

CLASSIC BATTLETECH®

A GUIDE TO

LIBERTY
LOPES

W*KGAMES

PTC 2011
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Special Thanks

To Herb Beas and Camille Klein for proposing such a cool product...it only took almost four years to see publication!

To Chris Lewis, who was more than willing to jump on board, under a tight dead-line (as usual), to generate an amazing ninety-eight logos!

The usual proofing crowd: David McCulloch, Jeff Morgan, Rich Cencarik, Peter La Casse, Michael Miller, Max Prohaska, Paul Sjardijn, Øystein Tvedten and Andreas Zuber.

Acknowledgements

Much of this work is based off of the material presented in the *Intelligence Operations Handbook* by the following authors: Alex Bund, Geoff Pass, Diane Piron-Gelman, and Robert Cruz.

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Published by FanPro, LLC • 1608 N. Milwaukee • Suite 1005 • Chicago, IL 60647

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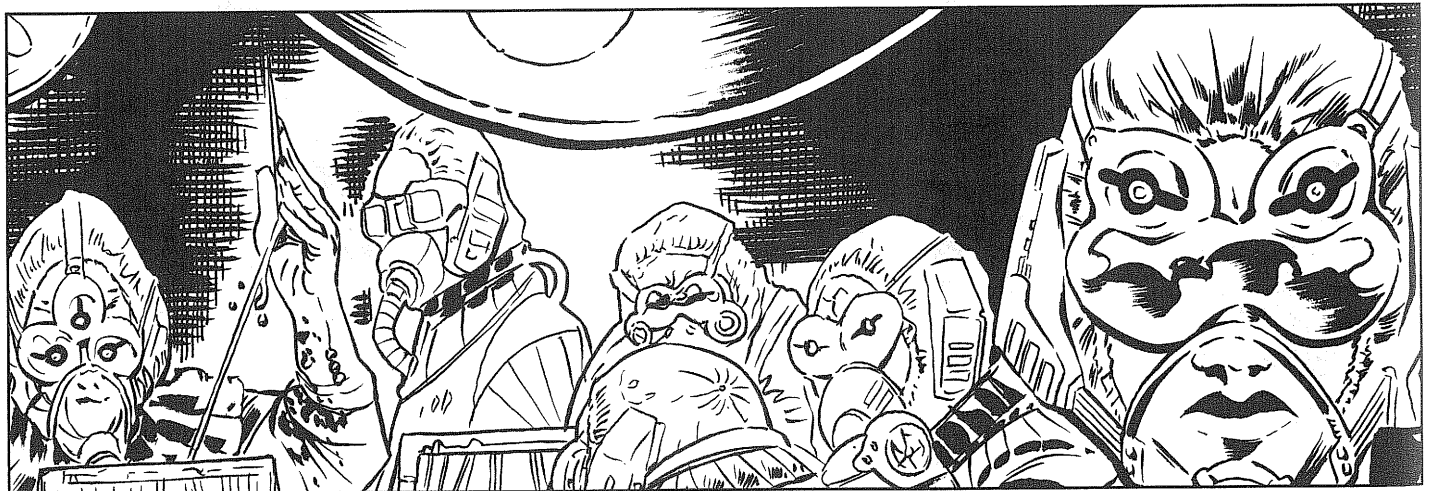
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PROFESSIONAL COURTESY

Dark, smoky, rundown and crowded, the Rage Hall was a typical Galatean City MechWarrior's dive bar, nothing special to anyone but the down-and-out and the Dispossessed. Samuel Martial knew this kind of place well, having frequented many in his long-lost youth. This one in particular had been among his favorites on past missions, an unassuming watering hole whose regular clientele drowned their sorrows, told each other again and again of glories past, and fought over the latest trivids out of Solaris VII.

It amazed Martial that nothing had changed since his last visit. Nothing, that is, but him. Back then, he'd been a barfly by the name of Emiril Timothy. His hair had been lighter and longer, he'd had green eyes rather than gray, and at least seven more kilos to his bulk. Emiril even spoke with a lisp, Martial fondly remembered, before he got caught in crossfire that cost him an ear and nearly his life. Today Emiril was dead, replaced by Sam Martial, who preferred a different booth at the back of the bar where he waited and watched.

"Heads up, ET," a voice whispered in his ear without warning, using his old initials as a call-sign. "Your pal just pulled into the lot."

Martial grunted once in acknowledgement, not daring to open his mouth for a verbal reply, even a sub-vocalized one. He knew full well his partner, waiting in an "abandoned" van outside, would get the message.

He allowed his gaze to pan around the room slowly, taking in the other patrons and identifying many of the same faces that had been there probably since Melissa Steiner-Davion was alive. It seemed a minor miracle to him that so many of these poor slobbs survived the gang wars that had laid so much of the planet to waste during the FedCom Civil War. Galatea, once the Mercenary's Star, became a refuge for those who couldn't cut it when Wolf's Dragoons made Outreach the center of the honorable merc trade. Transformed within a few short years into a black market for hired thugs, the rest of the Inner Sphere seemed content to forget about this world. Agents from every imaginable power player in the known galaxy continued to come here, but only when they wanted people willing to get their hands dirty, the kind of folks not for hire under any oversight by ComStar or the Mercenary Review and Bonding Commission.

Martial's roving eye caught those of a woman seated alone at a booth around the corner. Dark hair, nondescript baggy clothing, trying hard to look just as casual as he was. He tagged her from the familiar look in her eyes, too alert and appraising to match the collection of beer bottles arrayed on the table before her.

Competition, he told himself. But who's she working for? That analysis flashed through his mind in the fraction

of a second it took for him to size up her appearance and let his eyes move along. Keeping her in his peripheral vision for any sign of reaction, he absent-mindedly reached into his jacket for a cigarette, incidentally releasing the snap that held his hold-out pistol in its quickdraw holster. She didn't react. He moved on.

"Company," he sub-vocalized, as he stuck the cigarette in his mouth and lit it.

"Keep cool, ET," came the answering whisper from his bionic implant, a voice transmitted directly into his auditory nerve by the replacement for the flesh-and-blood left ear Emiril had lost. "Your pal just walked in."

Puffing out a cloud of smoke, Martial resumed his casual review of the bar and put a surprised smile on his face as his target came through the front door. Arnold Gruber was exactly what he'd expected: hulking, shaved head, scruffy beard, tattoos, and obviously so full of himself he didn't think he'd need more than a leather vest and a standard M&G service auto for protection in a place like the Rage. *Typical 'Mech jock*, Martial thought.

Gruber went straight to the bar, ordered himself something dark, and began scanning the room. Martial waited until the other man's eyes found his and then waved him over. Looking suddenly wary, Gruber's gaze darted back and forth before he approached.

"You Martial?" he said.

Subtle as a PPC, too, Martial amended, as he broadened his plastic smile and said, "That depends. Are you Mr. Gruber?"

"Yeah. I was told there's work to be had?"

Martial motioned to the empty seat before him, casting another quick glance around the room. The woman he'd noticed earlier was already gone. "You know there's always work to be had for the right people, especially when they come prepared."

Gruber, at least, wasn't so thick he couldn't take a hint. His body language said he was eager to brag. A smile twisted across his face as he produced a small data card.

"WHM-8D *Warhammer*," he said. "Practically fresh from the factory, and I can bring three more lance mates with firepower to match whatever you got in mind. What's the job?"

Martial palmed the data card and gave Gruber an appreciative smile. "Simple objective raid for my employer. Minimal resistance, but you'll have to go in incognito. We don't want anyone tracing the job back to you, and in turn back to us—whether or not you can pull it off."

"One of our specialties." Gruber looked thoughtful for a moment. "Who's the employer, and what's he offering?"

"The less you know about who, the better." Martial dropped his voice low, his expression turning serious. "We'd like to increase the chance of not being found out. What we offer is probably double what your other Lowbraü friends got last time."

The look on Gruber's face was everything Martial had hoped for. Recoiling in his seat, the big man reached downward for his pistol, but Martial's was already in his hand, concealed beneath the table. Locking eyes with the MechWarrior, he shook his head with a grim smile.

"You don't want to do that, Arnold. You're *not* that fast."

The snap of a safety disengaging too close to Martial's ear preceded Gruber's eyes moving to see who it was.

"Neither are you, FedRat," a new voice hissed from behind him, feminine and dangerous.

Martial raised his hands slowly. *Damn it!*

Relief showing on his face, Gruber began to rise, a grateful thanks to his unlikely rescuer on his lips. His gratitude died mid-sentence when the woman continued.

"Don't you know it's rude to walk out on a girl?" she asked coldly.

Gruber began to stammer. For just a moment, Martial could feel rather than see her pistol wave toward the big mercenary for emphasis. That moment was all he needed.

Twisting in his seat, Martial reached back to seize the muzzle of the weapon with his left hand. Swinging it high, he directed its silenced shot into the low ceiling panels. Drawing back his right hand, he brought his elbow around to connect with the woman's face. Stunned, she fell backward into the booth behind him. Martial turned back in time to see Gruber on his feet, his M&G in hand.

"I don't know who the hell you guys are," he began, "but it ain't gonna be that easy to—"

Whatever else Gruber had to say was drowned out by the impossibly loud report of two gunshots. In the half-crowded bar, Martial had trouble finding the source, but the target was clear. He cursed as Gruber's blood splattered across him, the table and the wall beside him. A look of infinite confusion and shock appeared on the MechWarrior's face. Then the life drained out of his eyes. The bar exploded in panic.

"ET!" a voice yelled in his ear, "What the hell's going on in there!?"

"Crudstunk!" Martial snapped, pulling himself under the table almost as fast as Gruber's corpse fell to the floor. A third gunshot tore open the seat behind him. "I'll explain in a minute!"

Attempting to crawl out onto a floor transformed into an obstacle course of running feet, falling bodies and overturned tables, Martial managed to avoid one more bullet before a hand grabbed his shoulder. Glancing up, he saw the dark-haired woman in nondescript

clothing, sporting a freshly bloodied nose and a silencer-equipped Nambu. She pointed the gun toward the bar.

"Come on," she hissed.

Amid the chaos, the silhouette of two men in dark trench coats peering through the otherwise panicked masses stood out. Martial got his feet under him and half-crawled after the woman, into the shadowy corners of the side booths.

"And you are—?"

"Not your immediate problem, FedRat," she snapped, finding cover in a recently vacated booth. "What's your angle with the Lowbraü?"

Expending his hold-out with two hasty shots at the gunmen, Martial pocketed the empty weapon, ducked behind an overturned table and reached behind for his Python. "I could ask you the same question!"

A bullet winged the table's edge, scattering metal and wood splinters close enough to Martial's face to make him wince. His rescuer responded with a pair of barely audible shots. A male voice cried out in agony as she ducked back down and glared at him.

"What's to say I wasn't after Gruber specifically, or you, for that matter?"

"Because you could have nailed either of us the moment you made visual," Martial growled. Popping up to send one bullet back at the remaining gunman, he spat out the cigarette he'd almost forgotten about, and saw three gun muzzles spit back. "Damn it! They brought friends!"

"Back door?"

Martial pointed behind her. "Ladies first!"

Snapping off two more shots before popping back under cover, the woman shook her head. "Uh-uh, *Herr* Martial," she declared. "You go first. If there's any of these goons watching that door, I want you to get the first bullet."

"Charming! How about together, then?"

"Fine!"

Martial leaped up first, snapping another shot back at the gunmen. He raced for the exit, the woman close behind. Tapping his earpiece, he had time enough to bark the words, "Track me," before slamming into the handle to the sound of fire alarms.

* * * *

Tumbling into a back alley, Martial darted quickly to one side, considered drawing a bead on his unexpected sidekick, then thought better of it. Instead, when the woman shot through the door behind him, he pointed down the dark passage to a distant street and ran that way. "So, how's it working for LIC these days?" he asked breathlessly, never losing his pace. The door banged open again behind them.

"How did you—?"

PROFESSIONAL COURTESY

"Your accent is showing. How'd you make me?"

"Because you just told me," she said with a smile, wiping the blood from her face. "Besides, who else would be looking for the Lowbraü who wasn't a Drac?"

A bullet rang off the nearby wall, chipping away plaster that sprayed over Martial's face. He turned onto the street, putting the corner of an abandoned tenement building between him and the gunmen. The LIC woman raced around to claim the opposite corner. Chancing a peek, Martial managed a quick head count.

"Three of them," he said. "How many did you get, Loki?"

"Two," she said, while reaching for a reload, "and the name's Casey. Not Loki. You?"

"One. Lohengrin, then?"

"MI4 is really slipping if you have to guess," she said flatly. Turning the corner again, she squeezed off two more shots as she crossed to his side. The lead gunman took a bullet square in the forehead and pitched forward, landing face first in the garbage-strewn ferrocrete pavement. Martial added two more shots to drop a second gunman. The third took cover behind a battered dumpster.

"Now that we know who we are, Casey" Martial grumbled, "who're our determined friends?"

"Not any of mine, I can assure you."

"Only one way to know for sure, I suppose."

Dropping into a crouch, Martial took the corner into the alley again, fully expecting to see the last gunman ready and waiting. Instead, the alley was empty, save for two bodies. Daring to move forward, Martial raced for the dumpster, the only object in the passage large enough to conceal a man. Again, the expected gunfire failed to erupt.

Casey materialized behind him, clutching her autopistol in both hands. Though the thought of going in with questionable backup didn't thrill him, Martial scurried around the dumpster, Python raised. He found nothing there, apart from a discarded trench coat.

"He's gone," he said.

Casey rose from her side of the dumpster, a quizzical look on her face. Her eyes darted up suddenly, toward something behind him. Martial ducked. From the tenement's fire escape, an amorphous swirl of gray and black dropped down, fire spitting from a barely recognizable hand. Casey grunted as one bullet slammed into her chest, throwing her back to the ground. A second bullet clanged off the dumpster, centimeters from Martial even as he jumped sideways.

Swinging his Python in line with the figure, Martial fired once and was rewarded with a cry of pain. The figure dropped, swirling colors settling on gray, but the shape was unmistakably human.

Camo sneaks, Martial thought. *Definitely not your run of the mill thugs*. He glanced back at Casey and then reached over to the fallen body, groped for its head and pulled down the mask. A twisted visage of death stared back at him.

"ET!" a voice shouted in his ear. "What's the sitrep?"

"Extraction, FP," Martial muttered as he patted down the body. He found nothing, exactly as he'd expected. "The mission's a bust. Foreign interference."

"Who's the competition?"

"Elsies and an unknown agency. Stand by."

A cough turned his attention back to Casey. Martial walked over, reached down, and suddenly found himself facing down her silencer.

"Strange gratitude, Lohengrin."

"Gratitude is I didn't fire, Freddie," Casey growled back. "Call it a professional courtesy. Who're you talking to?"

"Backup," Martial admitted. "He'll be around in a minute or two for pick-up. If you want a ride, you're welcome to it—out of professional courtesy, of course. You okay?"

Casey coughed and nodded, finally holstering her weapon. Martial noted the powder burn on her shirt and caught a glimpse of her body armor through the hole. "Now what?" she said.

"Our friends are all down," he told her. "Nobody to answer questions."

A Teutonic curse escaped Casey's lips as she sat up. "I don't suppose you found anything?"

"Would you tell me if our roles were reversed?"

"Heh." Casey forced herself to her feet and looked at the body. "So much for professional courtesy, though I'll wager you found nothing."

"That'll teach me never to bet against a Lyran."

Casey sneered back at Martial and looked down again. Reaching into her jacket pocket, she produced a pair of gloves and put them on.

"Well, kid," she said heavily, "you lucked out this time. Looks like we both busted our missions, and I'll bet they were the same. We'll not be figuring out who hired the Lowbraü any time soon, or where the rest of Gruber's buddies are."

Martial nodded and finished the thought for her, "Which means we won't be figuring out any time soon who hired them to give the Combine an excuse to take the Thumb Worlds. Another mystery of the Civil War left unsolved."

"For now, anyway..." Casey's voice trailed off as she spotted the gunman's forgotten pistol. Martial followed her stare. Molded into its grip was an emblem known and feared throughout the Inner Sphere. For the first time since the start of the mission, Martial's gut did a queasy flip; one for the emblem and another for what game they played in so blatantly displaying ownership.

"Word of Blake," he muttered.

INTRODUCTION

Confidential: Eyes Only
From: General Caradoc Trevena
To: Commanding General Hohiro Kurita

The past twenty years, it may be argued, have been among the most tumultuous seen in the entire history of the Inner Sphere. We have seen the invasion of the Clans, and an alliance by all five Great Houses to face the threat. We have seen ComStar sundered in that ordeal, with its factions vying for control over Terra. After the victory at Tukayyid, we saw the old rivalries rise again, and even my homeland, the Federated Commonwealth, has bowed then broken as the heirs to Hanse Davion and Melissa Steiner fought for control over the realm. We also saw the Clan invasion end, with the homeworlds of Kerensky's descendants revealed. We saw the alliance between the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation rise and fall, and House Liao, through new allies in the Periphery, rise again to menace their hated rivals in House Davion. New Clans have entered the Inner Sphere, others have been forced out, minor states have formed and shattered, and even the Periphery nations have risen in power and prestige enough to give any Great House pause. We have even seen a rebirth of this Star League itself. The changes have been nothing short of breathtaking.

Yet the more things changed, the more they stayed the same. Despite the strides taken over the last two decades, the Inner Sphere remains a hotbed of eternal struggle, with armies of BattleMechs arrayed between rivals and even allies. Indeed, there are even more disparate groups now than ever before—more factions, who share in common only the dream of one day bringing it all together under their own banner. It is sad to say that the Star League, once the unifying force in the Inner Sphere, and certainly our salvation from Clan dominion, seems more of a sham to the people of the Inner Sphere with each passing day.

Nowhere is this trend more obvious than in the current state of covert operations across the Inner Sphere, Periphery, and Clan-held territories. Each agency still pursues the agendas of the past, as poised against one another as the armies of their respective governments. The arduous task of compiling this document about them is only one sign of this division, and involved the use of far more agents than should have been necessary among supposedly allied realms. Though I'm hardly in a position to judge the intelligence communities of the member states, I think the resistance we encountered during this effort speaks volumes of the increasing factionalism we're now seeing.

Of course, my reservations pale in comparison to where much of the enclosed information comes from. Many of the details we have found in these documents have been obtained or verified against captured intel documents from the Word of Blake's ROM organization, which indicates a pervasiveness we had not previously thought possible. It remains unclear at this time how deep such infiltration goes, or what their ultimate goals are, but the very fact that we have evidence of its existence speaks volumes about the security of the Inner Sphere. I recommend that if we do nothing else, we watch this trend very carefully, indeed.

A Guide to Covert Ops is a comprehensive sourcebook detailing the current state of intelligence, counter-intelligence, and covert operations as they play out behind the scenes of the *BattleTech* universe. Including information that expands on the current state of the various shady organizations which serve the Great Houses, minor powers, Clans and corporations at large today, this book also expands on several areas of the *Classic BattleTech RPG (CBT:RPG)* game. New character generation rules, equipment, campaign rules, and even an adventure all allow new and ongoing players and game masters alike to add a "cloak and dagger" element to their *BattleTech* campaigns.

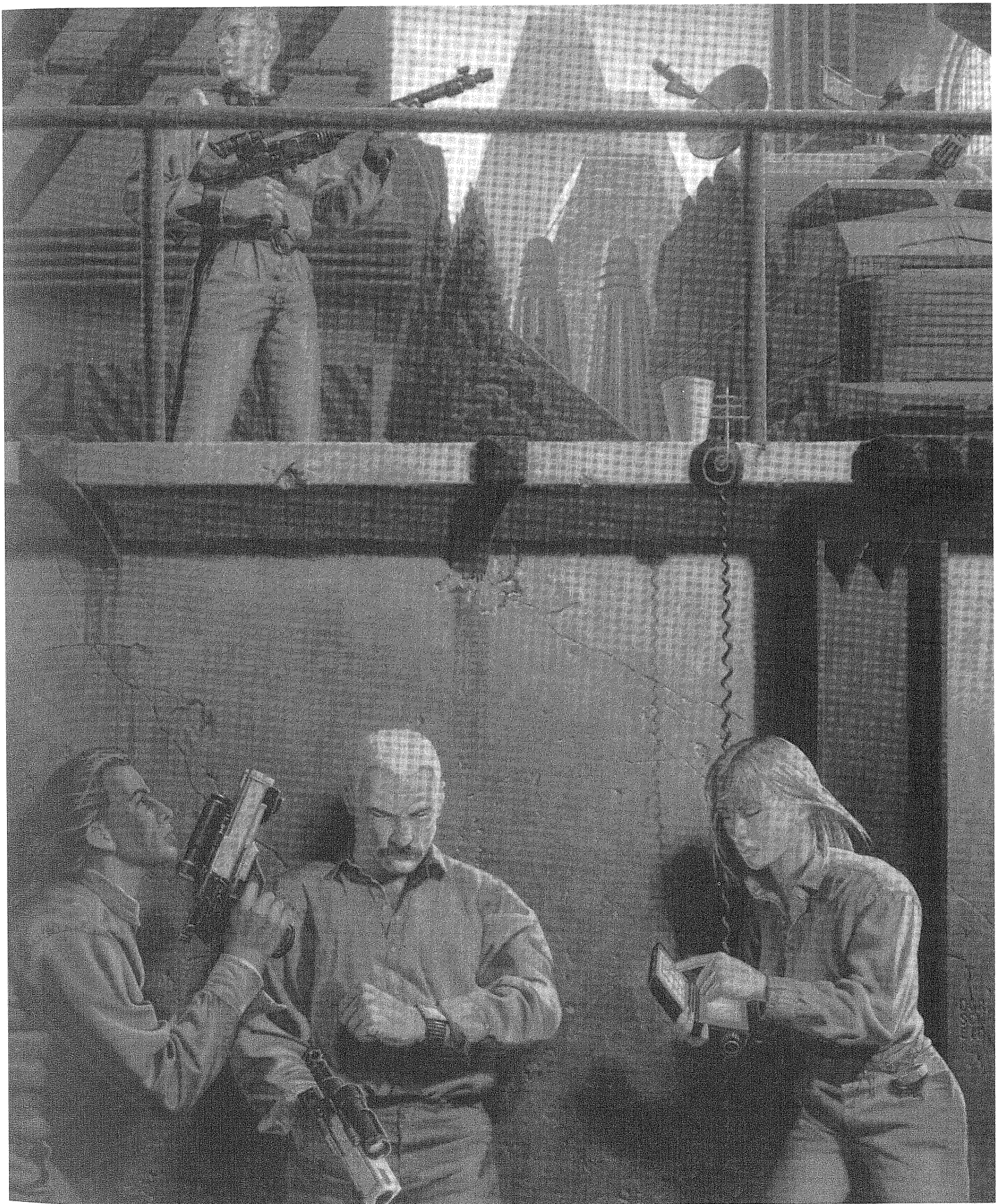
The *Character Creation* section offers expanded options for players interested in *CBT:RPG* covert operations, and provides in-depth information on how to generate and play a character from any of the major organizations currently working in the shadows. The *Overview of Intelligence Agencies* section outlines and updates the main intelligence agencies and their operations from since they were last featured in the out-of-print *Intelligence Operations Handbook* published by FASA Corporation. *New Equipment* provides new personal gear available to the elite operatives of these agencies, items which just can't be found on the streets, while the *Covert Operations* section provides rules and examples of how to run a role-playing campaign based on covert operations. Finally, *Operation Backstab* is a full-length adventure focused on the shadier side of the *BattleTech* universe. Designed to test the mettle of beginning covert operatives, this adventure can be easily adapted to test the mettle of veteran groups as well.

A word to the wise, however. Covert operations is risky business in the *BattleTech* universe, often far more so than simply stalking about in a fully armored BattleMech or advanced battle armor. As a venue where nothing and no one are necessarily what they appear to be, employers, and even colleagues may suddenly turn on each other, and a whole nasty bag of tricks lies in wait for the unwary and uninitiated around every corner. For game masters, role playing covert operations can be an exercise in cruelty, while players may find the challenge in escaping the devious traps laid out before them a truly enjoyable exercise.

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 product references pages in *CBT:RPG*, but the page numbers are identical regardless of whether you own *CBT:RPG* or *MW3*.

A GUIDE TO COVERT OPS



A GUIDE TO COVERT OPS



CHARACTER CREATION

The following section provides traits, skills, affiliations and life paths that can be used in conjunction with the character creation section of *Classic BattleTech RPG (CBT: RPG)* to add variety and depth to the character creation process when specifically dealing with covert operatives.

Unless otherwise stated in the rules, this section follows all the same rules of *CBT: RPG* character creation beginning on p. 21 of *CBT: RPG*.

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.

BLOODMARK (NEW)

Value: 1-5

A bounty has been placed on the character's head. The ranking of the Bloodmark determines both the price and the likelihood that someone will try and collect. The number of points the Bloodmark is worth indicates the magnitude and area of effect in the same way as the Bad Reputation Trait (see p. 79, *CBT:RPG*).

In addition, a Bloodmark also indicates the relative influence of those who will take up the bounty on the character's head. If using the advanced rules for Contacts and Enemies from the *CBT Companion* (starting on p. 209), the typical bounty hunters that will pursue a Bloodmarked character will have the resources and capabilities of an Enemy (though the hunters are just trying to earn their living). The level of these hunters is equal to half the level of the Bloodmark Trait, rounded up, so a level 3 Bloodmark indicates bounty hunters with the resources of a Level 2 Enemy ($3 / 2 = 1.5$, rounded to 2).

A character with a Bloodmark is not necessarily good or bad—just hunted. The only way to lose a Bloodmark is to seek out and eliminate the person or organization that placed the price on the character's life, as eliminating a hunter merely means another will eventually come along to collect.

Rank	C-Bills
1	5,000 – 19,999
2	20,000 – 74,999
3	75,000 – 249,999
4	250,000 – 999,999
5	1,000,000 – 5,000,000

LIFE DEBT (NEW)

Value: 3

At some point in the past, the character's life was saved by an individual or small group, and now the laws of personal honor, a sense of karma, or the stated will of the character's benefactor(s) have imposed the condition that such an act must be repaid in kind at some later date. The Life Debt should also be associated with an appropriate Contact (of any level), indicating the individual or individuals to whom the character owes this debt. In acknowledging a Life Debt, the character may be called upon to render aid (either in person or in the form of money or resources) at any time.

Rejecting an appeal for aid to the individual(s) he or she is indebted to will earn the character a level 3 Bad Reputation Trait, and will automatically change the associated Contact to an Enemy of equal level if the individual(s) survive. If, however, the Contact was killed by the character's inaction, there will be a dark cloud hanging over the character's head, reflected by either a 3-point Dark Secret or the permanent loss of 2 EDG points (gamemaster's discretion).

A Life Debt is considered paid off if the character saves the life of the one to whom the debt is owed, or by rendering aid of significant proportions (to be determined by the gamemaster).

KI FOCUS (NEW)

Cost: 8

This ability has its origins in the ancient Asian cultures of Terra, who first defined the *ki* or *chi*, a universal energy of nature, believed to flow through every individual. In martial arts, particularly those involving unarmed or primitive weapon techniques, training in the focusing of one's *ki* for stronger or more accurate strikes has become the hallmark of the truly advanced. The ability is quite rare, however, largely cultivated only by the most elite of masters, such as the Draconis Combine's Order of the Five Pillars or the Capellan Confederation's dangerous but spiritual Thuggees. The Ki Focus Trait reflects the character's mastery over his or her *ki*, and can be a powerful ability when used wisely. As it is only commonly taught in conjunction with the Asian martial arts and requires a great deal of mental discipline, this Trait may only be obtained by characters who possess Martial Arts/any Asian style at a +4 bonus (or higher) *and* the Meditation skill.

Over time, Ki Focus can be developed like a skill to grant a character incredible abilities, primarily in the martial arts. Accumulating these abilities, however, requires a significant investment of time and training. To reflect this, characters may first acquire this Trait at only its most basic level. However, like Skills, characters may invest experience in this Trait, over time developing extra abilities, outlined in the table below. Ki Focus is incompatible with the Clumsy, Combat Paralysis, Disabled, or Impatient Traits.

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KI FOCUS SPECIAL ABILITIES

Special Ability	XP Cost
Basic Ki Focus	0
Enhanced Melee	100
Enhanced Accuracy	100
Enhanced Perception	100
Enhanced Endurance	100
The Healing Hand	200
The Poison Hand	200
The Invisible Hand	400

Basic Ki Focus

Available to all characters with Ki Focus, the basic abilities of Ki Focus allow a character to deliver more accurate and powerful blows in melee combat, at a cost of 1 Fatigue point per combat round of use. The accuracy translates to a bonus of -1 to all attack TN and defense TNs in unarmed combat and the use of melee weapons such as swords and staffs. Any damage dealt in these attacks is increased by an additional 1D6.

Enhanced Melee

Ki Focus/Enhanced Melee allows the character to deliver blows in melee combat with far greater accuracy and force than basic Focus allows. This more refined ability allows the character all the abilities of Ki Focus/Basic at no cost in Fatigue to use. Characters with Enhanced Melee can instead spend 1 Fatigue point per combat round to double the attack and defense bonuses, while also increasing the AP of all melee attacks by 2 points. In addition, Enhanced Melee adds +2 to any existing Quickdraw skill, reflecting the enhanced reflexes of this ability.

Enhanced Accuracy

This Ki Focus discipline allows the character to translate the abilities of the Basic Ki Focus into all manner of ranged attacks. As with Enhanced Melee, this ability allows the character to ignore Fatigue costs for basic abilities. In addition, the character may spend 1 Fatigue Point per combat round to apply a +1 bonus to all ranged attack rolls, and an additional 1D6 damage to the target. If the weapon being used is archaic, however, such as a bow or shuriken (in other words, not a firearm), the attack bonus is increased to +2, and the damage AP is increased by 2 points. Once again, this ability confers a +2 bonus to Quickdraw as well.

Enhanced Perception

This form of Ki Focus grants the character all the abilities of the Good Hearing, Good Vision, and Night Vision Traits, and also adds a +3 bonus to all Perception check rolls.

Enhanced Endurance

This Ki Focus Discipline grants the character the abilities of the High Endurance, Pain Resistance, and Toughness Traits, and incidentally decreases all base damage delivered against him or her in melee combat by 1D6.

The Healing Hand

Characters with this advanced Ki Focus can actually perform limited physical healing on themselves or others by touch. Using this ability costs 2 Fatigue per attempt, and the character can attempt medical treatment on any non-Deadly Wounds per the standard rules for emergency healing (see p. 123, *CBT:RPG*) with a bonus of +4 to his or her roll. A successful roll automatically reduces the damage effects by 1 level (to a minimum of 1 Wound Point), and stops all bleeding in the affected section. Note that the use of this ability may be enhanced by the use of proper medical equipment.

The Poison Hand

This Ki Focus is the opposite of the Healing Hand, causing harm by mere touch, rather than healing it. Use of the Poison Hand costs 4 Fatigue per attempt, adds a +4 to all unarmed melee combat attack rolls only, and delivers an additional 2D6 damage above the norm. If the attack roll yields a MoS of more than 10, the resulting damage is automatically increased by one level. If used against an already incapacitated or subdued opponent, the Poison Hand is instantly lethal.

The Invisible Hand

This ultimate expression of Ki Focus allows a character to actually inflict damage without touching his or her opponent – a technique that borders on magic and is seen so rarely that the vast majority of people refuse to believe it can exist at all. This ability grants all the capabilities of Enhanced Melee at no cost in Fatigue points (totally replacing those of the basic Focus), but also allows the character to project these abilities at a range equal to three times their WIL score (in meters). The use of this ability to project such an attack costs 6 Fatigue per attempt, and is resolved as a standard melee attack with the following exceptions: First, a range modifier of +2 applies for every three meters of distance (or fraction thereof) between the attacker and the target. Second, unless the target also has this ability, he or she cannot block the Invisible Hand, and thus damage is resolved as though the target had rolled a 3 result. Thirdly, the damage uses WIL, not STR, as its base, so stronger will, rather than more muscle, prevails. If the target also has this ability, resolve as normal, adding in the range modifiers as given. Finally, attacks using the Invisible Hand are treated as though they have an AP of 2.

CHARACTER CREATION

UNREMARKABLE APPEARANCE (NEW)

Cost: 1

The character is "Mr. Normal", an attribute that is especially useful for agents and criminals alike. Eyewitnesses find it impossible to describe the character and often fail to pick them out of an identity parade.

The character's friends often pass them in the street.

Attempts to identify the character receive a -2 TN modifier and any disguise assumed by the character will likewise be harder to penetrate. Should the character receive any distinguishing scars, tattoos or lose body parts this modifier is lost unless it can be concealed.

This Trait cannot be combined with Attractive or Unattractive.

SKILLS

The following section contains a selection of new skills. Unless otherwise stated, these skills follow the rules in *CBT: RPG*, p. 95.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMBAT

As stated this skill is used by the militaries of the Inner Sphere in modern warfare. The subskills listed represent the specific environmental combat conditions where the operative is primarily trained for combat. Characters with this skill are proficient in using the surroundings, weather, and terrain of these environments to defeat the enemy.

When a character is fighting in the environment for which they are trained in, they may apply a bonus equal to half the level of this skill (rounded down) to all Skill Checks within that environment. If, however, they are operating in an environment opposite to the one for which they have been trained for, a penalty of equal value applies (though this penalty may be offset by acquiring the training for the opposite environment). Opposite environments are defined under each subskill.

Environmental Combat/Wilderness (Steppes)

This subskill allows a character to use the open plains and wilderness to their advantage when in combat, whether it is using camouflage, digging fox holes or trenches to fight from. In order for a character to have this skill they must have a +5 or higher in *BOD*. The environmental opposite for this skill is Jungle. Its linked attributes are *BOD* and *WIL*.

Environmental Combat/Arctic

This is a special subskill that requires a soldier to have a strong reserve of strength and stamina to operate in the harsh arctic environment. Not just anyone can operate in an arctic environment; in order to have this skill a character must have a +5 or higher in either *BOD* or *STR*. Environmental Combat/Arctic skill allows a character to know how to move, function and survive in subzero temperatures while engaging in combat

operations. The environmental opposite for this skill is Desert. Its linked attributes are *BOD* and *STR*.

Environmental Combat/Forest

This is a subskill that allows a character to function and operate as if they were raised in this type of environment. A character with this skill will have a knowledge and understanding of the forest to effectively utilize camouflage, set spring and snare type traps that can kill a hapless target. And they will be able to use the forest for setting up effective ambushes. In order for a character to have this skill they must have a +5 or higher in *INT*. The opposing environment for this skill is Desert. The linked attributes are *BOD* and *INT*.

Environmental Combat/Desert

This specialized subskill is much like *Environmental Combat/Arctic* but is on the other end of the spectrum for environmental extremes. And like the arctic, the desert combat takes a certain individual that has the endurance and willpower to overcome the extreme heat and what it can do to a person. For a character to have this skill and thus effectively operate in a desert combat environment they must have a +5 or higher in either *STR* or *WIL*. This special skill allows a trained character to use the desert surroundings to their advantage and to survive while overcoming the extreme heat during combat operations. Arctic, Forest, and Jungle are the environmental opposites for this subskill. The linked attributes are *STR* and *WIL*.

Environmental Combat/Jungle

Jungle combat is a subskill that requires someone to be of great stamina and endurance, but also have a strong will and intellect for operating in a jungle environment. The jungle has the ability to sap the strength of the strongest person. For a character to have this skill and thus effectively operate in a desert combat environment they must have a +5 or higher in either *BOD*. This skill allows the trained character to operate in a jungle like a character skilled in *Environmental Combat/Forest* but for the jungle environment. Mountains are the environmental opposite to this subskill. The linked attributes are *BOD* and *WIL*.

Environmental Combat/Mountains

Combat in the mountain environment is the opposite of the jungle environment that can go from the extremes of a desert by day and the extremes of the arctic at night. This subskill requires a character to possess a high endurance and strength in order for them to operate proficiently in a mountain setting. A character must have a +5 or higher in *STR* or *BOD* to be able to use this skill. As pre-requisite a character must have the skill of *Climbing* in order to obtain this skill. A character with this skill will be able to operate in the extremes of the mountain environment using the terrain to its maximum effectiveness during combat operations. The linked attributes for this skill are *STR* and *BOD*.

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Environmental Combat/Hostile Atmosphere (or Vacuum)

Of all the combat environments, those without sufficient atmosphere (or atmospheres too toxic for humans) are the most difficult to survive in. Characters operating in these environments must learn to fight using appropriate—and often, quite cumbersome and vulnerable—breathing gear, ever mindful of the catastrophic results of a compromised air supply or minor damage to protective equipment. Characters require high stamina and reflexes for this skill, and so must have a +5 or higher in *BOD* or *RFL* to acquire this skill. The environmental opposite for this subskill is Aquatic. *BOD* and *RFL* are its linked attributes.

Environmental Combat/Aquatic

Similar in many ways to hostile environment combat, but forced to account for other elements as well, characters with aquatic combat training are skilled in combat under water, where cumbersome and vulnerable breathing gear must often be worn, and where temperature, depth, current, and pressure, play as much a role as the drag of the water and the alien subaquatic landscapes. Characters operating in underwater environments must possess the same high stamina and reflexes for this skill as their hostile environmental counterparts, and thus have the same +5 or higher requirement in *BOD* or *RFL* to acquire this skill. However, because of the vast differences caused by fluid dynamics, this subskill is the environmental opposite to *Hostile Environment/Vacuum*. *BOD* and *RFL* are its linked attributes.

JACK OF TRADES

This is the skill that the grizzled old veteran has gained through his or her life experiences, representing the accumulation of knowledge of many subjects through a character has dealt with in the real world, which may allow them to accomplish certain tasks they would normally possess no formal training in. This skill is a general ability to which a character can apply to almost any task at the discretion of gamemaster, but should be rooted in the character's chosen profession, based on the knowledge and experiences they have had, and the general area of skills should be noted on the character's sheet. For example, a BattleMech Technician might develop the technical expertise to repair or rebuild a ICE-powered car even though he's never done it before, and would be considered to have the *Jack of Trades/Technician* skill.

For every 3 full levels a character has in the Jack of Trades, he gains a +1 bonus to the affected Skill Check, and does not make an unskilled roll for actions which fall under the general area of expertise this skill might cover. Jack of Trades can only be purchased during character creation only if the Character has undergone at least four Stage 4 Life Paths and has a minimum of three skills with bonuses of +5 or higher. After character generation,

the skill may be taken only if the character obtains a +5 in a minimum of three skills related to the set of skills this one would then cover. Note that, for purposes of creating Life Paths (per the rules in the *CBT Companion*, p. 22-27), Jack of Trades cannot be awarded as a skill. The linked attributes for the Jack of Trades should be based on the dominant attributes of the affected group of skills, but are normally considered to be *INT* and *WIL*.

AFFILIATIONS

This section describes additional sub-affiliations that players may choose during character creation. These affiliations are used in the same way as those found in *CBT: RPG*, with any notable exceptions included in the text.

BLACK DRAGONS

The Black Dragon society is an organization without land or territory. Instead, the leaders of the various sections raise money and manpower for their cause and carry out operations in their own separate ways. They use the resources of *gumis* to raise money and followers, while military leaders “lose” weapons and acquire troops for various missions. ISF operatives gather high-level intelligence; perform covert operations, including advance warning if any part of the society's operations has been detected. Corporate leaders involved with the Black Dragons gather funds through their own methods, providing cover for activities by their underworld allies, as well as helping agents accomplish their missions. Though often prone to poor coordination, this loose organizational structure allows the society to operate as an anti-government resistance, divided into cells whose individual capture or destruction does not disrupt the Black Dragons as a whole.

Game Material

Like the Yakuza, the Black Dragons are an illegal element operating in the Draconis Combine. But where the Yakuza is a blatantly criminal organization, the Black Dragons see themselves as the loyal opposition, a political movement dedicated to the “old ways”. Players that choose this affiliation must do so after Stage 2 in order to obtain any skills or traits. Only characters who first select the House Kurita (Draconis Combine) affiliation—but who are *not* of the Azami regions—may choose this affiliation.

Primary Language: Japanese

Secondary Language: Swedenese, Arabic, English

Bonus Traits: Quirk/Loyalty to the Black Dragon Society, Stigma/Traditionalist, Brave, In For Life/Black Dragon Society

Bonus Skills: Academic/Kuritian History +2, Academic/Kuritian Philosophy +2, Choose two: Stealth +2, Deception +1, Intimidation +1, Perception +2, Disguise +1, Blade +1, Poison & Antidotes +2, Rifle +1, Pistol +1

Path Restrictions: Must choose the

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Renegade Insurgent Life Path at least once before choosing any other Stage 3 Life Path.

FREE CAPELLA

The Free Capella today is a highly trained and motivated group of individuals sworn to defend the Capellan Confederation as a combination paramilitary organization and government watchdog group. Recently strengthened by an influx of Capellan nationals after the fall of St. Ives, including a handful of SIC intelligence operatives who refused to succumb to Sun-Tzu's rule, Free Capella's capabilities both as the "loyal opposition" and as the bastion for a truly free Confederation have grown.

Free Capella's extensive network of agents throughout the Confederation act as spies and ambassadors, their presence tolerated by the Confederation at the behest of the Chancellor, creating a unique, shadowy love-hate relationship between the fringe group and the Maskirovka, though their politics remain suspect under the leadership of Treyhang Liao.

Game Material

Free Capella are Capellan nationals who valued their freedom over living under the tyranny of certain Confederation Chancellors. Though they still honor their Capellan heritage and history, they feel they can best serve their countrymen by serving with the loyal opposition, rather than bow to any one Chancellor. Characters who choose a Free Capella affiliation should be in Stage Three before making their choice, and must have already chosen the House Liao (Capellan Confederation) affiliation.

Primary Language: Mandarin (Chinese)

Secondary Language: English, Hindi, Russian, Vietnamese.

Bonus Traits: Player may choose one of the following: Natural Aptitude/Administration, Negotiation, Perception, Leadership or Exceptional Attribute/Edge. If a bonus trait is selected, the character must also suffer one of the following traits: Stigma/Suspect Politics, Stigma/Loyalty to Treyhang Liao, Quirk/Capellan Idealist.

Bonus Skills: Language/Any Free Capellan Secondary +2, Academic/Capellan History +2, Academic/Capellan Philosophy +2, Choose two: Protocol/Capellan Confederation +1, Bureaucracy +1, Blade +2, Poison & Antidotes +1, Rifle +1, Pistol +1, Stealth +2, Negotiation +1, Administration +1, Perception +1, or Leadership +1

Path Restrictions: Free Capellan citizens that chose to become intelligence agents or special forces operatives must use the Stage 3: Academy/St. Ives Academy of Martial Sciences Path. After completion of that path, depending on the chosen field, the character must take at least one generic Maskirovka Path. Special forces operatives may choose to take Covert Ops or Death Commandos Covert Tour instead.

FREE SKYE

Free Skye has been a thorn in the side of the legitimate ruling Steiner line for decades, always agitating for the separation of the Skye region from the greater Lyrans state. Having attempted on several occasions to break free by military means, their leaders remain dedicated to their dream of self rule, supported by a groundswell of nationalistic pride.

Using clandestine operations that include terrorism, assassinations, and other covert operations, Free Skye remains alive and well even after its many military reversals. Working in a kind of resistance cell system for security and safety, they have grown in strength through large amounts of financial support from sympathizers and the like.

Game Material

Members of the Free Skye Movement are hardcore separatists, radicals that will and have used very questionable methods to achieve their goals. They are very secretive, operate in small and secret cells lest they be found out, but many of their best members are recruited directly from the martial academies of the Isle of Skye, a region with a long history of rebellion.

Primary Language: German

Secondary Language: Scots Gaelic, Italian, Swedish, English

Bonus Traits: Well-Equipped, Contact (2), In For Life/Free Skye, Quirk/Loyalty to Skye, Stigma/Hatred of Lyrans government (2), Enemy/Lyrans Military (2).

Bonus Skills: Negotiation +2, Perception +2, Acting +2, Choose two: Survival +2, Academic/Scottish History +1, Blade +1, Poison & Antidotes +1, Rifle +1, Pistol +2, Stealth +2, Deception +2

Path Restrictions: Must choose the Renegade – Rebel Operative Life Path at least once before choosing any other Stage 4 Life Path.

HEIMDALL

Heimdall, in the Norse mythos, is the Guardian of the Bifrost Bridge and defender of the Norse Gods. Like their namesake, Heimdall operatives have stood ever vigilant in defense of the Lyrans people. This independent, self-appointed guardian of the people developed originally in response to the excesses of Loki, the Lyrans covert intelligence organization that has nearly limitless power. So secret are the members of Heimdall, that only they and the fortunate few they have aided can attest to their existence, leaving many to dismiss them out of hand as more rumor than fact, and few can profess to know the size and influence this group has even today. Heimdall's political orientation and aims are unknown beyond its opposition to Loki and image as the "loyal opposition" in the Lyrans Alliance.

Game Material

Heimdall is a secret organization dedicated to opposing the excesses of the Lyrans government in

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general, and Loki in particular, to protect the Lyran people from such abuses of power. Most Heimdall members join at a very young age, with families passing their involvement down to their children's children. Though anyone can join the organization, the veterans are very wary of newcomers. A character who joins Heimdall may do so before the beginning of Stage 2 or Stage 3 Life Paths, but could even become involved during Stage 4. Characters joining Heimdall must be of the House Steiner (Lyran Alliance) affiliation, but may not belong to any other fringe group, such as Free Skye.

Primary Language: German

Secondary Language: Scots Gaelic, Italian, Swedish, English

Bonus Traits: Well-Equipped, Contact (2), In For Life/Heimdall, Quirk/Distrust Loki

Bonus Skills: Negotiation +2, Perception +2, Acting +2, Choose two: Survival +2, Disguise +1, Poison & Antidotes +2, Rifle +1, Pistol +2, Stealth +2, Interrogation +1, Intimidation +1, Read Lips +1, Surveillance +2, Deception +2

Path Restrictions: Must choose the Renegade—Rebel Operative Life Path at least once before choosing any other Stage 4 Life Path.

OMNISS: DANTE'S INFERNO

The Omnis are an anti-technology cult that first appeared with the formation of the Outworlds Alliance, based largely on the anti-tech views of the Amish religious group and the Alliance founder, Julius Avellar. Beyond only those technologies needed for basic support, the Omnis have depended on themselves for everything, and have lived in complete, non-violent isolation on the planet Dante ever since.

Recently, however, Dante's Inferno, a fringe group of Omnis has formed which sponsors terrorism against military production facilities. Whether their goals are to protect themselves from technologically-advanced pirates in the region, or to impose their philosophies on others, it remains unclear what the ultimate goals of this new organization is.

Game Material

Dante's Inferno players have no inhibitions when it comes to using whatever means necessary to protect their way of life. Religious zealots gone bad, most characters created using this affiliation should be young and from the Backwoods or Farmer Life Paths. Dante's Inferno characters must choose the Outworlds Alliance affiliation initially, but may also pick up this affiliation at any time during character generation.

Primary Language: Amish

Secondary Language: German, English and Japanese

Bonus Traits: In For Life/Dante's Inferno, Quirk/Loyalty to Omnis, Stigma/Fanatic (2), Quirk/Xenophobic (2)

Bonus Skills: Academic/Amish History +2, Academic/Amish Philosophy +2, Interests/Religion +2,

Blade +2, Choose: Poison & Antidotes +2, Rifles +2, Pistols +2, Stealth +2, Mediation +2

Path Restriction: Must choose the Fanatic Operative Path at least once before ending character creation.

NEKAKAMI

Of all the special operation groups/teams the Nekakami are the most secretive and dangerous known. Shrouded in mystery, the Nekakami—Spirit Cats—are a highly specialized group of cover operators believed to be the descendents of the Ninjitsu clans of ancient Japan. Today's Nekakami may have splintered off from the Sons of the Dragon, standing separate of any other group, but no less dedicated to the defense of the Dragon.

Game Material

Characters choosing a Nekakami affiliation must choose the Draconis Combine affiliation as well, adding all skills and traits that come with both allegiances. These must be chosen before the Life Paths even begin, as all Nekakami are either born to the organization, or adopted into it at a very early age.

Primary Language: Japanese

Secondary Languages: Swedenese, Arabic, English, German

Bonus Skills: Art/Oral Traditions +2, Academic/Ancient Japanese History +2, Martial Arts/Bujinkan (Ninjitsu) +2

Bonus Traits: In For Life/Nekakami, Quirk/Loyalty to House Kurita; Pain Resistance and Combat Sense Traits each cost half value, rounding down (for 1 and 2 points, respectively) thanks to the intense focus and discipline of a Nekakami clansman.

Path Restrictions: Characters enter the Nekakami life before the Early Childhood life path, and may never leave it. They must choose the Nekakami Childhood for Stage 1, then move on to Nekakami Aspirant for Stages 2 and 3. If, for any reason, the character is forced out of the Nekakami, he or she must take a minimum of two Ne'er-Do-Well Paths, any apply a -2 to the event rolls to all Life Path events.

ZHANZHENG DE GUANG

Terrorists or guerrilla fighters, the *Zhanzheng de guang* are an independent group operating on their own, but unquestionably tied to the Capellan state. Effectively Sun Tzu Liao's own state-funded terrorist/insurgency group, the ZdG has been active ever since the Fourth Succession War, operating on worlds seized from the Confederation by houses Steiner and Davion. Often regarded as a group of zealots, the ZdG have but one goal: to return their worlds to a proper Capellan rule—by any means necessary.

Game Material

Not truly a military force, the ZdG are a society of

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highly trained cells of guerrilla fighters well versed in terrorism and insurgency. As adept in an urban setting as they are in the backwoods, most of the current members hail from the backwaters of the Chaos March, or those seedier sides of its cities as gangs or criminals. Members are recruited from all walks of life, but should come from the Capellan or Chaos March affiliations. (Federated Suns and Lyran Alliance affiliations are also possible, if the characters are created during the period between 3030 and 3057.)

Primary Language: Hanyu

Secondary Language: Mandarin (Chinese), English, Hindi, Russian, Vietnamese.

Bonus Traits: Natural Aptitude/Perception, Quirk/Paranoid, Quirk/Loyalty to Sun Tzu Liao

Bonus Skills: Deception +2, Bureaucracy +1, Perception +1, Choose two: Leadership +1, Interrogation +2, Intimidation +2, Disguise +1, Blade +2, Poison & Antidotes +1, Rifle +2, Pistol +2, Stealth +2, Surveillance +2

Path Restrictions: Must choose the Guerilla/Insurgent Operative Life Path at least twice before choosing any other Stage 4 Life Path.

DOUBLE AGENTS

Several events in the following Life Paths indicate a covert operations character may become a double agent, effectively changing affiliation from one faction to another one, usually a hostile neighbor. The results of this event depend primarily on the nature of the change in allegiance and can have profound impact on the character's future.

In most cases, the effects of becoming a double agent are shown in the associated event, but for the most part, changing affiliation in any manner boils down to two potential outcomes, in game terms: outright defection to the opposing side, or remaining in position as a "mole" within the character's native organization.

Defection

Defection allows a character to escape certain imprisonment or death before his former comrades discover his treachery, but it automatically reveals his duplicity and very quickly adds him to the most-wanted list in his home state. Knowing that they will become a favored target for former countrymen, who likely taught them everything they know, is often enough to keep most operatives from turning traitor, but for some, the right price (or the right blackmail) may prompt them to cross that line.

A defecting character thus gains an automatic three-point Enemy upon changing sides, as well as a two-point Bloodmark Trait, reflecting the bounty on his head for defecting. In addition to this, the character also immediately "earns" a three-point Bad Reputation Trait that applies to *both* sides of the line, as his betrayal proves him corrupt both to those betrayed and those who found him so easy to buy off. As if all that wasn't bad enough, the character also suffers a one-point loss

in SOC for the same reasons, loses all Rank and Title Traits earned to that point, and gains another In For Life Trait with the agency he has defected to (even if he will not become an active member of said agency)

In exchange for all this, the character may immediately gain up to four points' worth of Wealth, Well-Equipped, Property, Rank, or even Title Traits, as his "prize" for defecting. If none of the above is given as part of the event that precipitates the defection, the gamemaster need not offer up the difference, however. In addition, the defecting character automatically gains all the "free" skills of his new affiliation, but may claim no more than one of the affiliation's "free" Traits – and then only at the game master's discretion.

If a player, at any time during character generation process, wishes to voluntarily defect, all the above rules apply, but the character must also burn two Edge threshold points to do so.

In any event, a character who defects must spend at least one Life Path in his new affiliation as appropriate to his new station (determined at the game master's discretion) before entering gameplay.

Turning "Mole"

Oftentimes, the defection of a character is preceded by a short period where the double-agent acts as a spy for his new masters. In this case, the character has become a "mole" within his own organization, and continues to serve – however briefly – while relaying state secrets to the enemy. Even more dangerous than defection, turning "mole" subjects the turncoat to potentially lethal repercussions from both his former countrymen and his future ones.

A character may elect to turn "mole" (or be forced into the role) in the same manner as outlined in the rules for defection, but does not immediately suffer or gain any of the negative or positive Traits that go along with it. Instead, turning "Mole" automatically forces the character to repeat his current path and roll all events with an *additional* -3 event roll penalty. If this roll results in an event below 2, all of the following occur:

The character automatically adds 3D6 years to the length of time spent in this path, and must choose three of the following Traits: Addiction (2), Amnesia, Combat Paralysis, Disabled (3), Glass Jaw, Madness/Any (4), Poor Hearing (4), Poor Vision (2), Slow Learner, Unhealthy, or Unlucky (3). In addition, the character automatically receives all the negative effects of defection whether or not he defects in the next Life Path, and loses all Rank, Wealth, Well-Equipped, Title, Property, and Land Grant Traits earned before this point. These factors all reflect a long, grueling time of torture, interrogation, public humiliation, and conviction for the ultimate betrayal of one's country. Making matters even worse, the character suffers a two-point loss of SOC and EDG thresholds, and must immediately roll 1d6 to determine if the rival state's offer for asylum still stands. On a 6, the offer remains in place, and the character may defect by the normal rules above. Any other result means the

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character's only Life Path option left is Ne'er Do Well, or immediately entering gameplay penniless, broken, and dishonored.

If the character manages to survive one Life Path of turning "mole" with no negative effects, he may repeat the Path again or immediately defect. Once again, the standard rules for defection will apply in such an event.

ADDITIONAL PATHS

The following section contains a number of Life Paths designed to expand and flesh out cover operative characters. Players and gamemasters can use these paths in conjunction with those presented on page 33–52 of *CBT: RPG*.

The following paths have some basic prerequisites. In addition to minimum required Attributes, a few also list prerequisite paths a character must complete before entering the particular path.

EVENTS

Like the paths presented in *CBT: RPG*, each of the paths below has a unique list of events. Players and gamemasters should follow all of the standard rules for determining character events (see p. 24, *CBT: RPG*), with one exception. Instead of rolling 2D6, players should roll 2D10 for most Path Event Tables to randomly 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 the single expenditure of Edge (see *Edge and Events*, p. 25, *CBT: RPG*).

STAGE 1: EARLY CHILDHOOD

Unless otherwise stated, this path follows the rules for Stage 1: Early Childhood in the *Character Creation* section of *CBT: RPG* (p. 33).

NEKAKAMI CHILDHOOD

Raised in a secret society you quickly learn to become observant of your surroundings. You learn early from your parents the fundamental skills that will be the bases of your life as a Spirit Cat Warrior.

Attribute Thresholds: BOD+1, RFL +1, INT +1, CHA –1

Traits: Alertness, Patience, Choose: Quirk/Loyalty to Draconis Combine, or Quirk/Loyalty to House Kurita

Skills: Language/Japanese +2, Perception +2, Protocol/Draconis Combine +2, Martial Arts/ Bujinkan (Ninjitsu) +1, choose three: Acrobatics +2, Read Lips +1, Running +2, Stealth +2, Survival +1, or Swimming +1

Next Path: Nekakami Aspirant (2/3).

Nekakami Childhood Events

- 2 Your parent's indiscretions have dishonored the Dragon and the Nekakami. Their flight has only compounded the dishonor, and the Spirit Cats' reach is long indeed. [Dark Secret (4), Shameful Heritage (2), Enemy (2), and cast out of the Nekakami. Next Path must be Back Woods or Street]

- 3 Serious accident at home [Choose two: BOD –2, Slow Learner, Poor Vision, Lost Limb (2)]
- 4 Family attacked by Black Dragons. You escaped, but not without lasting damage and a vow of revenge. [Escape Artist +1, Stealth +1, Enemy (2)/Black Dragon Society, Choose: BOD –2, Glass Jaw, or Madness/Paranoia]
- 5 Nekakami are supposed to stay in the shadows, but you just *had* to win the my-father-can-beat-up-your-father debate, didn't you? [Fast Talk +1, INT –1, SOC –1, Bad Reputation, Stigma/Untrustworthy]
- 6 Caught a rare virus [Unhealthy]
- 7 Your family's dishonor in battle has rubbed off on you. [Brawling +2, Enemy, Shameful Heritage (2)]
- 8 Attacked by a wild animal while honing your tracking skills. [Tracking/Any +1, Survival +1, Choose two: BOD –1, RFL –1, Lost Limb, Unattractive]
- 9 Your family is involved with a bad crowd, but it's not without its advantages. [Streetwise/Draconis Combine +1, Contact, Dark Secret (3)/Yakuza ties]
- 10 Found a hobby you loved despite the grueling training regimen. [Choose: Arts/Any +1 or Interest/Any +1]
- 11 A few scuffles on the playground builds character, and a thick hide. [Pugilism +2]
- 12 There's more to life than the martial arts. [Choose one: Academic/Any +2 or Language/Any +2]
- 13 Already learning the gift of invisibility. [Stealth +1, Natural Aptitude/Stealth]
- 14 Natural athlete. [Interest/Any sport, Choose: BOD +2, or Exceptional Attribute/RFL]
- 15 Your training includes extensive wilderness hunts. [Hunting/Tracking – Humanoids +2, Environmental Combat/Wilderness +1, Navigation/Ground +1, Survival +1]
- 16 Yours was a family of great honor among the Nekakami. We can expect great things from you. [Proud Heritage (2), Contact]
- 17 You take to the study of bujinkan early. Your *sensei* is impressed! [Martial Arts/Bujinkan +2, Blades +1, Tactics/Infantry +1, Natural Aptitude/Martial Arts/ Bujinkan]
- 18 Your skills with the blade at such a young age are almost supernatural. [Blades +3, Meditation +2, Martial Arts/Bujinkan +2, Thrown Weapons +2, Ambidextrous]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]
- 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each event]

STAGE 2 AND 3

Unless otherwise stated, these paths follow the rules for Stage 2: Late Childhood and Stage 3: Higher

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Education in the *Character Creation* section of *CBT: RPG* (pp. 36, 40).

NEKAKAMI ASPIRANT

This Life Path covers both Stage 2 and Stage 3, with characters beginning at ten years of age and advancing as far as age twenty. During this period, a member of the Spirit Cat clan begins to truly walk the path of the Nekakami. From here on out, the player character will know a lifetime of training and constant preparation for combat in the Dragon's defense. Their missions, when called upon to serve, will not be easy, and they will never know wealth or fame, but what are such things compared to the personal honor of serving the Dragon?

Time: 5 years

Attribute Minimums: STR 5, BOD 5, DEX 5, RFL 6, INT 5, WIL 5

Attribute Maximum: SOC 4. The Spirit Cats are not to stand out in society.

Attribute Thresholds: CHA -1, DEX +1, WIL +1

Traits: Enemy (2), High Endurance, Introvert (with anyone outside the Spirit Cats), Quirk/Loyalty to Draconis Combine, Quirk/Loyalty to House Kurita.

Skills: Blades +3, Academic/Nekakami Philosophy +3, Martial Arts/Bujinkan +2, Choose four: Streetwise/Draconis Combine +2, Academic/Draconis Combine History +2, Language/Any +1, Interest/Any +1, Streetwise/Draconis Combine +3, Survival +3, Blade +2, Rifle +1, Perception +1, Meditation +2, Fast Talk +2, Disguise +2

Previous Path: Nekakami Childhood

Next Path: Way of the Spirit Cat Intermediate Training (mandatory part of this path).

Nekakami Aspirant Events

- 2 *Cowardice!* You fled in the face of danger, deserting your clan in a time of need. [Alternate Identity, Combat Paralysis, Dark Secret (4), Enemy/Nekakami (2), Stigma/Traitor (2), May take no further Nekakami paths. Next Path must be Ne'er-Do-Well.]
- 3 Drawn astray by the desire for personal fortune and glory, you have broken the faith. [Lose all Loyalty Quirks, gain Bloodmark (3), Dark Secret (3), Enemy/Nekakami (2), Stigma/Traitor, and may take no more Nekakami paths. Choose: Quirk/Greedy, Quirk/Selfish, Impatient, or Madness/Any]
- 4 Watching your family murdered before your eyes pushed you over the edge. [Enemy (2), Madness/Paranoia (2), Quirk/Blood Feud]
- 5 The cosmos is out to get you. You just *know* it. [Unlucky (2), Bad Reputation, Unattractive]
- 6 "Perhaps you lack motivation..." Your *domo* is not satisfied with your performance. [BOD -1, WIL -1, Stigma/Lazy, -1 to any two skills gained in this pass]
- 7 You thought it was love, but you discovered otherwise. [Seduction +2, any four other skills -1, Quirk/Distrustful of Romance]

- 8 You like to consider yourself more of a thinker than a fighter. [Academic/Nekakami Philosophies +2, Academic/Any +2, any three military skills -2]
- 9 Your *sensei* likes to keep in shape, and you're his favorite sparring partner. [Pugilism +2, Martial Arts/Bujinkan +1, Choose: Poor Hearing, Thin Skinned, Unattractive]
- 10 You have got what it takes, but is it bravery, foolishness, or both? [Brave, INT -1]
- 11 Your technique is good, but you need to find your center. [Meditation +1]
- 12 Be one with the blade. [Martial Arts/Bujinkan (Ninjitsu) +2, Blades +2]
- 13 You have been honing your skills in getting in and out of camp by any means necessary. [Escape Artist +1, Stealth +1, Deception +1]
- 14 Is there nothing you cannot hit? [Ambidextrous, DEX +1, +1 to all ranged weapon skills gained in this pass]
- 15 You've discovered balance in your life. [Any two non-military skills +3, any other skill +2]
- 16 Your teammates voted you their leader. [Promotion, Contact (2), Martial Arts/Bujinkan (Ninjitsu) +2, any two military skills +1, Quirk/Loyalty to your Nekakami Team]
- 17 It's unbelievable how you have mastered Ninjitsu. [Martial Arts/Bujinkan +5, Meditation +2, Natural Aptitude/Martial Arts/Bujinkan]
- 18 No other Aspirant has accomplished what you have. You have earned your place among the Spirit Cats! [+1 to all skills earned this pass, Good Reputation (2), Fast Learner, Promotion (2)]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both events]
- 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each event]

Mandatory Subpath: Way of the Spirit Cat (Intermediate Training)

Aspirant graduates only

Time: 3 years

Traits: Brave, Wealth, Well-Equipped

Skills: Read Lips +3, Security Systems/Mechanical +2, Security Systems/Electronic +2, +2 to any skill acquired in Aspirant Training, +1 to any two other skills, and choose 1: Surveillance +2, Intimidation +2, Martial Arts/Bujinkan (Ninjitsu) +2

Fields: Armored Infantry. Also, choose two of the following secondary fields and apply +1 to all skills it contains rather than the usual +3:

Scout (minimum RFL 4)

MechWarrior (minimum RFL 4)

Aerospace Pilot (minimum RFL 5)

Special Forces (minimum DEX 5, BOD 5)

Events: Do not roll for events during intermediate training.

Next Path: Nekakami Special Training

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Mandatory Subpath: Nekakami Special Training

Intermediate Training graduates only

Time: 3 years

Attribute Minimums: WIL 6

Attribute Thresholds: Add +1 to any one threshold of player's choice (+1)

Traits: Quirk/Loyalty to Nekakami, Armored Infantry gain STR +1 and Vehicle (2), Special Forces gain Wealth and Well Equipped, MechWarriors and aerospace pilots gain Commission (to rank 1) and Vehicle (3)

Skills: Blades +2, Rifles +2, Poison & Antidotes +2, Stealth +2. Choose two: Deception +2, Electronic Counter-Measures +2, Hunting/Tracking-Humanoids +2, Martial Arts/Bujinkan +2, Escape Artist +2, Disguise +2

Fields: Choose one of the following fields for training and study based on the prerequisites:

Armored Infantry (minimum BOD 5 STR 6)

MechWarrior (Armored Infantry or Special Forces trainees only)

Aerospace Pilot (MechWarrior or Special Forces trainees only)

Special Forces (Scout, Armored Infantry or Special Forces Trainees only)

Events: Roll on Nekakami Aspirant table.

Next Path: Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4). After a tour of duty the player character may take Covert Ops (twice) but is then limited to Tour of Duty paths afterwards.

Time: 2 years

Attribute Minimums: (MI2/MI3/IGS): INT 5, WIL 4; (MI4/MI5/MI6/COD): BOD 5, DEX 5, INT 4; (BII/CID): DEX 5, INT 5, WIL 5

Attribute Thresholds: (MI2/MI3/IGS): INT +1, BOD -1, CHA -1; (MI4/MI5/MI6/COD): BOD +1, STR +1, WIL +1, EDG -2; (BII/CID): BOD +1, WIL +1, CHA -1

Traits: Promotion, In For Life/(DMI/MIIO). Agents *not* in the MI2, MI3, or IGS divisions also receive Wealth and Well-Equipped

Skills: Perception +4, Computers/Any +3, Administration +2, Bureaucracy/FedSuns +2. Choose two: Deception +2, Interrogation +2, Intimidation +2, Investigation +2, Protocol/FedSuns +2, Stealth +2, or Surveillance +2

Previous Paths: Military Academy (generic or any AFFC/AFFC), Military Enlistment, Tour of Duty (Inner Sphere or AFFC/AFFS), or Covert Operations (general or MIIO). Character must have entered and remained within the AFFS, AFFC, or MIIO prior to entering this Life Path. This path may be taken as a Special Training Subpath option in place of the standard Special Forces field, but doing so forfeits any attribute modifiers, skills, traits, or events of the original Special Training Path.

Events: Roll on the DMI/MIIO Training Events Table (below).

Next Path: Advanced Individual Training (mandatory, part of this pass)

STAGE 3

The following paths follow the rules for Stage 3: Higher Education in the *Character Creation* section of *CBT: RPG* (p. 40).

FEDERATED SUNS DMI/MIIO TRAINING

Federated Suns (regular or regional) Affiliations only (Lyran Commonwealth/Alliance may take part following the unification of the AFFC in 3042 and before the Lyran secession in 3057). Character cannot have any "questionable" Events in his or her history (per the GM's judgment; cannot be "hidden" by purchasing Contacts or other Traits) and must be completely loyal to the Federated Suns and/or the Davion family. Any question as to loyalty will prevent the character from ever being a part of DMI or MIIO.

The Federated Suns' Department of Military intelligence (DMI) and the Ministry of Information, Intelligence, and Operations (MIIO) are respectively the military and civilian covert agencies of House Davion's Federated Suns. With internal divisions that specialize in all matters from simple intelligence gathering to special "black ops" against rival states or factions, both agencies see to the stability and security of the Davion realm. Though they may pursue slightly different mandates in the name of the state, however, both agencies receive essentially similar training, both in combat techniques and the basics of intelligence operations.

DMI/MIIO Training Events

- 2 You didn't think you'd get away with selling those files you "found" on the open market, did you? [Convicted of treason, -1 to all skills learned in this path, add 1D6+4 years to the time this path takes, Bad Reputation (4) and dishonorably discharged. May take no more DMI, MIIO or AFFS Life Paths]
- 3 Perhaps this isn't the career path you should be taking. [Choose either Bad Reputation (5) and Enemy or leave the DMI/MIIO and take any other stage 3 or 4 you qualify for except DMI/MIIO paths.]
- 4 The only reason you're getting a second chance is because of your letters of recommendation. [-2 to all skills earned this pass. Must repeat this path]
- 5 That string of bad luck nearly got you booted from the program! [Unlucky (3)]
- 6 Hey, it's you! So now, what's the deal with the toga, the keg, the schnauzer and that tri-vid camera? [-2 to any three field skills, +4 to Interest/Any, Addiction/Alcohol and Bad Reputation (3)]
- 7 Next time you'll know who's standing behind you before you whirl around and punch someone in the gut. [Enemy (2), Bad Reputation (3) and Demotion]
- 8 So *that's* what "in the dog house" means! [-1 to any two field skills and take a -2 penalty on your next Events roll]
- 9 You got lucky! Most instructors wouldn't have thought that running a numbers racket was "showing initiative." [Gambling +3, Contact (1), Demotion (2)]

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- 10 Which is worse? Getting caught for doing something wrong or not standing out at all? [Lose one Contact]
- 11 Pop question: do you do the right thing and turn him in, or do you keep quiet and hope no one notices? [choose either +2 to any two skills, Contact and Stigma/Rat or Contact (2) and Dark Secret (2)]
- 12 Not everyone can be the best, or the brightest, or the prima donna. But you passed, unlike a good percentage of your class. [+2 to any two field skills]
- 13 Just when did you find time for that? [+2 to any two non-field skills and +2 to Interest/Any]
- 14 You had good instructors and a lot of talent. [+4 to any one field skill, +2 to any two other field skills and Contact]
- 15 Looks like all those extra classes in mathematics and probability paid off. Champ. [Gambling +5 and Wealth (2)]
- 16 There's taking calculated risks and then there's risk taking... [+3 to any four field skills, -1 EDG and Impatient]
- 17 You've got talent. We'll put that to good use. [+3 to any three field skills, may take OCS or any other Special Training regardless of prerequisites and Promotion]
- 18 Not everyone can be the best or the brightest. Not everyone is you, though. [+5 to any one field skill, +3 to any two others, Good Reputation (3), Contact (2), may take OCS or any other Special Training regardless of prerequisites and Promotion]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both events]
- 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each event]

Mandatory Subpath: Advanced Individual Training (AIT)

DMI/MIIO Training graduates only

Time: 3 years

Traits: Promotion, Well Equipped, Choose two: Alternate Identity, Contact (2), or Well-Connected. MI4, MI5, MI6, or COD agents may also choose from: High Endurance, Poison Resistance, or Thick Skin

Skills: +2 to any three skills, also choose three skills from the field selected below and add +2 to each.

Fields: (MI2/MI3): Officer (ignoring requirements), Choose either Analysis or Intelligence (see *New Fields*, p. 48)

(IGS): Officer (ignoring requirements) and Intelligence (see *New Fields*, p. 48)

(MI4/MI6/COD): Special Forces and Choose: Armored Infantry, DropShip Pilot, JumpShip Pilot, Marine, MechWarrior, Merchant, Planetary Surveyor or Scout

(MI5/BII/CID): Police and Choose: Analysis, Detective, or Police Tactical Officer

Events: Do not roll events for Advanced Individual Training.

Next Path: DMI/MIIO Operative (4, as per department)

Subpath: Officer Candidate School (OCS)

Enter via event roll only

Time: 1 year

Attribute Thresholds: CHA +1

Traits: Commission (Rank 1)

Skills: Administration +1, Protocol/Federated Suns +1

Fields: Officer

Events: Roll on DMI/MIIO Training Events

Next Path: Per last path followed.

INTELLIGENCE OPERATIVE TRAINING (GENERIC)

Open to all Inner Sphere and Periphery Affiliations.

This path offers a generic intelligence agency training program for the benefit of those Inner Sphere and Periphery affiliations that do not already possess one. Intelligence Operative Training may be undertaken in place of any standard Military Academy or University Path. If taken in place of Military Academy, however, it indicates a military-based covert operations training, and must be preceded by a pass through Military Enlistment. University replacements indicate government/civil intelligence agencies, and so do not have a military requirement.

Upon completion of Intelligence Operative Training, the character must take an appropriate covert operations Real Life path before entering gameplay.

Time: 1 year

Attribute Minimums: INT 5, WIL 4

Attribute Thresholds: INT +1

Traits: Promotion, Well-Equipped

Skills: Perception +3, Computer/Any +3, Comms/Conventional +2, Language/Any +2, Martial Arts/Any +1, Pistols +1, Surveillance +1.

Previous Paths: Any that would permit entry into a Military Academy or University path.

Events: Roll on the Intelligence Operative Training Events Table.

Next Path: Advanced Individual Training Subpath (mandatory, take twice as part of this pass)

Intelligence Operative Training Events

- 2 An enemy agent infiltrated the academy, and you gave her all the support she needed. There's a word for that, kid: Treason. [-1 to any three skills, Bad Reputation (4), add 2D6 years to the time spent in this path. May take no further intelligence, military, or covert operations paths for your affiliation, but may join an enemy intelligence agency by first taking Stigma/Traitor (2), Life Debt, and EDG -1, as well as a -2 penalty on all event rolls in the new path. Otherwise, next path must be Ne'er-Do-Well.]
- 3 Caught selling information and supplies on the black market. [Lose rank and Well-Equipped, Bad Reputation (3), Enemy (2), add 2D6 years to the time spent in this path, and may take no further intelligence, military, or covert operations paths for

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- your affiliation. Next Path must be Ne'er-Do-Well.]
- 4 Are you *sure* you want to follow this career? [-2 to any four skills earned this pass. Choose: Repeat this path at a -2 event roll penalty (spending another year in the bargain), or lose all Rank and Well-Equipped traits and take Ne'er-Do-Well.]
 - 5 Mishap during a combat training exercise. [-1 to all skills earned in this pass, choose: BOD -2, Clumsy, Disabled (2), Lost Limb (2), Poor Vision (2), or Unhealthy]
 - 6 A feud with a fellow cadet gets taken just a bit too far on the combat training grounds. [Pugilism +3, +2 to any two combat skills, -1 to four other skills, Bad Reputation (2), Demotion, Enemy (2), choose: Lost Limb or Unattractive]
 - 7 Analysis: Impulsive. Has difficulties grasping the bigger picture. Needs focus. [-1 to any three skills earned in this path, Bad Reputation, and choose: Addiction, Impatient, Madness/Schizophrenia, Timid]
 - 8 One of your fellow cadets has his own private syndicate going on in town. Do you report him? [If yes, take Good Reputation, Enemy, Quirk/Honorable, and Stigma/Rat. If you let it slide, take +1 to any two skills earned this pass, Quirk/Paranoid, Dark Secret (2)]
 - 9 Getting through the bookwork and still being fit for exercises in the morning required a little something "extra". [Addiction/Caffeine, +1 to any two skills]
 - 10 You have the face intelligence operatives love. [Unremarkable Appearance]
 - 11 You have a real knack for intelligence. [+2 to any two skills in the Analysis, Intelligence, or Scout fields]
 - 12 The training was grueling, and many cadets failed. Fortunately, you were not among them. [+2 to any two field skills, +1 to any two other skills]
 - 13 Despite a heavy training regimen, found time to pursue some of your own interests. [+2 to any two non-field skills and +3 to Interest/Any or Arts/Any]
 - 14 One of your instructors worked "black ops" in the Clan Wars. [+2 to any four skills in the Scout or Special Forces fields, Contact (2)]
 - 15 Your performance in field exercises exposes a hidden talent. [+3 to any one skill, +2 to any two other skills, Choose Natural Aptitude or Exceptional Attribute]
 - 16 Your training included a key role in a real field operation. [Promotion, +3 to any four field skills]
 - 17 You're going places cadet! [+3 to any three field skills, +2 to any two other skills, may take OCS or any AIT, regardless of prerequisites, and Promotion (2)]
 - 18 How many other cadets do you know that get to have lunch with the commandant *and* the local regional intelligence leaders? [+4 to any one field skill, +3 to any two others, Good Reputation (3), Contact (2), Promotion (2), and may take OCS or any other AIT regardless of prerequisites]
 - 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply

both events]

- 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each event]

Mandatory Subpath: Advanced Individual Training (AIT)

Intelligence Operative Training Graduates only.

This path must be taken twice. Civilian operatives (characters entering without prior military or police training), must elect Basic Training for their primary field during the first pass.

Time: 2 years

Traits: In For Life/(Affiliation Intelligence Agency), Promotion, Wealth, Well-Equipped

Skills: +2 to any three skills. Also, choose two skills from the fields listed below and add +1 to each.

Fields: Choose one of the following primary fields, subject to the listed restrictions:

Analysis (*minimum INT 5, WIL 4, see New Fields, p. 48*)

Basic Training

Covert Operations (*minimum INT 5, WIL 4, see New Fields, p. 48*)

Detective (*minimum INT 5, WIL 4, Police training*)

Intelligence (*minimum INT 5, WIL 4, see New Fields, p. 48*)

Military Scientist (*minimum INT 5, WIL 5*)

Planetary Surveyor (*minimum INT 5, WIL 4*)

Scientist (*minimum INT 5, WIL 5*)

Scout (*minimum INT 5, RFL 4*)

Special Forces (*minimum BOD 4, RFL 4, WIL 5*)

Events: Do not roll Events for Advanced Individual Training

Next Path: Advanced Individual Training (3, first repeat is mandatory). After mandatory repeat, may take Covert Operations (4, or related covert operations field in own affiliation), To Protect and Serve (4), Tour of Duty: Any (4), Travel (4), or Ne'er-Do-Well (4)

Subpath: Officer Candidate School (OCS)

Enter via event roll only

Time: 1 year

Attribute Thresholds: None

Traits: Commission (Rank 1)

Skills: Administration +1, Protocol/Affiliation +1

Fields: Officer

Events: Roll on Intelligence Operative Training Events

Next Path: Per last path followed.

SAFE TRAINING

Affiliation Free Worlds League. Characters from other nations may be inducted into SAFE but always have some ties to the Free Worlds League.

All characters wishing to join SAFE must undergo a training regime that standardizes their knowledge and abilities, as well as identifying their strengths (and weaknesses) before assigning them to one of the key

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service branches in the FWL intelligence community. As such, the entry criteria are quite lax when compared to other agencies; the difficulty begins with assignment to one of the more prestigious branches.

Note that a character passing through this path should choose a branch of service to work in. See the overview of SAFE later in this book for a more in-depth explanation as to the role and operations of these various branches.

Time: 2 years

Attribute Minimums: INT 3 (5 for Intelligence Gathering Directorate), WIL 4 (6 for Eagle Corps and Dark Shadows sub-Directorates). Covert Operations Directorate characters also must have BOD 6, DEX 6, and RFL 6.

Attribute Thresholds: INT +1, CHA -1. (Covert Operations Directorate): Choose either BOD +1, DEX +1, or RFL +1

Traits: Promotion.

Skills: Administration +3, Bureaucracy/FWL +3, Computers/Operations +3, Perception +3, Security Systems/Any +2

Previous Paths: Military Academy, Military Enlistment, any FWL Military Academy, any FWL-affiliated path.

Events: Roll on the SAFE Training Events Table.

Next Path: Advanced Individual Training Subpath (mandatory, part of this pass)

SAFE Training Events

- 2 And it was such a small favor ... You attempt to use your position to aid a friend or family member and are drummed out of the service. [-1 to all skills learned in this path, Bad Reputation (2). May take no more SAFE or FWLM paths]
- 3 Your family history places major obstacles in your path. Will you overcome them? [Demotion, Shameful Heritage]
- 4 Your don't "get" the intelligence community but your family ties ensure you complete the curriculum [-1 to all field skills, Impatient, Slow Learner, Well Connected]
- 5 You were a sickly child and the stresses of training don't help your condition. [Unhealthy]
- 6 Was it hazing, an accident or sheer incompetence on your part? [Choose one: STR -2, Bad Reputation (2), Madness (2) or Unlucky (2)]
- 7 College is the time to party, right? [Choose one pair of traits: Poor Vision (2)/High Endurance, Attractive/Dependents (2), Gregarious/Addiction (2)]
- 8 You never knew your parents and were raised by SAFE. You owe them everything. [In for life, +2 to any two field skills. May not gain Dark Secret, Proud Heritage, Shameful Heritage or Title traits during this path]
- 9 An "accident" teaches you a vital lesson about life in the intelligence services [Enemy (2), Lost Limb (3), Streetwise +2, Sixth Sense]

- 10 Some say that the best spies are the ones you don't notice [Introvert, Good hearing, Patience]
- 11 All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy but ensures he passes the course. [+2 to any two field skills and choose one: Night Blindness, Poor Hearing (1), Timid]
- 12 Okay, so it was a tough course but you made the grade [+2 to any two field skills, Patience]
- 13 Who said family ties wouldn't help ... [Patron (2), Promotion]
- 14 I thought this was supposed to be hard? [Choose one: Fast Learner, Tech Empathy, +3 to any two field skills]
- 15 That which does not destroy us makes us stronger. [Choose three: Fit, Toughness, Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (3)]
- 16 There's nothing in the rules about doing some private business on the side ... [Contact (2), Appraisal +3, Bureaucracy +2, Fast Talk +2, Bad Reputation (2)]
- 17 We need people like you ... [Commission, Well Connected (2)]
- 18 There are high flyers, and then there's you. [Choose Three: +3 to any field Skill, Fast Learner, Good Reputation (2), Patience, Patron (2), Promotion, Well Connected (2), may take OCS next before continuing on to the next path.]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both events]
- 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each event]

Mandatory Subpath: Advanced Individual Training (AIT)

SAFE Training graduates only

Time: 3 years

Traits: In For Life/SAFE, Promotion. (Eagle Corps): also take Brave. (Dark Shadows): also take Vehicle (2)

Skills: +2 to any three skills

Fields: (Intelligence Directorate): Officer (ignoring requirements), and Choose either Analysis, Intelligence, or Civilian Tech (see *New Fields*, p. 48, for the Analysis and Intelligence Fields)

(Covert Operations Directorate, Eagle Corps): Special Forces and Choose: Covert Operations or Scout. (see *New Fields*, p. 48, for the Covert Operations Field)

(Covert Operations Directorate, Dark Shadows): Special Forces and Choose: MechWarrior or Scout

(Covert Operations Directorate, Other): Scout, Detective or Covert Operations (see *New Fields*, p. 48)

(Counterintelligence Directorate): Detective and Choose: Covert Operations, Intelligence, Police, Police Tactical Officer, or Scout

Events: Do not roll events for Advanced Individual Training.

