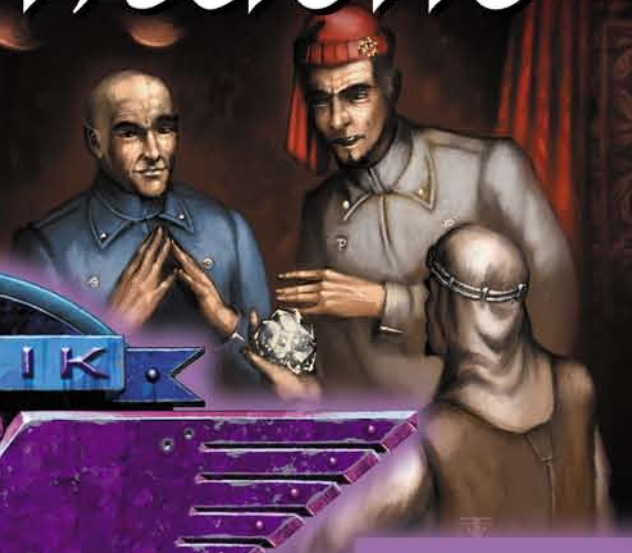


CLASSIC BATTLETECH[®]

35019

HANDBOOK

house marik[™]



WKGAMES

Chris Hartford

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CREDITS

Writing

Chris Hartford

Original House Marik Sourcebook

Adventure Architects (Walter H. Hunt and Richard K. Meyer)
C. R. Green

Product Development

Herbert A. Beas II
Randall N. Bills

Product Editing

Diane Piron-Gelman

BattleTech Line Developer

Randall N. Bills

Production Staff

Art Direction

Randall N. Bills

Cover Art

Franz Vohwinkel

Cover & Header Design

Jim Nelson

Layout

David M. Stansel-Garner

Illustrations

Attila Adorjany

Robert C. Atkinson

Doug Chaffee

Earl Geier

Chris Lewis

Gerhard Mozsi

Klaus Scherwinski

Matt Yo

Color Section

Franz Vohwinkel

Klaus Scherwinski

Maps

Øystein Tvedten

Handbook Series Fact-Checkers

Paul Bowman, Rich Cencarik, Loren Coleman, Ken' Horner, Peter La Casse, Mike Miller, David McCulloch, Jeffrey "Highlander" Morgan, "Medron Pryde", Rick Raisley, Ben "Ghost Bear" Rome, Christopher Searls, Paul Sjardijn, Peter Smith, Christoffer "Bones" Trossen, Øystein Tvedten, Chris "Chinless" Wheeler, Andreas Zuber

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Playtesters

Joel Agee, Raymond Arrastia, Daniel Ball, Ron "Steel Hawke" Barter, George "Skyhigh" Blouin, Rick Casarez, Brent Dill, Benjamin "Hawk" Disher, Tim DuPertuis, John "Quentil" Dzieniszewski, David Fanjoy, Jeff Fletcher, Bruce Ford, John Gordon, Aaron "Bear" Gregory, Anthony "Shadhawk" Hardenburgh, John "Worktroll" Haward, Ross "Koga" Hines, Rodney Klatt, Michael "Konan" Koning, Edward "TenakaFurey" Lafferty, Edward Lott, Keith "Vang" Oberschulte, Darrel "FlailingDeath" Myers, Lou "Nukeloader" Myers, Andrew Norris, Nathaniel Olsen, Aaron Pollyea, Simon "Big Ken" Pratt, Rick "Rick Steele" Remer, Jason "Psychopompous" Richter, Chris "Chunga" Smith, Joel "Septicemia" Steverson, Michael "GuruMike" Stouffer, Rob Strathmann, Geoff "97jedi" Swift, Roland "Ruger" Thigpen, Todd Thrash, Christine Tucker, Jason "Panzerfaust 150" Weiser, Aaron A. Williams, Patrick "Roosterboy" Wynne, Mark "Speck" Yingling (and of course, the fact-checkers and freelancers I mentioned above, who have always been there to help trash a rule or two for good measure...)

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1608 N. Milwaukee • Suite 1005 • Chicago, IL 60647

Find us online:

Precentor_martial@classicbattletech.com

(e-mail address for any Classic BattleTech questions)

<http://www.classicbattletech.com>

(official Classic BattleTech web pages)

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A gentle gust of wind blew the Duchess of Augustine's auburn hair across her face as she leaned forward to retrieve her sunglasses. She tucked the errant strand behind her ear as she settled the dark lenses on her nose. Her eyes shielded from the late-summer sun, Alys Rousset-Marik took a sip from her iced beverage and regarded the gathering before her in this garden that held so many memories.

Here, she and her siblings had played with reckless abandon, climbing trees and swimming in the large pond. Over there was the long lawn where she'd learned weapons from her mother, first the bow that remained in favor as a courtly pastime, later the pistols and rifles that were tools of both leisure and business. In her mind's eye, she could see Ana laughing as the arrow went wide and almost skewered the dog, or Janos tearing into the house to fetch their mother when Alys fell out of the tree and broke her arm.

All these were ghosts now, dead on Coventry or in its bloody aftermath, casualties of a family at war with itself. Ironically, this time it was not her own family—the Marik's bloody history was well-known across the Inner Sphere, with "Marik" synonymous with civil war—though the Coventry campaign and Thomas' de-facto abandonment of his sister, Alys' mother, had set in motion events that might follow the same path. Hence today's gathering. Ostensibly, it was a birthday party for young Calvin, who sometimes called Alys "Mum" and thankfully didn't remember his mother's bloody demise at the hands of the LAAF. He wasn't an orphan, but with Serge off fighting his own private war with the Elsie's—a campaign Alys funded, an open secret at court—the six-year old might as well be. "Auntie Alys" was the closest thing to a mother he had ever known, and the duchess did not want the boy to go through what she had experienced five years ago in the bloody betrayals of the FedCom Civil War.

At 26 years old, Alys had already experienced more than most people do in a lifetime.

"Careful Calvin, don't push." The boy halted his rough-and-tumble with his cousin Trent, Jerome Stewart's boy, who was a year or so older but lacked Calvin's exuberance. For a moment, the bundle of energy subsided into respectful acquiescence, but after a few seconds the admonition was forgotten and the two boys resumed their mad dash around the grounds, watched closely by dark-clad security men.

Little Giselle, Corrine's daughter—between the boys in age—stood calmly watching the proceedings, her rag doll clutched to her chest. After one particularly jarring crash between the two dashing boys, she hid the doll's face. "Tante Alys, my Anson will never be silly like that," she said solemnly. Alys smiled at the dark-haired girl. Was I ever that serious?

"It's okay, poppet," Corrine said from the lounge adjacent to Alys, embracing her daughter. "I'm sure your dolly will be just fine." Though Corrine was almost fifteen years older than Alys, the two cousins looked remarkably similar and could have passed for siblings. "Why don't you go and play with the boys for a bit, hmm?"

The little girl gently placed the doll in a spare seat. Reticence abandoned and skirts flying, she dashed off to join her playmates.

"You know, Corr, this is only the second time I recall seeing you in civvies. I was Giselle's age the last time, I think."

"Dad said I was married to the military for so long, and poor Dominic has to share his wife with a regiment." Corrine forced a grin, though her eyes reflected her internal concern. She commanded the

'Mechs of the Second Free Worlds Legionnaires and was bound for high rank, assuming politics didn't snag her. "But at least we serve together, unlike you and what's-his-name in the Atreans. How are you two getting on, by the way?" She grinned.

"Christian, and none of your business, at least while the children are around." Alys grinned back. "And great-grandpa." She gestured over to where the 122-year-old Androcles Stewart, a product of League medical science, sat dozing in the shade of a tree, his youngest great-great-granddaughter, five-year-old Carmen, asleep in his lap.

A liveried servant refilled Alys' glass and then faded back into the scenery, a skill the young duchess often wished she possessed. She found the constant attention afforded to the ruling family oppressive, but without the security detachments and selected staff, daily life could quickly become hazardous, as several Mariks had found to their brief and fatal surprise over the centuries. Alys' mother had tried to live outside those strictures, first with Lagendorf's Lancers and later as head of her own unit, but even there she couldn't fully escape family politics: Uncle Thomas' decision not to stage a rescue mission in the FedCom Civil War and Uncle Jeremy's contravention of Thomas' orders to do just that. Fracture lines, as her little tête-à-tête with Thomas immediately after the rescue had demonstrated. Relations with Thomas Marik had been frosty ever since, while her relationship with Therese Marik and her husband Jeremy had warmed considerably.

A smartly dressed woman strode across the patio, her formal suit more in line with the security detail than the chic casualness of the gathered Mariks. "Colonel Brett-Marik will be here in about two minutes, duchess."

"Thank you, Jasmine. Are my uncle and aunt with him?"

"They are not on the schedule, ma'am. Security advises that young Anthony is, however."

"Well, the boy can take charge of the younglings. He's off to Princefield in a few years, I believe; he can consider this a test of his leadership abilities." Jasmine smiled and Corrine laughed, looking at the chaos her daughter was causing with the two boys.

"You have a vicious streak, did you know?" Corrine said.

I'm sure some of the family already knew, Alys thought.

The crackle of a radio and a subtle shift in position by the security guards announced the arrival of the next guests at the soirée. Tall and lanky like his father but with his mother's classical looks and raven hair, Photon Brett-Marik was every inch the martial Marik. His arm was draped around a youth of surprisingly similar appearance. Giselle immediately left her "immature" playmates and dashed over to the newcomers. "Tony, Tony, come and play." For all his size and age advantage, the boy knew when discretion was the better part of valor and allowed himself to be dragged off.

"My, she's precocious. Then again, maybe it's genetic. One hears stories. How old were you when you decided you were going to marry Dominic?" Alys asked innocently.

Corrine's response was to throw a lemon slice at her cousin.

"A philosophical difference?" Photon asked as he settled into a free chair.

"You could say that. You're early."

"We came on ahead. Mum and dad are stuck in the city for a while, some function of the big man. Anthony liked the motorcade lights and sirens, though. They're not often an option back home." Home was Khe Shang province on Tamarind.



FAMILIES

"Dad is at the same soirée." Corrine interjected. "He and Thomas always did get on better than the others." The other uncles and aunts, she meant, and that was an understatement. Some of that generation had died in fratricidal conflicts or through excesses, but at least one had been executed on the orders of their mutual grandfather, Janos Marik. Alys was too young to remember the old man, having been born three years after his murder by another cousin and the elevation of Thomas to the Captain-Generalcy, but the elder two did.

"And mine has business concerns to deal with," Alys added. Her non-noble father, Jiri Rousset, oversaw the mercenary force that on paper was her command but for which she had little time because of the new "front" she was about to open. "I half-expected you to be there, Corr."

Corrine focused her attention on her drink.

"It's us kids who are going to do this, then," Photon said, his words heavily laced with irony. He was a decade older than Corrine.

"I've waited long enough. We all have. The League has." Alys' voice had turned deadly serious.

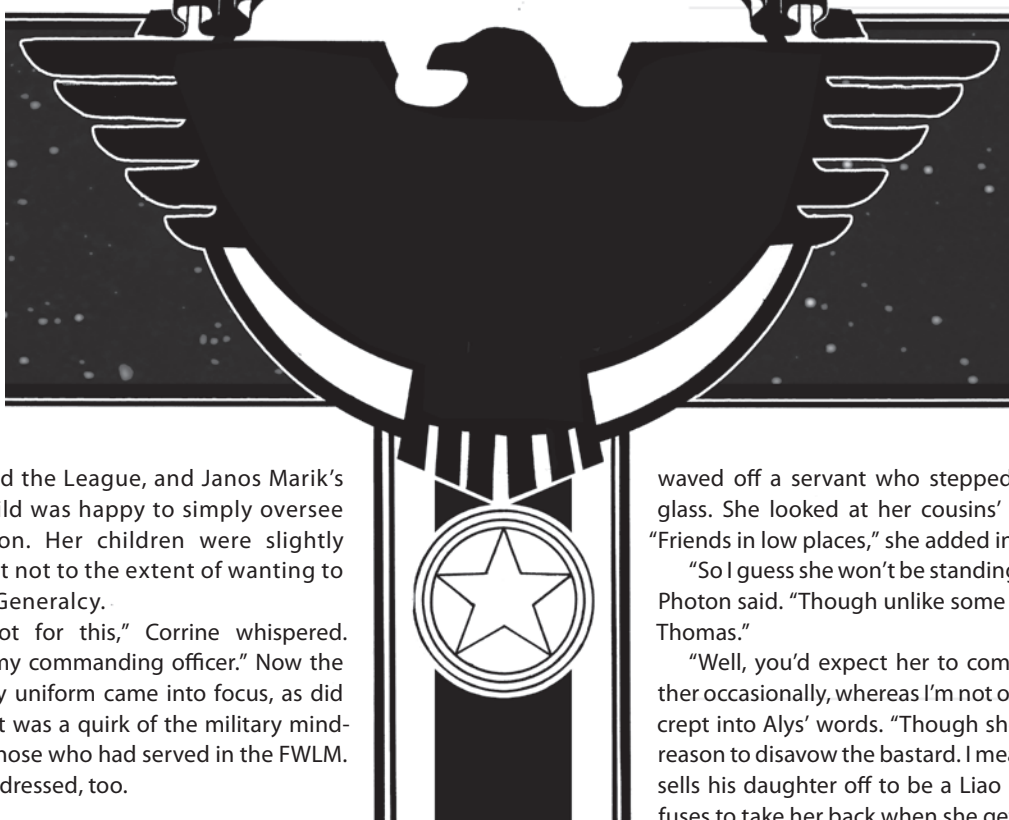
"Mum and dad are behind you, as is Regi." He meant his brother Reginald. "Assuming you really want to get involved in that nest of vipers."

Therese Marik-Brett and her family, despite their noble blood, cared little for the power politics that infested the League, and Janos Marik's eldest surviving child was happy to simply oversee the Tamarind region. Her children were slightly more ambitious, but not to the extent of wanting to usurp the Captain-Generalcy.

"I could get shot for this," Corrine whispered. "Conspiring against my commanding officer." Now the absence of a military uniform came into focus, as did her unease. Maybe it was a quirk of the military mindset, at least among those who had served in the FWLM. Photon was casually dressed, too.



Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik



"I prefer to think of it as 'exercising democratic rights'." Alys paused to take another sip of her drink. "It's not like you're staging a coup or anything."

"No, but isn't that what this is? Thomas is no saint, but in many regards this runs counter to everything I've stood for in recent years. It feels like I'm stabbing him in the back." Corrine looked worried.

"A coup would be going outside due process, and you've stood against those who want to take that road. I have no intention of usurping the office, hell no, but I do want to remind people of their rights, particularly those that have been trampled. And anyway, I thought you'd relish someone else being the focus of the opposition for awhile." She grinned at the older woman. "How many years have they been pressuring you, the family loyalist, to do something like this? I seem to recall that when I was at Princefield, your name kept cropping up as a potential successor to Thomas while Isis was off with Sunny-boy. Carlos would've jumped at the chance." Carlos was Duncan Marik's son, another cousin, though his father's treachery was precisely why the opposition hadn't sought to work with him.

"You know," Photon said, "I feel sorry for Isis, but I'm glad I don't have that Liao weasel as a cousin-in-law."

"You prefer Vic Steiner-Davion?" Corrine said, eyebrows raised.

"Don't believe everything you read in the scandal-sheets, Corr."

"Except when it's true." Alys swallowed the last of her daiquiri and

waved off a servant who stepped forward to refill the glass. She looked at her cousins' quizzical expressions. "Friends in low places," she added in explanation.

"So I guess she won't be standing up to daddy dearest." Photon said. "Though unlike some of us, she is talking to Thomas."

"Well, you'd expect her to communicate with her father occasionally, whereas I'm not obliged to." An icy tone crept into Alys' words. "Though she has almost as much reason to disavow the bastard. I mean, what kind of father sells his daughter off to be a Liao sex-slave and then refuses to take her back when she gets dumped?"



"I get your point, but she really did like Sun-Tzu," Corrine said. "She and I still trade messages regularly."

"And Sun-Tzu liked Thomas' army and economic resources. Good grounds for a relationship. But at least Sunny didn't give away half a foreign power at the wedding." Photon added, deadpan.

"No, he just used Isis to try to get it back. And it's the new beau's father who did that. Nice choice of boyfriends."

"Here's Alys being all cynical and grown up."

"I was twenty-one when half my family got wiped out and I had to raise my nephew. I think I've earned my cynicism, and Thomas has earned his comeuppance."

"So you're determined? The precedent is clear?" Corrine asked.



"Aye. Privilege guarantees me speaking rights, and all I need is one opportunity. I almost wish I'd done it years ago, but I don't think they'd have taken me seriously, and I had distractions." She glanced over at Calvin, who was chasing Giselle through one of the flowerbeds. "I didn't want to do it because of the impact on Calvin of a political fight like the one that's coming, but now I'm frightened about what will happen if I don't act."

"And the repeal statutes?"

"Parliament has the power to decide what constitutes 'the crisis', but does it have the will? That's the question, and my job to find out, I guess." She took a deep breath and pulled a folded sheet from her pocket. "This is what I have so far." The cousins leaned forward.

"Members of Parliament, fellow nobles, members of the League Press Corps. This is the first time I have taken my seat in this august body, and for as long as Parliament has sat it has been tradition for new members to address their fellows, describing their aspirations. I will not bore you with a long speech about my plans for Augustine or my ambitions while in these chambers, but I will avail myself of my opportunity to address this house and to pose a question."

"In 2772, Resolution 288 granted the Captain-General dictatorial powers for the 'duration of the crisis', powers that would be kept in check by the authority of Parliament and the provincial governments. When that statute was enacted, we had a genuine need for strong central leadership—the Star League was in its death throes and the Free Worlds League faced grave danger. Throughout the decades that followed, the post of Captain-General persisted, filled by a whole line of my ancestors up to the modern day. Since the death of my grandfather, the Captain-General—my uncle—has reformed the government of the Free Worlds League, drawing increasing power to Atreus at the expense of regional governments. I will not argue the finer points of the cultural impact this has had on the League, nor will I argue the benefits of such centralization. Those things are not what I wish to question. Rather, I question the wisdom of placing so much power in one man's hands, even if he is my own flesh and blood, particularly given the temporary nature of the post."

"Parliament created the Captain-General of the Free Worlds League to serve as the nation's military leader, installed when needed to protect the interests of the League as a whole. The Captain-General was never intended to be our political leader, let alone create a ruling dynasty—something our founding fathers would have abhorred. Resolution 288 has allowed such a state of affairs to exist in response to 'the crisis,' but one need only ask a simple question to strike at the heart of the matter."

"What is that crisis in this day and age that the Captain-General clings to and uses to justify his hold on power? We are not at war. The Fourth Succession War ended in 3030, and only the secessionists of Andurien have since posed a military threat to our realm. A new Star League exists to ameliorate the politics of the Inner Sphere and to mediate disputes between member-states. We have worked together to fight a common enemy, the Clans, on Coventry, in the Draconis Combine and in Clan space. With the exception of the Andurien War, none of these operations occurred under the command of the Captain-General. Add to that the fact that our economy is sound. Indeed, it is the strongest in the Inner Sphere and the envy of our neighbors."

"We are wealthy, we are well fed, and we are at peace. Where, then, is the crisis? Have we become complacent, accepting the present situation without placing it in historical context? We are allegedly still in a state of crisis—one I feel is unjustified and serves as a smokescreen for other elements, such as personal ambition. Should we allow this to continue?"

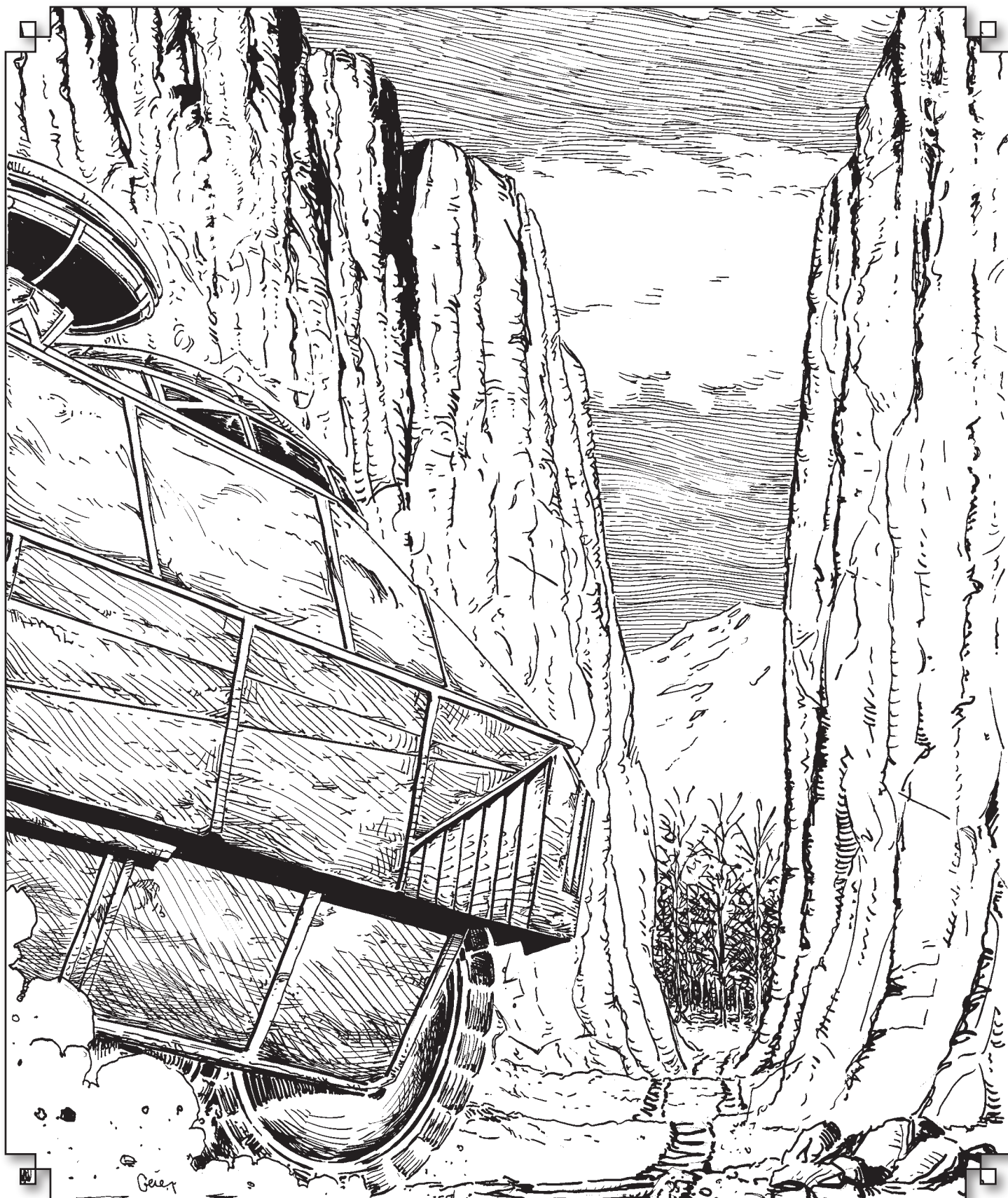
"I do not seek to force my views on this house, but I will state my belief that the crisis is over and that this assembly has it within its power to officially declare the same, terminating the provisions of Resolution 288. Whether we should take such a step is for wiser and more experienced people than myself to decide, but I think that not to have a great debate on this issue is to sell ourselves short and to betray the people's interests."

I thank the house for its time and wish it well in this, its 796th session."

—Inaugural address of Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik



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Handbook: House Marik was produced without government assistance or oversight, but its veracity is attested to by the federal government, which has contracted with Dagger Publications to produce a version for the Free Worlds delegation to the 3067 Star League Conference.

—Dagger Publications, Oriente, September 3067

With the Star League Conference approaching, we in the Archive Services wanted to provide an up-to-date summary of the League and its affairs as a primer for other delegations and a refresher for our own staff. Shortly before beginning our own compilation effort, we stumbled across Dagger Publications' commercial work and obtained a copy for comparison purposes. We found it surprisingly compact and informative (and accurate, save in some of its generalizations), ideally suited to our purposes. Under the authority of the Procurement Act of 3049, I entered into negotiations with Dagger and agreed to a licensing deal whereby we could use the core of their text in our public briefing documents. This obviated the need for my staff to replicate Dagger's effort and allowed Dagger to claim federal approval.

While Dagger made every effort to ensure the veracity of the information herein, there may be errors of omission or perception that color the presentation (or its interpretation), as Dagger Publications lacked access to all the facts. It is, however, as accurate and timely as a non-governmental agency could make it, and its non-secure nature largely guarantees its acceptability to foreign agencies.

As much as I would like to call this volume the definitive work on the Free Worlds League, other sources present valid views and opinions on the League and the Marik family. Where conflict exists between this and other sources, however, readers should take into account the depth and extent of research on this volume.

Nonetheless, caveat emptor.

—James Graham

Chairman, League Parliamentary Archive Services

5 October 3067



HANDBOOK HOUSE MARIK



موزی



Most of the Successor States are rags-to-riches stories chronicling the emergence of vast interstellar empires from the ruins of the old order, notably the fall of the Terran Alliance and the Terran Hegemony that succeeded it. Not so the Free Worlds League. The Marik family that helped found this realm boasted an ancient pedigree and commensurate influence before the rise of steam power, let alone the BattleMech, with records dating back to the thirteenth century. Lords of their own small domain in central Europe, many children of the Marik family married into other great houses of the day and served them as advisers and generals for centuries. Marik family ties spread across the European continent, but they latterly acknowledged as liege lords the ruling Hapsburgs of Austro-Hungary. Serving House Hapsburg, Marik scions grew rich and powerful, their domains frequently the site of royal progresses and their fortresses the recipients of royal patronage. As with any influential family, wastrels and hedonists cropped up roughly as often as sages and leaders.

The first golden age of the Mariks ended abruptly on June 28, 1914, with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand—a distaff cousin—in Sarajevo. The conflict that followed, called the Great War or First World War, shattered the Hapsburg Empire and led to radical social reform that disenfranchised the Mariks. The family suffered hardships in the decades after that terrible conflict, though they retained a grip on their Bohemian domains (if not the steadfast loyalty of their subjects). They weathered the financial and social storms that wracked the world, but just when they felt secure once more, a new challenge emerged. Powerful militaristic neighbors—ironically including the Germanic ancestors of what would become House Steiner—forcibly annexed the Czech lands, including those of the Mariks. The Marik clan had survived war, famine and social upheaval, only to see its domain destroyed and its members scattered by the “peaceful annexation” of 1938.

Like a number of Czechs, Antonín Marik fled the occupation of his homeland and made his way to England. There, with a new world war looming, he found service with the Royal Air Force. Decorated for valiantly defending the skies above his home in exile and later for taking the war back to the enemy, he hoped to reclaim his lost lands as a valiant hero returning home. Instead, the Czech lands swapped one occupier for another. Two generations of Mariks grew up in exile, hoping for eventual victory but always denied it.

The Marik homecoming would not take place until the second decade of the twenty-first century. After the “years of fire” that saw

the Soviet Union shattered and finally crushed, Major Jan Marik—one of Antonín’s grandsons—was among the NATO peacekeepers sent to maintain order in the Czech lands. Jan fell in love with his ancestral homeland and chose to live in Prague. No documents remained through which he could hope to claim his ancient family estates, ruined in any case by a century of occupation and mismanagement. In the years that followed, Jan Marik became a moderately successful businessman and slowly rebuilt family ties to the local community. One of his sons became mayor of Prague, and another served as regional commissioner for the Western (later Terran) Alliance. Ultimately, Jan’s grandson Marshik ushered in the second golden age of the Marik family.

TO THE STARS

The year 2021 saw the publication of Kearny and Fuchida’s theories on hyperspace travel, though these theories languished for more than eighty years before humankind recognized their true significance. Marshik Marik was a high-energy physicist at the Czech Technical University and his team was one of several that published validations of the rediscovered Kearny-Fuchida equations in May 2102. Unlike the scientists of Auckland and Ottawa, history has largely forgotten the Czech team (the fourth to publish, some twenty-six minutes after their Cambridge rivals), but Marshik knew significant gains could be made in developing practical applications of the FTL hypothesis—solid rewards, unlike the transitory prestige of validating an 80-year old theory. Under his leadership (and, some say, thanks to Marshik’s family’s ties in the Alliance bureaucracy), the Czech team became key players in the development of the first robot “JumpShip” and its successors that provided a practical demonstration of K-F principles. Marshik Marik was present in mission control when the first FTL vessel made its maiden voyage in 2107, and again when humanity undertook its first extra-solar voyage (to Tau Ceti, subsequently renamed New Earth).

Marshik would wait almost two decades before he could travel on one of the ships he had helped build, but even before then he stood at the vanguard of the colonization effort, using his mix of scientific and business know-how to good effect when the Alliance Parliament authorized the private construction of FTL vessels in 2123. Within a decade Marik had become one of the richest and most influential people

THE BEARABLE DARKNESS OF BEING

Standing here on the Karl V Most [Charles V Bridge —Ed.], I can see what my grandfather loved about this city. Ahead of me is the island of Malá Strana with its network of winding streets and little hostinecs. On the hill behind are St. Vitus’ Cathedral and the Castle, a beautiful sight even if both still bear the scars of the recent fighting. The people here have welcomed us with open arms as a stabilizing force in these dark days, and my facility with the language means I’m pretty much called on to serve as liaison with civil authorities. It’s not all sweetness and light—a lot of my dealings with them concern the disorder, in particular our efforts to stamp out looting and tit-for-tat murders that seem to typify post-Soviet occupation. Two decades ago the Velvet Revolution passed off peacefully; in this second liberation from the Russians, many have been less forgiving of their collaborating neighbors. The atrocities one person will commit against another beggar belief. One day—perhaps not in my lifetime, but in that of my children, or my children’s children—we can finally escape these petty conflicts. Still, I have a ray of light in these dark days: pretty Alena, my contact on the city council and a damned fine cook given the scarcity of resources. I feel like I’ve known her all my life, not merely three months. I gather tomorrow is her svátek—name day—so we’ll have to celebrate...

—*Diary of Jan Marik*, 12 Srpen (August) 2014



HISTORY OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

GEORGE HUMPHREYS— ARCHITECT OF UNIFICATION

Marik, Allison and Selaj were wildly different characters and their proto-nations had very different goals, so how did the three ever join together to create the first Successor State? They owe this achievement to the brilliant diplomacy of Sir George Humphreys, who not only brought the parties to the table, but also smoothed over their respective foibles. He suggested the constitutional provision that all the papers of high officials should be published, but not until 75 years after their deaths. This compromise preserved historical perspective with full disclosure but protected national security and the privacy of public figures. The “Rule of 75” remained on the statute books until the reign of Kenyon Marik, five hundred years later.

After the formation of the Free Worlds League, George Humphreys hoped to return to retirement but instead found his diplomatic skills needed once more in helping to form the new Parliament, in which he served as Speaker for its first five sessions. He finally retired in 2276, succeeded as MP by his son Richard, who continued his father’s legacy as a consummate diplomat. The Humphreys’ contribution eventually culminated in their installation as governors (later dukes) of the contested Andurien worlds, which are still governed by a descendant of the architect of unification.

—Woods Peerage, 2301

four prosperous worlds that became the core of the Marik Republic benefited greatly from the alliance, but knew that greater things lay ahead of them if only they could persuade others to join their nascent state. After diplomatic overtures fell on deaf ears, in 2245 Charles and his sons Alonzo and Detlev began a military campaign that over the next 26 years increased the Marik domain’s size and influence fivefold. In 2246, with the forcible induction of Atreus into their alliance, the Marik Republic reinvented itself as the Marik Commonwealth. Its purple livery and Eagle banner remain a fixture of the modern Free Worlds League.

in the Alliance, but that was not enough for him. He wished to recapture the glories of the old Marik kingdom, and truly become lord and master of his own domain. In 2156, he made this dream a reality by founding the extra-solar colony that bore his family name. Ostensibly a mining colony, the settlement of Marik would become much more in the years that followed. A succession of Marik administrators ensured the self-sufficiency of their world, turning it into a net exporter of food as well as minerals.

Habitation on the new planet was already well established when the Terran Alliance carried out its first Grand Survey between 2168 and 2172. By the time of the fourth such endeavor fifty years later, the planet Marik had become a key daughter world of Terra. The Mariks and their planet stood aloof from the Outer Reaches Rebellion that erupted in 2235, but the arrogant and overbearing response of the Alliance military (which included requisitioning supplies from the Marik domain, causing considerable local hardship) led to a hardening of attitudes. When the military phase of the rebellion ended in 2237 and the Alliance withdrew its forces back to Terra, Senator Charles Marik threw in his world’s lot with the rebels, and in 2238 he declared Marik independent from the Terran Alliance. The Demarcation Declaration of 2242 formally acknowledged Marik’s independence (as well as forcing many pro-Alliance worlds to fend for themselves). Even before the Declaration, the Marik family was exploiting the situation, inviting numerous neighbor worlds to join them in a mutual defense pact. The initial worlds in this alliance came together under Marik rule in the Republic of Marik, one of a number of such alliances to spring up in those dark years.

Though frequently characterized as shy and unassuming, Charles was a skilled and ruthless politician who fought off numerous rivals to ensure the adoption of his preferred constitution in 2241, winning ratification despite the seeming superiority of competing proposals. The main rivals were the Klondyke Constitution—with its unpopular strong central government—and the proposals of Allard Karsegian, which embodied a pro-business agenda. Charles Marik was not above using the rampant bribery and corruption to ensure victory, suborning the entire Klondyke camp by convincing them that his offer was more palatable than Karsegian’s and then causing several fringe elements of the Karsegian bloc under Adam Marczynski (who was involved in questionable land dealings) to switch sides at the last minute. That his rivals in the constitutional debates later became business partners stands as testament to Charles’ skill and the pragmatism that would come to typify the Republic of Marik’s inhabitants. The

THE HOARDER KINGS

I despaired of ever getting them to talk. For three years one or other of the trinity—Detlev Marik, Raju Selaj or Tomas Allison—would back out or add some precondition that meant a new round of negotiations before any conference took place. For all their disparate enthusiasm for the project, there was no spark to unite them or to bring about the coalescence of interests we so desperately needed. They would each talk to me, but not to each other, despite their family ties (Selaj’s mother was Marik’s niece). I was about ready to call it quits and let matters cool for a few years when the ideal solution presented itself.

During another frenetic round of shuttle diplomacy in October 2269, I was invited to visit Selaj’s apartments for a meal with the young Prince and his mother. After the excellent meal, Raju—hitherto a cold and distant figure—seemed suddenly full of enthusiasm and took me on a tour of the Palace of Mirrors. One room he showed me contained an exquisite collection of figurines, dollhouses, miniature paintings and micro-sized books. The prince was a compulsive hoarder of such works, his collection spanning several rooms in the palace.

Armed with this knowledge, when I visited Detlev Marik several months later, I observed his predilection for trophies, medals and awards and casually mentioned Selaj’s own collections. Marik seemed intrigued by this hint that his Regular counterpart had a human side not dissimilar to his own. When I suggested carrying letters between them, he seemed amenable and delivered a missive to me the next day.

It took another two years to organize the Treaty of Marik, but during that time I carried several communications between Marik and Selaj. By the time they finally signed the treaty, a significant rapprochement had grown between the two lords.

—Sir George Humphreys’ personal diaries, published in 2355 (under the Rule of 75)



The Federation of Oriente emerged at almost the same instant as the Marik Republic, but unlike the scheming and militarism of the Mariks, Tomás Allison used his skills as an ex-Alliance statesman to build diplomatic bridges to his neighbors. Centered on Oriente, Allison's alliance grew steadily, working to survive the rigors of those turbulent decades. The Federation established the Federation Marine and Aerospace corps (FeMA) to discourage adventurism by neighbors (such as the Marik Commonwealth) rather than as a means of extending the Allison reach; FeMA protected rather than coerced member planets of the Federation. Oriente soon matched Marik in power and influence. The two nations easily could have found themselves locked in a military conflict, but the presence of a third party cooled their rivalries and built bridges between the nations.

This third power broker was the Regular Principality, a mercantile collective of five worlds that emerged in the latter 2240s under the leadership of House Selaj. An ancient family like the Mariks, the Selaj were equally pragmatic and made a substantial profit by appealing to their neighbors' greed and self-interest. The marriage of Hugo Selaj to Marianne Marik, Charles' granddaughter, in 2252 forged a strong tie between Regulus and Marik but was not enough to make the mercantilists throw their lot with the militaristic Marik clan, nor to forswear their profitable business links to the Allisons of Oriente. It would take a fourth, hitherto insignificant player to bring these nascent states together in a genuine alliance.

Sir George Humphreys of New Delos could trace his family's starfaring pedigree back to TAS Pathfinder and was an outspoken advocate of colonial rights. An associate of Charles Marik and Tomás Allison from their times in the Alliance Senate, Humphreys had hoped to slip into obscure retirement, writing his magnum opus (*The Collapse of Illusion, A History and Analysis of Recent Alliance Governments*). Persuaded to come out of retirement in 2266 by Tomás Allison, his skills complemented those of his colleague, and together they worked to better Oriente's position. Unlike Allison, however, Sir George remained on good terms with Charles Marik and spearheaded efforts to forge a lasting peace with the Marik realm. Realizing that such a peace would also require Regulus to participate, Humphreys negotiated with the Selaj clan and in 2271 managed to bring together President Tomás Allison, Prince Raju Selaj and Duke Detlev Marik (who had succeeded his father two decades earlier).

Negotiations between the three leaders faltered numerous times, most notably when unknown persons leaked to the press that Regulus and Oriente planned to exchange control over a world as a sign of good faith—a move regarded by the people of Oriente as a betrayal. The incident took months to smooth out and led to the Rule of 75, which prohibited publication of high officials' private papers until 75 years after their deaths. The three persisted, however, and in 2271 signed the Articles of Unification (also known as the Treaty of Marik). The Articles bound their three proto-states into a confederation that would become the first of the new interstellar nations: the Free Worlds League.

The three leaders continued to play significant roles—the Duke of Marik as Minister of Defense, the Prince of Regulus as Minister of Trade and the President of Oriente as Minister of Foreign Affairs—though overall decision-making lay in the hands of the League Parliament. Parliament also had the power to appoint a joint commander of the armed forces, a Captain-General, based on nominations by the Defense Ministry and subject to ratification by the League Council.

FIRST BLOOD

During its initial, peaceful years the Free Worlds League grew slowly but surely as isolated worlds and proto-states joined the alliance for protection. Sometimes the League used a carrot-and-stick approach combining diplomacy with the threat of overt or covert military action, but for the most part the new nation avoided hostilities. These halcyon days ended in 2293 when the small but determined dictatorship of the Stewart Commonality refused the League's entreaties to join up. David Genovese of Stewart believed his rigid despotism was more than a match for the larger but more fractious Free Worlds League, which he saw as too bogged down in bureaucratic wrangling to bother him. The appearance on September 19, 2293, of a Free Worlds battle fleet commanded by Captain-General Juliano Marik came as a devastating surprise. Compounded by Genovese's ineffectual personal leadership, the Stewart defenses folded in short order, the campaign lasting a scant four months.

League military campaigns against the Sarna Supremacy, a little more than a decade later, were less clear-cut. Commanded by Captain-General Danak Selaj, one of the few non-Marik war leaders, the offensive in support of the independent Capellan Hegemony turned into a bloody meat grinder that shattered any hope of the Capellans joining the Free Worlds League.

Encounters with the remnant of the Terran Alliance went much more successfully for the League. The Treaty of Terra formalized relationships between the two nations after the McKenna coup swept away the old Alliance regime. Negotiated by James Humphreys, grandson of Sir George, the treaty headed off the real possibility of war; Parliament had appointed Juliano Marik for a second term as Captain-General and hawks were actively calling for expansion into the Terran sphere of influence. Both parties gained, ensuring secure borders while opening up a host of new markets on their neighbor's worlds. Indeed,

THE RYERSON ACCORD

The newborn League sought alliances with many of its neighbors, hoping to persuade them to join the Free Worlds or using the alliance to learn their secrets in advance of possible military action. One such alliance took place between the Free Worlds League and the Aris government of the Capellan Hegemony, which sought assistance in its ongoing war with the Sarna Supremacy. The deal reached in 2306, known as the Ryerson Accord in the League and the Ryerson Convention in Capellan space, called for League troops to aid the Capellan offensive. Captain-General Danak Selaj oversaw this process and sought to use the Sarna campaign as a distraction for his own offensive against Wasat and Berenson. The troops he sent to support the Capellans were the dregs of the League military, and though their numbers allowed the Capellans to move forward, that dubious advantage came at a stiff price. Rather than greeting the victors as heroes, the civilian population began a series of insurgencies against them. The bloodiness of the campaign and the failure of the Wasat-Berenson gambit led to Selaj's swift removal but also had a more lasting impact. Passed in 2310, the Succession Act gave the Marik clan rights of first refusal for the post of Captain-General, and all save one of the forty-eight warlords appointed since have come from that family.

—Military Disasters XXXV, Alhambra Press, 2491



HISTORY OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

economics succeeded warfare as the driving force behind League expansion in the first half of the twenty-fourth century.

Ironically, domestic matters posed the greatest threat to the Free Worlds during this period. Dynastic alliances were commonplace in the early League: Juliano's cousin married Brian Orloff of the Duchy of Oriente, and Juliano's youngest son Damien solidified ties to the duchy by marrying Duchess Antonia Allison. Laine Marik, the daughter of Juliano's older son Frederick, married David Graham to form the Graham-Marik line. The marriage of Laine's brother Christopher to Madelyne Sian (of the Sian Commonality) led to the formation of the Sian-Marik branch of the family, and also to future dynastic difficulties. By proclamation of the League Parliament, which cited their ties to "a belligerent foreign power," the Sian-Mariks were excluded from House Marik's line of succession. Christopher Marik—then the incumbent Captain-General—and his wife agreed to the conditions, but their sons Kyle and Dorian came to regard the proclamation as a usurpation of their rights. They subsequently became involved in various schemes to gain power, most of which were unsuccessful. One, tragically, was not.

When Geraldine Marik became Captain-General in 2349, her Sian-Marik cousins professed loyalty but secretly sought to eliminate her and establish themselves as the pre-eminent branch of the Marik family. Direct attacks proved fruitless, thanks mostly to Sian-Marik incompetence but also to the Captain-General's security provisions, a response to the Machiavellian politics in the Free Worlds League. The Sian-Mariks eventually managed to suborn Hadji-Mohammed Kimbrough, the Captain-General's food taster. After staging his own poisoning (which

placed him above suspicion), he assassinated the Captain-General in 2364 by sprinkling ground glass in her food. Legally, Geraldine's son Allan succeeded her, but he soon became the victim of another plot hatched by his uncle, Mikhail Marik, who ruled as regent. Mikhail Marik appeared to deal with various schemes against Allan, many of them fabricated as excuses to eliminate rivals to Mikhail's position and House Marik's primacy in the League. In particular, Mikhail targeted the Sian-Mariks, launching the first fratricidal conflict within the family. The Free Worlds media has long romanticized Mikhail's imprisonment of his nephew in order to carry out his vendetta, with numerous works of fiction and ever-popular vids, though the reality was closer to the history of Richard III than the Prisoner of Zenda.

Loyalists eventually rescued Allan, who had sometimes been sedated but was never in serious danger of his life. Once installed as Captain-General, he set about pursuing his mother's killers (though Kimbrough was never apprehended) and his rogue uncle. Mikhail denied his nephew vengeance by committing suicide, though the circumstances surrounding his death remain murky.

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN...

Mikhail's brief usurpation, though infamous, succeeded in eliminating almost all serious rivals to Marik political dominance. A succession of border clashes with neighboring sates proved inconclusive, nor did these conflicts give Allan Marik the opportunity to demonstrate his military acumen. Instead, his tenures as Captain-General were marked by bickering and political infighting,

SIAN-MARIK: BORN KILLERS

When Christopher Marik followed his heart and married Madelyne Sian, it seemed a tragic romance was unfolding at the heart of the Marik clan. Christopher died of a heart attack just two years after his wife's death in childbirth, leaving his two young boys to the tender mercies of their uncles and aunts. Without their parents to explain the circumstances by which the Sian-Mariks had been excluded from the line of succession, and believing their birthright had been stolen, they became increasingly bitter and ultimately schemed against the ruling Marik line. In 2364 their vendetta reached its apex with the assassination of Captain-General Geraldine Marik, carried out by Hadji-Mohammed Kimbrough but orchestrated and funded by the Sian-Mariks.

Evidence implicating the Sian-Mariks soon came to light. Mikhail Marik, who had taken over the reins of power in a de facto coup that disenfranchised Geraldine's son Allan, instigated vicious purges against the cadet branch of the family. Kyle and Dorian Sian-Marik, the ringleaders of the conspiracy, were captured and executed along with Kyle's sons Conal and Brion. Dorian's grandson Roger, another conspirator, escaped and began a reign of terror that lasted for half a century. Eventually succeeded by his daughter Clorinda, commonly nicknamed "the angel," these last remnants of the Sian-Mariks staged a series of increasingly bloody atrocities in pursuit of their cause. Roger's dynamiting of the nursery that had cared for his daughter simply to cover his tracks was without doubt the most gruesome crime committed, but his and later his daughter's casual slaughter of anyone who stood in their way has become a textbook example for criminal psychologists.

Roger died of a heart attack while planning an assault on Allan Marik, leaving the eleven-year-old Clorinda in much the same position as her great-grandfather had been three-quarters of a century earlier. Unlike Dorian and Kyle, however, she was no innocent. Despite her youth, she had been a full accomplice in her father's atrocities; the nickname "angel" came from her apparent youthful innocence that allowed her to sidestep security to plant bombs and carry out assassinations. She continued her terror campaign for another forty years until the reign of Geraldine's great-grandson, Terrence III. Cornered on Norfolk in 2434, Clorinda battled security forces in a five-hour shootout and eventually went down in a hail of fire as she tried to break out of her hideaway. On the Captain-General's orders, she received the best health care the League could offer and was nursed back to full strength before her execution in 2436.

Clorinda's children escaped the purges directed at these Marik offshoots, going on to rule a swathe of worlds in the Capellan Confederation's Sarna Commonality. In 2941, their distant descendant—Vincente Sian-Marik—was convinced to return to the League. The Captain-General of that time never trusted him, however, and dismembered the Sian-Marik family holdings to form Zion and Ohren provinces.

—*Famous for Fifteen Murders: Serial Killers and Terrorists of the Free Worlds*, Laurent InfoMedia, 3065



particularly after the once-fragmented Capellan states coalesced into the Capellan Confederation and rendered moot the League's efforts to expand in that direction. Were it not for his infamous uncle and martyred mother, Allan Marik likely would have been little more than a footnote in the early history of the League.

Allan's son Peter offered a stark contrast to his father. Aggressive and determined, he had little time for parliamentary protocol; after his appointment he stormed out of Parliament, declaring he would not return until the Andurien Crisis was resolved. Triggered by Kurnath Liao's declaration of war in 2398, this conflict sought to bring the long-disputed Andurien system into the nascent Capellan Confederation and is commonly acknowledged as the first major conflict of the Age of War. Instead, he vastly preferred the life of a field commander. When House Liao declared war on the Free Worlds League in 2398, the opening act in what would later be called the Age of War, Peter Marik was ready. The ensuing conflict was bloodier and more hard-fought than any in previous decades. Both sides employed massive numbers of tanks, infantry and fighters as well as WarShips. Casualties mounted swiftly, leading less hard-hearted members of the League administration to call for a cease-fire despite the eventual expansion of conflict to engulf the entire Inner Sphere.

House Selaj in particular spearheaded the peace endeavor, jealous of the Marik position and fearing that a never-ending war would eat into their profits. After the disastrous Kwamashu campaign of 2401, Herad Selaj proposed to take up the mantle of Captain-General, using a variety of political tricks to garner support. Unfortunately for Selaj, Peter Marik demonstrated his martial skill with a drive into the Confederation, forcing Liao troops off Mosiro and Lopez before pushing onward into the Sian system where the Free Worlds League flotilla secured a decisive victory. Other worlds were brutalized in the campaign as well, leaving the Liao state virtually crippled. In 2404, the new Capellan Chancellor, Aleisha Liao, proposed a treaty to end the conflict. The Andurien worlds would remain under Marik governorship for ten years, after which their inhabitants would decide their own fate via a referendum. This treaty ended the first Andurien conflict, but the Age of War was only beginning.

A FATHER'S PRIDE

Many Mariks have maintained secret mistresses but none were as important—or as potentially damaging—as Reiko Makayoshi. A minor functionary in a Combine trade mission, her beauty and intelligence captivated Mikhail despite the political obstacles to any long-lasting relationship. The two began an intense affair and the result was a child, Mikhail's daughter Hideyo.

The stigma of a relationship with a foreigner, and especially carrying his child, condemned Reiko to exile in the League, where she lived in relative obscurity until the tragic events of 2367. Mikhail continued to see her and Hideyo, never marrying, though he had other mistresses and children (who later went on to form House Severn). The exiles' existence was an open secret among the Marik family, though they were never discussed or acknowledged for security reasons. Some of Mikhail's other children became jealous of the attention their father lavished on his half-Kurita daughter and her mother.

Mikhail could offer little direct assistance, but his sister Geraldine had a much more pervasive reach. Using her powers as Captain-General and Warden of the Perimeter Defenses, she manipulated the NIA and federal agencies to smooth Reiko's way, in particular getting citizenship for herself and her daughter. Hideyo won attendance at the Boswood School of Industry on her own merits.

The death of Reiko and Hideyo (along with four others) in an elevator accident has been adequately explained. The failure of several emergency systems is usually attributed to mismanagement, but the high-rise block in which they lived was modern and well maintained. The timing of their deaths—when Mikhail was at the height of his power—is suspicious as well. Numerous theories posit a link to the Sian-Mariks, whom Mikhail had hunted ruthlessly after Geraldine's murder, or to his nephew Allan, whom Mikhail had held in "protective custody" for three years. Whatever the truth, the loss of Reiko and Hideyo hit Mikhail hard; historians often cite it as a factor in the collapse of his rule and in his suicide a few months later.

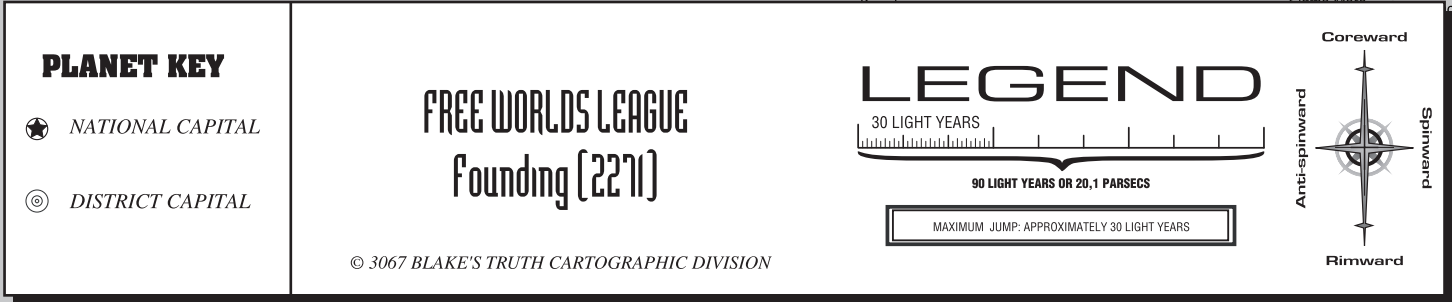
—*Skeletons in the Closet: Secrets of the Successor Lords*, Laurent InfoMedia, 3063

MIKHAIL MARIK—BAD, MAD OR DANGEROUS?

What persuaded Mikhail Marik to move against his nephew—and why he ultimately committed suicide—are among the League's most profound historical mysteries. Some theories posit a desire to avenge his sister's murder; he certainly did that, hunting down the assassins and unearthing conspiracies across the League, some of them even genuine. Others suggest a desire to hide his complicity in the assassination plot. A family tragedy is another favorite theme, with the death of his lover Reiko and daughter Hideyo in an elevator "accident" pushing Mikhail into a deep depression and triggering his decision to take his own life. Little evidence exists to suggest Mikhail was mad in the classic sense—he was clearly lucid and rational—but he may have suffered from depression. Contrary to public reports, nothing suggests that he suffered from paranoid episodes. His couring of House Marik's enemies, initially generated by grief, was little more than political opportunism. Medical records confirm he suffered from a degenerative disease, Knights-Grasse Syndrome, which caused intense pain but would not be fatal for many years. The threat of torture thus held little fear for Mikhail, though perhaps the stigma of having usurped his nephew's position became too much to bear, particularly once Allan was free.

The most insidious claim, put forward in 3053 by Nab Bruin in his bestselling novel *Double Bluff*, suggests that Mikhail and Allan were in league, with Mikhail carrying out a purge of the family's opponents while Allan remained safely "imprisoned." Bruin suggests that Mikhail's condition was terminal and that after the murder of his lover and daughter, he chose to sacrifice himself for the greater good of the League. Bruin hints that Mikhail's suicide—the completion of his part of the deal—may have been assisted by Allan's agents, either facilitating the usurper's self-termination or pushing him over the edge through the murder of Reiko and Hideyo, because Allan wanted power or because Mikhail had overstayed his agreed time in office. That Bruin's book is a work of speculative fiction has not prevented the Allan-Mikhail alliance from becoming a popular conspiracy theory in the League.

—Calvin McDonald's *Mysteries of the Eagle*, Regular Free Press, 3062





TIMELINE: ANCIENT HISTORY

Thanks to their ties to the ancient Hapsburg dynasty, the Marik family can trace its lineage back more than 1,500 years. Over that time their fortunes have waxed and waned, the low point being the aftermath of the Great War in the twentieth century. The Mariks eventually prospered, however, and acquired immense political and economic power.

- 1914: [28 June] Archduke Franz Ferdinand assassinated in Sarajevo, leading to the First World War, the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire and the disenfranchisement of the Marik family.
- 1938: Antonín Marik flees the occupation of his homeland and makes his way to England, where he flies Spitfires in the Battle of Britain.
- 2011-2015: The “years of fire” that see the final end of the Soviet empire and the formation of the Western Alliance. Jan Marik serves with NATO peacekeepers that move in to safeguard his ancestral lands.
- 2021: Kearny and Fuchida publish their key theories. General Motors files a patent for the first commercial fusion reactor.
- 2027: The *AS Columbia* is launched from Crippen Station, making a swift (fourteen-day) journey to Mars. Previous manned missions to Mars took six months.
- 2028: The Magellan Program commences, sending sub-light fusion-powered robot probes to explore neighboring star systems.
- 2086: The Western Alliance recasts itself as the Terran Alliance, becoming the first widely accepted global government.
- 2102: [25 May] Several teams rediscover Kearny and Fuchida’s papers, validating their theories. One of the second tier of teams, led by Marshik Marik, is at the Czech Technical University. A formal request for funding to develop the Kearny-Fuchida FTL drive follows.
- 2107: [3 Sept] A robot JumpShip successfully makes an in-system jump, proving the K-F system functional. Manned tests follow.
- 2108: [5 Dec] *TAS Pathfinder* becomes the first manned ship to travel to another star, Tau Ceti. The captain, Norm McKenna, dubs the system’s sole human-habitable world New Earth.
- 2116: New Earth becomes the first permanent settlement outside the Terran system.
- 2123: Corporations begin building private FTL vessels. Among those riding the industrial-exploration wave is physicist-industrialist Marshik Marik, who amasses a fortune and establishes a colony named Marik.
- 2168: The Terran Parliament authorizes the first Grand Survey (completed in 2172)
- 2195: Second Grand Survey takes place, showing more than 200 worlds in a sphere 90 light years in diameter.
- 2219: Third Grand Survey ends. Humanity now inhabits more than 300 colonies in a 100-light-year sphere, an average of four new settlements per year since the second Grand Survey.
- 2235: Fourth Grand Survey takes place. Humankind had spread to more than 600 colonies in a 120-light-year sphere, a stagger-

ing eighteen colonies per year. [27 May] Fifty colonies declare their independence from the Alliance, starting the Outer Reaches Rebellion.

- 2237: The Outer Reaches Rebellion ends when Alliance occupation forces withdraw.
- 2238: Marik declares its independence from the Terran Alliance in what proves to be the last gasp of the Rebellion.
- 2241: A Constitutional Convention on Marik adopts the proposals of Charles Marik, forming the Marik Republic (later the Marik Commonwealth). Oriente gains its independence; President Tomás Allison uses his diplomatic skills to build alliances with his neighbors and begins to create the Federation of Oriente.
- 2242: The Demarcation Declaration limits Alliance-claimed worlds to a radius of twenty-two light-years from Terra. All other worlds are left to their own devices, irrespective of their desires to remain part of the Alliance.
- 2247: Formation of the Principality of Regulus.
- 2271: The Free Worlds League forms, the first of the non-Terran states to appear.
- 2293: The League forcibly absorbs the Stewart Commonality.
- 2306: Parliament signs the Ryerson Accord. Danak Selaj serves as Captain-General during the disastrous Sarna campaign.
- 2315: [22 July] Conflict breaks out on Terra. Fleet Admiral James McKenna stages a coup and establishes control, forming the Terran Hegemony.
- 2316: The Free Worlds League and the Terran Hegemony negotiate the Treaty of Terra.
- 2317: Lucien Davion negotiates the Crucis Pact, creating the Federated Suns.
- 2320: Shiro Kurita founds the Draconis Combine.
- 2341: The Tamar Pact, Federation of Skye and Protectorate of Donegal unite to form the Lyran Commonwealth.
- 2364: Geraldine Marik dies when her food taster puts ground glass into her meal. Officially, Geraldine’s son Allan succeeds her; in reality, her brother Mikhail Marik governs for a protracted period.
- 2366-2369: Allan Marik’s campaigns bring a succession of formerly Liao-controlled worlds into the Free Worlds League, including Zion, Berenson and Andurien. These worlds become the focus of decades of conflict.
- 2367: House Liao forms the Capellan Confederation. Davion units occupy Capella but are annihilated when the Liaos employ orbital bombardment to wipe out the city where they are based.
- 2375: Robert Marsden stages a coup in the Lyran Commonwealth, making himself the sole Archon.
- 2389: The Terran Hegemony conducts the fifth Grand Survey.
- 2396: Peter Marik becomes Captain-General of the Free Worlds League.
- 2398: Kurnath Liao declares war on the Free Worlds League over the Andurien planets, marking the start of the Age of War. The campaign lasts six years and is regarded as a Free Worlds League victory.



TINTAVEL: DEATH OF A WORLD, BIRTH OF AN AGE

Of all the campaigns of Peter Marik's reign, the one on Tintavel garnered most attention and had the greatest impact, fostering as it did the creation of the Ares Conventions that legitimized warfare as a means of settling disputes. The assault began traditionally, with a short scuffle in low orbit followed by infantry and armor landings. The planet's Liao defenders sought to crush the Marik beachhead, but lacked the skill and equipment to threaten Peter's troops. In less than a week, the FWLM had established a solid presence and began aggressively expanding its area of control. The Liao troops fought tenaciously, but quickly realized they faced little chance of success in open terrain. Instead, some withdrew into the mountains, fighting a hit-and-run campaign, while others pulled back to the cities, vowing to make the Marik forces pay for every bit of ground.

Both aspects of the Tintavel conflict turned into bloody meat-grinders, exacting a fearsome cost from the civilian population as well as from the troops. The inhabitants of Tintavel's urban areas had not escaped in advance of the conflict—some evidence suggests that the local Liao commander ordered them to stay, lest any withdrawal be seen as an admission of defeat—and got caught in the middle. Civilian casualties mounted; first hundreds, then thousands and then tens of thousands. Constant fighting wrecked the planet's infrastructure, with no end in sight.

Which side used strategic weapons first is unclear. Some evidence hints that CCAF agents used a micronuke against the FWLM staging grounds, but also that the Marik troops used chemical weapons against insurgents in the mountains. As the conflict passed the six-month mark, it shifted markedly from a quest for control of the territory to a burning desire to wipe out the opposition. At this point, Peter Marik and Aleisha Liao—realizing that the situation had escalated out of hand—intervened and ordered their troops to withdraw. By the time the commanders complied and disengaged, there was little left worth fighting for. The planet's settlements limped on for a few more years before being abandoned.

The carnage of unrestricted warfare so horrified Aleisha Liao that she instigated the Ares Conventions, designed to protect civilian populations and planetary infrastructure. Peter Marik, though appreciative of the protections the conventions offered, was more pragmatic. "War is hell," he said, "and this document, while protecting people, will ensure that every man, woman and child in the Inner Sphere resides beneath the specter of warfare. It was Von Clausewitz who said 'War is the continuation of politics by other means.' As of today, we have enshrined that insight as a legal right for the nations of human space."

—*The March to War: Origins of the Age of War*, Latine Press, 2602

THE AGE OF WAR

The victory over Liao was the first of many, and Peter's reputation grew. His ambition grew as well, and with it his disdain for Parliament, whose members sought to rein in his actions. In many regards, the Captain-General faced a four-front war: not only against the Lyrans, the Terrans and the Liaos, but also against Parliament. This "war at home" reached its crescendo in 2413 when Parliament enacted a special committee to oversee the Captain-General's office. Initially the committee had little impact. The previous year, the Inner Sphere powers had met at the behest of Aleisha Liao and forged the Ares Conventions, which at first limited offensive warfare. Nor did the committee have any measurable impact on allegedly defensive operations, such as the relief of Dieudonne in 2416. However, when Peter Marik launched a counteroffensive, Parliament balked. Despite the drive's initial success, netting a succession of Lyrans worlds, Parliament ordered the Captain-General to conclude an armistice, fearing that the costs of offensive operations would lead to unpopular tax hikes. Peter complied, but not before one last push brought worlds like Rochelle into the League. Parliament understandably decided its oversight committee was insufficient and passed the War Powers Act, placing massive constraints on the powers of the Captain-General.

The truce with House Steiner lasted barely two years, thanks in part to Peter Marik's last-minute push, and in 2420 Parliament once more called for the installation of a Captain-General. Peter was the only serious candidate, but before a shocked Parliament, he refused the call, citing the limitations of the War Powers Act as making the job impossible. Forced to seek an alternative, Parliament appointed Joseph Stewart, one of Peter Marik's lieutenants. Captain-General Stewart moved to counter the Lyrans advance but misjudged the invaders' strength and intent. The League lost the worlds of Amity, Danais and Concord in short order. This Lyrans victory, together with the liberation of Rochelle, seemed to assuage House Steiner's bloodlust. Rather than driving further into the League, the Lyrans turned their attention toward the Draconis Combine.

Support for the War Powers Act collapsed in the wake of this defeat, and with it went support for the act's main architects, House Selaj. It seemed likely Parliament would strike down the act, allowing Peter Marik to resume his defense of the nation. When he was called to Parliament on May 9, 2422, Peter's return to greatness seemed assured.

The assassin who shot and killed Peter as he left the Parliament complex was never identified, but the timing and circumstantial evidence points toward House Selaj, whose members faced political ruin if Peter won his face-off against Parliament. With Peter gone, efforts to repeal the War Powers Act faltered. With the League's borders quiet, no immediate incentive existed to change the status quo, and debate raged on for half a decade. When Lyrans forces attempted to seize the strategic world of Bolan in 2427, however, Parliament called on the Marik family to lead the defense, offering the Captain-Generalcy to Terrence Marik II, Peter's oldest surviving son. A skilled politician, Terrence refused, knowing that Parliament would have to bow to his will and repeal the War Powers Act or appoint a non-Marik as Captain-General. The short but disastrous tenures of Selaj and Stewart had made that choice unpalatable to many. Parliament vacillated until more worlds fell to the Lyrans, assuring Terrence's political victory. He received a parliamentary delegation at his Dormuth estate, which informed him of the Act's repeal and restated its request for him to serve as Captain-General. Within hours, the new Captain-General was planning his campaign. His intelligent strategy blocked Lyrans efforts to take more worlds and locked the invaders into a bloody stalemate that made the LCAF troops pay dearly for their adventurism. Unfortunately, despite his success in defending the League, Terrence proved unable to retake the lost worlds. After fourteen years of campaigning, during only two of which he officially served as Captain-General, Terrence tendered his resignation as Minister of Defense.

A RELUCTANT HERO

The Marik clan met at Dormuth in the winter of 2440 to decide who should succeed Terrence. Two candidates stood out: Micaela Marik, Terrence's eldest daughter and a respected infantry commander, and Peter Marik II, Terrence's younger brother. Quiet and thoughtful, Peter supported his niece's claim, believing her the better choice. Her arrogance and blatant desire for the position led many to oppose her, how-



ever, including her cousin George, who pressed his father's position. The war of words between George and Micaela degenerated rapidly and culminated in Micaela calling her uncle a coward. The heated debate suddenly turned nasty, with open insults and accusations replacing the subtler barbs and needling of earlier proceedings. The other attendees looked on horrified until Terrence, who had hitherto watched in silence, ordered his daughter and nephew back to their seats. He declared that in dishonoring her uncle, Micaela had gone beyond acceptable behavior and made a grave misjudgment.

The duel that followed became a legend in Marik family history, pitting the sixty-two year-old Peter II against the thirty-nine year-old Micaela—age and experience challenged by youth and fitness. For all his unassuming nature, Peter II was well trained in the martial arts and an innovative swordsman. The clash between the two contestants lasted for some time—the legends say two hours, though various histories have challenged this figure—but in the end Peter won the duel and the nomination to become the twelfth Captain-General.

His counteroffensive succeeded where Terrence II's had failed, and in 2441 the League reclaimed the lost worlds of Kamenz and Bolan. Taking a leaf from his father's exploits, Peter II pushed on and took a succession of Lyran worlds, penetrating to Halfway and Smolnik before calling a halt to offensive operations. Some critics of the Captain-General suggested he should have pushed onward to Tharkad, shattering the Lyran Commonwealth, but such unrealistic complaints neglected to account for the massive resistance the LCAF would have mounted around their capital system. By calling it quits when he did, Peter avoided weakening the FWLM, and by switching to the defensive he forced the LCAF to expend resources in generally futile efforts to retake their lost planets. With the Steiner border arrayed to his satisfaction, the Captain-General turned his attention to the Liao front, defending against a succession of incursions.

When Peter II retired in 2452, he left the Free Worlds League at the height of its power. Its borders were secure and at their furthest extent, and the League economy was booming thanks in part to the Liberation Act of 2448 that made the populations of worlds captured by the League automatically eligible for citizenship (though actually

granting it entailed a long and convoluted process). The Liberation Act limited the exodus of civilians from captured worlds that had previously marked such occupation. This landmark legislation served as a template for similar laws in other states, expanding on the Ares Conventions and inuring the people of border worlds to the constant shifting of their political masters. The elder statesman of Free Worlds League affairs, Peter II continued to serve his realm for another sixteen years, continuing as Speaker of the House—a post he had held since 2446, the only individual ever to serve as Speaker and Captain-General simultaneously. When "Peter the Great" died in 2468, his state funeral was among the largest and most lavish in League history, attended by the powerful and showcasing the FWLM's new technologies.

PARADIGM SHIFT

The next Captain-General was Geralk Marik, Peter's grandson, an accomplished field commander. Aggressive and determined to live up to his predecessor's legacy, Geralk resumed the war with House Steiner and invaded Bella I and Alula Australis, capturing both in only a few months. Though he got results, Geralk's devastating methods—which included strategic bombardments and numerous tactics that pushed the spirit if not the letter of the Ares Conventions—earned him the epithet "the bloodthirsty." In 2459, Geralk Marik expanded the war to include the world of Loric, whose capture he personally oversaw. According to accepted wisdom, Geralk's battle plan could not possibly fail. It had one fatal flaw, however; it dealt with tanks, infantry and fighters. The Free Worlds forces were completely unprepared to face the new and terrifying battlefield innovation first fielded by the Terran Hegemony and now employed in battle by the LCAF. Heavily armed and armored but also highly maneuverable, these BattleMechs swiftly crushed Geralk's offensive and launched a counterattack against the Captain-General's command post. Some reports suggest Geralk had gone insane and believed he could not be beaten, while others say he led a valiant rearguard effort to allow his forces to withdraw. Geralk died when the Lyran 'Mechs overran his position, literally crushing him underfoot. Within three days,

PROLIFERATION: THE RISE OF FREE WORLDS LEAGUE BATTLEMECHS

Looking back, it is hard to believe that much of the Age of War took place before the widespread deployment of BattleMechs. The Terran Hegemony guarded such technology closely, and it took a Lyran raid against the planet Hesperus to spread details of these war machines to other states. The LCAF used the walking tanks to deadly effect on Loric, killing Geralk Marik, but three years later disaffected technicians on Alarion were persuaded to defect to the Free Worlds. They brought with them full BattleMech schematics, allowing the League to begin production in short order. The subsequent loss of these same schematics to the Capellan Confederation led to a major security operation, but it came too little, too late; the genie had already escaped the bottle.

The first Free Worlds League-designed 'Mech, code-named *Icarus*, comprised a limited run of half a dozen. Similar in many regards to the Lyran-made *Mackie*, it was crude compared to modern designs (or even the Terran models it aped), but field tests quickly proved its battlefield effectiveness. It ended up short-lived as additional designs more familiar to the modern Inner Sphere swiftly followed, each more sophisticated than its predecessor. Within months the FWLM had battle-tested these first examples, using them to halt the LCAF drive against Alula Australis. Realizing that federal manufacture would never be practical, Captain-General Simone Marik gifted the design schematics to several Free Worlds League corporations in return for sharply discounted bulk purchases. Inside of a decade, the BattleMech became a mainstay of the Free Worlds League military and people began to wonder how previous generations could have existed without them.

—*Mechs in Warfare*, Inter Media Resources, 2506



HISTORY OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE





the Free Worlds League abandoned Loric and consolidated its forces on other occupied worlds. The LCAF strove to recover them over the next few years, but the LCAF did not have enough BattleMechs to provide anything more than a localized advantage.

Only nineteen when she took office, Simone Marik—at that time the youngest Captain-General ever appointed by Parliament—received a major boon in 2462 when Lyran technicians defected to the Free Worlds League with complete schematics of the BattleMechs employed by the LCAF. In short order, the FWLM began to employ BattleMechs that allowed them to halt and then turn back the Steiner offensive against Alula Australis. This successful defense was the only notable military event during Simone's tenure, though unlike her vainglorious father and his predecessors, the youthful Captain-General had no desire to be covered in glory. Though a competent military commander, Simone is best known for her economic foresight (akin to that of her great-grandfather) and her dedication to strengthening the entire Free Worlds League through technology and education rather than concentrating on the military. Her forthright manner and lack of charisma did not sit well with Parliament, however, and after a series of failed negotiations with the Capellan Confederation over an alliance to attack the Terran Hegemony, Simone's tenure lapsed in 2475.

Carlos Marik, Simone's brother and the thirteenth Captain-General, had planned a punitive operation against House Liao after the disastrous negotiations, gathering troops at Oriente, but his abiding fear of the Terrans prompted him to shift his focus toward an invasion of the Hegemony. Reorienting the military troops gathered at Oriente for the Liao campaign, Carlos planned to strike quickly and lethally, using his WarShips and stockpiles of atomic weapons to smash the Terran military before the Hegemony could unleash it on the Marik domain. Ironically, Carlos' plans triggered the very military action he feared when a spy passed details of the operation to Hegemony leaders. Hegemony forces launched a lightning raid against Oriente, destroying the Free Worlds League fleet at anchor. This debacle prompted Carlos' younger brother, Brion, to stage a bloodless coup in which the Marik family and most of Parliament confirmed him as Captain-General. As the prospect of a civil war loomed, Parliament attempted to broker a deal giving Brion the Captain-Generalcy and leaving Carlos as Speaker of the House. Carlos' response made clear his unfitness to serve even to his own commanders, who defected to Brion's cause. Taking the last ship loyal to him, Carlos Marik fled into the Periphery, taking refuge in the worlds that would later become the Magistracy of Canopus. Shortly after swearing to reconquer the Free Worlds League, he disappeared. Most Marik family histories downplay suggestions that SAFE eliminated the troublesome Carlos; instead, they suggest that, consumed by paranoia, Carlos eventually took his own life. No more evidence for exists for this explanation than for any of the wilder speculations about his fate.

