3030s when Colonel Griff Storm of the newly formed Storm's Metal Thunder mercenary command discovered the ruins of the original factories. Aided in the endeavor by general government loans and financial aid from Samuel Norse, a descendant of the Norse family who originally ran the Star League-era facilities, the newly incorporated Norse-Storm Technologies unveiled the super-heavy *Devastator* in 3048, immediately winning several contracts with the FedCom government to produce more.

By the mid-3050s, Norse-Storm had expanded its operations with a second facility on Solaris VII. Manufacturing five powerful 'Mech designs—most based on Star League-era schematics and making use of advanced technology—the company has enjoyed remarkable growth as a supplier to Lyran and mercenary interests. However, detractors of this “upstart” company often point out that some of Norse-Storm's most popular ventures—notably, the *Maelstrom* and *Nightstar* BattleMechs—would perhaps sell less well had they not

been jointly devised alongside the larger, more financially secure FedSuns-based General Motors BattleMechs.

QUIKSCCELL COMPANY (QkCiCo)

Main Plant Locations: Harlowe Falls (Richvale), other facilities on Oliver and Kalidasa (FWL), Ares (CC) and Layover (FS)

CEO: Josef Kenworth

Main Products: Scorpion, LRM Carrier, SRM Carrier and tracked and heavy tracked APC vehicles

Profile:

Though they successfully relocated one of their two vehicle factories from Pandora to Richvale in the mid-3050s to escape possible capture by the Jade Falcon Clan, Quikscell Company's second factory on Oliver was lost when the Lyran Alliance seceded from the FedCom just a few years later. Neither the loss of the Oliver plant nor the company's notorious inefficiency in vehicle design, however, have reduced orders from the LAAF, who cannot be too choosy in the post-Civil War era. Still, the relocation of the Pandora plant to a safer interior world—mostly at the expense of Lyran taxpayers—has given company executives a long-overdue opportunity to improve upon some of the company's more wasteful practices, allowing them to streamline production and cut costs overall.

SEMIER DATA TRON (SeDaTron)

Main Plant Locations: Mako City (Tharkad)

CEO: Duchess Antoinette Greer

Main Products: *Buccaneer*, *Excalibur*, *Fortress* and *Seeker* DropShips; several small craft designs

Profile:

Though far younger than its principal rival, the Tharkad Aerospace Group (TAG), Semier Data Tron is clearly Tharkad's most favored DropShip manufacturing facility, as evidenced by the recent deployment of a full LAAF aerospace wing to act as the company's Mako City air defense force. Producing a line of rare but invaluable combined-arms military transport DropShips and small craft like the ST-46 DropShuttle, the company's owners, the Greer family of Mako Valley, have made many inroads into the Lyran military-industrial bureaucracy, and are said to have friends in very high places throughout the LAAF.

This favoritism has led to several accusations of nepotism by their rivals in TAG, and rumors abound that the two companies have fought several secret “corporate wars” already. The fact that both appear to be amassing military forces has exacerbated these rumors, and a special committee of the Estates General has been authorized to look into the matter before it comes to blows. At present, the rumors have begun to hurt business for both companies as many nervous investors pull their stocks in advance of the government investigation.



ECONOMICS

SHIPIL COMPANY (ShipCo)

Main Plant Locations: Edinburgh (Skye)

CEO: Duke Ryan DeGrange

Main Products: *Claymore*, *Overlord*, *Overlord-A3* and *Union-X* class DropShips; *Seydlitz* aerospace fighters and Light Strike aircraft

Profile:

Shipil Company, an ancient aerospace manufacturer whose roots predate the Star League, suffered heavy damage throughout the Succession Wars that followed the League's collapse. Despite this, the governments and nobility of Skye and Tharkad have staunchly supported this important producer of heavy DropShips and aerospace craft both economically and militarily.

With the formation of the Federated Commonwealth and the relative calm that followed the Fourth Succession War, Shipil recovered and increased its production of the classic *Overlord*-class 'Mech transport DropShip and has even introduced two new versions of the venerable craft since the Clan Invasion and the FedCom Civil War. In addition, the company has developed its own original design, dubbed the *Claymore*, as an assault craft whose very name invokes the spirit of the people of Skye.

Lyran government authorities have been concerned for decades about Shipil's loyalties in the face of Skye's many recent efforts to throw off Steiner government once and for all. Consequently, many people believe that government security and intelligence agencies always have their eyes on the dealings and behavior of Shipil's highest corporate officers.

SKYE PLEASURE CRAFT LTD. (SPCLim)

Main Plant Locations: Dublin Heights (Skye)

CEO: Baron Klaus Holburn

Main Products: Sea Skimmer Hydrofoil, numerous civilian hydrofoils and wet naval craft

Profile:

Originally a manufacturer of yachts, ferries and other small water craft used by the idle rich and local aqua-transport companies, Skye Pleasure Craft entered the military marketplace with the introduction of the Sea Skimmer combat hydrofoil in 2867. Built under contract for the newly formed reserve detachment of the Skye militia—itsself a glorified yacht club—the Sea Skimmer acquitted itself well during the Draconis Combine's 2895 invasion of Skye, prompting a flood of orders for more such craft for other water-rich worlds in the Commonwealth.

Today, Skye Pleasure Craft is one of the nation's largest wet navy contractors to do business on the interstellar scene, providing small combat and support vessels and even the occasional heavy capital ship or freighter—built to SPC standards on-site by local subcontractors—to military and civilian concerns throughout Lyran space.

S. L. LEWIS, INCORPORATED (SLeWInc)

Main Plant Locations: Trumbull (Carlisle)

CEO: Samuel L. Lewis, Jr.

Main Products: Savannah Master hovertank, heavy hover APC; numerous civilian hovercraft and hydrofoils

Profile:

In 3017, Samuel Laurence Lewis, a warrant officer aboard a Lyran merchant JumpShip, claimed a batch of tiny, military-grade Omni 25 fusion engines as his share of a cache of lostech discovered by his crew. Within a few years, Lewis transformed this windfall into a company producing the famous five-ton Savannah Master hovertank, an unbelievably fast vehicle capable of holding at bay even the day's most popular light 'Mechs such as the *Locust* and the *Wasp*.

Citing the limited supply of Omni 25 engines, which at the time were no longer in production anywhere in the Inner Sphere, critics predicted Lewis' success would not last. Yet today—more than forty years later—S. L. Lewis, Incorporated has survived and prospered, adding its own fusion production facilities to keep its version of the Omni 25—and its wildly popular Savannah Master line—on the market for all interested buyers. In addition, Lewis' son, Samuel Lewis Jr., has expanded the company into the civilian sector, with numerous recreational and commercial hovercraft and hydrofoil vehicles that also use lightweight fusion engines like the Omni 25.

STARCORPS INDUSTRIES (StrCrplnd)

Main Plant Locations: Stromhead (Loburg), Quasong (Son Hoa), facilities also located on Crofton (FedSuns), Emris IV (FWL), Menke and St. Ives (CapCon)

CEO: Mandrinn Trenton Volgers

Main Products (StarCorps of Loburg): *Longbow* and *Thanatos* BattleMechs, Manteuffel (Omni) tank

Main Products (StarCorps of Son Hoa): *Emperor*, *Highlander* and *Warhammer* BattleMechs; Manteuffel (Omni) tank

Profile:

During the Star League, StarCorps Industries, headquartered on Fletcher, was a major producer of BattleMechs for the SLDF. With the League's collapse, the interstellar conglomerate adapted many of its off-world industries to BattleMech production in order to survive the fallout and the Succession Wars that came afterward. In the Lyran realm, only one StarCorps plant—the Loburg facility—survived through all three centuries intact, producing the *Longbow* missile support 'Mech at a trickle barely sufficient to cover battlefield losses. The other facility, on Son Hoa, was vaporized in a nuclear attack by Marik troops at the start of the Second Succession War.

In 3057, the military buildup created by the Clans' arrival finally enabled StarCorps to upgrade its aging facilities, increase production, and—best of all—rebuild its holdings on Son Hoa, doubling the company's access to Lyran military markets. Furthermore, as one of the few international military manufacturers open to public trading in the Alliance Stock Exchange, StarCorps (now headquartered on the Capellan world of Menke) has given investors a good feeling about this small but expansive 'Mech manufacturing firm.



THARKAD AEROSPACE GROUP (TAGCorp)

Main Plant Locations: Aesiria (Tharkad)

CEO: Duke Lawrence Rothschild

Main Products: *Behemoth*, *Fortress*, *Mule* and *Intruder* DropShips

Profile:

TAG is one of the Lyran state's oldest surviving DropShip manufacturers, founded soon after Tharkad was chosen as the nation's capital in the early 2400s. In the years since, TAG has produced civilian and military DropShips from its Aesiria orbital shipyards over Tharkad, including the ultra-heavy *Behemoth*-class merchant vessel.

Though the technological decline of the Succession Wars slowed TAG's production to a trickle, the company survived by offering its orbital yards as a repair and refit facility to all traffic through Tharkad—even those of its chief rival, Semier Data Tron. This generosity earned the company a joint license to produce the venerable *Fortress*-class DropShip, a Star League-era combined-arms transport known for its ability to provide artillery support when grounded.

Despite their apparent cooperation in manufacturing military craft for the LAAF, the "friendly rivalry" between Semier and TAG may have taken a turn for the worse. Rumors suggest that TAG's board of directors recently released an inordinate amount of funds for mercenaries to augment the company's own aerospace defense forces. This move apparently mirrors Semier's recent request for additional air defense forces over its surface factories from the locally stationed 24th Lyran Guard.

THARHES INDUSTRIES (TharHes)

Main Plant Locations: Weibetal, Tharkad

CEO: Landgrave Gabriel Wellby

Main Products: *Barghest*, *Bushwacker*, *Crusader*, *Falconer*, *Goliath* and *Wolfhound* BattleMechs; standard Inner Sphere, Infiltrator (Mk I) and Fenrir battle armor

Profile:

TharHes Industries began as a branch of Defiance Industries specializing in the development and production of military-grade electronics, lasers and missile systems, but a brief company-wide sales slump led DefHes executives to unload a majority of their stocks in the nascent, semi-autonomous company, which were in turn bought up by the affluent Wellby family and House Steiner.

Under the Wellbys' and the Steiners' joint direction, TharHes expanded to BattleMech production, producing *Crusaders* for the Lyran military in the early 3010s, but the development of the *Wolfhound* BattleMech in the late 3020s truly proved this company's mettle. Within three decades, the factory had begun churning out an impressive line of machines for every weight class.

Ironically, though ancient giants like DefHes and Coventry Metal Works have long treated TharHes as a young upstart company in the military 'Mech markets, the Weibetal-based factories have provided a hefty share of weapons and electronics for designs fielded by both super-corporations. This arrangement stems from Lyran government policies encouraging inter-company cooperation and trade for economic growth and stability. As a demonstration of how such cooperation can be a double-edged sword,

however, TharHes' premier light 'Mech, the *Wolfhound*, is bound by long-term contract to purchase sensors and comm systems from Hesperus-based Doering Electronics rather than make use of their own high-quality systems.

YANKEE WEAPON SYSTEMS (Not Trading)

Main Plant Locations: Canton (New Earth), facilities also on Terra (Word of Blake)

CEO: Roger Greenwich

Main Products: *Excalibur* BattleMech

Profile:

The Yankee Weapon Systems plant on New Earth is a curiosity—not a military company based primarily in the Alliance, but actually headquartered on Terra. Opened in 3058, this factory made the Star League-era *Excalibur* 'Mech available to customers outside ComStar and the Word of Blake, in apparent defiance of what the common man sees as the Blakists' proprietary view of technology.

Because of this, and the fact that Yankee's New Earth division has remained a privately held corporation rather than a member of the Alliance stock exchanges, many in the Lyran government and business sectors see the company as a possible front for Blakist activities on Lyran soil. In the post-secession Alliance, however, even Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion seemed unwilling to look a gift horse in the mouth, and her successor has continued the LAAF policy of purchasing several units a month from the company.

BATTLEMECH DESIGN FIRMS OF SOLARIS VII

A rare animal, but one particularly abundant on the Game World of Solaris VII, BattleMech design firms—facilities that do not produce 'Mechs, but instead develop and sell 'Mech designs to larger factories throughout the Inner Sphere—have made their mark on the Lyran economy in their own small way. Many of these boast miniscule staffs and production facilities, limiting the few scratch-built and customized designs they manufacture to a mere handful a year. The following is just a sampling of these design firms.

Name: Innovative Design Concepts (InDesCon)

Main Plant Locations: Solaris City (Solaris VII)

CEO: Ramon Pietro

Main Products: BattleMech design services

Profile:

Innovative Design Concepts is the only Solaris City BattleMech design firm to appear on the Lyran stock exchanges, as part of CEO Ramon Pietro's desperate desire to enter the main-line 'Mech markets. Currently another arena-focused Mech designer like VEST and O'Neal's, whose products represent extensive customizations rather than truly unique designs, and incapable of mass-producing any machine in their limited factory space, IDC has nonetheless managed some success with its long-running *Daedalus* and *Longshot* BattleMechs, even though they are directly derived from the *Phoenix Hawk* and the *Assassin*, respectively.



ECONOMICS

Name: Omnitech Industries (Not Trading)

Main Plant Locations: Solaris City (Solaris VII)

CEO: Carl van Holdt

Main Products: BattleMech design services

Profile:

Omnitech Industries has made a few offworld sales with some of its scratch-built prototypes, but—like so many other Solaris 'Mech design firms—has largely limited its product development to experimental redesigns of extant machines. Among the company's most famous designs are the *Koto*, a 25-ton *Locust* upgrade, and the *Colossus*, a 95-ton experimental mesh of the *Marauder II* and *King Crab* BattleMechs. Unfortunately, the *Colossus'* failures canceled out the *Koto's* successes, and so Omnitech is currently struggling to make ends meet.

Name: O'Neal's BattleMechs (Not Trading)

Main Plant Locations: Xolara (Solaris VII)

CEO: Andrea O'Neal

Main Products: BattleMech design services

Profile:

A small company of less than fifteen technicians and engineers, O'Neal's BattleMechs is a quality design firm along the lines of VEST, but has developed its own designs expressly for local markets. Its only major hit since the company's founding in 3049 has been the *Werewolf*, a 40-ton 'Mech that, having failed to arouse any interest in military circles, found its way into a few Solaris stables. This success, however, is sorely limited by the company's inability to mass-produce anything.

Name: Solaris Arms (Not Trading)

Main Plant Locations: South Nowhere (Solaris VII)

CEO: Rico Saman

Main Products: BattleMech design services

Profile:

Solaris Arms is a small 'Mech manufacturing firm whose business is devoted far more to the arenas and stables of Solaris VII than to military exports. Like VEST, Solaris Arms focuses more on selling designs than on actual 'Mech production, and all three of its current 'Mech lines are produced in extremely limited quantities—just a few units a year. Unlike VEST, Solaris Arms tends to base its machines on existing models, with designs like the *Mantis* and *Ronin* clearly based on the *Ostscout* and the *Centurion*.

Name: Vining Engineering and Salvage Teams (Not Trading)

Main Plant Locations: Xolara (Solaris VII)

CEO: Doctor David C. Vining

Main Products: BattleMech design services

Profile:

Founded shortly before the Clan invasion by NAIS graduate and engineering genius Doctor David Vining, VEST has built a reputation as a developer of BattleMechs rather than a producer, building prototype machines for sale to interested buyers from any military. VEST's successes include Earthwerks' *Jackal* and *Grand Titan* designs, as well as several locally produced custom 'Mechs such as the 85-ton *Sasquatch*. As a small facility, VEST cannot mass-produce any of its designs.



The following rules cover roleplaying as well as the *Classic BattleTech* board game, allowing all types of players to emulate the unique qualities of Lyrans in their games.

CLASSIC BATTLETECH RPG RULES

This section provides several new Life Paths to supplement those found in the character creation rules for *Classic BattleTech RPG (CBT: RPG)* and the *Classic BattleTech Companion (CBT Comp)*. These rules enable players and gamemasters to create characters better tailored for Lyran-based campaigns.

MechWarrior Third Edition: *MechWarrior Third Edition (MW3)* was originally published by FASA Corporation. Upon its reprint by FanPro LLC, the name was changed to *Classic BattleTech RPG (CBT: RPG)*. This section references pages in *CBT: RPG*, but the page numbers are identical regardless of whether you own *CBT: RPG* or *MW3*.

SUB-REGIONS

The Lyran Alliance regions described on p. 34, *CBT Comp*, refer to large expanses of the original Lyran Commonwealth. These regions remain alive and well, but the redistricting of the Lyran state since its union with (and secession from) the Federated Commonwealth has gradually begun to blur the old regional borders. Because many of the tables in this section rely on the Alliance's current internal arrangement, the following Lyran Sub-Region Table further defines the home regions of Lyran characters based on each character's native province and adds skill points and traits for the creation of characters who hail from these regions. These skills and traits apply in addition to those described in *CBT Comp*.

TRAITS

The following section contains a selection of new traits and expanded rules for existing traits. Unless otherwise stated, these traits follow the rules in *CBT: RPG* (p. 78).

Some of the new traits are so closely related to existing traits (such as Quirks) established in previous rulebooks that players can exchange them at the end of character creation to give existing characters more flavor. When making such trait swaps, however, the player must switch among similar traits of equal point values, with the gamemaster determining whether the exchange is appropriate.

GREEDY (NEW)

Value: 1

Characters with this trait are obsessed with protecting what they have and accumulating more of the same, whether it be money, power or any other easily quantified commodity or resource. In general, characters with this trait behave as though they possess a Quirk that compels them to always guard what is theirs and accumulate more, and players may swap this trait for a 1-point Quirk/Greedy Trait. However, in addition to avaricious behavior, a character with the Greedy Trait also suffers a +2 penalty to the target number for all rolls that involve Negotiation, Protocol or Bureaucracy. This penalty reflects the character's inflexibility when bargaining with what he feels is rightfully his own. Likewise, any rolls involving the Administration, Appraisal or Scrounge skills receive a TN bonus of -2, reflecting the character's increased awareness of the value of his resources.

HEIR (NEW)

Cost: 2-8

The character with this trait is next in line to inherit a title of nobility or similar vast family empire of wealth and resources (such as a major corporation or industry). The size and proportion of the estate to which the character is heir is based on the character's SOC score, as well as the cost of this trait. (Heir costs two points less than

LYRAN SUB-REGION TABLE

Original Lyran Commonwealth Region	Modern Lyran Alliance Province or Theater	Skills, Traits and Modifiers
Protectorate of Donegal	Alarion Province/Timbuktu Theater	Language/Any +3; Protocol/Lyran Alliance -1
Protectorate of Donegal	Bolan Province/Cavanaugh Theater	Quirk/Hate House Marik; Negotiation/Political +2
Protectorate of Donegal	Coventry Province	Negotiation/Political +2
Protectorate of Donegal*	Melissia Theater	Language/English +2; Quirk/Hate Clans
Protectorate of Donegal	Donegal Province	+1 to all Social General/Advanced Social General Life Path event rolls
Protectorate of Donegal*	Arc-Royal Theater	+2 to Tactics/any or Negotiation/Any
Federation of Skye	Skye Province	Protocol/Lyran Alliance -2; Marketing +2
Tamar Pact†	Clan Jade Falcon Occupation Zone	+3 to Stealth or Survival; -1 to all Social General/Advanced Social General Life Path event rolls

*Worlds in these areas spinward (right) of a line from Newton Square to Ganshoren are originally part of the Tamar Pact.

†Including many worlds roughly one jump into the Wolf Clan Occupation Zone



HOUSE STEINER: RULES ANNEX





the character's SOC score, and is limited to characters with a SOC score of 4 or more after character creation.) Being an Heir increases the character's standing in social circles as others attempt to curry his or her favor, but also magnifies the character's responsibilities in administration and leading the dynasty he or she stands to inherit. These realities are reflected by a -2 TN modifier for all Administration, Bureaucracy and Protocol checks, and a -1 modifier for Deception, Fast-Talk, Negotiation and Seduction checks.

While the death of the current land- or business-holder typically transforms the Heir Trait into a combination of Title and Land Grant (or Wealth and Property for non-noble characters, such as corporate movers) equivalent to the character's SOC Attribute at the end of character creation, a character with this trait is not *guaranteed* to obtain his inheritance outright. Grievous enough offenses in conduct, in the eyes of the current titleholder or a higher-ranked member of the character's society (if said individual has the authority and right to do so) may temporarily or permanently deprive the character of his inheritance, and any one of the sycophants and servants who routinely curry the heir's favor may well be reporting his or her every move to those who can potentially divest the heir of his promised due. Such far-reaching roleplaying opportunities are up to the gamemaster, though he or she is encouraged to work with the player to generate the most interesting and realistic set of circumstances (based on the character's history and so on).