Next Path: SAFE Operative (4, as per department)

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Subpath: Officer Candidate School (OCS)

Enter via event roll only

Time: 1 year

Attribute Thresholds: CHA +1

Traits: Commission (Rank 1)

Skills: Administration +1, Protocol/Free Worlds League +1

Fields: Officer

Events: Roll on SAFE Training Events

Next Path: Per last path followed.

WOLFNET TRAINING

Open to active members of the Wolf's Dragoons mercenary command only. (Children of current Dragoons or past members may take this path as well, but suffer a -2 penalty on the event table.) Additionally, the character must possess an appropriate Contact (representing a sponsoring Dragoons officer) and cannot have been involved in any events that have harmed the Dragoons' integrity or reputation.

Nearly every man woman and child in the Inner Sphere has heard of the elite Wolf's Dragoons, but far fewer have ever heard of Wolfnet, despite its role in many of the mercenaries' victories. This intelligence agency boasts some of the best covert operations training in the entire Inner Sphere, despite its relative young age and the Dragoons' Clan origins.

After completing this training, a character must complete at least one Tour of Duty: Wolfnet.

Time: 2 year

Attribute Minimums: INT 6, WIL 5

Attribute Thresholds: INT +1, BOD +1

Traits: Promotion

Skills: Interest/Dragoons History +4, Comms/Conventional +2, Computer/Any +2, Language/Any +2, Perception +2, Pistols +2, Surveillance +2

Previous Paths: Military Academy (3), Military Enlistment (3), Outreach Mercenary Training Command (3), Police Academy (3), Covert Ops (4), To Serve and Protect (4).

Events: Roll on the Wolfnet Training Events Table.

Next Path: Advanced Individual Training Subpath (mandatory, part of this pass)

Wolfnet Training Events

- 2 Somehow, you were the only one to contract that rare virus. And because of it, you'll never fulfill your dream. [Addiction, Allergy, Disabled, BOD -1, REF -2 and may take no more Wolfnet Life Paths]
- 3 Live fire training accidents happen... [BOD -2, Disabled (2), Lost Limb (2) and may not take any more Wolfnet Life Paths]
- 4 Perhaps you should take a hard look at whether this is the right line of work for you. [Demotion, Bad Reputation. Choose either Timid and Stigma/Coward, or Madness/Hysteria and suffer a -1 on your next life path event roll.]

- 5 You failed the course because of events out of your control, but at least you can repeat it. [-1 to all skills learned in this path, lose all traits and attribute bonuses and must repeat this path]
- 6 Marginal 'pass'... You better shape up or you'll be out! [Bad Reputation (3) and apply a -2 penalty to your next Events roll]
- 7 How'd you manage to make it into Harlech so much? We were stationed on Remus! [-2 to any two field skills, Bad Reputation and +2 to any one of the following skills: Gambling, Interest/Any, Seduction or Streetwise]
- 8 You had the feeling there was someone making your life difficult. [Enemy (2)]
- 9 You may have needed some help, but you made it through. [Contact, Bad Reputation (2)]
- 10 The most difficult part of joining Wolfnet is the first years of training. Congratulations! You passed! [+1 to any two field skills]
- 11 You may have been your instructor's "favorite," but that didn't win you any friends. [Contact (2), Enemy]
- 12 You didn't get much free time, but you made the best possible use of what you did get. [+2 to any two field skills]
- 13 We made it, we band of brothers, and ever shall we watch after one another. [Well Connected (2)]
- 14 Just when did you find the time to pick *that* up? [+4 to any one field skill, +2 to any two others]
- 15 You may not be a natural, but you sure made everyone think you were. [Fast Learner]
- 16 There aren't many who can match your gift or your genes. [+1 to any two Attributes, Proud Heritage (2)]
- 17 That problem was theoretically impossible to solve! So how did you... [+5 to any two skills, INT +2]
- 18 The Dragoons reward their best and brightest... with duties and responsibilities commensurate with your incredible talents. [Good Reputation (3), Promotion, and may take OCS or any Subpath: Special Training from this life path or from the Military Academy or Military Enlistment Paths]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both events]
- 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each event]

Mandatory Subpath: Advanced Individual Training (AIT)

Wolfnet Training Graduates only

Time: 2 years

Traits: In For Life/Wolfnet, Promotion, Wealth, Well-Equipped

Skills: +3 to any three skills. Also, choose two skills from the field selected below and add +2 to each.

Fields: Choose one of the following primary fields, subject to the listed restrictions:

Analysis (*minimum INT 5, WIL 4, see New Fields, p. 48*)

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Covert Operations (*minimum INT 5, WIL 4, see New Fields, p. 48*)

Intelligence (*minimum INT 5, WIL 4, see New Fields, p. 48*)

Special Forces (*minimum BOD 4, RFL 4, WIL 5*)

Events: Do not roll Events for Advanced Individual Training

Next Path: Tour of Duty: Wolfnet (4) or Special Training (3, part of this pass)

Subpath: Special Training

AIT Graduates only

Time: 2 years

Attribute Minimums: WIL 5

Attribute Thresholds: Add +1 to any one threshold of the player's choice

Traits: Promotion, Well Equipped

Skills: +2 to any three Field Skills, +1 to any four others

Fields: Choose one of the following Fields, subject to the listed restrictions:

Armored Infantry (*minimum STR 6, BOD 5*)

Marine (*minimum WIL 5, may not have TDS Trait*)

Military Scientist (*minimum INT 5*)

Police Tactical Officer (*minimum RFL 4*)

Scout (*minimum INT 5, WIL 5*)

Events: Do not roll Events for Advanced Individual Training

Next Path: Tour of Duty: Wolfnet (4)

Subpath: Officer Candidate School (OCS)

Enter via event roll only

Time: 1 year

Attribute Thresholds: CHA +1

Traits: Commission (Rank 1)

Skills: Administration +1, Protocol/Wolf's Dragoons +1

Fields: Officer

Events: Roll on DMI/MIO Training Events

Next Path: Per last path followed.

STAGE 3 AND 4

Unless otherwise stated, the following path follows the rules for Stage 3: Higher Education and Stage 4: Real Life in the *Character Creation* section of *CBT: RPG* (pp. 40, 47).

ORDER OF THE FIVE PILLARS (O5P)

INITIATE/ADEPT

Draconis Combine Affiliation only. Characters must not have any previous In For Life Traits (other than to the Order), "questionable" events (as determined by the gamemaster, unless a suitable level 3 Contact has been purchased who can hide such a transgression), or any of the following Traits: Addiction, Combat Paralysis, Impatient, Madness, Shameful Heritage, Slow Learner, Timid, Unhealthy, or Unlucky (at worse than 4 points in total value).

The Order of the Five Pillars is a secretive collective of warrior monks who have become a combination of

spiritual guardians and intelligence organization. Guided by the often-benevolent hand of the Keeper of the House Honor, and headed by a single Abbess (or Abbot, when applicable), its ranks are impenetrable, even by the fearsome ISF, and its reach is truly fearsome. Being a Pillarine (as members of the Order are known) is a life-long commitment, and one not for the faint of heart or the weak-spirited.

To reflect the Order's training and discipline, and the length of commitment required before an adept is free to venture out on her (or his) own, all characters must take this Path a minimum of three times. The first pass represents training with the Order, while the second and third passes represent latter stages of "field training". Please note that Attribute, Trait, and Skill bonuses for the training stage apply only upon the first pass, while all subsequent passes gain those bonuses described under *Subpath: Adept*. Because the training is so structured, no event rolls are made during the first pass through this Path. However, event rolls are made for the second and subsequent passes, with the normal -1 penalty per repeat, even if the path repeat is mandatory. Finally, to reflect the greater success rate of female members of the Order, a bonus of +1 applies to all event rolls by female O5P adepts.

Time: 4 Years

Attribute Minimums: STR 6, BOD 5, WIL 6, INT 6, EDG 5

Attribute Thresholds: WIL +1, EDG +1

Traits: Enemy (3), In For Life/O5P, Well Connected, Well Equipped, Quirk(2)/Loyalty to House Kurita, Quirk/Honorable

Skills: Martial Arts/Any Asian Style +5, Blade +3, Interest/Dictum Honorium +3, Perception +2, Meditation +2, Protocol/Draconis Combine +1, +2 to two of the following skills: Acting, Archery, Deception, Disguise, Computers, Cryptography, Demolitions, Escape Artist, Forgery, Interrogation, Investigation, Language/Any, Leadership, Martial Arts/Any, Pistols, Poison and Antidotes, Protocol/Any, Security Systems, Seduction, Staffs, Stealth, Streetwise/Any, Tactics/Infantry, Thrown Weapons, or Training.

Events: Do not roll events for this pass.

Previous Paths: Any that would allow entry into a Military Academy or University.

Next Path: O5P Adept Subpath [mandatory, part of this pass. After taking the two O5P Adept passes as described above, characters may choose to either repeat the Adept Subpath again (per standard rules), or take the Travel (4) or Ne'er-Do-Well (4) Paths. Otherwise, they should immediately enter gameplay.]

Subpath: O5P Adept

O5P Initiate Training Graduates only.

Time: 3 Years

Traits: Patient, Introvert, Quirk/Honorable. After more than two passes through the O5P Adept Subpath, characters may elect to pick up either the Sixth Sense or Ki Focus Trait at half cost. (Note that to possess Ki Focus, a character must have a +4 bonus in any Asian

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Martial Arts style and the Meditation skill.)

Skills: Martial Arts/Any Asian Style +4, Blade +3, Perception +2, Interest/Dictum Honorium +2, add +2 to any two skills gained during Initiate training. Add +1 to any two other skills.

Previous Paths: O5P Initiate Training (3).

Next Path: O5P Adept (4, first repeat is mandatory). After mandatory repeat, may take Covert Ops (4), ISF Covert Operative (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), or Travel (4)

Order of the Five Pillars Adept Events

- 2 Not only have you broken your covenant with the Pillarines, you have betrayed the Dragon itself. You may have escaped the ultimate punishment, but not for long. [Escape Artist +2, Scrounge +2, Lose Quirk/Honorable, Bad Reputation (3), Enemy (3)/O5P, Enemy (3)/ISF, Bloodmark]
- 3 You violated one of the most sacred tenets of the *Dictum Honorium*—or at least, the local Illuminatis claim you did. You are no longer fit to be a Pillarine. [Bad Reputation (2), Poverty, Stigma (2)/Disgraced, may not take any more O5P paths, choose one of the following: Gambling +3, Deception +3, or Seduction +3]
- 4 The *Kokuryu-kai* attempts to recruit you. [If you join the Black Dragons, take Enemy (3)/O5P, Enemy (2)/ISF, Bad Reputation (3), Wealth, Well Equipped, Alternate Identity, and lose Quirk/Honorable; next path *must* be Black Dragons. If not, take Brave, Enemy (2)/Black Dragon Society, and Stigma/Bounty on Head.]
- 5 You are “compromised” by an ISF infiltrator, who exposed you when he was finally captured. [Wealth (2), In For Life/ISF, Stigma (2)/O5P “Turncoat”, may not take any more O5P paths, but may instead take ISF Covert Operations Paths. (Gamemaster and player may determine if the character really has betrayed the Order, or has actually counter-infiltrated the ISF.)]
- 6 The mission was a failure and drew unwanted attention to the Order. You were lucky to be spared, but not by much. [+2 to any three skills, lose one Contact, Bad Reputation, Stigma/Failure, and choose one: Dark Secret/Botched Critical Mission, Disabled, Impatient, Low Endurance, Madness/Flashbacks or Paranoia, Thin Skinned, Timid, or Unattractive.]
- 7 Following a failed operation, you are assigned to a “less harmful” role within the Order. Stigma/Questionable Dedication, -1 to all Skills gained in this Path, Bureaucracy +2, Protocol/Draconis Combine +2, Computer/Operations +2, Interest/Dictum Honorium +2]
- 8 You have stumbled on the path of enlightenment, and must atone to remain with the Order. [Impatient, -1 to four Skills gained in this pass, Interest/Dictum Honorium +2, Meditation +1, add two years to the time spent in this pass, Choose: High Endurance or Thick Skinned.]

- 9 You have strayed from the path of enlightenment, but fortunately, no one is the wiser—for now. [+2 to Gambling, Scrounge, or Seduction, +1 to any other skill, Choose one: Dark Secret, Addiction, or Dependent]
- 10 You are tasked with instructing a minor noble in the ways of the Dictum Honorium. [Interest/Dictum Honorium +1, Training +2]
- 11 Sometimes, just *being* is service enough, even if it's not glorious. [+1 to any two skills]
- 12 Your expertise in the ways of honor and nobility earn you a brief role as a warlord's consul. [Negotiation +1, Fast Talk +1]
- 13 Assigned to assist in DCMS Officer Training. [Martial Arts/Any +2, Training +2]
- 14 You foil an ISF attempt to infiltrate the Order. [Good Reputation, Enemy (2)/ISF, Perception +3, Martial Arts/Any +2]
- 15 In a rare show of cooperation for the good of the Dragon, you are instrumental in the success of a vital joint ISF/O5P operation. [Contact (2)/ISF Agent, Enemy (3)/foreign intelligence agency, Bureaucracy/Draconis Combine +1, add +2 to any three skills]
- 16 In service to the Order and the Dragon, you pull off a rare foray against enemies in a neighboring realm. [Enemy (2), +3 to any two skills, +2 to any other skill]
- 17 You are instrumental in converting a key officer in the DCMS to the Order's will. [Contact(2)/DCMS Officer, Negotiation +2]
- 18 “Your *ki* is strong, indeed, Adept.” Qualified for advanced training in the finer arts of the Pillarine monks. [Martial Arts/Any +2, Meditation +1, Choose one: Alert, Brave, Exceptional Attribute/Any, Fast Learner, Fit, High Endurance, Pain Resistance, Poison Resistance, Thick Skinned, or Toughness]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]
- 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each result]

MAGISTRACY INTELLIGENCE MINISTRY (MIM) OPERATIVE

Magistracy of Canopus Affiliation only. Characters must not have any previous In For Life Traits or “questionable” events (as determined by the gamemaster, unless a suitable level 2 or 3 Contact has been purchased who can hide such a transgression), or any one or more of the following Traits: Combat Paralysis, Impatient, Madness, Shameful Heritage, Slow Learner, Timid, Unhealthy, or Unlucky at worse than 6 points in total value.

The best of the Periphery intelligence organizations, possibly even better than some of the Inner Sphere, the Magistracy of Canopus' Magistracy Intelligence Ministry claims some of the most dedicated and skilled

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operatives to work the fringes of the Human Sphere. Well equipped, well funded, and answerable only to the Magestrix herself, Ministry agents are kept in an almost constant state of training throughout their careers, constantly honing their skills both for their own survival and for the advancement of their leaders' cause.

To reflect the unique training style employed by the MIM, characters from this agency must take this Path a minimum of three times, selecting their main branch of service at the start from all *except* the Ebon Magistrate (agents may enter the Ebon Magistrate only through a 2 or 19 event roll). The first pass represents initial training in the MIM, while the second and the third represent later stages of "field training" and operations. Please note, however, that Attribute, Trait, and Skill bonuses for the Training Stage only apply on the first pass, while second and subsequent passes—unless event rolls dictate otherwise—gain only those bonuses described under *Subpath: MIM Operative*. Because the training is so structured, no event rolls are made during the first pass through this Path. However, event rolls are made for the second and subsequent passes, with the normal -1 penalty per repeat, even if the path repeat is mandatory. Finally, to reflect the greater success rate of female operatives in the matriarchal Magistracy, a bonus of +1 applies to all event rolls by female operatives.

Note that a character passing through this path should choose a branch of service to work in. See the overview of the Magistracy's MIM later in this book for a more in-depth explanation as to the role and operations of these various branches.

MIM Operative Training

Time: 3 Years

Attribute Minimums: STR 4, BOD 4, WIL 5, INT 6, CHA 5

Attribute Thresholds: WIL +1, INT +1

Traits: Enemy (3), In For Life/MIM, Contact, Well-Equipped, Quirk(2)/Loyalty to Magestrix

Skills: Martial Arts/Any +3, Blade +2, Protocol/Magistracy of Canopus +2, Perception +2. Choose one of the following fields (as appropriate to service branch): (Central Analysis): Intelligence or Analysis; (Domestic Operations, Homeland Defense, or Royal Operations): Covert Operations, Detective, Police, or Police Tactical Officer; (Foreign Affairs): Covert Operations, Scout, or Detective; (Active Response): Cavalry, Covert Operations, Infantry, Marine, MechWarrior, Scout, or Special Forces.

Events: Do not roll events for this pass.

Previous Paths: Any which provide military training.

Next Path: MIM Operative [After taking the two MIM Operative passes as described above, characters may choose to either repeat the MIM Operative subpath again (per standard rules), or take the Covert Operations (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), or Travel (4) Paths. Otherwise, they should immediately enter gameplay.]

Subpath: MIM Operative

MIM Operative Training Graduates only.

Time: 3 Years

Traits: Enemy. Choose either Promotion, Wealth (2), Well-Connected, or Well-Equipped

Skills: Interest/Any +2, Perception +2, Protocol/Magistracy of Canopus +1, add +3 to any two skills gained during Operative Training, +2 to any four other skills.

Previous Paths: MIM Operative Training (3).

Next Path: MIM Operative (4, first repeat is mandatory). After mandatory repeat, may take Covert Ops (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), or Travel (4)

MIM Operative Events

- 2 Though left for dead after a disastrous field mission, you are rescued by agents of the Ebon Magistrate, who manage to rebuild you, but at terrible cost. [+4 to any combat skill, EDG -2, lose all Contacts; take Addiction (2), Dark Secret (3), Lost Limb (2), Special Item (3, represents prosthetic enhancement or elective implant), and choose either Amnesia, Madness/Any (3), or Unlucky (2). If not taken before, next Path *must* be Ebon Magistrate Training. Otherwise, may not take Ne'er-Do-Well or Travel.]
- 3 Captured and brutalized at the hands of a rival agency, you eventually cracked. Worse still, after you finally escaped, you returned to a realm that had labeled you a traitor. [Escape Artist +3, Interrogation +2, BOD -1, SOC -1, Bad Reputation (3), Dark Secret (2), Poverty (2), Stigma (2)/Traitor, add 2d6 to the time spent in this path, and may not take any more paths for the MIM.]
- 4 Compromised in the midst of a sensitive infiltration, you were lucky to get out alive. [Escape Artist +2, +2 to any one combat skill, Enemy (2), Bad Reputation, Poorly Equipped, Unlucky, and choose two: BOD -1, Clumsy, Disabled, Lost Limb, Madness/Any, or Unattractive.]
- 5 While on an undercover mission aboard a traveling pleasure circus, you are waylaid by c o m m o n pirates. [Deception +2, Fast-Talk +2, Negotiation +1, choose: Acting +1, Art/Any +1, or Chic +1. Lose all Wealth and Well-Equipped Traits, take Unlucky, add 1d6 years to the time spent in this pass, and *must* take one Ne'er-Do-Well Path before returning to this one or entering game play.]
- 6 "Is it truly worth it, putting your life on the line every day for so little gain, when the whole universe can be yours?" Foreign operatives attempt to recruit you. [If you choose to defect, take Enemy (2), Wealth (3), lose all but one Contact, and choose a foreign intelligence agency to defect to for the standard effects (may take no further Magistracy paths). If you resist the temptation, take Bloodmark (3), Brave, Enemy (2), Good Reputation (2), and lose one Contact.]

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- 7 Your partner's death was an accident, a tragedy—at least, that's what you keep telling yourself. [-1 to any two combat skills, and choose one: Addiction (2), Bad Reputation (2), Clumsy, Demotion (2), Madness/Flashbacks (2), Quirk/Paranoid (2), Shameful Heritage (2), or Unlucky]
- 8 *That* certainly wasn't in the plan! Got a little too "close" to the mark during your last op, and now must lead the ultimate double life... [Seduction +3, Alternate Identity, Dependent (2), Dark Secret (2), Unlucky.]
- 9 Really, how much "field research" are you getting out of those pleasure circuses? [+2 to Gambling, Scrounge, or Seduction, +1 to any other skill, Stigma/Lazy, Choose one: Dark Secret, Addiction, or Dependent]
- 10 "Yaaaawn!" Spent this past tour in a Central Analysis "think tank". [+1 to any three skills in either the Intelligence or Analysis fields, choose Impatient or BOD -1]
- 11 Another dreary tour of "Observation-only" operations. [+1 to any two skills]
- 12 "In the interests of fostering good relations with our allies..." Temporarily assigned a Capellan Maskirovka partner. [Contact (1), +1 to Brawling, Intimidation, Interrogation, or Martial Arts/ Gung-Fu]
- 13 Exposing tax fraud among the Durachi may not be glamorous, but it pays the bills. [Enemy (2)/Canopian merchant prince, Patience, Computer/Operations +3, Investigations +2, Perception +2]
- 14 Assigned to undercover work in a foreign realm. [Alternate Identity, Language/Any +3, +2 to Acting, Bureaucracy/Any, Chic, Deception, Disguise, Seduction, Streetwise/Any, or Protocol/Any]
- 15 Successfully turned a foreign contact! [Contact(2)/foreign political, military, or intelligence figure, Enemy (3)/foreign intelligence agency, Good Reputation, Promotion, Bureaucracy/Any +2, Protocol/Any +2, Seduction +2]
- 16 Impressed by your performance so far, your superiors clear you for "expanded training". [Contact (2), +3 to any two skills, may repeat MIM Operative training, then return to this pass.]
- 17 After playing a key role in foiling another of the Concordat's ill-conceived plots, a promotion is in order. [+2 to any four skills from Operative Training, SOC +1, Bloodmark, Good Reputation (2), Enemy, Promotion, Wealth]
- 18 "For service to the Magestrix above and beyond the call of duty..." Your star has risen indeed, but not everyone is happy about it! [+2 to any three skills, Bloodmark (2), Brave, Good Reputation (3), Enemy (2), choose Wealth (2) or Property (2). May take Officer Candidate School next or (if already an officer) take Promotion (2) and continue on this path.]
- 19 You have what it takes to join the Magestrix's

chosen few—no matter the cost. [+3 to any three combat skills, choose any five skills and add +2 to two of them, and +1 to the other three, EDG +1, take Dark Secret (3), Lost Limb (3), Special Item (4, represents prosthetic enhancement or elective implant), Wealth (2), Well-Equipped. May take Ebon Magistrate Training next and continue from this point.]

- 20 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

Subpath: Officer Candidate School (OCS)

Enter via event roll only

Time: 1 year

Attribute Thresholds: CHA +1

Traits: Commission (Rank 1), Poverty

Skills: Administration +1, Protocol/Magistracy of Canopus +1

Fields: Officer

Events: Roll on MIM Operative Events

Next Path: Per last path followed.

Subpath: Ebon Magistrate Training

MIM Operative Training. Enter via event roll only.

Time: 2 years

Attribute Thresholds: CHA -1, EDG -1

Traits: Alternate Identity

Skills: +2 to any two combat or technician skills

Fields: Choose one: Infantry, Marine, Police Tactical Officer, Scout, or Special Forces

Events: Do not roll events for this pass.

Next Path: Covert Ops (4) or MIM Operative (4)

STAGE 4 LIFE PATHS

Unless otherwise stated, these paths follow the rules for Stage 4: Real Life in the *Character Creation* section of *CBT: RPG* (p. 47).

CLAN WATCH OPERATIVE

Any Clan Affiliation. Characters must be members of the Warrior, Scientist, or Technician Caste. Technicians suffer a -1 penalty to all Event rolls. Scientists suffer a -2 penalty. Jade Falcon Watch Operatives and Rasalhaguans (Ghost Bear Watch only) add a +2 bonus to event rolls, while Steel Viper operatives and Diamond Shark merchants (Diamond Shark Watch only) add +1.

To many Inner Sphere organizations, the Clan Watch is a joke, little more than a ragtag collection of field operatives from the dregs of Clan society, armed with a smattering of skills and ill-trained to use them. Those Clans that have been among the Inner Sphere for a while, however, have learned to sharpen their skills. Though still employed largely in a surveillance-only role, more and more, the Clan Watch has steadily begun to close the gap between itself and the networks of the underhanded barbarians Kerensky left behind.

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Note that on a number of events, characters may be penalized in skills they do not have. These “negative points” should be factored in only against existing skills, and resolved against the final tally of skill points at the end of character generation. Any skill still below or at zero in points is then considered to be untrained. This same rule does not apply to the Glory Trait, however, which may start out after character generation in the negatives. This represents the inherent shame Clansmen feel in being a member of the “dirty” world of covert operations.

Time: 2 years (3 years for Diamond Shark, Ghost Bear, and Wolf/Wolf in Exile characters)

Attribute Minimums: RFL 5, INT 4 (5 for Diamond Shark, Ghost Bear, Nova Cat, or Wolf/Wolf in Exile), (Diamond Shark characters must also have CHA 5)

Attribute Thresholds: SOC -1 (Ghost Bear, Hell's Horses, Jade Falcon, Nova Cat, Wolf/Wolf in Exile add CHA -1)

Traits: Bad Reputation, Contact, Contact (2), Enemy (2), Enemy (3), In For Life/Watch, Promotion (1, non-warriors only), Stigma/Clan Watch, Well-Equipped. (Diamond Shark): Enemy (2), Stigma/Greedy, Well-Connected, Wealth (2), Glory -1. (Ghost Bear): Contact (2), Enemy, Well-Equipped, Glory -1, and increase Bad Reputation to level 2. (Jade Falcon, Hell's Horses, and Steel Viper): Glory -2. (Nova Cat/Wolf in Exile): Enemy (2), Enemy (2), Wealth, Well-Connected, Glory -1. (Wolf): Enemy (2), Enemy (2), Well-Connected, Glory -1. (All other Clans): Glory -3. Note that any Clan character can begin play with negative Glory points.

Skills: Perception +3, Stealth +3, Surveillance +2, +2 to any four military field skills, and +2 to any three skills: Blades, Brawling, Climbing, Comms/Conventional, Computers, Cryptography, Demolitions, Disguise, Escape Artist, First Aid, Free Fall, Gunnery/Any, Interrogation, Intimidation, Language/Any, Martial Arts/Any, Negotiation, Piloting/Any, Pistols, Protocol/Any, Scrounge, Security Systems, Seduction, Sensor Operations, Shotguns, Streetwise/Any, Submachine Guns, Tactics/Any, Technician/Any, Tracking.

Add the following skills to the above: (Diamond Shark): Negotiation +3, Fast-Talk +2, Gambling +2, Deception +1. (Fire Mandrill and Snow Raven): Fast Talk +2, Negotiation +1. (Ghost Bear): Streetwise/Any +3, Negotiation +2, Scrounge +2, Deception +1. (Hell's Horses): Stealth +2, Security Systems/Any +1. (Nova Cat, Wolf, and Wolf in Exile): Streetwise/Any +3, Deception +2, Negotiation +1

Previous Path: Clan Watch Operative (4) or any Clan Tour of Duty (4), non-Warrior Clan characters may enter this path after two passes through any appropriate civilian caste path, but only at a one-point reduction in their EDG threshold.

Next Path: Clan Watch Operative (4, same Clan or Generic), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (Scientist or Technician Caste only), Tour of Duty: Clan (4, Warrior Caste only, may be Generic or any appropriate Tour of Duty for the character's Clan and training)

Event Rolls: On an event roll of 20, instead of choosing two events or rolling thrice, the character may elect to infiltrate another affiliation's military or covert operations division, allowing them to take an appropriate path from that affiliation next, assuming all other requirements (but affiliation) are met. Doing so, however, reduces the character's EDG threshold by 2.

Clan Watch Operative Events

- 2 When that enemy counterintelligence agent unmasked you, you swore you would go down fighting. Unfortunately, they had orders to take you alive, denying you an honorable death! [Escape Artist +3, +3 to any two combat-related skills, Enemy (3), Glory (-2), Choose two: Addiction (2), BOD -2, Amnesia, Combat Paralysis, Disabled (3), Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (2), Madness/Any (3), Poor Hearing (3), Poor Vision (2), Slow Learner, Unhealthy, Unlucky (2); add 1d6 years to the time spent in this path, must take Ne'er-Do-Well or Dark Caste path next.]
- 3 The Spheroid savashri must have once more anticipated your actions and played you like a cheap harp! The “information” you obtained led your troops into a gruesome trap. [Deception -2, Cryptography -2, Computers +2, Comms/Conventional +2, Stigma/Failure (2), Bad Reputation, Enemy (2), Glory (-3)]
- 4 Of all the luck! Just as you successfully infiltrated the enemy base, another Clan assault force arrived to capture your objective the honorable way. [Stealth +2, Surveillance +2, Survival +1, Enemy (2), Bad Reputation, Glory (-1), Unlucky (2), non-warrior characters take the Timid Trait]
- 5 After a particularly spectacular snafu, you find the Watch was only too eager to cut you loose. You still remember watching your ride off-planet leaving you behind to face some very irate bandits. [Survival +3, Scrounge +2, Streetwise +1, Enemy (2). If the character has a vehicle, take Lemon; otherwise, take Poorly-Equipped (2). Choose one: Addiction (2), Disabled (2), Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (2), or Madness/Flashbacks (2). Next path must be Bandit Caste.]
- 6 While on a covert assignment against a rival Clan, you are captured by an alert Elemental guard. But at least your struggle impressed him enough to make you a bondsman, rather than an ugly red smear on the nearest bulkhead. [Choose one: BOD -1, Disability, Lost Limb, or Unattractive; character changes Clan affiliation per the standard rules on p. 28 CBT Guide to the Clans]
- 7 Experienced a small – but lasting – “disagreement” with one of your superiors. [+3 to Martial Arts/Any or Brawling, Unattractive, Enemy (2)]
- 8 You narrowly pulled off another mission for the Clan, but you just can't shake the image of that Spheroid commando on your tail, stalking you—toying with you—after leaving you with a subtle reminder of

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- unfinished business! [+2 to any three military field skills appropriate to the character's training, Addiction, Quirk/Paranoid, Unattractive.]
- 9 The mission was easy. Almost too easy! Or maybe you've watched one too many of those Spheroid spy holos. [Interest/Holovids +2, +1 to any two combat-related skills, Quirk/Paranoid (2).]
 - 10 As galling as being part of the underhanded spy business is for a true Clansman, being a mere paper-pusher is ten times worse! [Administration +2, Bureaucracy +2, Impatient, CHA -1]
 - 11 Surveillance is so boring it numbs the mind, but fortunately, those decadent Games on Solaris VII provide you with some semblance of amusement, and perhaps even an insight into Spheroid culture. [Interest/Solaris VII +1, Streetwise/Inner Sphere +1]
 - 12 A smattering of assignments allows you time to sharpen your skills, but wears on your nerves and isolates you from your teammates. [+2 to any two military field skills, Impatient, Introvert]
 - 13 Your shuttle is shot down during your drop, forcing you to survive far longer behind enemy lines than you had ever anticipated. [Scrounge +2, Survival +1, Navigation/Ground +1, High Endurance, Choose two: Clumsy, Disabled, Lost Limb, Unattractive]
 - 14 They call it a "deep cover" assignment. You call it unClanlike, but times have changed, and the Clan must adapt or die. [Acting +2, Deception +2, Surveillance +1, +1 to any other skill, Alternate Identity, SOC -1, Glory -1, add 1d6 years to the time spent in this pass.]
 - 15 You stumble upon a stockpile of contraband while investigating a possible Dark Caste campsite, and there is more here than you would have thought possible. Do you gather some equipment for yourself, or do the honorable thing, and turn it over to your superiors? [If the player chooses to personally "secure" some equipment, take Wealth (2) and Well-Equipped; otherwise, take Good Reputation, Promotion, Glory +1]
 - 16 The bad news is that the Spheroids are on to you. The good news is that they're content with just toying with you. The better news is that they underestimated you. [Deception +3, +2 to any three skills earned in this path, Promotion, Glory +1]
 - 17 You have heard that the enemy's commandoes were sneaky, but they met their match in you, quiaff? [Stealth +3, Martial Arts/Any +3, Blade +2, Good Reputation, Glory +1, Promotion]
 - 18 Kerensky himself must have been smiling upon you, operative. Not only did you manage to infiltrate the enemy camp and learn their battle plans, but you created enough mayhem to temporarily cripple their operation and even secured some new equipment for the Clan! [Stealth +4, Computers +3, Demolitions +3, +2 to any two combat skills, Enemy (3), Good Reputation, Glory +2. If the character has piloting skills, take Vehicle (3), Custom Vehicle; otherwise, take Well-Equipped (2). Choose: Disabled, Introvert, Quirk, Unattractive]

19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each result]

COMSTAR ROM OPERATIVE

ComStar Affiliation only. Characters must pass through at least one generic ROM path before taking the specific subpaths listed below.

Once a shadowy organization that not only enforced the ComStar theism within the Order, but also worked against all those who did not share their views, the secular intelligence agency of the "reformed" ComStar still retains a fearsome veneer, evoking images of inquisitions and assassinations. In truth, the agency is but a shadow of its former self, rocked by mass defections and staggered by the efforts of the fanatical Word of Blake to shatter it once and for all. Only ComStar's near-total control of communications allows this weakened agency its edge over others.

Note that a character passing through this path should choose a branch of service to work in. See the overview of ComStar's ROM later in this book for a more in-depth explanation as to the role and operations of these various branches.

Time: 6 years (5 years for Mu/Delta, Rho/Rho, Delta Epsilon, and Delta/Xi operatives)

Attribute Minimums: INT 7, WIL 6 (Rho/Rho, Delta/Epsilon, and Delta/Xi operatives also must have at least BOD 6 and RFL 5)

Attribute Thresholds: INT +1, CHA -1 (Rho/Rho operatives, add BOD +1)

Traits: Contact (2), Enemy (3), Enemy (2), In For Life/ComStar ROM, Promotion, Quirk/Loyalty to ComStar, Quirk/Paranoid, Shameful Heritage (2, reflects ROM's nefarious past), Well Connected (2), Well Equipped (2). (Mu/Delta): Alternate Identity, Bad Reputation, raise Quirk/Loyalty to level 2. (Rho/Rho): Bad Reputation, Enemy (2), Enemy (2), Well-Connected, Well-Equipped. (Delta/Epsilon and Delta/Xi): Custom Vehicle (2), Enemy (2), Introvert, Vehicle (2), raise Quirk/Loyalty to level 2.

Skills: Perception +4, Computers/Any +3, Cryptography +2, Martial Arts/Any +1, +2 to any five skills from the following fields: (Mu/Delta and Mu/Iota): Analysis, Basic Training, Covert Operations, Detective, Infantry, Intelligence, Scout, and Special Forces. (Rho/Gamma): Covert Operations, Intelligence, Officer, and Politician. (Rho/Rho and Rho/Chi): Basic Training, Covert Operations, Infantry, Scout, and Special Forces. (Mu/Mu): Analysis, Detective, Intelligence, Military Scientist, Scientist. (Delta/Epsilon and Delta/Xi): Aerospace Pilot, Armored Infantry, Basic Training, Cavalry, Covert Operations, Infantry, Intelligence, MechWarrior, Scout, Special Forces, or Technician.

Previous Path: Minimum of three passes through ComStar Service or Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (in ComStar's service).

Next Path: ComStar ROM Operative (4, must be same branch or generic), ComStar Service (4), Covert Ops (4),

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Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (4).

Event Rolls: (Mu/Delta only): On an event roll of 20, instead of choosing two events or rolling thrice, the character may elect to infiltrate another affiliation's military or covert operations division, allowing them to take an appropriate path from that affiliation next, assuming all other requirements (but affiliation) are met. Doing so, however, reduces the character's EDG threshold by 1.

ComStar ROM Operative Events

- 2 You discovered a Blakist mole in ROM! Unfortunately, he was faster than you. [Enemy (2), Investigation +4, +2 to any other skill, choose two: Amnesia, Combat Paralysis, Disabled (3), Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (3), Madness/Any (3), Poor Hearing (3), Poor Vision (2), Slow Learner, Unhealthy, Unlucky (2)]
- 3 Captured by a Blakist plant and "broken", you were turned against your former comrades. [Interest/Writings of Jerome Blake +3, Interrogation +1, Demotion, Stigma/Traitor, add 1D6 years to the time spent in this pass. Roll 1d6. On 1-4, character is "rescued" by ComStar, but must take Dark Secret (2), and either Amnesia or Madness (3) Traits. On 5-6, character defects to Word of Blake, and must choose the Word of Blake Service path next, following the standard Defection rules.]
- 4 Another failed operation lands you in the infirmary for a month or two, and your superiors question your performance; damn those fanatics! [+2 to any two skills gained in this path, Addiction, Demotion, Enemy (2), Quirk/Hatred of Word of Blake, Choose: Clumsy, Disabled (2), Lost Limb (2), Madness/Any (2), Poor Hearing (2), Poor Vision]
- 5 Consistent sub-par performance leads to your transfer to a "more suitable assignment". [-1 to six skills gained in this path, transferred to ROM's information analysis section; if already there, next path must be ComStar Service.]
- 6 You dropped the ball on the operation. Fortunately, your comrades saved your ass, but not your career. [+2 to Protocol/ComStar, -1 to any two skills gained in this path, Demotion, Choose Clumsy or Impatient]
- 7 You saw some heavy action, and have the scars to prove it! [Perception +2, +2 to two combat-related skills, Enemy (2), Unattractive, Choose: Addiction, Disabled (2), Introvert, Lost Limb, Low Endurance, Poor Vision, Poor Hearing, Quirk, Thin Skinned, or Timid]
- 8 Minor operations, most of them low-risk – but not all. [Surveillance +2, Comms/Conventional +1, +1 to any other skill, Enemy (2), Addiction]
- 9 With allies like these, who needs enemies? You experience "difficulties" working with friendly agents in the SLDF. [Fast Talk +2, Negotiation +2, Enemy]
- 10 Every now and again, somebody's got to man the desks, and unfortunately, that someone has been you for a damn long time. [Administration + 1, Bureaucracy +1, Comms/Conventional

- +1, Impatient]
- 11 Spent more of your time poring over HPG communications logs than performing field work. [Bureaucracy +1, Comms/HPG +1, Investigations +1, -1 to any combat-related skill earned during this pass.]
- 12 Assigned as part of a traveling Precentor's shipboard security detail for a few years. [Zero-G Operations +2, Navigation/Space +1, STR -1]
- 13 Exposed a Blakist plant who tried to recruit you. [+2 to any skill, +1 to any other skill. Good Reputation, Enemy]
- 14 Your reports on several key figures in Word of Blake were right on the money. Of course, the fanatics have branded you a heretic, but such is the price for fame. [Investigation +3, Perception +3, Surveillance +2, Enemy (2), Good Reputation, Promotion, Bloodmark]
- 15 Your talent with machines opens the door for a posting with a special R&D branch of the Information and Analysis Division. [Tech Empathy, character may choose to take the Think Tank path next.]
- 16 Caught in a crossfire during a sabotage mission gone bad, you showed not only a cool head and fast hands under fire, but came away with some excellent salvage for the boys in analysis. [Demolitions +3, Tactics/Any +2, Promotion, Vehicle, Choose: Addiction, Disabled, Introvert, Low Endurance, Night Blindness, Poor Hearing, Quirk, Thin Skinned, Unattractive]
- 17 You've been a part of every major operation the past couple years. Most of them you can't talk about, but people come to you now, to solve their problems. [+4 to any combat-related skill, +2 to any three other skills gained in this path. Promotion (2), Good Reputation (3), Enemy (2), Dark Secret (2)]
- 18 Double agent. You successfully "defected" to Word of Blake, and so far, the fanatics are none the wiser. [Interest/Writings of Jerome Blake +5, Acting +4, Deception +3, Disguise +2, Alternate Identity, Bad Reputation (2), Brave, Stigma/Fanatic (2), may take Word of Blake Service or Word of Blake ROM Agent Paths next (ignoring requirements), but must take at least one more ComStar ROM path afterward.]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]
- 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each result]

FANATIC/GUERILLA OPERATIVE

Open to all Affiliations. Characters from Dante's Inferno, Free Capella, Heimdall, the Nekakami, the Word of Blake, and Zhanzheng de guang affiliations receive a +1 bonus on all event rolls.

Dismissed by governments as disorganized, harmless, and even insane in some cases, guerilla operatives—be they religious fanatics, political terrorists, state-sponsored militants, or simply the most overzealous and determined members of an elite and

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very legitimate agency—are nonetheless a very real danger. Hailing from all walks of life, there is a fine line between a guerilla and a fanatic, and that line is often redrawn by those in power.

Whether they have a chance against the powers that be or not, guerillas and fanatics are the proverbial wild card in any tense political, social, or military situation. Their goal is victory by any means necessary, and they will gladly surrender their own lives for the cause they feel is right.

Time: 1D6 years

Traits: Brave, Enemy (2), Quirk/Xenophobic (2), Stigma/Terrorist (2), Well-Connected, Well-Equipped. Fanatic characters gain 2 extra character points for choosing any one Madness trait after completing the Life Paths.

Skills: Interest/Philosophies of Leader (or Religion) +4, Intimidation +3, Martial Arts/Any +3. Add +2 to any five military field skills, and choose three of the following: Blades +1, Computer/Any +2, Demolitions +3, Pistols +3, Rifles +2, Security Systems/Any +3, Stealth +2, Surveillance +2, Submachine Guns +1, Support Weapons +2

Previous Path: Any, so long as the character has received at least Basic Training

Next Path: Covert Ops (4), Fanatic/Guerilla Operative (4), Guerilla/Insurgent Operative (4), Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4)

Fanatic Operative Events

- 2 Betrayed! At the moment of your greatest glory, one of your own sells you out, delivering you into the hands of the hated enemy! [Escape Artist +3, Interrogation +3, Pugilism +2, Bad Reputation (3), Bloodmark (3), lose all Well-Equipped earned to this point. Choose: BOD -2, EDG -2, Combat Paralysis, Disabled (3), Madness/Any (3), Poor Vision (2), Slow Learner, Unhealthy, or Unlucky (2). Add 2D6 years to the time spent in this path.]
- 3 You hesitated at the moment of truth, and the enemy devils thwarted the operation. [+2 to any three combat skills, Enemy (2), Timid, Stigma/Coward (2). Choose two: Addiction (2), Clumsy, Disabled (2), Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (2), Madness/Catatonia (2), Unlucky (2)]
- 4 That batch of explosives you mixed up went off just a tad sooner than you planned. [Demolitions +3, Unlucky (2), Lost Limb (2), Unattractive]
- 5 After your best friend and mentor martyred himself for the cause, you've begun to doubt yourself. [-1 to all skills earned in this pass, Introvert, and lose one level of Quirk/Xenophobic. Choose: Addiction, Timid, or Madness/Flashbacks]
- 6 You had the bad taste not only to survive your suicide mission, but fail in it as well. [Escape Artist +2, Bloodmark (2), Timid, Stigma/Coward, and choose one: Clumsy, Dark Secret (2), Disabled (2), Poor Hearing (2), Poor Vision, Unlucky]
- 7 Your name is now uttered in the same breath as Amaris the Usurper, and even your comrades fear you! Now, *that's* "terrorism"! [Intimidate +5, +3 to any three combat skills, Bad Reputation (3), Bloodmark (4), Quirk/Proud, Stigma/Cruel (2)]
- 8 A crowded mall in broad daylight. What have you become? [WIL -1, EDG -2, Demolitions +2, +1 to any three other combat skills. Lose one level of Quirk/Xenophobic, take Dark Secret (3), and choose from the following: Addiction, Timid, Introvert, Quirk/Paranoid, or Madness/Flashbacks]
- 9 Throwing yourself against the devils without a care for your own survival may instill fear in the enemy and inspiration in your brothers, but it will take more than convictions to win this war. [+3 to any two combat skills, +2 to any four other skills. Choose two: BOD -2, STR -2, Disabled (2), Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (2), Poor Vision (2), Poorly Equipped, Slow Learner, Unhealthy, Unlucky (2)]
- 10 You may be willing to die for the cause, but not every battle is life-and-death! [+2 to any two combat skills, Enemy (2)]
- 11 Gofer for the cause. Well, at least you still contribute. [Administration +2, Bureaucracy +2, Negotiation +2, Streetwise/Any +2, -1 to all other skills earned in this pass]
- 12 Another foot soldier for the cause. [+1 to any four skills, Bad Reputation]
- 13 You excel at close-quarters fighting. [+2 to any melee combat skill (Blade, Boxing, Brawling, Martial Arts, or Pugilism). Choose Ambidextrous or RFL +1]
- 14 Spokesperson for the cause. Yours is the face and the voice the hated enemy deals with most. [Comms/Conventional +2, Fast-Talk +3, Intimidation +2, Interest/Philosophies of Leader (or Religion) +2, Leadership +2, Negotiation +3, +2 to any two other skills. Gregarious, Bad Reputation (2), Bloodmark (3), Promotion]
- 15 "Procured" some heavy equipment from the hated enemy—all for the cause, of course. [Scrounge +3, +1 to any two other skills, Good Reputation, Enemy (2). Choose: Wealth and Well-Equipped or Vehicle (3)]
- 16 Your skills and devotion to the cause inspire hordes of new recruits. [Leadership +2, +1 to all skills earned in this pass, Good Reputation (2)]
- 17 Your deadly accuracy seems almost a divine gift, and the hated enemy has placed a price on your head. [+6 to any ranged weapon skill (including vehicular weapons), Natural Aptitude/same weapon, +2 to any three other combat skills. Bloodmark (3), Good Vision, Patient]
- 18 *For the cause!* Willing to kill, and ready to die, no force in the universe is your equal, and even the hated enemy knows it. [Leadership +3, +4 to any two combat skills, +2 to any three other skills. Bloodmark (4), Good Reputation (2), Promotion (2), Quirk/God Complex, Choose: Toughness, Pain Resistance, or Exceptional Attribute]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both events]

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- 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each event]

FREE RASALHAGIAN FIELD OPERATIVE

Free Rasalhague Republic Affiliation only.

With it's small military severely depleted by the losses of the Clan invasion, the operatives of the Perth department are about the only means the Free Rasalhague Republic has of striking back at the Clans. In addition to specific missions, these agents also serve as a vital link to resistance cells operating within the Occupation Zone.

It is a nervous existence, for not only do these agents have to contend with an increasingly effective Clan Watch, but also the threat of betrayal by Rasalhague citizens seeking to ingratiate themselves with their new masters.

Time: 1D6 + 1 years

Attribute Minimums: WIL 4

Traits: In for Life, Alternate Identity, Well Equipped

Skills: Blade +2, Demolitions +1, Tactics/Infantry +1, Martial Arts/Any +2, Choose two: Cryptography +2, Disguise +2, Interrogation +2, Leaderships +2, Perception +2, Pistols +3, Security Systems +2, Stealth +2

Previous Paths: Free Rasalhagian Field Operative (4), Mimir Resistance Cell Member (4), Covert Ops (4), Military Academy Special Forces Special Training (3)

Next Path: Free Rasalhagian Field Operative (4), Mimir Resistance Cell Member (4), Covert Ops (4), Travel (4), To Serve and Protect (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4)

Free Rasalhagian Field Operative Events

- 2 Captured and made a Clan Bondsman. [See Changing Affiliations, choose from either Clan Wolf, Clan Jade Falcon or Clan Ghost Bear. WIL -1]
- 3 The Cell you set up last year was compromised but you escape the trap. Just. [Enemy (2), Choose one: Poor Hearing (3), Poor Vision (3), Lost Limb (2)]
- 4 You accidentally expose an undercover operative from a friendly state. [Enemy (3), Demotion]
- 5 You do your job, but your conscience does not rest easy. [Interrogation +2, Addiction (2), Choose one: Bad Reputation (3), Dark Secret (3)]
- 6 Your mission ends in complete failure thanks to the actions of a double agent who frames you for their actions. [Enemy (3), Bad Reputation (3). Lose rank and next Life Path must be Ne'er-do-Well (4) or Civilian Job. Escape Artist +3, Martial Arts/Any +2]
- 7 Elimination of a notorious Star Captain results in "Collateral Damage" [Enemy (2), Bad Reputation (2), Demolitions +2]
- 8 Inability to stick to the rules finds little favor with the Powers-That-Be. [Demotion, Bad Reputation]
- 9 Hiding in the wilderness may not have been such a good idea after all. [Choose one: Allergy, Animal Antipathy, Quirk/Hates Wilderness]
- 10 You become a loner upon discovering your best friend

- blew your cover. [Enemy, Introvert, Perception +2]
- 11 Your superiors would not be happy with your close ties to another Operative. [Dependent, Dark Secret, +2 to any two skills]
- 12 When charm fails, brute force can win through [CHA -1, Martial Arts/Any +2, Blades +2]
- 13 You are too sharp for The Watch to catch. [Choose any two: Disguise +2, Fast Talk +2, Forgery +2, Streetwise/Any +2]
- 14 It's amazing the gadgets they come up with these days. [Well Equipped (3)]
- 15 Your skill as a Sniper is unsurpassed. [Rifles +3, Choose one: Good Vision, Patience, DEX +1]
- 16 The extraction of a high-ranking official from the Clan Occupation Zone gets you noticed. [Contact (3), Promotion, +2 to any one skill]
- 17 Forget holovid martial arts flicks! You show those Clanners the real thing! [Martial Arts/Any +3, Natural Aptitude/Martial Arts/Any, REF +1]
- 18 Your infiltration of the Clan Headquarters goes undetected. You make off with all their secrets. [Promotion (3) or Commision (Rank 1), Computer/Hacking +2, Cryptography +2, Security Systems +2, Stealth +2]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results.]
- 20 [Choose two event or roll three times and apply each result.]

ISF COVERT OPERATIVE

Draconis Combine Affiliation only. Open to all Draconis Combine Characters in place of the standard Covert Operations Path, though DEST characters should complete one Tour of Duty (Inner Sphere or Draconis Combine), or one generic Covert Ops tour first.

The Dragon's enemies are legion, and may strike from within and without. The ISF, as ever, stands between the ascendance of the noble House Kurita and those who would see it in ruins. Though not as honored as the *samurai* MechWarriors, agents of the ISF inspire more than enough well-deserved fear to compensate.

Note that a character passing through this path should choose a branch of service to work in. See the overview of the Internal Security Force later in this book for a more in-depth explanation as to the role and operations of these various branches.

Time: 3 Years (5 years for Metsuke, Mononokete, or DEST)

Attribute Minimums: WIL 6, INT 6 (Mononokete and DEST must also have BOD 5)

Attribute Thresholds: WIL +1, CHA -1. (Metsuke and Koe No Ryu: add BOD -1; Mononokete and DEST: add BOD +1)

Traits: Bad Reputation, Contact, Contact, Enemy (3), In For Life/ISF, Well Connected, Well Equipped, Quirk/Loyalty to House Kurita, Quirk/Loyalty to Draconis Combine. (Mokonete and Metsuke): add Alert, Enemy (2), and choose to raise either one Quirk/Loyal to level 2.

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(Mononokete and DEST): add Contact, Enemy (2), Well-Equipped, raise either *one* Quirk/Loyal trait to Level 2, and choose Quirk/Rival with DEST or Quirk/Rival with Mononokete, as appropriate.

Skills: Blade +3, Intimidation +2, Martial Arts/Any +2, Perception +3, +2 to any two other skills, and add +2 to any four skills in the following fields: (Mononokete and DEST): Aerospace Pilot, Armored Infantry, Basic Training, Cavalry, Covert Operations, Infantry, Intelligence, MechWarrior, Scout, Special Forces, or Technician. (Metsuke): Analysis, Intelligence, or Military Scientist. (Koe No Ryu): Officer, Politician, or Police. (Mokonete): Covert Operations, Detective, Intelligence, Police, Police Tactical Officer, Scout, or Special Forces.

Previous Paths: Any that would allow entry into the standard Covert Ops path.

Next Path: Covert Ops (4), ISF Covert Operative (4, must be same department or Generic), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Tour of Duty: Draconis Combine (4), Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (4)

Event Rolls: (Mokonete only): On an event roll of 20, instead of choosing two events or rolling thrice, the character may elect to infiltrate another affiliation's military or covert operations division, allowing them to take an appropriate path from that affiliation next, assuming all other requirements (but affiliation) are met. Doing so, however, reduces the character's EDG threshold by 1.

ISF Covert Operative Events

- 2 Captured, tortured, and interrogated, you finally cracked – after a very long time. Even you don't know how you got out of that one. [Escape Artist +3, Scrounge +2, Survival +2, WIL -1, add 2D6 years to the time this path takes, next path must be Ne'er Do Well, and choose two: Addiction (2), Amnesia, Disabled (2), Lost Limb (2), Madness/Any (2), Poor Vision, Glass Jaw, BOD -2]
- 3 You served the wrong Dragon's bidding this time, and pay your dues as an unwitting patsy for the *Kokuryu-kai*. [Fast Talk +1, Survival +1, Bad Reputation (2), Demotion (2), Enemy (2)/Black Dragon Society, add 1D6 to the time spent in this path]
- 4 Compromised by enemy agents, and too weak to fall on your sword, you betray the Dragon. [Wealth (2), Bad Reputation (2), Enemy(3)/ISF, add 1D6 to the time spent in this path, next path must be Ne'er Do Well or Covert Operations for a rival agency.]
- 5 The *Kokuryu-kai* attempts to recruit you. [If you join the Black Dragons, take Enemy(3)/ISF, Bad Reputation (2), Wealth, Well Equipped, Alternate Identity, and lose Quirk/Loyalty to House Kurita; next path *must* be Black Dragons. If not, take Quirk/Loyalty to House Kurita, Brave, and Enemy (2)/Black Dragon Society.]
- 6 At the moment of truth, you didn't have it in you to pull the trigger. [Timid, Bad Reputation, Stigma/Coward, Quirk/Honorable]
- 7 The op was a failure. You made it, but some of your buddies weren't so lucky. [First Aid +2, Martial

Arts/Any +2, lose one contact, and choose one: Unattractive, Timid, Disabled, or Madness]

- 8 After a failed operation, your superiors request your transfer to a "less risky" posting. [-1 to all Skills gained in this Path, Bureaucracy +3, Protocol/Draconis Combine +2, Computer/Operations +2]
- 9 Enemy counterintelligence was waiting, but you escaped the trap. [+3 to any two combat skills, but choose two: Disabled (2), Addiction (2), Lost Limb (2), Poor Vision, Poor Hearing]
- 10 You take part in a successful capture of local dissidents. [+2 to Martial Arts/Any, Blades, or Pistols]
- 11 Routine operations. [+1 to any two skills]
- 12 Your diligence while assigned to a routine security detail is noted. [Good Reputation]
- 13 You are given a deep cover assignment. (Gamemaster determines the nature of it.) [Alternate Identity, add 1D6 years to the time this path takes]
- 14 "Your talents are being wasted here." Receive offer to change departments. [If you accept, you may choose any other ISF branch or Order of the Five Pillars Life Path next, after meeting all requirements; note that selecting the O5P Path forfeits any Rank accumulated to this point.]
- 15 You help to expose and destroy a minor Black Dragon cell, though not without consequences. [Enemy (2)/Black Dragon Society, Choose: Unattractive or Lost Limb, +3 to any three skills]
- 16 You play a key role in operations behind enemy lines. [Promotion, Enemy (2), +3 to any two military field skills, +2 to any other skill]
- 17 You are instrumental in exposing a foreign agent in the ISF. [Good Reputation, Promotion, Enemy (3)/foreign intelligence agency, add +3 to any three skills]
- 18 Inducted into the *Musukosan No Ryu* (Sons of the Dragon). [Good Reputation (2), Well-Connected, Contact (2)]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]
- 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each result]

LYRAN INTELLIGENCE CORPS OPERATIVE

Lyran Alliance Affiliation only. Open to all Lyran Alliance Characters in place of the standard Covert Operations Path, though Loki characters should complete one generic Covert Ops tour first. Federated Suns characters may join during the period of the Federated Commonwealth, but may not serve in either the Loki or Lohengrin branches.

Well-equipped and well funded, the Lyran Intelligence Corps has become one of the most efficient in the Inner Sphere, and their successes more than make up for the collective deficiencies of the Lyran military. With operation ranging from benign observation to sabotage,

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assassination, and even terrorism, the LIC is as deadly as any of the covert agencies used by the other Successor States.

Note that a character passing through this path should choose a branch of service to work in. See the overview of the Lyrans Intelligence Corps later in this book for a more in-depth explanation as to the role and operations of these various branches.

Time: 4 years (5 years for Lohengrin, Molehunters, and Loki)

Attribute Minimums: INT 6, WIL 6 (Lohengrin and Loki also must have STR 5 and BOD 5)

Attribute Thresholds: INT +1, CHA -1 (Lohengrin, Molehunters, and Loki also take WIL +1)

Traits: Enemy (3), In For Life/LIC, Promotion, Quirk/Loyalty to Lyrans Alliance, Well Connected, Well Equipped (2). (Lohengrin): also add Alert, Contact (2), Wealth, Stigma/Orphan, and increase Quirk/Loyalty to Lyrans Alliance to level 2. (Molehunters): also add Alert, Contact (2), Enemy (2), Quirk/Distrust Loki, and another level of Well-Connected. (Loki): also add Alert, Combat Sense, Enemy (3), Introvert, Quirk/Distrust Molehunters, Stigma/Terrorist (2), and choose either Wealth (2) and Well-Equipped or Vehicle (4).

Skills: Negotiation +2, Perception +3, Protocol/Lyrans Alliance +1, +2 to any six skills from the following fields: (Norns): Analysis, Intelligence, or Scout. (Diplomatic Guard, Diplomatic Corps, or Propaganda): Intelligence, Officer, Politician, or Police. (Molehunters): Basic Training, Covert Operative, Infantry, Intelligence, Scout, Special Forces, or Technician. (Bondians): Basic Training, Covert Operations, Intelligence, or Officer. (Lohengrin or Loki): Aerospace Pilot, Armored Infantry, Basic Training, Cavalry, Covert Operative, Infantry, Intelligence, MechWarrior, Scout, or Special Forces.

Previous Paths: Any that would normally allow entry into the Covert Ops path.

Next Path: LIC Operative (4, must be same branch or Generic), Covert Ops (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Tour of Duty: Lyrans Alliance (4), Tour of Duty: Federated Suns (4, only if prior to the Lyrans Secession), Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (4), Tour of Duty: Social General (4, only if character has Commission Trait)

Event Rolls: (Molehunters, Lohengrin, or Loki): On an event roll of 20, instead of choosing two events or rolling thrice, the character may elect to infiltrate another affiliation's military or covert operations division, allowing them to take an appropriate path from that affiliation next, assuming all other requirements (but affiliation) are met. Doing so, however, reduces the character's EDG threshold by 1.

LIC Operative Events

2 It was a trap! The only good thing to happen that day is that you survived, barely. [Escape Artist +3, Survival +2, BOD -1, WIL -1, Enemy (2), may no longer choose any Covert Ops paths, Choose one: Amnesia, Combat Paralysis, Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (3),

Madness/Any (3), Slow Learner, Unhealthy]

- 3 Maybe they couldn't prove you betrayed the Alliance, but given the prison time, and the death of your career, they may as well have. [Interrogation +4, Fast Talk +2, Protocol/Lyrans Alliance +2, Bad Reputation (3), Enemy (2)/LIC officer, Stigma/Traitor, Lose all Rank; Next Path must be Ne'er Do Well.]
- 4 You fell in love with the target, not only compromising the mission, but yourself and your career as well. Now, your former comrades hunt for both of you. [Disguise +2, Acting +1, +1 to any combat skill, Alternate Identity, Dependent, Enemy (3)/LIC, Stigma/Traitor, Bloodmark (2), May not take any additional Covert Ops paths for the Alliance, next path must be Travel or Ne'er-Do-Well.]
- 5 You picked the most breathtakingly unwise moment to insult a superior officer, and he holds quite a grudge. [Fast Talk +1, Brave, Demotion, Enemy (2), Poverty, Bad Reputation]
- 6 Months of work, countless man-hours of preparation, and it all goes up in smoke with your number one contact in a simple—and quite accidental—car wreck! It's enough to drive a man to drink! [+2 to any skill, Addiction, Unlucky, Lose 1 Contact (if any)]
- 7 Perhaps Field Operations isn't the best use of your abilities. After bungling a simple stakeout, you are reassigned to a position less dangerous. [Perception -1, Computers +2, Bureaucracy/Lyrans Alliance +1, Bad Reputation, Demotion, Impatient]
- 8 "So, which side did you serve in the war?" Questioned on your affiliation during the Civil War by someone on the opposite side—who just happens to be your superior. [Interrogation +2, Enemy, choose Stigma/pro-Katherine or Stigma/pro-Victor]
- 9 You had plenty of opportunities to put your skills to the test this time, and even have some scars to prove it, but you just couldn't shine brightly enough for that promotion. [+2 to any three skills, SOC -1, Unattractive, Choose: Impatient, Introvert, Quirk, or Timid]
- 10 During boring, late-night watches, you practiced your skills as an amateur hacker. [Computer/Hacking +2, Security Systems/Electronic +1, Introvert]
- 11 You spent much of your time assigned to data analysis, amazed by the sheer weight of so much red tape. [Computer/Operations +1, Bureaucracy/Lyrans Alliance +1, Protocol/Lyrans Alliance +1]
- 12 You are assigned to the security detail of a key witness, who impresses you with his vast knowledge. [Interest/Any +2, +1 to any other skill.]
- 13 You talked your way to a higher rank, salary and pension. [Fast Talk +2, -1 to any two skills earned during this pass, Promotion, Stigma/Greedy, Wealth]
- 14 Exposed a corrupt member of the local government! [Surveillance +3, Seduction +2, Deception +2, Enemy (2), Good Reputation]
- 15 Assigned to a deep-cover operation. (Gamemaster determines its nature.) [Alternate Identity, add 1D6 years to the time this path takes]

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- 16 Classical case of being in the right place, at the right time, with a mini-camera. [Perception +4, Surveillance +3, Alert, Enemy(2)] Dazzling success! You got the data *and* the girl, and nobody even knows it was you! [+3 to any skill, +2 to any two other skills, Dependent (2), Good Reputation, Promotion, Wealth]
- 18 Those “disruptive” elements are no more. Those that should, know it was your hit. Everyone else is blaming other “enemies of the state”. Once this mission is declassified, it'll make the field op's textbook. [+3 to any two skills, +1 to any two other skills, Enemy (3), Good Reputation (2), Promotion (2), Wealth (2)]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]
- 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each result]

MASKIROVKA COVERT OPERATIVE

Capellan Confederation Affiliation only. Open to all non-St. Ives Capellan Confederation characters in place of the standard Covert Operations Path. St. Ives characters may join before the secession of the St. Ives Compact in 3029, or after the Compact's reconquest in 3062. St. Ives characters joining after the Capellan-St. Ives War will suffer a -2 penalty on all event rolls in this path. Death Commando characters must use the Death Commandos Covert Tour.

Ruthless in the extreme, the Maskirovka are one of the most feared of all intelligence services in the Inner Sphere, and they will stop at nothing to assure the continued domination of the Capellan state and the ascendancy of the Liao family. Knowing full well that enemies to the realm may emerge both from within and without, the Maskirovka hold no one above suspicion – except, perhaps, the Chancellor himself.

Note that a character passing through this path should choose a branch of service to work in. See the overview of the Maskirovka later in this book for a more in-depth explanation as to the role and operations of these various branches.

Time: 5 years

Attribute Minimums: WIL 5, INT 5, EDG 4

Attribute Thresholds: WIL +1, EDG +1 (Generic or Chancellor's Will operatives receive CHA -1)

Traits: Bad Reputation (2), Contact, Enemy (2), In For Life/Maskirovka, Well-Connected, Well-Equipped, Quirk/Loyalty to House Liao, Quirk/Loyalty to Capellan Confederation. (Generic or Chancellor's Hand agents also receive Alternate Identity)

Skills: Intimidation +1, Interrogation +1, Martial Arts/Gung Fu +2, Perception +3, Pistol +3, Protocol/Capellan Confederation +2, +2 to any four skills from the following fields: (Chancellor's Ear): Intelligence or Analysis. (Chancellor's Cunning or Chancellor's Voice): Intelligence or Politician. (Chancellor's Sword or Chancellor's Hand): Covert Operations, Detective, Police, Police Tactical Officer,

Scout, or Special Forces.

Previous Paths: Any that would allow entry into the standard Covert Ops path.

Next Path: Covert Ops (4), Maskirovka Covert Operative (4, same branch or generic), Tour of Duty: Capellan Confederation (4), Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (4)

Event Rolls: (Chancellor's Hand or Chancellor's Sword only): On an event roll of 20, instead of choosing two events or rolling thrice, the character may elect to infiltrate another affiliation's military or covert operations division, allowing them to take an appropriate path from that affiliation next, assuming all other requirements (but affiliation) are met. Doing so, however, reduces the character's EDG threshold by 1.

Maskirovka Covert Operative Events

- 2 Perhaps you should have swallowed that cyanide capsule rather than let them turn you. [Wealth, Bad Reputation (2), Enemy (3)/Maskirovka, Bloodmark (2), add 1d6 to the time spent in this path, next path must be Ne'er Do Well or Covert Operations for a rival agency.]
- 3 Captured, tortured, and interrogated, even you don't know how you got out of that one, or what the enemy managed to learn from you. [Escape Artist +3, Scrounge +2, Survival +2, WIL -1, Enemy (2), add 2D6 years to the time this path takes, next path must be Ne'er Do Well, and choose two: Addiction (2), Amnesia, Disabled (2), Lost Limb (2), Madness/Any (2), Poor Vision, Glass Jaw, BOD -2]
- 4 Played for a patsy by enemy spies, you're allowed to live—for now, but this is your last chance to make good. [Fast Talk +1, Survival +2, Bad Reputation (2), Demotion (2), Enemy/Thuggees, add 1d6 to the time spent in this path]
- 5 Stuck your neck out on behalf of a citizen under suspicion. Your actions may have been noble, but your superiors did not appreciate the interference. [Demotion, Bad Reputation, Quirk/Honorable, Stigma/Suspect Political Views]
- 6 Free Capella attempts to seduce you with visions of a kinder, freer Confederation. [If you throw in with the rebels, take Enemy (3)/Maskirovka, Bad Reputation (2), Wealth, Well-Equipped, Alternate Identity, lose Quirk/Loyalty to House Liao and gain Quirk/Loyalty to Treyhang Liao, next Path may not be any Maskirovka. If not, take Quirk/Loyalty to House Liao, Brave, Enemy (2)/Free Capella, and Promotion.]
- 7 They were waiting for you, but you managed to escape. [+3 to any two combat skills, but choose two: Disabled (2), Addiction (2), Lost Limb (2), Poor Vision, Poor Hearing]
- 8 Mission failure! You made it, but some of your buddies weren't so lucky. [First Aid +2, Martial Arts/Any +2, lose one Contact, and choose one: Unattractive, Timid, Disabled, or Madness]
- 9 After a bungled operation, your superiors transfer you to a relatively “safe” desk job. [-1 to all skills]

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- gained in this path, Bureaucracy +3, Protocol/Capellan Confederation +2, Computer/Operations +2]
- 10 You take part in a successful capture of local dissidents. [+2 to Martial Arts/Gung Fu or Pistols]
 - 11 Just another day at the office. [+1 to any two skills]
 - 12 Your supervisors like your attention to detail, and your ability to follow orders! [Good Reputation]
 - 13 Deep cover assignment. (Gamemaster determines the nature of the mission.) [Alternate Identity, add 1D6 years to the time this path takes]
 - 14 Some talents can boost a career faster than others. [Seduction +2, Promotion, Bad Reputation]
 - 15 You help expose and destroy a Thuggee cell before they could launch an attack, but not without consequences. [+3 to any three skills, Enemy (2)/Thuggees, Choose: Unattractive or Lost Limb]
 - 16 You are recognized for your work behind enemy lines. [Promotion, Enemy (2), +3 to any two military field skills, +2 to any other skill]
 - 17 You discover an enemy spy in the agency! [Good Reputation, Promotion, Enemy (3)/Foreign Intelligence Agency, add +3 to any three skills]
 - 18 It started as a routine operation, but you just may have saved the entire Confederation! [+2 to any two skills, +1 to any two other skills, Good Reputation (2), Promotion (2), Wealth, Choose one: Alert, Brave, or Exceptional Attribute/EDG]
 - 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]
 - 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each result]

DMI/MIIO OPERATIVE

Open to any characters that have completed DMI/MIIO training and have remained in the AFFS.

The Federated Suns' Department of Military Intelligence and the Ministry of Information, Intelligence, and Operations, are among the Inner Sphere's most solid and dependable intelligence gathering and covert operations organizations. Capable of both domestic and international missions ranging from simple surveillance to deadly "black ops", the men and women of this agency are some of the brightest and most dangerous minds House Davion has to offer.

Note that a character passing through this path should choose a branch of service to work in. See the overview of the DMI and MIIO later in this book for a more in-depth explanation as to the role and operations of these various branches.

Time: 2 years (MI4, MI6, and COD operatives take 4 years)

Traits: Contact (2), Enemy (2), Promotion, and choose Quirk/Loyalty to House Davion or Quirk/Loyalty to

Federated Suns. (MI2/MI3/IGS): add Good Reputation (2). (MI4/COD): add Alternate Identity, Wealth, Well-Equipped, and choose Dark Secret (2) or Bad Reputation (2). (MI5/BII/CID): Bad Reputation, Enemy, Well-Connected, Well-Equipped, Choose Quirk/Loyalty to House Davion or Quirk/Loyalty to Federated Suns.

Skills: Bureaucracy/Federated Suns +2, add +2 to any seven skills from the following fields: (MI2/MI3): Analysis, Intelligence, or Officer. (IGS): Intelligence and Officer. (MI4/MI6/COD): Armored Infantry, DropShip Pilot, JumpShip Pilot, Marine, MechWarrior, Merchant, Planetary Surveyor, Scout, or Special Forces. (MI5/BII/CID): Analysis, Detective, Police, or Police Tactical Officer

Previous Paths: DMI/MIIO Training, DMI/MIIO Operative
Next Path: DMI/MIIO Operative (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Tour of Duty: Federated Suns (4), Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (4)

Event Rolls: (MI4 only): On an event roll of 20, instead of choosing two events or rolling thrice, the character may elect to infiltrate another affiliation's military or covert operations division, allowing them to take an appropriate path from that affiliation next, assuming all other requirements (but affiliation) are met. Doing so, however, reduces the character's EDG threshold by 1.

DMI/MIIO Operative Events

- 2 Captured! The enemy's methods in extracting information were brutal. You'll never be the same. [BOD -1, STR -1, Unattractive, -1 to all skills gained in this path. Choose two: Amnesia, Clumsy, Combat Paralysis, Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (2), Madness/Any (4), Poor Vision (3), Slow Learner, or Unhealthy. May take no further DMI/MIIO or Covert Ops paths]
- 3 First through the door and last to leave the hospital. [Tactics/Any +3, BOD -1, Disabled (2), Lost Limb (3), Low Endurance, Unhealthy and may take no more DMI, MIIO, Covert Ops or related Life Paths]
- 4 Causing civil unrest? This isn't what you signed up for. Still, you shouldn't have gone to the press... [Bureaucracy/FedSuns +3, -3 to any three other field skills, Bad Reputation (4), Brave, Enemy (2), Stigma/Rat and dishonorably discharged - may take no more DMI, MIIO or AFFS Life Paths]
- 5 Blackmail only works when the mark doesn't call your bluff. Pity; had it been in the line of duty, you might have gotten away with it. [Fast-Talk +2, Bad Reputation (3), Enemy (3) and dishonorably discharged-may take no more DMI, MIIO or AFFS Life Paths]
- 6 You should have listened to your gut and gotten the general that report. [-2 to any two field skills, Bad Reputation, Demotion and double the amount of time this Path takes]
- 7 What is corruption, really? [choose either Fast Talk +2, Dark Secret/On the take (4), In For Life/Criminal organization and Wealth (3) or Fast Talk +3, Bad Reputation (3), Poverty and kicked out of AFFS-may

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- take no more DMI, MIO or AFS Life Paths]
- 8 "Why yes, Intel *should* have let us know that the CP was going to be overrun. But since we're Intel..." [choose either WIL -1, Timid, and double the amount of time this Path takes or BOD -2, Disabled (2), Survival +2 and add 1d6 years to the time this Path takes]
 - 9 Enemy intel made you while your guard was down, but fortunately, the cavalry arrived to rescue you! [Pistols +2, Tactics/Infantry +2, Contact, Life Debt, and choose one: BOD -1, Disabled, Lost Limb, Poor Hearing, Poor Vision, or Unlucky]
 - 10 Inter-office politics suck, especially when you back the wrong side! [Bureaucracy/FedSuns +2, Bad Reputation, Enemy (2)]
 - 11 Caught in the middle of an inter-office war. Coulda been worse... [Bureaucracy/FedSuns +3, Administration +2, Enemy (2)]
 - 12 Guarding a "priority facility" may *sound* interesting. Well, next tour you won't have to. *Hopefully*. [Gambling +2, Interest/Any +2, -1 to any two field skills]
 - 13 Mental note: assignment to the Outback means party time for everyone *but* special forces agents. [+1 to any two field skills, +2 to any two non-field skills]
 - 14 Got in and got out. Sure there were a few bodies left behind, but none were yours and that's all that matters! [+3 to any three combat skills, +2 to any other skill, Bad Reputation, Dark Secret (2), Promotion]
 - 15 They turned out to be smuggling art, not weapons, but it was still a good bust. [Investigation +3, Streetwise/Any +3, Contact (1), Good Reputation (2)]
 - 16 Performance: Outstanding in all areas. Capable of serving at all levels. Must promote. [+3 to three field skills, +2 to any three other skills, Good Reputation (2), Promotion]
 - 17 Lessee. Got the hostages, sold some guns to your enemy's enemy and didn't get caught? Sounds like win-win... [Bureaucracy/Any +4, Fast Talk +4, Negotiation +4, Surveillance +4, Good Reputation, Contact (2), Well Equipped]
 - 18 "Next time John, write a damn memo!" [+3 to three field skills, Contact (3), Good Reputation (5), Promotion, may take OCS or any field training (adding one year to time spent in this path), regardless of prerequisites and gains a +2 bonus to next Life Path Events roll]
 - 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both events]
 - 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each event]

MIMIR RESISTANCE OPERATIVE

Free Rasalhague Republic Affiliation. Other non-Clan

affiliations may take this path, but automatically suffer a -2 penalty on all event rolls (ComStar, Lyran, or Combine characters roll with a penalty of -1).

Centuries of occupation by House Kurita served to hone the skills of the scattered members of the Rasalhague resistance. The few short years of peace following the turbulent creation of the Republic did not erase the hard-won knowledge of how to run an effective resistance cell system, something the Clan invaders are now only beginning to realize, as a new generation of dedicated freedom fighters rises from the local population and troops stranded behind enemy lines.

Time: 4 years

Traits: Contact (1), Enemy (2), In For Life/Mimir

Skills: Stealth +3, Perception +2, +1 to any skill from the Covert Operations, Intelligence, or Scout Fields, Choose three: Brawling +3, Comms/Conventional +3, Cryptography +2, Demolitions +2, Escape Artist +2, First Aid +3, Pistols +2, Shotguns +2, Throwing Weapons +2

Previous Paths: Any except a 'Clan only' path.

Next Path: Civilian Job (4), Covert Ops (4), Fanatic/Guerilla Operative (4), Tour of Duty: Free Rasalhague Republic Field Operations Agent (4), Mimir Resistance Operative (4), Ne'er-do-Well (4)

Mimir Resistance Operative Events

- 2 Your capture and interrogation result in the destruction of your cell. [Add 1D6 Years to Life Path duration, WIL -1, Enemy (2), Stigma/Coward, Timid, lose one Contact, Escape Artist +2, Choose: Bad Reputation (2), Clumsy, Dark Secret (2), Disabled (2), Madness/Any (2), or Unlucky]
- 3 Thanks to that Salamander your dreams are filled with flames. [Unattractive, Quirk/Fear of Fire (2)]
- 4 Ambushing that weapons convoy may not have been such a great idea. [Enemy (2), Lost Limb (2), +2 to any two skills]
- 5 As if the Clanners were not bad enough, they put a price on your head so big that every bounty hunter within ten parsecs is after you. [Bloodmark (3), Good Reputation]
- 6 It's just a flesh wound! [Brave, Lost Limb (2)]
- 7 Badly needed money and supplies are intercepted. [Poverty, Poorly Equipped, Scrounge +1]
- 8 "Assassinating" the Clan commander's goldfish is hardly the stuff of legend. [Enemy]
- 9 Seeing your friends gunned down gives you second thoughts about this whole "Resistance" thing. [Timid]
- 10 Your cell goes dormant when things get too hot. [-1 from any two skills]
- 11 Your anti-Clan graffiti raises the spirits of the downtrodden masses. [Arts/Painting +2]
- 12 The keyboard is mightier than the PPC! You alter vital supply requisitions and the local garrison now has abundant supplies of toilet paper, but is short on ammunition. [Computer/Hacking +2]
- 13 Uncle Fanslow always said this was his "lucky gun".

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[Special Item, Well Equipped]

- 14 Hiding out in the wilderness was good for your health, in more ways than one. [Survival +1, Tracking +1, Swimming +1, Choose one: BOD +1, STR +1, REF +1]
- 15 You are chosen to establish a new resistance cell. [Cryptography +2, Leadership +2, Security Systems/Any +2]
- 16 You know a man, who has a friend, who's sister is married to... [Well Connected (2)]
- 17 New equipment smuggled into the Occupation Zone makes eliminating the communications center simple. [Well Equipped (2), +2 to any two skills]
- 18 Your cell captures a BattleMech, and you get to pilot it! [Piloting/Mech +3, Gunnery/Mech/Laser +2, Gunnery/Mech/Ballistic +2, Gunnery/Mech/Missile +2, Sensor Operations +1, Vehicle]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results.]
- 20 [Choose two event or roll three times and each result.]

ORDO VIGILIS COVERT OPERATIVE (GENERIC)

Marian Hegemony Affiliation only. Open to all Marian Hegemony Characters in place of the standard Covert Operations Path.

Though still new in comparison with other Inner Sphere and Periphery states' intelligence services, the Ordo Vigilis does an adequate job of carrying out the mission originally tasked to the Directorate for Security and Information.

Note that a character passing through this path should choose a branch of service to work in. See the overview of the Ordo Vigilis later in this book for a more in-depth explanation as to the role and operations of these various branches.

Time: 3 years

Attribute Minimums: CHA 4, WIL 5, BOD 4 (5, for Sections B and D)

Attribute Thresholds: +1 to BOD or WIL. (Section C and D operatives, add CHA -1)

Traits: Contact (1), Contact (2), Enemy (2), In For Life/Ordo Vigilis, Quirk/Loyalty to Marian Hegemony. Choose: Well-Connected or Well-Equipped. (Section A): add Well-Connected. (Sections B and D): add Alternate Identity. (Section C and Palace Guard): add Alert and Bad Reputation

Skills: Pistol +3, Perception +2, Protocol/Marian Hegemony +1, add +3 to any four other skills in the following fields: (Section A): choose from Deception, Fast-Talk, Interrogation, Investigation, Negotiation, Reconnaissance, Seduction, and Surveillance. (Section B): Analysis, Covert Operations, Intelligence, Officer, Politician, and Scout. (Section C): Analysis, Covert Operations, Detective, Intelligence, Police, and Scout. (Section D): DropShip Pilot, JumpShip Pilot, Marine, MechWarrior, Scout, and Special Forces. (House Guard):

Basic Training, Infantry, Intelligence, Police, Police Tactical Officer, and Scout.

Previous Paths: Any that would allow entry into the standard Covert Ops path.

Next Path: Ordo Vigilis Covert Operative (4, must be same Section or Generic), Covert Ops (4), Tour of Duty: Periphery (4), Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (4)

Event Rolls: (Sections B and D only): On an event roll of 20, instead of choosing two events or rolling thrice, the character may elect to infiltrate another affiliation's military or covert operations division, allowing them to take an appropriate path from that affiliation next, assuming all other requirements (but affiliation) are met. Doing so, however, reduces the character's EDG threshold by 1.

Tour of Duty: Ordo Vigilis Events

- 2 Those MIM agents were tough to deal with, but that's nothing compared to what they did to you. [Escape Artist +2, Scrounge +2, Survival +2, BOD -1, Enemy (2)/MIM Agent, add 2d6 years to the time this path takes, next path must be Ne'er Do Well, and choose two: Addiction (2), Disabled (2), Lost Limb (2), Poor Vision, Glass Jaw, Madness (2), Unlucky]
- 3 It's tough to shake an old habit, isn't it? Perhaps your foreign patron will be kinder to you than your now-ex employers. [Wealth, Bad Reputation (2), Enemy (3)/Ordo Vigilis, add 1d6 to the time spent in this path, next path must be Ne'er Do Well or Covert Operations for a rival agency.]
- 4 He was just a merchant, questioning how things are done; you didn't have the heart to simply "take him out". [Timid, Demotion, Quirk/Honorable, Stigma/Suspect Political Views]
- 5 Almost as bad as being flipped, is being played for a fool. [Fast Talk +1, Survival +2, Bad Reputation (2), Demotion (2), add 1d6 to the time spent in this path]
- 6 It was a trap! But you managed to escape. [+2 to any two combat skills, but choose two: Disabled (2), Addiction (2), Lost Limb (2), Madness (2), Poor Vision, Poor Hearing, Unlucky]
- 7 A dissident senator just can't shake the idea that patronage is dead, but he sure is offering you a lot of denarii to "look the other way" now and again. [Choose: If you throw in with dissidents, take Dark Secret (2), Bad Reputation (2), Wealth, Well-Equipped, and Alternate Identity. If not, take Quirk/Loyalty to O'Reilly Family, Brave, and Enemy (2)/Dissident Senator.]
- 8 Don't think of it as a demotion, your superiors just think you can do less damage in analysis. [Poorly Equipped, -1 to all Skills gained in this Path, Bureaucracy +3, Latin +1, Protocol/Marian Hegemony +2, Computer/Operations +2]
- 9 You survived a failed operation, but some of your buddies weren't so lucky. [First Aid +1, Martial Arts/Any +2, lose one Contact, and choose: Unattractive, Timid, Disabled, or Madness]
- 10 You take part in a successful capture of local dissidents. [+2 to Blades or Pistols]

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- 11 Just another day at the office. [+1 to any two skills]
- 12 Years of faithful service to the Caesar get you noticed. [Good Reputation]
- 13 Deep cover assignment. (Gamemaster determines the nature of the mission.) [Alternate Identity, add 1D6 years to the time this path takes]
- 14 It's not who you know, it's...well perhaps you should have been a tad more discreet. [Seduction +2, Promotion, Bad Reputation]
- 15 You help expose and destroy a cell of Illyrian resistance fighters before they could launch an attack, but not without consequences. [+2 to any four skills, Enemy (2)/Illyrian rebels, Good Reputation, choose: Unattractive or Lost Limb]
- 16 Successful missions behind enemy lines. [Promotion, Enemy (2), +3 to any two military field skills, +2 to any other skill]
- 17 You uncover enemy operatives in the Ordo Vigilis, and deal with them accordingly. [Good Reputation, Promotion, Enemy (3)/foreign intelligence agency, add +3 to any three skills]
- 18 Another victory for Caesar! [+3 to any two skills, +2 to any other skill, Good Reputation, Promotion (2), Wealth (2)]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]
- 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each result]

OUTWORLDS ALLIANCE INFILTRATION DIVISION OPERATIVE

Outworlds Alliance Affiliation only.