Tall and charismatic, Brion Marik inspired his troops and prepared for war with the Terran Hegemony, which he believed his brother's folly had made inevitable. To his surprise, rather than staging a major invasion, Hegemony leader Theodore Cameron proposed a peace treaty. Signed in 2478, it provided for monitoring and mutual understanding to reduce tensions along the two realms' mutual border. Brion's pragmatism undoubtedly saved the League from a major military embarrassment at the hands of the technologically advanced Hegemony and began an era of détente that culminated in the formation of the Star League almost a century later. The rest of Brion's reign was workmanlike, its high point a series of joint exercises with the Terrans that served to discourage Lyran and Capellan adventurism. Though often maligned as ineffectual, Brion's calm and measured approach to leadership was just what the Free Worlds League needed to calm its nerves. When he died of a heart attack in 2511, Theodore Cameron was among the mourners at Dormuth. After the funeral, he held a series of official engagements with the new Captain-General, Brion's son Albert.

Ironically nicknamed "the great," given his short stature, Albert inherited his father's charisma and his great-great-grandfather's military ability. He was also a patron of the arts, an accomplished businessman and a skilled diplomat. The only endeavor at which Albert did not excel was direct command of troops. His diminutive frame was an obstacle to service with line units, though this did not prevent him from piloting a customized Griffin BattleMech, adapted to his size and equipped with advanced communications gear that allowed the bipedal tank to serve as a mobile command post.

The early years of Albert's governance were relatively peaceful, but in 2528 war erupted once more over the Andurien worlds. This bitter and hard-fought conflict dragged on for three years and eventually engulfed most of the Marik-Liao border. Though outnumbered, Marik forces performed well, beating back numerous assaults. The border constantly shifted back and forth, despite Albert's valiant leadership and cunning plans. In 2531, Ian Cameron of the Terran Hegemony sought to broker a peace settlement, and invited Albert Marik and Mica Liao to a conference

THE SUCCESSFUL FAILURE

In her investiture speech in 2459, weeks after her father died on Loric, Simone Marik stated, "My first ambition is to avoid making history." In many regards she succeeded—economic reform and technological advances, hardly the stuff of popular history, typified her twelve-year tenure. This very reality, however, gave her a far-reaching impact. Simone's foresight drove the Free Worlds economy forward and gave the nation considerable power in the later years of the Age of War. On her orders, the NIA carried out operations on Alarion to secure 'Mech technology for the FWLM. Though quiet and studious, Simone Marik was forthright in her opinions—a tendency that frequently put her at odds with Parliament and kept the renewal of her tenure from becoming a foregone conclusion.

Having reshaped the Free Worlds' military and economy, Simone sought to improve its diplomatic fortunes, building alliances with the Capellan Confederation. Chancellor Jasmine Liao likewise sought to link her House to the Mariks and normalize relations. Efforts to broker a dynastic marriage failed, however, with Simone refusing then-twelve-year-old Raxal Liao on the grounds that her tenure would likely expire before he reached his majority. The Liaos in turn blocked a suggested alliance between Simone's brother and a niece of the Chancellor. As an alternative, Simone suggested a bold trade: the coveted Andurien worlds in exchange for Capellan support in an invasion of the Terran Hegemony. Jasmine Liao refused. This reversal finally convinced Parliament to abandon Simone, and in 2475 the MPs allowed her tenure to lapse. Her brother Carlos succeeded her, and Simone retired from public life. Aged only 35, she died in a riding accident seven weeks later.

—Jared Khan, *Great Mariks (Vol. 1)*, Oriente University Press, 3041



HISTORY OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

SALT IN THEIR BLOOD

The Free Worlds have always excelled at finding commercial applications for technology, but except for Marshik Marik's initial work and the developments of Rhylene during the Star League, they have been innovators in only one area: jump technology. League scientists perfected the advanced energy collection and power-transference superconductors that allowed significant reductions in the size of jumpsails. At a third of their previous size, they became practical additions to all classes of jump-capable vessels rather than merely appropriate for energy-collection stations and WarShips. Freed of their reliance on fusion plants, operating costs for commercial JumpShips fell considerably. League scientists also pioneered the Condé Process, a high-pressure crystallization technique that facilitated the production of significantly more reliable K-F cores. The tripling of the major overhaul interval on the drives to roughly two years (which most current vessels exceed by an order of magnitude) also contributed to a general reduction in operating costs.

Having helped make space travel cost-effective, League scientists shifted their emphasis to limiting the dangers faced by crews and passengers. The development of personal escape units by Venza Engineering of Stewart, though not a new technology, provided a tangible hope of escape from stricken vessels (few of which carried sufficient life boats or escape pods), while the hull-sealant technologies of Jamgo Industries on Angell II may have provided the inspiration for the Clans' HarJel. The Brandt Recoil effect discovered by scientists on Stewart had the greatest impact, however. The scientists found that generating a K-F field produced a momentary measurable feedback that allowed the jumping vessel to sense whether or not its emergence point was stable. From this recoil, they developed a cutout circuit that drastically reduced mis-jumps and soon became standard on all vessels. A side effect of the process permitted ships to approximate their target coordinates somewhat and trust the vessel's systems to safeguard them, drastically reducing calculation times.

—*Technological Innovations*, Charybdis Publishing, 3066

position clear, but the Periphery states summarily rejected membership in the Star League. Immediately, the Great Houses enacted plans to force their compliance, treating them as children who must be made to acquiesce for their own good. Within two years, Star League assault forces launched invasions of the Rim Worlds Republic, Outworlds Alliance, Taurian Concordat and Magistracy of Canopus. Their pretexts for war included the Pollux Proclamation and the Taurian Concordat's pre-emptive attacks on the Federated Suns in an operation code-named Case Amber.

Marik forces dominated the Seventh SLDF Corps that made up the Canopus thrust, commanded by Marion Marik, Albert's daughter and the new Captain-General. Leaving political management of the League in Parliament's hands, she waged a bitter campaign, pitting Free Worlds League technology and skill against the Canopians' determination. Attacks such as the ambush at Vakarel in 2577, or the strike against the SLDF transport hub on Meadowvale, slowed the SLDF advance, but the Captain-General tenaciously prosecuted the war. She remained, however, a staunch adherent of

on New Delos. To the surprise of observers (and, according to rumor, the participants), the three leaders reached a solution reaffirming the result of the First Andurien War, after which a plebiscite would indicate the Andurien citizens' desire to remain part of the Free Worlds League or leave it. The deal resolved a host of other border issues as well, making the Treaty of New Delos one of the most comprehensive accords between the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation. The close working relationship between Albert Marik and Ian Cameron was key to the treaty's success, but the most historic accomplishment of that partnership was yet to come.

CREATING THE STAR LEAGUE

One thing Albert learned from Ian Cameron was the Hegemony lord's desire to see an end to the Age of War and the union of humanity—if not unification under a single ruler, then as allies in a peaceful confederation. Cameron called this dream the Star League. Albert, with his mercantile and arts background, found Cameron's arguments compelling and swore to aid him. In the decades that followed, Albert Marik as much as Ian Cameron would be the architect of this pan-human alliance, though ultimately he would claim little of the glory (outside the Free Worlds League, at least).

Cameron's negotiations to end the Second Andurien War showcased his ability to bring feuding lords to the table. His brokering of another peace deal after the Third Andurien War (which erupted in 2551) was the first concrete step in this new alliance. Here, Albert Marik showed his willingness to make sacrifices for the greater good, promising to transfer sovereignty of the Andurien worlds to Terrence Liao despite the League's clear military supremacy in the conflict. This sweetener paved the way for Liao to sign the Star League Accord, which the Capellan lord had previously hesitated to do. The signing marked the first major step forward in Cameron's plans. Historians often gloss over the fact that, in exchange for the sacrifice of Andurien, Cameron promised the Marik family the Free Worlds League's seat on the Star League Council.

Albert's assistance likewise proved invaluable in winning over the Lyran Commonwealth and Federated Suns. He accomplished the former by manipulating the Archon's political and economic advisors, who feared that not joining the Star League would hand the Mariks an unassailable economic advantage. For the latter, Albert worked to destabilize the Davion economy, prompting that realm's twin lords to seek the ameliorating influence of Cameron's alliance. Neither endeavor was particularly glorious, nor was Marik's involvement widely known outside of close associates of the Captain-General and the Hegemony Director. Only the martial Draconis Combine remained aloof from Albert Marik's economic and political meddling, but even Hehiro Kurita was amenable to the alliance, though it would take Ian Cameron until 2569 to persuade the Kurita warlord to sign the Treaty of Vega. With that done, the dream of a united humanity became a reality. The next two years saw the actual forging of the Star League, establishing its bureaucracies and shaping its powers and limitations.

THE STAR LEAGUE ERA

Like many legendary eras, the Star League period has been romanticized and turned into a "golden age" that few who lived at the time would recognize. The idea of "humanity united in peace" was Ian Cameron's dream, which he and the other House Lords chose to make happen by any means—including war. The Pollux Proclamation of 2575 made this



the honors of warfare, insisting on the applicability of the Ares Conventions even after First Lord Cameron announced their suspension in 2579. The destruction of the Canopian fleet at Thurrock opened the door to Canopus, and Marion captured the Magistracy capital in early 2584. Securing the entire Magistracy took another four years, and thirteen more would pass before all the Periphery realms were subdued.

Unlike some House forces involved in other Star League campaigns, Marion Marik came to respect her Periphery opponents. Despite considerable casualties on both sides, she made sure her personnel treated prisoners well. She left many Canopian institutions intact, establishing the Star League as an over-arching authority rather than seizing direct governance. This preservation of Canopian society, together with Marion's insistence on the honors of war, did much to ensure a good working relationship between Canopus, the Free Worlds and the Star League. Melissa Humphreys, the administrator appointed to oversee the reconstruction of Canopus, took a similarly enlightened approach, encouraging her parent government to pour massive investments into its neighbor. Seeing an opportunity for profit, Parliament—and League businesses—readily complied. Resistance to the occupation soon crumbled. In 2604, civil government resumed and Canopus took its place as a full member of the Star League, the first Periphery realm to make the transition.

BACKLASH

The enlightened attitudes that made Marik governance of the Magistracy so effective unfortunately came back to haunt the League. Free Worlds-sponsored investment transformed Canopian industry, placing it at the cutting edge. Marik companies profited from this rebuilding, but it soon became apparent that the Periphery's combination of drive, determination and new technology was quickly outstripping the antiquated industries of the Marik domain. Unlike the long-standing trade rivalry with the Lyran Commonwealth, this was a one-sided battle in which the Free Worlds League suffered greatly.

Throughout the 2620s and into the 2630s, the Marik economy slowed and then stalled. The introduction of a Star League-wide currency, the SL dollar, in 2623 proved the final straw that pushed the Free Worlds League into recession despite efforts by skeptics in Parliament to block its introduction. The economy became the overriding issue in Parliament, with some calling for government protection of the economy (limited by the free-trade provisions of the Star League accords) or even an abrogation of the Treaty of

ALBERT MARIK: THE LITTLE GIANT

One of the most important leaders in Free Worlds history, Albert "The Great" was a superlative orator and tactician, though his diminutive size precluded his participation on the battlefield. A dozen years working for Calloway VI's Rising Star Conglomerate left him well versed in business, while his Marik heritage—and illustrious forefathers—ensured his military brilliance. An avid painter and art collector, he became a patron of culture, taking an interest in everything from sculpture and painting to ballet and taiko. Albert possessed many talents, but unlike many people with such diverse interests, he was a master of several.

His succession to the Captain-Generalcy in 2511 pushed Albert onto the wholly new stage of League-wide politics and governance, but his business acumen and natural speaking ability allowed him to do pretty much as he willed. His deep, clear voice held people spellbound, and though he rarely wrote his own material—like most professional politicians, he relied on his staff—he could deliver captivating off-the-cuff speeches. When going into a meeting or public engagement, he made it his business to know as much as possible about the other attendees, and his ability to enquire after a guest's latest golf scores or their child's performance at a concert recital provided a personal means of developing a rapport. He also boasted impressive facility with languages. In addition to his native English, he spoke Hindi, Japanese and German fluently and could also turn his hand to Urdu, Mandarin and French with reasonable competence—abilities that smoothed his diplomatic dealings with outsiders. That Albert became the secret architect of the Star League with his friend Ian Cameron is perhaps unsurprising. The Star League needed precisely his combination of skills in order to become a reality, though only in the Free Worlds is his central role in the endeavor routinely recognized. His death shortly after the League's founding was a major tragedy, and the leaders of all the Great Houses attended his funeral on the planet Marik.

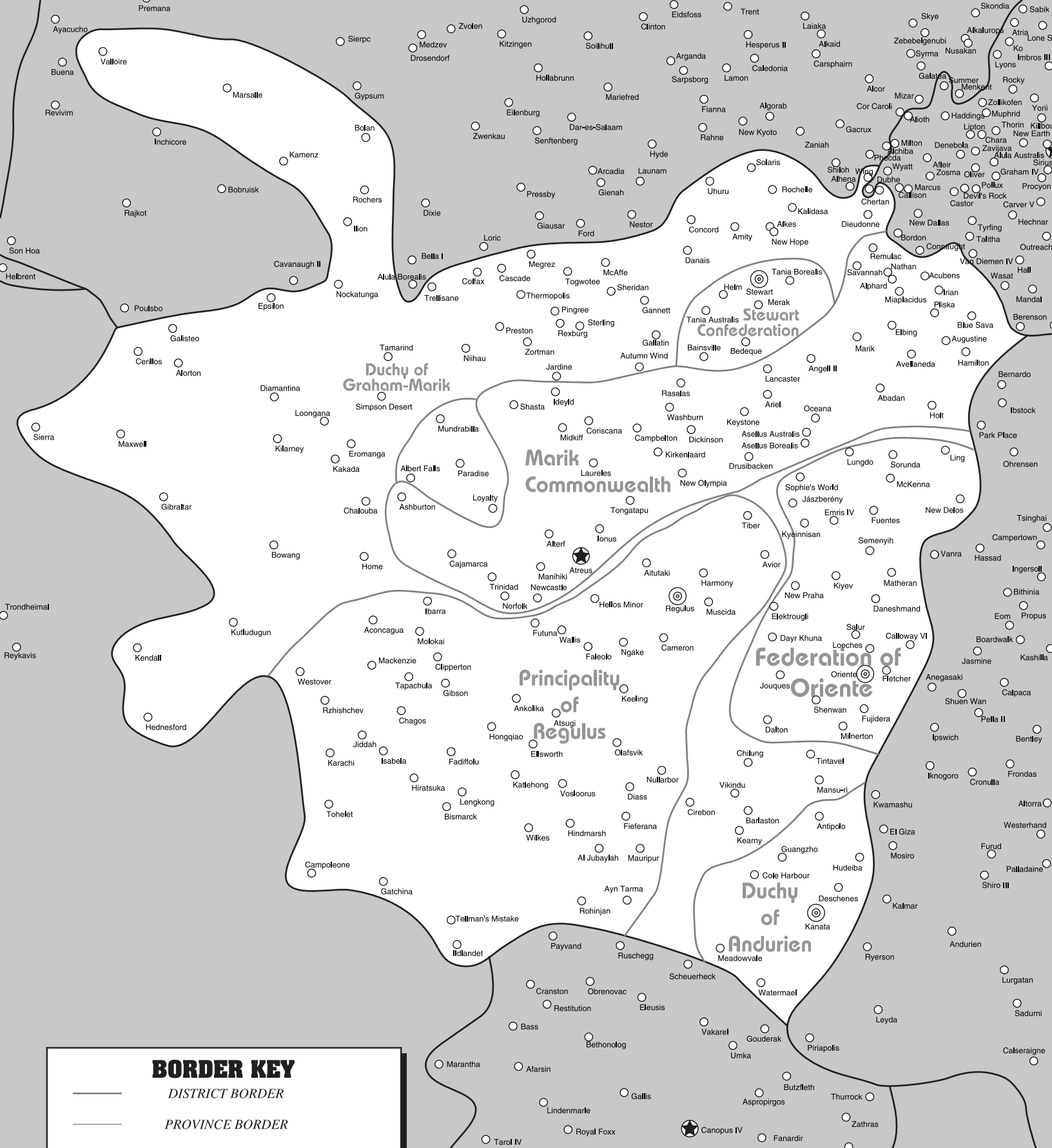
—Jared Khan, *Great Mariks* (Vol. 2), Oriente University Press, 3041

UNLIKELY ALLIES—THE FREEBOOTER WAR

Between 2584 and 2588, a group called Shepperton's Freebooters struck Marik targets in and around Andurien. The Freebooters formed around a core of CCAF defectors, who revolted and fled to the Periphery after a regional plebiscite suggested that Andurien would rejoin the Free Worlds. (Ironically enough, it didn't at that time, but remained a Capellan holding until the First Succession War; the Free Worlds' "Duke of Andurien" actually governed a rump province during this period.) With the Captain-General kept busy by the Star League campaign in the Magistracy of Canopus, Parliament called on the Liaos to deal with the troublemakers. As the CCAF and Maskirovka made stumbling efforts to crush the renegades, Atreus and Sian became locked in a war of words that threatened the stability of the Star League. In 2587, Marion Marik threatened to halt operations in Canopus and return to deal with the Freebooters, taking the war to Sian if the need arose. Neither the FWLM nor the CCAF had yet managed to track the rogues back to their hideout.

In March of 2588, the Maskirovka—allegedly aided by Star League intelligence agents—identified Wisconsin as the Freebooters' base of operations. Houses Liao and Marik planned a joint assault, the only such FWLM-CCAF military operation until the Second Star League campaign against Clan Smoke Jaguar. The attack on the Freebooters degenerated into a chaotic melee in which the nominally allied armies lost more than a company of 'Mechs, while the renegades lost almost two battalions. The League and the Confederation divided the spoils and the prisoners. Those in Free Worlds custody spent the next two decades in prison, while those returned to Sian were executed in front of Chancellor Ursula Liao.

—*Forgotten Histories*, Charybdis Publications, 3055



BORDER KEY

- DISTRICT BORDER
- PROVINCE BORDER

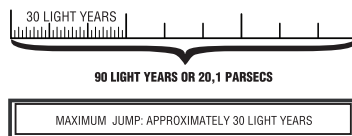
PLANET KEY

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

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE
after
Age of War (2571)

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LEGEND





TIMELINE: THE AGE OF WAR

With the Free Worlds League a cohesive whole, internal disputes died down and were replaced by external confrontations with neighboring states—the Capellan Confederation and the Lyran Commonwealth—in the so-called Age of War. During this period, the Free Worlds League had mixed success, political hesitancy limiting its ability to capitalize on martial successes.

- 2398: The First Andurien War between the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation heralds the Age of War.
- 2404: Peter Marik stages a major naval assault on Sian before negotiating a peace treaty with Chancellor Aleisha Liao.
- 2412: [13 June] The Ares Conventions are signed.
- 2416: The Lyran Commonwealth tries to take the Marik planet Dieudonné, but is beaten back. The Lyrans lose several worlds to League counterassaults.
- 2418: The Lyran Commonwealth and the Free Worlds League conclude a short-lived armistice.
- 2420: Hostilities resume between the Lyran Commonwealth and the Free Worlds League. The introduction of the War Powers Act limits the Captain-General's control of the League and the military. Consequently, Peter Marik turns down the post of Captain-General and Joseph Stewart is elected instead. His tenure is disastrous, but the Commonwealth cannot follow up its advantage because of its second front with the Draconis Combine.
- 2422: Peter Marik is assassinated.
- 2427: The Lyran Commonwealth turns its attentions back to the Free Worlds League. Parliament repeals the War Powers Act to ensure a Marik Captain-General. Terrence Marik takes up the post.
- 2439: Scientists on New Earth unveil the first BattleMech, the MCK-5S Mackie.
- 2441: Having made little headway against the Lyrans, Terrence Marik steps down as Captain-General. His brother Peter II assumes the Captain-Generalcy at his family's behest.
- 2452: Peter Marik II steps down as Captain-General, to be succeeded by his grandson Geralk.
- 2455: Operation Prometheus, a commando raid against Hesperus II, nets the Lyran Commonwealth plans for the Hegemony's BattleMechs.

- 2459: The Lyran Commonwealth first uses BattleMechs, smashing Marik troops on Loric. Captain-General Geralk Marik is crushed by a Lyran 'Mech. His daughter Simone becomes Captain-General.
- 2462: Defectors from the Commonwealth BattleMech plant on Alarion give the Free Worlds League schematics and technical notes on the Lyran 'Mech program. A Marik defector in turn leaks this information to the Capellan Confederation.
- 2470: The Free Worlds League use BattleMechs for the first time during clashes on Alula Australis.
- 2475: Carlos Marik succeeds Simone, whose tenure Parliament allowed to lapse. Gathering a fleet in the Oriente system, Carlos prepares to attack the Terran Hegemony. Hegemony intelligence services get wind of the planned assault and a Hegemony fleet destroys the Marik forces at anchor. After this debacle, Brion Marik stages a coup and deposes his older brother, who is certified mentally unstable.
- 2478: Director Theodore Cameron of the Terran Hegemony and Captain-General Brion Marik of the Free Worlds League negotiate a peace treaty.
- 2508: Megrez falls to the Lyran Commonwealth.
- 2511: Brion Marik dies and is succeeded by his son, Albert.
- 2528: The Second Andurien War breaks out between the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation.
- 2530: The Magistracy of Canopus forms.
- 2531: The Free Worlds League attempts to recapture Megrez from the Lyrans. The Terran Hegemony steps in to mediate the dispute, as well as the ongoing conflict with the Capellan Confederation.
- 2556: The Terran Hegemony successfully mediates an end to the Third Andurien War. With the aid of Albert Marik, Ian Cameron persuades House Liao to sign up for Cameron's Star League concept.
- 2558: The Tharkan Accords signify the Lyran Commonwealth's intention to become part of the embryonic Star League.
- 2567: The New Avalon Accords bind the Federated Suns into the Star League.
- 2569: [15 August] Hehiro Kurita signs the Treaty of Vega, making the Combine the last great power to join the Star League.

TIMELINE: THE GOLDEN AGE

Many view the era of the First Star League as a golden age crowned with social, technological and economic marvels. The reality is less rosy; considerable conflict still existed and many areas still suffered hardships. Considering what followed, however, this view of the early Star League years has a certain validity by comparison.

- 2571: [9 July] The Star League is formally established.
- 2575: The Star League issues the Pollux Proclamation, demanding that the Periphery states join the League. The Periphery states refuse, triggering the Reunification War.
- 2577: The Taurian Concordat launches a preemptive strike, code-named Case Amber, against Star League forces gathering to attack the Concordat. The assault destroys twenty Davion auxiliary ships on 15 March. The Reunification War officially starts when the Star League declares war on the Periphery states. [June] Captain-General Marion Marik leads the SLDF Seventh Corps against the Magistracy of Canopus. [Nov] The Magistracy Navy ambushes an SLDF task force at Vakarel.
- 2578: Magistracy forces strike at the Star League transport/supply nexus on Meadowvale. This action halts the League advance for six months.
- 2579: Ian Cameron renounces the Ares Conventions for the duration of the Reunification War. Marion Marik refuses to follow suit.

- 2583: The Canopian Navy is ambushed and destroyed at Thurrock.
- 2584: [April] Canopus falls to Captain-General Marion Marik. The Freebooters' War begins.
- 2588: The remaining Magistracy worlds fall to Star League forces. The Freebooters' War ends with a joint FWLM-CCAF assault on Wisconsin.
- 2597: The Reunification War ends.
- 2604: The military occupation of the Magistracy of Canopus ends. Tanya Kerensky, an SLDF trooper, dies from stab wounds inflicted by Leonard Kurita during a struggle in the Star League Council Chambers.
- 2607: The last Star League troops withdraw from the Periphery.
- 2623: [1 July] Star League member-states accept a unified currency, the Star League dollar.
- 2630: Hyperpulse generators, a Marik invention, undergo their first tests.
- 2640: The SLDF holds the first Martial Olympiad.
- 2650: Michael Cameron issues the Edict of 2650 limiting the size of each member-state's military. Heavy cuts in the DCMS result, leaving many Combine MechWarriors ronin (masterless warriors).



HISTORY OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

Marik. The most vocal supporters of this protectionist agenda were the princes of Regulus, whose trade empires had been curtailed by the Star League alliance, but Oriente and Stewart also courted the protectionists. Only the Marik Commonwealth stood decisively in opposition, with various Captains-General working to protect the diplomatic agreements and maintain the Free Worlds' place in the Star League. The technologies for hyperpulse generators, discovered by Rhylene HyperTech of Oriente in the late 2620s, became a battleground for these factions. Though several years passed before the FTL-comms system became public, the Star League Terran science directorate insisted—per the Treaty of Marik—that the Free Worlds League company share its innovation with other member-states. Rhylene's work provided the last clue needed by the famed scientist Cassie DeBurke to complete her research on HPG communications; the company's hardware made DeBurke's theories a practical reality. Rhylene's contribution appeared in the findings presented to Star League Communications Minister Joshua Hosiko, but only as a footnote buried deep in a technical appendix. Few outside the League appreciate Rhylene's involvement in the project, an undercutting of the League's historical technological advantage that played right into the protectionists' hands. The movement's leaders began speaking out equally against the Captain-General and the First Lord.

Only in the late 2640s did the Free Worlds League claw its way out of the labor disputes and political wrangling that dominated the early years of the Star League, with the opening up of new worlds thanks to advanced technologies giving the realm a much-needed shot in the arm. As the economy improved, so did the standing of the Captain-General and the popularity of the Star League. Even the enacting of First Lord's Edict 2650 (the reduction of House militaries) did little to dampen spirits, though it did drive a number of former soldiers into the arms of extremists.

THE SCOURGE OF DEATH

The economic renaissance in the Free Worlds League robbed the Protectionist Party of its core support, but encouraged the most extreme to take matters into their own hands. The 2660s saw the emergence of numerous extremist groups, a number of which resorted to violence and terrorism. Most of these groups staged only one or two operations before the security services tracked them down (and many were dealt with before they could commit a crime). The group known as the Scourge of Death was different, appearing on the scene with a bomb at Atreus' starport in 2667. Over the next decade, the Scourge staged numerous assassinations, hijackings and acts of sabotage. Despite apprehending a few low-level operatives, Free Worlds security services proved unable to identify and deal with the group as a whole, or to unravel the web of finance and information that supported the terrorists. Then the Scourge went a step too far, stirring up a hornet's nest that changed the very fabric of the Free Worlds League.

On October 19, 2678, a bomb exploded at Hartsdale, the Marik mansion on the family's Dormuth estate. Captain-General Terrence Marik and most of his senior relations were meeting in the library, beneath which the explosives had been placed. Terrence died immediately, as did his wife and daughter, his brother Theodore and numerous other cousins, officials and staff. In total, the blast killed 39 people and nearly ended the Marik line. Terrence's closest surviv-

ing relative was General Gerald Marik, commander of the Third Marik Militia. He had attended the doomed soiree and was not expected to survive the night, having suffered massive injuries. So dire was his condition that the family priest even gave him the Last Rites.

Survive he did, however. With bionic implants and the best medical care the Free Worlds League and Star League could offer, Gerald made a remarkable recovery, and a little over a month after the attack was sworn in as the twenty-sixth Captain-General. He swore to avenge his dead relatives and track down the perpetrators of the atrocity. Parliament and much of the League's population stood with Gerald, especially since Andrew Marik, Gerald's son, was among the casualties. The new Captain-General had goodwill in abundance—even the Steiners and Liaos sent their condolences—and Gerald was determined to exploit that advantage to the full.

He unleashed SAFE and the Marik Militia to hunt down all leads concerning the Scourge. Niceties such as civil liberties were casually brushed aside; slowly but surely, Scourge cells were crushed and their web of relations unraveled. Public support waned somewhat under this assault on civil freedoms, but most tolerated the intrusions, presuming them to be temporary. Gerald brushed off protests lodged in the Star League Council when the FWLM staged a series of raids in the Magistracy of Canopus, calling the raids "police actions" relating to internal security. Parliament also made its displeasure known, accusing the Captain-General of using the Dormuth tragedy as an excuse to remove his political rivals. Suggestions even floated around Atreus of withdrawing support from the Captain-General and installing another member of the Marik family as the Free Worlds' Star League Council lord.

Then came the events on Westover. Whether a fortunate coincidence or stage-managed by Gerald Marik, SAFE's discovery of a Scourge cache on this backwater world proved fortuitous, especially as it included numerous traceable computer records. With unrestricted access to several banking records among the find, SAFE identified the source of the Westover cell's funding: the Selaj family of Regulus.

Conspiracy theorists later suggested that the evidence against House Selaj was merely the ultimate example of Gerald using any means necessary to eliminate his rivals; according to them, SAFE could easily have fabricated the records. Certainly the trial-in-absentia of princes Puraj, Rajneesh and D'mir Selaj was little more than a drumhead court. Nonetheless, the princes were convicted of treason and sentenced to death on October 1, 2679. The Selaj refused to submit to Gerald's authority and instead ordered their forces to dig in. A full-fledged civil war seemed inevitable; the Star League, fearing for its own stability, ordered its troops in the Free Worlds to upgrade their combat readiness and prepare to intervene.

Never renowned as an orator, Gerald Marik nonetheless managed to convince the SLDF that this showdown was an internal matter. Admiral Millard Crichton, senior SLDF commander in the region, agreed not to intervene militarily in Free Worlds affairs, but committed the SLDF to providing humanitarian aid where applicable. With potential Star League interference averted, Gerald turned his full attention against House Selaj, crushing D'mir Selaj's forces on Helios Minor. The Regular prince committed suicide as Marik troops forced their way onto his estate. Gerald then redeployed his troops to invade Regulus itself in late December. With many troops defecting and their base of support in grave danger, Puraj and Rajneesh,



together with their families and assets valued at billions of C-bills in modern currencies, fled into the Magistracy, there to become the hidden bugbear of the Marik family and the target of numerous SAFE operations in the ensuing decades. Many less fortunate associates of the Selaj were imprisoned or executed as Gerald sought vengeance. Unable to declare the Selaj menace crushed once and for all, SAFE retained the expanded budget and broadened mandate it had gained after Hartsdale. The League became a de facto police state, overseen by a paranoid warlord.

DESCENT

Gerald Marik saw daggers in every shadow and suspected House Selaj of masterminding every political reversal. Some in the League suggested that his paranoia stemmed from his extensive bionic reconstruction, an anti-bionic attitude that remains a major factor in League life. Often, however, this contention was dismissed as propaganda and frequently laid at the feet of the Selaj. A mélange of fear and pity tinged the rest of Gerald's tenure as Captain-General, but despite his perceived flaws, most people nonetheless recognized him as a potent force within the Free Worlds League, and Parliament—out of respect or fear—rarely argued with him.

Not so his daughter Elise, who succeeded to the Captain-Generalcy in 2703. Devoted to her father, she accepted his paranoid fancies as fact and even claimed that foul play may have caused Gerald's demise. In her inaugural address, she vowed to continue her father's work and called for an investigation into his death. The investigation, which Elise Marik oversaw, concluded that Gerald had died of poisoning—directly contradicting the original coroner's report, which blamed the death on long-term complications from the

Dormuth blast. Elise directed SAFE to sniff out subversive elements, ordering them to focus their attentions along the Capellan border. Why she ordered such specific scrutiny never became clear, but the unpopular dismissal of more than a hundred soldiers from border regiments marked the start of a 25-year "cleansing" that dwarfed Gerald's paranoid elimination of political opponents. Elise browbeat Parliament into supporting her purges, along with the nationalization of several key industries.

The prime opponent of these actions was Elise's brother, Oliver, who as MP for New Delos spoke out against them in Parliament. By 2704, he came to realize that his sister was beyond reason and restraint, and that his politicking had only served to make him a target. Taking his young son Boris, Oliver fled to the Terran Hegemony, where he established himself on Procyon. In the years that followed, Oliver became the focus of opposition to Elise, and in 2724 a number of his former colleagues in Parliament tried to persuade him to proclaim himself the Free Worlds representative in the Star League Council. A firm believer in civil liberties and due process, Oliver refused, though his choice provided only a temporary reprieve for the Captain-General. Four years later, Parliament—convinced that Elise was insane and finally willing to stand up to her—declared the crisis over and the post of Captain-General redundant.

Predictably, Elise saw this maneuver as yet another plot against her. Gathering a body of loyal troops, she marched on Parliament, arrested almost a third of the MPs and sent the remainder home. With Parliament dissolved, Elise Marik ruled unchallenged. Oliver Marik believed himself honor-bound to oppose this blatant violation of the law. On March 23, he crossed into the Free Worlds League with his fellow exiles and made his way to Calloway VI. There, in the Duke of

ANTI-BIONIC SENTIMENT

For a society that prides itself on the diversity of its people and on accepting differences in others, the Free Worlds League has developed some surprising and dismaying prejudices. Perhaps the best known is the widespread disdain for technological enhancements and cybernetics. An aesthetic distaste for such modifications is understandable, though during the Star League era most could be concealed and were barely distinguishable from the real thing. Likewise, disdain for the enhancements they provide—particularly among sportsmen—makes perfect sense to most people. The core objection in the League, however, appears to be spiritual.

Many people came to believe that any form of cybernetic replacement, whether for medical, cosmetic or practical reasons (for example, having stronger and more durable prostheses would be a boon in many environments), detracted from the spiritual whole. By sacrificing part of themselves or allowing technology within their bodies, those who relied on cybernetics lessened their humanity. Certainly some people did this intentionally—the outré cyberstyles of the twenty-third and twenty-fourth centuries advocated a "human-alien" look in which practitioners competed to look odder than their fellows—but this perception eventually extended to recipients of medical and performance-enhancing implants.

Initially, at least, jealousy was a factor. Only the rich could afford such enhancements, and blanket prejudice against them first arose in the lower echelons of society. Eventually, disdain for cybernetic technologies spread to all levels of the Free Worlds, though such attitudes remained strongest at their roots. Sects such as the Exituri and K'wara made a virtue out of their anti-technological and anti-bionic views. Captain-General Gerald Marik, who came so close to dying in the Scourge of Death attack on Hartsdale, survived thanks to bionic implants, which eventually served as a focus for many of his opponents. Professor Thomas Menke went so far as to suggest that Gerald was not legally alive as determined by the Terran Alliance's ancient sentence statutes. Gerald was paranoid, perhaps with good reason, but his humanity was beyond question. Menke found himself unseated when SAFE investigations uncovered links between the Magistracy of Canopus, refuge of the fugitive Selaj princes, and funding received by the professor.

Almost four hundred years after the Scourge atrocity, some anti-technologists still regard Gerald as sub-human. Similar accusations have been leveled at the present incumbent, Thomas Marik, but ComStar medical records show that even though he underwent extensive surgery—and still bears considerable scarring—no bionics were used in any procedures. Rumors persist, however, citing irregularities in Thomas' records. Despite prevailing prejudice, bionics are still employed in the Free Worlds, if less often than in other Successor States.

—*Trends in Modern Society*, Atrous Sociological Abstracts, 3049



HISTORY OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE





Oriente's Winter Palace, a hastily convened Parliament-in-exile confirmed him as the Free Worlds' representative to the Star League and his son Boris as the twenty-eighth Captain-General.

In the ensuing civil war, Oriente and Andurien stood with Oliver while Stewart and Regulus sided with Elise, a surprisingly even breakdown of forces. Many units, however, suffered mixed internal allegiances, and the opening shots of the conflict came in the determination of these units' loyalties. The initial campaigns were dramatic and deadly; pro-Elise Loyalists struck toward Oriente, while the rebels invaded first Regulus and later the Marik Commonwealth. An assault into Regulus commanded by Boris Marik and Duke Martin Humphreys drew off the main Loyalist troops. Boggled down on Helios Minor, they could not respond when a second assault force under Oliver's command raided the Free Worlds' capital. Elise commanded Atreus' defense personally and held out through a day and a half of bitter street fighting in and around the spaceport before she and her bodyguards were captured. However, if Oliver and Boris thought this lightning assault would end the war, they were mistaken. Elise's son, the pragmatic and determined Bertram, continued the fight, smashing a rebel invasion of Ariel. Under his leadership, the conflict ground down to a stalemate. Little changed for the next five years except for steadily mounting numbers of dead or crippled on both sides.

In 2734, the tide of war finally shifted in favor of the Loyalists, and Bertram managed to liberate Atreus and his mother. Though treated well by her captors (her emaciated condition stemmed from her re-

fusal of food for fear of poisoning, rather than neglect by the rebels), imprisonment had stripped away what little sanity remained, leaving Elise clearly incapable of resuming her duties. Consequently, Bertram went from Loyalist military commander to head of the Loyalist movement. Despite his recent battlefield successes, however, he knew that victory by force of arms would be long and difficult. Instead, he sought to negotiate with Oliver, believing they could resolve the situation with minimal bloodshed now that Elise was out of the picture.

On May 20, 2734, the Treaty of Verona acknowledged Bertram as Captain-General and Star League Council Lord, while he in turn reinstated Parliament and issued a general amnesty for all military and parliamentary forces involved in the civil war. Bertram also publicly acknowledged his mother's failings. Oliver and Boris, together with the other rebel leaders, stood trial. Head held high, Oliver Marik was executed two months later. Boris Marik died in an ill-advised escape attempt that some claim was a subtle assassination, but in general the years that followed were a time of healing.

Bertram reigned for only seven years before dying of a heart attack. His only child, Ewan Marik, succeeded him. Unluckily for the Free Worlds League, the son shared few of the father's qualities. Where Bertram had been thoughtful and temperate, Ewan possessed a fiery and hedonistic temperament, as well as a complete lack of tact. He made a poor choice for Council Lord or Captain-General, though Parliament had little taste for unseating another Marik while the civil war remained fresh in their minds. Ewan thus remained in office de-

THE MONSTER UNDER THE BED

From its founding as a protectionist group opposed to trade liberalization between the Free Worlds and other Star League states (its first acknowledged act was the bombing of Atreus' spaceport in 2667) to the bloody devastation of Hartsdale that so nearly ended the Marik line, the Scourge of Death has been cast as the Free Worlds' bogeymen. No one has conclusively determined whether the Selaj family created them from the outset or simply manipulated them later on, but documents recovered by SAFE agents on Westover provided proof of Regular involvement. The result was the dismembering of the Regular bureaucratic apparatus and the flight of Puraj and Rajneesh Selaj from the League into Canopian space, taking with them fabulous wealth. Their supporters were less fortunate, left to SAFE's tender mercies. Most were imprisoned; the ringleaders were publicly executed.

Some disputed the far-reaching powers assumed by SAFE and the Captain-General during this hunting down of House Selaj, but the havoc unleashed on Aerie encouraged all but the most recalcitrant to support the purges, even after Regulus had been pacified. Even then, Gerald Marik feared that the escapees would pose a perpetual threat to his realm with an ongoing terror campaign, much as the Sian-Mariks had done three centuries earlier. To counter that possibility, he issued Special Order 91, giving SAFE the authority to execute any member of the Selaj family it uncovered, irrespective of location, age or status. Such an order was illegal under the Star League charter (which insisted on a fair trial for anyone accused), but Gerald and his supporters and successors kept the order secret. It remained known only to the Captain-General and the Director of SAFE until researchers accidentally uncovered it in 2902. It remains a legal statute in the Free Worlds even today.

The fate of the Selaj is lost to history, though SAFE has records of covert operations until the 28th century, targeting anyone suspected of links to the exiles. In all cases, SAFE agents followed a shoot-to-kill policy. To date no one knows what happened to Puraj and Rajneesh Selaj, and this very absence of definitive knowledge about any end to the Selaj threat has turned House Selaj into the Marik family's nemesis. Gerald's successor, Elise Marik, remained convinced that Puraj and Rajneesh posed a danger to her reign (along with a host of other threats, real and imagined); the paranoid security of the Mariks and other major houses in the Free Worlds League remains as a legacy of the Dormuth bombing.

Every so often, new rumors emerge of a Selaj threat, though none have been credible since the onset of the Succession Wars. Most incidents attributed to the Scourge of Death since then are copycats seeking attention from the name of their infamous predecessors. A handful remain unaccounted for, which has fed conspiracy theories surrounding the group. The recent four-hundredth anniversary of the Atreus port bombings brought a spate of terrorist attacks across the League, including one on the spaceport complex on the actual anniversary day, along with an attempt to kill the Prince of Regulus. Some attribute these events to a reborn Scourge. SAFE has so far dismissed these claims, but remains concerned about the authors of these new attacks.

—*Mysteries of the Eagle*, by Calvin MacDonald, Regular Free Press, 3062



HISTORY OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

EWAN MARIK—MALICE AFORETHOUGHT

Few individuals in Free Worlds League history are quite as unpleasant as Ewan Marik, who single-handedly alienated the Free Worlds League from the other Council Lords and the Star League. A rotund bon vivant, he routinely drank to excess and frequently attended council meetings drunk or under the influence of drugs. While inebriated, he took little care to hide his lack of respect for his colleagues and their representatives—especially Michael Steiner of the Lyran Commonwealth, whom Ewan frequently called “Lady Steiner.” Only with Minoru Kurita did the Captain-General have anything like a cordial relationship, which amounted to a tacit alliance of convenience to advance their own positions at the expense of their enemies. When Coordinator Minoru called for the repeal of First Lord’s Edict of 2650, allowing a significant enlargement of House military forces, Ewan keenly supported Kurita’s move. Ewan also suggested and won approval for a tax on the Periphery realms to pay for this rearmament program. Ewan’s malice would have far-reaching repercussions, though a decade passed before the trouble reached the boiling point.

—*Secrets of the Star League*, Tamarind Liberty Press, 2893

THE LADY AND THE DRUNK

I never worked out exactly why Ewan Marik took such an intense dislike to me. From the moment we met at the Court of the Star League, he took every opportunity to belittle me. “Clean-Hands Michael” was one epithet, “Lady Steiner” another. He was uncouth and bereft of tact, someone whose idea of a good night out was a bottle of cheap vodka, a ten-kroner prostitute and a bar fight. He never lost himself in a Bach sonata or a Strauss waltz, and I guess that was the heart of the matter. He regarded anyone who didn’t share his passion for carousing and thuggery as weak and feeble.

I remember one time, around 2755 I think, when he arrived at the council meeting more drunk than usual even for him. He’d just arrived on a Davion JumpShip after his own suffered a malfunction. He swayed into the chamber, preceded by the sharp tang of spirits and sweat. His clothes looked like he’d slept in them—which he probably had—and he hadn’t shaved or bothered to comb his hair. His words, though, offended the rest of us more than anything else—even his erstwhile ally, Minoru Kurita.

“Well, ‘First Lord,’” he snarled, “you and your puppet Kerensky ought to be pleased that I had a miserable time on that Davion tub coming here. Davion ships are as badly serviced as a Kurita brothel and as ugly as a Capellan whore, eh, gentlemen? Oh, but of course Lady Steiner wouldn’t know about such things.”

—*From Over The Edge: The Recollections of Michael Steiner*, Tharkad Press, 2791

regiments struck FWLM bases on Bolan. Initially preoccupied by their land grab of Star League assets and facilities in what remained of the Terran Hegemony, the hard-pressed League forces gave ground but ensured that little remained in their wake to aid the Steiner advance. They employed tactical orbital bombardment to contain the Lyran, but this tactic rapidly escalated into tit-for-tat attacks; eventually, both sides employed atomic weapons. Though his own forces began the escalation, Kenyon declared the Ares Conventions abrogated by the Lyran and

spite the offense he caused and the concerns he provoked at home and abroad. People believed that the Star League and Parliament, who oversaw routine affairs, would ameliorate his excesses. Fate, however, would not be so kind.

ENDGAME

Historians have never fully established culpability for the death of First Lord Simon Cameron on New Silesia. Most likely an accident, though assassination remains a popular theory, this unexpected tragedy had immediate and far-reaching effects. Simon’s death placed the Star League in the hands of his eight-year-old son Richard, whose formative years were overseen by his regent, Commanding General Aleksandr Kerensky of the SLDF. In the Free Worlds League, Kenyon Marik succeeded his father Ewan in 2763. “The Eagle” had more political savvy and charm than his father, but harbored a longstanding hatred of Aleksandr Kerensky, with whom he had served in the SLDF half a dozen years earlier. His secret vendetta against the general (which involved espionage and non-cooperation) led to an awkward rift when conflict erupted in the Periphery in 2765, a legacy of Ewan Marik’s taxation proposal. Unlike the Reunification War, where Free Worlds League troops fought alongside the SLDF, Kenyon refused to allow the FWLM to assist Kerensky. He held to this policy even after Stefan Amaris staged a bloody coup on Terra, slaying Richard Cameron and installing himself as First Lord. Marik even denied Kerensky the use of SLDF bases in Free Worlds territory, but Kerensky ignored this and staged troops out of the Oriente fleet base. Despite having no desire to see Amaris as First Lord—like the other House Lords, Kenyon Marik had formally refuted Amaris’ claim to the post—he could not let Kerensky’s violation of Free Worlds sovereignty stand, and gathered a massive FWLM force to strike against the SLDF at Oriente. However, by the time the Free Worlds League force was ready for action, the SLDF had moved on. Kenyon returned his troops to their pre-crisis positions, but added what he saw as Kerensky’s insult to the long list of alleged crimes the general had committed. When General Kerensky defeated Amaris in 2779, Kenyon had little desire to build bridges to the aged commander in order to save the Star League. Instead, he took great pleasure in dismissing Kerensky and stripping him of authority.

The SLDF’s departure from the Inner Sphere in 2784 was the final straw for the Star League, which had walked a delicate balance between peace and war for almost half a decade. With the Star League Council disbanded, the former Council Lords began jockeying for position, and invasion of the Free Worlds League by the Lyran Commonwealth or the Capellan Confederation seemed likely. In addition, the planets of the former Terran Hegemony lay ripe for the taking, an opportunity the Captain-General feared the Free Worlds might miss if the bureaucrats were allowed to get in his way. To counter this possibility, Kenyon first manipulated Parliament into repealing the Rule of 75 that governed the release of state documents. He then presented Parliament with a draft bill that gave the Captain-General far-reaching discretionary powers “for the duration of the crisis.” Panicked by the looming collapse of the old order, Parliament voted for this legislation that essentially established the Captain-General as the sole real power in the League. The act entered Free Worlds League law on December 19, 2784, recorded as Parliamentary Resolution 288. Though the balance of power between Parliament and the Captain-General has remained fluid in the years since, Resolution 288 remains a cornerstone of Free Worlds League politics.

FIRST SUCCESSION WAR

Officially, the First Succession War began when Minoru Kurita claimed the First Lordship in December 2786 (an act Kenyon Marik mimicked in January 2787). The Free Worlds League, however, acknowledges 2785 as the start of the conflict, when three LCAF



himself free to respond as he saw fit. His action set a devastating precedent.

The Steiner drive cost the Free Worlds valuable planets and resources, but Kenyon's success on the Terran campaign considerably outweighed this misfortune. SAFE waged an extensive disinformation campaign to hide the extent to which inter-House squabbling over the carcass of the Hegemony had further harmed worlds already ravaged by the Amaris Coup. Likewise, the bloody reality of the conflict with House Steiner was kept from public knowledge, until enough soldiers returning home from the front made the truth impossible to hide.

By 2787, the First Succession War was in full swing. The Captain-General ordered the targeting of Lyran heavy industries, believing he could force a short conflict with a decisive Free Worlds victory if he could destroy his rivals' ability to wage war. Many factories were vaporized in nuclear blasts or by orbital bombardment, or else rendered useless when suppliers met similar fates. With House

Steiner apparently crippled and preoccupied by skirmishes with the Draconis Combine, Kenyon Marik turned his attention to his realm's other enemy, the Capellan Confederation. Ordering his troops to "clear a route ten parsecs wide to Sarna," he launched one of the largest Free Worlds League offensives of the First Succession War, seizing a broad swath of Capellan worlds before being brought up short by the bloody counterattack against New Delos.

Other Inner Sphere powers soon adopted Kenyon's methods of warfare, targeting infrastructure as much as troop formations. Lyran troops staged a series of attacks against Free Worlds League industrial centers; even the Draconis Combine joined the fray, attempting to carry off SLDF stockpiles and then razing their objectives with orbital and nuclear bombardments when they failed. Tens of millions died in these attacks, mostly civilians. In the years that followed, war deaths across the Inner Sphere slowly crept into the billions. Amid all this carnage and chaos, few commented on ComStar's seizure of Terra.

TIMELINE: SERPENT IN EDEN

The period from 2650 to 2750 saw remarkable calm for many peoples of the Inner Sphere, but not for those in the Free Worlds League, who suffered the loss of personal liberties and a civil war.

- 2650: First Lord's Edict of 2650 issued, limiting the size of Star League member-state militaries and private troops.
- 2667: Scourge of Death anti-League terrorists surface in Free Worlds League.
- 2676: House units first allowed to compete in SLDF Martial Olympiad.
- 2678: Scourge of Death terrorists bomb Marik estate, killing Captain-General Terrence Marik and many members of House Marik along with their accompanying staff. Gerald Marik, the most senior survivor, is named Captain-General.
- 2679: Selaj family implicated in Scourge of Death attacks. Free Worlds forces raid Magistracy of Canopus and other local Periphery worlds in a hunt for the Selaj.
- 2680: D'mir Selaj killed on Helios Minor. Puraj and Rajneesh Selaj escape into Canopian space.
- 2681: Rim Commonality separates from Principality of Regulus as part of an ongoing internal "scouring" campaign launched by Captain-General Gerald Marik to combat the Scourge of Death.
- 2690: Michael Cameron retires as First Lord in favor of his son, Jonathan Cameron, who shortly thereafter announces a new military budget to spur technological advances "to enhance the security of the Star League." This budget includes a new tax that extends to all realms, including the Territorial States in the Periphery, though the terms of the military upgrade program indicate that these realms will be the last to see the fruits of these revenues.
- 2699: The Principality of Gibson breaks off from the Principality of Regulus in the Free Worlds League.
- 2703: Gerald Marik dies, succeeded as Captain-General by Elise Marik, who proclaims that her father was murdered and initiates a nationwide purge.

- 2728: Elise Marik removed as Captain-General by Parliament following a 25-year witch-hunt throughout the realm.
- 2729: Elise Marik and her loyalists dissolve Parliament and arrest many MPs, sparking a civil war. A "proxy Parliament" installs her brother Oliver as the nation's Council Lord and his son, Boris Marik, as Captain-General.
- 2730: Forces loyal to Oliver and Boris Marik capture Elise. Elise's son Bertram continues to fight.
- 2734: Bertram Marik liberates Atreus and his mother; Free Worlds League civil war ends with the Treaty of Verona between Oliver and Bertram Marik. As Parliament reconvenes, Bertram Marik is named Captain-General and Council Lord.
- 2738: Jonathan Cameron dies, succeeded by Simon Cameron as First Lord of the Star League. Aleksandr Kerensky is named Commander-in-Chief of the SLDF.
- 2751: Simon Cameron dies in an apparent accident on the asteroid of New Silesia in the Star's End system of the Rim Worlds Republic. His young son, Richard Cameron, becomes First Lord of the Star League, with General Aleksandr Kerensky named as his regent.
- 2765: Tensions on New Vandenburg erupt into open warfare that spreads throughout the Periphery. The SLDF intervenes, leaving only a skeleton garrison in the Terran Hegemony.
- 2766: [25 December] Stefan Amaris stages a bloody coup to seize control of the Hegemony and the Star League. He executes Richard Cameron. The Council Lords refuse to accept Amaris as First Lord, but neither do they support Kerensky and the SLDF in their efforts to liberate Terra.
- 2779: Stefan Amaris surrenders to the SLDF after a bitter campaign.
- 2780: [October] Aleksandr Kerensky is stripped of office.
- 2784: [November] Having gathered most of the surviving SLDF, Kerensky leads a massive exodus into the Periphery and beyond, where his descendants eventually found the Clans. [December] Parliament passes Resolution 288, granting the Captain-General broad powers "for the duration of the crisis."



HISTORY OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

KENYON AND KERENSKY

Ewan Marik's antipathy toward Aleksandr Kerensky was incidental; the Star League military leader became a target of Ewan's scorn simply as a friend of the loathed Michael Steiner. By contrast, the enmity between Kenyon Marik and General Kerensky was much more personal.

Kenyon had served as a staff officer with Kerensky seven years before taking office as Captain-General. During this period, while the Commanding General was away on Terra, Marik acted on his own initiative to suppress an uprising on Pollux. Ordering the troops to evict protesters from the government compound they had occupied, he triggered a violent confrontation that left more than a dozen people dead.

Upon returning from Terra, Kerensky was horrified by what he found. Kenyon was unrepentant, saying force was the only thing rebels understood. Kerensky called on Kenyon to acknowledge his role in the bloody disaster and submit to a tribunal for punishment. Kenyon refused, and then went further. He told Kerensky that the "upstart Russian peasant" wouldn't dare punish him, the son and heir of the current Captain-General and the designated successor to the Free Worlds' Star League Council seat. Kerensky responded by ordering a full court-martial that stripped Kenyon of his Star League rank and dishonorably discharged him from SLDF service.

When Kenyon became Captain-General in 2763, he immediately clashed with Kerensky, publicly deriding the general's leadership as regent for Richard Cameron and privately setting SAFE to spy on the SLDF commander. When the Periphery world of New Vandenberg erupted in revolt, Marik was glad to see Kerensky depart. He believed the regent's absence would allow him and the other House Lords to run roughshod over young Richard. They reckoned without Stefan Amaris, whose coup even they found unpalatable. During the long drive to retake Terra from the Usurper, Kenyon refused Kerensky permission to use SLDF facilities in Free Worlds space, but to the Captain-General's fury, Kerensky staged from them anyway. When the Star League Council met for the final time after Amaris' defeat, they agreed on only two things—the appointment of Jerome Blake as Minister of Communications and the removal of Aleksandr Kerensky as Protector. Kenyon Marik grinned openly as Kerensky's "reward" was read out, little realizing the horrors that would follow.

—*Secrets of the Star League*, Tamarind Liberty Press, 2893

A seesaw pattern of warfare emerged between the major combatants. The FWLM fire-bombed Hall and Outreach in revenge for New Delos, and the CCAF attacked Calloway (where the FWLM trounced its Liao opponents). LCAF troops scoured Dieudonné while the League smashed the defenses of Alula Australis. Herakleion was infected by a bio-agent so virulent that quarantine conditions imposed by Thaddeus Marik remain in effect 250 years later. The Andurien worlds fell to the Marik advance, making good a threat Kenyon had made to Barbara Liao in a taunting note delivered by the newly formed ComStar. Other worlds fell in short order, the ease of the Marik advance giving rise to rumors that Kenyon simply threw darts at a map of the Capellan Confederation and his troops then took the indicated world. The loss of his son and heir, Carl, in an attack on the Lyran planet of Kamenz in 2789 was the low point of the First Succession War for Kenyon, but only when the Twenty-first Centauri Lancers annihilated the Fourth Marik Militia on Anegasaki in 2794 did the Capellan campaign falter. In the same year, the Captain-General's sixteen-year-old grandson died in a Liao raid on Oriente, the 'Mechs of his cadet company vaporized in a Liao atomic strike.

The overextended FWLM spent a protracted period re-establishing its defensive lines and building up supply caches. Meanwhile, Parliament balked at the perceived lack of success in this "long drawn-out conflict." They little realized that this war, which had raged for slightly less than a decade, would continue for another thirty years. The prosecution of the bloody First Succession War became Kenyon's driving passion; he disdained Parliament's views, preferring to keep his own counsel.

A year later, a Free Worlds' assault on Hesperus, newly acquired by the Lyrans, never even made it into the atmosphere. Instead, a bloody naval engagement wrecked the fleets of both sides. Fleet Admiral Thaddeus Marik, who headed the task force, was lucky to escape. The long-contested Bolan Thumb became the next focus of LCAF-FWLM battles, though the strategy of the Commonwealth commander, Kommandant-General Aric Hasseldorf, concealed the true threat his forces posed until it was almost too late. Not until 2811 did the FWLM make a concerted effort to secure the Bolan Thumb by crushing the Poulsbo salient. This attack failed to achieve its objective, though it cost the Lyrans dearly. Thaddeus Marik, who had succeeded his father in 2804, had little choice but to abandon the Thumb worlds and rationalize his realm's borders with the Commonwealth.

Thaddeus' ascension had not come without its problems. Resolution 288 remained in effect, but Parliament sought to regain its powers and had considerable support from provincial leaders such as Carter Allison of Oriente. Returning from the front upon learning of his father's death (though not before completing his task in Steiner space), Thaddeus interrupted parliamentary deliberations and presented his authority as granted by Resolution 288. Parliament balked when they saw the battalion of troops accompanying him, but recognized the threat to themselves if they failed to comply. Support for the continuance of Resolution 288 was not unanimous, however. In a game of bloody brinkmanship, Marik withdrew the FWLM from Oriente, the home province of his chief opponent, leaving only house troops to guard against Liao incursions. After fourteen months, Carter Allison personally signed the acceptance of Resolution 288 and Thaddeus' installation as Captain-General. His political objective gained, Marik finally moved against the Liao raiders, surprising CCAF troops who had in two prior campaigns come to regard Oriente as a soft target. The unexpected challenge to their third invasion, and the bloody counterattack, forced the Liao troops onto the defensive once more. Under Thaddeus' reign, the tempo of the conflict increased, as did the cost in lives and materiel. Naval battles were commonplace as the two forces jockeyed for position; Thaddeus had served as Fleet Admiral for the Lyran front since 2789 and favored such operations. Many of both side's WarShips died in these fierce clashes.

This bitter conflict did not stop with direct force of arms. Spies and assassins waged a hidden war, including a notorious attempt to assassinate the Lyran Archon by a disgruntled nobleman who had fallen under SAFE's influence. Nonetheless, by late in the second decade of the 29th century, the combatants were exhausted and seeking to disengage. Houses Steiner and Marik made peace overtures and agreed to a cease-fire along the Lyran front. Ironically, seeking one last victory before the cessation of hostilities, Thaddeus Marik was killed in battle on Dieudonné. He left the final armistice agreement with the Steiners to his successor, who signed the Bella Accords on May 16, 2821. A similar agree-



ment with the Capellan Confederation followed in November, negotiated by Duke Jonathan of Andurien, another of the legendary Humphreys clan. The agreement with Sian recognized the postwar borders and facilitated mass prisoner exchanges, one of the few civilized highlights of this dark era. The First Succession War was over, but the issues that had brought the Great Houses to war remained unresolved. Few saw the peace that descended over the Inner Sphere as anything more than a time to prepare for the next wave of violence.

INTERVIEW WITH THE TRAITOR

Officer: You arrived on Dieudonné from A Place as part of a mining delegation. What was your intention?

LeStat: My plan was to hand over all the information I could.

Officer: You wanted to undermine the planetary authorities?

LeStat: Quite the opposite. I wanted to bring down House Steiner, not harm A Place. It had suffered enough.

Officer: But that didn't happen. What did?

LeStat: You know. You interviewed me back then.

Officer: I want to hear in your words.

LeStat: As you wish. The local SAFE operatives said I would be of more help if I returned to A Place and worked as a Marik agent there. I agreed.

Officer: They offered to pay you?

LeStat: Yes, but that's not why I did it.

Officer: Fifty thousand M-bills per month of service and you weren't motivated?

LeStat: No.

Officer: How long did you supply information to the League?

LeStat: Two years, six weeks.

Officer: So around 1.2 million M-bills. Still not enough motivation?

LeStat: 1.7 million M-bills—they offered a half-million bonus if I stayed for the duration of the war—and no, no incentive.

Officer: I know I'd be tempted, but then, I'm not you. What was your role in the government?

LeStat: I was a troop coordinator.

Officer: For A Place?

LeStat: No, for the entire sector.

Officer: *whistles* A plum assignment, invaluable to the FWLM effort. Did you feel qualms about selling military secrets to the League?

LeStat: I wasn't selling them, and no—though I regret that others had to suffer for what the Steiners did.

Officer: Which was?

LeStat: They killed more of the population than the Mariks or Kuritas ever did by taking away the DropShips that linked us to the outside world. Our economy collapsed, and with it the supply network for essential goods, including food.

Officer: People starved?

LeStat: Thousands. Tens of thousands.

Officer: And your family?

LeStat: I was the only survivor. My brother and both sisters starved to death. I almost died, too. I was lucky, though plenty of days I thought I wasn't.

Officer: So you swore to avenge them?

THE DEVLIN SOLUTION

"Henceforth you may consider the Ares Conventions suspended. I expect you all to act accordingly." Barbara Liao's words to her troops in 2789 typified the prevailing attitude of the First Succession War, a willingness by the Great Houses to use any weapon in their arsenals to win, crushing their enemies or shocking them into surrendering. Using Marik codes and ciphers recently acquired by the Maskirovka, Barbara Liao disguised her military assault force—Strike Force Devlin—as a Marik supply convoy and penetrated deep into the New Delos system. By the time its defenders unmasked the ruse, Capellan fighters were diving on their targets, striking swiftly and mercilessly. Civilian casualties were a high priority; House Liao hoped that mass civilian deaths would shatter the Free Worlds' morale. Three days of slaughter ensued, leaving more than 20,000 Marik civilians dead and ten times that number wounded by the time the Liao troops pulled back. Kenyon Marik responded in kind, ordering firebombing raids on several Liao worlds. Meanwhile, the Capellan Chancellor sought new targets for her "Devlin Solution." The population of the Free Worlds refused to be cowed, however, and the willful atrocities of New Delos spurred them to greater effort against the Liao foe.

—*Apocalypse Then: The First Succession War*, Charybdis Publications, 3027



LeStat: Exactly. Richard Steiner's war effort denied thousands the essentials they needed to survive. The Archon didn't deserve any loyalty in return.

Officer: And at the end of the day you were extracted?

LeStat: Yes. The LIC suspected there was a mole in my command center and so I called for extraction.

Officer: So you could live a life of luxury in the League?

LeStat: No, I keep telling you. The money meant nothing.

Officer: So I can see.

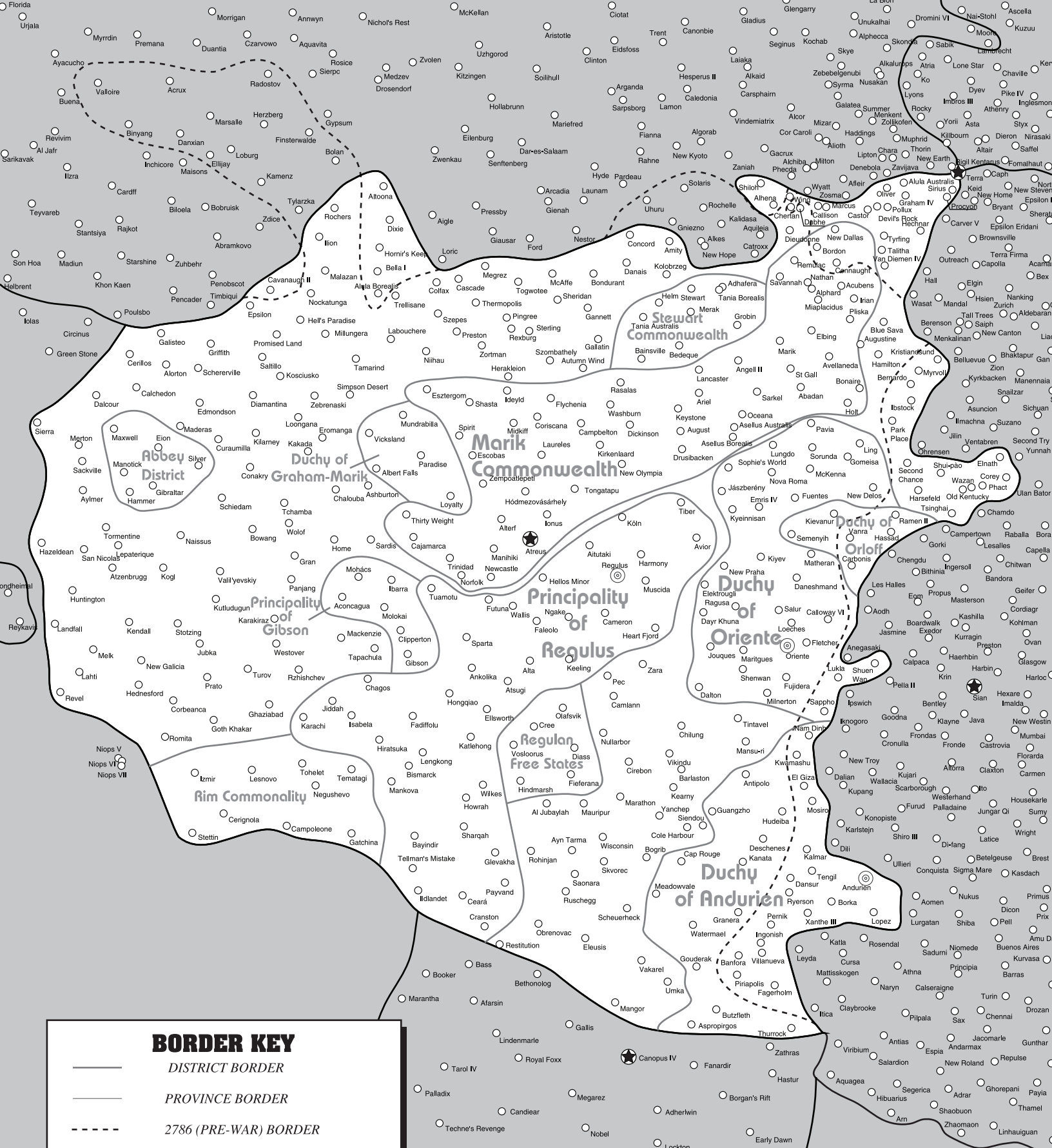
LeStat: I'm sorry?

Officer: You haven't touched the accounts in the—what is it—eleven years you've been here on Dieudonné.

LeStat: As I said, the money meant nothing.

Officer: Well, it will remain available to you and your heirs as a mark of our gratitude. You never know when it might be useful.

—Debrief notes: Jermyn LeStat, SAFE Field Center: Dieudonné, 2844



BORDER KEY

- DISTRICT BORDER
- PROVINCE BORDER
- 2786 (PRE-WAR) BORDER

PLANET KEY

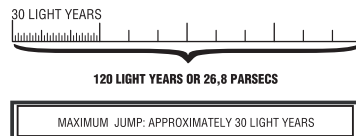
- NATIONAL CAPITAL
- DISTRICT CAPITAL
- PROVINCE CAPITAL

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE after

First Succession War (2822)

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LEGEND





TIMELINE: FIRST SUCCESSION WAR

Determined to make the most of the Free Worlds League's strength, Kenyon Marik and his successors prosecuted the First Succession War with fire and determination. No holds were barred; totally unrestricted warfare includes widespread use of chemical, biological, nuclear and orbital weaponry. The gains, though considerable, are shattered by these weapons.

- 2785: [March] Acting on LIC intelligence, three LCAF regiments hit Bolan. Retreating Free Worlds League forces resort to scorched-earth tactics and nuclear bombardment of the Sabari Continent. Kenyon Marik declares Ares Conventions violated and claims the right to respond in kind.
- 2786: [December] Coordinator Minoru Kurita proclaims himself First Lord of the Star League and declares war on any who oppose him. [31 December] Archon Jennifer Steiner declares war on the Draconis Combine. The First Succession War commences.
- 2787: [February] Free Worlds League raids begin along the Commonwealth border, targeting heavy industries. Kenyon Marik orders his troops to "clear a route ten parsecs wide to Sarna" in the Capellan Confederation. Corey and Wazan fall in short order, but a counterattack against New Delos kills tens of thousands of Free Worlds League citizens.
- 2788: A Draconis Combine deep raid targets several Marik worlds, including Helm, where the Coordinator hopes to retrieve a Star League stockpile of arms. When he fails to find the cache, he uses orbital bombardment and nuclear weapons to annihilate the planetary population. More than 70 million die in the assault and in the years that follow. [January-February] Under the command of General Amanda Lestrade, Commonwealth forces launch their first major raiding campaigns against key industrial worlds along the Free Worlds League border. [25 June] Jerome Blake seizes Terra, declaring it a neutral holding of ComStar.
- 2789: The League military firebombs the Liao worlds of Hall, Outreach, New Canton and Ingersoll. Liao forces counterattack on Calloway VI. [March] Free Worlds League forces attack Hesperus II, but are repelled. [July] Free Worlds forces capture Alula Australis from Commonwealth troops during heavy fighting over the former Terran Hegemony worlds. Kenyon's son and heir, Carl, dies in the fighting on Kamenz.

- 2790: The Lyran Commonwealth launches a second wave of raids against Combine and Free Worlds League targets, including Dieudonné, Oliver and Sirius. FWLM forces capture Andurien, Ingonish and Ryerson. [July-August] Commonwealth forces under Kommandant-General Aric Hasseldorf begin conquest of Bolan Thumb worlds using a modified raiding strategy. This gradual campaign reclaims Valloire, Binyang, Danxiang and Radostov by the close of 2793.
- 2791: Ward Marik, Kenyon's grandson, is assassinated.
- 2793: Capellan forces assault Anegasaki, destroying the Fourth Marik Militia before withdrawing. This incident marks the end of the FWLM's free rein on the Capellan front.
- 2794: FWLM forces smash the Bolson Shipyards at New Kyoto and also target Hesperus II, though the Marik forces withdraw after a massive naval battle. Kenyon's new heir, Jason Marik, dies in battle on Oriente.
- 2811: [March] After a relative lull in offensive campaigns, the Free Worlds League launches a concerted assault against Poulso in an effort to relieve ongoing pressures against the Bolan Thumb. The utter defeat of this offensive—though a Pyrrhic victory for the Commonwealth—forces Captain-General Thaddeus Marik to abandon the Thumb.
- 2812: Free Worlds League forces seize Alula Borealis, signifying the start of a new campaign on that front. [3 August] Richard Perkins, disgruntled Landgrave of Hegel—a Donegal Protectorate world decimated by epidemics that could not be controlled thanks to the loss of interstellar commerce—falls under the influence of a Free Worlds League spy and attempts to assassinate Archon Richard Steiner in the Royal Court. Though arrested and charged with treason, the Archon commutes his sentence to life imprisonment.
- 2813: [April] A series of battles for control of Bella I begins when Commonwealth troops recapture the world. Over the next three years, most of the League border fighting will center on this planet, and then expand along the border in a wave of furious new raids and assaults.
- 2820: Unable to prosecute an ongoing raiding war, the Lyran Commonwealth and Free Worlds League begin peace talks on Bella I.
- 2821: [16 May] Archon Richard Steiner and Captain-General Charles Marik agree to the Bella Accords, formally ending the First Succession War on the League-Commonwealth front.

SECOND SUCCESSION WAR

As expected, peace with the Lyran Commonwealth proved tempestuous, and in 2828 a dispute over prisoner exchanges led to the breaking off of diplomatic relations. Charles Marik, who had succeeded Thaddeus in 2820 as Parliament's second choice (their first, Charles' sister Jeanette, chose instead to join ComStar) had spent the years of peace preparing for just such an eventuality, rebuilding and resupplying the FWLM and bolstering military research rather than rebuilding the League's shattered civilian infrastructure. He blocked efforts by Oriente and Sirius to pass a reconstruction bill, instead diverting the

proposed funds to the military. He also co-opted many scientists to work on military development projects, starving industry of intellectual resources. Though a sound tactical move, this ordering of priorities proved deeply unpopular with the border provinces. With Resolution 288 still in effect, however, regional leaders could do little to oppose the Captain-General. Worlds like Uhuru and Chertan went from industrial splendor to bare subsistence. Other colonies failed entirely and were lost. Some were simply forgotten, isolated from the rest of the universe and unable to communicate. Millions died.

A competent MechWarrior and commander who fought in the Rahne campaign in 2817, Charles was a poor diplomat, though he



HISTORY OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

CURSA AND ORIENTE: THE COOKIE JAR

Until recently, historians had not clearly established responsibility for the debacle of the ComStar War. Charles Marik certainly regarded ComStar as at fault and Jeanette as culpable in the betrayal of the Free Worlds League, a cats' paw for then-Primus Conrad Toyama. Conversely, for all the Captain-General's assertions, the leak could have originated within the FWLM or the Marik court. Indeed, some brave souls suggested as much at the time. The declassification of ComStar archives after 3052 revealed ComStar's duplicity and the deliberate manipulation of the Marik war effort by the Order's second Primus. That ComStar aided and abetted a series of FWLM victories between 2831 and 2836—and a number of reversals as well—is beyond question. Jeanette Marik's culpability, however, remains unknown. She certainly served as an information conduit to her brother, directly and indirectly, but neither SAFE nor ComStar's records indicate whether she knew of Primus Toyama's desire to manipulate the Successor States. Her death along with 351 other staff members after Charles' Operation Cookie Jar (the leaking of information about the nonexistent Curisa cache) reflected the Captain-General's beliefs, but opinion remains divided on her innocence or guilt.