STIPEND (NEW)

Cost: 2/4/6/8/10

Similar to the Wealth Trait, Stipend represents a regular allowance that characters hailing from typically affluent families receive over and above any current salary or already accrued savings. As these monies typically flow from a trust fund established for the character's benefit by someone of higher social standing, the character with Stipend must take either the Heir Trait or an appropriate level Contact or Patron to represent this benefactor. The character then receives from this individual a monthly allowance that continues until the fund runs out, or until the character reaches some pre-defined state of maturity in his or her social, political or career development (such as finally finding a worthy mate, or proving ready to assume a certain position in a family enterprise while upholding the benefactor's standards). A stipend may be lost if the character fails to accomplish occasional tasks requested by his or her benefactor. The amount of monthly allowance provided by this trait, and its prerequisite traits, are described below in the Stipend Table. As with the Heir Trait, such far-reaching roleplaying opportunities are left to the gamemaster, working in consultation with the player.

STIPEND TABLE

Trait Points	Monthly Allowance	Minimum Prerequisite
2	500 C-bills	Must have Contact or Patron
4	1,000 C-bills	Must have Contact (2) or Patron (2)
6	1,750 C-bills	Must have Contact (2) or Patron (3)
8	3,000 C-bills	Must have Heir (2 - 4 pts), Contact (3) or Patron (4)
10	5,000 C-bills	Must have Heir (5 - 8 pts), Title, Contact (3) or Patron (5)

SKILLS

The following section contains a selection of new skills and expanded rules for existing skills. Unless otherwise stated, these skills follow the rules in *CBT: RPG* (p. 95).

MARKETING (NEW)

Characters with the marketing skill are not so much gifted in the art of salesmanship as in appealing to the common sense of their intended consumers and in maintaining an effective balance of cost-to-profit for the production, advertising and selling of their product. The marketing skill is, obviously, best used in commercial situations, enabling a character to lure customers more effectively whenever he or she wishes to sell a product or service, and may be used as necessary to pinpoint particular market groups or entice more customers into a new, dry or even oversaturated market. Mercenaries and others who sell their services may use this skill to drum up business. In such cases, the gamemaster may assign a TN based on the location and potential employers available wherever the character chooses to market himself, and increase the number of offers by 5 percent for every point by which the skill roll exceeds this amount (or decrease the number by an equal measure in the event of a failed result). (INT/WIL)

NEGOTIATION (EXPANDED)

The revised Negotiation Skill allows characters to choose a specialization where they can best apply their persuasive abilities. (CHA/WIL)

Negotiation/Commercial

The specialization focuses the character's skill on haggling over prices for goods and services, as the provider or purchaser of said goods. Characters can also use this skill to barter the basic terms of a business arrangement between mercenaries and governments, or between corporate management and independent contractors or labor unions. To negotiate a favorable price, the character with this skill must make an Opposed Skill Check and modify the current price of the good or service by a percentage based on the margin of success (or failure). A successful roll can reduce a merchant's price by as much as 5 percent per point of success (to a minimum of 25 percent of the original cost), while a fumble might insult the merchant so much that he refuses to sell at all.

Negotiation/Legal

The legal specialization is commonly used by attorneys and other members of the Inner Sphere's widely varied judicial systems. A successful Action Check using the Negotiation/Legal Skill may also reveal veiled clauses in the complex terminology of contracts or government legislation, allowing characters to find technicalities and loopholes in the relevant laws that can benefit or hinder them. During a legal proceeding, such as a trial or court-martial, a successful Opposed Skill Check using this skill may help a defense attorney sway the judge and the jury (if any), thereby reducing his client's charges or sentence, or even acquitting him altogether, while a fumble might financially ruin the character or even send him to the gallows.



HOUSE STEINER: RULES ANNEX

Negotiation/Political

The ultimate arenas for many practiced negotiators are the halls of power, whether corporate boardrooms or the floor of a Senate building. Negotiation/Political is the skill used in these venues, often to decipher the true intent and meaning of those in power as they communicate with the public, the media, their rivals and even their own underlings. A successful Action Check (often but not always Opposed) with this skill can cut through the flowery speech of a local political, corporate or military leader and allow the character to divine the plainer meaning beneath. Characters can also use it during negotiations over objectives that need not be all about money and the bottom line. Successful Negotiation/Political Checks can also disguise the negotiator's true motives using similar tricks of wordplay and innuendo, overcoming less savvy negotiators to gain concessions while presenting the appearance of offering a better deal. A successful Opposed Negotiation/Political Skill Check can help secure the release of hostages from a dangerous terrorist or hammer out the basics of a non-aggression pact between two otherwise hostile neighbors, while a fumble can lead to a tragic waste of life or even set armies on the path to war.

ADDITIONAL PATHS

The following section contains four new Life Paths unique or very closely tied to Lyran life. Players and gamemasters can use these paths in conjunction with those presented on pages 33–35 of *CBT: RPG* and pages 37–91 of *CBT Comp*. In addition to minimum required Attributes, the following paths list prerequisite paths a character must complete before entering them.

EVENTS

These paths feature unique events similar to the paths presented in the *CBT: RPG* rulebook. Use the standard rules for determining character events (see p. 24, *CBT: RPG*), with one exception. Instead of rolling 2D6, players roll 2D10 to select an event. After rolling dice for an event, the player can increase or decrease the dice roll results by 1 or 2, or reroll using a single expenditure of Edge (see *Edge and Events*, p. 25, *CBT: RPG*).

STAGE 4: REAL LIFE

Unless otherwise stated, this path follows the rules for Stage 4: Real Life in the *Character Creation* section of *CBT: RPG* (p. 47).

MERCHANT MASTER

Available to any affiliation, so long as the character has at least Negotiation/Commercial and two levels of Wealth. Lyran, Free Worlds and Clan Diamond Shark characters receive a +1 bonus to event rolls in this path. Lyran characters who passed through at least three generic Free Trader paths (see p. 48, *CBT: RPG*) before entering the Merchant Master path may apply an additional +2 bonus to event rolls.

Whether a seasoned spacer or a skilled entrepreneur, you stand out in a universe swarming with enterprising traders in your ability to drive hard bargains and turn a better profit. Many master merchants are still free traders, boldly striking out on their own to tap a universe of new markets where the less experienced fear to travel. Others

have joined interstellar conglomerates, drawing on these corporate powerhouses as semi-private contractors plying the space lanes for the deal of the century.

Time: 2 years

Attribute Minimum: CHA 4

Traits: Wealth, choose either Gregarious or Well-Connected

Skills: Negotiation/Commercial +3, Administration +2, Marketing +2, Career/Merchant +1

Previous Paths: Free Trader or any path that permits entry into the Free Trader path

Next Path: Corporate Mover (4), Free Trader (4), Merchant Master (4), Travel (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4)

Merchant Master Events

- 2 Got mixed up in some bad business and it cost you everything, even the shirt off your back. Now you're on the run from creditors and the law. [Negotiation/Commercial +2, Scrounge +2, Poverty (5) and lose Well-Connected (one level), Bloodmark (2), Bad Reputation (3), Stigma/Criminal. If the character has any combat skills, his next path must be Tour of Duty: Pirate; otherwise, next path must be Ne'er-Do-Well. May take no further Merchant or Free Trader paths.]
- 3 Nobody bought your story that you didn't know your cross-border shipment was loaded with stolen weapons. [Scrounge +3, Streetwise/Any +2, Poverty (3), and lose one level of Well-Connected, Bad Reputation (3), Poorly Equipped, Stigma/Gun Runner, and add 2D6 years to the time spent in this path. Next path must be Ne'er-Do-Well, or Tour of Duty: Pirate if combat-trained.]
- 4 Following a bad year, you are approached by some "legitimate businessmen" with an offer difficult to refuse. [Streetwise/Any +2, Administration -2. If you accept their "help," take In For Life, Wealth (2), Dark Secret (3), Stigma/On the Take and Timid. Otherwise, take Brave, Quirk/Honorable, Bloodmark (3), Poorly Equipped and Poverty (3).]
- 5 Took one chance too many while opening up a new Periphery market. Pirates made off with everything that wasn't nailed down, including your crew! [Escape Artist +4, Scrounge +2, +2 to any two combat-related skills, -2 to all other skills gained in this path. Add 2D6 years to the time spent in this path, lose all Wealth and Well-Equipped, and next path must be Ne'er-Do-Well.]
- 6 The local trade consortium doesn't take kindly to freelancers operating in its territory. [Marketing -2, Enemy (3), Poverty (2)]
- 7 Did someone forget to pay those "special" border-crossing fees again? [Fast Talk +2, Streetwise/Any +2, Protocol/Any +1, Dark Secret/Blackmailed, Impatient, Poverty, Poorly Equipped]
- 8 You didn't think you were the merchant king in these parts, did you? [Enemy (2), Poverty]
- 9 Either the market's dry around here, or the economy's just plain bad. Either way, you had to cut overhead. [Career/Merchant +2, Poverty, Poorly Equipped]
- 10 It's been another slow year. [Poverty]
- 11 It ain't sexy, but business has at least been steady. [+1 to any three skills in the Merchant Field]
- 12 Another humdrum year, but at least you managed to get a line on some new markets. [Marketing +3, Career/Merchant +1]
- 13 Busy year. You've not opened many new markets, but after tallying all the expenses and profits, you still came out ahead. [+2 to any two Merchant Field skills, +1 to any two other skills, Wealth]



- 14 Among the first to tap a new market, you managed to snake your competition, but not by much. [Marketing +3, Career/Merchant +2, Negotiation/Commercial +2, +2 to any two other skills, Contact, Wealth, Enemy (2)]
- 15 It's not a buyout; it's a long-term partnership. Just keep up the good work! [Negotiation/Commercial +2, Career/Merchant +2, Administration +1, Protocol/Any +1, Wealth (2), Contact (2)]
- 16 Your skills with guns are almost as good as your skills at the bargaining table. Those bandits won't ever underestimate you again! [+2 to any three Military Field skills, +2 to any other skill, Wealth (2), Well-Equipped]
- 17 Not only did you find a way to open up a new market when the local government underwent a "regime change," but you managed to bankrupt your biggest rival in the effort to corner it. [Negotiation/Commercial +4, Streetwise/Any +3, Administration +2, Career/Merchant +2, Fast-Talk +1, Stigma/Ruthless (2), Wealth (3), Well-Connected, Enemy (2), Good Reputation (2), Property]
- 18 It didn't take long with all that wheeling and dealing to draw the attention of the local trading consortium, which approaches you with a very handsome offer. [+2 to any three skills learned in this pass. If you accept, take Wealth (4), Well-Connected, Good Reputation (2), Stigma/Sellout, choose either Well-Equipped or Property (2), and next path must be Travel, Corporate Mover or Civilian Job. If not, take Brave, Enemy (3), Wealth, Contact (2) and add +3 to any two skills.]
- 19 Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results.
- 20 Choose two events or roll three times and apply each result.

CORPORATE MOVER

Available to any affiliation. Lyran characters receive a +1 bonus to all event rolls. If from any Protectorate of Donegal sub-region, the bonus rises to +2.

The corporate mover may not have the most exciting lifestyle in the universe, but he's on the fast track to success nonetheless. Indeed, just as warriors and mercenaries may conquer a world and bring it under their liege's dominion, the corporate mover may build a financial empire through years of careful planning, endless deal-making and the occasional boardroom backstabbing.

Time: 4 years

Attribute Minimum: SOC 4

Traits: Stigma/Ruthless, Wealth, Well-Connected

Skills: Negotiation/Commercial +3, Career/Any Relevant +2, Leadership +2, Negotiation/Any Other +2, Administration +1

Previous Paths: Any University or Civilian Job

Next Path: Civilian Job (4), Corporate Mover (4), Travel (4)

Corporate Mover Events

- 2 After a freak accident at the newest project site, the company compensates you handsomely, but it doesn't make up for the loss of the best years of your life. [BOD -2, Negotiation/Legal +3, First Aid +2, Medtech +2, -1 to any two skills earned in this path, Addiction/Prescription Painkillers (2), Disabled (3), Wealth (4), Unlucky, add 2D6 years to the time spent in this path, and choose one: Clumsy, Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (2), Poor Vision (2), Slow Learner, or Unhealthy. Next path must be Ne'er-Do-Well, Travel, or Civilian Job.]
- 3 A senior member of the board just washed up in the local river, and your colleagues—along with the media—are convinced you had everything to do with it. (Player decides guilt or innocence.) [Leadership -2, Administration -1, Bad Reputation (3), and lose all Wealth. If you stay and face the music, take Negotiation/Legal +3, Brave, Unlucky (2), and choose Dark Secret (2), Stigma (2)/Murderer or Madness (2), and add 3D6 years to the time spent in this path. If you run, take Escape Artist +2, Stealth +2, Alternate Identity, Bloodmark (3), Dark Secret (4) and Enemy (2). Either way, next path must be Ne'er-Do-Well.]
- 4 Caught embezzling funds, you lost your golden parachute, and after so many years in prison you'll never be the same. [SOC -2, Administration +2, Fast Talk +1, Negotiation/Legal +1, Bad Reputation (3), Enemy (2), Stigma/Criminal (2), Poverty (3), choose Addiction (2), Clumsy, Disabled (2), Madness/Any (2), or Unlucky, and add 1D6 years to the time spent in this path. Next path must be Ne'er-Do-Well.]
- 5 One indiscretion too many in the workplace earned you a nice, shiny pink slip. [Negotiation/Any -2, +2 to Seduction, Gambling, or Streetwise/Any. Take Bad Reputation, Poverty (2), Enemy (2), and add 1D6 years to the time spent in this path. Next path must be Ne'er-Do-Well.]
- 6 "Interstellar marketing trends being what they are in this day and age, we've had to make a few cutbacks." Choose a voluntary demotion or take the golden parachute to greener pastures. [If you stay, take Poverty, Good Reputation (3), Patron, Quirk/Corporate Loyalist, and next path must be Civilian Job. Otherwise, take SOC -1, Career/Any Relevant -2, Marketing +1, Wealth, Unlucky, add 4 years to this path, and next path must be Ne'er-Do-Well or Civilian Job.]
- 7 The company frowns on fraternization in the workplace. Be grateful you still have a job. [Seduction +2, Fast-Talk +1, -1 to all other skills earned in this pass, Bad Reputation, Poverty]
- 8 A little fraternizing in the workplace might be harmless, but sometimes you get more than you bargained for. [Dependent, Poverty]
- 9 No matter how successful you get, sometimes, the drudgery of daily life leaves us all staring out the window, watching life pass us by. [Interest/Any Two +1, -1 to all skills earned in this pass]
- 10 You stave off the mind-numbing effects of career stagnation by frequenting the local pubs and hanging out with colleagues. [Interest/Any +2, Computers +1, Streetwise/Any +1, Addiction, choose BOD -1 or Impatient]
- 11 Sometimes, it seems you're just a high-priced worker drone. [Career/Any Relevant +1, +1 to any other skill]
- 12 Career progress isn't always measured in money and stock options, you know. [Marketing +2, Career/Any Relevant +2]
- 13 Climbing up the corporate ladder, one supervisor at a time. [Negotiation/Commercial +2, Leadership +1, +1 to any other skill, Wealth]
- 14 Raise and promotion. Not bad for four years. [Administration +2, Leadership +2, Wealth]
- 15 Your company won the government contract, and you got tapped as the liaison—travel expenses paid, of course. [Protocol/Affiliation +3, Negotiation/Political +2, Marketing +2, Career/Any Relevant +1, Gregarious, Well-Connected]
- 16 The competition has certainly taken notice of you, and the offer of your dreams now sits on the table. [Career/Any Relevant +2. If you accept the offer, take Wealth (4), Patron (2), Property (2), Well-Equipped, Enemy/Former Employers (2) and Stigma/Deserter. If you decline, take Wealth (3), Property, Good Reputation (3), Well-Connected, Enemy/Rival Corporation (2) and Quirk/Corporate Loyalist.]
- 17 How does "Vice President of Regional Operations" sound? [Career/Any Relevant +3, Negotiation/Commercial +3, Language/Any +2, Marketing +2, Zero-G Operations +1, Well-Connected, Wealth (3), may take Travel Path next]



HOUSE STEINER: RULES ANNEX

- 18 The deal of the decade lands you the chairmanship! [Negotiation/Commercial +4, Leadership +3, SOC +2, Wealth (4), Property (2), Good Reputation (2), Enemy (2), Well-Connected]
- 19 Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results.
- 20 Choose two events or roll three times and apply each result.

TOUR OF DUTY: ADVANCED "SOCIAL GENERAL"

Lyran Alliance Affiliation only. Must have the Commission Trait and at least one level of Contact or Well-Connected. Taking this path counts as a repeat for any Lyran Tour of Duty, with event roll penalties as appropriate. However, a +2 bonus applies if at least two previous tours were from the Tour of Duty: "Social General" path (see p. 51, CBT: RPG).

It takes more than politics as usual to stand out in the unique socio-military structure of today's Lyran armed forces. For those who survived the Byzantine games to advance their careers and social standing while simultaneously serving their time in uniform, some stand out as quietly acknowledged experts in the power politics of manipulation, bribery and blackmail.

Time: 2 years

Attribute Minimums: CHA 3, SOC 5

Traits: Contact (2), Enemy (2), Promotion, choose either Attractive, Good Reputation or Gregarious

Skills: Protocol/Lyran Alliance +3, Bureaucracy/Lyran Alliance +3, Career/Soldier +2, Negotiation/Political +2

Previous Paths: Any Lyran Alliance Military Academy or Tour of Duty

Next Path: Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (4), Tour of Duty: Lyran Alliance (4), Tour of Duty: "Social General" (4, but only if character has at least one Contact), Tour of Duty: Advanced "Social General" (4, but only if character still meets the requirements), Travel (4)

Tour of Duty: Advanced "Social General" Events

- 2 Played for a fool, you came out on the wrong side of the Archon. [Negotiation/Political -1, Scrounge +3, Negotiation/Legal +2, Escape Artist +1, SOC -2, Lose all Contact, Rank and Well-Connected traits, take Enemy (3), Bad Reputation (3), Poverty (3), and Stigma/Traitor (2), add 3D6 years to the time spent in this pass, may take no more Lyran military, covert operations or government paths]
- 3 Your attempt to blackmail a respected member of the Estates General backfired horribly, and now you're the one on the run. [Bad Reputation (3), Bloodmark (3), Enemy (3), lose all Contact, Rank and Well-Connected traits, next path must be Ne'er-Do-Well]
- 4 That noble you crossed pulled some strings, and guess who just happened to get transferred to the front for an objective raid based on faulty intelligence! Worse, guess who got blamed when the mission fell apart as predicted! [+3 to any three skills in a Military Field, +2 to any two other skills, Bad Reputation (3), Enemy (3), Stigma/Failure, lose three highest-ranked Contacts (or all Contacts, if less than three), choose one: BOD -2, Addiction (2), Clumsy, Combat Paralysis, Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (2), Madness/Any (2), or Unlucky (2). Next path must be Tour of Duty: Lyran Alliance, Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere, or Ne'er-Do-Well.]
- 5 One of your rivals dug up some dirt on your family that you thought was long buried. Your reputation is shot. [SOC -1, Interest/Family History +2, Negotiation/Politics +2, Bad Reputation (2), Enemy (2), Shameful Heritage (2)]

- 6 A rival has learned of some of your less savory moments. Of course, none of it needs to become public—so long as you do exactly as he says... [If you submit to this blackmail, take Negotiation/Political -2, Dark Secret (3), In for Life, Patron (2) and Quirk/Paranoid (2). If not, take Bad Reputation (3), Brave, Enemy (3), and may take no more "Social General" paths.]
- 7 You turned on the charm full blast and got caught in bed with the duke's daughter the next day. Perhaps you should have been a tad more discreet. [Seduction +2, Fast-Talk +2 and roll 1D6. On a result of 1 - 3, the noble flies into a rage; take Escape Artist +3, Bad Reputation (3), Bloodmark (3) and choose Disabled (2) or Demotion (2). On a result of 4 or 5, take Bad Reputation (3), Demotion (3) and lose one Contact. On a result of 6, the noble forces you into wedlock; take Negotiation/Political +3, Contact (3), Dependent (2), Wealth (2) and Title.]
- 8 Someone you stepped on during your rise remembers you upon your subsequent fall. [Career/Soldier -2, Negotiation/Political -2, +1 to any two combat skills, Demotion, Enemy]
- 9 The young noble to whose coattails you attached yourself had no more career potential than you did! [Career/Soldier -1, Impatient]
- 10 "I don't care *who* your daddy is, boy! In this outfit, we *earn* our promotions!" Assigned to a decidedly apolitical commander. [+2 to any two relevant combat skills, Unlucky]
- 11 Hard to climb the social ladder when you're constantly assigned to backwater garrisons. [Career/Soldier +1, +1 to any other skill]
- 12 You befriended a fresh-faced, wide-eyed heir. [Seduction +2, Career/Soldier +1, Negotiation/Political +1, Contact]
- 13 You couldn't resist the opportunity to loot the enemy stockpile after your command seized it during the raid, and your team really appreciates a commander willing to "show some damned initiative." [Negotiation/Political +3, +2 to any Military Field skill, Contact, Dark Secret (2), Greedy, Wealth (2), Well-Equipped]
- 14 Kissed the right butt this time, didn't you? [Protocol/Lyran Alliance +3, Negotiation/Political +2, Promotion, Wealth]
- 15 "Don't think of it as blackmail, my lord; think of it as keeping you honest." You've got the goods on a rival; now it's time to make him sweat. [SOC +1, Negotiation/Political +4, Leadership +2, +1 to any two other skills, Contact (3), Dark Secret (3), Enemy (3), Promotion (2), Wealth (2). In this event, the Enemy and Contact traits represent the same person.]
- 16 Contrary to popular belief, not every politically aware Lyran officer is a tactical incompetent, as you proved so brilliantly on the battlefield. [SOC +1, Leadership +3, Tactics/Any +2, +3 to any two other Military Field skills, +1 to any two other skills, Brave, Enemy (2), Good Reputation (3), Promotion (2)]
- 17 Someone you helped along your own way up repaid that old debt when your back was against the wall. [Negotiation/Politics +2, +3 to any two other skills, +1 to any two other skills, lose one Enemy, gain Good Reputation, Life Debt, Patron and choose two of the following: Promotion (2), Vehicle (2), Wealth (2), Well-Connected or Well-Equipped]
- 18 Hero of the Alliance! The right combination of politics and martial glory have earned you wealth, power and above all, respect—but at what price? [SOC +1, Negotiation/Politics +2, Career/Soldier +2, Leadership +2, Good Reputation (2), Enemy (3), Promotion (3), Title, Land Grant, Wealth (3), Vehicle (3), Owns Vehicle, choose: BOD -2, Addiction (2), Dark Secret (2), Madness/Flashbacks (2) or Unattractive]
- 19 Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results.
- 20 Choose two events or roll three times and apply each result.