Sometimes the OAI needs to send somebody under cover. While many of these brave operatives come from the ranks of the civilian law enforcement agencies, circumstances may call for just about anybody to be drafted into service. Whether it is Periphery bandits or an Inner Sphere corporation, the risks are great, but the Alliance must have that information.

They just need a few good people...

Time: 3 years

Attribute Minimums: None

Traits: In for Life/OAI, Alternative Identity, Wealth, Well Equipped

Skills: Fast Talk +2, Perception +2, Chose three: Blade +1, Demolitions +1, Escape Artist +1, Forgery +1, Martial Arts/Any +1, Streetwise/Outworlds Alliance +1, Pistol +1

Previous Paths: Any which permit entry into a Covert Operations path.

Next Path: Infiltration Division Operative (4), To Serve and Protect (4), Covert Ops (4)

Infiltration Division Operative Events

- 2 The good news is that the Pirate band you failed to infiltrate didn't kill you. The bad news is that they sold you at the Port Krin slave markets on Antallos. [Lose one Alternative Identity, Enemy (2),

- BOD -1, STR -1, Escape Artist +2, Stealth +2, add 1D6 years to the time this path takes, and choose one: Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (2), or Unhealthy]
- 3 You avoided detection, but only by revealing the presence of a fellow operative. [Deception +2, Fast Talk +2, WIL -1, Unlucky (2), Choose one: Bad Reputation (3), Dark Secret (3)]
- 4 You were never trusted and they fed you false information. [Streetwise/Any +2. Lose one Alternate Identity, and choose two: Bad Reputation (2), Enemy (2), Unlucky]
- 5 Something went very, very wrong with your assignment. You just wish you could remember what it was... [Lost Limb, Amnesia]
- 6 Your infiltration was a complete success! You played your part so well that even your own people didn't know it was you during the gunfight. [Acting +4, BOD -1, Enemy (1), Choose one: Disabled, Lost Limb, Poor Hearing, Poor Vision, Madness/Any (2)]
- 7 The mission was a bust, but at least you got plenty of exercise running away. [Lose one Alternate Identity, Enemy (2), BOD +1, Running +2]
- 8 Everything was going fine until you ran into that pack of savarts. [Pistol +1, Choose one: Animal Antipathy, Lost Limb]
- 9 This assignment is so dull that you are left wondering whether you infiltrated the right organization. Still, at least the alcohol was free. [Addiction, Gregarious]
- 10 Your efforts to blend in have some, err, unexpected consequences. [Dependent, +1 to any two skills].
- 11 Your cover involved lifting things. Very heavy things. [STR +1]
- 12 Your forged identification was a masterpiece. [Forgery +2, Bureaucracy +1]
- 13 You saved the life of another operative at great personal risk. [Contact(1), Good Reputation]
- 14 You may not be flashy, but your methodical approach gets results. [WIL +1, Choose one: Patience, Well Equipped]
- 15 They seek you here, they seek you there... [Disguise +2, Acting +2, Escape Artist +2]
- 16 Congratulations, Immortal Warrior! Mission Accomplished! (Unfortunately, your superiors are unimpressed by your high body counts and collateral property damage.) [Martial Arts/Any +3, Pistol +2, Combat Sense, Demotion, Quirk/Aggressive, Stigma/Dangerous]
- 17 Your superiors take a close interest in your successes. [Contact (2), Promotion, +2 to any three skills]
- 18 It was one of the toughest assignments you ever had, but how you handled it was the stuff of legends. The other side's vowing revenge, but they'd have to find you first... [Bloodmark (2), Good Reputation, Promotion (2), Wealth, Well Equipped, +4 to any two skills, +2 to any four other skills]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results.]

CHARACTER CREATION

20 [Choose two event or roll three times and each result.]

OUTWORLDS ALLIANCE TRADER/OPERATIVE

Outworlds Alliance Affiliation only; Cannot have Transit Disorientation Syndrome Trait (TDS)

The eyes and ears of Outworlds Alliance Intelligence, the Trader/Operative is an expert at uncovering information in the course of their travels throughout the Periphery and the Inner Sphere. These agents rarely have to worry about having a false identity slip at a vital moment, for they are what they appear to be—they just happen to work for the government as a sideline.

When the intelligence they are after is not accessible through observation or contacts, then the operative may be called upon to fall back on some of their less savory skills.

Prerequisites:

Time: 3 years

Attribute Minimums: CHA 4

Traits: In for Life, Vehicle(4)

Skills: Appraisal +1, Fast Talk + 2, Negotiation +1, Surveillance +2 or Security Systems +2.

Previous Paths: Trader/Operative, Deep Periphery Trader, Free Trader, Covert Ops

Next Path: Trader/Operative(4), Deep Periphery Trader(4), Free Trader(4), Covert Ops(4), Ne'er-Do-Well(4)

Outworlds Alliance Trader/Operative Events

- 2 Your ship is captured by Pirates! [Lose all Wealth, Vehicle and Well Equipped traits, Fast Talk +2]. You may either join up with the merry band (next path Tour of Duty: Piracy) or be marooned (add 1D6 years to the time this path takes)]
- 3 You barely escaped after that band of Smugglers demonstrated they did not appreciate your interest in their operations. [Brawling +1, Pistols +1, Enemy (2), BOD -2, Chose one: Lost Limb, Unattractive]
- 4 Your cover is well and truly blown and just about everybody is out to get you. [Disguise +2, Enemy (3), Enemy, Enemy. Assume an Alternative Identity or never take Trader/Operative, Deep Periphery Trader or Free Trader life paths in the future].
- 5 Hopefully you are proud of yourself, because if the truth about that deal comes out nobody else will be. [Wealth (2), Chose one: Bad Reputation (3) or Dark Secret (3)]
- 6 A business rival gets the better of you this time. [Poverty, Appraisal +2]
- 7 You and authority figures just don't get on [Enemy]
- 8 You've spent more time sharpening your wits than attending to business. [Fast Talk +1, Negotiation +1, Poverty]
- 9 You have a job to do and money isn't everything. It helps if you keep telling yourself that. [Poverty, +2 to any skill]
- 10 You may have lived through duller times, but you can't recall when. [+1 to any two of the following skills:

Comms/Conventional, Computer/Any, Cryptography, Deception, Perception, Surveillance, Security Systems/Any]

- 11 Sometimes life is too much like hard work. [STR +1]
- 12 You spend way too much time paper pushing. [Bureaucracy +2, BOD -1]
- 13 You didn't quite get the shirt off the back of a competitor, but you did get his business. [Enemy, Appraisal +1, Chose one: Wealth (2), Property (2), Vehicle (2)]
- 14 Getting those troop assessments was a difficult assignment, but a crate of Terran Scotch opens all kinds of doors. [Scrounge +2, Contact]
- 15 Not only did you get the intelligence you were after, but you also turned a nice profit! [Wealth, Chose two: Security Systems +2, Surveillance +2, Appraisal +2, Gambling +2]
- 16 Who you know can sometimes be more important than what you know. [Streetwise +2, Contact, CHA +1]
- 17 In recognition of your efforts, your superiors have arranged for you to "win" yourself a reward. [Gambling +2, Chose one: Owns Vehicle, Wealth (4)]
- 18 Months spent tracing that supply route back to the Pirate base paid off. The raiders have been eliminated and OAI have slipped you a nice little bonus. [Wealth (2), Vehicle (2), Good Reputation, +2 to any two skills]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results.]
- 20 [Choose two event or roll three times and each result.]

RENEGADE INSURGENT

Not all covert operatives are professionals or militants backed by some Great House government. Some, in fact, are the domestic, *civilian* opposition, a grassroots movement of disgruntled citizens or sympathizers to an underground cause. Hailing from all walks of life, they attack their own government from within, using the subtler tools of sabotage and subterfuge rather than overt military action.

Time: 1D6 years

Traits: Brave, Dark Secret/Rebel (2), choose Introvert or Quirk/Anarchist

Skills: Computer/Any +2, Deception +2, Perception +2, Stealth +1, Surveillance +1

Previous Paths: Any non-Military Path.

Next Path: Civilian Job (4), Free Trader (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Travel (4), Yakuza (4), Draconis Combine characters only)

Renegade Insurgent Events

- 2 The primary charges were treason and domestic terrorism, and three of your comrades already paid the ultimate price. Your execution was set for tomorrow, when the local duke made an offer you couldn't refuse... [Alternate Identity, Contact (3), Enemy (2), Dark Secret (5), In For Life, Life Debt, add

CHARACTER CREATION

- 1D6 years to the time spent in this path, and next path must be Covert Ops for "enemy" state or affiliation]
- 3 What should have been your group's hammer blow for freedom turned into a nightmare when government agents descended upon your home mere hours before the act! You escaped, but just barely. [Stealth +4, +2 to any two combat skills, Bad Reputation (3), Bloodmark (3), Enemy (3), choose BOD -1, Disabled, Lost Limb, Unattractive, Madness/Paranoid, or Quirk/Paranoid. Next Path must be Ne'er-Do-Well]
 - 4 "That little stunt of yours malfed up six months of planning! Next time you sympathizers want to help, just keep your fragging head down!" Accidentally fouled up an operation by sympathetic guerillas. Luckily, they let you live. [Bad Reputation (2), Enemy (2), Stigma/Loose Cannon, Choose: Clumsy or Unlucky]
 - 5 The accident cost you more than you wanted to give to the cause. [+2 to any one skill. Lost Limb (2), Unlucky, Choose: STR -1, Disabled, Madness/Flashbacks, Poor Hearing, Timid, or Unattractive]
 - 6 One close call too many with the local authorities has made you gun shy. Maybe things aren't so bad the way they are after all... [WIL -1, Combat Paralysis]
 - 7 They're on to you! Time to disappear! [Alternate Identity, Enemy (2), choose Bad Reputation (3) or Dark Secret (3)]
 - 8 Anonymous phone calls and a few pipe bombs doesn't do much more than annoy the local authorities. [Comms/Conventional +1, Demolitions +1, Bad Reputation, Unlucky]
 - 9 Well, you're certainly *not* Mr. Subtlety, are you? [Stealth -1, Bad Reputation]
 - 10 It's not much, but we all do what we can to fight the good fight. [+1 to any two skills]
 - 11 Amateur hacker, but a little worm here, a little virus there, and a lot of superfluous spam from unregistered accounts can really lag a government network. [INT +1, Computer/Hacker +2]
 - 12 Stealing office supplies for sale on the black market! Oh, you rebel! [Streetwise/Any +2, Negotiation +1, Security Systems/Any +1, Stealth +1, Wealth]
 - 13 Where did you learn to shoot so well? [+3 to any two ranged weapon skills, Good Vision]
 - 14 A string of unfortunate "accidents" not only has cost the government tens of thousands in lost resources and overtime pay, but better still, nobody had to get hurt, and nobody knows it was you. [Stealth +2, +2 to any two other skills]
 - 15 "Time to take this to the next level..." A string of successes allows your group to put the squeeze on the local authorities for a change. [Leadership +3, Administration +2, +2 to any three others skills, Bloodmark (2), Good Reputation, may take Fanatic/Guerilla Operative or Covert Ops path next]
 - 16 Hacked your way into the local bank nets and made a

- little* withdrawal—for the cause, of course. [Computer/Hacker +4, Administration +2, Wealth (3)]
- 17 "Now *this* is some serious hardware!" Liberated some "special" supplies from the local militia. [Stealth +3, Security Systems/Any +3, +2 to any three other skills, choose: Vehicle (2) or Well-Equipped]
 - 18 "Say! You mean *you're* the guy who crashed the whole Kawanaka power grid last year?" Your reputation precedes you. [Streetwise/Any +3, +2 to any three skills, Contact (2), Good Reputation (3), may take Fanatic/Guerilla Operative or Covert Ops next path]
 - 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both events]
 - 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each event]

SAFE OPERATIVE

Characters must pass through SAFE Training before taking this path.

Although regarded as the "poor man" of Inner Sphere intelligence agencies, SAFE is one of the largest and most active services in the Inner Sphere. Historically, its emphasis has been as much inward-looking as observing its foreign enemies. This serves the present SAFE well, finding as it does tensions rising within the League as the disparate elements of the Marik family jockey for position while the Word of Blake works in the background. The members of SAFE know that the future security of the FWL rests on their shoulders. So, unfortunately, does the organization's enemies...

Time: 5 years

Traits: Contact (2), Enemy (2), Promotion, Well-Equipped

Skills: Bureaucracy/FWL +2, Perception +2, Comms/Conventional +1, Computer/Operations +1, Cryptography +1, and add +3 to any three skills from an appropriate field.

Previous Path: SAFE Training (3)

Next Path: Covert Ops (4), Tour of Duty: Free Worlds League (4)

SAFE Operative Events

- 2 Turned! You find yourself an unwilling tool against your employers, feeding them bad information. [Contact (2), Enemy (2), Choose: Dark Secret (5), Wealth (2) and EDG -2, or Bad Reputation (5) Stigma/Traitor (2), Bloodmark (4), and may take no further SAFE or FWLM paths.]
- 3 Whether guilty or not, you are accused of working for a foreign power and drummed out of the service (after a suitable time detained at the Captain General's pleasure). [Streetwise/any +2, Bad Reputation (4), Bloodmark (2), Stigma (2)/Traitor, add 2d6 years to the time spent in this pass. May take no more SAFE or FWLM paths; next path must be Ne'er-Do-Well]
- 4 Expect the unexpected, they say. You didn't, and must suffer the consequences. [EDG -1, Choose

CHARACTER CREATION

- two: Clumsy, Disabled (2), Enemy (2), Madness (2), Poor Vision (2)]
- 5 Your poor performance leads to a "sideways promotion." [-1 to all skills earned in this pass. Demotion, Bad Reputation (2)]
 - 6 We learn from our mistakes, or at least we try to [-1 to half the skills earned in this pass. Bad Reputation. Choose one pair of traits: Alternate ID/Dependent (2), Wealth (2)/Bloodmark (2), Contact (2)/In for life]
 - 7 "Hey, I'm an analyst, not a field spook." Field operations provide the best experience, but often at a price... [+2 to any two field skills, Choose one combination: Timid/Madness (2), Glass Jaw/Low Endurance, or Unattractive/Unhealthy]
 - 8 Ops are days of boredom followed by seconds of terror. [Patience, Interest/Any +2, Choose: Addiction, Introvert, Quirk/Daydreamer, or Timid]
 - 9 Whoever said, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" sure didn't know what they were talking about. It just means someone else to keep tabs on. [Fast-Talk +2, Enemy (2), Contact (2)]
 - 10 "Join SAFE, see the universe." Fine if you can stomach hyperspace travel, hell if you can't. Zero-G Ops +3, Choose one combination: Alternate ID/Transit Disorientation Syndrome, G-Tolerance/Enemy (2), Well-Connected/BOD -1, or Contact (2)/Madness]
 - 11 Faint heart never won fair maid. You grow to love the thrill of the chase, perhaps too much... [+2 to any three field skills, Attractive, Addiction (2), Brave, Bad Reputation (2)]
 - 12 Things didn't go to plan but you made it work anyway and attracted the attention of The Powers That Be. [Fast Learner, Good Reputation (2), Well Connected (2), Unlucky (2)]
 - 13 Regulus' efforts to undermine the Mariks come to naught thanks to your intervention, winning you friends and enemies in equal measure. [Good Reputation (3), Promotion, Enemy (2)]
 - 14 "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer." You undertake an "exchange" with the Word of Blake ROM [May take a Word of Blake ROM path next]
 - 15 Sent undercover to locate an enemy mole. [Alternate ID, Contact, Enemy (2), Disguise +2, Forgery +2, Surveillance +2, Security Systems +2]
 - 16 Your quiet (and some say ruthless) efficiency means you are called on to participate in many operations [Good Reputation (3), +3 to any two field skills]
 - 17 The war at home makes the long-standing conflicts with the LIC and Maskirovka pale in comparison. As they say, the bitterest conflicts are those *within* families. [+3 to any two field skills, Good Reputation (2), Promotion, Pain Resistance, Enemy (2)]
 - 18 You are a hero of the League and a child of heroes of the League. [Proud Heritage (2), Good Reputation (3), Contacts (2), Patron (2)]
 - 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each result]

STAR LEAGUE MEMBER STATE LIAISON SUBCOMMAND

Any Star League Member State. Must have Commission Trait and must not have a Bad Reputation.

Drawn from the officer corps of the recreated SLDF, the Member State Liaison Subcommand is charged with the difficult task of maintaining communications and coordination between the military and intelligence services of the member states. Senior officers often spend time at the heart of government on the capital worlds of the Inner Sphere. Meanwhile, junior officers liaise with forces in the field or act as the staff and security detail for senior officers.

The officers of the subcommand may rarely take to the field, but surviving the equally dangerous atmosphere of Inner Sphere politics is more than challenge enough.

Time: 3 years

Attribute Minimums: CHA 4, SOC 4

Attribute Thresholds: SOC +1

Traits: Contact (2)

Skills: Administration +2, Bureaucracy/Any +2, Leadership +1, Protocol/Any +2, Negotiation +2, Tactics/Any +1

Previous Paths: Any Military or Military Academy from a Star League member state.

Next Path: Star League Member State Liaison Subcommand (4), Tour of Duty: Star League Defense Force(4), Tour of Duty: Affiliation(4), Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere, Tour of Duty: "Social General"(4)

Star League Member State Liaison Subcommand Events

- 2 Almost dying in a catastrophic DropShip crash was bad. The cloud of suspicion that it was your fault is worse. [Bad Reputation (3), Disabled (2), STR -1, REF -1, Survival +2]
- 3 Where a superior is concerned, honesty is not always the best policy. [Enemy (3), Demotion (2)]
- 4 The Mafia ends up holding all your markers after a bad run of luck. You can't pay, but you have access to all kinds of information. [In For Life/Mafia, Dark Secret (2), Gambling +2]
- 5 Some people are not so pleased to see Star League "Observers". That sniper on St. Ives certainly didn't like you. [Combat Paralysis, Choose one: Lost Limb, Thin Skinned, Addiction, Streetwise +2]
- 6 You were honored to participate in exercises with troops from another member state. A pity you didn't know you were packing live ammunition until after you opened up on a target. [Any two Military Field Skills +2, Enemy (3), Choose one: Combat Paralysis, Gremlins, Unlucky (2)]
- 7 You never went anywhere near that "House of Ill Repute". Your superiors don't believe you though.

CHARACTER CREATION

- [Demotion, Bad Reputation (2), SOC -1, Protocol/Any +2]
- 8 You didn't get on too well with the Capellan Ambassador. The Ambassador's spouse was a different matter. [Enemy (2), Seduction +2]
 - 9 Duty demands you be seen in all the right places. Unfortunately, your bank account is not equal to the task. [Poverty, Gregarious]
 - 10 Shuffling paper was never your style. [BOD -1, Choose one: Administration +2, Bureaucracy/Any +2, Protocol/Any +2]
 - 11 Some do not appreciate the influence your friends and relations give you. [Enemy (3), Choose one: Well Connected, Proud Heritage(2), or +1 to any two skills]
 - 12 You spend so much time traveling that your feet hardly touch the ground. [STR -1, Freefall +2]
 - 13 Assigned as bodyguard to a SLDF Liaison Officer, you spot the assassin long before he can reach your charge. [Perception +2]
 - 14 Your victory over red tape is the stuff of legends. [Administration +2, Bureaucracy/Any +2, Negotiation +2]
 - 15 You receive a special presentation from the First Lord for services to the Star League. [Promotion, Choose one: Vehicle (2), Special Item (2)]
 - 16 As a representative of the Star League, you must always look your best. [Vehicle(2), Well Equipped(2)]
 - 17 It was lucky they put you in charge of security for that conference. [Promotion, Contact(3), Security Systems + 2, Choose one: Pistol +2, Martial Arts/Any +2]
 - 18 You were just supposed to be along on that raid as an observer, but when the command staff was killed by a Headhunter attack you took command and saved the unit. [SOC +1, Promotion, Leadership +2, Tactics/Any +2, +2 to any two skills]
 - 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results.]
 - 20 [Choose two event or roll three times and each result.]

STAR LEAGUE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES "FURY" TEAM

Affiliation: Inner Sphere or Clan Nova Cat only. Cannot possess a Bad Reputation or Disabled Trait.

Drawn from across the Inner Sphere, the Fury Teams are highly skilled and well equipped units that the First Lord dispatches to deal with threats to the Star League that can't be handled by conventional forces or diplomacy.

Whether it be raiding Clan held territory for information or new technology, rescuing kidnapped Star League personnel or hunting down renegade Smoke Jaguar warriors, the diversity of skills possessed by a Fury Team will see them through.

Time: 4 years

Attribute Minimums: SOC 3

Attribute Thresholds: SOC +1

Traits: Choose one: Well Equipped, Vehicle (2)

Skills: +3 to any skill, +2 to any three Military Field skills.

Previous Paths: Any Military or Covert Ops of a Star League member state agency.

Next Path: Star League Special Circumstances "Fury" Team (4), Tour of Duty/Affiliation (4), Tour of Duty: Star League Defense Force (4), Covert Ops (4), To Serve and Protect (4), Member State Liaison Subcommand (4)

Star League Special Circumstances "Fury" Team Events

- 2 You are captured and made a Bondsman after operations in Clan territory go horribly wrong. [Survival +2, +1 to any three skills. Lose all Rank, Vehicle, and Well-Equipped traits, gain Stigma/Bondsman. Choose two: Disabled, Introvert, Lost Limb, Low Endurance, Night Blindness, Poor Hearing, Thin Skinned, Timid, or Unattractive. Next Life Path must be Civilian Job (4) under the capturing Clan (determined by the gamemaster). Character may regain warrior status if he completes one full pass through Civilian Job without acquiring any additional negative traits.]
- 3 Somehow you made it back, but the rest of your team were not so lucky. [+2 to any three skills. Clumsy, BOD -1, Addiction. Add 1D6-2 years to the time spent in this path (minimum of 1), and choose one: Bad Reputation(5), Dark Secret(5)]
- 4 Willpower alone kept you going—or so the surgeons say. [WIL +1, Unattractive, Choose: Amnesia, Disabled (3), or Lost Limb (3)]
- 5 You'll never be over Monte Diablo. [+2 to any four skills, Combat Paralysis. Choose: Dark Secret (3) or Madness/Flashbacks (3)]
- 6 Only the visible scars from your run-in with that Elemental have healed. [Quirk/Fear Battle Armor, Choose one: Lost Limb, Madness/Any]
- 7 There is nothing like a good plan—and yours wasn't. [Tactics/Any +1, Enemy (2), Choose: Stigma/Unlucky or Impatient]
- 8 The problem with being a "Proud Defender of the Star League" is that there is always a camera crew on hand when you goof. [Demotion, Bad Reputation (2), +2 to one Military Field skill]
- 9 This is your chance to make up for the crimes of your ancestors. [Choose one: Dark Secret or Shameful Heritage]
- 10 This tour was dull, but you find ways to while away the time. [Addiction, Gambling +2]
- 11 Constant skirmishing keeps your skills sharp. [+2 to one Military Field skill]
- 12 You are not here to win any popularity contests. [Choose: Enemy (2) or Bad Reputation (2)]
- 13 Sometimes you just have to be sneaky to achieve your objective. [Perception +2, Stealth +2]
- 14 A fringe benefit of this duty is that you get to play with some real cool toys. [Vehicle (2) or Well Equipped (2)]

CHARACTER CREATION

- 15 Your ancestors fought for the Star League. Now that honor falls to you. [One Military Field Skill +2, Choose one: Promotion (2), SOC +2, Proud Heritage (2)]
- 16 Sometimes the objective can be achieved without resorting to violence. [Leadership +2, Negotiation +2, Fast Talk +2, CHA +1]
- 17 The enemy was good, but you were better! [Commission (Rank 1) or Promotion (3) if already commissioned. Tactics/Any +4, +3 to any military field skill, +2 to any two other skills]
- 18 The First Lord himself handed you this mission. You didn't disappoint him. [SOC +1, +3 to any two skills, +2 to any two other skills. Contact (3). Choose one: Promotion, Vehicle or Well Equipped]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results.]
- 20 [Choose two event or roll three times and each result.]

TAURIAN MINISTRY OF INTELLIGENCE OPERATIVE

Taurian Concordat Affiliation only. Characters must have special forces training and have served at least two Tours of Duty with the Taurian Concordat. May not have Combat Paralysis.

Time: 2 years

Attribute Minimums: INT 4

Attribute Thresholds: None.

Traits: Enemy (3), Contact (2), Contact, In For Life/TMI, Quirk/Paranoid, Well-Equipped

Skills: Perception +3, Deception +2, Investigation +2, Protocol/Taurian Concordat +2, Surveillance +1. Members of the Special Task Groups may add +2 to any three infantry, marine, special forces, or police field skills. Members of the Concordat Constabulary may add +2 to any three infantry, marine, police, or detective field skills. Members of any other branch may add +2 to three of the following skills: Acting, Deception, Disguise, Computers/Any, Cryptography, Escape Artist, Forgery, Gambling, Interrogation, Investigation, Language/Any, Leadership, Martial Arts/Any, Pistols, Poisons and Antidotes, Protocol/Any, Security Systems, Seduction, Streetwise/Any

Previous Path: Any that would allow entry into the Covert Ops path, as long as above-listed requirements are met.

Next Path: Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (4), Covert Ops (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), To Serve and Protect (4)

Event Rolls: On an event roll of 20, instead of choosing two events or rolling thrice, the character may elect to infiltrate another affiliation's military or covert operations division, allowing them to take an appropriate path from that affiliation next, assuming all other requirements (but affiliation) are met. Doing so, however, reduces the character's EDG threshold by 1.

TMI Operative Events

- 2 Crudstunk! That ultra-sensitive (and completely illegal) operation against a Taurian citizen just got busted wide open! Guess who the TMI made fall guy for this one? [Investigation -2, Protocol/Taurian Concordat +3, Fast Talk +3, Deception +2, Bad Reputation/Taurian Concordat (2), lose one Contact (2), Enemy (2), Stigma/Narc (2), Unlucky (2), ejected from the TMI; next path must be Ne'er-Do-Well.]
- 3 Damn the MIIO! Fresh from the DropShip, and already you walked into their trap. The mission came apart before it even began, and you may never be the same again. [Escape Artist +3, Interrogation +3, +2 to any two combat-related skills, Glass Jaw, Enemy (3), add 1D6 years to the time spent in this pass, Choose two: Addition(2), Combat Paralysis, Disabled (2), Lost Limb (2), Madness/Any (3), Quirk/Hatred of MIIO (2), Unlucky. May take no other Covert Ops or Tour of Duty paths.]
- 4 Sometimes it doesn't matter how good you are, how long you prepared, or how good your backup is. Sometimes, the universe itself is against you. [+2 to any three skills gained in this path, Bad Reputation, Gremlins, Quirk/Paranoid, choose: Clumsy, Combat Paralysis, or Glass Jaw]
- 5 Captured while attempting to infiltrate a neighboring realm, your government refused to acknowledge your existence, leaving you to rot. [Survival +3, Scrounge +2, Escape Artist +1, Addiction (2), Enemy (2), Madness/Flashbacks (2), Quirk/Hatred of TMI. Add 1D6 to the years spent in this pass. Lose In For Life/TMI and two Contacts.]
- 6 What happened to you out there!? At the moment of truth, you just couldn't pull the trigger. Good thing for you your partner has enough clout to keep you on the payroll. [Contact (2), Demotion, Quirk/Honorable, Stigma/Coward, Timid]
- 7 You idiot! Months of preparation down the drain because *you* forgot some legal technicality during the arrest, and now an enemy to the state walks! [Interrogation +3, Intimidation +1, Fast Talk +1, Investigation +1, Protocol/Taurian Concordat -2, Bad Reputation, Demotion, Enemy]
- 8 You thought these Capellan operatives were supposed to be *helping*! [Fast Talk +2, Martial Arts/Any +2, Enemy (2)]
- 9 Perhaps you "infiltrated" that Canopian pleasure circus a bit longer than necessary, no? [Gambling +3, Seduction +1, Choose: Addition (2) or Disability (2)]
- 10 Routine operations. [+1 to any two skills]
- 11 Paperwork, paperwork, paperwork. Doesn't this agency ever *do* anything? [Bureaucracy +2, Computers +2, -1 to any four combat-related skills gained in this pass.]

CHARACTER CREATION

- 12 Served a stint with the Special Asteroid Support Forces (SASF). [Jump Packs +1, Navigation/Space +1, +2 to any two skills from the Marine Field, BOD -1. Add 2 years to the time spent in this pass.]
- 13 You saw some heavy action, and have the scars to prove it! [Perception +2, +2 to three combat-related skills, Enemy, Unattractive, Choose: Addiction, Disabled, Introvert, Lost Limb, Low Endurance, Quirk, Thin Skinned, or Timid]
- 14 Though you've really done nothing noteworthy at all, your superiors all agree you're doing a fantastic job! [Protocol/Taurian Concordat +2, +2 to any other skill, Promotion, choose: Impatient, Introvert, or Timid]
- 15 Assigned to a deep-cover operation. (Gamemaster determines its nature.) [Protocol/Any +2, Alternate Identity, add 1D6 years to the time this path takes] You somehow doubt your superiors' recent orders have the best interests of the state in mind. The question is, what are you going to do about it? [Stealth +2, Computer/Hacking +2. If you go along with the conspiracy, take Dark Secret (2), Promotion (3), Quirk/Paranoid, and Wealth (4). But if you expose these activities, take Alternate Identity, Enemy (2), Good Reputation (2), Promotion, Wealth]
- 17 It took some time, but the extra technical data you "recovered" from Detroit should become very useful. [Stealth +3, Security Systems +2, Computers +1, +2 to any three other skills gained in this pass. Add two years to the time spent in this pass. Enemy (2), Good Reputation, Promotion, Wealth.]
- 18 Hah! Those Davion dogs never saw you coming...or going! [Stealth +3, Security Systems +3, Computers +2, Cryptography +2, Enemy (3), Good Reputation, Promotion (2), Wealth, Choose: Well-Equipped (2) or Vehicle (4)]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]
- 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each result]

WOLFNET COVERT TOUR

Open only to active-duty Wolf's Dragoons characters who completed Wolfnet Training.

Wolfnet is the best of the best. With the success of the Dragoons riding on their shoulders, the agents and operatives of this covert organization are often the first—and last—line of defense for the Inner Sphere's most infamous mercenary command.

Time: 2 years

Traits: Contact, Enemy (2), Enemy (2), Promotion, Well Connected, Well Equipped

Skills: +3 to any two skills in the character's field, +2 to any four other skills

Previous Paths: Wolfnet Training, Wolfnet Covert Tour

Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Wolfnet Covert Tour (4), Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (4), Covert Ops (4)

Event Rolls: On an event roll of 20, instead of choosing two events or rolling thrice, the character may elect to

infiltrate another affiliation's military or covert operations division, allowing them to take an appropriate path from that affiliation next, assuming all other requirements (but affiliation) are met. Doing so, however, reduces the character's EDG threshold by 1.

Wolfnet Covert Tour Events

- 2 Crossed swords with some shifty agents in the March, who had moves you've never even thought possible. [+3 to any two combat skills, Enemy (3), lose one Contact, and choose two of the following: Disabled (3), Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (3), Poor Hearing (5), Poor Vision (3), BOD -3, or RFL -3. May take no further Wolfnet paths.]
- 3 Your captors give you a choice: surrender what they want to know and live, or.... [Escape Artist +2, Pugilism +1, Enemy (2), STR -1. If you give in, take WIL -1, Bad Reputation (3), Stigma/Coward, and may take no more Dragoons Life Paths. Otherwise, take Disabled (2), BOD -2, add 2d6 years to the time this path takes, and choose Glass Jaw, Madness/Any (3), or Unhealthy]
- 4 Ten months of hard work down the tubes, and it's all *your* fault! [+2 to any skill in one of the character's fields, Bad Reputation (3), Demotion, Stigma/Incompetent, Unlucky]
- 5 Corruption is almost unknown within Wolfnet. Will you be the exception? [Choose: Bad Reputation, Enemy (2), Demotion, and Quirk/Honorable or Promotion, Wealth (2), and Dark Secret (5)]
- 6 Exotic assignments are pretty good until you contract a matching exotic disease. [Administration +2, Protocol/Any +1, Allergy (2). Choose: BOD -2 or Unhealthy]
- 7 During a field mission in the March, your team is ambushed by unknown operatives. You manage to fight your way out of the trap, but not without some lasting scars—and some unfinished business. [Perception +3, +2 to any two combat skills. Enemy (2), Unattractive. Choose two: BOD -2, RFL -2, Addiction, Disabled (2), Lost Limb (2), Madness/Any (2), Poor Vision, Unlucky]
- 8 The Dragoons are a tight-knit family, but every family has its problems. [Martial Arts/Any +2, Bad Reputation, Enemy (2)]
- 9 You made a bad call, and while no one was hurt, there are still some hard feelings. You'll know better next time. [Bad Reputation]
- 10 Training duty may not be sexy, but it's better than getting sent to some God-forsaken iceball. [Training +2, +1 to any field skill]
- 11 Not everyone can get the high-profile assignments, but you still did your job and did it well. [+2 to any skill, Good Reputation]
- 12 You did your job and still found time for other pursuits. [Interest/Any +2, +1 to any other skill]
- 13 Sometimes it's skill, sometimes it's luck. And sometimes it's bribes to all the right people followed by a tactical team and a DropShip-load of Wolf's Dragoons... [Fast Talk +3, Intimidation +3, Seduction +3, Enemy (2)]

CHARACTER CREATION

- 14 It was difficult, moreso than you'll ever admit to anyone. [+3 to any three field skills, Quirk/Unsure of Self]
- 15 That was lucky, stumbling upon that enemy agent like you did—luckier still that a friendly agent happened to be faster on the draw. [+2 to any four field skills, EDG +1, Contact (2), Life Debt (2)]
- 16 Years of training and powerful instincts not only got you out of a tough spot, but also made the mission a stunning success! [+2 to any two skills, Contact (2), Good Reputation, EDG +1]
- 17 No one's heard from you in over a year. How did you made it back across three borders and two hundred light-years? [+3 to any two field skills, +2 to two other skills. Good Reputation (2), Promotion, and choose two of the following: Allergy, Low Endurance, Night Blindness, Transit Disorientation Syndrome, Unattractive, BOD -1, or RFL -1]
- 18 You pulled off the mission of a lifetime. Too bad nobody will ever know about it... [+2 to any two skills, Promotion (2), Well-Connected, Well-Equipped, Wealth, and apply a +1 bonus to the events roll for your next Path]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both events]
- 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each event]

WORD OF BLAKE ROM COVERT OPERATIVE

Word of Blake Affiliation only. Characters hailing from House Marik's Free Worlds League receive a +1 bonus on event rolls. Characters must pass through at least one generic ROM path before taking the specific subpaths listed below.

Since the schism, the Word of Blake's ROM agency has only grown stronger and more dangerous than their estranged brethren in ComStar. Though the fanatics themselves remain fragmented into various subsects, the Word's ROM agency remains remarkably cohesive and frighteningly effective. Sharing ComStar's monopoly on interstellar communications wherever they hold sway, and with the resources of Terra itself behind them, there is almost nowhere in the Inner Sphere the Word's influence cannot be felt, and in their shadow is always ROM.

Note that a character passing through this path should choose a branch of service to work in. See the overview of Word of Blake's ROM later in this book for a more in-depth explanation as to the role and operations of these various branches.

Time: 6 years (5 years for Mu/Delta, Rho/Rho, Delta Epsilon, and Delta/Xi operatives)

Attribute Minimums: INT 6, WIL 7 (Rho/Rho, Delta/Epsilon, and Delta/Xi operatives also must have at least BOD 6 and RFL 5)

Attribute Thresholds: WIL +1, CHA -1, SOC -1 (Rho/Rho operatives, add BOD +1)

Traits: Bad Reputation, Contact (2), Enemy (3), Enemy (2), In For Life/Word of Blake ROM, Promotion, Quirk/Loyalty to Word of Blake, Shameful Heritage (2, reflects ROM's nefarious past), Stigma/Word of Blake Sub-Sect, Well

Connected (2), Well Equipped (2). (Mu/Delta): Alternate Identity, Bad Reputation, raise Quirk/Loyalty to level 2. (Rho/Rho): Bad Reputation, Enemy (2), Enemy (2), Well-Connected, Well-Equipped. (Delta/Epsilon and Delta/Xi): Custom Vehicle (2), Enemy (2), Introvert, Vehicle (2), raise Quirk/Loyalty to level 2. (Rho/Omicron and Mu/Psi): Bad Reputation (3), Exceptional Attribute/WIL, Quirk/Paranoid, raise Quirk/Loyalty to level 2, Wealth, Well-Equipped.

Skills: Interest/Writings of Jerome Blake +4, Perception +3, Computers +3, Cryptography +2, Martial Arts/Any +2, +2 to any four skills from the following fields: (Mu/Delta, Mu/Iota, and Rho/Omicron): Analysis, Basic Training, Covert Operations, Detective, Infantry, Intelligence, Scout, and Special Forces. (Rho/Gamma): Covert Operations, Intelligence, Officer, and Politician. (Rho/Rho and Rho/Chi): Basic Training, Covert Operations, Infantry, Scout, and Special Forces. (Mu/Mu): Analysis, Detective, Intelligence, Military Scientist, and Scientist. (Delta/Epsilon and Delta/Xi): Aerospace Pilot, Armored Infantry, Basic Training, Cavalry, Covert Operations, Infantry, Intelligence, MechWarrior, Scout, Special Forces, and Technician. (Mu/Psi): Basic Training, Covert Operations, Intelligence, and Officer.

Previous Path: Minimum of two passes through Word of Blake Service or Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (in Word of Blake's service).

Next Path: Fanatic Operative (4), Word of Blake Service (4), Word of Blake ROM Covert Operative (4, must be same branch), Covert Ops (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (4)

Event Rolls: (Mu/Delta only): On an event roll of 20, instead of choosing two events or rolling thrice, the character may elect to infiltrate another affiliation's military or covert operations division, allowing them to take an appropriate path from that affiliation next, assuming all other requirements (but affiliation) are met. Doing so, however, reduces the character's EDG threshold by 1.

Word of Blake ROM Covert Operative Events

- 2 Sometimes, the Blessed Blake demands sacrifices, and sometimes, those sacrifices are great indeed, a point that heretic spy has made all too clear. [Enemy (2), Perception +2, +2 to any two skills, choose two: Amnesia, Combat Paralysis, Disabled (3), Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (3), Madness/Any (3), Poor Hearing (3), Poor Vision (2), Slow Learner, Unhealthy, Unlucky (2)]
- 3 You fell in love, and even had a kid. Unfortunately, she's a heretic, and Internal Obedience is now hot on your tail. [Disguise +2, Acting +2, Alternate Identity, Dependent (2), Enemy (3)/ROM, Stigma/Traitor, Bloodmark (2), May not take any additional paths for the Word of Blake, next path must be Travel or Ne'er-Do-Well.]
- 4 Captured by heretics and "broken", you were turned against your former comrades. Deception +2, Interrogation +2, Survival +2, Stigma/Traitor, add 1D6 years to the time spent in this pass. Roll 1d6. On 1-4, character is "rescued" by Word of Blake, but must take Dark Secret (2), and either Amnesia or

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- Madness (3) Traits. On 5-6, character defects to ComStar, and must choose the ComStar Service path next; defectors also receive the Enemy (3)/Word of Blake Trait.]
- 5 Blake's blood! Prayers, praise, bribery and threats – no matter what you try, that infernal computer will not reveal the secrets of the heretics! [Computer/Any +3, Security Systems +2, Tech/Electronics +1, -1 to any three combat-related skill gained in this pass, Addiction (2), Introvert, Quirk/Obsessive.]
 - 6 Internal Obedience assures you your partner is an honored martyr to the cause, but you know better. His blood is and forever shall be on your hands. [+2 to any two combat-related skills gained in this path, Dark Secret (2), Choose: Madness/Flashbacks (2) or Quirk/Guilty Conscience (2)]
 - 7 You saw some heavy action, and have the scars to prove it! [Perception +2, +2 to two combat-related skills, Enemy (2), Unattractive, Choose: Addiction, Disabled (2), Introvert, Lost Limb, Low Endurance, Poor Vision, Poor Hearing, Quirk, Thin Skinned, or Timid]
 - 8 A "low profile" doesn't involve blowing up three square blocks in a running gunfight through a major city. [+3 to any two combat skills, +2 to any other skill. Bad Reputation (3), Demotion (2). Choose: Stigma/Psychotic or Madness/Hysteria]
 - 9 It was supposed to be a simple, low-risk operation, but you get the feeling someone sold you out. [+2 to any two combat-related skills, Quirk/Paranoid, Unlucky.]
 - 10 Dear Blake, give me strength! You experience "difficulties" working with some Free Worlders. [Negotiation +2, Martial Arts/Any +2, Fast Talk +1, Enemy (2)]
 - 11 Sooner or later, everyone draws comm-watch. [Comms/HPG +1, Computer/Operations +1]
 - 12 As boring and drawn out as surveillance was, you had a chance to catch up on your reading and other uplifting pursuits. [Interest/Writings of Jerome Blake +2, Computers/Any +2, Art/Any +1]
 - 13 Blessed Blake! When you signed up for ROM, you didn't expect to be put behind a desk – for *three years straight!* [Bureaucracy +2, Computer/Operations +2, Comms/Conventional +1, Impatient]
 - 14 When it comes to HPGs, you could write a book. (But the Blessed Blake already did so, and you wouldn't dream of correcting him!) [Comms/HPG +3, Comms/Conventional +2, Cryptography +1]
 - 15 You are called upon to assist in the indoctrination of a new initiate. [Interest/Writings of Jerome Blake +2, Training +2, Deception +1, Leadership +1]
 - 16 You have the touch of the Blessed Blake himself, and often serve operations teams as the resident techno-wizard. [+2 to any two Technician skills, Quirk/Meticulous, Tech Empathy]
 - 17 You found a Lostech cache after the careful study of old Star League files. You decide to sell some of it, and keep the rest. After all, wouldn't the Blessed

Blake want you to be better prepared? [Investigations +2, Negotiation +2, Dark Secret (2), Choose: Wealth and Well-Equipped (2), or Vehicle (4) and Custom Vehicle.]

- 18 Double-agent. You successfully "defected" to ComStar, and so far, the heretics are none the wiser. [Acting +4, Deception +4, Disguise +2, Alternate Identity, Bad Reputation (2), Brave, may take ComStar Service or ComStar ROM Agent Paths next (ignoring affiliation requirements), but must take at least one more Word of Blake ROM path afterward.]
- 19 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]
- 20 [Choose two events or roll three times and apply each result]

NEW FIELDS

The following new fields for the Covert Operations field have been referenced by some of the preceding Life Paths. Unless otherwise specified, they are available to both civilian and military agencies (civilians may use them in place of Detective training or as an additional University Field, subject to their listed requirements. Military agencies may use them in place of (or in addition to) the Military Scientist or Special Forces Fields.

Analysis Field (14 CPs)

Prerequisite: INT 4, WIL 4. Characters with Police Officer Occupational Field may ignore the INT requirement.

Investigation
Languages (any two)
Navigation/Any
Sensors Operations
Strategy
Tactics/Any

Intelligence Field (14 CPs)

Prerequisite: INT 4, WIL 4. Characters with Police Officer Occupational Field may ignore the INT requirement.

Comms/Conventional
Cryptography
Electronic Counter-Measures
Languages (any two)
Linguistics
Sensors Operations

Covert Operations Field (14 CPs)

Prerequisite: INT 4, WIL 4. Characters with Police Officer Occupational Field may ignore the INT requirement.

Escape Artist
Fast Talk
Languages (any two)
Security Systems/Any
Streetwise/Any
Surveillance

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

To: Elected-Prince Christian Mánsdottir, First Lord
From: General Caradoc Trevena, Interim Director, SLIC
Date: 22 October 3067
Subject: Intelligence Agency Overview (EYES ONLY)

My lord,

As per your request, I have obtained the following reports outlining the status and origins of most of the known intelligence agencies and major covert operations at large throughout the Inner Sphere and near Periphery, drawing on my own sources as well as friendly agency reports. Getting this information has been much like pulling teeth, since no one in their right mind would simply give up state secrets of this nature very eagerly.

Despite the difficulties, however, I believe the following pages provide a wealth of illumination on the capabilities and goals of the various intelligence agencies at large today. I cannot stress enough the sensitivity of this information, as it exposes quite a few more skeletons than I had expected to find in the various closets of the Great Houses. Still, although many of these secrets have been partly confirmed in past research, it is my belief that others of them could be no more than "red herrings" leaked by certain agencies to flag a security leak and track it back to its source.

Thus, in the interests of maintaining the integrity and spirit of the League, I would strongly recommend this document be destroyed immediately after viewing, for should word of its existence ever leak out, it could seriously undermine the trust we have struggled to build this past decade.

Your humble servant,

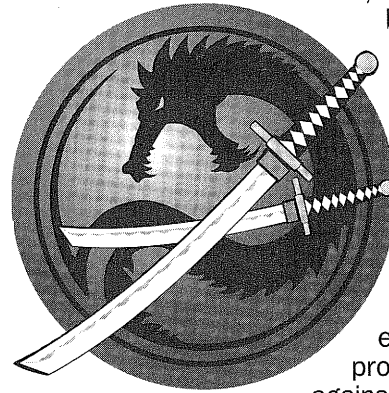
General Caradoc Trevena

INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE (ISF)

We obtained the following report outlining the past and current state of the Draconis Combine's ISF through some "friends" I have in Wolf's Dragoons. It may have been censored a bit—either for our benefit or to save face for the Coordinator—but the bulk of it seems sound and insightful. I must admit, as a former soldier for the Commonwealth I was tempted to revel in the Dragon's current woes, but the outcome of their latest internal issues has caused so much upheaval, I find myself worried about their future. —CT

BRIEF HISTORY

Founded around the same time as the Combine itself, the ISF began as an elite



branch of Shiro Kurita's regular army, loyal to him and his dreams of conquering all of known space. Used initially to infiltrate target worlds, gathering intelligence on troop movements and force strengths, their role expanded quickly to protecting the Combine against internal and external

enemies alike.

Internal Machinations

In the years following their formation, the ISF's loyalties shifted away from the Coordinator to the Combine as a whole, and evidence suggests the organization has meddled more than a few times in the progression of leadership for the sake of the state. In the first known instance of such machinations, the ISF stood back while conspirators pushed Nihongi Von Rohrs, nephew of the ineffectual Coordinator Nihongi Kurita, to the throne. Believing that Von Rohrs would bring the Combine back to the path laid out by its founder, the ISF was initially pleased with his early conquests. However, paranoia among his successors led to several purges that removed many from the top ranks of the agency. These changes hampered the ISF's effectiveness, delaying their efforts to capture plans for the Terran Hegemony's new BattleMechs and forcing the agency to again manipulate the succession.

The disastrous results of their manipulations did not prevent the ISF from continuing to "guide" the Combine's leadership over the following years. To avoid a power struggle upon Coordinator Martin McAllister's death, they helped arrange the marriage of McAllister's daughter, Siriwan, to Warren Kurita, then arranged for Warren's death after the birth of their son, Hehiro. Later, during the Star League era, the ISF conspired to assassinate Coordinator Leonard Kurita to avert a disastrous war against the League.

Under the rule of Urizen Kurita II, the ISF's power increased tenfold with a broader license and an increased budget. As part of a plan to restructure the Combine along feudal Japanese lines, the agency's directives were broadened to "cleanse the realm of those who might tarnish its honor." With planet-wide purges and terror tactics, the ISF operated almost

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE COMMAND

ISF Director:

Ninyu Kerai-Indrahar

Mononokete:

Constance Jojira

Mokonete:

Alyson Kenshin

Koe No Ryu:

Takura Migaki

Metsuke:

Omi Dashani

DEST:

General Paul Omishita

without restraint, and by the time of the Coordinator's death the Combine was a state of uniform culture and fanaticism where even the most benign political criticisms brought the harshest of punishments.

THE SUCCESSION WARS

During the Star League's final years, Coordinator Takiro Kurita again increased the ISF's budget and expanded its duties to include monitoring the military. This decision, while strengthening the ISF, created a rift between the agency and the military that would grow worse over time. This divide caused the ISF to become overly focused on watching the Draconis Combine Mustered Soldiery (DCMS) for signs of disloyalty, and as a result the Amaris coup caught the Combine flat-footed. Once in power, the Usurper blackmailed the ruling Kurita line, forcing the agency to help him resist the League.

In the early months of the First Succession War, the ISF learned of the Federated Suns' plans to attack the Capellan Confederation, information that would spur Jinjiro Kurita to launch an attack against the Dragon's greatest foe. Throwing the weight of the Combine military against the Suns in 2787, Jinjiro won a string of devastating victories that threatened to shatter House Davion, until the assassination of his father, Coordinator Minoru Kurita, on Kentares IV. The resulting massacre ordered by Jinjiro became a rallying cry for the Federated Suns and one of the darkest moments in Combine history.

In 2830, Coordinator Jinjiro Kurita launched the Second Succession War with an assault on the Lyran Commonwealth in a desperate effort to stave off the maddening effects of a mental disease that could rob him of his dignity and his throne. Evidence suggests, however, that his decision to start the war came from a report delivered to him by the ISF in an effort to keep an unpopular successor, Zabu Kurita, from ascending to power. Evidence also suggests that Jinjiro finally gave into madness after ISF agents delivered him the mysterious gift of a toy soldier, dressed in a SLDF uniform. Though nobody really knows who sent the gift to the Coordinator, the resulting change in the Combine leadership ultimately led to one of the blackest chapters of the ISF's history.

The Shadow War

Zabu Kurita's reign lasted barely a year after Jinjiro's madness forced him to step down. Unpopular among the DCMS, he was convinced to commit seppuku, clearing the way for his son, Yoguchi, to assume the mantle of Coordinator. Though many saw Yoguchi's ascent as the dawn of a new age of Kuritan glory, he quickly came into disfavor among the ISF when he attached the agency to the DCMS. This decision insulted the ISF, which considered itself superior to the military, and created a rift between the agency and the Coordinator that ultimately erupted in a power struggle after Yoguchi's assassination by a Lyran operative known only as Snow Fire.

Upon Yoguchi's death, his brother, Miyogi, ascended to the throne, while his sister, Roweena Kurita, curried favor with the ISF in a series of schemes that seemed more intent on accumulating wealth than power. Money and power are often difficult to separate, though, and Roweena's machinations broadened her power base as she traded on the resources of her People's Reconstruction Effort (PRE) to aid the ISF's activities. This aid allowed the ISF's influence to stretch through all levels of Combine society and drew the agency closer to Roweena.

When, after the Second Succession War, Miyogi Kurita finally ordered an investigation into the extent of his sister's "anti-Combine activities", the ISF split along pro-Miyogi and pro-Roweena factions. Rajiv Sulevani, head of the pro-Miyogi investigation, attempted to assassinate all of the pro-Roweena agents to contain the problem. The resulting inter-agency fighting became known as the Shadow War by citizens of the Combine and cost the lives of more than a thousand agents. Though Roweena was defeated in the short run and placed under house arrest with her PRE dismantled, she got the last laugh decades later when her surviving agents helped Miyogi's ambitious advisor, Taragi Kurita, usurp the Coordinator.

In the aftermath of Taragi's reign, efforts to revive a good working relationship between the ISF and the Coordinator were made, including the Davarapala Accords in 2921 between Coordinator Shinjiro Kurita and the agency's Director, Clarissa Indrahar. These Accords gave the ISF full membership in the High Command, relieving them of the stigma of military control, but it would be some time before the ISF and the Coordinator worked hand-in-glove.

Takashi and Theodore

After Hohiro Kurita's assassination in 3004 by a member of his own Otomo, Takashi Kurita became Coordinator amid rumors that he had collaborated in his father's death. Upon receiving word of these rumors from the ISF, he immediately set the Otomo on anyone spreading such sedition and used the opportunity—and the agency—to solidify his power base by eliminating his other enemies in the Combine. Under Takashi's rule, particularly with the appointment of the formidable

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

Subhash Indrahara, the ISF once again became the Coordinator's partner, though always placing the needs of the state above those of its leader. To that end, Indrahara helped broker the Concord of Kapteyn against the Federated Commonwealth alliance, and the ISF attempted to abduct Archon-Designate Melissa Steiner before her marriage to Prince Hanse Davion.

However, Takashi's increasing conflicts with his son, Theodore, and his feud with Wolf's Dragoons—expanded to include all mercenaries during and after the Fourth Succession War—forced the ISF once again to distance itself from the Coordinator. This rift grew during the 3030s and 3040s as Theodore's power base grew at the expense of his father's. Since both pursued what they believed was the best path for the Combine and neither did any harm to the Dragon, the ISF remained neutral. However, the agency facilitated many of Theodore's reforms, such as the creation of the Ghost regiments and a critical deal between the Dragon and ComStar that bought independence for the Free Rasalhague Republic in exchange for advanced 'Mechs the DCMS used in the War of 3039.

During the Clan invasion, an ISF agent close to the ComStar Primus provided the Combine with valuable information on the Clans and their intentions. Taking advantage of her high position, she warned Theodore of the Clan invasion of Luthien in time to summon aid from the Federated Commonwealth, and later also warned the Dragon of ComStar's disastrous Operation Scorpion, enabling the Draconis Elite Strike Teams (DEST) branch of the ISF to act before ROM agents in seizing control of the HPGs throughout the Combine.

In the years after the Truce, the ISF operated with the primary goals of defeating the Clan threat and locating the invaders' homeworlds. To this end, Coordinator Theodore Kurita assigned many agents—particularly those of the DEST—to missions in the occupation zones and coreward Periphery, while shoring up relations with unlikely allies in the Federated Commonwealth and ComStar. Though helpful in ending the Clan threat, this single-minded devotion brought the Coordinator a long stream of trouble that continues to this day. In searching so hard for the Clans' weaknesses, the cracks in a society pushed to reform too fast grew more pronounced. Rising in the shadows, the ancient *Kokuryu-kai*—better known as the Black Dragon Society—has become the greatest internal threat to the stability of the realm since the Shadow War.

The Black Dragon

The Black Dragon Society's first overt move was the attack on the Davion world of Towne, launched after the FedCom broke up in the face of a Marik-Liao invasion. Hoping to bring back the Combine's glory days with this unsanctioned invasion, the Society's plans were thwarted by mercenaries employed by the Coordinator's cousin, Chandrasekhar Kurita. A purge of the DCMS after that incident was believed to be the end of the Society, but instead, less than two months later, the Society

struck again with an attempt on the Coordinator's life.

Recently uncovered information suggests that the *Kokuryu-kai*'s second major operation in 3058 was aided by a large number of sympathizers within the ISF and Otomo. The subsequent disappearance of General Hohira Kiguri, head of the DEST, would seem to support this, as Kiguri was a known opponent of Lord Kurita's reforms. After this incident, a second, more widespread purge—this time including the ISF itself—attempted to destroy the Society for good. The ISF's vital role in the operations to destroy the Smoke Jaguars and end the Clan Crusade for all time showed few indications that any of the *Kokuryu-kai* had survived, though an attempted assassination of Victor Steiner-Davion during his visit to Luthien revealed they might not be entirely gone.

After the Clans' defeat, much of the ISF assisted the reclamation of the worlds liberated by Operation Bulldog. Nearly a decade of rebellion against their Clan overlords produced populations grown accustomed to resistance, making it nearly as difficult to assimilate these worlds as it was to bring the remains of Clan Nova Cat into the Combine. The resource drain on both the agency and the overall economy of the Combine created a great deal of internal dissent that awakened the Black Dragons once more, who moved forward a few short years later with their most ambitious plans yet.

In just a handful of isolated incidents, the latest actions attributed to the Black Dragons have provoked some of the hardest fighting and the most terrible tragedies in recent years. With the renegade attack on Alshain by the Alshain Avengers in 3062, the Society instigated the biggest conflict on the Clan front since Operation Bulldog. Shortly before the beginning of these hostilities, mysterious troops masquerading as mercenary and Lyran forces struck garrisons in the Lyons Thumb, while others masquerading as Combine regulars hit Lyran territories. Together, these events forced the DCMS to swing into action, seizing the Thumb worlds and deploying the majority of their remaining troops to cover the Clan front. Amid this turmoil, forces from the Federated Suns' Draconis March launched their own assault, also apparently instigated by renegade Combine strikes.

These destructive conflicts savaged the Arm of the Dragon and stretched thin the already depleted resources of the ISF. Though many attacks have been publicly attributed to the Black Dragon, their actual origins remain a mystery, making the purges and investigations that followed in their wake chaotic and often random. Though the sources of the attacks remain unclear, the effects have been pronounced. To save face among his people and forestall any more "renegade" adventurism, the Coordinator has been forced to annex territories along the Lyran and FedSuns borders and distribute his weakened DCMS among several hostile regions, all the while tensing for the next attack by dissidents within his own realm. The Dragon now stands on the verge of losing most of the reforms the Coordinator spent his life putting into effect for its own survival.

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

BRANCHES OF THE ISF

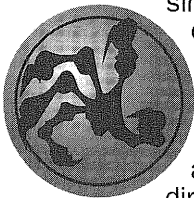
The Internal Security Force is subdivided into five main branches, all of which operate independently of one another, with no central administration outside the ISF Director himself. This arrangement helps foster internal security among the various branches by compartmentalizing operations.

Currently, the ISF's primary mission is to locate and destroy the surviving elements of the Black Dragon Society while simultaneously protecting the Combine against external threats. The Clan and Federated Suns fronts remain hotbeds of activity for the latter activities, suggesting that Theodore Kurita does not fully trust his neighbors after recent hostilities.

It should be noted that recent efforts by the Coordinator to strengthen Japanese culture among his people—possibly as an effort to placate the Black Dragons until he can strike them down for good—has led to an influx of new Japanese names for agencies previously tagged by generic labels. Curiously enough, the DEST and the ISF entities have not received this treatment, most likely because their names are recognized and feared even in foreign lands.

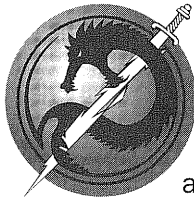
Mononokete

The Mononokete ("Ghost Hands"), formerly known as the covert operations division, forms the active intelligence branch of the ISF. Though trained along similar lines to the DEST, Mononokete operatives work in smaller groups and often receive more deep cover assignments. Their missions run the gamut from assassinations to sabotage to spreading misinformation among rival intelligence services, all directed against external threats to the state. Within the Combine, Mononokete operatives also watch over foreign visitors, particularly as attachés and liaison officers. Rarely are the talents of these operatives used to resolve internal matters.



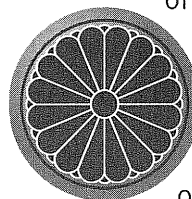
Mokonete

The Mokonete ("Guiding Hands"), formerly known as the internal security division, is perhaps its most feared and pervasive organization. Directed to confront threats on the home front, this agency has built a reputation for brutality against even the mildest anti-government sentiments, but its "guiding hand" is only as harsh as the Coordinator's. The Mokonete is responsible for identifying and reeducating dissident citizens, as well as the detection and elimination of foreign agents operating within the Combine. Currently, this mandate is primarily directed at ferreting out members of the elusive *Kokuryu-kai*, who continue to pose a threat despite three major purges launched by this division.



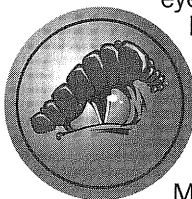
Koe No Ryu

The Koe No Ryu ("Voice of the Dragon") is the Combine's propaganda division. The most benign branch of the agency, this group puts the official spin on events both within and without House Kurita's borders. Thanks to the widespread acceptance of state-run public media, this division holds considerable power and influence in the Combine, and at least one of its operatives sits on the board of every media concern operating in Kurita space as an "advisor".



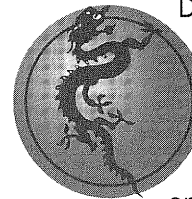
Metsuke

The Metsuke is the intelligence gathering and analysis section, though the term Metsuke ("all-seeing eyes") once applied to the entirety of the ISF. The Metsuke are infiltrators, sleeper agents and observers who take no action but can broadcast what they know and see to friendly agents at any time. It has been presumed that the Black Dragon Society maintains its own Metsuke-like organization, though its ranks likely include many otherwise legitimate members of the Dragons who have given their allegiance to the Society after first earning sensitive positions in government or military life.



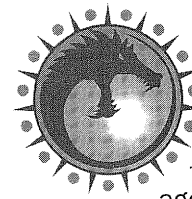
Draconis Elite Strike Teams (DEST)

The DEST are by far the most well known of the Draconis Combine's active covert operations divisions. More a part of the DCMS than the ISF, the ranks of the DEST are comprised entirely of cross-trained MechWarriors, producing fearless soldiers whose skills allow them to pursue almost any military objective. Under Theodore Kurita's rule, the DEST have been primarily employed as counter-Clan operatives, engaging in infiltration of hostile territories, espionage, assassinations, and even frontal assaults. As the most exposed branch of Combine intelligence agencies, with wider recruitment options to match, the DEST are also the ISF members most likely to be compromised by Black Dragon agents.



Musukosan No Ryu

The unofficial Musukosan No Ryu ("Sons of the Dragon") are a relatively new organization, formed by Subhash Indrahah as something of a secret society, loyal to his vision of the Combine's destiny and the only members of the Dragon's intelligence array entrusted with the most critical of missions. Though this organization counts Theodore Kurita in its number, our intelligence indicates that the Black Dragon Society has touched even this core group of fanatical agents, which is now ostensibly loyal to Ninyu Kerai-Indrahah.



ORDER OF THE FIVE PILLARS (O5P)

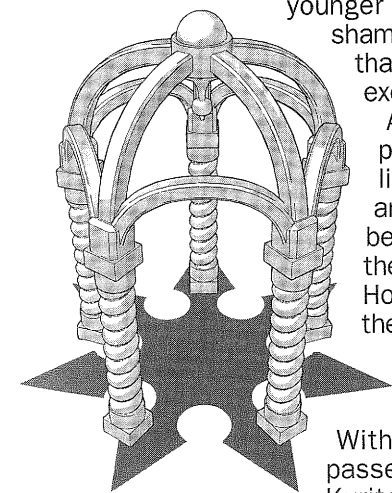
The Order of the Five Pillars (O5P) is a curious agency, neither officially part of the Combine's intelligence apparatus nor technically opposed to it. Instead, the Order is a self-sufficient organization that maintains the dual roles of protecting the spiritual honor of House Kurita while at the same time keeping watch over its people. In order to facilitate its goals, the O5P has evolved its own bureaucracy and intelligence network that pervades all of Combine space, and possibly beyond. They are included here because they have the ear of the Dragon's officials.

BRIEF HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

The origins of O5P date to the mid-2300s when it was little more than a clerical staff intended to assist the Keeper of the House Honor in her (or his) duties as custodian of the Combine's religious, ideological, and social codes. Omi Kurita, daughter of Shiro Kurita, founder of the Draconis Combine, first compiled these codes, known collectively as the Dictum Honorium. The Dictum was conceived as both an homage and a warning to future generations of Kuritas, a warning that was especially pointed after Omi's younger sister, Shada, so shamed the family's honor that Shiro commanded her execution.

Assisted by her parents, Omi spent her life maintaining and amending the Dictum, becoming the first to hold the title of "Keeper of the House Honor". Though the title afforded her no power, the position entitled her a special degree of respect.

With her death, the title passed to her niece, Shiragi Kurita, and ever since the



Keeper has been a member of some branch of the ruling Kurita line.

The Evolution of the Order

Sanyu Kurita, third Keeper of the House Honor, is largely credited with the formation of today's O5P. A controversial Keeper, known for making revisions that did not always cast the Kurita family in its best light, Sanyu's independence eventually became reflected in the Order itself. Claiming all ivory trade within the Combine as her exclusive monopoly, the proceeds of which would provide independent funding for her office, Sanyu used a series of alliances and even the brute force of her cousin's household guard to seize control over all

ivory trade within the realm, then expanded her influence to cover all craftsmen who worked with the prized commodity. The result was the formation of an unofficial government bureaucracy with the trappings of a Kurita-sanctioned guild.

Over time, Sanyu's agents, spreading out along trade networks, began to evolve in their search for new ivory sources. Once functioning as mere business agents, the influence of Sanyu and her Dictum gradually transformed these operatives into a corps of ideological inspectors and eventually assumed the trappings of a monastic order. This transformation, including the assumption of a quasi-spiritual chain of command, provided them with better coordination and the protection of mystique and anonymity, much the way ComStar's own Order evolved during this same time.

Along the way, the organization officially picked up its name, the Order of the Five Pillars, in reference to the five pillars (facets) of Combine society. Meshing well with their self-assigned responsibility to uphold the principles of House Kurita, the O5P's new form made it at once the spiritual core of the realm as well as a potent intelligence apparatus. The transformation was so gradual it caught the ISF completely by surprise, but with sanction from the ruling House Kurita there was no way to eliminate the Order.

The Order Underground

In 2459, upon Sanyu's death, Coordinator Kozo Von Rohrs decided to abolish the Keeper of the House Honor position, declaring that the Von Rohrs were of pure morals and ethics and had no need for such a position. To emphasize his point, Kozo had the Abbess of the O5P, Jamila Benhashemi, summoned to his quarters and executed. With this act, and the follow-up executions of many O5P Illuminati, he abolished the Keeper and sent the Order underground.

The Order's lower-ranked Adepts and Neophytes, taking advantage of their contacts in the ivory trade, dropped out of sight and blended in with the populations of planets as far removed from Von Rohrs' military as possible. While in hiding, they maintained their scriptures, continued to recruit and induct new members, and maintained their network through clandestine contacts and secret meetings.

Even when Marika Van Rohrs reestablished the office of the Keeper fifty years later, the O5P remained in hiding, far too distrustful of the Von Rohrs to come forward. Only when Martha Kurita became Keeper did the Order make known its continued existence in the shadows, and only upon the ascent of Coordinator Siriwan McAllister did they make their full networks available to the Keeper.

Restoration and Revival

Under Siriwan Kurita's rule, the Order's power and prestige increased dramatically. She encouraged its

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ORDER OF THE FIVE PILLARS COMMAND

Keeper of the House Honor:

Lady Miyako Kurita

Abess of the Order:

Abess Tomade Yamiro

Ivory Trade Mistress:

Illuminatus Yamara Imishada

Field Operations:

Illuminatus Mara Selenica

Mistress of Arcana:

Inquisitor Esther Lu-Huang

Thought Control:

Inquisitor Lucias Nomotawa

Guidance and Training:

Illuminatus Kharisma Shimazu

evolution into more of an intelligence agency than it already was, rivaling the ISF itself. The Order's income increased as Draconian law reinforced the sale of ivory to the people, and the Pillarine headquarters on Luthien were constructed on Siriwan's orders, including the Sanctum Arcanum, in Unity Palace.

Also under Siriwan's directives, all officers in the DCMS were required to study martial arts under O5P instructors. This allowed the Keeper a view into the state of the Kuritan officer corps, and gave the O5P influence in military affairs. Some officers—those with the right state of mind or the proper loyalties—were even initiated further into the occult society of the Order, thus becoming agents of the O5P.

Curiously enough, though the powers of the Order have never diminished from the days of Siriwan Kurita and the Keepership of Martha Kurita, the O5P has remained relatively quiet. However, they still maintain their intelligence apparatus, which works either in tandem with the ISF's internal security division or on its own agenda.

The Order Today

The ISF, alarmed at the Order's infiltration of all aspects of Combine society, have attempted to infiltrate the organization and compete with the quality of its training, but either because of their lack of women adepts—many O5P Adepts and Illuminati are female—or because of counter-penetration by the Order, their success has been limited. This rivalry has continued, unabated for the past five centuries, though neither organization would admit to such disharmony.

Nonetheless, during the Keepership of Constance Kurita, efforts to reconcile differences between the two agencies were initiated. This détente was furthered under the Keepership of the Coordinator's daughter, Omi Kurita, who tested both sides when she asked them to relay a message to the Dragon's enemies together,

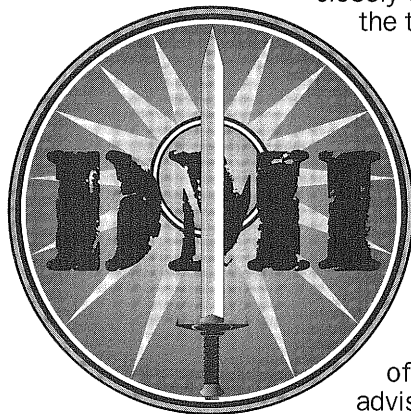
seeking aid in Luthien's defense during the Clan war. Emboldened by its success, Omi continued to build on that alliance of expediency through the rest of her years.

Tragically, Omi's death at the hands of an assassin in 3065 seems to have shattered this fragile alliance. While the two might have cooperated individually with the Coordinator's son, Minoru, in tracking Omi's killer, these reports cannot be independently verified. In truth, it remains unclear at present exactly how Minoru found (and executed) the assassin and avenged the Dragon's loss.

Today, the head of the Order and Keeper of the House Honor is Miyako Kurita, daughter of Isoroku Kurita, Warlord of Dieron. The Abbess of the Order is Tomade Yamiro, a woman who was apparently investigated by the ISF for possible ties to the Black Dragon. Shamed by the ISF's baseless accusation, Yamiro does not seem to share the previous Keeper's willingness to work cooperatively with the ISF. There have already been indications that the two agencies have had disagreements over the sharing of information, a crack in the newborn alliance that both can ill afford.

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

The AFFS Department of Military Intelligence (DMI) and the civilian Ministry of Information, Intelligence and Operations (MIIO) share the responsibility for covert operations and intelligence gathering within the Federated Suns. While technically the DMI is focused primarily on enemy threats outside of the Federated Suns and the MIIO on threats within, those lines were blurred centuries ago; though the two agencies operate independently from each other, both closely coordinate their efforts and there has been very little historical animosity between the two.



OVERVIEW

Since its inception, the Federated Suns, though not a military dictatorship, has relied as heavily on its military as it has on civilians and non-military agencies. The DMI's origins stem from the earliest days of the Armed Forces of the Federated Suns (AFFS), but it truly earned its current position in the days following the Davion Civil War and Alexander Davion's ascension to the throne on New Avalon.

The Modern DMI

The DMI, founded as one of the eight major subdepartments of the AFFS, is officially tasked with gathering intelligence on all foreign military and political powers, advising the First Prince and the High Command on matters relating to these powers,

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

performing covert actions against those powers as directed by "competent command", and disseminating necessary information concerning these powers to lower echelons. As a military agency, the DMI is commanded by a full field marshal who also sits on the AFFS High Command, while six AFFS marshals direct internal subdivisions.

In the years since the formation of the DMI, its personnel have been tasked with several other additional duties, some of them official and some not, including security for high-ranking military officials and screening for all military and civilian personnel who are to be given security clearances, including cadets entering major academies like Albion or the NAIS College of Martial Sciences. The department also maintains security over sensitive projects and facilities, tracks all foreign military officers within FedSuns territory, and is available to deal with incidents of domestic unrest and terrorism. DMI personnel can also be found in each ambassadorial and political entourage dispatched to foreign powers.

INSIDE THE DMI

Though a complete examination of the DMI's operational and administrative procedures is beyond the scope of this report, what follows is a brief overview of its practices and lines of communication.

Operational Security

The DMI is, of course, a secretive command, more so than any of the AFFS' other departments. Information on all operations is carefully guarded and even administrative and other support personnel must hold a security clearance. Much of the information passed through the DMI is compartmentalized, at least until it reaches the higher levels, where it is assembled into a cogent picture of what is going on in the Inner Sphere and beyond. This policy ensures that even if a foreign operative manages to infiltrate the agency, that operative will likely not be able to compromise current or future operations, thus minimizing the damage.

In fact, the greatest threat for leaks and compromises comes not from within the Federated Suns' intelligence community, but from without—namely, high-ranking politicians and military officers who have access to the products provided by the DMI and the MIIO. Foreign powers, especially the Capellan Confederation, the Word of Blake and the Free Worlds League, target individuals such as these who have either shown a displeasure with the Federated Suns in some way or who have proven they have exploitable weaknesses, such as with gambling, drugs, shady dealings, extra-marital affairs and the like.

Both the DMI and the MIIO work together to discover these weaknesses and prevent key officials from being "turned", though they may just as often exploit these same individuals to pass false intelligence and/or to ferret out moles and foreign operatives. When spies and

moles within either organization are discovered, teams from divisions MI5 and MI6 work together to determine who belongs to these organizations and eliminate them, tracking them across foreign borders if necessary. Such operations are typically quick and surgical, telling the foreign agencies responsible that they have been found out, though in some cases the agency has been known to eliminate foreign agents in a fashion that appears almost accidental to hide the fact that they discovered the threat. Internal threats, by comparison, are commonly put on trial under a blanket of secrecy. Though MI6 has almost certainly summarily executed individuals suspected of treason, the great majority of those who "disappeared" in this way are given the opportunity to put up a defense.

Lines of Command

In recent decades, the DMI has gone through two significant command upheavals due to the formation and dissolution of the Federated Commonwealth. In the days before the Federated-Commonwealth Alliance, the DMI and the MIIO operated independently, albeit with significant coordination between them. Though the DMI was—and still is—an integral AFFS Department, its commander often took orders directly from the First Prince, the Prince's Champion, or the Prince's Intelligence Advisor.

During the FedCom era, the Lyran Archon and the First Prince chose to combine the military and intelligence-gathering organizations into a joint command structure. The Federated Commonwealth Intelligence Corps (FCIC) was thus created to bring the DMI, the MIIO and the Lyran Intelligence Corps (LIC) under a single umbrella organization that would, at least theoretically, coordinate the actions of all three agencies, collate and independently analyze the intelligence gathered, and provide a single point of contact for their leaders.

In reality, the three organizations continued to operate as independently as they always did. More than that, the rivalry between the Lyran and FedSuns agencies continued to grow, with neither side willing to share their most guarded secrets with the other. Though unconfirmed, there are rumors of operations where FedSuns and Lyran agents accidentally ended up on opposite sides and even fired upon each other.

At the end of the FedCom Civil War, the DMI suffered another upheaval. Many operatives were missing in action while huge numbers of personnel have either left or were forced out of the agency. To help combat the drain of personnel, the FCIC has been permanently dissolved. Most of its remaining staff and agents have been assigned into the DMI or MIIO, others to the AFFS General Staff's intelligence ranks.

Today, the DMI once again reports directly to the AFFS High Command and its commander can take orders directly from the First Prince (Regent), the Prince's Champion, the Intelligence Advisor or the High Command. The director of each DMI division reports to the DMI commander and sits on an intelligence advisory board

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DMI COMMAND

MI1:

Field Marshal Christian Robert McCarthy

MI2:

Marshal Daniel Darwith

MI3:

Marshal Romulus Colcetti

MI4:

Marshal Andrea Gavin

MI5:

Marshal Melora Li-Vehn

MI6:

Marshal Carver Felsner

MI7:

Marshal Erik Trejo

that helps determine the goals and requirements of the AFFS and the Federated Suns as a whole. Patterned on the military organization of the state, the DMI chain of command follows the same chain as the rest of the AFFS, with DMI division commanders assigned for each March, under whom subcommanders are assigned for each Combat Theater and PDZ/Combat Region. An additional division—also subdivided accordingly—even addresses areas beyond the FedSuns' borders. This arrangement allows the various branches of the DMI to focus better within a given area of operation and provides an additional level of compartmentalization.

In addition, DMI personnel are attached to every combat unit and organizational headquarters in the AFFS as a natural part of their mandate for the gathering, analysis, and dispersal of intelligence. These assets—typically from the MI2 and MI3 divisions—report on a daily basis to the commander of the unit to which they are attached.

A fourth operational division exists within the DMI devoted to operations outside of the Federated Suns' borders. Reporting to the commander of the DMI, the personnel and assets of this division are compartmentalized into smaller groups that deal with specific nations and other significant powers throughout the Inner Sphere. Rumor has it these groups cover not only each of the Great Houses, the Periphery states, and the Clans, but also major non-governmental organizations, such as major corporations and even the Roman Catholic Church.

Rank Structure

Since the dissolving of the FCIC, the DMI, like the rest of the AFFS, has returned to the traditional Federated Suns rank structures. All DMI personnel have a military rank, or for those few non-military within the organization, a corresponding

civilian rank indicator. The entirety of the organization is enlisted-heavy, with non-officers making up the bulk of the personnel.

Field and other operations personnel, because of the specialization of their training, are typically sergeants and above and follow the same promotion guidelines as AFFS MechWarriors. Officers fill all of the command slots, with marshals commanding each administrative division, as well as typically the four operations divisions; generals command assets assigned to combat theaters and major generals command assets assigned to PDZs. Smaller groups and branches are headed by lieutenant generals and colonels. Lieutenant colonels are typically the most senior officers that still operate in the field, though majors and captains command the majority of the operational units.

DMI DIVISIONS

The Department of Military Intelligence is divided into seven major administrative divisions. In addition, DMI assets are assigned to four regional operational divisions. An overview of each is provided below.

MI1 - Command

MI1 is the DMI's command branch. The commander of the DMI sits at its head and holds the rank of field marshal. Beneath him sit all the other commanders of the various field and operations units (including those who command DMI assets within AFFS marches, combat theaters and PDZs). Additionally, this division retains control of most of the DMI's administrative assets and has responsibility for all agency training programs.



All operational orders from higher authority are routed through MI1 and final authority to sanction and direct all covert actions against both foreign and domestic targets rests within this division. A number of safeguards are in place to ensure that this power is not used precipitously or injudiciously, such as the required approval of three officers of the rank of general or higher before certain actions can be undertaken. Actions against members of any ruling or royal family, by comparison, require the approval of the First Prince, the Prince's Champion or—in the absence of either—a majority of the High Command.

MI2 - Analysis and Speculation

As the division's name suggests, MI2 is responsible for collating and analyzing all intelligence gathered, be it from HumInt resources, communications intercepts, imagery and other sensor platforms, or any other asset the DMI employs.

The data gathered by MI2 is used to paint a picture of what is currently happening in the Human Sphere and projecting the most likely course of future events.



Though headquartered in the Fox's Den on New Avalon, MI2 is the division that AFFS personnel interact with the most. MI2 teams are assigned to each AFFS combat unit and major command, providing field and regional commanders a source of ready and accurate intelligence and planning data. Further, with so many MI2 personnel so close to the front lines, the DMI is able to process a great deal of information, maintaining a constant flow into the march headquarters and the Fox's Den.

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Currently, the division is recuperating from the Civil War, when much of its network was broken and the remainder had been focused on the conflict instead of foreign powers.

MI3 - Electronic Information Gathering

MI3 division personnel are charged with monitoring enemy communications and electronically observing all known enemy operations and troop movements. While the majority of these efforts are focused on worlds bordering the Federated Suns, MI3, in conjunction with MI4 and MI6, operates listening posts and reconnaissance satellites in systems throughout the Inner Sphere. This division also secures transmission of this intelligence and routes it to the appropriate headquarters for analysis and dissemination, through both the conventional ComStar HPG network as well as through a series of "black box" systems used throughout the FedSuns, which can transmit encrypted messages to all branches of the DMI.

Rumors abound that the MI3 maintains a bureau that works hand-in-hand with the NAIS not just to ensure secure encryptions for their transmissions, but also to crack the secrets of HPG technology itself. Some wild theories have it that MI3 actually built its first HPG years ago and has since established its own networks to and from key worlds. Even wilder rumors suggest that MI3's technological breakthroughs allowed it to equip the dozen or so specialized JumpShips in the agency's inventory with HPGs that have ranges of several hundred light years. Whether or not those particular rumors are true, MI3 certainly does operate a small fleet of ships used to ferry sensitive communications and/or remotely monitor enemy worlds from hidden positions within a star system. The exact size and capabilities of this fleet remain classified.

MI4 - Covert Operations

For all of its high-tech gear and expensive black projects, the DMI relies on its "Stealthy Foxes" in the field to gather the majority of its information. Listening to an enemy's transmissions will only get one so far without the necessary codebooks, and conversations often make no sense without that one bit of information to put everything in perspective. This is the intelligence that only field agents can provide.

Contrary to popular opinion, the majority of a field agent's time is not spent worming his way into an enemy's confidence or making the rounds at cocktail parties frequented by socialites. MI4 agents spend the bulk of their time recruiting and "running" moles and other informants, though many of these "insiders" do not even realize what they are doing and to whom they are inadvertently giving sensitive information. Of course, there are classic "secret agents"

who do worm their way into important positions, just like Justin Xiang and Alex Mallory did during the Fourth Succession War, but those are the exception, not the norm.