—*ComStar Mysteries Resolved*, Andurien Associated Press, 3055

showed a degree of political cunning. He manipulated his younger and more charismatic brother, Oskar, into undertaking a mission into Steiner space and then used evidence of the trip to accuse his sibling of treason. Oskar fled to the Periphery, taking up residence on Canopus. His position secure, Charles set about preparing for the gathering storm. He determined that intelligence-gathering would play a major role in the next war and set about reinvigorating SAFE, which had stagnated since the battles between Elise and Oliver Marik. He also sought to take advantage of his sister's position in ComStar, little realizing the price her information would eventually exact. Indeed, information leaked from ComStar about Lyran troop movements in advance of an attack against Graham IV, Castor and Callison prompted Charles to resume the conflict with the Steiners. After a two-month phony war throughout June and July of 2830, Marik forces crossed the border and seized several strategic worlds, though ultimately the Steiner counteroffensive regained them. In short order, most of the border was in flames, which did not prevent Charles from opening a second front against the Capellan Confederation. In 2832, FWLM forces seized Zion, Berenson and Kyrkbacken and inflicted grievous damage on several other Capellan worlds.

Except for the loss of Dieudonné and Megrez to the LCAF, the campaign largely went well for the League. Charles, however, grew concerned about intelligence he had received from Jeanette, believing the League's enemies were benefiting from knowledge of FWLM troop movements that could only have come from ComStar. In late 2836 he baited a trap to test ComStar's intentions, ordering the Marshal of Oriente to send news of a rediscovered Star League cache on Curisa. Soon afterward, a Liao task force landed on this hitherto unimportant world, giving Charles the desired "conclusive proof" of ComStar's perfidy. In response, the Captain-General smashed the orbiting Oriente HPG and killed the attendant ComStar personnel, including his sister. He was ill prepared for the consequences of this rash act.

On March 19, scarcely a dozen hours after the Oriente attack, Primus Toyama sent out a terse message that withdrew ComStar's services throughout Free Worlds space: "The Free Worlds League has been placed under Communications Interdict for violating the terms of the Communications Protocol of 2787. Until the League admits its violation and makes proper reparations to ComStar, in an amount equal to triple the cost of rebuilding

the Oriente relay station, all communication into or out of Free Worlds territories or protectorates is hereby suspended."

This proclamation sparked a bitter, six-month hidden war between SAFE and ComStar's ROM agency as SAFE hunted down and apprehended ComStar personnel within the League. The interdict rendered the Free Worlds League blind and deaf, reliant on courier JumpShips to communicate with the fronts. This process took weeks, and the League's enemies swiftly exploited it. Dozens of worlds fell on both fronts as the gains of the First Succession War were swept away in half a year. Most worlds were forced to rely on their own initiative, not knowing if they would ever receive supplies or reinforcements. In a few cases, the FWLM defenders held out valiantly, but for the most part it was a massacre. Even the DCMS and AFFS joined in the ravaging of the Free Worlds League, striking at vital industries in hopes of claiming their share of the spoils, as they had done with the Terran Hegemony five decades earlier. Only infighting among the ravaging hordes of the Successor States slowed the advance, as clashes erupted between armies of the other four Great Houses squabbling over the League's carcass.

In response, FWLM forces abandoned many worlds and consolidated their troops in defensive positions. Charles remained convinced of ComStar's perfidy and refused to apologize, which led to the opening of a "sixth front" for the Captain-General against his own Parliament. Various MPs had belatedly realized that their control of finances allowed them a measure of leverage despite Resolution 288. On June 24, 2838, a parliamentary rebellion headed by Hector Lombard, the Minister of Finance, rejected an FWLM appropriations bill. Several similar moves followed. On August 9, Parliament blocked efforts by the Captain-General to press commercial JumpShips into military service as couriers and transports. The FWLM was now hamstrung as well as deaf and blind, and the League appeared doomed. The fall of Shiloh and Van Diemen IV was the final straw for Charles, and the loss of numerous troops there finally forced him to do the unthinkable. After eighteen months of HPG silence, he ordered his youngest son to Terra and accepted Toyama's terms.

The restoration of HPG communications on November 9, 2838 allowed the Captain-General and Parliament to see the full peril of the Free Worlds League's predicament. With Parliament and Charles Marik still at loggerheads and the FWLM in disarray, no immediate reversal of fortune seemed likely. For the next three years, the Capellan Confederation and Lyran Commonwealth continued to nibble at the Free Worlds League's edges, able to out-produce and outmaneuver the moribund FWLM and continuing to push forward. Meanwhile, Charles fought a political war against his own financiers. Hector Lombard made no secret of his desire to unseat the Captain-General and repeal Resolution 288. Faced with arrest, Lombard fled to Helios Minor.

Asuncion fell to the CCAF in 2840 and Danais followed six months later. These losses forced many Marik troops to flee their positions. A number of mercenary units defected to the Lyran and Capellan forces, pushing the Free Worlds to the brink. As the League apparently lay on its deathbed, Charles left for Irian to take personal command of the FWLM forces on that beleaguered world, determined to fight a last-ditch engagement.



Surprisingly, when Steiner forces landed on Irian in 2842—and thanks to Kendall Allison and Jonathan Humphreys, Charles' political allies in Oriente and Andurien—the finance logjam broke and military funding resumed. Charles' departure allowed tempers to cool sufficiently for Parliament to realize that continuing to block FWLM appropriations would soon leave them with no Free Worlds League to squabble over. Lombard's power base collapsed, voting by a majority of 28 on January 5 to resume military funding.

As resources flooded to the front, Charles Marik and Harlan Allison of Oriente staged a bitter rearguard action on Irian. Outnumbered three to one, they held out until March, when FWLM reinforcements authorized by Parliament arrived and drove off the invaders. The tide had turned. Over the next five years, Charles, his son Gerald, his brother William and allies such as Allison slowed and then reversed the Lyran and Capellan incursions. The fighting cost the lives of William Marik, whose reactor failed on Danais in 2843, and Harlan Allison, whose demise during the Sixth Battle of New Delos ended the long line of dukes of Oriente and prompted the installation of Blair Halas as the new head of that duchy. Ostensibly meant to limit Marik influence in the duchy, Halas' appointment was seemingly manipulated by the Captain-General to further his own ends. By 2847, the League had regained many of its earlier losses, though worlds such as Shiloh and Dieudonné would elude Charles and his successor Gerald, who became Captain-General in 2854. By 2860, almost all the contested worlds on the Liao front were back in Marik hands.

Gerald died suddenly in 2861, in an incident surrounded by considerable speculation given that he had refused to consider an armistice with the neighboring states until the League made good all losses from the ComStar War. His sister Philippa succeeded him. Though trained as a warlord and a veteran of several campaigns against the Steiners and Liaos, Philippa advocated peace. In the Lyran Archon, Elizabeth Steiner, she found someone she could work with. Their rapprochement led to an armistice along the two realms' mutual border. Almost immediately, factions in Parliament called for a reduction in military spending. Despite her commitment to peace, Philippa did not want to make the newly recovered League look like an appealing target. She resisted major military cuts, but dispatched teams to render humanitarian aid where possible, desperately working to preserve industries on ravaged worlds like Danais, Andurien and Ryerson. Like her father before her at the end of the First Succession War, Philippa prepared for peace and war concurrently.

Within months, the fighting everywhere in the Inner Sphere had ceased, and Elizabeth Steiner sought to create a more lasting peace by inviting representatives of the Great Houses to a summit on New Earth in November 2864. Unfortunately, this endeavor was doomed from the outset. The Davion and Kurita representatives showed little desire to cooperate; the Draconis Combine delegate claimed he could not negotiate, while his Federated Suns counterpart insisted that the Davions be acknowledged as First Lords of the defunct Star League. In addition, the Liao delegate insisted on provisions that neither the Free Worlds League nor the Federated Suns could accept—specifically, the return of all conquered Liao territories. Hopes of a new and profitable era of peace were dashed.

PARTNERS AND PUPPETS

The ComStar War marked the low point of League-ComStar relations, but for much of the past three centuries the Free Worlds and ComStar have maintained close ties, for good and ill. Two Captains-General have had ComStar schooling: Elisabeth Marik, who attained the rank of adept, and the present incumbent, Thomas, who served as Precentor of Son Hoa. These two leaders brought with them contacts and influence they gained in ComStar's service, though some claim that in doing so they have advanced the Order's secret agenda.

Other ties between ComStar and the League have offered little advantage. Precentor Vasur Kristofur's association with Anton Marik helped fan the flames of civil war (allegedly to force a devaluation of the M-bill), while Emilio Rachan's manipulation of the Duke of Irian and various troop elements during the Helm Crisis cost thousands of lives and nearly denied the Inner Sphere the lost technologies of the Star League memory core.

The Word of Blake's escape to the League after the ComStar schism has taken the relationship between the Free Worlds and the Order to a whole new level. Blakist influence has pervaded the League, particularly in communications and intelligence-gathering, as Word of Blake ROM entered into a complex partnership with SAFE. The relationship has had its quarrels—most notably the battles on Gibson with Regular-backed insurgents and arguments over the Order's administration fees—but the symbiotic relationship has benefited both powers. The League gained access to Blakist technology archives, communications services and its intelligence apparatus, while the Blakists received a safe base of operations, a guaranteed market for their services and a means of building up their military strength. Only time will tell if this partnership ultimately brings even closer ties or an acrimonious split.

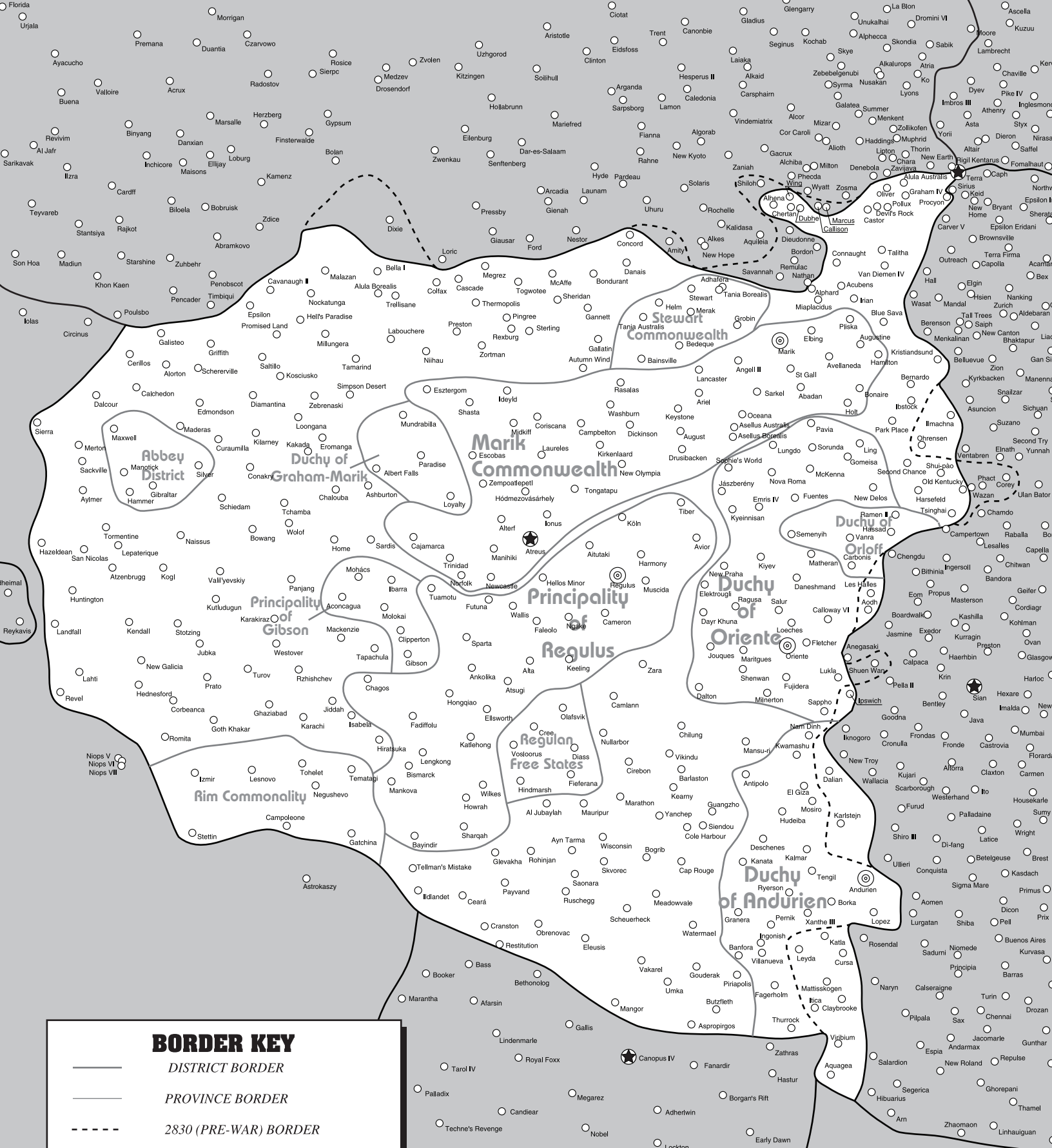
—*The Toyama Doctrine: ComStar and the Word of Blake's Hidden Agenda*, New Avalon Free Press, 3060

HALAS ORIGINS

The Halas family, which succeeded the Allison clan as dukes of Oriente, was appointed by Parliament as a means of breaking the province's longstanding alliance with the Mariks. Blair Halas, a colonel in the Fusiliers of Oriente, had little involvement in League politics, though his ancestors were career soldiers with ties to the FWLM, the Fusiliers of Oriente and the SLDF. He was a fifth-generation Fusilier, and his grandfather and great-grandfather had served with distinction in the SLDF. His father and uncle had held senior posts in the Ducal Guard and had been confidants of the Allison.

From the outset, however, it became clear that although the Captain-General and the new duke had never met, they had much in common—in particular a sense of fair play and a determination to do whatever was necessary for the League. It also became apparent that though he did not directly support Halas' candidacy, Charles Marik had influenced the selection process in favor a duke he felt he could work with—some of the alternatives were too horrible to contemplate. The two men worked well together for the remaining nine years of Charles' tenure, and their relationship set the tone for future Halas-Marik dealings. The two houses remained broadly allied, finally uniting dynastically through the children of the present Captain-General.

—Jan Tudyk, *MechWarrior Families*, Archangel Press, 3064



BORDER KEY

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

PLANET KEY

- NATIONAL CAPITAL
- DISTRICT CAPITAL
- PROVINCE CAPITAL

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE after

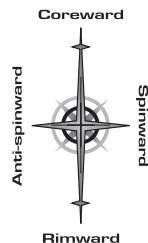
Second Succession War (2864)

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LEGEND



MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS





TIMELINE: SECOND SUCCESSION WAR

With the horrors of the First Succession War still fresh, the Second Succession War was a more restrained affair, but various political and military disasters left the Free Worlds League weak and cost it almost all of its First Succession War gains.

- 2828: [December] Prisoner exchange talks on Wyatt between the Commonwealth and the Free Worlds League break down.
- 2830: [14 June] Captain-General Charles Marik, responding to reports of an allegedly imminent offensive against the Free Worlds League, declares war on the Lyran Commonwealth. [August] As Commonwealth units scramble to face a looming Combine threat, the Free Worlds League invades New Hope, Senftenburg and Zwenkau, following a strategy similar to the Combine's by raiding nearby border worlds to throw off and weaken those planets' defending forces. [September] Commonwealth troops attack Dieudonné, but are repulsed within two months.
- 2831: Taking personal command of the Free Worlds front, Archon Marcus Steiner launches a massive assault to reclaim New Hope, Senftenburg and Zwenkau. Over the next five years, the Lyrans push deeper into League space to take Dieudonné, Danais, Megrez and Alula Australis.
- 2832: The FWLM liberates Berenson, Zion and Kyrkbacken. Attempts to take Ventabren and Elnath are repulsed.
- 2837: [March] Liao troops land on Cursa, allegedly in reaction to a secret message sent by the FWLM via ComStar. Charles Marik orders the Oriente HPG destroyed in response. ComStar counters with a Communications Interdict. Lacking command and control, the FWLM is thrown into disarray, and loses almost all the gains of the First Succession War over the next eighteen months. [August] LCAF units launch a new assault against the Free Worlds League. Initial targets include Zosma, Callison and Marcus, but eventually expand to include Bordon, Shiloh, Oliver and Graham IV.
- 2838: [9 November] ComStar lifts its interdict against the Free Worlds League.
- 2840: Ascuncion falls to Capellan forces. [February-March] Commonwealth offensives on Oliver and Graham IV collapse as reinforcements are cut off by a sudden surge in Free Worlds League counter-raids.
- 2841: Commonwealth forces assault and seize Danais. At almost the same time, a second thrust on the Free Worlds League border hits the worlds around Irian, including Savannah, Remulac and Nathan.
- 2842: [5 January] Commonwealth troops land on Irian, initiating a four-month campaign to secure the heavily industrialized world. The arrival of League reinforcements in March ultimately forces the Lyran assault back and marks the start of the FWLM counteroffensive.
- 2843: FWLM forces retake Danais, The Captain-General's youngest son, William, dies in the fighting.
- 2845: The Duke of Oriente, Harlan Allison, dies during the Sixth Battle of New Delos. Blair Halas, the first of a new ducal line, succeeds him.
- 2846: Free Worlds raids penetrate deep into Commonwealth space; Asuncion is retaken.
- 2850: Snow Fire, an alleged Lyran operative, assassinates Coordinator Yoguchi Kurita.
- 2851: A tidal wave devastates Hassad.
- 2853: The Free Worlds League opens a new offensive against the Commonwealth with the recapture of Megrez, while Combine forces initiate a major assault on Hesperus II. The FWLM also briefly occupies and pacifies the Circinus Federation.
- 2854: Free Worlds League assaults against the Commonwealth make few gains, but attacks against the Confederation regain worlds lost during the ComStar interdict.
- 2862: The Free Worlds League claims Illon and severely damages several Lyran industrial worlds

A GOOD DAY TO DIE

FADE IN

A young woman clammers from the cockpit of a shattered 'Mech She moves slowly and is in considerable pain. Nonetheless she pulls herself out of the wreckage and toward another shattered hulk.

MARIA: Harlan? Harlan?

Her legs are badly injured. She pulls herself across the ground, a torturous effort for her and for us, the viewers.

MARIA: Harlan? Answer me!

A puff of steam spouts from the second 'Mech as a hatch pops. A raw, blistered hand appears.

MARIA: Harlan! My god.

She pulls herself up the wreckage, ignoring the burns she receives. She yanks the hatch open to reveal the battered ruin of HARLAN ALLISON.

ALLISON: I knew you'd come. Did we get them?

MARIA: We got them. The Elsie pulled back and the town is safe. Now hush, conserve your strength.

ALLISON: Too late for that [his voice gurgles]. A mask full of ashqua. I know when my lungs are shot.

He coughs and bloody foam appears.

MARIA: Hold on, hold on. The medics are almost here.

ALLISON: No, send them where they can do some good. [He is wracked by coughing.] I know it's my time. I just wish my line lived on.

MARIA: It can. It will. I won't let you die.

She begins to cry. With considerable effort, he reaches up and brushes away a tear.

ALLISON [his breathing ragged as he fights for every word]: Today is a good day. To die.

His eyes close and he falls back in the cockpit couch.

FADE OUT

—From the screenplay of *The Last Warrior*, a biopic based on the life of the last Allison duke, 2847



HISTORY OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

STANDING ORDER B923-J1XB (4 JANUARY 2851)

Henceforth, until the Captain-General deems otherwise, a bottle of Connaught Fine Malt shall be presented to the Director of SAFE on 12 December each year in recognition of services rendered.

[signed] Charles Marik

—Item included with the personal documents of Charles Marik, Atreus Historical Abstracts, 2844

THIRD SUCCESSION WAR

Philippa Marik used the lull to rebuild the economies of several key worlds, but did not neglect the military. At the urging of the LCCC, in particular Duke Robin Halas of Oriente (whom court rumor linked romantically to the Captain-General), she instigated a series of building and R&D programs. When conflict re-ignited across the Inner Sphere in 2866, the FWLM was ready, though it would not see substantial action for several years. Instead, the initial Marik strikes of the Third Succession War were economic and political, culminating with the failed attempt to assassinate Elizabeth Steiner in 2867. In this attack, exploiting blueprints obtained by Free Worlds intelligence agencies during the reign of Tracial Steiner, a team of assassins snuck through secret passages in Government House and into the throne room, where the Archon's 'Mech guards slew them. The net result of this endeavor was the fracturing of League relations with the Commonwealth and a slight thaw toward the Draconis Combine, whom the League had regarded frostily ever since the DCMS' participation in the harrying of House Marik during ComStar's interdict.

When the DCMS staged a massive invasion of the Lyran state, Philippa heeded Duke Halas' hawkish urgings and authorized the FWLM to undertake its own operations that netted considerable gains in Skye. Unfortunately, the FWLM could not hold its conquests, despite the deployment of Andurien and Orloff troops (against the wishes of leaders in those provinces). Marie Marik, who succeeded her mother Philippa in 2873 and approved the troop deployments shortly after taking office, bore the brunt of the political backlash for subsequent losses that turned the Humphreys clan from staunch Marik allies to bitter enemies. Duke Humphreys opined that the waste of resources and lives was "symptomatic of the current leadership." Despite this characterization, during Marie's reign the honors of warfare that typified the Third Succession War came into common use. No longer would massed troops decide the fates of worlds, nor would combatants employ strategic weapons. Instead, the emphasis shifted to small-scale tactical operations designed to conserve valuable technology and minimize collateral damage.

Marie made little headway against the Steiners and Liaos during her short tenure, as did her brother who succeeded her in 2880. The only notable success of James Marik's reign was the defense of Les Halles against a Capellan liberation force. Public credit for that operation went to its architect, the venerable Robin Halas, who continued to advise the new Captain-General just as he had James' two predecessors. In middle age and poor health, having contracted Branthian fever during the 2876 epidemic, James Marik reigned for only three years. Lacking heirs, his sudden death threatened the stability of the Free Worlds League. His closest successor was thirteen-year-old Samuel Marik, too young to ascend to the Captain-Generalcy. Instead, Admiral Lloyd Marik-Stanley (who lent his name to the League's famed aerospace school) stepped forward to serve as regent until Samuel came of age and to block those who sought to do away with Marik sovereignty.

With backing from Andurien and Orloff, the matter appeared settled, and the admiral had already moved into the Atreus palace when a new contender stepped forward. Elisabeth Marik, Samuel's aunt and a ComStar adept for the past twenty years, had precedence and notarized papers from James (signed four months before his death) acknowledging her as his successor. With distrust of ComStar still rife among the League population, many flocked to Marik-Stanley's banner, particularly after he made a vociferous anti-ComStar address from his flagship anchored at Hassad. Civil war loomed, a threat Elisabeth quickly moved to counter in a demonstration of formidable diplomatic skills. Acknowledging her lack of martial ability, she called on Admiral Marik-Stanley to share power with her, taking on the role of FWLM Commander-in-chief while she oversaw political and administrative tasks. Not initially inclined to agree, the admiral was convinced to do so by Arthur Humphreys of Andurien, who saw in the deal the means for both leaders to get what they wanted without resorting to internecine conflict. For six years, the agreement held. Lloyd Marik-Stanley captured numerous Capellan worlds, which Elisabeth then integrated with the Free Worlds League. Then the admiral died in battle on Aldebaran in 2889, leaving Elisabeth in sole command of the realm. Her easy charm, superlative negotiating skills and ability to judge how to get the best from others made Elisabeth Marik one of the best-loved Captains-General despite her limitations as a military leader. Though poorly suited to battlefield command, she could draw on a broad range of knowledge in the LCCC and Parliament, and understood the FWLM's capabilities and limitations. After 2907, she added her nephew Samuel's expertise to the list by appointing him her deputy for military affairs. She listened, a rare talent in the leader of one of the Inner Sphere's largest nations, and everyone from the lowliest infantryman to the highest duke felt she took their views into account.

The military high point of Elisabeth's reign was the Red Rover campaign in which elements of the Defenders of Andurien and Orloff Grenadiers staged a nine-year drive throughout the Capellan Confederation, hitting worlds such as Aldebaran, Shensi and

THE HOME DEFENSE ACT (ENACTED 2906, REPEALED 3037): KEY POINTS

"Parliament may designate any province of the Free Worlds as 'immediately threatened by military attack.'"

—Paragraph 3

"Any province that suffers incursions by hostile foreign troops is automatically 'immediately threatened by military attack' and entitled to invoke the provisions of this act."

—Paragraph 4

"Any province 'immediately threatened by military attack' may employ up to three-quarters of provincial troops for home defense."

—Paragraph 8

"Troops issued home-defense orders may not be commanded by the Captain-General or his or her representatives."



Nanking. Red Rover culminated in 2910 with the capture of the ice ship Silver Frost and the routing of the Liao garrison on Zion. Otto Liao's countermoves prevented the Red Rovers from striking further. In June the taskforce was recalled, the survivors staging a victory parade through Atreus City. On the Steiner front, only the smashing of LCAF forces on Loric in 2913 matched the Red Rovers' achievements. Three Marik Militia regiments rampaged across the world for three weeks before the Donegal Guard forced them to withdraw. Once again, however, the FWLM proved unable to hold onto its gains in the face of LCAF and CCAF reinforcements.

Elisabeth's good relations with Parliament made a stark contrast to her predecessors and successors, and gave her virtual *carte blanche*. She not only listened to Parliament, but also kept them informed. While retaining a tight grip on the reins of power, she allowed Parliament to contribute to the decision-making process. However, while the MPs generally respected Elisabeth, some provincial representatives feared subsequent Captains-General might exploit their support, in particular the use of provincial 'Mech forces (which formed the bulk of offensive troops on the Capellan front). In a rare moment of short-sightedness, the Captain-General drafted the Home Defense Act, which allowed provinces designated by Parliament as "immediately threatened by military attack" to retain up to 75 percent of their regional troops to garrison their territory. Elisabeth saw this as a minor concession, a sop to her allies. Over the next century, however, this provision would cause enormous problems for successive Free Worlds leaders.

Samuel Marik, the child-candidate for Captain-General after James' death, finally took up the post in 2917, having spent the previous decade as his aunt's military commander. Though lacking Elisabeth's vision and diplomatic skill, he was politically and militarily adept. He made slow but steady progress on both fronts, taking Callison, Wing and Shiloh, raiding Solaris and blocking Lyrans efforts to capture Stewart, and staging a series of assaults on Hassad that earned the Fusiliers of Oriente a succession of commendations and land grants. To bolster his military efforts, Samuel used political intrigue and espionage. The Lyrans turncoat Mikhail Tertren provided information that bolstered FWLM efforts against the LCAF, while around the same time SAFE convinced Vincente Sian-Marik—a descendant of the Marik cadet line that had schemed against Geraldine Marik and her successors—to defect to the Free Worlds League in 2941. That move brought a broad swath of worlds on the Capellan-League border, including most of Zion and Ohren provinces, under Free Worlds League dominion, but not before the CCAF defenders staged a scorched-earth withdrawal.

Samuel died in 2944 and was mourned across the League. His son Paul reigned for a little more than three years before dying in an aerospace action over Ingersoll in 2947. His sister Iris succeeded him for just four months before a speeder accident left her crippled and she resigned in favor of her son, Brock. Brock Marik immediately undertook a tour of the realm and fell victim to the Liao firebombing of Van Diemen IV after only eighteen months in office. History has never ascertained whether his death was a fluke or part of a Liao scheme. Iris Marik's younger son Thaddeus then became the fifth Captain-General in as many years.

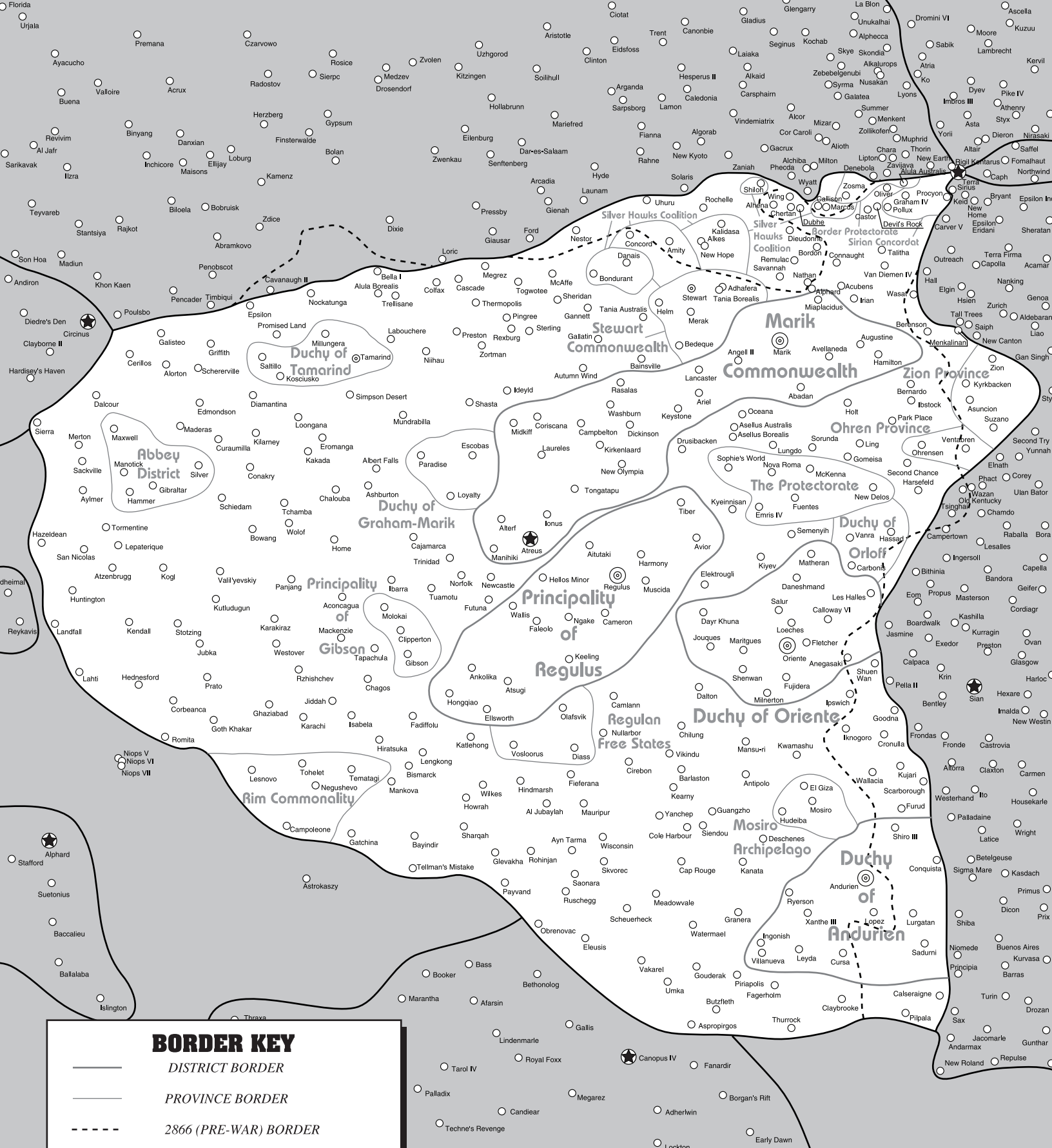
Thaddeus II had grand ambitions not matched by his skill as a political or military leader. Convinced of his own superiority and unwilling to listen to others, he proposed a grandiose plan to subdue Denebola, Solaris and Wyatt that he codenamed Operation Killing Stroke. His arrogance in demanding troops and finances for the operation alienated Parliament, whose members declared all worlds within two jumps of the border "under threat of military attack" and thus permitted to invoke the Home Defense Act. Andurien, Stewart and the Sirian Concordat recalled most of their troops, together with a host of smaller provinces. Thaddeus pushed ahead with the operation anyway, even encouraging military coups in some provinces whose leaders threatened to invoke the Home Defense Act. Thaddeus in turn threatened or bribed other provincial authorities in order to ensure the availability of troops. Using his personal wealth, he hired ten mercenary regiments to make up the shortfall. In the end, however, Killing Stroke proved a damp squib, gaining only Cavanaugh for the League. The main legacy of Killing Stroke was the decision of several newly captured planets like Shiloh, Amity and Danais to band together and form the Silver Hawks Coalition (created by the Concord of Danais in 2966). The later years of Thaddeus' reign were little more successful; he came to rely heavily on federal and mercenary troops (as well as those of loyal allies) while locked in a bitter war of words with his parliamentary rivals.

Stephan Marik's ascension in 2963 came as a surprise to the man himself and to Parliament, taking place after Thaddeus drowned on Conakry during one of his few vacations. Local fishermen recovered his body two weeks later. The new Captain-General was less ambitious than his father, but no less determined to see the FWLM achieve ever-greater successes. The FWLM's fortunes seesawed between victory and defeat, each following the other with horrible regularity. Stephan vowed to break the cycle, and in 2971 he ordered the invasion of Loric. The campaign initially went well, capturing Donnelly Metalworks after a week of fighting, but quickly turned against the invaders. Counterattacks by the Twelfth Star Guards and SLDF-vintage Eridani Light Horse pressured the FWLM troops, but against the advice of his commanders, Stephan ordered his task force to remain on-world. The ensuing three-month campaign inflicted grievous damage on the Third Regular Hussars,

LIBERATION UNITS

The principal legacy of Samuel's reign did not originate with the Captain-General, but came at the hands of Erin Marden-Smythe, SAFE Assistant Deputy Director for Covert Operations. A member of a Dispossessed MechWarrior family, she appreciated the dissatisfaction that pervaded such groups across the Inner Sphere (in particular their frustration with their own governments) and proposed recruiting irregular troops from such families in Lyrans and Capellan space. Gaining limited funding, she recruited two groups of men and women on Callison and Shiloh, dubbing the irregular formations Liberation Units. Members were encouraged to disrupt the infrastructure on Liao and Steiner worlds, egged on by promises of significant remuneration (including rescue from their Dispossessed status) if the FWLM subsequently liberated the targeted planets. Liberation Unit leaders received special training—explosives use, small arms, propaganda, psychological warfare and a host of other assassination and sabotage skills—and could pass on the skills to their subordinates. The experiment was an unqualified success, the chaos caused by the LUs aiding FWLM operations considerably. By the end of 2930 half a dozen additional Liberation Units had begun operating against the League's enemies. They remained a mainstay of League operations until the Clan invasion, with most being recalled or rendered inactive during the post-Tukayyid *détente*.

—*Terror Tactics: Dirty Tricks of the Succession Wars*,
Skye Military Press, 3059



BORDER KEY

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

PLANET KEY

- NATIONAL CAPITAL
- DISTRICT CAPITAL
- PROVINCE CAPITAL

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE after

Third Succession War (3025)

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LEGEND



MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS





TIMELINE: THIRD SUCCESSION WAR

The long haul of the Third Succession War more resembled a series of smaller conflicts than a single war. Of considerably lower intensity than the First and Second Succession Wars, it saw a return to something like the Ares Conventions. By its end, many campaigns had devolved into small-unit actions rather than regimental operations.

- 2864: [9 November] Peace talks begin on New Earth with representatives of all five Great Houses attending. The talks quickly break down.
- 2866: Start of the Third Succession War.
- 2867: A Marik assassin using stolen plans of the secret passages in the Royal Palace on Tharkad attempts to kill Archon Elizabeth Steiner. The BattleMechs guarding the Throne Room stop him. Political fallout from the attempt prompts a League rapprochement with House Kurita.
- 2869: Marik begins a new offensive against House Steiner, targeting the Federation of Skye.
- 2873: Philippa Marik dies. Her daughter Marie uses regional forces to consolidate her mother's gains, earning many enemies. The League loses the worlds anyway.
- 2880: James Marik becomes Captain-General.
- 2881: Liao forces attack Les Halles but are repulsed.
- 2882: James Marik dies. Elisabeth Marik leaves ComStar to become Captain-General. Lloyd Marik-Stanley, her main rival, becomes commander-in-chief of the FWLM.
- 2889: Liao forces attack the Marik world of Aldebaran. Arthur Humphreys is killed in the battle.
- 2901: A Marik deep strike force codenamed Red Rover starts operations against House Liao, targeting Aldebaran, Shensi, Nanking, Buenos Aires and Zion.
- 2906: Parliament passes the Home Defense Act.
- 2910: The Red Rover strike team completes its operations.
- 2913: FWLM forces smash the Lyran defenders on Loric before withdrawing.
- 2917: Elisabeth Marik dies. Her nephew Samuel, already commander in chief, takes over as Captain-General. Forces under his command capture Wing, Callison and Shiloh as well as blocking offensives against Stewart.
- 2928: League forces raid Solaris VII. In revenge, the Commonwealth raids Stewart. Hauptmann Mikhail Tertren is captured when the LCAF is repulsed. He is released after he agrees to work undercover for the Free Worlds League.
- 2929: With the aid of Hauptmann Tertren's information, Marik forces take Shiloh.

- 2933: The ComStar Guards and Militia are formed, starting as light infantry. These forces will come to be known as the Com Guards. ROM funding is reduced to finance the unit.
- 2934: The League attacks the Liao world of Hsien, but FWLM forces are repulsed by a determined defense.
- 2937: Hauptmann Tertren escapes across the FWL border after the LIC mounts a major mole-hunter operation.
- 2941: Free Worlds League forces occupy Ohrensen, Ventabren, Suzano, Zion and Kyrkbacken after convincing Vincente Sian-Marik (an administrator in the Sarna Commonality) to transfer his allegiance to the Free Worlds League. Capellan troops stage a brutal scorched-earth withdrawal. On the Steiner front, the FWLM employs irregular "Liberation Units" on Shiloh and Callison.
- 2944: Samuel Marik dies. His son Paul becomes Captain-General.
- 2947: [March] Paul Marik dies in battle over the Liao world of Ingersoll. His sister Iris takes control. [July] Iris Marik is seriously injured in a speeder accident. Her son Brock becomes Captain-General.
- 2948: Brock Marik is killed in a bombing raid on Van Diemen IV. His brother Thaddeus becomes the next Captain-General.
- 2952: Thaddeus Marik starts a three-pronged attack on the Lyran Commonwealth, codenamed Operation Killing Stroke. He does not have the support of Parliament. The Free Worlds League takes Cavanaugh II from the Lyran Commonwealth.
- 2963: Thaddeus Marik drowns. His son Stephan succeeds him.
- 2971: The FWLM invades Loric. Elements of the Twelfth Star Guards and the Eridani Light Horse eventually force them to retreat.
- 2978: A Liao-based Liberation Unit under the command of Jasbinder Shafir goes rogue when the FWLM fails to pay its wages. Defecting to Liao, they play a key role in winning Wasat for the Capellan Confederation.
- 2980: [7 May] Callison falls to the Commonwealth when no Marik reinforcements arrive, a result of infighting between Parliament and the Captain-General. Zosma and Rochelle also come under attack, while Liao forces target Hassad and Vanra.
- 2987: The Commonwealth launches its infamous "Deep Raid" against Marik space. Lyran forces strike Ling, Park Place, Ryerson, Inan, Nathan and Bordon.
- 2988: An officer in the Orloff Grenadiers attempts to involve Janos Marik in a conspiracy against Stephan. Janos denounces him, and the officer is imprisoned along with numerous co-conspirators. Duchess Morgaine Humphreys of Andurien is assassinated in a failed military coup.
- 2990: The Sixth Defenders of Andurien smash Liao troops on Teng.

who comprised the majority of the assault force. The mercenary Redmond's Broadwords who accompanied the Hussars were effectively wiped out, their survivors subsumed by other mercenary units. With his forces' fighting strength down by a third, Regular Duke Cameron-Jones applied to Parliament to designate Regulus as a threatened state and thus eligible to invoke the Home Defense Act. Fearing that Stephan would seek to circumvent their author-

ity, Parliament complied. Contract disputes led several mercenary formations (including Richard's Panzer Brigade and Lockhardt's Ironsides) to invoke escape clauses and seek employment with the Free Worlds' enemies, further weakening the Captain-General's position. House troops did not escape financial hardship amid the political infighting, and even a Liberation Unit went rogue after failing to receive promised payments.



HISTORY OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

With Stephan and Parliament at loggerheads, the League's enemies struck. When an LCAF attack on Zosma, Rochelle and Callison threatened to overwhelm those worlds' defenders, the Captain-General deliberately held back reinforcements to demonstrate his power. When the relief troops finally arrived, six weeks after the attack, they turned the tide on Rochelle and Zosma, but Callison fell to the Steiners on May 7, 2980. The FWLM turned back Liao forces that struck Hassad and Vanra, but not the League units suffered considerable losses. Military and political sparring continued until 2787, when a Lyran task force struck deep into the Free Worlds League, targeting Ling, Park Place, Ryerson, Inan, Nathan and Bordon. At Bordon, the destruction of a new 'Mech factory struck deep at the Marik psyche. After this bitter blow, Stephan realized he had to regain Parliament's support, and bowed to several of the MPs' demands. The first of these was Parliament's right to share in the spoils of victory (colloquially known as the Replevin Doctrine). Various MPs also sought to gain influence over military affairs, in a move recorded as Special Resolution 523. Almost immediately, this alliance of Parliament and the Captain-General brought success for the League over the Lyrans and Capellans, most notably through victories by the Sixth Defenders of Andurien on Teng and a successful Liberation Unit raid against the Bowie aerospace plant on Wyatt.

A year after the deep raid against Bordon, forces in the League sought to unseat the Captain-General by encouraging his son and heir, Janos, to join a plot to install a military junta instead of Parliament. Janos denounced the plot and its conspirators, but SAFE failed to trace the ringleaders. In 2989, Duchess Morgaine Humphreys of Andurien was killed in an unsuccessful military coup attempt that demonstrated the extent of unrest throughout the military in the wake of the political logjam. Rather than settle matters, Parliament's success in forcing the Replevin Doctrine on the Captain-General had prompted many representatives to turn on each other, and many parliamentary debates soon resembled nothing more than bad-tempered slanging matches. Several became open brawls, broken up by parliamentary men-at-arms. Riots, strikes and protests erupted across the Free Worlds League. Bitter and dispirited by his military failures, his defeat by Parliament and the poor state of League affairs, Stephan Marik withdrew from public life. He died in August 2991 after a long fight against cancer.

ACCESSION

Janos Marik became Captain-General on September 2, 2991, and immediately began building bridges to his political enemies, including a number of those who had sought to use him in a scheme against his father three years earlier. He announced a general amnesty for political prisoners, including those involved in the 2988 plot, and enacted humanitarian legislation to aid worlds across the Free Worlds League. The legislation gave particular preference to those worlds targeted by the Deep Raid. Janos and his wife, Hilda Lauber, toured the League throughout late 2991 and early 2992, giving the new ruler deep insight into the problems that plagued his realm. His thoughtful and compassionate leadership, combined with his belief that military action should be a last resort, earned him enormous respect throughout the League. In just two years, he had reversed the alienation created by his predecessors. Janos surrounded himself with a broad base of advisors, ranging from his brother Anton to military officers from the Silver

Hawks, Marik Militia and Orloff Grenadiers, as well as regional and national politicians. Among the best known of these were Saj Rahal and Falstaff McHenry from the Sixth Marik Militia and Silver Hawk Irregulars, respectively, as well as MP Stephanie Alvarez of New Olympica. Vincente Orloff, the current earl's father, also became a close confidant, helping to promote the Captain-General's agenda. This "council of friends" would play a key role in shaping Free Worlds League policy in the early years of Janos' reign.

Hilda's death in 2994 hit Janos hard, but the entire League voiced its sympathy for their young leader. Even Duchess Catherine Humphreys of Andurien, one of House Marik's few dedicated opponents, paid her respects at the funeral. Afterward, Janos threw himself into his work, striving to root out corruption in the FWLM and SAFE via the Accountability Edict and the Logistics Act, both passed in 2996. The restructuring prompted by these new laws was immediately put to the test with the assault on Hesperus a year later. Though defeated by a young Katrina Steiner, the raid demonstrated the FWLM's newfound strength. When the LCAF launched a tit-for-tat attack against Kalidasa later in the year, Janos ordered reinforcements to the beleaguered world and authorized a new attempt against Hesperus, much of whose garrison was involved in the Kalidasa assault. This second attack nearly succeeded, only blocked by the desperate action and superlative skill of the mercenary Eridani Light Horse.

The marriage of Janos Marik to Ana Stewart in 2998 heralded a new generation of Mariks to complement Janos' seven children by his first marriage, and strengthened dynastic alliances within the Free Worlds League. The daughter of the Stewart Commonality's ruling Duke Androcles, Ana bound the Stewart duchy to the Mariks. Her children and grandchildren, though unlikely to succeed to leadership of either Stewart or the Marik Commonwealth, would play a major role in League affairs. Tragedy struck as well, however, with the death of Janos' fifth child, Cartwright, shortly after the wedding.

The millennium celebrations marked the end of the first phase of Janos Marik's reign, marred only by Davion attacks against Kalidasa that led to a six-year covert war against the Federated Suns. For his part, Janos focused his realm's efforts against the League's traditional enemy, the Lyran Commonwealth. He intended to weaken the Federation of Skye and diminish Lyran industrial capacity, with the factory complex on Hesperus as his ultimate strategic objective. Success would have far-reaching effects—a Lyran shortage of supplies would aid League war efforts against the Commonwealth along the entire front and force the Lyrans to draw off troops from their Draconis Combine border. Simultaneously, Janos intended League forces to resume their offensive into the Tikonov Commonality, bringing more former Terran Hegemony planets into the Free Worlds. In theory a cunning and insidious plan, reality would be another matter.

Loric, targeted in March 3002, was not the easy campaign military analysts had predicted. The two Marik Militia regiments committed to the campaign found themselves embroiled in a meat-grinder. The mercenary Cady's Regiment, hired for its experience against Lyran units while working for the Draconis Combine, likewise struggled. It seemed apparent that news of the attack had leaked to the Lyrans, who had significantly enhanced their defensive capabilities. Battle dragged on for eight months before the FWLM troops admitted defeat and withdrew.



League forces hit Solaris, the second world in the campaign, while the struggles on Loric still raged. Janos Marik's plan called for an initial hit-and-run campaign to soften up the planet's defenses before the main force arrived, while military intelligence planted disinformation intended to make the LCAF think Bella I was the next target. The League did not successfully conclude any phase of this operation, and General Willis Crawford, the overall commander, threw away more troops in a doomed effort to rectify the situation. In the end, General Crawford—an associate of Anton Marik—was blamed for the Solaris disaster and court-martialed. Crawford's execution on July 1, 3003, opened a rift between the Captain-General and his brother that would have grave implications in later years.

The Free Worlds' second front against the Capellan Confederation, dormant for several years, fared little better. The campaign, begun around the same time as the Loric assault, was under the command of Anton Marik, who had been elevated to command of the entire front in January 3002, granted the title Duke of Procyon by his brother. The operation comprised a series of interlinked attacks designed to liberate one or two worlds at a time. Unfortunately, troops and resources were in short supply thanks to the overrunning (and eventual abandonment) of the Loric and Solaris campaigns. The bloody clashes—especially at Menkalinan and New Canton—would drag on for years.

In 3006, responding to the Lyran Archon's "Concentrated Weakness" policy, Janos Marik turned his eyes back to the Commonwealth. He ordered a series of incursions, the most notable of which were assaults on Coventry and Pollux that sent shockwaves through Lyran military and political circles. These same events played a key role in unseating Archon Alessandro Steiner. According to court legend, his successor Katrina Steiner sent Janos a case of Tharkan Ice Schnapps for "services rendered to the Lyran people," though no record of such a gift exists. The coup engineered by the canny former LCAF officer unfortunately meant stiffened Steiner resistance to FWLM operations.

Small-scale actions dominated the next few years, including the assault on Rochelle that began the feud between Janos and the mercenary Cranston Snord after the Captain-General sought to confiscate the unit's 'Mechs. The death of his youngest child, his namesake, affected the Captain-General deeply; even worse was the loss of Ana Stewart to a degenerative bone disease in 3011. The death of another child, Faith, by overdose in 3012 was the final nail in the coffin. Janos Marik largely withdrew into himself, hiding in darkened rooms at palaces on Marik and Atreus, communicating with the outside world via messages.

Anton Marik had long felt dissatisfied with his brother's reign, particularly after the treatment meted out to Willis Crawford and the undermining of Capellan-front operations to bolster actions against the Commonwealth. He coveted the Captain-Generalcy, believing that his withdrawn elder brother had become unfit for the role. Thanks to whispering in his ear by ComStar and Liao agents, Anton believed the rest of the League would prefer him to take command of the Free Worlds. He lacked large numbers of loyal troops, however. Elements of the Marik Militia would side with him, but he had no core to his army until a meeting at Terra's Kashmir Arcology brought Anton face-to-face with his backer, Chancellor Maximillian Liao. They discussed troop deployments and government loyalties, both preludes to Anton's subsequent actions. Chancellor Liao also provided Anton with the services of Wolf's Dragoons, an elite mercenary force whose loyalty was guaranteed so long as their wages were met. Egged on by Maximillian—and covertly by ComStar, which in facilitating the Kashmir meeting and its aftermath sought to "rebalance the Inner Sphere economies"—Anton took his chance. On May 22, 3014, he proclaimed himself Captain-General and announced his intention to unseat his brother.

ANTON'S REVOLT

Backed by Wolf's Dragoons, Anton quickly moved to expand his holdings and found support in almost a quarter of the Free Worlds League's provinces. Systems like Nova Roma, Emris IV and Sophie's World fell swiftly, some taken by local insurrections and others by the usurper's troops. Along with the Dragoons, these included substantial elements of the Marik Militia and the Regular Hussars. Many major regions declared neutrality, among them Andurien and Regulus. The latter province, despite support for Anton Marik within its military, eventually sided with Janos.

When Anton's message claiming the Captain-Generalcy reached Atreus on May 24, Janos reacted with surprising calm, mobilizing troops and then—after spending a day gathering his thoughts at the Marik mountain estate—addressing Parliament. There he admitted his failings while refusing to acknowledge Anton's claim to his office, disowning him. "From this moment," Janos Marik proclaimed, "I have no brother." Seeking to discourage support for Anton, Janos announced Executive Order 1136 subjecting units and provinces that stood with Anton to the Replevin Doctrine. This, together with the Captain-General's diplomatic approach toward neutral provinces, did much to undercut Anton's backing. Within a fortnight of the declaration, it became clear that Anton would not achieve his cherished quick victory. He lacked the forces to expand his holdings, though Janos likewise had no pretensions to a quick resolution. Threatening the death penalty for any who dared aid his renegade

CRAWFORD

A classmate of Anton Marik, Willis Crawford was vain and self-centered. Though a graduate of Princefield, Crawford had limited capacity for strategic planning and he tended to blame failure on others. Only Anton Marik's patronage enabled him to rise as far as he did. His disastrous leadership during the assault on Solaris in late 3002 was the final straw and had serious repercussions.

An overly complex plan, the Solaris assault needed a firm hand and an insightful leader to succeed. Crawford was none of these things. When substantial elements of the attack force were delayed by conflicting orders and LCAF spoiling attacks, Crawford pressed on regardless, unwilling to admit to the Captain-General that his troops could not meet their objectives. The LIC had learned of the assault and the LCAF was well prepared to meet it, sabotaging many 'Mechs and fighters even before they left their staging areas and shorting the power plant of a fully laden 'Mech transport, stranding it and its cargo. Under-strength and badly coordinated, the FWLM operation never stood a chance, but Crawford squandered most of his force in a vain attempt to salvage his own reputation. He was arrested and imprisoned at Caulfield Island on Atreus until his Court Martial on June 23, 3003. He was executed on July 1, an act that permanently soured relations between the Captain-General and Anton Marik.

—*A House Divided: Civil Wars of the Mariks (Vol. IV)*,
Kaplin Media, 3018



HISTORY OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

THE CONCORD OF KAPTEYN

The Steiner-Davion alliance, signed on Terra in 3022, led ComStar to suggest the formation of a mutual defense alliance among the Inner Sphere's other three great powers. Subhash Indrahara of the Draconis Combine was its architect (though the initial idea belonged to Maximilian Liao), and the ISF director's appearance in the Free Worlds League in the late summer of 3022 could not be ignored. Janos Marik received him on Atreus. An educated and cultured man—despite being a torturer and head of the Combine's secret police—Indrahara spent many hours discussing literature and visiting libraries and museums before raising the possibility of an alliance between the Combine and the League.

The core tenets of the Concord were simple: the signatories agreed not to attack each other and to extend "favored trading partner" status to fellow signatories. This trade clause appealed greatly to the Mariks, who recognized the economic and political gains of increased sales to the Draconis Combine. Little did Janos realize that the simplicity of the Concord, which was to be signed on Terra in October, hid another Kurita agenda.

When Coordinator Takashi Kurita and Janos Marik met at Elmau, Takashi shocked the Captain-General as he introduced a third member of the alliance, facilitated by the wording of the treaty: Maximilian Liao. Janos almost walked out when Kurita calmly explained that "as an enemy of our enemy, House Davion," Chancellor Liao made a natural ally, even if he had supported Anton Marik's revolt less than a decade earlier. Takashi Kurita also pointed out that while the Free Worlds needed Combine support against the new Steiner-Davion alliance, the militarily powerful Kurita realm was not so dependent on the League's strength of arms. Under the circumstances, Janos Marik signed.

Of course, signing the accord was one thing. Enforcing it was another matter, as demonstrated by the Fourth Succession War that would soon follow.

—*Alliance of Convenience*, NAIS Military Press, 3054

brother, the Captain-General began a long and bloody counteroffensive. Some of those approached by both Mariks refused to aid either one—Catherine Humphreys refused to help Janos, though she did say he was preferable to a Liao puppet like Anton.

The Lyran Commonwealth chose this moment to stage a succession of deep raids, exploiting the chaos in the League. Despite the need to defend against the incursions, Janos Marik executed powerful counterattacks against the rebels. While regional units battled Lyran attackers on several worlds—most prominent among these the battle for Nestor, in which the Orloff Grenadiers held off the Donegal Guards—Janos pushed toward Anton's base of operations on New Delos. By early 3015, Anton still held only a core of his domain, the worlds known today as the Protectorate. New loyalist offensives threatened to crush this island of rebellion, and the backbone of the rebel forces, Wolf's Dragoons, could only deal with one offensive at a time. Seeking to bolster his troops' flagging strength, Anton called on Wolf's Dragoons to disperse their soldiers throughout the rebel units. Jaime Wolf refused and prepared to depart. Furious, Anton committed an ultimately fatal mistake: He took the Dragoons' dependents hostage—including Jaime Wolf's wife, daughters and brother, Joshua—and executed all of them for treason.

Learning of this as they were heading out of the New Delos system, the Dragoons immediately reversed course. They descended on New Delos and smashed the rebel HQ at Cienfuegos in a three-day rampage that left no stone unscorched. The infamous Natasha Kerensky, who had a relationship with Joshua Wolf, personally slew Anton. Within six weeks, the rebellion was over and the last troops disarmed.

Though the main conflict had ended, the bloodletting would continue for some time. After visiting his brother's grave on April 12, Janos ordered the rebel leadership—including his second son, Gerald—executed, though some had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment or hard labor. Surprisingly, Janos Marik offered Wolf's Dragoons a contract and unleashed them on the Lyran Commonwealth and Capellan Confederation in a succession of raids over the next four years. The Dragoons' assault on Hesperus (memorialized as the Thirteenth Battle of Hesperus) came close to success, but proved the mercenary unit's swan song. Shortly afterward, the mercenaries left House Marik's service.

As the Third Succession War wound down to its final conclusion, Janos' old enemy, Katrina Steiner, sought to emulate her distant ancestor Elizabeth and issued a peace proposal to the other Successor States. Janos refused to pay it any heed. The unexpected alliance between Houses Steiner and Davion, however, did catch Janos' attention. When Subhash Indrahara, head of the Draconis Combine's feared ISF, arrived on Atreus to reach an understanding with the Mariks, he found the Captain-General amenable. The inclusion of Maximilian Liao in the discussions nearly derailed them, as Janos Marik knew full well of the Chancellor's involvement in the recent League civil war. House Kurita insisted on including the Capellan leader, however. The ultimate result of the talks, signed at Elmau in Bavaria, was the Concord of Kapteyn.

FOURTH SUCCESSION WAR AND BLOODY ANDURIEN

The Concord of Kapteyn did not prevent conflict between its members. Janos Marik continued a low-level war against the Confederation, employing mercenaries in efforts to seize control of Sirius. Liao objected, but with the Concord lacking a specific focus, the Captain-General ignored the Chancellor and the Coordinator saw no need to intervene. The wedding of Melissa Steiner and Hanse Davion on August 20, 3028, and the ensuing Steiner-Davion invasions of the Capellan Confederation and Draconis Combine, finally gave the Concord an objective.

As the only nation not targeted by the Steiner-Davion juggernaut, the League had to relieve the pressure on its allies, though the Captain-General did not react sufficiently swiftly for the Coordinator's liking. Takashi Kurita sent a terse communiqué to Atreus, but failed to get the result he wanted. Subsequent FWLM offensives, codenamed Operation Dagger, were half-hearted; the LCAF, though unable to resist the Marik assault, made the attacking troops pay dearly. When Capellan forces launched a surprise attack on the League worlds closest to Terra, the unexpected assault by their supposed allies shocked the FWLM high command. These CCAF troops, isolated from Sian and loyal to the breakaway Tikonov Republic, threatened a broad swath of planets. Bolstered by LCAF units, this so-called Republican force stood a very real chance of trapping some of the League's best soldiers. In response, Janos Marik ordered a withdrawal on a broad front, rationalizing his defensive lines but losing part or all of several provinces. By the time an outraged Parliament met, they could do little to ameliorate the situation.



TIMELINE: THIRD SUCCESSION WAR (CONTINUED)

- 2989: [12 September] Parliament passes Special Resolution 512, better known as the Replevin Doctrine, to secure for themselves part of the spoils of war.
- 2991: FWLM forces raid Wyatt. [August] Stephan Marik dies of cancer. [2 September] Janos Marik becomes Captain-General.
- 2994: [March] Janos Marik's wife, Hilda (nee Lauber) dies suddenly.
- 2997: Free Worlds forces attack Hesperus II. They are defeated by the Fifteenth Lyran Guards, commanded by Colonel Katrina Steiner (Tenth Battle of Hesperus). The Commonwealth attacks the Marik world of Kalidasa, using three of the regiments previously guarding Hesperus II. The assault bogs down. With the Hesperus garrison under-strength, Marik sends four 'Mech regiments to attack Hesperus II (Eleventh Battle of Hesperus). The Eridani Light Horse defeated the League advance.
- 2998: Janos Marik marries Ana Stewart.
- 3000: [April] Unknown forces raid Kalidasa's 'Mech factory. The assault is eventually traced to the Federated Suns, prompting SAFE to stage a covert six-year campaign against Davion targets, passing blame onto House Liao.
- 3002: Archon Alessandro Steiner begins his policy of "Concentrated Weakness" to free up more units for strikes against the Free Worlds League. The Free Worlds League attacks Loric, where Steiner defenders beat them off. An attack on Solaris also stalls. Anton Marik becomes commander of the Capellan front and launches assaults against Menkalinan and new Canton, both of which bog down.
- 3003: Willis Crawford, an ally of Anton Marik and the commander of the Solaris debacle, is tried and executed for incompetence and insubordination. Maximillian Liao starts secret negotiations with Anton Marik.
- 3006: Thomas Marik enters ComStar. House Marik launches several deep raids into the Commonwealth, exploiting the flaws in the "Concentrated Weakness" strategy.
- 3007: Cranston Snord's Irregulars see action on Rochelle. After the campaign, Janos Marik tries to confiscate the mercenaries' 'Mechs. The Irregulars escape and vow never to work for House Marik again.

- 3010: ComStar begins an operation to start a civil war in the Free Worlds League. They also plan to involve Wolf's Dragoons so that the famed mercenary unit will be forced to make another supply run. This time, ComStar hopes to follow them home.
- 3011: Ana Stewart-Marik dies.
- 3014: [22 May] Anton Marik rallies his forces and proclaims himself Captain-General. Civil war breaks out in the Free Worlds League. The Bounty Hunter destroys Lieutenant Natasha Kerensky's lance on Nova Roma. Andurien, Regulus and Sirius refuse to side with Anton. Regulus and Sirius eventually side with Janos, but Andurien remains neutral.
- 3015: Anton Marik orders Jaime Wolf to disperse the Dragoons among his troops. Wolf refuses. [February] Anton's forces are pushed into a small cluster of worlds around Ling. [8 March] Anton Marik arrests Joshua Wolf and 27 other members of the Dragoons for treason. They are later executed. Among those killed are Jaime Wolf's wife and two daughters. [22 March] Wolf's Dragoons descend on New Delos, led by the Black Widows. Anton Marik is killed and his troops annihilated. The rebellion ends. House Marik employs Wolf's Dragoons. [April-October] Free Worlds League courts try and punish the rebels. Many rebel leaders are imprisoned; some, including Janos' son Gerald, are executed.
- 3017: Marik forces raid Clinton, home base of Cranston Snord's Irregulars. The Irregulars are not there, but the Marik troops take all the Irregulars' "collectibles" with them.
- 3018: Cranston Snord's Irregulars embark on a deep penetration raid of Marik space to recover their museum collection. The assault comes to be called the "Junk Yard Dog Affair."
- 3019: Wolf's Dragoons, working for the Free Worlds League, raid Hesperus II (Thirteenth Battle of Hesperus). They come within miles of their objective before being forced to retreat. Soon afterward, they embark on another deep-space supply run.
- 3020: Katrina Steiner issues her famous Peace Proposal to the leaders of the other four Houses. None but Hanse Davion take her seriously. Secret negotiations begin between Houses Steiner and Davion.
- 3022: [13 October] In response to the alliance between the Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth, Houses Liao, Marik and Kurita sign the Concord of Kapteyn to form their own alliance.
- 3025: End of the Third Succession War.

CONTACT REPORT

Contactee Name: Janek Hansen, Captain, FWLM

Date: August 17, 3028

Location: Hilton Head Island, Terra

Nature of Contact: While attending one of the many ComStar seminars held as part of the festivities surrounding the marriage of Hanse Davion and Melissa Steiner, I happened to chat up a young female scientist from the Federated Suns delegation. We discussed our interests and impressions of Terra—per the approved subjects protocols issued by SAFE—and one thing led to another. I asked the young

woman, whose name I had yet to divine, to be my date at the Free Worlds Ball to be held the next evening. She seemed amenable and I requested her PersCom number. She scribbled it down and I was about to place it in my jacket pocket when I caught sight of the name. Riva Allard. She must have sensed my discomfort, because she immediately volunteered that yes, her father was the Davion Intelligence Secretary. With that revelation, I decided not to pursue matters further and withdrew, reporting the contact to Director Cornejo.

—*The Wedding Gift: Tales of the Steiner-Davion Wedding*, Tremaine Abstracts, 3041



HISTORY OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE



نور ۱۴۰۳



The Fourth Succession War left the Capellan Confederation a broken ruin and the Draconis Combine reeling from internal and external shocks. The Free Worlds League remained the only state capable of resisting the Steiner-Davion juggernaut, but it was too late for the Concord of Kapteyn, which unraveled in the wake of the conflict. (The treaty remains officially in effect, despite being effectively moribund.) The League too, though militarily intact, was in poor shape. Many in Parliament spoke out against the Captain-General, and arguments raged throughout 3030. Derrick Cameron-Jones of Regulus even suggested it was time to remove the Captain-General. Given postwar dissatisfaction with the Mariks, the Regular measure would likely have passed had not fate intervened.

In September, the Duchy of Andurien seceded from the Free Worlds League and entered into an alliance with the Magistracy of Canopus. These two powers promptly invaded the Capellan Confederation. Galvanized, Janos and his associates pushed through the Internal Emergency Act, stripping the League's member-states of their sovereignty for a typically vague "duration of the emergency." The sole exceptions were the Duchy of Oriente, a longstanding Marik ally, and House Marik's principal rival, the Principality of Regulus, whose leaders might side with Andurien if pushed too hard. Opposition groups were labeled "unpatriotic" and forced onto the defensive. Even as the FWLM prepared to deal with the League's errant province, additional disaster struck. In October, Janos Marik suffered a stroke; he had allegedly suffered a prior episode during the Fourth Succession War. Though he remained in nominal control of the League, his son Duggan and nephew Duncan vied for de facto power. Both were doomed to disappointment. In January 3031, Thomas Marik, who had been in ComStar's service since 3006, arrived on Atreus bearing notarized papers naming him as his father's successor. He had received word of his father's illness from Christopher Halas, then Duke of Oriente.

Thomas Marik's reappearance was not universally popular. His brother Duggan attempted to wrest the reins of power from him in the months following Janos' stroke, as did their cousin Duncan. Parliament held off on appointing a regent, thanks to stalling tactics by Janos' ally Shane Eastwick, who knew of Thomas' nomination. Approved by acclamation after producing verigraphed documentation supporting his claim, Thomas took up almost all of his father's powers, though the old man retained the title of Captain-General; Thomas styled himself Deputy Warden of the Perimeter Defenses. His success at the role pleased his father but dismayed those who thought to use Thomas as a puppet in their own schemes. ComStar, Christopher Halas, and Duggan and Duncan Marik could only watch as the onetime quiet scientist ran roughshod over their plans.

Even as the Capellan Confederation launched a counteroffensive against the Andurien-Canopus incursion, the FWLM began moving into position to isolate and reconquer Andurien. Progress occurred slowly, but a series of parliamentary measures ensured little resistance to Thomas' orders. Even vocal opponents of the Mariks, such as the ruling house of Regulus, knew better than to further exacerbate the situation. SAFE, having failed to head off the Andurien secession, focused its efforts on gathering intelligence on Andurien troop dispositions. In doing so they diverted resources from domestic security, with deadly consequences.

By the first half of 3034, the home front was secure and the Andurien-Canopus alliance was spent, the grim determination of the Liao defenders threatening a counter-invasion to push home their advantage. The time was right for the FWLM, hitherto involved in posturing and strategic maneuvering, to commence operations, as much to forestall any Liao offensive as to reintegrate Andurien. The first step was the isolation of Andurien from its ally, accomplished by seizing a broad swath of worlds along the rogue province's Periphery edge. Realizing her predicament, Catherine Humphreys dug in. Thomas did not take the bait, however. Against the advice of his cousin Duncan, who favored a direct assault on the province, he ordered the FWLM to wage a slow but steady isolation campaign. Thomas, it seemed, had become adept in the arts of war—too adept for the liking of some.

On June 1, 3035, a bomb exploded at a senior staff meeting on Atreus, killing the Captain-General and Duggan Marik. At the time, everyone believed the blast had killed Thomas as well. Duncan Marik, who had just left the meeting when the bomb went off, became the nominal forty-ninth Captain-General. The surviving younger Mariks—Paul, Duggan and Thomas' younger brother, and their sisters, Kristen and Therese—raised no

BROTHERS IN ARMS?

Marik,

Some members of this alliance face the hordes of hell itself, while others sit idly by and fiddle as the Inner Sphere burns. If the Confederation falls to this menace, can you be sure your fractious collection of bickering provinces won't be next? By provision of the Concord of Kapteyn, you **MUST** render aid, humanitarian and material if not in the form of troops. I trust the League's internal troubles are not so great as to keep you from discharging this obligation.

In Celestial Wisdom,
Chancellor Maximillian Liao, First Lord

My dear Chancellor,

Of course the League will discharge its obligations. We have opened numerous of our military hospitals to treat your casualties and provided for the transit of CCAF troops through our border regions—supervised, of course—as requested by Citizen Xiang. Additionally, I have the honor of telling you that a substantial shipment of war materiel has been dispatched. It was uncovered recently on New Delos and bears CCAF identification codes, and so I thought to return it to you in this your hour of need. I'm sure my quartermaster's staff cleaned off the blood.

Captain-General Janos Marik
Duke of Atreus, First Lord of the Star League

Shipping manifest HC139428R; ex Oriente. Dest: Sian

Item	Number
Toilet paper	22 tons
Soap	1.2 tons
Dress uniform gloves (<i>white, left</i>)	150
Tires (<i>reconditioned</i>)	2,000
Food (<i>Use by 12-31-3015</i>)	96 tons
Entrenching tools	100
Ammunition (<i>.22-caliber air gun pellets</i>)	15 tons
Medical supplies	
(<i>Prozac, hand to Chancellor directly</i>)	1 case
Morale package	
(<i>Hunky Hanse and Belissima Melissa dolls, courtesy of Quality Memorabilia of Andurien</i>)	1 crate

—Janos Marik, Official Correspondence,
October 16, 3028



HISTORY OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

THE BEST OF ENEMIES

"Give me that, Cranston; you'll spill it." The middle-aged man pushed his glasses back up his nose and reached for the bottle.

Cranston, his hands shaking a little with cold and adrenalin, snatched it away. "You really think I'd spill Nestor Gold, Walmar? Damn, this stuff is older than I am and belongs in the museum. Hell, it WAS in the museum." He grinned as he undid the cap with a last twist. Walmar held out a tin cup. Cranston poured in a solid measure, then did the same with his own cup.

"You think he'd approve?"

"Probably not, but he'd understand. We go back a long way, Janos and I. Cheers!" He clinked his cup against his friend's and then turned and toasted the tomb. "Damn, first my ticker starts to play up and then someone decides it's time for Janos to check out. Not that all this sneaking around is much good for my health. How long do we have, by the way?"

"Eleven minutes to the next security sweep."

"I felt duty bound to give my old adversary a decent sendoff. I forget the number of times we tweaked each other's noses since waaay back on Rochelle. It was a good-natured game. Enjoyable aggravation, if you will."

"Cranston, he burned the museum!"

"True, but not the collection. And we did get 'em back."

"Eventually."

"Yes, eventually. Drink up. I don't think either of us wants to spend the rest of our days in a Marik stockade. There's a real enemy out there who one day might decide to pay us a visit."

He shoved the empty cup back in a pocket and took a slug from the bottle before resealing it and tucking it in his jacket. "As Rhonda's fond of saying, 'Let's rock 'n roll.' Farewell, Janos, you old reprobate. Sleep well." Gently, he laid a wreath of purple flowers atop the tomb. "Seyla."

—Marik Mausoleum, Dormuth, Marik,

April 11, 3037

objection to Duncan's power play. After a brief investigation, Duncan declared Andurien to blame for the assassinations and vowed to take all measures necessary to bring the errant province into line. With this declaration of war, Duncan pursued the high-risk, aggressive strategy Thomas had dismissed. He spent much of his brief tenure, a little over a year, at the front leading his troops, with mixed success.

On December 5, 3036, Thomas Marik appeared before a stunned Parliament. Rescued from the wreckage by ComStar and rehabilitated in the best medical facilities Terra had to offer, his survival had remained secret while he recuperated. In an unprecedented move, Parliament declared Duncan's tenure as Captain-General ended. Duncan stayed in the field, realizing that his only hope of holding onto power was to win the Andurien campaign and return home to a hero's welcome. He knew he would eventually face a reckoning with Thomas.

After Parliament verified his identity with a battery of tests and installed him as the fiftieth Captain-General, one of the first things Thomas did was warn off the Capellan Confederation. Having ejected the Andurien-Canopus forces from Capellan territory, Chancellor Romano Liao was eyeing the Andurien worlds, long a bone of contention between the League and the Confederation. Though he did not reveal it until later, Thomas was receiving intelligence from ComStar on Andurien and on neighboring states. Chancellor Liao, appreciating her realm's precarious position, backed down. A second problem for Thomas resolved itself on February 4, 3037, when Duncan Marik was killed in battle at Xanthe III. His death spared the League the difficulty of bringing him to trial. The League offensive had fallen into disarray and suffered several major reversals, but Thomas' personal leadership of the campaign allowed the situation to recover and proceed in the League's interests. Over the next two years, the FWLM slowly reduced Andurien strongholds. Though it took until 3040 to complete the reintegration, the situation had progressed sufficiently for troops elsewhere in the League to play a minor role in the War of 3039, mostly against Steiner and Davion forces but also targeting the Capellans. Catherine Humphreys, captured in the last battles of the Andurien War, died of a heart attack while awaiting trial for treason. Thomas pardoned other political and military leaders involved in the campaign, though the duchy fiercely resented the federal occupation that followed.