CREATURES

This section provides several new creatures native to worlds in the Lyran Alliance. All of them follow the rules for Creatures presented in *CBT Comp*.

KYOTAN ARMOR BEAR (URSUS BLINDARUS KYOTIS)

The Kyotan armor bear is a powerful predator native to the Lyran world of New Kyoto in the Federation of Skye. It strongly resembles a terrestrial bear, but its head and torso are covered with thick plates reminiscent of the natural armor found on Terran armadillos. A black, leathery hide covers these plates; thick, coarse black or brown fur grows between them and covers the bear's arms, legs and face. The armor does not hinder the bear's mobility; this animal is incredibly fast and aggressive, adapted for life in the harsh, predator-filled jungles of New Kyoto's northern Asharu continent.



The Kyotan armor bear is a pure carnivore and has a special liking for warm-blooded creatures, including humans and even other armor bears. Powerful, swift and almost impossible to kill without heavy weapons, these creatures terrorized the early inhabitants of New Kyoto, decimating entire settlements before organized hunting parties began to thin out their numbers. Though today's armor bears keep to the remaining woodlands on Asharu, far from human settlements, more than a thousand deaths on New Kyoto each year are blamed on these creatures. As with all New Kyotan wildlife, exporting armor bears off world is strictly prohibited by Kyotan and Lyran law.

Homeworld: New Kyoto, Federation of Skye, Lyran Alliance

Environment: Temperate and subtropical woodlands

Type: Native

Body Shape: Four-legged

Coloring: Black or brown fur and hide

Length: 345 cm

Height: 195 cm

Weight: 900 kg

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
32	34	2	5	4	7	1

Traits: Aggressive (3), Bad Vision (2), Good Smell (3), Quirk: Warm-Blooded Creatures, Terror

Skills: AniMelee +5, Climbing +2, Perception +6, Sudden Strike +2, Tracking +2

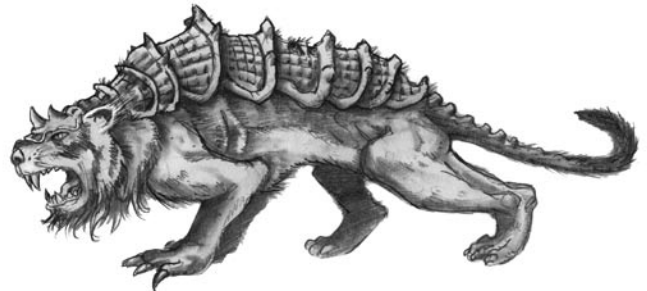
Size: Large (+1)

Armor: Thick plates beneath a tough hide (torso and head only) [3/3/2/1], thick hide on legs [1/1/0/0]

Attack: 2 • 4D6 (claws),
1 • 5D6 (bite)

Movement: Ground 6/11/22; Water 2/3; Sprinting 5 turns; Jumping 3 meters

Notes: Armor bears are solitary hunters and never appear in groups larger than pairs. They are also extremely difficult to domesticate and train, imposing a +9 TN modifier on any attempt to do so.



KI-RIAN (PANTHERA BLINDARUS KYOTIS)

A vicious feline pack hunter native to New Kyoto, the ki-rian is another of the planet's native armored mammals, which dominate the local food chain and threatened early colonial efforts on that world. With the same thick hide and armored plates as the armor bear, the ki-rian was initially classed as a variant of the bear species, despite its obvious feline characteristics and its exclusive evolution on the equatorial Kalasaka continent, where it still prowls the tropical jungles and open grasslands. Ki-rians are fast, aggressive and remarkably agile despite their armored torsos. Their fearlessness has led them into many clashes with human settlements all over Kalasaka, where they are blamed for thousands of deaths and injuries annually. Every few years, the natives of New Kyoto wage massive hunting campaigns to reduce the ki-rian population, a practice that only briefly contains this species.

Homeworld: New Kyoto, Federation of Skye, Lyran Alliance

Environment: Equatorial jungles and grasslands

Type: Native

Body Shape: Four-legged

Coloring: Black, brown or tan fur over black, armored hide

Length: 105 cm

Height: 82 cm

Weight: 82 kg

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
8	9	2	6	3	7	1

Traits: Bad Hearing, Blood Rage, Good Smell (2), Night Vision, Pack Hunter (4-12), Terror

Skills: AniMelee +6, Climbing +1, Perception +3, Tracking +2

Size: Medium (+0)

Armor: Thick plates beneath a tough hide (torso only) [3/3/2/1], thick hide on head and legs [1/1/0/0]

Attack: 2 • 3D6 (bite, claws)

Movement: Ground 11/25/50; Water 5/10; Sprinting 2 turns; Jumping 3 meters



HOUSE STEINER: RULES ANNEX

TOAD-FOX (PSEUDOVULPES BUFOS RAHNEIS)

The Rahne toad-fox—named for its distinctly amphibian shape despite being a red-furred mammal—evolved on the stormy, water-poor world of Rahne, where the seasons (known locally as storm, calm, cold and melting) change abruptly every 21 days. The toad-fox is an aggressive, nocturnal hunter with long (30-centimeter) ears and poisonous, 15-centimeter claws that preys mostly on the slimy rock-hugger, an invertebrate species common to the rocky mountain regions that cover much of Rahne's surface. Though possessing what inhabitants of the underground cities call an evil disposition, the toad-fox does not often attack humans, who mostly keep to their underground dwellings. However, during the deadly melting seasons when these creatures mate, they burrow into the mountainsides. Burrowing toad-foxes occasionally find their way into outlying settlements, where they can cause havoc.



Homeworld: Rahne, Federation of Skye, Lyran Alliance

Environment: Mountains and canyons

Type: Native

Body Shape: Four-legged

Coloring: Red fur, solid black eyes

Length: 120 cm

Height: 80 cm

Weight: 56 kg

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
6	7	3	7	2	5	2

Traits: Aggressive (2), Bad Hearing, Blood Rage, Good Smell (2), Night Vision (2), Pack Hunter (2-6)

Skills: AniMelee +5 (Poison), Climbing +5, Perception +2

Size: Medium (+0)

Armor: Furred hide [1/0/0/0]

Attack: 1 • 3D6 (claws, poison),
1 • 2D6 (bite)

Poison [4D6; Lethal; Injected; 2 turns, 2 doses]

Movement: Ground 10/20/60; Sprinting 15 turns; Jumping 8 meters

THARKAN GAZELLE (GAZELLA THARKADII)

The Terran gazelle was among the first herd animals imported to the cold climate of Tharkad by Seth Marsden, one of the original founders of the Protectorate of Donegal. Though naturally suited to the snow and ice of Terra's North American region, many of these beasts struggled to adapt to the even more intense cold of the future Lyran capital, and grew heavier and sturdier than their Terran forebears. Today, gazelles abound in Tharkad's arctic and cooler temperate regions, in the wild and on ranches, where they are raised for their meat and hides. Typical gazelle herds in captivity can be as large as fifty animals, while wild gazelles often range in herds of five to ten and survive by grazing and foraging in the broad wilderness and forests well beyond the borders of human civilization.



Homeworld: Tharkad, Protectorate of Donegal, Lyran Alliance

Environment: Arctic, tundra and cool temperate regions

Type: Introduced

Body Shape: Four-legged

Coloring: White or tan fur and hide, with brown or tan markings

Length: 240 cm

Height: 200 cm

Weight: 575 kg

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
23	22	1	4	4	3	2

Traits: Bad Vision (2), Good Hearing (2), Good Smell (2), Shy

Skills: AniMelee +2, Perception +4, Ram +3

Size: Large (+1)

Armor: Thick hide [1/1/0/0]

Attack: 1 • 2D6 (bite, hooves)

2 • 4D6 (ram, antlers)

Movement: Ground 18/28/40; Water 2/3; Sprinting 10 turns; Jumping 5 meters

Notes: Tharkan gazelles in ranch herds automatically have the Domesticated and Tamed traits.



KAUMBERG EICHHORNCHEN (FELIPHILUS KAUMBERGII)

The Kaumberg eichhornchen is a small, tree-dwelling mammal common to the vast woodlands of Kaumberg, a minor world in the Lyran Alliance's Alarion Province. It has since spread to many worlds throughout the Alliance and beyond, thanks to its habit of hitching rides on many of the planet's outbound lumber shipments. Though hardly an ideal house pet—eichhornchens have a taste for wood rivaling that of the Terran beaver and have no qualms about gnawing away at furniture and structural supports in the average home—many humans have been taken in by their soothing sounds (a cross between a bird-like coo and a feline purr) and their cute appearance (a mix of qualities found in the typical Terran cat and common ground squirrel). Because of this, these creatures have managed to invade households across the Inner Sphere, but many immune to their charm view them as the pests they are.

Homeworld: Kaumberg, Alarion Province, Lyran Alliance

Environment: Woodlands, moderate climates

Type: Native

Body Shape: Four-legged with a long tail

Coloring: Black, gray, brown or tan fur with white striping or spots

Length: 28 cm

Height: 13 cm

Weight: 10 kg

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
2	2	2	7	6	5	4

Traits: Good Hearing (2), Good Smell (2), Night Vision, Quirk/Wood, Shy

Skills: Acrobatics +5, AniMelee +3, Climbing +5, Perception +3, Stealth +3

Size: Extremely small (-3)

Armor: Furred hide [1/0/0/0]

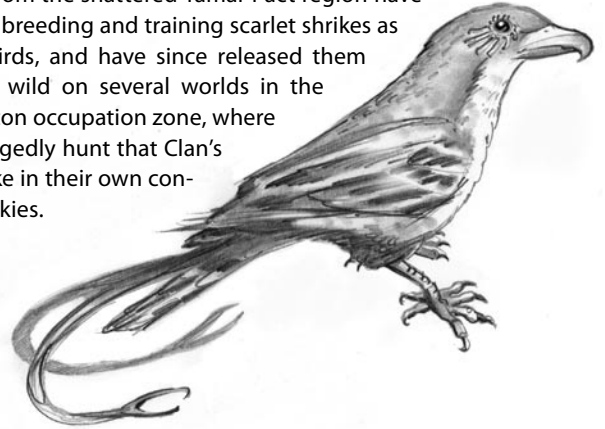
Attack: 1 • 2D6 (bite),
0 • 1D6 (claws)

Movement: Ground 4/8/26; Sprinting 4 turns; Jumping 4 meters



SCARLET SHRIKE (LANIUS CARNIVORUS KOLOVRATIS)

The scarlet shrike is a small but aggressive bird of prey native to the Lyran world of Kolovraty, close to the Clan and Periphery borders. An airborne carnivore that preys on smaller birds and even a few large native insects and rodents, the shrike has a hooked beak, six-taloned feet and a pair of long, tentacle-like appendages that grow from its tail and appear to aid in flight stability and capturing prey. Its distinctive red and orange plumage and piercing cry earned this creature its official name and its nickname, the Kolovraty phoenix. Though extremely difficult to domesticate, rumor has it that some wealthy nobles from the shattered Tamar Pact region have taken to breeding and training scarlet shrikes as attack birds, and have since released them into the wild on several worlds in the Jade Falcon occupation zone, where they allegedly hunt that Clan's namesake in their own conquered skies.



Homeworld: Kolovraty, Coventry Province, Lyran Alliance

Environment: Moderate climate

Type: Native

Body Shape: Winged

Coloring: Red and orange feathers, black beak and eyes

Wingspan: 86 cm

Height: 40 cm

Weight: 0.9 kg

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
2	1	2	7	3	6	2

Traits: Aggressive, Good Sight (2), Showy Coloring

Skills: AniMelee +4, Perception +4

Size: Extremely Small (-3)

Armor: Feathers [1/0/0/0]

Attack: 2 • 2D6 (beak, talons)

Movement: Ground 0.5/0/0; Air 75

Notes: Trained hunting shrikes increase AniMelee to +5 and gain Tracking +3, and also pick up the Tamed Trait. In some cases, they may even pick up a Quirk reflecting a preferred prey (such as jade falcons).



HOUSE STEINER: RULES ANNEX

GRAUSIAN BLOODSUCKER (CRANAE VAMPIRUS GRAUSIS)

Distantly related to the deadly crana, the Grausian bloodsucker retains many of the same characteristics of the large insectoid creature that has terrified people across the Inner Sphere. Though only half the size of the standard crana, the bloodsucker moves fast on its eight legs. However, it relies more on surprise than speed to catch its prey, often lying dormant until a heat source draws near enough to awaken its senses. The Grausian bloodsucker has adapted to life on the fringes of human society and prefers to hunt smaller prey than humans, such as local wildlife, including the Grausian scrufter (a coyote-like desert scavenger). Bloodsuckers immobilize their prey with a powerful toxin, then drain the victim of most of its blood. Sometimes, the bloodsucker deposits eggs in the victim while feeding, but instances of laying eggs in a creature still living are rare. Though these insects are generally wary of humans, locals frequently tell harrowing tales of bloodsucker encounters.

Homeworld: Graus, Protectorate of Donegal, Lyran Alliance

Environment: Desert and badlands, warm climates

Type: Native, possibly introduced and mutated

Body Shape: Eight-legged

Coloring: Tan or brown chitin

Length: 31 cm

Height: 15 cm

Weight: 9 kg

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
2	1	2	6	4	4	1

Traits: Bloodsucker, Good Smell (2), Night Vision, Toxic Immunity, Shy

Skills: AniMelee +4, Climbing +2, Perception +3, Stealth +3

Size: Extremely Small (-3)

Armor: Chitin [2/1/1/2]

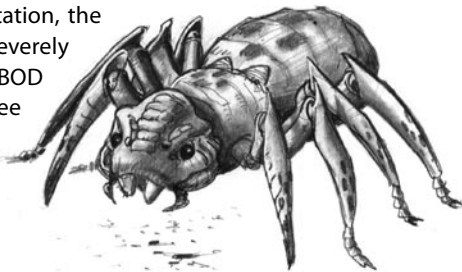
Attack: 1 • 1D6 (bite, poison),

1 • 2D6 (claws)

Poison [2D6; Subduing; Injected; 3 turns, 3 doses]

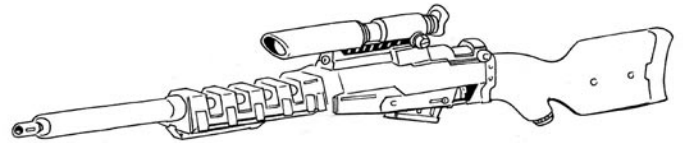
Movement: Ground 6/10/20; Sprinting 1 turn

Notes: Bloodsuckers typically move in groups of 3 to 18, and may appear dead at first glance. If a warm-blooded character moves within 5 meters of one, the creature must make a Perception Check, and awakens instantly upon success. On any successful bite attack that immobilizes its prey, a bloodsucker may deposit 1D6 eggs into a victim on a separate 1D6 roll result of 6; otherwise it simply makes another attack against the victim as if against an immobile target, causing damage normally (reflecting blood drain). If eggs are implanted, they hatch in 2D6 + 10 days, but can be removed before then on a successful MedTech or Surgery Check with a +2 penalty. During gestation, the victim becomes severely ill and loses one BOD point for every three days that the eggs remain inside him. He dies if his BOD score reaches zero.



PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

The equipment described below follows the standard rules in *CBT: RPG*, *CBT Comp*, *Lostech* and *Combat Equipment*. Unless otherwise specified, all of these items have a Lyran affiliation, and so their availability to non-Lyrans may be restricted.

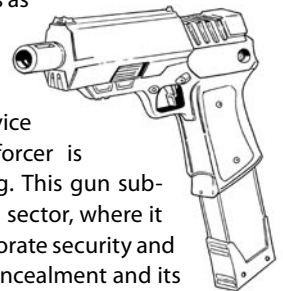


M&G G-150 HUNTING RIFLE

Thanks to the company's reputation for fine firearms, it comes as no surprise that the Mauser & Gray G-150 hunting rifle has become the weapon of choice for sports hunters across the Alliance. Solid, dependable and exceedingly popular, the G-150 boasts a highly accurate single-fire mode and a short burst capacity for bigger game. The standard weapon kit offered by Mauser & Gray includes a detachable telescopic scope and a gun case of Kaumberg oak lined with faux silk, but the G-150's semi-modular design offers owners a wealth of options for customization.

TK "ENFORCER" SEMI-AUTOMATIC PISTOL

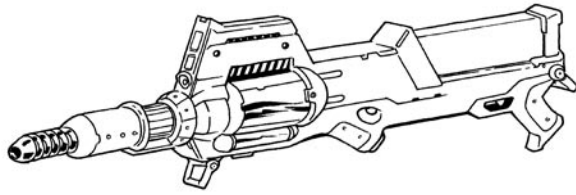
Originally designed by TK industries as a reliable companion to the TK assault rifle, the TK "Enforcer" semi-automatic pistol lost out as the standard sidearm of the LAAF to the Mauser & Gray service automatic primarily because the Enforcer is more expensive and prone to jamming. This gun subsequently found its niche in the civilian sector, where it remains a favored weapon among corporate security and executive bodyguards for its ease of concealment and its compatibility with TK assault rifle clips.



STAR KING GYROSLUG CARBINE

A venerable firearm first produced by Kelang Weapons during the First Succession War (before Kelang merged with nearby Triesting Arms to become TK Industries), the Star King gyroslug carbine has been kept alive by a dedicated following among firearms aficionados ever since the model was discontinued in favor of TK's standard "cone rifle" lines. Despite its age, the typical Star King still boasts better range and hitting power than most modern carbines, but original ammunition designed for this weapon is almost as hard to come by as the rifle itself.





MAXELL PL-10 LASER RIFLE

Its inventory of personal-grade weaponry long devoid of a standard-issue, energy-based sidearm, the Lyran military requested that several Alliance arms manufacturers propose personal laser weapons for use by specialized troops, good enough to compete with those commonly seen among Free Worlds League troopers and capable of penetrating the thick armor worn by Clan Elementals. Maxell Metals, makers of a series of reliable 'Mech-grade lasers for the LAAF aerospace forces, won the first contract in 3059 with their PL-10 laser rifle, which trades range for raw hitting power.