Every MI4 field agent receives years of training before being allowed into the field alone. After that, many of these operatives remain solo agents, armed with the capability and mental wherewithal to be able to survive alone on enemy worlds with little to no support. Still, undercover work is only one aspect of an MI4 agent's mission, and many agents, when the mission calls for it, must also be able to work side-by-side with MI3, MI5 and/or MI6 teams.

There are even times when these operatives are tasked with duties normally performed by other divisions, and they have been known to carry out assassinations, extractions, kidnappings, sabotage and hijackings when MI5 or MI6 teams would not have the ability to do so in a timely—or safe—fashion. As a result, these best-trained of DMI operatives are also the closest-watched (by both superiors and psychologists) and the most-scrutinized before even being accepted into the MI4 ranks. Agents must be in superior physical shape, incredibly intelligent, mentally stable and unerringly loyal to the Davion family and to the Federated Suns.

MI5 - Counterinsurgency

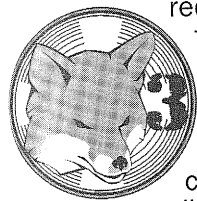
MI5's mandate is to protect the security of the Federated Suns by finding and eliminating all foreign agents operating within the nation, specifically within the AFFS. This includes identifying and tracking the actions of foreign agents as well as rooting out those individuals who are feeding the agents information or support. In concert with the MIIO, MI5 is also responsible for operations to counter domestic terrorists and other powers working against the best interests of the Federated Suns.

MI5 carries out its mission with the support of each of the other DMI divisions, and quite often in conjunction with the MIIO. These agents must be highly trained and motivated, and completely loyal to the First Prince and the Federated Suns, as their primary mission is to defend the Federated Suns against all its enemies, foreign and domestic.

In addition to their field work, MI5 agents—often referred to as the "Relentless Hounds"—perform all interrogations of suspects and are responsible for both monitoring information security within the AFFS and conducting background checks where necessary. MI5 also works with law enforcement groups throughout the Federated Suns, training them in security procedures, especially how to deal with suspected foreign spies and terrorists.

MI6 - Special Forces

The agents of MI6 number the fewest within the DMI but constitute its best-known and most-feared operatives. The existence of these so-called "Rabid



OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

Foxes" is an open secret; the AFFS officially refuses to acknowledge the existence of a DMI special forces division, but there are few Federated Suns' citizens that have not heard of their incredible exploits. Some have speculated that MI6's mandate is to make the

impossible happen at all costs, and that seems to be what these talented operators accomplish on a regular basis.



MI6 does not openly recruit, but instead selects seasoned personnel from the ranks of the AFFS or other DMI divisions and offers them positions within training regiments, which are assembled once per year. These individuals are then subjected to upwards of two years of intensive training, in which they must endure conditions that would likely kill lesser individuals while their existing skills are honed to perfection. Several candidates die each year, while the great majority wash out of the training, leaving a super-elite cadre to finish the curriculum and graduate as MI6 operators. The rest return to the regular AFFS, far better for the experience.

MI6 personnel are divided into teams numbering anywhere from 20 to 150 personnel, with most assigned to the Operational Divisions. These operators have access to the best equipment possible and are all cross-trained in a number of specialties; each team thus has enough trained personnel to do anything from put several companies of 'Mechs into the field to navigating WarShips through hyperspace. These teams receive the high-risk assignments, such as extraction of friendlies from behind enemy lines, hostage rescue, long-range reconnaissance, direct assault missions, sabotage and any number of other missions that could not be accomplished by normal troops.

It is unknown just how many MI6 operators there are, though it is believed that division personnel are assigned to protective details for senior AFFS officers and key military installations as needed—including the Fox's Den and even special secure facilities, such as those that house atomic weapons.

MI7 - Liaison

Originally formed to serve as a liaison office between the DMI and the MIIO, MI7's role has been expanded somewhat in the post-FedCom era. While still serving as an official link to the MIIO, coordinating operations and serving as an information conduit, MI7 now also coordinates support requests from all outside agencies.



Those FCIC personnel that were not folded into other departments or agencies found homes in MI7 and now answer the thousands of requests for assistance that pour in daily. They schedule training schools that are open to non-DMI or MIIO personnel and further act as the DMI's public relations department, issuing

statements and holding press conferences when necessary.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, INTELLIGENCE, & OPERATIONS

The Ministry of Information, Intelligence and Operations is the civilian agency tasked with maintaining the security of the Federated Suns by engaging in covert actions, counteracting foreign covert actions, and investigating all threats to the nation and to the Davion family. In these missions, the MIIO works hand-in-hand with the AFFS Department of Military Intelligence (DMI) under the direction of the First Prince and his or her senior advisors.

OVERVIEW

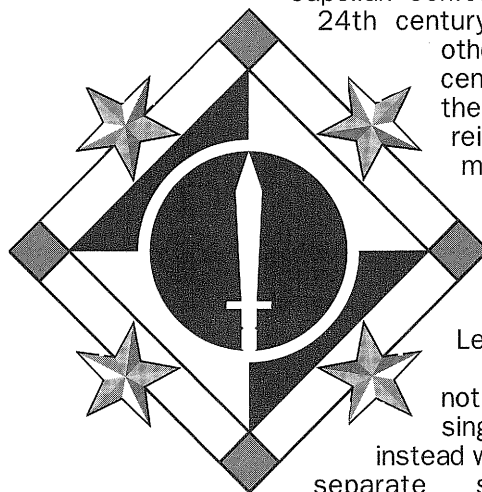
The MIIO can trace its history back to the first formal governments on New Avalon in the 23rd century, though its current incarnation owes more to the rise of the Admiral James McKenna's Terran Hegemony and the Capellan Confederation in the 24th century than to any

other source. In the centuries since, the MIIO has reinvented itself many times, especially after the Davion Civil War and the fall of the Star League.

The MIIO did not even begin as a single agency, but instead was a number of separate security and intelligence agencies that were eventually grouped together under a single ministry office. Today, the MIIO is a quietly effective organization, without the fame—or infamy—of the Kurita ISF or the Capellan Maskirovka to help or hinder its agents in their jobs.

MIIO

As the civilian intelligence agency for the Federated Suns, the MIIO is concerned principally with safeguarding the nation's civilian hierarchy and is specifically tasked with maintaining the security of the Federated Suns' political structure against foreign infiltration. Over the years this mandate has been broadly interpreted, transforming the ministry into an interstellar intelligence



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agency without peer. The MIIO also provides specific security for the First Prince, the Davion royal family, and other civilian officials and dignitaries, and the agency's director is also the Prince's senior intelligence advisor and a member of the Privy Council.

Because its mandate closely resembles that of the DMI, the MIIO often works in close coordination with that agency. Though both have similar goals and operations, each has a slightly different focus, so operations do not intersect nearly as much as some might think. To assure as much efficiency as possible, a liaison within both organizations helps coordinate interagency operations as necessary.

Of course, the MIIO does not need the support of the DMI to fulfill its obligations to the Federated Suns. Its operatives have completed scores of successful missions, known only to the Prince and those that surround him or her, in just the past decade. A well-regarded rumor has it that MIIO agents tracked down and dealt with the assassin who killed Archon Melissa Steiner-Davion and later uncovered evidence of Katherine Steiner-Davion's crimes.

The FedCom Civil War has gutted the MIIO, however, as the Archon evidently used Ministry personnel, through her senior advisor, Richard Dehaver, to do much of her dirty work during the Civil War. Countless MIIO personnel left their positions in protest of these actions, but just as many actively assisted her in such illegal activities. Many of the latter have either been arrested, eliminated, or are being sought by the current administration.

MIIO COMMAND

MIIO:

Cole Williams

Bureau of Internal Investigation:

Dominic Reynold

Counterintelligence:

Sanford Nesbit

Covert Operations:

Mason Lyndon

Information Gathering Services:

Cherilyn Treaser

COMMAND

The Director commands all MIIO resources and reports directly to the First Prince, the Prince's Champion and/or the Privy Council, or High Command. MIIO personnel are civilians, though many are former military, and so are not organized along a military chain of command. That is not to say that there is not rank or position within the ministry, just that seniority is determined by other means than rank insignia.

Serving under the Director are a number of senior deputy directors, each controlling a different division or operational region. Together, the Director and these senior deputies form the Command Group, which functions as the senior decision-making body within MIIO. Assistant deputy directors report to the deputy directors and command larger departments within each division. An entire hierarchy of senior directors, senior agents and managers extends down from there.

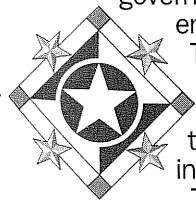
MIIO DIVISIONS

MIIO contains four major divisions, which in turn are subdivided, along with several different regional operations offices. These offices handle the agency's operations both within and without the Federated Suns. Unlike the DMI, each MIIO division has its own analysis, electronic intelligence, special operations and other special-purpose personnel, allowing each subdivision to handle all operations as an autonomous entity if need be.

MIIO Director Cole Williams served as a colonel within the AFFS before the Clan war and is rumored to have been a regional DMI deputy director until he resigned when Archon Katherine took the throne on New Avalon.

Bureau of Internal Investigation

Though the actual size of all MIIO divisions is classified, the BII is generally thought to be the largest, as this division's mandate is to monitor the entirety of the Federated Suns. BII personnel investigate all allegations of corruption and wrongdoing within the state's bureaucracy and monitor the media and all major groups for anti-governmental or other seditious leanings. The BII also handles background investigations for governmental employees and for nobles who need security clearances.



Technically, this division is prohibited from investigating or otherwise spying on governmental officials or nobles without cause and specific authorization, which must come from the MIIO Director (with assent from the Judicial Review Court, or a lesser Regional Review Court). Of course, the security of the Federated Suns is paramount, and these regulations have likely been circumvented countless times in the past, especially during the FedCom Civil War.

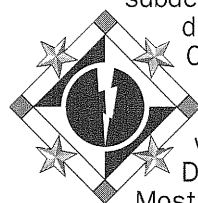
The BII handles all of its own operations, from investigation to arrest (or other conclusion), an arrangement that has spawned rumors that this division has taken part in assassinations, kidnappings and other shady operations. While these rumors have spawned a number of paranoid watchdog groups, neither the BII's actions nor the influence of these groups has ever reached the level of the Lyran Loki and Heimdall groups.

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Counterintelligence

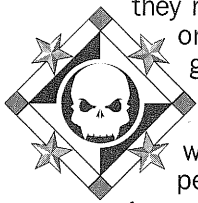
The Counterintelligence Division, or CID (sometimes known as the Rat Catchers) originally grew out of a BII subdepartment, becoming fully operational during the Second Succession War. Charged with rooting out spies and other covert groups operating within the Federated Suns, this division often works with the BII, the Covert Ops Division, or even DMI units as necessary. Most commonly in concert with the BII, the CID is often called upon to eliminate the threat of terrorists groups first identified by the BII.

The CID operates all throughout the Federated Suns, tracking all known foreign agents and any domestic spies they may have recruited.



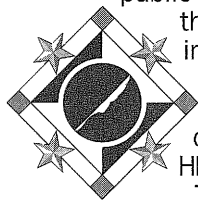
Covert Operations

The Covert Operations Division, or Covert Ops, is responsible for operations against foreign powers, be they nations or significant non-governmental organizations, such as large political groups or interstellar corporations. The majority of operations are directed at infiltrating and cultivating informants within target organizations. Covert Ops personnel work to destabilize governments, sour relations between non-allied governments, carry out high-risk raids, engage in attacks upon specific individuals or locations, and dozens of other special operations. As their activities are similar to those of the DMI's MI4 and MI6, this agency often pursues coordinated activities with those divisions.



Information-Gathering Services

This division is responsible for gathering intelligence and information through means other than spies and informants. Personnel from this division monitor all public transmissions and media reports throughout the Inner Sphere for relevant information. Additionally, technicians from this division actively work to decode and analyze encrypted communications, especially intercepted HPG transmissions.



The IGS also maintains listening posts on certain border worlds and in systems where civil unrest threatens the security of the state. Analysts from this division regularly advise the MIIO Director and the Privy Council, and work closely with the DMI's MI2 and MI3 personnel to build and maintain a current picture of what is going on within the Inner Sphere.

Regional Operations

As with the DMI, all MIIO operations are run through regional operations directors, who have been given authority to oversee all activities within their assigned theater of operation. Each of these directors reports to the MIIO Director and the Command Group (of which they

are also a part). Corresponding roughly to a political division of the realm, there are six regions of MIIO operations, but since the formation of the Federated Commonwealth and its later breakup, the makeup of these regions has been altered over time to better suit their operations.

Each of the six regions are headquartered on a specific Federated Suns world and has responsibility over dozens of star systems. The six regional commands are located on Addicks, Markesan, New Avalon, New Syrtis, and Robinson, with the New Avalon office all handling all operations outside of the Federated Suns.

MASKIROVKA (MA SI JIA RUO NA)

The following report was intercepted by agents we have on Highspire (for rather obvious reasons). The verigraphed signature confirms it comes from Kali Liao herself, though for the life of me, I'm puzzled by the connection between her and St. Jamais. —CT
Faithful Cameron,

I regret that in our previous correspondence I neglected to provide current information on the state of the Capellan intelligence apparatus to accompany our material on the Capellan arm. For reasons I cannot fathom, it appears that a few of my followers misunderstood the nature of my request and withheld some useful tidbits. You may rest assured, however, that such negligence has been more than atoned for.

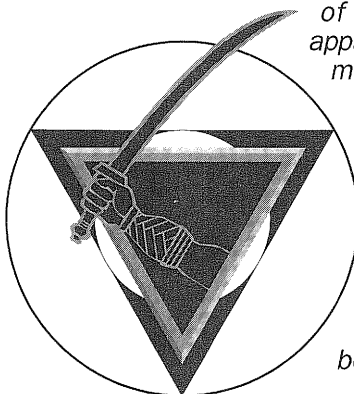
Once more, the information contained in the attached report should demonstrate our commitment to our private arrangement, and I trust that it will be used in good faith as we stand against those who oppress your people and mine. Through understanding, after all, we attain a greater level of enlightenment, and as we stand at the threshold of a great Ascension, you will find the Confederation a worthy ally indeed!

With affection,

Kali Liao, 27 September 3067

EVOLUTION OF THE MASKIROVKA

The Capellan Maskirovka is the proverbial riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma, which describes not only to its actions but also its motivations. While much of this agency's more bewildering moments have come under the direction of colorful Chancellors in the past, even today there are times when the Maskirovka's activities vary between the ruthlessly efficient and the



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inexplicably unpredictable.

The story of the Maskirovka begins with the Deimos, its predecessor from the far-off days of the Capellan Hegemony. Originally conceived as a census bureau, the Deimos quickly evolved into an effective secret police agency, charged with protecting the Hegemony against internal and external enemies. Over time, the Deimos became the single most important cog in the machine of the Capellan state, heavily relied upon by the Hegemony Prime Magnates with minimal oversight. This reliance led to increased budget and payroll for new recruits as the Hegemony's influence grew but also contributed to the Deimos' eventual demise, as enemy agents found it increasingly easier to infiltrate the agency. By the end of Franco Liao's reign as Chancellor, the Deimos had become so riddled with foreign operatives that its vaunted efficiency was hopelessly compromised and a feeling of inter-agency paranoia paralyzed those few who weren't somehow linked to another government's payroll.

In 2396, Chancellor Kurnath Liao decided that the time had come to overhaul the Deimos and commissioned a task force whose sole function was to investigate and evaluate the current state of the agency. Named from a Russian word that has multiple meanings (all related to the fine art of deception), the Maskirovka was originally charged with rooting out enemy infiltrators and providing the Capellan state with reliable protection from hostile intelligence agencies. By spreading carefully constructed pieces of misinformation and following their trails, the Maskirovka managed to identify and eliminate hundreds of double agents in the Deimos. These purges left the agency so gutted that the Maskirovka was given the green light to take its place as the intelligence arm of the Capellan Confederation.

The Trials of Loyalty

Under Aleisha Liao, the Maskirovka's power declined somewhat from sheer disuse. Aleisha's indifference toward reports of enemy troop movements and her general disdain for carrying out offensive covert operations caused the agency to atrophy, and its budget shrank accordingly. After Aleisha's death, however, things only became bleaker for the Maskirovka when Arden Baxter assumed the mantle of Chancellor.

In his ten-year reign, Baxter launched a systematic effort to purge the Confederation of everything even remotely connected with the Liao family. In most cases this domestic campaign was unsuccessful thanks to the recalcitrance of the Capellan nobility, but some parts of the Confederation—notably the military and the Maskirovka—suffered greatly at Baxter's hands. The Maskirovka found their budget cut to shoestring levels, their mandate reduced to simple information gathering, and news of anti-Liao "popular fronts" ignored. When it was later discovered (despite the Chancellor's efforts to hide the truth) that the anti-Liao popular movement was funded by Arden Baxter himself, the few members of the

Maskirovka still loyal to the Liao family decided that enough was enough. On two occasions, the agency unsuccessfully tried to remove Baxter from office by fomenting political upheavals in the Confederation. When these failed, they resorted to more direct means. In 2425, several agents duped An Manliu, a mentally disturbed lieutenant from Marion's Highlanders, into assassinating Chancellor Baxter as he made his way to the House of Scions.

The post-Baxter years were far more kind to the Maskirovka, which saw its power and influence grow. However, the agency's efficiency waxed and waned dramatically because of its dogged loyalty to the Liao family. In the best of times, the Maskirovka carried out Capellan policy and preserved domestic harmony in the name of the Chancellor with brutal efficiency. At the worst of times, its agents fell all over themselves to "yes" a Chancellor to death. This eagerness to please the head of state at any cost would lead to the Maskirovka's greatest difficulties during the reign of Maximilian Liao.

Before he became the so-called "Mad Chancellor", Maximilian Liao was known as "El Diablo", and he quickly earned a reputation for shooting (or at least convincingly threatening to shoot) those messengers who brought him bad news, regardless of their loyalty or value. It was during his reign that a promising Maskirovka operative by the name of Tsen Shang recruited a young Davion MechWarrior of Capellan ancestry who had publicly turned his back on the realm where he had grown up after his military career had ended dishonorably. The thought of turning a promising prospect from the evil Davions to the side of the glorious Confederation led Shang to bring his prize back to Sian, where he was welcomed with open arms and worked his way up to become one of Maximilian Liao's closest advisors. The promising prospect used the Chancellor's ego, the Maskirovka's all-consuming paranoia, and the knowledge that Maximilian had help from another Davion traitor to his advantage in his new position. In their haste to play "yes men" to Chancellor Liao, the Maskirovka completely failed to notice they'd been effectively duped into becoming an unwitting branch of the Federated Suns' MIO.

The name of this prospect was, of course, Justin Xiang.

THE BURNING DOWN

Maximilian Liao died a broken man in 3036, his realm shattered and in disarray, reduced to half its might in two short years of brutal fighting of the Fourth Succession War. His daughter, Candace, had defected with her Davion spy lover, taking with her the entire St. Ives Commonality, and his intelligence service was riddled with moles. His remaining daughter, Romano, who had stood as de facto Chancellor since the end of the war, ordered sweeping reforms upon his death to prevent another Justin Xiang incident.

In the obsessive effort to bolster its own security, the agency was compartmentalized to the point where none but the most senior officers were aware of the

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activities of other branches or agents. Romano devised a taxing series of tests agents had to pass to prove their utmost loyalty and dedication to the Confederation. Those who failed were brutally purged, and any survivors continued on with the knowledge that the penalty for failing future missions was death. Though these bloody efforts created a duplication of assignments and virtually drowned the Maskirovka's ranks in their own paranoia, they succeeded in binding the agency closer to the Chancellor's will and also forced the agency to grow more efficient, streamlined, and secure than ever before. Though the purges and paranoia would ultimately limit the Mask's ability to engage in anything but the most defensive of operations under Romano's reign, the security of the Confederation against foreign intelligence was never so strong.



XIN SHENG

The ascent of Sun-Tzu Liao heralded more sweeping reforms for the Maskirovka. Scaling back the strict compartmentalization instituted by Romano, the agency regained its ability to function in more than a defensive capacity. Failure was officially no longer punishable by death, and the agency's old mandate was renewed: to protect the Capellan Confederation from enemies both within and without. Sun-Tzu even increased the Maskirovka's operating budget to improve its training and equipment, boosting the effectiveness of its field

operatives and analysis branches, and its duties expanded to include fomenting unrest on former Capellan worlds seized during the Fourth Succession War.

Though Sun-Tzu's reforms may have softened the Maskirovka's public edge, it would be foolhardy to presume it has become anything less than the brutally effective intelligence gathering and secret police force it has been since the final days of the Deimos. Indeed, with the help of his Maskirovka and the Death Commandos, the current Chancellor of the Capellan Confederation has managed to reclaim much of his realm's lost worlds and continues to actively support a vast web of insurgents throughout the Periphery and on the Davion front. Mask agents are suspected of being active in House Marik's Free Worlds League as well, defending Capellan interests against an increasingly aggressive opponent, and there is even some evidence suggesting that Sun-Tzu's loyal operatives are hard at work solidifying their hold over his Periphery allies. Though the compartmentalization of Romano's reign may be gone, it is curious to note that in many cases the Maskirovka still does not seem to be fully aware of all its activities at any one time, suggesting that Sun-Tzu himself plays his cards very close to his vest.

BRANCHES OF THE MASKIROVKA

Chancellor Sun-Tzu's Xin Sheng has touched the Maskirovka in the names of its subsections, adding a touch of the Confederation's Han culture in its titles, though even more closely signifying the agency's loyalty to the office and the person of the Chancellor himself. Curiously enough, however, this change has not been applied to the agency's name overall, which retains its Russian heritage.

Ma Si Jia Ruo Na Dong Shi Bu (Maskirovka Directorate)

The Maskirovka Directorate is the office of the head of the Confederation's entire intelligence community—besides the Chancellor himself, of course. The agency's Director is personally responsible to the Chancellor for the actions of his agents, and is to be available to the Chancellor at all times. The Director is also expected to participate in strategy meetings with the Chancellor and *Sang-jiang-jun* Talon Zahn, updating both men on developments relating to the current state of the Inner Sphere and the Maskirovka's activities. The commanding officers of each branch report to the Director, coming into contact with the Chancellor only when swearing loyal service to him (and to the Confederation) upon assuming office.



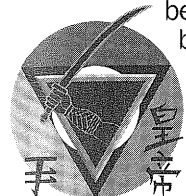
Department heads present all aspects of their organizational plans to their branch commanders, who in turn must gain approval for all requests from the Director. In a departure from the past, Maskirovka agents are allowed some measure of leeway in carrying out

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their assignments and are, in most cases, passively encouraged to take initiative if a situation warrants it. Balancing this seeming leniency is the expectation that all deviations from standing orders must be documented and justified to one's superiors.

Huang Di Shi Zhe

Formerly the Capellan Operations Branch, the *Huang Di Shi Zhe* (Chancellor's Hand) is responsible for intelligence gathering and espionage beyond the borders of the Confederation. The operations of this branch are divided into three distinct departments.



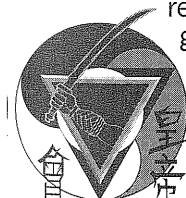
The *Zang shu er* (Chancellor's Ear) is one of the largest and generally most reliable in the Maskirovka, which is surprising given the Capellan distrust of other cultures. Charged with infiltration and information gathering, the ingrained distrust of the Capellan people toward non-Capellans makes it hard for many agents to work with networks of native informers. As a result, many agents become "sleepers", spending months, if not years, developing their cover—and their cultural tolerance—before carrying out an assignment.

The *Zang shu jiao zha* (Chancellor's Cunning), formerly known as the Department of Misinformation, handles the spreading of false information and propaganda to hostile agents both within and beyond the Confederation's borders. Over the years, the Maskirovka has taken the dissemination of misinformation to a high art, forcing enemy agencies to waste valuable time and resources checking and authenticating all data gathered from Capellan sources.

The *Zang shu jian* (Chancellor's Sword), is the Hand's covert operations department, which handles offensive missions ranging from sabotage and psychological warfare to guerilla operations on neighboring worlds, and even kidnapping and assassination, as necessary. Sword agents are—in some cases—hardened criminals, but most recruits are simply amoral individuals, whose "ethical flexibility" allows them to undertake the most ruthless of missions without fear or remorse.

Huang Di Yi Zhi

The *Huang Di Yi Zhi* (Chancellor's Will) is more widely known than the Hand. Formerly known as the Special Services Branch, the Will serves as the Maskirovka's internal security force. Fanatically loyal to the Confederation, the Will stands ready to carry out any operation ordered by their Chancellor and upholds the power of the Capellan government through its three departments.



The *Zang shu zhe* (Chancellor's Shield) conducts counterinsurgency operations, forever working to quell internal unrest and protect the realm from enemy infiltrators. The Shield acts swiftly and is not above using the most extreme methods to detect and neutralize enemy operatives within the Confederation. If an individual is suspected of spying for a foreign power, the Shield closely monitors him for no more than one month, gathering evidence to confirm their suspicions. At the end of that time, the suspect is either arrested by the department or let go. If arrested, a suspect can expect to undergo excruciating interrogation using all known technological implements and psychological methods in order to make him crack.

The *Zang shu sheng* (Chancellor's Voice) is the propaganda department of the Will, which creates all official reports concerning events within the Confederation and the rest of the Inner Sphere. These reports, distributed through a variety of Maskirovka-controlled media outlets, may contain any tactics from a subtle slant to outright lies in order to ensure the citizens' total loyalty to the Confederation. The recent success of the Xin Sheng movement has allowed the Voice to appeal to the patriotism of Capellan citizens, playing to the basic emotions of pride and the superiority of the Capellan people over the "barbarians" who constantly threaten their sovereignty.

The third department of the Chancellor's Will is the *Zang shu cheng* (Chancellor's Eyes), formerly known as the Department of Officer Observation and Cultural Monitoring. As its former name implies, the Eyes are charged with observing Capellan educational and industrial facilities and vigilantly watch for anti-government actions or speech.

Military observers (political officers) for the Eyes have a similar responsibility, with an added mandate to watch for signs of Hopeless Battle Syndrome, a leftover phenomenon from the reign of Romano Liao in which Capellan citizens, soldiers, or operatives take on suicidal odds rather than face the consequences of defeat. Military personnel showing signs of Hopeless Battle Syndrome are removed from their positions and remanded to therapy and counseling before they can hamper their units' effectiveness in the field.

MASKIROVKA COMMAND

Maskirovka Director:
Citizen Nancy Bao Lee

Huang Di Shi Zhe:
Citizen Aaron Ward

Zang shu er:
Citizen Hyun-Ki Takeo

Zang shu jiao zha:
Citizen Sven Borkavich

Zang shu jian:
Citizen Lavina Hastings

Huang Di Yi Zhi:
Citizen Thomas Jarra

Zang shu zhe:
Citizen Zahra Sanora

Zang shu sheng:
Citizen Shaiming Xuan Loc

Zang shu cheng:
Citizen Mikhail Sigmund

Death Commandos:
Jiang-jun Michael Hyung-Tsei

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Si Wang Te Gong Dui (The Death Commandos)

The Death Commandos are not actually a part of the Maskirovka but are loosely assigned to the Confederations' armed forces. In fact, significant friction exists between the Commandos and the Maskirovka, largely attributed to the latter's belief that the former may one day be groomed to replace it. The rivalry between the Mask and the Commandos goes much deeper, however, than can be attributed to the mere professional jealousy common when military and civilian-based covert operations clash. Ever since the Justin Xiang disaster, where the Commandos suffered grievous damage thanks to the Mask's infiltration, relations between the two agencies have remained frosty.

The Commandos serve as the Chancellor's personal guard as well as an elite covert military force. Its operatives are trained in all forms of combat, from a variety of martial arts to small-scale BattleMech warfare. Death Commandos are chosen for their fanatic loyalty to the Chancellor himself as well as for their combat prowess.

Interestingly enough, it has been the Death Commandos, not the Maskirovka, who have been most active in the Chaos March, having actively supported guerilla operations in the Sarna and Tikonov regions since Sun-Tzu's rise to power. Though the Maskirovka is most certainly active in the region as well, the tendency for the Commandos and the Mask to shun cooperation makes it difficult for the Chancellor to pursue his objectives in the region quite as effectively as he might otherwise.

[This logo, only recently seen in one or two capture correspondences, apparently is associated with the Death Commandos in some way; what its purpose is, or why the Commandos appear to have a new secret identification is unknown. —CT]

SAFE

To: Caradoc Trevena, SLDF Intelligence Command
From: Victor Steiner-Davion, Precentor-Martial (ComStar)
Date: 19 October 3067

Doc,

Many thanks for the briefing on SAFE. While I cannot comment first-hand on the information you supplied, Isis has been able to provide insights into the organization, its history and—perhaps most interestingly—its internal politics.

I know that during my tenure as First Prince there was a tendency to denigrate SAFE as the poor cousin of the Inner Sphere intelligence agencies, an organization riven by internal politics and factional

ambition. Certainly they appeared to lack the cold ruthlessness of the ISF, LIC or Maskirovka, particularly in special-operations, but their low-key activities hide a



formidable intelligence and analysis organization, particularly in economic and political fields. Furthermore, it would be a grave error to mistake the present organization for the one that failed so spectacularly in the

Fourth Succession War, allowing the Federated Commonwealth a near-bloodless conquest of more than a dozen League worlds. The Andurien War and Thomas' ascension to power brought about a sea-change in the organization's fortunes, just as they did in the FWLM, and the alliance with the Word of Blake ROM—one of the most potent intelligence agencies in the Inner Sphere—over the last 15 years has allowed SAFE to learn from that organization's experience, though there are increasing signs of frictions between the two groups.

SAFE's abilities may be invaluable in our New Star League, not least in keeping a close eye on the Blakists. Thomas and I have rarely seen eye-to-eye but I believe—and Isis concurs—that he will be willing to work with the SLDF. This is something we should pursue with some vigor at the Star League Conference in November.

—Victor

HISTORY

Similar to the organization of a number of provinces into the Free Worlds League, the League's intelligence service began life as a collection of disparate agencies, some working in concert with each other but most often pursuing their own political and regional agendas for the first 45 years of the nation's existence. With that in mind, Parliament approved (barely) the formation of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) in 2317, to unite the plethora of intelligence agencies after the chaos of the Terran Crisis. The NIA was active in both foreign and domestic operations, particularly against the nascent Lyran Commonwealth.

Death and Rebirth

Like much of the League infrastructure, the NIA soon found itself bound by political red tape and bickering. Its operations came under tight parliamentary control, ostensibly to protect the rights of member states, which hamstrung both internal and external operations. Rules bound the NIA's activities, making it little more than a glorified police force. In response, the NIA developed internal practices intended to circumvent legal and political restrictions on their actions while hiding the cost of their operations behind false accounts. In many

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regards, this was carried out with the complicity of certain League administrators (who sought to free the NIA from the shackles of Parliamentary politics) but soon expanded into a system of graft and corruption in which members of the NIA worked to advance their own private agendas and those of their patrons. This system survived for more than 40 years but eventually the extralegal excesses of the agency came to the attention of the prolific League media and the subsequent scandal lead to a succession of resignations and show-trials. In 2631, the Parliament ordered the NIA disbanded and in its place the formation of a replacement agency, known, for reasons lost to history, as SAFE.

This new organization worked closely with agencies of the Star League and those of neighbor states such as the Lyran Intelligence Corps, quickly dispelling the corrupt image of its predecessor. However, it took a domestic crisis—the so-called “Scourge of Death” and the near-annihilation of the Marik family in 2678—to solidify SAFE’s reputation. They played a vital role in unmasking the terrorists and their links to the Selaj family, and were instrumental in the long hunt for members of the Regular ruling family in the years that followed. SAFE’s complicity in the dismantlement of Regulus’ political structures did not, however, sit well with all member states of the League who accused them of being political tools of the Marik Commonwealth. Nonetheless, Parliament had little choice but to approve the agency’s actions. In doing so, they allowed SAFE to attain powers unparalleled in the history of the FWL.

Dark Days

The de-facto police state that emerged after the Selaj Crisis saw SAFE’s influence spread throughout the League. Civil liberties fell by the wayside as SAFE pursued enemies of the state and in 2680 Captain-General Gerald Marik, paranoid and vengeful, persuaded Parliament to expand SAFE’s funding and powers, allowing them to monitor any citizen of the FWL for involvement in “suspicious activities”. While many agents used these abilities to protect the state as intended, a number abused their position and built power bases of their own. Nonetheless, most FWL citizens approved of SAFE’s actions, allowing them to continue generally unmolested for almost half a century. Indeed, Gerald’s successor, Elise, exceeded even her father’s paranoia and sent SAFE against every threat, real or imagined.

In the chaos and rebellion that marked the end of Elise’s reign, SAFE sided with the Captain-General against Parliament. Although this placed them on the nominally victorious side, the reconstituted Parliament insisted on curbing SAFE’s power with the Intelligence Act of 2735. This scaled back the organization’s budget and manpower and also refocused its efforts toward gathering intelligence on the FWL’s foreign enemies rather than those at home. The Act also centralized much of the League’s defense intelligence gathering and analysis into SAFE’s hands. While some in Parliament worried over this move, the shift in emphasis mainly served to hide the agency’s emasculation.

Shadows and War

Ultimately, the refocusing of SAFE’s activities proved fortuitous as the Amaris crisis wrecked the Terran Hegemony and the entire Inner Sphere collapsed into the chaos of the First Succession War. Indeed, during the reign of Kenyon Marik, SAFE’s domestic operations (save counter-intelligence) dwindled to almost nothing as the agency sought every advantage it could against the Lyran Commonwealth and Capellan Confederation. SAFE proved their worth time and again in the first stages of the war, but in the early 29th Century it became clear that ComStar was manipulating its message traffic to their own ends and the result was open conflict between the FWL and the Order. Unfortunately, neither the Captain-General nor SAFE could operate under ComStar’s communications interdiction and the League had little choice but to capitulate. SAFE received the lion’s share of the blame for this disaster and found its funding slashed to the extent that even foreign operations were curtailed.

The agency limped through the 29th and early 30th centuries, regaining some of the respect it once enjoyed during the reign of Samuel Marik in the 2920s when SAFE’s assistant director, Erin Marden-Smythe, exploited Disposed families in neighboring realms, using them for espionage and sabotage to aid the League’s cause. However, SAFE remained under-funded and suffered another blow when it was caught unawares by the Steiner “Deep Raid” of 2987. This attack brought the agency’s shortfalls to the attention of the League government and also triggered a series of political plots that culminated in a scheme to overthrow Parliament in 2988. This period of dissent lead to a considerable increase in SAFE’s domestic activities, including investigations of the Free Worlds League Military (FWLM) that lead to the Accountability Act of 2996 and the Logistics Act of 2997, both of which sought to counter corruption in the military-industrial complex. These endeavors lead to a cooling of relations between the military and intelligence communities, but solidified SAFE’s reputation and the new Captain-General, Janos Marik, saw to it that the agency’s budget and manpower were increased to meet its needs. It would prove to be a provident move.

By the Sword

The Civil War between Janos and Anton Marik in 3014 saw SAFE’s domestic powers increase considerably, as an amendment to the Intelligence Act passed granting the agency almost free reign in the hunt for traitors to the realm. The one concession to democracy was that Parliament could undertake a post-facto review of both foreign and domestic operations. Although only intended as a temporary easing of restrictions on SAFE’s operations, the post-civil war era saw the agency demonstrate its value by uncovering a succession of plots within the League while also becoming adept at media manipulation and public relations, which aided both the agency and the Captain-General.

The League’s disastrous showing in the Fourth

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

SAFE COMMAND STRUCTURE

Director of SAFE:
Wilson Cherenkov

Assistant Director, Analysis:
Béatrice Sibleyras

Deputy AD, Information Gathering:
John Franklin

Deputy AD, Active Analysis:
Niki Manon

Assistant Director, Covert Operations:
Parminder Roi

Commander, Eagle Corps:
General Michael Kallenberg

Commander, Dark Shadows:
Force Commander Anne-Marie McCormack

**Assistant Director,
Counterintelligence:**
Andrei Toshak

Succession War undermined much of the confidence in SAFE, whose renewed emphasis on domestic affairs had come at the expense of foreign operations. Likewise, the Andurien Revolt and the ten-year conflict to bring the errant province back into the League did little to restore this confidence, particularly following their failures in protecting Janos Marik from an assassin's bomb and in predicting the fate of Thomas Marik. In many regards, the denigration of SAFE's performance in the war was without justification—intelligence operations played a major role in the conflict, but few came to the attention of the public (or even to Parliament after the Internal Emergency Act of 3030 and the Addendum to the Incorporation in 3037). ComStar, who proved essential to Thomas' survival and reappearance, became a close ally of the League and SAFE found its foreign intelligence capabilities aided with both passive (in the form of priority communications) and active (ROM-gathered intelligence) assistance, particularly against their mutual foe, the Federated Commonwealth.

New Alliances

The Clan Invasion prompted the League to ally with the other Inner Sphere powers, even its historical enemies in the Capellan Confederation and Lyran Commonwealth. These new relationships were workmanlike if frosty. The League resented what it saw as extortion by its new "allies," in particular the FedCom's de-facto blackmail of the Captain-General to get the manufacturing assistance it needed. However, while relations with the FedCom remained cold and those with historical allies the Draconis Combine deteriorated, the League found surprising new friends in the form of the Capellan Confederation, going so far as to plan a marriage between Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao and Isis Marik. Nonetheless, the Captain-General

did not trust the Capellan Chancellor and though allied with the Confederation, much of SAFE's efforts were aimed at containing the aggressive Capellan Maskirovka.

Assistance in this and other matters came from a surprising new direction. The aftermath of the Battle of Tukayyid lead to a schism within ComStar and most of the traditionalists—including the majority of ROM, its superlative intelligence and covert agency—sought refuge within the League. Although this lead to a number of tensions, the Word of Blake-FWL alliance also allowed considerable cross-pollination between ROM and SAFE, leading to a drastic improvement in the skills and abilities of the Free Worlds intelligence agency as they learned from their Blakist counterparts. Both organizations vied for the Captain-General's attention and for many years Thomas played SAFE off against WoB-ROM, using one to verify the other and even using ROM to carry out a number of foreign operations rather than the League's own resources.

In recent years, however, this rivalry has taken a darker twist, with rumors of growing tensions between SAFE and WoB-ROM. SAFE Director Wilson Cherenkov is responsible for much of this, instructing his subordinates to function independently of the Blakist agency for reasons not yet clear. For their part, since the ascension of Cameron St. Jamais as Precentor Martial, ROM appears to have distanced itself from the League and the Captain-General in particular. The reasons for this apparent estrangement are also unknown.

SAFE BRANCHES

SAFE has three principal branches, each under the authority of an Assistant Director who reports to the Director of SAFE (who in turn answers to the Captain General and the Parliamentary Intelligence Oversight Committee). These branches are the Analysis Branch, the Covert Operations Branch, and the Counterintelligence Directorate, each with numerous subdivisions. Additionally, each branch has a number of regional officers who serve as specialists and overseers for the major regions and member-states of the FWL such as Regulus, Andurien and Oriente.

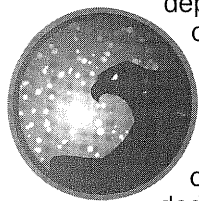
ANALYSIS BRANCH

SAFE's largest division, the Analysis Branch, spans both foreign and domestic operations. The majority of its members are field agents charged with gathering information on the League and its neighbors, but the division also features a substantial number of analysis staff based at several regional centers and with a central command center on Atreus. These two subdivisions within the Analysis Branch operate largely independently of one another, each answering to its own assistant director.

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

Information Gathering

With agents on every League world and many worlds in neighboring states, the Information Gathering sub-department is the largest in SAFE by an order of magnitude. Many of its operatives work passively, monitoring local media and forwarding information to analysis centers, often in conjunction with another full-time occupation. IG also maintains a cadre of dedicated intelligence operatives—spies in common parlance—whose job is to gather information by infiltrating or subverting foreign (and, occasionally, domestic) organizations. However, the majority of such operatives belong to the Covert Operations branch. Most IG agents work alone and are the source of the myth that SAFE operatives are poor team-players.

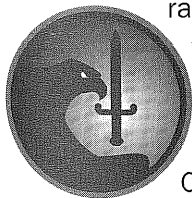


Active Analysis

Based on series of key worlds (such as Andurien, Tamarind, Stewart, and Oriente) to analyze regional information, and with its headquarters on Atreus to look at the “big picture,” the Analysis sub-branch is home to the SAFE agents who investigate the data provided by IG (and who, in many cases, direct their actions). Some analysts are generalists but most specialize in specific areas, such as events on a particular world or region, politics, economics and/or technology. SAFE Analysts usually work in small teams, most of whose tasks are routine statistical and contextual analysis of data. They are methodical workers and excellent team players. Indeed, their analysis capabilities are second to none in the Inner Sphere (exceeding even those of ComStar) but are frequently limited by the action (or inaction) of the IG sub-branch.

COVERT OPERATIONS

Arguably the most glamorous (and secretive) of the SAFE divisions, Covert Operations is tasked with a wide range of physical operations both inside and outside the League. Their tasks range from infiltration and espionage (when less skilled IG operatives are deemed insufficient to a mission's needs) to assassination and sabotage. Covert Operations have also, historically, funded terrorist groups elsewhere in the Inner Sphere though such actions have been (officially at least) suspended since the Clan Invasion. In practice, however, SAFE-sponsored terrorism is alive and well, with agents particularly active in the Capellan Confederation and Periphery realms. Most Covert Operations operatives function as individuals or in small teams but two larger organizations exist, tasked with particularly difficult operations.



Eagle Corps

The Eagle Corps is SAFE's ultra-elite special-forces team, its skills and equipment commensurate with the Federated Suns' “Rabid Foxes” or the Draconis

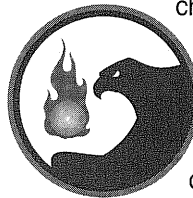
Combine's DEST. Numbering only three companies of commandoes, the unit does not officially exist, but has become an open secret within the FWL during the last ten years after a series of successful missions. The Atreus-based unit draws its personnel from the cream of the FWLM and law enforcement agencies like CopSec (the federal police force) and makes use of the latest (in many cases, even prototype) equipment.

Dark Shadows

More public than the Eagle Corps, the Dark Shadows are a 'Mech battalion operated by SAFE to provide an independent, heavy-hitting force for missions requiring strength over finesse. Most members of the elite Dark Shadows are on extended secondment from the FWLM, usually serving tours of 18-24 months with the unit. Although details of the Shadows' missions are classified, known only to the Captain-General and members of the Intelligence Oversight Committee, enough information has leaked out to color the public image of the unit. A number series based on the Shadows' alleged operations have been broadcast, including one putting its members through the equivalent of the battalion's rigorous selection process.

COUNTER INTELLIGENCE

The most secretive of the SAFE branches, the counter-intelligence division pervades League society, charged with defending against foreign and domestic threats. Some agents are tasked with discovering the agents from foreign powers and taking action to monitor (or neutralize, if necessary) their activities. Others ferret out domestic threats to the government, both political and commercial. The majority of these operatives maintain regular employment, concealing their ties to the CI-directorate behind a normal lifestyle. Some high profile “mole hunters”, however, work openly within the League, as much for a deterrent effect as for practical counter-intelligence work. In particular, the governments of Regulus and Andurien are kept under close observation, but recent political shifts have lead to the monitoring of members of the Marik family opposed to the Captain-General, including Alys Rousset-Marik and the family of Therese Brett-Marik. Counter-intelligence agents are also reputed to have clashed with Blakist ROM agents within the League, and there are rumors that some elements of the CI directorate may be more loyal to their erstwhile targets than to the government on Atreus.



LYRAN INTELLIGENCE CORPS (LIC)

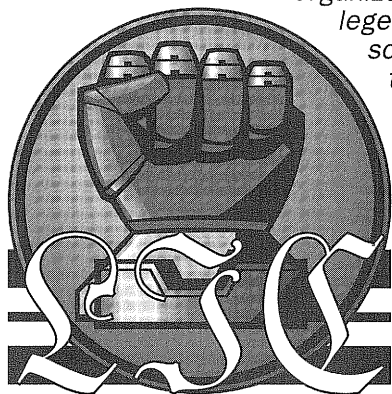
To: General Caradoc Trevena,
SLDF Intelligence Command
From: Adept Mu-VI Frances LuBeck
Re: LIC Status Briefing [[CLASSIFIED!]]

Good evening, General.

As you requested, I have attached my report on the intelligence apparatus of the Lyrans Alliance, though I am sure you already were aware of much of it. It is quite academic with the Order, and, of course, I am aware of your own Lyrans heritage, so if the report strays from what you know to be the truth, please feel free to make corrections. As always, we endeavor to be as accurate as possible. In a nutshell, however, it boils down to this:

With a longstanding reputation as one of the oldest and most reliable secret service organizations in the Inner Sphere, the Lyrans Intelligence Corps has often saved House Steiner whenever its military machine failed to deliver hoped-for results. Although the events of recent years have shaken the foundations of this organization, reducing its legendary efficiency somewhat in the wake of the Civil War, the LIC remains a powerful entity that must be watched.

—F. LuBeck



BRIEF HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

The LIC was formed during the reign of the first Katherine Steiner

who claimed the mantle of Archon of the Lyrans Commonwealth. Created to defend the Commonwealth in general and the Steiner family in particular, the agency was initially conceived as a defense against all non-military attacks. The agency's early years, however, were plagued with ineptitude as the agents had difficulty adapting to the changing face of the Inner Sphere. In fact, it took the agency six years to slip an operative into the Terran Hegemony BattleMech plant on Hesperus II, before LCAF commandos finally raided it to obtain the plans for the *Mackie*.

The success of the commando raid, however, proved to be the last time the LCAF outperformed the LIC, as an agency-wide overhaul and intensified training helped to raise its standards of effectiveness.

Early Years: LIC on the Defensive

The LIC's first responsibility, protecting the Archon and the Steiner family, characterized their first several centuries as an intelligence agency. Rather than launch complex operations against rival states, the organization's most noteworthy successes came in identifying and dealing with threats from within the Commonwealth. For example, the LIC proved instrumental in clearing Duke Reynolds of Fatima of accusations of assassinating Archon Alistair Steiner in 2467. In helping to prove Reynolds' innocence, the LIC's actions brought an end to civil unrest caused by conflicts between Reynolds' supporters and detractors.

In 2592, the LIC proved its worth by identifying the Steering Committee in the Estates General as the culprits in the kidnapping of Archon-Designate Kevin Dineson. This action helped head off a crisis that began when then-Archon Viola Steiner-Dineson, reacting to rumors about the kidnapping, flew into a berserk rage that nearly sparked an internal war among the Commonwealth's largest families.

Not all of the LIC's operations during this time were confined to the Commonwealth's borders, but they were, by and large, the only ones considered largely successful. In fact, thanks to an unauthorized raid by Loki operatives on the Combine world of Vega in 2488, the public perception was that Lyrans intelligence could not mount an effective operation against external adversaries. In fact, the raid, which cost several agents' lives, resulted in a brief—and somewhat public—dispute between Loki, the LIC's terrorist espionage unit, and the rest of the Commonwealth administration.

The Succession Wars: LIC on the Offensive

During the Succession Wars, the LIC came into its own, launching a number of missions against rival states, particularly the Draconis Combine and the Free Worlds League. Though Loki performed many of these actions, the contributions of other divisions, such as the Lohengrin and the Norns, cannot be denied. Though by their very nature many LIC operations remained classified—and indeed, some may never be revealed—others have become legendary. For example, the crippling of a Draconis Combine JumpShip fleet during the Fourth Succession War, perpetrated by Loki agents using flight-pack equipped garbage bags, demonstrate that there are no lengths to which the LIC will not go to secure a victory.

In the early years of the 31st century, however, the LIC's operations became much more sinister under the reign of Alessandro Steiner. Once more working under their mandate to secure the Archon and the ruling Steiner line, the LIC deployed Loki against the Lyrans people as rioting and civil unrest intensified as a result of Alessandro's military mismanagement. In order to keep the peace, Loki held much of the Commonwealth in a grip of terror, conducting midnight raids to arrest common citizens as "enemies of the state". Later still, the agency even attempted to assassinate Alessandro's popular

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niece, Katrina Steiner, only to be thwarted by the shadowy agency known as Heimdall. Once in power, Archon Katrina Steiner reined in the LIC, and Loki in particular.

With the union of the Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth into the Federated Commonwealth, the LIC grew even more efficient and effective, engaging in joint operations and sharing information on the other Successor States under a new joint intelligence command known as the Intelligence Secretariat (also known as the FCIC). Though a merging of the two agencies was considered, the outcry from both and the centuries of experience in their respective regions allowed the LIC to remain a largely independent agency under the Secretariat. This decision proved most fortunate in the years following Melissa Steiner-Davion's assassination.



Shattered Dreams and New Beginnings: The LIC Today

Almost from the moment Katherine Steiner-Davion usurped her brother's control over the Lyran half of the Federated Commonwealth and declared its secession as the Lyran Alliance in 3057, the LIC and the MIIO became overnight enemies. Inter-agency spying began almost at once (and possibly even before) the maps were redrawn, and suddenly former friendly agents were looked upon as spies and traitors. Kommandant-General Alicia Savinson, head of Loki under Archon-Prince Victor,

ousting her superior, Karl Harburg to assume control of all LIC operations. Her ascent, and her willingness to follow any order given by Archon Katherine and the Alliance, virtually turned the agency's clock back to the days of Alessandro.

Purges swept the ranks of the LIC, eliminating agents loyal or sympathetic to the united FedCom, while the Propaganda division worked overtime to sell Katherine's image as a benevolent pacifist. Rumors circulated to implicate Victor in his mother's death, and Loki agents mercilessly hounded anyone who publicly questioned the Archon's decisions.

While her brother was away helping to defeat the Clans, agents at home helped persuade his regent, Yvonne Steiner-Davion, to step down in favor of "Katrina", expanding their influence into the Davion realm as well. Meanwhile, LIC and Loki agents scrambled for every military edge they could find, whether among the forces Victor took with him into Clan space or at home. During this time Loki, in parallel to the famous Hesperus II commando raid of centuries past, obtained access to the Wolf's Dragoons' light fusion engine specs. Archon-Prince Victor Steiner-Davion returned two years later to an Inner Sphere he barely recognized, his sister on both thrones.

The Civil War that soon followed was fought on every level, with agents on both sides declaring for either faction much the same way the militaries of both realms did. Complicating matters further, Heimdall once more resurfaced, targeting the LIC espionage agencies grown out of control. Hundreds—if not, thousands—of agents died in the fighting, gutting both sides.

The end result remains clearly visible today. Alicia Savinson and many of her most ardent supporters in the LIC command, court-martialed in secret proceedings on the authority of Archon Peter Steiner-Davion, have been removed, replaced by a retinue of more reliable officers. The agencies themselves, particularly the espionage division, have been reined in and many are being restructured, with most ongoing activities placed on hold pending a review. Recruitment has doubled in an effort to refill the ranks, but it may be some time before the LIC is ready to resume full-scale operations again.

The net result of the past few years has been to reset the LIC to almost its infancy. Operations have been curtailed to such an extent that they have returned to the original mandate, with the LIC forming the hidden line of defense for the realm and the Archon. Currently, the agency's directives are almost exclusively aimed at keeping foreign operatives out, though some departments—notably the Norns—have the added responsibility of investigating a number of "loose threads" left after the Civil War. Chief among these is the location of several units listed as MIA after the fighting. Ranging from POWs allegedly taken by hostile troops in every theater of combat—by both pro-Katherine and pro-Victor forces—to WarShips that have vanished inexplicably across both realms, the determination of the location and disposition of such assets has been given a high priority. Also, an ongoing

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LYRAN INTELLIGENCE CORPS COMMAND

LIC Chancellor:

General Sasha Gorge

Norns:

Kmd.-Gen. Johann Strauss

Diplomatic Guard:

Kmd.-Gen. Kirsten Byrd

Diplomatic Corps:

Kmd.-Gen. Damon Braun

Lohengrin:

Kmd.-Gen. Klaus Hirsch

Propaganda:

Kmd.-Gen. Tabitha Bjorn

Bondians:

Kmd.-Gen. Mikhail Rappaport

Molehunters:

Hpt.-Gen. Andrew Redstorm

Loki:

Hpt.-Gen. Heinrich Kinchmeyer

investigation into a number of so-called "phantom units", which struck in places such as the former Lyons Thumb region, continues to attempt to identify who really instigated the conflicts that resulted.

With operations curtailed and so much new blood on its way in, it is likely that the agency's operations—for the near future, at least—will see a noticeable decline in efficiency and quality. The LIC is, however, quite resourceful, adapted to making up for the shortcomings in the Lyran military. Furthermore, those operatives who have survived both the fighting and the recent purges and investigations most certainly represent the agency's most elite. For that reason, if none other, the Lyran Intelligence Corps should not be underestimated, even in its weakened state.

BRANCHES OF THE LIC

The Lyran Intelligence Corps is subdivided among six primary divisions (Norns, Diplomatic Guard, Diplomatic Corps, Lohengrin, Propaganda, and Espionage), each serving a special area of intelligence expertise. A small, unofficial central command, directed by the Archon and the head of the LIC, helps to coordinate operations between these branches, but all are capable of independent operations if need be.

NORNS

The Norns, the LIC's eyes and ears, maintain a watch on all communications and troop movements. Long considered one of the most demanding assignments in the agency, this division is subdivided into a passive monitoring department, which monitors and analyzes all communications within the realm and beyond, and the active monitoring department, which involves a network of field agents and scouts. Thanks to their extensive computer expertise and the former FedCom alliance, this division now has access to a limited version of the "black box" network, which allows them to communicate in some regions even without relying on the HPG network or "pony express".

Unfortunately, the vast capabilities of this division—between its electronic surveillance network and its field operatives—have been compromised by a scramble to reorganize ever since the united Federated Commonwealth broke apart. Accustomed to sharing information between the LIC and the DMI, this division is struggling to establish itself in areas left to its former allies. Kommandant-General Johann Strauss, the head of this division, has even suggested re-opening a dialogue with the Federated Suns' intelligence agency networks, both to help both agencies recover more quickly and to help heal the rift between once-allied realms.



DIPLOMATIC GUARD AND DIPLOMATIC CORPS

The Diplomatic Guard (DG) and Diplomatic Corps (DC) are two of the LIC's higher profile divisions. Agents in the DG, charged with the protection of important individuals in the Lyran state, serve as a combination of bodyguards, transportation, or couriers for high-security information.

The DC, meanwhile, circulates at most major social functions, often appearing as part of an entourage for a traveling noble or ambassador, making contacts while gathering as much information as possible. Also adept at negotiation and blackmail techniques, the DC has at times been used to obtain subtler solutions than agencies like Loki or Lohengrin.



LOHENGRIN

The LIC's Lohengrin anti-terrorist division has seen a lot of action since the break-up of the Commonwealth. Lohengrin operatives are recruited at childhood from orphanages around the Lyran state and undergo an intensive indoctrination program that makes them the ruthless and fanatical agents on par with the Draconis Combine's DEST. Often used against other "internal threats", this agency's powers were broadened during the Civil War and they worked closely with Loki to break up demonstrations and deal with other "threats to national security". At present, many of these emergency powers remain in effect, and a large proportion of Lohengrin operatives are currently stationed in the Isle of Skye region, where secessionist sentiments remain high.



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PROPAGANDA

The propaganda division of the LIC, once considered the most benign of its kind throughout the Inner Sphere, experienced a radical change under the rule of Katherine Steiner-Davion. Shifting from a passive, hands-off agency that gently reminded the public of the benefits of the united FedCom, the division took a much more active roll during the increasingly tense years following the break-up of that alliance. Their operations included the suppression of "harmful" reports in the media, the leaking of damaging or discrediting information about any who spoke against the Archon, and coordination with Loki to stage events or expose anti-Katherine elements.

In the wake of the Civil War, this division has seen some of the biggest changes in an effort to undo the damage and return to less draconian measures, and it is currently operating under directives aimed at healing the wounds of the Civil War.

BONDIAANS

The Bondians are the recruitment and training arm of the LIC's espionage division. This department does not take an active role in covert operations but rather serves as the assignment and command branch, first seeking out new talent, then molding it for the needs of the Lyrans state.

Since the depletion of the LIC's ranks during the Civil War, this agency has been quite busy as LIC Chancellor Sasha Gorge has requested that the agency temporarily suspend or reduce its standards in order to more quickly rebuild its strength.

MOLEHUNTERS

Another branch of the espionage division, the Molehunters are the LIC's elite counter-insurgency force, charged with protecting against all outside agents in the Lyrans state. Just before and during the Civil War, this agency—once directed primarily at rooting out agents from Houses Marik, Liao, and Kurita—turned its efforts against MIIO and DMI operatives as well as native Lyrans dissidents. Often working closely with Loki, the Molehunters operated with broad discretionary powers. Now that it has been reined back in, this agency is undergoing heavy restructuring and damage control, limiting its current activities.

The Molehunters' principle responsibilities remain hunting for hostile operatives, though the definition of what exactly constitutes a "hostile operative" ranges from foreign intelligence agents to pro-Katherine hold-outs in the LIC's own ranks. These responsibilities are currently playing havoc with the department, as the

coupling of such goals with strict new guidelines for behavior is slowing the process considerably.



LOKI

The most fearsome and effective of the LIC's espionage departments, Loki has served as the Lyrans state's own secret police, special forces, and terrorist group all rolled in one. As often directed against the Lyrans people as not, this agency counts assassinations, sabotage, and suicide assaults among its duties. In recent years, Loki's reputation has steadily worsened, as the agency is prone to blindly—even eagerly—following the personal ambitions of the Archon. Briefly reined in under Archon Katrina Steiner, and remaining so through Archon-Prince Victor's rule, Loki's excesses became almost legendary during the rule of Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion, prompting a resurgence of Heimdall, the mysterious counter-agency that does not appear to be part of the official Lyrans intelligence apparatus.

Loki, like many of the active branches of the LIC, is currently undergoing restructuring after the Civil War. Reports place this department among the worst damaged as well, and many of the pro-Katherine hold-outs that have recently been ousted or are still under investigation hail from this unit.

MIMIR



The Free Rasalhague Republic probably is unique amongst the Inner Sphere powers, in that much of its intelligence apparatus predates the creation of the Republic itself by many

centuries. —CT

BIRTH AND DEATH

The late twenty-second and early twenty-third centuries witnessed a mass emigration from Terra. The region between what would become the Draconis Combine and the Lyrans Commonwealth was settled by colonists from the Scandinavian countries who formed the Rasalhague Consortium. Even after this loose confederation of worlds evolved into the Principality of Rasalhague, it felt no need for any intelligence apparatus.

Everything changed in 2330, when the Draconis Combine targeted the Principality. After a campaign of three years the end appeared to be in sight, for the Combine was poised to strike Rasalhague itself. But while the Principality had been losing the war, the spirit of independence in Rasalhague citizens had fostered the creation of a network of informers, guerrilla fighters and couriers. Christened Mimir, this organization became ever more effective as the less talented were culled in a

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

brutal Darwinian process.

In 2334, Mimir operatives identified a major supply dump being constructed on New Bergen to support the assault on Rasalhague. Seeing this as the last chance to halt the implacable advance of the Dragon, Elected Prince Eric Sorenson used the information provided by Mimir to plan a desperate attack. The New Bergen assault was aided by a Mimir-coordinated uprising and the surprised Combine garrison was killed to the last man.

The massive captured stockpile of modern weapons transformed the Rasalhague war. The campaign would drag on for another twenty years, and even after the fall of Rasalhague the Combine garrisons would be harassed by guerrilla attacks until 2367. Many Mimir operatives remained at large, passing on their skills to new generations of insurgents.

TYR

The Combine may have captured the Principality, but maintaining control consumed significant military and intelligence assets. Secret organizations were constantly springing up, each one devoted to freeing the Principality from the claws of the Dragon. Little more than a nuisance, the ISF were able to stamp out many of these groups, but those that used the "Cell" system remained frustratingly resistant to stamping. Those that survived the attentions of the ISF began to contact one another, forming a shaky alliance that became known as Tyr.

This freedom movement was initially too fragmented and disorganized to be very effective. Indeed, petty jealousies saw more than one cell betrayed to Kurita by another. It took intervention by an outside agency to finally unite the various groups. The Lyran Commonwealth invited Tyr's leaders to a meeting on Tamar in 3029, where Katrina Steiner secured an agreement from the freedom fighters to aid the Lyrans against Kurita in return for an undertaking by the Commonwealth to recognize the Tyr as the legitimate government in exile of the Rasalhague state.

After the aid Tyr provided the Lyrans during the Fourth Succession War, the leaders were infuriated when the Commonwealth did not turn over the liberated worlds to their control—not until after the Draconis Combine relinquished control of the remaining Principality worlds and recognized the new Free Rasalhague Republic, forcing the Commonwealth to do the same.

REPUBLIC

While many Tyr leaders left the shadows in which they had lived for so long, some preferred to shun the limelight of politics. Weland Rebsamen organized the most skilled Tyr operatives into the new military intelligence arm of the KungsArmé.

The Ronin War caught the reformed Mimir off-guard. Always focused on freeing the Rasalhague worlds, there was just no time to develop intelligence assets deeper in Combine territory. Once the crisis was upon them

however, General Rebsamen rallied his people. Even as Kanrei Theodore Kurita was eliminating the Ronin supply dumps in Combine space, Mimir Strike Teams were busy infiltrating and sabotaging the renegade's support structure in Republic territory.

Starved of supplies, the Ronin forces were doomed.

THE CLANS

In late 3049, the Clans came howling out of the Periphery and started to snap up Republic worlds at a frightening rate. Mimir operatives did what they had always done; they went to ground, established their familiar Operations Cells, watched and waited.

Unfortunately, these intelligence operations were hampered by ComStar's collusion with the invaders. Not only did they stop forwarding the reports, but the Order also revealed the identity of agents to the occupying forces. But just as the feared ISF could not crack the Cell system, ComStar and the Clans were to find Mimir equally resistant to their efforts.

Following the initial Clan assault, the Ghost Bears made a critical mistake in leaving completely inadequate garrisons behind as they moved on to new targets. This gave Mimir Cells an unexpected opportunity to incite popular uprisings on the Bears' supposedly secure rear. On several occasions, Mimir teams even succeeded in capturing Clan weapons and turning them on the invaders, forcing the Ghost Bears to expend precious time and supplies re-securing their new possessions. This pushed the Bears to contract the Steel Vipers for temporary garrison troops as they penetrated deeper into the Inner Sphere.

Even after the Clan defeat on Tukayyid and the Great Refusal, Mimir operatives continue to be active in the Clan Occupation Zone, always on the lookout for signs that one of the Clans is gearing up to finish the conquest of the Republic, or for the possibility of reclaiming the Republic's lost worlds.

ORGANIZATION

The Free Rasalhague Republic possesses two intelligence agencies. The lesser of them is the intelligence arm of the civilian government, the Rasalhague Internal Intelligence Agency (RIIA), which is primarily charged with maintaining internal security and handling major crimes spanning more than one Republic world. The larger (but less visible) agency is Military Intelligence—also known as Mimir.

Military Intelligence consists of four departments, each of which is named after one of the old Runes. Their fields of activity are strictly defined, but they are also expected to cooperate as many operations require the talents of more than one division.

CURRENT OPERATIONS

Mimir has always excelled at performing missions in occupied territory. Operatives can use their knowledge of the terrain and people to avoid detection, complete

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their mission, and evade capture. They have less success operating away from traditional Rasalhague worlds.

The greatest asset in any operation is the cell system perfected during the Combine occupation. A cell consists of four to six people, each of which possesses specialized skills and extensive cross training. What makes the cell system so difficult to break is that an individual cell has no knowledge of any other. A cell may operate independently or under the direction of a controller. While a controller can contact a cell, the cell rarely has the means to reciprocate so that even if a cell is compromised, other cells are rarely endangered.

In the Clan Occupation Zones, Mimir's operations currently focus on Perth's gathering of intelligence, with many operations coinciding with military missions and raids against Clan-held worlds. Recent changes in Clan politics, however, have endangered Perth agents working in the Ghost Bear Dominion, where the Clan appears to be winning over local support, thanks in no small part to Star Colonel Ragnar's influence. However, in the Wolf Occupation Zone, where Crusader sentiments of Khan Vlad Ward hold sway, more and more Rasalhague-born civilians have been supporting the agency's missions.

While primary missions are focused on the Clans and internal threats, Mimir is also concerned about its neighbors in the Draconis Combine and Lyran Alliance, where certain reactionary elements may either become worthy allies in the liberation of lost Rasalhague worlds, or dangers to be faced should they consider the remnants of the Republic an effective consolation prize for their own lost territories.

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

Mimir Command:
General Hans Mohn

Field Operations (Pertra):
Överste Bjørn Pedersen

Communications and Signals (As):
Överste Anita Olson

Data Analysis (Thurs):
Överste Jack Sharov

Counter Intelligence (Giof):
Överste Dolores Brin-Kotis

RASALHAGUE INTERNAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Director:
Hjalmer Kirch

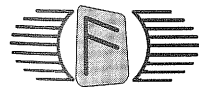
Field Operations (Pertra)



Symbolized by the Pertra Rune, the Field Operations branch is at the bleeding edge of Rasalhague intelligence operations. Pertra operatives are highly trained for survival in occupied territory, where they undertake missions such as information gathering, sabotage and assassination.

The most highly prized ability of a field operative is the knowledge and skill of creating resistance cells.

Communications and Signals Interception (As)



The As Rune is the symbol used by this department. Charged with maintaining communications between agents in the field—a task for which they employ everything from the latest high-tech communications equipment to couriers to carrier pigeons—this department is also responsible for intercepting and decoding enemy communications, and for supplying transport for personnel and equipment.

Mimir Headquarters are located on Karbala, where the local Second Kavalleri are stationed. Överste Signa Pegrem of the Second has developed strong ties to As as he prizes their intercepted information almost as highly as he does stealth and ambushes.

Data Analysis (Thurs)



Data Analysis department uses the Thurs Rune as its emblem. Thurs analysts must battle daily with the mountains of data produced by the Field Operations and Communications departments. The other departments tend to look down on Data Analysis operatives because they don't run the same kind of day-to-day risks. However, they never complain when Thurs comes up with that vital piece of data needed to make a mission a success.

Counter Intelligence (Giof)

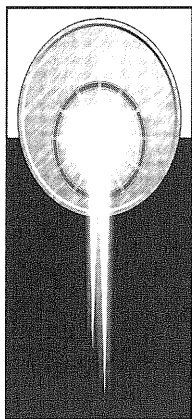


Represented by the Giof Rune, the chief goal of this department is to prevent the Clans from gaining information on the few remaining Republic worlds. They also keep a close eye on ComStar and the Word of Blake operations within the Republic.

Giof has the closest ties with RIIA and law enforcement agencies, as the paths of their investigations often cross.

COMSTAR ROM

Once again, Wolfnet is the source of the following report. Don't ask me how these guys know half of what they appear to, but as none of the other intelligence agencies I have access to refute these claims, I can only presume they are largely valid. What concerns me most here, is the sudden increase in the "alert status" of ComStar's intel agency concerning the renegade Word of Blake. It is the opinion of Wolfnet and others that the two Orders are again on a collision course. If that's the case, I recommend an increase in security for Tukayyid, as it seems the most likely place the Blakists would strike next. —CT



BRIEF HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

In 2780, after the SLDF's liberation of Terra from the grip of Amaris the Usurper, the HPG network of the Terran Hegemony was a shambles. Jerome Blake was chosen by the Council Lords to head the decimated Department of Communications, charged with the monumental task of rebuilding the shattered remains of the Star League Communications Network (SLCOMNET).

Blake was a hero of the liberation, one of the highest-ranking SLCOMNET officers to survive the Usurper's reign of terror. He fought beside Kerensky, putting his knowledge of the communications network to use both in coordinating the SLDF liberation campaign and in intercepting transmissions from Amaris' forces. Through it all, he never appeared willing to assume power for himself, and few of the Successor Lords presumed he would ever pose a threat to their plans to claim the title of First Lord. Dismissing Kerensky, the House Lords turned on one another, all but forgetting about the idealistic Blake, who seemed preoccupied with rebuilding shattered communications in the former Terran Hegemony. Sensing the death of the League and predicting the Dark Age to come, Blake reformed the Department of Communications as a new organization: ComStar.

With Operation Silver Shield, Blake transformed ComStar into a powerful player in the Inner Sphere, at once establishing its neutrality and its exclusive rights to Terra in a combined diplomatic and military campaign. The shocked House leaders, too preoccupied with their own wars against one another, did not dare defy him. As the Succession Wars began, Blake turned his focus toward expanding and entrenching the organization under the mandate of preserving high technology for the day when the House Lords would finally be willing to make peace.

Enter ROM

After Capellan agents attempted to seize control of the HPGs within their realm, it became clear to Blake that the promise of neutrality alone was not enough to stay the ambitious House Lords. Though he personally abhorred violence, Blake saw the need for a swift and brutal security force that could operate with surgical precision to safeguard ComStar's interests. Thus was born ROM. Intended for emergency use only, ROM was to employ its tactics to help secure the neutrality and sanctity of the precious HPGs administered by ComStar, but successive administrations, beginning with Conrad Toyama, transformed both ComStar and ROM forever.

Under Toyama, ComStar became a quasi-religious order dedicated to the memory and alleged goals of Jerome Blake as interpreted from his personal journals. ROM, its security agency, became at once its protectors and its internal "thought police", enforcing Toyama's vision and theology. As early as 2821, ComStar's neutrality and the self-defense-only role of ROM became moot when the Order meddled in the affairs of the Free Worlds League, manipulating the Successor State into entering the First Succession War. Toyama, a firm believer in Blake's opinion that the Inner Sphere would blast itself to the Stone Age, hoped that dragging the League into the war would accelerate such a collapse. Then, ComStar, with its monopoly on high technology that the warring states were destroying at a phenomenal rate, could step in as humanity's redeemer.

When ComStar's duplicity came to light, it resulted in a showdown with Marik and a shadow war between ROM and SAFE that only ended after a yearlong communications interdiction forced Captain-General Thomas Marik to sue for peace. Since that incident, ROM activities have played a major—if largely unseen—role in the affairs of both ComStar and the Inner Sphere at large.

Dark Ages

ROM's activities to further successive administrations of ComStar grew steadily more brutal after the so-called "ComStar War" against House Marik. Operation Holy Shroud, the brainchild of Toyama's successor, Primus Raymond Karpov, allegedly put to the sword over three hundred key researchers and scientists across the Inner Sphere in an effort to disrupt technological development within the Successor States. The Second Succession War was initiated when ROM agents, aware of the Combine's ISF "shadow war", leaked the information, knowing full well that Coordinator Miyogi Kurita would feel honor-bound to attack his neighbors.

At home, ROM initiated a series of "witch hunts" after a Lyran infiltrator was discovered among the Order's ranks. These purges successfully eliminated a number of foreign operatives and encouraged a closer adherence to the mystical ways of ComStar. To forestall a Terran rebellion against the order, ROM staged a terrorist bombing that killed a thousand civilians and a visiting Precentor, and blamed it on a radical independence group called Black December. The internal

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actions reached fever pitch during the primacy of Dwight Kurstin, a paranoid who initiated such severe purges, extending to high levels and employing extreme measures, that ROM fractured in an internal war until Kurstin's assassination just one year after his ascent.

In the early 30th century, Primus Hollings York attempted to curb the excesses of ROM in favor of the ComStar Guard and Militia (today known as the ComGuard). During this time, ROM operations became steadily less reliable and more prone to hostile counterintelligence. Indeed, York seemed willing to disband the agency altogether until his assassination in 2947. Only the ascent of his successor, Adrienne Sims, who prophesied visions of a looming invasion from beyond the periphery, saved ROM from oblivion.

ROM returned to its campaigns of assassination and subversion in the 30th and 31st centuries with the Jolly Roger Affair and Operation Holy Shroud II, two intelligence missions intended to sow further chaos and breakdown of technology in the Inner Sphere. The lack of complete success in these operations, however, demonstrated that, while formidable, ROM was not infallible.

Regardless, by this time centuries of effort toward the goal of collapsing the Inner Sphere had become second nature to ROM. The agency leaked word of the secret treaty between Houses Steiner and Davion to the other Successor States, prompting them to sign the Concord of Kapteyn in response. During the Fourth Succession War, ROM agents were used to slow House Davion's war machine, including a faked Death Commando strike on the NAIS, intended to destroy research into the famed Gray Death Memory Core.

ROM's efforts on behalf of Primus Myndo Waterly to further fragment the Inner Sphere and bring about its collapse continued through the years following the Fourth Succession War, contributing to the formation of the Free Rasalhague Republic and the survival of the DCMS in the War of 3039. The agency even fought a covert war with House Davion's MIO. Waterly's scheming seemed to know no bounds, for when the Clans arrived in 3048, her first instincts were to use this new force to accelerate the Inner Sphere's demise.

Clan War and Aftermath

ROM's complicity in Waterly's campaign of aiding the Clans during their invasion ended with the infamous Operation Scorpion, in which the agency attempted to enforce an interdiction applied to all HPGs across the Inner Sphere. The operation failed miserably, due to the forewarning of a highly placed ISF agent in the Order, even as the Com Guard struggled to win a fifteen-year truce with the invaders.

The failure of Scorpion and subsequent removal of Waterly in favor of Sharilar Mori, coupled with Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht's reforms, created a schism between progressive and conservative elements in the Order. This schism spawned the renegade Word of Blake faction, which took refuge in the Free Worlds League under the protection of Captain-General Thomas Marik.

The mass defection virtually gutted the ranks of ROM, which foresaw its own doom in the reformations to come. In the years immediately following Tukayyid, Mori and Focht together continued to shift ComStar to a more secular path, one that would serve to help the Inner Sphere rather than hinder it, and dedicated first and foremost to ending the Clan threat.

Word of Blake, however, remained a force to be reckoned with (albeit a limited one at first). A covert war between ROM agencies on both sides simmered for many years after the Schism until, weakened by the mass defections to Word of Blake and too focused on the Clans, ComStar's ROM was caught completely by surprise by the Blakists' assault on Terra in 3058, capturing the birthplace of humanity in a well-orchestrated blitzkrieg.

The capture of Terra proved a disastrous blow for morale within the Order and ROM suffered a new wave of defections as a result. However, the extremely loyal members who remained have proven themselves up to the task of leading a new generation into the future. Evidence of this came later that year, when a ComStar ROM agent delivered the location of the Clan homeworlds as revealed by a Smoke Jaguar turncoat.

Current Events

Since the end of the Clan War, ComStar's ROM agency has once more directed its primary focus to the Word of Blake. No longer facing a disorganized band of "harmless fanatics" but a cohesive intelligence force with a single—if mysterious—agenda, Victoria Pardeau, head of ROM, has worked tirelessly to upgrade the agency's capabilities in the face of a serious threat. According to some of her recent reports, ComStar's ROM agents have infiltrated the Word of Blake at various levels, and pockets of the organization are also at work in the Chaos March, Periphery, and even Terra itself—all attempting to determine the nature of the Blakists' recent activities. Information, however, has not been forthcoming—a distressing trend to say the least.

As if to make the matter more worrisome, we have recently learned that ROM's Information Analysis branch has issued another "priority alert" to all Counterintelligence, Covert Operations, and Security Divisions, and at least one unit each of the Blake's Wrath and Valkyrie divisions has been deployed to an undisclosed area. The alert seems to have something to do with Blakist activities in the Chaos March region, but again, details are too sketchy at this time.

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COMSTAR ROM COMMAND

ROM Director:

Precentor ROM Victoria Parrdeau

Counterintelligence (Mu/Delta):

Demi-Precentor Mu/Delta IX Alexi Luchenko

Diplomatic Relations (Rho/Gamma):

Demi-Precentor Rho/Gamma XVII Sasha Richardson

Covert Operations (Rho/Rho):

Demi-Precentor Rho/Rho II Anika Trevaine

Information Analysis (Mu/Mu):

Demi-Precentor Mu/Mu III Marko Stephenson

Clan Overwatch (Rho/Chi):

Demi-Precentor Rho/Chi XV Mussad Degora

Blake's Wrath (Delta/Epsilon):

Demi-Precentor Delta/Epsilon IV Lars Sjardijn

Valkyrie (Delta/Xi):

Demi-Precentor Delta/Xi VI Miyogi Sulacco

ComStar Security (Mu/Iota):

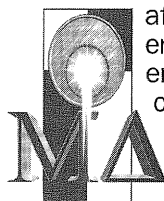
Demi-Precentor Mu/Iota IV Cornelius Morrisson

DIVISIONS OF ROM

ComStar's ROM has undergone two major reorganizations since the Schism, the first intended to purge the agency of all the trappings of pre-reformation ComStar, and to purge its ranks of Blakist elements, and the second to cover losses after the fall of Terra in 3058. The agency is now only a shadow of its former self in size, but remains a formidable force in the intelligence and covert operations field. Currently, the bulk of ROM's activities are devoted to tracking the whereabouts and activities of the Word of Blake, maintaining the Order's integrity against opposing agencies, and supporting the Star League's intelligence service.

Among the most drastic changes made to ROM in recent years has been the Order's elimination of the Internal Obedience and Spiritual Enlightenment branches, both of which had no place in a more secular and benevolent organization. Another has been the de-emphasis on espionage activities within those states where ComStar maintains its HPGs and the shifting of the Propaganda division from what amounted to a rumor mill to a sales and "customer service" agency. All of these changes are intended to emphasize ComStar's transformation back into what Jerome Blake truly intended it to be.

Counterintelligence (Mu/Delta)



ComStar's Counterintelligence Division, increased in size and scope after the schism, still employs much of the strong-arm brutality employed by pre-Reformation ROM, though such tactics are employed more discreetly today. Charged with the increasingly challenging task of unmasking and eliminating enemy agents from the Successor States and Word of Blake, this department considers the security of ComStar to be worth any price and its agents are usually fanatical.

Diplomatic Operations (Rho/Gamma)



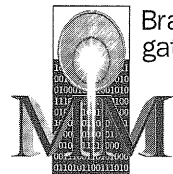
The Diplomatic Operations Branch of ROM is ComStar's public face, assigning personnel to attend diplomatic functions across the Inner Sphere in an ongoing effort to improve relations and reassure people of the reformed Order's good intentions. Operatives at these functions generally confine their activities to observation and public relations, though the branch also has agents capable of more in-depth intelligence gathering missions with tactics ranging from seduction to blackmail.

Covert Operations (Rho/Rho)



ComStar ROM's Covert Operations Branch was gutted by the mass defections that followed the Schism and the Word of Blake's capture of Terra, forcing massive reorganizations and desperate efforts to recruit additional agents to fill the most serious gaps. In post-reformation ComStar, this branch has supposedly abandoned its assassination and misinformation strategies, but the increasing predations of the past few years by Word of Blake has forced the Order to respond in kind, albeit to a limited extent.

Information and Analysis (Mu/Mu)

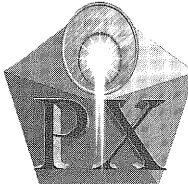


ComStar's Information and Analysis Branch represents its primary intelligence-gathering department and thus has the lion's share of the reformed Order's budget. Charged with analyzing data gathered by agents at every HPG station and beyond, this branch suffered through a serious

reorganization and purge by Counterintelligence after its failure to predict the Word of Blake invasion of Terra. Still operating with depleted numbers, the IA Branch's recently upgraded central processing center has shown a marked improvement in correctly interpreting unfolding events across the Inner Sphere and even in Clan-held territories.

Wolfnet's analysts have seen a sharp increase in Information and Analysis' Word of Blake interests, indicating that something big has the Order concerned. There is a strong belief that this may be a new round of covert warfare between the splinter factions and an advisory has gone out telling all Wolfnet agents to keep alert in these uncertain times.

Clan Overwatch (Rho/Chi)



Formerly known as the Clan Liaison branch, this department changed its title as part of a minor restructure to more clearly define its role in ComStar's intelligence organization. A specialized variation of Covert Operations, this

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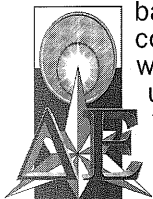
department focuses on backing anti-Clan activities in the Occupation Zones and gathering information on the political and military moves of Kerenesky's descendants. Some agents from this department seized the rare opportunity afforded during Operation Bulldog and Task Force Serpent to infiltrate the Clan homeworlds and the information they have gleaned on current Clan activities has been monumentally helpful.

It should be noted that after the Inner Sphere's victory on Strana Mechty, the active espionage operations of this division have been focused only on the Jade Falcon and Wolf Clans with other cells in the Ghost Bear Dominion lying dormant. Resources ordinarily spent on such operations now appear to be going to another division of ROM.

Blake's Wrath (Delta/Epsilon)

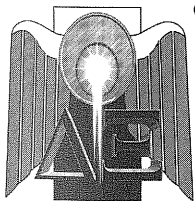
Though the title evokes images of the pre-reformed order, Blake's Wrath still represents ROM's elite, ground-based special forces units. Trained in conventional and BattleMech warfare as well as in aspects of intelligence and unorthodox combat, Blake's Wrath functions primarily as a strike team or guerilla unit. In the post-Tukayyid era, many of these operatives worked closely with the Clan Overwatch but it appears

that a number of these operatives have since been pulled back to Tukayyid for new instructions, possibly involving actions against the Word of Blake.



Valkyrie (Delta/Xi)

The Valkyrie is the aerospace division of ROM's special forces, an airborne version of Blake's Wrath, often used to support its ground-based counterpart in combined-force operations. This force also has the support of its own DropShip and JumpShip detachment that allows them to mount independent expeditions. Like the Blake's Wrath, many of the Valkyrie have been recalled to Tukayyid for reassignment.



Comstar Security (Mu/Iota)

ROM's security branch, charged with the protecting important ComStar officials across the Inner Sphere and maintaining the HPGs, has been under almost constant pressure since the Schism. After the capture of Terra, this division, along with Information and Analysis, underwent a thorough purge of its ranks by Counterintelligence. As a result, much of its personnel are relatively inexperienced, a situation that does not boost the morale of many in ComStar's upper ranks.