Even more far-reaching than the defeat of Andurien was the legislation Thomas pushed through in the last years of the war. In the weeks following his reappearance and before Duncan's death, Thomas strong-armed Parliament into passing the Addendum to the Incorporation, building on his father's Internal Emergency Act and further consolidating power in the Captain-General's hands. Relieved to be free of the tyrannical and tactless Duncan Marik, and glad to see the possibility of another Marik civil war receding, Parliament accepted the Addendum. Like Resolution 288, it represented an abrogation of parliamentary authority.

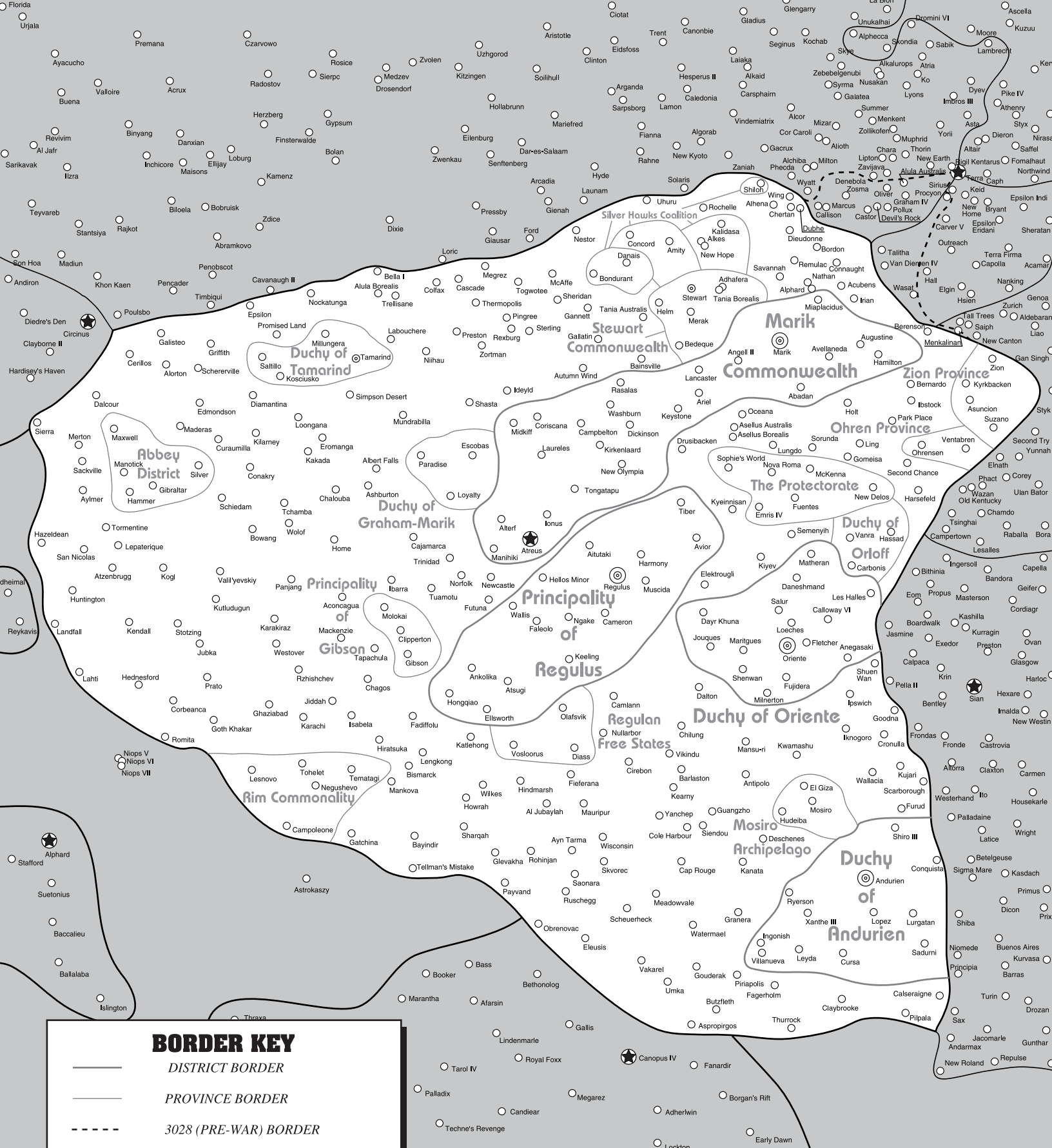
THE COMING OF THE CLANS AND THE EAGLE'S RISE

The 3040s saw rapprochement and rebuilding in the Free Worlds League. The Captain-General spent considerable time rebuilding his military and streamlining government

bureaucracy and organization. He welded the FWLM into a genuinely unified force, stripping away its regional distinctions and organization in favor of a single command structure and uniform. The rights of individual provinces were likewise subsumed by those of the nation, though each province retained control of "culturally significant factors" within its own society.

Thomas' marriage to Sophina Desiree of Oceana on April 9, 3047 was the high point of the decade, providing the League with much-needed stability as well as a legitimate heir soon afterward. Thomas' daughter Isis, born out of wedlock in 3034, had served in that role for the past decade, but her illegitimacy made her an unpalatable choice to many League traditionalists. Joshua Simon Marik suffered no such stigma. However, it soon became apparent that his health was fragile, which would eventually push the League into crisis.

The Clan invasion, beginning in 3050, had little direct impact on the Free Worlds League, but Thomas knew his realm could not stand aloof from the chaos. When Jaime Wolf summoned the Inner Sphere Leaders to Outreach, Thomas went willing to contribute in some manner, little realizing the extent to which events would suck him in. Rather than merely providing pro forma support for the campaign against the Clans, he found himself blackmailed into providing substantial material aid to the major combatant realms. In return for 'Mechs and vehicles, Joshua Marik would receive the best treatment for his leukemia that the advanced medical center at the New Avalon Institute of Science



BORDER KEY

- DISTRICT BORDER
- PROVINCE BORDER
- 3028 (PRE-WAR) BORDER

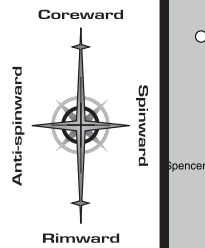
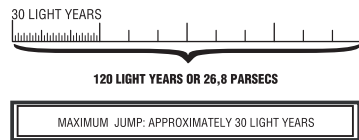
PLANET KEY

- NATIONAL CAPITAL
- DISTRICT CAPITAL
- PROVINCE CAPITAL

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE after Fourth Succession War (3030)

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LEGEND





HISTORY OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

TIMELINE: FOURTH SUCCESSION WAR AND BEYOND

Indecision hamstringing FWLM operations in the Fourth Succession War and a succession of reversals undermined Janos Marik's authority. The resulting web of secession and betrayal radically reshaped the Free Worlds League.

3026: The Gray Death Legion works for House Marik against the Capellan Confederation.

3028: [Mar] The Gray Death Legion discovers a Star League depot on their Helm landhold. Hostile forces close in, but the Legion escapes with the Star League memory core. [Aug] Operations Galahad and Thor '28 are launched. [Aug 20] Hanse Davion marries Melissa Steiner. Troops gathered for joint Davion-Steiner exercises become the first wave of Operation Rat, the opening drive of the Fourth Succession War.

3029: [June 1] ComStar interdicts the Federated Suns. [December 7] ComStar lifts the interdiction in return for the right to garrison their HPG stations in Federated Suns space.

3030: [January] Fourth Succession War ends. [September] The Duchy of Andurien secedes from the Free Worlds League. Allied with the Magistracy of Canopus, the duchy attacks the Capellan Confederation. [October] Janos Marik has a stroke. Duggan and Duncan Marik vie for control of the League. Parliament passes the Internal Emergency Act of 3030, strengthening the Captain-

General's powers by stripping minor provinces of their sovereignty.

3031: [January] Thomas Marik leaves ComStar to take his place as Janos' successor. [March] The Capellan Confederation launches a counteroffensive against the Andurien-Canopus alliance.

3034: Isis Marik is born. Her existence is not acknowledged until late 3035, after her father's apparent murder.

3035: [June 1] A bomb kills Janos and Duggan Marik. Thomas is also believed killed. Duncan Marik becomes Captain-General. The Capellan Confederation retakes worlds invaded by the Duchy of Andurien.

3036: [April 21] Maximillian Liao commits suicide. Romano Liao becomes Chancellor. [December 5] Thomas Marik reappears and becomes Captain-General. ComStar agrees to supply him with information in return for the right to station Com Guard forces in the Free Worlds League.

3037: [February 4] Duncan Marik dies in battle. Thomas forces the Addendum to the Incorporation through Parliament, eliminating the Home Defense Act and further consolidating power in the Captain-General's hands.

3039: [April] The War of 3039 starts. It ends in December, with minor Free Worlds League involvement.

3040: The Free Worlds League completes the recapture of the Duchy of Andurien.

could provide. In addition, Free Worlds League troops need not be dispatched to the front lines.

Initially, the League's people greeted this deal with skepticism. As war materiel began to flow from the League into the Federated Commonwealth, however, the manufacturing advantages became apparent. The Free Worlds soon became the pre-eminent source of advanced technology in the Inner Sphere. Even after the war ended in May of 3052, orders for Free Worlds equipment remained high. ComStar's know-how bolstered the League's technological advantage when the traditionalist Word of Blake sect fled to League space seeking Thomas' protection after the ComStar Order fractured in the wake of Operation Scorpion.

Even before the Clan war ended, Thomas had begun preparing for the peace, building an alliance to rival that of the Steiners and Davions. Approached by Sun-Tzu Liao immediately after his accession to the Chancellorship earlier in the year, the Captain-General agreed to a dynastic marriage between Sun-Tzu and Isis Marik. This alliance made no provision for a super-state like the Federated Commonwealth—as long as Joshua Marik remained alive, the illegitimate Isis remained second in line for the Captain-Generalcy—but it secured a large portion of the League's borders. Internal troubles became the Captain-General's main challenge, especially friction between the Blakists established on Gibson and that planet's local garrison. Regular forces played a major but unofficial role in this conflict, which quickly escalated out of control, ending only when Thomas and his personal troops, the Knights of the Inner Sphere, ar-

rived to restore order. The use of battlefield atomics sent shockwaves throughout the League and Inner Sphere, but while this terrible incident prompted the League to place tighter controls on its nuclear weapons, other nations did not follow suit.

The death of Sophina Marik after an industrial accident delivered a major blow to the Captain-General and the League. Unfortunately, more bad news awaited. On July 21, evidence came to light that the individual undergoing leukemia treatment on New Avalon was not Joshua Marik; the frail heir to the League had died and been replaced by a double. Despite regarding war as a last resort, Thomas knew he had to punish Victor Steiner-Davion for this deception, and so he unleashed Operation Guerrero against the Federated Commonwealth's Sarna March. Capellan troops participated in the operation, seeking to regain worlds lost in the Fourth Succession War; the FWLM likewise focused its efforts on the triangle of worlds lost in that same conflict. Upon attaining those objectives with minimal casualties, the FWLM juggernaut halted. Deprived of Marik support, the Capellan offensive stalled, but not before the Sarna March fragmented into what came to be called the Chaos March. During this turbulent time, the Lyran half of the Federated Commonwealth seceded to form the Lyran Alliance under Prince Victor's sister, Katherine Steiner-Davion. Katherine immediately undertook rapprochement with Thomas, which he warily accepted.

Chafing under the restrictions imposed after their defeat at Tukayyid and their losses fighting the Wolf Clan, the Jade Falcons staged an invasion of the Lyran Alliance, taking the planet Coventry.



Katherine petitioned Thomas for aid, which he supplied. A multinational task force assembled, and Victor Steiner-Davion—a virtual Antichrist to many in the Free Worlds—took charge. Faced with this unified Inner Sphere front, the Falcons withdrew. The resolution of the Coventry incursion taught the Inner Sphere's leaders a long-forgotten lesson; standing together, they could defeat the Clans. What better way to do so than in a reborn Star League?

The Whitting Conference of 3058 established Sun-Tzu Liao as First Lord of the new Star League for a three-year term and prepared the way for a military counteroffensive to decisively end the Clan threat. The operation targeted the brutal Clan Smoke Jaguar and had two parts—Operation Bulldog, in which elements of the FWLM played a significant supporting role, and Operation Serpent, in which the Knights of the Inner Sphere supported the Eridani Light Horse in an attack against the Jaguars' holdings in Clan space. Both operations succeeded, though the Knights were decimated on Huntress. The FWLM played its part well in the subsequent Great Refusal, fought against forces from all the invading Clans on the Clan homeworld of Strana Mechty. Afterward, the Knights' leader, Sir Paul Masters, became the first Star League ambassador to the Clans. Coordinator Theodore Kurita became First Lord in 3061, a political move by Prince Victor and ComStar intended to block Katherine Steiner-Davion's assumption of that office. At the 3064 Star League conference, Thomas Marik dismissed initial efforts to establish him as First Lord, declaring his loyalties conflicted by the FedCom civil war. With that fratricidal dispute over, his candidacy at the forthcoming 3067 conference is a hot topic at the Atreus court.

In addition to the war against the Clans, 3059 saw Thomas' marriage to Sheryl Halas, the daughter of the Duke of Oriente, and the birth of a new heir, Janos Marik II. More children followed: Christopher in 3060 and Jessica in 3063. Isis, cast off by Sun-Tzu Liao on April 14, 3062, found herself once more an outsider in the Free Worlds. She took refuge elsewhere, first on Luthien and later on Moggyrod with Prince Victor's retinue. Her abrupt expulsion from the Capellan Confederation soured relations between it and the League, but in many regards the change merely reflected the worsening diplomatic situation and Chancellor Liao's growing confidence. The Atreus press noted that Thomas enacted no diplomatic sanctions against the Chancellor, but throughout much of the League details of Duchess Isis' social engagements on Luthien and her friendship with Omi Kurita and Victor Steiner-Davion dominated the scandalvids. Isis Marik's image as a flighty dilettante remained the popular perception, even as SAFE reported her increasing maturity and determination. Isis had no desire to intervene in League politics, despite her father's seeming shunning of her. Instead, that role would fall to another member of the sprawling Marik family.

So far, the 3060s have seen immense technological and commercial progress in the League. The collapse of what remained of the Federated Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine's ongoing troubles with its Inner Sphere and Clan neighbors left the Free Worlds League as the Inner Sphere's unquestioned powerhouse, though Thomas Marik has rarely exploited his influence. He refused point-blank to intervene in the FedCom Civil War, even when Lyran perfidy placed his own sister—leader of the mercenary unit Kristen's Krushers—in grave peril. Thomas lost a niece and a nephew in that conflict as well; a second niece survived because Marshal Jeremy Brett of Tamarind launched a rescue mission on his own initiative. Kristen's surviving child, Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik, has since become the main focus for opposition to Thomas Marik's rule. Her recent call to repeal Resolution 288 prompted the ongoing Great Debate about the League's political establishment, bringing the role of the Captain-General into serious question for the first time in decades. A direct attempt to repeal Resolution 288 failed, but the social and political ramifications continue to echo around the League and the Marik family.

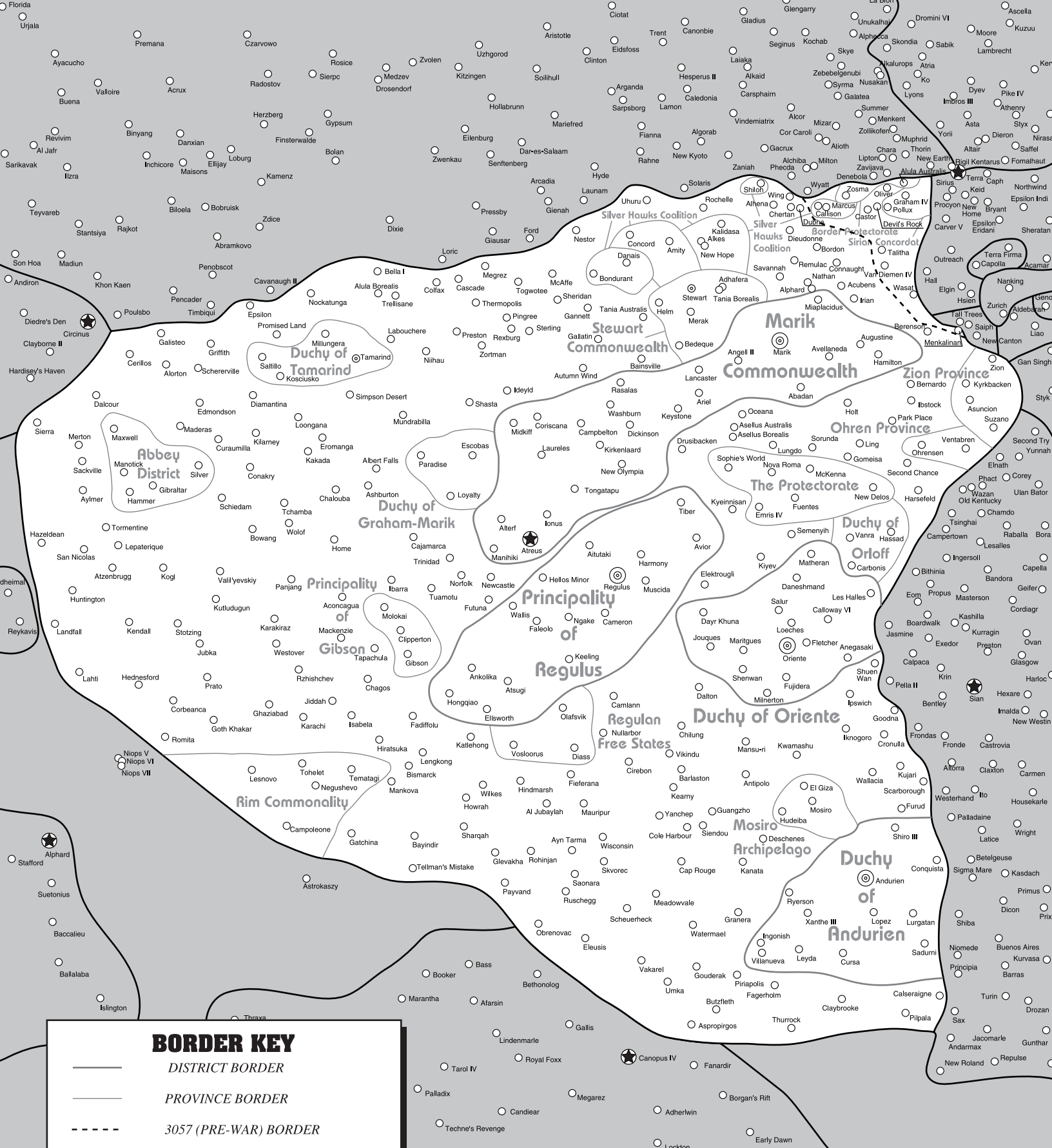
ISIS MARIK: LITTLE GIRL LOST

Born in 3034 to Amandine Ruiz, a minor functionary at the Atreus court, Isis Marik lived her earliest years in secret; Amandine did not want her child to be sucked into the political mayhem of court life in the aftermath of Thomas and Janos Marik's assassinations and Duncan's rise to power. Rumors of the child's existence circulated in the court, however, and on April 19, 3036, Amandine was persuaded to present Isis and claim the Captain-Generalcy of the Free Worlds League on her behalf. DNA tests proved that young Isis was indeed Thomas' child, but succession was another matter. Thomas had not formally taken on the mantle of Captain-General, though he had served as regent for his father for much of the previous five years. Parliament remained locked in debate on the issue when Thomas Marik reappeared in December, rendering the question moot. Isis continued as heir presumptive until 3048, when the birth of legitimate heir Joshua Marik bumped her down the pecking order. She became heir again briefly following Joshua's death in 3057, but her promotion was short-lived, and ended with the first child of her father's second marriage.

Never particularly interested in power politics, Isis became a tool for her father, a dynastic prize to be dangled before potential suitors. The flirtatious young duchess rarely objected to this; indeed, she reveled in the attention. This game reached its climax during the Successor Lords' conference on Outreach during the Clan War, when she found her targets elevated from provincial lords' sons to the heirs of Successor States. When Sun-Tzu Liao asked Thomas for her hand in marriage, Isis gladly accepted. Her ten-year relationship with Sun-Tzu, for whom she genuinely cared, gave her time to mature and learn statecraft, though she came to realize that her fiancé saw her solely as a means to manipulate her father and gain his support. Fortunately for Isis, politics kept the marriage from taking place, nor were there children. Though her rejection by Sun-Tzu came as a shock, she had no other ties to bind her to Sian. Relations with her father cooled markedly, however; rather than return to Atreus, she escaped to Luthien and the friendship of Omi Kurita, whom she had first met on Outreach and whose acquaintance she had renewed at the Whitting Conferences.

Isis visited Omi and her lover, Victor Steiner-Davion, in the Lyran Alliance and played a key role in defeating an assassination attempt against Theodore Kurita's daughter. When Victor declared war on his sister Katherine, Isis returned to Luthien with Omi, and was with her when she died at another assassin's hands. Rumor has it that on her deathbed Omi revealed an important secret to the duchess, but such claims cannot be verified. In the wake of her friend's murder, Isis built a strong relationship with Prince Victor, bringing the Steiner-Davion lord out of his depression and helping him to victory in the FedCom Civil War. Isis and Victor maintain that they are "just friends," but this has not stopped the scandalvids in the League and the remnants of the FedCom from speculating about their relationship.

—*Heirs and Enemies*, Corbett Public Media, 3067



BORDER KEY

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

PLANET KEY

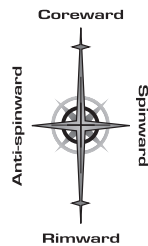
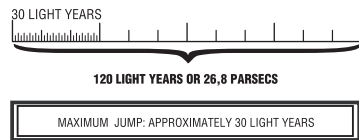
- NATIONAL CAPITAL
- DISTRICT CAPITAL
- PROVINCE CAPITAL

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE
after

Operation Guerrero (3058)

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LEGEND





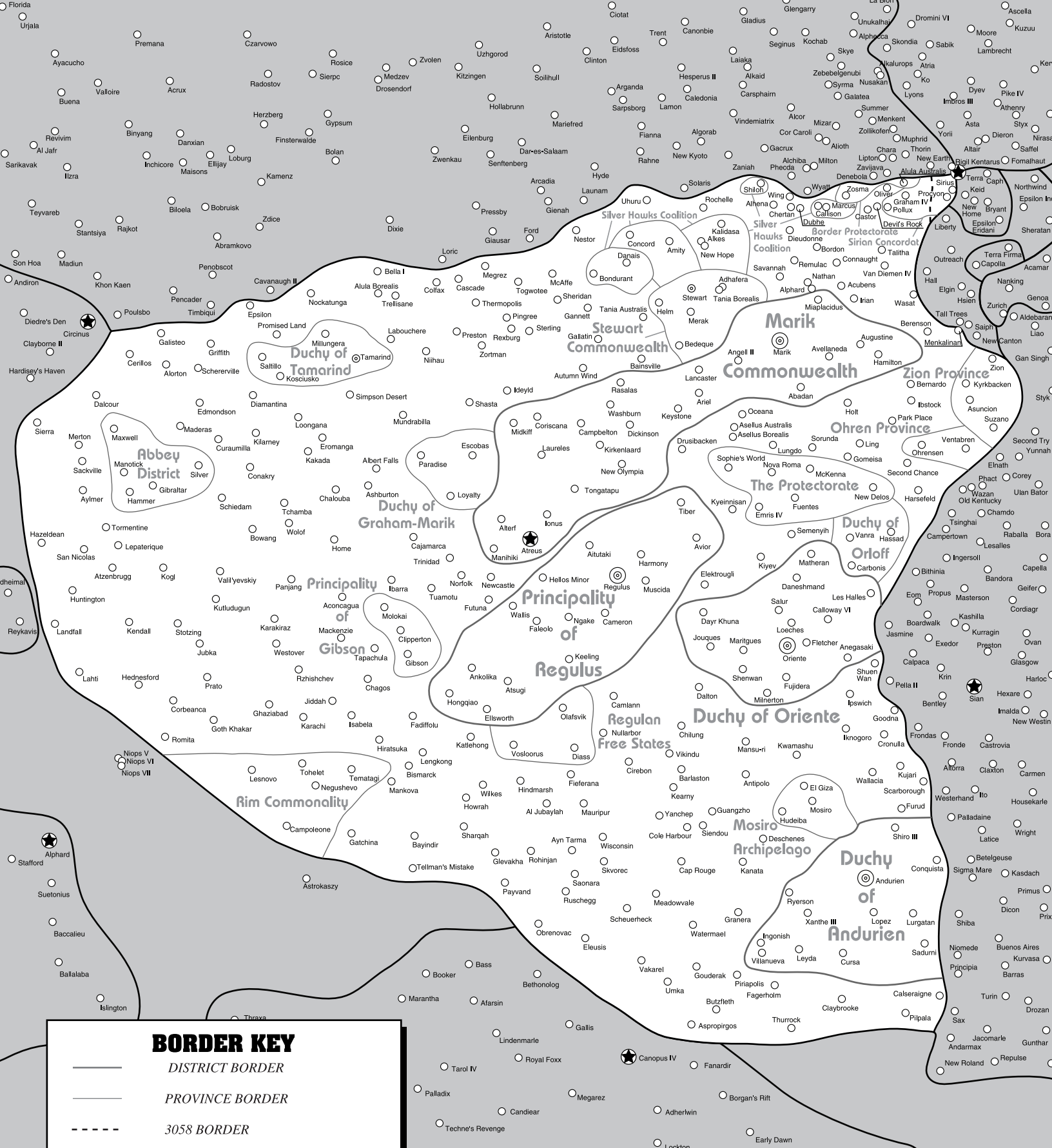
TIMELINE: KERENSKY'S RETURN

The return of the SLDF, metamorphosed into the Clans, shattered the FedCom alliance and the Draconis Combine, leaving the Free Worlds League the strongest and most intact realm in the Inner Sphere. The Clan invasion brought immense profit to the League's military-industrial complex, and also gave Thomas Marik an opportunity to strengthen his grip on the League. In reaction, his rivals grew bolder.

- 3046: The Military Reorganization Act transforms the FWLM into a genuinely national and cohesive army rather than a mishmash of regional and federal troops. The Provinces Harmonization Act subjects the Duchy of Oriente and the Principality of Regulus to the provisions of the Internal Emergency Act.
- 3047: The Captain-General marries Sophina Desiree of Oceana.
- 3050: [7 March] The Clans launch their first invasion wave against the Inner Sphere. [31 October] The Clans stop their advance when an aerospace fighter from the Free Rasalhague Republic rams their command WarShip and kills the ilKhan, the Clans' supreme war leader.
- 3051: [12 January] Jaime Wolf convenes a conference of Successor State leaders on Outreach, intending to unite them against the Clans. Prince Hanse Davion blackmails Thomas Marik into providing material aid for the war effort. [29 October] The Clans resume their attack on the Inner Sphere.
- 3052: [1 May] The Battle of Tukayyid begins. ComStar's Primus, Myndo Waterly, launches Operation Scorpion—an attempt by ComStar to take control of the Inner Sphere that ultimately fails. [21 May] The Battle of Tukayyid finishes, ending the first Clan war [17 June] Sun-Tzu Liao announces his forthcoming marriage to Isis Marik. Prince Hanse Davion dies. Victor Steiner-Davion becomes First Prince of the Federated Commonwealth.
- 3053: As ComStar fragments into warring halves, Thomas Marik offers the traditionalists—who call themselves the Word of Blake—refuge in the Free Worlds League. The Blakists establish a base of operations on Gibson.
- 3054: [19 May] Thomas Marik lays plans to create a new, elite FWLM unit, personally loyal to the Captain-General. The Knights of the Inner Sphere form six months later.
- 3055: Local forces, covertly supported by Regulus, stage an insurrection against the Blakists on Gibson. The situation degenerates and only ends when the Knights of the Inner Sphere intervene, but not before the Regular renegades employ battlefield atomics.
- 3057: [20 May] Joshua Marik, undergoing treatment at the NAIS as a result of the Outreach deal, dies of leukemia. Fearful of losing vital

war materiel from the League, Victor Steiner-Davion prepares a double to take Joshua's place. [15 June] Sophina Desiree, badly injured in an industrial accident, commits suicide. [21 July] Joshua Marik's double is unmasked. Enraged by Victor's deception, Thomas Marik launches a punitive assault (Operation Guerrero) against former League worlds in the Federated Commonwealth. The FWLM liberates these planets with minimal bloodshed. A concurrent effort by Capellan forces to regain some of their lost worlds stalls when the FWLM withdraws its support. The Lyran segment of the FedCom secedes, using emergency powers; Katherine Steiner-Davion establishes herself as Archon of the newly christened Lyran Alliance. The war-torn Sarna March collapses into anarchy, forming the Chaos March.

- 3058: Clan Jade Falcon invades the Lyran world of Coventry. Thomas Marik dispatches troops to aid Katherine Steiner-Davion, placing them under Victor Steiner-Davion's command even though the two leaders remain at loggerheads. [November] The Whitting Conference creates a new Star League and undertakes an ambitious plan to end the Clan menace. As a compromise candidate, Sun-Tzu Liao becomes First Lord.
- 3059: FWLM troops take part in Operation Bulldog, the destruction of Clan Smoke Jaguar forces in the Inner Sphere. Meanwhile, the Knights of the Inner Sphere join Morgan Hasek's Operation Serpent, a major strike against the Clan homeworlds.
- 3060: Elements of the First Free Worlds Guards take part in the Great Refusal against the Crusader Clans. They lose their engagement, but the Star League alliance achieves overall victory and the Clan invasion ends.
- 3062: [14 April] Sun-Tzu Liao breaks off his engagement with Isis Marik, who flees to Luthien. With the outbreak of civil war in the Federated Commonwealth, the Free Worlds League pledges neutrality, though mercenaries with House Marik ties (such as Kristen's Krushers) play a role in the conflict. When treachery threatens the Krushers, Thomas refuses to intervene. Marshal Jeremy Brett of Tamarind, Kristen's brother-in-law, stages an unauthorized cross-border raid to rescue the mercenary unit. His actions are wildly popular across the League, but not on Atreus. At the end of the civil war, Thomas returns the captured territory to Lyran control.
- 3067: Having fought a quiet campaign against her uncle for the past half-decade, Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik escalates the war of words by launching the Great Debate, a movement to repeal Resolution 288.



BORDER KEY

- DISTRICT BORDER
- PROVINCE BORDER
- 3058 BORDER

PLANET KEY

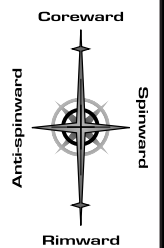
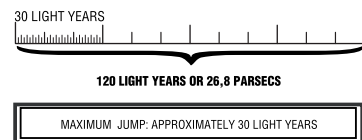
- NATIONAL CAPITAL
- DISTRICT CAPITAL
- PROVINCE CAPITAL

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

after
FedCom Civil War (3067)

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LEGEND





Spanning a roughly triangular area of space 500 light-years per side, the Free Worlds League remains home to 406 inhabited worlds across 335 systems, divided between 161 provinces. Some of these provinces are city-states or islands, while others are multi-world associations that could be (and in many cases were) independent nations. From Sirius in Terra's back garden to Lesnovo on the Periphery fringes, the diversity of these planets gives the Free Worlds League its character and strength, united in pursuit of its differences.

HOW TO READ THIS ATLAS

The following section reviews many of the League's key worlds, arranged according to the four principal provinces and with a fifth miscellaneous district representing minor regions and independent planets. Along with historical and cultural overviews, each entry opens with a block of statistics, including world name, noble ruler, primary star type and JumpShip recharge time in hours, as well as planetary position relative to other worlds in the system, DropShip travel time to the jump point (assuming a standard jump point and

1G acceleration with a midpoint turnover), the number and names of any natural satellites, local gravity and atmospheric pressure and content (relative to Terran standards), surface water coverage, equatorial temperature, dominant planetary environmental conditions and the highest form of native life. The write-ups also include the positions of any jump point recharge stations, along with the class of the local Word of Blake HPG facility and the planetary population size (based on the 3067 Parliamentary Electoral Register.)

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

UNIVERSAL SOCIO-INDUSTRIAL LEVEL REFERENCE TABLE

TECHNOLOGICAL SOPHISTICATION

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

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

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

RAW MATERIAL DEPENDENCE

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

INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT

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

AGRICULTURAL DEPENDENCE

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



TOURING THE REALM



Thomas Marik of Atreus/Marik



Alys Rousset-Marik of Augustine



Kirc Cameron-Jones of Regulus



Christopher Halas of Oriente

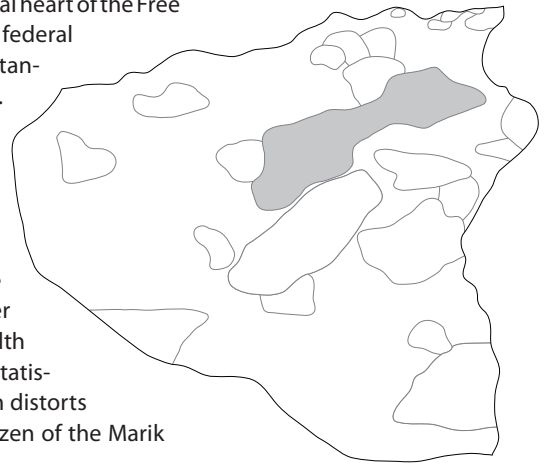


Dalma Humphreys of Andurien



MARIK COMMONWEALTH

Encompassing 24 principal worlds, the Marik Commonwealth is the military and political heart of the Free Worlds League, containing the headquarters of the Free Worlds League Military and the federal capital, Atreus, in addition to the regional government on the planet Marik itself. The standard of living in the Marik Commonwealth equals that found anywhere else in the League. With their leaders and military forces unswervingly loyal to the Free Worlds League (of which the Commonwealth was a founding member) and to the Captain-General who rules it, many in this region feel the central government neglects their interests in favor of the League as a whole, or in favor of squeakier wheels. Few truly begrudge this state of affairs, but this widespread belief has led other League citizens to stereotype Marik Commonwealth residents as having a martyr complex, taking the challenges they face in stride but making sure everyone else knows what they have to suffer for the greater good. Most of the other provinces find this attitude rich, given that the Commonwealth worlds have the League's highest average per-capita income. Ironically, though such statistics are broadly true, the presence of the League's richest citizens in the Commonwealth distorts average income figures upward to the detriment of the average worker. In reality, a citizen of the Marik Commonwealth is likely to be no better off than citizens of other regions.



Completely surrounded by allied worlds, the Marik Commonwealth escaped many of the ravages of the Succession Wars, though a number of its systems became targets for raids and sabotage. Neglect and the collapse of the League-wide economy caused the worst destruction of infrastructure in this region. Such gradual decay has proven insidious, in many ways harder to identify and remedy than damage from weapons fire and bombs. Nonetheless, the people of the Commonwealth have persevered, throwing their full weight behind Captain-General Thomas Marik's reforms of the Free Worlds League.

With an ethnically diverse population like much of the FWL, the Marik Commonwealth draws its people principally from the European regions of old Terra, including the British Isles, the Czech and Slovak Republics, Romania, Austria, Germany and Hungary. English is the province's official language, but substantial minorities speak Czech and Slovak, while Romanian, once regarded as a dead language, has made a significant comeback during Thomas' reign. Christianity (mostly Protestant and Orthodox, but with some Catholic-dominated worlds like Augustine) is the dominant religion, with significant minorities in Judaism and Islam.

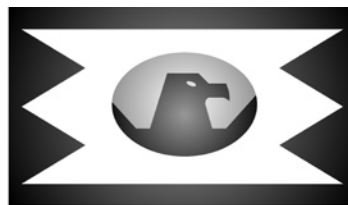
As the League's industrial heartland and one of its most active trading regions, the Marik Commonwealth has a dynamic economy and a vibrant arts scene, supported by private and corporate investment. Many of the FWL's best known artists, writers and actors hail from the Commonwealth, though the provinces of Regulus and Oriente pose significant challenges in terms of the mass media.

ATREUS

Noble Ruler: Duke Thomas Marik
Star Type (Recharge Time): F4V (175 hours)
Position in System: 3
Time to Jump Point: 16 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Wendigo)
Surface Gravity: 1.0
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 45° C (Jungle)
Surface Water: 70 percent
Recharging Station: Both
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Mammal
Population: 8,398,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: A-A-B-A-D

Founded in 2160 during humankind's initial exodus to the stars, Atreus was then one of the most distant worlds from Terra, colonized in order to exploit its rich and diverse resources. Despite its role as a resource center, Atreus escaped industrial ruin, a key factor in its selection as the capital of the nascent Free Worlds League in 2271.

Atreus City, the planetary and League capital, situated on the island continent of Ionia, has a rarely matched charm. Even during the Succession Wars, the "city of dreams" maintained a constant stream



of tourists. Sprawling across a dozen hills, its architecture spans a score of traditions from neo-classical to minimalist. The government districts in the north of the city are almost entirely built of classical white marble and chromium, with many buildings dating back to the massive construction programs fostered by Captain-General Juliano Marik. The House of Government, home to Parliament and the Captain-General's offices, is the only original seat of government still in use in the Inner Sphere.

Atreus has a diverse economy, ranging from food production (which dominates the rolling continents of Corin and Lanan) and artisanal crafts to the manufacture of aerospace craft and consumer electronics. In Atreus City itself, government affairs and their supporting industries dominate; lobbyists and lawyers reside cheek by jowl with caterers and security personnel. Tourism is a strong second in the city's finances, with museums like the League Museum of Technology, the Reaves Fine Art Institute and the Interstellar Botanic Gardens attracting tens of thousands annually. Fine restaurants and hotels dot the capital (along with many less fine examples in the southern tourist districts), consuming domestic and imported goods at a prodigious rate. Indeed, this conspicuous consumption—using



TOURING THE REALM

up native resources, as Atreus cannot feed all of its population at normal levels—has led planetary residents to fear above all else any restriction of the flow of goods to the League capital. Should interstellar commerce fail, the fate of the population, particularly in Atreus City, is beyond thinkable for the government.

Atreus' mountainous fourth continent, Paltos, remains lightly settled and has escaped significant development, thanks largely to the estates of the League's rich and famous nestled on its mountain-sides and in its idyllic valleys.

MARIK

Noble Ruler: Duke Thomas Marik

Star Type (Recharge Time): K0V (191 hours)

Position in System: 2

Time to Jump Point: 5.5 days

Number of Satellites: 2 (Hradcany, Malla Strana)

Surface Gravity: 1.1

Atm. Pressure: High (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 40° C (Arid)

Surface Water: 55 percent

Recharging Station: Both

HPG Class Type: A

Highest Native Life: Mammal

Population: 4,805,000,000

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

Founded by Antonin Marik in 2139 under the auspices of the Terran Alliance, the world of Marik quickly became an industrial and financial powerhouse, its strength coming from substantial and diverse mineral deposits that fuelled the eventual expansion of the Marik Commonwealth. Despite its arid climate, the population has boomed, the inhabitants residing in cities designed to weather the storms and tectonic incidents typical of this planet. The Captain-General's Winter Palace at Dormuth on the northern continent of Mondaria, the Marik family's ancestral seat, is stark and functional, as much a fortress as a royal residence. The LCCC headquarters, situated at Masket some 500 kilometers south of the capital, are designed to resist any conventional military assault. The bulk of the facility lies underground and is well able to survive even orbital bombardment and nuclear attack (though it has yet to face such a test).

The mining industry that once dominated Marik, in particular the southern Chavalet continent and the western regions of Mondaria, has declined markedly over the last century and redevelopment is transforming the scars that dot the planet. Many open-cast excavations have been flooded and transformed into water sports venues, while others remain in use as tourist attractions, "mining camp" holidays having long been a popular vacation. The orange-red precious firestones excavated in such holiday centers are a big draw and continue to be mined commercially, along with precious metals used in numerous industries planetwide. Manufacturing—civilian and military—plays a major role in Marik's economy, though over the last half-century service industries have overtaken them as the principal



on-world employers. Despite the limits of the local climate, agriculture and aquaculture (principally in the shallow Azman Sea between Mondaria and Chavalet) remain key industries as well, employing roughly five percent of the population. Lacking the conspicuous consumption of the League capital, and with a practical culture that stresses self-reliance, Marik is almost entirely self-sufficient.

NEW OLYMPIA

Noble Ruler: Prince Felix D'Andre/Earl Luka Kefalczyk

Star Type (Recharge Time): G1V (182 hours)

Position in System: 3

Time to Jump Point: 9.75 days

Number of Satellites: 1 (Delphi)

Surface Gravity: 0.95

Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 35° C (Temperate)

Surface Water: 82 percent

Recharging Station: Zenith

HPG Class Type: A

Highest Native Life: Plant

Population: 2,535,000,000

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

The dual provinces of New Olympia—the Independent Principality of Olympica and the Republic of Kasnov-Greenland, a canton of the Marik Commonwealth—have existed in an uneasy peace for almost

800 years. Though little publicized, the existence of the island-continent Olympica Province as an independent region within the heart of the Marik domain has evolved into a major draw for the rich and famous, becoming home to many Marik citizens who sought the convenience of residing at the heart of the League while escaping the Marik Commonwealth's infamous tax laws. Recent government efforts to strip away Olympica Province's tax-free status as part of League-wide economic harmonization programs have faltered because of the cultural protection clauses in the Addendum to the Incorporation, the FWL's founding document. Financial services and businesses that cater to the wealthy inhabitants—restaurants, casinos and the like—are the core businesses of Olympica, principally in the capital of Darienbad, which also houses the Allison MechWarrior Institute. In Kasnov-Greenland, which encompasses the small continental mass of New Greenland as well as most of the planet's archipelagos, agriculture and fishing dominate the economy. The latter industry operates on a commercial scale and as part of the local tourist industry, with flotillas of tourist fishing vessels plying the Turbian Ocean and the Sea of Kandon in search of massive game fish. Marlin and tuna are imported from Terra, along with other prizes such as the Hodson's Fliers native to the League world of Cap-Rouge, which flourish in New Olympia's vast oceans. The high mountains of New Greenland are also a popular tourist destination, renowned for their winter sports facilities and spas. This "Garden of the Gods" region is home to the Lloyd Marik-Stanley Aerospace School, the FWL's principal naval academy.





AUGUSTINE

Noble Ruler: Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik
Star Type (Recharge Time): G4II (185 hours)
Position in System: 6
Time to Jump Point: 7.96 days
Number of Satellites: 4 (Tagaste, Suk Arras, Numidia, and Bona)
Surface Gravity: 1.0
Atm. Pressure: High (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 55° C (Arid)
Surface Water: 67 percent
Recharging Station: Nadir
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Mammal
Population: 1,975,500,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-B-C-C-A

Founded as a religious colony by Jesuit followers of St. Augustine, the former Planet 2112-8845 A has developed a broad-based society that, while retaining strong ties to the Roman Church, has become a core part of the Marik Commonwealth.



The Succession Wars cost Augustine two-thirds of its population, and bitter fighting wrecked the famed Seminary along with much of the planetary infrastructure. The past century, however, saw a steady recovery as well as substantial immigration to the warm but pleasant planet.

Petrochemicals and mineral wealth dominate the northern continent of Kabuko, while agriculture (including wine production and the manufacture of fruit preserves) is the principal employer on the two other landmasses, Roma and Grecian. A fief of the Mariks since the 27th century, Augustine has traditionally served as the seat of favored members of the Captain-General's immediate family. The current duchess is Alys Rousset-Marik, who inherited her mother's estate (situated at Temple Ford at the mouth of the Dexter River on Roma) during the FedCom Civil War. Augustine has thus become not only a focus for religious affairs, but also more recently for League politics, its capital serving as a center for many opposed to the incumbent Captain-General. Though not officially confirmed—the government refuses to comment on security matters—SAFE has built up a substantial presence here to monitor opposition groups, many of whom are on the political fringe.

KEYSTONE

Noble Ruler: Prime Minister Alexander Iwasaki
Star Type (Recharge Time): F6V (177 hours)
Position in System: 2
Time to Jump Point: 13.87 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Ea)
Surface Gravity: 1.1
Atm. Pressure: Low (Tainted)
Equatorial Temperature: 35° C (Temperate)
Surface Water: 35 percent
Recharging Station: Nadir
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Plants
Population: 3,100,250,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: A-A-C-A-B

The mineral resources that initially drew humankind to Keystone have long been exhausted, but the factory complexes that grew up around them remain and have gone from strength to strength. Never a hospitable world, the industrialization of Keysone severely damaged its environment. Breather masks are a common sight across the planet and most buildings contain built-in air processing systems designed to scrub away manmade and natural pollutants. Once the poisons are gone, the air is thin but breathable in the lowlands that make up two-thirds of the landmass, though most companies maintain at least part of their facilities pressurized to near-Terran levels. Earthwerks Inc, one of Keystone's largest employers, is the only company to maintain all of its facilities in a Terra-like environment, having relocated its once-scattered sites to the domed city of Darras on the shores of Lake Marenga, the sole major body of water. To save on life-support costs, most other companies maintain their heavy manufacturing facilities at ambient levels and rely on acclimated staff wearing breathers and environmental suits. The razor-edged rocks that appear everywhere on the planet require that most such suits must be armored, adding to their bulk.



Hydroponics facilities provide a limited array of foodstuffs for the population, the native soil being too toxic to grow food suitable for humans, and Keystone is technically self-sufficient with these vegetables and yeast cultures. In practice, however, the planet relies heavily on imports for diversity, particularly animal products that are in short supply locally.



TOURING THE REALM

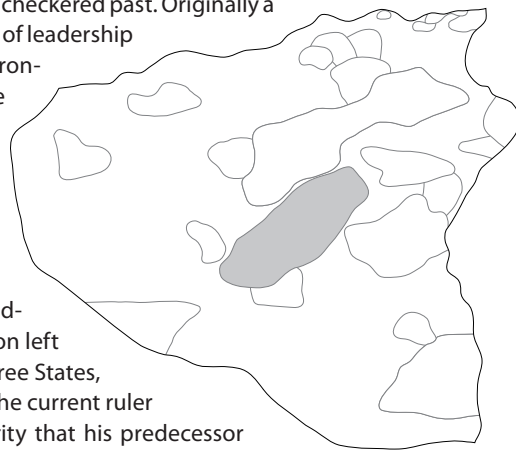
PRINCIPALITY OF REGULUS

The second of the Free Worlds League's founding trinity, the Principality of Regulus has a checkered past. Originally a mercantile alliance under the auspices of House Selaj, Regulus underwent a forcible change of leadership after the Scourge of Death atrocities for which the Regular princes were blamed. The Cameron-Jones clan, who succeeded them, were initially loyal supporters of the Mariks, but over time have grown increasingly distant from the League's ruling family, seeking advantage for their own province while remaining committed to the ideals of the Free Worlds League. Thomas Marik's centralization of military and political authority has further eroded the relationship between Regulus and Atreus, leading to such petty resistance as bureaucratic slowdowns, the reversal of national and regional emblems and so forth. Such actions typify the Regular willingness to push back at those who challenge them.

The Principality of Regulus once extended much further than it does today, until the landmark case of Camlann v. Free Worlds fragmented this mercantile domain. That legal decision left only the core worlds within the principality and established other substates: the Regular Free States, the Principality of Gibson and a host of independent worlds and minor provinces nearby. The current ruler of Regulus, Prince Kirc Cameron-Jones, has not faced the same challenges to his authority that his predecessor weathered while Thomas Marik solidified his grip on power, but has nonetheless committed himself to protect the rights of his and other provinces.

The Indian influence of House Selaj remains strong in Regulus, mixed liberally with European and East Asian cultures. English is the dominant language, used in business and education, but in less formal circumstances Hindi and Urdu are common. The Hindu faith likewise predominates in Regulus, beating out Islam and Christianity. The latter falls to third place in this fifteen-world region, while Sikhism is a distant fourth.

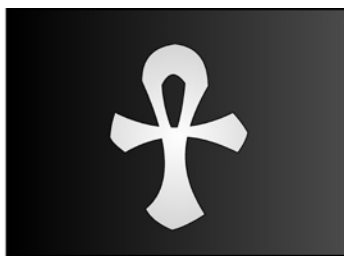
Second only to the Marik Commonwealth in manufacturing capacity and overall trade (a status Regulars often blame on federal contracts that apparently favor Marik industries over those from their own principality), Regulus strives to live up to its mercantile heritage. Regular traders are among the farthest-ranging and innovative in the Inner Sphere, constantly seeking new goods and markets.



REGULUS

Noble Ruler: Prince Kirc Cameron-Jones
Star Type (Recharge Time): K6III (197 hours)
Position in System: 3.91
Time to Jump Point: 4 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Zamzama)
Surface Gravity: 0.95
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 45° C (Tropical)
Surface Water: 53 percent
Recharging Station: Both
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Reptile
Population: 3,220,250,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: A-B-B-A-B

Though the events of the 2550s stripped Selaj authority from Regulus, that family's Hindu influence remains evident in the planet's architecture and in formal dress. Regulus City, on the rugged Chebbin continent, has numerous gleaming ultra-modern buildings, but at its heart stands an array of classical Indian structures—the palaces of the original merchant-princes on the banks of the Brahma River—as well as the ghats that play a major role in the lives of the Hindu-dominated population. The old palaces today house the Regular planetary government and the province's prince. Central to these is the Palace of Mirrors, once home to D'Mir Selaj but today the site



of the regional assembly. These chambers are a focus of much anti-Marik propaganda, Regulus having inherited the province of Andurien's role as chief opponent to the federal government and the Captain-General. Unlike Andurien, however, Regulus has no ambitions to secede from the

League; rather, it seeks to retain its own powers within the League's broader framework. Prince Kirc Cameron-Jones is a thorn in Thomas Marik's side, but one who seeks to protect the League from itself and to ensure the continuance of Regular commercial activity. This quest for profit remains embedded in the Regular psyche, and the planet's commercial districts are second only to those of Atreus within the League. Surprisingly, Regulus is also a major religious center; the Hari Mandir of Menlas City on equatorial Tinnin is the focus of the Sikh religion, where the commonality of life under the gurus' teachings stands in stark contrast to the rampant commercialism elsewhere on the world. In addition to the trading of goods and services, entertainment plays a major role in the Regular economy, with everything from music to holovids and immersive RHEs recorded in studio complexes across the planet. Mount Rajah, on the southern continent of Tabar, is a magnet for outdoor pursuits (and a former favorite haunt of Janos Marik), with hiking trails and climbing pitches in summer and ski runs in winter.



AITUTAKI

Noble Ruler: Duke James Kalka
Star Type (Recharge Time): K8II (199 hours)
Position in System: 3
Time to Jump Point: 3.5 days
Number of Satellites: None
Surface Gravity: 1.15
Atm. Pressure: High (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 45° C (Tropical)
Surface Water: 70 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Reptiles
Population: 925,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-C-B-B-C

Little remains of the commercial way station built by the first Regulans on Aitutaki, replaced over the centuries by a successful agricultural community. In 2414, Aitutaki became the main military training grounds for the Principality of Regulus. Much of the world remains dedicated to military training, with abundant live-fire ranges and exercise grounds. The island continent of Simla is dedicated solely to the planet's military academy, complete with artificial towns in which to practice urban warfare and a series of fortifications for defensive and offensive training. Today, the Simla facilities are in the hands of the FWLM rather than the being the sole preserve of the academy, but few troops from outside the region have trained there. The city of Srinagar, nestled in the Koram Shan uplands of the Andrine continent, is home to Aitutaki's main financial and manufacturing centers, as well as its military academy and almost ten percent of the planet's population, but the planetary government lies in the lowland spaceport city of Ladakh, some 250 kilometers to the west. The planet's early settlers deliberately separated their world's financial and political centers in order to minimize political interference in commerce (and vice-versa). A high-speed rail line links the two capitals, carrying passengers and freight on a journey that takes a little under an hour. A derailment in April 3067 caused severe disruption (but amazingly, no loss of life) and was originally regarded as an accident, though the subsequent investigation pointed to sabotage by an unknown organization.

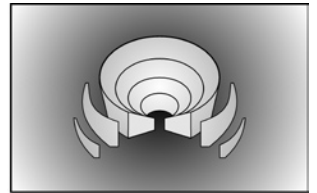


TIBER

Noble Ruler: Governor Shandra Marillier/Duke Tenzin Seren
Star Type (Recharge Time): G5V (186 hours)
Position in System: 4
Time to Jump Point: 8 days
Number of Satellites: 2 (Palatine, Ostia)
Surface Gravity: 1.0
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Tainted)
Equatorial Temperature: 50° C (Arid)
Surface Water: 22 percent
Recharging Station: Both
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Fish
Population: 625,500,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-A-B-A-B

Jointly administered by Regulus and the Duchy of New Assam, Tiber is one of the principality's key factory worlds. New Assam's entire population numbers a mere 4 million, and so Regulan affairs dominate on Tiber. Regulan authorities dealt with violent labor unrest in 3025 that pitted elements of the Regulan Hussars against each other. The crushing of that rebellion by domestic forces signaled the principality's determination to police its own affairs, but also demonstrated the provincial government's leanings in worker-employer disputes. Resentment still simmers on Tiber, though no more major riots have occurred thanks in part to federal legislation mandating index-linked wages and minimum paid holidays for citizens all across the FWL. Much of the planet's final assembly work takes place in and around the Regulan capital of Verona, on the western continent of Perugia, but most corporations maintain satellite facilities across Tiber and in low-orbit, bringing parts together for final assembly via efficient rail and air transport systems.

In stark contrast to industrialized Regulan Tiber, the mountainous island continent of New Assam has little manufacturing. Its economy revolves around service industries, in particular banking and insurance, which center on the capital city of Tezpur. Tourism also plays a major part, with several raucous resorts catering to factory workers while high-class mountain retreats offer corporate executives respite from day-to-day business. Recent excavations for a new railway line linking Tezpur with upland towns uncovered a massive series of spectacular caverns that have drawn spelunkers from across the Free Worlds. A survey of the caves is currently underway, with a view toward opening more of them to the public.

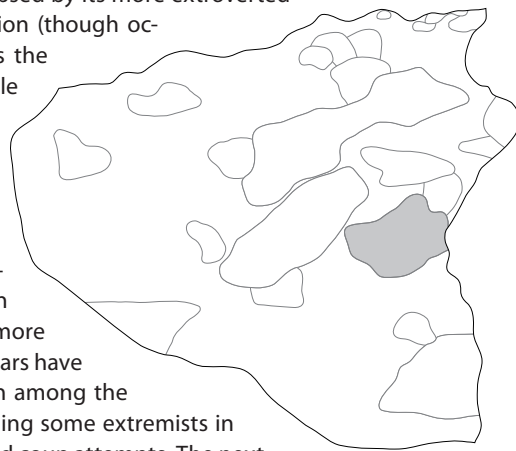




TOURING THE REALM

DUCHY OF ORIENTE

The third founding member of the Free Worlds League, Oriente has been steadily eclipsed by its more extroverted neighbors. Frequently allied with the Captain-General or else standing as loyal opposition (though occasionally on less friendly terms with the Mariks), the province has commonly acted as the “swing vote” between the more confrontational power blocs of Marik and Regulus, a subtle shift from the earliest days of the FWL when Regulus served as a moderating influence. Diplomatic necessity historically encouraged Oriente to subsume its needs and desires to those of the federation, but whereas the original dukes fought to ensure equal treatment for Oriente’s concerns, the current ruling house—which first took office in 2845—has allowed League interests to dominate. The Halas clan, though generally respected, lacks the near-instinctive support of the population enjoyed by their predecessors, the Allison family. The Allisons struck a balance between artistic and commercial interests, and between Oriente’s needs and those of the Free Worlds, but the Halas dynasty has tended toward more polarized views. Commercial interests take precedence over cultural matters, and recent years have seen regional interests take a back seat to federal ones. Duke Christopher Halas, though among the most respected of recent leaders, is a federalist and key supporter of Thomas Marik, leading some extremists in Oriente to regard him as a traitor; some of these have launched half-baked assassination and coup attempts. The next generation is unlikely to offer any improvement: the duke’s son and heir, Timothy, shares many of his father’s views, and Duke Christopher’s daughter Sherryl is married to the Captain-General. Only the duke’s second son, Gregory, stands in opposition, his outspoken support of the Oriente Nationalist cause prompting a major rift with his father.



The common people of Oriente are more pragmatic than not. While seeking to preserve their own cultural identity they see the advantages for themselves and for the League in a stronger central government, and have shown willingness to sacrifice some freedoms—most notably their independent military—in return for a booming economy, rapidly improving standard of living and protection from internal and external threats. Provided their day-to-day lives continue normally, they can endure much.

As with the rest of the League, English is the common tongue of Oriente. Greek, Spanish and Italian are the mother tongues of many of its peoples, with various Chinese dialects common on worlds toward the Capellan border. Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity form the mainstay of religion in this province, but substantial minorities adhere to Islam and Confucianism.

ORIENTE

Noble Ruler: Grand Duke Christopher Halas

Star Type (Recharge Time): F2III (173 hours)

Position in System: 4

Time to Jump Point: 18.75 days

Number of Satellites: 2 (Escorial, Coruna)

Surface Gravity: 1.1

Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 45° C (Tropical)

Surface Water: 58 percent

Recharging Station: Both

HPG Class Type: A

Highest Native Life: Mammal

Population: 3,980,000,000

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



origin in “Hellas,” the ancient Greeks’ name for themselves.)

Marginally warmer than Terra, Oriente’s benign climate has allowed agriculture to flourish despite the industrial focus of the planetary economy. Oriente is a net exporter of food staples—grain and rice in particular, farmed on the Martigues and Navarran continents. As with many commercial League worlds,

it imports a broad range of luxury goods. Intense storms occasionally ravage the equatorial belt, but the residents of the Avillan and Tarragonan archipelagos that make up the major equatorial landmasses have adapted to the month-long storm season, enjoying paradise-like conditions for the rest of the year. Of Oriente’s five continents, only ice-locked Burgos has no permanent habitation, but even there research stations and occasional resorts devoted to outdoor pursuits offer a regular human presence.

Heavy manufacturing once dominated Oriente’s economy, but the Succession Wars and frequent Capellan raids eroded this capacity in favor of service industries and light engineering. Oriente remains a key center for the design of commercial goods, particularly consumer electronics, cooking gadgets, and refrigeration and washing appliances, but few products are built on-world. Instead, Oriente firms sell or license their designs to manufacturers elsewhere in the

A representative commonality with an autocratic executive, the world of Oriente is a microcosm of the Free Worlds League. Like much of the duchy that would later bear its name, Oriente’s founders had strong ties to the Italian and Iberian Peninsulas, which remain apparent in the place names and habits of many Oriente citizens (a penchant for taking main meals late in the evening, strong family relations and a commitment to the arts, for example). The replacement of the Iberian Allison dynasty with the Greek-descended Halas family has led to subtle changes over the past two centuries toward a more general “Mediterranean” culture. (Some suggest that the name “Halas” has its



FWL. Many companies have sought to lure the skilled population away from Oriente, but cannot compete with the planet's quality of life. Several corporations instead opened their own subsidiaries on the planet to exploit its mix of education and innovation.

LES HALLES

Noble Ruler: Prefect Louis Smit
Star Type (Recharge Time): F5II (176 hours)
Position in System: 2
Time to Jump Point: 14.94 days
Number of Satellites: None
Surface Gravity: 0.85
Atm. Pressure: Low (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 30° C (Cold-Temperate)
Surface Water: 85 percent
Recharging Station: Both
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Microbes
Population: 1,250,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-C-C-C-D

Only a narrow band of Les Halles supports human life comfortably; massive ice sheets engulf much of the planet and leave only twenty percent of its surface water in liquid form, mostly in the equatorial Auverne Sea. Even where ice does not dominate the single pseudo-continent of Orléans, the harsh and rocky landscape requires considerable effort to clear and make suitable for farming. The planet's strategic location, however, has made control of it a major issue for the League and the neighboring Capellan Confederation, from both a military and a commercial point of view. Whether in Marik or Liao hands, Les Halles has served as a key trading port, its starport cities surrounded by vast warehouse districts and equally extensive bazaars. As with Kalidasa on the Lyran border, the government closely monitors such trade, but it is widely acknowledged that almost everything available in the Inner Sphere can be bought on Les Halles, either legally or via the extensive black market.

A relatively small number of goods are produced on-world, with transshipment and reselling the focus of the planetary economy. The mining and refining of spacecraft fuel is Les Halles' principal heavy industry, though the past decade has seen the establishment of an orbital repair complex designed to serve as a hybrid maintenance facility and cargo way-station. On the planet itself, vast expanses of hotels, bars, bordellos and restaurants service the largely transient population of the port cities. Only in more isolated districts and in the capital of Beauborg does the permanent population dominate, residing in settlements dug into the planetary crust to protect them from the harsh weather. Most settlements on Les Halles are built around an atrium, a large open central area off of which commercial and residential districts lie. All that varies is the scale of construction—a house may have rooms stemming from a central subterranean courtyard (complete with reinforced-glass roof), while a town may comprise a series of interlinked cathedral-like atria.



FLETCHER

Noble Ruler: Count Christof Nials
Star Type (Recharge Time): G2IV (182 hours)
Position in System: 2
Time to Jump Point: 9.12 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Quarrel)
Surface Gravity: 0.95
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 35° C (Temperate)
Surface Water: 55 percent
Recharging Station: None
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Birds
Population: 550,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-B-C-A-D

The mountains that dominate all four of Fletcher's continents (Lautoka, Koro, Norsup and Bairiki) have over the centuries been a blessing and curse to the planet's inhabitants. Rich mineral veins (now long-exhausted) prompted the initial colonization effort and supported the establishment of



a broad manufacturing base. At the height of the first Star League and the relative peace of the past two decades, Fletcher's mountains became one of the Inner Sphere's pre-eminent winter-sports venues. Unfortunately, the relative lack of arable land not scoured annually by floodwaters has made Fletcher reliant on imports even of staple crops, though ironically many "luxury" crops are grown on smallholdings up the terraced valley sides. Only in the relative lowlands of the Suva archipelago is agriculture a significant part of the local economy, but the high costs of production resulting from the islands' isolation often makes it cheaper to import from off-world.

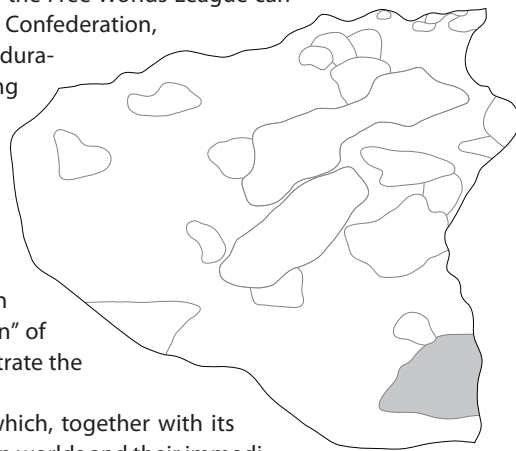
Though the planetary population trailed off markedly during the Succession Wars (recovering substantially over the past half-century), the industrial capacity of the factory complexes—many built into mountainsides or in precarious hanging valleys high above the spring melt waters—has scarcely declined. A major shake-up occurred following the carnage of the First and Second Succession Wars, with a series of trade cooperatives replacing independent companies, but many of Fletcher's industries trace their heritage back to the halcyon days of the Star League and beyond. The technical renaissance of recent years has greatly benefited Fletcher, with the massive pressurized dry-dock facilities of Free Flight, Ltd. in low orbit being the most obvious of the new developments that have sprung up on and around the planet.



TOURING THE REALM

DUCHY OF ANDURIEN

The newest of the “big four,” the Duchy of Andurien typifies how much the politics of the Free Worlds League can change. Comprising a wedge of worlds long contested by the League and the Capellan Confederation, this duchy first formed during the Age of War, but was reduced to a rump province for the duration of the Star League after the Free Worlds ceded most of Andurien’s territory—including the planet Andurien itself—to House Liao. Resurrected during the First Succession War in the 29th century, the modern Duchy of Andurien came under the stewardship of the Humphreys clan, loyal diplomats from Oriente. Almost immediately, however, Andurien began chafing at the bonds imposed on it by the federal government. Whether prompted by the years of Capellan domination or by a desire to become masters of their own destiny rather than pawns of interstellar politics, the Andurien people and their leaders are fiercely independent, strongly inclined to take no counsel but their own. Friction between Andurien and the League marked the Third Succession War, in stark contrast to the “loyal opposition” of Oriente and Regulus. In the wake of the Fourth Succession War, which seemed to demonstrate the central government’s ineffectiveness, Andurien made a bid for independence.



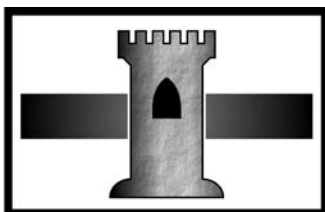
The ten-year conflict between the Free Worlds League and secessionist Andurien (which, together with its Canopian allies, unsuccessfully invaded the Capellan Confederation) shattered the Andurien worlds and their immediate neighbors, prompting a substantial reconstruction effort by the victorious Atreus government and leaving the duchy with some of the most modern industries in the FWL. Despite being formally reincorporated into the League, Andurien’s people resented federal interference in their affairs, particularly the removal from power of Dame Catherine Humphreys and the installation of a regency (which lasted until 3048, when Catherine’s granddaughter Dalma was restored to office). The people of Andurien and Duchess Dalma cooperate with the Free Worlds League, but petty acts of resistance continue, ranging from the use of regional dialects when League troopers enter stores to incidents of sabotage and terrorism. Very little can be pinned on the duly constituted authorities in Andurien, but the complicity of the Humphreys family in passive resistance to what many Anduriens call “the occupation” is an open secret. Consequently, a substantial number of SAFE operatives have been deployed to the region, the largest concentration in the League, and an Act of Parliament denies the duchy the right to field its own military. The federal government seized the resources of the former Defenders of Andurien under the provisions of the Replevin Doctrine and used them to form the new Free Worlds Legions.

English is the official language of Andurien, but in practice Italian is the most common tongue, closely followed by Spanish and Chinese dialects (principally Mandarin and Hakka). Catholicism is the principal faith of the Andurien worlds, with Confucianism a distant second. Many Anduriens eschew religion, believing in no power in the universe beyond human determination.

ANDURIEN

Noble Ruler: Duchess Dalma Humphreys
Star Type (Recharge Time): G0V (181 hours)
Position in System: 5
Time to Jump Point: 10.43 days
Number of Satellites: 2 (Mulhacen, Betic)
Surface Gravity: 1.2
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 45° C (Tropical)
Surface Water: 65 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Amphibian
Population: 4,575,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: A-B-B-C-C

Shattered in the conflict that spanned the 3030s, verdant Andurien has made a miraculous recovery thanks to massive investment by the League central government. Only a handful of scars remain, from the Wall of



Martyrs at the famed botanical gardens of Jojoken (where civilian saboteurs were summarily executed after a lethal attack on an FWL medical complex) to the grim edifice of the Occupation Headquarters (referred to as the “Dark Tower” by the native population). Downtown Jojoken, on the major land mass of Altay, is as modern and bustling as any League provincial capital, its pristine and well-ordered streets hiding seething resentment and rampant xenophobia.

For all its modern infrastructure, Andurien has yet to regain the financial influence it had before its secession attempt. Since then, few of the League’s banks and financial institutions have established significant facilities on-world. Business that previously flowed through Andurien—cross-border trade with the Capellan Confederation and the Magistracy of Canopus—is now routed through Oriente and Campoleone. Substantial manufacturing takes place on Andurien, to meet domestic needs and export sales, though the planet’s military manufacturing lies solidly under FWLM authority. Nonetheless, substantial quantities of materiel have been “misplaced by administrative error,” leading to rumors of secret caches being stockpiled for another secession bid.

The botanical gardens at Jojoken remain Andurien’s biggest tourist draw, the greenhouses and flowerbeds containing species from all over the Inner Sphere. The landscaped gardens have distinct zones reflecting the nations from which the various species originate and

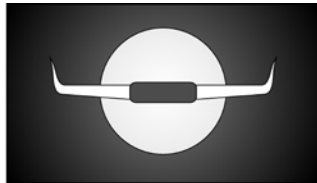


within each of those are planting beds that denote provinces and worlds. Those for the Marik Commonwealth are frequently replanted, as they often fall prey to vandalism by Andurien “patriots.” Also popular are photographic safaris on the southern Zahle continent that showcase Andurien’s diverse flora and fauna, much imported from elsewhere in the Inner Sphere, as well as major natural wonders like the kilometer-high Sondahl Falls.

SADURNI

Noble Ruler: Countess Simone Wan
Star Type (Recharge Time): G9VI (190 hours)
Position in System: 4
Time to Jump Point: 5.82 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Radlan)
Surface Gravity: 1.1
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 35° C (Temperate)
Surface Water: 65 percent
Recharging Station: None
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population: 75,500,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-D-C-C-C

Sadurni’s largely agrarian economy allowed the world to weather the Andurien civil war much better than many of its neighbors, but the collapse of its urban economic systems triggered a humanitarian disaster that cost many more lives than the battles that raged on the planet. City-dwellers fled to the country and relied on cousins and the kindness of strangers, at least until military authorities organized relief efforts. After the war, life on Sadurni quickly returned to a semblance of normality, at least on the main continent of Patra; life on agrarian Katerini and Xanthi changed little even during the war. Many of the skilled artisans and stonemasons for whom the world was famous—Sadurni marble built the Court of the Star League in Unity City—devoted their talents to rebuilding Jojoken on Andurien, and a host of other battle-scarred cities across the duchy. Consequently, non-essential reconstruction on Sadurni itself did not commence until the late 3040s, and in a number of areas it remains incomplete even twenty years later.

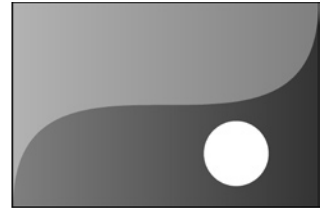


LOPEZ

Noble Ruler: Secretary General Charles Cunin
Star Type (Recharge Time): M0V/M5V (203 hours)
Position in System: 1
Time to Jump Point: 3 days
Number of Satellites: None
Surface Gravity: 0.85
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Tainted)
Equatorial Temperature: 50° C (Arid)
Surface Water: 25 percent
Recharging Station: Both
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Reptile
Population: 2,600,500,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-C-B-D-B

The sole planet in the system, small warm Lopez is popularly regarded as an interstellar miracle—a life-supporting world that should not exist, but has managed to thrive despite the adversity it faces. How Lopez survives in its tide-wracked binary system continues to puzzle scientists, but the tidal forces ensure active geology on-world. The numerous volcanoes that dot the planet make its atmosphere sufficiently dense in greenhouse gases like CO₂ to retain heat and encourage thriving vegetation. Appearing cloud-locked from space, with mountain “islands” poking above the dense atmosphere, Lopez has become a popular tourist destination despite the need to wear filter masks for protection from atmospheric toxins. Most native species are naturally resistant to the high CO₂ levels (a scientific oddity, given the massive quantities of vegetation), and scientists genetically modified many Terran species to survive on this jungle planet. Attempts to engineer modified humans on Lopez, however, always stall (for political and ethical reasons), and only on the mountain peaks can humans breathe unaided for more than short periods.

The capital city of Orton, located high in the Puebla Mountains, serves as the seat of the planetary parliament and the main financial center. Its rival, French Bluff, is more popular as a tourist destination, located on the edge of the Miyama Jungles and the smaller of the planet’s two main bodies of water, Lake Léon. This region’s rugged terrain is the principal nesting ground of the legendary branth, dragon-like reptiles whose wingspan can extend up to fifteen meters and which are the subject of many wilderness safaris, despite the increasing number of specimens exported off-world thanks to immunity-boosting vaccines. Elsewhere on Lopez, terrestrial hybrid crops flourish, though some regions are often plagued by infestations of branth rats, a voracious local vermin that is smaller kin to the native dracoforms. Fishing in the Coliman Sea and the rivers of the Miyama Jungle provides the people of Lopez with many delicacies.