VEHICLES

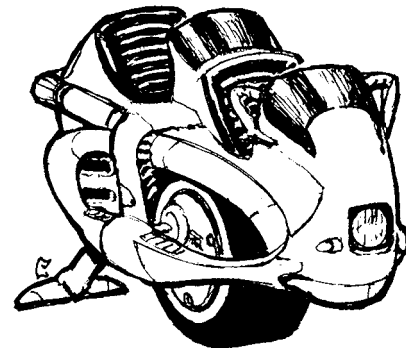
The following vehicles appear more commonly in Lyran space than elsewhere in known space. Where applicable, they follow all standard rules for vehicles in accordance with *CBT: RPG*, *CBT* and *AT2*.

DEFIANCE BLUESTREAK

A sporty monocycle developed for civilian use by Defiance Motors of Tharkad, the Defiance Bluestreak is built for racing and cross-country touring. Its compact engine, powered by hydrogen fuel cells for exceptional endurance and maximum efficiency, delivers an off-road land speed as high as 210 kilometers per hour, and still leaves room for a driver, a single passenger and a tail cargo hatch for personal gear. The current Bluestreak model, the DB-6000, first debuted in the 3061 Tatyana-500 Motor Cross, where champion racer Dominic Hackett claimed his fifth career trophy.

Vehicles	Eqpt.	Refuel		Movement
	Ratings	Cost	Cost	Cruise/Flank
Defiance Bluestreak	D/B/B	920	—	2,000 km 140/211

Notes: Off-road capable; features forward searchlight (270m range), room for 1 passenger, and 25-kg cargo bay (rear).



CBT INFANTRY PLATOON CONSTRUCTION DATA

Item	Type	Base Range	Damage (Each)	BV
M&G G-150 Hunting Rifle	Standard	2	0.32	0.32
TK "Enforcer" Semi-Automatic Pistol	Standard	0	0.20	0.20
Star King Gyroslug Carbine	Standard	1	0.35	0.35
Maxell PL-10 Laser Rifle	Standard†	2	0.26	0.53

† Weapon is anti-armor capable

LC-100 "ASTROLUX" STARYACHT

The Lockheed/CBM LC-100 "Astrolux" StarYacht is by far the most popular long-range civilian spacecraft intended for sale to the private citizen. Such features as fuel reserves for more than a week's travel at 1 G, food storage for a month of sustained space travel, luxury quarters for seven passengers, a generous five-ton cargo bay and the ability to land in the small craft bay of any DropShip or JumpShip as easily as at any planetside port make the Astrolux the perfect shuttlecraft for any serious vacationer. This wildly successful combination has prompted several knock-offs—and accompanying legal hassles—over the century since the LC-100 was introduced. Despite this, the Astrolux remains one of Lockheed/CBM's most popular civilian products.

ANTI-PERSONNEL WEAPONS (CBT:RPG STATS)

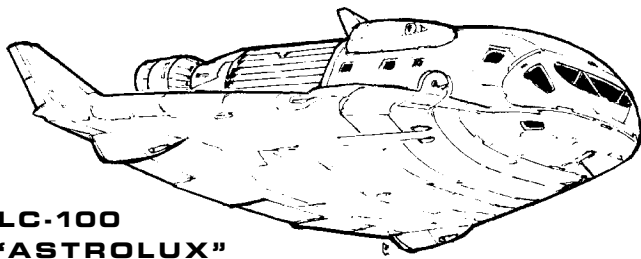
Item	Skill	Equipment	AP •	Range (meters)	Cost/	Shots	Reload	Weight	Notes
		Ratings	Damage	Type	S/M/L/E				
M&G G-150	RIF	C/C/D	4 • 4D6	B	45/95/215/460	9	270/5	3.5 kg	Burst (3/1); jam on fumble; includes a detachable telescopic scope for -2 TN at M/L/E
TK "Enforcer"	PIS	C/B/C	3 • 3D6	B	7/25/55/140	20	110/3	1.6 kg	Burst (4/1); jam on fumble
Star King Carbine	RIF	D/D/D	4 • 5D6	B	23/65/130/285	20	950/15	5.2 kg	No AP reduction at ext. range
Maxell PL-10	RIF	D/C/D	5 • 3D6	E	55/200/460/1,050	9*	2,000/**	6.5 kg	—

*Power use per shot

**as power pack



HOUSE STEINER: RULES ANNEX



LC-100 "ASTROLUX" STARYACHT

Type: Civilian Aerodyne

Tech: Inner Sphere

Introduced: 2953

Mass: 200 tons

Dimensions

Length: 24 meters

Width: 20 meters

Armor

Nose: 33

Wings: 28

Aft: 23

Cargo

Bay 1: Cargo (7.5 tons)

1 Door

Fuel: 20 tons (1,600 points/10.87 Burn Days)

Safe Thrust: 5

Maximum Thrust: 8

Structural Integrity: 8

Passengers: 7

Crew: 1 officer, 2 enlisted/non-rated

Weapons: None

COST OF LIVING IN THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

As one of the wealthiest and most economically stable nations in the Inner Sphere, the Lyrans offers a higher-than-average standard of living for the majority of its people. Of course, exactly how much higher than average varies with where one lives within the state—for example, whether one's homeworld is precariously positioned within striking distance of Clan or pirate raiders, or whether it is a heavily populated and well-developed industrial planet or a nearly desolate backwater. Because such circumstances weigh heavily on the economic fortunes of a given world's citizens, salaries and other earnings tend to vary from world to world, as do the prices of various goods and services. These factors are reflected in the Typical Salary and Price Guide Table below.

The table shows average salaries for various economic and social classes within the Alliance by province, with percentage modifiers based on the location and importance of a given world, as well as the relative cost and availability of equipment in such regions. The equipment modifier tables allow players to determine the cost, availability and legality of equipment and services in each region as well, with the cost expressed as a percentage of the item's listed price and the availability modifiers given in terms of rating levels. Positive modifiers increase the percentage of the item's cost, or its equipment levels as indicated, making items harder to acquire, while negative modifiers reduce cost or levels.

All applicable modifiers for major worlds, border worlds and backwaters are compounded (except when a world meets both border world conditions, in which case only the Clan border is counted) when determining final modifiers. For example, Tharkad, a major world in Donegal Province, receives the major world modifier on its Donegal Province prices and salaries, while the world of Melissia, a major staging area located near the Clan front, uses the Coventry Province column and modifiers for major world and Clan border.

TYPICAL SALARY AND PRICE GUIDE TABLE

(Prices and Salary Rates as of Fiscal Year 3067)

Biweekly Salary (in Kroner)	Donegal Province	Alarion Province	Coventry Province	Skye Province	Bolan Province	Clan Border/ Major World	Periphery Border/ Backwater
Minimum Wage	168.00	162.00	171.00	174.00	163.00	+2%	-5%
Lower Class	504.00	485.00	514.00	523.00	490.00	+3%	-2%
Middle Class	777.00	747.00	792.00	799.00	755.00	+5%	-2%
Upper Class	3,029.00	2,914.00	3,087.00	3,116.00	2,943.00	+5%	-1%
Knight†	4,231.00	3,846.00	4,115.00	4,154.00	3,884.00	+5%	-1%
Baronett	8,461.00	7,692.00	8,154.00	8,307.00	7,769.00	+5%	-1%
Baront	16,924.00	15,385.00	16,308.00	16,462.00	15,539.00	+7%	-1%
Graft	33,846.00	33,769.00	32,615.00	32,923.00	31,384.00	+7%	-2%
Landgraf/gravet	68,307.00	61,538.00	65,230.00	65,846.00	62,769.00	+7%	-2%
Duke†	640,386.00	576,924.00	611,539.00	623,078.00	588,462.00	+8%	-2%
Grand Duke†	5,336,538.00	4,807,692.00	5,096,154.00	5,240,384.00	4,903,846.00	+9%	-2%

*To convert kroner to C-bills or other currencies, consult the Lyrans Units of Currency and Exchange Rates Table in the *Economy* section, p. 131.

†For further explanation of titles and landholds, see *CBT Comp*, pages 202-209.

HOUSE STEINER: RULES ANNEX



Cost Modifier (%)/Availability Modifier/Legality Modifier (by Region/World Type)

Item/Expense	Donegal Province	Alarion Province	Coventry Province	Skye Province	Bolan Province	Clan Border/Major World	Periphery Border/Backwater
<i>Weapons</i>							
Blades, unpowered	100/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	90/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	+0/-1/+1	-8/-1/-1
Blades, powered	105/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	-3/-1/+1	+3/+1/-1
Staves	100/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	+0/-1/+1	-10/-1/-1
Archery	103/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	98/+1/+0	98/+1/+0	-5/-1/+1	-8/-1/-1
Pistols, ballistic‡	98/-1/+1	95/+0/+0	95/-1/+0	90/-1/-1	95/-1/-1	-8/-1/+1	-10/-1/-1
Pistols, energy	103/+0/+1	100/+0/+1	100/+0/+0	95/-1/+0	98/+1/+0	-3/-1/+1	+5/+2/+0
Rifles, ballistic‡	100/-1/+1	98/+0/+0	98/-1/+0	90/-1/-1	95/-1/-1	-5/-1/+1	-10/-1/-1
Rifles, energy	105/+0/+1	108/+0/+1	103/+0/+0	98/-1/+0	100/+0/+0	+0/-1/+1	+3/+2/+0
SMGs	105/+0/+1	105/+0/+1	100/-1/+0	98/-1/+0	98/-1/+1	-5/-1/+1	+5/+0/+0
Shotguns	98/-1/+1	95/+0/+0	95/-1/+0	90/-1/-1	95/-1/-1	-8/-1/+1	-13/-1/-1
Throwing weapons	100/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	90/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	+0/-1/+1	-8/-1/-1
Support weapons	108/+1/+2	105/+0/+2	108/+0/+1	105/+0/+0	105/+0/+1	+5/-1/+1	+10/+2/+0
Demolitions	110/+0/+2	108/+0/+2	110/+0/+2	108/+0/+1	108/+0/+1	+8/-1/+1	+10/-1/+0
<i>Weapon Accessories</i>	95/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	90/-1/-1	93/+0/-1	-5/+0/+0	+5/-1/-1
<i>Power Pack/Rechargers</i>							
Standard	93/-1/-1	90/-1/-1	93/-1/-1	90/-1/-1	93/+0/-1	-5/-1/-1	-8/+0/+0
High-Capacity	95/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	95/-1/+0	93/+0/+0	-5/-1/+0	+3/-1/+0
Quick-Charge	94/+0/+0	94/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	94/-1/+0	95/+0/+0	-5/-1/+0	+3/-1/+0
Rechargers	95/-1/+0	93/-1/+0	93/-1/+0	95/-1/+0	95/+0/+0	-5/-1/-1	-5/-1/+0
<i>Armor/Combat Garb</i>							
Flak	95/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	-3/-1/-1	+3/+0/-1
Ablative	98/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	-3/-1/-1	+3/+0/-1
Ablative/Flak	100/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	+0/-1/-1	+5/+1/-1
Ballistic Plate	103/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	+0/-1/-1	+5/+1/-1
Leather	88/+0/+0	85/-1/+0	85/-1/+0	83/-1/+0	90/+0/+0	-5/-1/-1	-3/-1/-1
Miscellaneous	105/+1/+1	108/+1/+1	108/+1/+1	110/+1/+1	110/+1/+1	+0/+0/+0	+10/+1/+0
Camo/Sneak Suits	115/+1/+2	120/+1/+2	123/+1/+2	125/+1/+1	125/+1/+2	-2/+0/+0	+15/+1/+0
Battle Armor	120/+1/+2	125/+1/+2	128/+1/+2	130/+1/+2	128/+1/+2	-3/+0/-1	+18/+1/+0
<i>Misc. Equipment</i>							
Communicators	90/-1/-1	88/-1/+0	88/-1/+0	85/-1/-1	90/-1/+0	-5/-1/+0	+5/-1/+0
Kits	95/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	-5/-1/+0	+3/-1/+0
Computers	105/-1/+0	103/-1/+0	103/-1/+0	103/-1/+0	105/-1/+0	-3/-1/+0	+13/+1/+0
Music Sets/Musi-chips	103/-1/+0	100/-1/+0	100/+0/+0	105/-1/+0	103/+0/+0	-3/-1/+0	+3/+1/+0
Tri-vid Sets/Cameras	103/-1/+0	100/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	103/-1/+0	100/+0/+0	-3/-1/+0	+5/+1/+0
Hologrids	100/-1/+0	98/-1/+0	98/-1/+0	100/-1/+0	98/+0/+0	-3/-1/+0	+5/+1/+0
Print Media	80/-1/+0	85/-1/+0	85/-1/+0	83/-1/+0	85/-1/+0	-5/-1/+0	-5/+0/+0
<i>Personal Gear/Expenses</i>							
Clothing	95/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	+3/-1/+0	+5/+0/+0
Food	90/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	90/+0/+0	90/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	+3/-1/+0	+0/+1/+0
Housing, Rental	105/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	110/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	+5/+0/+0	-5/+0/+0
Utilities	98/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	90/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	90/+0/+0	+5/+0/+0	-5/+0/+0
Housing, Owned	110/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	125/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	+13/+0/+0	-10/+0/+0
Utilities	98/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	90/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	90/+0/+0	+5/+0/+0	-5/+0/+0
Hotel Rental/Expenses	95/+0/+0	90/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	140/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	+10/+0/+0	-8/+0/+0
Fuel	100/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	110/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	-5/-1/+0	+8/+1/+0

*To convert kroner to C-bills or other currencies, consult the Lyran Units of Currency and Exchange Rates Table in the *Economy* section, p. 131.

‡ Ballistic weaponry includes all Gauss, gyrojet and needler weapons not classified as support weapons.



HOUSE STEINER: RULES ANNEX

COST MODIFIER (%)/AVAILABILITY MODIFIER/LEGALITY MODIFIER (BY REGION/WORLD TYPE) (CONT.)

Item/Expense	Donegal Province	Alarion Province	Coventry Province	Skye Province	Bolan Province	Clan Border/Major World	Periphery Border/Backwater
<i>Personal Vehicles</i>							
Civilian, Ground	100/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	-5/-1/+0	+0/+1/-1
Civilian, Air	98/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	-3/-1/+0	+3/+1/-1
Civilian, Seagoing	100/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	+0/-1/+0	+5/+2/-1
Civilian, Spacecraft	98/-1/+0	100/-1/+0	100/-1/+0	95/-1/+0	98/-1/+0	-5/-1/-1	+10/+2/+0
Military, Unarmed	103/+1/+0	105/+1/+0	105/+1/+0	100/-1/+0	100/+0/+0	+0/-1/-1	+10/+0/+0
Military, IS-Armed	105/+1/+1	108/+1/+1	108/+1/+1	105/+0/+1	108/+1/+1	+5/+0/+0	+13/+1/+0
Military, Clan-Armed	138/+2/+1	145/+2/+1	135/+2/+1	135/+1/+1	150/+2/+1	+10/+0/+1	+28/+2/+0
Fusion-Powered	+10/+0/+0	+8/+1/+1	+10/+1/+1	+8/+1/+0	+8/+0/+0	-3/-1/+0	+5/+1/-1
ICE-Powered	+0/+0/+0	+0/-1/+0	+0/-1/+0	-5/+0/+0	-5/-1/+0	-5/-1/-1	-3/-2/-1
<i>Medical/Survival Gear</i>							
Medical Kits	85/-1/+0	88/-1/+0	90/-1/+0	90/-1/+0	85/-1/+0	-5/+0/-1	+8/+0/+0
Cybernetic Limbs	103/+0/+0	105/+1/+0	105/+1/+0	108/+1/+0	105/+1/+0	-3/-1/+0	+13/+2/+0
Bionic Eyes/Ears	105/+1/+0	108/+1/+0	108/+1/+0	110/+1/+0	108/+1/+0	-3/-1/+0	+15/+2/+0
Other Medical Gear	90/+0/+0	93/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	90/+0/+0	-5/+0/-1	+8/+0/+0
Medical Services	105/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	+3/-1/+0	+8/+1/+0
Survival Kits	90/-1/+0	93/-1/+0	95/-1/+0	95/-1/+0	90/-1/+0	-5/+0/-1	+10/-1/+0
Other Survival Gear	95/-1/+0	98/-1/+0	98/-1/+0	98/-1/+0	93/-1/+0	-5/+0/-1	+8/-1/+0
<i>Travel/Entertainment</i>							
Surface Travel	103/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	-5/-1/+0	+3/+0/+0
Atmospheric Travel	105/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	108/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	-5/-1/+0	+5/+0/+0
Oceanic Travel	103/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	108/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	-3/-1/+0	+5/+1/+0
Space Travel, In-System	100/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	+0/-1/+0	+8/+1/+0
Space Travel, Interstellar	98/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	+0/-1/+0	+10/+1/+0
Concerts/Theaters	110/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	115/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	+8/-1/+0	-3/-1/+0
Sporting Events	108/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	115/+0/+0	103/+0/+0	+8/-1/+0	-5/-1/+0

*To convert kroner to C-bills or other currencies, consult the Lyran Units of Currency and Exchange Rates Table in the *Economy* section, p. 131.

‡ Ballistic weaponry includes all Gauss, gyrojet and needler weapons not classified as support weapons.

In many cases, the gamemaster determines into which categories a world may fall. For border worlds, the definition depends on whether the world lies within two jumps of the relevant region (Clan Occupation Zone or Periphery space), with Clan border world modifiers taking precedence over those for Periphery border worlds. Major worlds consist of regional capitals or major industry or trade centers. Backwaters, by contrast, are sparsely populated worlds largely lacking in major industries or even a native military defense force. In the Lyran Alliance, roughly half of all interior worlds not classed as major might be considered backwaters, while the rest boast a modest local economy slightly above subsistence level.

There is no limit to how much modifiers may change the percentage of an item's final cost, but availability and legality levels may not fall lower than A or rise higher than F.

The Black Market

Just as the location and relative industrial, economic or political importance of a world influences its economy, it also affects the local

black market (if any). As always, the efforts of local law enforcement and the predominant needs of the planet's inhabitants can vary the results wildly—at the gamemaster's discretion—but in general, players can find the price for any piece of hardware or service required by determining the item's availability and legality ratings, modified for the appropriate region (in the Typical Salary and Price Guide Table), and consulting the Black Market Base Cost Table below. Additional modifiers to the base costs are provided as well, based on the character's location in Steiner space. A character may negotiate these prices using the Negotiation/Commercial Skill, but gamemasters should also keep in mind that black markets are typically illegal, fly-by-night operations, and most who trade in illicit goods and services don't have the patience for a drawn-out bargaining process.

As with the cost of living modifiers above, prices fluctuate based on where one is in the Alliance, with all applicable modifiers multiplied together. A black market on Tharkad, for instance, can reduce prices by two percent (Tharkad gets the Donegal Province and major world modifiers, resulting in a x0.98 modifier, as 1 x 0.98



= 0.98). On the other hand, Melissa, a military command center less than two jumps from the Falcon border in Coventry Province (Melissia Theater) receives modifiers for being a major world, a Coventry Province world *and* a Clan border world. These factors make the black market so risky that prices can rise by roughly 10 percent ($1.02 \times 1.10 \times 0.98 = 1.099$ or 1.10).

ROLEPLAYING IN THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

The following information for gamemasters and players of *CBT:RPG* campaigns covers other aspects of Lyran characters and life in the Lyran Alliance, and should be used to add a more Lyran flavor to such campaigns and characters.

ADVANCED EXPERIENCE BONUSES

To reflect the cultural tendencies of Lyran characters, particularly their emphasis on deal-making over combat, Lyran characters gain experience somewhat differently than other faction characters. The following table provides a guide to experience awards for Lyran characters, and essentially replaces the one provided on page 209 of the *CBT:RPG* core rulebook for Lyran characters only. Note, however, that the table is merely a guide for gamemasters to use, and additional

BLACK MARKET BASE COST TABLE

Availability		A	B	C	D	E	F
Legality							
A	0.5	1	1.25	1.5	2	4	
B	1	2	2.5	2	3	6	
C	2	3	4	3	4	9	
D	3	4	5	6	8	14	
E	5	6	7	10	15	21	
F	7	9	11	13	20	30	

Additional Modifiers

Alarion Province	x0.97
Bolan Province	x0.95
Coventry Province	x1.02
Donegal Province	x1.00
Skye Province	x0.90
Clan Border*	x1.10
Free Worlds/Draconis Combine Border*	x0.97
Periphery Border*	x1.05
Major World*	x0.98

*Border worlds lie within two jumps of the associated faction (Clan, Free Worlds/Combine or Periphery). Major worlds serve as regional, provincial or national capitals, or as centers of major industry (such as worlds that host the companies featured in the *Economy* section of this book, or which can locally manufacture items of Tech Level D or better).

awards may be made based on the situation and the characters' unique ways of handling it. Also, these awards are faction-specific. They should not be used by a character who lives and works primarily outside the Lyran Alliance and who was not born and raised as a Lyran citizen, nor should any other faction-specific awards be applied to a Lyran character.