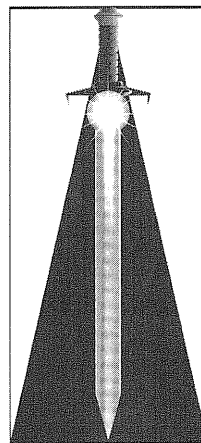


WORD OF BLAKE ROM

The following report on Word of Blake's ROM meshes an outdated Wolfnet report with recent observations into the organization's activities. Unfortunately, much of this is conjecture and as a result has a low reliability rating. All we can be certain of is that something is definitely going on here, something big. Unfortunately, the political and social subdivisions of the Word, as well as its overall fanaticism and runaway spiritualism, have made efforts to penetrate the Order and determine exactly what is happening an extremely difficult endeavor for any agency. -CT

BRIEF REVIEW AND OVERVIEW

Even before the Schism between the Word of Blake and reformed ComStar, ROM served as the intelligence organization for the self-proclaimed guardians of high technology. With the advantage of a monopoly on all interstellar communications, the technological resources of the Star League, and the zealotry of mystical fanaticism, this agency cultivated a reputation for brutal effectiveness. Based on the unshakable belief that the Inner Sphere is destined to plunge into chaos with ComStar rising up as its savior, ROM and past ComStar Primuses have justified and perpetrated terrifying schemes to expedite the process.



The mysticism, fanaticism, and ambitions to bring the Inner Sphere to heel under a Blakist theocracy first combined during the primacy of Conrad Toyama, who assumed control over ComStar upon Jerome Blake's death in 2819. In the centuries that followed, ROM became a combination of thought police and special forces unit. Through ROM, ComStar instigated conflicts between the Successor States, assassinated scientists, and maintained order and loyalty within its own ranks. With every technological edge at their disposal, ROM proved nearly impossible to penetrate and detect, and many of their operations were disguised to fool the Great Houses into thinking they were actually the work of their rivals.

In 3052, the spectacular failure of Primus Myndo Waterly's Operation Scorpion revealed the Order's duplicity once and for all to the Inner Sphere and the Clans. In an effort to save the Order, Precentor-Martial Anastasius Focht deposed Waterly, replacing her with Sharilar Mori, Waterly's former aide (and possibly an agent of the Draconis Combine's ISF). Together, Focht and Mori proposed sweeping changes to the Order, secularizing it with an eye toward helping, rather than hindering, the Inner Sphere powers. These proposed

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changes fractured the Order along conservative and progressive lines and gave birth to the fanatical—though factional—Word of Blake.

The Schism

Led initially by Demona Aziz, Precentor of Atreus, a staggering number of ComStar's personnel defected to join the newly created Word of Blake in the Free Worlds League, where they declared Captain-General Thomas Marik—himself a former ComStar Acolyte—as their “Primus-in-exile”. Included among these defectors were a large number of ROM agents, many of them fanatical and dangerous recipients of centuries worth of dogma and procedural indoctrination. Though divided amongst themselves into various subgroups, from the moderate Counter-Reformists to the radical Toyama, the Word of Blake's ROM, operating with the same freedom it enjoyed before the Schism, proved itself adept at all levels of covert operations, which were largely directed against ComStar.

Alexander Kernoff, head of the Word of Blake ROM after the Schism, immediately took steps to organize the fractured agency and expand upon its numerical advantage over the reformed ComStar ROM. His first priorities focused on counterintelligence, particularly the elimination of any ComStar ROM agents in the flood of defectors, as well as the stabilization of support for the Order within the Free Worlds League. Once more, these priorities turned ROM into inquisitors, seeking out heretics in its midst, while at the same time working to squelch resistance to the Word's presence among the government and population of the Free Worlds League.

As the efforts Word of Blake ROM turned to the FWL, they engaged in only token operations directly against ComStar, little more than a series of pranks and propaganda stunts. These operations served two purposes: first, they kept ComStar ROM distracted, even while the Order busied itself with preparations against the Clan threat. The second, and more sinister purpose was to lull ComStar into a false sense of security by presenting the appearance that such “monkey warfare” was the best Word of Blake could do. In 3058, the Blakist disproved this notion as ROM and the Word of Blake Militia executed Operation Odysseus, the conquest of Terra.

Word of Blake's seizure of Terra went a long way toward further strengthening the renegade order's position as a player in Inner Sphere politics, and for ROM, the capture led to a new influx of recruits as ComStar suffered a second wave of defections. More importantly, the Word's ROM also gained access to a wealth of state-of-the-art equipment that its intelligence gathering and analysis agents could put to excellent use. Though largely sabotaged in ComStar's withdrawal, enough of the equipment has been brought on-line again to give the agency a perceptible boost in operating efficiency.

Recent Activities

The formation of a new Star League, with ComStar effectively serving as its core, was a devastating blow to morale in the Word of Blake. Though the capture of Terra was no mean feat, earning the renegade Order some legitimacy in the eyes of the rest of the Inner Sphere, ComStar's apparent rise in stature provoked considerable concern over their intentions once the Clan threat was neutralized. The issue became even direr when Precentor-Martial Focht stepped down in favor of former Archon-Prince Victor Steiner-Davion. Though this change produced yet another wave of defectors who naturally flocked to the Word of Blake, Precentor Kernoff believes that Victor's strong ties to both halves of the former Federated Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine may lead to a greater sharing of inter-agency information—an intelligence power bloc, as it were.

In reaction to Victor's posting, the Word of Blake ROM initiated another counterintelligence purge, apparently the result of redoubled efforts to cleanse the order of ComStar infiltrators; indeed, a good portion of those “defecting” to the Word were exposed as ComStar spies before long. At the same time, Word of Blake operatives also doubled their efforts to penetrate ComStar, and with it, the Star League. To further ensure operational security, Precentor Kernoff also initiated another reorganization of ROM, compartmentalizing the agency and minimizing the avenues of communications between each branch. Even within the same departments, access to information is restrictive, preventing the sharing of data between operatives except on a “need to know” basis. This change has further enhanced internal security within ROM, minimizing the damage a potential infiltrator can do.

Though clearly focused on their covert struggle with ComStar, the Word of Blake also appears hard at work in other areas as well. During the FedCom Civil War, the sheer manpower of Word of Blake's ROM allowed them to devote equal or near-equal attention to other theaters of operation, including the Periphery and Chaos March regions. Unfortunately, the disparate nature of these assignments, coupled with the strict compartmentalization of ROM, has frustrated efforts to obtain more than a few details regarding each one.

What can be determined, however, points to a great deal of focus on alliance-building and arms dealing in the Chaos March, as well as an inordinate number of mercenary unit hires and upgrades. Until recently, in fact, we had tagged several Word of Blake representatives on Outreach as members of ROM, though their activities appeared confined to the research and hiring of mercenaries. These activities came to a rather abrupt halt as little as three months ago. Even more disturbing is the apparent disappearance of twenty to thirty percent of ROM's active covert agents, apparently reassigned elsewhere in the Inner Sphere. These assignments could all point to a major operation in the works, or could merely be another one of Kernoff's reorganization plans.

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ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS OF ROM

Despite its rigid compartmentalization, the Word of Blake ROM shares much in common with the organization as it existed before the 3052 Schism. Allowed to operate largely at its own discretion, the agency retains the unwritten right to police the rank and file while also conducting its operations against external targets. Because the Word of Blake maintains the techno-theology once espoused by ComStar, ROM retains the Internal Obedience and Spiritual Enlightenment divisions that the reformed Order did away with.

In practice, ROM functions under the authority of the Precentor Martial, in this case, Cameron St. Jamias. St. Jamias is believed to be the leader of the Sixth of June, a radical—some use the term “terrorist”—subsect of the Toyama faction, which believes in taking any means necessary to further humanity’s greater good. As a former member of Blake’s Wrath (now known in the Word of Blake as Light of Mankind), he is a shrewd strategist and a formidable tactician.

It is believed that most of ROM’s current activities are being coordinated by St. Jamias, who has been redeploying Word of Blake’s military assets over the past few months. This theory begs the question as to whether or not St. Jamias is truly in command of the Order, rather than Word of Blake’s Precentor, William Blane. However, analysis of some communiqués intercepted and decoded out of St. Jamias’ office suggest the existence of a “shadow leader”, apart from either man, to whom at least the Precentor-Martial reports.

It is further believed that St. Jamias’ ascent to his current post is no accident. The previous Precentor-Martial, Trent Arian, and his aide, Precentor Suzanne Mulvanery, were assassinated in an explosion on 6 June 3061. The date of the bombing, as well as St. Jamias’ apparent ties to the Sixth of June movement, casts suspicion on this assassination, which has been officially blamed on ComStar “heretics”. After five years of efforts to uncover the truth, we still only have conjecture to go on. However, if St. Jamias’ supporters actually sacrificed two of the Word of Blake’s finest military minds to install a radical in their place, the implications of their future plans is staggering.

What follows is an outline of the nine major departments attached to ROM. All of these agencies report only to their own Precentors, who in turn report to the Precentor ROM. This allows the Precentor ROM and Precentor Martial to keep abreast of all activities without risking inter-departmental security breaches.

WORD OF BLAKE ROM COMMAND

ROM Director:

Precentor ROM Alexander Kernoff

Counterintelligence (Mu/Delta):

Precentor Mu/Delta III Lydia Julia
Halloway

Diplomatic Relations (Rho/Gamma):

Precentor Rho/Gamma VII Melva Kingman

Covert Operations (Rho/Rho):

Precentor Rho/Rho III Richard
Mullaney

Information Analysis (Mu/Mu)

Precentor Mu/Mu V Clive Reordan

Light of Mankind (Delta/Epsilon):

Precentor Delta/Epsilon VII John
Christopher

Purifying Light (Delta/Xi):

Precentor Delta/Xi IV Tatyana Corsairre

Word of Blake Security (Mu/Iota)

Precentor Mu/Iota VII Takaeo
Yamashi

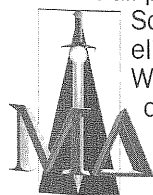
Internal Obedience (Rho/Omicron)

Precentor Rho/Omicron XI Carmaine
Juliana

Spiritual Enlightenment (Mu/Psi):

Precentor Mu/Psi IX Garin Klien

Counterintelligence (Mu/Delta)



If at all possible, Word of Blake’s Counterintelligence Division has grown even more brutal and inquisitorial since the Schism, free from the need for discretion that binds its ComStar counterpart. Charged with the location and elimination of all non-Blakist agents within the order’s many subgroups, only the internal politics of the various Word of Blake sects hamper the effectiveness of these fanatical agents. The Word’s counterintelligence branch does not seem to solely confine its activities to Word of Blake, either, and CI agents may have infiltrated the governments of the Free Worlds League, Capellan Confederation, and neighboring Periphery realms such as the Circinus Federation.

Diplomatic Operations (Rho/Gamma)



ROM’s Diplomatic Operations Branch, like that of ComStar, presents the Order’s public face and is perhaps the only department of the Blakists’ intelligence apparatus not run by its most fanatical elements. Primarily devoted to improving Word of Blake relations with the Free Worlds League, Capellan Confederation, and nearby Periphery realms, agents of this branch are also hard at work placating the population of Terra and conducting public relations missions in the war-ravaged Chaos March. Like ComStar’s DOB, operatives in this branch are also adept at more in-depth intelligence gathering missions as well, though their tactics revolve more around blackmail and coercion.

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

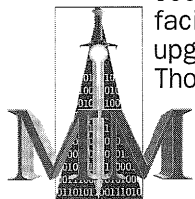
Covert Operations (Rho/Rho)

The Blakist ROM's Covert Operations Branch may stand now at virtually double—or even triple—the size of ComStar's equivalent division, since a majority of its operatives defected with the splinter group in the original schism. Though it remains possible that many of these agents are of questionable quality due to the subdivisions in the Word, or may even be infiltrators from ComStar, the sheer numbers makes this branch a powerful tool. Unlike their brethren, the Word of Blake see no reason to hold back their covert operations assets and regularly engage in assassination, espionage, and misinformation campaigns, particularly directed at ComStar, House Kurita, and the former FedCom states.



Information and Analysis (Mu/Mu)

The capture of Terra gave Word of Blake's Information and Analysis Branch a massive advantage in securing many of the former intelligence facilities used by ComStar, recently upgraded using captured Clan technology. Though departing ComStar agents did their best to destroy the sophisticated computers used in the day-to-day gathering and analysis of information from across the Inner Sphere, there have been indications that the Blakists have not only restored operations but also gained a wealth of intelligence on the activities of their former brethren.



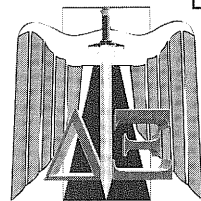
Light of Mankind (Delta/Epsilon)

Word of Blake changed the name of their special forces section to Light of Mankind as part of an ongoing effort to distinguish their order from the "heretics" of ComStar. The name change has had no impact on these elite troops, who easily match the capabilities of other cross-trained commando forces in the Inner Sphere such as the Draconis Combine's DEST. Disturbing new reports place a number of these units in the Chaos March, but their activities there remain a mystery.



Purifying Light (Delta/Xi)

Once more operating under a name change to distinguish itself from the ComStar equivalent, Purifying Light is the aerospace division of ROM's special forces. Rumors say this potent aerospace force has been granted WarShip support and is trained in counter-WarShip combat. Furthermore, it appears that several Purifying Light units have been deployed to unknown locations in the



Inner Sphere.

Word of Blake Security (Mu/Iota)

Though officially tagged as a defensive division, the Word of Blake's Security branch functions more like a combination of their Internal Obedience and Counterintelligence branches, watching more for enemy infiltration than concerning themselves with protecting HPGs or personnel. This "active defense" has proven helpful, as many internal threats have been thwarted by the actions of Security operatives, either independently or in conjunction with other ROM branches.



Recent reports place a number of Blakist security operatives in the Periphery regions surrounding the Free Worlds League, where they appear to be accompanying an inordinately large volume of shipping traffic. As of this report, no indications exist as to what this irregular flow of traffic represents, but it has piqued the curiosities of the Wolfnet and ComStar ROM intelligence agencies.

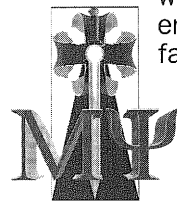
Internal Obedience (Rho/Omicron)

The Word of Blake ROM's Internal Obedience division may be the most feared and overworked of the entire agency. Charged with maintaining the proper level of fanaticism and devotion among all levels of the order, this division is hindered by the variety of internal sects that make up the Word. This has created something of a multi-level standard as to what constitutes disobedience and what constitutes overt treason. In order to best perform its tasks, the Internal Obedience Division often works hand-in-hand with the Security and Counterintelligence divisions, focusing mainly on assuring that the Word's membership does not drift too far into secularism or criticism of the upper ranks.



Spiritual Enlightenment (Mu/Psi)

The Word of Blake's Spiritual Enlightenment branch of ROM actually serves as the core of an organization-wide indoctrination and training initiative employed on all levels of the splinter faction. Each subdivision of the Word maintains its own SE branch, assuring that the correct codes of conduct and political views are instilled in new members. Any rampant individualism is tempered by an overwatch that assures none of the disparate groups trains its members in a mindset counter to the overall goal of the Word.



THE CLAN WATCH

The following rather insightful report discusses the Clan Watch. Credit for the majority of it goes to Phelan Kell and his own Watch program, though I am told by some reliable sources that the balance of it meshes with a decade of research by ComStar, the ISF, and even the former Intelligence Secretariat of the FedCom. It's short on history, but apparently the Clans didn't have an intelligence service to speak of until they met us. Nice to see they can learn a trick or two, yes? —CT



OVERVIEW

The intelligence service branch of the Clans, dubbed the Watch, has the look and feel of a poorly applied theory. Underfunded, ill-equipped, ill-maintained, and ill-trained for the duties of intelligence gathering and analysis, the entire apparatus seems to work—when it works—despite its own shortcomings. Believing that spy agencies and deception are tools for the dishonorable and convinced of their martial supremacy, the

Clans hold too much bias against the concept of intelligence and covert operations to dedicate the resources needed for a top-flight intelligence outfit. With three hundred years of ritualized warfare and bidding practices behind them, they allowed what intelligence assets they initially possessed to atrophy, creating the gross discrepancy now seen between the Watch and the agencies of the Inner Sphere.

The Clan Watch is the direct descendant of Intelser, a crude intelligence agency formed in 2980 by the Clans' Grand Council to gather information on the state of the Inner Sphere. Conceived to answer the challenges by Warden members of the Council who argued against invasion on the grounds of insufficient data, the ranks of Intelser were comprised almost entirely of lower castemen, merchants and technicians, supervised by washed-out warriors.

Sent to the Periphery to gather what information on the current state of the Inner Sphere they could, the Intelser agents brought back a confused picture, mistaking the state of the Periphery for that of the Successor States as well. Their information sparked another round of debate that raged until the Dragoon Compromise of 3000. Dispatched as the Clans boldest and perhaps most successful intelligence gathering effort, however, even the ultimate defection of the Dragoons to the Inner Sphere proved this operation a dismal failure from the Clan point of view.

The Watch as it exists today formed during the Clan invasion as a response to anti-Clan activities by Inner Sphere intelligence agencies. Though once more conceived as a blanket service for all invading Clans, each Clan was responsible for maintaining its own semi-

independent operation and even the non-invading Clans formed their own programs in anticipation of possible action against Inner Sphere forces. Lacking both resources and a suitable model from which to proceed, the Clan Watch blundered through its early years, focusing the bulk of its efforts on weeding out enemy agents infiltrating the Occupation Zones. Regarded as a necessary evil—with the stress on evil—the Clans staffed these agencies with the dregs of their warrior caste, supported by merchants and technicians. Infiltration of opposing factions was negligible and the gathering of data was largely limited to eavesdropping on local newsvids before launching an attack. Lacking sufficient analysis capabilities, the Clans simply did not know how to put the scant information they gathered to use, resulting in numerous intelligence failures that only heightened the Clans' scorn for such operations. Though some Clans, notably the Wolves and the Jade Falcons, took steps to upgrade their intelligence apparatus, the Clan Watch branches remained sub-par throughout much of the ComStar truce.

When the invasion was ended in 3060, the Watch miraculously endured, though now fragmented between the surviving Clans and lacking any central authority. The invasion and the aftermath of its failure spurred some Clans to modify their own Watch programs, gradually bridging the gap between their inexperienced operations and those of their Inner Sphere counterparts. Though their current rate of improvement is still quite limited and irregular, with some branches developing better in select areas than others, the overall effectiveness of the Clan Watch appears sufficient for most military operations.

THE CLAN WATCH BRANCHES

The Clan Watch, loosely organized on the order of the ilKhan during the start of the Clan Invasion, diverged after the Tukayyid truce and in subsequent years. Never abolished but now lacking the centralized authority of a war leader, the organization has fractured along Clan lines and each separate branch has already developed unique characteristics under the leadership of its Clan.

Nonetheless, the obvious division between the Watch programs of the Invading Clans versus those of Home Clans is striking. Exposed to more of the turmoil and cloak-and-dagger of Inner Sphere politics and rival agencies, the Invading Clans have been forced to adapt at breakneck pace lest they be shattered like the Jaguars. The Home Clans, still stuck in the pre-Invasion ways with little to worry about save the threat of neighboring Clans, remain woefully underdeveloped in areas of intelligence analysis and covert operations.

While it remains true that none of the Clan Watch programs measures up to any Inner Sphere organizations, some do come close in specific areas and all remain dangerous to the overconfident operative.

The designator for someone within the Watch is a simple black ring laid behind the daggerstar.

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

CLAN WATCH COMMANDS

Clan Blood Spirit:

Foremaster Bayle Campbell

Clan Cloud Cobra:

Foremaster Eleni Riaz

Clan Coyote:

Foremaster Clarissa Jericho

Clan Diamond Shark:

Foremaster Semi Kalasa

Clan Fire Mandrill:

Foremaster Drew Tanaga and
ilChi Jas Keller

Clan Ghost Bear:

Foremaster Laurie Tseng

Clan Goliath Scorpion:

Foremaster Kyrie Ben-Shimon

Clan Hell's Horses:

Foremaster Temuchin Amirault

Clan Ice Hellion:

Foremaster Jonas Cage

Clan Jade Falcon:

Foremaster Kael Pershaw

Clan Snow Raven:

Foremaster Klaus Harper

Clan Star Adder:

Foremaster Dagmar Lahiri

Clan Steel Viper:

Foremaster Arthur Stoklas

Clan Wolf:

Foremaster Katya Kerensky

Clan Wolf (in Exile):

Foremaster Daphne Vickers

Clan Nova Cat:

Oathmaster Minoru Nova Cat

Clan Blood Spirit

In their isolation, the insular and paranoid Blood Spirit Clan was content to take a defensive position with their Watch program. However, where they once merely gathered information on the activities of other Clans via the chatterweb or their ilChis to the Fire Mandrills and Snow Ravens, recent events have seen the Spirits coming more into the open. These developments, notably the forming of ties to the Cloud Cobras and a closer alliance with the Fire Mandrill Kindraas, have demonstrated the Spirits' ascendance in the Clan homeworlds. One benefit has been some degree of coordination between the Spirits' and Mandrills' Watch programs.

Clan Cloud Cobra

Clan Cloud Cobra's spiritual bent would seem to preclude an active Watch program, relegating their intelligence gathering techniques almost exclusively to the chatterweb and the occasional Trial with rival Clans. However, it appears that their Cloisters, which cross Clan boundaries, are the perfect medium for slipping in agents disguised as other followers of The Way. In addition to these "religious agents", there is reason to believe the Cobras have some intelligence on the Periphery around Clan space, made possible by contacts between the Clan and the Tanite worlds.

Clan Coyote

Clan Coyote's Watch is a typical "Home Clan" program, limited in scope and capabilities, and staffed almost exclusively by the dregs of the warrior caste. Training is sub-par, even by Clan standards, and equipment consists of what gear the Clan feels can be spared for such "dubious duties". As a result, the extent of the Coyotes' covert operations amount to little more than specialized infantry actions, with intelligence gathering limited to hearsay from Coyote shipping traffic, the chatterweb, and any information sold by passing Diamond Shark merchants.

Clan Diamond Shark

Where most Clan Watch programs center on the military and are hence staffed almost exclusively by members of the warrior caste (albeit its most undesirable elements), the Diamond Sharks' Watch seems to be dominated by merchants, who have proven surprisingly adept at using their contacts in the lower castes to monitor the political and military activities of their fellow Clans and even sectors of the Inner Sphere.

Far more influential, however, is the Sharks' distinction as the primary administrators of the Clan-wide chatterweb system. This cross-media network runs through all Clan society and provides an excellent conduit for intelligence gathering and analysis, at which the Sharks seem quite adept. Though lacking in espionage talents, these other areas of expertise easily place the Sharks on par with some Inner Sphere agencies.

Clan Fire Mandrill

Fractured largely along Kindraa lines, the Fire Mandrill Watch program seemed to exist in spite of itself. Field operatives among other Clans—generally little more than captured Mandrills doing their utmost to be uncooperative in their new Clans—often reported to contacts from their own Kindraa and no others, despite directives from the Khan herself. Indeed, the Mandrills' Watch has yet to pull off even one successful operation to date.

However, new developments have recently come to light suggesting that Clan Blood Spirit, in a rare example of inter-Clan cooperation, is now offering to support the Mandrills' crippled Watch. The arrangement, which involves having the Blood Spirits administer the Mandrills' program, offers the Kindraas a reliable central command for their intelligence agency while simultaneously allowing the Blood Spirits greater access to the "outside world".

Clan Ghost Bear

Once considered just as ineffective as any other branch of the Clan Watch, the Ghost Bear program has shown a sharp improvement since the Clan took steps to equalize its standing with the largely Rasalhaguian population whose worlds it now claims. In fact, it is believed that in winning over the Rasalhaguians by allowing the civilian governments a degree of semi-autonomy under Ghost Bear aegis, the Bears also won over their new countrymen's willingness to defend this joint Dominion. The Bear Watch thus appears to include a growing number of native Rasalhaguians who can draw on a heritage

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

of rebellion and covert operations from the Republic's long struggle for independence. With this new influx of experienced resistors now fighting for the Bears, we can expect this Watch agency to show a dramatic improvement in possibly all aspects of covert operations.

Clan Goliath Scorpion

Clan Goliath Scorpion's Watch, in many ways, is typical of the Clan intelligence apparatus before the invasion. Almost completely limited to paramilitary scout missions, largely in search of Star League artifacts, the Clan's ability to mount successful covert operations is limited. Indeed, the Clan's most successful intelligence gathering mission may well have been the participation of some units in the famous (or infamous, depending on one's viewpoint) Wolf's Dragoons mission at the turn of the century.

Some evidence suggests, however, that the Scorpions are taking a more overt approach to intelligence gathering, employing their trademark Seeker MechWarriors in a new force whose primary aim is to gather information at all corners of known space. To facilitate this effort, Clan Snow Raven has forged a limited partnership with this Clan. Strangely enough, there have been whispers of a tie between the Blood Spirit and Goliath Scorpion Watch on the Chatterweb but nothing that can be verified.

Clan Hell's Horses

Though the Horses briefly appeared in the Inner Sphere to occupy three worlds from Clan Wolf, their stay proved short-lived when, evidently at the urging of the Wolf Khan, the Clan launched an ill-conceived assault against the Ghost Bears in 3063. Operating almost exclusively on Wolf Clan intelligence, it seemed the Horses, who previously showed little to no taste for covert operations, had a Watch that was no better than their fellow Home Clans.

Postwar analysis of their assault on the Bears suggests, however, that in the case of all three planets struck, the Horses had unexpected assistance on the ground. Initially attributed to Wolf Watch operatives, the more surprising truth is that Horses' agents—squads of elite commandoes slipped in on specialized drop shuttles—carried out a series of covert strikes to disable key parts of the early warning grids. Apparently, though the Clan's intelligence and analysis sections seem every bit as atrophied as those of other Home Clans', the Horses possess surprisingly adept active operatives.

Clan Ice Hellion

Impatience and an over-reliance on technology color the Ice Hellion Clan's Watch program, which has taken the extraordinary step of reactivating several older DropShips and fitting them with sensors and comm gear for intelligence gathering. The Clan's disdain for covert operations, however, has led to their staffing these vessels with washed-up Elementals for on-board defense while the remainder of the crews hail almost exclusively from the technician caste. The activation of these vessels has yet to improve the Hellion Watch above that of its fellow Home Clans.

Clan Jade Falcon

Long challenged by its own distaste for adaptation, Clan Jade Falcon's experiences have proven a harsh teacher, resulting in a more capable Watch program than those found in nearly every other Clan. The Falcons, however, continue to cling to their belief in refraining from "underhanded" covert operations. As a result, their intelligence focuses more on the gathering and analysis of information through conventional media sources, the chatterweb, and even specialized scout units drawn from the ranks of second-line troops.

Falcon Watch operatives, if used at all in an active role, tend to either observe and report on enemy activities or to act as a kind of secret police monitoring the activities of the lower castes. Some whispered reports point to efforts by the Falcon Watch to clamp down on the scientist caste, suggesting the Clan is suffering from some kind of internal conflict.

Clan Snow Raven

The Snow Ravens' naval supremacy and particular infatuation with Machiavellian politics have made them an interesting player in the intelligence game. Often trading their naval assets to other Clans for hard profit, the Ravens place themselves in an excellent position to observe the military and political state of others. This has given the Clan a leg up on intelligence gathering and analysis, though they maintain very few field operatives.

Preferring to use politics until force is their only option, many Snow Raven agents are adept at negotiation and even blackmail techniques. Unfortunately, while this system may promise results, the Ravens' willingness to turn these same tools to manipulate one another through the chain of command hampers other Watch operations.

Clan Star Adder

The absorption of the Burrocks has given Clan Star Adder more than just increased manpower and physical resources for its Watch program; it has also provided an unexpected boost in an area most Clans are loathe to explore. Armed with inside intelligence on Dark Caste activities in the Periphery surrounding Clan space, the Adders have been able to make better inroads with their anti-bandit missions. Interestingly enough, in order to better facilitate these missions, the Adders have added a disproportionate number of former Burrocks to their Watch staff to the point where Burrocks outnumber the born-and-bred Adders in the agency.

Apart from the greater emphasis on anti-bandit operations, the Star Adder Watch remains on par with that of the other homeworld Clans, excelling neither in intelligence gathering or field operations. How much longer this will remain the case as other Clan agencies grow more sophisticated remains to be seen.

Clan Steel Viper

Clan Steel Viper, once an invading Clan, clung surprisingly tightly to its traditionalist ways during its time in the Inner Sphere. Even as the neighboring Jade Falcons and Wolves honed their intelligence services, the Vipers showed a virtual refusal to adopt the "barbarian ways" of spying and sabotage. This attitude held until

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

their ejection from the Inner Sphere when a surprise Jade Falcon counterattack caught their troops totally unawares. In part blaming the failure on a lack of intelligence and treachery on the Falcons' part, Khan Zalman ordered a reform of the Clan on every level—including its intelligence apparatus.

Despite Zalman's request, however, the Vipers have yet to rise above the capabilities of the other home Clans. Agents, many solahma or abtakha warriors augmented by technicians with limited warrior training, are typically ill-equipped and ill-trained for their missions.

Clan Wolf

As one of the only Clans to actually respect its intelligence community, Clan Wolf stands out with one of the most capable of the Watch programs. Tempered by more than a decade of experience in the Inner Sphere, the Wolves' agency has gained excellent understanding in the arts of intelligence gathering, analysis, and response. Specialized teams of warriors serve as the Wolf Clan's active operations branch, performing commando-style missions generally akin to miniature raids and are directed into action by a collection of technicians and strategists in the Wolf Watch's analysis branch.

Currently, the Wolf Watch operations appear to be focused on gathering intelligence only, particularly about military readiness of the Lyran Alliance and Jade Falcons, but the Clan is also maintaining a wary eye on the Ghost Bears, as well as their own dominantly Rasalhaguan populace, which has begun to agitate once again for membership in the Dominion.

Clan Nova Cat

As far as anyone can determine, Clan Nova Cat's Watch program is in a state of repair and reorganization due to the Clan's casualties since defecting to the Inner Sphere in 3060. However, the effectiveness of this agency has begun to improve drastically thanks to the recent installation of Minoru Nova Cat (Kurita) as Oathmaster. Minoru, who is believed to have avenged the recent murder of his sister, Omi, has all but forsaken the name of Kurita and embraced the ways of his new Clan. Nonetheless, there is some evidence suggesting the Nova Cat Watch may be getting a subtle boost in its intelligence gathering and analysis capabilities from some agency in the Combine since Minoru's ascent. Given Minoru's spiritual bent, the only acceptable source would likely be the Order of the Five Pillars.

[Hardly surprising is the fact that Phelan neglected to tell us anything about how his Wolves conduct business. Fortunately, some of our own agents have managed to pick up a few facts along the way. What follows, however, is based on a lot of conjecture. -CT]

Clan Wolf (in Exile)

The Wolves who followed Phelan Kell into exile in the former Arc-Royal Defense Cordon brought with them a sizeable portion of the Clan's Watch, reorganized under Loremaster Daphne Vickers. Khan Phelan also drew on some family contacts to further augment this service, producing an agency that – while still not quite on par

with the LIC or ISF – certainly outclasses every Clan agency. Phelan's Watch operatives are more adept at infiltration, intelligence gathering, analysis, and even counter-intelligence work. Active operations, however, are limited to commando missions, as Clan honor forbids assassination and espionage.

Additionally, it is possible that Exiled Wolf Watch operatives occasionally coordinate with certain independent agencies as well, particularly the Wolf's



Dragoons' Wolfnet and the mysterious Heimdall organization. Officially, however, neither group is recognized by the Phelan's Watch.

STAR LEAGUE INTELLIGENCE COMMAND



Created alongside the new Star League, the Intelligence Command is entrusted with the unenviable task of coordinating the efforts of the member states intelligence agencies. As

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

a secondary task, the Command can be called on at any time to provide assistance in investigations initiated by the Star League council.

SMOKING THE JAGUARS

The Jade Falcon assault on the Lyran Alliance world of Coventry was a brutal reminder that the breathing space purchased at such awful cost on Tukayyid by the Com Guards was running out fast. A hastily formed multinational relief force succeeded in driving the Falcons off and served as the inspiration for a much more sweeping move: the formation of a new Star League.

Though officially formed with the signing of the new Star League Constitution on 21 November 3058, the Intelligence Command emerged several weeks earlier. The First Whitting Conference was, in reality, two separated conferences with a mutual objective. The political discussions that culminated in the alliance of traditionally hostile states overshadowed the military planning sessions in the public eye, but from the start it was obvious that both would need reliable intelligence.

Jerrard Cranston, Prince Victor's intelligence advisor, was charged with coordinating the efforts of the hoard of advisors who had accompanied their leaders. Though many viewed it as a thankless task on the same order as herding cats, Cranston was able (with the untiring efforts of his ComStar ROM and ISF counterparts) to organize the virtual madhouse he had been handed. By the end of the conference, the intelligence apparatus was shaping up into an effective (if not peaceful) organization, ultimately becoming the core of the Member State Liaison subcommand.

Even as the Star League prepared their armies for the assault on Clan Smoke Jaguar, the Intelligence Command was organizing a new subcommand to collate and analyze data coming out of the Clan Occupation Zone. With the route to the Clan Homeworlds revealed, Data Analysis were charged with watching the Jade Falcons, Ghost Bears, Wolves, and Steel Vipers; although the assault on the Smoke Jaguars was not expected to trigger intervention from the other Clans, there was genuine concern that one or other of the invaders might take advantage of the situation. With the DCMS spearheading the assault against the Jaguars, the Free Rasalhague Republic and the Lyran Alliance defenses were bolstered with ComStar troops and a powerful mercenary contingent, including Wolf's Dragoons.

Operation Bulldog was a phenomenal success, with the Smoke Jaguars folding in a fraction of the time originally anticipated at the Whitting Conference. The Intelligence Command continued to keep a close eye on the remaining Clans while the SLDF pursued the surviving Jaguars into the Periphery (ultimately following them all the way back to the Clan Homeworlds).

OPERATION STAR FALL

Afterward, however, the SLDF Intelligence Command could do little as the League member states became

embroiled in a series of isolated conflicts. Even when the Jade Falcons and the Ghost Bears launched their attacks, the Intelligence Command found itself limited to gathering data without requests for Star League aid from the Lyran Alliance or the Draconis Combine.

That changed in 3066 when the Word of Blake uncovered a plot being hatched by the Baron von Summit. Apparently eager to improve relations with other states as probationary members of the Star League council, the Blakists passed their information along to the SLDF Intelligence Command. The Baron had lost his son in the vicious fighting of the Jade Falcon Incursion and planned to take his revenge. He had hired mercenaries to penetrate the Occupation Zone using forged documents and transponder codes. Once in position, the team was to crash an automated freighter into the Jade Falcon's genetic repository on Sudeten.

Such an attempt on the repository (successful or not) could have ignited the whole Clan Occupation Zone, but dispatching a conventional force in pursuit or sending a warning to the Clans could have had the same effect. First Lord Mänsdotter thus authorized the dispatch of a heavily armed Fury Team to intervene.

The Special Circumstances unit finally caught up with the mercenaries in an uninhabited star system one jump from their objective. As conflict raged between the aerospace forces, a crack battle armor team launched a spirited assault that captured the mercenary JumpShip before it could make the final jump.

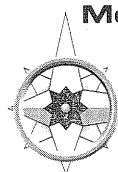
A NEW AGE

With the St. Ives situation resolved (for the time being), the Federated Commonwealth Civil War concluded, and aggression from the Ghost Bears and Jade Falcons contained, there is some hope that no more internal strife will tear at the fabric of the Star League. Still, the SLDF Intelligence Command continues to watch the Clans for signs of aggression, and with Clan Wolf's claim that the Great Refusal will not bind them, most intelligence efforts have been directed towards that Clan in particular.

ORGANIZATION

The Intelligence Command consists of three subcommands. The Member State Liaison and Data Analysis subcommands were formed to prosecute the campaign against the Smoke Jaguars, but the controversial Special Circumstances subcommand was added after the return of Task Force Serpent. General Trevena has been vocal in his reservations about employing Special Circumstances Fury Teams.

Member State Liaison



The importance of this subcommand cannot be emphasized enough, as it supplies intelligence liaison officers for the government, military, and intelligence communities of the various

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

STAR LEAGUE INTELLIGENCE COMMAND

Director:

General Caradoc Travena (temporary assignment)

Member State Liaison:

Colonel Kenneth Waters

Data Analysis:

Major Steven Partridge

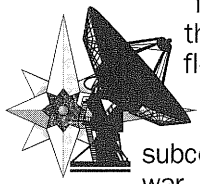
Special Circumstances:

Colonel Katherine McBride

member states, as well as providing additional security, bodyguard services, and even top secret courier services. However, the Intelligence Command has neither the resources nor the mandate to build an intelligence network to span known space, and while this reliance on member states would appear to put the SLDF at a disadvantage, the access to multiple sources allows for cross checks and verification that compensate for the possibility of non-disclosure. Also, ComStar's commitment to the Star League gives the Intelligence Command access to ROM's resources.

The top level of the subcommand consists of a liaison from each state paired with an SLDF liaison officer. Things have been tense since the addition of the Word of Blake to the Star League council, with the Blakists being less open than their ComStar counterparts. Whenever the SLDF is called upon to take the field, requests for relevant intelligence are passed back to the member states through their assigned liaisons.

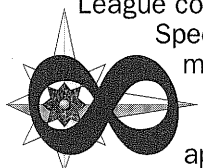
Data Analysis



The Data Analysis subcommand was created to consolidate information gathered from in and around the Clan Occupation Zones during Operation Bulldog. Operatives poured over mountains of data as it flooded into their headquarters on Tukayyid day and night, always on the lookout for warning signs of another Clan about to strike. The subcommand also monitored events in the St. Ives Compact, but without a clear mandate from the council it was unable to act in that conflict, though agents of this subcommand did play a role in the prosecution of Kali Liao for the infamous Black May attacks during the war.

More recently, Data Analysis detected signs of the Jade Falcon's build-up in preparation for their strike against the Lyrn Alliance. The FedCom Civil War was in full swing and Nondi Steiner ignored the reports issued to her, dismissing them as an attempt by personnel loyal to Prince Victor to draw off forces she was using to hunt down Allied troops.

Special Circumstances



The creation of the Special Circumstances subcommand has been one of the most hotly debated issues in the Star League council. While the other subcommands could be viewed as little more than information clearinghouses, Special Circumstances gives the Command teeth. The abuse of power First Lord Sun-Tzu Liao exhibited made the other council members wary of adding the kind of capabilities envisaged for SC.

While the Star League could draw troops and support personnel from the member states, the problem of recruiting and training agents to undertake sensitive missions for the Star League itself appeared insurmountable. Following his acceptance of the positions of Precentor Martial and Commanding General of the SLDF, Victor Steiner-Davion came up with a novel solution. ComStar and the Draconis Combine had made every effort to discover the location of the Clan Homeworlds ever since the original Clan Invasion in 3050. Recognizing their common goal, the Combine supplied funds and personnel to aid the Explorer Corps in the hunt through the Deep Periphery. Theodore Kurita even went as far as to hire several mercenary units for this dangerous duty. As these forces were no longer required following the end of the Clan Invasion, Victor suggested that control of several of the better units be passed to the Star League Intelligence Command.

Christened "Fury Teams", these units are a unique blend of ComStar, DCMS, ISF, and mercenary personnel capable of handling a wide spectrum of missions. Teams normally consist of seven core members with additional personnel assigned to provide skills called for by particular mission requirements. Deployment of a Fury Team requires the approval of the First Lord, the Commanding General of the SLDF, and one or more Council members. All missions are closely scrutinized to ensure that the Team did not overstep the bounds of their orders or employ excessive force.

Though their existence remains a cause for debate, Fury Teams have been involved in everything from rescuing kidnapped Star League observers on St. Ives to hunting down groups of rogue Clan units (many of them made up of ex-Smoke Jaguar Warriors) in the Periphery.

OPERATIONS

Intelligence Command is often forced to sit on the sidelines and observe events, shackled by divisions within the League Council. Though not idle by any means, Intelligence Command must conduct much of its business with more caution and sensitivity than other Inner Sphere operations.

MAGISTRACY INTELLIGENCE MINISTRY (MIM)

This report was recently intercepted by our operatives watching over the Confederation. Its integrity is still under review by Data Analysis. -CT

To: Citizen Craig MacDonald, Chancellor's Ear
From: Agent Theresa Markoja
Re: MIM Status Briefing [[CLASSIFIED!]]

Citizen,

I bid you greetings from the front. Attached to this transmission, you'll find my complete summary of the Canopian intelligence apparatus. In the interests of security, I have triple-encoded the report, for I cannot be sure that my actions are not being monitored, even now. My analysis, I hope, will shed light on the state of the Magistracy Intelligence Ministry, its origins, and its capabilities at present, but I must confess that some of the enclosed is pure conjecture on my part. Despite seven months of intense scrutiny, the causes and motivations of the Ministry's dramatic improvements remain a closely guarded secret, hidden even from the prying eyes of allied liaisons such as myself.

I have considered more direct measures to pierce this veil of secrecy, but doing so would compromise my position and quite possibly damage the Canopians' trust in our honorable intentions; in light of what I have learned I cannot be certain that any efforts to cover my tracks would be sufficient.

Awaiting further instructions.

BRIEF HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

Technically a branch of the Magistracy Armed Forces and thus eligible for military funding and oversight, the Canopians' Magistracy Intelligence Ministry operates as an independent agency, answerable only to the Magestrix herself. This factor alone assures that the ministry is no mere branch of the service but a powerful political tool that can and has been used to assure the dominance and influence of the Centrella family not just in Canopian politics but also over the entire Periphery and even into the Inner Sphere.

Origins of the MIM

Though it has changed considerably since then, the

Magistracy Intelligence Ministry traces its origins back to the founding of the realm in 2530, when Kossandra Centrella, a former captain in the Free Worlds League military, led a group of deserters to the Canopus star systems. Though she would found her new nation based on the principles of tolerance and openness, the first Magestrix knew full well that intelligence would play as critical a role in ensuring the security of the realm as much as any raw military or economic resources ever could. Thus, she devoted much of her efforts toward cultivating an elite cadre of special operatives from the ranks of her fledgling military, whose primary role would be to venture out among the neighboring states as scouts, gathering information and acting to divert threats against the realm.

The original MIM was structured as a simple special forces command of the military, its operatives merely commandos and scouts whose roles were limited primarily to observation and the occasional covert operation against neighboring realms deemed most likely threats to Canopian sovereignty, such as the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation. The rise of the Magistracy's pleasure industry, however, opened a doorway for less military-oriented techniques of infiltration and intelligence gathering as diplomats and nobility from both sides of the Canopian borders came to indulge in the thriving entertainments offered by the pleasure circuses and casino planets.

MIM agents, often posing as prostitutes, wealthy playboy gamblers, hunting guides, and other representatives of the nation's tourist trade could gather a wealth of information on the activities of their neighbors and of the more suspect members of their own state's leadership. This information in turn was used to strengthen border defenses, secure lucrative trade agreements, or force political opponents to remain in line with the administration.

Unfortunately, to effectively carry out these operations and expand their numbers enough to fulfill their mission needs, the MIM became highly dependent on hastily trained operatives drawn from these same civilian sectors they were tasked to infiltrate, resulting in numerous security breaches and technical snafus that compromised their overall effectiveness as an agency. Furthermore, the MIM lacked sufficient manpower and expertise to analyze the vast pool of data it managed to accumulate, a deficit that would prove especially costly when the Star League leadership decided to invade the Periphery realms in 2577.

After the conquest and subjugation of the Magistracy by the Star League, the military stewardship of the League-appointed Humphreys administration strengthened the MIM by transforming it into a better-organized intelligence gathering apparatus along similar lines to House Marik's SAFE agency. Ostensibly intended to passively collect data on the security and loyalty of the Star League's Canopian Territories, Melissa Humphreys overhauled the ministry while at the same time attempting to bind it closer to her own power base

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

within the Free Worlds' Duchy of Andurien. To justify the agency's existence as part of the rebuilding of the Canopian realm, it was put under the jurisdiction of the Canopian military, but answerable exclusively to the head of the state, rather than the rest of the Magistracy government. This assured—in theory, anyway—that ultimate authority of the MIM's operations would remain with Humphreys.

Whether this revitalization of the MIM was part of a plan to ultimately fold the Canopian state into the Free Worlds League or to strengthen Andurien politically and militarily against House Marik has never been proven, but sufficient evidence persists to this day to support either theory. As fate would have it, however, the Humphreys administration ended in 2604, leaving ultimate authority over the Canopian Territorial State to the Star League Council itself. The MIM languished, its funding slashed as a result of increasingly severe taxation edicts, and its mandate limited solely to assisting the Magistratrix in maintaining civil order and Star League policies within the realm.

When the Star League finally collapsed in the late 2700s, many of the political "reforms" imposed on the Magistracy were repealed while most of the more beneficial changes remained. The Magistratrix, for example, recovered her ultimate authority over the state, while the democratic Central Committee and the rights of individuals installed by Star League rule were retained. The MIM, vastly improved in organization (if not in size and resources) also remained in place, though its mandate would expand over the years that followed the League's demise.

As the Succession Wars began, the Ministry reclaimed some of its more active operations, such as the Foreign Affairs Corps and the Active Response Corps, foreign covert operations departments that had been suppressed or outright banned under Star League rule. Now placed under the sole authority of the Magistratrix, thanks to the precedent set by the Humphreys governorship, the MIM's role expanded from a mere branch of the military and home security apparatus to a vital tool of the state as personified by the Magistratrix. Benefiting from the training and organization of a Great House, the Ministry easily became the most potent of the Periphery covert agencies for centuries to come, a fact that supported the Magistracy's survival through centuries of war despite the realm's fairly unsophisticated military.

Giant Leap Forward: The Reorganization of 3040 and Beyond

Largely on the defensive throughout the Succession Wars and struggling with an economy weakened by centuries of virtual stagnation thanks to those same conflicts, the Magistracy of Canopus remained largely aloof from the fighting between the Great Houses. All that changed, however, with the start of the Fourth Succession War in 3028.

The Capellan Confederation, weakened by the aggressions of House Davion on a level not seen in centuries, appeared to then-Canopian Magistratrix Kyalla Centrella as a ripe target for her own plans of interstellar conquest. Cashing in on political overtures and secret deals with the nearby Duchy of Andurien—efforts made easier thanks to the aid of her MIM agents—Magistratrix Centrella and Dame Catherine Humphreys of Andurien allied their respective states and launched an ill-advised invasion against the Confederation after the Fourth Succession War's end in 3030.

Though the Canopian-Andurien invasion force enjoyed several initial successes in the war, thanks in part to excellent intelligence gathered by Canopian operatives in the Confederation, Capellan determination eventually won the day, expelling the last of the invaders by 3035. For the Canopians, the disastrous outcome of this invasion actually proved fortuitous, as it underscored what many of them had come to see as a sign of their Magistratrix's instability. Her daughter, Emma, soon came to be seen as a worthy successor to the throne—and the sooner done, the better. A covert struggle between supporters of Kyalla Centrella and supporters of her daughter began, with MIM caught in the middle.

In 3039, matters came to a head when operatives from the MIM's Royal Operations Corps, sent by the Magistratrix herself, failed to assassinate Emma Centrella. Finally compelled to act, Emma, with the aid of some of the Royal Guards and her own supporters in the Ministry, swiftly turned the tables on her mother, returning to Canopus IV in 3040 to depose the elder Centrella and restore stability to the war-battered nation. Emma's first acts upon assuming the throne turned toward helping her realm recover from the fallout of the failed Canopian-Andurien invasion and revitalizing its stagnant economy.

It was at this point that the MIM received a long-overdue overhaul, turning it into the agency it is today and spurring a tremendous leap forward in effectiveness. Some of the reforms have been obvious, such as a significant boost in funding and the purge of certain operatives and officers still loyal to the deposed Magistratrix Kyalla. Others, such as the creation of the shadowy, ultra-elite Ebon Magistrate, have not been as easy to track. But the level of improvement seen in the MIM's activities to date, such as ongoing efforts to infiltrate foreign intelligence agencies as far away as the Lyran Alliance and the Draconis Combine and the suspected subversion of certain sectors of the Word of Blake's ROM community, have come as a complete surprise, showing a level of ability that cannot be attributed to simple reorganization.

Though evidence is sketchy, I have discovered a number of factors that may have played a part in the MIM's marked improvement over the past decades. The first of these is a vague reference to extremely resource-rich worlds located "beyond explored space" that Magistratrix Kyalla first alluded to during her secret meetings with the Andurians in the 3020s. No concrete evidence of these worlds' whereabouts, or the nature of

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their resources, has been uncovered. Still, some data suggest Canopian explorers discovered either a germanium-rich world or system, or perhaps they came into possession of an undiscovered cache of Star League weapons and equipment. Regardless of the exact nature of the discovery, the Canopians seem to have valuable resources that somehow remain hidden from bandits and ComStar explorers alike.

Another possible explanation for the MIM's improvement is the timing of this reform, which corresponds roughly with the end of the Fourth Succession War and the Wolf's Dragoons' postwar acquisition of Outreach. This theory suggests that the Dragoons, whose Wolfnet agency is known to be formidable, might have experienced a defection at this time, or—for uncertain reasons—may have opted to establish roots in a Periphery realm as a means of watching the rim for possible Clan incursions, which resulted in Wolfnet operatives joining the Canopians' MIM.

Either or both of these together could explain the sudden boost in the MIM's capabilities, but I must caution that solid evidence of either one remains elusive. What I can say with certainty is that none of the foreign agencies known to be looking into the recent and somewhat inexplicable rise of the MIM has found a fully satisfactory cause into the phenomenon. Given the agency's cell-like nature, which compartmentalizes the flow of information to minimize breaches, and its singular responsibility to the Magistris, efforts to lift this veil of secrecy without upsetting the balance of power may continue indefinitely.

In recent years, it has seemed that even the Magistracy military leadership has grown wary of the strides that the MIM has made, as Magistris Emma Centrella recently denied a request by her military commander, Senior General Hadji Doru, to share her exclusive command of the MIM with the military leadership. There is even some evidence to suggest that the Word of Blake ROM has been desperately trying to infiltrate the agency as well, a development that suggests the Blakists are worried about something here.

BRANCHES OF THE MIM

Though the MIM uses a military command structure, its divisions operate with only the barest direction from any one central agency. Instead, the various departments function largely autonomously, coordinating with their counterparts on an as-needed basis through the command staff of the MIM (supported by the Central Analysis Corps) and administering their own ongoing training programs, through which new and veteran agents alike constantly cycle to ensure a high level of expertise. These departments further subdivide their duties to keep agents unaware of the larger picture, taking a page from historic resistance or guerilla movements to maintain the security of the whole at the expense of fully integrated support and command direction. This policy causes redundancy and even an occasional clash of jurisdictions,

but it also assures that the entire agency cannot be fully compromised by a foreign or rogue agent.

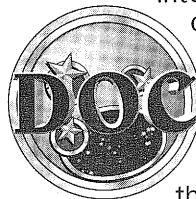
Central Analysis Corps

The Central Analysis Corps of the MIM is its data gathering and analysis branch and is remarkably well-organized and sophisticated for its funding and resources. Lacking field agents, CAC personnel are office operatives whose data and conclusions are used by the MIM command to direct any and all other field operations.



Domestic Operations Corps

The Domestic Operations Corps of the MIM is an internal security force that largely focuses on gathering intelligence and rarely takes on active operations such as sabotage, espionage, or assassination. Focused on the Canopian homelands (while also active in the Fronc Reaches), the DOC performs counterintelligence work and monitors the hot spots of civil unrest throughout the Magistracy itself. Though currently operating in a surveillance-only mode, this department also disseminates propaganda and is used as a shadow police force among the Canopian elite.



Foreign Affairs Corps

The external operations version of the DOC, the Foreign Affairs Corps are spies who infiltrate and gather data on foreign realms while also undertaking certain active operations, such as "interdiction"—the capture or execution of suspected threats to the Canopian state. It is presumed that the majority of operatives that have been discovered in other realms originate from this agency, which currently operates under an "observation-only" mandate.



Royal Operations Corps

This branch of the MIM monitors and has the authority to interdict the activities of the Canopian aristocracy, like an internal security force geared specifically for the high-profile, politically-volatile nature of the internal politics of Canopian royalty. Technically, it is within the purview of these agents to arrest or even execute members of the ruling Centrella line, if necessary, and so these agents in this department must pass a battery of tests that prove their loyalty to the Magistris beyond all question first, followed by their devotion to the rest of the state.



OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

MAGISTRACY INTELLIGENCE MINISTRY COMMAND

Director of the MIM:
General Jenni Elliot

Central Analysis Corps:
Colonel Beata Olesya

Domestic Operations Corps:
Colonel Peder Smythe

Foreign Affairs Corps:
Colonel Vegard Waldemar

Royal Operations Corps:
Colonel Marah Berit-Centrella

Homeland Defense Corps:
Colonel Bryant MacKenzie

Active Response Corps:
Colonel Yasmin Bellanca

Homeland Defense Corps



The MIM's Homeland Defense Corps are the Canopian secret service, a purely defensive force that runs concurrent with the Royal Guards as the official protectors of all high-ranking officials, both in the government bureaucracy and in the nobility itself. Often seen at official functions serving as escorts, operatives from this department are also adept at surveillance and other law-enforcement duties.

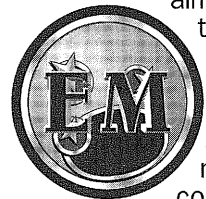
Active Response Corps



The Active Response Corps of the MIM is the Canopians' military "black ops" division. Effectively similar in nature to the original MIM as a whole, operatives from this division are elite troops roughly analogous to House Kurita's DEST or our own Death Commando warriors. In keeping with the MIM's current protocols, ARC teams are rarely deployed, though their missions are invariably aimed at military objectives and include everything from the assassination of key officers to the sabotage of enemy military equipment and facilities.

The Ebon Magistrate

A fairly recent development, the Ebon Magistrate is, beyond a doubt, the most mysterious and worrisome subdivision within the MIM. In fact, it took months of subtle digging to even confirm its existence and longer still to gain any understanding of its function and methods. What I have learned to date, while fragmentary, has been intriguing. Devised as a kind of ultra-elite covert operations unit, this organization is staffed almost exclusively by warriors who have no close friends or family and who are well versed in all manner of the martial arts, from unarmed techniques to vehicular and BattleMech combat.



Recruits for this part of the agency are drawn from all over the Magistracy and trained to operate in autonomous, semi-permanent cells to minimize the chances of security breach between them. These operatives undergo training in accordance with special mission parameters that are handed down from the Magistracy via the Magistrate's director, General Elan Karagan. Most alarming, my research indicates that in some cases, these agents may even receive "personal modifications", a colloquialism that suggests the Canopians are making use of advanced prosthetics or elective implants to augment their Magistrate agents.

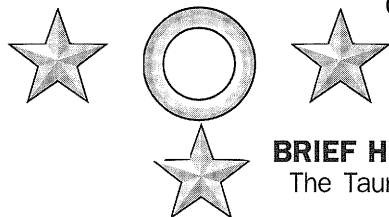
TAURIAN MINISTRY OF INTELLIGENCE (TMI)

This report was captured in the same transmission intercept as the MIM. Apparently, Chancellor Liao commissioned both around the same time to evaluate his allies'. -CT

To: Citizen Craig MacDonald, Chancellor's Ear
From: Agent Meagan Tressari
Re: TMI Status Briefing [[CLASSIFIED!]]

Rank,

Attached you'll find my complete summary of the Taurian intelligence apparatus, which I hope you'll find informative and even a little amusing. After five months among them as a "friendly consultant", I have managed to observe much of their operations firsthand while the rest has been gleaned from more traditional methods.



As requested, I have also revised this report to account for the upheavals of the past few years, in particular the collapse of the Canopian-Taurian effort in the former New Colony region, the recent fracturing of the Taurian realm, and the Pleiades campaign against House Davion. While these three events have seemingly stretched the realm to its breaking point, they have also sparked a renewed interest in beefing up intelligence—with our assistance, of course.

BRIEF HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

The Taurian Concordat's Ministry of Intelligence is an agency of the Taurian Ministry of the

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

Interior. Charged first and foremost with internal security in an open society, this agency has reflected the defensive nature of the Concordat as well as its egalitarian mindset. This has created an interesting conflict of principles of security versus citizens' rights that has all but hamstrung the agency's ability to effectively carry out its own mandate. Moreover, the overall defensive strategy of the Concordat through the years has further eroded this agency's effectiveness in carrying out external covert operations to the point where only the more egregious examples of the Clan Watch perform worse than the TMI.

Paranoia and Perfidy: From Founding to Succession Wars and Beyond

From its very beginnings, Taurian intelligence has focused on little more than surveillance and analysis with little to no emphasis on espionage. Fiercely proud of their hard-won independence from the Terran Alliance and eager to never again be held under the thumb of oppressive governments—or to become one themselves—the Taurians created the Concordat Security Service (CSS) in 2361. Attached to the nascent Taurian Navy, the CSS was little more than a picket fleet, maintaining a constant vigil on the Concordat's borders with only the occasional leap across to survey troop movements among the neighbors. In the early days of the CSS's development, however, less emphasis was placed on internal security as the nation eagerly accepted anyone in the spirit of openness and expansion.

This attitude changed after the Concordat's first armed clash with the Federated Suns in 2368. Suddenly faced with a confirmed threat to their sovereignty, Concordat Protector Richard Calderon ordered sweeping reforms of the intelligence apparatus, the better to anticipate future attacks from Davion space. Though still proceeding from a defensive premise, the Ministry of the Interior – under which the CSS operated—enacted a series of revamps, including the training of special operations teams specializing in guerilla warfare in any environment, and the official creation of the Concordat Constabulary, an internal security force to ward off hostile infiltrators.

In 2577, the Star League's invasion of the Taurian Concordat put these reforms to the ultimate test. CSS operatives and special task forces engaged the invading SLDF and Davion troops alongside the Taurian Defense Force at every turn. Yet even as their cooperation netted some impressive victories, including the "Case Amber" operation in which the CSS and TDF successfully destroyed or captured twenty Davion WarShips with a well-laid trap and the assassination of the League's Taurian front commander in 2584, the CSS's own fanatical patriotism cost the Taurians dearly. With agents willing to sacrifice themselves for each victory and resorting to tactics outlawed by the rest of the Inner Sphere, the Taurian intelligence agency was decimated by the time of the Concordat's surrender in 2596. What few survivors

remained went to ground, their agency banned under Star League rule, but they would resurface in the 2760s as the core of the Taurian Freedom Army, a rebel faction formed against the Star League's excesses.

It was not until after the Amaris Crisis and the fall of the Star League that the Taurian intelligence agency was reborn as a secret sub-agency of the Ministry of the Interior. Formed from recruited survivors of the TFA and descendants of the original CSS, the new Taurian Ministry of Intelligence replaced the outmoded agency, but assumed its mandates. An inflated budget helped quickly beef up the new TMI as war erupted across the Inner Sphere, but the anticipated Davion invasion never occurred. As subsequent generations of Taurians grew up in a realm that never suffered more than a passing raid or two by neighboring realms and pirates, the capabilities of the TMI atrophied.

The most crippling event for the TMI, however, occurred with Thomas Calderon's assumption of the Protectorship in 3017. Ever-paranoid of a Davion invasion like so many before him, Thomas rescinded tax breaks that fed the Taurians' colonial expansion efforts and put his nation on war footing after the start of the Fourth Succession War in 3028. Unlike previous rulers, however, Thomas' belief in the Davion threat grew into an obsession. Where the TDF and the TMI both benefited initially in the form of enhanced budgets and upgraded equipment, the failure of even a credible threat to materialize eventually took its toll on both the agency and the Protector himself. As Thomas Calderon grew more and more convinced of a Davion invasion, vital resources were diverted away from the TMI to finance the military, building up the TDF in advance of an "imminent" attack. This paranoia spiked in the late 3040s, between a few isolated incidents and the too-brief presence of a Davion military force on the Taurian border. Of course, after years of waiting for attacks that never came, the Taurians were easily led to believe that the Clan threat was a hoax. It took a few years for the financially-strapped, resource-poor TMI to prove the existence of Kerensky's descendants.

New Beginnings: The Rise and Fall of Jeffrey Calderon

By the mid 3050s, the Taurian economy had been stretched to the breaking point by a Protector convinced of a war brewing "any day now." The lack of a true threat and realization that the Clans did indeed now top House Davion's priorities made Thomas Calderon's actions increasingly ludicrous. His insistence that an invasion would strike at any moment, unsubstantiated by several underfunded and poorly executed intelligence operations in the nearby regions of the Federated Commonwealth, led him to order troops to ignore all other threats, including repeated predations by pirate forces in the Pirates' Haven Cluster and the New Colony region. Matters came to a head in 3055 when he was suddenly deposed in favor of his son, Jeffrey.

Jeffrey Calderon, though quite young, was something

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of a visionary. His negotiations with the Canopian Magestrix opened the door to their alliance and mutual development of the New Colony Region, a grand event that ultimately paved the way for our own association with the two most powerful Periphery realms. Unfortunately, promised reforms and increased funding in the TMI had yet to materialize before the fateful conference on Detroit in 3060, where Protector Jeffrey lost his life. What little evidence the TMI gathered (with our help, naturally) pointed to a Davion agent who arrived via Capellan territory. Lord Grover Shraplen, a known isolationist with similar views to the departed Protector Thomas, assumed power after Jeffrey's death, armed with the knowledge that House Davion was once more meddling in Taurian affairs.

Ironically, Shraplen's rise prompted a deepening of our mutual alliance, now united against the common foe of House Davion. Shraplen increased his military support of our efforts in the Chaos March and against St. Ives, while boosting his military machine at home and even increasing the TMI's budget, though marginally. The strain of more recent events, however, has begun to show.

Current Events: Secessions and Crusades

In 3066, the Concordat was hit by three new crises resulting from its Protector's increasingly paranoid behavior, once more focused on the so-called "Davion bogeyman". With its economy stretched thin as its military supported our own efforts in the Chaos March, even the promise of membership in the New Star League could not boost the people's flagging confidence in their leadership. Thus, the New Colony Region, in a sudden move the Concordat was not prepared to oppose, seceded to form the Fronc Reaches, supported by the Taurians' erstwhile allies in the Magistracy of Canopus.

Adding insult to injury, an effort by the Protector to bring his errant Baron, Cham Kithrong, in line sparked a military confrontation on Marfik that snowballed into a short and brutal civil war. Seceding six worlds under the protection of his VI Corps, Baron Kithrong, all but declaring Shraplen a usurper, announced his intention to resist the Taurian government until Erik Martens-Calderon, the illegitimate heir to Jeffrey Calderon, is recognized and installed as the new Protector.

Finally, another historic "misunderstanding" between the Davions and the Taurians sparked the first major military invasion by the Concordat in history. Amazingly, the Concordat has managed not only to turn back the apparent invaders but even seized territory from the Federated Suns as well. Unfortunately, this victory is tenuous at best and may be unraveled if the Concordat's current financial, political, and military woes get any worse.

BRANCHES OF THE TMI

The TMI is organized into five main subdivisions, two of which actually fall under the joint administration of the Ministry of the Interior and the Taurian Defense Force.

Recruitment and training for operatives, however, is normally handled through the TMI Headquarters on Taurus, which reports directly to the Minister of the Interior. At present, many of the TMI's operations center on weeding out possible insurgents—either Davion agents or anti-Shraplen elements—among its own ranks. These operations, however, have only been partially effective; I myself have located and assisted in exposing over a dozen foreign operatives in the past two months alone.

Bureau of Analysis

The TMI Bureau of Analysis handles passive surveillance including the monitoring of new media and other communications in neighboring realms. Field operatives in this branch are few and far between, and budgetary constraints have limited the number of capable analysts who can interpret the incredible volume of data they gather.



Diplomatic Corps

This branch of secret service appears modeled loosely on the Lyran agency of the same name and serves as a combination bodyguard and government liaison group. Often assigned to visiting dignitaries in the hopes of gleaned information from them in an unguarded moment, this department's underfunding has led to an emphasis on the former directive over the latter.



Concordat Constabulary

The Concordat Constabulary is the internal security force of the TMI and is by far the most well-funded and —equipped division of the agency. Charged with locating, identifying, and eliminating (as necessary) any infiltrators among the ranks of the Taurian government, military, and business communities, this agency is also the most pervasive and heavily staffed.

Unfortunately for the Taurians, their own obsession with maintaining a "free and open" society has hamstrung this department, laying it open to the very foreign interference it is supposed to counter. Also charged with keeping an eye out for the common people, the Constabulary also doubles as an "internal affairs" agency—the watchers who watch other watchers, in other words.



Propaganda Division (TDF)

Though nominally assigned to the military, where it serves to maintain good morale and counter rumors instigated by enemy agents, the TMI also features a rarely seen civilian counterpart to its Propaganda Division. At present, this civilian counterpart is laboring to assure the Taurian people that



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all is well, even in the face of obvious turmoil, and currently touts the recent victories in the Pleiades while downplaying the effective secession of the Calderon Protectorate.

Special Task Groups (TDF)



The Taurian Defense Force's Special Task Groups are commando operatives and special agents who infiltrate, report, and undertake various operations from espionage to counter-terrorist operations. Their operations are severely restricted in an effort to prevent human rights violations, though interestingly enough, special mandates exist that allow STGs to be employed during time of war as a state-sponsored terrorist unit.

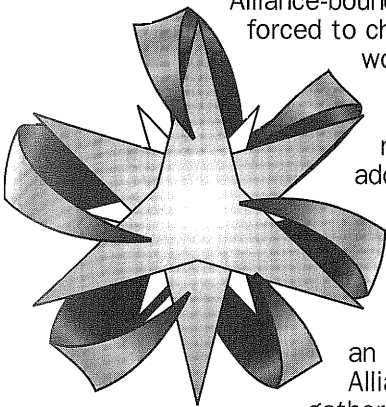
OUTWORLDS ALLIANCE INTELLIGENCE

Outworlds Alliance Intelligence (OAI) has never been particularly large. Indeed, Alliance citizens view its very existence with the same kind of antipathy they normally reserve for BattleMechs. Yet no review of the Periphery intelligence agencies would be complete without including the one attached to one of the Periphery's largest realms.

FORMATION

The Outworlds Alliance Intelligence, like the Alliance itself, was created almost by accident. With no territorial ambitions and a charter that guaranteed member worlds a high level of autonomy, the Executive Parliament perceived no need for an intelligence agency.

In 2571, a band of privateers began terrorizing shipping throughout Alliance space. The Alliance Service Arm assigned Ernst Bernstine and Morgan William to analyze gathered evidence, hoping to identify any pattern to the attacks and possibly locate the pirates' base. Working from their tiny office on Alpheratz, the two men exhausted all the available information their newly formed Analysis Department had without any success, so they hit the streets in search of more data. Bernstine interviewed the crews of Alliance-registered merchant ships while William analyzed ships' logs and sensor data. All their legwork paid off with the discovery that a Federated Suns cargo broker was selling shipping schedules of Alliance-bound cargos to the privateers. With their source of information cut off, the privateers were forced to change their tactics, switching their attacks from shipping to raiding the richer Alliance worlds.



Despite this, Prime Minister Catherine Avellar praised William and Bernstine's efforts and showed a keen interest in how they had pieced together all the information, not nearly impressed by their painstaking detective work as she was by the wealth of additional information gathered in the course of the investigation. Seeing the winds of change blowing in the Inner Sphere with the formation of the Star League, President Avellar authorized the two to expand operations.

SWITCH AND BAIT

While William continued to run the Analysis Division, Bernstine set himself up as an information broker and courted the cooperation of Free Traders operating out of Alliance space. In a remarkably short time he had established a respectable data-gathering network. The attention of the new organization was still focused on the troublesome privateers but deteriorating relations with the Star League made monitoring ship and troop movements along the Inner Sphere borders an issue of increasing urgency.

Worried by the raids, the Executive Parliament authorized the purchase of several companies of light and medium BattleMechs to bolster the Alliance's defenses. Unfortunately, word of the build up drew the attention of Star League Intelligence and the Star League analysts completely misinterpreted their data, presenting First Lord Ian Cameron with panicked reports of a sizable BattleMech force being created in the Periphery state. Alarmed by the possibility of an attack on his young Star League, First Lord Ian Cameron dispatched several SLDF Divisions to the Alliance, ostensibly to hunt down privateers. In reality this force was to hunt down and eliminate the BattleMech threat. Despite venomous criticism for her "lack of backbone", there was little Catherine Avellar could do.

Ernst Bernstine and his network swung into action, smuggling the 'Mechs into Federated Suns space as the Star

TAURIAN MINISTRY OF INTELLIGENCE

Director of the TMI:

Minister of the Interior Drew Beilas

Bureau of Analysis:

Comptroller Leeza Becca

Diplomatic Corps:

Comptroller Richard Blaine

Concordat Constabulary:

Comptroller Cole Loriann

Propaganda Division:

Comptroller Soon Lo Gui

Special Task Groups:

Comptroller Jason Roberts

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

League marched in. One of the last ships to make the jump was even commandeered to carry Terran Hegemony troops back into the Outworlds Alliance, but none of the SLDF officers thought to search the BattleMech-filled cargo DropShip she was carrying.

REUNIFICATION WAR

The League forces never came close to where the pirates were operating, but neither did they find the BattleMechs for which they were searching. Instead, after a long occupation, careless actions by a Combine MechWarrior sparked the Santiago Massacre—one of a series of events that would ultimately set off the Reunification War.

The covert side of that conflict was as brutal and bloody as the battles themselves raged across the Outworlds Alliance. As the public face of Alliance intelligence operations, Morgan William was “sanctioned” by an SLDF Special Operations team early in the war, though Bernstine continued his operations with many of his Trader/Operatives flying flags of convenience out of ports in the Federated Suns. The SLDF Navy soon discovered the impossibility of sealing Alliance borders as these intrepid spacers would slip through their net time and again, bringing badly needed supplies and information to the beleaguered Pitcairn Legion. Even by the end of the war, many of Bernstine’s operatives were still in business, though the Alliance military was a shambles.

THE LEAGUE FALLS

During Star League’s “Golden Years”, the Alliance’s intelligence-gathering network remained in operation, though with no real direction. That all began to change after 2750, as rebellion against ill-conceived Star League taxes and policies began in all the Periphery states. Though the Alliance wanted nothing to do with weapons after the horrors of the Reunification War, they supplied the Taurian Concordat and Magistracy of Canopus with intelligence on SLDF shipping and troop movements.

When the storm finally broke in the Taurian Concordat with the New Vandenburg Revolt in 2765, the Outworlds Alliance avoided being sucked into another conflict. Likewise, the Alliance was not directly involved in Civil War, though its traders unofficially passed information on to the SLDF after learning of the hellish conditions under which Terran Hegemony citizens were living.

THE LONG ROAD

The catastrophic loss of shipping during the Succession Wars was disastrous for the OAI. Decreased trade and fewer ships choked off a vital source of intelligence. Thankfully, there was little interest in any of the Periphery states as the Inner Sphere powers turned toward obliterating each other, allowing the Alliance much-needed time to recover.

The growth of Alliance industry and trade over the last twenty years has seen a rebirth of the old

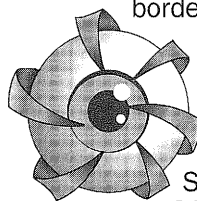
Trader/Operative system, however. Though now much more commercially oriented, with much of the information gathered related to business and commerce with the Draconis Combine and Federated Suns, the information gathered by the trader-operatives has provided the Alliance with early warning of powerful forces active in their part of the Periphery, including the recent arrival of elements of the Snow Raven Clan.

ORGANIZATION

Tucked away out of sight in the Alliance Service Arm, OAI has sharply defined roles, mostly limited to activities larger states would assign to civilian police and intelligence agencies. Its four divisions—Observation, Liaison, Analysis, and newly formed Infiltration—are geared primarily toward external threats only. It is only under the most of extreme emergencies that the Executive Parliament gives clearance for OAI operations against a member world—something that has happened only twice.

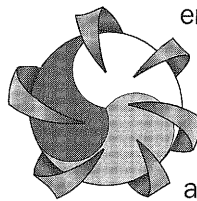
Observation Division

The agents of the Observation Division are the most likely of all OAI operatives to be active beyond Alliance borders. They often operate under the tried and tested cover as crews of independent traders, allowing them to cover a large territory without causing undue suspicion. Though not every tramp, merchant, and free trader in the Spinward region has connections with the OAI, they certainly have proven the agency’s most fertile source of information.



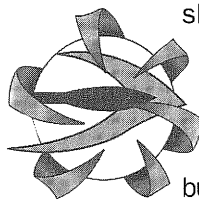
Liaison Division

The Liaison Division works most closely with the troops of the Alliance Military Corps and planetary law enforcement agencies. A member of this division is always attached as a liaison at regimental level, collecting information for analysis from gun camera footage, sensor logs, and after-mission debriefings. Conversely, any intelligence briefings prepared by Analysis are passed through the Liaison Division operatives to those that require it on a need-to-know basis. The Liaison Division is also OAI’s point of contact with ComStar and the Explorer Corps.



Analysis Division

The heartland of OAI, Analysis Division fondly remembers the early years when two dedicated men slaved away in a tiny office buried deep in the bowels of the Alliance Service Arm headquarters. Although their facilities have expanded somewhat since then (Bernstine and William’s office has been preserved almost as a shrine), business has changed very little. Analysis



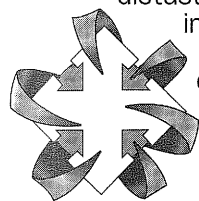
OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

operatives are tasked with sifting through the disassociated fragments of information that come in from the other divisions, looking for morsels of data from which the big picture can be constructed, and—if deemed necessary—requesting as much from the appropriate division.

Following Draconis Combine operations in the region of Dante, Analysis has been pushing for Infiltration to send in an operative to get some “ground truth” on what is going on. Moreover, an increase in pirate activity and the recent appearance of elements of Clan Snow Raven in the vicinity of the Alliance have stirred up this and other divisions of the OAI, effectively placing the Alliance intelligence apparatus on full alert.

Infiltration Division

The Infiltration Division is a new addition to OAI, a result of the modernization of the Alliance Ground Defense Arm, which also showed that the Alliance needed to take a more proactive approach to intelligence operations. As the smallest (and most distasteful) OAI division, Infiltration is called upon in rare cases where information cannot be gathered by the usual means or when more direct action is called for. Infiltration is also charged with running counter-espionage operations; something OAI had previously thought unnecessary.



Though military in nature, Infiltration Division personnel are often recruited from outside the military. Instead, undercover officers from planetary law enforcement agencies are commonly used since they have already demonstrated the prerequisite skills and may have a suitable established cover.

ORDO VIGILIS

The fact that this report originates from an intercepted Word of Blake source might make it appear suspect, but we have reason to believe that every word is true (or at least as close to true as can be expected from the Blakists). What is most disturbing is not so much the Word's involvement in Marian affairs as how far these efforts have gone in making this former pirate state into a viable military and intelligence power. This bears watching. -CT

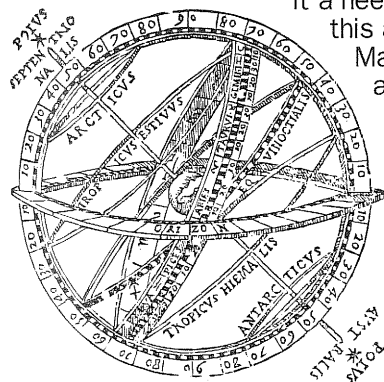
From: Demi-Precentor Rho-XV Brian LeBlanc
To: Precentor ROM Alexander Kernoff

The Peace of Blake be with you, Precentor.

The report below should give you a good picture of our progress in the Marian Hegemony. The Marians have proven to be quick studies under our tutelage and our Blessed Order maintains several highly placed liaison officers within each section of the Marian intelligence agency, despite the recent troubles with the Circinus Federation. In this manner, ROM may continue to monitor their progress and provide guidance. In the coming days, they should prove to be a valuable ally for us in the Periphery.

INTRODUCTION

Born of fortune hunting as a bandit kingdom and baptized in the fiery crucible of war, the Marian Hegemony has finally come of age as a fully legitimate state in the latter half of the 31st century. It makes sense that legitimacy brings with it a need to have a cohesive mechanism for providing intelligence to its leaders, especially in this age where information can truly be ammunition, but to understand the evolution of the Marian *Ordo Vigilis* (Watchers), one must understand the ancient origins of the Hegemony and its progress from bandit kingdom to Periphery power.



When Johann Sebastian O'Reilly founded the Marian Hegemony in 2920, he did so with an eye toward recreating the proverbial grandeur that was Rome. That the Hegemony's military was modeled after that of ancient Rome was no accident—the simple Roman system of Centuries and Maniples and Cohorts and Legions provided an efficient means of spreading out the state's military forces over its territory. That Marian society was modeled after that of ancient Rome was also no accident—O'Reilly was quite enamored of the old Roman Republic. That its intelligence service also followed the old Roman model was a byproduct of the Hegemony's focus, which placed more emphasis on military strength and expansion than on intelligence.

The Romans had a very simple system of intelligence gathering; when they needed information about opposing forces, commanders would bribe members of the enemy army to give it to them. When a Senator wanted to gather information about his enemies, he would bribe somebody close to his target to give it to him. The Romans had no concept of counterintelligence; everyone

OUTWORLDS ALLIANCE INTELLIGENCE

Coordinator:
Steven Woodward

Observation Division:
Migel Haverlock

Liaison Division:
Shandra Chiu

Analysis Division:
Douglas Faulds

Infiltration Division:
Jason Vorn

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could be bought and sold, and the trick was simply to find the right price; those whose price was deemed too steep were simply eliminated.

For several decades, the Marians held much the same view. The rudimentary intelligence network of the Hegemony consisted largely of a bastardized version of the ancient Roman system of patronage. Under this system, wealthy Senators seeking to curry favor with the O'Reilly family maintained a network of "clients"—people that received money and favors from their patrons in exchange for giving them political support and tidbits of information and gossip that were in turn passed along to the Marian leader (who used or ignored such bits as he saw fit). Those that passed along good information received the favor of the head of state (in effect making them clients of whoever happened to be on the throne at the time). Those that passed along bad information, however, were either ignored or found themselves forced from their lofty station while their clients generally becoming clients of political rivals.

Senatorial power plays often focused on the subversion of a rival's clients. Ambitious Senators with enough coin would often attempt to buy off certain clients in the hopes that those clients would either turn to them for patronage outright or turn against their patron and, eventually, cause his downfall—in which case the client would likely come to them anyway.

This system remained in place until the reign of Marius O'Reilly. Upon assuming the mantle of Imperator, Marius created the Directorate of Security and Information and decreed that all information pertaining to state security be funneled through that agency. The DSI culled the most promising informers from the patronage networks that already existed, making them *de facto* agents and giving them rudimentary training in encryption techniques and surveillance. Despite rigorous background checks performed on these new DSI agents to ensure loyalty to the State, however, they were not immune to performing a double-cross if they felt they could personally profit from the venture. One of these informers-turned-agents, for example, filed the report bringing to light Sean O'Reilly's embezzlement of state funds to fuel his private excesses. However, that same informer later turned around and told Sean of his father's intent to disinherit him and make Julius his heir (upon Sean's ascension to the throne, the informer was rewarded with a promotion within the Directorate).

A peripheral responsibility of the Directorate was the Palace Guard. Though directly under the purview of the MHAf at the time, the Guard's commanding Prefect relied on the DSI to provide intelligence regarding possible threats to the Caesar. Information such as this was instrumental in helping the Guard foil an attempt on Sean O'Reilly's life in 3052.

When Sean O'Reilly requested the assistance of the Word of Blake in helping further build his realm, one of the areas where our Blessed Order had the greatest impact on was the Directorate (which had been renamed the

Ordo Vigilis by the romanophile O'Reilly). Selected DSI agents were given intensive training by ROM and installed in positions of command within the new agency.

ORDO VIGILIS SECTIONS

The Sections of the *Ordo Vigilis* operate independently of one another, united under the auspices of the *Administratorium* (Office of the Director). This compartmentalization ensures that, though the responsibilities of each Section sometimes overlap, the overall integrity of the agency is maintained.

The *Administratorium* also functions as the analysis arm of the *Ordo Vigilis*, devoted to analyzing information routed through from other branches for the purpose of formulating possible plans of action (if any) to benefit the Marian military or government.

Section A: *Securitatis Internum* (Internal Security)

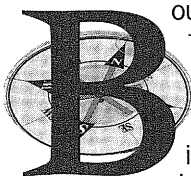
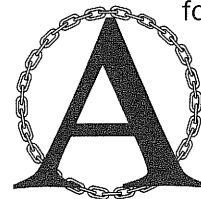
Among other duties, Section A monitors the activities of the informer networks set up under the former DSI. Informers (*delatores*) are assigned to handlers, who assemble the information given them into reports to be sent along to planetary station chiefs. SI station chiefs in turn assign agents to follow up leads gleaned from informers, work with local police forces to curb the spread of internal dissent by giving them lists of people that are deemed in need of "protective custody", and provide evidence gathered by *delatores* at trials. Foreign visitors in particular are watched carefully by the *delatores*.

Praesidii Praetoris (Palace Guard)

The Palace Guard, originally a unit under the direct command of the Marian throne, was made the joint responsibility of *Securitatis Internum* and the *Administratorium* in 3057. The Caesar still maintains nominal command of the Guard, but actual control is held by SI and the *Administratorium*. A prospective Guardsman must be a member of I Legio, must undergo rigorous screening to ensure his absolute loyalty to the Hegemony and the O'Reilly family, and, upon being selected, must swear an oath to defend the Caesar at the cost of his own life.

Section B: *Observationis Externum* (External Surveillance)

Easily one of the most important Sections of the OV, Section B handles the operations of all Marian agents outside the borders of the Hegemony. OE field agents (referred to internally as *delatores externes*) infiltrate other realms with an eye toward gathering information on domestic disposition, and, in some cases, fomenting unrest among the civilian populace where possible. Sleeper

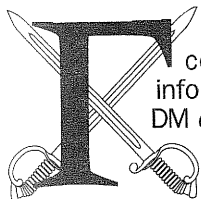


OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

agents are also planted in the Marian diplomatic corps and foreign populations for long-range plans. Occasionally, the OE works in tandem with our own ROM agents, but never for very long. OE agents also provide information on foreign troop movements where possible.