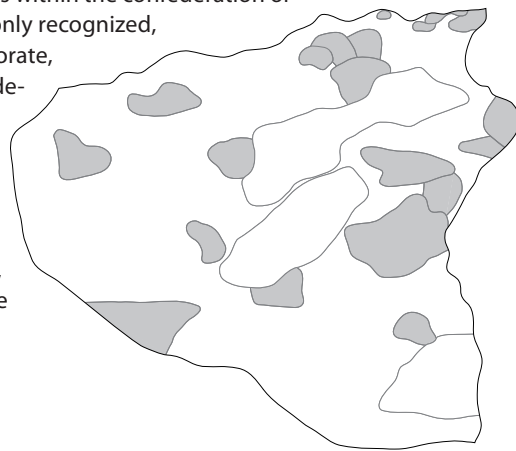




TOURING THE REALM

MINOR PROVINCES AND INDEPENDENT WORLDS

Most League worlds lie outside the four principal provinces, either independent planets within the confederation or else part of the ever-shifting patchwork of minor regions. A number of districts are commonly recognized, though they lack the political clout of their larger cousins—the Silver Hawks, Border Protectorate, Stewart Commonality and the like. Some grew organically, often as alliances for mutual defense or trade, while some came into being fully formed, divorced from a parent region by the provisions of Camlann v. Free Worlds. The Regular Free States and the Principality of Gibson are examples of the latter, having seceded from the Principality of Regulus. Other examples include the Mosiro Archipelago, formerly part of the Duchy of Andurien, and the Duchy of Graham-Marik, which once formed part of the Marik Commonwealth. Any attempt to classify these disparate worlds or profile their inhabitants is doomed to failure, save that they stand as living testimony to the strength through diversity that pervades the Free Worlds League.



STEWART

Noble Ruler: Duke Hector Stewart
Star Type (Recharge Time): G8V (198 hours)
Position in System: 4
Time to Jump Point: 6.19 days
Number of Satellites: 4 (Argyle, Leon, Carthage and Clyde)
Surface Gravity: 1.0
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 45° C (Arid)
Surface Water: 81 percent
Recharging Station: Both
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population: 3,005,250,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-A-B-B-B
Affiliation: Stewart Commonality

Stewart's native vegetation—incompatible as it was with Terran seed stocks—caused many problems for the world's initial colonists from the British Isles. Substantial efforts at environmental engineering, however, first on the northern Lanarkshire continent and later on southern Aberdeenshire and Angus, led to a hybrid ecosystem capable of supporting human life without expensive imported foodstuffs. These efforts also revealed the extensive mineral deposits on the island continent of Highland that gave Stewart its industrial strength. The colony's early rulers formed the Stewart Confederation, a six-world nation that became a rival to the Marik Commonwealth. Indeed, the Stewart family could easily have played a more substantial role in the affairs of the Free Worlds League than eventually transpired had not David Genovese publicly derided the nascent federation and brought the wrath of Juliano Marik down on his people. In the centuries that followed, Stewart regained its influence, via mercantile rather than political or military means. Only



in this century, with the marriage of Ana Stewart to Captain-General Janos Marik, has House Stewart found itself firmly ensconced near the pinnacle of League affairs, and a number of Marik-Stewart descendants have taken up key military and political posts in the League.

Corean Enterprises is the best-known company on Stewart, famed for its *Locust* and *Trebuchet* 'Mech designs as well as for providing components to many other League manufacturers. A substantial and diverse civilian engineering industry also exists on-world, manufacturing and assembling everything from groundcars and blue-water naval vessels to consumer electronics and white goods. Combined with substantial agriculture—a far cry from the colony's early days—the net result is one of the most self-sufficient worlds in the League. Even tourism has flourished on Stewart, though the kitsch fake clansmen of Highland and Lothian (who claim to “accurately recreate ancient Scotland”) are frequently mocked.

HELM

Noble Ruler: Landholder Halina Elin
Star Type (Recharge Time): K4IV (195 hours)
Position in System: 4
Time to Jump Point: 4.31 days
Number of Satellites: None
Surface Gravity: 0.95
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 30° C (Cold-Temperate)
Surface Water: 58 percent
Recharging Station: None
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Reptiles
Population: 22,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: D-D-C-D-B
Affiliation: Stewart Commonality

Cold and desolate, Helm could easily have remained in obscurity, little more than an agricultural colony overtaken by the rapidly expanding human frontier. However, a trio of events kept Helm lodged in the public consciousness, though not until the eve of the Fourth



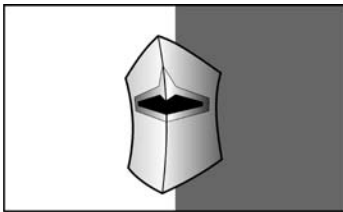
Succession War did these events converge with universe-shattering repercussions.

The first act of this drama was the expansion of the SLDF's presence on Helm. The city of Freeport already served as a provisioning center for the SLDF fleet; the Star League military enhanced this facility with the construction of a Castle Brian, a combination redoubt and storehouse against the eventuality of renewed war in the Inner Sphere. As tensions escalated in the wake of the Amaris Coup, the Castle Brian at Nagayan Mountain became the focus of efforts to conceal the substantial SLDF stockpiles on the world.

Rumors of the cache drew attention from the Marik government, which sought to gain control of it, but also attracted the other Successor Lords—most notably Minoru Kurita, who sought to seize the stockpile. When his troops failed to uncover the materiel (rumor had it that the SLDF or Marik forces had already done so), Lord Kurita ordered punishment strikes against Helm's civilian centers. The nuclear blasts shattered Freeport and most other urban areas, killing or displacing almost 80 percent of the planetary population. Even today, Freeport's ruins remain unsafe. The township of Helmdown serves as the planetary capital and spaceport, while fighter bays in the distant asteroids are the only remnant of the SLDF fleet base.

The final chapter of Helm's drama began in 3027, when the backwater world was granted to the mercenary Grey Death Legion as their landhold. Unknown to them, rumors of the Nagayan Mountain facility had prompted unscrupulous forces within the FWL—aided and abetted by rogue elements of ComStar—to move against the mercenaries. A running battle raged across the planet as the complex history of Helm and its hidden stockpiles unraveled. Nagayan Mountain contained not only the massive materiel caches sought by the House Lords of prior generations, but also—to ComStar's dismay—a massive archive that threatened the Order's monopoly over advanced technology. ComStar's allegedly rogue agents attempted to destroy this archive, famed as the Helm memory core, by manipulating the Grey Death and others. Instead, the failure of their schemes led to the eventual dissemination of the memory core and its attendant technologies across the Inner Sphere, facilitating the ongoing technological renaissance. To credit the Helm memory core alone for developments over the past forty years is an overstatement, but the data did serve as a technological Rosetta stone, allowing half-understood documents and systems to be rendered useful.

Ironically, Helm itself has benefited little from the altered fortunes of the Successor States; expansion to the Helmdown WorkMech plant is the only technological advance on what remains a largely agrarian world. A side effect of ComStar's schemes on Helm has been the rebirth of the long-lost Yehudan Sea, whose waters were locked underground by SLDF excavations. Landholder Elin, Helm's League-appointed overlord, has overseen the construction of Newport, a modern metropolis on the shores of the ancient sea that she hopes will become the planet's major economic center.

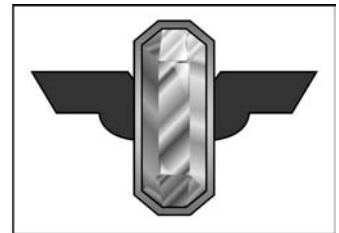


ALULA AUSTRALIS

Noble Ruler: Sir Jasper De Lyon
Star Type (Recharge Time): A7II (168 hours)
Position in System: 8
Time to Jump Point: 27.98 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Caprice)
Surface Gravity: 1.09
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 26°C (Temperate)
Surface Water: 87 percent
Recharging Station: Both
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Amphibian
Population: 3,245,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-C-B-C-C
Affiliation: Border Protectorate

The key world of the Xi Ursae Majoris system, brought into the FWL by the conquests of Geralk Marik, Alula Australis has long been a battleground between the FWLM and the LCAF. Here the League first used BattleMechs in combat, stopping a Lyran advance in 2470, and for many years Alula

Australis was the site of a major 'Mech manufacturing facility at Cedar Ridge. Relocated to Savannah in 2947 after repeated attacks, the site was even destroyed on several occasions, leading to its nickname of Cinder Ridge. Despite the loss of the planet's main heavy industry, mining and refining remain cornerstones of the planetary economy. Petrochemical extraction and processing dominates the cities of Cirebon and Leng-kong on the hilly Locke continent, while smelting of ferrous metals and purification of rare earths used in microelectronics is the main industry of the planetary capital, New Horizon City in southern Auroria. Precious metals and stones also play a major economic role, in particular sapphires from the deep mines on Locke, many of which are exported to jewelers across the Inner Sphere. The quest for mineral wealth, however, has come at a price. The landscape around the cities is pockmarked with mines and quarries, many of which are simply abandoned once exhausted, with any equipment not salvaged for re-use left behind to rust. Likewise, the outflow from refineries at Sturgeon has killed off most of the life in Lake Pattaya, in the Hubbes River valley of southern Hume. Numerous environmental protection groups have sought to remedy this situation, but even with federal backing they have made little inroads against the greed of the Council of Nobles, Alula Australis' ruling oligarchy.





TOURING THE REALM

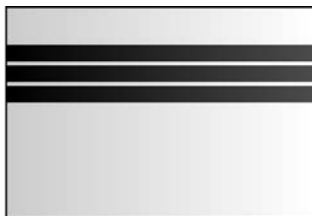
IRIAN

Noble Ruler: CEO Sigmund Hughes
Star Type (Recharge Time): G5III (186 hours)
Position in System: 3
Time to Jump Point: 7.47 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Prospero)
Surface Gravity: 0.95
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 43° C (Warm-Temperate)
Surface Water: 71 percent
Recharging Station: Both
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Plant
Population: 2,171,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: A-A-C-A-D
Affiliation: Independent

Outsiders find it hard to judge where the world of Irian ends and the Irian Technologies conglomerate begins. Though the planet is legally a distinct entity, Irian is a corporate fief, with a series of contracts weaving civil government and commercial enterprises into a cohesive whole. Consequently, IrTech is more than a simple corporation—it forms a nebulous and unofficial commercial province centered on Irian, and so the world is simultaneously more and less than an independent planet. It has all the trappings of a regional capital—including fine buildings, renowned museums and a high standard of living, all funded by IrTech—but its people are legally bound to the corporation. Indeed, Camlann v. Free Worlds does not apply to Irian, which the law regards as a corporate entity rather than a political member-state of the FWL, protecting the conglomerate from hostile political maneuvers.

Beyond the factory complexes in places like Kirin River amid the broad valleys of western Indran, little sets Irian apart from its neighbors. It has an average climate, nondescript terrain (all four continents—Indran, Hathor, Bruin and Kriess—are gently rolling landscapes lacking broad plains and significant uplands) and few natural resources. Tolerable for humanity (save for the inedible natural vegetation), its very blandness makes it an ideal corporate haven. Few distractions exist for the population, and little attracts outsiders. Imports meet most of Irian's resource needs, particularly foodstuffs; the few local foods palatable to humans have little texture or taste.

The historical Duchy of Irian has had little to do with the planet in the modern era, but the title remained in use as recently as 3028. The last holder of the title, however, was stripped of his rank on the eve of the Fourth Succession War, after the Helm debacle. Ever since, IrTech has used various legal initiatives (mostly trademark infringement suits) to prevent the title from being passed on.



TAMARIND

Noble Ruler: Duchess Therese Marik
Star Type (Recharge Time): K2IV (193 hours)
Position in System: 4
Time to Jump Point: 4.85 days
Number of Satellites: 2 (Teteli, Tamarin)
Surface Gravity: 1.0
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 38° C (Temperate)
Surface Water: 61 percent
Recharging Station: Nadir
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Reptile
Population: 3,581,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-D-B-C-B
Affiliation: Duchy of Tamarind

A little-reported insurrection in the early 3030s swept away the democratic government of Tamarind and placed the world under the suzerainty of the wife of the FWLM marshal overseeing that section of the League's border. That this woman was Therese Marik, a disinherited child of Captain-General Janos Marik by his first wife, was as much a political statement by Tamarind's electors as a practical measure to restore good governance after Prime Minister Otho Korituk's disastrous tenure. Unlike some of her siblings, Therese never sought political authority. This attitude played well to the people of Tamarind, who stood on the brink of catastrophe thanks to Korituk's mismanagement. Certainly Therese Marik had a better relationship with Atreus than "Otho the Cold," her appointment to the duchy having been approved by her brother in his role as regent for their father.

The last thirty years have seen a major reversal in Tamarind's fortunes, replacing the massive debts and food crises of the 3020s with productivity sufficient to meet the planet's needs and establish a decent export trade. The textiles and light engineering industries that dominated before various troubles drove them into recession have regained their positions, complemented by agricultural and mineral exports from the Anthine Plains and Rebran Heights, respectively. Tamarind's most precious commodity continues to be its many artworks, which typically command high prices across the League. Founded in 3043, the *Musée National des Beaux-arts du Tamarind* in Padaron City ensures that many native works remain in the duchy, reserved for the people as part of the cultural identity provisions of the Addendum to the Incorporation. Situated on the banks of the Parnos River, the Musée itself is widely regarded as a work of art in its own right. Even after three decades of steady rule, however, the 84-year-old Therese Marik, as grand-dame of planetary affairs, has not stripped away all of her predecessor's trappings. The "courtly arts" of falconry and hunting remain popular among Tamarind's elite, though the duchess ensures that such pursuits do not distract from good governance.





NEW DELOS

Noble Ruler: General Natalia Simonov (Military Governor)

Star Type (Recharge Time): G8III (198 hours)

Position in System: 4

Time to Jump Point: 6.19 days

Number of Satellites: 1 (Lot)

Surface Gravity: 1.1

Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 42° C (Tropical)

Surface Water: 78 percent

Recharging Station: Both

HPG Class Type: A

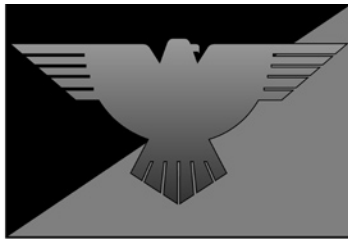
Highest Native Life: Reptile

Population: 1,715,000,000

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

Affiliation: The Protectorate

The history of New Delos is inextricably bound to that of the Free Worlds League, the planet having played a role in everything from the founding of the nation (New Delos was George Humphreys' homeworld) to the contretemps between Janos and Anton Marik. The first ruling house of Oriente, the Allisons, died in battle on New Delos, to be replaced by the Halas clan, and various conferences between the League, Capellan Confederation and Terran Hegemony took place in its once-grand cities.



Anton Marik's revolt shattered the world, its political infrastructure ravaged by the vengeful Wolf's Dragoons while leaving civilian society intact. Massive emigration in the wake of that conflict has continued unabated, with many residents relocating to other provinces in an effort to shake New Delos' stigma of treachery. Ghost towns dot the planet's three major continents—Ostrov, Mindanao and Béziers—and wilderness has reclaimed many cities. Some settlements, such as Anton's seat of power at Cienfuegos, were never rebuilt after the war, remaining as mute testament to the horror of the conflict. Delosian wolves have reclaimed the ruins, adding their howls to the ghosts of martyred Dragoons and Anton himself. The woodlands incinerated by the duke in a futile attempt to hamper the Dragoons' approach remain devoid of vegetation, and only the skeletal remnants of buildings and 'Mechs hint at a onetime human presence here.

New Delos remains a federal protectorate, administered by a military governor from the fortress at Quito on Ostrov whose main enemy is the apathy of the population. Efforts to reinstate civilian government have failed repeatedly in the face of the locals' disinterest. The economy bumps along in the doldrums, barely sufficient to sustain the people and offering few prospects for the future. It will take substantial outside investment and interest to break this cycle of neglect, something neither the federal government nor private agencies have seen fit to lavish on this planet.

SIRIUS

Noble Ruler: General Helen Thrall (Military Governor)

Star Type (Recharge Time): A1V (162 hours)

Position in System: 6

Time to Jump Point: 47 days

Number of Satellites: 1 (Sirius VI-a)

Surface Gravity: 0.95 (V)/1.1 (VI)/0.86 (VI-a)

Atm. Pressure: Low (Tainted, V), Low (Tainted, VI), Low (Breathable, VI-a)

Equatorial Temperature: 65° C (Arid)/33° C (Cool-Temperate)

Surface Water: 16 percent/47 percent

Recharging Station: Zenith

HPG Class Type: B

Highest Native Life: Plants

Population: 14,250,000

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

Affiliation: Sirian Concordance

The Sirius system contains three inhabited worlds: Sirius V and Sirius VI as well as Sirius VI's moon, VI-a. Of the three, the moon colonies are the oldest by half a century, where the thin but breathable atmosphere is much more conducive to human life than the volcanic world of Sirius VI and the bleak methane hell of Sirius V. Only when the mineral wealth of the two planets became apparent did anyone make serious efforts at colonization and terraforming. Oxygen factories and sulfur-hungry algae helped improve conditions on Sirius VI (though pressurized settlements were the norm for many years), providing a home for hardy mining colonists sustained by foodstuffs grown by their distant cousins on the planet's moon. Facilities on Sirius V were even more marginal, with domed cities the only option, given the environment's resistance to any significant manipulation. The three colonies developed a symbiotic relationship, bridged by a series of orbital way-stations, and at the height of the Star League played a major role in the industrial base of the Star League and the Terran Hegemony.



The Amaris Coup and the Succession Wars did enormous harm to the Sirius settlements. Orbital blockades forced a number of domed cities on Sirius V to the brink of starvation, while other domed habitats failed when they ran out of repair parts for atmosphere-processing plants and power facilities. Warfare shattered many areas of the Sirian system, with most orbital facilities destroyed during Amaris' turbulent reign. More were lost as recently as the eve of the Fourth Succession War, when military activity cracked the dome over the settlement of Tiantan, killing its inhabitants and leaving Sirius V virtually empty. Today, the colony teeters on the edge of abandonment.

The inhabitants of Sirius VI and VI-a were no more fortunate than their kin on Sirius V. When the Sarna March fell into chaos in the wake of Operation Guerrero, the planet came under the sway of extremists whose pogroms decimated the few remaining urban areas, allowing only scattered rural communities to survive. The near-mutiny of the Sirian Lancers finally forced the FWLM to intervene, reclaiming the Sirius system for the Free Worlds. The Lancers' commanding officer,



TOURING THE REALM

General Helen Thrall, has taken over the government in the planetary capital of Lost Hope. Thrall has little love for the federal authorities, whose inaction she blames for Sirius' present predicament, but neither does she care for the "humanitarian" endeavors of the Word of Blake—who, according to rumor, have suggested Sirius might find a better home in their new Hegemony.

SHILOH

Noble Ruler: Blessed Leader Elena Kubayshev

Star Type (Recharge Time): A8V (169 hours)

Position in System: 4

Time to Jump Point: 25.77 days

Number of Satellites: 0

Surface Gravity: 1.11

Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 55° C (Arid)

Surface Water: 15 percent

Recharging Station: None

HPG Class Type: B

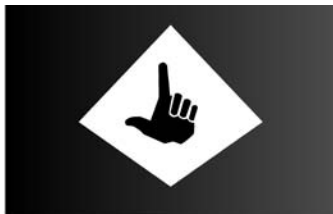
Highest Native Life: Plant

Population: 1,000,000

Socio-Industrial Levels: F-F-C-D-D

Affiliation: Silver Hawks

The Exituri settled on Shiloh, the fourth planet of the A8V-class Delta Taurus system, in 2138, creating one of the earliest (and most distant from Terra) of human colonies at the time. Harsh and desolate, Shiloh suits this ascetic cult, whose members use oxen and plows to grow crops.



Most surface water lies in more than a dozen shallow salty seas; only a handful of rivers wind their way across the planet, though more significant water deposits exist in subterranean aquifers. Shiloh has the highest birth rate in the Free Worlds League—one of the highest in the Inner Sphere, in fact—but the harsh environment and lack of advanced medical technology inflicts severe infant and adult mortality rates. Only one in ten children grow to adulthood, and few Shilohans live beyond 45. The Exituri accept this stark reality as "how it is," believing that those who perish were too weak to survive this life and will be reborn. The combined birth and death rates kept the colony's population stable for much of its existence; current estimates put it around a million, though Shiloh conducts no official census.

Food is the planet's only significant import. Its main exports are handicrafts such as wood and bone carvings, textiles and metalworks. Only one official spaceport exists on Shiloh, in the fortified city of Kandahar roughly a hundred kilometers south of the capital, Vedic, from which the port is isolated by the stark uplands of the Ashgabat Massif. Kandahar is the only legal entry point to Shiloh; arrivals undergo formal questioning and examination before being allowed to mix with the general population. "Undesirable elements," whose precise definition is indeterminate, are summarily deported.

The Free Worlds League recaptured Shiloh from the Lyran Commonwealth in 2910 after an eighty-year occupation and existed as an independent world until 2966, when the Blessed Leader approved its association with several neighbors to form the Silver Hawks coalition. Since then, Shiloh has played a low-key role in the alliance, more concerned with its own affairs than with those of its neighbors, let alone those of the wider League.

KALIDASA

Noble Ruler: Baroness Hestor Hepburn-Marik

Star Type (Recharge Time): G11a (182 hours)

Position in System: 4

Time to Jump Point: 9.75 days

Number of Moons: 2 (Carbons, Deons)

Surface Gravity: 1.1

Atm. Pressure: Low (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 56° C (Arid)

Surface Water: 67 percent

Recharging Station: Both

HPG Class Type: A

Highest Native Life: Plant

Population: 2,520,000,000

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

Affiliation: Independent

Important as a manufacturing center and strategic military base, Kalidasa has long been a bone of contention between Houses Marik and Steiner. Recent years have seen a reduction in military operations against the world—the last full-scale invasion occurred in 2997, though the planet suffered several raids during the reign



of Janos Marik—in favor of its becoming a commercial crossroads. A dozen starports cater to cross-border trade, all on the sole hospitable continent of Kalmia, each with attendant customs services (including a collection of Lyran officials licensed to operate in the FWL) that inspect every load of cargo passing through the system. Cleared cargo is stored in massive warehouse districts around the spaceports. Several sanctioned bazaars in each city sell imported goods alongside native commodities. A viable black market exists as well, trading restricted goods to and from the Lyran Alliance without official interference. Native industries are limited in scope, mainly light industry and refining, with mineral extraction on the largely uninhabited continents of Kaleen and Kumar and logging on Kalmia providing raw materials. To the surprise of many visitors to this commerce-driven planet, the capital, Sakuntalem, has a well-developed arts scene, with plays by the planet's namesake a specialty.

A substantial military presence exists on Kalidasa, guarding the ports and factories, but most corporations augment these defenses with private paramilitary forces. Kali-Yama and Quikscell in particular place stringent guards around their facilities and are major employers of mercenary troops. Officially, a cadet line of the Marik family governs Kalidasa, but in practice a shadowy alliance of business interests—including both large military manufacturers—dictates the



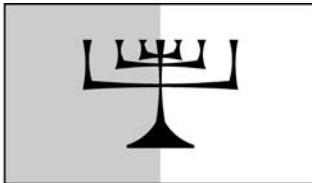
planet's affairs. Baroness Hepburn-Marik serves as a neutral arbiter in these corporate affairs and a conduit for official policy from Atrous. She has, however, built up a strong rapport with the local FWLM forces that may stand her in good stead in the event of a clash between the "merchants" council and the legal authorities.

ZION

Noble Ruler: General Géné Ward
Star Type (Recharge Time): F7III (178 hours)
Position in System: 2
Time to Jump Point: 12.89 days
Number of Satellites: 2 (Talit, Bimah)
Surface Gravity: 1.1
Atm. Pressure: Low (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 51° C (Arid)
Surface Water: 35 percent
Recharging Station: Nadir
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Reptiles
Population: 925,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: D-C-B-C-B
Affiliation: Zion Province

Having escaped from the clutches of the loathed Capellan Confederation, Zion's people found the prospect of a dynastic marriage between the Marik and Liao families too much to bear. In the mid-3050s, the world of Zion and its attendant province erupted in a violent rebellion, put down by the FWLM in a bloody campaign. The collapse of the marriage deal and its attendant alliance in the early 3060s came as a bitter irony, considering the many scars of the abortive revolt that remain in settlements across this planet. The arid expanse of the Negbek Desert suffered the most when the pipeline that supplied its outlying settlements with fresh water from Lake Aleppo was sundered in several places. For the duration of the revolt, local farmsteads and communities were forced to rely on small water-extraction and desalination plants; only after the FWLM occupation were engineers able to patch the pipeline system.

A military occupation force remains on Zion, under the command of Géné Ward, but the general takes a hands-off approach to commercial affairs and the economy has made a surprising recovery. Trade with the Federated Suns is brisk, as is that with the independent worlds of the former Sarna March. Even Capellan merchants journey to trade in Zion's bazaars, but for the most part they maintain a low profile and keep to their own enclaves in the capital, Beersheba. Only the seemingly endless series of terrorist attacks by radicals has prevented the return of civil government, the need to neutralize the scattered cells taking precedence over the return of civil liberties. For the most part, the population does not object to this continuing "soft occupation," regarding the handful of troublemakers in their midst as a threat to their own lives. Most locals see the terrorists' actions as opportunistic rather than linked to Zion's own anti-Capellan agenda.



GIBSON

Noble Ruler: Prince Ballala Patekar / Precentor William Blane
Star Type (Recharge Time): G2V (183 hours)
Position in System: 3
Time to Jump Point: 9 days
Number of Satellites: 2 (Unity, Understanding)
Surface Gravity: 1.0
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 38° C (Arid)
Surface Water: 59 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Mammal
Population: 4,220,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-C-B-C-C
Affiliation: Principality of Gibson/Word of Blake

Terraformed extensively in the early years of colonization, Gibson has become one of the most hospitable planets in the Free Worlds, somewhat arid but comfortable for human life and almost entirely self-sufficient, a testament to the skill of the planetary engineers. Groups from all over Terra and known space flocked to Gibson, drawn initially by promises of easily farmed land on the single continent of Matrah, and later by the planet's cultural diversity. The planetary capital, Portent, situated on the shores of Lake Nauru, became a renowned center for freethinkers that has only been equaled in recent years by Kira Place. For many years, the people's desires were subject to the whims of the merchant-princes of Regulus, but in 2702 Gibson used the provisions of Camlann v. Free Worlds to declare independence. In conjunction with Molokai and Clipperton, it formed the Principality of Gibson.

Its tolerance for diversity made Gibson seem an ideal new home for Word of Blake refugees. No sooner had they arrived, however, than the Blakists set about imposing their belief structures on the native inhabitants. Rather than joining the general atmosphere of tolerance, the Blakists polarized the community. A series of insurrections erupted in short order, sponsored by covert agents of the Principality of Regulus. The intervention of Thomas Marik and the Knights of the Inner Sphere brought a measure of peace to the world, but only after the Blakists and the native population established distinct enclaves. Tensions between the two groups remain high, and rumors have circulated for several years that the non-Blakist districts of Gibson may repudiate the principles of Camlann v. Free Worlds and petition for readmittance to the Principality of Regulus in an effort to stall further Blakist encroachment.





TOURING THE REALM

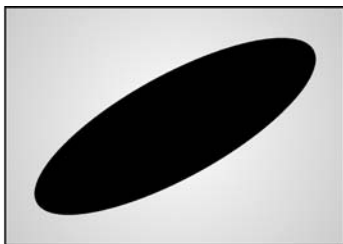
CAMPOLEONE

Noble Ruler: Factor Jerome Hud
Star Type (Recharge Time): G2 (182 hours)
Position in System: 2
Time to Jump Point: 9 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Lonely)
Surface Gravity: 0.85
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 32° C (Temperate)
Surface Water: 39 percent
Recharging Station: None
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Plants
Population: 1,250,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: D-C-D-D-C
Affiliation: Rim Commonality

Clinging to the edge of the Free Worlds League as if fearful it might be flung off into uncharted space, Campoleone exists as little more than a trade way-station. Subsistence-level agriculture takes place on this chilly world, principally in the lowlands of the Cosenza continent and along the valley of the Pao River, but for the most part inhabitants rely on goods brought in by passing traders, many of whom have villas in the hills around Ausapolis, the planet's single major settlement. With its lack of modern amenities, Campoleone has an austere beauty that makes it a popular retirement location for spacers (though few can afford the luxury of the merchants' villas), and over the centuries it has earned a reputation as *the* place to go to dig up information on the Periphery realms and the Deep Dark. According to local tradition, a share in profits made using information obtained on Campoleone is given to those who aid the endeavor, easing the flow of information but also generating considerable speculation and guesswork as less scrupulous individuals seek to con visitors. Those who stoop to such methods find their welcome on Campoleone quickly exhausted, as honest dealings are a core tenet of the spacer community.

Beyond the spaceport city, Campoleone has little industrial or commercial activity, and much of the planet's agricultural produce is traded via a barter economy. Only the logging of ebony-like ginja wood on Cosenza and in the distant Torino Islands, prized by craftsmen across the League, takes place on a semi-commercial basis. The scarcity of the trees limits their commercial exploitation, and so far attempts to farm them have produced inferior crops. Some prospectors spend weeks tracking down the best stands of ginja trees before calling in the LoggerMechs.

Little known to outsiders until recently, the Voidjumper's Memorial on the peak of Mount Kenley-Maccan stands as a testament to spacefaring vessels lost in the Free Worlds. According to space tradition, the families of crews leave keepsakes at the memorial to show that the vessel, though lost, is not forgotten. At present the monument covers three acres, centered on the Angel of Campoleone, a 20-meter tall myomer-kinetic sculpture by Durrës.



CLAYBROOKE

Noble Ruler: Colonel Ravan Durant
Star Type (Recharge Time): F2IV (173 hours)
Position in System: 6
Time to Jump Point: 18.75 days
Number of Satellites: 2 (Brana, Kurna)
Surface Gravity: 1.1
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 41° C (Warm-Temperate)
Surface Water: 62 percent
Recharging Station: Nadir
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Amphibian
Population: 3,601,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: D-C-B-D-A
Affiliation: Independent

The military occupation of Claybrooke in the 3030s galvanized its population, and the Andurien troops who viewed the world as vital bridge to their allies in Canopus suddenly found themselves targets of a vicious resistance. The quisling military dictator, Charles

Applebaum, installed by the Humphreys after annexation, found himself ostracized by his own people and forced to reside almost entirely within his fortified mansion in the capital, Sheridan, while Andurien troops ran roughshod over the population. Applebaum's tenure lasted only eleven months before the anti-Andurien Army of the Resistance shot and then hanged him. Headed by former dictator Carla Chestine, the Army waged a guerrilla campaign in the lowlands of the Hastings continent and the Muranga Hills of Hawthorne that kept several regiments of secessionist troops pinned down for almost three years. The resistance group's almost single-handed victory earned them great plaudits when the FWLM finally liberated the world as part of the ongoing effort to isolate and recapture the errant Andurien Province. Unfortunately for Claybrooke, Chestine sided with Duncan Marik and led a detachment to Xanthe III in support of the short-lived Captain-General. There, she and the core of her Army of the Resistance perished in an ill-planned assault on Andurien positions.

Chestine's successors lacked her drive and determination, but managed nonetheless to trade on the Army's martial success. Several books and films about the locals' resistance to occupation have generated publicity that helps to sell a broad range of Claybrooke's products throughout the FWL. Claybrooke-brand cheese and beef is commonplace in League food outlets, and a line of "Claybrooke Frontierwear" became a popular trend in the late 3040s. More recently, political debates over farm subsidies for Hastings and the Ermine Archipelago, as well as long-running disputes over the rich petrochemical and mineral deposits on the moons Brana and Kurna, have plagued the tenure of current planetary ruler Colonel Durant. Durant is reputed to have said he would prefer a new invasion to the present situation: "At least then I'd be able to shoot my enemies."



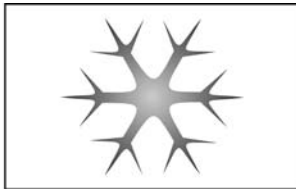


CERILLOS

Noble Ruler: None
Star Type (Recharge Time): G0III (181 hours)
Position in System: 3
Time to Jump Point: 10.43 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Blanca)
Surface Gravity: 1.05
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 47° C (Arid)
Surface Water: 35 percent
Recharging Station: None
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population: 550,250,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: D-C-B-D-B
Affiliation: Independent/Trinity Worlds (unofficial)

A dry world toward the fringes of the League, Cerillos is renowned for its hardy if somewhat insular inhabitants. Descended from the Hispanic and Indian peoples of southwestern North America, the population is proud and self-reliant, placing considerable emphasis on strength and personal honor. A spirit of machismo dominates on Cerillos (and several surrounding worlds in the unofficial "Trinity" province that also includes Galisteo and Sierra), as does a level of chauvinism and prejudice uncommon in the Free Worlds League, attitudes protected by the "cultural identity" provisions of the federal charter. Only a handful of population centers exist on the continents of Las Cruces, Mazatlán and Santa Rosa, with most of the population residing on scattered ranches and haciendas. The planetary capital, Puerto Cortés in the Rio Vicente valley, is the site of one the Free Worlds' largest cattle markets every autumn.

With a largely agrarian economy—Cerillos' only substantive exports are animal products, principally beef raised in the high plains of Alamogordo and San Clemente—little wealth exists on any of the "southwestern" worlds. This makes joining the military an attractive option. The inhabitants of Cerillos are generally tough and skilled fighters, provided their aggression can be channeled and they heed authority. The mercenary command Camacho's Caballeros typifies the martial ideal of Cerillos and its fellow southwestern worlds (the Caballeros' leader, Carlos Camacho, hails from nearby Galisteo). On all three planets, brotherhoods of retired soldiers form strong bonds that rival even these worlds' intense family loyalties. Some of these brotherhoods are little more the social gatherings where old soldiers can meet, drink, and trade war stories, but the ones in the upper echelons of society are martial orders with intricate rituals and structures.



DIEUDONNE (DIEUDONNÉ)

Noble Ruler: Charles, Vicompte d'Arrene
Star Type (Recharge Time): F3V (173 hours)
Position in System: 2
Time to Jump Point: 17.36 days
Number of Satellites: 5 (Runes, San Palo, Mary, École and Marie Theresa)
Surface Gravity: 1.00
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 40° C (Arid)
Surface Water: 67 percent
Recharging Station: None
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population Size: 630,538,750
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-C-B-D-B
Affiliation: Independent

Settled by colonists from Western Europe, in particular France and the Low Countries, the verdant world of Dieudonné was perceived by many as literally God-given, hence its name (though later histories suggest the planet was named for a 20th-century mathematician). The planet's inhabitants quickly learned to harness its rich flora and fauna; the former have myriad medicinal applications, while the latter are renowned for their exotic tastes and tenderness. Dieudonné also boasted mineral wealth aplenty, leading to the establishment of refining complexes and manufacturing sites across the two major land masses, Normandy and Vinci.

Unfortunately, the planet stood at the crossroads of three interstellar realms—the Free Worlds League, the Lyran Commonwealth and the Terran Hegemony—and so became a much squabbled-over prize. The Amaris Coup shattered the Star League complexes that dotted the world, and in the Succession Wars that followed, possession of Dieudonné went back and forth between the Lyran and the Free Worlds. Not firmly in Marik hands until the mid-29th century, its strategic position (not to mention its surviving Star League fortifications) made it a linchpin of military operations, and in 2912 it became the headquarters for military operations in the Free Worlds regions near Terra. The command facility just outside the capital, New Bastogne, is heavily fortified and can withstand direct attack or a prolonged siege. Rival powers have made little overt, concerted effort to seize Dieudonné in recent years, instead substituting a war of spies for open hostilities. The genteel villas and marinas of resorts in the St. Therese and St. Germaine archipelagos have become the League's most unusual battlefield, where members of SAFE's Counterintelligence Directorate spar with their rivals from the LIC, MIO and Maskirovka.





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VANRA

Noble Ruler: Duke Alfonso Orloff
Star Type (Recharge Time): G5II (186 hours)
Position in System: 4
Time to Jump Point: 7.47 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Citadel)
Surface Gravity: 0.95
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 20° C (Cold-Temperate)
Surface Water: 55 percent
Recharging Station: Both
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Reptiles
Population: 1,250,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: A-B-C-B-C
Affiliation: Grand Duchy of Orloff

The Orloff family's status in the FWL—and by extension, that of their planetary landhold, Vanra—has been a source of pride for centuries. Once a part of Oriente, the provisions of Camlann v. Free Worlds allowed the Orloffs to establish their own province, which despite its small size has wielded considerable influence over the League (particularly in military circles). The maintenance of the traditions that bind this "Orloff Mafia" is inextricably linked to the pomp and circumstance that permeate life on Vanra, particularly in Orloff City. In addition to the monumental duke's palace and regional government offices, the ornate Chapter House of the Order of the Saber dominates the city's center, where the palace and chapter house face each other across the Padova River. Surrounded by rumors of lost technologies and secret rituals, the chapter house recently held a series of "open days" to demystify its processes. The Vanra site is one of the Order's four key locales, with the others on Atreus, Harmony and New Olympia.

Honor-bound and emphasizing "proper" behavior, the upper echelons of Vanran society are keen practitioners of swordsmanship. Duels are common, though officially outlawed; the authorities turn a blind eye to non-lethal contests, avoiding the capital's parks and gardens during the traditional dueling hours of dawn and dusk. Tradition likewise dictates that a doctor be present at these duels, and that seconds safeguard the life (if not the health) of the duelists. Nonetheless, accidents happen, and many nobles bear scars and other injuries as badges of courage and honor.

Hunting (mounted on horses or tabis, or else afoot) is another popular sport among the Vanran nobility. Boar hunts in the Cantania Highlands north of Orloff City and wolf coursing on the island-continent of Modena are popular fixtures in the social calendar. These blood sports also have their opponents, amid the social elite and the common people, and "hunt saboteurs" are commonplace.

Despite the behavior of its upper echelons (or perhaps because of it), Vanra's ordinary folk are hardworking and determined. The robust and diverse planetary economy is broadly self-sufficient, though reliant on imports for many luxuries. After its military officers, Vanra's couturiers are its best-known export, Vanran design and tailoring being synonymous with style and quality across the Free Worlds League.

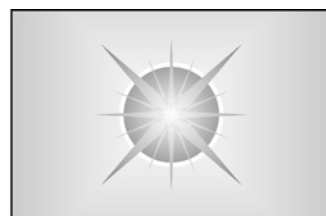


ZOSMA

Noble Ruler: Mayor Joshua Catali
Star Type (Recharge Time): A4V (165 hours)
Position in System: 3
Time to Jump Point: 36.09 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Brandeis)
Surface Gravity: 1.21
Atm. Pressure: Thin (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 67° C (Arid)
Surface Water: 22 percent
Recharging Station: None
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Plants
Population: 292,135,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-B-C-B-D
Affiliation: Border Protectorate

Resource-starved and barely habitable, baked by its massive sun and occasionally sterilized by solar flares, Zosma has survived through the centuries thanks to its strategic importance and the mineral wealth of its single massive land mass. Scientific curiosity—that worlds exist in this system, let alone that one of them is borderline habitable by humans—led to the first colonies here, reliant on quake-resistant, pressurized and radiation-shielded habitats as well as ongoing food and water imports. Zosma's mineral wealth soon forged a burgeoning commerce and financed a series of expansion programs. Corporate oversight gave way to a military government after Zosma's incorporation into the FWL, and the frequent brutalization of the Age of War and the Succession Wars that followed.

The FedCom occupation of Zosma stripped away the Marik military junta and attempted to kick-start the planetary economy, but only minimal improvements had occurred by the time the League recaptured the world a decade ago. The creation of a new port facility at Fort Amadeus on the shores of the brackish Shallow Sea remains as the FedCom's sole legacy, but the military-commercial facility at the capital—Duhr Prime, on the shores of the Scalding Sea—remains the principal cargo hub.





OHRENSEN

Noble Ruler: Director Shoga Leow
Star Type (Recharge Time): F7II (178 hours)
Position in System: 2
Time to Jump Point: 12.89 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Box)
Surface Gravity: 0.95
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 35° C (Temperate)
Surface Water: 61 percent
Recharging Station: Nadir
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Birds
Population: 1,300,250,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-C-B-C-B
Affiliation: Ohren Province

One of the League's youngest provinces, incorporated in 2941 by Samuel Marik, Ohrensen fought bitterly to maintain its independence. The result was a province culturally and politically related to nearby Zion (both regions being "liberated" in the same political gambit that centered on the defection of Vincente Sian-Marik from the Capellan Confederation to the FWL), but which retains control of its own political and economic affairs. As an added benefit, sundering the former Capellan worlds into competing provinces undermined Sian-Marik's power base,

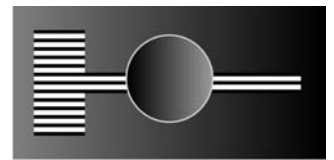


Brutalized by Capellan scorched-earth tactics during the secession period, when withdrawing CCAF forces razed almost a third of the towns on the main continent, Rossonia, Ohrensen received massive investment in the mid-30th century, though endemic corruption siphoned off much of the money that flowed into the region. The net result was a world (and province) with a functional industrial and economic infrastructure, but whose population subsisted in conditions well below the League norm. The criminal gangs that sprang up during this era came to dominate planetary politics on Ohrensen and neighboring Ventabren, though today these so-called firms hide their activities behind legitimate businesses. Through divided by bitter infighting (which frequently leads to a high body count), these groups acknowledge an overlord, Director Loew, who serves as the de facto planetary and provincial leader. Loew's enforcers maintain a semblance of order within the "thugocracy" (which the federal government regards as a civilian dictatorship), though recent years have seen growing conflict with Capellan criminal groups seeking to expand their operations into "traditional Capellan territory." Only in the wilds of the Padderborn Highlands on Rossonia and on the wide-open continents of Ulm and Salva do the criminal gangs have no influence. Here, however, the gangs' violence and intimidation give way to pure lawlessness that leads most farmers and miners to go about armed. The summary justice of these regions is a stark contrast to the peace-by-intimidation of "civilized" Ohrensen.

CAMLANN

Noble Ruler: Castellán Frederica Nix (for Duke Mikhail Korcinksi)
Star Type (Recharge Time): M0III (201 hours)
Position in System: 1
Time to Jump Point: 3.14 days
Number of Satellites: None
Surface Gravity: 0.81
Atm. Pressure: High (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 38° C (Arid)
Surface Water: 60 percent
Recharging Station: Nadir
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Reptile
Population: 3,428,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: D-C-C-D-C
Affiliation: Independent

When Justice Nkwameh Mbili published his famous opinion that the world of Camlann should be allowed independence from the Principality of Regulus, he probably had little knowledge of the impact his ruling would have on the Free Worlds League. The initial furor led to considerable interest (and investment) in Camlann, but following the fall of the Star League, it largely reverted to subsistence with limited exports of foodstuffs and craftwork. Only in the past sixty years has Camlann's economy recovered to its Star League-era levels. The largest single planetary exports are communications gear and components, with first ComStar and now the Word of Blake their largest single client. The Blakists have pressed the federal government to grant them control of Camlann's communications industry "to ensure its purity," though both Atreus and local authorities have so far rejected this motion.



Officially, Duke Mikhail Korcinksi governs Camlann, but having succeeded to the dukedom at only six years of age, his castellan, Frederica Nix, serves as regent. A dedicated supporter of the Captain-General, Nix's tenure has brought Camlann into closer cooperation with Atreus than in recent decades, but her dislike of the Word of Blake—particularly in light of their efforts to subvert Camlann's economy—causes a number of political problems.

Much of Camlann has been terraformed and is hospitable to human life. Four of the planet's five continents have substantial human occupation, though only Dolorous Garde and Cameliard boast any significant industry. Badon and Sauvage continents are largely agrarian and produce a wide variety of fruits and cereals. Visitors to Camlann, many coming to visit the local "dinosaurs," often find the planet's 36-hour days uncomfortable (in particular, the long, moonless nights). In most areas, native fauna have been pushed back from human habitats and "dino-spotters" must travel long distances to find their prey. The exception is the rat-like chalice hunter that remains a problem in many regions, prompting the rise of numerous pest-control companies. Larger native reptiles, like the Mordred lizard, are rare in most parts of Camlann; they thrive only on the island-continent of Joyous Garde, a wildlife preserve not directly targeted by the terraforming effort.



FREE WORLDS GOVERNMENT

To speak of a Free Worlds League government is to grossly oversimplify the reality. Instead, a series of interlocked federal and provincial governments valiantly strive to work together. Each has its own area of responsibility, though the balance of power and delineation of rights remain ever shifting. Within this web of government, it comes as little surprise that many redundancies and overlaps exist (and with them the attendant political “turf wars”).

Planetary and provincial governments are installed according to local traditions (see p. 87), but the federal government of the Free Worlds League, as established by the Treaty of Marik in 2271, is a representative democracy. In theory, Parliament stands as the ultimate arbiter of League affairs, but in practice the Captain-General—legally ever since the enacting of Resolution 288 and practically for a considerable period before that—serves as the pinnacle of government. Indeed, tussles between the office of the Captain-General and Parliament are a principal aspect of politics in the Free Worlds. The present incumbent’s efforts to centralize power have reshaped the political landscape, but it remains to be seen if this shift will be permanent or whether the pendulum will swing the other way once more, empowering Parliament at the expense of the Captain-General.

THE CAPTAIN-GENERAL

Originally created by the Treaty of Marik as a coordinator and military general for times of crisis (as determined by Parliament), the post of Captain-General has gained significant political and diplomatic powers. The creation of the original Star League shifted the post from one that existed solely in times of “crisis” (when not serving, a former Captain-General held the title of “Warden of the Perimeter Defenses”) to a permanent position, serving the dual role of Council Lord. Legally, the two roles were divisible, though members of the Marik family traditionally filled both. Only once, however—following the unseating of Elise Marik, when Oliver and Boris Marik governed—did these posts actually work separately to any degree. At other times, though proxies may have stood in for the Captain-General during Star League functions, the positions were essentially synonymous.

The fall of the Star League created the next major shift in the Captain-Generalcy when Kenyon Marik passed Resolution 288, granting the Captain-General far-reaching powers “for the duration of the crisis.” This open-ended abrogation of power effectively removed Parliament from the decision-making process, though that body continued to wield substantial influence through its control of finances and other aspects of the federal government. The reshaping of the Free Worlds League in recent years, however, has undermined even this deliberate check on the Captain-General’s powers. Resolution 288 also undermined Parliament’s ability to censure the Captain-General—hitherto, all Captains-General served in one-year terms, renewed by Parliament as the situation dictated, but could theoretically be dismissed by a non-renewal of their mandate. By acknowledging a perpetual crisis, Resolution 288 stripped away Parliament’s ability to unseat an incumbent Captain-General, leaving death or resignation as the only legal methods of ending that officeholder’s term.

Originally open to all candidates, the post of Captain-General evolved into a *de facto* sinecure of the Marik family. This popular view of the role as belonging solely to the Mariks was reinforced early in League history by the less-than-stellar reigns of Danak Selaj and Joseph Stewart, the only two non-Marik Captains-General to

hold the office. Despite popular opinion to the contrary, the Captain-General need not be a member of the Marik clan, but the Succession Act of 2310 granted the Mariks the right of first refusal for the office. Ever since, the post has become a permanent Marik holding. It has likewise become traditional for the standing Captain-General to nominate his or her successor, usually—but not exclusively—in accordance with primogeniture.

Despite the continuance of authority ensured by Resolution 288, the Captain-General did not hold absolute power until recently. Parliament could hinder matters through its control of fiscal affairs, and regional governance (including the now-defunct Home Defense Act of 2906) restricted the Captain-General’s authority in non-federal matters. However, the Internal Emergency Act of 3030 and the Addendum to the Incorporation, passed in 3037, allowed the Captain-General to sidestep provincial authorities, save in matters regarded as “culturally significant”. Even this restriction (and Parliament’s authority) may be circumvented by Clause 9 of the Addendum, which reads, “The Captain-General can veto any law that interferes with the will of the Captain-General while Resolution 288 is in effect.” To all intents, this clause transforms the Captain-General from warlord to dictator, and this shift in power lies at the heart of resistance to Thomas Marik’s rule.

PARLIAMENT

Initially meeting in the Mayor’s Hall on Regulus in 2272, the Parliament of the Free Worlds moved to Atrous in 2275, the world selected to house the League government, and occupied a facility that later formed the heart of the government complex. The classical chromium and marble-rimmed ferrocrete of the building’s exterior contrasts with its neo-Gothic interior. Along with the main chamber of Parliament, it holds offices for the Speaker of the Parliament, the Captain General and hundreds of functionaries. The original chamber, initially designed to hold eighty MPs (expanded to two hundred in 2368) now forms an annex used by the “lords of the realm.” A new chamber, modeled on the Mother of Parliaments on Terra, was built during the twilight years of the Star League, designed to hold five hundred representatives in relative comfort. A visitor’s gallery opposite the Captain-General and Speaker’s positions seats an additional 150 people.

Members of Parliament serve two-year terms, with elections staggered throughout the year to prevent the electioneering that paralyzed some historical parliaments for months on end. Parliamentary districts (known as wards) are re-examined every decade by the federal Supreme Court and are subject to redefinition depending on changes in population, industry and the like. Officially, the Act of Incorporation allows wards to select their representatives “according to local traditions,” but as most worlds have multiple cultures and traditions, the default method of a ballot is most common.

Parliament convenes on the first Monday in January (except when that day falls on New Year’s Day, in which case it convenes on the second Monday) and initially follows a rigid protocol before beginning its formal six-month session. The MPs’ first step is to meet as the “Committee of the Whole,” assembling all members in the Chamber of Parliament and there electing the Speaker for that session. Candidates for this post cannot name themselves, but must be nominated and seconded by other members. Once all candidates are declared, MPs vote in what may take one or several ballots (named





FREE WORLDS GOVERNMENT

THE DOCUMENT OF INCORPORATION: KEY POINTS

Membership

"The Marik Commonwealth, the Federation of Oriente and the Regular Principality, and all their constituent worlds and territories, are automatically members of the Free Worlds League."

—Clause I.1

"The Free Worlds shall be governed by a Parliament comprising representatives from all member-states. The Parliament of 2272 shall comprise 80 members, though Parliament may vote additional seats as it sees fit."

—Clause I.3

"Member-state representation in Parliament shall be determined pro-rata on federal tax revenues contributed by the member-state. Each member-state or constituent world shall be guaranteed representation in Parliament. For the Parliament of 2272, representation shall be as follows: Marik Commonwealth 26 members, Principality of Regulus 29 members, Federation of Oriente 25 members."

—Clause I.10

"Determination of each Member of Parliament shall be made by authorities according to local traditions. Where several traditions co-exist, a plebiscite shall be held."

—Clause I.11

"The Free Worlds Parliament shall make no law to regulate or control the form of government maintained or adopted by a member province and shall not interfere in the affairs of provincial governments, except as they touch upon or interfere with the collective security and harmony of the Free Worlds League."

—Clause I.14

Diplomacy

"All diplomatic negotiations with foreign provinces and governments shall be conducted by duly appointed federal representatives."

—Clause II.2

"All treaties and agreements with foreign powers are subject to ratification by Parliament. Without such ratification, such treaties and agreements are not binding on the Free Worlds, its citizens or representatives."

—Clause II.4

Military Affairs

"Parliament shall raise a duly constituted militia from citizens of the Free Worlds to defend its borders and ensure the liberties of its citizens."

—Clause VI.1

"In times of crisis, Parliament shall appoint an officer to command the Free Worlds Military for a one-year term. This officer shall be known as the Captain-General and has full authority over federal troops and military resources while the crisis remains in effect."

—Clause VI.3

"All provinces and non-governmental bodies shall have the right to maintain troops. Parliament shall determine the maximum numbers of such troops and the limits on their deployment."

—Clause VI.5

"Federal troops shall remain under the authority of Parliament in peacetime and under a duly appointed military commander in times of crisis."

—Clause VI.6

"Provincial and private military forces within the Free Worlds may be called into federal service during times of crisis on the authority of Parliament or their appointed representative."

—Clause VI.7

"Non-governmental naval vessels in the Free Worlds may be called into military or governmental service as needed. Fair remuneration will be made for units called into service."

—Clause VI.11

Trade

"Where applicable, the provisions of the Act of Incorporation supersede those of the Customs Union Accord of 2263."

—Clause VII.3

"No member state of the Free Worlds League shall apply tariffs to goods from another member-state."

—Clause VII.8

"Member-states may, at their own discretion, levy import duties on foreign goods, but said taxes may not exceed the equivalent federal tariffs."

—Clause VII.14

"Goods crossing international boundaries—imports and exports—or inside Free Worlds territory and within 60 light-years of an international border are subject to inspection by federal customs officers."

—Clause VII.15

"Goods originating outside the Free Worlds are subject to federal tariffs at a rate to be determined and reviewed by Parliament."

—Clause VII.16

"Goods exported from the Free Worlds League are subject to federal approval and may be subject to tariffs or restrictions as Parliament deems fit."

—Clause VII.17

Jurisprudence

"The laws and processes of member-states remain in effect save where they conflict with federal laws."

—Clause VIII.1

"Federal laws passed by Parliament apply in all worlds, provinces and territories of the Free Worlds League and may not be overturned or superseded by local statutes."

—Clause VIII.2

"A commission shall be established to reconcile the legal codes of member-states."

—Clause VIII.4

"Legal disputes between member-states or involving the jurisdictions of more than one member-state shall be adjudicated by a federal court."

—Clause VIII.9

Expansion

"The Parliament of the Free Worlds may extend membership in the League as it deems fit."

—Clause IX.2

"New member-states shall pay taxes to the federal government as determined by Parliament. New member-worlds and member-states shall have parliamentary representation commensurate with their tax contributions."

—Clause IX.3

"New member-states must accept the provisions of the Act of Incorporation in full."

—Clause IX.4



RESOLUTION 288: KEY POINTS

"The incumbent Captain-General shall hold office until his or her death, until he or she voluntarily relinquishes the post, or until the crisis ends."

—Clause 1

"The post of Captain-General remains within the provenance of the Marik family unless they choose to relinquish said authority. A sitting Captain-General may appoint his successor, subject to Parliamentary ratification. If only one candidate exists while the crisis remains in effect, Parliament may not refuse ratification."

—Clause 2

"Henceforth and for the duration of the crisis, Parliament shall gather and disband as the Captain-General deems fit."

—Clause 4

"The Captain-General serves as supreme commander of the military of the Free Worlds and his or her decision on military matters is final and binding. All troops of the League must obey issued orders of the Captain-General."

—Clause 9

"While the crisis remains in effect, the Captain-General may designate industries as 'vital to the war effort' and direct their actions. Should the industries fail to comply, the Captain-General may place them under federal authority."

—Clause 14

SPECIAL RESOLUTION 512 (THE REPLEVIN DOCTRINE)

Whereas, we, the Parliament of the Free Worlds League, being the properly deputized legislature of the realm, require funding above and beyond that provided by the individual provinces we represent;

Whereas, we, the Parliament, have appropriated funds for the military of the Free Worlds League in order to provide for the common defense of our respective provinces;

Whereas, the appropriation of such funds has taken monies away from public works projects such as industrial development, agricultural support and provisions for transportation, roads, housing, medical facilities, education for our young and other concerns of public welfare; and

Whereas, the aforementioned military of the Free Worlds League has accomplished successful ventures into rival space, capturing profitable territories and claiming the spoils for the economy of the Free Worlds League,

Now therefore, we, the Parliament, demand restitution from the executive branch, in the person of First Lord and Captain-General Stephan Marik, under the legal precedent and principle of Replevin, to be offered in the form of proportionate amounts of the spoils of war, to be returned to our respective commonalities.

THE INTERNAL EMERGENCY ACT OF 3030: KEY POINTS

"For the duration of the crisis, no military force within the Free Worlds (excepting those of the Duchy of Oriente and the Principality of Regulus) shall fail to recognize the authority of the Captain-General."

—Article 1

"All member-states (excepting the Duchy of Oriente and the Principality of Regulus) shall provide whatever materials the Captain-General and his deputies deem necessary to prosecute their war effort while the crisis remains in effect."

—Article 3

"No member-state (excepting the Duchy of Oriente and the Principality of Regulus) shall pass any legislation without the approval of Parliament or the Captain-General."

—Article 4

"Parliament and the Captain-General shall exercise a duty of care regarding matters concerning the cultural and social identity of member-states."

—Article 5

"The Captain-General shall determine when the crisis has ended and the provisions of this Act shall be suspended."

—Article 7

ADDENDUM TO THE INCORPORATION: KEY POINTS

"The Captain-General shall have ultimate authority over matters in the Free Worlds save for those deemed culturally significant to a member-state."

—Clause 1.1

"The provisions of the Internal Emergency Act of 3030 are renewed and considered in effect until suspended by the Captain-General."

—Clause 4.3

"The Captain-General can veto any law that interferes with the will of the Captain-General while Resolution 288 is in effect."

—Clause 9.2

"While a crisis is in effect, the Captain-General may make all necessary appropriations to ensure the operational efficiency of the FWLM."

—Clause 9.3

"No province can countermand the Captain-General's orders to military troops. The Home Defense Act is hereby repealed."

—Clause 9.4



FREE WORLDS GOVERNMENT

CAPTAINS-GENERAL IN HISTORY

Though the Free Worlds League has existed for just shy of eight centuries—3071 will see the nation's octo-centennial celebration—only fifty Captains-General have served. Initially, they were appointed for the duration of a particular crisis and then stood down, most serving repeated terms over years or decades. Since 2571, however, the Captain-General has served a continuous term, taking on a diplomatic as well as a military role. Two Captains-General—Tomas and Elise Marik—served on multiple occasions since the rise of the Star League, and their terms are counted as distinct Captain-Generalcies. The reigns of pre-Star League leaders who served non-contiguously are considered a single term even when interrupted by other incumbents (such as occurred with Juliano Marik).

1. Juliano Marik (2249-2319)

Served 2294, 2297, 2314-2318 (6)

The grandson of Detlev Marik, Juliano Marik was not the first choice to serve as the League's first Captain-General, a role originally offered to his cousin, Micaela Marik-Orloff. Her unexpected death elevated Juliano to the office of Minister of Defense during the Stewart Crisis of 2294, and subsequently to three distinct terms as Captain-General over the next 24 years. His second term was nearly his last, as Danak Selaj took over the role of Captain-General during the conflict with the Sarna Supremacy. The bloody outcome of that struggle, however, ensured Juliano's recall for his last and longest campaign when trouble erupted once more in 2314.

2. Danak Selaj (2259-2312)

Served 2306-2307 (1)

Appointed to lead the Free Worlds' intervention in support of the Capellan Hegemony against the Sarna Supremacy (a result of the Ryerson Accords of 2306), Danak Selaj was one of only two non-Marik Captains-General to assume the office. The bloody disaster of the conflict ensured a swift end to Danak's tenure, and his brief appointment is often overlooked by all but the most fastidious historians.

3. Christopher Marik II (2286-2319)

Served 2319 (1)

Christopher Marik's marriage to Madelyne Sian led to his descendants' exclusion from the line of succession, but did not prevent Christopher's own appointment during the crises of 2319. Though subsequently eclipsed by the infamy of his children, Christopher was notable as the first Captain-General to die in office, suffering a heart attack at the tender age of 33.

4. Terrence Marik II (2270-2334)

Served 2326-2327, 2330 (3)

Succeeding his nephew Christopher as Minister of Defense in 2319, the calming of the diplomatic situation meant that Terrence Marik did not serve as Captain-General

Divisions after the lobbies through which the MPs enter to be counted in such votes, called the Division Lobbies). A candidate who gets an outright majority—more than 50 percent of the vote—is appointed Speaker. Otherwise, the lowest-scoring candidate is eliminated and a new Division takes place. The process continues until a Speaker is elected or only one candidate remains through the withdrawal of opposition. The Speaker, de facto head of Parliament and mediator of disputes, then appoints the League Council (see p. 84).

Ostensibly, Parliament rules the Free Worlds League, though in practice this has not been true ever since the passage of Resolution 288 gave overall leadership to the Captain-General. Parliament retains oversight of taxes and public spending, but Clause 9 of the Addendum has curtailed its ability to use these to check the Captain-General's influence. Parliament remains responsible for enacting budgets, but the Captain-General can block any measures he deems unsuitable and may make appropriations as he sees fit for the FWLM. The latter power was intended to prevent paralysis, such as stalled Thaddeus Marik II's Operation Killing Stroke.

For all his authority, however, the Captain-General cannot pass laws (though he can block them) and must rely on Parliament to put forward and enact significant legislation. The current Captain-General has adopted a laissez-faire approach to Parliament, allowing its members to carry out day-to-day business such as oversight

IDEOLOGIES OF THE FREE WORLDS

Though political parties have minimal power in the Free Worlds, a number of ideologies hold sway. Most MPs hold views that span numerous ideologies, and so a representative may be a "Protectionist Regionalist" or a "Federal Libertarian." The most significant ideologies are given below:

Protectionism

Protectionists believe that government should assist and manage all aspects of society. "Niche industries" should receive subsidies (funded by taxation) to allow them to survive, and the authorities should regulate trade and industry. Additionally, protectionists believe in strong centralized welfare programs and governmental support for struggling sectors.

Libertarianism

Opposing protectionism, libertarians espouse complete freedom of action and self-reliance. They believe people should stand or fall on their own merits without outside interference. The creation of a truly open market with no trade tariffs and the dominance of commercial forces, rather than social justice, is central to their thinking.

Federalism

Believing in the primacy of the League government over provincial authorities, the federalist agenda is closely tied to Thomas Marik's centralization of power in recent decades. Federalists believe that the Atreus government and its representatives should be the final arbiters in all disputes, though they recognize the need to preserve the cultural uniqueness of each member-province.

Regionalism

In stark contrast to federalism, regionalism espouses the retention of as much power in the hands of provincial authorities as possible. While acknowledging that some aspects of society need central management, they believe the people are best served by allowing most decisions to be made at a local rather than national level.



of economic matters (including taxation, budgeting, weights and measures, licensing and the like), granting patents and copyrights, overseeing education and military affairs (though unable to interfere with the latter) and managing state healthcare. Thomas Marik sees Parliament's parochial views of League affairs as vital to good government—a counterbalance to his national endeavors—and he seeks to work with local interests wherever they do not conflict with the national good.

Legislation in Parliament is enacted by majority rule—members vote on each matter put before the House via Divisions, with a simple majority needed to pass legislation. Approved bills are signed by the Speaker and then presented to the Captain-General, who must either enact or veto the proposed law within 28 days. Legislation neither enacted nor vetoed in that time is returned to the Speaker and may be presented again. If the Captain-General fails to enact or veto legislation three times, it automatically becomes law.

PARTIES AND VOTING BLOCS

Though political parties do exist within the League, mostly political lobbying groups sponsored by corporations, parliamentary voting remains largely a matter of self-interest by MPs along provincial and planetary lines. An MP who does not vote the way his ward, world and province desire may quickly find himself disenfranchised. The result is a chaotic hotchpotch of ever-shifting alliances that forms three broad camps: pro-federal government (supporting the Captain-General), opposition and independent. Such divisions are usually only clear-cut on major issues. In many cases, MPs of the same broad faction may vote against each other in Divisions and frequently enter alliances with members of other factions. Broadly speaking, the Captain-General

until the mid-2320s. His military leadership skills were scarcely tested, though his administrative skills prepared the way for his son and grandchildren.

5. Philip Marik (2291-2343)

Served 2336, 2341 (2)

A succession of internal disputes prompted the installation of Philip Marik as the fifth Captain-General. The intense son of Terrence Marik, Philip soon demonstrated his skill in politics as well as military leadership. He preferred to negotiate with the rebels, but made clear that he was backed by immense military might, a carrot-and-stick approach that resolved matters with minimal bloodshed.

6. Geraldine Marik (2314-2364)

Served 2349, 2356, 2364 (3)

Thanks to her father's efforts, the 2340s and 2350s were a relatively quiet period and Geraldine served only two brief stints in office to deal with border troubles. Her third term, during a period of heightened tensions along the border with the Lyran Commonwealth, saw numerous assassination attempts, initially believed to be by foreign agencies but later identified as the work of the Sian-Marik family (Christopher Marik's children). Geraldine's murder by Hadji-Mohammed Kimbrough triggered a series of bloody purges.

7. Mikhail Marik (2315-2367)

Served 2364-2367 (3)

Though Geraldine's son Allan was her designated heir, her brother Mikhail took charge of matters after her assassination and led a brutal purge of the Sian-Marik dynasty (along with other opponents of the Marik family). Mikhail's usurpation of power took the League to the brink of civil war, but his mysterious suicide in 2367 averted the crisis.

8. Allan Marik (2331-2392)

Served 2377, 2384, 2391-2392 (4)

Injured in the attacks on his mother and then imprisoned by his uncle, Allan Marik finally won his freedom in 2367 and went on to lead the League in three border crises, two against the Lyran Commonwealth and one against the Capellan Confederation. Though not regarded as the best military commander of the day, he followed his grandfather's lead and left the League in a strong position. His death in a DropShip accident in 2392 came during a period of heightened tension with House Liao, and assassination was initially suspected (though the accident report pointed to a component failure and the incident was eventually listed as accidental).

9. Peter Marik (2348-2422)

Served 2392-2393, 2396-2414, 2416 (22)

Immediately succeeding his father, and leading the Free Worlds through the First Andurien War (2398-2404), Peter struggled against factions within his own government and eventually refused to serve after Parliament passed the War

VOTING PATTERNS FOR AND AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT

Based on Voting Records 3057-3067

Province	MPs	%For	%Against	%Abstain
Marik Commonwealth	56	92	7	1
Principality of Regulus	51	18	59	23
Duchy of Oriente	42	91	7	2
Duchy of Andurien	34	21	63	16
Silver Hawks Coalition	27	41	27	32
Stewart Commonality	18	83	10	7
Duchy of Tamarind	13	77	9	14
Abbey District	12	79	12	9
Rim Commonality	12	16	57	27
The Protectorate	10	86	12	2
Duchy of Graham-Marik	9	91	7	2
Border Protectorate	9	74	15	11
Sirian Concordance	9	35	60	5
Principality of Gibson	9	86	8	6
Duchy of Orloff	8	88	9	3
Mosiro Archipelago	8	12	72	16
Regulan Free States	6	22	61	17
Others	167	40	35	25



FREE WORLDS GOVERNMENT

Powers Act in 2418 (which led to the disastrous appointment of Joseph Stewart). Ongoing trouble with the Steiners prompted Parliament to make several attempts to convince Peter to resume the Captain-Generalcy. As he left one such meeting, Peter was killed by an unknown assassin.

10. Joseph Stewart (2368-2431)

Served 2420 (1)

Peter Marik's deputy in the Dieudonné campaign of 2416—and also his nephew through Peter's sister-in-law, Erin Stewart—Joseph Stewart was an excellent field commander but had limited experience at strategic command. Under his tenure, the Free Worlds lost Amity and Danais to the Lyrans, who also routed League forces at Concord. When the opening of a second front with the Draconis Combine kept the Lyrans from pressing their advantage, Parliament declined to renew Stewart's term as Captain-General. He retired to the planet Stewart, where he served as its duke between 2430 and 2461.

11. Terrence Marik III (2375-2446)

Served 2427, 2432 (2)

The eleventh Captain-General served two brief tenures during the clashes of the 2420s and 2430s, demonstrating intelligence and tenacity but nonetheless unable to retake the worlds lost to the Steiners. He remained as Minister of Defense after his 2432 appointment, but vowed never again to serve as Captain-General, instead proposing that his brother—"a winning Marik"—serve as the League's military commander.

12. Peter Marik II (2379-2460)

Served 2441, 2446, 2448-2449 (4)

Taking office when his brother refused a third term, soft-spoken Peter was not an obvious candidate for Captain-General. By order of her father, Terrence Marik III, a duel resolved disputes over the succession with Peter's niece Micaela. Peter's leadership skills allowed the Free Worlds to take Kamenz, Bolan, Halfway and Smolenz, though the fighting on Bolan claimed the life of Peter's son.

13. Geralk Marik (2420-2459)

Served 2452, 2455-2459 (5)

Taking over from his grandfather in 2452, Geralk was a staunch believer in action, and his campaigns against the Lyrans earned him the nickname "Geralk the Bloodthirsty." He led his troops from the front, a choice that would kill him in 2459 when the LCAF deployed its secret weapon—BattleMechs—on Loric. The first Captain-General to die in battle, Geralk remains one of the best-known figures in League history despite his relatively negligible military and political impact.

14. Simone Marik (2440-2475)

Served 2459-2475 (16)

One of the youngest appointees to the role of Captain-General, Simone Marik was only nineteen when her father

can count on support from the Marik Commonwealth; the duchies of Graham Marik, Oriente, Orloff and Tamarind; the Protectorate; the Stewart Commonality; and the Abbey District. The Duchy of Andurien, Principality of Regulus, Regular Free States, Rim Commonality and Sirian Concordance generally vote for the opposition. The remaining provinces are independent and often form the "swing vote" in Parliament, courted by both of the other factions. Each group employs individuals known as whips to encourage their members to vote appropriately in Divisions.

THE LEAGUE COUNCIL

The executive arm of Parliament, the League Council, comprises the Speaker of Parliament and the nine ministerial heads nominated by him or her (Communications, Defense, Foreign Affairs, Energy, Human Services, Intelligence, Justice, Taxation and Trade). These appointments must be ratified by Parliament (requiring a simple majority of 251 votes), and are often the subject of vigorous debate. In most cases, however, the election of the League Council is a pro forma matter. Per the provisions of the Act of Incorporation, at least one representative must hail from the Principality of Regulus, a second from the Marik Commonwealth and a third from the Duchy of Oriente. Juggling this requirement—much maligned by the smaller provinces—is often the most complex part of forming the council.

The council primarily presents legislation to Parliament—treaties, budgets and laws—though in reality its role is a courtesy rather than a legal necessity. While any MP can legally present a bill, only those from the League Council are guaranteed a substantive Parliamentary hearing, and so council measures are much more likely to be voted upon.

In many cases, the League Council serves for the duration of the Parliament, but a vote of no confidence within Parliament (requiring the support of three-fifths of all MPs rather than the usual simple majority) can recall the Speaker and the council. In most such cases, council members immediately tender their resignations, though this is not legally required, and several governments have remained in office even after such censure. In practical terms, however, a League Council that receives a no-confidence vote is largely unable to function, and will most likely find its legislative agenda blocked by the remainder of Parliament.

LORDS OF THE REALM

Not part of the Act of Incorporation but nonetheless a part of League Parliamentary traditions are the Lords of the Realm. Comprising those members of the aristocracy charged with overseeing planets or provinces, the Lords form an unofficial (and certainly non-voting) chamber of Parliament. Their main role is to provide Parliament and the Captain-General with information on the state of affairs in the League, above the concerns of the rank-and-file but not automatically at governmental level. In theory the Lords' chamber includes as many representatives as there are worlds in the League, but in practice a "busy session" comprises around twenty to thirty nobles. This poor attendance can largely be attributed to the unpaid nature of the Lords' work and their lack of voting power, as well as the unwillingness of many to leave their fiefs for protracted periods. As such, the Lords often comprise those participating in the Atreus social scene, though commonly they serve out of mere curiosity as much as a sense of duty. Ironically, the fact that many members of the Lords are active socialites ensures regular media coverage that far exceeds this chamber's political significance.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES

Parliament serves as the legislative branch of government, but the non-elected civil bureaucracy actually carries out its day-to-day tasks. Headed by an MP appointed by the Speaker who sits on the League Council, each of the nine ministries oversees a distinct aspect of League government. Each comprises sub-ministries and agencies, the creation of which some journalists jokingly refer to as the "government sport." The result is a Byzantine nest of inter-related (and sometimes overlapping) responsibilities.



MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

Something of a misnomer, the Ministry of Communications has little direct involvement in communications. Instead, it serves as the principal non-military link to the Word of Blake, maintaining relations with the sect and thus the Free Worlds' access to HPG communications. The ministry's role, instigated after the brutal ComStar War, took on new significance with the schism in ComStar and the Word of Blake's temporary exile in the League. The Ministry of Communications facilitated the Blakists' relocation and continues to support the remainder of WOB personal in the League despite the sect's capture of Terra almost a decade ago. Opponents of the ministry and its head, MP for Lancaster South Alain Tete, are likely responsible for the spate of rumors suggesting that the department is little more than a Blakist mouthpiece.

A key sub-ministry is the Communications Commission, which licenses broadcast media outlets and tracks down unsanctioned "pirate" broadcasters. The CC also monitors and enforces federal oversight of recorded materials, maintaining the classification system that warns viewers about the content of vidtapes and the like and seeks to protect minors from harmful materials. The range of cultures within the Free Worlds League makes this a difficult task, with one group regarding as offensive what another sees as commonplace.

MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

The largest and most complex part of the federal bureaucracy, the Ministry of Defense is inextricably bound to the FWLM. While the LCCC and FWLM oversee the practical aspects of the League's military forces, the Ministry of Defense plays a key role in developing new technologies, raising troops and generally supporting the combat forces. The Minister of Defense is the only member of the League Council who is not automatically a Member of Parliament. Protocol and recent tradition allow for a military officer to serve in this role, and customarily that individual also serves as the Captain-General's deputy. The present incumbent is Admiral Heather Alexander. When the Minister of Defense is not a serving officer, he or she is typically a retired soldier, usually of the highest ranks. Once caught between the proverbial irresistible force of the Captain-General and the immovable object of Parliament, the passage of the Addendum to the Incorporation has made the lives of Defense Ministry employees much easier. Clause 9 stripped away most of the red tape that once enmeshed the ministry, though this has left the department with a surfeit of staff.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The second most powerful government ministry after defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs handles diplomatic endeavors on behalf of the League. It establishes and manages foreign policy under the orders of the Captain-General and in consultation with Parliament, including the upkeep of embassies and diplomatic missions across the Inner Sphere; appointing, supporting and dismissing ambassadors and their staffs; designating prohibited-travel areas and war zones; issuing federal passports (though provinces may issue their own); and providing visas for visitors. The ministry's role is not entirely diplomatic, however. Security forces attached to embassies and diplomatic missions fall under its authority, even though they hail from the FWLM or SAFE. Likewise, monitoring of foreign news media frequently falls to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, usually in conjunction with the Intelligence Directorate. The current Foreign Minister is Nadine Pryce, one of several MPs from the Marik Commonwealth.

MINISTRY OF ENERGY

A strategic department, the Ministry of Energy has a broad remit. At the routine level it is responsible for encouraging League citizens to conserve energy, including the promotion of fuel- and power-efficient homes and transport as well as licensing power plants and refueling stations across the League. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the MoE handles the surveying and extraction of strategic fuel resources,

died on Loric. Blunt and intelligent, she is commonly dismissed by historians as a non-entity between her martyred father and her infamous brother, but her determination gained BattleMech technology for the Free Worlds League military and restored the realm to military parity with the Lyrans. She also played a key role in bolstering the League's economy, but even this failed to win over Parliament. After a series of failed diplomatic initiatives, she resigned in favor of her brother, choosing instead to pursue her passion for horse riding. A riding accident killed her a scant seven weeks after her resignation.

15. Carlos Marik (2448-Unknown)

Served 2475-2477 (3)

A veteran military officer and a patriot to the core, Carlos Marik unfortunately suffered from a fixation against the Terran Hegemony. Believing the Hegemony posed a threat to the League, Carlos changed the objectives of the fleet at Oriente toward Terra, triggering a pre-emptive Hegemony strike that revealed Carlos' folly. After his brother Brion staged a bloodless coup, Carlos refused to accept the alternate post of Speaker of the House. Instead, he fled to the worlds around Canopus, where he subsequently disappeared.

16. Brion Marik (2450-2511)

Served 2477, 2481-82, 2493, 2496-98, 2502-06, 2508-2511 (16)

The third of Geralk's children to serve as Captain-General, Brion possessed charisma and intelligence, which he used to repair relations with the Terran Hegemony while working diligently against the Lyrans and Capellans. Under his tenure, peace and stability returned to the Free Worlds. His sudden death in 2511 prompted a massive public outpouring of grief.

17. Albert Marik (2478-2573)

Served 2511, 2512, 2516-2519, 2528-2531, 2544, 2551-52, 2571-73 (16)

Nicknamed "Albert the Great," Albert Marik combined the roles of diplomat and war leader to a degree rarely seen before or since. Under his leadership, the League fought the Second and Third Andurien Wars, as well as a series of brush-fire conflicts with the Lyran Commonwealth. He also took the Free Worlds into the Star League, winning from the ruling Camerons the acknowledgement that only a Marik could serve as the Free Worlds' Star League Council Lord. Historians outside the Free Worlds often gloss over Albert's role as joint architect of the Star League, but it remains central to teaching about the period in League schools.

18. Marion Marik (2502-2598)

Served 2573-98 (26)

Marion Marik was seventy years old when she succeeded her father Albert, but age did not stop her from participating in the Star League to the fullest of her abilities. In addition to representing the Free Worlds in Star League councils, she personally commanded the campaign against



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the Magistracy of Canopus during the Reunification War. Her insistence on applying the Ares Conventions meant that considerably fewer problems cropped up in this theatre than in other areas of the Star League campaign.

19. Brion Marik II (2549-2614)

Served 2598-2614 (16)

Though trained in the arts of war, Brion II was the first Captain-General appointed solely for political purposes—to sit on the Star League council—rather than to oversee a military campaign. A skilled administrator and economist, he worked closely with the Star League to rebuild the Canopian economy after the Reunification War, ironically planting the seeds of the Free Worlds' future economic woes.

20. Rhean Marik (2568-2616)

Served 2614-16 (3)

Soft-spoken Rhean succeeded her father in 2614, but already knew she would serve a brief term in office—she was suffering from cancer, and despite the best efforts of Free Worlds and Star League doctors was not expected to survive more than a few months. In fact, she confounded the medics and lived for almost three years, her courage and determination winning her immense respect in the Free Worlds and abroad. Some conspiracy theorists suggest, however, that she was deposed in a coup and in fact survived until 2634.

21. Tomas Marik (2598-2646)

Served 2616-2618 (3)

Tomas Marik had little interest in politics or in governing the Free Worlds, let alone serving as its liaison with the Star League, but a promise to his aunt led to his succeeding her in late 2616 (his father, Quentin, had died in 2612). Tomas served for three years before submitting his resignation to Parliament. The youngest-ever Captain-General, two months younger than Simone Marik had been when he took office, he was scarcely twenty-one when he finished his first term.

22. David Marik (2572-2621)

Served 2618-21 (4)

Brion II's fourth child took charge of the League just as its economy began to feel the pinch of the Canopian resurgence. His four-year tenure was uneventful, comprised mostly of routine Star League business, until ill health brought his term to an abrupt end.

23. Tomas Marik (second term)

Served 2621-2635 (15)

With David childless and Brion II's remaining child unwilling to take office, Parliament turned back to Tomas Marik, pleading for him to come out of retirement and resume the reins of power. He oversaw one of the most difficult eras in League history as the economy nosedived into a deep recession. He fought foreign trade disputes and domestic labor crises, often getting his way by sheer bloody-mindedness.

including fuels used in spacecraft, as well as sourcing the rare materials used in the creation of K-F drive cores. The sub-ministry responsible for developing new energy technologies has grown immensely since the discovery of the Helm memory core. The current Minister of Energy is Etienne Fuentes of Les Halles.

MINISTRY OF HUMAN SERVICES

The Ministry of Human Services is a catchall department whose mandate extends to education, healthcare and social services. League citizens are most likely to have regular contact with this ministry in their daily lives, and it has offices on every League world and in most major cities. For all its reach, however, the MHS remains underfunded and short-staffed. The MHS does not operate the League's medical services but does license private hospitals and clinics, making substantial contributions to treatment costs. Suggestions that the Free Worlds League create a true national health service have always come to naught, however. Likewise, the MHS oversees schools in the League, but directly operates only a handful. Instead, the ministry establishes and monitors the curriculum of all the schools in the League, licensing the schools and their teaching staffs. The current head of the MHS is Daniel Montrepani, MP for Atsugi in the Principality of Regulus.

MINISTRY OF INTELLIGENCE

Principally an oversight body for the Free Worlds intelligence agency, SAFE, as well as for the FWLM's Military Intelligence Directorate, the Intelligence Ministry acts as a clearinghouse for intelligence within the Free Worlds League. Unfortunately, the interests of military security (in the case of the DMI) and the provisions of the Sedition Act (in the case of SAFE) allow these agencies to withhold information from the ministry should the Captain-General designate it of strategic importance. The Ministry of Intelligence is thus severely constrained in its effectiveness, often little more than "piggy in the middle" when disputes arise between Parliament, the Captain-General and the agencies. Only when investigating anti-government activity does the Ministry of Intelligence exercise unchallenged authority (though SAFE's internal security duties overlap with it). The current Minister of Intelligence is Duke Paul Marik, the Captain-General's quiet younger sibling, whose intellect and efficiency serve the ministry well.

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

Charged with overseeing federal law, the Ministry of Justice has two distinct elements: the state judiciary and an investigative and enforcement arm known as CopSec. In addition to enforcing federal law, the Ministry of Justice works with provincial authorities to harmonize local laws (a process ongoing for the past eight centuries). Another key ministry task is the licensing of advocates and lawyers across the League, ensuring that all are qualified for the relevant areas of law, regarding both subject and regional applicability. For example, a lawyer qualified to practice in the Duchy of Oriente cannot work on cases in the Duchy of Andurien without a separate license to do so. On multi-jurisdictional cases (including federal law), advocates must be qualified in all of the regions involved. The Justice Ministry also manages the six federal penitentiaries and oversees provincial ones. The current head of the Justice Ministry is Francoise Verglas of Tamarind, a fully qualified lawyer, who serves as the federal government's advocate before the Supreme Court.

MINISTRY OF TAXATION

Among the least popular of government ministries, but vital to the functioning of the Free Worlds League, the Ministry of Taxation gathers all taxes and duties within the League. It operates according to the Revised Unified Tax Code of 3044 (which replaced a complex web of prior tax legislation), issuing tax assessments at the end of each fiscal year. The ministry has three divisions: assessment, collections and enforcement. The first determines taxes due from individuals, corporations and



provinces. For many individuals, tax assessments operate on an “honor” system, with the Ministry of Taxation trusting that the records submitted are accurate and assessing liability accordingly, though spot-checks do take place. In addition, all corporate bodies and provinces are audited annually. The ministry also carries out the bi-annual assessment of the League and its constituent provinces that determines parliamentary representation. The current Minister of Taxation is Lady Majella Dedopolis, MP for Sadurni West.

MINISTRY OF TRADE

The Ministry of Trade stimulates and regulates the League-wide domestic economy as well as internal and foreign trade. A key responsibility is ensuring a free and open internal market and the practice of free trade, but the ministry also issues commercial licenses to foreign nationals and corporations. The Trade Ministry, in consultation with other ministries, determines what items may be freely sold in the Free Worlds and what items require permits or are restricted. The ministry enforces its authority in this area via the Free Worlds Customs Service, whose personnel have the power to inspect all merchant vessels and commercial premises in the League. The Customs Service also assesses tariffs on goods entering or leaving the League. Merchant vessels within the Free Worlds are licensed by the Ministry of Trade, and any vessels called into government service (under Clause VI.11 of the Act of Incorporation) do so under Trade Ministry authority even when in service to the ministries of Defense or Communications. The current Minister of Trade is Razvan Zamfirescu, MP for Loyalty.

LEAGUE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE (LGAO)

Created in 3043 to oversee the Free Worlds League bureaucracy, the LGAO stands outside the traditional ministerial structure but has subsumed elements of powers from the trade and taxation ministries. Officially, the LGAO ensures government efficiency on all levels, smoothing interactions at a federal level and between the national government and those of member-states, but over the years since its founding its principal role has changed to supporting the Captain-General and his agenda, channeling government contracts to pro-Marik corporations and advancing the cause of the federal government over regional agendas. As a result, for all the LGAO has done to facilitate smooth operation of the federal government, it has become an object of loathing in the provinces and something of an albatross around the Captain-General's neck. The Marik Scholarship Fund it administers, in particular, has been singled out for criticism, aiding loyalists to enter government service or the military at the expense of those who oppose the Captain-General. This “stacking the deck” is widely regarded as contrary to the spirit and interests of the Free Worlds League.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Internal Emergency Act stripped all but the most powerful provinces—Oriente and Regulus—of their sovereignty at the onset of the Andurien War, though for the most part the regional governments continue to function. Though intended as a short-term act, the provisions of the 3030 emergency legislation were open-ended, like those of Resolution 288, and were subsequently enshrined in permanent legislation via the Addendum to the Incorporation. At present, each of the League's 161 provinces manages its own affairs, but defers to federal authorities on matters of defense and foreign policy. The provisions of *Camlann v. Free Worlds* have made regional authorities attentive to the needs of individual worlds that might otherwise seek independent status, though their means of ensuring loyalty vary wildly. Some pander to their member worlds' every expressed desire, while others foster economic or social independence that makes breaking away a difficult proposition.

In 2635, however, he tendered his resignation for the second time and convinced his uncle Ward to take charge of the Free Worlds, choosing to spend the last eleven years of his life leading an exploration team in the Deep Periphery.

24. Ward Marik (2582-2655)

Served 2635-2655 (20)

Brion II's sixth child, Ward Marik, was among those considered to replace David Marik, but recognizing the economic crisis facing the League, he had refused to serve. With the economy on the road to recovery and no alternative except allowing one of his own sons to succeed Tomas, Ward initially took office as a pro forma Marik representative to the Star League, but in the end served for two decades. Though far from a diplomatic genius, he worked diligently to advance the Free Worlds' position and built on the foundations laid by his nephew. The key event of his tenure, however, was the passing in 2650 of a restriction on troop numbers among the Star League member-states (in particular Tadeo Amaris' Rim World's Republic). The significance of this move would not become apparent until decades later.

25. Kernath Marik (2604-2671)

Served 2655-2671 (17)

Vain and self-serving, Kernath Marik nonetheless proved a capable leader who built on the prosperity of his father's reign, encouraging trade within the Free Worlds and between the Star League member-states. Though he reigned for seventeen years, Kernath spent less than eighteen months on Atreus, preferring his apartments at the Court of the Star League on Terra or his winter quarters at the estate of Dormuth on Marik.

26. Liam Marik (2607-2673)

Served 2671-2673 (3)

When Kernath died in 2671, the Marik family appointed his brother Liam as the next Captain-General rather than his eldest son (and expected heir) Terrence. The family cited a number of factors in the decision—among them the commitment of Terrence and his brother to their careers and families, as well as Liam's political and economic experience—but in many regards it was a reaction to Kernath's absentee leadership of the Free Worlds. In stark contrast to his brother, Liam rarely left the Free Worlds League, preferring the give-and-take of Parliament to the infighting at the Court of the Star League. Ill health plagued his reign, however, and few were surprised when he died after only three years.

27. Terrence Marik IV (2632-2678)

Served 2674-2678 (3)

Initially overlooked for the role of Captain-General, Terrence IV immediately put his mark on Free Worlds politics, instigating a series of economic programs to bolster the League economy. He had grandiose plans to assure the future of the Free Worlds and the Marik clan, but had barely begun to enact these programs when fate intervened. The



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terrorist group known as the Scourge of Death planted a bomb at Dormuth Palace that detonated during a family gathering, killing the Captain-General, his wife Sarah, their daughter Emily and dozens of others.

28. Gerald Marik (2632-2703)

Served 2678-2703 (26)

Among those targeted by the Dormuth attack, Gerald (later nicknamed “the Avenger”) barely survived. Elected on a mandate for vengeance, his anti-terrorist campaign soon metamorphosed into a war against the Selaj family, the alleged perpetrators of the attack, as well as against all opponents of the Marik family and the League. Under his leadership, many civil liberties were suspended, and the nation slowly metamorphosed into a police state. Historians have attributed much of this to a paranoid mindset that failed to distinguish between genuine threats to the Free Worlds and the Marik clan and those that existed only in Gerald’s delusions. However, documentary evidence shows that even though Gerald saw threats where none existed, many of his actions were shaped by rational political thinking and opportunism, exploiting the leeway given to the “victim” leader.

29. Elise Marik (2661-2740)

Served 2703-2731 (29)

Elise Marik, who succeeded her father after his stroke in 2703, had none of his political understanding or insight but remained committed to his political programs. Her ongoing quest to root out insurgents and security risks alienated many in Parliament, including her own brother, Oliver, who sought refuge in the Terran Hegemony. Parliamentary attempts to unseat Elise led to her suspending Parliament as a “threat to state security,” an act that triggered a civil war (later called the Parliamentary Rebellion). During that conflict, Elise led her loyalist forces to Helios Minor, where she was captured and imprisoned.

30. Boris Marik (2689-2736)

Served 2731-2734 (4)

Parliament installed Boris Marik, Oliver Marik’s son, as Elise’s successor while his father served as the Marik Council Lord. A superb commander, Boris was responsible for many of the Parliamentary victories in the civil war, but failed to hold back forces led by Elise’s equally determined son, Bertram. When Atreus fell to Bertram in 2734, the two sides agreed on a truce and Boris surrendered his position. As the “junior partner” in the Rebellion, he was imprisoned rather than executed like his father (though Bertram spared other rebel leaders). Rumors of an assassination plan prompted Boris to make an escape attempt in 2736, in which he was killed by sharpshooters.

31. Elise Marik (Second term)

Served 2734-2740 (7)

Elise officially resumed her reign in 2734 after Boris’ surrender, but this was a legal sham; the Treaty of Verona

Planetary and provincial governments vary considerably, but fall into the following six broad categories.

CIVILIAN DICTATORSHIP

On worlds such as Wisconsin, Ohren and Goth Khakar, political authority is in the hands of a single leader (or clique) with absolute power. Dictatorial regimes are usually dependent on the skill and charisma of their leaders and rarely survive the leader’s demise. Corruption is common in such regimes—they are formed by self-interest and usually exist to support such interests. Those that become entrenched usually metamorphose into an oligarchy.

MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

Some military dictatorships come into existence in the same way as their civilian equivalents—corrupt individuals or juntas seize power—but many such governments exist with the support of the federal government, principally worlds occupied by the FWLM. Most such worlds went through a period of military dictatorship soon after absorption into the League by military action (a scarcity in recent years), though some regions like the Protectorate have lain under military occupation for decades. The government of the Sirian Holds, headed by General Helen Thrall, is the best known current military dictatorship in the Free Worlds, albeit one with minimal federal support. Zion Province, overseen by General Géné Ward, is also a military dictatorship, but a hands-off policy has allowed its economy to flourish.

OLIGARCHY

One of the most common types of planetary government in the League, an oligarchy is characterized by a small subset of society dominating the government—usually nobles, though sometimes a religious or professional group. Most oligarchies have a supreme leader, but unlike a dictatorship, there is commonly an established succession and/or governmental institution that ensures the continuance of authority. Some oligarchies, like Andurien and Orloff, are open and enlightened, allowing their citizens substantial freedoms. Others, notably the theocracies of Shiloh and Al Jubaylah, impose strict moral and social restrictions on their populations.

FEUDAL AUTOCRACY

The distinctions between an oligarchy and a feudal autocracy are ill defined, and some political analysts use the terms interchangeably. In this form of government, an elite—usually the nobility, but sometimes a professional or corporate body—holds governmental authority. Unlike an oligarchy, however, this position is held with the consent and on behalf of the general population. In many cases, a parliament of the “commons” advises the ruling elite, though often with little legal power. The Duchy of Graham-Marik and the Rim Commonality are classic examples.

REPRESENTATIVE COMMONALITY

A code of laws defines the representative commonality, which serves and supports the population through a series of mutual obligations and rights. In many cases, political participation depends on strict criteria—tax payments, or military or community service—but the process is broadly democratic, with local government and representation in the League Parliament determined via plebiscite. The government rules, however, not the people. Oriente is a classic example of this system, as is Stewart, though both also have an autocratic chief executive.

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Closely related to the representative commonality, participatory democracies are governments “of the people, by the people.” An elected government debates



matters, but decisions are made by national plebiscites and thus lack the direction or unified vision of representative governments. In many cases, participatory democracies have a very loose legal framework, and governments have little check on their powers beyond the disparate nature of the electorate. Governmental policies may seesaw rapidly with changing public moods or the emergence of charismatic speakers, and though they give everyone chance to participate in the process, such governments usually perform badly. Deschenes and Bordon are good examples of participatory democracies. Tamarind likewise has many traits of this type of government, though the emergence of Therese Brett-Marik as head of state has given this provincial government an autocratic focus.

LEAGUE NOBILITY

Like all the Successor States, the Free Worlds League has a solidly established nobility, most of whom serve as planetary or provincial officials overseeing affairs on various planets or serving as part of various governments. Unlike most other realms, membership in the League nobility does not automatically confer governmental authority (though it does on many worlds) and is largely honorary. The system of titles used across the Free Worlds is not consistent—different provinces adhere to different standards—but some degrees of equivalency exist.

The title of duke or duchess is the preeminent noble rank in most provinces. The leaders of the Marik Commonwealth, the Duchy of Andurien and the Duchy of Graham-Marik are all dukes or duchesses, though female leaders of Andurien traditionally style themselves Dame. The leader of Oriente is likewise a duke, but is styled Grand Duke. Ever since the reign of Thaddeus Marik, the noble leader of Marik (traditionally the Captain-General) has also gone by the title of the Eagle, and the dukes of Atreus and Graham-Marik style themselves Defenders of the Free Worlds. Andurien's leaders once also had the right to use the latter title, but this right was withdrawn in 3030. Similarly, the Grand Duke of Oriente uses the honorific "Princes of the Order of Atreus."

Considered slightly less senior than a duke—though functionally the same—the title of earl (or its variant, the title of count) is the next most common among provincial nobility. The leader of Stewart goes by the title of earl, but is accorded the rights and privileges of a duke. He is also familiarly addressed as "Gudano," a throwback to Earl Nathan Stewart, who in 2406 said the title of earl was "good enough." The lord of Orloff is likewise an earl (albeit historically subservient to the leader of Oriente) and bears the honorific of banneret. The most senior noble of Tamarind is a count or countess. The lord of Regulus, technically a duke of the realm, holds the title "Count of Harmony," though the present incumbent has resurrected the use of prince.

Other senior titles used in the Free Worlds League vary considerably. The elected leader of the Principality of Gibson is called the principal, and after the end of his or her seven-year tenure is called emeritus. The leader of Shiloh, the head of the Exituri faith, holds the title of Blessed Leader, though this is often reduced to "lord" or "lady" elsewhere in the League (to the Blessed Leader's anger). The current incumbent, who has held the post for more than forty years, is commonly addressed as Daadi, or grandmother. Historically, the leader of Sirius has held the title "Primus, Protector and Sublime Princeps," but that post is currently in abeyance; the present incumbent, Helen Thrall, simply uses her military rank.

Planetary rulers hold the nominal rank of duke, while lesser nobles across the League are usually styled baron. Specific titles vary from world to world, however. On Helm, locals use the title "landholder," while on Hongqiao, "exalt" is the norm and on Kilarney, "laird." Earl, count and viscount are also used in some cases (without referring to seniority like that of the lords of Stewart or Regulus), and other planets employ the titles of prince, king and even emperor.

in fact confirmed Bertram Marik as Captain-General and Council Lord. Bertram allowed his mother to keep the title until her death, though in practice she had no power and received no visitors.

32. Bertram Marik (2691-2746)

Served 2740-2746 (7)

Legally taking office in 2740, Bertram had served as de facto Captain-General since 2734 and as supreme commander of the FWLM since 2730. After the Parliamentary Rebellion, his reign became a time of peaceful rapprochement. A thoughtful and considerate man, Bertram worked diligently to reunite his people and won heartfelt acclaim by members of both factions after his sudden death in 2746.

33. Ewan Marik (2714-2763)

Served 2746-2763 (18)

Rash and self-centered, Ewan Marik was the mirror image of his father. He took perverse pleasure in others' discomfort and frequently went out of his way to insult rivals and enemies. He deliberately antagonized his fellow Star League council members and seemed ready to escalate hostilities with House Steiner into war after clashes at Phecda III. At his instigation, the Star League levied the hated Defense Tax on the Periphery states to rebuild the militaries of Star League member-states. This act of political foolishness paved the way for the New Vandenburg Revolt.

34. Kenyon Marik (2734-2804)

Served 2763-2804 (42)

Though less adversarial than his father, Kenyon Marik strongly disliked Aleksandr Kerensky, commander of the Star League Defense Force. Kenyon had served under Kerensky several years earlier, and Kerensky had cashiered Marik for using excessive force to suppress a violent uprising in the Terran Hegemony. Despite personal opposition to the Usurper Amaris, Kenyon refused to aid Kerensky's liberation campaign, and took great pleasure in stripping the general of his office as Star League Protector after the liberation of Terra in 2779. As the Star League collapsed, Kenyon oversaw the passage of Resolution 288 and the opening bloody campaigns of the First Succession War. His order to "clear a route ten parsecs wide to Sarna" has become infamous, along with his orders to use nuclear weapons against Capellan targets.

35. Thaddeus Marik (2755-2821)

Served 2804-2821 (18)

A former fleet admiral and veteran of the war against House Steiner, Thaddeus Marik was one of the most ruthless leaders in Free Worlds history. In addition to fighting Houses Steiner and Liao, he bent domestic enemies to his will. His "abandonment" of Oriente—a stronghold of opposition—to Capellan predation typified his policies. Under his leadership, Steiner and Liao industries were ravaged (as were those of the Free Worlds). By the end of his reign, the Inner Sphere economies lay in ruins and the Successor States were well on the road to collapse.



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36. Charles Marik (2779-2854)

Served 2821-2854 (34)

Charles succeeded his father in the dying months of the First Succession War, and spent most of the lull that followed preparing for the next conflict. The second choice as Captain-General after his older sister Jeanette joined ComStar, Charles found himself embroiled in Precentor Conrad Toyama's schemes as Toyama sought to expand ComStar's power. Resentful at being manipulated, Charles waged an ill-advised war against the ComStar, and the chaos that ensued as ComStar interdicted communications across the League cost the realm almost all of Kenyon and Thaddeus Marik's earlier gains. Charles subsequently recovered some of the lost ground, but upon his death in 2854, much of the realm he had inherited remained in enemy hands.

37. Gerald Marik II (2801-2861)

Served 2854-2861 (8)

Gerald Marik II cared little for politics and spent most of his tenure on various military fronts, having little success against House Steiner but making substantial gains against House Liao. Determined to make good the losses of his father's reign, he resisted calls for an armistice. His unexpected death shortly before the end of the Second Succession officially occurred from natural causes, but many conspiracy theorists posit an assassination—either by his successor or by outside agencies—to facilitate the peace process.

38. Philippa Marik (2803-2873)

Served 2861-2873 (13)

Unlike her father and brother, Philippa Marik was initially committed to peace and engaged in substantial diplomatic negotiations with the Lyrans. When these efforts failed, however, Philippa showed no hesitancy about preparing the League for war and even ordered the assassination of her opposite number, Archon Elizabeth Steiner. The attempt failed, but the strike at their mutual enemy ingratiated the Free Worlds with the Draconis Combine.

39. Marie Marik (2824-2880)

Served 2873-2880 (8)

A lackluster commander, Marie earned the ire of several provinces by using regional military forces in a vain attempt to hold territory captured from House Steiner. The loss of these worlds—and many of the troops—caused a sharp dip in Marie's popularity. During her reign, however, the FWLM adapted to the low-intensity conflict that typified the Third Succession War. When Marie died in a boating accident in 2880, few mourned her passing.

40. James Marik (2826-2882)

Served 2880-2882 (3)

A diplomat during his mother's reign, spending considerable time at the Steiner court on Tharkad, James Marik's marriage to a Steiner did little to curb his prosecution of the war against the League's enemy. Already ill after a bout of

MAJOR HOUSES

For the most part, the history of the Free Worlds is the history of several families. Some died out or were stricken from the records—the Allison of Oriente and the Selaj of Regulus, for example—but others have gone from strength to strength.

HOUSE MARIK

To many, House Marik is the Free Worlds League, and foreigners often identify any League citizen as "a Marik." That the Mariks helped found the League and have served as its Captains-General for most of its history is unquestioned, but their official domain—the Marik Commonwealth—is merely part of the whole nation. Nonetheless, the idea that the Mariks and the League are synonymous is deeply ingrained in outsiders (in much the same way as the people of foreign states are often referred to by the names of their more authoritarian ruling families).

From a young age, members of the Marik family are trained to lead and serve. All learn politics (of the League and the other Successor States) and military history, and those who are physically able learn weapons skills and battle tactics, usually starting at age seven. By the age of fifteen, most Mariks have received schooling equivalent to a military academy, though they traditionally attend one of the League's military schools, as much to broaden their horizons and build up contacts with their peers as to hone their skills. They sometimes serve with the FWLM as early as their eighteenth birthdays. Those individuals who do not undergo military training and service are traditionally excluded from the line of succession, though the law does not require it.



Captain-General Thomas Marik, Duke of Atreus

One of only three of Janos Marik's ten children still alive, Thomas Marik was a surprise choice to succeed his father, but is arguably one of the most influential leaders the Free Worlds has ever seen. Spending much of his early life in service to ComStar, the scientifically skilled Thomas returned to Atreus to support Janos during the Andurien Crisis. Serving as de facto regent during his father's illness, Thomas played a key role in planning the campaign against the rogue province and was initially thought to be among the victims of the bombing that killed his father and brother, Duggan. He survived with the aid of ComStar, and used the shock of his unexpected reappearance to drive through parliamentary reforms in the Addendum to the Incorporation. This legislation, together with the Military Reformation Act, has done much to strip away the factionalism endemic to the Free Worlds League and establish it as an industrial powerhouse. It did not, however, make the Captain-General popular with many of the provincial leaders whose authority he curtailed.

In 3047, Thomas married Sophina Desiree of Oceana. Their union soon produced an heir, Joshua Marik. Unfortunately, Sophina and Joshua both died in the 3050s, one through an industrial accident and the other from leukemia. Victor Steiner-Davion's failed efforts to conceal Joshua's demise led to the short but bitter conflict known as Operation Guerrero that sundered the Federated Commonwealth. On Sophina's insistence, Thomas remarried, choosing as his bride Sherryl Halas, daughter of the Grand Duke of Oriente. Their marriage has so far been blessed with three children: Janos, Christopher and Jessica.

Isis Marik

Thomas' first child, born in 3034 to his mistress Amandine Ruiz, Isis Marik spent her earliest years in secrecy as her mother attempted to protect her from the intrigues of Parliament and the Atreus court. Her existence soon came to light, however, and when DNA tests proved her lineage, she became the focus of opponents



of Duncan Marik. Rumors of an assassination attempt against her as a toddler have never been confirmed, but after Thomas reappeared, he acknowledged Isis as his child. Isis became the heir presumptive, but her lack of legitimacy placed her second in the line of succession to Thomas' legitimate heirs: first Joshua and later his children with Sherryl Halas. Isis' primary role was to solidify relations with the Capellan Confederation by marrying Sun-Tzu Liao, a match meant to strengthen the shaky bonds of the Concord of Kapteyn and potentially lead to a full union of the two powers. In the end, however, Isis was little more than a pawn, used by Thomas to manipulate the Capellan chancellor and by Sun-Tzu to win the resources he needed to rebuild his military. It came as no surprise when the engagement faltered after the Hustaing debacle, though Isis Marik's flight to Luthien and subsequent association with Victor Steiner-Davion caught many pundits off guard. Young and vivacious, Isis remains a favorite of the League's celebrity gossip columns, equaled only by her cousin Alys in the popularity stakes.

Alys Rousset-Marik, Duchess of Augustine

The daughter of Kristen Marik and niece of the Captain-General, Alys Rousset-Marik expected nothing more from life than service in her mother's mercenary unit. The chaos of the FedCom Civil War changed all that and looked set to engender a major shift in League politics. Like most Mariks, Alys received an exemplary military and political education. She graduated from Princefield ahead of schedule, taking up a post in Kristen's Krushers shortly before the outbreak of war. Caught up in the infighting on Coventry, the Lyran duplicity that killed her brother and sister triggered the Krushers' attempted flight from their erstwhile LAAF employers. The unit fought its way almost clear of the war zone, until the Krushers became embroiled on Arcadia in a battle they could not survive. The Captain-General refused to intervene, and so it was up to another uncle—Marshal Jeremy Brett—to push the limits of his authority and stage an incursion into Lyran space. Brett's force was victorious, but too late to save Kristen Marik, who died of her injuries. Alys, who assumed her mother's titles and responsibilities, swore to avenge Thomas' abandonment of his kin and began a campaign to subtly undermine his authority. The result in the past few months has been the "Great Debate" over the status of Resolution 288 and the ongoing crisis. While declaring herself a "patriot and daughter of the League," Alys seems determined to unseat her uncle.

Colonel Corinne Marik

The daughter of Paul Marik, Minister of Intelligence, Corinne has traditionally been regarded as a pro-Thomas loyalist, but her association with the Duchess of Augustine has prompted many to question her position. Interest in Corinne as a rival to Thomas has dropped off in favor of Alys Rousset-Marik ever since the birth of Corinne's daughter, Giselle, and this reduction in attention has ironically allowed the colonel to take a more active role in politics. While not opposing her uncle, she has lent tacit support to her cousin's Great Debate by encouraging people to consider the issues. How this affects her relationship with the Captain-General remains unknown, but she did exchange angry words with her father at the recent Halloween Masque on Atrous.

Therese Marik-Brett, Duchess of Tamarind

Janos Marik's eldest surviving child, Therese—a skilled politician and administrator—could well have been Captain-General had she not decided to defy her father and elope with the man of her dreams, Jeremy Brett, in 3008. The resilience of her nearly sixty-year marriage is a testament to the wisdom of her choice. Never reconciled with her father, it took the accession of her brother Thomas to facilitate Therese's rehabilitation into court life. In many regards her public profile has been surpassed by that of her husband, especially since his decision to invade Arcadia during the FedCom Civil War played well with the League's numerous hawks.

Branthian fever, he made little headway against the Lyrans during his short reign, but did retake the world of Les Halles from House Liao.

41. Elisabeth Marik (2844-2917)

Served 2882-2917 (36)

The succession crisis that followed James Marik's sudden death threatened to ignite a new civil war in the Free Worlds. All three of James' children had died before reaching their tenth birthdays, and the official heir, Samuel Marik, was only thirteen. Luckily, ex-ComStar Precentor Elisabeth Marik took the reins of power instead. Though unskilled in warfare, she demonstrated a knack for negotiation and politics. She built up strong relationships with the military and Parliament, exploiting the talents of others where needed and manipulating friends and enemies alike to do her bidding. Her one notable mistake was allowing the passage of the Home Defense Act, which would hamstring a number of her successors.

42. Samuel Marik (2869-2944)

Served 2917-2944 (28)

Finally assuming the Captain-Generalcy upon his aunt's death, Samuel Marik had served as head of the FWLM since 2907. A skilled pilot and commander, he also proved an able politician. He had the will to do "whatever is necessary" to win, most notably persuading others to turn traitor and side with the Free Worlds. Prominent turncoats influenced by Samuel include Mikhail Tertren's treachery to the LCAF and Vincente Sian-Marik's defection back to the League along with five worlds of the Capellan Sarna Commonality.

43. Paul Marik (2891-2947)

Served 2944-2947 (4)

A fighter pilot of some repute, Paul Marik insisted on leading his troops personally and oversaw numerous raids against the Lyran Commonwealth and Capellan Confederation. Considered reckless by the LCCC, he inspired the troops, who performed exceptionally well under his command. His death in action above Ingersoll dealt a major blow to FWLM morale, but was hardly unexpected given his insistence on leading the assaults.

44. Iris Marik (2893-2960)

Served 2947 (1)

Calm and considerate, Iris had served as Captain-General for only four months when a speeder accident left her crippled. She opted to resign her post in favor of her son, Brock. Despite her injuries, she continued to be a force in League politics until her death in 2960.

45. Brock Marik (2910-2948)

Served 2947-2948 (2)

In some regards more like his uncle Paul than his mother, Brock Marik enjoyed leading his troops and toured many cantonments after his confirmation in 2947. Unfortunately,



FREE WORLDS GOVERNMENT

a scant eighteen months into his reign, the base he was visiting on Van Diemen IV came under Capellan attack. The Captain-General was among the casualties. Whether someone leaked his itinerary to the CCAF or the raid was a coincidence remains a point of historical contention.

46. Thaddeus Marik II (2912-2963)

Served 2948-2963 (16)

Stability returned to the Free Worlds with the confirmation of Thaddeus II, but Thaddeus lacked the political or military skill to realize his grand dreams. His plans alienated Parliament and several provinces, which enacted provisions of the Home Defense Act to withhold troops from his campaigns. Thaddeus drowned while vacationing on Conakry.

47. Stephan Marik (2933-2991)

Served 2963-2991 (29)

Thaddeus II's son Stephan also found himself in conflict with Parliament, losing several political as well as military battles against the Steiners. Through tactics similar to those of Thaddeus Marik I, he managed to assert his authority, but came to realize that he too would have to make sacrifices to win Parliament's support. The resulting effective partnership brought considerable success against the LCAF and the CCAF, and only ended with Stephan's death from cancer in 2991.

48. Janos Marik (2963-3035)

Served 2991-3035 (44)

Janos Marik followed his father's bridge-building policy, spending the early years of his reign touring the League. A disastrous campaign against House Steiner led to frictions, however, not least with his brother Anton, who would eventually stage a bloody rebellion in 3014. Cross-border raids typified Janos' reign, though the Fourth Succession War of 3028-3030 cost the League a broad swath of worlds. Suffering a stroke in 3030, for the last five years of his life Janos was aided by his son Thomas, who returned from ComStar service. Unfortunately, the province of Andurien exploited the aftermath of the Fourth Succession War to stage a bid for independence. Midway through the campaign to recapture the errant province, Janos and his sons Duggan and Thomas were apparently assassinated by a bomb smuggled into their command meeting. Thomas Marik's escape and reappearance some years later remains a subject of conjecture and even the odd conspiracy theory.

49. Duncan Marik (2986-3037)

Served 3035-3036 (2)

The assassination of Janos and his sons left his nephew Duncan as the senior Marik family officer in the FWLM—Janos' remaining son, Paul, was a civil servant, and his daughter Kristen commanded a mercenary unit. Duncan's involvement in the Andurien campaign made him a natu-

Therese's own status on Tamarind has grown immensely, and she has served as planetary administrator since 3032. Unlike her pro-reform sons, Therese has taken no public stance on the Great Debate but has expressed support for "all branches of my Marik family."

HOUSE HALAS

The second clan to rule Oriente, House Halas came to power after the death of the last scion of House Allison on New Delos in 2845. Parliament appointed Blair Halas of this prominent MechWarrior family to the post, ostensibly because of the clan's distance from the Mariks and thus independence from interference by the Captain-General. That the Halas family would eventually become close allies of the Mariks, with the Captain-General taking a Halas bride, was simply unthinkable.

The present lord of House Halas is Christopher Halas, Grand Duke of Oriente and a former confidant of Janos Marik. Now Thomas Marik's father-in-law (though at 87, the grand duke is barely a decade older than his new son), Christopher has seen Oriente's power wane as the Captain-General centralized authority in his own hands. His eldest son Gregory is the heir presumptive of House Halas and the Grand Duchy.



HOUSE STEWART

Almost as venerable as House Marik, the early years of House Stewart are lost to the mists of time. Only with the establishment of the Stewart Commonality in 2259 does the modern line come to the fore. Threatened with extinction when Stewart's deranged warlord David Genovese provoked a military confrontation with the nascent Free Worlds League, the Stewarts were surprised to find their power bolstered by the incorporation of their commonality into the Free Worlds (as its fourth province) and Parliament's recognition of the Stewart line as governors of the member-state.

Hector Stewart, the venerable Earl of Stewart (nicknamed the Young Duke), has ruled since his father's retirement in 3018. Though he speaks nowadays of resigning in favor of his son Leonard, the determined Hector does not relish the prospect, as his gruff son is a poor diplomat. Advanced age is finally taking a toll on the Young Duke, however. Leonard does not relish assuming power either, fearing that he will suffer the same behind-the-scenes manipulation by family members for their own profit that his father has long contended with, as well as having a "back-seat driver" in the form of a retired predecessor. Leonard's grandfather, the "Old Duke" Androcles Stewart, still clings to life despite being well into his dotage at the age of 122; his survival after sixty years of retirement, a testament to League medical science, does not instill confidence that Leonard can escape his father's manipulations.



HOUSE CAMERON-JONES

As with Oriente, the current rulers of the Principality of Regulus are not the original incumbents. Unlike House Allison, the Selaj family did not die out gloriously in the Succession Wars, but were eliminated by the Mariks after the Selaj attempted to wipe out the Captain-General and his line via the Scourge of Death terror group. For many years, Regulus was a federal protectorate, but eventually Parliament insisted on its return to independence. The result was the installation of a new ruling clan, the Cameron-Jones family. Distantly related to the rulers of the Star League



(though more distantly than they wished others to believe), the Counts of Harmony (as the lords of Regulus are officially known) have sought to rebuild the province's fortunes, though their own efforts at self-aggrandizement have often hampered such efforts.

Kirc Cameron-Jones has served as head of the family since 3057. Unlike his predecessors, he dares to style himself prince, a title largely ignored since the demise of the Selaj clan. A staunch opponent of Thomas Marik, Cameron-Jones nonetheless supports the Free Worlds League, though he would prefer to head it. With the crushing of Andurien's influence, Regulus has become the focus of opposition to the Mariks. Unfortunately for Cameron-Jones, the myth of "Marik infallibility" as Captain-General has blocked his path to power. Even though he heads up the opposition bloc in Parliament, most foes of the Marik look closer to home for a candidate as rival to the Captain-General.



HOUSE HUMPHREYS

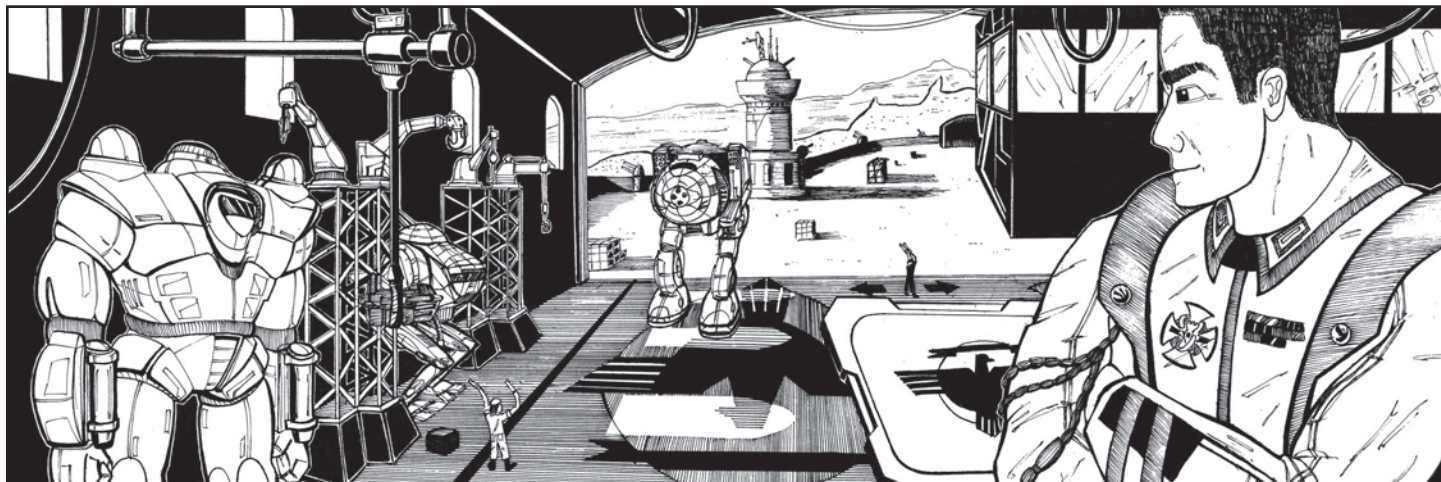
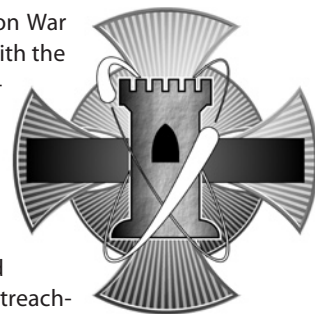
The fortunes of House Humphreys have risen and fallen many times over the centuries. Sir George Humphreys was the key architect of the Free Worlds League and his descendants played a significant role in League diplomacy with its neighbors. When Andurien was created as a League province, the Humphreys clan made a natural choice as its leaders, though the Captain-General's decision to trade most of Andurien's worlds for peace with House Liao and membership in the Star League soured relations with between the Marik and Humphreys families. Relations between the two houses reached their low point in 3030, when in the wake of the Fourth Succession War Duchess Catherine Humphreys declared her province independent of the League and entered into an alliance with the Magistracy of Canopus to crush what remained of the Capellan state. House Liao made a creditable effort at halting the incursion even before the Mariks launched their own military campaign to regain control of their errant province. Andurien's gambit failed, and with it went House Humphreys' influence for many years.

The present leader of Andurien, Dalma Humphreys, is the granddaughter of the notorious duchess and a former associate of the Captain-General. Now secure in her power, the cooperation she showed Atreus in the 3050s has dwindled to nothing as she seeks to rebuild her power base. Many who knew her grandmother have commented on the similarity between the two women and few people doubt that given enough time and resources, Dalma can rebuild the glories of Andurien. Others suggest that Thomas deliberately fostered Dalma's treachery, allowing her "enough rope to hang herself and her damned clan." The heir apparent is the childless Dalma's brother Steven, widely considered a liability; he has all of Dalma's ambition, but none of her political acumen.

ral choice as the next Captain-General. He served in that role for the second half of 3035 and almost all of 3036 until Thomas Marik abruptly resurfaced, having miraculously survived. Together with Thomas' reappearance came rumors of Duncan's complicity in the bomb plot, prompting Parliament to strip Duncan of the Captain-Generalcy. He remained in the field, however, and died leading troops on Xanthe III.

50. Thomas Marik (b. 2990) Served 3036-present (31)

Confirmed as Captain-General after his reappearance in 3036, Thomas has reshaped the Free Worlds and in particular the FWLM as well as playing a key role in the formation of the second Star League. Though he prefers diplomacy to conflict, Thomas has proved willing to use force where needed and is an accomplished pilot and field commander, skills he learned in the decades since leaving ComStar. Pragmatic and thoughtful, he has become the "elder statesman" of the Inner Sphere, a moderating influence in Star League affairs and second only to now-retired Anastasius Focht in experience. His close association with ComStar—in particular, the Word of Blake—is the one weakness in his reign, with some suspecting that the Blakist organization exerts undue influence over the Captain-General.





FREE WORLDS GOVERNMENT

MINOR HOUSES

While the “big five” dominate League affairs, they are not the only dynasties to play a role in League politics.

House Orloff has produced a plethora of talented military leaders and wields disproportionate influence over the FWLM. The current leader of House Orloff, Duke Alfonso, maintains close ties to Oriente but has become increasingly wary of Thomas Marik’s reforms, fearing that they will destroy the “cultural distinctiveness” of his province.

House Smith, though only one of many clans in the Silver Hawks Coalition, achieved a measure of notoriety during the reign of Janos Marik through advocating peace with the Lyran Commonwealth. Reaching their political apogee with Charles Smith’s tenure as MP for Amity and his private peace treaty with neighboring (but Lyran) Rahne, the Smiths’ influence dwindled during the Andurien Crisis and the years of centralization that followed. Charles Smith’s speeches about peace and coexistence became a laughingstock in Parliament, but his ideas came to the fore once more in the 3050s during the rapprochement with the Lyran state that followed the sundering of the Federated Commonwealth.

The nascent House Bey of Albert Falls succeeded the Van Vaal dynasty in the late 3020s and has gone on to be a major advocate for Thomas Marik’s policies over the years. Centered on their matriarch, Countess Selah Bey, members of this youthful clan (Selah’s three sons and one daughter, together with two infant grandsons) are leaders of style who have made supporting the central government an “in” thing for the trendy young to do.

House Stimson, the hereditary ducal presidents of the Regular Free States, have long forgotten their disappointment at the failure of a dynastic marriage to the Marik clan (foiled when Therese Marik eloped with Jeremy Brett). Unlike the days of Janos Marik’s reign, the Stimsons are solidly behind the current Captain-General, their fervor matched only by the Halas, Bey and Stewart families.



House Orloff



House Smith



House Bey



House Stimson

SAFE

The power and influence of SAFE, the federal intelligence agency, has waxed and waned over the years together with its shifting mandate. Often dismissed by outsiders, it is nonetheless scarily effective at many aspects of its assigned duties: Immediately after its founding in 2631, when it replaced the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), SAFE focused on domestic issues and gained significant powers during the Scourge of Death crisis. The late Star League era and early Succession Wars saw most of that capability lost in favor of foreign intelligence-gathering, especially after the Intelligence Act of 2735 severely curtailed domestic operations. Later in the Succession Wars and in the modern era, the pendulum has once more swung back to domestic affairs, albeit at the expense of for-



eign capabilities. The League’s alliance with first ComStar and now the Word of Blake has in many regards plugged these gaps, with ROM offering their League counterparts communications intercepts and direct intelligence.

TRAINING

Each of SAFE’s operational branches handles its own personnel selection and training. They have broad discretionary powers in their methods and processes, and though applications are made to specific branches within SAFE, candidates may be assigned to other branches as their skills dictate. The exact number of SAFE facilities and their locations remains classified but a central (and very public) training

facility exists on Atrous, part of the heavily defended Citadel complex, together with an island compound in Atrous’ high arctic. Other recruitment and induction centers exist across the Free Worlds, usually associated with regional capitals, but

SAFE COMMAND STRUCTURE

Director of SAFE:

Assistant Director, Analysis:

Deputy AD, Information Gathering:

Deputy AD, Active Analysis:

Assistant Director, Covert Operations:

Commander, Eagle Corps:

Commander, Dark Shadows:

Assistant Director, Counterintelligence:

Wilson Cherenkov

Béatrice Sibleyras

John Franklin

Niki Manon

Parminder Roi

General Michael Kallenberg

Force Commander Anne-Marie McCormack

Andrei Toshak



these have a much less significant public presence than the Atreus facilities.

COMMAND

Officially, SAFE reports to Parliament's Ministry of Intelligence, but the provisions of the Sedition Act mean that SAFE's reports go to the Captain-General and only the items he approves are forwarded to Parliament. In truth, with his brother Paul serving as Intelligence Minister, Parliamentary oversight no longer poses the difficulty it occasionally did in the past, and in most cases SAFE does pass on information via the Parliamentary Intelligence Oversight Committee. In terms of operations, SAFE has three inter-related branches—Analysis, Covert Operations and Counter-intelligence. Each is under the command of an Assistant Director, who in turn reports to the Director of SAFE (presently Wilson Cherenkov) and the Captain-General. Additionally, each branch has numerous sub-divisions, some independent units under the command of Deputy Assistant Directors and others merely regional or specialist units. Considerable effort is spent on ensuring that members of SAFE put their loyalty to the organization before any allegiance to homeworld or family. This policy enabled the agency to weather the tempests of Free Worlds politics, consistently supporting the Captain-General.

OPERATIONAL BRANCHES

SAFE has well-defined areas of responsibility that fall into one of three branches. Each operates under its own command structure, but for practical reasons most SAFE field offices include elements from each branch and appoint one person as overall head. Regional offices oversee the affairs of major regions and member-states.

Analysis Branch

The largest division of SAFE, headquartered on Atreus but with offices scattered across the League, the Analysis Branch consists of two divisions: intelligence-gathering and active analysis. Its reputation is formidable, if little known outside the League and the upper echelons of foreign intelligence agencies. It works closely with its counterparts in the FWLM, the Military Intelligence Directorate, as well as with Word of Blake ROM.



Information Gathering: IG is the most pervasive of SAFE's components, with elements on every League world and many in neighboring states. Its broad role includes passive media monitoring and cultural observation as well as active espionage and infiltration operatives. Outside the Free Worlds, many IG operatives are foreign nationals who volunteer their services (or have been convinced to do so). SAFE shell companies employ others who do not realize that their efforts are contributing to the Free Worlds' intelligence apparatus.

Active Analysis: Operating from central locations in each major region, the active analysis sub-branch sifts through data gathered by IG and disseminates it as needed. With the Atreus headquarters providing an overview of the League, AA takes a multi-level approach to

its work, looking at individual actions but also studying larger group activities and trends. This "brain" of SAFE has few peers and is the key to the organization's domestic policing agenda. Its only weaknesses lie in the intelligence it receives from other branches, and in the ability (or willingness) of those who receive its analyses to act on them.

Covert Operations

With close ties to IG and military special ops, the functions of SAFE's Covert Ops branch range from infiltration and espionage to sabotage, assassination and (historically, at least) state terrorism. Most Covert Ops personnel operate in small teams, assigned tasks as their superiors see fit, but two larger (and prestigious) formations exist in addition to regular operatives: the Eagle Corps and the Dark Shadows.

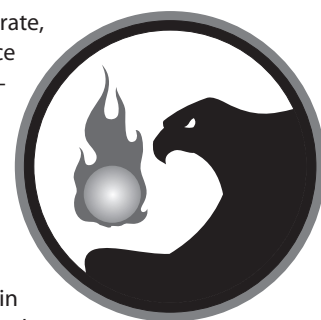


Eagle Corps: Akin to the Federated Suns' Rabid Foxes or the Draconis Combine's DEST, the Atreus-based Eagle Corps is SAFE's ultra-elite special-forces team. Drawing its personnel from the FWLM and civil law enforcement agencies, the Corps (which doesn't officially exist) fields roughly three companies, all equipped with cutting-edge gear. Their isolated HQ, the Eyrie on Atreus' moon, is well disguised and heavily fortified, designed to operate as a command center in the unthinkable eventuality of an invasion of the Atreus system.

Dark Shadows: Intended for matters that require force rather than finesse, the Dark Shadows are SAFE's independent BattleMech troops, the only such governmental unit outside the FWLM (from which it draws its soldiers). The Shadows' operations and details are hidden from public view, but their existence is an open secret, albeit one colored by myth and misdirection.

Counter-intelligence

Few ever comment on the existence of the Counter-intelligence Directorate, though provisions for its existence and operations are clearly documented in governmental papers. In the public mind, these "spooks" wage a secret war against Lyrans and Capellan agents, monitoring their activities, feeding them disinformation and occasionally eliminating them. In reality, the main targets of CI operatives are often the League's own citizens, including—according to rumor—several members of the Marik clan.





FREE WORLDS LEAGUE MILITARY

The past two decades have seen the Free Worlds League Military (FWLM) metamorphose from a fragmented and impotent collection of interlinked but independent militaries into a cohesive whole, with standardized equipment, training and methods. The League's embarrassing showing during the Fourth Succession War and in the subsequent civil conflict to bring Andurien back into the fold were the driving factors behind this renaissance, aided by such landmark legislation as the Internal Emergency Act (3030), the Addendum to the Incorporation (3037) and the Military Reorganization Act (3046). All three of these laws helped streamline the workings of the FWLM and transform it into a genuinely effective fighting force.

Compared to other Successor States, the League lacks much recent combat experience; in the past two and half decades, the FWLM has fought only one minor border war and contributed troops to the counterattack against the Clans. Nonetheless, it has developed a level of consistency, quality of personnel, and degree of advanced equipment unmatched in any contemporary Inner Sphere force. Only the militaries of ComStar and the Word of Blake—despite depletion by war and defections—can match the League military's technological sophistication, and even that rough parity is in question given the FWLM's decade-long alliance with the Word of Blake Militia. Only exports to the Draconis Combine and former FedCom states have limited the growth of the FWLM, though such sales also financed the modernization of the League armed forces and allowed massive upgrades without the need to increase taxes. Unfortunately, early plans to expand the FWLM beyond its current size have been stalled by the need to rebuild League forces after Operations Bulldog and Serpent, as well as replacing foreign equipment losses from the FedCom Civil War and the DCMS' contretemps with the Ghost Bears.

The alliance with the Word of Blake and its militia has proven a mixed blessing to the FWLM. Over the past decade and a half, it has enabled the League military to develop advanced technologies equal to any in the Inner Sphere outside of Clan forces, but many the high command believe these advantages have made the FWLM overly dependent on what amounts to a foreign power. Even Thomas Marik appears wary of the Blakist troops, specifically ordering limits on the number of joint operations and the degree of WOB ROM's access to SAFE and FWLM command systems. Only in the FWL navy, heavily reliant on technicians and expertise from the Blakist fleet, does the Word of Blake enjoy the level of access it had before the breakaway ComStar sect seized Terra and established the Blakist Hegemony.

The FWLM has also served in the new Star League Defense Forces, seconding troops to Operations Bulldog and Serpent as well as "peace-keeping" duties in the former St. Ives Compact. Of these three major deployments, only in the battle for Huntress did FWLM forces excel, and their commander was subsequently appointed the first Star League ambassador to the Clans. Nonetheless, the Captain-General has made clear his willingness to participate in any future SLDF operations, stating that only through cooperation can peace be maintained in the Inner Sphere.

STRUCTURE OF THE FWLM

Ostensibly the FWLM answers to Parliament, but during a Captain-General's tenure—a consistent reality since 2571—that individual, rather than Parliament, determines military operations. The need for permanent representation in the first Star League Council, along with

the provisions of Resolution 288, ensured the permanence of this situation, with Resolution 288 remaining in effect through the loosely defined "duration of the crisis." The Emergency Powers Act and the Addendum to the Incorporation stripped away what few obstacles remained to the Captain-General's power, most notably the Home Defense Act and the abilities of provincial governments to oppose the Captain-General's political will. The current Great Debate seeks to encourage public discussion about the Captain-General's immense power, in particular the continuance of Resolution 288. Efforts to strike down that act recently failed, but even had they succeeded, the FWLM would have remained largely unaffected, simply reporting to the Speaker of the House rather than the Captain-General.

THE HOME DEFENSE ACT

Agreed to by Captain-General Elisabeth Marik as a favor to her supporters, the Home Defense Act effectively crippled FWLM operations for more than a century. Designed to prevent the removal of vital garrison forces from threatened provinces, the Act permitted Parliament to designate a region as at risk from attack, meaning that the province could retain up to 75 percent of its regional troops for home defense. In practice, the Act became a mechanism for defying the Captain-General's will, with Parliament designating provinces at the heart of the League "at risk of attack" whenever it suited their political agendas. The willingness of various regions to invoke the Act served as a barometer of their support for the Captain-General. Those who backed him or her rarely called on its provisions, while opposition leaders did so almost without exception. With the act in force, the Captain-General could only rely on federal troops and those of the Marik Commonwealth. The Addendum to the Incorporation struck down the Home Defense Act, eliminating it as a political tool, and returned the onus for responsible troop deployment to the Captain-General. Except for the Andurien War, Thomas Marik's protocols have kept at least one regiment for each region in its home province.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

The Captain-General (or Parliament) stands as supreme commander of the FWLM, and all orders for troops in the field officially originate from him. In practice, the League Central Coordination and Command group (LCCC) acts as the FWLM's high command, determining and issuing orders on the Captain-General's behalf. These orders are in turn relayed to regional operational command authorities (four marshals and the fleet admiral) or formation commands (such as the Marik Militia or Free Worlds Legions), who pass on the orders to specific regiments in the field. To ensure command integrity, operational authorities take precedence over formation commanders, but military protocol dictates that only orders relating to deployment and combat readiness travel through such channels, while non-urgent matters fall under the purview of the formation commands. Rather than a hard and fast rule, this reflects a general policy with numerous exceptions. Formation commanders can cut deployment orders for troops under their authority (though doing so would be a breach of protocol), and operational commands can order reviews of pay and leave arrangements (though such matters usually fall under formation command).





FREE WORLDS LEAGUE MILITARY

THE CAPTAIN-GENERAL

Originally conceived as the war leader of the FWLM, the role of Captain-General has grown from supreme military commander to head of state for the League, a focus of political as well as military authority. This expansion of the Captain-General's powers remains a bone of contention in the League, particularly in those provinces opposed to the centralization of power and increasing authoritarian rule, but all the arguing has done little to diminish the military significance of the post. All Captains-General have military experience in some form. Those who did not undergo martial training in youth, such as the present incumbent, must do so within the first two years of their governance or else be subject to Parliamentary censure and replacement with a more qualified candidate. The provisions of the Ryerson Accords of 2406 have ensured that, with two exceptions, all Captains-General have hailed from the Marik family, building on that clan's heritage of military excellence. Combined with the understanding that bound the Captain-Generalcy to League representation in the Star League Council, the post has become hereditary in fact, if not in law. Officially, Parliament installs the Captain-General, the precise choice being made by the leaders of House Marik and comprising "any appropriate family member of majority age." For the past half-millennia, however, incumbent Captains-General have named their successors, usually following primogeniture, and Parliament has confirmed them. Historically, Parliament had limited rights to dismiss a Captain-General, but it rarely exercised these rights after the formation of the original Star League. The recent Addendum to the Incorporation removed even this option, granting the sitting Captain-General the right to veto any parliamentary or provincial legislation. Prior to the enactment of Resolution 288 in 2779, a Captain-General only served for the duration of each military crisis, in peacetime taking the title "Warden of the Perimeter Defenses." The perpetual crisis of Resolution 288, however, rendered that title archaic, and only those few Captains-General who voluntarily retired have adopted it.

LEAGUE CENTRAL COORDINATION AND COMMAND

The FWLM high command has had various incarnations over the centuries, but its present form, the League Central Coordination and Command group (LCCC), has existed since the onset of the Succession Wars. Unlike most of the Free Worlds League bureaucracy, the LCCC is based on Marik and oversees all aspects of the FWLM, from strategic planning and oversight of military operations to administering military facilities and procuring equipment to organizing research and development. Known colloquially as the "Seven Sons of Solon," or the "Dark Circle," the LCCC also oversees newly captured territories pending their incorporation into the League. Administration of captured worlds and direct command of military operations lies with the four League Marshals who oversee the League's operational command authorities, known as military districts.

The Captain-General heads the LCCC, but his political duties mean he is absent more often than not. In such instances, the Minister of Defense chairs LCCC meetings. Though acting with the Captain-General's authority, the LCCC frequently operates on its own initiative, its actions subject to later review by the Captain-General. Parliament has no authority over the LCCC, save in its management of finances. The Captain-General makes appointments to the LCCC; if there is no sitting Captain-General, appointments are up to the

LCCC chair. In addition to the core members, a six-man "outer circle" comprising the Director of SAFE (currently the venerable Wilson Cherenkov), the four League Marshals and the Fleet Admiral provides advice to the LCCC, but these individuals have no right to participate or vote in LCCC matters.

Minister of Defense

The only LCCC post not legally bound to the FWLM, the Minister of Defense serves as the Captain-General's deputy, chairing LCCC meetings where appropriate and liaising with Parliament where required. Any sitting MP may fill this post with the Captain-General's approval, though recent protocol has favored military appointees. If the Captain-General is not present at an LCCC meeting, the Minister may cast a vote, though traditionally ties are referred to the Captain-General for adjudication. Notionally the Minister of Defense serves as head of all the combat arms of the FWLM, and all applicable orders go out under his or her signature (or that of the Captain-General).

Admiral Heather Alexander, a former head of military intelligence, took charge of the ministry in 3061 and has continued her strong rapport with the Captain-General and Parliament. Nearing military retirement age, Alexander is widely tipped for a political career, building on the good relations she has established while in office.

Director of Military Intelligence

The Director of Military Intelligence oversees the gathering, analysis and dissemination of all information regarding foreign and domestic troops, including readiness reports for the FWLM and associated commands (mercenary troops and those units that fall outside direct FWLM command, such as corporate security detachments), along with details of allied and enemy troop readiness and capabilities. The DMI also gathers information on foreign military technology, though use of such information is in the hands of the Chief Armorer. Battlefield intelligence and counterintelligence also falls under the DMI's mandate (SAFE covers civil operations), as does command of the irregular Liberation Unit and military police.

Johannes Wade, the former Marshal of Oriente, took charge of Military Intelligence earlier this year and is still settling into the role. His numerous years of experience on the Capellan front stand him in good stead, however.

Quartermaster General

In charge of logistics support and recruitment, the Quartermaster General has a thankless but vital task. Balancing the needs of units in the field against the establishment of stockpiles leads the Quartermaster General to work closely with military manufacturers like Earthwerks and FWDI, but also with companies such as DuraPac (for food and domestic consumables) and Lichenseour (for uniforms). Management of all state and provincial military academies is likewise the quartermaster's job; the Quartermaster General must review all curricula and recruitment quotas. The FWLM Medical Corps reports to the Quartermaster General, as does the Transport Corps.

Determined and precise, General Cassandra Blake has overseen the quartermaster's office for more than decade and has effectively balanced the needs of the troops and the FWLM budget. Her careful planning facilitated the mass upgrade of the FWLM and the rebuilding of units damaged in SLDF operations, as well as estab-



lishing significant stockpiles of reserve materiel to support future military action. Cassie Blake strongly dislikes the Word of Blake, an attitude that has hampered relations with the League's allies. Her relationship with Chief Armorer Adam Tam is likewise tempestuous, their overlapping responsibilities fuelling clashes as much personal as professional.

Chief Armorer

Originally, the Chief Armorer held exclusive authority over construction and maintenance of FWLM military equipment, but over the years some of this power has shifted to the Quartermaster General. The Chief Armorer remains the primary authority for military R&D and manufacturing (save where the quartermaster instigates independent contracts with defense industries) and oversees the few state-owned manufacturing facilities. All FWLM technical personal report eventually to the Chief Armorer, as do almost all members of naval crews.

Admiral Adam Tam has served as Chief Armorer since the eve of the Clan invasion, and despite threats to soon retire, keeps finding excuses to remain in military service. Over the past two decades he has been responsible for retro-engineering Clan equipment and the development of the League's WarShip program. His close ties to the Word of Blake Militia have set him at odds with Quartermaster General Blake, but the FWLM rumor mill attributes much of the friction with "Sassy Cassie" to a failed relationship in the pair's past. So far, Thomas Marik has chosen to leave the two officers in place despite their personal differences.

Liaison Officer

Recent decades have given the Liaison Officer—formerly Occupation Liaison Officer, charged with the defense and reintegration of territories captured by the League but not yet officially annexed—little to do. Only the immediate aftermath of Operation Guerrero saw significant action for this office. In response, the Captain-General enhanced the post by making the Liaison Officer responsible for liaising with the Word of Blake Militia and the SLDF, absorbing the former job of Government Liaison Officer.

The current officeholder, Rose Shrank, had a distinguished career as an armor commander before becoming Liaison Officer. She continues to keep her battlefield command skills sharp, despite her posting to Marik. She has built up a good working relationship with the SLDF commanding generals and played a key role in organizing the FWLM's participation in Operation Bulldog.

Communications Officer

A new post, created to maintain numbers in the LCCC and to reflect the shifting nature of the League military, the Communications Officer oversees battlefield communications and signal interception (SigInt) as well as strategic communications via HPG and courier. The Communications Officer liaises with the Word of Blake (and ComStar where appropriate) on communications issues, and also for maintaining the fleet of courier JumpShips in the League (which also transport VIPs). Members of the Signals Corps report to the Communications Officer, as do naval comtechs who coordinate with Word of Blake HPG operators.

A distant associate of Thomas Marik, and Isis Marik's great-uncle, General Albert Ruiz has headed the Office of Communications since its inception in 3063. He has fought tenaciously to establish his new command, garnering the respect of subordinates and peers alike for his determination. A series of early territorial disputes with the DMI were resolved efficiently, and the two LCCC officers now work closely together.

MILITARY DISTRICT COMMANDS

The four Free Worlds military districts form the heart of the FWLM's operational command structure, each under the command of a marshal who has day-to-day authority over all the troops in his or her district. The marshals do not sit on the LCCC, but instead form an outer circle of authority, generating operational plans and requests for consideration by the LCCC and the Captain-General. When faced with enemy action, each marshal has broad discretionary powers to redeploy troops and carry out defensive operations to protect the worlds in his or her charge. In the past few years, a loophole in the FWLM charter that designates some Lyran Alliance planets as historically part of the Free Worlds League has facilitated limited offensive operations such as Marshal Jeremy Brett's "forward deployment" to Arcadia during the FedCom Civil War. Though Marshal Brett escaped censure for his actions, the Captain-General made it clear that he will deal sternly with any further efforts to exploit this bureaucratic oversight (in advance of an Act of Parliament to rectify it). Henceforth, all offensive operations are in the hands of the LCCC.

The marshals work directly with formation commanders, whether of single regiments, combat groups or divisions, as well as with planetary militia commanders. Traditionally, all front-line units receive their orders through the marshals' offices, but in practice formation commands (for example, the Marik Militia) can sidestep this system despite it being a grave breach of protocol. A handful of units fall outside the authority of the military districts irrespective of the units' physical location, answering only to the LCCC or the Captain-General. The Knights of the Inner Sphere are a primary example, acting as mobile troubleshooters as well as being the Captain-General's personal unit. The FWLM navy forms a fifth, ill-defined military district of sorts, its area of responsibility overlapping with the four geographical districts.

Dieudonné District

Among the most active military districts, Dieudonné straddles the Lyran and Capellan/Chaos March borders, encompassing a rough box of worlds bounded by Togwotee, Ionus, Haresfield and Sirius. This region suffered greatly in the Fourth Succession War, losing a good portion of its worlds to the FedCom alliance. The Free Worlds recaptured those planets, along with sharply contested Sirius, during Operation Guerrero and its follow-ups. Charged with the defense of the Sirian Holds, Silver Hawks Coalition, Zion Province and the Stewart Commonality, as well as the Border Protectorate, recent years have seen Marshal Anne-Marie van Creveld liberate lost planets (Operation Guerrero), deal with an abortive insurrection (Zion Province) and head off a threatened mutiny (Sirius). She has also constantly been forced to guard against incursions from the Chaos March, though the formation of the AMC and the Blakist Hegemony have largely negated such threats.



FREE WORLDS LEAGUE MILITARY

THE EAGLE'S TALONS

The military of the Free Worlds has undergone radical reshaping over the past several decades. Though superficially similar to the way it was before the Andurien War, the FWLM's current incarnation is much more cohesive and significantly more deadly. It comprises sixty-six regiments across thirteen formations, divided equally between federal troops and those formerly answering to provincial authorities. All forces are now obliged to accept the Captain-General's orders in the new, harmonized FWLM. However, this does not mean that every trooper's or unit's loyalty is certain.



Free Worlds Legionnaires (Federal)

The nine-regiment Free Worlds Legionnaires (more commonly known as "the Legions") were created after the Andurien War of the 3030s, initially employing materiel seized from the disbanded Defenders of Andurien and later receiving cutting-edge League technologies. The Legions are the only formation with their own training arm (the Legionary Training Institute on Andurien, formerly that province's War College), and following the lead of the Defenders, have been at the forefront in adopting combined-arms formations.



Free Worlds Guards (Federal)

The Free Worlds Guards have a long and illustrious history, inextricably entwined with that of the Free Worlds League. Currently fielding four regiments, they are slowly rebuilding to their peak strength (six regiments at the start of the First Succession War). These regiments are well equipped—after the Knights of the Inner Sphere, they have the highest priority for supplies—and have consistently demonstrated their loyalty to the League. Many Guards, however, resent the formation of "upstart" units like the Legions and the Knights, which they feel dilutes the resources and traditions of the FWLM.



Oriente District

The district with the narrowest front, bounded by Hassad, Aitutaki, Cirebon and Cronulla, Oriente has historically formed the bulwark of FWLM defenses and the spearhead of offensive operations against the Capellan Confederation. Encompassing the Duchy of Oriente, Orloff and much of Regulus, the district is coming to terms with its new Marshal, James Jordanov, who recently succeeded Johannes Wade. Since the cooling of relations between the League and the Confederation, alert levels in Oriente have increased sharply as cross-border raids resumed. Jordanov and his staff have developed a series of plans to deal with Liao actions, ranging from company-scale raids to multi-regimental incursions, but fortunately they have had little call to activate these schemes.

Ryerson District

Responsible for Andurien and the Magistracy border, the Ryerson district has historically faced few challenges beyond the ongoing disputes with the Capellans over Andurien. The last major operation in the region occurred in the 3030s, when it was the focus of the reconquest effort, but since then near-constant low-level skirmishes have erupted along the Magistracy and Periphery borders. The LCCC has blocked suggestions that district forces move against a longstanding thorn, the Periphery world of Astrokaszy, though Marshal Albrecht Kiel has undertaken a number of bandit-hunting operations in the near Periphery. The wedge shape of Ryerson—it extends from Kujari to Lesnovo and then to Calseraigne—gives it the longest border of any district, though it has the lowest troop concentration. Marshal Kiel has argued that the growth of Periphery realms like the Marian Hegemony should prompt the LCCC to rethink its deployment strategies.