The Lyran Way

As a general rule, characters born and raised in Lyran society tend toward the subtler arts of negotiation, politics and trickery to overcome obstacles in life, rather than overt violence and belligerence. This preference has evolved over the centuries into a statewide imperative toward claiming the "moral high ground", which tends to manifest in a resort to open violence only when a character has exhausted virtually all other avenues for resolving a situation. Lyran characters should try to roleplay negotiations or exercise their social skills rather than charging into an unfamiliar situation with weapons blazing (unless combat

ADVANCED EXPERIENCE AWARDS (LYRAN) TABLE

Action	XP Award
Mission (Group)	
Combat failure	1/2/3
Combat partial success	1/3/5
Combat total success	2/5/8
Non-combat failure	0/1/2
Non-combat partial success	1/3/5
Non-combat total success	3/6/9
Campaign (Group)	
Adventure off-track	2
Advanced minor campaign goals	3
Advanced major campaign goals	5
Combat-related advance	-1
Advanced through guile, social skills	+(1-3)
Advanced via moral high ground*	+2
Roleplaying (Individual)	
Totally out of character	0
Often out of character	1
Usually in character	2
Always in character	3
In character despite danger	4
Entertained the group	+1
Roleplay of social skills	+1
Trigger-happy	-1
Miscellaneous (Individual)	
Major subplot started/resolved	1
Minor subplot started/resolved	3
Devised clever plan	+2
Devised heroic plan	+3
Critical feat accomplished	+1

*Ignore combat-related advance penalty in this case.



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is already joined). The Advanced Experience Table below reflects different modifiers for combat and non-combat actions.

A character who goes into battle only after being attacked can claim the moral high ground when the shooting stops, and gains an experience advantage over the “trigger happy” Lyran who does not bother with talk first but habitually resorts to pre-emptive strikes and other acts of senseless brutality. When in doubt, the gamemaster may determine whether or not any or all of the modifiers below apply to the Lyran player character.

NATIONALITIES

Ever since the Articles of Acceptance forged the three diverse alliances of Skye, Donegal and Tamar into the Lyran Commonwealth, the Lyran state has been largely devoted to tolerance and cultural openness. People of all religious, political and ethnic backgrounds are welcome—even encouraged—to live, work and trade throughout the Alliance, and interaction through travel and commerce is fairly common. However, this public policy of supporting cultural diversity throughout the realm has varied widely in practice, as exemplified by the historically white-supremacist government of New Capetown or the Catholic-Buddhist clashes on Arc-Royal of the past century.

Today, more than ever, the various cultures and nationalities within the Alliance are strongly identified with the various provinces and border regions, with attitudes among inhabitants of some provinces verging on xenophobia toward peoples of other provinces. Many of these attitudes appear in the relevant province descriptions in the *Touring the Realm* section beginning on p. 71. The people of Skye, for example, are proud and fiercely independent, with a way of life profoundly influenced by Irish, Scottish and Italian cultures. The people of the former Tamar Pact, by comparison, have lost some of their historic longing for independence and have replaced it with a burning need for vengeance against the Clans who now occupy their former homes. Conversely, many Lyrans have become intensely distrustful of the peoples from the former Arc-Royal Defense Cordon since the FedCom Civil War, because so many Lyrans supported former Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion during that conflict, and because of the presence of the breakaway Wolf Clan led by Khan Phelan Kell.

To determine the attitude of Lyran characters toward those from another Lyran region (or from other realms), the gamemaster may make a 2D10 “attitude check” roll whenever such characters interact, using the Lyran Reaction Table below to find the appropriate modifiers. The result can be used to help determine the first impressions a Lyran NPC (the “reacting character”) might have of a player character from a different region or nationality (the “receiving character”). Apply an additional –3 modifier for every level of a Quirk (or its equivalent, if any) in which the reacting character hates those of the receiving character’s region, such as the Quirk/Hate Clans received by citizens of the former Tamar Pact per *CBT Comp*.

Gamemasters may also use this system to establish the “gut feeling” a Lyran player character might have under similar circumstances, by making the player character the reacting rather than the receiving character. Such checks should only be made if the character’s origins are obvious or known, such as by speaking a particular language or dialect common to a given region (for example, the thick Scots Gaelic accent of Skye), sporting regional insignia and so forth.

Characters who receive a negative impression may still help those they inwardly dislike, but will be more standoffish in their demeanor and less inclined toward idle chatter. Characters who receive an extremely negative impression will not be helpful at all, and may even act hostile toward such characters, possibly to the point of hindering a mission thanks to their prejudices. Characters more positively disposed toward those of another realm may react with fascination toward the “out-of-towners,” eager to help with information or—when extremely impressed—goods and even their own services free of charge.

In addition to the above, a Reaction Result Modifier may be imposed on all social skill Action Checks made by the receiving character when dealing with the reacting character. This modifier reflects the degree of open- or closed-mindedness the receiving character experiences based on first impressions.

Crossing Borders

To facilitate trade within the Lyran state and conserve national defense resources, most civilian shipping traffic operates with a minimum of military or security escort during interstellar travel in Alliance territory. However, many worlds that border neighboring provinces (as well as all worlds lying within at least two jumps of neighboring realms and the Periphery) traditionally maintain close aerospace patrols, system sensor satellites and similar measures to watch for military incursions or occasionally check suspect freight vessels for contraband. Especially alert during times of heightened national or regional tensions, these security measures protect Lyran worlds with a variety of responses (based on the relevant circumstances), ranging from a casual inquiry on cargoes and flight plans, to a brief detention pending inspections, to a military or security force interception and possible seizure of the transport.

Any vessel that refuses to submit to a Lyran security search party is regarded as hostile and may even be fired upon by local aerospace forces (or, lacking a dedicated security force, flagged as a suspicious craft within Lyran space). Those who submit (and have nothing to hide) generally find a customs search little more than a nuisance. Lyran boarding parties realize that harassment of merchants and other civilian travelers harms the national economy and violates the realm’s open-travel mandates, and so they do their best to make these inspections painless.

In game terms, a border crosser (either the JumpShip captain or the most prominent of the characters aboard the border-crossing vessel) may determine the likelihood of an encounter during an attempt to cross the Lyran Alliance’s many regional and national boundaries by making a modified form of the standard Reaction Check described under *Nationalities*. For this roll, additional TN modifiers may apply based on various circumstances, including character traits belonging to the border crosser. Certain Action Checks, made before the vessel hops the border or soon after its arrival, may further modify the circumstances surrounding such travel.

This modified Reaction Check, generally made as soon as the border crosser enters a new system and completes any related Action Checks (unless otherwise noted), determines what kind of response—if any—the border crosser and his vessel arouse among local security forces. All modifiers made to the standard Lyran Reaction Table during a border crossing appear in the Additional Reaction Modifiers section of the table below.



LYRAN REACTION TABLE

2D10 Roll	Reaction Type	Reaction Result Modifier
0 or less	Extremely Negative	-4
1-6	Negative	-2
7-13	Neutral	0
14-19	Positive	+1
20 or more	Extremely Positive	+2

Reaction Roll Modifiers

Reacting Character Origin	Lyran						Receiving Character Origin								Other			
	DP	AP	CP	SP	BP	TP	Clan				Inner Sphere				CS	WB	Per	
	JF	WC	WX	Oth	DC	FW	CC	FS	FR	CS	WB	Per						
Donegal Province	+1	+0	+1	-2	-1	-1	-3	-3	-2	-2	-2	-2	-1	-2	+0	+0	-1	-2
Alarion Province	+1	+2	+0	-1	+1	-1	-2	-2	-2	-1	-1	-1	+0	-1	+0	+0	-1	-1
Coventry Province	+1	+0	+0	-1	+0	-1	-3	-2	-2	-1	-2	-1	-1	-2	+0	-1	-1	-2
Skye Province	-3	-1	-1	+2	+1	+1	-2	-2	-3	-2	-3	-3	-2	-3	-1	-1	-2	+0
Bolan Province	+0	-2	+1	+1	+0	-1	-2	-2	-2	-1	-2	-3	-2	-2	+0	+0	-1	-1
Tamar Pact	-2	-2	-2	+0	-2	+3	-4	-4	-4	-4	-3	-1	-1	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2
Clan Border	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	-2	-2	-1	-1	+1	+0	+0	+1	+1	-1	-1	+0
Combine Border	+1	+0	+0	+1	+0	+0	-1	-1	+0	+0	-1	+0	+0	+1	+1	+0	+0	+0
Free Worlds Border	+0	+1	+0	+1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	-2	-1	-1	+0	+0	-1	+0
Periphery Border	+0	+1	+1	+0	+0	+0	-1	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	-1	-1	-2

Receiving Character Origin Key:

AP = Alarion Province	JF = Jade Falcon Clan	CC = Capellan Confederation
BP = Bolan Province	WC = Wolf Clan	FS = Federated Suns
CP = Coventry Province	WX = Wolf Clan (in-Exile)	FR = Free Rasalhague Republic
DP = Donegal Province	Oth = Other Clan	CS = ComStar
SP = Skye Province	DC = Draconis Combine	WB = Word of Blake
TP = Tamar Pact	FW = Free Worlds League	Per = Periphery

Additional Reaction Modifiers (for Border Crossing)

Condition or Circumstance	Reaction Roll Modifier
Major Military Activity Underway in Region	-2
Border crosser is Commercial/Government-Employed	+1
Border crosser is Independent Vessel	-2
Border crosser is Mercenary/Friendly Military	+2
Border crosser vessel is Military Class	-1
Border crosser Contact Used*	+2/level
Border crosser Well-Connected Used*	+1/level
Border crosser has Enemy/Bad Reputation Trait	-1/level
Border crosser has In for Life/Dark Secret Trait	-2
Border crosser has Unlucky/Bloodmark Trait	-1/level
Border crosser uses Bureaucracy/Protocol Skill†	+1/2 MoS
Border crosser attempts pre-emptive bribery‡	+1/2 MoS
Border crosser attempts bribery at crossing‡	+1/3 MoS
Border crosser failed in bribery attempt‡	-MoF
Border crosser failed previous crossing§	-5 (+1/month since failure, max 0)

*To be relevant, the Contact/Well-Connected Trait must be applicable to the Lyran Alliance in the region where the border crossing occurs and must be extensive enough to influence the locals. The border crosser must make a successful Protocol or Bureaucracy check (against a TN of 10 minus the Trait value) to use the appropriate connections.

†Skill Checks are required for these efforts at the time of the border crossing, reflecting advance communications or responses to hails from local security agencies, with modifiers based on the margin of success (MoS).

‡Bribery attempts require a successful Negotiation or Fast-Talk check against a TN of 15 (plus any reaction modifiers from the Lyran Reaction Table) to compute their modifier. This Action Check is modified by -1 for every 500 C-bills or 5 percent value of any cargo being smuggled (whichever is greater) by the border crosser(s), as well as by the relevant reaction roll modifiers from the Lyran Reaction Table. Double this monetary cost if the bribe is attempted at the time of crossing, rather than having been arranged ahead of time. A failed Action Check during a bribery attempt automatically adds the margin of failure (MoF) to the border-crossing TN.

§Repeat the reaction roll for every world visited after the initial failure, regardless of location or border status. This modifier increases over time by 1 point per month (based on the time elapsed since the last failure) to a maximum of 0.



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BORDER CROSSING ROLL RESULTS TABLE

Modified 1D10 Result	Encounters (per Region Entered by Border Crosser)						
	Free Worlds Border	Combine Border	Clan Border	Periphery Border	Provincial Border	Theater Border	Interior Region
0 or less	Attacked!	Attacked!	Attacked!	Pirates!	Bandits!	Attacked!	Raiders!
1	Bandits!	Raiders!	Bandits!	Attacked!	Scout	Raiders!	Scout
2	Raiders!	Bandits!	Scout	Bandits!	Scrutiny	Scrutiny	Interception
3	Scout	Scout	Raiders!	Interception	Inspection	Scout	Scrutiny
4	Interception	Interception	Raiders!	Interception	Inspection	Interception	Scrutiny
5	Interception	Conscription!	Interception	Scout	Conscription!	Inspection	Inspection
6	Conscription!	Scrutiny	Interception	Conscription!	Registered	Inspection	Registered
7	Scrutiny	Inspection	Conscription!	Conscription!	Registered	Conscription!	Registered
8	Scrutiny	Inspection	Conscription!	Inspection	Ignored	Registered	Ignored
9	Inspection	Inspection	Inspection	Inspection	Ignored	Registered	Ignored
10	Inspection	Registered	Inspection	Registered	Ignored	Registered	Ignored
11	Registered	Registered	Registered	Registered	Greetings!	Ignored	Greetings!
12	Registered	Registered	Registered	Ignored	Greetings!	Ignored	Greetings!
13 or more	Greetings!	Greetings!	Greetings!	Greetings!	Greetings!	Greetings!	Greetings!

ENCOUNTER TYPES

Type	Description/Effects
Pirates!	A veteran bandit force of equal or greater strength in aerospace and marine support attacks the border crosser(s) with the intent to cripple and plunder the vessel(s) and enslave everyone on board. Over major worlds, such as industrial centers or regional capitals, treat this as an <i>Attacked!</i> result.
Bandits!	A bandit force of equal aerospace strength and average skill attacks the border crosser(s) with the intent to board and plunder the vessel(s). Over major worlds, such as industrial centers or regional capitals, treat this as a <i>Raiders!</i> result.
Raiders!	A small strike force (of equal or lesser strength in aerospace and marine assets) from the nearest military power attacks the border crosser(s) with intent to disable or capture the vessel(s) and prevent them from warning local/regional security.
Scout	An unregistered and unknown JumpShip is discovered nearby. It does not respond to hails but may attack or flee if provoked.
Attacked!	A veteran local military/security force of equal or greater aerospace and marine strength attacks the border crosser(s) with the intent to capture, cripple or destroy the vessel(s), believing them to be hostile invaders or dangerous criminals.
Interception	A local military/security force of equal strength in aerospace and marine assets and average combat skills orders the surrender of the border crosser(s) and attempts to detain and board the vessel(s) on suspicion of subversive activities or the smuggling of contraband. Will attack with intent to cripple or destroy if provoked or if the border crosser(s) resist.
Inspection	A random customs inspection, backed up by minimal force, is requested of the border-crossing vessel(s). Any attempt to resist or stonewall the inspection may result in local security scrambling an interception force from the nearby jump station or patrol vessels, if any (see <i>Intercepted!</i>).
Conscription!	A current military crisis or emergency prompts local military/civil authorities to demand that the vessel(s) used by the border crosser(s) immediately surrender command to an appointed officer for possible transport of refugees or materiel. Any resistance will result in the scrambling of interceptors to take the vessel(s) by force (see <i>Intercepted!</i>). If there is no military or local crisis, treat this result as an <i>Inspection</i> .
Scrutiny	The vessel(s) used by the border crosser(s) are flagged by local security or military for further observation by other regional forces. Roll for an encounter in the next system, regardless of location and border status, with an additional -2 reaction roll modifier.
Registered	Local sensor probes or solitary patrol craft query the vessel(s) used by the border crosser(s) regarding their identification, nationality, destination and business, but otherwise leave the ships alone unless they engage in overtly hostile action or their responses to any inquiries fail to check out. In such cases, local authorities may call for an inspection (see <i>Inspection</i>).
Ignored	Aside from a casual scan by local sensor satellites or wandering patrol craft, the border-crossing vessel(s) are left alone and unacknowledged by local authorities and traffic.
Greetings!	Friendly vessels and/or patrols operating close by issue trusting hails to the border-crossing vessel(s). Aside from a genuine eagerness for conversation, news from beyond the system or trade, these greetings have no ulterior motive.



To determine a specific encounter or reaction from local military or security forces, or even bandits present in the system, the border-crossing player should roll 1D10, then apply the appropriate reaction result modifier and consult the appropriate column of the Border Crossing Roll Results Table for the region into which the vessel has just crossed. The encounter descriptions provide a more detailed explanation of each encounter type, allowing gamemasters to further develop whatever reaction the arriving vessel and its crew receive.

LYRAN ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Byzantine politics of the Lyran Alliance and the relentless drive for profit, power and status offer a load of roleplaying potential for gamemasters and players, especially in the eras following the Clan invasion and the FedCom Civil War. Ambition, greed, lust and bitter rivalries drive political, military and social leaders across the realm in a relentless quest for dominance, power or mere revenge, while others remain focused on the threats beyond House Steiner's borders. Below are some plot hooks for gamemasters and players to consider when campaigning in the Lyran Alliance (or with Lyran characters).

Social Climbers

One of the strongest recurring themes in Lyran society is the constant push to rise in social standing. Particularly prevalent in the military, the need to amass more status, wealth and power is likewise a driving force for Lyrans in every walk of life and every part of the social strata. In a nation dominated by the economic might of free enterprise and a massive industrial base, the movers and shakers are not limited to the nobility and the military. They may also be business leaders, traveling merchants, entertainers and even the intelligentsia. Characters hailing from the Lyran Alliance, having long been indoctrinated by this societal imperative, are often on the lookout for any opportunity to raise their standing in social circles, to be the life of every party or the one in the know, or the one whose face and name opens doors. Players and gamemaster can create many an adventure out of trying to break into a given social circle, or to become the *de facto* leader of a group by sheer force of personal charisma and social stature.

It's All About the Kroner

If not the most important commodity to Lyrans, money is certainly one of the top two, because money brings with it the power and status craved by so many who live under the Steiner fist. Money *is* power to most Lyrans, and though the vast majority have enough of a work ethic to come by their gains honestly, plenty of Alliance citizens do not care how they amass their wealth—or how many bodies they have to step over to get more. The Lyran thirst for money can be the source for many adventures, however they seek to obtain it. Characters may beg for it, borrow it, fight for it or even steal it, overcoming obstacles as diverse as a tight-fisted patron or a battalion of BattleMechs if they see the payoff as worth it. Though by and large Lyrans might not favor more violent means, plenty of Lyran-born mercenaries across the Inner Sphere easily give the lie to that prevailing national stereotype.

Power Plays

Among the Lyran nobility and upper classes, the thirst for money and status is only a part of their ultimate goal: power. Throughout

the centuries, nobles, military commanders, corporate leaders and even free merchants and criminal bosses have jockeyed behind the scenes for more and more power, relatively unfettered by the largely open society of the Lyran state, which serves to perpetuate such ambitions. Only the power of the Archon, the ultimate authority of law and the interlocking series of checks and balances made possible by generations of interlacing alliances and understandings have maintained the sense of order and unity that largely keeps the realm united under the Steiner fist.

In the wake of the FedCom Civil War, what little central authority held the realm together under Steiner laws has weakened further. Even minor nobles and upstart small-timers see in this situation an opportunity for unprecedented growth, such as in the increasingly volatile Isle of Skye region. Many are willing to employ dubious means—or merely dubious people—to enhance their own power base at the expense of their neighbors and rivals. Their methods may range from subtle efforts to overtake a rival market, to a more overt smear campaign meant to shatter public support for those whose power and resources they covet. The more desperate or extreme may even use overt violence, all the while setting themselves up as a worthy successor and a true Lyran patriot.

Old Scores

Throughout Lyran history, jockeying for power—behind the scenes and in the light of day—has damaged and even deposed a number of prominent Lyran nobles and other wealthy and powerful people. Almost without exception, these same individuals want to reclaim their lost glory and gain a measure of revenge against those who wronged them. For these Lyrans, the goal may not always be money, power or even social standing, but vengeance (though most prefer the term “justice”). Though the current Archon has specifically decried such acts of revenge, many minor nobles and leaders may turn a blind eye to score-settling so long as the actions taken do not hinder their own agendas.

In addition to internal conflicts, some old scores remain along the Lyran Alliance's Free Worlds League front, where the memories of past Succession Wars and Operation Guerrero die hard. The often-rebellious Skye region is another tumultuous place, especially after their latest defeat against the Steiner supremacy during the civil war. The former Arc-Royal Defense Cordon is yet another volatile area, where those who vigorously opposed the rule of Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion still face the wrath of those who supported her.

As one of a party, a Lyran character may seek any opportunity to further his own such aims or protect against them. Parties may also get caught up in these vendettas, serving either side on the field of battle or in a more covert capacity.

The Big, Green Menace

The Clan invasion may be over, but the average Lyran who sees a map of the Inner Sphere knows that a distinct threat from the invaders remains—a sense likely felt most keenly by anyone from the shattered Tamar Pact. The Jade Falcon Occupation Zone is the current all-consuming menace on which much of the Lyran state remains focused, a constant source and target for raids and planetary assaults as well as for more subtle covert operations, including the fomenting of rebellion on Clan-controlled worlds. Because Lyrans still see the Clans as the



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invader, unprovoked attacks against the Clan Occupation Zone are always perceived as justified, often regardless of their targets, in terms of the Lyran imperative for taking the moral high ground.