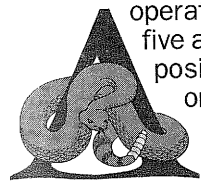
Section C: Delatura Militaria (Military Intelligence)

Section C agents are chiefly responsible for gathering information on enemy troop movements. This section is also charged with doing thorough background checks on all Legionaries who are allowed access to sensitive information. DM-run listening posts set up behind Marian lines in a conflict monitor all radio traffic and help to provide accurate information on enemy operations inside the borders of the Hegemony. DM *delatores* are planted in every Marian unit as "political officers", to keep an eye on their compatriots (and each other), and their testimony is considered invaluable at courts-martial.



Section D: Operationes Abscondites (Covert Operations)

The smallest of the sections, Section D's members are drawn largely from the Legions with the remainder coming from other sections or external recruitment. OA operations include infiltration, assassination, extraction, and sabotage. OA teams are arranged in groups of five and to date have only been employed in wartime. Teams are dropped behind enemy lines to scout enemy positions and sow general havoc. Unlike the other sections (which are based on Alphard), Section D is based on the desert world of Horatius, a remote planet that is also the base for the Cohors Morituri, the Marian penal cohort. Upon Julius O'Reilly's ascension to the throne, several of the Morituri who had been pardoned by Julius were invited to train for Section D. These ex-Morituri proved to be resourceful and quick studies, no doubt a legacy of their time in that latter-day "Chain Gang Battalion".



ORDO VIGILIS COMMAND

Ordo Vigilis Director:

Jaroslav Svoboda

Securitatis Internum:

Craig Adams

Praesidii Praetoris:

Prefect Niclas Wallin

Observationis Externum:

Kevin Weekes

Delatura Militaria:

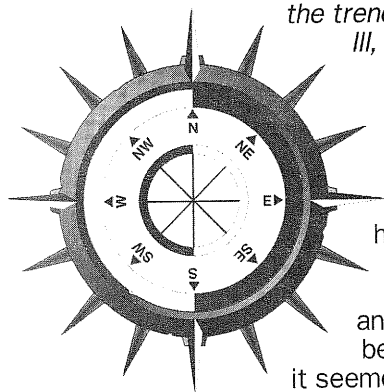
Prefect Bret Hedican

Operationes Abscondites:

Sean Hill

FEDERAL INTELLIGENCE COMMAND (FIC)

ComStar has provided this report on the state of the Circinus Federation's Federal Intelligence Command, based on a decade of analysis made possible by unidentified agents they have slipped into the realm. Though much of it reeks of ComStar double-talk and once again raises the specter of a Blakist bogeyman, considering the trend I'm seeing in other reports and the presence of a brand new 'Mech factory on Baltazar III, I wouldn't discount this potential threat. - CT



BRIEF HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

Formed shortly after the fall of the Star League, allegedly by expatriate Lyran farmers and mercenary remnants of the SLDF, the Circinus Federation has long been regarded as a barely-legitimate bandit kingdom. Its primary defense force, the Black Warriors, has served not only as the backbone of this tiny state's meager military, but has engaged in numerous so-called "covert operations" against neighboring realms.

Though the existence of these operations, which are little more than smash-and-grab pirate raids, has been officially denied Federation government, reliable observers believed they formed the extent of the Federation's intelligence and covert activities, or so it seemed until very recently.

Origins of the FIC

Though given a high-sounding title, the Federal Intelligence Command is little more than a civilian force assembled by late Federation president H.R. "Little Bob" McIntyre as part of a check against the rising influence of the Cirion family, traditional commanders of the Black Warriors. A careful balance of power between the McIntyres and the Cirions, traceable back to the earliest days of the Federation, seemed ready to tumble into chaos in 3032 when General Adam Cirion died and "Little Bob" declared himself commander of the Black Warriors by the authority of his title as Federation President.

McIntyre's talent for politics, however, did not translate into equal skill as a military commander, and over the course of a decade his poor strategic skills led the Black Warriors into one disaster after another. Wanting to improve the quality of the intelligence he was receiving while also assigning agents to watch his back as it became clear his troops' loyalty was wearing

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

thin, McIntyre commissioned a small internal intelligence force whose role would be monitoring neighboring realms and coordinating with the Warriors. In truth, McIntyre's intent was to use this force to keep an eye on the Warriors' most radical elements, such as the upstart Captain Michael Cirion—then a company commander—attempt to usurp his power.

Building on pre-existing civilian police agencies used to handle unrest throughout the Federation, McIntyre's Federal Intelligence Command, formed in late 3038, was little more than a skimming of various planetary government security forces with rudimentary skills in infiltration and surveillance. As an apparatus, the FIC was an ungainly mess. Furthermore, its intended role as the Warriors' watchdogs fell flat when Michael Cirion staged a secret coup against the president in 3041. The agency's complete inability to link Cirion with the coup after a settlement had been reached proved (to McIntyre's mind, at least) that his entire experiment had been a dismal failure.

Upgrade

Rather than abandon his FIC project, McIntyre instead opted to overhaul the intelligence agency using the same methods employed to protect the Federation centuries before: he hired outside help. With widespread distrust among the Warriors at a time when the Federation desperately needed their muscle to survive, McIntyre was forced to abandon his unofficial mandate for the agency and could not hope to recruit membership from the Federation's weakened defense force, even to fulfill its official duties.

Recognizing the weaknesses of the agency, including the lack of suitable training at home, President McIntyre instructed the FIC to recruit "consultants" from beyond the Federation's borders. Over the next decade, the agency grew to encompass a host of mercenary specialists from across the Inner Sphere and periphery. Reorganized loosely into three departments to handle external intelligence, internal security, and data analysis, the FIC gradually began to show some promise, and plans were even underway to construct crude but serviceable training facilities for homegrown FIC operatives. Unfortunately, the Marian Hegemony invasion of 3064 would prove the agency's undoing.

The Fall of the FIC

Shortly after the start of the Marian invasion, our information on the FIC became markedly unreliable. The reason for this, as far as can be ascertained, appears to be the influence of Blakist operatives, whose services were "offered" as part of an arms deal intended to check Marian ambitions in the Federation. Thus, what follows is mostly conjecture.

Upon the start of the Marian Invasion, our operatives reported confusion in the FIC's lines of communication, signifying what appeared to be a major breakdown in the chain of command. Follow-up analysis suggests that several of the agency's own mercenary "consultants"

were, in fact, subverted by agents of the Hegemony's *Ordo Vigillis* or simply chose to depart ahead of the coming storm. Their departures not only created a power vacuum in the FIC, but also rendered immediately suspect any operations the remainder of the agency could perform. This left the FIC all but crippled and prompted McIntyre to turn to outside help as a collection of mercenary guerillas tried to hold the line.

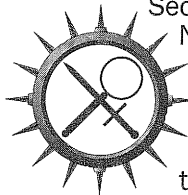
Forces belonging to the Word of Blake arrived soon after this in response to the president's call for aid and boosted the strength of the McIntyre House Guards. It is believed at this time that the Word of Blake reinforcements also included elements of ROM, who apparently assumed command of the shattered remains of the FIC. The sudden death of President McIntyre, the disappearance of Colonel Donner, commander of the Black Warriors, as well as recent departure of the Warriors themselves, presents a more alarming sequence of events that may be tied to the virtual Blakist control over the Federation.

BRANCHES OF THE FIC

Until recently, the FIC was broken into three separate divisions, all of whom answered to a single Director, answerable in turn only to the president. Mass defections and the Word of Blake takeover has rendered further information on this office—including who, if anyone, now holds it—inconclusive.

Analysis Division

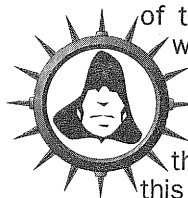
The Analysis Division of the FIC compiled and reviewed information gathered both by the Internal Security and External Operations Divisions.



Nominally used to identify targets for Black Warriors raids or warn of likely threats both within Federation borders and beyond, it is unclear how much of this division remains in operation at this time.

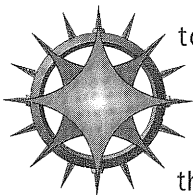
External Operations

The External Operations Division for the FIC largely consisted of the recruitment of spies in a crude parody of the Marian Hegemony's *Ordo Vigillis*, as well as the use of scouts on potential raiding targets. Apparently, much of the Federation's diplomatic corps was also considered to be part of the EOD. Like the rest of the FIC, the current state of this department remains unclear.



Internal Security

Intended to maintain the near totalitarian rule of the Federation government over the various sub-governments and citizenry of the state, the Internal Security Division is the only division known to remain active since the recent series of events.



OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

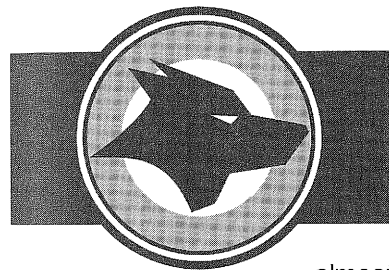
Supplemented by known operatives of the Word of Blake ROM, the measures employed by this division have grown markedly more draconian and their authority now extends to all levels of Circinian government.

WOLFNET

Wolfnet. Within the Inner Sphere intelligence community, there is no other agency that is simultaneously held in such high esteem and hatred. Its reach and competence is legendary, as is the inability of any other agency to place one of their own operatives within its rolls. Smaller by magnitudes in both size and budget than any other Inner Sphere intelligence agency, it has nevertheless managed coups that none other has approached in this century. And yet, this elite organization is founded and run by "mere" mercenaries.

ORIGINS

Wolfnet was founded shortly after the mercenary unit Wolf's Dragoons mysteriously appeared in the Inner Sphere in 3005 and quickly gained prominence, mainly because no other mercenary unit had ever before deigned to develop its own interstellar intelligence-gathering agency.



The mere fact that a heretofore-unknown mercenary force some five regiments strong had simply appeared in the Inner Sphere was cause enough for intelligence agencies across known space to worry, but that they quickly formed an organization that could not only prevent their own operatives from penetrating the Dragoons mystery, but also gather information on par with their own agencies surely caused more than a few senior officers across the Inner Sphere to be released from their duties. Even more bizarre, as the Inner Sphere would learn some five decades later, was that the Dragoons had been formed by the Clans, a martial society known to be almost fatally lacking in the areas of spycraft and intelligence-gathering.

On the other hand, the Dragoons were freebirths almost to the man. More than that, the unit had a significant number of non-warriors in its ranks—scientists, technicians, and even merchants, castes that not only were filled with intelligent and creative individuals but also could make use of unofficial information-gathering and passing networks. When Jamie and Joshua Wolf and their closest advisors realized that the Inner Sphere they had entered bore little to no resemblance to the one that the Clans thought existed, they knew they would have to make immediate changes in the way that they would operate. One of the first changes was the formation of Wolfnet.

GROWING CAPABILITIES

At its inception in the early years of the 31st century, Wolfnet was given the unenviable job of determining the relative strengths, goals, and weaknesses of each of the Inner Sphere's nations, both militarily and politically. Shortly thereafter, Wolfnet was also tasked with gauging the technological advancement of each of those nations.

The officers assigned to Wolfnet, under the direction of then-Major Margaret Tulliver, organized into two separate branches, one devoted to battlefield intelligence and the other to intelligence gathering and analysis on an interstellar level. Tulliver, herself a former MechWarrior but more importantly a levelheaded logistician and strategist, took specific interest in the interstellar division.

The battlefield intelligence branch was initially assigned only limited assets, with MechWarriors and other combat personnel dual-tasked to fill vacancies. Tulliver herself kept the majority of Wolfnet's personnel and worked hard with them to create a first-rate organization that could keep track of everything happening in the Inner Sphere while keeping to a shoestring budget.

WOLFNET TODAY

Wolfnet's inner workings are mysterious to all but those who work within the organization, or to those few individuals who fill high command positions within the Dragoons. Yet it has grown significantly over the past seven decades, in manpower, capability and budget, and is still considered a prime target for almost every intelligence agency in the Inner Sphere.

Wolfnet has been busy this last decade, perhaps more so than at any time in its past. With the end of the Clan War following the Star League's Annihilation of Clan Smoke Jaguar, the Inner Sphere has become a hotbed of conflict and revolution. As the FedCom Civil War waged around them, the Dragoons, who remained largely neutral in that action, saw significant conflict touch every other nation to one extent or another, leaving Wolfnet to keep an eye on everything. In so doing, the agency apparently missed the early signs of the Word of Blake's increased activity within the Chaos March, but once aware, the mercenaries were able to form a power bloc of like-minded commands to check on the ComStar splinter group.

FEDERAL INTELLIGENCE COMMAND

FIC Director:
Unknown

Analysis Division:
Unknown

External Operations:
Unknown

Internal Security:
Unknown

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

Wolfnet, as ever, remains at the forefront of such operations.

A LOOK AT WOLFNET

The Wolfnet of today is still very interested in determining the capabilities of each of the major powers within the Inner Sphere, as well as the Periphery and those Clans maintaining a local presence. Through contacts believed to be active within the Clan Watch the Dragoons may even be able to keep an eye on the distant "Home Clans", covering every possible avenue of conflict.

Far smaller than any of the intelligence agencies fielded by the five Great Houses, Wolfnet nevertheless manages to maintain parity with those organizations by making frugal use of its limited resources. Overlooked by many, perhaps the greatest asset at the agency's disposal is its extensive network of mercenary contacts throughout the Inner Sphere, a fringe benefit of the Dragoons' influential role in the mercenary profession. In fact, some have speculated that this very asset was the first resource Tulliver and her people made use of so long ago; with mercenary units so integral to the defense of each of the Great Houses, Dragoons agents stationed in hiring halls and other popular mercenary hangouts could quickly have helped determine military deployments and shifts, almost before the leaders of those nations learned of them, so long as they had the analysts to sort it all out.

Beyond these contacts, the organization certainly employs numerous undercover operatives, a vast network of informants throughout the Inner Sphere, feeding its analysts information on every nation and significant power. Backed up by what is believed to be very mature electronic intelligence gathering technology, possibly including special listening devices left behind on every world they've ever been on, the Dragoons' alleged intelligence web is vast indeed.

DIVISIONS

The actual makeup of Wolfnet is a closely guarded secret. Thus, what follows is an educated guess as to the internal divisions and the responsibilities of each one.

Command

The Command Division has ultimate responsibility for Wolfnet, including all its personnel and operations. This division is likely the smallest and is further subdivided into a number of different commands. Each Dragoons regiment (or independent entity, such as Zeta Battalion) has a member of the Command Division to oversee Wolfnet operations in support of those units. Likewise, a command officer oversees operations against and/or within every nation in the Inner Sphere and Periphery. Liaison officers are also assigned to this division.

Battlefield Intelligence

The officers and enlisted personnel of this division are tasked with gathering as much information as

possible about enemy units that a Dragoons field unit might encounter on the battlefield. They interrogate prisoners, work with Communications and Technology personnel to intercept and decode enemy transmissions, and further work with Intelligence and Analysis personnel to determine just what that enemy's plans are. Members of this division brief Dragoons officers before all combat operations and, since many are rated MechWarriors or soldiers, may even take to the field to gather information firsthand.

Communications and Technology

Members of the Communications and Technology Division are tasked with intercepting and decoding enemy communications and reverse-engineering high-tech items recovered by other Dragoons personnel. The Communications and Technology Division works closely with GM-Blackwell in these endeavors and, though this relationship has diminished somewhat in the past decade, with the Federated Suns' NAIS. Members of this division are far more capable than most others of similar assignment in the Inner Sphere; it was a technician allegedly from this division that broke ComStar codes and activated an HPG prior to the Fourth Succession War, though many consider that story apocryphal.

Field Operations

The agents of the Field Operations Division have responsibility for gathering intelligence on the various governments and significant entities of the Inner Sphere and Periphery. These agents attempt to infiltrate "enemy" agencies and recruit informants from within those agencies. The members of this division are primarily intelligence gatherers, however, and only rarely take part in combat operations of any kind. Of course, like any other major intelligence agency Wolfnet has many enemies, but it still operates on the mandate to only gather information, not to interfere with any other agencies or governments.

Intelligence and Analysis

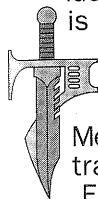
Intelligence and Analysis Division personnel take all of the information that comes into Wolfnet and analyze it to determine the current situation in the Inner Sphere. Personnel from this division also work with each of the Dragoons field units, providing battlefield commanders the detailed analyses they need to ensure successful operations. The great majority of this division's assigned personnel operate on Outreach, though, sifting through the huge amount of information that comes in every day.

SEVENTH KOMMANDO

The Seventh Kommando is probably the best-known division within Wolfnet, even though its existence is only semi-official. Seventh Kommando operatives are publicly assigned to other Dragoons units from time to time—one currently serves in Zeta Battalion, in fact—but as a whole entity, the entire division and its full complement is a secret the Dragoons play close to the vest. Publicly,

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

no one knows who most Seventh Kommando operatives are, as they guard their identities more closely than many of the Dragoons' other secrets. What is known, of course, is that they are the Dragoons' special forces and covert operations troops, assigned to carry out the highest-risk combat operations that simply cannot be assigned to any other unit.



The members of the Seventh are extremely competent MechWarriors and battle armor operators, and each operative is cross-trained in multiple specialties for greater team flexibility in the field.

Estimates place three overall Seventh Kommando Teams in current operation, after some attrition in the March. Exact compositions are unknown but a typical team is presumed to be approximately platoon-sized (25-50 individuals) and is assigned as needed to Dragoons combat regiments for support. Seventh Kommando teams serve in a broad range of functions, from long-range recon patrols, zero-G marines, and straight commandos, to snipers, special-function teams, or even special BattleMech shock troops. They often employ the procedures and tactics of other groups to cast blame away from the Dragoons.

WOLFNET

Command:

Colonel Pietr Shadd

Battlefield Intelligence:

Major Jennifer Von Hayz

Communications and Technology:

Major Andery Hendriks

Field Operations:

Major Tenno Blackfeather

Intelligence and Analysis:

Major Simone Fynn

Seventh Commando:

Unknown

INDEPENDENT GROUPS

This final report, on a series of independent covert organizations at large today, was provided by our friends at ComStar. Much of it is quite conjectural, but the threat these entities represent cannot be overlooked, either, as I see it. -CT

To: Precentor ROM Victoria Parrdeau

From: Precentor XIV-Mu/Delta Tempest Stryker

Here is the final report you requested from Project Phoenix. Intelligence has given us some disturbing information. While we cannot confirm what we have with hard facts, the circumstantial evidence is strong and undeniable. As the Word's power grows within the Chaos March, further solidifying their hold over its peoples and over Terra itself, many of these organizations have been courted by our misguided brethren as possible allies to their cause. All of it suggests a disturbing trend we can no longer afford to ignore.

NEKAKAMI

The Nekakami—the Spirit Cats—are perhaps the most secretive and certainly one of the most dangerous groups known to exist. Shrouded in mystery, no one knows their precise origins for certain, but it is believed they may be somehow connected to the "Sons of the Dragon" or even the Black Dragons, as their first known appearance was noted at about the same time as these two groups. They possess all the traits of the Combine's DEST operatives, yet appear more refined and adept in their art.

Some hints suggest the Nekakami existed long before the formation of Draconis Combine. In fact, their origins may extend far back to Terra's feudal Japan and the sect of highly trained assassins of southern Japan known as the *Koga-Ryu*, who were masters of Ninjitsu, an ancient form of martial arts specializing in stealth and assassination. If true, the Nekakami, like their ancestors who were loyal to Shogunate, are likely loyal to the Dragon and stand ready to defend House Kurita against all enemies. Nekakami operatives, disguised as loyal ISF operatives, may have even appeared recently to aid Franklin Sakamoto in saving Coordinator Theodore Kurita from a Black Dragon assassination attempt.

We have confirmed that the Nekakami do not answer to the ISF and may not even work directly for the Coordinator. In fact, it appears that ISF does not trust this shadow group in the slightest, and because of the lack of accountability and control they represent, the Combine's secret police has even labeled this organization ronin. Though not outright enemies of each other, it would seem that the ISF and the self-described *Seishin ban* ("Soul Watchmen") are also not allies.

Nekakami operatives are highly specialized, extensively trained—possibly from birth—and equally as sophisticated as the ISF and DEST in every aspect. They excel in all martial sciences and their combat training is superior to even that of DEST operatives. Committed for life, Nekakami loyalty is unquestionable, their methods and ethics firmly rooted in the strict codes of Ninjitsu. Nekakami apparently work in four- to five-man teams called *Miharu no Seishin* ("Surveillance of the Soul"), each of which may be formed as early as training begins, and their members stay together until such time as they are no longer effective. Never known to willingly retire, Nekakami are born to this way of life and most probably will die in it.

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

OMNISS

Though commonly classified as a cult, the Omnis are more of a relic of bygone era brought to life. Descendents of the Amish religious faith, which believed only in using the most basic technologies to survive, the Omnis were among the original founders of the Outworlds Alliance. Soon after their arrival, they isolated themselves as much as possible on the planet of Dante, living a peaceful—if draconian—life, until recently.

Inexplicably, the climate on Dante is completely different now. Where once, the Omnis appeared merely aloof to visitors (whose access to their world was restricted to the planet's single Starport only), the formerly non-violent Omnis have grown suddenly militant, more hostile than ever. There are now armed security details at the Starport, mercenaries apparently hired by the Omnis, and rumors have begun to leak out of the Alliance of a radical sect of Omnis members who sponsor—or even actively engage in—terrorist acts against military production facilities and other apparatuses of high technology. “Dante’s Inferno”, as this organization is called, may have arisen as a result of pirate attacks throughout the Alliance, which sent an influx of refugees to Dante, refugees who do not embrace the ways of the real Omnis and have perverted their original message.

Whatever the cause, the recent increase of attacks has agitated the terrorist Inferno cells into action. Reports laying blame for the 3065 attack against the Dieron Shipyards at the Inferno’s feet were confirmed when a DEST team traced articles of clothing from the attackers back to Dante. While following up, the DEST team encountered what they believed was an organized operation of highly trained terrorists who nearly overwhelmed the elite commandos before they could escape the planet with barely enough evidence to support their claims. Based on the DEST account, however, speculation abounds as to the possible influence of an outside special forces group, or a highly trained and organized mercenary commando force that is supporting the Inferno. As of this moment, the situation on Dante remains a mystery.

FREE CAPELLA

The original Free Capella underground movement was an organization of civilian resistance and disaffected soldiers born out of desperation during the occupation of Capella by Terran Hegemony forces from 2320 to 2335. The Free Capella Underground relentlessly harassed the Hegemony forces from the first year of occupation with a guerrilla campaign that made the price of staying too high for the Terran occupation force. Centuries later, the Free Capella Movement arose again as a loose alliance of dozens of anti-Confederation dissident groups in the wake of the Fourth Succession War, and from there grew into a large, professional organization of intelligence gatherers that flourished and grew through the recent fires of the

Capellan—St. Ives War.

Today, Free Capella is a highly trained and motivated group of individuals, sworn to defend the Capellan Confederation they once resisted, reformed under Treyhang Liao’s leadership from a pure, anti-government, paramilitary organization to an intelligence gathering “watchdog” group similar in spirit—if not in operation—to Heimdall in the Lyran state. After the fall of the St. Ives Compact, Free Capella received an influx of Capellan nationals, including a handful of St. Ives Maskirovka agents who refused to succumb to Confederation domination. Treyhang readily accepted these agents into his organization, allowing them to transform the existing operations into a true intelligence-gathering network within the new guidelines of the movement.

Free Capella has a network of agents operating within the Confederation, but rather than acting as spies, they are ambassadors to the worlds to which they are assigned. For unknown reasons, the Confederation currently allows some Free Capellan agents to interact as necessary, tolerating them at the behest of the Chancellor for the intelligence information they in turn offer the Confederation. Free Capella, in turn perhaps playing their own game, passes this information to the Maskirovka, though the Confederation’s secret police does not appear to return the favor often. Recently, Free Capella uncovered some information concerning the sudden disappearance of the entire UrbStryc-A stockpile stored on Wei, and is presently working with the Maskirovka to track down the deadly chemical weapons.

In addition to its intelligence network, Free Capella also fields its own Special Operations Group, which incorporates the combat commands of the Blackwind Lancers and Jie Fang Legion. These forces perform Free Capella’s IntelCom wet work, taking advantage of training received from FedSuns operatives during the movement’s anti-Confederation days and later supplemental training from the Maskirovka.

FREE SKYE MOVEMENT

Free Skye has been a thorn in the side of the legitimate ruling Steiner line for decades, if not centuries. Most notably active under the guidance of Aldo Lestrade and Fredrick Steiner during the Fourth Succession war, and again under the lead of Duke Ryan Steiner’s in the Skye March rebellions during the early FedCom period, this organization has always rallied for the independence of the entire Federation of Skye from the rest of the Lyran state. Having rebelled once—and failed—soon after the formation of the united Commonwealth, Free Skye’s ranks swelled within a year of Archon Melissa Steiner-Davion’s assassination and nearly sparked a second rebellion when a lone gunman assassinated Duke Ryan, the titular head of the movement. Katherine Steiner-Davion’s appearance as the Lyran regent briefly contained the organization’s secessionist inclinations—despite a second, brief bid for independence—when she seceded the Lyran realm from

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

the FedCom in the face of the Marik-Liao invasion of 3057, but even she could not quench the burning desire for independence still simmering under the surface.

During the FedCom Civil War, Ryan Kelswa-Steiner, son of the slain Duke Ryan, rose to the same mantle as figurative head of the Free Skye movement. A chip off the paternal block, his efforts, though ultimately doomed at the time, revitalized the pride of those in the movement, fostering a renewed sense of purpose nearly lost in the chaos of the war. Working with older contacts and bringing in new and more loyal members, Duke Kelswa-Steiner rebuilt Free Skye along the lines of other historical independence movements, its operatives working secretly in resistance cells to achieve their goals with clandestine operations including terrorism, assassinations, and other covert operations, buoyed by waves of financial support from sympathizers throughout the region. At the peak of the FedCom Civil War, the movement made one more bid for independence, and though it ultimately failed, Kelswa-Steiner bounced back into power, an event that no doubt validated Free Skye's cause among the people. The organization has since gone underground again, but it is a sure bet they will rise again. The only questions are how long they will remain silent and what will it take to stop them and hold the Lyran state together again.

As a grass-roots resistance organization, Free Skye's operatives are not true black operatives like Loki or Heimdall, but are instead a paramilitary force, trained in guerrilla operations, clandestine surveillance, and terrorist tactics. They have developed an extensive underground intelligence network that is protected by a cell system, with support garnered from all walks of life. Many—if not all—Skye Ranger units are likely members of the Movement, as are most of the businesses and industrial leaders throughout the Skye Province and possibly beyond.

BLACK DRAGONS

Though not a pure covert operations group, the Black Dragons have proven themselves to be a threat to the stability of House Kurita's rule. Operating in the shadows until only recently, the organization appears to pervade all levels of Combine society, from the commercial and industrial sectors to the ranks of the yakuza to the military and even to the intelligence apparatus of the state. Of late, several high-profile incidents have demonstrated the capabilities made possible by this broad membership base with their fanatical desire to return the Combine to its "old ways" of glory and conquest. Recent assaults and raids on worlds of the former Federated Commonwealth, an assassination attempt on the Coordinator, and even the provocation of the Ghost Bear/Combine War in 3062 have all been attributed to the Black Dragon. Yet they are not immune to attacks themselves. Since their attempt on the Coordinator they have been at war with the Nekakami and the ISF.

The Black Dragon society is an organization without land or territory. Instead, its various leaders raise money and manpower for their causes and carry out operations in their own separate ways, as autonomous cells patterned loosely around the yakuza structure itself. In fact, much of the funding and manpower used by the *Kokuryu-kai* appears to come from yakuza *gumis* and their followers, or legitimate businessmen dedicated to the same reactionary goals, while military leaders and like-minded ISF operatives "lose" weapons or recruit troops for various missions, covert and otherwise. Though coordinated only barely by an irregular council that rarely meets in its entirety, this loose organizational structure allows the Society to operate as an anti-government resistance that cannot be easily rooted out or destroyed as a whole.

With their considerable power, influence, and demonstrated resilience to purges on all levels of Combine society, the Black Dragons have proven to be an extremely unpredictable group. Willing to sacrifice everything to gain their objective, they will stop at nothing to see the Dragon on the path to conquest once more.

HEIMDALL

Heimdall, in the Norse mythos, is the Guardian of the Bifrost Bridge and a defender of the Norse Gods. Like their namesake, the operatives of this shadowy organization have stood vigilant in defense of the Lyran people, as independent, self-appointed guardians whose development appears to have occurred concurrent with the excesses of the LIC's fearsome Loki agency. So secret is Heimdall that only its members and the fortunate few who the organization has aided can attest to its existence, and very little evidence supports the rumors that this group truly exists. Even in the whispered rumors, spoken in guarded conversations, Heimdall's political orientation and aims remain unknown, save for its opposition to Loki. Some wild theories suggest the organization was itself divided during the recent chaos of the FedCom Civil War. Conversely, the size and influence of Heimdall is a mystery that remains even today.

Heimdall has been romanticized for events surrounding Alessandro Steiner abdication, Katrina Steiner's survival against Loki assassins, and even the daring rescue of Archon-Designate Melissa Steiner alongside the Kell Hound mercenary group when Kurita agents attempted to kidnap her on the eve of the Fourth Succession War. Apparently lying dormant until some great threat—either from Loki or from outside agencies—rises to menace the Lyran people, Heimdall remains silent, tucked away into the shadows and the background noise of daily life. Even when activated by some threat, the agency acts quickly and quietly, then simply vanishes again when the threat is removed without leaving a trace of their existence. How they pull off this appearing and disappearing act no one can say for sure, but that they do suggests superior training techniques and a level of coordination that is both

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

masterful and intuitive, backed up by capabilities equal to any LIC agent, Loki or otherwise.

Heimdall operatives have proven to be resourceful and well connected, able to enlist the help of entire communities to accomplish their mission. Some indications suggest they are well funded, perhaps by various sympathetic leaders within the Lyrans' substantial financial and industrial community. However they are supported, Heimdall enjoys the support of the people even in the absence of hard evidence to their very existence, and for those people they will remain vigilant as long as the power they oppose exists.

ZHANZHENG DE GUANG

Alternately referred to as terrorists or freedom fighters, the Zhanzheng de guang (ZdG) has long been viewed as Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao's answer to the state-sponsored terrorists other Great Houses have been known to employ. However, appearances are deceiving, for though this group certainly strives to achieve the goals of the Capellan Confederation, they are not, in fact, the brainchild of the current Confederation ruler. Originally appearing on New Home after the Fourth Succession War, this guerilla movement soon spread throughout the region, launching a reign of terror against the Federated Commonwealth and the planetary governments they put in place after claiming the historically Capellan worlds of the Sarna March—all with the blessings of the Confederation.

When Sun-Tzu ascended to the throne, he immediately began plans to rebuild his shattered nation, including making overtures to independent groups such as the Zhanzheng de Guang, organizing their then-uncoordinated activities, and helping them focus better on their objectives. With his backing, they would act to destabilize governments, laying the groundwork for his ultimate plan to one day invade and reclaim the worlds seized by the Steiner-Davion alliance. The Zhanzheng de guang were thus tasked to build the necessary lines of communication, establishing operating cells on nearly all former Capellan worlds, and then fall silent as they expanded their reach behind the scenes, until 3055, when all elements were in place and awaiting their activation instructions. In January of 3056, all cells on Zurich were authorized for independent operations, each cell staggering their attacks to keep local authorities from recognizing that a general uprising was underway. This "low-intensity terror campaign" gradually expanded, culminating in the widespread explosion of violence launched during the 3057 Free Worlds-Capellan invasion of the Sarna March.

Though many cells successfully collapsed local governments and paved the way for Confederation victories in the region, a number of ZdG operations failed when House Marik abruptly withdrew its support for the campaign soon after its launch. The result was the formation of the Chaos March, a collection of disrupted worlds where no Great House held sway. But even though

the ZdG's ultimate goals were only partly met, the remainder of the organization outside direct Capellan influence has remained active ever since, continuing to battle for control of the remaining Chaos March worlds and stirring up trouble throughout the region ever since.

Zhanzheng de guang operatives are highly skilled and trained in guerrilla activities, insurgence, and acts of terrorism. Many have received their training from both the Capellan Death Commandos and the Maskirovka, though the majority are "home grown" in order to facilitate greater security and freedom of operations. Fanatical and brutal, they are skilled in most aspects of ground combat, including the use of 'Mechs and armored fighting vehicles, all wholly devoted to the return of Confederation rule over the worlds they call home. However, recent losses in the March to a mysterious new movement have decimated this organization.

THUGGEES

As covert agencies go, the Thuggees are actually little more than a fringe cult of fanatics dedicated to Kali, the Hindu death goddess. Their mention in this report is testament to their membership's willingness to undergo all manner of sacrifice and subterfuge to further the ends of its current leader, Kali Liao. Believing her to be the personal incarnation of the Hindu death goddess, the Thuggees happily obey Kali's every whim as a directive from the heavens.

The Thuggees' roots extend back to eighteenth-century India, but they were originally believed destroyed by the British Raj by the close of the 19th century. However, pockets of cultists survived to carry their bizarre and murderous faith to the stars during the first waves of human colonization, most settling within the Capellan Confederation, where they carried on in secret. Under various leaders, the Thugees committed several small-scale assassinations and random, ritualistic murders throughout the centuries, but were widely regarded as a band of general troublemakers until Romano Liao assumed control of the Capellan Confederation.

Romano's reign as Chancellor, marked by bloody purges, brutal assassinations, also saw the rise of the Thuggees, thanks to her employment of the House of the Setting Sun, a group of professional killers affiliated with the cult. This action alarmed even Tsen Shang, then head of the Maskirovka, yet the cult received a virtual free reign to engage in its murderous rituals so long as their victims were those who spoke out against the Chancellor or the state. A few members of the CCAF and the Maskirovka even joined its ranks, giving the Thuggees unprecedented power.

Under Kali Liao's direction, the Thuggees reached their apex with a wave of brutal suicide attacks on the St. Ives Compact and Free Capella during the recent Capellan-St. Ives War, using nerve agents purloined from a cache on Wei. The attacks killed hundreds, if not thousands—including Free Capella leader Tormano Liao—and sent shockwaves of terror and recrimination through

OVERVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

all levels of society on both sides of the conflict. To avert the political repercussions, Chancellor Liao sent his sister to stand trial before a Star League court, where, after a rambling diatribe where she declared herself the incarnation of the goddess Kali and pronounced doom upon the members of the court, her insanity became plain for all to see. The court remanded Kali to the care of her brother, who promptly sent her into internal exile on the planet Highspire, where she remains under armed guard. Since then, her Thuggees may have fallen into disgrace among the Capellans, but we have observed no clear decrease in their influence. Disturbing reports from field agents on Highspire suggest that Kali has received visitors and “gifts” from the Word of Blake in exchange for information she still gathers through her Thuggee contacts. If true, an alliance between the fanatical Thuggees and the Blakists is a troubling development.

MANEI DOMINI

The information of the newest—and perhaps most disturbing—covert organization at large comes from a highly sensitive source on Outreach, but as yet cannot be substantiated by normal means. However, I trust our agent’s report to be true. First encountered on Helios, this group—which uses a bloody hand for its symbol—was at first presumed to be a small-time covert mercenary group, but evidence uncovered since has suggested otherwise. Dragoons reports claim this faction goes by the name *Manei Domini*, Latin for “Hands of the Master”, but in some instances the name *Manei Atrocis* (“Bloody Hands”) has been used. The organization has apparently been operating throughout the Chaos March, but odd rumors also place some of their operatives in the Circinus Federation and Marian Hegemony as well. What has been determined, however, is that they have managed to eliminate—or nearly eliminate—all of the Zhanzheng de Guang from Caph, Bryant, Liberty, Sheratan, Fletcher, Hall, and Keid, using methods even more savage than the pro-Capellan terrorists themselves.

The Manei Domini, it seems, has even been at war with Wolfnet and the Dragoons’ Seventh Kommando forces, and several Dragoons operatives have been exposed and brutally murdered throughout the March—even on Outreach, where the Manei has been linked to a growing low-intensity terror campaign that included two fire bombings on the local HPG. According to the reports, the Dragoons’ intelligence casualties have been mounting, hindering Wolfnet’s ability to operate. Our analysts believe the damage done may be so severe, in fact, that the Dragoons Intelligence Network is slowly being isolated from the rest of the Chaos March, forced for the moment to address the threat on Outreach even as they continue operations throughout the Inner Sphere. Additional reports suggest the Federated Suns’ MIO, the Capellan Maskirovka, House Marik’s SAFE agency, and even our own ROM suffered losses at the hands of this new group, yet we have yet to solidly identify who they are and who they work for.

This we know about these operatives: they are highly motivated, and highly trained in terrorism, espionage, insurgency, and counter-insurgency. They are fanatical and all but amoral, killing any who get in their way. To date, none of their operatives have been taken alive (though not for lack of trying), and in the few cases where enough of their remains been recovered, it has been discovered that their agents are often—if not, always—equipped with surgically-implanted “self destruct” devices ranging from suicide bombs to acid capsules. In addition, many operatives have been artificially augmented, with several corpses sporting elective myomer implants and enhanced prosthetics all geared toward boosting their capabilities in the field. Clearly, these agents are willing to pursue any means necessary and make any sacrifice necessary to ensure their success and to assure that they are never captured or identified in the event of failure. Their high level of personal upgrades also suggests they are backed by an organization which has access to a high level of technology—possibly of Capellan origin—and presumably the tremendous resources to implement it.

A GUIDE TO COVERT OPS



NEW EQUIPMENT

The following equipment, especially elective enhancements, is tailor-made for use by covert operatives and is rarely used by other individuals in the *BattleTech* universe. Each item description contains rules for using the item or provides a page reference for the appropriate rules in *CBT: RPG*.

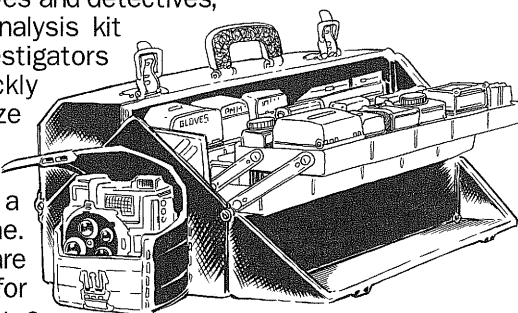
FORENSIC ANALYSIS KITS

Common in police stations and standard equipment for private eyes and detectives, a forensic analysis kit enables investigators to quickly

record, analyze and identify forensic evidence at a crime scene.

These kits are specialized for various

functions, ranging from fingerprint and fiber analysis to genetic residual readers. Counter-forgery analysis kits can help determine whether electronic or print media has been faked. When properly used, these kits can place the resources of a virtual crime lab in the user's hands. In some cases, results can even be admissible evidence in court.



Forensic Analysis Kit (Basic)

This particular FAK allows the user to quickly obtain fingerprint, hair, fiber and blood type analysis from a crime scene using minimal technology. It comes with enough sterile adhesives, fingerprinting powder, blood-typing chemicals and litmus papers for five analyses of each type. In addition to basics like magnifying glasses, tweezers and sterile storage bags, this kit includes a holocamera with 30-image capacity and a pocket audio disc recorder for taking images and notes from a crime scene.

This kit provides a -2 target number modifier for an Investigations or Career/Detective Check. Each use requires 1D6 x 5 minutes of time.

Forensic Analysis Kit (Advanced)

This FAK performs all the functions of the basic kit, but uses more advanced technology, including genetic sampling and analysis. It comes with enough

consumable equipment for ten analyses of hair, fiber, blood, DNA, fingerprints and general chemical residues. The kit includes a digital holocamera with 50-image capacity, a pocket transcriber for recording notes and a specialized noteputer that can perform genetic and chemical composition analyses like a Scanalyzer (see pp. 148-149, *CBT: RPG*).

Use of this kit confers a -3 modifier for Investigations or Career/Detective Checks. Each use requires 1D6 minutes of time.

Counter-Forgery Kit (Basic)

This FAK is used to analyze the integrity of most forms of low-tech documentation and images. Essentially a high-resolution scanner and electronic microscope, combined with a specialized portable computer, the counter-forgery kit can be used over and over, conferring a -2 target number modifier to any rolls made to ascertain whether a document has been altered or copied. This kit can only determine if the image or document has been altered or copied, not whether it is the original work of an individual pretending to be someone else. Each use requires 2D6 turns to yield results.

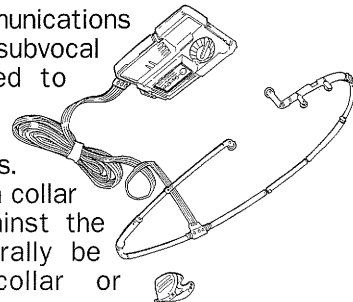
Counter-Forgery Kit (Electronics)

This FAK is used to analyze the integrity of most forms of electronic documentation, software and images. This system combines high-resolution scanning of electronic media with sophisticated software that analyzes the media bit by bit. In this way, the electronics counter-forgery kit functions exactly like the basic kit, providing a -2 modifier for checks to tell whether the electronic recording in question has been doctored or illegally copied. A complete analysis requires 1D6 turns.

Subvocal Microcommunicator

Created for covert communications in crowded environments, the subvocal communicator was designed to thwart casual eavesdroppers and recording devices, and even to discourage lip-readers.

Its main pick-up is a wire-thin collar that presses skin-tight against the throat, where it can generally be disguised by a shirt collar or



FORENSIC ANALYSIS KITS

Item	Equipment Rating	Cost/Refill	Weight	Afil	Notes
Forensic Analysis Kit, Basic	C/A/A	300/75	5 kg	—	-2 TN; 1D6 x 5 min. per use; Pwr use: 0.2/hr
Forensic Analysis Kit, Advanced	D/B/B	4,500/100	8 kg	—	-3 TN; 1D6 min. per use; Pwr use: 0.6/hr
Counter-Forgery Kit, Basic	D/A/A	700/—	4 kg	—	-2 TN; 2D6 turns per use; Pwr use: 0.4/hr
Counter-Forgery Kit, Electronics	D/B/A	900/—	4 kg	—	-2 TN; 1D6 turns per use; Pwr use: 0.4/hr

NEW EQUIPMENT

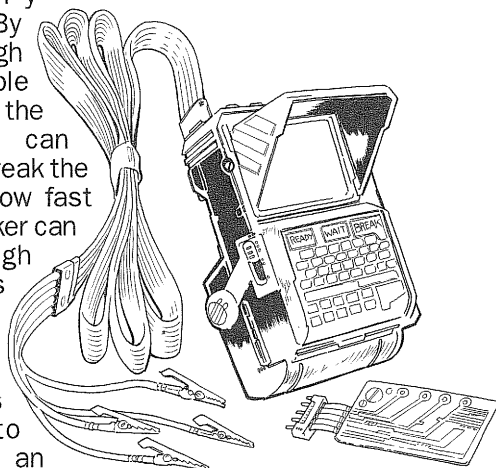
camouflaged as a choker necklace. The subvocal communicator functions much like a standard microcommunicator, but picks up and amplifies speech that sounds to casual observers and recording devices like a mere whisper or hum—in effect, speech made without moving the lips. Special circuitry attached to the pickup by wire (or wireless), in a device barely half the size of a handheld calculator, effectively translates this subvocal speech for a recipient within the communicator's range. Combined with a standard earpiece, connected to the unit by wire or wireless means, this communicator allows agents to relay information with little fear of casual detection.

Use of a subvocal communicator without making a check requires a minimum +3 bonus in the user's Comms/Conventional Skills. Otherwise, the character must make a Comms/Conventional Check each time he uses the communicator, against a base target number of 12, to successfully transmit messages.

Electronic Codebreaker

This relatively simple piece of equipment attaches to any electronic keypad through which a security code is normally entered. By

running through all possible combinations, the codebreaker can (given time) break the code. Just how fast the codebreaker can run through combinations depends on the design of the keypad. Many keypads take time to reset after an incorrect code is entered, which limits how many combinations the codebreaker can attempt per minute. A three-digit keypad with a two-second delay, for example, only allows thirty attempts per minute, with up to one thousand



combinations taking more than thirty minutes.

To use the device, an intruder must first remove the keypad cover and connect the codebreaker to the keypad's electronics. A Technician: Electronics Check is required to do so, with the target number determined by the lock's complexity. Players may make multiple attempts to hook up the codebreaker, though advanced keypads may have additional security circuitry that will raise the alarm if a check fails. Keypads may also block input after a set number of failures, making them almost impervious to this simple brute-force approach.

Anyone with knowledge of electronics and computer programming can build a codebreaker device using common components and approximately twenty hours of effort.

Advanced Electronic Codebreaker

A more advanced version of the standard codebreaker, this device uses finesse over brute force and "cons" the code out of the keypad. The advanced codebreaker normally takes between one and ten minutes to break a keypad code of any length, and will not trip an alarm for failed attempts because of the way it works. Like the standard codebreaker, the advanced version must be attached to the keypad electronics. A Technician: Electronics Check is required to accomplish this, with the target number determined by the lock's complexity.

Availability of advanced electronic codebreakers is restricted to major Inner Sphere intelligence agencies and the Clans. While such units sometimes appear on the black market, they generally cost at least twice the normal price.

ELECTIVE ENHANCEMENTS

Modern cybernetic technologies, made possible by the wonders of the recent technological renaissance and the ethical flexibility of covert operations, have combined to create a small but slowly growing trend in personal enhancements: prosthetic upgrades and elective implants.

Prosthetic upgrades enhance the capabilities of an operative who has already sacrificed an arm, leg or other major body part in the line of duty. These upgrades typically modify an existing Type 3 or 4 replacement limb, allowing an agent to effectively use his own handicap to

MICROCOMMUNICATORS

Item	Equipment Ratings	Cost	Notes
Subvocal Microcom, Standard	D/C/D	400	Range: 100 meters; Pwr use: 1/hr; Micro power packs only
Subvocal Microcom, Wireless	D/C/E	600	Range: 100 meters; Pwr use: 1/hr; Micro power packs only

ELECTRONIC CODEBREAKERS

Item	Equipment Rating	Cost	Weight	Afil	Notes
Electronic Codebreaker	C/D/E	1,000	2 kg	—	Pwr use: 0.1/hr
Advanced Electronic Codebreaker	E/E/F	20,000	3 kg	—	Pwr use: 0.2/hr

NEW EQUIPMENT

slip weapons and tools past many of the more common detection devices. Elective implants are a more extreme type of enhancement, in which a willing subject permanently alters his or her body expressly for the purpose of improving field performance. Extreme cost, rarity of expertise in installation and maintenance, and the dubious nature of trading in perfectly healthy body parts for barely approved technological wizardry have combined to restrict the implementation of this equipment to the most fanatical of covert operatives—and semi-expendable guinea pigs—in the Successor States.

Neither the Clans, who oppose artificial enhancements except in cases of dire emergency (when a warrior's survival is paramount), or the Periphery nations, which lack the necessary resources and training, employ implant-augmented agents. However, in rare instances, both may field an occasional operative using prosthetic upgrades.

PROSTHETIC UPGRADES

By far the most common elective enhancements are prosthetic upgrades. Customized design of cybernetic replacement limbs and the use of miniaturized, finely tuned components can allow for the mounting of virtually any tool or even a small short-range weapon on a prosthetic arm or hand, while prosthetic legs offer agents the ability to conceal larger weapons, extra power supplies, ammunition and even enhanced climbing capability.

Though the options seem almost unlimited, implementation is not. Prosthetic limbs, for all their complexity, lack space for more than one upgrade apiece if they are to keep functioning. Therefore, prosthetic upgrades are not modular, and customization for each upgrade means that the recipient effectively requires a new prosthetic for each new tool.

Obtaining and Maintaining a Prosthetic Upgrade

Unless otherwise stated in the rules for each item, installing any prosthetic upgrade requires the Engineering Skill, Tech/Myomers, an appropriate weapon Tech skill (or Tech/Mechanics, when no weapon skills apply), and the necessary parts. Obtaining these parts is virtually impossible outside any official government or military agency, and attempting to locate them on the black market adds an automatic +6 to all target numbers when searching among Inner Sphere sources, or +9 when searching Clan or Periphery sources. Roll for each appropriate skill in turn against a base target number of 12 to perform the installation. If any result fails, the installation has failed and the component to be installed is ruined. On a fumble, the prosthetic itself is also ruined and must be replaced.

All listed upgrades require a Type 3, 4 or 5 prosthetic limb customized to accommodate the added equipment. Customizing a prosthetic limb adds 25 percent to its cost and raises its availability by one level. Characters who enter the game with a customized prosthetic

upgrade must take a 4-point Special Item for each separate enhancement.

If an upgraded prosthetic suffers damage during combat, make a 2D10 roll, using twice the limb's total wound value as a target number, to see if the upgrade remains operational. If the roll result is equal to or less than the target number, the upgrade has been damaged and will not function until it is repaired. A Deadly Wound to an upgraded prosthetic automatically destroys the upgrade.

Repairing or replacing a destroyed upgrade requires the same Tech skills used to install the equipment. Replacing an upgrade forces the technician to start over, using the above rules for installation, except that an Engineering Roll is not required. Repairing a damaged part merely requires the appropriate weapon Tech skill or Tech/Mechanics, against a target number of 12. A penalty equal to the wound value of the limb applies to this roll.

William's character, Jean-Claude, is a member of the LIC who lost his right arm in a previous mission and now has a Type 3 Prosthesis. He elects to get a customized prosthetic that will mount a tranquilizer dart gun in a concealed wrist panel. The cost of a prosthetic arm automatically increases to 9,375 C-bills for the customization to fit a weapon, plus an additional 200 C-bills for the weapon itself, so the total upgrade is worth 9,575 C-bills. If Jean-Claude is to enter the game with this upgraded prosthesis, he will have to pay that price in C-bills and will also require a Special Item (4) Trait.

In addition to the cost, the device must be installed. The gamemaster decides that Jean-Claude can get ahold of this equipment without the local black market (it pays to be Loki), and a technician is given the task of installing the weapon. Since the dart gun is a ballistic weapon, the gamemaster decides to base the tech's skill rolls on Tech/Ballistics. The technician must make three checks—one each for Engineering, Tech/Myomer, and Tech/Ballistics—against a target number of 12 to correctly install the dart gun. Thanks to his expertise, the technician's results are 13, 17 and 15, and so the installation is a success.

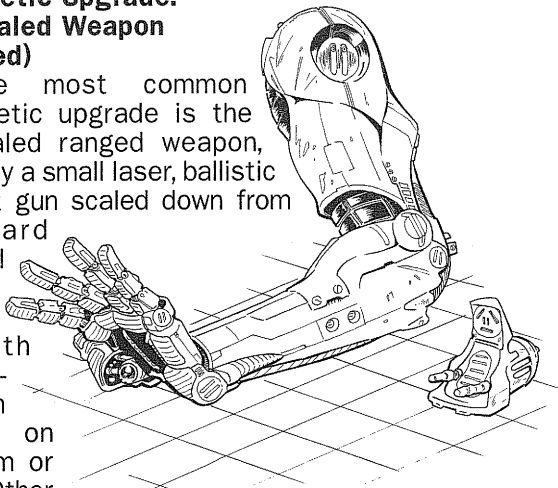
In a firefight soon afterward, Jean-Claude suffers a hit to his right arm, and the attack delivers 2 wound points. Jean-Claude rolls 2D10 to see if the upgrade remains functional. He gets a 7, well above the 4 he needs to avoid losing the use of the weapon ($2 \times 2 = 4$). His dart gun has not been damaged. In a subsequent attack, Jean-Claude suffers more damage to the right arm, which now has a total Wound Value of 3. Jean-Claude rolls again to see if his dart gun was damaged and gets a 5. This result is below the 6 he now needs ($2 \times 3 = 6$) to keep his dart gun functional. The weapon is damaged and must be repaired.

NEW EQUIPMENT

Jean-Claude returns to his rather annoyed tech friend after the fight to get his dart gun fixed. The tech decides that a replacement is not necessary, and so attempts to fix the upgrade by making another Tech/Ballistics Check. Since the arm suffered 3 wound points, the target number for the attempt is 15 (12 + 3 = 15). The tech rolls and gets a 13. The repair has failed, forcing him to replace the device. In order for the replacement to succeed, the tech will need a new dart gun upgrade and must also make new Tech/Myomer and Tech/Ballistics Checks to successfully replace the ruined weapon.

Prosthetic Upgrade: Concealed Weapon (Ranged)

The most common prosthetic upgrade is the concealed ranged weapon, typically a small laser, ballistic or dart gun scaled down from standard pistol size to fit beneath well-hidden panels on the arm or hand. Other possibilities include shotguns, small submachine guns



or even a sonic stunner. Space limitations prevent concealed prosthetic weapons from incorporating special accessories such as scopes, silencers or flash suppressors; of all the weapon accessories listed on p. 47 of *Lostech*, only the laser sight can be mounted on such a weapon.

Spotting any concealed device in a prosthetic limb is difficult; the usual giveaway is the presence of an exposed port for power or ammunition clips. Trying to spot a concealed weapon in a prosthetic limb imposes a +6 modifier to Perception Check target numbers, but only when the weapon is empty. This modifier drops to +3 if the weapon's power or ammunition clip is installed. Increase these Perception Check penalties by +1 for Type 3 and 4 prosthetics to reflect the fact that their mechanical appearance helps mask the existence of weapon ports.

To fire a ranged weapon installed as a prosthetic upgrade, the character uses the appropriate skill listed for that particular weapon. Because the weapon is mounted directly in the arm or hand, a -2 target number modifier applies to reflect the increased accuracy of literally "being one with the weapon". This bonus also affects the Quickdraw Skill, if the character uses it to rapidly ready the weapon. Reloading a prosthetic ranged weapon is a Simple Action.

Because their use is impractical, and because the jarring of everyday walking and running can upset finely tuned aiming and firing mechanisms, ranged weapon upgrades are not available for leg prosthetics.

PROSTHETIC RANGED WEAPONS

Item	Skill	Equipment	AP •	Range in Meters		Shots*	Cost/ Reload	Notes
		Ratings	Damage	Type	S/M/L/E			
Laser	PIS	E/E/F	3 x 2D6	E	5/11/25/60	3 pps	500/*	Obvious Port (power)
Ballistic	PIS	D/E/F	2 x 2D6	B	1/3/5/10	2	450/1	—
Dart Gun	PIS	D/E/F	1x 1D6	B	1/2/3/5	1	200/1	May use tranq darts
Needler	PIS	D/E/F	1x 3D6	B	1/3/6/10	5	300/1	Splash, AP 0 vs. barriers
Shotgun	SHT	D/E/F	1x 4D6	B	1/3/6/8	1	600/1	Splash, +1 TN (recoil)
Sonic Stun.	PIS	E/E/F	0 x 3D6	S	1/2/3/5	2 pps	300/*	Subduing
SMG	SMG	D/E/F	2x 1D6	B	2/5/10/20	20	1500/5	Burst (4/2), jam on fumble
Laser Sight	—	C/D/E	—	—	90 (max)	0.05 pps	+100	-2 to weapon attack TNs

* Energy-based equipment uses micro power packs only; listed ammo is in power points per shot (pps)

PROSTHETIC MELEE WEAPONS

Item	Skill	Equipment	AP •	Shots*	Cost/ Reload	Notes
		Ratings	Damage	Type		
Blade	BLA	C/D/E	1x1D6	M	—	100/—
Needle	BLA	D/E/F	0x1D6	M	1	800/**
Shocker	BLA	D/E/F	0x 3D6	E	3 pps	250/*
Vibroblade	BLA	D/E/F	4x 2D6	M	1 pps	500/*

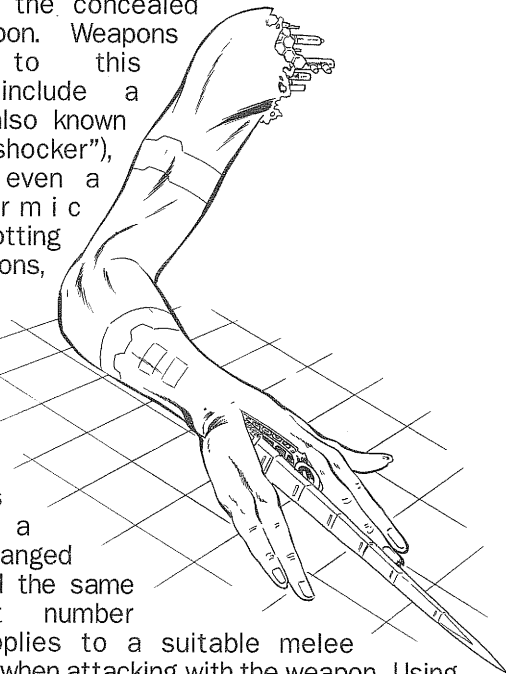
*Energy-based equipment uses micro power packs only; listed ammo is in power points per shot (pps)

†Costs and capabilities of a poison needle (one injected dose) appear in the rules for poisons and antidotes (see pp. 114-117, *Lostech*)

NEW EQUIPMENT

Prosthetic Upgrade: Concealed Weapon (Melee)

Another common prosthetic upgrade is the concealed melee weapon. Weapons common to this category include a stunstick (also known as a "shocker"), blades or even a hypodermic injector. Spotting these weapons, which can retract into their own panels, is every bit as difficult as spotting a concealed ranged weapon, and the same -2 target number modifier applies to a suitable melee combat skill when attacking with the weapon. Using Martial Arts instead of the native skill for the weapon negates the -2 modifier.



even suspend himself from a metal overhang with little fear of losing his grip. A single hand electromagnet can also be used to grab metal objects, such as most weapons, beyond the agent's normal reach.

When used for climbing metal surfaces, electromagnet upgrades apply a -1 target number bonus for every two limbs upgraded. Two such upgrades (on both hands or both feet) are required, however, to ascend without climbing/rappelling equipment.

When used to pull objects up to the magnet's capacity (5 kg per magnet), players should make a skill check against the agent's Dexterity, modified for range. If successful, the agent pulls the object in question to him.

Prosthetic Upgrade: Grappler

Another low-tech variation on the electromagnet upgrade, the grappler upgrade allows an agent to fire a weighted line that can be used to grapple or ensnare a chosen target. This upgrade is a concealed device consisting of a high-pressure launcher and a thin but remarkably sturdy cable strong enough to pull objects as heavy as 50 kilograms, whether or not the agent can heft that amount of weight himself.

Used to ensnare or climb, the grappler provides a -4 bonus to the appropriate target numbers, modified by range. Once an object or person is snagged by the grappler, the agent can then reel in the line to pull in the target or pull himself out of harm's way.

Prosthetic Upgrade: Concealed Lockpick

Concealed lock-picking equipment enables field agents to defeat most mechanical locks. With this upgrade, extendable picks transform the agent's fingers into a lockpick kit, allowing him to perform Security Systems Checks as if he had the standard lockpick kit (see p. 150, *CBT: RPG*). Though this system lacks the vibroblade component of some high-end kits, the synergy of having "built-in" picks confers a -1 target number modifier to appropriate skill checks.

Prosthetic Upgrade: Electromagnet

Another helpful upgrade is the electromagnet. Though not exceptionally powerful, these upgrades, when applied to prosthetic hands and feet, can allow an agent to scale metal surfaces without climbing gear and

Prosthetic Upgrade: Claws

This climbing upgrade works best when installed in four prosthetic limbs, or when the appropriate gripper or climbing gear is used to offset the absent components on other limbs. Intended for climbing, these small, retractable claws allow an agent to ascend any non-smooth surface, such as wood or unworked stone, without specialized gear. A -1 modifier to target numbers for Climbing Checks (one check per limb) applies in such cases.

Exposed claws can also be used as weapons in melee combat, adding 1D6 damage to any successful attacks, at an AP of 1. If used in conjunction with the Weapon Style special maneuver (found in several varieties of Martial Arts skills), these bonuses double, yielding an extra 2D6 damage at an AP of 2.

OTHER PROSTHETIC UPGRADES

Item	Equipment Ratings	Range S/M/L/E	Cost	Notes
Climbing Claws	D/C/C	—	-1	TN modifier to Climbing (per limb); 1x1D6 damage in melee
Electromagnet	D/C/C	1/2/3/5	700	Pwr Use: 2/min; 5 kg max.; -1 TN modifier to Climbing (magnetic, per limb)
Grappler	C/C/C	2/5/8/12	500	50 kg max.; -4 TN modifier to ensnare or climb.
Holster/Cargo	C/C/B	—	150	-3 TN modifier to Quickdraw (holster only)
Lockpick	C/C/D	—	500	-1 TN modifier to Security Systems

Prosthetic Upgrade: Concealed Holster/Cargo Unit

A concealed mechanical fast-draw holster for a full-size pistol or short blade can be mounted in a prosthetic leg, typically in the thigh section, where sufficient space can be found without sacrificing the use of the limb. This hidden holster can give any agent the element of surprise when cornered and seemingly unarmed. Clothing must often be specially modified to permit an agent the full surprise value of this prosthetic upgrade, which confers a -3 modifier to all Quickdraw Checks.

Rather than a specialized holster, an agent may instead employ a variant upgrade to store general cargo—though never anything bigger than half the width and length of his thigh. Such cargo typically includes data discs, extra ammunition, power cells or even explosives.

ELECTIVE IMPLANTS

Often wired directly into the central nervous system or grafted permanently onto the body, elective implants offer significant benefits at a commensurately high cost. Most of these implants are the covert offshoots of existing bionic replacement technologies, such as cybernetic eye and ear systems. Others are more invasive developments that have arisen from less ethical beginnings. Though these implants are not quite as invasive as the Clans' EI neural implants, only those of strong will and constitution can assimilate such radical and expensive implant technology without succumbing to side effects that can range from chronic pain to insanity.

Obtaining and Maintaining an Elective Implant

Without exception, all of the elective implants featured in this section are used exclusively by the intelligence agencies of the Great Houses. Though a few minor powers and fringe agencies within the Inner Sphere may also dabble in their development, it remains virtually unheard-of to encounter Periphery or Clan agents employing any of the following equipment. Any of this equipment that finds its way to the black market likely does so through the dissection of an agent who once wore it, or through a former agency scientist who had to sell the equipment to finance his own run from the authorities. If a character is looking for any of the following implant technology on the Inner Sphere black market, apply a +9 modifier to all target numbers. A +15 modifier applies to all target numbers if seeking such equipment on the Clan or Periphery black market.

Elective implants can only be installed by a character with a minimum +5 bonus in his or her Surgery Skill. Successful assimilation of the technology then requires a check against the implanted character's BOD/WIL. Once both checks are successful, the implanted character must spend at least two months in recovery per implant before returning to active duty. In the case of more pervasive implants, such as dermal armor or triple-strength myomer augmentations, recovery extends a full three months per implanted limb.

If either the surgery or the BOD/WIL Check fails, the

character's body begins to reject the implants within 2D6 days (plus the combined BOD and WIL of the character). He or she must return for surgery to either remove the implant or try again. If a second attempt to install the implants fails, the character may not receive the implants and must immediately make a second BOD/WIL Check to avoid dying on the operating table. These rolls are made even if the character chooses to enter the game with an elective implant. Elective implants count as a 4-point Special Item and will cost the character 2 points of Wealth if purchased before entering the campaign.

Unless stated otherwise, recipients of any elective implants suffer additional side effects from the implanting process. First, all implant recipients immediately receive the Addiction Trait, reflecting the painkillers needed to keep profound headaches—caused by the metabolic demands and disruptions of their implants—at bay. Without these painkillers every 6 hours, apply a +1 target number modifier to all of the character's Action Checks.

One in every six implant recipients may also receive a 1-point Disability or Madness Trait as well, reflecting the physical and mental shock of becoming a man/machine hybrid. After the implants have been successfully installed, the character rolls 1D6. On a result of 6, the character receives a 1-point Disability or Madness Trait (see pp. 101-103, *CBTC*) at the discretion of the gamemaster.

Finally, all surgery on an implanted area becomes more difficult, adding a +4 target number modifier to Surgery Checks. Treatment and recovery time for wounds in the same limb or general torso area as the implant are doubled (see p. 125, *CBT: RPG*).

Note: Characters from the Free Worlds League also receive Stigma (2)/Bionics and lose 1 point of SOC if the implant is obvious or becomes known.

Audio/Visual Implants

Picking up where conventional bionic eye, ear and even voice box replacements leave off, a host of cybernetic optical, auditory and speech implants have recently emerged as a new tool for the enhanced agent. Originally an experimental alternative to standard bionic replacements for these vital organs lost in the line of duty, modifications have improved the utility of these implants to the point where they can perform a variety of covert functions. Only the obvious technological surface features give away these implants, though any one can be easily explained as a simple bionic replacement. Among the war-weary populations of the Inner Sphere, the influx of wounded veterans sporting bionic replacements allows the agent with an elective implant to move about largely undetected.

Cybernetic Eye Implants: These implants augment the user's natural senses by magnifying vision or enabling the user to peer into the infrared spectrum. These implants can switch between standard viewing and an alternate mode with a simple eye blink, allowing an agent to see objects and people by heat patterns or zoom in for a closer look from a distance. As with

NEW EQUIPMENT

prosthetic upgrades, the technology is still too crude to combine features effectively, especially considering the fact that bionic eye replacements must link directly with the human brain in order to be effective. For this reason, implants fall into three basic types.

All cybernetic eye implants function either singly or in pairs, but cannot be mixed, as the signals from different implant types

cause intense nausea and disorientation in the implanted agent.

Since they share much of the same technology as conventional bionic replacements, installing one of these enhanced implants works the same way as installing the standard model (see p.145, CBT: RPG).

Infrared cybernetic eyes allow the agent to see in darkness by detecting heat emanations from his or her surroundings. This system effectively allows the agent to ignore all target number modifiers for darkness, but he or she cannot pick out surface details such as color, texture or facial features.

Telescopic cybernetic eyes provide an agent with telescopic magnification abilities superior to a standard bionic eye. If used in conjunction with personal weapons, the telescopic eye duplicates the capabilities of a telescopic scope, yielding a -2 target number modifier to weapon attacks at medium, long and extreme ranges. When used for general Surveillance and Perception checks at distances over 500 meters, telescopic eyes also provide a -2 target number modifier.

Laser-sight eyes provide the same improved capabilities as the standard telescopic model, but add a laser pinpoint designator that can further enhance targeting accuracy for personal weapons. This designator also allows an agent to more accurately judge

distances and range his weapons, resulting in a -4 target number modifier for Perception and Surveillance checks, ranged weapon attacks and similar actions.

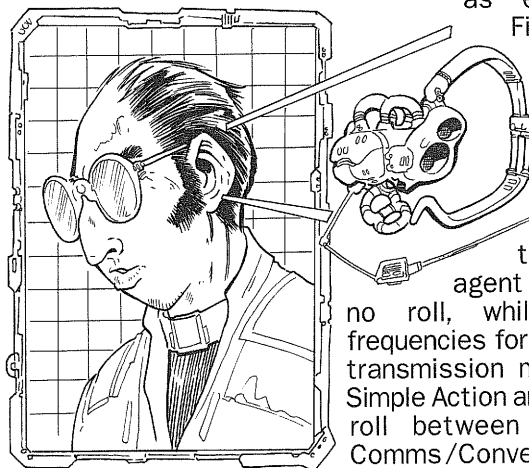
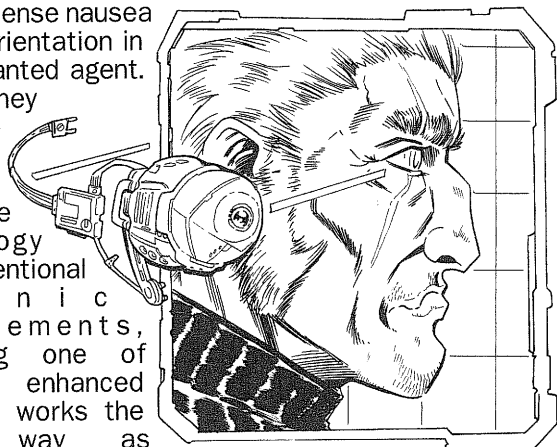
Cybernetic Ear Implants: These implants give agents enhanced audio detection capabilities, either a vastly increased hearing range or the ability to intercept wireless communications chatter. Resembling standard bionic ear replacements, both varieties feature tiny, unmarked, adjustable dials that the agent can manipulate to home in on a particular sound or carrier frequency.

The standard augmented hearing implant grants the agent a -3 bonus to Perception or Surveillance Checks when attempting to eavesdrop on conversations, and allows him to listen in on whispered conversations even through heavy walls or over distances as far away as a city block. The implant also increases target numbers for Stealth Checks against the implanted agent, adding a +2 penalty to anyone attempting to sneak up on him.

Signal pickup implants allow an agent to attempt to tap into any wireless communications occurring within a 100 meter radius, allowing him to eavesdrop on communicator chatter without being in the same room as either party.

Finding a known frequency using this implant is an incidental action for the trained agent and requires no roll, while searching frequencies for that one vital transmission may require a Simple Action and an opposed roll between the agent's Comms/Conventional Skill and that of the communicator.

Signal pickup implants can even be used to feed a field agent instructions, just like an operative equipped with a communications receiver unit (see below).



AUDIO/VISUAL IMPLANTS (HEAD)

Item	Equipment Ratings	Cost	Notes
Cybernetic Eye (IR)	E/C/B	450,000	No target number modifiers for darkness.
Cybernetic Eye (Telescopic)	E/C/B	450,000	-2 target number modifier to M/L/E when used with weapons, or other surveillance skills.
Cybernetic Eye (Laser Sight)	E/C/B	600,000	-4 target number modifier to M/L/E when used with weapons and other surveillance skills.
Cybernetic Ear (Enhanced)	C/C/B	200,000	-3 target number modifier to surveillance skills; +2 modifier to Stealth against the user.
Cybernetic Ear (Signal Pickup)	D/C/C	400,000	100 meter range.
Cybernetic Speech (Variable)	C/A/C	180,000	—
Cybernetic Speech (Ultrasonic)	D/B/D	200,000	—

NEW EQUIPMENT

Cybernetic Speech Implants: These implants allow the user to simulate other voices or speak outside the normal range of human hearing, providing agents with the means to conceal their identities or their communications in the field. Though both of these electronic voice boxes require the agent to physically speak, their functions require different operations, which is why the two have never been combined into a single system.

Variable speech implants, capable of changing pitch and tone with a few *s u b t l e* manipulations of the user's tongue and throat muscles, are delicate systems that mimic the capabilities of the voice distorter (see p. 107, *Lostech*). They can also alter the user's voice within human hearing ranges, providing a bonus of -2 to target numbers for Acting and Deception checks. Attempting to determine if a voice filtered through a variable speech implant is real or fake requires a successful Comms/Conventional Check or an opposed Acting or Deception check, as appropriate for the situation, using a +2 target number modifier.

The ultrasonic speech implant is a simple switch-mode implant that allows agents to more subtly alter their speech from normal human ranges of hearing to an inaudibly high pitch. Intended primarily to provide a covert "silent speech" mode, this implant lets the agent communicate with anyone who has an appropriate receiver device—such as a properly tuned signal pickup



implant or modified communicator—while appearing to say nothing at all. Skilled agents can even use this silent speech with their mouths closed, like a ventriloquist. Standard communicators, modified to pick up this ultra-high speech, cost only ten percent more than a comparable model, while normal communicator models may be physically reconfigured on a Tech/Comms Check against a target number of 15.

Audio/Video Implant Upgrades

Developed to further augment the capabilities of optical-, auditory- or speech-enhancing implants, audio/video implant upgrades add the ability to record, transmit or receive information via existing implants. Though the range on transmitting and receiving upgrades is limited to a mere hundred meters, the upgrades allow agents to remain in touch with partners in the field and can be used to relay instructions between field operatives. All of these implants are placed in the agent's chest, where x-ray scans may dismiss them as a pacemaker or other medical monitoring device. They receive signals via a wireless connection to the agent's existing sensory and speech implants.

Recorder Units: These upgrades allow the agent to record several hours of audio/visual information gathered by his other sensory implants. If the agent has bionic eyes—standard or enhanced—the recordings will be six hours' worth of soundless video. If the agent has audio-only implants, the recorder can absorb twelve hours of information. Once a recorder is full, a data disk can be ejected and replaced through a port that looks to casual observers like a flap of skin near the device itself. Only a successful Perception Check against a target number of 15 will reveal that the apparent scar tissue from a past operation is in fact the entry port for the recording device. Ejecting and replacing a data disk for the recorder is a Complex Action.

Transmitter, Receiver and Communication Units: These implants offer limited-range communications capabilities that relay information via any optical or auditory implants the agent already possesses. All three units feature the same effective range, equal to a standard

A/V IMPLANT UPGRADES (TORSO)

Item	Ratings	Cost	Notes
Recorder Unit	D/C/F	5,000	Duration: 6 hours, looping.
Transmitter Unit	D/D/F	5,000	Range: 100 meters
Receiver Unit	D/C/F	2,000	Range: 100 meters
Communications Unit	E/D/F	8,000	Range: 100 meters

SUBDERMAL IMPLANTS (ALL LOCATIONS)

Item	Ratings	Cost	Notes
Dermal Myomer Armor Implant	E/E/F	+50%	+2 BOD, +2 STR, +1 REF, AV increase: 3/3/3/3, Pain Resistance, -1 CHA, Unattractive
Triple-Strength Myomer Implant	F/E/F	+150%	+4 STR, +2 REF, Toughness, -1 CHA, Unattractive

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headset, and can only change frequencies by remote signals from a partner's console. As implied by their names, transmitting and receiving units only offer one-way communications, either relaying a steady stream of data to a partner or receiving a steady stream of instructions. A communications unit allows two-way contact so that the agent can speak back to his comrades.

Subdermal Myomer Implants

By far the most invasive and radical implants available are subdermal myomer implants, which take the concept of the elective myomer implant further into the realm of combat at a tremendous increase in cost and health risks. These devices were developed to work as full-body implants, with all four limbs, the torso and even the head subjected to an extensive and painful procedure that involves replacing the existing musculature with specialized myomer bundles, but sub-dermal implants can vastly improve an agent's durability, speed and strength even if they are employed over only a few body sections. Only characters with a BOD score of 5+ or the Fit Trait can receive one of these specialized implants.

The cost of a subdermal implant is based on the cost of a Type 5 Prosthesis, with the head musculature counting as a base of 30,000 and the torso a base of 150,000. If all limbs and the head are implanted, then the agent automatically receives reinforcement around the torso for free, completing the full-body effect. Otherwise, the benefits of these implants only apply to the affected limb.

Subdermal implants suffer damage normally per standard rules if they take any damage greater than 2 wound levels in a single hit. Because damaged myomers do not heal themselves, agents with damaged subdermal myomers must return to surgery to recover, requiring the same surgical skills, myomer implantation device and hospital facilities used to originally implant the specialized myomers. In such cases, treat the implantation of repaired myomers as if implanting the agent for the first time, but ignore any rejection factors. Only the failure of the surgeon's skill renders the effects of damage permanent.

Implanting subdermal myomers on the head invariably leaves some scarring and creates an unnatural facial appearance. Furthermore, the tight, super strong artificial musculature, applied far more simplistically than natural facial muscles, makes many subtler facial expressions difficult for agents with subdermal implants. These factors are

reflected by an overall decrease in CHA and the Unattractive Trait, listed in the Notes column of the table below.

Attribute modifiers for myomer implants are not cumulative with battle armor or power armor Attribute modifiers. Also, subdermal implants in the head do not increase a character's bite strength.

Dermal Myomer Armor Implant: This specialized myomer implant increases the agent's resistance to all manner of weapons fire and melee damage by effectively doubling the benefits of a standard myomer implantation and enhancing its strength with inert, ballistic-resistant cording. This implantation virtually destroys the nerve endings over most of the agent's body, resulting in immunity to pain—though the chronic headaches that require the near-continuous use of painkillers remain.

Triple-Strength Myomer Implant: A Capellan variant of the standard myomer implantation techniques that were also pioneered by the Capellan Confederation, triple-strength myomer implants provide inhuman strength and amazing reflexes, effectively doubling all effects of standard elective myomer implants (see p. 112, *Lostech*, for more information)



COVERT OPS CAMPAIGNS

As might be expected, the wide range of roleplaying possibilities involving covert operations offers players and gamemasters an unlimited supply of adventures and ideas. The following section contains information for gamemasters interested in incorporating the shadowy dealings of covert operations in their own campaigns.

The first section, *Running Adventures in Covert Operations*, provides a number of possible hooks and suggestions for gamemasters, for incorporating aspects of covert operations in a *CBT: RPG* campaign and for role-playing in general. Covert missions of every stripe, from the clumsy efforts of the Clan Watch to sophisticated shadow wars between corporate agencies, offer options for every adventuring party's taste, and the section offers just a sample of this unlimited array of venues. The second section, *Spymaster's Toolkit*, provides additional rules for the *CBT: RPG* system, to better simulate the dangerous and unpredictable nature of covert operations. Also included in this section are simple covert-operative NPCs and tables for generating encounters tailored to this shadowy environment.



RUNNING ADVENTURES IN COVERT OPERATIONS

In the complex universe of Classic BattleTech, there is no nation, Clan, or private agency that isn't up to something dirty that its own laws and directives officially cannot condone. For whatever reason, be it a crooked politician's lust for power or a genuine sense of urgency at the highest levels of security, covert operations conducted by all these factions—from simple spying to sabotage to assassination—are a shady fact of life.

Though the *Classic BattleTech Guide to Covert Operations* contains a number of new game mechanics and tables, gamemasters should take care not to let the mechanics interfere with game play. Campaigns involving covert operations or covert-operative characters should be an exercise in roleplaying, not accounting or "roll-playing". These rules are merely suggestions designed to help run adventures. If they interfere with the flow of an adventure, gamemasters may modify or ignore them as needed.

Similarly, player characters and NPCs should be more than mere strings of statistics. All characters in any adventure should have their own motivations and habits that help shape their actions. A technician spy, for example, may have grown attached to his assigned targets, to the point where he fails to perform an act of sabotage demanded of him by his superiors. A DEST sniper, steeped in the Combine's samurai code, might tip off his prey to his presence with a warning shot, giving his mark one last chance to flee or fight for his life before firing the next bullet. Such character details, whether physical or social, can enhance a roleplaying experience.

When running covert operations, gamemasters should emphasize the difference between appearance and reality, a sense of misdirection that adds tension and can foster paranoia. Though not always violent, the business of covert operations is dangerous, with potential enemies on all sides seeking any opportunity to eliminate, capture or discredit, all without giving themselves away. Here, more than anywhere else in the *BattleTech* universe, nothing is what it seems.

CLAN VS. INNER SPHERE ADVENTURES

Ever since the Clan invasion began—indeed, ever since the appearance of Wolf's Dragoons in the early 3000s—covert operations have played a role in the interaction between the Inner Sphere and Kerensky's descendants. The Clans, with their rigid codes of honor and their ritualized form of warfare, however, have embraced a more "honest" mindset and thus are often outclassed by Inner Sphere agents. The vast differences between Clan and Inner Sphere cultures have made infiltration of the Clans difficult, but not impossible.

Gamemasters wishing to run their players through operations against the Clans should review each Clan's Watch agency described in this book and consult the *Classic BattleTech Guide to the Clans* to get a feel for

what the characters are up against. Whether infiltrating Clan occupation zones to foment unrest among the locals or attempting to slip into a Clan facility to capture or destroy OmniMechs in advance of an invasion, the characters may encounter a host of complications. Characters in an adventure set after the Clans' defeat on Strana Mechty may even infiltrate the Clan homeworlds, far removed from any intelligence apparatus; such characters are on their own in an alien society. Player characters masquerading as agents of the Clan Watch may have it somewhat easier; the major difference between the Watch and a typical Inner Sphere agent is the Clans' increased emphasis on internal security, as most Inner Sphere powers are old hands at stealth and espionage.

The main thing to bear in mind when running covert operations that pit Clan or Inner Sphere factions against one another is the relative sophistication of each agency's operations, and how well they work against each other. By and large, for example, Clan agencies are easy to get around and, with the exception of a few competent operatives, are largely staffed by the dregs of Clan society. They focus primarily on counter-intelligence and scouting, and their lack of sophistication in other areas of covert operations makes a lot of these agents over-specialized and easy to bypass. Clan characters, in addition, must deal with the problem of Clan honor, which is largely incompatible with the actions of a covert operative. Gamemasters running a Clan-based covert operations campaign will find the resolution of honor with the inherent underhandedness of completing a covert mission a compelling plot device and an interesting adventure hook.

By comparison, Inner Sphere intelligence agencies are monolithic shadows, invisible—or visible and much feared—extensions of their respective governments. Long on experience and well equipped, field agents from many Inner Sphere and Periphery government spy agencies are masters at what they do, and make far more challenging opponents than any Clan operative. Inner Sphere agents are widespread, including "sleepers" and turncoats among other agencies. Gamemasters can find a wealth of opportunity for roleplaying adventures in Inner Sphere-based campaigns, with added layers of secrecy and paranoia as honor goes right out the window.

"Free agent" characters—those in business for themselves, like specialized mercenaries—may get involved in Inner Sphere or Clan-based covert operations simply by being hired for a job. Such missions are usually so trivial as to be unworthy of dedicated agents, or so dangerous or criminal that using a mercenary provides a level of protection against retaliation. As the Clans never hire agents in such a fashion, free agent characters will likely encounter the Clan Watch only through acting against it.