Tamarind District

The largest single district, spanning a rough box bounded by Romita, Cerillos, Diass and Megrez, Tamarind contains the League capital, but few other worlds of note. Most of the district consists of minor provinces and independent worlds, of which the Abbey District, Duchy of Tamarind, Principality of Gibson and Duchy of Graham-Marik are the key players. The district has gained a degree of notoriety in recent years, with its Marshal—Jeremy Brett, the Captain-General's brother-in-law—staging an unauthorized cross-border incursion into the Lyran Alliance during the FedCom Civil War. Brett, husband of Therese Marik, has become something of a hero in the League, his popularity limiting the Captain-General's ability to censure him. Publicly, Brett and his wife remain aloof from League politics, but it is an open secret that they and their children associate closely with Alys Rousset-Marik.

Fleet Command

In the past decade and half the FWLM has developed the most potent navy in the Successor States, rivaling the covert might of ComStar and even most naval Clans. Much of that success can be attributed to Admiral Grace Jakes, but that venerable officer retired in 3065, appointing her deputy to the post of Fleet Admiral. So far, Atal Tandon has fulfilled his predecessor's trust, overseeing the deployment of several new orbiting behemoths. At present, the League deploys four naval battle groups, each focused on a Thera-class carrier and its escorts: the Sardis group at Tamarind, the Corinth group at Atreus, the Santorini group at Oriente and the Delphi battle group at Andurien. A fifth battle group should deploy at Regulus within the next eighteen months.



MAJOR TRAINING CENTERS

Falling under the purview of the Quartermaster Corps, the League's military academies have a strong tradition of excellent training for officers and enlisted ranks. Unlike some militaries, for which equipping a recruit with a gun and sending him into the field suffices, the FWLM invests considerable time and effort in its troops. Though each academy is allowed some leeway in its selection criteria and teaching, the FWLM imposes a minimum criteria and curriculum to inhibit the growth of rogue academies. Applicants to the all-volunteer FWLM are profiled and streamed by selectors and matched to specialties that suit their skills. The selectors take personal preference into account, but that is only one factor in the process. The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) oversees the baseline curriculum and ensures that all troops have a minimum level of field craft and weapon skills.

The League has around ninety military schools, ranging from prep schools for preteens to full-fledged universities. Eight schools dominate, however, turning out the majority of combat-ready personnel.

Aitutaki Academy

Formerly the military academy for Regular forces, Aitutaki covers a broad range of military fields (with the exception of an aerospace program), but specializes in training MechWarriors, armor crews and technical personnel. The academy's Regular heritage makes it a bastion of anti-Marik sentiment and its instructors, while complying with OFSTED protocols, often deliberately single out non-Regular attendees for harsh treatment. Dueling is common in the school, carried out with swords rather than firearms, and is used in everything from honor courts to command disputes.



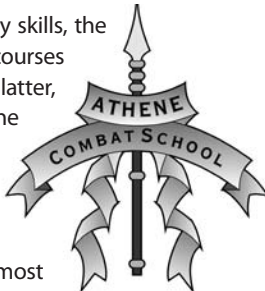
Allison MechWarrior Institute

Situated on New Olympia along with the Lloyd Marik-Stanley aerospace school, the AMI is acknowledged as the best in the League for MechWarriors. The Captain-General has a personal say in those approved to attend the college, but a fixed proportion of places—currently fifteen percent—is allocated to the children of Dispossessed MechWarriors and former members of the FWLM. The atmosphere at the school is competitive, with pupils pitted against each other but also encouraged to bond in competitions with other schools. Rivalry with the Lloyd Marik-Stanley school is particularly intense, covertly encouraged by instructors on both sides.



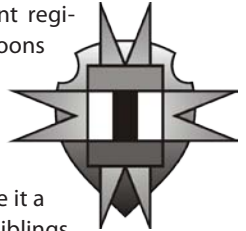
Athene Combat School

The only school dedicated solely to teaching infantry skills, the Athene Combat School on Atreus offers a wide range of courses from basic infantry skills to battlesuit operations. The latter, though not the first such program in the Inner Sphere, is one of the most respected, a far cry from even a decade ago when the school struggled to attract attendees. Most of the students hail from the Marik Commonwealth, but recent years have seen pan-League recruitment, including foreign attendees under the aegis of the SLDF. Unlike most schools, the ACS' senior graduation ceremonies frequently host the Captain-General, who has taken a keen interest in the battlesuit program.



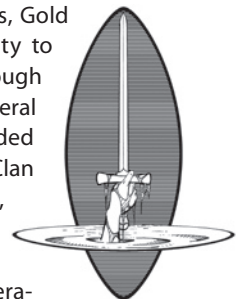
Atrean Hussars and Dragoons (Federal)

Once a pair of independent regiments, the Hussars and Dragoons were unified under a single command hierarchy in 3062 in an effort to rehabilitate the struggling Hussars. The three Dragoons regiments have made it a point of honor to aid their new siblings, as much to protect their own reputation as that of the Hussars. Ties between a senior officer in the Twelfth Dragoons and factions opposed to the Captain-General have resulted in a major downgrading of that regiment's loyalty rating, though few expect this to have any significant impact on the wider formation.



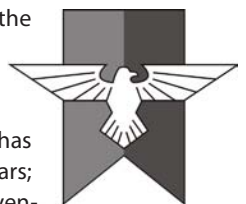
Knights of the Inner Sphere (Federal)

The twin Knights regiments, Gold and Silver, owe personal loyalty to the Captain-General, even though officially they fall under federal authority. Thomas Marik founded these units shortly after the Clan invasion. Now a dozen years old, the Knights stand at the pinnacle of the League military, performing admirably in operations on Huntress and Strana Mechty. Their ideals of honor and valor prompted the short-lived NeoChiv craze in the League, but even though that fad quickly died off, the Knights' commitment and determination remains unshakable.



Marik Militias (Federal)

Once the armed forces of the Marik Commonwealth, the Marik Militias were sworn to League service early in its history. The number of regiments has varied considerably over the years; currently the League fields seventeen Militia regiments, by far the largest formation in the FWLM. These units suffer from inconsistent equipment and troop quality, ranging from the veteran Sixth Marik Militia to the newly formed Thirty-Seventh, and have historically undergone high personnel turnover because of poaching by other formations. Nonetheless, the Marik Militias remain the muscle of the FWLM.





FREE WORLDS LEAGUE MILITARY

Fusiliers of Oriente (Provincial/Federal)

Historically a provincial formation, the six Fusiliers regiments came under direct federal authority in 3064. This move has aided the Captain-General's centralization efforts, setting a trend for others to follow. The FWLM invests more heavily in the Fusiliers than in other provincial troops, a carrot-and-stick approach that recognizes and expands on the changes brought about by the Military Reorganization Act as well as Oriente's closer ties with the Marik family.



Oriente Hussars (Provincial/Federal)

Commonly seen as poorer cousins of the Fusiliers, the Oriente Hussars regiments have actually enjoyed an equally prestigious career. Unlike the image-conscious Fusiliers, the Hussars are grimly practical, their rivalry with the Fusiliers spurring them on. Materially, the two formations have reached parity (after long years during which the Hussars remained at a disadvantage). The FWLM has raised a sixth Hussars regiment in the past decade, replacing the one lost after Anton Marik's revolt.



Protectorate Guard (Provincial)

The occupation of the Border Protectorate by the Federated Commonwealth for more than 25 years came as a bitter pill for the Protectorate Guard. The Protectorate's liberation in 3057 allowed the three Guard regiments to rebuild ties with their homeland. In deliberate contravention of the Military Reorganization Act, these units have given priority to recruits from Border Protectorate worlds, though the LCCC tacitly approves this policy. Unfortunately, political wrangling between the Steel Guard commander, Marilyn Stroud, and the federally appointed overall commander, Loren Bryce-Marik, hampers the Guard's command structure.



Atreus Officer Training College

Unlike other League academies that provide a full training course, the Atreus OTC focuses solely on teaching leadership skills. It draws recruits only from other academies and (more often) front-line regiments. The command skills taught at this school include battlefield command and tactics, time management and bureaucratic skills designed to minimize the inconvenience of the FWLM's monolithic administration. The intense yearlong course produces some of the FWLM's best field officers.



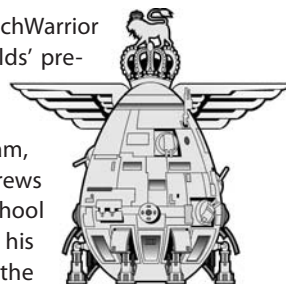
Legionary Training Academy

Formerly the Humphreys Training Academy of Andurien, the LTA is one of the few military schools dedicated to supporting a single FWLM military formation, in this case the Free Worlds Legions. Also setting the school apart from others in the League is its unabashed political bias and screening process, authorized by the LCCC, that ensures LTA attendees are loyally aligned with the Captain-General and the federal government. The LTA teaches a broad range of courses, beginning with the OFSTED-mandated basic training and a full spectrum of military occupation specialties. Only battle armor and naval training are missing from the LTA, requiring the Legions to draw some of their troops from other schools and units.



Lloyd Marik-Stanley Aerospace School

Located some 200 kilometers from the Allison MechWarrior Institute, the LMS Aerospace School is the Free Worlds' pre-eminent aerospace academy. It offers core programs for aerospace, DropShip and JumpShip crews, and since 3054 has also offered a WarShip training program, as a two-year conversion course for existing naval crews and as a six-year program for new recruits. The school commandant, Admiral Eugene Schlöndorff, pushes his pupils hard but also instills in them a fierce loyalty to the school and the FWLM. Though publicly decrying competition with the Allison MechWarrior Institute, he privately regards it as an excellent means of bringing his charges together. In addition to its ground base high in the New Greenland Mountains, locally known as the "Garden of the Gods," the school maintains several orbital training facilities, notably Parnassus Station and the FWLS Janos Marik. Plans to commission a dedicated training vessel for the school have stalled, as the LCCC chose to fund two Zecchetinu-class vessels in lieu of what would be a largely non-combat ship.



Orloff Military Academy

One of the League's smaller schools but almost as prestigious as Princefield, the Orloff Academy takes candidates as young as twelve and provides them with a general education in addition to their military studies. The entire curriculum lasts about eight years. Access to the school is tightly controlled despite the LCCC's best efforts, with acceptance given only to those candidates the school governors deem worthy. The school offers only one MOS, BattleMech pilot, but the core curriculum also features skills usually found in officer training schools elsewhere, making all graduates command-qualified. This





"Orloff Mafia" is an in-joke in the FWLM, sparked by graduates of the school wearing a distinctive dirk presented to them at commencement.

Princefield Military Academy

Though not the best-rounded military school in the League, Princefield is the most prestigious. Once the home of the Duchy of Oriente's main training facility, Princefield has become the finishing school for the League's nobles and high-ranking officers. Many Captains-General received their training here, along with provincial dukes and the scions of noble houses. Bloodlines and connections are the key to admission, though the LCCC strives to ensure that some non-noble candidates also secure places. Courses are deliberately streamed to restrict access to the BattleMech and aerospace programs, encouraging pupils to compete. Social skills also feature prominently, with those selected for officer training undergoing education in protocol and genteel sports in addition to military leadership. As with Aitutaki, dueling is common at Princefield, overseen by the Provost Marshall.



UNIT TYPES

Though the Military Reorganization Act of 3046 transformed the FWLM's disparate elements into a unified fighting force, the troops of the Free Worlds remain divided into three broad categories: League/federal troops, provincial forces and mercenaries.

FEDERAL TROOPS

Also known as League forces, the federal elements of the FWLM have no regional ties and instead focus their loyalty on the Captain-General and the LCCC. Once a minority of the forces available to the Captain-General, their proportions have grown in recent years and today they form a slight majority within the FWLM. The largest single component are the Marik Militias, the house troops of the Marik Commonwealth, sworn to League service since early in the nation's history. The Free Worlds Guards, Atrean Dragoons and Atrean Hussars are smaller parts of the federal component, but have higher-quality personnel and equipment than the militias, the Free Worlds Guards in particular. The Free Worlds Legions are the last major federal formation, built from the shattered remains of Andurien's military, their loyalty to the state assured by stringent security procedures. The elite of the federal troops—and, indeed, of the FWLM—are the Knights of the Inner Sphere, a two-regiment group that takes its orders directly from the Captain-General. The Knights represent the cream of the FWLM military and the pinnacle of its technical achievement.

PROVINCIAL FORCES

Though the Military Reorganization Act of 3046 officially rendered the provincial-federal distinction moot, a degree of historical inertia maintains troops formerly loyal to the League's individual member states as a distinct entity from those that swear direct fealty to the Free Worlds as a whole. Erasing this long-standing prejudice and weakening the ties between such units and their former home provinces is an ongoing objective of the LCCC and the Captain-General, a fine balance between managing their loyalty to the state and maintaining the traditions that keep them strong. To some degree, the Captain-General's policy of deploying at least part of each formation in its home province works counter to this objective, but Thomas apparently wants to grant the units some semblance of their former command structure while eroding their provincial loyalties from within. It remains to be seen if this sleight of hand will succeed. Units

Sirian Lancers (Provincial)

When Operation Guerrero stopped short of reconquering the Sirian planets, the three Sirian regiments came within a heartbeat of launching their own private war to liberate their homeworlds. The League military's delay in recapturing the Sirian worlds, and the devastation discovered when the Lancers were finally allowed to proceed, has shattered the trust that formerly existed between the Captain-General and the Lancers' CO, General Helen Thrall. General Thrall now serves as the de facto Primus of the Sirian Concordance.



Silver Hawk Irregulars (Provincial)

The Falcon and Gryphon regiments of the Silver Hawk Irregulars reflect the chaotic and largely autonomous Silver Hawk worlds from which these regiments were raised. Both units have seen a marked increase in troop and equipment quality over the past two decades, but they remain the poor relations of the FWLM. What they lack in skill and technology, however, they more than make up for in ingenuity and bloody-mindedness.



Stewart Dragoons (Provincial)

A small but significant worsening in relations between the Stewart Dragoons and the rest of the FWLM over the past five years stems from the death of Kristen Marik, a cousin of the present planetary earl, and the Captain-General's abandonment of Kristen's unit during the FedCom Civil War. Corean Enterprises' sponsorship of the Stewart Home Guard shocked the FWLM, but the agreement has proved surprisingly effective. The corporation receives free advertising for its military hardware, the units gain advanced technology and the FWLM need not foot the upgrade bill.

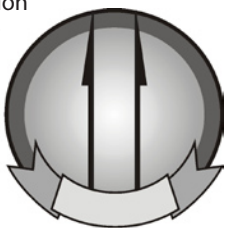




FREE WORLDS LEAGUE MILITARY

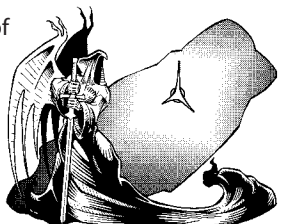
Orloff Grenadiers (Provincial)

Seeing the Military Reformation Act as a slap in the face to their military excellence, the Orloff Grenadiers have spent the past twenty years jockeying for position within the LCCC. While technically accepting the reforms, the Grenadiers have done everything in their power to retain their traditions (which they regard as a matter of cultural importance), ultimately prompting Oriente to mediate between the regiments and the high command. Despite all this horse-trading, the FWLM regards the three Orloff regiments as broadly reliable.



Regulan Hussars (Provincial)

After the crushing of the secessionist Andurien regime in the 3030s, Regulus became the focus of opposition to the Captain-General, and the five Regulan Hussars regiments have become a proxy battleground between the Mariks and the Cameron-Jones clan. Claiming cultural precedent, the Hussars have opposed many provisions of the Military Reformation Act. In response, the LCCC has placed the Hussars at the bottom of the FWLM supply chain.



like the Regular Hussars and Sirian Lancers have proven particularly resilient, the former encouraged by their prince to oppose centralization efforts and the latter driven by their own agenda regarding their former homeland. Other units such as the Oriente Hussars and Fusiliers, Stewart Dragoons and Orloff Grenadiers appear to be complying, if warily.

MERCENARY TROOPS

Historically, mercenaries have played a major role in the League's defense, but the present Captain-General has made clear his intention to phase out such troops. A handful remain in League employ, but most contracts have been allowed to lapse in recent years. Only six regimental-sized formations remain in the League, and at least one of those, The Krushers, is in private hands. Despite Thomas' position, the lucrative nature of contracts with the League—and the League's pragmatic approach to military finance—ensures that mercenary commands are likely to play a role for the foreseeable future, with the FWLM and as private security troops with the League's many industrial conglomerates.

UNIFORMS

The harmonization of rank structures and uniforms was a key element of the Military Reorganization Act, stripping away the plethora of systems and dress that existed prior to the Andurien War. These changes, among the slowest to gain acceptance, provided a clear visual representation of the new order in the Free Worlds, demonstrating the unity Thomas Marik hoped to build in the wake of the divisive Andurien conflict.

INSIGNIA

Various insignia worn by troops in the FWLM indicate their unit, branch of service and rank. The first two appear on the left breast of dress uniforms, while national and provincial insignias appear on the left shoulder, the Marik Eagle upmost (save when troops seek to slight the League in favor of their provincial ties). Rank insignia appear on the cuffs and collar of dress uniforms and the left shoulder of field dress.

DRESS UNIFORM

In use since 3047, the FWLM dress uniform is standard across all service branches. It features a white twill jacket with maroon stripes across the shoulders, and front and back piping in purple. The basic design is the same for officers and enlisted ranks save that the former have gold-edged collars and rank insignia inlay, while the latter has no specific edging. Additionally, enlisted troops display their rank insignia on the right shoulder, while officers employ collar markings to designate their grade. Officers may also wear service braids to denote time spent in the FWLM, one braid (usually purple, but gold in the highest ranks) per five years of service.

Male members of the FWLM wear white stirrup pants with gold over-trousers and integral boots. Many female service personnel wear the standard pants, but others opt for the alternative, a full-length buff skirt and shoes. Many officers carry a ceremonial dagger, but only members of the Order of the Saber are entitled to wear swords. Firearms are not worn as part of the FWLM dress uniform.

FIELD UNIFORMS

Field uniforms are considerably more practical than dress uniforms, varying by rank and service branch to meet the requirements of the role.

Senior Officers

In the field, officers ranked at lieutenant colonel and above traditionally wear a distinctive uniform comprising a dark blue jersey and a white shirt or blouse, the pullover containing Kevlar inserts to protect against enemy action. Officers of lower rank wear the standard field uniform for their branch. Many senior officers also follow this style, particularly in high-risk areas where hostile troops may be in range. The LCCC, seeking to protect its commanders from opportunistic attacks, actively encourages this practice. Several ranking officers nonetheless insist on "full honors" on the battlefield, trusting the enemy's sense of fair play to prevail.

MechWarriors

MechWarriors have two types of field dress, one worn inside their 'Mechs and one when not in combat. The former consists of a cooling vest and neurohelmet worn over a lightweight vest or crop-top and shorts or briefs. The cooling vest is commonly the FWLM-J2, but since 3055 this



has slowly been phased out in favor of the more efficient J6. Both vests incorporate shoulder padding for a neurohelmet, though the lightweight helmets currently manufactured in the Free Worlds obviate the need for such protection. Outside their 'Mechs, pilots wear an olive green jumpsuit over their 'Mech garb or else wear "undress" clothing like that of infantry troops.

Aerospace

FWLM aerospace pilots wear a lightweight pressure suit and G-suit while in their aircraft; the ensemble also contains breathing apparatus and temperature regulation gear. The pilot's helmet serves as a dual-purpose piece of life-support gear and a neurohelmet. Newer designs feature holographic targeting gear akin to the Star League V-12 system, providing the pilot with a fully immersive environment in which he essentially is the aircraft. Outside their aircraft, pilots wear an olive coverall akin to that of MechWarriors, though many adopt naval uniform for non-combat situations.

Navy

Naval undress uniform comprises utilitarian green coveralls. During combat operations or those in which hull integrity is at risk, naval crew members wear a lightweight pressure suit capable of supporting life independently for thirty minutes. In both cases, a woolen jacket and cap are worn for warmth, the jacket usually gray and the cap dyed purple for enlisted ranks or green for officers.

Infantry, Armor and Conventional Troops

Conventional troops wear an olive bodysuit beneath a titanium and Kevlar combat vest. Armor plates may also be added to the arms and legs, though employment of such protection is at the discretion of individual troopers, many of whom prefer unarmored mobility. Vehicle crews in particular rarely use the inserts (and also commonly eschew the combat vest). Infantry and armor crews wear helmets of different styles; a foot soldier's helmet contains comm gear and provides ballistic protection, while a tanker helmet provides additional padding and support appropriate to the type of vehicle in which the trooper serves.

RANKS

Prior to Thomas Marik's reign, an assortment of ranking systems existed in the FWLM. The Military Reorganization Act created a unified rank structure as well as a single command structure. The ranks of the new military appear below.

Captain-General



Initially intended as the military commander of the League's armed forces during times of crisis, the position of Captain-General has been held by the Marik family since 2314, with two exceptions.

Over time, the office of Captain-General gained non-military powers, but its essence as supreme military commander remains. The Captain-General's rank insignia is four broad gold stripes on a purple background, located on the dress uniform collar and cuffs. Five gold braids replace the maroon piping on the right shoulder. In the field, the Captain-General normally wears the insignia of a general.

Marshal (Fleet Admiral)



The highest position in the Free Worlds League Military, a marshal commands one of the League's four military districts, while the Fleet Admiral commands the League's naval forces. The marshals and the Fleet Admiral report directly to the Captain-General and may sit on the LCCC. The rank insignia is a single broad gold bar inset with silver on a purple backdrop, with gold braid hanging from the right shoulder of the dress uniform.

General (Admiral/Vice Admiral)



The highest field rank in the FWLM, generals command permanent multi-unit organizations (such as the Free Worlds Legionnaires or planetary garrisons), or ad-hoc multi-unit groups of division size or larger. Though only one official grade of general exists (the navy has two, admiral and vice admiral), an unofficial seniority exists within the rank. Several factors influence this seniority, but length of service and performance are the most important. Generals wear a gold square on a purple background, with the center of the insignia somewhat lighter than the surrounding material. Purple braid is used on the right shoulders of the dress uniform.

Colonel (Commodore)



The rank of colonel denotes command of a 'Mech regiment or an ad-hoc brigade, though in a few cases commanders of infantry and armor units may also be full colonels. This is the highest rank usually found on the battlefield. Occasionally, a colonel may act as aide to a general. A colonel's insignia comprises three gold bars across a purple background, with a fourth bar of half-width above the uppermost bar. Naval officers with the rank of commodore or above command the FWLM's fleets.

Lieutenant Colonel (Captain)



Originally intended to allow officers not yet colonels to command regiments, the League's military reforms formalized this position. The rank of lieutenant colonel is normally given to commanders of armor and infantry regiments, but may also be granted to a temporary commander of a 'Mech regiment or more often to a senior battalion commander. Three gold bars on a purple backing denote the rank of lieutenant colonel.

In the navy, an officer must have at least two years of command experience before being promoted to captain. Senior captains often hold the honorary rank of flag captain, indicating the experience and training required for commanding multi-ship operations. Such officers are responsible for implementing and executing the strategies and tactics devised by the commodore or admiral commanding the fleet.

Force Commander (Commander)



Lowest of the so-called "field grades" (senior officers), the rank of force commander approximates to that of major in the Star League military system. Officers of this rank serve as battalion commanders, though some



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may serve as regimental commanders of infantry or armor units if such units are part of a garrison force or subordinated to a larger organization. The rank insignia is three gold bars on a purple backing, the lower two full-width and the upper half-width.

Officers with the naval rank of commander usually serve as executive officers on FWLM naval vessels, but commanders may also command DropShips and JumpShips while gaining the experience needed for promotion to naval captain.

Captain (Lieutenant Commander)



Highest of the "company grades" (junior officers), the rank of captain indicates command of a company-sized unit, and is indicated by two gold bars across a purple backing.

Lieutenant (Lieutenant)



Lieutenants are the lowest-ranked FWLM officers, commanding lance- or platoon-sized units. Two subdivisions exist, senior grade and junior grade. In the League's ground forces, senior grade lieutenants are usually experienced officers, while those of junior grade are unproven or fresh graduates. In the navy, seniority makes the distinction between a lieutenant senior grade and a lieutenant junior grade. A single gold bar denotes junior grade lieutenants, while senior grade lieutenants have a second half-width bar above the first.

(Ensign)

The FWL navy has an additional officer rank, that of ensign, indicated by a single red bar. Such officers are fresh graduates or untested officers who have recently received their commissions.

Sergeant Major (Master Chief Petty Officer)



The highest non-commissioned rank, sergeant majors are responsible for the conduct and discipline of enlisted men and non-commissioned officers. Such ranks are scarce and mark the pinnacle of an enlisted career, with only a single sergeant major per regiment. Three gold stripes on a rectangular purple background with a semi-circular tab at the top denote the rank of sergeant major.

Master Sergeant (Senior Chief Petty Officer)



Master sergeants usually serve at battalion level, acting as a force commander's link to his troops. Many master sergeants also command support service detachments such as engineering or logistics companies. The rank insignia of master sergeant is three gold stripes on a rectangular purple background.

Staff Sergeant (Chief Petty Officer)



Non-commissioned officers of staff sergeant rank often support company, lance or platoon commanders. Many MechWarriors in the FWLM hold this rank. Three gold stripes set on a V-shaped purple patch indicate a staff sergeant. Unlike lower ranks, the purple patch fills the upper V-section of the rank insignia.

Sergeant (Petty Officer First Class)



FWLM sergeants often act as commanders of infantry or armor platoons. The rank insignia is three gold stripes on a V-shaped purple patch. The upper V of the insignia is half-filled by the patch.

Corporal (Petty Officer Second Class)



Corporals command infantry squads and may also serve as the gunner or driver of a combat vehicle. Corporals also pilot BattleMechs, though in such cases they are referred to as MechWarriors. Three gold stripes on a purple patch signify the rank of corporal, with the upper V open and showing the uniform beneath the insignia.

Private, 1st Class (Able Spaceman)



Troops ranked private, first class (PFC) are qualified soldiers who have served at least a year in the FWLM. The rank of PFC grants no additional authority or responsibility above regular privates, though it does accompany a minor pay raise. Two gold stripes on a purple patch denote a PFC.

Private (Spaceman)



The rank of private indicates a qualified soldier with less than one year of service. The rank insignia is a single gold stripe on a purple patch.

Recruit (Spaceman recruit)

Troops of this rank are not officially part of the FWLM, but are enrolled at one of the numerous military academies throughout the League. Such trainees wear no rank insignia, and though they use a military-issue field kit, wear academy rather than FWLM dress uniforms.

MEDALS AND HONORS

Medals and decorations are commonplace in the FWLM (though not to the extent of the Lyran Alliance military), but strict rules govern the circumstances and manner in which they may be worn. For dress uniform, medals are worn on the left breast below branch and unit indicators, though some awards are only worn on a purple sash over the jacket. Many medals are worn only for specific ceremonies, their place being taken at other times by ribbon versions.

Crest of the Eagle

The Crest of the Eagle is awarded to members of units that play a key role in successful campaigns. The award is made to whole units, usually of battalion size and above, with veteran MechWarriors often receiving a number of them during their careers. Recipients are nominated by the Captain-General and approved by Parliament. The Crest of the Eagle is only given to MechWarriors, and is displayed on a scarlet or purple sash.

Silver Cross

The League's premier decoration for aerospace pilots, the Silver Cross is awarded for "acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty," often posthumously. The title confers a knighthood on the recipient, and so the bearer has the right to use the title "Sir" or "Lady." The



cross itself resembles the Terran Maltese cross, with a diamond set in its center. Some holders of the Silver Cross have formed their own organization, the Order of the Silver Cross, that seeks to counter alleged "MechWarrior bias" by the FWLM and the Captain-General in particular. Though members oppose some of Thomas Marik's decisions, they remain a loyal opposition.

Distinguished Service Awards

Among the most practical awards in the League, the series of medals known as distinguished service awards represent the number of documented kills recorded. Warriors who destroy or disable 500 tons of enemy 'Mechs (or aerospace craft for pilots) receive a leaf-shaped lapel pin made of bronze, set with a ruby. Following 1,000 tons of kills, the warrior receives a pin containing an emerald, and following 2,500 tons a similar pin with a sapphire. Following 5,000 tons and for each subsequent 5,000 the recipient receives a diamond-set pin.

Raiding Ribbons

Raiding ribbons indicate involvement in a successful raid (defined as any operation that succeeds at its intended mission or recovers significant booty), and are awarded to all participating members. The ribbons are single-color bands, the color indicating the targeted state. A blue ribbon indicates that the target was the Lyran Alliance (or Lyran Commonwealth, before the formation of the Federated Commonwealth). Gold indicates the Capellan Confederation. Ribbons added in recent years are red for attacks on the Federated Commonwealth and green for raids against minor powers (Chaos March or Periphery states). Some MechWarriors and pilots advertise their exploits by painting slashes of the same color on their 'Mechs or aerospace fighters.

Conquest Ribbons

Closely related to raiding ribbons, conquest ribbons are awarded for participation in the capture or liberation of a planet. The color scheme is the same as for raiding ribbons, but each conquest ribbon is bordered in purple and has the name of the world embroidered on it in black.

Defensive Operations Ribbons

Defensive operations ribbons indicate participation in the successful defense of a League world against outside aggression. Such ribbons are purple with green edging, with the name of the world written in the color of the aggressor (blue for the Lyran Alliance, gold for the Capellan Confederation, red for the Federated Commonwealth and green for minor powers).

Star League Service Pin

The Star League service pin first appeared in 3059, denoting detached service as part of an SLDF force. These two-centimeter pins are shaped like a Cameron Star, colored black for duty that saw no combat and silver for combat service. A gem at the heart of the star denotes the opponent: green for Inner Sphere duty (such as St. Ives) and red for operations against the Clans. The name of the principal world where the duty took place is engraved across the widest part of the star. Star League service pins are worn on a purple sash.

Life Service Medal

The Captain-General awards this decoration for at least twenty years of service in the FWLM. The basic award consists of an eagle's head etched in silver, mounted on a black ribbon. For each additional decade of service, an additional bar is added to the ribbon. Younger officers often deride the medal as the "Chicken Hawk's Crest" or "Old Buzzard's Crest."

Oriente Legion of Merit

The Duke of Oriente and the commanders of the Fusiliers of Oriente and Oriente Hussars regiments determine membership in the Oriente Legion of Merit. Recipients are inducted into an honorary society for "warriors who have demonstrated the proper blend of bravery and wisdom." The Legion of Merit is awarded almost exclusively to members of the Fusiliers or Hussars, but on exceptional occasions has been given to members of other units stationed in the Duchy of Oriente. A pin depicting crossed swords over a palm branch and worn on the right lapel of the dress uniform denotes membership in the Legion. Tassels hung beneath the pin denote the length of time in the Legion; red tassels represent one year and blue represent five years.

Order of the Saber

The highest decoration attainable in the Free Worlds League Military, induction into the Order of the Saber is determined by the Captain-General for "heroism in pursuit of the cause." The order has chapter houses on many major League worlds, which provide free meals and lodging to any needy member of the order.

Regulan Ankh

The Regulan Ankh is the official honor for warriors who serve with distinction in units of the Principality of Regulus. Forged from white gold and set with a turquoise, the Regulan Ankh allegedly provides its bearer with a reserve of strength in times of need.

Allison's Chain

Allison's Chain is awarded to the League unit that has demonstrated the greatest valor under fire. Traditionally carried wrapped round the command lance's regimental standard, the three-strand chain (gold, silver and platinum) is named for the former duke of Oriente, Harlan Allison. Tradition states that no pennant adorned with the chain has ever fallen to the enemy. The Ducal Guard of the Fusiliers of Oriente currently holds this honor.

Halls of Heroes

The Free Worlds League maintains several "Halls of Heroes," inclusion in which is the greatest military honor in the League. Seven such halls exist throughout the League, but the most famous and prestigious are the Marik Hall on Atreus and the Orloff Hall on Vanra. Each new addition is at the discretion of the Hall Master, but invariably the inductee is a gifted leader, performed some amazing feat of heroism or otherwise made a significant contribution to the military of the Free Worlds League. Many entries into the halls are posthumous, taking the form of a dedication ceremony rather than the elaborate induction ceremony for living recipients. Living members of a Hall of Heroes may use the title "Hero of the League."



SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Many of the states that emerged as humankind expanded to the stars can trace their heritage back to pre-existing societies of Old Earth—the Draconis Combine and its Japanese heritage, the Lyran Commonwealth/Alliance and its mix of Germanic, Irish and Scots cultures, the Capellans and their Chinese heritage—even though most of them did not start out with such trappings. The modern Free Worlds League is much harder to pin down to any one cultural ideal.

Elements of Eastern European society exist alongside Mediterranean and Indian influences, mixed with Celtic and Polynesian and Islamic culture and even Chinese society. Indeed, the absence of any single most prominent cultural influence typifies the League. Its varied peoples are at liberty to follow their own paths. This realm's cultural diversity is its greatest strength and its greatest weakness. The absence of a unified culture means that the peoples of the Free Worlds are not straitjacketed by a single mode of thought or action, but neither are they capable of swiftly uniting in a concerted national effort. Historically, at least, self-interest and contradictory cultural imperatives have hindered such endeavors and have acted as the principal brake on the League's economic and territorial expansion.

As a rule, the citizenry of the Free Worlds are a tolerant bunch, willing to put up with their neighbors' foibles and in turn expecting acceptance of their own idiosyncrasies. Intolerance and prejudice exist, of course, but its manifestations are localized and frequently quite different from biases seen elsewhere in the Inner Sphere. For example, several League societies harbor a distaste for technology—the Exituri of Shiloh and the K'wara Islamic sect of Kanata being the best examples—and preach a return to a simpler existence. Another example, less fanatical but more commonplace, is the widespread disdain for technological augmentation or prosthetics; many League residents see suffering with infirmity as preferable to the dehumanizing effects of technology.

The federal government takes great pains to ensure minimal involvement in cultural matters, leaving such issues to planetary and provincial authorities. Indeed, for all the centralization of power that has taken place during Thomas Marik's reign, Clause 1 of the Addendum to the Incorporation enshrines the provinces' cultural primacy. Federal authorities provide the framework in which the individual provinces can operate and mediate disputes between them. This arrangement loosely harmonizes the laws and educational standards of member provinces and provides for their defense without infringing on their unique identities.

PEOPLES AND CULTURES

The Free Worlds League, though not the largest of the Successor States, contains within its borders the most diverse population among them. Though some cultures and languages have fallen by the wayside, the government's efforts to preserve national identity and cultural diversity have resurrected some societies and languages, building for them an extant and vibrant society.

LANGUAGES

The sheer diversity of ethnic and social groups in the Free Worlds made clear the need for a lingua franca from the outset. English soon became established as the means of everyday communication,

though it is the primary language for less than a quarter of League citizens. Spanish, Italian, Mandarin and Urdu predominate, with Greek, Czech and Arabic also spoken by significant numbers. Federal law requires that all dealings in Parliament be carried out in English, as well as all judicial and traffic-control communications. Though business need not be transacted in English, most merchants find that tongue a common tool for dealing with clients and suppliers.

Some languages, such as Romanian, were once spoken widely in the Free Worlds but fell out of use and became classified as "dead" as their native speakers shifted into using English and other languages. The past two decades, however, have seen a grass-roots movement to resurrect several lost tongues with groups such as the Mercanti Foundation of Atreus and the Petrie School on Regulus offering grants to study them. According to the 3065 League Census, Romanian—along with Latin—has sufficient use across the Free Worlds to once again be classed as a living language. That these have been joined by artificial tongues such as Esperanto, Lingatine and Foran (languages whose "births" date back to the 19th, 23rd and 27th centuries, respectively) has not fazed supporters of these resurrected languages.

SOCIAL GROUPS

The peoples of the Free Worlds hail from every corner of Old Earth and though many are scattered across the Free Worlds League, their heritage and traditions appear clearly in many provinces. The Marik Commonwealth, for example, has strong links to Eastern and Central Europe and many of its people are of Czech, Slovak, Romanian and Hungarian stock. Oriente, by contrast, draws many of its people from the Mediterranean basin—principally Spain and Italy, but with a substantial Greek tradition—and is bolstered by Russian, Indian and Chinese enclaves. Hindu culture once dominated Regulus, but this influence has slowly waned since the demise of the Selaj dynasty (though Hindu architectural influence remains strong). Today, Mongolian, Kazakh and Persian influences dominate this region, alongside the cultures and languages of Norway and the Baltic states. Andurien, as its occasional ties to the Capellan Confederation suggest, has a powerful Chinese subculture, but its northern European traditions—in particular, the Welsh of the ruling Humphreys clan—dominate, closely followed by Spanish and Italian influences.

As a culture, the people of the Marik Commonwealth, spared many of the horrors of the Succession Wars, tend toward introspection and adherence to established traditions. The family is the core of their society, encompassing nuclear families and extended clans. Many inhabitants have strong ties to business interests and are among the League's most active traders, exceeded only by the Regulans. Marik citizens are broadly supportive of the Free Worlds League and the Captain-General.

The population of Oriente tends toward cultural or military pursuits, the results of their dual heritage as the architects of the Free Worlds and their location on the Capellan border. Artistic works are highly prized in Oriente, but the inhabitants do not restrict their cerebral pursuits to the arts; many of the League's scientific and technical innovations originated in this region. Oriente's commitment to the Free Worlds has rarely wavered, even though its political association with the Mariks and the Captain-General has waxed and waned through the years.





SOCIETY AND CULTURE

CRUEL AND UNUSUAL

Of all the elements of the Free Worlds legal system, the definition of “cruel and unusual” is perhaps the most problematic. Many worlds interpret the term differently. On a frontier world, for example, violent crimes often result in summary judgment—usually execution—and even relatively minor crimes may result in floggings or similar physical punishments rather than incarceration. Conversely, in the safe core worlds of the League’s interior, any form of physical punishment is abhorred; incarceration, monetary fines or confiscation of goods are the norm. The core-worlder finds violent physical punishments repellent, while the removal of liberty most greatly offends the sensibilities of those on the border planets. Add to that variations in outlook and moral ideals between different religious faiths, and the result is a quagmire of conflicting concerns, all of them cultural and thus given considerable significance in the legal process. Under the usual process, conflicts are referred to the “next highest court,” but in the most heated debates it is not unusual for appeals to follow appeals and the matter be referred ever upward until it reaches the First Circuit or (in rare circumstances) Parliament.

Worlds League can maintain its own legal traditions, within a few broad guidelines: the accused must have a fair hearing, trial by combat or ordeal is not permitted, “cruel and unusual” punishments are prohibited, and all advocates and adjudicators must be licensed in the jurisdiction in which they practice. However, federal law may supersede provincial law and automatically applies in disputes that cross jurisdictions. This openness has given rise to a diverse spectrum of legal traditions, ranging from those principally involving corporate law (such as Irian), to those with major religious elements (such as Shiloh or Djubba), to those that foster human freedom (like the anarchic communes of Ayn Tarma). Most League citizens have few qualms about falling back on the law to resolve disputes, to the point where one wag once suggested that the League government was a “litigiocracy”—an observation unfortunately well-grounded in truth, though in many regards this quip demonstrates the trust of the League’s people in the legal and judicial process.

Adjudicating the complex web of clashing statutes—usually between provinces, but also between worlds, as different member planets of the same province often have different legal precedents—is the responsibility of the Federal Judicial Courts, whose members also judge matters involving federal law. Over almost eight centuries of the League’s existence, a considerable body of opinions and rulings has grown up, establishing a framework of precedents in which cases of differing jurisdiction can be placed—and in the most extreme cases, where federal statutes can be enacted to supersede particularly daunting conflicts among provincial laws.

Such drastic measures, however, are only employed in the most intractable cases. Most of the time, cross-jurisdictional disputes fall into one of three categories: resource and territorial disputes, financial and contractual dealings, and personal crimes, including the flight of felons from one jurisdiction to another. By focusing on these three areas, federal involvement in regional litigation is kept within reasonable limits, making possible the licensing of appropriate advocates. Without such restricted frames of reference, finding a lawyer or judge fully conversant with the relevant statutes would be virtually impossible. For example, the most senior judge in the League—Chief Justice Khalil Marcus—is a licensed advocate in fifty-six provinces, roughly a third of those in the League. In his area of specialty, tax law, he has at least a passing familiarity with the statutes of all 161 provinces, as well as federal law. As might be surmised, clerks and researchers play a vital role in the Free Worlds legal system, especially at the federal level.

COURTS

The complex interaction of local and federal law has led to the development of a five-tiered court system, with each level (or circuit) handling cases within its jurisdiction and referring any cross-jurisdictional legal affairs to the next highest level. Plaintiffs and defendants in a case have the right to request that a higher circuit hear their case, but unless compelling jurisdictional reasons exist for doing so, the decision to refer the case lies with the case’s presiding judge.

At the base level are regional courts (the Fifth Circuit). Usually associated with towns and cities or similar administrative areas, they handle the most mundane cases—petty theft, vandalism, assault—as well as more serious crimes that fall solely within their jurisdiction. Not all planets have permanent regional courts, however, and so many rely on circuit judges or referrals to the planetary courts on the Fourth Circuit.

The Fourth Circuit courts function on a planetary level, ruling in matters that involve multiple cities and/or regions, though the range of cases they handle is broadly similar to the Fifth Circuit. On some low-population worlds, the Fourth and Fifth circuits may merge roles, with all cases being handled by these planetary courts. Federal statutes require all planets in the League to have at least one qualified Fourth Circuit judiciary.

Regulus never had a strong military or intellectual tradition, even though its troops and sages are respected, but rather focuses its endeavors on commercial pursuits. Many of the League’s most active traders are Regular, as are a substantial number of corporate executives. The arts remain strong on Regulus, particularly those of Indian origin, despite the diminution of other aspects of the Asian sub-continent’s culture. Politically, Regulus’ support for the League remains solid, but the province’s people have never spared much love for the Marik clan.

The fourth major province, Andurien, mixes commercial and political acumen with significant military traditions. The result is a self-reliant and proud people who are nonetheless divided on the region’s checkered relations with the federal government. The secessionist fervor of the 3030s has largely disappeared, but lingering resentment of federal authorities remains.

One other group of note is the Roma, descendants of the Terran Romany peoples. They adhere to no political boundaries and instead wander the League at will. Though strongest in the Marik Commonwealth, Roma communities exist on many League worlds, though mostly on a temporary basis. The technically adept Roma prefer an itinerant lifestyle, though—as through much of their history—this preference has led to resentment and suspicion among their neighbors. Nonetheless, Roma technical expertise is often highly prized by those isolated communities who can pragmatically put aside their prejudice.

CRIME AND JUSTICE

Per the provisions of the Act of Incorporation, each member-state of the Free



SAMPLE CRIMES AND PUNISHMENTS

Crime	Standard punishment
Pubic intoxication	50-300 M-bill fine
Antisocial behavior	E-tagging, exclusion orders and/or 3 months' imprisonment
Vandalism	50-100 M-bill fine; 100-200 hours community service
Littering	50-100 M-bill fine; 50 hours community service
Personal slander	1-50,000 M-bill fine
Corporate slander	50-500,000 M-bill fine
Insider dealing†	100-250,000 M-bill fine; 3 years' imprisonment
Assault	6-12 months' imprisonment
Petty theft	50-100 M-bill fine; 100-200 hours community service*
Grand theft	50-100,000 M-bill fine; 3-10 years' imprisonment**
Customs violations	Confiscation of goods, 50,000-500,000 M-bill fine and 6 months' imprisonment
Tax evasion	100-1,000,000 M-bill fine; 2-5 years' imprisonment
Fraud	50-250,000 M-bill fine; 3-8 years' imprisonment
Intellectual theft	25-75,000 M-bill fine; 2-8 years' imprisonment
Civil espionage	10 years' imprisonment
Kidnapping	5-15 years' imprisonment†
Manslaughter	3-10 years' imprisonment†
Murder	15+ years' imprisonment (usually "life or 30 years")†
Treason	25 years' imprisonment†

*Plus amputation of one hand in some theocratic communities

**Plus blinding in some theocratic communities

†These are capital crimes on some worlds, particularly those near the League's borders, and execution usually follows public humiliation and torture. Some groups in the League have attempted to eradicate this practice, calling it "cruel and unusual," with little success.

‡Including gaming fraud and card-counting on Kyeinnisan.

While the Fourth and Fifth circuits deal with local matters, the Third Circuit courts are often called upon to handle multi-planetary (and thus potentially multi-provincial) matters, including those involving more than one province on a single world. Two versions of Third Circuit courts exist: those operating in the larger provinces such as Oriente and Regulus, whose responsibilities cover all cases within that province's jurisdiction, and those that operate on a federal level, trying cross-jurisdictional (but not always federal) cases.

The Second Circuit, whose area of responsibility often overlaps with the Third Circuit, exists solely to examine cases of federal law or those referred from the Third Circuit. The eight Second Circuit courts are located on Andurien, Atreus, Irian, Marik, Oriente, Regulus, Tamarind and Tematagi.

The First Circuit, the pinnacle of the Free Worlds' legal system, comprises a single body—the Supreme Court of the Free Worlds League. Based on Atreus and presided over by the Chief Justice and his deputies, it rules in all matters that affect the League as a whole, or in matters that involve foreign powers. The Supreme Court operates with the authority of Parliament, and though no higher court authority exists, the First Circuit may in very rare circumstances refer cases to Parliament for final adjudication.

Another somewhat unofficial tier of courts exists for matters within noble families, colloquially known as Family Tribunals (or, more officially, House Courts). These groups have authority over members of each noble house and usually comprise the upper echelons of the family. With one exception, their legal status is questionable, but few who come before them challenge their authority. These courts permit noble families to judge their own affairs before involving provincial or federal authorities. The key exception, the Marik clan's House Court, has historically held the legal authority to appoint the Captain-General. Resolution 288 impinges on this authority—at present, the Captain-General can appoint his own successor—but should a Marik incumbent leave office without making provision for the succession, the Succession Act empowers the Marik family to suggest a candidate.

FEDERAL COURT JUSTICES

Crime	Judge
First Circuit	
Supreme Court	Chief Justice Khalil Marcus. Justice Niall Venn, Justice Patricia Rossini
Second Circuit	
Federal Court of Andurien	Justice Alphard Mantovani; Justice Carole Quinn
Federal Court of Atreus*	Justice Mikhal Solinnin
Federal Court of Irian	Justice Rory Kiel; Justice Haydn Lewis
Federal Court of Marik	Justice Cole Danak; Justice Talvin Kulkarni
Federal Court of Oriente	Justice Michaela Arias; Justice Félix Diéquez
Federal Court of Regulus	Justice Jamison Weiss; Justice Sulina Dutta
Federal Court of Tamarind	Justice Hikaru Shaw; Justice Gustavus Rive
Federal Court of Tematagi	Justice Jan Chen; Justice Peter Phillips

*Atreus currently has only one sitting federal judge, and so the First Circuit handles some of its cases.

POLICE AND SECURITY FORCES

Maintaining security personnel to enforce law and order falls to provincial and regional authorities. The League has no national police force, though SAFE and the Customs service have broad cross-jurisdictional powers and work with the investigative arm of the Department of Justice (CopSec) to enforce federal law. The size, quality and reliability of police forces across the Free Worlds fluctuate considerably (though recent reforms, including the introduction of a federal uniform, have stripped away historically regional bias-



es within CopSec, at least). In many regards, this variance is tied to wealth and moneymaking. The richer core worlds are more likely to employ professional security personnel than marginal frontier worlds, many of whom rely on appointed marshals and volunteer wardens. For example, Irian's industrial and commercial sectors are patrolled by well-trained and equipped corporate security troops to uphold planetary and corporate law. Likewise Kyeinnisan, the gambler's world, maintains a frighteningly efficient security force (nicknamed the "holy rollers"), funded by various on-world businesses through an annual subscription, whose members ensure that their planet has the lowest crime rate in the Free Worlds League. On the border world of Eleusis, however, law is in the hands of roving Qadi (judges) appointed by the Sultan, who serves as judge, jury and executioner in the often-lawless borderlands of that once-beautiful world.

EDUCATION

The Free Worlds League has no dedicated education ministry, but federal authorities are hardly disinterested in such matters. Instead, education falls under the Department of Human Services (which also oversees healthcare and social services). The League places no legal requirements on the education of its citizens, preferring to let market forces dictate the level and extent of schooling among the general population, but it does lay down the curricula for subjects taught in the League's schools and universities, usually tied to key development points at ages four, six, ten, fourteen and eighteen.

All teachers in the Free Worlds League must be licensed by federal authorities after a two-year training course (or a one-year addition to an existing university course). Throughout their careers, teachers' success rates are monitored constantly by studying their pupils' exam results, weighted by their aptitude scores. A pupil who performs well above his or her indicated aptitude is considered a success for the teacher. One who consistently performs below potential is a failure. For the most part, student performance falls in the grey area between the two extremes, with a series of bureaucratic benchmarks largely irrelevant to reality forming the backbone of the government's education analysis.

Schooling in the Free Worlds begins around four years of age and usually continues to age fourteen or eighteen. From ages four to twelve the primary curriculum teaches rudimentary skills—math, reading, writing and so on—that increase in sophistication with age, usually through practical lessons. Between twelve and fourteen, secondary education takes on a more academic and theoretical tone, expanding into subjects like language, history, geography, the sciences and technology. After age fourteen, pupils who continue in education are streamed into one of three broad school types: vocational trade schools (teaching manual skills and usually graduating pupils at sixteen), academic lyceums offering junior and senior diplomas (whose graduates complete their studies by age eighteen and usually go on to universities), and mixed-ability "comprehensive" schools that amalgamate the functions of the two other types. All League schools are privately owned and operated (though local governments often fund primary and secondary education) and so the schools' availability and success rate varies considerably. In general, the richer core worlds have larger and more successful schools, often with more esoteric courses, while those on border worlds tend to be smaller and more practical in nature.

Tertiary education, from universities and the like, commences at age eighteen and continues for anywhere between two and ten years, depending on the course and university. The government provides no direct financial aid for those students at this level, and individuals who pursue such a course of study must finance themselves (usually via family wealth or work) or find a sponsor. However, the military and many corporations frequently offer educational opportunities in return for the graduate's services. Numerous foundations, including some with government ties, also provide full and partial scholarships, though their selection criteria commonly serve a political agenda and are fraught with bias and nepotism.

FREE WORLDS TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

Founded in 3023, the Free Worlds Technical Institute was Janos Marik's response to the Federated Suns' NAIS. Its early years were difficult—persuading skilled technical staff to work at the college was a challenge, as was convincing corporations to share details of technical processes they considered proprietary—but the Institute grew in scope and prestige until the universe-shaking events of 3028-3030. Grayson Carlisle, discoverer of the Helm memory core, acknowledged the League's suzerainty over Helm and dispatched copies of his remarkable find to Janos Marik and to Duke Hector Stewart. Subsequently, the FWTI became the principal conduit for disseminating this priceless information. Only by sponsoring attendees and teachers could companies gain access to the memory core's secrets (with a few exceptions, courted directly by federal authorities). Suddenly, corporations began lining up to support the school—and the rest, as they say, is history.

Offering a range of courses that run from three to five years, covering subjects as diverse as physics, chemical engineering and planetology, FWTI boasts fierce competition for places. All candidates must undergo a rigorous series of interviews and exams before acceptance. Though officially open to all with sufficient aptitude, the process favors the wealthy and landed classes, who have access to a more comprehensive education. Scholarships are available for the underprivileged, funded by corporate interests and encouraged by tax incentives, but they help little with the academic requirements that in many regards exceed those of the NAIS.

LOECHES TRADE SCHOOL

One of the League's top two business schools, the Trade School of Loeches in the Duchy of Oriente offers a broad range of business and marketing courses, designed to create the League's next generation of businessmen and merchants. Loeches' curriculum tends toward the vocational—the practical skills of negotiating, organizing transportation and dealing with Customs, for example—but provides graduates with a rounded view of business affairs. Many courses include placement schemes lasting anywhere from one to six months, in which students can put their lessons into practical context.

MAARAKIVA UNIVERSITY

The League's second major business school, with a curriculum that overlaps the one of its chief rival, Maarakiva University tends toward the theoretical and cerebral. Though its graduates are fully conversant with all aspects of business, their schooling directs them toward planning, advertising and market research. The government of Olafsvik, where the school is based, contributes significantly to



Maarakiva and hires a number of graduates each year (business skills being useful in government service), but most former students join corporations or establish their own businesses.

LOYALTY THEATRICAL ACADEMY

The media and the arts are key elements of League society, and the Loyalty Theatrical Academy is the best-known school for the performing arts in the Free Worlds. Founded in 2975, its fortunes have waxed and waned with the League's entertainment markets. Holly Duchesne's takeover of the school in 3028 allowed it to escape the often-contradictory demands of the League's plethora of broadcasters, particularly after the appointment of the Caritas Agency to represent graduates and to handle contract negotiations. The academy's curriculum includes music, dance, acting, lighting, oration, writing and direction and a host of similar skills; all students undergo a broad introductory course before specializing in a particular field of study. Short and intensive courses are available, usually geared to hobbyists and dabblers, but the main course of study lasts three years. The private school continues to have a tempestuous relationship with its faculty—few stay longer than a couple of years before moving on or being let go, though many return to the school as their careers dictate. The sheer number of performers in the Free Worlds League, however, makes turnover a minor problem for Duchesne and her staff.

KIRA PLACE

Once a quiet vacation retreat, Kira Place on the world of Home became a popular refuge for intellectuals and freethinkers. Its role as a center of learning grew from the individuals who came to the planet seeking to learn from the intelligentsia. The intellectual collective grew steadily, including such notables as Thornton Hyadil, Muhren Dahl, Edith Anderson and Campbell Hudson, and the "lessons" they gave to visitors became more involved and formalized. In 2917, the gatherings officially became the "commune of Kira Place."

In the century and half since its founding, Kira Place has established no specific curriculum. Instead, its attendees engage in freewheeling discussions on philosophy, religion, economics and host of similar subjects. The college's Blue Sky debates have become legendary, involving all students in sessions that can last for weeks. The school's motto is, "There is no such thing as a wrong opinion," though the slogan has not prevented heated arguments or one speaker demolishing another's position.

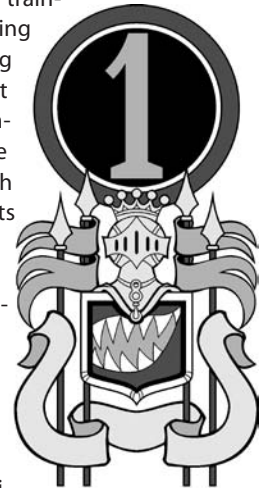
SAINT CATHERINE'S UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

Part medical facility and part teaching hospital, St. Catherine's University on Atrous is the Free Worlds' largest medical school. Spread across eleven campuses in six cities, it graduates approximately six hundred doctors per year and twice that number of medical technicians. The nursing school annex in Atrous City graduates almost

two thousand personnel per year. Graduates of the eight-year MD course (three years theoretical and five years clinical experience) are respected across the League. The EMTs and field personnel trained at SCUH's West Ionia County annex are likewise highly rated, many sponsored by the FWLM, which employs them as battlefield medics. In addition to its role as a teaching hospital and full-fledged medical facility, St. Catherine's is a major center of medical research and has been involved in pioneering and recovering numerous procedures.

HERO TRAINING INSTITUTES

Pointedly excluded from the FWLM training program by Thomas Marik's centralizing reforms, the two surviving Hero Training Institutes have struggled to remain afloat in the modern League. The standards imposed by OfSted mean that graduates have little chance of gaining employment with the FWLM and so the schools' main clients are those seduced by the mercenary lifestyle—an allure that remains strong despite Thomas' encouragement of neo-chivalric ideals. While the Hero Institutes exist primarily as moneymaking machines for their owner, Kenneth Morrall—fees are high and equipment standards low—they do offer genuine military training, even if it amounts to only a few months of practical experience in the two-year course. This legacy of founder Roncelli "Ronco" Morrall is the main reason the Institutes have survived for almost eighty years while other private institutions have folded or been shut down by the authorities.



OUR LADY MARIA AUXILIADORA PREPATORY SCHOOL

Officially, the Maria Auxiliadora school is little different from other "finishing schools" across the Free Worlds that provide "refined young ladies and gentlemen" with the social and academic skills they need to survive in the upper echelons of society. The key difference is that while other schools finish their pupils' education, Maria Auxiliadora teaches its students to finish others. Maria Auxiliadora is a school of assassins, named for the patron saint of these quiet killers. Federal authorities do not officially sanction the school, but neither have they moved against it during its four-century existence. Instead, graduates gain employment with their families (as well as with SAFE and many corporations) to facilitate the plethora of quiet feuds that typify relations between the League's minor noble houses. Graduates are not above the law—they risk prosecution if caught committing a crime or identified by any evidence they leave—but the school's training means that few are apprehended.



RELIGION

Religious freedom is central to the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Free Worlds. The League contains representatives of most major Terran faiths and has also spawned several new religions. The interrelated faiths of Christianity, Judaism and Islam (the “Faiths of the Book” in Muslim parlance) predominate, but none has an outright majority, nor have they sought to dominate their rivals. With living space not a major issue, these groups have largely overcome the differences that historically marked relations between them. The League has no government-sponsored religion; in fact, the law prohibits such an institution, mandating a clear separation between Church and State. The Marik family and the Captains-General, with the exception of Danak Sejjaj, have espoused Catholic and Orthodox Christian traditions.

CHRISTIANITY

The largest single religion in the Free Worlds by a slim margin, Christianity has prospered because of its cross-ethnic appeal. Lacking a focused cultural identity, variations of this religion can permeate different elements of League society. Unfortunately, this same loose focus on belief in Christ and acceptance of the Bible, with no other necessary elements in common, makes Christianity a fragmented faith. Several hundred lesser sects complement its three main denominations.

Roman Catholicism

The Catholic tradition remains healthy in the League thanks to its entrenched bureaucracy and traditions, though occasional bouts of doctrinal rigidity have alienated many adherents. Looking to the Petrine Pope of Rome as the head of their church, the Free Worlds tradition is somewhat at odds with other forms of Catholicism that have grown up, most notably the New Avalon tradition, but is pledged to follow the Pope’s lead in doctrinal matters. The occupation and isolation of Terra, first following the Amaris Coup and then by ComStar and Word of Blake, has hindered links to the Vatican, and so day-to-day matters in the Free Worlds fall under the authority of the Cardinal of Atreus despite the acknowledgement of Rome as the Church’s overlord.

While many worlds have a Catholic hierarchy, the most commonly encountered members of the Church are the Society of Jesus (better known as Jesuits), whose pursuit of knowledge has kept them closely involved with educational systems in the Free Worlds. Most major tertiary schools have some Jesuit faculty members (as do several primary and secondary schools), and the Society itself operates a number of schools that teach secular and religious subjects. The seminaries on Kalidasa and Augustine are central to the maintenance of the League’s Catholic infrastructure, though the Augustine school is a shadow of its former glory.

Christian Orthodoxy

The Orthodox traditions of Greece and Russia maintain a strong grip in some parts of the Free Worlds, in particular the Marik Commonwealth and Oriente, where they comprise the second largest Christian sect. Relations with the Catholic (Western) tradition have fluctuated somewhat over the years, but save for 3054—which

saw the bi-millennial anniversary of the East-West schism, triggered by the mutual excommunications of the Pope and Patriarch of Constantinople—have been good in recent years. The self-governing nature of Orthodox churches has deprived the Eastern tradition of the strong centralized power that has allowed Catholicism to flourish, but ironically the very absence of Catholicism’s insistence on the infallibility of the Pontiff has encouraged Orthodox membership on some worlds. Despite this tradition of self-governance, the Orthodox Patriarch of Atreus rather than the local cardinal plays a ceremonial role in the enthronement of each new Captain-General.

Protestantism

The smallest of the three main sects, Protestantism in its various forms is nonetheless alive and well in the League. Most Protestant churches have small congregations, but work together through the auspices of the Free Worlds Protestant Synod, founded in 2312. Unlike Catholicism, the Protestant churches favor communal decision-making and advance a strong social agenda. Historically, the Synod has had close ties to Parliament and has been less supportive of the Captains-General.

Other Traditions

Though the “big three” dominate Christianity in the Free Worlds, they are not the only sects with significant numbers of adherents. The evangelical tradition has spawned numerous churches across the League, though few have lasted for any significant period; most find that the League’s cultural divisions hamper their ability to recruit. Evangelical churches have attained the most success from recruiting among the needy and underprivileged; the worlds of Procyon and Sirius have seen particular growth in evangelical churches since their liberation. The best-known evangelical sects, however, are those that espouse apocalyptic ideals. Generally short-lived, these churches attract considerable attention and prompt a distorted common impression of evangelism as a faith. Such groups usually collapse with the death or discrediting of their founder, or the failure of their doomsday prophecies. Only a handful of such groups exist today in the League, ranging from the benign (suggesting Christ will return in “the current lifetime”) to the potentially violent (suggesting that the world will end and God’s judgment will come immediately after the enthronement of the Antichrist at the next Star League conference).

In stark contrast to the ups and downs of evangelism, the Church of Latter-Day Saints has prospered in the Free Worlds League. Many of its adherents work for the civil service, in particular the Department of Human Services, thanks to their religion’s involvement with genealogy and record keeping. Though the total number of Mormon adherents remains relatively small, the cohesiveness of their church has allowed it to wield significant influence.

Ironically in this age of interstellar travel, faster-than-light communication and BattleMechs, the low-technology Amish tradition has survived and thrived, principally on Home but also in several enclaves elsewhere in the League. They maintain minimal involvement in League affairs, but outsiders often admire their willingness to work together to solve problems and avoid violent solutions.



JUDAISM

The second most extensive faith in the Free Worlds, Judaism has prospered almost despite itself. The Jewish faith has often faced serious internal struggles: radicalists vs. traditionalists vs. reformers. Some reformed elements of the faith found rapprochement with the Catholic Church and Christianity, but this event only galvanized the traditionalists and radicalists. Orthodox sects such as Hasidism gained many adherents during these troubles (though their numbers subsequently dropped off until they stabilized a century ago). The number of hard-liners grew as well, but the Free Worlds League includes no wholly Jewish worlds even though roughly a third of its provinces have a Jewish element among their populations. Hebrew is spoken widely, ranking among the top ten languages spoken in the League, and there are dozens of rabbinical and Talmudic schools.

ISLAM

The third of the inter-related faiths bound through the words of the Bible (or at least its Old Testament), Islam has struggled in the Free Worlds. Many of its tenets are at odds with interstellar society, and it faces practical difficulties in transplanting the faith to other worlds, most notably associated with salat (prayer, which must be directed toward Mecca) and hajj (pilgrimage) to the holy sites. These difficulties have hampered traditional Islam, particularly the Sunni and Shi'a sects of Old Earth, but have also led to the emergence of new traditions.

K'wara Islam, rooted in the Black Muslim faith of the twentieth century, first emerged in the twenty-fifth century. This ultra-conservative variation eschews technology and advanced medicine. Occasionally (and erroneously) described as the Muslim equivalent of the Amish, the sect not only refuses to use technology, but also crusades to rid the universe of it. The rabid zeal of the K'wara has made little headway in expanding the sect out of its base on the world of Mosiro.

In stark contrast, the liberal Qarad'yani sect has adapted well to life in the League and has prospered by taking a symbolic rather than literal view of the Koran and the holy sites of Islam. Many Qarad'yani see the "quest for New Mecca" as a spiritual journey rather than a literal one, a constant process of self-education and enlightenment. More traditional sects regard these views as heretical, and some hard-line Muslims place a fatwa (death sentence) upon the head of each new Qarad'yani adherent. The clashes between the orthodox and liberal elements of the Islamic faith make some of the Sunni-Shi'a clashes of ancient history seem minor.

HINDUISM

Most popular in the Principality of Regulus, but with adherents scattered throughout the Free Worlds, the Hindu faith got off to a slow start but now has representation on about fifteen percent of League planets. This faith's lack of rigid tenets and an open approach to compliance are its strongest points, but have also led to major diversification as isolated worlds and cities developed their own variants and practices over the centuries. Hinduism's emphasis on cultural as well as spiritual matters means that many adherents of other faiths are regularly exposed to Hindu traditions through rituals, festivals, music and works of art, which grants this decentralized

faith a larger role in public perception than the actual number of its adherents suggests.

BUDDHISM

The fifth and final major faith in the Free Worlds, Buddhism shares many traits with Hinduism; many of their beliefs are intertwined, thanks largely to their common origins in Terra's Indian subcontinent. Seeing Buddhist and Hindu worshipers in the same shrine is not uncommon. Indeed, Hindus may well have Buddhist symbols in their homes and vice versa. As a distinct faith, however, Buddhism has never prospered in the League to the extent that it has in the Capellan Confederation or Draconis Combine. Adherence to the faith tends to be a personal choice rather than a world or provincial matter, though some locales (such as Sorunda and Chilung) have significant Buddhist communities. Monasteries like the tiny Blue Door House on Chilung or the massive New Tibet Gonpa of Sorunda provide a means of expounding the faith and teaching new generations of believers.

The traditions of Free Worlds Buddhism vary considerably, ranging from the decentralized Mahayana, the Japanese variant that encourages individuals to attain Nirvana by living with wisdom and virtue, to the isolationist but well-organized Mantrayana, which favors religious recitations and monastic institutions. The third strand of Buddhism, best known to nonbelievers, is Zen (called Chan on worlds near the Capellan border). This sect stresses master-pupil relationships and a quest for satori (enlightenment) through self-discipline and meditation.

OTHER FAITHS

While the five major faiths predominate in the Free Worlds, the League's open society has allowed a plethora of fringe cults and religions to flourish. Most are harmless, but others have sinister overtones, often linked to cults of personality and messianic fervor.

Sikhism

Another Terran faith originating in the Indian sub-continent, Sikhism focuses on the teachings of fourteen spiritual leaders (gurus) who emerged between the fifteenth and twenty-fourth centuries (though some orthodox sects only accept the ten gurus acknowledged on Terra before the eighteenth century). Meditation and acts of devotion are important to Sikhism, as is a belief that personal actions shape the path of enlightenment and rebirth, a concept that has long been part of common parlance: karma. The Hari Mandir of Menias City on Regulus is the heart of the Sikh faith in the Free Worlds, but the establishment of often-sumptuous religious venues in each Sikh community is a key part of the faith's culture.

Way of Arme

Emerging in the early thirty-first century, the nihilistic cult known as the Way of Arme has skirted legality for the past fifty years but has somehow survived suppression attempts by federal and provincial authorities. Based on the teachings of Brian Arme (who spectacularly killed himself during a live pirate broadcast on Marcus in 3016), the cult preaches abnegation: enlightenment through self-destruction. Its practitioners often starve themselves to glimpse the truth beyond. The final act of suicide to ascend to another state of existence, known to cult members as Culmination,



SOCIETY AND CULTURE

makes the Way of Arme different from other ascetic faiths (including several Christian sects such as the neo-Cathars), and is the crux of outsiders' desires to suppress the cult.

Rumors have long claimed that Arme never died, and that the cult is a scam designed to gather the resources of members who choose Culmination for the use the sect's elite. The stories suggest that in many cases, Culmination is not voluntary (though most League jurisdictions do not outlaw assisted suicide). Despite these rumors and various governments' efforts, the Way of Arme has remained popular among the lower echelons of League society, some of whom see in it a means of escaping their difficult lives.

The Exituri

An ascetic faith that mixes elements of Hinduism, Islam and Judeo-Christian traditions, the Exituri are almost entirely limited to the Silver Hawk world of Shiloh. Anti-technology and puritanical, most adherents live in conditions akin to those in the eighteenth century. Revelation of the sect's beliefs is a crime among the Exituri, and so its practitioners have little missionary fervor; more surprisingly, apostate members of the faith are equally unwilling to discuss its practices. Adherents show little tolerance of other faiths, though their opposition (and members' orthodoxy) varies considerably between quiet disdain to violent attacks. The Exituri are extremely hard workers; they value personal honor and achievement, and karma is a central tenet of their beliefs. These elements have allowed them to survive the harsh conditions on Shiloh. The head of the Exituri is Blessed Leader Elena Kubayshev, though the faith also prophesies the arrival of a messiah, the Mahdi, who will deliver the sect from its self-imposed purgatory on Shiloh.

Eleusinism/Athenism

The last 250 years have seen the emergence of an animistic sect on Eleusis that centers on belief in the spirit world, including the souls of people, animals and even planets. Claiming that this collective manifestation of life-force represents what others call deities, Eleusinism is at odds with more established faiths, though much of the friction between its theologians is expressed through intense debates about humankind and its role in the universe. (Adherents see Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom, as the central manifestation of life force, though some prefer the term Gaia.) Thanks to groups like the Faith Publishing Alliance, which reluctantly admitted this fringe religion in 3059, Eleusinism has spread across the League, though it remains to be seen whether it becomes established as a true religion or merely remains a fast-growing but short-lived fad.

Delphism

Originating in the Lyran Commonwealth roughly 150 years ago, Delphism seeks to rehabilitate the polytheistic beliefs of the ancient Greeks and Romans. It has never gained widespread recognition, but the general tolerance of the Free Worlds has allowed this faith to establish enclaves. New Olympia is the best known of these, with a substantial minority of the watery world's population making offerings to Poseidon (as well as other Olympian gods, to a lesser degree).

FESTIVALS AND TRADITIONS

Among the most distinctive elements of Free Worlds society are the many festivals and holidays celebrated by its citizens. Many are of religious origin, though few of these retain their sacred connotations; others are linked to geographical or social phenomena.

Mardi Gras

Originating as a Christian festival at the start of Lent, the forty-day fast before Easter, Mardi Gras is among the most pervasive festivals in the League, celebrated in various forms. On Bernardo and Asuncion, it is a rowdy carnival celebrating excess and licentiousness. On Atreus and several worlds along the Lyran border, the variant known as Fastnacht is marked by communal meals; likewise on Stewart, with its Shrove Tuesday cake festivals. The masque ball on Andurien is arguably the most sophisticated Mardi Gras party, where attendees sport silken clothes that are works of art; the masquerers who produce the elaborate masks also worn by celebrants are among the League's most highly regarded craftsmen. This surface elegance conceals a sensuous and hedonistic heart that rivals Carnival on other League planets.

Mega Mela

The venue of the Mega Mela varies annually, but each festival attracts hundreds of thousands of attendees. Beginning as the Kumbah Mela, the modern Mega Mela is a secular Hindu event that appeals to adherents and non-believers alike. It includes demonstrations of Hindustani cooking, dress, dancing, music and literature. The sole surviving religious element is the Conclave of Sadhus, the annual gathering of mendicant holy men, many of whom spend all year traveling to the next event. The colorful Mela is second only to Diwali in the Hindu calendar, though it has a broader appeal than the Festival of Lights.

High Sanction

Taking place every six years on Prato to coincide with the regular flares of that planet's star, High Sanction is part religious ceremony and part star-watching experience. Many attendees dress in white linen robes and walk in a procession from the capital, Aigle, to the summit of Mount Nayes. There they wait, many in quiet meditation while others sing and tell stories, for the flare to take place. Raucous partying accompanies the radiant event that turns night to day across the planet for upwards of an hour.

Diwali

The four-day Hindu festival of lights is celebrated on many League worlds, each day highlighting a different aspect of faith. Its simple but colorful rituals often involve fireworks and light shows, both of which honor the heavens and thank them for wealth and good fortune. Outside of Regulus and other predominately Hindu worlds, the largest Diwali celebration takes place on Kyeinnisan, whose authorities play on the tradition that good fortune accompanies those who gamble on the festival days.

Presentation Season

The coming-of-age rituals of the Free Worlds' upper classes follow their own complex rules, established over generations. The balls that



precede the state opening of Parliament on Atreus (and in many cases, regional assemblies as well) are grand soirees at which newly adult (and thus titled) members of the nobility are presented in public for the first time. New attendees dress in opulent finery—some classically elegant, others gaudy like the Regular billiboo or its Terran cousin, the peacock—designed to make an impression. The weeklong series of galas and dances is commonly called the Presentation Season.

MEDIA AND THE ARTS

In an advanced society like the Free Worlds League, “soft” products such as books, films and paintings are as important to the economy and to society as minerals and motor vehicles. Philosophers throughout the ages have argued that the truest measure of a nation’s success is the breadth of its cultural traditions. Without stability and riches, the arts struggle; with them, they flourish.

ARTS

Some artists create for art’s sake. Others create to sell. The Free Worlds has numerous examples of both, ranging from the ultra-modern to traditions that date back millennia.