At the same time, many Lyran citizens and assets remain within Clan-held territory, including lost loved ones, pieces of technology and secret files from overrun LIC offices, which military, government and even industrial/commercial leaders would dearly like to see reclaimed.

CLASSIC BATTLETECH RULES

The following rules supplement those in *Classic BattleTech Master Rules, Revised (BMR)*, and cover combat in various terrain and environmental conditions that players may encounter in the *BattleTech* universe. All players should read through these rules and agree to their use before beginning play.

NEW TERRAIN AND ENVIRONMENTS

With well over two thousand worlds in human-controlled space, humankind in the *Classic BattleTech* universe has settled in some very strange environments indeed. The following rules cover some new terrain types and environmental conditions.

Electromagnetic Interference (EMI)

Many worlds and settings in the *BattleTech* universe remain so rich in heavy metals or are inundated with such powerful back-

ground radiation (caused by everything from an irregular planetary magnetic field to local solar activity) that even the well-shielded sensors and communications gear used by BattleMechs, ground vehicles and battle armor are overwhelmed by the resulting interference.

In game terms, this electromagnetic interference (EMI) imposes a +2 to-hit modifier for all ranged weapon attacks and a -2 penalty to rolls on the Missile Hits Table (regardless of the weapon system used) made by all units operating within an affected area. This area of effect may cover the entire playing area, or—if the players and/or gamemaster decide—be confined to select mapsheet-sized regions, to represent a more localized phenomenon. Additionally, all active probes within an EMI-affected region are rendered useless, while ECM systems double their effective range.

Extreme Depths

Though it is true that BattleMechs, certain battle armor designs and submarines are fully sealed combat systems capable of fighting underwater, the rules given in *BMR* presuppose that such units engage in battle close to a shoreline, where depths rarely exceed 90 meters (15 sub-levels). However, in some exceedingly rare instances, these battlefield units—by accident or design—may be required to enter extreme depths, at which point such factors as hull pressure become a dramatically increasing problem, especially for BattleMechs, ProtoMechs and battle armor.

EXTREME DEPTH TABLE

Depth (in Levels)	Modifiers (BattleMechs/ProtoMechs/Battle Armor/Submarines)					
	Walk/Cruise MP Modifier	Weapon Attack Modifier	Physical Attack Modifier*	BattleMech Piloting Mod.	BattleMech Heat Mod.	Hull Breach TN
15 or less	+3/+3/+0/+0	+0/+0/+0/+0	+0/+0/+0/+0	+1	-1†	10/10/10/10
16-20‡	+4/+4/+0/+0	+1/+1/+0/+0	+1/+1/+0/+0	+2	-6	10/10/10/10
21-25	+5/+5/+1/+0	+2/+2/+1/+0	+2/+3/+1/+0	+3	-7	9/9/10/10
26-30	+6/+6/+2/+0	+3/+3/+2/+0	+3/NA/+2/+0	+4	-9	9/9/10/10
31-35§	+7/+7/+2/+0	+4/+4/+3/+0	+5/NA/+3/+0	+5	-12	8/8/10/9
36-50	+9/+9/+3/+0	+6/+6/+4/+0	NA/NA/+5/+0	+7	-15	8/8/9/9
51-150††	-/-/+4/+0	-/-/+6/+0	-/-/NA/+0	—	—	-/-/8/9
150 or more	-/-/-/+0	-/-/-/+0	-/-/-/+0	—	—	-/-/-/8

*Applies to anti-BattleMech attacks by battle-armored troops as well as ProtoMech "thrashing" and submarine "ramming" attacks.

†Per submerged heat sink (to a maximum of -6)

‡BattleMechs and ProtoMechs make Crush Depth Checks for each hex entered below a depth of 15.

§Battle-armored units make Crush Depth Checks for each hex entered below a depth of 30.

††Submarine units make Crush Depth Checks for each hex entered below a depth of 50.

CRUSH DEPTH CHECKS (2D6)

Base: See appropriate Hull Breach TNs above. Apply the following TN modifiers by unit type:

BattleMechs: +1 for every ten (full) tons of BattleMech weight, -1 for every level below 15.

ProtoMechs: +1 for every ton of ProtoMech weight, -1 for every level below 15.

Battle Armor: +(battlesuit's current armor value), -1 for every 2 full levels below 30.

Submarines (300 tons and under): +1 for every 5 tons of submarine weight, -1 for every 5 levels below 50.

Submarines (over 300 tons): +60, -1 for every 5,000 tons of submarine weight, -1 for every 5 levels below 50.



In general, BattleMechs and ProtoMechs begin to experience the effects of increasing pressure when submerged below a depth of 15 levels or deeper. At this stage, actuators strain against the resistance of their own volume changes, throwing off targeting, reducing mobility and—in extreme cases—even causing life-threatening breaches that can ultimately destroy the submerged unit. Battle armor equipped with underwater maneuvering units (UMUs), because of its significantly reduced size and design for underwater operations, does not begin experiencing the effects of extreme depth until it sinks below 20 levels.

Units in extreme depths may experience additional effects as well. As pressure increases, its boiling point also rises, enabling BattleMech heat sinks to work more efficiently. However, the likelihood of hull breach from weapon attacks and other damage also increases per the standard rules in the *BMR* (pp. 94–95).

The Extreme Depth Table below summarizes the effects of entering each level of depth for all relevant units. Units not on the list are presumed automatically destroyed upon submerging in Depth 1+ water. The effects include Walk/Cruise MP penalties, weapon attack penalties, physical attack penalties, heat level bonuses and Hull Breach target numbers (which are used both to determine the chance of hull breach from attack damage as well as the likelihood of a hull breach due to crushing pressures). All figures given are for BattleMechs, ProtoMechs, UMU-equipped battle armor and submarines, respectively. An NA entry means the action is not allowed, while a dashed entry means the unit is automatically destroyed at that depth. The listed modifiers include those already covered by the *Underwater Operations* rules in the *BMR* (pp. 94–95), which take effect at depths of 15 or less.

At crush depths (15 or more for BattleMechs or ProtoMechs, 30 or more for battle armor, 50 or more for submarines), the affected unit must immediately make a Crush Depth Check using the base Hull Breach target number (TN) for every hex entered while below crush depth levels. This roll is modified as indicated on the Table for unit size and levels below crush depth. If the roll result equals or exceeds the modified TN for that depth, the unit suffers a catastrophic hull breach caused by extreme pressure. ProtoMechs, battle armor and submarines are instantly destroyed once they fail one of these checks. BattleMechs must roll for a random location (based on the Front/Back Hit Location Table) and suffer all the effects of a hull breach to that location as described on page 93, *BMR*.

Remember that any checks for hull breach due to damage from attacks, falls, or collisions use the base Hull Breach TNs without the crush depth modifiers.

Also note that the Extreme Depth Table applies only under terrestrial conditions. To reflect conditions where the gravity effects are greater or lesser than Terra-standard, assign a gravity rating to the scenario per the High/Low Gravity rules (see p. 84, *BMR*), then divide the maximum Depth Level per range and the Crush Depth levels given on the table by the local gravity. Adjust the minimum depths per range accordingly, and apply modifiers and Hull Checks only as the appropriate units reach the levels indicated under their new depth ranges.

For example, on a 0.5 G world, each maximum depth level per range would be divided by 0.5, meaning a BattleMech would operate per the normal *BMR* rules up to a maximum depth of 30 [$15 / 0.5$

$= 30$], would make Crush Depth Checks only after dropping below a depth of 30, and would suffer a +4 MP penalty, +1 attack penalty, +2 piloting penalty, and receive –6 heat points per turn when operating at depths 31 through 40 [$20 / 0.5 = 40$, minimum of 31 determined based on 30 maximum from previous depth range.]

NEW UNIT TYPES

The following are new battlefield unit types available in the Lyran Alliance. Unless otherwise stated, they follow the rules laid out in *BMR*, *AT2*, *Combat Operations* (CO) and *Combat Equipment* (CE).

FLECHETTE INFANTRY

Flechette infantry are special infantry troops specifically fielded to take out conventional infantry. Armed primarily with needler weapons, they are essentially ineffective against armored targets, and their effective combat range is poor, but against conventional infantry they can be lethal. With the advent of the Firedrake heavy incendiary support needler, the LAAF has brought the potency of these troops up another class.

Typical Lyran flechette infantry are specialized troops, organized as motorized or foot combat platoons, with two Firedrake-equipped support weapons per squad, backed up by Zeus heavy rifles. Against unarmored targets (such as conventional infantry), they can dish out incredible damage, but the low armor penetration value of the flechette weapons reduces their effect against battle-armored troops, BattleMechs and vehicles. Flechette infantry are rarely anti-BattleMech trained, and are typically deployed in urban environments and other terrain where they may take advantage of abundant local cover.

Flechette Infantry Game Rules

Flechette infantry may be deployed as foot or motorized infantry. Foot platoons have a movement rate of 1 MP, while motorized platoons have 2 MPs. Armed with a combination of heavy rifles and Firedrake support needlers, flechette platoons inflict significantly more damage than conventional rifle platoons and gain a bonus in their ability to deliver incendiary attacks as well.

In combat, flechette infantry moves, attacks and suffers damage in the same manner as conventional foot and motorized infantry (see the table below for modifiers based on range and damage based on the number of surviving troopers). In addition, however, flechette infantry may set fire to a target hex per the *Intentional Fires* rules (p. 80, *BMR*). The target number for successfully starting fires using flechette infantry is 5+, thanks to the use of the Firedrake needlers. Flechette infantry costs 1,156,260 C-bills per foot platoon and 1,850,012 C-bills per motorized platoon. Both platoon types have a BV of 45. As an anti-personnel specialty unit, flechette infantry is not trained for anti-BattleMech attacks.

Optional Game Rule: Hard/Soft Targets

Because anti-infantry needlers are the primary support weapon used in Lyran flechette infantry platoons, this infantry type is notoriously weak against armored units (BattleMechs, armored vehicles, battle armor and hardened buildings). To reflect this, when making



HOUSE STEINER: RULES ANNEX

FLECHETTE INFANTRY RANGE MODIFIER TABLE

Range (in hexes) o	1	2	3
To-Hit Modifier	-2	0	+2
			+4

FLECHETTE INFANTRY DAMAGE TABLE

Troopers Surviving	Damage Inflicted
1-3	1
4-5	2
6-8	3
9-10	4
11-12	5
13-15	6
16-17	7
18-19	8
20-22	9
23-24	10
25-26	11
27-28	12

flechette infantry attacks against such targets, divide any damage by 3 and round down. This rule does not hamper the flechette infantry's ability to start fires, and this type of unit retains its full damage value against conventional infantry, unarmored vehicles and non-hardened buildings.

LOCKHEED AB-18C "ROUBVOGEL" AEROBOMBER

Produced by Lockheed/CBM Corporation, the AB-18C Aerobomber is the current incarnation of one of the most popular conventional combat aircraft bombers in widespread use in the Lyran Alliance (and, thanks to the former FedCom, the Federated Suns as well). Typically used as an atmospheric support craft, many commanders today fit the AB-18C with an external TAG unit and four one-ton laser-guided bombs for close support missions.

Type: **AB-18C "Raubvogel" Aerobomber**

Technology Base: Inner Sphere (Conventional)

Tonnage: 45

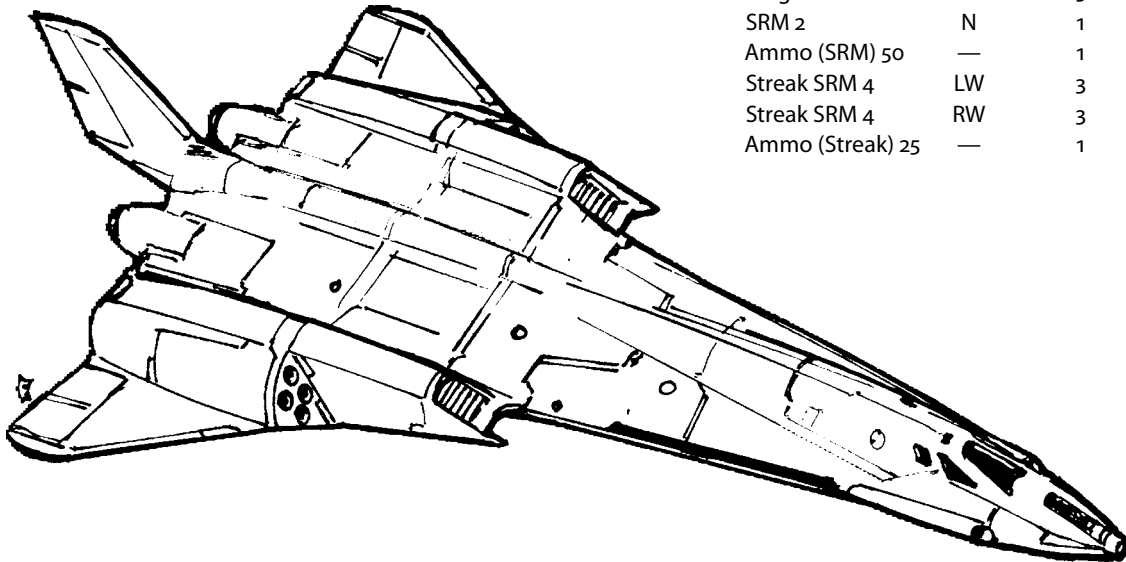
Battle Value: 400

Equipment

Equipment	Mass
Engine: 180 Turbine	14
Safe Thrust: 4	
Max Thrust: 6	
Structural Integrity: 4	
Heat Sinks: 8	8
Fuel: 320	2
Controls:	4.5
Power Amplifiers:	0.5
Armor Factor: 36	2
	<i>Armor Value</i>
Nose	10
Wings	9
Aft	8

Weapons and Ammo

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Tonnage	Heat	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
Large Laser	N	5	8	8	8	—	—
SRM 2	N	1	0	2	—	—	—
Ammo (SRM) 50	—	1					
Streak SRM 4	LW	3	0	8	—	—	—
Streak SRM 4	RW	3	0	8	—	—	—
Ammo (Streak) 25	—	1					



HOUSE STEINER: RULES ANNEX



JORMUNGAND-CLASS BLUEWATER CRUISER

One of a handful of wet navy capital combat vessels in widespread use in Lyran space, the Jormungand class is a fearsome sight on the high seas of House Steiner's water-rich planets. Initially developed by Skye Pleasure Craft, Ltd. for the oceanic militia command on Porrima in 2902, more than twenty of these 60,000-ton warships operate today throughout the Alliance, keeping the oceans of several worlds safe from local pirates and capable of providing powerful artillery support during near-shoreline engagements. Tharkad currently boasts the largest Jormungand fleet, with three of these ships actively patrolling the coastlines around the Tatanya island chain.

Type: **Jormungand-class Bluewater Cruiser**

Chassis Type: Surface Vessel, Large

Tonnage: 60,000 (Template D)

Equipment Rating: C/E/E

Equipment

	Standard	Mass
Chassis/Controls:	Standard	17,550
Engine/Trans:	Fusion	32,400
Cruise MP:	6	
Flank MP:	9	
Heat Sinks:	40	40
Fuel:	N/A	0
Armor Factor:	2,700	216

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Fore	60	300
Fore-Left/Right	60	300
Aft-Left/Right	60	300
Aft	60	300
Turret (x 5)	60	300

Weapons and Ammo

2 PPC, 1 Autocannon/10
3 Long Toms
2 LRM 20
3 Long Toms
2 PPC, 1 Autocannon/10
2 LR Torpedo 20
2 SR Torpedo 6
2 SR Torpedo 6
2 SR Torpedo 6
Ammo (Long Tom) 300
Ammo (AC/10) 240
Ammo (LRM) 240
Ammo (LR-T) 240
Ammo (SR-T) 360

Location

Turret (1)
Turret (2)
Turret (3)
Turret (6)
Turret (7)
Fore
Aft
Fore-Left (3)
Fore-Right (3)
Body
Body
Body
Body
Body
Body

Tonnage

29
99
22
99
29
20
6
6
6
60
24
40
40
24

Crew: 77 officers, 266 enlisted/non-rated, 102 gunners, 10 bay personnel, 84 marines

Life Boats: 30

Vehicle Bays

1 Light	1 Door (Fore-Right)
1 Light	1 Door (Fore-Left)

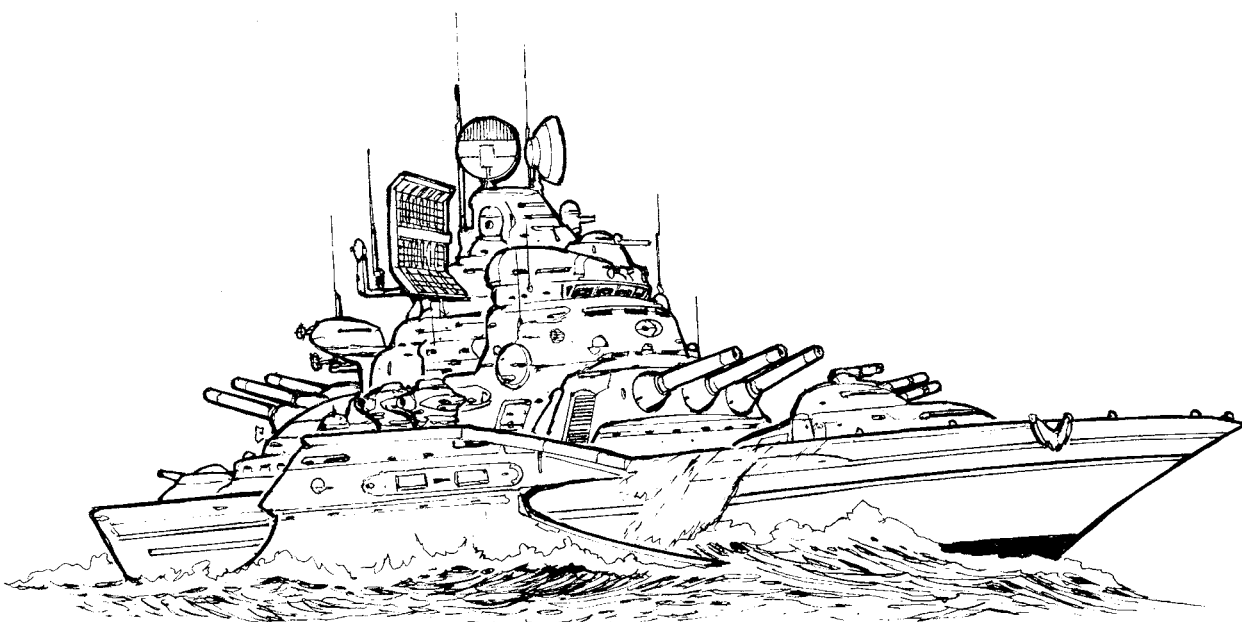
Helipads

1	Hull (5)
---	----------

Cargo

Refrigerated (745 tons)	1 Door (Aft-Left)
Basic (3,696 tons)	1 Door (Aft-Right)

Notes: Features Advanced Fire-Control System, 12 tons of communications equipment, 2 field kitchens, 4 mounted searchlights and 1 MASH unit with 8 operating theaters, as well as CASE in all hull locations.