In any event, characters working for a government agency—Inner Sphere and Periphery or Clan—may find that failure brings with it instant denial of their

PROFESSIONALS VS. PLAYBOYS: REALISM AND ROMANCE IN COVERT OPERATIONS

The modern media has done much to skew public perceptions of covert operations, intelligence gathering and special forces. The ultra-suave secret agent armed with high-tech gadgetry is part of popular culture, as are teams (or individuals) adopting a wide range of disguises and aliases to infiltrate enemy strongholds. We see images of elite soldiers bursting through windows to overwhelm hostage takers and neutralize threats to national security. While the latter has a basis in fact (SAS operations at the Iranian Embassy in 1980, for example), this represents only a tiny fraction of special-forces operations. Most missions are less prestigious and the troopers involved, though skilled, are far from superhuman. Likewise, the concept of "super spies" is inimical to effective espionage—a high-profile spy would have very limited effectiveness. Indeed, the vast majority of intelligence and special-forces operations involve unglamorous activities—communications intercepts, analysis, forensics, planning and above all, patience—rather than leaping into direct action.

Of course, *CBT: RPG* players will likely want to plunge into the "good stuff" rather than getting bogged down in such details, no matter how necessary they are. One decision the gamemaster should make early on in any covert operations campaign is how to balance the needs of the players and the story with realism and believability. In many regards, this is a matter of taste. Many players may want a stylish and action-oriented game, placing themselves in the thick of the decision-making

existence. How far such denial can go is an excellent hook for an adventure, as the characters could be the star field agents of their House one day and outlaws the next, hunted by their former comrades until they can either escape to a friendly realm or clear their own names.

NATION-STATES VS. PRIVATE AGENCIES

The nation states of the Inner Sphere and Clans aren't the only ones engaged in the dirty business of covert operations. Corporations, underground organizations and even wealthy individuals often have their own secret agents to pursue their private agendas. Though these agents are often private investigators and bounty hunters—little more than semi-legalized spies and mercenaries—others can be as deadly as any Inner Sphere operative, and indeed may even be renegades with training and equipment paid for by some Successor State or Periphery government.

Compared to covert operations conducted by a government, the special emphasis common when dealing with private agencies is stealth. With fewer resources than a government, private citizens and corporations—even those with an international reach—often shy away from military affairs. Among corporations, the need for stealth arises from the very real fear of getting caught in an unethical act, soiling the company's reputation and costing it sales, not to mention possible retaliatory action from an offended government. Private citizens, who may act out of any number of reasons, likewise prefer to keep their activities secret, though their fears usually center around police involvement rather than military retaliation. Underground organizations, from organized crime to rebels and terrorists, may not act as covertly, but likewise fear the wrath of a dedicated government intelligence agency.

Player characters may become involved in this realm of covert operations in a number of possible ways. If they are agents for a House government or Clan, they can be brought in to investigate suspicious activities and uncover a conspiracy that they must then thwart or expose. As free agents, they may be hired by a corporate employer, underworld leader or private citizen for similar goals, or to perform a more active service that the hiring party can later deny. In virtually every case, discretion is a high priority, and the price of failure can be more than just the loss of promised fees. The same rules apply if the characters are members of the organization they are working for, though being officially on the payroll removes their employer's ability to deny any connection with them. As a result, failure in this kind of mission may result in a more "permanent solution" to protect the employer from any backlash. No matter who the employer or what the circumstances, failing a mission can provide an excellent hook for further adventures.

Even within a single agency—government or private—characters may find themselves mired in layers of intrigue. Many state and private agencies, after all, are subdivided, and entrusted with a tremendous amount of sensitive information. Within these intelligence machines are agents seeking promotion, departments engaged in "turf wars", turncoats bought out by rival agencies, and moles slipped in by the same. As a result, paranoia permeates all levels, with internal watchers keeping an eye on the rank and file. This element of internal distrust may provide a seed for more adventure hooks, regardless of who the player characters are working for.

TYPES OF GAME

There are as many different types of covert operations campaigns as there are characters. Missions may focus on a single aspect or involve several, one building on another (for example, analysis after intelligence gathering), or may involve legitimate activities serving as a smokescreen for less official activity (for example, diplomacy concealing espionage). The following sections present the various campaign types in broad strokes, together with examples of each and their interactions with other mission profiles.

ESPIONAGE AND INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

The gathering of information is the most fundamental of covert operations and one of the least understood. The popular image of espionage is the agent who

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infiltrates an enemy installation, either sneaking in to steal particular secrets or undertaking a long-term undercover mission, appearing to work for one employer while providing another with intelligence. These are both genuine and valid missions, but they represent only one aspect of intelligence gathering, namely intelligence gathered directly by people (human intelligence, or humint). Other aspects of intelligence gathering include communications and signal intelligence (sigint or comint) and even simply monitoring the media.

Humint

Human intelligence falls into two broad categories: agents operating in "enemy" territory (the classic "spies") and operatives recruited (or coerced) from within the target population. The former are often attachés serving on diplomatic missions, gathering intelligence in addition to their cover jobs. Such operatives can also serve as coordinators for local intelligence assets, in effect acting as a local overseer (commonly referred to as the "station chief" or "resident"). Local operatives can assist in intelligence gathering for a variety of reasons. The most common are ideological (perhaps to aid the expansion of a government or the elimination of a disliked local authority) and financial (bribery and greed). Less scrupulous operatives can ensure cooperation through blackmail and coercion, using the target's own foibles and vulnerabilities against him. Either type of operative brings the ever-present danger of the targeted nation determining the spy's presence and either unmasking him or (more insidiously) using him to feed false information to the spying power.

Humint is most powerful when it provides direct access to the target information or items. Provided the spy can be trusted, his information is first-hand and definitive, less likely to be subject to interpretation than other sources of intelligence.

SigInt

Signals intelligence is the most pervasive (and in many regards, the easiest) form of espionage. At its simplest level, it involves intercepting communications, decrypting them (where required) and then analyzing the content. Sigint is an important part of battlefield intelligence gathering, where considerable effort is made to divine the orders and reports of opposing forces, but is equally valid when attempting to eavesdrop on diplomatic, industrial, financial and criminal communications.

Local sigint—within a city or on a world—is relatively straightforward. The espionage team merely needs to tap into the information flow, which can be accomplished by listening in to broadcast signals or hardwiring intercepts into the communications equipment of the sender or receiver. The latter provides more focused intelligence but usually requires some form of covert operation to install the listening devices. The former, while usually involving little more than appropriate receiving equipment, often nets a lot of superfluous information and thus requires considerably more analysis.

Interstellar sigint is a much trickier proposition because of the de facto monopoly on such communications equipment held by ComStar and the Word of Blake, requiring the compromising of their proprietary technologies (and official neutrality) to accomplish. In practice, this is not as difficult as it seems, in particular since the ComStar schism resulted in dissemination of HPG technology. Also, domestic links to and from planetary HPG stations are vulnerable to standard interception methods and to monitoring by the broadcasting organization—a boon when the intelligence-gathering agency is allied with a nation-state, such as the Word of Blake and the FWL.

As a consequence of the damage to ComStar's and the Word of Blake's image caused by the schism, many users of HPG services use private encryption before sending messages. The development of alternative interstellar communications devices, such as the "black box" faxes of the Federated Commonwealth, offer no guarantee against enemy interception of communications. Such devices or their technical schematics might fall into enemy hands, compromising a supposedly secure system (as the AFFC discovered during the Clan invasion). Breaking encryption and "sifting the wheat from the chaff" is often an analyst's job rather than a sigint function.

process and the action. Others may prefer a more realistic and specialized approach, becoming involved with one aspect of covert operations and having NPC characters handle other key roles. Both styles—action-oriented vs. procedural—have their place in the *BattleTech* universe, and the information in *The CBT:RPG Guide to Covert Operations* can be tailored to either.

As fiction and broadcast media have shown in recent years, characters need not be at the cutting edge of action in order to play a significant role in covert operations. In lieu of being spies and saboteurs, they can be analysts dedicated to divining the opposition's intentions and formulating counter-plans, or even technical staff examining forensic evidence and developing new technologies. Such rear-echelon personnel may still participate in front-line activities—the analyst sent to gather first-hand knowledge or a scientist assigned as a mission specialist—albeit as the exception rather than the rule. That they don't habitually undertake such operations may heighten the experience for such characters.

On the flip side, players preferring an action-oriented game can have their characters take on the roles of special-forces troops, spies or other field operatives, each acting within the narrow confines of their assigned mission at the "business end" of the covert operations field. As part of an established chain of command or reporting structure, such characters can be given orders, assignments and information as the needs of the story (and the gamemaster) dictate.

Media Monitoring

While much intelligence gathering concentrates on divining secrets, being able to place information in an appropriate context is of vital importance. As such, monitoring the media, scientific journals, financial reports and even scandal-sheets is a key factor in intelligence gathering. Knowing where a company is performing well allows a rival to focus its intelligence-gathering efforts, and reports of an individual's activities may expose weaknesses that can be exploited in other ways. In many cases, however, media monitoring simply provides contextual information: the direction of public opinion, social trends, concerns and the like, information a government needs to know about its own people and a rival state needs to know about its enemies. Most governments employ agents on each world in their realm (and on worlds controlled by their rivals) whose task is gathering such information. Many such operatives perform this task in addition to an everyday job and don't regard themselves as spies, particularly when such information-gathering efforts are concealed behind a media-monitoring or marketing façade.

ANALYSIS

While in some cases the importance of information is clear, in many cases it is not. Sifting through gathered information, placing it in context and then assessing its importance usually falls to dedicated analysts. In most cases, a team of analysts works together, often bound by a common area of responsibility—for example, the study of a particular nation or technology, or knowledge of cryptography—but each with their own areas of expertise. These teams fall into two distinct groups: those involved in parsing the intelligence and making it understandable, and those who interpret the data and make recommendations to their superiors. The former group often includes cryptographers, image analysts, linguists, audio engineers and statisticians, who transform the data into intelligible formats, while the latter group are most often political, cultural, financial and technological experts. The boundary between the two groups is a soft one, with some analysts also being expert linguists and cryptographers who prefer working with “raw” data, while some of the technical teams play a key role in shaping the subsequent analysis.

Analysis can be as simple as translating and recording conversations or may be as complex as pattern-matching data over time and geography. Most intelligence agencies maintain numerous analysis teams and intelligence frequently goes to several such groups; data that is not immediately of value may later be important in analysis, and information significant to one team (for example, regarding a technological development) may have different meaning for political or military analysts. Members of these teams are often the most educated and technology-savvy employees of an intelligence agency but rarely have experience in field operations.

SABOTAGE, KIDNAPPING AND ASSASSINATION

In addition to gathering information (and in some cases acquiring items) from rival groups, one of the key tasks of covert operations is denying the same resources to the enemy. The most obvious applications of this type of operation lie in the industrial and military fields, where saboteurs may seek to destroy a production line or a supply cache to deny its use to the opposition. Such attacks were prevalent in the early Succession Wars and played a major role in destroying the Inner Sphere's industrial capacity; the resulting social backlash forced covert operations to become extremely specific in the resources targeted. During the First Succession War, commandos didn't think twice about destroying a JumpShip to prevent their opponents from using it, but in the present era operatives assigned the same task generally seek to incapacitate rather than destroy the priceless vessel (for example, via the LIC attacks against the DCMS fleet at Dromini VI during the Fourth Succession War).

Covert operatives can also sabotage other parts of an enemy's infrastructure—communications, sanitation, transportation and power generation—as befits a mission's requirements. For example, tampering with a city's water supply is a relatively easy way to undermine its resolve (one reason such sites are usually well protected), while targeting a power plant may cripple a factory's production without risking valuable manufacturing technology.

Sabotage may also mask other activities. Destroying an industrial complex may serve to conceal the theft of something it contained, providing the thieves with a screen of deniability. For example, stealing a hardware encryption device is of minimal value if the enemy knows it is gone, because as soon as they realize the cipher is compromised, they will change it. However, if they have no reason to suspect the theft, then the thieves may be able to use the device to eavesdrop on their rivals.

Such devious methods apply equally to people as to technology and buildings. A covert ops team may be ordered to abduct (or “rescue”) someone in an enemy's employ. If the disappearance is apparent, political and diplomatic repercussions may result, but concealing the operation can vastly reduce the fallout. Many covert agencies have teams whose role is to fabricate evidence to explain disappearances—suicide notes, for example, and false trails of travel and financial data—while others specialize in providing bodies that can be substituted for the targeted individuals and in circumventing efforts to identify the remains.

Kidnapping enemy personnel (or aiding defections) is one of the trickier tasks facing covert operations teams. Here, they must not only move themselves and their equipment through potentially hostile territory, but must also have plans to get their target (quite possibly unwilling) past security—hence the desire to minimize

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the chances of alerting rival security agencies. Such efforts may involve guns and drugs to subdue the target, or may involve some form of compulsion (blackmail, extortion and the like). Such operations may also occur with the target's complicity—for example, a scientist who wishes to defect to a rival corporation or a diplomat who has forsaken his nation—though their dependents may be less willing to cooperate.

Wetwork

Much easier than kidnapping is the simple assassination of a target individual. A wide range of methods exists—firearms, explosives and poisons, for example—tailored to the target's security precautions and the desire for secrecy. An assassination may be made to look like death by natural causes—a traffic accident, a heart attack—to conceal enemy involvement, or it may be deliberately overt to serve as an object lesson. The assassination of a low-ranking target is usually easier than the slaying of a senior politician or head of state, but planning and patience can defeat even the most determined security; famous examples include the slaying of Coordinator Yoguchi Kurita by the Lyran agent Snow Fire, and more recently the murder of Archon Melissa Steiner by an assassin now known to have been in the employ of the Archon's daughter. Rumors abound that the great Hanse Davion was brought low by an assassin, though official reports have always cited natural causes.

SECURITY/SPY-HUNTERS

Countering the actions of foreign powers is an important role in any intelligence agency, usually forming a distinct department or directorate charged with counterintelligence and security. Such agencies operate on multiple levels, from identifying and neutralizing enemy agents to providing security for people and locales.

Counter-spies operate in various ways. Some may investigate anyone appointed to a sensitive position, vetting their background and habits to weed out any security risks (or at least to be aware of potential problems where personnel are irreplaceable), while others may work with their information gathering colleagues to determine what the enemy knows and then attempt to trace said knowledge back to its source. Nations, companies and organizations frequently take care not to reveal what they know so as to protect any sources from deliberate or accidental exposure. Controlling such information likewise falls under the purview of the counter-intelligence agencies, though doing so is a much larger task than chasing down spies and rumors.

Upon identifying an enemy agent, counter-intelligence agents have a number of options. They can unmask the spy, charging him with espionage, deporting him or making him “disappear,” depending on the circumstances. However, eliminating a known operative leaves no guarantee that another, unidentified, agent

won't be substituted. In many cases, it is more effective for the counter-spies to suborn the agent and use her to manage the information flow (including disinformation) to the spy's employers. Such management may be covert, the unmasked spy herself remaining unaware of the manipulation, but in many cases it involves blackmailing the target (often via threat of prosecution) and turning her into a “double agent”, an accomplice (albeit rarely willing) of the counter-intelligence agency. Disinformation may also take place on a larger scale—for example, manipulation of the media, a task usually falling under the purview of a dedicated propaganda agency.

Protection Details

Providing security for key sites and bodyguards for key personnel (the latter known as close protection) is the last major task of the security services. The latter involves some of the most talented and single-minded intelligence operatives, who must constantly remain alert to their surroundings and their principals' actions, as well as being expert marksmen, martial artists and drivers. The cream of the crop serve in the protection details of senior government officials, but corporate officials and media personalities are also major employers of close-protection staff.

Site protection troops differ greatly from bodyguards, often of a more military mindset and training than other security-service personnel. Nonetheless, their ties to intelligence agencies shape the skills of these troopers, who are adept at close-quarters combat, particularly inside buildings and spacecraft, rather than in open battlefields.

COVERT OPS CHARACTERS

Gamemasters may find using characters with covert operations skills a challenge for many games, especially during long-running campaigns. As a general rule, covert operatives possess a wider range of skills and abilities, and are generally trained to think “outside the box”. Many are also accustomed to working on their own, and will put their wealth of knowledge and advanced equipment to use in ways that can often unbalance or disrupt an otherwise well-crafted adventure. Depending on the nature of the campaign, characters with covert backgrounds or training can pose a unique challenge for finding adventure hooks and keeping the game interesting, but not an insurmountable one.

Conversely, not all characters in a covert operations campaign need to be covert operatives. In fact, a vast majority of the manpower in any intelligence agency often plays a support role rather than doing fieldwork. Intelligence agencies are not dominated by spies and other field agents, but by analysts, technicians and administrators. These people who make sense of the data gathered in the field or by remote devices and observation then determine on the relevance of such information and make appropriate decisions. Though the assassins, commandos and saboteurs are often called

upon to carry out these actions, their presence represents the hands, not the heart, of the covert agency.

Described below are three main types of covert characters a gamemaster may have to contend with, and suggestions for what kinds of campaigns can be run with different proportions of regular and specially trained characters. Though broken into three categories, any and all of the suggestions below may apply to any character group, even if the adventure has nothing at all to do with covert operations.

COVERT OPERATIONS-ONLY CAMPAIGNS

In a campaign centred wholly on covert operations, character types may run the gamut from the desk-jockey administrator to the hardened field agent. If the gamemaster has enough expertise in the collection of characters, it may be possible to organize them as a single unit of the broader agency, tasked with a single mission together. Smaller groups may excel as operatives with an NPC support staff, complete with a team director who oversees their work.

The size and traits of a covert operations group may go a long way toward influencing its venue of operation. If all the characters hail from one affiliation, for example, they can easily be a part of that affiliation's intelligence network, or a team of infiltrators or rebels acting against the excesses of the same. If they hail from different backgrounds, they could be mercenaries, rebels or terrorists, working for their employers' agenda or for their own. They could even be a team of "mole hunters" tracking down security leaks within their organization, policing the secret police.

Whatever their nature, characters in a campaign centered on covert operations may find they have access to all sorts of cool weapons and gear, but their exploits will be largely unknown. Foreign agents are ever on the lookout for their kind, and the chances are great that they will earn a very long list of enemies and perhaps even have bounties placed on their heads. All is fair in this dangerous business, and a sniper can lie in wait on every rooftop.

MIXED-CHARACTER CAMPAIGNS

In a campaign of mixed character types, where a significant percentage of the characters do not have backgrounds or training in covert operations, adventures can become a bit more complex and diverse. In fact, adventures where some characters may be in the limelight, such as a Solaris MechWarrior or a member of the nobility, offer a wealth of potential for adventures, particularly if the non-covert characters are unaware of their comrades' clandestine activities.

While few mixed-character campaigns can be truly based around all characters being part of an intelligence group, mercenaries, revolutionaries, criminal organizations and even the stables of Solaris VII can often provide excellent venues for such parties.

Moreover, if the characters are keeping secrets from each other, one or more of the covert ops characters may actually be a spy from some rival group. Such campaigns tend to get a bit more complex than others, as the specially trained characters may find solutions or undertake actions that can surprise their comrades and even appear counterproductive.

Gamemasters running these types of campaigns should consult with each player in turn first, to determine the motivations and actions of each character before starting an adventure. They should also be prepared for numerous sidebar discussions throughout the adventure, as characters may often split up to pursue their own agendas. If the characters in a mixed campaign are aware of each other's abilities, such a "double blind" style of play is not always necessary, but can be used when group members become separated.

MAINLY NON-COVERT CAMPAIGNS

In mainly non-covert campaigns, specially trained characters are in the minority, and adventures should be tailored mostly for the bulk of the group, whatever it is they may do for a living. However, this is *not* to say the training and skills of the covert operative in the group's midst—known or unknown—are wasted. Indeed, these characters may find uses for their abilities on regular occasions, and may require the same "double blind" method of game play as any mixed-character campaign. Character groups without a covert operative among them may find themselves drawn into this shadowy realm of adventure by circumstances beyond their control, and may encounter covert-operative NPCs along the way who can work to help or hinder their efforts.

PLAYER CHARACTER DOUBLE-AND TRIPLE-AGENTS

In the course of any campaign, particularly one involving covert operations, the potential exists for an operative to switch sides, either willingly or under duress. In an adventure campaign already underway, the causes of such actions can vary widely, running from a healthy bribe, to blackmail, to a hostage situation. More sinister organizations with access to advanced psychological techniques may even manage to "reprogram" an individual into becoming an unwitting agent for their side.

In the case of a double agent, the character continues to superficially work with his original team, but reports to an enemy agent, or even actively works against his former comrades behind the scenes. A triple agent, a character who allows the enemy to think he has turned, may in fact be setting the enemy up into a trap laid by his friends, or may even be working for a third party whose agenda is completely different and counter to both sides.

To effectively manage such a switch in allegiance becomes a challenge not only of creativity, but also of

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knowing what motivates one's player characters, both as a gamemaster and as a player. Thus, attempting to sway group members to switch sides is not a plot device gamemasters should employ lightly. The following guidelines may help gamemasters better manage double- and triple-agent scenarios in their campaigns.

DOUBLE-BLIND PLAY

It almost goes without saying that roleplaying a double agent requires the player who has been turned not to reveal his activities in front of the other players. To conceal his activities from his fellows, therefore, the player and the gamemaster may engage in sidebar discussions on the character's activities, or exchange notes during routine gameplay. The same method may be used whenever the gamemaster feels the other player characters might pick up on some of the double agent's unusual activities, with the gamemaster revealing information to everyone *but* the turned agent.

Either or both methods of double-blind play will help keep the players in the dark, but gamemasters should take care to avoid excessive note-passing and sidebar discussion, as doing so may immediately clue the other player's into the double agent's activities (not to mention seriously bogging down an adventure). The same techniques can apply if the character is a triple agent working *for* his fellow player-characters, and will help to foster the sense of uncertainty that permeates all manner of covert operations.

MOLES AND TURNCOATS

The trickiest element of the double (or triple) agent is the fact that he or she is actually working against his own people, and may even be forced to kill or injure several characters. Not surprisingly, such a development within a gaming group will likely upset the game balance and even cause a gaming group to self-destruct. Gamemasters are therefore strongly advised to seriously consider exploring this aspect of covert operations before using it in any campaign.

When dealing with a turncoat, gamemasters should consider every action the turncoat character is taking as though he or she were an NPC, and accord the potential victims of this character's schemes every opportunity to discover that something is amiss. Though this may seem as though the gamemaster is being forced to slant the game against such moles, the fact is that in turning against the other player-characters, such an individual effectively becomes a wolf in sheep's clothing, and must thus move all the more carefully to avoid detection. Furthermore, creating an environment that favors the group above the individual helps retain a semblance of group unity should the double agent ever be exposed and dealt with.

If a turncoat is successfully exposed, the gamemaster should permit all characters the opportunity to act on this information, and permit actions up to and including killing the traitor. If the

turncoat can escape, that event should also be allowed. Whether killed or escaped, however, the turncoat player character is no longer considered a viable member of the player characters' group, and thus the turncoat's player should be ready to return to character creation if he or she still wishes to be part of the campaign. An escaped double agent character can become a recurring enemy for the others to face as time goes on, and gamemasters may want to review the *Double Agent* rules on page **XX** in the *Character Generation* section of this book for additional traits, skills, and other effects that may be added to the exposed turncoat.

At every stage of the way, characters on all sides of a double or triple agent adventure should be reminded—whenever the actions of one affect the others—that *CBT: RPG* is a game. The point is to have fun, and if ever the game feels more like an exercise in diplomacy or debate, then it may behoove all concerned to suspend play until a later date.

COVERT OPERATIONS NPCs

Nonplayer characters (NPCs) are a staple of roleplaying, and while many that the player characters (PCs) will encounter need only be quickly described and require no statistical information, sometimes greater detail becomes necessary. Though it is recommended that any major NPCs be generated using the standard character creation rules, or even borrowing the statistics of a sample character, the rules below allow gamemasters to develop custom intermediate-level NPCs—those which, while critical to the story, do not require a full-blown biography.

USING NPC TEMPLATES

The NPC template system allows gamemasters to quickly generate NPCs based on the type of character being encountered. *Everyday* NPCs are ordinary characters who play some role in the setting. Typical examples include support staff and desk-jockeys. *Secondary* NPCs are roughly equal to starting characters and may often serve as common foes or the lackeys of a more powerful opponent. In covert operations, these characters may even be trainees the player characters must watch after, or may serve as office security. *Primary* NPCs are superior to starting characters, and may serve as typical villains or even an instructor at the agency's headquarters facilities. *Unique* NPCs are often the harbinger of a fully fleshed-out NPC. These can range from veteran field agents to a powerful opponent's right-hand man.

As shown on the *NPC Template Table*, each NPC template receives a certain number of points, which are spent on Attributes, skills and traits. Points may be spent on Attributes and traits per normal character generation rules, though no attribute may be below 2 or above the racial maximum for the character type, and thresholds are not considered an issue for NPCs generated in this fashion. In order to gain additional

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points, the NPC may buy a negative trait. Furthermore, the Natural Aptitude Trait in this system adds 2 points to the associated skill.

Skills bought for NPCs using this system are given in two numbers. The first is a range of how many skills the NPC type should have, while the second number—the one in parentheses—is the number of points available to spend. In this system, every skill level (including a +0 skill bonus) costs 1 point. As with trait and Attribute points, the points available for use on skills may be raised by picking up negative traits. Likewise, unspent skill points may be put into Attributes or traits. Gamemasters are encouraged to use their discretion in selecting skills—and may freely assume that the NPC already has fluency in his or her native language, and a Perception bonus of 0 if not mentioned—but should diversify the skill base a bit to round out the NPC.

The NPC characters shown below were generated using the NPC template system.

NPC TEMPLATE TABLE

	Everyday	Secondary	Primary	Unique
Attributes	38	44	50	54
Skills	5-6 (10)	6-8 (15)	8-10 (20)	10-12 (30)
Traits	0	3	5	7

SPY (SECONDARY)

Infiltration and observation is their specialty, and they may have spent anywhere from days to years working their way into the enemy's midst to get their hands on some vital data or be their own agency department's eyes and ears. Though rarely ordered to take overt actions, the betrayal of the sensitive information they uncover can cost countless lives in the field.

Attributes

STR	5	WIL	4
BOD	5	CHA	5
DEX	6	EDG	3
RFL	6	SOC	3
INT	7	Move	11/22/44

Skills

Comms/Conv.	+2
Computers	+2
Cryptography	+2
Fast-Talk	+0
Perception	+2
Pistols	+1
Protocol	+1
Stealth	+1

Traits

In for Life
Good Vision
Gregarious

*4 points transferred from traits to skills.

SPECIAL FORCES TROOPER (PRIMARY)

They work in the shadows, armed and equipped for the most dangerous missions, when normal troops just won't do. Fearless, pitiless and remorseless, they will stop at nothing to attain their objectives, and will lay down their lives with a fanatic's zeal—after all, to their friends and family, they are probably already dead.

Attributes

STR	6	WIL	6
BOD	7	CHA	5
DEX	6	EDG	4
RFL	7	SOC	3
INT	6	Move	13/23/46

Skills

Blade	+2
Comms/Conv.	+0
Martial Arts/Mil (Haymaker, Neck Jab)	+2
Perception	+2
Pistols	+2
Rifles	+3
Stealth	+2
SMGs	+2
Tactics/Infantry	+1

Traits

Brave
Combat Sense
In for Life
Unattractive

*5 points transferred from traits to skills.

CLOSE-PROTECTION DETAIL (SECONDARY)

They guard VIPs from nobility and high commanders to corporate executives and criminal bosses, or serve as the first line of defense for valuable items and data. They watch everyone who comes close and let nobody pass without a thorough search. Trained and willing to throw their own lives in harm's way, they follow a simple directive: protect at *all* costs.

Attributes

STR	5	WIL	6
BOD	6	CHA	3
DEX	5	EDG	3
RFL	7	SOC	3
INT	6	Move	12/23/46

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Skills

Comms/Conv.	+0
Perception	+3
Pistols	+2
Rifles	+2
Running	+1
Security Systems	+2
Tactics/Infantry	+1

Traits

Introvert
Quirk/Paranoid
Brave
Good Vision

*3 points transferred from traits to skills.

ANALYST (EVERYDAY)

The backbone of the intelligence community—and likely, not the guys who get out of the cubicle much—the analysts make sense of the flood of information the field agents retrieve. With access to field reports, as well as data from intercepted communications, satellite images and other sources, these people may be “in the know,” but they’re sitting ducks in a firefight.

Attributes

STR	4	WIL	4
BOD	4	CHA	5
DEX	5	EDG	3
RFL	4	SOC	3
INT	7	Move	8/18/36

Skills

Comms/Conv.	+0
Computers	+3
Cryptography	+2
Perception	+1
Investigations	+1
Protocol	+0

Traits

Combat Paralysis
Introvert
Patient

*3 points transferred from traits to skills; 1 point transferred from traits to Attributes.

SCIENTIST (SECONDARY)

More focused than the analyst, scientists nonetheless work closely with generalized operatives, lending their expertise to an investigation and determining clues from hard evidence collected by field agents. A great source of information, these characters much prefer the order of a lab to the chaos of the field.

Attributes

STR	4	WIL	5
BOD	5	CHA	4
DEX	5	EDG	3
RFL	4	SOC	3
INT	7	Move	8/18/36

Skills

Academics	+3
Bureaucracy	+1
Computers	+2
Forensics	+1
Investigations	+2
Protocol	+1
Perception	+2

Traits

Fast Learner
Timid

*4 points transferred from Attributes to skills.

“CLEANER” (UNIQUE)

They call these brutal specialists when things go wrong. The ultimate in damage control, the “cleaner” makes problems go away, be it a key witness, a diplomat who saw too much, or even a failed operative whose misstep may lead back to the agency. Usually, the “cleaner” is a field operative himself, a member of an agency elite who knows tricks many others haven’t yet learned.

Attributes

STR	6	WIL	7
BOD	7	CHA	4
DEX	6	EDG	4
RFL	7	SOC	3
INT	7	Move	13/23/46

Skills

Comms/Conv.	+0
Computers/Hacking	+2
Cryptography	+2
Demolitions	+3
Martial Arts/Karate	+3
(Feint, Block, Precision Hit)	
Perception	+3
Poisons & Antidotes	+2
Pistols	+3
Rifles	+3
Security Systems	+2
Submachine Guns	+2
Stealth	+1

Traits

Natural Aptitude: Demolitions
Bad Reputation
Combat Sense
Well-Connected
In for Life

*3 points transferred from Attributes and 5 from traits to skills.

COVERT OPERATIONS ENCOUNTERS

Even when engaging in covert operations, which emphasize stealth and secrecy, chance encounters are commonplace. The nature of these encounters may vary, however, based on where the characters are and what they are doing. The encounter tables below help gamemasters generate many such encounters, both friendly and hostile. These encounters may be determined in advance, but also contain sufficient information and statistics to be used "as is," with minimal interruption in game play.

GENERATING ENCOUNTERS

Gamemasters may generate random encounters when characters are in a locale where such meetings are likely to occur, be it on the streets, in a bar, or while infiltrating a government installation. When the player characters are not actively engaged in a mission, the gamemaster should roll 1D10 once per hour of game time. On a result of 6 or more, a random encounter takes place. If the player characters are actively engaged in a mission, the frequency jumps to one encounter every half-hour of game time, or every time the characters enter a new locale. Generating an encounter is a simple three-step process:

Step 1: The gamemaster rolls 1D10 and adds all appropriate modifiers for the player characters' locale and circumstances to the result (see the *Encounter Modifiers Table*, below).

Step 2: Using the modified result, the gamemaster checks the *Master Encounters Table*. The Encounter Type listed determines which specific Encounter Table is used to generate the incident. The gamemaster then rolls 1D6, adding the applicable Reaction Modifiers (again, based on the characters' locale and circumstances) to the result.

Step 3: The gamemaster consults the final result on the appropriate Encounter Table, and enjoys the show.

ENCOUNTER MODIFIERS TABLE

Location/ Situation	Encounter Modifier	REACTION MODIFIER				
		Covert Op (I.S.)	Covert Op (Clan)	Military (I.S.)	Military (Clan)	Civilian
Civilian Residential	-1	-1	-2	-2	-2	0
Military Residential	0	+1	+1	0	0	+2
Military Facility	+1	+2	+3	+1	+2	+2
Government Facility	+1	-1	-1	0	0	-1
Industrial, Major	0	0	+1	0	0	+1
Industrial, Minor	-2	+1	+1	+1	0	-1
Top-Secret Facility*	+2	+1	+2	+1	+2	+2
Commercial	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wilderness	-3	0	0	0	0	0
Rival/Neutral State (Wartime)	+2	+2	+3	+2	+3	+1
Allied State (Wartime/Peace)	+1	+2	+3	+1	+2	0
Rival/Neutral State (Peace)	+1	+2	+3	+1	+2	0
VIP/Top-Secret Item Nearby	+1	+1	+2	+1	+2	+2

*Cumulative with Military, Government and Industrial Facilities

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MASTER ENCOUNTERS TABLE

Modified 1D10	Encounter Table	REACTION MODIFIER				
		Covert Op (I.S.)	Covert Op (Clan)	Military (I.S.)	Military (Clan)	Civilian
2 or less	Criminal	+1	0	+1	+1	-1
3-4	Civilian	0	+1	+1	+1	0
5-6	Police	-1	0	+1	0	+1
7-8	Military	+1	+2	0	0	+2
9	Renegade	+2	+3	+2	+3	0
10	Rival Agency	0	+2	+1	+2	-1
11+	Covert Op	+1	0	+2	+2	-2

CRIMINAL ENCOUNTERS TABLE

1 or less	Burglars! They have the gear and they've got one foot in the door when the alarm sounds. (1D6 x Thug NPCs, Primary: Pistols, Secondary: Security Systems)
2	Street Eyes! A young ruffian in gang colors watches you like a hawk. Is he following you, too? (Thug NPC, Primary: Perception, Secondary: Streetwise)
3	King of the Mountain! "Out of my way, old-timer!" A young street punk picks a fight with the wrong guys. (Thug NPC, Primary: Blades, Secondary: Brawling)
4	Turf War! Without so much as a warning, a groundcar screeches to a halt nearby, and gunfire erupts. Out spills a handful of thugs, weapons drawn and ready to rumble. They will run if more than half their number are killed or incapacitated. (1D6 x Thug NPCs, Primary: Submachine Guns, Secondary: Pistols)
5	Terrorists! They've got guns, a bomb and a cause, and they don't mind taking you right down with them. They fight to the death. (2D6 x Thug NPCs, Primary: Pistols, Secondary: Brawling)
6+	Job Offer. "Your reputation precedes you. My associates and I would like to make you an offer." The local crime syndicate likes your style and the offer is tempting. (Soldier NPC, Primary: Pistol, Secondary: Negotiation; 1D6 x Thug NPCs, Primary: Pistol, Secondary: Intimidation)

CIVILIAN ENCOUNTERS TABLE

1 or less	Drunk. "I'll tell you what's wrong with this place..." He's had a few too many and sees problems and conspiracies everywhere, and will loudly point them out to you. (Bystander NPC, Primary: Bureaucracy, Secondary: Brawling)
2	Workaholic. "Not now; I gotta run." He's so focused on his job he doesn't even give the player characters a second glance as he rushes around. (Bystander NPC, Primary: Career, Secondary: Administration)
3	Gossip. "Did you hear about...?" They're on their break and they've just got to unload the latest news of the day to each other, along with anyone else willing to get in on the conversation. (1D6 x Bystander NPCs, Primary: Bureaucracy, Secondary: Streetwise)
4	Nosy. "Say, you're not from around here, are you?" You have to admit, he pays attention more than most. Or is he more than he appears? (Bystander NPC, Primary: Perception, Secondary: Interrogation)
5	Professional. "Ah, gentlemen/ladies, perhaps I could interest you in..." A man dressed in a sharp suit is interested either in selling the characters something, or getting them to sign on with some moneymaking deal, or hiring them for some small job. (Thug NPC, Primary: Negotiation, Secondary: Fast Talk)
6+	Rent-A-Cop. "Hey! Where do you think you're going?" Give 'em a uniform and a stunstick, and they all think they're <i>The Immortal Warrior</i> . (2 Thug NPCs, Primary: Staffs, Secondary: Pistol)

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POLICE ENCOUNTERS TABLE

1 or less	Beat Cop. A police officer walking his beat keeps a wary eye on the player characters. (<i>Bystander NPC, Primary: Streetwise, Secondary: Pistol</i>)
2	Cordon. "Move along, people; nothing to see here!" Police are directing traffic away from the area. (1D6 x <i>Bystander NPCs, Primary: Intimidation, Secondary: Pistol</i>)
3	Detective. "Excuse me. Have you seen this individual?" A police detective asks for the characters' help in locating a missing person or a dangerous criminal on the loose. (2 <i>Thug NPCs, Primary: Interrogation, Secondary: Pistol</i>)
4	Security. For whatever reason—the presence of VIPs, escaped criminals, terrorists or an imminent riot—the police are out in force today. Armed and watchful, they're ready for anything. (1D6 x <i>Thug NPCs, Primary: Martial Arts/Military, Secondary: Pistol</i>)
5	Stakeout. A group of police officers are taking more than casual interest in the player characters' activities. (1D6 x <i>Thug NPCs, Primary: Pistol, Secondary: Stealth</i>)
6+	SWAT. A group of heavily armed cops appear and seek to arrest one or more player characters (regardless of any real crimes committed), or to assist the regular officers already on the scene with a crisis. (2D6 x <i>Thug NPCs, Primary: Martial Arts/Military, Secondary: Pistol</i>)

MILITARY ENCOUNTERS TABLE

1 or less	Guard. A soldier stands faithfully at his post... Or is he really asleep? (<i>Thug NPC, Primary: Rifles, Secondary: Martial Arts/Military</i>)
2	Support Staff. A couple of support service able-bodies or technicians stroll by, chatting about the day's events, almost unaware of the characters' presence. (2 <i>Thug NPCs, Primary: Protocol, Secondary: Martial Arts/Military</i>)
3	Junior Officer. "As you were, soldier..." Trying his best to follow the book, this young officer is eager to please and still sets an example for his men. He's also just brash enough to try to be a hero. (<i>Soldier NPC, Primary: Protocol, Secondary: Pistols</i>)
4	MechWarrior. Cocky or merely absorbed in his thoughts, a man clad in MechWarrior's fatigues and carrying his neurohelmet brushes past without so much as an "excuse me." (<i>Soldier NPC, Primary: Pilot/Mech, Secondary: Brawling</i>)
5	Squad. Whether on patrol, taking in some physical exercise or summoned to duty by an alarm, a group of soldiers closes in on the characters. If hostile, they will attack on sight, and will not flee until more than two-thirds of their number are killed or incapacitated. (2D6 x <i>Soldier NPCs, Primary: Rifles, Secondary: Martial Arts/Military</i>)
6+	Security Force. "Hold it right there." A reinforced guard post of armed soldiers blocks the characters' progress unless they can fork over the proper ID and clearances. (1D6 x <i>Soldier NPCs, Primary: Rifle, Secondary: Blade</i>)

RENEGADE ENCOUNTERS TABLE

1 or less	Work Crew. A group of independent contractors (real ones or disguised agents) blocks the player characters' path while performing some kind of repairs. (1D6 x <i>Thug NPCs, Primary: Technician, Secondary: Brawling</i>)
2	Consultant. Hired to present an outside perspective, this person will either improve efficiency or get on the last two nerves of everyone around. (<i>Bystander NPC, Primary: Protocol, Secondary: Fast-Talk</i>)
3	Private Detective. His investigations into a case somehow connected to what the characters are doing (if at all), lead this man to follow them around, either watching them or asking questions. (<i>Thug NPC, Primary: Surveillance, Secondary: Pistols</i>)
4	Mercenary Soldiers. Hired for brawn, not necessarily for brains, they have no real respect for the chain of command or proper decorum, but can be counted on in a firefight. (1D6 x <i>Soldier NPCs, Primary: Rifles, Secondary: Martial Arts/Karate</i>)
5	Vigilante! Motivated by a personal sense of justice or vengeance, this individual takes matters into his or her own hands and is often little more than a terrorist of a different stripe. (<i>Soldier NPC, Primary: Pistol, Secondary: Brawling</i>)
6+	Mercenary Operative. He is trained, but owes loyalty to no flag or Clan. This makes him dangerous indeed. (<i>Elite NPC, Primary: Rifle, Secondary: Pistol</i>)

COVERT OPERATIVE ENCOUNTERS TABLE

1 or less	Analyst. "Given the data, we suspect the enemy will..." He spends all day in a think tank, poring over data from a hundred agents and independent sources. He is military intelligence, and what he knows could save or cost lives. (<i>Thug NPC, Primary: Investigations, Secondary: Perception</i>)
2	Guerrillas. Trained to wage a war that can often seem hopeless, they will fight anyone who can possibly interfere with their plans, using tactics that verge on terrorism. If they oppose the player characters, they will only flee if more than three-fourths of their number are killed or incapacitated. (<i>1D6 x Thug NPCs, Primary: Submachine Guns, Secondary: Interest/Local Area</i>)
3	Commandos. These elite warriors are sent in to take out the toughest targets with surgical precision. Unlike guerrillas, they do not retreat until the job is done. (<i>1D6 x Soldier NPCs, Primary: Rifles, Secondary: Demolitions</i>)
4	Scientists. Two scientists take a small break and discuss today's project and findings. Though only half of what they say makes sense to you, they may have the specialized information you need. (<i>2 Thug NPCs, Primary: Academics, Secondary: Computers</i>)
5	Spy. He looks like he belongs here, but his eyes constantly dart around the room, surveying everyone and everything. The spy may be a friendly agent or an enemy. If an enemy agent, he will attempt to escape when confronted. (<i>Soldier NPC, Primary: Surveillance, Secondary: Pistols</i>)
6+	Field Operative. Well equipped and trained for any special operation from assassination to espionage, the field operative is a fearless and dangerous foe, and not much safer to have around as a friend. Good thing they usually work alone. (<i>Elite NPC, Primary: Rifles, Secondary: Demolitions</i>)

RIVAL AGENCY ENCOUNTERS TABLE

1 or less	IA Dragnet! "Lately, there have been some concerns regarding your performance..." An internal affairs agent is sent to interrogate the characters, whose loyalties or actions have been called into question. This could be part of a department-wide shakeup, or more focused on the characters themselves. (<i>Soldier NPC, Primary: Interrogation, Secondary: Investigation</i>)
2	Observers "Pay no attention to me. Just act like I wasn't even here..." Either to better coordinate departments, or as a civilian overwatch, observers are temporarily assigned to the player characters' group. (<i>1D6 x Soldier NPCs, Primary: Pistol, Secondary: Surveillance</i>)
3	Partnership "Command feels it's time you were broken in on a new assignment..." One or more of the characters is assigned a new partner from elsewhere in the department, who takes part in their next mission. (<i>Soldier NPC, Primary: Pistol, Secondary: Demolitions</i>)
4	Poachers! "Have you considered a transfer to my department? Your talents are being wasted here..." An inter-departmental recruiter attempts to sway one or more characters into changing jobs within the agency. (<i>Soldier NPC, Primary: Negotiation, Secondary: Fast-Talk</i>)
5	Mole! "Alert! Unauthorized access in Data Node E! Alert!" The characters come upon a supposedly loyal agent in the act of broadcasting his latest report to enemy superiors! The mole will attempt to flee, but fights to the death if cornered. (<i>Elite NPC, Primary: Pistol, Secondary: Cryptography</i>)
6+	Assassin! One of your colleagues suddenly collapses without apparent reason. The expanding pool of blood and the still-swinging window panel, however, betray the silent killer's presence. The assassin will attempt to flee, but fights to the death if cornered. (<i>Elite NPC, Primary: Rifle, Secondary: Pistol</i>)



OPERATION BACKSTAB

CALCULATED RISKS

"All right, then," said George W. Santaesus, a casual smile on his lips as he took in the rest of the boardroom. "What's next on the agenda today?"

Lucia Greane, George's pretty but utterly humorless secretary, looked down through her glasses with a half-bored expression, not bothering to lift one of her well-manicured hands to handle the noteputer in her lap. Her gaze returned to his after a moment, ignoring the rest of the expectant executives around her. "That's all for today, sir."

"Excellent," George said. "Then let's get back to work. New Syrtis doesn't pay us to lounge around, after all."

He settled back in his overstuffed synthleather chair, rubbing his eyes in a vain effort to relieve a throbbing migraine, as the suits filed out one by one. Silence descended around him, but he knew without opening his eyes that Lucia remained.

"There is something else?" he asked wearily.

"Yes, Mr. Santaesus. Baron Langdon—"

"Ah, yes. He called twice during this meeting, didn't he?" Lucia nodded.

"I suppose he should be suitably distressed by now. Let me make a call. Thank you, Lucia."

As Lucia left him alone at the table, George turned to face the flatscreen across from him, straightened his tie, and deftly tapped the inlaid controls on the surface before him. As the screen came to life with an archaic family crest, he put on his self-assured smile and was rewarded with a scowl from the face that replaced the crest. Baron Terence Langdon, dressed in another of his ridiculously outdated costumes, practically glowered at him. As usual, George had to resist the urge to laugh.

"Baron Langdon, so good to speak with you again—"

"Spare me the idle chatter, Santaesus," Langdon cut in gruffly. "What kind of game are you playing at here?"

George allowed his mild confusion to show. "Game?"

"You know full well what I'm talking about, damn you! The Straand titanium lode! I hear Johnston Industries has made its own offer!"

"Ah, that. Well, Baron, I'm afraid it's out of my hands. I received a request from my superiors to make Brynd an offer."

"An offer that exceeds mine, no less, but is strangely close to that of Stevens."

"The terms were, again, out of my hands," George said politely, fixing Langdon with an innocent stare. "Where it falls in relation to yours and Baron Stevens' is—"

"A violation of our deal! You're trying to cut me out!"

"Ah, that!" George said, letting his voice take on its customary edge. "The fact is, JI is interested in results, not promises. If we cannot get what we need through local channels, we will have to take direct measures. Do you understand me?"

Langdon's face flushed. He sneered at the camera, as if trying to bore a hole in George with his eyes. "This is preposterous—!"

"No, Baron Langdon," George snapped back, "it's called free enterprise. You people should get used to the idea."

Langdon seemed ready to explode at the implication that mere nobility could not stand against corporate might, and George had his next words ready when the baron spoke again.

"The Brynds won't deal with you, George! Roderick doesn't trust anyone when it comes to his land and his heritage. He won't let any of us deal, in fact, as long as his crops are good. There's no incentive for him."

George paused, his eyes narrowing. Langdon had a point there.

"Well, Mr. Santaesus," Langdon went on, beginning to smile. "It seems we still have something in common."

George fought the urge to break the connection. Instead, he nodded and steepled his fingers on the Kaumberg mahogany table. "It seems we do, Baron. I am open to your suggestions."

Langdon grinned, clearly reveling in what he thought was a victory, but even as he spoke, George's mind drifted to a file sitting in his desk. It was risky, yes, but George believed firmly that anything worth acquiring was worth some gamble, and the biggest titanium find on the planet certainly qualified. George had run the numbers, calculated the risks, and still the bottom line came out well in the black. If he pulled this off, then none of Langdon's words would matter. He just had to string along the competition a bit longer.

"So, does that sound like a reasonable deal?" Langdon asked, snapping him out of his reverie.

George smiled once more. "Oh, yes, Baron Langdon," he said. "Quite reasonable."

"Excellent!" Langdon beamed. "Roderick Brynd won't know what hit him."

"Oh, no, sir," George smiled, basking in the irony. "He won't, indeed."

And neither will you, he thought.

CLASSIC BATTLETECH RPG RULES

Running *Operation Backstab* requires the gamemaster to be thoroughly familiar with the material in the adventure, as well as having a working knowledge of the *Classic BattleTech RPG (CBT: RPG)* rules. *Lostech: The MechWarrior Equipment Guide*, the *MechWarrior's Guide to Solaris VII*, and the material presented earlier in this book will also prove helpful for this adventure. Aside from passages clearly marked for reading aloud to the players and the fictional prologue, all the information contained in *Operation Backstab* from this point is intended for the gamemaster's eyes only.

HOW TO RUN OPERATION BACKSTAB

Aside from the basic *CBT:RPG* rules and the supplements for equipment and vehicle rules in *Lostech* and the *Guide to Solaris VII*, all the information needed to run *Operation Backstab* is included in this adventure. The gamemaster should read through the adventure before attempting to run it, to help him adjust to any twists and turns the players make that could diverge from the plot. Familiarity with the story in its entirety also allows the gamemaster to see upcoming plot developments before they happen, so that he can lay the appropriate groundwork beforehand. The gamemaster should take care, however, not to telegraph upcoming events in this adventure. Covert operations are dangerous and full of surprises, and any operatives worth their salt know better than to tip their hand before acting.

Though *Operation Backstab* tries to cover all the likely ideas and avenues the player characters might explore, it is impossible to foresee every action the characters may take. Therefore, gamemasters should be prepared to improvise as necessary to keep the adventure on track.

Operation Backstab is not designed as a purely stand-alone adventure, but rather as a single chapter in a long-running campaign. First-time gamemasters (or role-players) should find this adventure a perfect steppingstone for further adventures in the shadows of the *Classic BattleTech* universe. Veteran gamemasters, on the other hand, may augment this adventure with twists and complications of their own to suit their campaigns, or increase the danger level as appropriate for a more experienced party.

THE ADVENTURE SECTIONS

This adventure begins with a fictional prologue, *Calculated Risks*, to give the gamemaster a feel for the setting. The *Overview* explains the nature and specific background of the adventure. The adventure itself is broken down into eight chapters, each of which is divided into four parts: *The Situation*, *The Story*, *Behind the Scenes* and *Troubleshooting*.

The Situation offers a synopsis of the action in the chapter. The gamemaster may use this as a quick reference and overview. It also tells how a given section connects to those before and after it.

The second part, *The Story*, is read aloud to the players. This section describes where the player characters are and what is happening to them as though they are actually there. Depending on the player characters' previous choices and/or the point in the adventure where the chapter occurs, the gamemaster may need to adapt the text to suit the situation.

Behind the Scenes tells the gamemaster what is really happening in the chapter and proposes a potential sequence of events. Any maps needed to play a scenario are included in this section, as well as non-player

characters and other information vital to game play. *Behind the Scenes* may also contain hints and suggestions for handling particular alternate scenarios that may arise.

Troubleshooting offers suggestions for getting the adventure back on track if the player characters wander too far off course. For example, the player characters may need help to notice a particularly vital overlooked piece of information, or to rescue the team from certain death, though gamemasters need not use these ideas.

In some cases, the player characters may skip chapters in the course of their investigation. If this happens, let it. The complex nature of the characters' mission and the events surrounding it will offer alternate routes toward gathering clues and evidence necessary to successfully complete the adventure. By reading ahead, the gamemaster should be able to determine which chapters the team can skip, or even backtrack to, in order to complete *Operation Backstab*.

At the end of the adventure are three final sections: *Wrap-Up*, *Research* and *Cast of Characters*. *Wrap-Up* provides tips on how to complete the adventure, as well as hooks for ongoing campaigns and follow-on adventures of the gamemaster's own design. *Research* contains additional information that the characters may attempt to discover during the course of this adventure. *Cast of Characters* includes complete game statistics for NPCs who have a major role or impact in the adventure.

OVERVIEW

The world of Acamar is a typical backwater planet in the Chaos March. Like most Inner Sphere worlds, stewardship of Acamar is divided among several noble families, all loosely bound by a provisional government installed shortly after the breakdown of the Federated Commonwealth. Predictably, rivalries exist among these various factions. Recent developments, including the discovery of abundant amounts of titanium in the landholds of the Langdon and Stevens families—hostile neighbors of the Brynd family—have only served to increase simmering friction between the nobles.

Barons Langdon and Stevens have temporarily put aside their differences to ally against the Brynds, who remain unaware of the find under their land. The Stevens clan, however, recently called in powerful new leverage on their own, making overtures to Johnston Industries, a FedCom defense contractor eager to exploit the titanium lode. A lucrative deal was allegedly in the works between Johnston and the Stevens family, which would cut out the Langdons. The only fly in the ointment was the continued resistance of the Brynds—until a recent attack by the Broadstreet Bullies, a small mercenary outfit of ill repute, on the Brynd family estates. The attack killed several Brynds and threw the family's financial stability into doubt. Pressure has since increased to sell off part or all of the family's landhold to either the Langdons or the Stevens, both of whom are calling in old debts. Instead of selling out, however,

OPERATION BACKSTAB

Roderick Brynd, head of the Brynd family, has put off his decision for three months and hired the player characters to learn the truth about the attack. He wants to know who is pulling the strings and why.

The adventure starts on the mercenaries' world of Outreach as thugs attempt to kill or kidnap the Brynd representative before the ink on the contract with the player characters is dry. Having been dispatched to intercept the representative before he can get outside help, these assailants will realize they arrived too late. In hopes of keeping the problems on Acamar local, the thugs attack the player characters as well.

Once the player characters handle the thugs, they can check out the situation on Acamar firsthand and meet all the major players, including the heads of the three families and the local Johnston Industries representative, or they may follow up on clues left at the scene of the Outreach attack. Either route will uncover evidence that a mercenary unit known as the Broadstreet Bullies is the culprit behind the assault on the Brynd estates. The Bullies, a minor outfit with a poor reputation, have been banned from doing business on Outreach, and are currently rumored to be based on Fletcher, a haven for disreputable mercenaries, pirates and other dregs of the March.

On Fletcher, the player characters must negotiate obstacles ranging from distrustful and even hostile natives to the elements of local pirate gangs, in pursuit of Jesse Boulерice, a member of the Broadstreet Bullies who broke ranks after the contract on Acamar. Agents of the secretive and fanatical Word of Blake, following their own agenda, attempt to silence Boulерice and the player characters as well when they finally meet. Boulерice ultimately reveals that Johnston Industries hired the Bullies, but the Blakists ensure that he does not survive to make a statement, forcing the players to locate their evidence elsewhere.

Because their mission involves so much travel, the player characters may eventually have to face efforts by one of their own employer's crew to sabotage their efforts. The players quickly discover the saboteur is an agent of the Stevens family, who have a vested interest in not allowing the Brynds to discover the truth. To make matters even more complicated, a Langdon family agent also turns up among the crew, tagging along to learn what the player characters learn, since the Langdons do not know what the Stevens clan and Johnston Industries were up to.

Back on Acamar, the player characters must break into Johnston Industries' local headquarters to obtain hard evidence about the hiring of the Broadstreet Bullies to attack the Brynd landhold. This information also proves collusion with the Stevens family, exposing a conspiracy to obtain the titanium find. Its implications shake the foundations of Acamar's political scene.

With this information in hand, the player characters must deliver it to the Brynd house so they can secure payment for a job well done. The player characters must win a final race against time and a team sent after them

by the Stevens family, or else Roderick Brynd will sign over his landhold to Johnston Industries upon the expiration of a two-month deadline.

GETTING STARTED

Operation Backstab is an adventure for three to six players and is geared toward covert operations. As a result, though open to all manner of characters, including MechWarriors, at least half or more should hail from a special forces or covert operations background. Characters need not possess 'Mechs or vehicles, or the skills to run them, to participate in this adventure, though personal combat skills and equipment are a must. Technically inclined characters or those with abundant social skills may also be extremely useful when playing *Operation Backstab*.

Because this adventure is open to characters hailing from multiple factions and also makes no assumptions about the characters' capabilities—apart from being involved in covert operations—the gamemaster may need to be creative in explaining what binds them together as a team. The simplest way, on which the introductory chapter, *Help Wanted*, is based, presumes that the player characters have formed a mercenary unit dedicated to special operations and have come to Outreach in search of their next contract.

HELP WANTED

THE SITUATION

Like so many others, the player characters have come to Harlech, capital of Outreach, in search of work worthy of their unique skills. With no shortage of conflicts in the middle of the so-called Chaos March, business is booming, but one ad in particular has captured their attention: an urgent notice offering generous remuneration to a team that can exercise "maximum tact".

The players meet with Andrew Osbourne, a representative of the Brynd family, a minor noble house that maintains a thriving agricultural landhold on Acamar. Acamar has known peace since GM of Kathil and Johnston Industries of New Syrtis helped establish a stable provisional government on that planet in 3062. Recently, however, a small BattleMech unit shattered that peace with an assault on the Brynd estates and surrounding lands. The attack did not kill the family head, Baron Roderick Brynd, but cost a significant number of lives and left this year's harvests a smoldering waste.

Through Osbourne, Brynd offers the players a generous fee and the services of the family-owned JumpShip and DropShip to pursue any and all leads in determining who executed the attack and why. The Brynds secretly suspect two of their neighbors, the Stevens and Langdon families, who often clash with them in the planetary council. Both of these families look even more suspicious because of their willingness to buy up the damaged properties, a boon to the sagging financial resources of the Brynd family. Baron Brynd,

however, has held off his decision to sell for two months, pending the results of this investigation.

THE STORY

You've only been on Outreach a few days, it seems, but already your MercNet account has been deluged with eager offers for your unique professional services. The vast majority are local, mostly assassination jobs offering relatively low pay for relatively high risk. It seems most of the good work is going to the bigger names or the boys with 'Mechs. In the wake of the FedCom Civil War, what folks appear to want most is heavy firepower rather than a small outfit like yours.

One job offer, however, looks more than a little interesting. It offers higher pay and lower risk than the average and doesn't put you up against any of the big boys. Most curious of all, the offer is not a generalized "Warrior Wanted" ad, but an appeal directed specifically to all of you. The prospective customer, identifying himself as Osbourne, requests the honor of your presence tomorrow at 0845 hours, in Conference Room 187 of the Hiring Hall.

Read the following if the players decide to meet with Osbourne, and decide which of them will attend the meeting:

For a prospective employer so apparently eager to meet with promising prospects like yourselves, it comes as some surprise that the door to Room 187 is locked. When you knock, a nervous voice asks you to first swipe your identification through the door slot. Having worked with enough paranoid employers in the past, you know this is a common request. Once your identification is verified, you enter a medium-sized briefing room, complete with a holoprojector, closed window blinds and enough noteputers arrayed around the meeting table for each of you.

Standing at the far end of the table is the man you presume to be Osbourne. Thin and pale-skinned, he looks no more than thirty years old. His dark hair is slicked back and his suit is well-tailored. Too bad his smile doesn't seem as sharp as the rest of his corporate look. Upon your entry, he quickly closes and pockets a microcommunicator.

"Good morning, people," he says with a wide grin. "I'm Andrew Osbourne, and I represent the Brynd house, on Acamar. I would like to thank all of you for coming. We're most eager to get you on board and on your way, so please have a seat and I'll explain anything you want to know about the job."

BEHIND THE SCENES

Osbourne is every bit as nervous as he looks, but he's nobody's fool. Just before reaching the Hiring Hall, he narrowly avoided getting killed by an out-of-control vehicle on the highway. He knows his master believes a conspiracy exists against the Brynd family, which gives Osbourne a healthy dose of paranoia about why he would nearly die in a car crash today, of all days. To make

matters worse, minutes before the characters arrived, he received an anonymous threat on his wireless communicator. If asked about his obvious nervousness, Osbourne tells the characters about his brush with death, but leaves out the threat unless asked why he was on the phone just now.

Osbourne explains the mission as a simple investigation into an unprovoked BattleMech attack on the family estates and surrounding farmland of Baron Roderick Brynd. To highlight the oddity of the attack, he points out that first, the Brynd family landhold does not include any military apparatus or resources directly related to military campaigns. The family lands on Acamar are mostly agricultural, covering some 1,400 square kilometers, with three small towns—Justaine, Straand and Lopez—to speak of. By contrast, the neighboring landholds of the Stevens and Langdon families, both of which include some mining and light industries, escaped the raid untouched. A history of "disagreements" exists between the Brynds and their neighbors, but most of these have been in the planetary parliament and certainly are not worth a military confrontation.

The player characters are being hired to locate and secure hard evidence proving who carried out the attack and why. If the attackers were mercenaries, the players will be informed that finding the same hard evidence as to who hired them and why is part of their objective. To facilitate the assignment, the Brynd family is generously offering its sole *Scout*-class JumpShip, *Daniel Brynd*, and its attached *Fury*-class DropShip *Samantha*. (Note: The *Samantha* is a decommissioned, obsolete variant of the *Fury* class that features a 500-ton cargo bay, eight light vehicle bays and passenger quarters for 80 people in addition to the crew. Its LRM weapons have been removed in favor of additional cargo space.) In addition, evidence already gathered about the attack on Acamar is available for the characters' review, including holographic security camera footage of the attacking 'Mech forces.

The Brynd family offers the characters 1,000 C-bills each per party member to sign on, plus an additional 750 C-bills per week, to a maximum of six weeks, including transit time. The characters are further informed that failure to resolve the mission within the appointed time will result in cancellation of the contract, and the vessel crews are ordered to return to Acamar at the end of that time regardless of the circumstances. Osbourne is not at liberty to discuss the reason for this provision at this time.

Osbourne does his best to answer any questions outside these guidelines and is authorized to negotiate the contract fee. Characters wishing to negotiate must nominate a representative from their group to make an Opposed Skill Check against Osbourne's Negotiation Skill (see Osbourne's statistics below). If Osbourne has the better MoS, the team's fee does not increase. If the player character's roll is better, Osbourne increases the fee by 5 percent per point of MoS, to a maximum of a 50 percent raise.

OPERATION BACKSTAB

Andrew Osbourne

Attributes

STR	4	WIL	5
BOD	5	CHA	5
DEX	6	EDG	4
RFL	6	SOC	4
INT	6	Move	10/20/40

Traits

Combat Paralysis
Well-Connected (2)/Chaos March

Skills

Blades	+2
Martial Arts/Military	+2
• Neck Jab [TN to hit + target RFL and highest Martial Arts Skill bonus; if successful, opponent makes Knockout Test]	
• Sweep [TN to hit #2; if successful, opponent is knocked prone]	
Negotiation	+4
Protocol/Acamar	+3
Perception	+2
Pilot/Wheeled	+1
Pistols	+1

Equipment

Leather Jacket [1/1/0/1]
Tranq Gun [2•5D6; 1/4/6/10; 10 shots (2 clips); Subduing]
Compad

Osbourne's knowledge of the attack is limited to the holovids he has on hand, and while he can speculate about the neighboring families, he admits there is no proof as to who is behind the attack. If the players decide to take the opportunity now to review the footage, have them roll for Perception and consult the *Holovid Evidence* table below to determine what information they glean from the video records.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Little can go wrong here unless the characters attempt to push their luck beyond the limits of the negotiations. If they balk at the idea of immediately signing the contract or try to push for more time, Osbourne gives them another 24 hours to decide whether they want the job or not. Though he still seems nervous in such an event, Osbourne will be past his limits to negotiate and will thus be eager to find another outfit to take the characters' place.

If the characters try to wait out the 24 hours, they will find no other serious deals with terms nearly as generous as those Osbourne and the Brynd family have already offered.

WARNING SHOTS

THE SITUATION

Upon returning to accept the assignment, the characters and Osbourne discuss how to begin their mission. Osbourne leaves open the option of traveling to Acamar to survey the "scene of the crime", but it will behoove the players to do some research on Outreach into whether the attackers were in fact mercenaries or pirates known in the general area. Traveling to Acamar will give the player characters a better sense of the lay of the land, but Osbourne—stressing the mission's short time frame—argues in favor of locating the place from which the attackers may have staged their assault and starting there instead.

On Outreach, the player characters can conduct further research and make further inquiries, eventually learning that the mercenaries who hit Acamar were the Broadstreet Bullies. The Bullies, a minor mercenary outfit of ill repute, were labeled rogue after they reneged on a contract and turned on their employers. Now wanted by the MRBC and a host of local authorities, the Bullies have stayed mostly in the Chaos March, taking on the dirty work of other minor factions or resorting to piracy from the planet Fletcher.

Armed with this knowledge, the characters can travel to either Acamar or Fletcher. In both cases, unidentified agents attempt to kill Osbourne—and the player characters—before they leave Outreach.

HOLOVID EVIDENCE TABLE

Perception TN: 14

MoS	Information
Less than 0	Attackers used a simple urban camo scheme on their 'Mechs.
0-3	Attacking 'Mechs all bear the same logo: one red letter "B" offset against a white letter "B", against a black circular field. Attackers fielded a full company of 'Mechs, mostly medium and light designs. Attackers' 'Mechs consisted of older designs of Lyran manufacture (i.e. <i>Zeus</i> , <i>Hatchetman</i> , <i>Firestarter</i> , <i>Commando</i>).
9-11	Attackers preferred to operate in pairs.
12+	One lance of attacking 'Mechs—the one that attacked the farmlands outside Lopez—seemed reluctant to fire on civilians and active vehicles out in the open. (Osbourne confirms that Lopez was the least damaged area in the entire assault.)

RESEARCH TABLE

TN (Computer/Any or Investigations): 14

TN (Protocol, Negotiation or Streetwise/non-Outreach): 14

TN (Protocol, Negotiation or Streetwise/Outreach): 13

MoS	Information
Less than 0	"Never heard of them. Maybe mercs, maybe pirates?" (No evidence uncovered.)
+0 to +3	"There aren't any pirates around here with that logo. No House troops, neither. You try maybe looking up some mercs, has-beens, maybe?" (A search of records reveals no pirates, active mercenaries or regular army troops matching the description the characters give.)
+4 to +7	"Yeah, I think I remember these guys. They used to work out of Outreach, but not any more. I hear they're null set." (The unit is the Broadstreet Bullies, a minor mercenary outfit recently blacklisted by the MRBC on Outreach and declared rogue. A bounty of 3,000 C-bills exists on Outreach for each unit member captured, or 2,000 per member confirmed killed.)
+7 to +9	"The Broadstreet Bullies are supposedly some remnant of a Lyran force smashed in the Marik-Liao invasion. They tried going merc until they blew a contract and pillaged some town on Genoa somewhere. Word is they're still active in these parts, though." (Though blacklisted and hunted, the Bullies still try to work the mercenary trade, but can only find work outside of Outreach. Their latest whereabouts place them somewhere in the Chaos March—most likely Epsilon Eridani or Fletcher, which have become major staging worlds for all kinds of business, above-board and seedy.)
+9 to +11	"There's lots of places here a bad merc unit can still find work, especially one that's short on transportation like the Bullies. Fletcher is the best bet, since its HPG is still-offline; has been since '58." (The Bullies do not have a JumpShip, but claim a full 'Mech company, some support, and two DropShips—a <i>Union</i> and a <i>Leopard</i> . Advisories have gone out for bounty hunters to check out Fletcher as a haven for renegade mercs.)
+12 to +13	"The Bullies, huh? They're still active, for sure, even after that ugliness on Genoa. Most of their work comes out of Fletcher, but from what I hear, they may have suffered a minor split-up, if you follow me." (Latest word for the dedicated bounty hunter places the Bullies on Fletcher. However, the recent sale of their <i>Leopard</i> DropShip suggests their strength has recently been reduced.)
+14 and up	"The latest word is the Bullies are off the market. Seems they finally hit it big with a major employer who doesn't mind a few black marks on their record. Not all of them went with it, though. Seems a few of 'em have a modicum of self-respect." (The bulk of the Bullies left Fletcher recently under a new contract with the Word of Blake or ComStar. Their current whereabouts are unknown, but rumor has it that some of their members jumped ship beforehand and may still be on Fletcher.)

THE STORY

Andrew Osbourne seems thrilled and relieved when you accept the contract.

"I can't tell you enough how grateful the Brynd family will be for your help in this matter," he says. "You'll want to get started straight away, of course. I hope you don't mind that I'm assigning myself as your liaison, as it were. I won't get in your way or dictate orders to you once the mission begins, but you may find my advice useful, should you decide to stay on Outreach awhile. And besides," he chuckles, "that DropShip and JumpShip you'll be using are my ride home as well."

Read the following once the characters agree to these terms:

"Excellent," Osbourne says. "Now, if I may be so bold, I think we could start with some research. The fact is, aside from the holovid recordings, we don't know much about the attacking force. We have reason to believe they are mercenaries or pirates, in which case, we may be in the best place to start looking."

BEHIND THE SCENES

As long as the players are on Outreach, they have access to enough research facilities to determine the identity, make-up and current status of the forces that hit the Brynd family holdings. If they opt to go on to Acamar without doing any research, Osbourne may initially complain, but will not push the issue. In this case, the player characters will be taken to the DropShip for immediate departure.

If the characters opt to stay on Outreach and conduct research, they may learn the nature and origins of the Brynd attackers. The team can conduct its research in any number of ways, from queries in local bars to a computer search of public records on Outreach. A bonus applies if the characters originally reviewed the holovid evidence, equal to half the MoS from that earlier roll. The use of any Outreach-based Contacts or Well-Connected traits during such research also nets a bonus to the roll equal to the contact's level. If using social skills (by talking to Outreach residents in local bars or at the Hiring Hall, for example) these trait bonuses apply,

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along with Social Trait bonuses such as Attractive, Good Reputation and Gregarious; the penalties that go with their opposites likewise apply. Each character, after explaining how he or she wants to proceed, may make a single roll using the appropriate skills per day; consult the table below to determine the results. Any successful roll result also yields the information in the next lowest result.

Regardless of whether or not the player characters decide to stay on Outreach to conduct research, or travel immediately to Acamar to view the scene of the crime, unknown agents attack them on the way to their DropShip. These agents, hired by the Stevens family through a third party on Outreach, attempt to kill both Osbourne and the team in a last-ditch effort to halt the investigation before it can begin. There will be one agent for every two player characters, disguised as spaceport technical staff and parked near the Brynd DropShip. As Osbourne and the team approach, these agents' obvious interest in them will be evident on a successful Perception Check (TN 14), and the suspicious bulges in their partly opened jumpsuits betray the presence of pistols in concealed shoulder holsters with a successful Perception Check against a target number of 16.

These agents draw their weapons and open fire on the player characters as soon as they pass by, hoping to take out a few with some good back-shots if the team does not react to them first. If the characters make any obvious moves that suggest they have identified these men as a potential threat, the thugs attack immediately. They go for Osbourne first, but forget about him quickly if the player characters take down any of their number. Osbourne is unarmed and wears no armor. His attributes are the same as a Bystander NPC (see p. 206, *CBT: RPG*). The gunmen are all Thug NPCs (see p. 206, *CBT: RPG*; *Primary*: Pistols, *Secondary*: Blades and Martial Arts/Military). They wear Flak Vests [1/5/1/3], and each is armed with an M&G Service Automatics Auto [3•4D6; 5/20/40/85; 8 shots (4 clips)] and one knife.

If the player characters manage to subdue any of these men for interrogation, they find them less than helpful. Essentially a bunch of down-and-out TempTownners from Outreach's fringes, they were hired by a third party agent named Adler Ramier for a simple hit. Ramier, who uses that name as a pseudonym, is virtually impossible to track down. If the player characters attempt to do so, the TN for locating him (by going to TempTown and making some discreet inquiries using Streetwise/Outreach) is 18. If the players do locate Ramier, use the Bystander NPC statistics (see *CBT: RPG*, p. 206). Replace his Career Skill with Negotiation; his primary skill is Pistols, and his secondary skill is Interrogation. If interrogated, Ramier says his employer is a man named Brian Gallest, an off-worlder who paid cash in advance and promised the rest on completion of the job. The name means nothing to Osbourne and cannot be found in any database on Outreach.

If the players opt to head for Acamar at this point, skip to Chapter 6: *Betrayal in the Void*. If they head to Fletcher instead, continue on to Chapter 3: *Needle in a Haystack*.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Getting through this chapter in one piece is fairly easy, though the gamemaster may feel free to introduce a few more encounters using the Thug NPC if the player characters' research leads them into too many underground bars. Such encounters, however, should only occur when the player characters have done something offensive (or fumbled a roll while asking questions), and will not be tied to the gunmen who ambush them at the spaceport.

If the player characters decide to go anywhere other than Acamar or Fletcher by the end of this chapter, they will swiftly hit a dead end, as no clues exist anywhere but those worlds. After spending three weeks pursuing such a false lead (two in transit, one on-planet), an exasperated Osbourne suggests they return to Acamar. At that point, skip to Chapter 6: *Betrayal in the Void*.

NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK

THE SITUATION

On the damp and dreary world of Fletcher, the player characters must try to locate at least one of the Broadstreet Bullies in an effort to determine who hired them for the Brynd family attack. Having had its Class B HPG destroyed during the Marik-Liao invasion, Fletcher has plunged into lawlessness, with only a handful of local nobles once loyal to the Federated Commonwealth claiming any semblance of authority in the capital and surrounding cities. As a result, the planet has become an ideal place for pirates, renegades and black marketeers to set up business and continue their operations in the March.

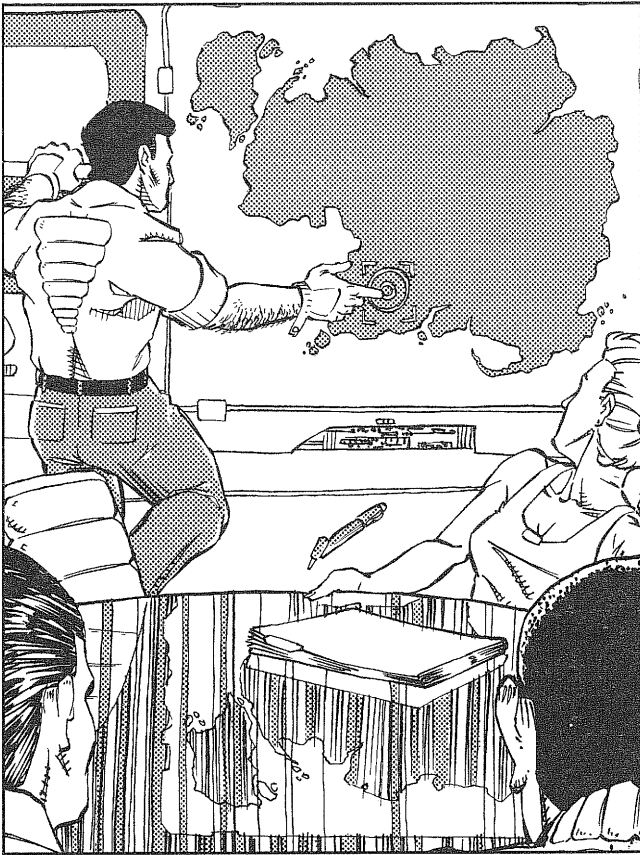
In this very large haystack, the player characters must find a former member of the Broadstreet Bullies by the name of Jesse Boulrice, who quit the Bullies when they accepted a contract with the Word of Blake. Boulrice has gone into hiding since his desertion, and everyone from local thugs to bounty hunters to Word of Blake ROM agents will be hot on the trail of those who ask too many questions.

After arriving on Fletcher, the characters begin in Royce, the planetary capital and home to its only legitimate (and fairly safe) spaceport. Though Royce is the planet's official center of power, the real hub of renegade activities on Fletcher—according to rumors and police records—is the city of Quang Lo. The players will learn that this distant settlement, formed around the last of the major Zhanzheng de guang holdouts after the fracturing of the Commonwealth, is ruled by brute force and treachery—and is quite likely the place they must travel to next.

THE STORY

Though the *Samantha's* captain, Vincent Durant, explained the speed of your journey to Fletcher by claiming he was merely adjusting to Fletcher's native gravitational pull of 1.3 standard units, you could not help but feel a sense of urgency during the trip. Just hours before planetfall, Andrew Osbourne calls you to a meeting in the DropShip's briefing lounge.

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Read the following once the players have arrived in the briefing room:

You arrive in the *Samantha's* conference room to find Osbourne already present, standing beside a flatscreen projector at the far end of the meeting table. Beside him,

you see a small dark-featured man—Walton Stanton, the ship's first mate. A quiet fellow, Stanton merely nods in greeting as Osbourne begins.

"Good morning, friends. I hope you are all well and ready for our imminent descent. I wanted to take this opportunity for a final review of what we know about Fletcher. Unfortunately, it's not much. Mr. Stanton, however, has been kind enough to obtain some information during our journey in, and can explain better than I."

Stanton clears his throat and calls up a map of the planet below using a small remote already in his hand. The map displays a single massive continent, dubbed Hamilton, and a single red icon appears in its southeastern quadrant.

"What we know of Fletcher is basic history for most folks," Stanton begins. "Perpetual rain and cloud cover makes orbit scanning tricky, and the surface is drearier, I hear, than Solaris VII. When the Capellans ran the show down there, the planet became the favorite burial site for countless Chancellors, but like most of the worlds here, it fell to the FedCom in the Fourth Succession War. When Katherine broke up the Commonwealth, Liao guerrillas tried to take over, but flubbed the job and burned out the local HPG. Since then, Fletcher's been under a blackout. ComStar and the Word of Blake have claimed willingness to get the planet connected again, but not till it's safe. Of course, with the blackout, the place has become a favorite hideout for deposed tyrants and petty thugs throughout the March. No surprise some renegade mercs might find their way here if they couldn't reach Galatea."

Stanton points to the red icon on the map and continues. "We're going to set down here, the capital city of Royce. It's the only place on this mudball with a spaceport safe enough for unarmed traffic like ours. It's still held by the local militia, who evidently cling to a fragment of the pro-FedCom government. They control

ROYCE INQUIRY RESULTS TABLE

MoS	Information
-8 or less	At the mention of the Bullies, your subject's eyes widen with terror and he runs away. (Encounter Roll, +10)
-5 to -7	"Fraggin' claim jumpers! That bounty's mine!" (Encounter Roll, +5)
-3 to -4	"You're asking too many questions. Mind explaining who the hell you are?" (Encounter Roll, +2)
-2 to 0	"I know nothing. Last I heard, the Bullies left weeks ago." (Encounter Roll, -1)
+1 to +3	"Heh. The last I recall, the Bullies hauled out on some new contract. Not sure who with, but before they left, they sold off one of their DropShips." (No encounter roll)
+4 to +5	"The Bullies had a bit of a falling out, as I understand it. They say some are still around, and that there's a price on their head, not just with the Dragoons on Outreach. Most of them are gone, though." (Encounter Roll, +1)
+6 to +7	"The Bullies are gone, but I know at least one of their lance commanders jumped ship before they took their last job. Word is bounty hunters are looking for him in the Quang Lo area. You guys bounty hunters?" (Encounter Roll, +4)
+8 to +9	"I know one of 'em is still around. Blakies and bounty hunters are after him, though, after he jumped ship. Try Quang Lo. Ask for a guy named Boulерice. Jesse Boulерice. He's your man." (Encounter Roll, +7)
+10 and up	"The Bullies signed on with the Word of Blake and took off, but some folks wanted nothing to do with it. Blakist agents hunted down most of them, but I hear a guy named Lieutenant Boulерice managed to make it to Quang Lo first. I suggest you see about getting some wings to fly you over there if you want to talk to him; from what I heard, his hounds picked up a scent. Clock's ticking for your boy." (Encounter Roll, +8)

OPERATION BACKSTAB

the city and much of the surrounding area, out as far as 200 kilometers or so, but that's about it. Beyond that, the chatter we've been hearing says anything goes."

"So," Osbourne cuts in, smiling nervously, "let's hope the folks we're after are in that area. If not, I'm afraid Captain Durant won't be keen on hopping elsewhere. Our vessel would make a fine prize for some down-and-out pirates and mercenaries, after all. Any questions?"

BEHIND THE SCENES

The player characters are free to ask questions, but beyond Stanton's briefing, the Brynd family representatives don't know much else about Fletcher. Stanton, whose statistics appear in Chapter 6, can remember additional details such as the names of other cities and their possible alignments (militia, independent or Capellan) on a successful Intelligence Check with a +2 penalty to the target number. If he succeeds by more than an MoS of 5, he will reveal the existence of Quang Lo, a major city 540 kilometers northwest of Royce, believed to be a shattered holdout of Liao insurgents that has since become a black-market town run by pirates and other renegades.

Once on the ground, the player characters can fan out in Royce, home to no small number of local bars, shops, government buildings and markets, any one of which can be a source for information on the Broadstreet

Bullies. However, asking about the Bullies raises the risk of running afoul of Royce's more suspicious population. Making their inquiries discreet requires a successful Protocol or Streetwise Check against a TN of 15. Subtract 2 from this roll if the character's specific area of expertise does not include the Chaos March. Any relevant social Traits may be applied at a bonus (or penalty) equal to the trait's point value, but any Contact or Well-Connected traits that do not cover the Chaos March or Fletcher in particular are worth only half as much as usual (rounded down). Consult the table below to determine the result of such inquiries, as well as any possible encounters that may arise from them. Electronic or public news inquiries (using Computers, Investigations or similar skills against a TN of 12) will confirm only the existence of an MRBC bounty on the heads of any Bully captured or killed, on an MoS of 3 or higher. On an MoS greater than 5, the player characters also learn of a second bounty placed on the head of any Broadstreet Bully found on Fletcher. To collect, the Bully must be brought to the nearest Word of Blake representative, dead or alive.

This time, Osbourne does not accompany the player characters on their inquiries, seeing it as an unnecessary risk to his person. No other Brynd representative will go with the team either, though the characters are encouraged to check in from time to time.

ROYCE ENCOUNTERS

1D6 Roll	Encounter Type
1	Nosy Locals: 1D6 Bystander NPCs (see p. 206, <i>CBTRPG</i> ; <i>Primary</i> : Perception, <i>Secondary</i> : Brawling) take note of the characters, but do nothing unless forced to fight. If inquired of according to the above table, a -4 penalty applies to the roll.
2-3	Petty Thugs: 1D6 Thug NPCs (see p. 206, <i>CBTRPG</i> ; <i>Primary</i> : Brawling, <i>Secondary</i> : Pistols) think the characters are easy meat and wait for an opportunity to attack them in a dark alley. If interrogated, a -3 penalty applies in gathering information on the inquiry table.
4-5	Curious Cops: One Soldier and three Thug NPCs (see pp. 206-207, <i>CBTRPG</i> ; <i>Primary</i> : Pistols; <i>Secondary</i> : Interrogation; replace SMG with Auto-Pistol) appear, either uniformed or plainclothes members of local law enforcement or the militia. They are suspicious about the characters' line of questioning, but will not fight unless forced. If questioned, a -2 penalty applies on the inquiry table.
6-7	Bounty Hunter: A single Soldier NPC (see p. 207, <i>CBTRPG</i> ; <i>Primary</i> : Submachine Guns; <i>Secondary</i> : Blades) is on the same trail the characters are following and has overheard their discussion. He doesn't like competition, but will only attack if he thinks he can kill or discourage the characters. If questioned, a +2 bonus applies on the inquiry table.
8-9	Bloodhounds: The Bounty Hunter plus 1D6 "Henchmen" Thug NPCs (see pp. 206-207, <i>CBTRPG</i> ; <i>Primary</i> : Pistols; <i>Secondary</i> : Blades; replace SMG with Sternsnacht Python: 4•4D6; 5/15/40/80; 12 shots; jam on fumble) see the player characters as competition and follow them around, gathering information and waiting for the right moment to attack. They'll want to take at least one character alive for questioning, but won't shed any tears if they have to kill everyone instead. If questioned, the bounty hunter yields a penalty of -1 on the inquiry table; the henchmen yield a +2.
10 to 11	Hostile Agent: One Elite NPC (see p. 207, <i>CBTRPG</i> ; <i>Primary</i> : Pistol, <i>Secondary</i> : Blades and Rifles) from an intelligence agency operating in the March locks onto the characters and awaits his moment to strike. A smooth operator, he may not reveal himself right away, and won't attack if he has no means to melt into the background afterwards. His primary goal is to learn what the player characters know before killing anyone. If captured and interrogated, apply a -4 penalty on the inquiry table.
12+	ROM Agents: 1D6 - 2 (minimum 1) Hostile Agents from the Word of Blake ROM decide the player characters are targets. They are relentless in pursuing the characters, but may want to take one or two alive to find out if anyone else is on the same trail. If interrogated, their fanaticism yields a -6 penalty on the inquiry table.