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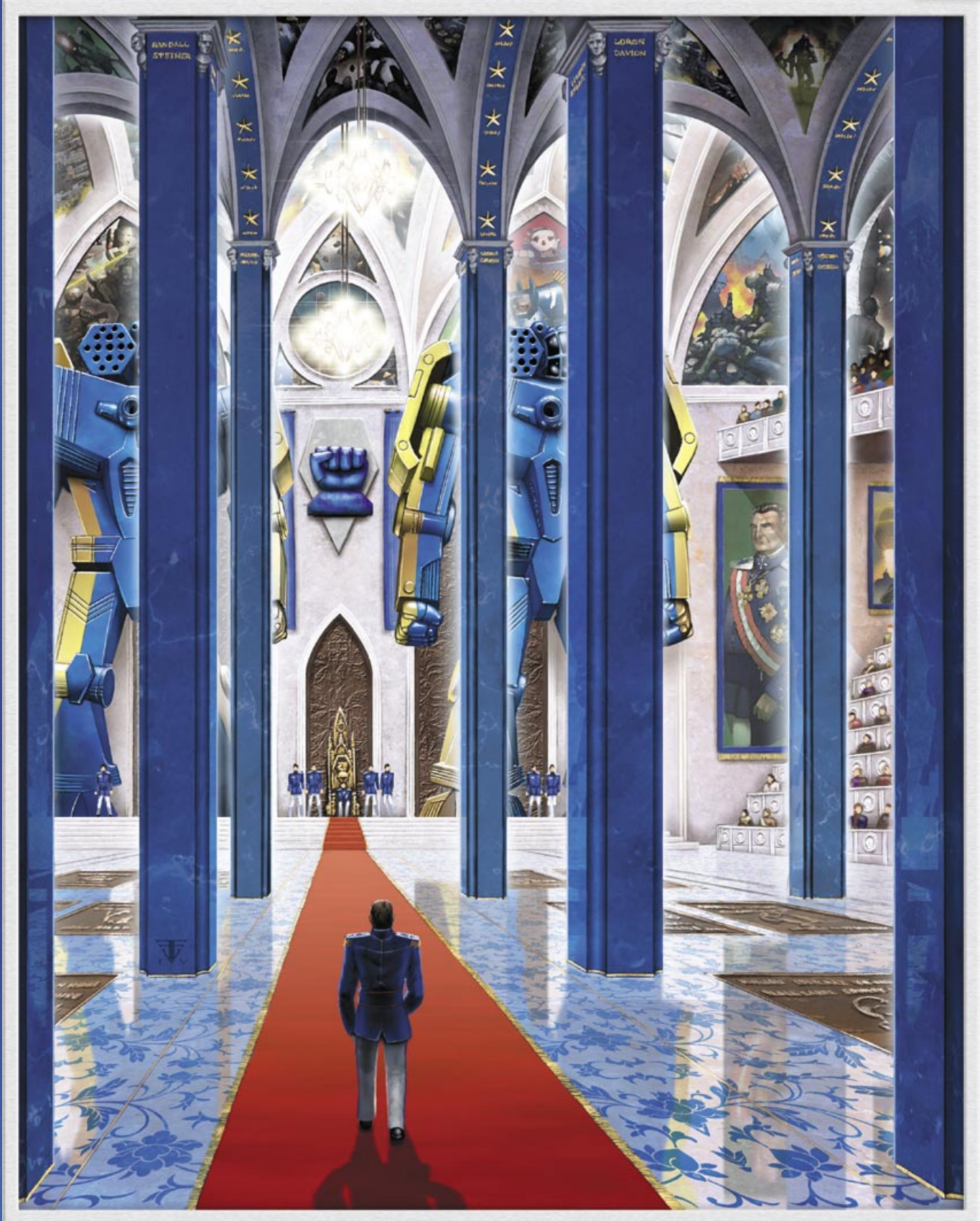
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HANDBOOK: HOUSE STEINER





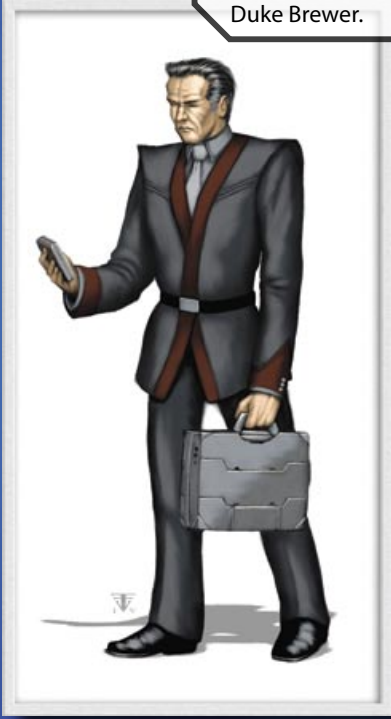
HOUSE STEINER CREST



LYRAN ALLIANCE
STATE EMBLEM

ARCHON
PETER STEINER-DAVION
NOVEMBER 3067

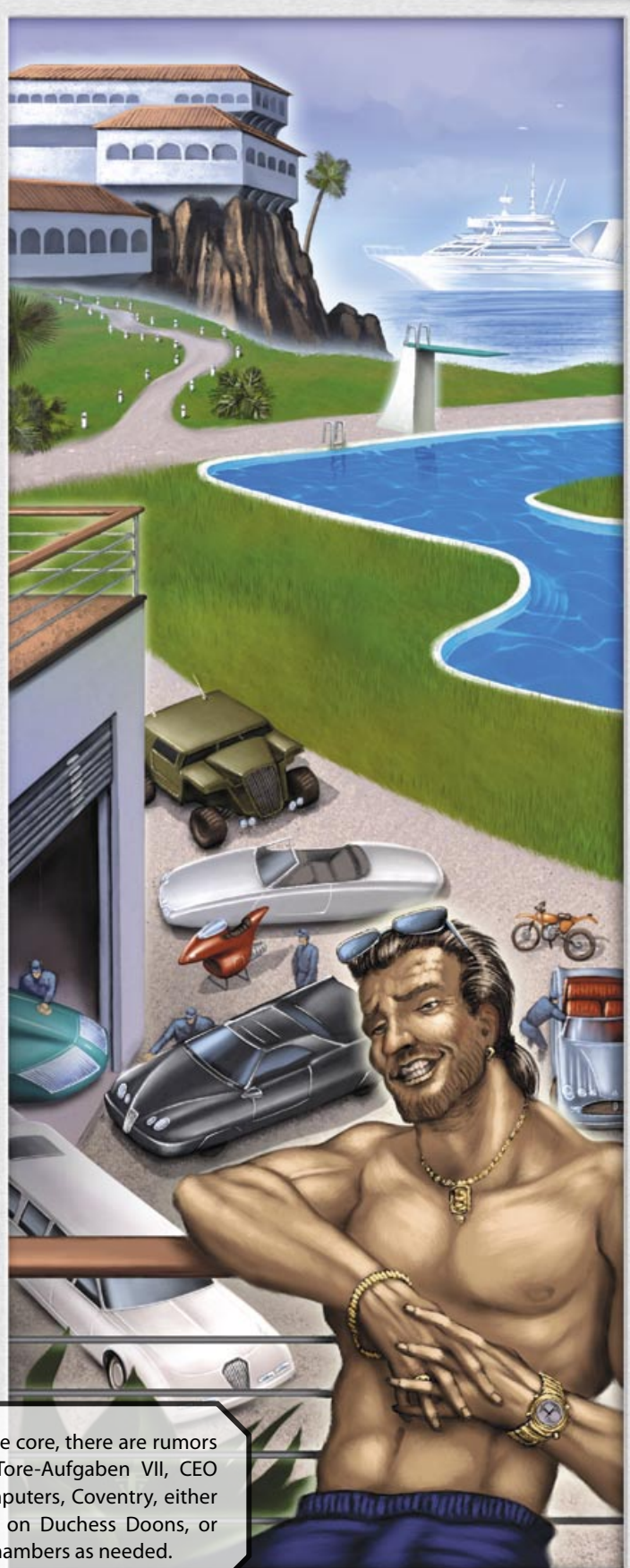
Though not of the nobility, the brilliant and ruthless Gualtiero Marino of Blue Shot Weapons wields considerable power, which he seeks to increase as he checks his notes before a meeting with Duke Brewer.

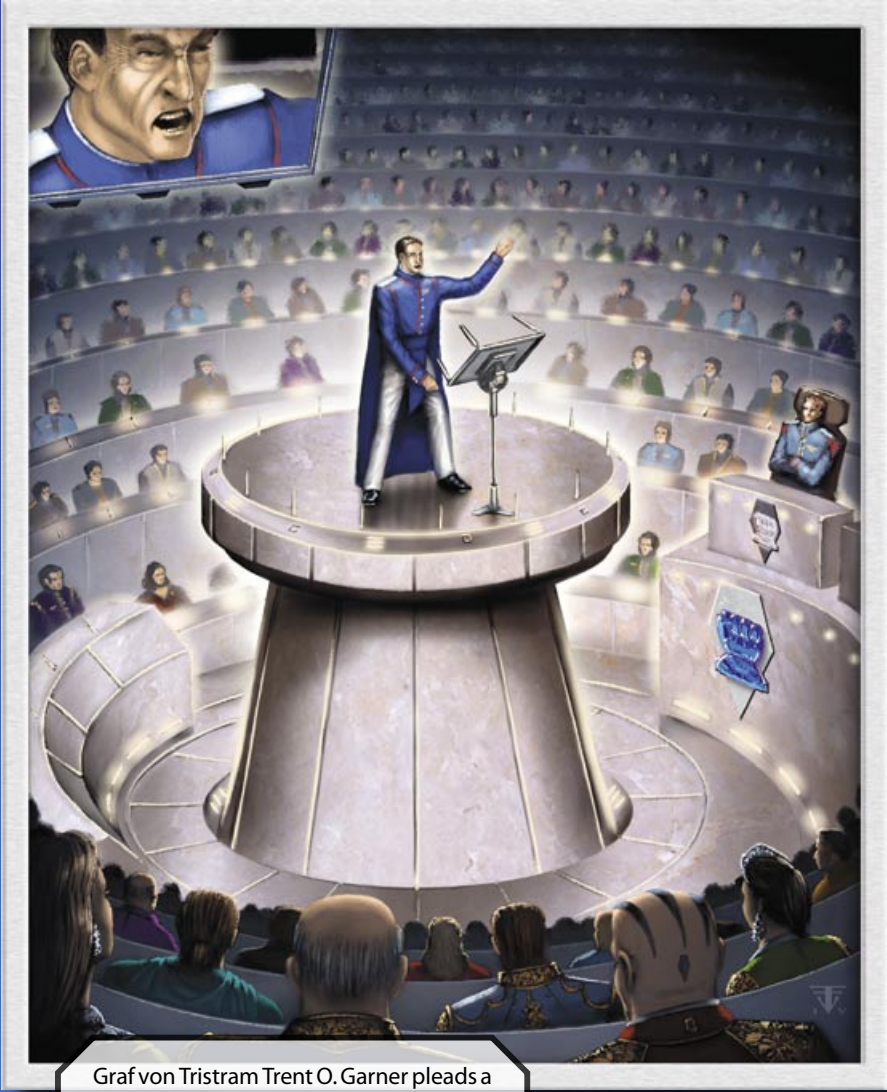


Duke Anatoly Serfass of Alarion, though under public pressure to step down, still has considerable support among the gentry, aptly demonstrating the rift between nobility and commoners.

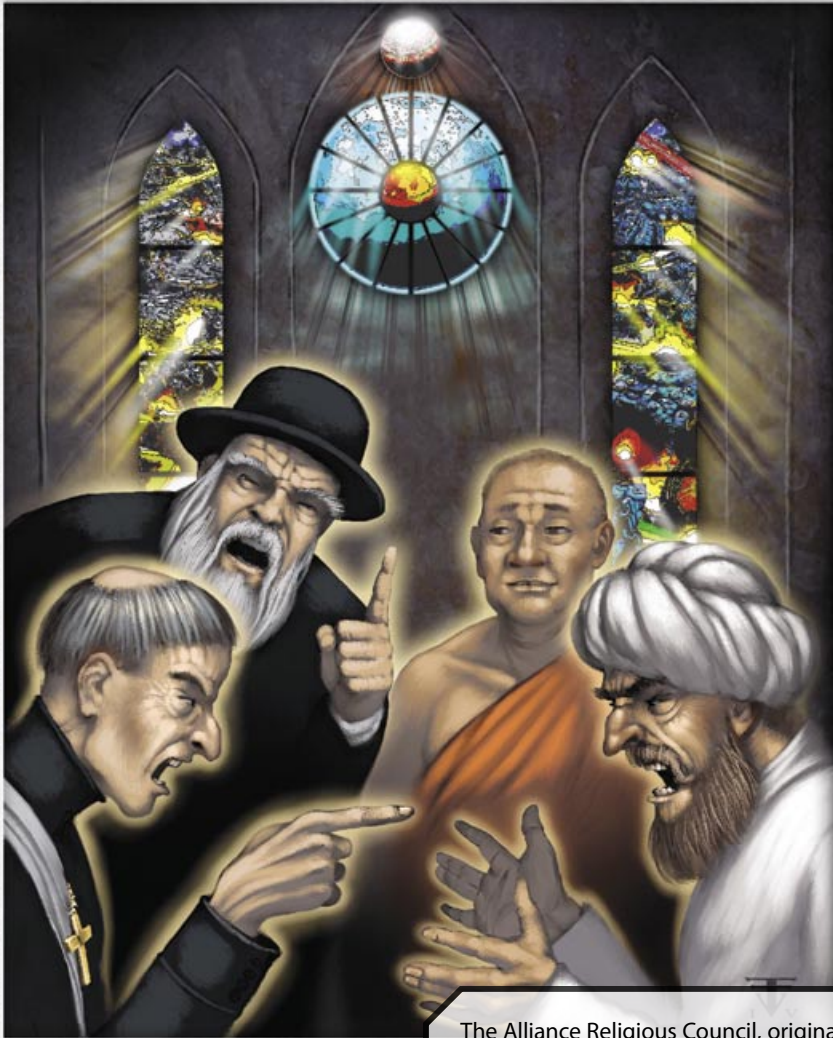


A playboy to the core, there are rumors that Wilhelm Tore-Aufgaben VII, CEO of Nashan Computers, Coventry, either has the goods on Duchess Doons, or visits her bedchambers as needed.





Graf von Tristram Trent O. Garner pleads a case before the Estates General for a new military readiness base on Cavanaugh II to guard against Marik incursions.



The Alliance Religious Council, originally formed in 2590, ensures that the religious freedoms guaranteed under the Articles of Acceptance are protected, even if that requires some heated debates.





Acrux Agricultural Industries



Mountain Wolf BattleMechs



Ioto Galactic Enterprises



Bowie Industries



S.L. Lewis, Incorporated



Starcorps Industries



TK Industries



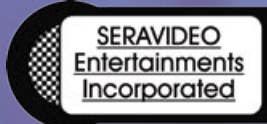
As head of the megaconglomerate Nashan Diversified, Duchess Margaret Doons is arguably one of the top ten most powerful people in the Lyran Alliance; many who both respect and resent her unmatched business acumen put her in the top five.



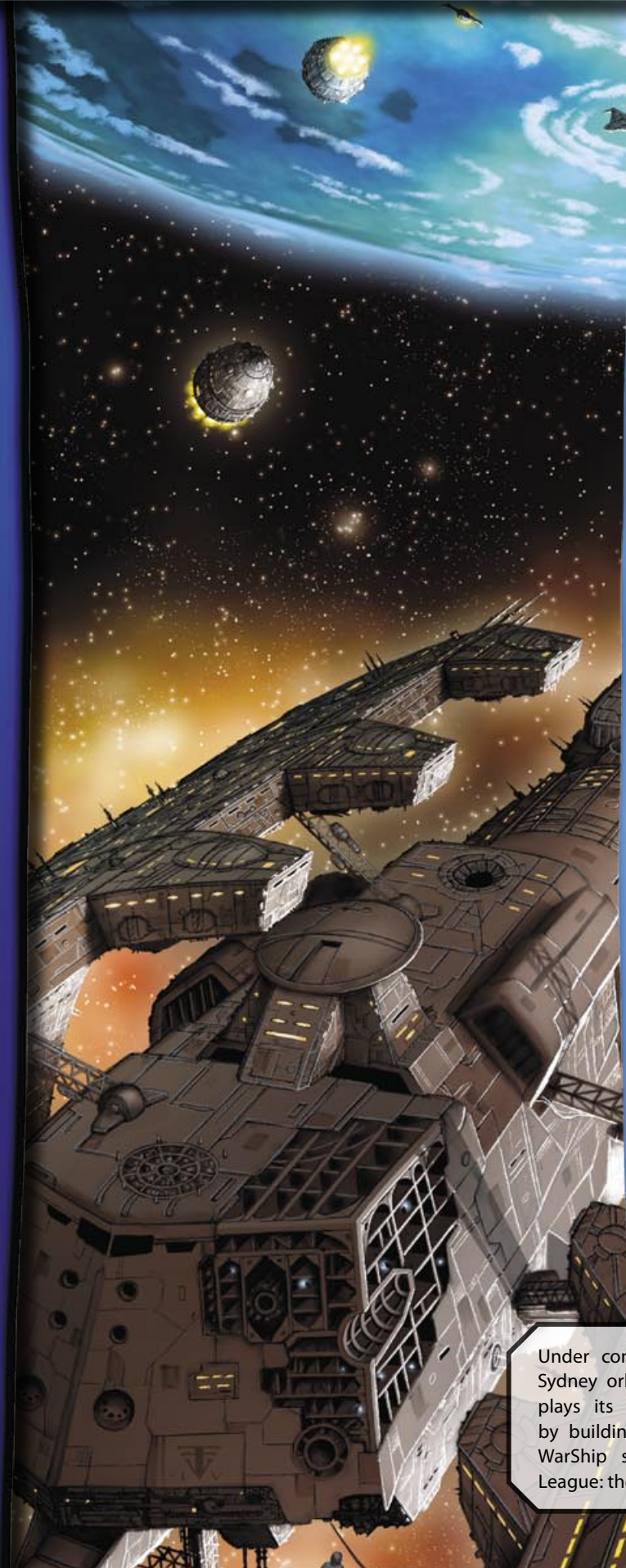
Nashan Diversified



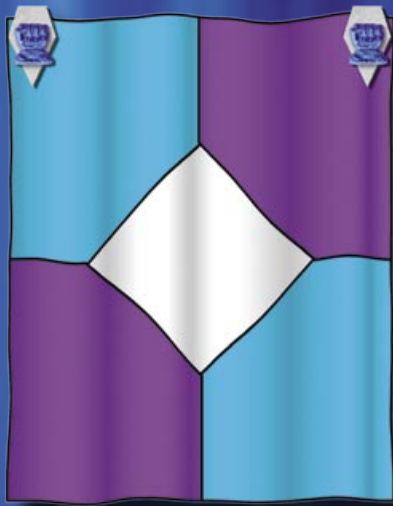
Virtue Cartographers



SeraVideo Entertainments



Under construction at Alarion's Port Sydney orbital yards, the Alliance displays its awesome economic might by building the largest Inner Sphere WarShip since the fall of the Star League: the *Mjolnir*-class *Fylgia*.



With Avanti Automotive driving down prices in the entire region in their bid to open new markets, a Gienah Automotive representative gets into a heated debate with a League Factor over the export tax for Gienah's new luxury hovercar.





Zettle metals

Zettle Metals



Gienah Combat Vehicles



Lockheed / CBM Corporation



Maxell Metals



Gienah Automotive



Timbiqui Spirits



Dynamics Company of Gallery



Nashan Diversified



Defiance Industries of Hesperus

A member of the Lyran Free Traders Association, this salesman consults his personal display unit for up-to-date news from the Lyran Alliance Stock Exchange before opening a bid.





Dobless Information Services



J.B. BattleMechs, Incorporated



BLUE SHOT WEAPONS

Blue Shot Weapons



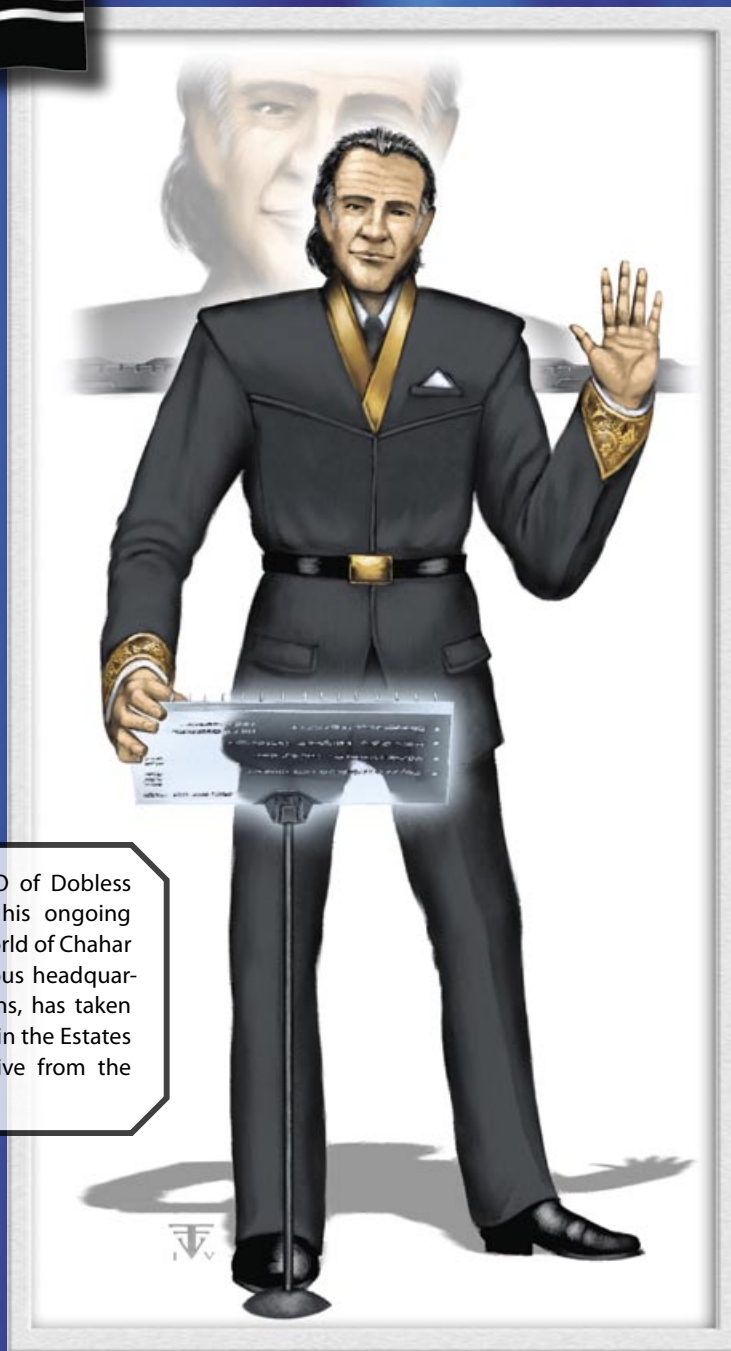
Coventry Metal Works



Blackstone BattleMechs



Nashan Diversified



Baron Seth Tobiason, CEO of Dobless Information Services, in his ongoing efforts to take back the world of Chahar (the location of his previous headquarters) from the Jade Falcons, has taken to campaigning for a seat in the Estates General as a representative from the world of Ludwigshafen.



House Bradford Crest



Norse Storm Technologies



Quicksell Company

With a corporate mentality similar to that of many Combine businesses, the “work first” attitude—displayed here with a company picnic for lunch—has allowed Coventry Metal Works to challenge the mighty Defiance Industries, despite Coventry’s inferior size.





Tharkad Aerospace Group



Alliance-Grand
Hotel Interstellar



Semier Data Tron



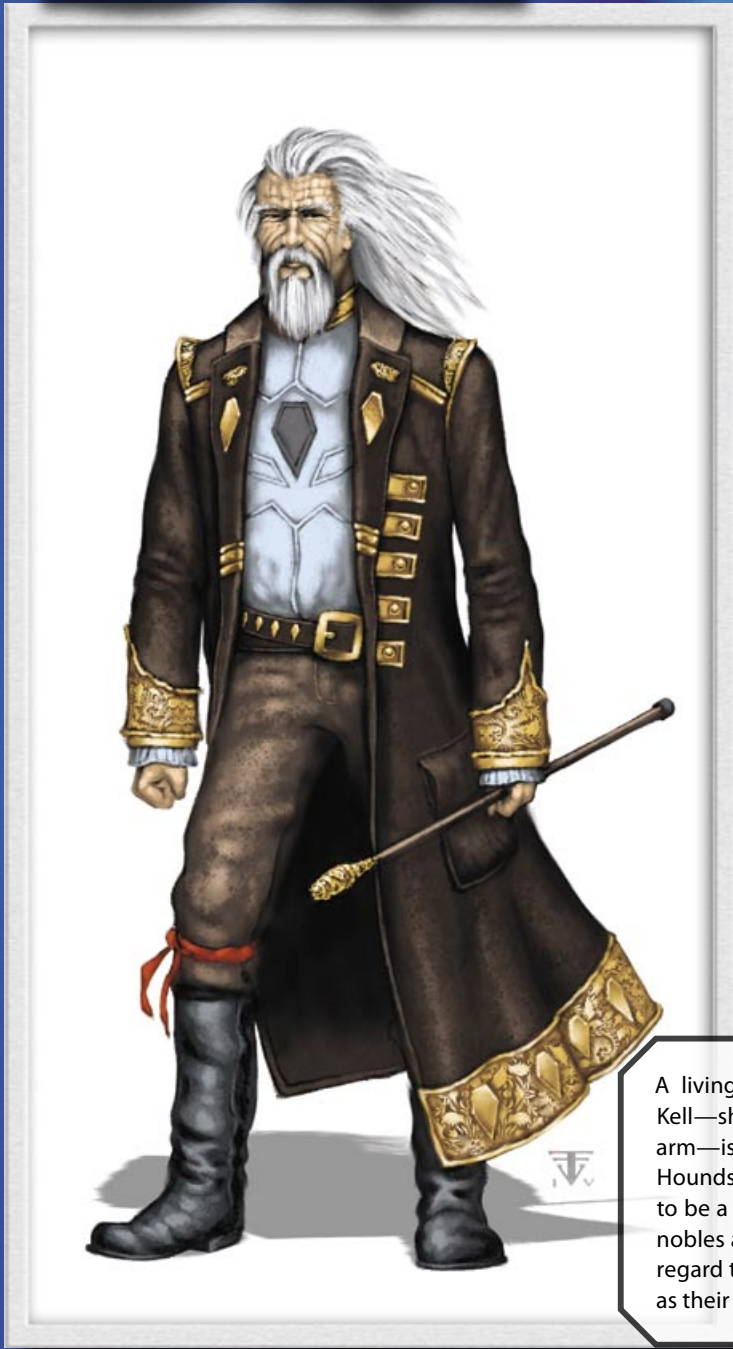
Lockheed/CBM Corporation



Nashan Diversified



House Kell Crest



A living legend, Grand Duke Morgan Kell—shown wearing his replacement arm—is the founder of the elite Kell Hounds mercenary unit. He continues to be a thorn in the side of those Lyran nobles and military leaders who do not regard the welfare of the common man as their highest priority.



Edasich Motors



Meier-Star Agency



Tharkan Media Associates



Mauser & Gray Firearms

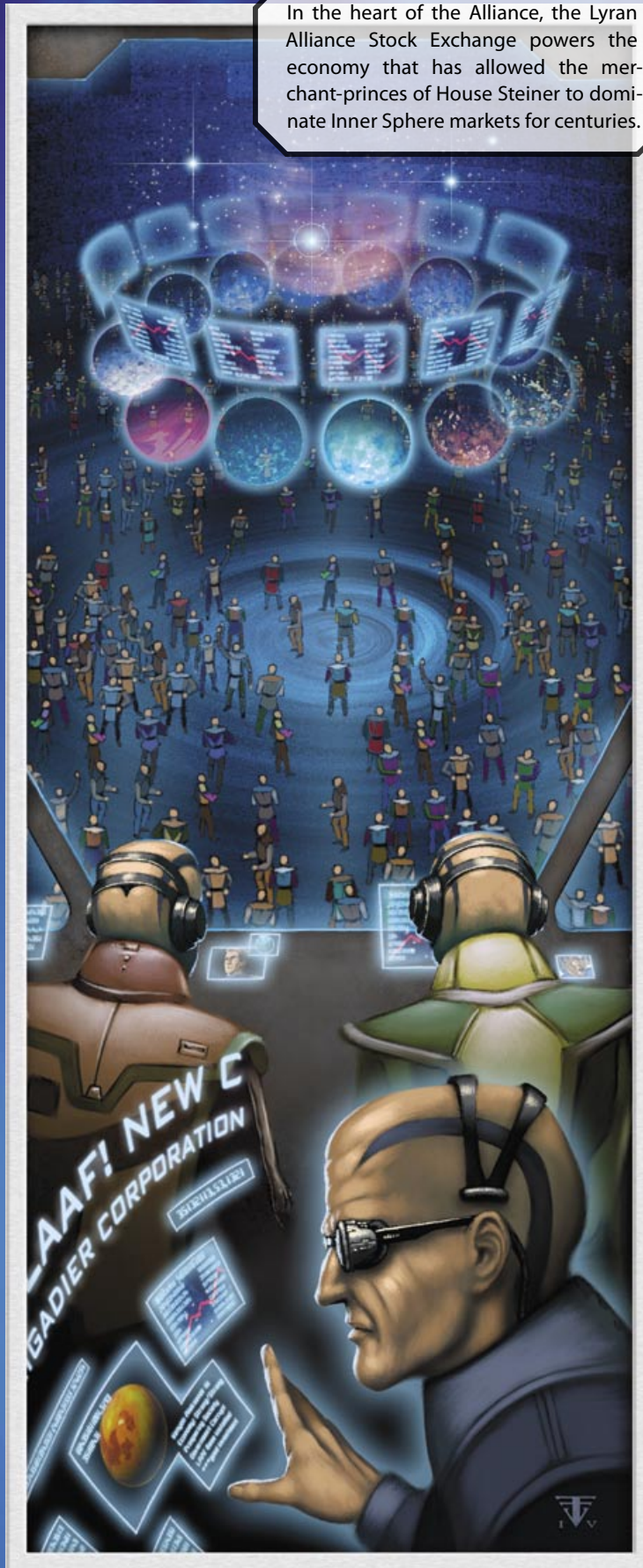


TharHes Industries



Ioto Galactic Enterprises

In the heart of the Alliance, the Lyran Alliance Stock Exchange powers the economy that has allowed the merchant-princes of House Steiner to dominate Inner Sphere markets for centuries.



Longanecker
Longanecker PlastiSteel



Defiance Industries of Hesperus



Bountiful Delicacies



Lyran Free Traders Association



Arc-Royal MechWorks



Commonwealth Press
Commonwealth Press



Defiance Industries of Hesperus



Edasich Motors



Ramtech Industries



Yankee Weapon Systems



Cyclops, Incorporated



House Kelswa Crest



House Brewer Crest



Duke Daniel Brewer, usually dedicated to his work as CEO of Defiance Industries of Hesperus—the largest arms producer in the Inner Sphere—plays Microgravity ForceCross, the latest extreme-sport craze sweeping the Alliance.



Doering Electronics



Zettle metals
Zettle Metals



SeraVideo Entertainments
Incorporated



Bowie Industries



Technologies
Gray Death Technologies



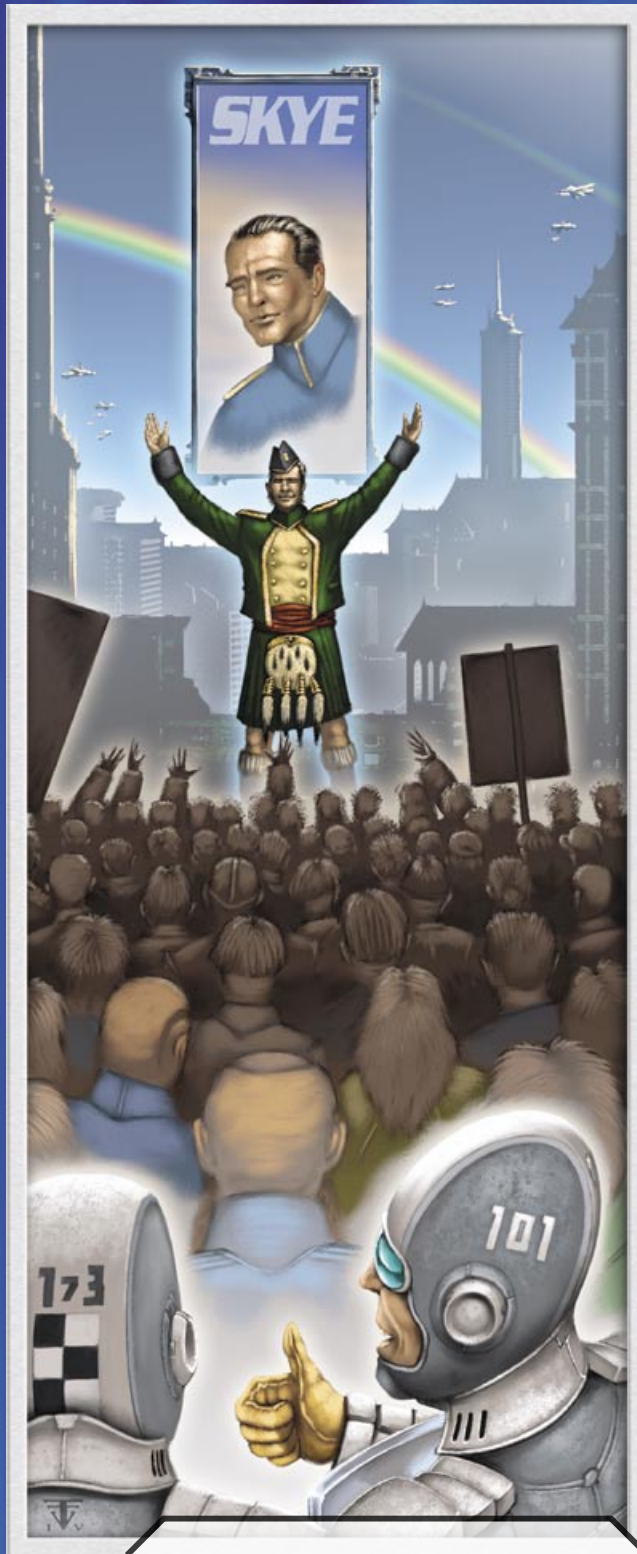
Water Pure Industries



Avanti Industries



Toloy Chemicals



Even Strategic Local personnel from the Alliance's elite anti-terrorist Lohengrin find themselves swayed by Free Skye rhetoric and the desire of Skye Province, ever a thorn in the Steiner breadbasket region, to secede from the "imperial fist" of far-off Tharkad.



Earcandy Company



Shipil Company



Skye Pleasure Craft Ltd.



BLUE SHOT WEAPONS

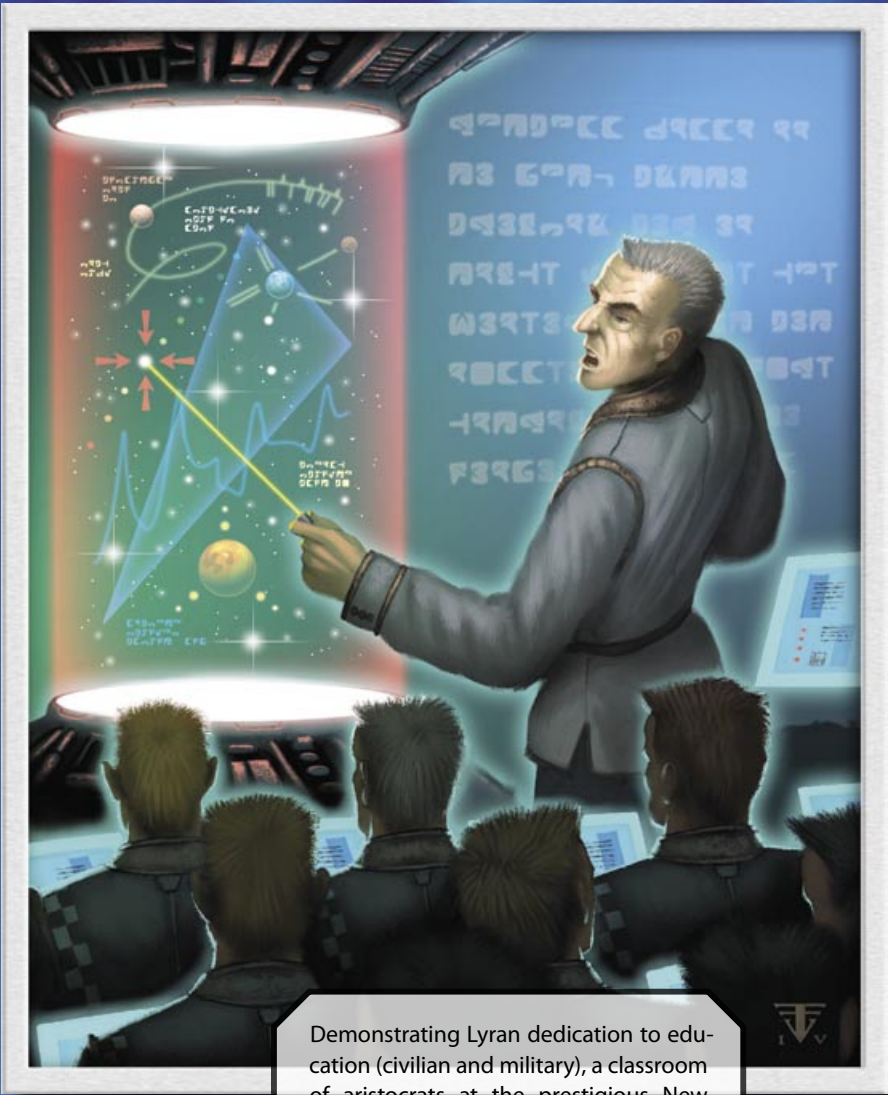
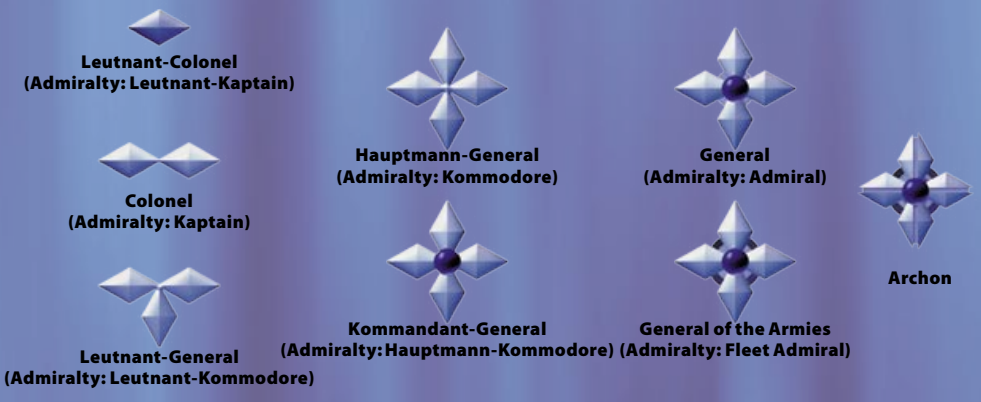
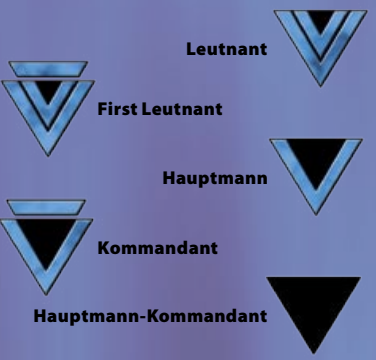
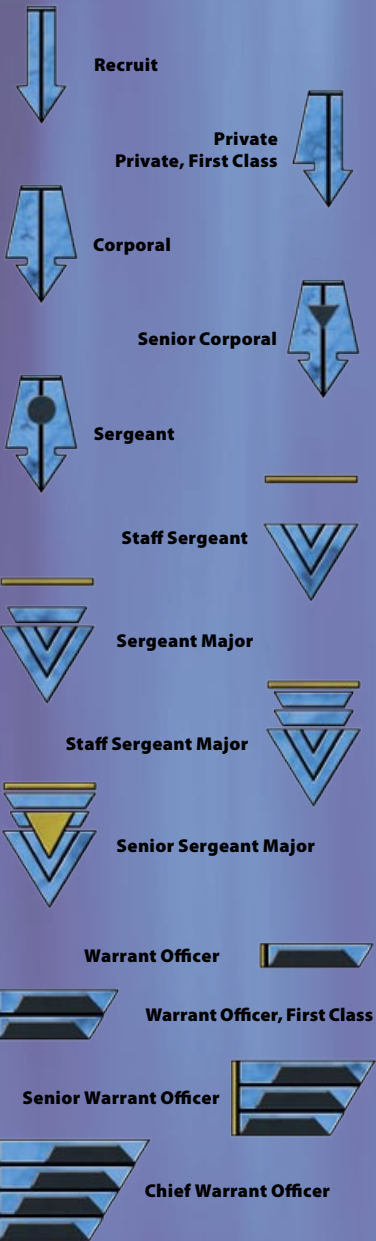
Blue Shot Weapons



Rastaban Agricultural



HANDBOOK: HOUSE STEINER



Demonstrating Lyran dedication to education (civilian and military), a classroom of aristocrats at the prestigious New Cambridge University on Wessex listens to an exciting lecture on astrophysics.

THE MAILED FIST OF POWER!



For centuries, the merchant-princes of the Lyran Commonwealth survived as much through economic might as by the cloak and dagger, steadily growing in strength until their influence could be felt across the Inner Sphere. Now emerging from the ruins of a short-lived alliance and a bloody civil war, a bold new identity has taken hold of the people united under the mighty fist of House Steiner.



Kicking off a new series, **Handbook: House Steiner™** brings the essential history, politics, and culture of one of the Inner Sphere's most powerful nations to life for a new generation of **Classic BattleTech®** players. More than a mere sourcebook, **Handbook: House Steiner** provides rules for both **Classic BattleTech** and **Classic BattleTech RPG™** campaigns, including new personal equipment, creatures, life paths, and more—all tailored for players and campaigns based on the Lyran state!



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