OPERATION BACKSTAB

Once the characters learn where to find a former Broadstreet Bullies officer, they should try to get there as quickly as possible. A number of means exist for getting to Quang Lo, but as planetary authorities do not have the muscle to assure their survival, anyone traveling to the city via local transit systems is literally tempting fate. The roads are treacherous, strewn with hazards ranging from forgotten landmines to roving brigands. Finding a local pilot-for-hire who can transport the team to the city outskirts, however, is easily accomplished at the Royce Spaceport, with fares starting at 100 C-bills per person. Alternatively, the player characters may attempt to convince the *Samantha's* captain to hop them over to the area near Quang Lo (Negotiation or Leadership Check, TN 16), but Captain Durant will hop back to the spaceport the moment his vessel is threatened in any way, letting the players know the LZ is too hot for his tastes. Quang Lo does not have facilities to safely accommodate an aerodyne DropShip landing, forcing the *Samantha* to set down in the open terrain to the city's east.

TROUBLESHOOTING

By the end of this chapter, the characters should realize that Boulерice, a surviving deserter from the Broadstreet Bullies on the lam, has gone into hiding in Quang Lo, a known hotbed for all kinds of illegal activities on Fletcher. Most of the characters should still be alive and well enough to continue.

The only real danger in this chapter occurs if too many characters are killed or seriously wounded in the search for information, or the players become lost and/or fail to make good enough rolls to get the information they're after quickly. In the former case, the gamemaster should avoid killing the characters with the random encounters, and may feel free to ignore some to keep the players guessing. Don't put on the kid gloves, however.

Covert Operations is a messy, dangerous business, and it's all right to bloody the characters up a little.

More critical is tracking down Boulерice quickly, as the Word of Blake and some local bounty hunters have picked up his trail. The former Bully will be found and killed in the next day or two, and so if the players seem lost, the gamemaster may provide clues to nudge them in the right direction. To give one example, the characters may check in with Osbourne or Stanton and get an inspired suggestion. Alternatively, the gamemaster may allow the time to elapse and proceed into the next chapter with Boulерice already dead.

CROSSFIRE!

THE SITUATION

Having traced the identity and whereabouts of a former Broadstreet Bullies officer on Fletcher, the player characters must try to reach him before the Word of Blake or competing bounty hunters do. Jesse Boulерice, a MechWarrior lieutenant in the Bullies who jumped ship when they took a contract for the Word of Blake, is now being hunted by Blakist agents determined to assure that he tells no tales about his former unit's new mission. In truth, Boulерice is ignorant of where the rest of the Bullies have gone or what they're up to, but ROM takes no chances with him or anyone known to meet with him.

The characters must now find and talk to Boulерice to obtain information as to who hired the Bullies for the attack on the Brynd estate. Boulерice, knowing full well that the heat is on, will not make it easy, but may jump at the chance for protection and possible escape. Though still a renegade according to the MRBC, which carries a price on his head, he would rather take his chances with the Dragoons on Outreach than with the Word of Blake on Fletcher.

QUANG LO INQUIRY RESULTS TABLE

MoS	Information
-8 or less	The clack of submachine guns being readied behind you is unmistakable. (Encounter Roll, +10)
-5 to -7	"Boulерice <i>who?</i> " (Encounter Roll, +5)
-3 to -4	"Lots of people come through here. I don't remember them all." (Encounter Roll, +2)
-2 to 0	"Sounds like someone who comes by here a lot. Lives somewhere by the river, maybe." (Encounter Roll, -1)
+1 to +3	"He comes by here a few times, but keeps to himself. I think he lives by the river." (Encounter Roll, +0)
+4 to +5	"Boulерice? Yeah. He lives in the residential areas up north, close to the river, but doesn't come out much." (Encounter Roll, +1)
+6 to +7	"That guy's marked, you know. He only comes out to get supplies, then disappears again. Lots of folks like that in Quang Lo. You want to go check the houses near what used to be Pier 11." (Encounter Roll, +3)
+8 to +9	"Boulерice has a price on his head big enough for anyone around here to turn him in. If you want to talk to him before someone cacks the poor fellow or he starts running again, you'd better get to 14 North Front Avenue fast. The heat's on here, and from what I hear, Jesse's escape boat is about ready." (Encounter Roll, +4)
+10 and up	"Jesse's about to run. Been rebuilding himself a skimmer to take the river west of here. I've seen hunters and Blakies looking for him, so if you really think you want to risk the crossfire that may go down tonight, go right on to 14 North Front Avenue." (Encounter Roll, +5)

OPERATION BACKSTAB

Boulerice's answers and his willingness to go to Acamar to testify provide the evidence needed for the player characters to succeed in their mission, at least in part. Unfortunately for him and the player characters, however, getting him to Acamar alive will prove nearly impossible.

THE STORY

Set on the banks of a winding, muddy river, with marshlands extending into the north and west, the term "city" barely applies to the scattered arrangement of low structures and medium-sized high-rises the locals call Quang Lo. The residential outskirts, largely abandoned in the fighting that transformed many of the buildings into blackened piles of rubble or hollow pockmarked shells, support all manner of squatters, few of whom react to your approach except to stay out of the way.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Quang Lo is a city ruled by a collection of criminal organizations and former pro-Capellan revolutionaries whose plans for a decisive victory over the "Davionist" planetary government fell apart with most of their support apparatus at the end of Operation Guerrero. City administration is effectively maintained by a core group of former Zhanzheng de guang, who keep the locals in check using brute force and an alliance of Fletcher's less scrupulous permanent residents. Bounty hunters, freelancers (washed-out mercs, lostech prospectors or bounty hunters) and organized crime provide the bulk of the city's income, and former administrative offices and malls have become centers for a darker form of commerce. The player characters should feel right at home amid all this, but as the new faces on the block, they draw plenty of suspicious glances.

Much like in Royce, the characters' best means for locating Boulerice is discreet inquiry, but in Quang Lo, such inquiries take on a more dangerous undercurrent. Many local bounty hunters would be glad to earn a quick paycheck by finding Boulerice first, and in the shadows lurk Word of Blake agents who leave nothing to chance. Boulerice himself lives near Quang Lo's riverfront, among the ruins of a suburb partially destroyed by urban fighting and neglect. For his basic needs, he regularly deals with the black markets in the city's northern "downtown" area, purchasing everything from food to weapons and machine parts. Questioning any of the shopkeepers in this area using the Negotiation or Streetwise skills may determine the whereabouts of Boulerice or net the characters more dangerous encounters, as outlined in the following table. C-bills, still honored on Fletcher as the planet continues to do off-world business, will grease the wheels of any inquiries not facilitated by the muzzle of a gun. For every 200 C-bills (or fraction thereof) the characters offer to a source, apply a -1 bonus to the TN (to a maximum of -3). These shopkeepers, who recognize Boulerice as a faithful customer (he never haggles!), also respond positively if the characters suggest they've come to help their quarry, applying another -1 bonus to the TN. House bills are not accepted as payment.

Whether by following one of his informers, getting the information from a friendly (or not so friendly) source, or just plain stumbling upon him, the characters should eventually reach Boulerice's residence, a rundown beach house half destroyed by a stray artillery shell years ago. This house, located on the riverfront, features its own boat launch, and the ramp leads right to a rickety garage that is closed when the characters arrive. Boulerice has rigged his house with motion detectors and video cameras to warn him of intruders, and the windows and doors are booby trapped with Class D Inferno ordnance (2•7D6;

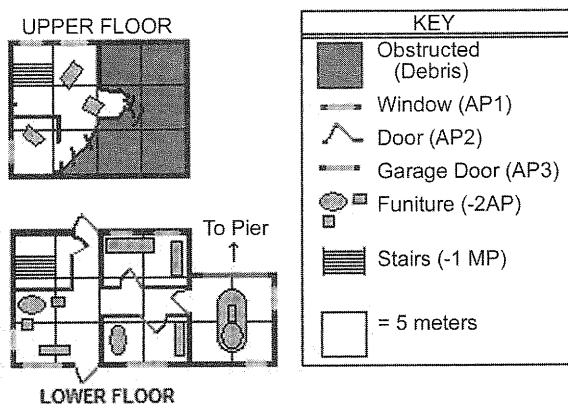
QUANG LO ENCOUNTERS

1D6 Roll	Encounter Type
1-2	Petty Thugs: 1D6 Thug NPCs (see p. 206, <i>CBT:RPG</i> ; <i>Primary</i> : Brawling, <i>Secondary</i> : Pistols) think the characters may have a few things worth prying from their cold, dead hands. If interrogated, a -5 penalty applies in gathering information on the inquiry table.
3-4 the	Informers: One Bystander NPC (see p. 206, <i>CBT:RPG</i> ; <i>Primary</i> : Perception; <i>Secondary</i> : Pistols) bolts at sound of Boulerice's name. Paid by any one of Boulerice's hunters to alert them about competition, this NPC leads the characters straight into an attack if they follow. If interrogated, a -4 penalty applies on the inquiry table.
5-6	Boulerice's Informer: See regular Informer. This one runs straight to Boulerice, having been paid to alert him if anyone comes after him.
7-8	Bounty Hunters: 1D6 Soldier NPCs (see p. 207, <i>CBT:RPG</i> ; <i>Primary</i> : Submachine Guns; <i>Secondary</i> : Blades) on the same trail the characters are following have overheard their discussion and hate competition. They will attack if they cannot otherwise discourage the characters. If questioned, a +2 bonus applies on the inquiry table.
9	Hostile Agent: See Hostile Agent entry in the Royce Encounter Table. If this man has enough information, he'll try to intercept Boulerice himself, but otherwise glances suspiciously at the characters and moves along. If captured and interrogated, a -4 penalty applies on the inquiry table.
10+	ROM Agents: 1D6 + 2 Soldier NPCs (<i>Primary</i> : Submachine Guns; <i>Secondary</i> : Blades) from the Word of Blake ROM decide the player characters are targets. They attack relentlessly, ignoring any collateral damage.

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incendiary). A character may spot the tripwires on a successful Perception Check (TN 15), and can disarm them using Demolitions (TN 16). Doing so without prompting Boulrice to either shoot at the characters through a window or bolt straight for the jet sled in his garage for a fast getaway will require circumventing the four cameras arrayed at each corner of the house (see map, p. 144). For purposes of defeating the cameras, Boulrice has the same statistics (including a Perception Skill Bonus) as the standard Soldier NPC.

Jesse Boulrice's House



The characters' best chance for getting close to Boulrice is to walk up to the front door as cautiously and non-threateningly as possible and ask to see him. Boulrice does not let them in unless they can guarantee that he won't be harmed and they've come to help. The former Broadstreet Bullies lieutenant offers to tell the characters everything they want to hear if they can get him out of here safely, once he has reason to believe they're really not going to harm him.

TROUBLESHOOTING

At this stage, the biggest potential hazards include getting shot by some unsavory type, getting blown up by Boulrice's defenses or losing Boulrice to a bounty hunter's bullet or his own foolishness. The gamemaster should feel free to use any convenient plot device to avoid slaughtering the characters outright, but beware of kid-glove treatment. Quang Lo is ten times as dangerous as Royce, and so the risk to life and limb should rise accordingly. If the characters are having too easy a time of it, feel free to increase the opposition.

On the other hand, if Boulrice's position has been compromised (by the characters' bungling in Royce or here in Quang Lo) and his whereabouts dropped squarely into the hands of a bounty hunter who gets away, he may be dead by the time the characters reach this point. If desired, the gamemaster can simply say that some unknown circumstance has delayed the bounty hunters until now. Otherwise, the player characters arrive to find a corpse, and their mission on Fletcher is blown.

If Boulrice is alive but spooked by the player characters' arrival and attempts to escape in his jet sled,

the gamemaster may decide to give the sled a sudden malfunction that stops it cold (it was rebuilt by a poor mechanic and started in haste), or he may limit how far away Boulrice can get and give the characters some means to track him. Alternatively, the gamemaster may want to explore the side adventure of spending days tracking down the fugitive Boulrice through the swamps northwest of Quang Lo.

BULLS IN THE CHINA SHOP

THE SITUATION

The characters have successfully located Boulrice, but Word of Blake agents and several local bounty hunters are drawing near. The former Broadstreet Bully lieutenant can tell them who hired his mercenary unit for an attack on the Brynd estates, but unless the characters can get him to Acamar to testify before the planet's ruling body, his information will be regarded with suspicion and scorn. Unfortunately, Boulrice is just about out of time when a Word of Blake death squad locks onto the players and their charge. Hunted by a group of well equipped, highly motivated fanatics who will stop at nothing to kill them all, the characters must get back to their DropShip and escape from Fletcher—any way they can.

THE STORY

Jesse Boulrice does not look like the kind of man who would serve in a unit with the Broadstreet Bullies' reputation. At the moment, he looks more like an innocuous street bum than anything else. His blond hair is mussed, his jumpsuit is tattered, particularly where the service patches have been torn off, and thick stubble lends a craggy look to a face that, in better times, could have been used on LAAF recruitment posters. Dark circles around his clear blue eyes betray a lack of sleep, and a subtle shake to his hands betrays nerves frayed by the use of too many stimulants.

"What do you want to know?" he asks, weariness and desperation in his voice. "I'll tell you anything you want to know if you can just get me out of here."

BEHIND THE SCENES

Jesse Boulrice was a lieutenant for the Broadstreet Bullies, in command of the unit's strike lance, until his desertion less than a week ago. Now a hunted man, he is desperate to get off Fletcher and will even willingly face the MRBC on Outreach for his crimes on Genoa (when the Bullies earned their rogue status). Boulrice, however, will not just sit back and let everything spill out in a rush. Knowing that the information he carries has value to the player characters, he will barter telling his story for getting off Fletcher with them, and will even volunteer—if nobody else suggests it—that he be taken along to testify on Acamar.

Once asked, it is up to the gamemaster to determine how much information Boulrice yields. A good rule of

OPERATION BACKSTAB

What Boulерice Knows

Jesse Boulерice was a lieutenant in charge of the Broadstreet Bullies' strike lance. Originally, he served as a scout lance chief in the LAAF and piloted a *Nightsky*, until the Marik-Liao invasion left his unit cut off from retreat home. After that, he followed his commander, Hauptmann Daniel Grover, when the unit went mercenary, and they took on a host of minor jobs across the Chaos March. Then came Genoa, a world recently stabilized after the fighting died down some.

On Genoa, the Bullies were hired to supplement local militia troops. They got the job through some corporate types who helped set up the local government, and were charged with basic garrison duties. A few months into the contract, after a supply snafu, Hauptmann Grover and the Genoa Militia commander had a huge argument. Subsequently, Grover declared that he and his unit would depart at once, but he also turned his troops on the nearest towns for what he called an objective raid. Boulерice, feeling every bit as betrayed as the other Bullies at the time, willingly took part in the looting of several stores and banks before the unit withdrew to Fletcher. Apparently, nobody on Outreach ever heard their side of the story.

The Bullies got the Acamar mission after they did several jobs for local smugglers and other such riff-raff. Interestingly enough, the employer was again a corporate type who claimed a hand in setting up the local government. Johnston Industries, apparently unhappy with a situation involving a local baron, wanted the baron taught a lesson. A JI exec named Santaeus offered generous pay and even said Johnston Industries was willing to forgive the unpleasantness on Genoa, and so the Bullies accepted the job. Boulерice, who had expected some resistance, was appalled to find none, and so held his lance back in the attack on Lopez.

After Acamar, the Bullies returned to Fletcher via their corporate employer's JumpShip. There, they received word that a new employer was willing to meet with them. When Boulерice learned the new employer was the Word of Blake, he got nervous. His apprehension worsened when the Blakists began asking if the Bullies had any trouble with inflicting civilian casualties. Finally, Boulерice convinced his lance to depart with him, but the Blakists killed two of them as they tried to take their 'Mechs and go. Boulерice's third lancemate was killed four days ago in Royce, by an unseen sniper in the market. Since then, Boulерice has been struggling to get off Fletcher any way possible. He plans to use the river as his escape route from Quang Lo, in a one-man hydrofoil skimmer he's partially repaired.

thumb is to relate a sentence on each related topic for every 2 points (or fraction thereof) of MoS the questioning character makes on an Interrogation Check (TN 15). For example, if a character asks about what happened on Genoa and rolls a 17 on the Interrogation Check, Boulерice says only that he was commanding the strike lance at the time. Consult the information under *What Boulерice Knows* (see sidebar) to determine what he has to offer.

Any extended dialogue with Boulерice eventually places the characters' collective safety in jeopardy, as Word of Blake ROM agents are even now closing the noose around them all. Their imminent strike, which begins with a sniper shot aimed at Boulерice, can come at any time. To reflect this (and avoid bogging the adventure down in too much dialogue), the gamemaster should count every question and sentence of answers as a combat round, and begin rolling 2D6 after the third round and for each subsequent round after that. This roll should be made before Boulерice speaks, to keep the players guessing, and the gamemaster should count how many rounds he or she has rolled. When the number of rounds rolled exceeds the result of the roll, the Blakists launch their attack.

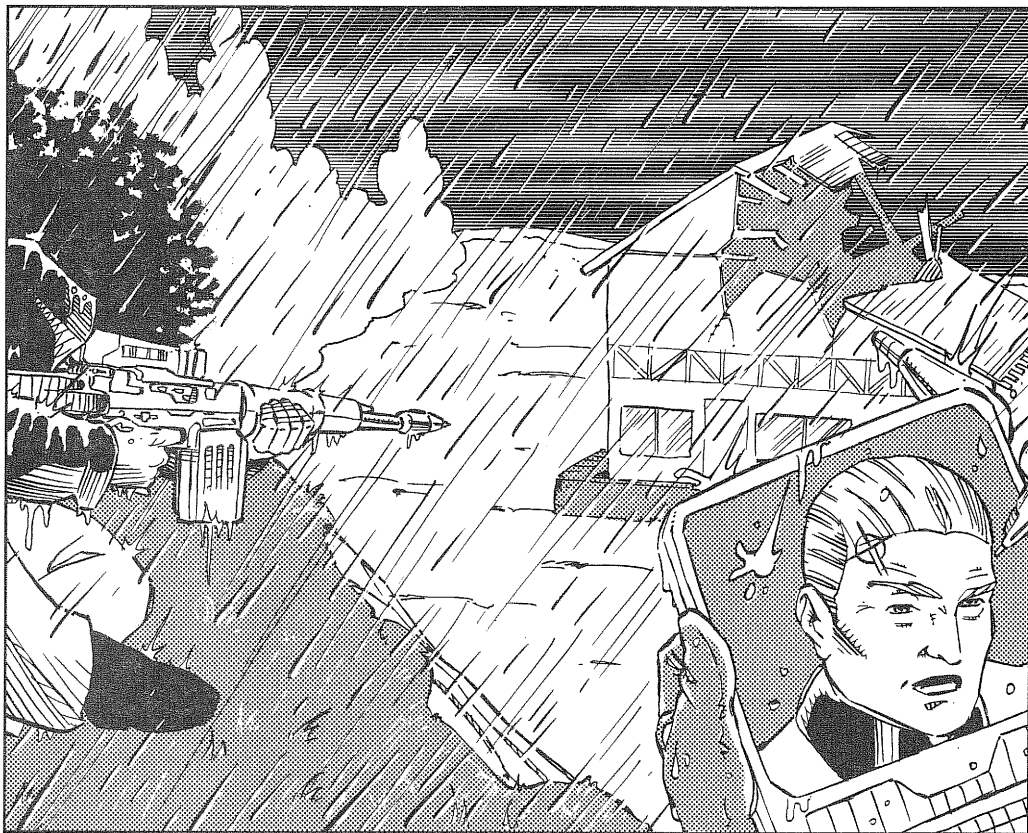
Jesse Boulерice

Attributes

STR	5	WIL	5
BOD	5	CHA	5
DEX	6	EDG	5
RFL	6	SOC	2
INT	5	Move	11/21/42

Traits

Bad Reputation (4)/The Inner Sphere
Stigma (2)/Rogue Mercenary
Quirk/Paranoid



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Skills

Blades	+2
Boxing	+3
• Jab Punch [Shot at specific location, TN -3]	
• Roundhouse Punch [+ 2D6 Damage; opponent must make Knockdown Test with +5 TN]	
• Boxing Dodge [+2 to opponents TN; +4 to opponents TN if using special maneuver]	
Perception	+5
Pilot/BattleMech	+4
Pistols	+3
Gunnery/Humanoid/Ball.	+4
Gunnery/Humanoid/Laser	+4
Gunnery/Humanoid/Miss.	+3
Martial Arts/Military	+3
Shotguns	+3
Tech/Mechanical	+0

Equipment

Ablative/Flak Jacket [2/4/5/2]
 Sternsnacht Python [4•4D6; 5/15/40/80; 12 shots (5 clips); jam on fumble]
 M&G Flechette Rifle [1•4D6; 5/12/25/40; 30 shots (3 clips); burst (5/3); splash; AP 0 vs. barriers]
 3 Knives [1•2D6 each]

The Word of Blake agents begin their attack with a sniper shot aimed at Boulерice through one of the house's windows. The gamemaster should record the shot as having a TN of 12, and the weapon deals base damage of 4D6 (Energy, AP 3 after shooting through the window) directly to Boulерice's head. Increase this TN by 4 if any character states he is by the window at any point before the shot is fired. Regardless of whether or not the first shot kills Boulерice, the rest of a full squad of seven Word of Blake ROM agents will attack. Their statistics appear below. The sniper is not among those who enter the building.

The only options open to the characters are fight or flight, as none of the Blakist agents will take prisoners or listen to negotiations. Already convinced that Boulерice knows too much, they have determined to silence him and anyone he talks to. If they are not stopped at the house, they will chase the characters all the way back to the DropShip *Samantha*, if need be. The gamemaster may handle this battle and pursuit any way that seems appropriate, using the map of the house and bearing in mind the following details.

The one-man jet sled in Boulерice's garage, if not already destroyed, will fail and crash after 1 round of sustained use. Aside from it, there are two old boats on the piers, one of which is a hydrofoil with the same cruise and flank speeds as a conventional hovercar (160 and 240 kph, respectively). The other is a conventional motorboat with a Movement Rate of 75/120. Both of these vehicles boast enough room for five adults. The Blakist ROM agents, meanwhile, have access to an armored hovercar and two hoverbikes that boast the same cruise and flank speeds (160 and 240 km,

respectively), but have parked these vehicles a block away to avoid detection as they moved around the house. Their sniper, who remains outside and watches from the rooftop of a nearby building, will warn his comrades by microcommunicator if anyone slips out. The river behind Boulерice's house and the highway that runs through the center of Quang Lo both lead back to Royce. The *Samantha* is in the Royce spaceport, ready to lift off the moment the characters return.

ROM Troopers (4)

Attributes

STR	6	WIL	6
BOD	6	CHA	4
DEX	7	EDG	5
RFL	7	SOC	4
INT	6	Move	13/25/50

Traits

Quirk (2)/Fanatic
 Brave

Skills

Perception	+4
Stealth	+3
Running	+2
Tactics/Infantry	+2
Pilot/Hover	+2
Blades	+2
Submachine Guns	+4
Blades	+3
Martial Arts/Military	+3

- Haymaker [Take 1 Fatigue and add 2D6 Damage]
- Neck Jab [TN to hit + target RFL and highest Martial Arts Skill bonus; if successful, opponent makes Knockout Test]
- Sweep [TN to hit +2; if successful, opponent is knocked prone]

Equipment

Ablative/Flak Suit [2/4/5/2]
 Gunther MP-20 [4•3D6; 4/12/30/50; 30 shots (5 clips); Burst (5/2); jam on fumble]
 Vibroblade [5•2D6; Pwr use: 1/turn]
 Microcommunicator, Military

ROM Commandos (2)

Attributes

STR	6	WIL	7
BOD	7	CHA	4
DEX	6	EDG	4
RFL	7	SOC	4
INT	6	Move	13/26/52

Traits

Quirk (2)/Fanatic
 Brave
 Combat Sense

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Skills

Perception	+5
Stealth	+4
Running	+3
Tactics/Infantry	+3
Leadership	+2
Blades	+2
Rifles	+3
Machine Guns	+3
Martial Arts/Military	+4
• Haymaker [Take 1 Fatigue and add 2D6 Damage]	
• Neck Jab [TN to hit + target RFL and highest Martial Arts Skill bonus; if successful, opponent makes Knockout Test]	
• Sweep [TN to hit +2; if successful, opponent is knocked prone]	

Equipment

Power Armor (Light) [PA(L) Suit] [4/5/6/5; Pwr use: 1/turn; Camo +4, ECM +6, IR +6]
 Imperator AX-22 Assault Rifle [4•4D6; 30/80/185/435; 15 shots (8 clips); Burst (15/3); jam on fumble]
 2 Vibroblades [5•2D6; 1 pwr/rd]
 Microcommunicator, Military

ROM Sniper (1)

Attributes

STR	5	WIL	5
BOD	5	CHA	4
DEX	6	EDG	5
RFL	6	SOC	3
INT	5	Move	11/21/42

Traits

Quirk (2)/Fanatic
 Brave
 Patient

Skills

Perception	+6
Pilot/Hover	+2
Pistols	+3
Rifles	+5
Blades	+2
Martial Arts/Military	+2
• Haymaker [Take 1 Fatigue and add 2D6 Damage]	
• Sweep [TN to hit +2; if successful, opponent is knocked prone]	

Equipment

Ablative/Flak Suit [2/4/5/2]
 Starfire ER Laser Rifle [4•4D6; 85/285/625/1,300; 6 power/shot (2 high-capacity military power packs); 1 turn to recharge]
 Dagger [1•2D6]
 Microcommunicator, Military

TROUBLESHOOTING

The characters should at least learn at this point that the Bullies' employer for the Acamar attack was Johnston Industries, one of the corporations that helped set up the planetary government. Even if Boulrice dies, they should still learn this detail. His survival and the information he yields, however, is secondary to the goal of getting out alive. Once again, the gamemaster should try to avoid killing any characters (except Boulrice, that is), but at this point, if it happens, it happens. The Word of Blake is playing for keeps, and will stop at nothing to make sure the characters do not survive this encounter. If the team sustains too many casualties to be viable, or if they fail to make good their escape, the gamemaster should be prepared to offer assistance—a call from Osbourne, for example, or a faster extraction as the *Samantha's* captain returns to pick up the characters. Engine trouble for the Blakists during the chase, or a conveniently missed roll during a Blake agent's attack, can also help the characters live to die another day. Finally, any wounded characters may be treated on board the DropShip *Samantha*, which features a fully stocked sickbay and two doctors, each of whom possesses a +3 Skill bonus in MedTech and First Aid and a +2 bonus in Surgery.

BETRAYAL IN THE VOID

THE SITUATION

Regardless of how they reach this point, after visiting Fletcher or coming straight from Outreach, the players will be on their way to Acamar, home of the Brynd clan and scene of the crime, when a Stevens family agent among the JumpShip or DropShip crew turns on them. In their efforts to locate and eliminate this threat, the characters also uncover an agent from the Langdon family who has infiltrated the crew to gather intelligence.

THE STORY

With a gentle thump that makes the floors tremble slightly, the *Samantha's* docking port mates with that of the JumpShip *Daniel Brynd*, firmly latching into place for the hyperspace jump to Acamar. Weightlessness sets in as the shudder sends adrift anything not strapped down or magnetically secured to the flooring. As you reorient yourselves, the public address system comes to life and you hear the deep baritone of the JumpShip's captain, Gustav Cormier:

"Welcome back to the *Daniel Brynd*, folks! We'll be initiating the jump sequence momentarily. Please stand by."

A few moments pass before the jump alarm sounds, and you tense instinctively for the inevitable, disorienting effects of another trip through hyperspace. Just before the expected jump, you feel another shudder, more violent than the first. The jump alarm gives way to a general alert claxon, and the lighting shifts from the blue of pre-jump to emergency red. Even before the captain's voice returns you know something has gone terribly wrong.

OPERATION BACKSTAB

"Attention all hands! Jump aborted! Fire in the helium tank bay! Damage repair crews to Tank Alpha! All other stations, report status to DCO!"

BEHIND THE SCENES

A small explosive device has just exploded in the *Daniel Brynd*'s liquid helium tanks, temporarily compromising the vessel's ability to jump. Though the crew can repair the damage and attempt another jump in roughly three to five hours, the fact that such a thing happened makes many of the crew nervous. If the characters do not bring it up first, Andrew Osbourne declares they have been sabotaged.

Investigating the Scene

Anyone capable of sabotaging a JumpShip could potentially cause more serious damage, given enough time. With this in mind, Osbourne enlists the characters to find the person responsible, starting with a look at the damaged tanks. Any character who makes a successful Perception, Investigations or Demolitions Check (TN 15) will find the remains of a small explosive device used to breach the tank. If the roll succeeds by an MoS of more than 5 points, the investigating character also uncovers the remains of a radio detonator. A follow-up Investigations or relevant Career Check (TN 16) and the use of an appropriate analysis kit can turn up any residual clues as to the identity of the saboteur, though such evidence must still be matched up with a suspect.

At the same time, any character with the Communications/Conventional Skill may be able to review the comm-logs from both ships around the time of the explosion. Doing so reveals that a short transmission originated from the *Samantha* just as the *Daniel Brynd* powered up its jump drive. Locating the anomalous short-burst transmission among the other noise going on at the time requires a successful Communications/Conventional Check against TN 15, which also reveals that the explosion happened almost instantly after the transmission was made. These facts narrow down the search for the saboteur to the *Samantha*'s crew.

Checking the Logs

If the characters cannot determine any further clues from the remains of the bomb and/or detonator, they may consult the maintenance logs of the helium tank bay. As a vital JumpShip system, this area is restricted, requiring all who enter to swipe a keycard nominally unique to each crewman. The system is checked many times throughout the day—twice before and after every jump—and the crew keeps a log of everyone who enters the chamber. A successful Perception Check of the logs (TN 12) reveals that a week before the *Daniel Brynd* got underway—more than a month ago, in game time—one of the *Samantha*'s crew inexplicably entered the bay briefly. This crewman, a communications tech named Errol Malveneri, did not stay long, logging back out less than thirty minutes after

logging in. Any character willing to put in the extra effort to check Malveneri's records (Computers or Investigations, TN 14) discovers that he joined the crew just before the ships set out for Outreach.

Interrogating Malveneri

Malveneri is innocent, and if the characters attempt to question him, he appears nervous but bewildered. In fact, he had nothing to do with the bomb in the helium tank bay, and any efforts to verify his presence there beyond his log-in will prove that beyond doubt. He does have a secret, however. If interrogated (TN 12), he reveals that he is actually an agent of the Langdon household, sent to join the *Samantha*'s crew to find out what the Brynds were up to. The Langdon family, whose lands border those of the Brynds, sent Malveneri because they are mystified by the mercenary attack. Though they have their own theories about it, they did not tell Malveneri about them. Attempting to gain further evidence from Malveneri is therefore a waste of time, unless the name Santaesus comes up. The name triggers a confused response from Malveneri, who recognizes Santaesus as a representative from Johnston Industries. Malveneri then reveals, on another successful Interrogation Check (TN 10), that Johnston has been negotiating with the Langdons over mining rights near the Brynd territories. Supposedly, the corporation is also dealing with the Stevens family, whose lands likewise border the Brynd estates. What they are mining for, Malveneri does not know.

Continuing the Search

As Malveneri proves a dead end, the characters may wish to resume interrogating the remaining passengers and crew of the *Daniel Brynd* and the *Samantha*. In all, there are 18 crewmen on the JumpShip and another 14 on the DropShip, making this a long search. If the characters encountered the comm-log that indicates the detonation signal originated from the *Samantha*, they will find the search more manageable, especially with Malveneri already accounted for.

In the course of their interrogations, the characters eventually find that the *Samantha*'s first mate, Walton Stanton, is reluctant to speak with them. Stanton comes up with every excuse in the book to avoid their questions. If the characters press the matter, Stanton grows visibly agitated and ultimately decides to bolt for the nearest escape pod. Unless he is stopped, Stanton will board the pod and eject, hoping that another JumpShip stationed nearby will pick him up. The other Brynd ships, lacking firepower and small craft back-up, cannot prevent such a rescue, and Stanton gets picked up less than an hour after leaving the *Samantha*. If Stanton is cornered, fear will prompt him to attack the characters, and he will try to fight his way to the escape pods. Stanton's statistics appear below.

OPERATION BACKSTAB

Walton Stanton

Attributes

STR	4	WIL	5
BOD	5	CHA	4
DEX	6	EDG	5
RFL	6	SOC	3
INT	5	Move	11/21/42

Traits

Glass Jaw

Skills

Perception	+3
Zero-G Ops	+2
Pistols	+2
Blades	+1
Brawling	+2

- Haymaker [Take 1 Fatigue and add 2D6 Damage]
- Eye Gouge [+5 TN; if Fatigue inflicted, opponent receives +5 TN to all attacks for 1D5 turns]

Equipment

Leather Jacket [1/1/0/1]
Needler Pistol [1•5D6; 2/6/12/20; 10 shots (2 clips); Splash damage, AP 0 vs. barriers]
Dagger [1•2D6]

About Walton Stanton

Stanton, as it turns out, is an agent for the Stevens family, one of the Brynd clan's more vocal rivals and the immediate neighbor to the east of their barony. His record shows no indication of this, however, as he has been on the Brynd payroll for years. In fact, Walton Stanton started out loyal to the Brynds and was bought by the Stevens some years back.

As first mate, Stanto hired Malveneri, aware all along of the man's loyalties to the Langdon family. Knowing that he would make the perfect fall guy if necessary, Stanton copied Malveneri's security pass upon hiring him and used it to access the helium tank bay. The characters can discover this if they search Stanton's quarters on the *Samantha*, where he has left behind a comm pad that still bears records of his latest electronic bank transactions, along with the copy of Malveneri's pass.

If the players manage to capture Stanton and interrogate him, he admits to planting the bomb before the JumpShip left Outreach, concealing it among the piping where he knew the techs would not casually look. If the Interrogation, Intimidation or Negotiation Check used to pump him for information (TN 14) yields a margin of success greater than 3, Stanton adds that the Stevens family is not behind the attack on Acamar, but that he knows who is. If pressed, he admits that Johnston Industries' local representatives hired the Bullies for the attack, hoping to precipitate a crisis.

If the name Santaeus comes up, Stanton smiles knowingly and points out that the Brynd family's pride in running the "breadbasket of Acamar" ruined what could

have been a profitable relationship with a powerful corporation. He is referring to a recently discovered deposit of titanium that runs through the Brynd landhold. Johnston Industries, a major military supplier to the Federated Suns and partial architect of Acamar's post-FedCom government, has been stymied in its efforts to secure mining rights to the titanium, as the lode runs through some of the Brynd clan's most fertile land. Johnston has obtained mining rights to the neighboring Stevens and Langdon landholds, however.

TROUBLESHOOTING

In this chapter, the greatest danger is losing track of the investigation. Fortunately, there is little chance that either of the agents on board the DropShip will escape or do anything that can cause serious harm to the vessels, as neither wishes to risk a nasty death in the vacuum of space. If the characters seem to be getting bogged down in details, the gamemaster can have Osbourne or one of the ship captains suggest the next logical step in the investigation. If the characters still need prompting, these same characters can take the next step on their own and deliver the results in the hopes that the characters can pick up the leads. Try not to have the Brynd family officers do all the work, however. Lacking any kind of security on board, they cannot realistically move on either of the suspects without an incident. It falls to the player characters as the resident "professionals" to take the Langdon and Stevens agents into custody.

At the end of this chapter, the characters should know that the Stevens family and Johnston Industries are involved in a plot against the Brynds. The Langdons, evidently in league with Johnston but unaware of the attack, appear to be unwitting accomplices.

THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

THE SITUATION

On Acamar, the characters get an opportunity to survey the damage done to the Brynd family landhold, and to collect additional video evidence and witness accounts of the attack. Shortly after arriving, the characters are invited to attend a social gathering hosted by the Brynds in an effort to shore up some local support. There, the characters meet the Stevens and Langdon family heads, as well as George W. Santaeus, vice president of Johnston Industries' Acamar offices, and can get a feel for the political situation. How much information the characters have already obtained to this point will determine the dynamics of this chapter.

THE STORY

During the in-system burn, Osbourne tells you that, although Acamar is a cold world, the homelands of the Brynd family lie in the more temperate interior equatorial zones on the continent of Katenga. Because the area has a much more hospitable climate than the rest of the

OPERATION BACKSTAB

world, and is further blessed with some of Acamar's most fertile soil, it has become the planet's breadbasket. Osbourne tells you the Brynds take great pride in their consistent crop yields—in open seasonal fields and domed agriplexes—that help to feed millions. Furthermore, their fair treatment of local farmers throughout the centuries spared their lands much of the fighting that broke out when Acamar's garrison was shattered in 3058—at least until now.

"Now that you're here," he adds, "we hope we can finally get to the bottom of this whole mess. Baron Brynd will be most eager to meet you as soon as we land."



Read the following if the characters are arriving with Jesse Boulrice:

Shortly after your arrival at the city of Justaine, in the Brynd landhold, two well-dressed men meet you and inform you that they are chauffeurs for Baron Roderick Brynd, with orders to take you to his estates nearby. After verifying their identity and Osbourne's voucher, two hovervans take you through Justaine. Beside you, Boulrice stares out the rear windows, a sour expression on his face as the vans pass several badly damaged buildings.

"Your friends did a fine job here, Mr. Boulrice," Osbourne says, with an edge to his voice.

"My team hit Lopez," Boulrice replies. "I tried to

keep the damage minimal."

"If you fired even one weapon, you failed," Osbourne tells him.

The vans carry you in silence to the outskirts of Justaine, past the crumpled dome of a year-round agriplex. Perched on a hill overlooking the city, you see what can only be the Brynd estate, an elegant building of white, polished marble and stone. The structure is marred by scaffolding that surrounds its west wing, which still bears the black scars of a recent fire. The front lawn is also gouged up, and several ancient trees leading to the entrance appear to have been recently cut down, leaving only stumps to attest to their existence.

"A BattleMech marched through here," Boulrice explains. "I'll bet it was Hauptmann Glover. He hates nobility, and doesn't mind smashing up a nice house."

"That attack killed Baron Brynd's eldest daughter and three house servants, Mr. Boulrice," Osbourne shoots back. "You should be grateful if the Baron doesn't want payback."

Boulrice does not argue the point, but instead joins you as you enter the building, escorted by your chauffeurs. Inside, your escorts lead you through an exquisitely decorated corridor to a large dining hall or ballroom. Aside from two long tables set against the far walls, some towering houseplants in the corner and a host of paintings, the room appears empty of furnishings. A man in his fifties, dressed in a severe dark suit, stands at the base of a winding staircase near the east entrance.

"Welcome to my home," he says, though his eyes narrow at the sight of Boulrice. "I am Baron Roderick Brynd, head of the Brynd family. I'm glad to meet you at last—even with our esteemed 'guest'."

Read the following if the characters arrive without Boulrice:

Shortly after you reach the city of Justaine, in the Brynd landhold, you are met by a pair of well-dressed men, who inform you they are chauffeurs for Baron Roderick Brynd with orders to take you to his estates nearby. After verifying their identity and Osbourne's voucher, a hovervan takes you through Justaine. Through the van's windows, you can see the scars of the mercenary attack, with buildings reduced to rubble or partially scorched by flames—all untended to since the fateful day of the assault.

"They did a fine job out here, in particular," Osbourne tells you, not having to elaborate on who "they" were. "They largely left residential sectors alone, but they targeted any building remotely connected to agribusinesses or administration, even if it was just a passing shot. We called for aid from the planetary government, but by the time troops arrived, it was already too late."

The van carries you to the outskirts of Justaine, past the crumpled dome of a year-round agriplex. Perched on a hill overlooking the city, you see what can only be the Brynd manor, an elegant building of white, polished

PARTY CONVERSATION

Baron Terence Langdon:

"Roderick, please. Try to understand how it looks from our perspective! Your farmlands produce the biggest yields in the region, but now they lie fallow. You'll need all the help you can get to recover. I'm just offering to ease the burden. I assure you, as your neighbor, that with the proper administration, we can have your southern territories—say, the ones around Straand—back up and running in no time. It'll be a loss for me for the first year or so, but with that much less territory to concern yourself with, you can get Lopez and Justaine back up and running in no time."

Baron Harcourt Stevens:

"You know I feel your loss, Baron Brynd, but you've been holding out for almost a month now, and an offer this good just can't hold up forever. Trying to go it alone is admirable, and I know we haven't seen eye to eye in the past, but you and I both know what affects one of our holdings affects us all. All I'm asking is the chance to help you get back on your feet again—just a little administrative support from a concerned neighbor."

George W. Santaeus (Johnston Industries):

"Excellent party, Baron Brynd. I want you to know I look forward to many more. Have you had the chance to consider my offer yet? All we're asking for is mining rights in the Straand area, with the standard fifteen percent revenue cut going to your family. I'm talking no more than twenty to thirty percent of the landhold. Surely, that's a reasonable offer?"

marble and stone. The structure is marred by scaffolding that surrounds its west wing, which still bears the black scars of a recent fire. The front lawn is also gouged up, and several ancient trees leading to the entrance appear to have been recently cut down, leaving only stumps to attest to their existence.

"A BattleMech marched through here," Osbourne explains. "Their commander, I'd guess. He smashed the western side of the building, killing Baron Brynd's eldest daughter and three house servants. They didn't stand a chance. Why he left the rest of the building standing, I'll never know, but the damage done was severe enough."

After pulling up to the front steps, your chauffeurs lead you out of the vans and escort you inside the manor house. You pass through an exquisitely decorated corridor and into a large dining hall or ballroom. Aside from two long tables set along the far walls, some towering houseplants in the corner, and a host of paintings, the room appears empty of furnishings. A man in his fifties, dressed in a severe dark suit, stands at the base of a winding staircase near the east entrance.

"Welcome to my home," he says. "I am Baron Roderick Brynd, head of the Brynd family. I'm glad to meet you at last. I hear you have learned much already about our situation, yes?"

BEHIND THE SCENES

In this chapter, the characters have the opportunity to discuss their findings with their employer, who is grateful for anything they can tell him about the attack. Baron Brynd is remarkably well disciplined under the circumstances, bottling up his rage until he knows exactly who to direct it against and why. Lacking military resources, he has requested the characters' aid to find out who his enemies are this time, and hopes to win his measure of revenge in the courts on Acamar.

Brynd will not be content to hear merely the name of the mercenary command; he wants to know who hired them and why. If the characters have managed to bring Boulерice along from Fletcher, they are one step ahead of the game, as Boulерice remains willing to testify to the nature of his former comrades' work on Acamar. If, on the other hand, they have only brought the results of their research on Outreach, Brynd will be disappointed and tell them he needs more information. In any event, the motive for the attack remains unclear, or at least unsubstantiated. Baron Brynd needs to know the reason behind the assault; he plans to make the guilty party pay dearly before the planetary government, and can't afford to miss any details.

At the end of their meeting, Brynd informs the player characters that he will hold a gathering later that evening, chiefly to rally what friends he has left in Acamar's government and social circles. He hopes to find the guilty party among the guests, and to that end has included some neighbors and local representatives whom he does not fully trust. Brynd asks the characters to attend this party as well, to see if they can find the hard evidence he requires to secure his landhold's independence and possibly some revenge as well. (Brynd will see to it that the characters are appropriately dressed for this formal gathering if they didn't pack their good civvies.) In the meantime, the characters are free to tour the landhold, which boasts a few undamaged markets, bars and restaurants for the characters to enjoy as long as they return in time for the party.

Touring the Scene

If the characters decide to tour the landhold, the Brynd family lends them drivers and vehicles—mostly economy cars and vans. With Osbourne as their ever-present guide, they can easily visit the cities of Justaine and Lopez, which are located less than an hour away from the estate. Both cities still bear the scars of fighting, including damage to the surrounding farmlands and domed agriplexes. The characters may feel free to question a few locals

OPERATION BACKSTAB

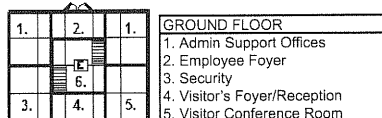
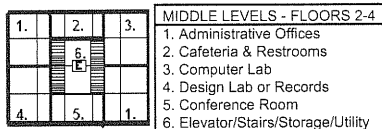
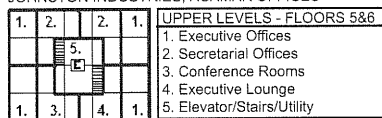
about the attack, but cannot glean much more information beyond what they could have determined from the holo vid evidence they received back on Outreach.

If their questions turn to local politics and news, the characters will soon find that the neighboring Stevens and Langdon families have been vying for control of the Brynd landhold for decades and that the heads of both families are often at odds with Baron Brynd in the planetary council. The recent establishment of a Johnston Industries satellite office on Acamar (in the city of Huss) will likewise come to light. Johnston, one of the two major corporations responsible for forming the planet's new government, has lately been looking into mining rights in this area, a development that has the region's more eco-friendly residents up in arms. The Langdon and Stevens families reportedly have given JI an audience on the matter, and both are supposedly close to a deal, but the Brynd family has refused to consider it.

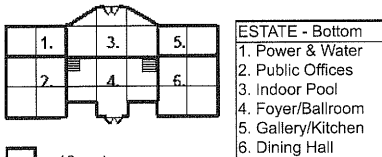
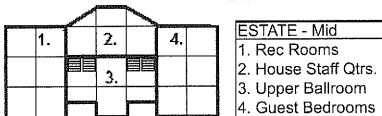
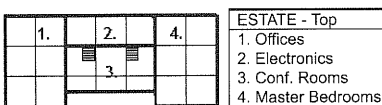
Baron Brynd's Party

When the characters are ready to join Baron Brynd's party, they may return to the estate, where appropriate attire has been prepared for those who lack it. House servants will not allow the characters to attend the gathering dressed in anything less than proper, but if the characters

JOHNSTON INDUSTRIES, ACAMAR OFFICES



□ = 10 meters



□ = 10 meters

somehow circumvent them and show up in street clothes, they may expect to be laughed out of the hall. Once at the gathering, the characters find the room teeming with finely dressed and groomed nobility and business leaders, all being tended to by an exceptionally courteous staff. Baron Brynd is at the center of it all, with Osbourne at his side, rubbing elbows with the guests. Three of the latter stand out, engaging in an intense whispered conversation off to one side.

These three guests are Barons Langdon and Stevens and the local vice president of Johnston Industries. Their conspiratorial whispering ends shortly after the characters spot them, but anyone with the Good Hearing trait and a successful Perception Check against TN 18 will hear something about titanium mining. The rival barons and the VP in turn stop to chat with Brynd in hopes of rattling his cage about his mounting financial troubles. If at any point the characters make it known to any of these individuals that they are in Brynd's employ, the subject will remark that their employer faces a mountain of financial difficulties between the landhold's repair costs and lost revenues from this year's harvest. The subject will further ask if the characters are *sure* they will be paid when they complete whatever

ESTATE OBSTACLES (STANDARD)

Estate Security: 1 Thug NPC (see p. 206, *CBTRPG*; *Primary*: Pistols, *Secondary*: Blades) equipped with a Flashlight, Needler Pistol, Mini-Stunstick and Microcommunicator, patrols nearby. Typically seen near offices and main doors.

Estate Staff: 1D6 Bystander NPCs (see p. 206, *CBTRPG*; *Primary*: Career/Any, *Secondary*: Brawling), equipped with nothing special, are going about routine business in the area. Typically seen in any chamber during the day, or near bedrooms or quarters at night. They will not attack unless they outnumber the player characters by more than 2 to 1. Otherwise, they will try to raise an alarm.

Static Security: A standard vid camera, tri-vid camera or motion sensor covers this room or corridor. On a 1D6 roll of 1 to 4, someone is watching on the other end of the line. Typically seen in the office and public chambers. Non-existent in bedrooms.

Locks: The locks on most exterior and interior doors and windows are standard mechanical systems that may be circumvented with a successful Security Systems Check (TN 14). Safes, utility rooms (power, electronics or water) and offices use more sophisticated systems (TN 16), and may trigger an alarm if the MoS to unlock them is less than 3.

Computers: The characters may bypass any computer system security with a successful Computer/Operations, Computer/Hacking or Computer/Programming Check (TN 13). The "master's" computer, if not bypassed by an MoS of 3 or more, sets off an alarm to summon 1D6 Estate Security guards.

JOHNSTON INDUSTRIES OFFICE OBSTACLES (STANDARD)

Corporate Security: 1 or 2 Thug NPCs (*Primary*: Pistols, *Secondary*: Blades), equipped with a Flashlight, Autopistol, Mini-Stunstick and Microcommunicator, patrol nearby. Typically seen near offices and main doors.

Corporate Staff: 1D6 Bystander NPCs (*Primary*: Career/Any, *Secondary*: Brawling), equipped with nothing special, are going about routine business in the area. Typically seen anywhere during the day, but not in the executive offices at night. They will not attack unless they outnumber the player characters by more than 2 to 1. Otherwise, they try to raise an alarm.

Static Security: A standard vid camera, tri-vid camera and motion sensor covers this room or corridor. On a 1D6 result of 6, no one is watching this monitor. Typically seen in all offices and corridors, but not in restrooms.

Locks: The locks on most exterior and interior doors and windows are standard mechanical systems that may be circumvented with a successful Security Systems Check (TN 14). Safes, utility rooms (power, electronics or water) and offices use a more sophisticated electronic lock (TN 16), and may trigger an alarm if the MoS to unlock the system is less than 3.

Computers: The player characters may bypass any computer system security with a successful Computer/Operations, Computer/Hacking or Computer/Programming Check (TN 13). The computers in the executive offices have a TN of 15 and will set off an alarm if the MoS for such rolls is less than 3, summoning 1D6 Corporate Security guards.

OPERATION BACKSTAB

fact-finding mission they are on.

The gamemaster may feel free to set the tone for each potential encounter with these three men as fits the situation, using the boxed text below as a guide. The gist of all conversation with Brynd is that each man wants at least partial administrative control over the lands in the Brynd family's southern area, around the township of Straand. Though technically in competition with each other, these three all make different offers to secure better control of the area, and they are united in trying to get the land away from Baron Brynd because Brynd is opposed to any mining in his landhold.

All three gentlemen will act relatively aloof toward the player characters, not knowing what to make of their presence. Langdon has almost nothing to say, but Stevens and Santaesus suggest that Baron Brynd is a falling star and that the characters can find better opportunities elsewhere—possibly even with one of them. Santaesus, in fact, virtually offers the characters a more lucrative contract—in the vaguest of possible terms—if they are willing to skip out on Brynd. To that end, he gives the characters his card, which includes his office address in Huss. As it happens, Santaesus is the man who hired the Bullies, but Stevens is in on the plan. If the player characters voice any theories about who hired the Bullies, they will be challenged to prove it. Brynd will not launch an unsupported accusation in his precarious financial condition, and even if Boulerville is available for testimony, his word will not be enough for Brynd.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The characters face no mortal danger in this chapter unless they do something unconscionably stupid. The main point of this chapter is to introduce the characters to the big players who affect their mission and give them an opportunity to gather any information they have not yet received. By the end of this chapter, the characters should be aware that the mercenaries who attacked the Brynd family were likely hired by one of the three men interested in seizing control of the southern Brynd lands.

The characters should also find that their employer is in financial peril as a result of the attack, which makes solving the case while he still has money more urgent. They should have a fair idea that one of the baron's rivals has the proof needed to expose and discredit them before Brynd is forced to sell off his territory (which will also force him to declare the characters' mission a failure).

To succeed in their mission, the characters must figure out which one of the three apparent conspirators orchestrated the attack. The guilty party is Santaesus, a cool customer, but he should slip just enough to point the finger at himself. If the characters bring Boulerville along to the party, Santaesus recognizes the former Broadstreet Bully and gets very nervous, making him more likely to slip up.

BREAK-IN

THE SITUATION

The characters must break into their suspect's private office to uncover the evidence needed to expose the plot against House Brynd. If they are astute enough, whatever they find should lead them right to Johnston Industries' satellite office in Huss, but they may attempt to do the same at the Stevens and Langdon estates. Once armed with the information, the characters can return to Baron Brynd with all the evidence he needs to convince the planetary government that he is the victim of a plot and to take legal action against the guilty party.

THE STORY

Osbourne finds you after the last of the guests have departed, and thanks you all for attending the gathering. He looks defeated as he tells you that, after a chat with Baron Brynd, he has learned the dire depths of the family finances.

"I want you to know that the Baron intends to compensate you for your hard work to this point," he finishes. "However, we are very short on time. I fear that within a week at the most, we will be forced to sell the Straand area to one of our neighbors, or even to Johnston Industries. It's quite a shame. That region gave us some of our best yields in the last few years."

Read the following if the characters never visited Fletcher:

"But enough about that," he says suddenly, a hopeful look in his eyes. "I hoped that, after meeting the neighbors, you might have come up with further ideas—perhaps something that could turn up the hard evidence we're looking for."

Read the following if the characters visited Fletcher:

"But enough about that," he says suddenly, a hopeful look in his eyes. "I hoped that, having met the neighbors, you might have had a chance to confirm our theory that Johnston Industries is behind the attack. How are you planning to get the hard evidence we need to prove it?"

BEHIND THE SCENES

Osbourne is open to hearing what the characters have planned next, but he hopes they have locked onto a suspect. When he asks what they plan to do, if their goal is anything short of breaking in and getting the information, he appears uneasy, as any other course of action will likely take too much time. (The characters were hired for their covert operations background, which can yield quicker results than any court injunction.) This is the one area where the Brynd family is willing to bend the law in order to be sure they've found their enemy.

The characters should by now suspect George Santaesus and his branch of Johnston Industries of being

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behind the attack on the Brynds, but to find the evidence, they need to enter the JI offices in Huss and get their hands on some hard data. Only with such evidence can Baron Brynd finally act, but the information has to be credible and undeniable. The only place such evidence exists is in Santaeus' office. Alternatively, characters who arrive straight from Outreach (having avoided the Fletcher angle altogether) may decide to check out the other two neighboring lords instead. Osbourne accepts whatever reasonable arguments the characters make for any suspect they name, and strongly recommends a more direct but discreet approach to obtaining evidence.

It should ideally be left up to the players how to proceed, but for the most part, their goal is to break into the offices of their chosen target, bypassing all manner of electronic security and guards, and find any hard evidence either in computer files or personal documents. The gamemaster determines the exact layouts of the offices visited and what kind of obstacles the characters run into, using the maps below as a rough guide to the layout and functions of each room. For further ideas, a table of random obstacles for the rival barons' estates and Johnston Industries suggest likely encounters and hazards the characters must overcome.

Wherever the characters decide to break in, they should ultimately find what they are looking for in the office of their target. Each location may hold information on the attack, but only one holds the incriminating hard evidence Brynd needs.

At the Langdons' estate, there is nothing more incriminating to find than an encrypted computer journal kept by Baron Langdon that goes on about his plans to talk Brynd into giving up his Straand area holdings. After obtaining them, he plans to tell Johnston his price for mining rights has tripled. Aside from a vague statement that the Stevens family is in league with JI to cut out the Langdons, there is no information about the Bullies' attack.

At the Stevens estate, the characters may make a significant discovery, locked in a hidden safe that can be compromised on a successful Security Systems Check against a TN of 15. The safe contains reports on the mercenary attack from a private investigator on Baron Stevens' payroll. The investigator, apparently based off-world and calling himself Smith, informs Stevens in these reports of everything the player characters should already know—that the Broadstreet Bullies mercenary unit pulled the trigger on orders from Johnston Industries. A note from Baron Stevens, addressed to Smith, indicates that he is pleased with the report and that this knowledge will earn the Stevens family millions no matter which way the Brynds jump.

In Santaeus' office at Johnston Industries in Huss, the characters can find records encrypted on Santaeus' computer, which they can decode with a successful Cryptography, Computer/Operations or Computer/Hacker Check (TN 14). The records clearly show that Santaeus hired the Broadstreet Bullies and include balance sheets listing the rogue unit as an

"outside contractor". In a concealed safe behind a painting on the wall, the player characters will find additional records on unmarked data disks. These are sensitive reports from Acamar to the JI home offices on New Syrtis, in which Santaeus discusses several options for gaining access to more valuable resources on Acamar. One of these options, dubbed Operation Backstab, involves using mercenaries to inflict maximum economic damage to someone referred to as "the subject", forcing a fiscal crisis for which JI can offer a way out. Backstab, highlighted in the computer records, promises in Santaeus' assessment the fastest way to obtain access to "the assets" and suggests that the Chaos March's unsteady politics offer credible deniability that can protect JI. It should be reasonably obvious to the player characters that the subject of this report is Baron Brynd and that the assets are the Brynd family's coveted southern lands.

Once the characters have copies of the information in hand, they can slip out of the offices and back to Brynd's estate. They should definitely do so before any security or backup can arrive.



TROUBLESHOOTING

However they proceed, the characters should manage to slip away with the information they have come to find, suffering minimal personnel losses into the bargain. The question is which private offices they attempt to penetrate first. If they opt to break into either one of the rival barons' estates, security should be weaker and more lax, allowing them to get in quickly and find any evidence or lack thereof. Remember that the Langdons have no part in the conspiracy, while Baron

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Stevens knows what happened but is keeping the secret to use as blackmail later. Discovering these two facts in the offices of the nobles should in turn direct the characters back to the JI office in Huss.

At this point, the biggest danger is causing an incident with the local nobles by setting off security and/or harming anyone. The characters should keep their infiltration discreet, as anything that touches off a gun battle will likely have repercussions later on. A shootout is distinctly possible at the Johnston offices, but if the characters can make off with the evidence, all the alarms in the world won't stop Baron Brynd from getting his revenge.

WRAP-UP

The player characters have successfully gathered the information to expose Johnston Industries' meddling in the political scene on Acamar and the corporation's efforts to obtain control over valuable resources. Upon their return to Brynd with this information, they will be asked to stay on long enough to complete a speedy—and very public—government hearing against Johnston Industries. In the end, Santaeus and JI will lose, forced to pay damages in a stiff fine levied by the government.

The characters may be asked to testify at the hearings, but nothing the prosecution can say will sway the government from its decision. By the time the characters are ready to leave Acamar, they hear that JI may soon close its Acamar offices as a result of the scandal. This rumor sparks mixed reactions among the locals, who realize they are losing a corrupt but still lucrative source of jobs and income. At the same time, the Brynd family begins the difficult process of rebuilding.

For their efforts, a grateful Baron Brynd pays the player characters for a full three months of work, whether or not the team takes that much time to complete the assignment, plus a bonus of 10,000 C-bills per member. The characters are given the use of the DropShip *Samantha* to transport them to any commercial JumpShip in-system, as a final reward for a job well done.

COMMON PROBLEMS

Most of the information the gamemaster needs to successfully run this adventure is included in the text of each episode and event. Of course, Murphy's Law and common sense dictate that problems will occur. The following suggestions will help the gamemaster overcome certain problem areas quickly.

Missed Clues

As an investigation-driven adventure, *Operation Backstab* requires the characters to be on their toes and alert for all manner of clues. At the end of each chapter, in the *Troubleshooting* section, the critical points covered include what information the characters should come away with, but sometimes the characters may miss out. If that happens, the gamemaster may use Osbourne—the characters' guide through much of the adventure—to suggest where to find a vital fact or to somehow find it himself.

Serious Injury or Death

Like the starting adventures in previous Guides, *Operation Backstab* is riddled with opportunities for the characters to get killed. Though character death is an unfortunate event, the nature of this adventure does not allow for mid-stream recruitment. The gamemaster should therefore consider carefully before each encounter whether the characters can reasonably hope to survive it. If the answer is no, then the gamemaster should leave open a convenient means of escape to save the characters from sudden death.

Keep in mind, however, that covert operations are dangerous by nature and that even a minor mission such as this one can be fraught with lethal peril. It may be tempting to save the characters often, but the gamemaster should not soft-pedal the hazards of this adventure. Instead, the team should learn from its mistakes, and if that takes a few dead bodies, then so be it.

Replacement Equipment

For characters who find themselves short on equipment, *Operation Backstab* provides ample opportunity to collect necessary gear along the way, from shops in Harlech on Outreach to the shadier black markets in Quang Lo on Fletcher. Characters far removed from these excellent resources may also find some gear with the appropriate Streetwise/Chaos March Check (TN 15). A helpful local can point them to the nearest source for what they need, though the availability of such equipment should always depend on how critical it is to the mission. See pp. 131–132, *CBT:RPG*, for more information on how to handle the black market.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Not every loose end is tied up neatly at the end of *Operation Backstab*. These loose threads give the gamemaster excellent opportunities to craft follow-on adventures around a plot that is already half-developed. The most obvious of these plots are outlined below as possible hooks into the player characters' next adventures.

Vengeance

If the players journeyed to Fletcher, the odds are very high that they ran afoul of the Word of Blake there. If any Blakist agents survived the fight with the characters, they will surely harbor a grudge. More important, they remain convinced the characters know something they shouldn't. The Blakist agents are quite likely to put out an all-points bulletin demanding the player characters' capture or extermination, a threat that can dog them for some time to come.

The same applies to Johnston Industries, a major defense corporation with ties to the Federated Suns government. Shamed by the exposure of their unethical operations on Acamar and the resulting shake-up, the company may seek to avenge this misfortune with an attack on the characters at some later date.

Return to Acamar

The trouble on Acamar is only beginning. The player characters helped settle a dispute between minor nobles squabbling over a titanium deposit, but the larger danger comes from the Word of Blake, whose operatives are even now insinuating themselves into the central government. In the power vacuum that results when the characters' information discredits those with the closest ties to Johnston Industries—including the Stevens family—the Word of Blake finds an opportunity to expand its influence. Baron Brynd may hire the characters again to investigate this development in the name of Acamar's continued sovereignty, or the Blakists already on-planet might come hunting for the characters. In the latter case, the Word of Blake's operatives may either seek the characters' aid in securing their dominance (ignoring the fiasco on Fletcher, if it happened) or move to silence the characters for what they already know.

The Boulерice Angle

If the characters managed to rescue Jesse Boulерice and bring him off Fletcher alive, they hold in their hands the opportunity for additional rewards, as Boulерice still has a price on his head with the MRBC on Outreach (3,000 C-bills alive, 2,000 dead).

Taking him back to Outreach to face the charges against him and his fellow Bullies may prove more challenging than it seems, however. Boulерice, free from imminent death at Blakist hands, may try to barter his way out of the characters' custody or may make a daring escape attempt. Even if he does not, or if the characters subdue him before he can get far, taking him back to Outreach for a public trial attracts the attention of the Word of Blake, who will attempt to finish what they started on Fletcher.

REWARDS

The characters should earn experience points at the end of this adventure for the actions they performed in order to accomplish each step along the way. Gamemasters should use the *Rewards* rules on p. 208 of the *CBT:RPG* rulebook as a guide for these, classifying each completed chapter as a mission goal. If the characters also rescued Boulерice from the Word of Blake and took him along to Acamar, they can receive an added bonus for success in that mission as well. They can earn still more experience bonuses by delivering Boulерice back to Outreach, where he still stands accused of the crimes his unit committed on Genoa.

RESEARCH

This section provides all the pertinent background data for the characters' surroundings and recent events they may need to know or can easily learn about through the course of this adventure.

ACAMAR

Orbiting a long distance from its sun, Acamar is a world where near-constant winter dominates most of its land mass and renders only the large equatorial continent of Katenga suitable for habitation. The first settlers on this world were drawn by large veins of precious metals, including gold and silver, and industrial metals such as titanium and nickel, on the planet itself and in the local Illeudian asteroid belt. These valuable resources made the Acamar system a jewel in the Capellan Confederation's crown for centuries. To assure their dominance, the Liao government allowed the lion's share of the profits from the gold and silver trade to go to the planet's nobility. After the Fourth Succession War, however, Acamar's merchant class—who harbored a deep resentment of this arrangement—voted to join the short-lived Federated Commonwealth after their brief membership in the Tikonov Free Republic. Under Commonwealth rule, Acamar's middle class prospered, while much of the nobility clung bitterly to their Liaoist loyalties and bided their time.

When Houses Marik and Liao launched Operation Guerrero in 3057, Acamar's nobility joined the Capellan agents sent to destabilize the government and overwhelmed the meager planetary garrison. The merchant class, led by a staunchly pro-FedCom silver magnate, formed the Acamar Merchants Freedom Guild to oppose the nobility and brought on board the Tiger Sharks, a mercenary unit, to help even the score. The resulting fighting shattered all centralized government on the planet as both sides pummeled each other to near-oblivion. For a while, the planet broke down into a collection of scattered city-states as the few nobles and administrators left struggled to keep order in their own regions.

Acamar was spared the downward spiral into chaos when General Motors of Kathil and Johnston Industries of New Syrtis banded together to launch Operation Stiletto, a mercenary-backed effort to restore a stable (and profitable) government on Acamar and nearby Genoa. Securing the major cities of Huss and Flat, as well as the planetary capital of Kalskag, the corporate/mercenary forces brought the various factions to heel and helped build a new government designed to grant the planet stable autonomy and keep the trade routes open.

Not all of Acamar's nobility and people took part in the fighting, however. Settlements on the interior plains along the equator, where the planet's weather is mildest and the metal mining industries had yet to reach, instead became islands of tranquility in a realm of chaos. With their milder seasons and fertile soil, these small agricultural communities were willing to sell to any customer, regardless of the hostilities. Because so much of Acamar's livelihood depends on these areas, and because none of the noble families or merchant leaders in the region possessed military equipment worth mentioning, these remote lands became inviolate during the fighting. The Brynd, Langdon and Stevens families control the bulk of one such region.

OUTREACH

Outreach is the mercenary's world, first settled in the 2100s by Terran colonists attracted to its warm climate, arable land and abundant natural resources. In its early years, Outreach was known as an agricultural exporter, but tourism became a mainstay of the planet's economy after the world hosted the Star League Martial Olympiad in 2704. After the collapse of the League, and in the more than two centuries that followed under Capellan rule, Outreach's tourism and economy fell into a sharp decline, until the Federated Commonwealth captured the planet in the Fourth Succession War.

To reward Wolf's Dragoons for their service in that war, Prince Hanse Davion gifted them the world of Outreach. The Dragoons' efforts to rebuild the decaying planet soon paid off with a renaissance in its economy and development that transformed it into the new center of the mercenary trade, eclipsing even Galatea, the so-called Mercenary's Star. Located on the continent of Romulus, Outreach's capital city of Harlech, site of the famed mercenary Hiring Hall, provides tourists and mercenaries alike a place to meet and do business. The city is also the home of the Mercenary Review and Bonding Commission, which oversees the honorable mercenary trade throughout the Inner Sphere. In addition to these, Outreach is also home to no small number of military industries, including the GM Blackwell plant on Remus, Outreach's other continent.

Outreach is heavily protected, with the bulk of the Dragoons' five elite 'Mech regiments on-planet at any given time and the bulk of the Dragoons' naval assets in orbit, augmented by the powerful Cyclops I orbital station. These defenses, and the fearsome reputation of the planet's masters, have prevented Outreach from falling into the chaos that continues to swirl around it since 3057 (though they have not prevented the Capellan Confederation from claiming the world as "an independent barony"). In fact, the outbreak of hostilities throughout the March has created a booming industry as hundreds of local leaders have flocked to this world.

The downside of all this activity is the pronounced growth of the so-called TempTownners. These down-and-out mercenaries hail from commands shattered by all the recent fighting, who managed to drag themselves back to Outreach only to find their funds virtually depleted and their prospects for further employment all but wiped out. Over the last few months, the number of these burned-out warriors has increased dramatically, to the point where they are virtually a fixture in every bar, restaurant and alley of Harlech, a solemn warning to others of the price of failure.

FLETCHER

Fletcher's dense atmosphere and constant cloud cover keep it damp and chilly. In its heyday as a holding of the Terran Hegemony, Fletcher became an industrial powerhouse, with several arms factories located there, including StarCorp Industries, Caletra Fighters, Yelm

Weapons and Flame Tech. The planet gained equal significance as the burial site of many Capellan Chancellors, starting with Aliesha Liao, the author of the Ares Conventions, who was laid to rest there even while the Hegemony ruled the world.

During the Succession Wars, virtually all of Fletcher's heavy industries were destroyed, leaving Fletcher a dreary, self-sufficient funeral world by the time it became part of the Federated Commonwealth. Lightly garrisoned after its conquest, Fletcher became a hotbed of terrorist activity by the pro-Liao Zhazheng de guang, who attempted to seize the planet without support during the Marik-Liao invasion of '57.

In the fighting against Fletcher's meager government defenses, both the Liaoist guerrillas and the militia forces were virtually destroyed, disrupting central authority, cutting off cities all over the world and incidentally destroying the local HPG station. A decade later, ComStar and the Word of Blake have yet to re-establish interstellar contact with Fletcher, and visitors passing though attest that the planet has broken down into semi-independent city-states largely ruled by the gun. The pro-FedCom militia still asserts limited authority over the capital city of Royce, but is surrounded by lawless lands ruled by 'Mech pirates, down-and-out mercenaries and even (allegedly) elements of the Word of Blake.

JOHNSTON INDUSTRIES

Johnston Industries is one of the Federated Suns' larger military corporations, a producer of everything from conventional vehicles to BattleMechs and the new *Dagger* OmniFighter. Originally based on Addicks, it was founded from the remains of the Star League's former Tauken Weapons System manufacturing plant. Around the time of the Fourth Succession War, the corporation relocated its central offices to New Syrtis, capital of the Capellan March, where it also built some new facilities.

After the war, Johnston Industries and other local industrial companies gained access to a lot of resources from former Capellan worlds, including Acamar, which became a prime source for military-grade industrial metals such as titanium and bauxite. When all authority collapsed in the region during the Marik-Liao offensive of 3057, Johnston joined with General Motors of Kathil in a plan to re-establish order and trade with some of its key suppliers. The military operation, led by corporate security troops and assisted by several smaller mercenary outfits, was dubbed Operation Stiletto, and brought peace to the war-ravaged planets of Acamar and nearby Genoa.

In the aftermath of Stiletto, GM withdrew its security troops, leaving behind only a small distribution office largely maintained by local interests. Johnston, by contrast, decided to establish a regional office in the city of Huss. From these offices, Johnston has maintained more direct contact with the citizens of Acamar, and often advises the planetary government in matters of industrial development. JI's main interest, of course, is the opening of additional mines. Several

operations, either franchised or wholly owned by the company, exist on Acamar today, some deep within the planet's polar wastes.

HOUSE BRYND

House Brynd is one of a handful of noble families who control the narrow strips of fertile, arable land on Acamar. Of these families, the Brynds have historically been the most successful with seasonal crops—those that lie fallow during winter months—and year-round produce grown in agri-domes. Though the Brynds, like all nobility on Acamar, dominated the planet during its Capellan heyday, they never dabbled in the mining that has dominated so much of the planet's economy. As a result, their profits were lower and the corresponding gap between rich and poor in the Brynd landhold was much narrower. In addition, the Brynd family rarely imposed its will on residents of their lands, a fact that the farmers in the region have never forgotten.

For these reasons House Brynd suffered little economic or political backlash when Acamar became part of the Federated Commonwealth. Even when the Marik-Liao invasion shattered the planet's peace and prosperity, the Brynds and their fellow farmers came through with barely a scratch. This reality is a source of pride for the Brynd family, whose members seem more in touch with the common man than their neighbors.

The Brynd family landhold is a large, roughly triangular expanse of Acamar's most arable land. Their territory covers 1,400 square kilometers and includes three small towns: Justaine, and Lopez in the north and Straand in the south. Located close to Justaine is the Brynd family manor, as well as the family's private spaceport, which is just large enough to accommodate the converted *Fury*-class DropShip *Samantha*. The Brynds also claim one *Scout*-class JumpShip, the *Daniel Brynd*.

HOUSE LANGDON

Located on the eastern border with the Brynd landhold are the lands of House Langdon. Founded nearly fifty years before the Brynds, the Langdons were among Acamar's more prominent nobles as the short-lived head of all agriculture on the planet. Centuries under Capellan rule, however, gradually wore away at this family's prestige, as its members more than once became the subject of House Liao's frequent purges. The results thinned the Langdon bloodline and instilled in them a deep fear of the Confederation. When Acamar became part of the Federated Commonwealth, House Langdon breathed a collective sigh of relief.

Like most of Acamar's agro-nobility, the fortunes of House Langdon did not decline when the planet joined the Commonwealth, and the Langdons likewise were spared the worst effects of the 3057 Marik-Liao invasion. Nevertheless, the Langdons sided with the other Acamar nobles who fought in the name of House Liao at that time, hoping to gain valuable mining lands in the interior as a reward. Operation Stiletto ended the Langdons' dreams,

however, until Johnston Industries discovered the titanium lode running through Langdon territory.

The Langdon family controls a roughly rectangular region due east of the Brynds, with a total area of approximately 1,300 square kilometers. This region contains two small towns, Alliston and Grange, both of which support a farming industry similar to that of the Brynds. Apart from these assets, the Langdons possess only a lance of aging AgroMechs. The Langdons' estate is located outside Alliston.

HOUSE STEVENS

House Stevens borders the Brynd landhold to the west. Much younger than either the Brynds or the Langdons, this family appeared on the scene after the previous landholders, the Jiang-Xie family, were annihilated in a Capellan purge. The head of the Stevens family at the time, Roger Stevens, received the agricultural landhold from Chancellor Maximillian Liao in recognition of his faithful military service to House Liao. Known for their loyalty to the Confederation, the Stevens clan suffered an upheaval when the Federated Commonwealth annexed Acamar.

Though initially stymied by the political change, the Stevens family managed to recover much of their former glory under FedCom rule, and chose not to risk these gains by joining the rest of Acamar's nobility in fighting for a return to Capellan control. In fact, when Johnston and GM launched Operation Stiletto, the Stevens family moved to assist the pro-FedCom companies by volunteering the household guard for the effort. Soon afterward, Baron Harcourt Stevens began courting the powerful industries for mining rights on his land, a plan that has sparked some controversy because it threatens to deprive Acamar of nearly a tenth of its total farmland.

The Stevens landhold is a triangular region due west of the Brynds, with a total land area of about 1,000 square kilometers. This area contains three small towns—Ingata, Nang-tze and Xingya—which support a series of domed agriplexes, mainly to the north. The Stevens clan maintains an aerospace port that, though too small to accommodate DropShips, services commercial airliners and even the occasional military aircraft. The Stevens estate lies just outside Nang-tze.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

This section provides overviews and *CBT:RPG* stats for the major non-player characters.

GEORGE W. SANTAESUS

With his easy smile, piercing gaze and preference for slicked-back hair and immaculate gray suits, George Santaesus is the model of the corporate shark. He is charming in conversation and possesses a keen wit that he brings to bear in all manner of social encounters, from the boardroom to the dining hall. His ambitious and ruthless take-no-prisoners approach to business earned

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him his vice presidency for Johnston Industries new Acamar offices, but he has no intention of stopping there. Hiring mercenaries to sack the Brynd family estates so his company can access its hidden titanium veins is only a sample of the lengths to which this man will go to earn a profit and further his career.

Attributes

STR	4	WIL	7
BOD	4	CHA	5
DEX	6	EDG	5
RFL	6	SOC	3
INT	6	Move	10/20/40

Traits

Attractive
Bad Reputation/New Syrtis
Gregarious
Patient
Well-Connected (2)/Johnston Industries

Skills

Acting	+3
Administration	+4
Bureaucracy/Corporate	+4
Fast-Talk	+4
Martial Arts/Aikido	+2
• Aikido Dodge [+4 to opponent's TN, no damage inflicted; if user wins round of combat, opponent is knocked prone]	
• Topple [-2 to opponent's TN, no damage inflicted; if user wins round of combat, opponent is knocked prone]	
Negotiation	+6
Perception	+4
Pilot/Hover	+1
Pistols	+2

Equipment

Hold-Out Laser Pistol [4•2D6; 10/22/50/120; 3 power/shot (2 micro power packs)]
Microcommunicator, Civilian
Noteputer
Pocket Transcriber

BARON HARCOURT STEVENS

Though he prefers to speak softly, nothing else about the head of the Stevens family is understated. Standing almost two meters tall, his height, hard features and rugged build testify to his passion for physical fitness and the martial arts. With his commanding gaze and regal bearing, Stevens could easily have served as an officer in the glory days of the Federated Commonwealth. At heart, Stevens is even harsher than he looks. An opportunist looking to escape being a mere farmer lord, he has jumped at the chance to capitalize on the titanium find in the region, but was crushed to find that his hated neighbor, Roderick Brynd, held the majority of the lode. Still hoping to gain

controlling influence over any mining profits, he quickly learned of Santaeus' plan to hire the Broadstreet Bullies and secretly hoped for its success so he could blackmail Santaeus over it later.

Attributes

STR	6	WIL	6
BOD	7	CHA	5
DEX	6	EDG	4
RFL	6	SOC	4
INT	6	Move	12/22/44

Traits

Fit
Toughness
Well-Connected (2)/Acamar

Skills

Administration	+4
Blade	+2
Bureaucracy/Acamar	+4
Fast-Talk	+2
Martial Arts/Military	+3
• Haymaker [Take 1 Fatigue and add 2D6 Damage]	
• Neck Jab [TN to hit + target RFL and highest Martial Arts Skill bonus; if successful, opponent makes Knockout Test]	
• Sweep [TN to hit +2; if successful, opponent is knocked prone]	
Negotiation	+5
Perception	+3
Pilot/Wheeled	+0
Pistols	+2

Equipment

Needler Pistol [1•5D6; 2/6/12/20; 10 shots (2 clips)]
Microcommunicator, Civilian
Pocket Transcriber

BARON TERENCE LANGDON

Stocky, with a thick beard, bald pate and a preference for fancy clothes, Baron Langdon looks more like a stage performer pretending to be the head of a noble family. Langdon's appearance, however, is only half the façade he cultivates; he has even fooled himself with delusions of his own greatness. On numerous occasions, he has tried his hand at the Byzantine politics and corporate power plays that rule Acamar, only to come off as a bumbling blowhard. Still, he tries to speak smoothly, attempting—and often failing—to win allies among his fellow nobles. The discovery of titanium in his landhold has made Johnston Industries take notice of him, and they have tolerated his annoying habits in order to strike a lucrative mining deal. This success, however, has not placated him, as Langdon believes he can grab the additional resources on Baron Brynd's landhold through a charm and shrewdness that he does not actually possess.

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Attributes

STR	5	WIL	5
BOD	5	CHA	4
DEX	6	EDG	7
RFL	6	SOC	4
INT	5	Move	11/21/42

Traits

Quirk/Arrogant
Well-Connected (2)/Acamar

Skills

Administration	+4
Blade	+1
Bureaucracy/Acamar	+3
Fast-Talk	+0
Negotiation	+3
Perception	+1
Pilot/Wheeled	+0
Pistols	+1

Equipment

Microcommunicator, Civilian
Noteputer

Traits

Quirk/Honorable
Well-Connected (2)/Acamar

Skills

Administration	+5
Blade	+2
Bureaucracy/Acamar	+4
Fast-Talk	+0
Negotiation	+5
Perception	+3
Pilot/Wheeled	+1
Pistols	+2

Equipment

Microcommunicator, Civilian
Noteputer

BARON RODERICK BRYND

Roderick Brynd is a dark-skinned man somewhere in his late forties. He rarely raises his voice, even in anger, and prefers to lead more by example than by command. He prides himself on his family's fair treatment of the people who live in their landhold and strongly identifies with the modern farmer on Acamar, whom he considers a dying breed. He has lobbied against the expansion of industrial concerns into the few arable areas on the planet, believing that excess mining will ultimately rob Acamar of its independence. Brynd also believes strongly in justice and bringing down the guilty with as little bloodshed as possible. This desire for justice has been sharpened by his grief at losing his eldest daughter in the Bullies' attack.



Attributes

STR	6	WIL	6
BOD	5	CHA	5
DEX	6	EDG	4
RFL	6	SOC	4
INT	7	Move	12/22/44



SHADOW WARRIORS

A space armada slowly takes shape a hundred million kilometers above the elliptical plane of a star; the target planet does not have the military to stop the massive BattleMech invasion about to be unleashed on their world. Instead, a handful of men slowly maneuver in disguised, pressurized, polymer bags towards their targets. After attaching to the ships, they cut a hole in the bulkhead and sneak towards the fragile Kearny-Fuchida core that makes interstellar travel possible. Knowing death is the only outcome, they disable the fleet, aborting the invasion before it has begun, changing the course of history. They have no name, no history, no life beyond their service to the State. They are covert operatives.

A Guide to Covert Ops provides detailed information on every intelligence agency in the **BattleTech** universe. Additionally, extensive Life Paths covering everything from DEST to Lohengrin and Valkyrie to guerrilla insurgents are included. Finally, new specialized espionage gear, campaigning rules and a complete adventure provide all the information and tools players and gamemasters alike will need to enter the covert world of special ops.

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ISBN: 1-932564-15-2 Price: \$24.99.

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