Sculpture and painting are perennial favorites, traditional stoneworking and oil-on-canvas works being complemented with plastics engineering, laser-etching and dynamic art. Museums, galleries and private homes are the major venues for such works, but many corporations have come to regard art as a business investment and acquire it to decorate their halls and boardrooms. Other artworks in the League are on a scale almost unprecedented in history. Massive installations like the Rock Gardens of Hiratsuka or the Park of ‘Mechs on Norfolk—which recreates major historical battles with eighth-scale BattleMechs, allowing visitors walking among them to appear almost the same size—cover several square kilometers. Some temporary works may be even larger—Van Rosen’s laser-light shows on the moons of Tiber, for example—while others may be deliberately transitory, such as the sand sculptures of Ariel and Park Place. Even in permanent works, a dynamic element may exist—kinetic sculptures, often featuring myomer elements, have been popular for centuries. The prior fad for organic-looking abstract myomer works has died down in recent years, but still holds a morbid fascination for many in the League, particularly those who otherwise find bionics repellent.

Dance and music pervade all levels of society, from the informal fandangos of a quinceañera on Fuentes and the ragas of Diass to the formal balls of Harmony and the state operas of Atreus. Null-G dancing originated in the Free Worlds and is taught at various schools across the League with financial backing from federal authorities. Ballet is also popular, as a performance art and a means of keeping fit, as are swing and tap dance. Formal dancing (foxtrot, waltz, tango, quickstep and disco) is likewise popular as a hobby and a spectator sport. Music in the League ranges from classical works like those of Beethoven, Debussy and Shaw to 20th- and 23rd-century popular music traditions. New works include everything from the naturalistic sounds of Elmana, a native of Tamarind who uses wind noise and animal sounds in her music, to the discordant NovaRock popular among disaffected youth.

Theater is also popular across the Free Worlds, including classic plays by Shakespeare, Tolstoy and Pinter, as well as more recent pieces. Improvisation is popular in many areas and amateur dramatics is a common pastime. Many stage plays are recorded and broadcast across the League, in particular the performances of the Shakespeare Players of Hamilton and the Kabuki of Shasta, helping to meet the population’s insatiable demand for new material.

MEDIA

Interstellar distances pose obstacles for broadcast media, but none have proved insurmountable. Most worlds have their own audio and video transmission networks that broadcast domestic and imported material. Developing material for such stations, whether news broadcasts, documentaries, soap operas or movies, is big business dominated by several major corporations. Most worlds import around eighty percent of their broadcast material, a state of affairs that a number of groups have challenged on the grounds that it undermines local cultures.

Most video transmissions in the Free Worlds are vidtape, a holographic format whose origins date back centuries. Whether played on small portable units or through stadium-sized broadcast suites, the core principles are the same, though quality varies considerably. Presentation can be simple text (commonly known as a vidnovel) or offer an immersion experience in which the viewer sits inside the events and can shift perspective as he or she sees fit. The ultimate expression of vidtape is the RHE (Recreational Hologram Environment), which allows the viewer to be an active participant in the recording through interactive props and sophisticated computer modeling. RHEs of sports events and active pursuits like climbing and dancing are popular across the League; recordings of military engagements and extreme sports make up another substantial element of the market.

THE VIDTAPE FINALS

Most art forms have their own competitions and awards, but in the Free Worlds League those for vidtape are federally sponsored and take place during the first two weeks of April every year. Incorporating a trade show element—content producers use the event to hawk their next-season wares to broadcasters—the Vidtape Finals are big business. The show’s venue varies annually, hosted by the world that wins the “Theater World” category, but its content follows a long-established tradition of seminars, parties and gala performances. Almost a hundred awards in total are given out, but the key ones are Theater World (the world whose contributions to the vid industry have been most significant that year), best documentary, best performance work, best movie (long form) and best ongoing series. Performers and creators are likewise acknowledged via awards such as best director, best actor, best actress, best dance troupe and best musical performance. Originally each world could make only one nomination in each category, but that provision was struck down in 3044 and there are now no limits on the number of candidates. Critics say this allows the more populous and media-savvy worlds to dominate the competition and complicates the awards process, but its supporters believe it reflects the state of the industry rather than an artificial world-based view.



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Irian Media Interstellar

News broadcasts by Irian Media's journalistic arm, Irian News Interstellar (INI), can be found on almost every League world (and in many other realms), serving as the backbone of many local broadcasts as well as wholly Irian Media-created programming. Rivalled only by INN and DBC, INI has managed to retain its distinctive edge despite efforts to appeal to a wider commercial market. However, this has not dissuaded some critics of INI from decrying the "worsening standards" of journalism. Irian Media's entertainment arm, much more populist than INI, operates largely independently, though crossover markets exist in the docudrama and lifestyle fields. The logos of these two distinctive parts of Irian Media are among the best known in the Free Worlds; Irian Media is one of the few non-governmental agencies to have such a pervasive reach. Only the Word of Blake's HPG Network and the attendant Voice of Truth, and also the Highlife chain of stores, match Irian Media's profile.

Atrean Broadcasting Corporation

Though lacking the breadth and reach of Irian Media Interstellar, Atrean Broadcasting has built a solid reputation for coverage of parliamentary and economic matters, which it syndicates to interested parties across the Free Worlds. The nature of this programming means that, while the average citizen is aware of ABC's product, few care to subscribe to its services. The relatively small number of people who do subscribe (compared to INI's reach) are the League's business and political decision-makers, giving the company a significantly greater impact than its viewing figures otherwise suggest.

Loyalty Consumer Distribution

Nicknamed "Lowest Common Denominator" by its rivals, the media giant LCD takes an unabashedly commercial stance on broadcasting. It makes programs as inexpensively as possible, often going for cheap thrills, nudity and late-night adult programming widely reviled by the press but a firm favorite among LCD's core viewers. LCD's low-price syndication deals have allowed it to gain footholds across the League, though the nature of its programming has isolated the company from some of the more moral-minded worlds. Rumors in the media community suggest that even with the company's low-cost productions, outgoing funds substantially exceed income. If so, LCD may soon be forced to seek protection from its creditors.

OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In addition to media and the arts, the Free Worlds boasts a broad range of popular recreational activities. Gaming is particularly popular, especially on Kyeinnisan, which has established itself as the Gambler's World and mixes high-stakes gaming with gaudy spectacle. Sports predictions (such as football pools and horse or tabi racing) are also extremely popular, as are lotteries.

Participation in sports is commonplace, with everything from rugby and baseball to kibadi (a tag-like team game) and polo. Favored sports vary from world to world, but the most widespread are cricket and soccer, both of which have adherents across the Free Worlds. Members of professional teams are well paid and as popular as many vid stars, and support for "the team" is a common element of League culture. Most worlds have their own sports leagues and championships. Some sports have interplanetary tournaments, usu-

ally held every four years, that pit the best teams of several worlds against each other. The Soccer League Championships are one of the best-known such tournaments, held at the Adelphi Stadium on Atreus, closely followed by the Atrean Games athletics tournament.

Outdoor pursuits are popular among rank-and-file Free Worlds citizens, ranging from walking and cycling to climbing and rafting. Resorts exist across the League to cater to the demand for new experiences and challenges, ranging from the luxurious (yachting on New Olympia) to the extreme (climbing the north face of Mount Rajah). Every year sees dozens of expeditions journey to out-of-the-way corners of the League (complete with documenting vid team, of course) to face new and greater challenges. Endurance racing has gained particular media popularity in recent years, with Anna Ikonen, the Atreus-born self-confessed adrenalin junkie, the current media darling.

CLOTHING AND STYLE

With no unifying culture to shape the dress of its inhabitants, the Free Worlds instead has a plethora of fashions as colorful and varied as the people who wear them.

On Atreus and similar cosmopolitan worlds, no one style predominates. Instead, each new year (or "season," in fashion parlance) sparks a covert war between couturiers to provide the latest fashionable look. The League's "style leaders" likewise vie to pick the fashions that will typify the year (and to avoid trends likely to become embarrassments). Getting caught wearing last season's clothes—or, in the most extreme cliques, wearing the same outfit twice—is a social gaffe of the highest order. Most fashion houses produce two concurrent collections—genuine "trend-setter" outfits and "sheep-chic" for the mass market (the latter term originated with the idea that its wearers want to be stylish, but succumb to a herd instinct that ends with everyone dressed similarly). Some trends, like the "mercenary chic" of the mid-30th century, persist for a time, but most fade quickly only to be rediscovered decades or centuries later.

Corporate employees commonly have a specific uniform or constraints on their mode of dress, both of which impose uniformity of appearance (though some seek to buck the trend, personalizing their clothing while toeing the official line). Formal suits and jackets are common, though neckties are not part of current fashions.

Regional variations make little change in core styles, often merely emphasizing particular colors or materials, though some provinces and worlds have clearly defined clothing. Dashikis and tams are popular on many worlds with a strong African heritage like those of the Mosiro Archipelago, while saris and choli are popular among women on worlds of Indian heritage, in particular in the Principality of Regulus. The black bekishe is the normal dress for Hasidim, while djelabas and kaftans predominate among the Free Worlds' Islamic population. Charro suits appear on many of the "Southwestern worlds" alongside Pueblo mantles, while in Andurien and on other worlds along the Capellan border, cheongsam and tang jackets are popular. Even tracht, dirndl skirts and lederhosen may be found in the League, usually on worlds with a Germanic heritage or that border the Lyran Alliance.

Members of the League Parliament wear distinctive dress: a white high-collared linen shirt and black trousers or skirt, over which is worn a purple chasuble with color panels inset in the shoulders denoting regional affiliations. The uniformity this outfit lends to



Parliament is deceptive, but it also formalizes the post of MP. While wearing the chasuble and in the precincts of the Parliament complex, an MP cannot be prosecuted for anything he or she says, no matter how libelous or scurrilous—a practice that gave rise to the phrase, “under the chasuble” to describe pronouncements made from a privileged position.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Though historically marketers of new systems rather than technological innovators—a key distinction between the economies of the Free Worlds and the Lyran realm—the Free Worlds League has recently seen a sea change in its procedures and fortunes. The steady recovery of lost technology has allowed the League to prosper, and in many regards has offset the research advantages of the Federated Suns and Lyran Alliance. The League has always taken steps to conserve technology—after the First Succession War, Parliament mandated the creation of technology caches to limit future loss of knowledge—but the creation of the Free Worlds Technical Institute and later the recovery of the Helm memory core have allowed the League to match if not exceed its Inner Sphere competition.

The League is farthest ahead of its rivals in the practical application of technologies. The development of the Free Worlds as the Inner Sphere’s armorer during the Clan invasion allowed League companies to develop and master mass-production techniques for advanced military technologies while other states had to rely on handmade components. League products are thus quicker to make, more reliable and cheaper than their equivalents in other states. That payment for war materiel is often severely late matters little to the companies that have taken payment in kind by using foreign contracts to finance their research and development. Foreign rivals find it difficult to compete with the advantage accrued by Free Worlds companies, and the creation of an economic hegemony with the Free Worlds at its heart may form part of the Captain-General’s plans for his term as First Lord of the Star League.

Everyday Technology

With all the secrets of the Helm core and now Clan technology yet to be unraveled, there remain considerable differences between the technology levels of the Great Houses. Though losing more than the Lyran state and recovering less quickly than the Federated Suns (and certainly without the outside help received by the Draconis Combine), the League has nonetheless done well, and the years since the Clan invasion have allowed it to match its neighbors in the domestic field.

Despite the Helm core, power generation technologies in the League have changed little. Solar collectors and aerogenerator (wind turbine) farms, and in some cases hydroelectric plants, provide the bulk of electricity used in residential and commercial areas, usually complemented by fossil fuel technologies. Federal authorities, in addition to mandating efficiency standards, have controlled the dissemination of fusion power plants, licensing their use and seeking to limit their employment to areas where other technologies are unsuitable. This policy, designed to conserve military-grade fusion plants for governmental use during the Succession Wars, was never stringently enforced, but even with the recovery of advanced technologies over the past few decades, civilian use of fusion plants has increased by only two percent. However, the use of larger plants as backup power

sources for government and medical facilities (and many industrial complexes) has grown significantly in the past two decades.

With such domestic technologies as water and air purification plants, cooking and food preservation systems and other “white goods,” the Free Worlds has slowly pulled ahead of many of its neighbors. The fall of the first Star League left patents for numerous such systems in Free Worlds hands (most famously the TriFil process used by Curtiss Hydroponics), and though the Succession Wars made their use difficult, the post-Fourth Succession War era saw many archived technologies come back into use, through the recovery of constituent technologies or the development of cost-efficient manufacturing processes. For example, the preponderance of food irradiators has been facilitated by the recovery of containment technologies found in the Helm core. Likewise, the recent promulgation of sonic scrubber systems has been made possible through cost-effective processes, the actual technology remaining available thanks to Parliament-dictated caches put in place after the First Succession War.

In consumer electronics, companies like Kensai have pioneered new vid systems and formats, while other companies have continued to advance audio science. Personal computing has likewise moved on in leaps and bounds, with systems available to civilians not far behind those common during the first Star League. Personal and interplanetary communications, however, have seen little investment or research. Instead, federal authorities have allowed the Word of Blake to monopolize these areas (though they have not blocked private research in communications), and so the League’s people must rely on the Blakists’ good graces to communicate between worlds.

Medicine

Medical science demonstrates the staggering cultural diversity of the Free Worlds. The anti-bionic sentiment that permeates many planets has hampered the development of prosthetics, though transplant procedures are widely accepted. Disdain for bionics pervades the Free Worlds, but the intensity of the prejudice fluctuates. On some worlds, an “out of sight, out of mind” attitude prevails, with readily concealable systems such as artificial hearts and some skeleto-musculature reconstructions accepted and only bionics that are immediately apparent drawing comment. Elsewhere, a lack of obvious modifications does not exempt an individual from name-calling and social stigma. As the current Captain-General has found, the very suspicion of bionics is enough to send some fringe groups into a frothing fit of accusations, no matter how many denials are issued. The most hard-line anti-technologist groups denounce all life-supporting or life-enhancing transplants, even those from human donors (such as kidneys, livers and hearts) that have been practiced for a millennium.

Surgical procedures are highly advanced, commonly taking place using keyhole techniques to minimize their invasiveness or else employing laser scalpels that simultaneously cut and cauterize. Advanced drugs and processes keep the level of surgical complications in the Free Worlds significantly below the Inner Sphere average, at least in the best hospitals. Likewise, the development of artificial organs (for life support rather than transplant) and materials such as synthetic blood by companies such as Metamorphosis, Inc. of Dayr Khuna has led to significant improvements in the ability to maintain life. Some League medical agencies are even investigating Clan cloning technol-



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ologies with a view to custom-growing replacement body parts, though to date no company has publicly announced any successes.

The League has made its greatest inroads in pharmaceuticals. In addition to new anti-viral and anti-bacterial agents, pharmaceutical companies like Carreño have developed wonder drugs such as the life-extending (but expensive and addictive) ReLive process. Though not widely available, these have the potential to radically reshape League society, and their impact strongly concerns the government's Department of Human Services.

Architecture

League worlds have always had a diverse range of construction materials and composites available, but recovered technologies have allowed Free Worlds engineers to build "bigger, higher and longer." The past decade played host to a spate of new construction and civil engineering, including structures like the Marran Dam on Holt, the Laymana Bridge on Regulus and the Adelphi Stadium on Atreus. Construction of ordinary residences, though changing little, has benefited from recent developments with substantial increases in energy and heat efficiency, together with adaptability through modular design and assembly.

Many architectural styles exist across the League, some separated geographically and others by time. Many government buildings in the Marik Commonwealth are in the 23rd-century, neo-classical post-Terran style, though some buildings—including the 27th-century interior of Parliament—favor neo-Gothic design elements. Oriente sports a range of Mediterranean styles, most commonly Imperial Spanish and classical Greek, but also many elements of Islamic design. Regulus shares many neo-classical traits with the Marik Commonwealth, complemented with elements of Indian rather than Gothic design.

Travel

Personal transport is commonplace in the Free Worlds. Most families own one or more groundcars, usually wheeled but sometimes employing hover technology, and motorcycles remain popular among League youth. The large size of some League families has made "people carriers" popular on many worlds; these small buses can transport eight or ten people in relative comfort. In more rural areas, tracked vehicles or even VTOLs and fixed-wing aircraft often turn up, though in most cases the aircraft are leased or owned by an entire community and used as needed.

While personal transport allows freedom of movement, most groundcars are employed within 250 kilometers of their owners' home cities. Long-distance travel is usually by rail—often diesel or electric, drawing power from overhead lines, though more advanced worlds employ maglev systems for rapid inter-city transportation—or by fixed-wing aircraft, though airships, DropShips and even blue-water ships provide passenger and cargo links to distant settlements. Some vessels and services are owner-operated, but many are part of various local transport cartels, the largest of which span several worlds.

Numerous commercial agencies exist for interstellar travel, ranging from independent DropShips that carry passengers and/or cargo between worlds by contracting with JumpShips on a world-by-world basis to massive conglomerates like Free Flight (for cargo) and Golden Eagle (for passengers). Outside of the military, few League citizens rou-

tinely leave their homeworlds. Many, however, aspire to the "once in a lifetime" trip to Atreus, New Olympia, or Kyeinnisan, and interstellar tourism is a growth industry in the newly prosperous Free Worlds.

Though not transport vehicles per se, 'Mechs play a substantial role in the Free Worlds League economy. BattleMechs are a key export and the focus of the post-Clan invasion economic boom, but have a relatively small share of the domestic market. Instead, IndustrialMechs (also called WorkMechs) are the main domestic product. Aquatic engineering models are a common sight on New Olympia, while ConstructionMechs are common in most urban areas. LoggerMechs and MinerMechs have been a staple of their respective industries for centuries, but have seen a renaissance in the past two decades. Other 'Mech models serve as off-road vehicles in some worlds, with roles as diverse as cargo carrier and cattle herder.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

The Free Worlds League has little in the way of political parties—typically fragmentary League politics makes cooperation impractical other than on broad ideological grounds—but that has not prevented the growth of numerous "social awareness" groups, many of which have a political agenda. Most began as innocuous interest groups, but many have attracted hard-line agitators whose efforts to "aid the cause" have drawn SAFE's attention. For two of the groups listed below, scrutiny by SAFE led to their banning.

BLAKEWATCH

The Word of Blake's exile to Gibson was not universally popular, nor was their takeover of the League's HPG communications network. The pressure group BlakeWatch emerged in the mid-3050s, its mandate to report on the Order's activities in the Free Worlds. The society's monthly newsletter contains a mix of facts and speculation, some of which verges on paranoia, reflecting the mindset of its editors. The Word of Blake has made known its distaste for this group, but has taken no direct action against the "conspiracy theorists." They do refuse to transmit the group's "libelous tissue of lies," as they call the newsletter, over the HPG network, forcing BlakeWatch to hand-carry documents (thereby somewhat limiting the newsletter's circulation). BlakeWatch is headquartered on Harmony in the Principality of Regulus, leading many to suspect that Regular authorities bankroll the group and promote its activities. Another claim, possibly circulated by the Blakists, is that ComStar "heretics" are behind BlakeWatch, either ROM or a splinter cell of personnel left behind when ComStar pulled out of the League.

FIFTH OF NOVEMBER COMPACT

Designated a terrorist group in 3056, the Fifth of November Compact (named for an abortive anti-government attack in 1605) takes as its objective the removal of Parliament's authority and the establishment of a strong central government for the Free Worlds. Established in 2895, the society was tolerated as a loyalist group for many decades, and in recent years its members have supported the Captain-General's centralization of power, though Thomas Marik regards this group as the type of ally he can do without. Parliament and regional governments are the Compact's prey, through political whispering campaigns and occasional terror attacks (letter bombs and attempted assassinations are the group's main weapons). The emergence of the Compact's militant arm prompted federal authorities to declare the order illegal and



arrest many of its known members, though SAFE now believes that in doing so it removed the organization's moderates and pushed the remainder to more radical action.

CAMPAIGN FOR REGIONAL AUTONOMY (CAMRA)

Almost the mirror image of the Fifth of November, though both disdain Parliament, CamRA's agenda is to relax federal authority and return to regional governance with minimal centralization. For many years a loose-knit society of like-minded individuals who primarily sat in League pubs and discussed politics over fine beers, the Internal Emergency Act and the Addendum spurred the group to become genuinely involved in politics. Unfortunately, the initial recruitment drive attracted a broad swathe of anti-federalists, some of whom advocated direct and often lethal action. These extremists triggered a ban on CamRA after an attempted bombing of an Education and Welfare office on Oriente in 3049. Often cited as "an assault on the democratic process," the ban has significantly reduced anti-federal terror attacks, though SAFE remains vigilant for new incidents.

TRADE UNIONS

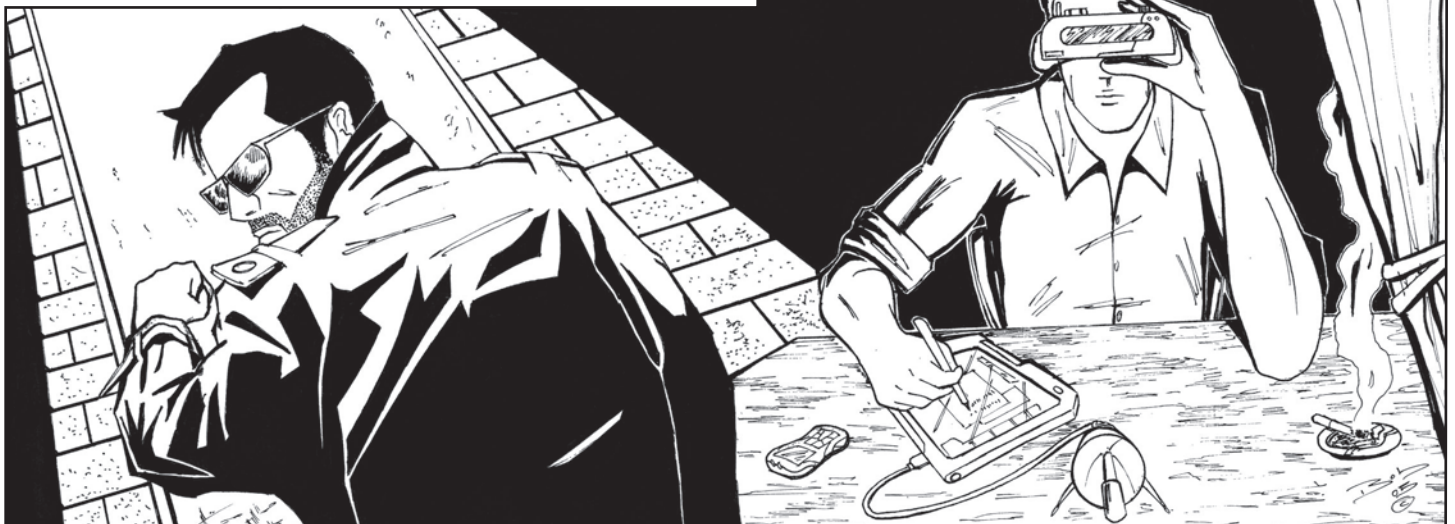
Federal authorities lay out standards for education and employment, including a League-wide minimum wage and mandated holiday allowance, both of which are among the lesser-known provisions of the Addendum to the Incorporation. Enforcement has always been patchy, however. Historically, many worlds had their own workers' associations, though corporations sometimes refused to recognize the right of these groups to collectively negotiate wage increases or to represent their members in tribunals. The Addendum obliged employers to recognize such groups, though acceptance of their authority remains haphazard. Most unions operate on a single world and often within a single company, but during the past two decades some union members have made efforts to bring related groups together to share experience and information. Groups such as the Amalgamated Engineers Association, the Shopworkers Mutual Aid and the Labor Rights Collective have emerged as the focus of such industries' employees, while the Union Congress of the Free Worlds, founded in 3060, is attempting (with minimal success) to create a "union of unions."

SOCIETY OF KERENSKY ASCENDANT

Though Captain-General Kenyon Marik hated SLDF commander Aleksandr Kerensky, the Star League general became a cult figure to many League citizens, variously held up as a messiah or Antichrist. The late 29th-century fictional work, *Kingdom of the Gypsies*, postulated that Kerensky and his troops were the puppetmasters behind the Succession Wars, supplying arms to all sides to shatter those who had brought down the first Star League before rebuilding it afresh. The truth of the Kerensky Exiles revealed by the Clans has done little to undermine these beliefs in the Free Worlds, few of whose citizens have had direct contact with the Clans. Many in the less-developed regions of the League accept as fact the idea that Kerensky is still alive, a 350-year-old cyborg, plotting against the Inner Sphere.

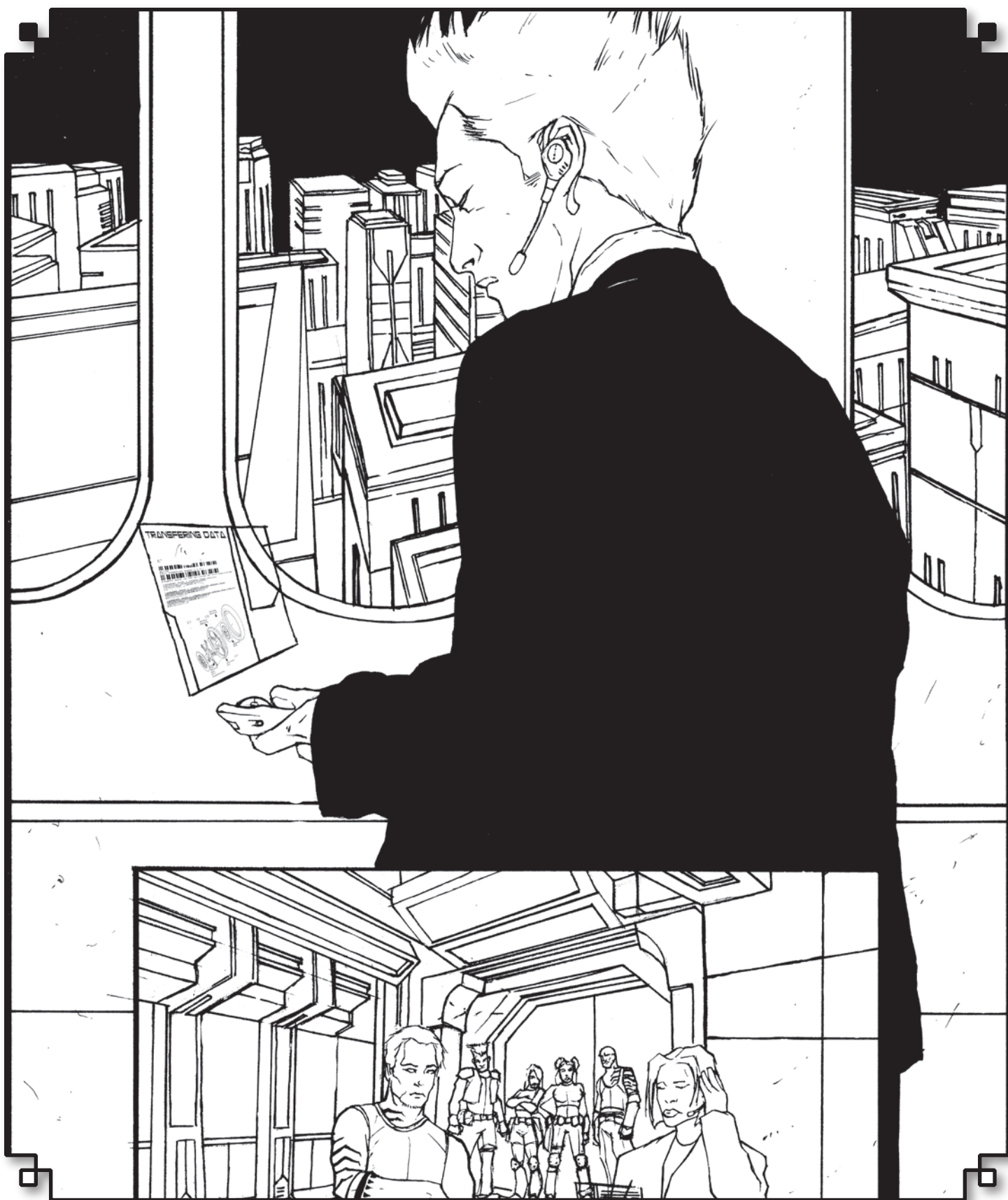
The Society of Kerensky Ascendant has sought to build on this myth, preaching the coming apocalypse and the cleansing of the Inner Sphere by the "Hidden Master." Claiming that Kerensky resides on Terra, or Mars, or Jardine, or (insert favorite lost or inaccessible world here), they call the current Star League a sham and believe the Master's secret minions will collapse the established order so as to bring about the birth of a true Star League. The mysterious deaths of several high-ranking members of the Society have done little to stem the group's pronouncements; indeed, these "martyred saints of Kerensky" have become the focus of new rumors.

Adherents of the group give aid to one another, whether in business or daily life, believing that by helping each other they are paving the way for Kerensky's return and the formation of the true Star League. Only the Society will escape the apocalypse, they believe, and non-believers are to be pitied. The Society has taken no steps against the Free Worlds authorities, convinced that the time and nature of his intervention is a matter for the Master. SAFE keeps a close watch on adherents, and some have been prosecuted for violating discrimination and insider-dealing statutes.





ECONOMICS





Once the lesser cousin of the Inner Sphere, lacking the technical innovation of the Federated Suns or the manufacturing capacity of the Lyran Alliance (nee Commonwealth), the Free Worlds League has made surprising gains in the past two decades. Already benefiting from the social reforms instigated by Thomas Marik, notably the elimination of domestic trade tariffs and (officially) a complete lowering of internal trade borders, it took the Clan invasion of 3049-3052 to kick the League economy into overdrive. With the FedCom and Draconis Combine reeling under the Clan juggernaut and the Capellan economy still in tatters after the Fourth Succession War, the Free Worlds took up the slack, exporting vast quantities of war materiel to their allies and their onetime enemies. The industries of warfare in turn vaulted the entire League economy into the stratosphere. Though the imminent crisis of the Clan invasion has since diminished, the League—the largest nation untouched by significant, recent warfare—continues to prosper. Can this state of affairs continue, or is the Free Worlds economy like a wave riding high, about to crash on the shoals of fortune?

NATIONAL ECONOMY

Trade and new technologies rather than manufacturing has always lain at the heart of the League's national economy, rendering it vulnerable to the slings and arrows of martial fortune as whole areas of the Inner Sphere fell "out of bounds" because of one conflict after another. The low-level skirmishing of the Third Succession War allowed the League to resume mercantile if not diplomatic relations with all of its neighbors, bringing in much-needed foreign currency to feed cash-starved League industries. Then the Fourth Succession War and the forming of two opposing power blocs—the FedCom alliance and the Concord of Kapteyn (together with isolationist tendencies among the Kapteyn allies)—pushed the economy to the brink once more. Ironically, the Andurien secession kick-started

League-wide economic growth, with the production of war materiel feeding into the larger economy and triggering a general gearing-up of production to support the war effort and cope with reconstruction in the aftermath. Coupled with increased federal government powers (including mandated wage and vacation levels across the Free Worlds), a sense of prosperity crept back into League affairs.

Today, fueled by technological innovations as well as significant sales to the Federated Suns, Lyran Alliance and Draconis Combine (and to a lesser extent, the Capellan Confederation), the average income of League citizens is at its highest level since before the Amaris Coup. That most of these foreign sales are on credit and won't be fully paid off until the early 32nd century seems to worry the League little; the largely stable Inner Sphere economy of the Second Star League provides hope that the debtor nations will make good. In the meantime, the League has drawn on these debts, trading repayment in the future for goods here and now. Some economists question the wisdom of this course, fearing a "house of cards" made of debt built on debt, vulnerable to market forces and unexpected situations. Despite the occasional catastrophe, however, federal authorities generally leave League citizens free to act as they see fit, permitting the principles of a free market to run riot so long as no one is denied such staples of life as food, water and shelter.

The League government takes a hands-off role in the economy, choosing merely to oversee the money supply and the flow of information rather than greatly restricting the market. Among Thomas Marik's innovations were regularizing taxes across the League and creating a "common market" where companies from Andurien to Tamarind to Sirius to Lesnovo played on the same field. In reality, planetary and regional biases still exist but these are minimal compared to those against foreign goods or simple market forces. For example, shipping costs are the main disadvantage faced by a Dieudonné-produced item sold on Claybrooke when compared to similar goods

LEAGUE UNITS OF CURRENCY AND EXCHANGE RATES

Unit Value*	Coin Metal (Image)	Paper Color (Image/Reverse Image)
100 Eagles (M-bill)	None	Black (Charles Marik/Regional Image**)
25 Eagles (M-bill)	None	Red (Kenyon Marik/Regional Image**)
5 Eagles (M-bill)	None	Blue (Janos Marik/Regional Image**)
Double Eagle (2 M-bills)	None	Green (Thomas Marik/Regional Image**)
Eagle (M-bill)	Gold (Marik Eagle)	Purple (Parliament/Regional Image**)
50 Cent (0.5 M-bill)	Silver, mid (Marik Eagle)	None
10 Cent (0.10 M-bill)	Silver, small (Marik Eagle)	None
5 Cent (0.5 M-bill)	Copper, mid (Marik Eagle)	None
1 Cent (0.01 M-bill)	Copper, small (Marik Eagle)	None

* Current denominations of notes and coins have been in circulation since 3063, replacing those used since the devaluation of 3031.

** The precise regional image depends on the mint at which the note was produced: the Marik Eagle for Marik or Atreus, an ankh for Regulus, a Calloway orchid for Oriente, a globe for Andurien and a silver hawk for Concord.

EXCHANGE RATES (1 SEPTEMBER 3067):

M-bill (eagle)	S-bill (kroner)	C-bill (C-bill)	D-bill (pound)	R-bill (krona)	L-bill (yuan)	K-bill (ryu)
1.00	1.05	0.95	1.05	1.35	1.62	1.05



FISCAL REPORT, THIRD QUARTER 3067

Quarterly GNP (1) in the third quarter of 3067 was 2.5 percent, up 0.1 percent on the prevailing annual trend, though a slowdown in National Growth to 3.2 percent reflects the potential saturation of key domestic and export markets, as well as a normal lull associated with the anticipated release of 3068 product ranges in the third quarter and also the tri-annual policy announcements of the Star League conference. Though disappointing, these figures are significantly above the Inner Sphere norm: both the Lyran Alliance and Federated Suns reported GDP falls.

Federal base interest rates remain at 2.1 percent, the same rate as in the second quarter and 0.25 percent lower than the Q1 3067 figures. This continues the FWCB's soft management of the economy, the slight easing of the rate serving as a minor stimulant in several sectors. The lending rate likewise decreased to 3.3 percent in the same period, mirroring the base rate changes.

The LSQI (2) closed out the quarter 6 percent higher than the 1 January figures, though growth was not uniform across all sectors. Manufacturing and strategic commodities remained broadly stable, while the main growth occurred in service sectors. Output prices (excluding petrochemicals and germanium) have grown 2.3 percent from the 1 January figures, driven principally by the consumer sector. Construction output rose by 0.7 percent, while manufacturing output increased by 1.2 percent. The quarterly agricultural rate stands at -1.9 percent, though allowing for annual trends, there has been a 0.2 percent increase over the same period in 3066. Domestic consumption increased by 0.75 percent in the quarter, one-tenth below the rolling annual rate, but 0.05 percent ahead of projections.

Presently 70.9 percent of the League population is employed or in full-time education (up 0.1 percent on Q2) and unemployment (of those aged between 18 and 60, excluding students) stands at 8.1 percent (down 0.25 percent on Q2). Of those working, 3.2 percent are owner-operators (down 0.2 percent on last quarter). Average earnings growth currently rests at 3.1 percent, a net 0.9 percent increase above inflation, though this varies considerably by sector; average growth in the banking sector is 9.2 percent, while in agriculture it is 1.6 percent (a net fall of 0.7 percent compared to inflation). Average domestic spending remains stable at 102 percent of earnings, with many individuals and corporate bodies building up substantial debt over the past five years. The RPI (3) increased one-tenth to 3.1 percent, slightly ahead of the government's inflation target of 3 percent.

Currency exchange rates have remained broadly stable throughout the year, with only the slow recovery of the Lyran kroner detracting from the eagle's performance. Net exports continue to rise, increasing 2.8 percent over the year-start figures and further bolstering the FWL's Balance of Payments and continuing the net-export trend that has existed since 3053, in contrast to historically neutral levels.

(1) Gross National Product

(2) League Stock Quotations Index—an index of the top 500 shares on the League Exchanges.

(3) Retail Price Index—the price of foodstuffs, housing (etc).

—Atreus Office of National Statistics, 19 October 3067

from closer Andurien. Foreign goods, however, are frequently subject to import taxes, and so goods shipped long-distance within the League may be cheaper than those from a nearer Lyran or Capellan world. (One exception to this rule is books, which are tax-free because the federal government refuses to "tax learning.")

Managing the six League mints and the realm-wide flow of money falls solidly under the aegis of the federal government, though its actual administration is a complex mix of regional and national effort by the government on Atreus, provincial authorities and—on the macroeconomic scale—the Word of Blake. Inextricably linked to the flow of monetary information is that of stocks and shares. The same couriers and transmissions that carry financial transactions also carry information between the three key stock markets and their satellites. Recent innovations in this field have facilitated drastic growth in the trading of stocks and shares that fuels and feeds on the growing League economy.

WHAT'S IN YOUR WALLET: CASH AND CREDIT IN THE FWL

A joke in the Free Worlds notes that the realm has seen more currency variations than Captain-Generals, especially in recent years. Current denominations of notes and coins are recent additions to the League, having been introduced in 3063 in response to practical needs for a single currency. Prior to 3040, each mint in the League produced its own currency, broadly interchangeable but differing in form and denominations. This led to occasional confusion and even problems over acceptance (the unwillingness of Tamarind merchants to accept the green Andurien five-eagle note became a Treasury legend). The present regularized system provides a League-wide template while allowing for regional variations. Each of the mints—Atreus, Marik, Regulus, Oriente, Andurien and Concord—produces a full range of currency, with the reverse sides of the common polymer vellum notes imprinted with regional images to complement the federal images on the front. No regional variations exist in coins, though certain special-issue coins commemorate historic events, key figures or sporting occasions.

Such "hard" currency is most commonly used in small transactions and on frontier worlds. For larger purchases on the League's more affluent planets, electronic fund transfers by means of a "credit key" are more common; buyers merely insert the stick-like key into a reader and then punch in a security code to authorize the transaction. The funds are debited almost instantly from the buyer's on-world bank account. Interplanetary transactions are only available to pre-approved customers; most people must either arrange a funds transfer from their homeworld bank branch—which takes roughly a week—or else bring bank-certified credit keys with them.

Once the universal currency of the Inner Sphere, the status of the C-bill has come into question in the Free Worlds ever since the Word of Blake's exile there. Most major stores still accept all C-bills, but some smaller institutions levy a 2-percent "conversion charge" to exchange ComStar versions for those of the Word of Blake. That the two variants are functionally identical matters little to these profiteers, and uncertainty over the use of physical C-bills has led to a drop in their use for routine transactions (though they remain the main currency of electronic fund transfers and big business).

FREE WORLDS CENTRAL BANK

The Free Worlds Central Bank of Atreus serves as regulator and engine for the national economy. The FWCB determines the levels of hard currency in circulation and manages the billions of daily electronic-funds transactions. Ostensibly part of the government's Trade and Taxation Directorate, the central bank is in practice largely independent. Director George Chambeley and his board make decisions concerning the currency supply and the FWCB's base lending rate (the core rate at which money is loaned throughout the League). All other banks in the Free Worlds—licensed and monitored by the federal government—base their actions on those of the FWCB.



Thanks to the efforts of Director Chambeley and the overall strength of the League economy, the Marik eagle has risen to the pinnacle of Inner Sphere finances, rivaled only by the C-bill and Lyrans kroner (S-bill) in international markets. The C-bill remains the pre-eminent international currency—barely—but the kroner and eagle continue their decades-long jousting for the second spot, the eagle's present superiority ensured for the time being by the crippling reconstruction debt facing the Lyrans in the wake of the FedCom Civil War.

Federal Reserve

Like most governments, that of the Free Worlds League often borrows to finance major schemes (most commonly wars), but it also maintains stockpiles of precious metals and resources as a guarantee of the League's finances and the currency in circulation. Officially on the germanium standard, the Federal Reserve includes a mix of resources ranging from diamonds and gold to germanium and radioactives. Relative intangibles such as works of art are also rumored to form part of the Reserve, but this is a common misconception; the substantial art collections owned by the government are part of its liquid assets rather than integral to the Reserve.

The Reserve's stockpiles are traded and relocated as part of a complex financial balancing act to keep the needs of the government and the FWCB covered, thereby ensuring the liquidity of the economy and the security of the eagle. Fifteen years of solid economic growth stand as testament to the Reserve's juggling skills and ability to manage its resources' value in the wider markets of the League and the Inner Sphere.

The FWCB and the Word of Blake

The cornerstone of the modern FWCB—and finance across the League—is the involvement of the Word of Blake. The League's relationship with ComStar, usually cordial, permitted the authorities to make solid use of the HPG network, but the close cooperation with the Blakist exiles in the 3050s led to an unparalleled level of network integration. The FWCB possesses guaranteed priority access to Blakist HPGs, through which it can quickly and efficiently disseminate information to the mints and subsidiary banks. Thanks to the HPG network, the six principal financial hubs are linked by a near-instantaneous communications grid, able to exchange data within a few hours. The information held at the FWCB and the mints is rarely out of sync by more than a dozen hours (and usually by as little as six), disseminating from these sources to secondary banks at standard communication rates (usually 50 light-years per day, batched with regular comm traffic).

The Blakist infrastructure also serves as the backbone of League interstellar commerce, transferring account information and money in addition to routine batch traffic (though transfers may be expedited for an additional fee). The League's Exchange Markets are similarly synchronized, the three hubs of Atreus, Oriente and Regulus being fully in sync every eight hours and allowing for a rolling process that permits League stock markets to function 24 hours a day.

LEAGUE EXCHANGE MARKETS

Goods and services are tangible products to be sold and exchanged, but the merchants of the Free Worlds—as with other major nations—are not satisfied with simply selling physical items. The League Exchanges exist as a means to trade goods, whether physical stocks of petrochemicals or fish, or future resources such as yet-to-be-mined mineral deposits or projected JumpShip construction. A separate strand of business within the exchanges handles the trading of stocks and shares in League-based companies (and select foreign multinationals). Both aspects of business—the commodities and futures exchange and the stock market—fall under the authority of the Exchanges Regulatory Board, based on Atreus but with branch offices on most provincial capitals.

Trade on the exchanges occurs on national, regional and system levels. National trades only take place on the three major exchanges and are synchronized every three days by Word of Blake HPG links. Such trades involve strategic resources (as designated by Parliament and the Captain-General, principally petrochemicals, germanium and so forth) as well as publicly traded shares of nationally listed corporations. Because of their importance, the values of such resources are harmonized across the League and trading in them is strictly limited.

SHIP RIGHTS

Ironically, though Free Worlds authorities offer merchant vessels little assistance (or hindrance, beyond the licensing paperwork), all commercial vessels are bound to the federal government. As part of their licensing conditions, all League-registered vessels must be available to assist the FWLM in the transportation of supplies and may expect to lose 10 to 20 percent of cargo capacity to such government operations (and potentially more during a crisis). The payments for such work are significantly lower than commercial operations, but they can provide a reasonable income for those willing to build a relationship with the military, turning duty into opportunity. For many, however, assisting the FWLM is an onerous duty that interferes with their ability to make a profit and that has sent careless companies into financial tailspins. Even deep within the League, Customs vessels have the right of "stop and search" (colloquially known as "strop and squirm," after the usual reaction of the targeted vessels) to check permits and manifests. Such operations are only routine, however, within sixty light-years of the border, where vessels may be newly arrived outside the main entry ports. Illegal or undeclared cargoes are subject to seizure pending a full investigation. If found in contravention of federal statutes, such goods are sold off (usually at a fraction of their value) and the funds used to finance the Customs vessels.

In return for these inconveniences, ship owners and operators receive significant rights. Each FWL-registered DropShip or JumpShip with a current operator's license has autonomous status within the League—in effect, it becomes a non-voting province—and the right to govern its own personnel and issue passports. Its decks stand distinct from provincial (but not federal) law, a provision that a number of enterprising businessmen have used to circumvent local gambling, licensing or decency statutes. A ship's independent status has also been the source of considerable trouble on the rare occasions when provincial security personnel attempted to carry out searches or arrests aboard ship. League-registered vessels also suffer significantly reduced import and export tariffs, though the Star League is seeking to end this favorable treatment.



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Regional trades—involving non-strategic resources and second-tier companies listed on a single exchange—is handled by individual exchanges and is not subject to routine harmonization (though the FWCB and the Exchanges Regulatory Board keep a close eye on cross-League values of goods, calling for intervention by the Federal Reserve as needed). The regional level is the focus of most business on the exchanges, which straddle national and planetary markets. This level also confers the most risk. Regional trades lack the regulation and management of national-level trades, even though the same facilities carry them out, and lack the immediacy of planet-level trades. Major fortunes can be made or lost on the regional level.

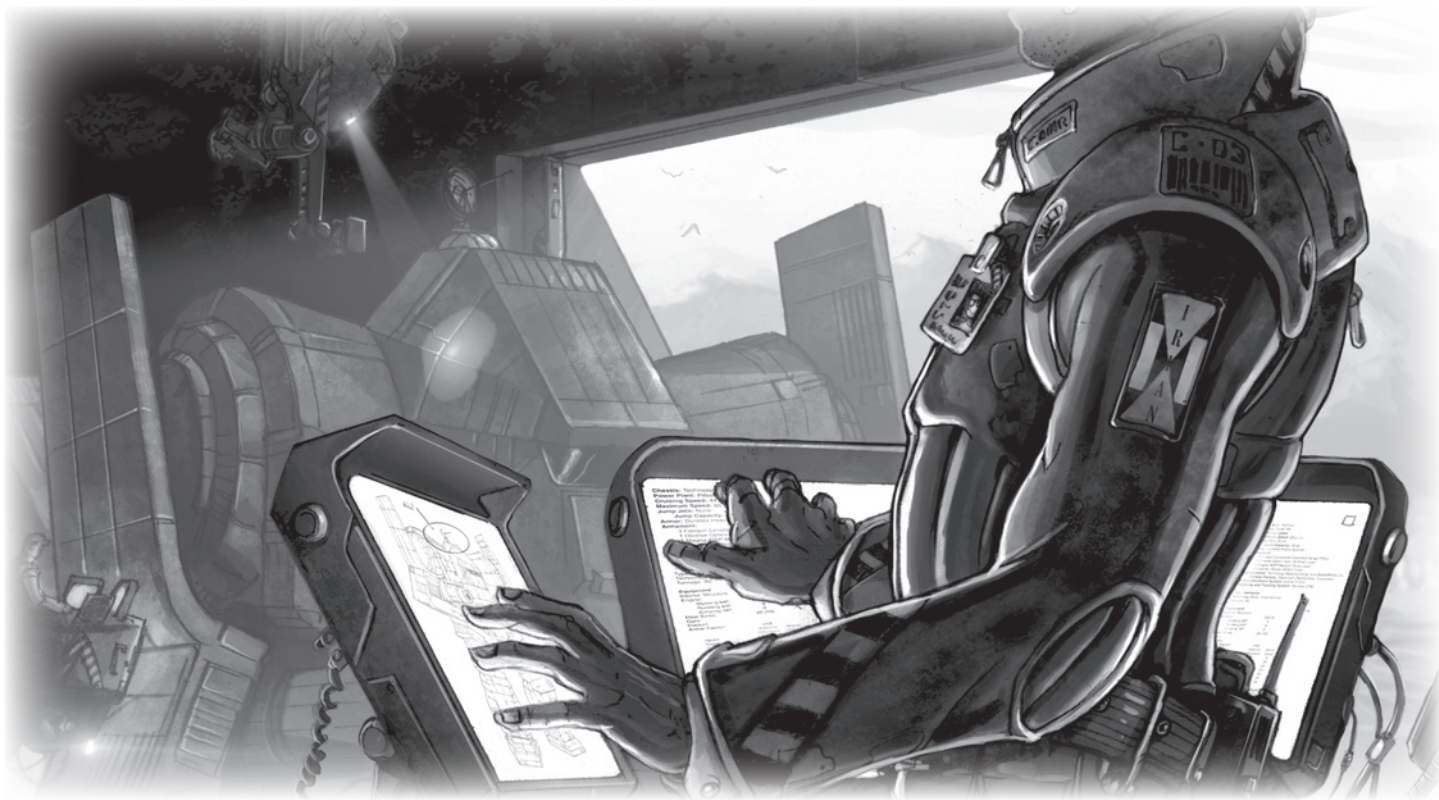
Information from the regional exchanges disseminates to local markets on all worlds in the vicinity via routine HPG traffic, though their isolation limits the ability of these satellite exchanges to operate in the regional markets. Instead, most rely on system-level trades that take their lead from the regional exchanges but are driven by local market forces. These exchanges deal solely in shares of planetary corporations and readily available goods. Futures speculation is limited to advance purchases of a season's crops or a month's mining output, a low-profit but essential type of trade. Unlike the regional Exchanges, which are operated by federal authorities, the planetary exchanges fall under the purview of planetary (or in some cases provincial) authorities. Worlds such as New Olympia may find themselves with multiple planetary exchanges, one for each constituent province (one each for Olympica and Kosnov-Greenland, in this case).

An unofficial fourth tier of trading takes place among the merchant vessels that ply League space. Limited to listing their goods

for trade when they are within one light-minute of a cargo station or planetary exchange (to minimize the impact of transit times on the local market), many vessels instead stage deep-space meetings and trade among themselves without recourse to the legally sanctioned exchanges or physical markets. Such shadow trade is the backbone of the black market, and the alteration of "secure" cargo manifests to legitimize these trades is a major business in the underworld.

FOREIGN TRADE

Cross-border commerce is perhaps the riskiest mercantile endeavor, carrying the prospect of considerable profits or substantial losses. Such trades do not fall within the protective umbrella of the FWCB or the Exchanges Regulatory Board; instead, they occur on trust (though the Star League has a working group investigating legal safeguards in this area). Many goods are allowed to cross the border in both directions, usually through one of a handful of designated port systems (Callison, Kalidasa, Promised Land and Thermopolis on the Lyran border, Castor and Graham for the Federated Suns and Chaos March, and Zion, Les Halles and Shiro III for the Capellan Confederation), subject to strict monitoring and inspection by Customs authorities of both nations. Civilian goods face few restrictions (though most imports to the Free Worlds face a tax, books and water being the notable exceptions). Medical and military imports and exports require federal licenses (and potentially appropriate permits in the origin/destination realms). The League does not issue transit permits, and so goods crossing the League may need import and export licenses.





MILITARY ENGINEERING

The military-industrial complex plays a vital role in the Free Worlds economy, being a major employer in the League and a key source of foreign currency. While its economic value is only a fraction of the entire League economy, military engineering is inextricably linked to the federal government in a synergistic relationship. Though independent of the government, the defense industries are closely tied to the authorities, on whom they rely for orders and export licenses (the last fifteen years have seen foreign sales replace those to domestic agencies like the FWLM as the League's largest market for military goods). Many League military manufacturers are small companies trading in a limited range of specialized products (like the weapons manufacturers Magna and FlameTech), while others are massive conglomerates that employ millions across the League and beyond. The Free Worlds' ten major 'Mech manufacturers now produce around fifty percent of all such combat vehicles in the Inner Sphere, and sales show no sign of slowing.

AUSTEN-ARMSTRONG INDUSTRIES (AARMS)

Main Plant Locations: Karun (Abadan), Villafranca (Bainsville)

CEO: Salwa Hanachi

Main Products (Austen Vale Ordnance): Personal energy weapons

Main Products (Armstrong Industries): Personal ballistic and missile weapons

Profile:

Once the League's preeminent manufacturers of longarms, the merger of Austin Vale Ordnance and Armstrong Industries in 3044 created a conglomerate capable of holding its own on the international stage. Individually, the companies produced notable but flawed products—the M4T laser rifle and the Derenforth heavy rifle—but by combining their skills and experience, they overcame their weaknesses and now produce solid, reliable equipment. The A2 variants of both weapons are the mainstay of the modern FWLM, and Austen-Armstrong has worked closely with the LCCC to develop several new rifles and support weapons. The company's involvement in small arms remains limited, however, a shortcoming CEO Hanachi hopes to rectify in the near future.

BRIGADIER CORPORATION (BrigCorp)

Main Plant Locations: Portent (Gibson), Ben Loen (Mackenzie), Gordon (Oliver)

CEO: Prabhaker Das

Main Products (Brigadier Corp. of Gibson): *Buccaneer*, *Fury*, *Merlin* and *Monarch*-class DropShips

Main Products (Brigadier Corp. of Mackenzie): *Behemoth*-class DropShip, *Impavido*-class WarShip

Main Products (Brigadier Corp. of Oliver): *Chimera*, *Crusader*, *Griffin* and *Scorpion* BattleMechs

Profile:

Like Nimakachi and SelaSys, the interests of the Brigadier Corporation span the manufacture of BattleMechs and naval vessels, including work on the imposing *Impavido*-class of combat JumpShips. Their imposing *Behemoth*-class DropShips have long been prized as bulk haulers, but the smaller *Fury*, *Buccaneer* and *Monarch*-classes are more commonly seen across the Inner Sphere. Historically, Brigadier Corp. had its headquarters on Oliver, but legalities associated with the FedCom takeover of that world at the end of the Fourth Succession War led the company to relocate its business hub to Portent on Gibson (though the Gordon plant remained under Brigadier Corporation's control despite the FedCom occu-

pation). Since the recovery of Oliver in Operation Guerrero, some have called for HQ operations to return there, a move CEO Das has strongly resisted. Under his leadership, the Gibson and Mackenzie DropShip facilities have come to dominate corporate affairs, much to the disgust of those overseeing BattleMech manufacturing on Oliver. That many of Brigadier's former plants—like those on Procyon and Karachi—remain in ruins is a sad testament to the BattleMech division's fortunes, given the modern economic climate. Production on Oliver is at its highest level since the First Succession War, however, with much of the output still going to the LAAF and AFFS.

BROOKS, INC (Brooks)

Main Plant Locations: Jojoken (Andurien), Kirin River (Irian), Lakeland (Kendall)

CEO: Walter Meschini

Main Products (Brooks of Andurien): Galleon and Harasser tanks

Main Products (Brooks of Irian): Galleon, Harasser, Main Gauche and Stygian tanks

Main Products (Brooks of Kendall): Galleon and Main Gauche tanks

Profile:

Spread across three worlds, Brooks Incorporated is best known for the Galleon light tank but has also developed several other light combat vehicles such as the Harasser hover tank and the forthcoming Bulwark assault vehicle. Components are the largest part of Brooks' business, especially the StarSlab armor commonly employed on League 'Mechs (most often as a field upgrade rather than as part of a new build) and exported to the Magistracy of Canopus and Taurian Concordat. CEO Meschini is a distant relative of Duchess Humphreys and is a regular guest at official functions. He has so far attempted to remain aloof from the friction between Andurien and Atreus, spending much of his time on Irian or Kendall, though his Andurien-nationalist wife remains a fixture on the Jojoken social circuit.



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COREAN ENTERPRISES - MACADAMS-SUHARNO (UNLISTED)

Main Plant Locations: Glencoe (Stewart), New Avalon (FS)

CEO: Count Yethers Corean

Main Products (MacAdams-Suharno of Stewart): *Locust, Sirocco, Tarantula* and *Trebuchet* BattleMechs; Inner Sphere Standard and Longinus battle armor

Profile:

Like Kallon industries, Corean Enterprises' non-FWL headquarters (located in Jeratha on New Avalon) is an obstacle to expanding sales in the Free Worlds League, but the Davion-based corporation has nonetheless established a solid business supplying components to companies like Gibson Federated, Irian, Earthwerks and Kali-Yama. Indeed, while the Corean factory on Stewart produces several complete BattleMechs, the component business is by far the largest element of sales. Thanks to a convoluted scheme that grants the Stewart clan a minority stake in the factory complex, Corean has avoided most of the tax burden Kallon suffers. The patronage of Irian BattleMechs and Earthwerks-FWL helps as well, with those conglomerates claiming that Corean's technologies are essential to their own businesses and that an independently owned company avoids the conflict of interest that could ensue should one or the other of them to gain control of the plant.

Over the decades, Corean has built a solid working relationship with Imperator. The two companies have launched a number of joint R&D projects, sharing the costs and rewards equally. Some have suggested that this alliance could lead to the formation of a new military-industrial giant in the Free Worlds League, but to date neither company has demonstrated a willingness to surrender its sovereignty. Instead they continue to dance around each other in a seemingly never-ending courtship.

DIVERSE OPTICS INC. (UNLISTED)

Main Plant Locations: Sverdlovsk (Kessel, Draconis Combine), Kirin River (Irian)

CEO: Susumu McAdams

Main Products: Laser weaponry

Profile:

Kessel-based Diverse Optics has made its laser weapons under license in the Free Worlds League for more than a century, most notably by Irian BattleMechs but also by Guttierrez Aerospace. In 3056, seeking a slice of the booming League economy, the corporation established a satellite office on Irian for the manufacture and development of its products. Initially wary of Irian Technologies' reaction, the Draconis Combine-based company was pleasantly surprised by the assistance received from Irian, which saw the new Diverse Optics operation as a means of gaining access to DCMS military technology and Clan systems. The rapid development in the Free Worlds of advanced laser weapons vindicated IrTech's decision, and that company swiftly incorporated a variety of pulse and extended-range laser systems into its designs (as did many other manufacturers). Efforts to export the laser systems to the Kessel plant in 3060 nearly caused a diplomatic incident, however, when a League government bureaucrat decided that doing so violated

League Military Export statutes. Only when Diverse Optics threatened to shut down the Irian plant (then the only facility with the capability to manufacture the systems) to protect its patents did the move receive official sanction, thanks in part to pressure applied by Irian Technology, which made no secret of its displeasure at interference with one of its "favored partners."

EARTHWERKS-FWL, INC. (EWWFL)

Main Plant Locations: Mount Rochester (Keystone), Martina (Calloway VI), Benedict (Asuncion), Sao Fernando (Bernardo)

CEO: Dame Juri McMahon

Main Products (Earthwerks-FWL of Asuncion): *Flea* BattleMech

Main Products (Earthwerks-FWL of Bernardo): *Flea* BattleMech

Main Products (Earthwerks-FWL of Calloway VI): *Archer, Shadow Hawk* and *Stinger* BattleMechs

Main Products (Earthwerks-FWL of Keystone): *Apollo, BattleMaster, Bloodhound, Grand Titan, Griffin, Jackal, Phoenix Hawk, Stinger, Thug* and *Thunderbolt* BattleMechs

Profile:

Once part of a transnational engineering concern, Earthwerks-FWL survived the threat of nationalization by establishing its League assets as an independent corporation, related to but distinct from its cousins in the other Successor States. The corporation is the largest manufacturer of BattleMechs in the FWL—roughly fifty percent ahead of its closest rivals, Kali Yama and Irian BattleMechs—but it does its highest volume of business in civilian 'Mechs used for logging, mining and construction. Earthwerks also produces a broad range of groundcars, trucks and commercial vehicles, including a premium custom-order service (popular with automobile enthusiasts) and a contract building division making purpose-built industrial vehicles. This diversification primarily occurred in response to the Succession Wars that left many of the corporation's military plants in ruins, but it also provided a steady stream of income not dependent on the FWLM budget—the Act of Parliament act that ensured the independence of Earthwerks-FWL also gave the League military the right of first refusal on the company's military output.

The Fourth Succession War and the occupation of the corporation's homeworld of Procyon led Earthwerks-FWL to relocate its administrative elements to the company's Mount Rochester complex, situated north of the city of Kodes on Keystone, complying with the requirement that League companies maintain their operational headquarters inside FWL borders or face reclassification as a foreign company (with all the accompanying tax and licensing issues). The corporation stands at the heart of the League military's modernization, working closely with authorities to develop efficient and cost-effective upgrade kits and engineering protocols. Much of the development work on such processes occurred during the dark days of the Clan invasion when AFFC and DCMS troops were the primary recipients, the lessons learned in such endeavors leading to the final version of many designs used by the FWLM. Earthwerks emphasizes practicality and efficiency over cutting-edge technologies, though its R&D department is second only to Irian Technologies.

The present CEO of Earthwerks-FWL, Juri McMahon, has held the post since 3052. A native of Gallery in the Lyran Alliance, she is the



corporation's first non-League CEO since the onset of the Succession Wars. Her drive and determination have done much to counter innate League prejudice against Lyrans and have brought her into close association with the Captain-General, the first significant rapprochement between the corporation and the Marik family since Kenyon Marik attempted to nationalize Earthwerks' assets. Rumors on the business grapevine suggest that McMahon's long-term goal is to reunify the entire Earthwerks corporation under her leadership, a claim seemingly backed up by increased contacts between Keystone and Earthwerks legacy companies in other realms.

EXETER ORGANIZATION (UNLISTED)

Main Plant Locations: Medway (Keystone)

CEO: Anup Tind

Main Products: Pegasus scout tank and communications equipment

Profile:

One of the smaller manufacturers in the FWL, Exeter has managed to build a solid reputation with its core product, the Longscan series of communication systems. Contracts with the Word of Blake have prompted substantial investment at the Keystone plant, whose output has increased fourfold over the past decade. Much of this extra production went toward meeting foreign and domestic demand for Exeter's systems—Earthwerks-FWL has become a major client in recent years—but Exeter has also scaled up production of its own vehicle, a variant of the Pegasus hovercraft.

Recently, some question has arisen as to Exeter's independence. Rumors suggest the corporation is an Earthwerks-FWL shell, or that CEO Anup Tind—and by extension the entire company—are in the Blakists' pocket. The company has made no public statement on the matter, but its lawyers have filed suit against several news agencies in an effort to quell some of the more scurrilous stories. The legal action has merely heightened suspicions about the privately owned company.

FREE WORLDS DEFENSE INDUSTRIES (FWDI)

Main Plant Locations: Jojoken (Andurien), Portent (Gibson), Zamora (Lopez), Ennis (Westover)

CEO: Matthew McNeill

Main Products (Gibson Federated BattleMechs): *Anvil, Buccaneer, Cicada, Grand Crusader, Hammer, Locust, Marauder, Toyama* and *Wolverine* BattleMechs; Inner Sphere Standard and Achileus battle armor

Main Products (Andurien AeroTech of Andurien): *Stingray* and *Riever* aerospace fighters; *Intruder*-class DropShips

Main Products (Andurien AeroTech of Lopez): *Shiva, Stingray* and *Riever* aerospace fighters; various military and commercial aerospace small craft

Main Products (Andurien AeroTech of Westover): *Stingray* and *Riever* aerospace fighters; various military and commercial aerospace small craft

Profile:

Free Worlds Defense Industries formed in 2562 in response to the shifting economic climate in the League. The merger of Gibson Federated BattleMechs and Andurien Aerotech formed a corporation of sufficient size to compete against large multinationals such as Kallon and Earthwerks, as well as powerful national companies like Irian Technologies. Despite this, only government involvement in the labor disputes that wracked the company in the 27th century allowed it to survive near-bankruptcy and limp on to the financial goldmine of the rearmament that followed the repeal of First Lord's Edict 2659. The counterstrikes of the First and Second Succession Wars exacted a terrible toll from FWDI, whose Lopez facility was razed by Liao forces and only rebuilt with grants from the Andurien government. The company's ties to the Humphreys clan placed the board in a difficult position during the crises of the 3030s—FWDI found itself an unwilling partner in the secession attempt, the Andurien Aerospace plant forcibly incorporated into the duchy's war efforts while Marik forces occupied the Gibson facility. Only in 3041 did the board regain control of its sites, instituting a decade-long program to rebuild and upgrade the shattered complexes. The cost of reconstruction pushed the company to the brink of bankruptcy again, but once more its fortunes shifted with the renewal of war—this time the Clan invasion and massive export orders from the AFFC and the DCMS.

Andurien, Westover and Lopez are home to the principal Andurien AeroTech factories, responsible for building advanced models of their fighters for domestic use and cut-down export models that often use low-quality generic components. A halo of subsidiary companies and contractors supports the main aerospace plants and their workers, providing everything from airframe components and electronics to catering services and uniforms. 'Mech-armed corporate security troops guard each facility but each plant also has close links with federal military forces charged with their defense. The 'Mech plant on Gibson escaped the ravages of the Andurien War, but recent years have seen it co-opted by the Word of Blake into building up forces for the Blakist military. Only since the occupation of Terra by Blakist forces and the shift of production to former Hegemony sites has FWDI regained full control over its factories. Initial hopes that the years of Blakist domination over the Gibson complex would result in a cutting-edge facility proved unfounded—almost all of the advanced systems installed by Word of Blake engineers were stripped out, and only a handful of systems predate the occupation of Gibson.



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FUSIGON-FLAMETECH WEAPON CORPORATION (FusiFlam)

Main Plant Locations: Iridant (Cambelton), Torrance (Fletcher)

CEO: Jolana Sochova

Main Products (Fusigon Heavy Weaponry): Vehicle weapons

Main Products (FlameTech): Vehicle weapons

Profile:

Prior to the Fourth Succession War, Fusigon and FlameTech existed as separate entities, the former a respected manufacturer of heavy weapons and the latter embroiled in a series of misappropriation scandals. When Thomas Marik came to power during the Andurien War, ensuring an ongoing supply of equipment was essential. With FlameTech's guilt proven, Thomas disbanded the board of directors and split the company in two. The weapons plant at Lago on Cambelton was sold to Fusigon who merged it with their own operation, headquartered at Iridant, while the Fletcher facility continued as FlameTech. Fusigon prospered, but the remains of FlameTech sank deeper and deeper into debt despite meeting company contracts, including the production of new technologies. In 3065, FlameTech's remaining assets were incorporated into Fusigon.

The combined company has played a key role in meeting the demands of domestic and foreign 'Mech and vehicle manufacturers, though industrial disputes continue to cause problems that director Sochova has endeavored to keep in check. The expansion of the company has done much to counter the trouble with export orders formerly handled by the less nationalistic FlameTech branch of the company, while the Fusigon elements focus on domestic orders. The two companies' combined R&D efforts have also speeded the development of new high-energy weapon systems that are expected to enter the market in the next six to twelve months.

GARRET SATCOMM (GarSat)

Main Plant Locations: Castleton (Dalton)

CEO: Mathias Lauber

Main Products: Tracking and communications systems

Profile:

Though managed by the Captain-General's cousin—Mathias Lauber is the grandson of Jerome Lauber, as is Thomas Marik—Garret Satcomm has done little to exploit its relationship with the Atrous Court. Instead, its business in the League and abroad is based solely on the reputation of Garret's equipment, widely acknowledged as among the finest produced in the Inner Sphere. The addition of ECM, ECCM, active probes and advanced fire-control systems has solidified the company's position at the pinnacle of the TTS market. Garret has not been satisfied to rest on its laurels, however, and though no products have been released on the open market, the R&D department is working closely with the FWLM to develop a next generation of systems. Garret was closely involved with the miniaturized sensor suites used on the Phalanx battlesuit, as well as the long-range systems employed on some of the League's newest naval vessels.

Garret's homeworld of Dalton has become the company's latest "macro-scale" project with the installation of a seismic monitoring network. The Neptune Network (named for the Roman god of the sea and earthquakes) is intended to unravel the mystery of Dalton—

its reversion to geologic stability around 2500A.D. after years of intense seismic activity. Scientists hope the project will reveal the reason behind the quieting of the world's geology and also predict whether the intense activity was a solitary event or part of an ongoing cycle. The study, running since 3058, is due to report in the coming months.

GILMOUR MILTECH (GMil)

Main Plant Locations: Charity Heights (Talitha)

CEO: Angus Gilmour

Main Products: *Cronus* BattleMech; repair and refit services

Profile:

Founded by FWLM MechWarrior Angus Gilmour in 3023, Gilmour MilTech began as a maintenance contractor for Talitha's planetary militia, but soon expanded into custom rebuilding and equipment reconditioning, mainly to support mercenary concerns. The company weathered the storms of the FedCom occupation and became a major supplier to the AFFC as well as maintaining links to the FWLM via what were officially mercenary contracts. Returned to League sovereignty after Operation Guerrero, Gilmour built up strategic partnerships with a number of companies, including Hollings-Dupre, Ltd. Subsequently, the company began to manufacture new designs, including the CNS-5M *Cronus*, an upgrade of the older home-grown CNS-3M model that originally emerged from Gilmour's lines during the Fourth Succession War. The company has yet to diversify further—most of its resources remain committed to maintenance contracts and rebuilding battlefield wreckage—but Angus Gilmour has stated his intent to release a new BattleMech design, possibly as soon as next year.

GRUMMAN AMALGAMATED (GrumAI)

Main Plant Locations: Shimgata (Shiro III)

CEO: Haydn Globin

Main Products: Ontos heavy tank

Profile:

The descendant of an ancient military contractor, Grumman Amalgamated today is a shadow of its former glory (the original Grumman Industries helped found the New Earth colony), but remains the only heavy tank manufacturer in the FWL. Grumman's Ontos design is licensed for manufacture by several other corporations in the Inner Sphere, some of which get supplies wholly or partly from the Shiro III plant. Indeed, Grumman components (including a version of the light Gauss rifle licensed from Imperator) form a substantial part of the company's business. With little in the way of technology research facilities, Grumman has focused its efforts on developing alternate equipment loadouts for the Ontos frame. In addition to the classic medium laser variant, the company fields models that use LRMs, heavier lasers and even ballistic weaponry. Many are custom orders—Grumman has a special-order division—but others are simply speculative builds designed by the company's test crew for war games intended to push the vehicle's chassis to its limits.



GUTTIEREZ AEROSPACE (UNLISTED)

Main Plant Locations: Polonia (Trellisane)

CEO: Daniel Gutierrez

Main Products: *Lancer* and *Stingray* aerospace fighters

Profile:

Most of the League's aerospace industry centers on ImStar and Andurien AeroTech, but the determination of Daniel Gutierrez has won a small but significant niche for his advanced F-94 variant of the *Stingray*. Though outperformed by more modern variants and new designs like the *Shiva*, the Gutierrez model was the first to feature advanced technology (beating the Andurien variant by four months). Produced in relatively limited quantities, the F-94 has developed a cult following, with its advocates evangelizing Gutierrez's precision-built and hand-finished product. FWLM statistics lend credence to these claims, suggesting that the Trellisane model's survivability is up to twenty percent higher than other variants of the *Stingray*. In addition to several refinements of the original F-94, Gutierrez Aerospace is working on a new production model of the *Lancer* technology testbed, as well as a second new model scheduled to debut before 3070. Negotiations with Diverse Optics to license several new laser technologies have caused considerable speculation, but at present no firm specifications of the new model are available.

IMPERATOR AUTOMATIC WEAPONRY CORPORATION (ImpAuto)

Main Plant Locations: Atreus City (Atreus)

CEO: Colm de Smit

Main Products: Vehicle weapons

Profile:

The name in ballistic weaponry (and no slouch in other weapon fields), Emperor has managed to dominate this area for centuries, within the Free Worlds League and abroad. Formerly part of the Kallon empire (and Earthwerks before that), Emperor gained legal autonomy in 3056 as part of the political games that maintained Kallon's own independence from Earthwerks. Renowned for high-quality "classic" designs and innovative technologies, Emperor provides a quality of service that has become the benchmark in the League military-industrial complex. While far from cheap, their combination of reliability and resilience makes Emperor weapons an excellent value. Despite a considerable increase in manufacturing capacity, ImpAuto has a substantial backlog of orders to fill.

This backlog, while indicating an ongoing commitment to sales, has become a bone of contention. In 3064, accusations of favoritism were leveled at Emperor, the plaintiffs alleging that some clients had their orders expedited after the payment of a "priority production fee." Emperor has not denied the claim—in fact, a spokesman suggested instead that such practices were commonplace in the prestigious segments of the market and that such provisions were explicit in the company's contracts. Nonetheless, reports in the Atreus Herald-Times caused a minor drop in the value of ImpAuto shares, though with negligible impact on orders.

Colm de Smit staunchly advocates the strategic partnership with Corean Enterprises of Stewart (which led to joint products like the light Gauss rifle), but has deliberately avoided any deeper commit-

ment. He fears an official merger of the two companies would cost Emperor its identity and possibly no small number of sales, both of which occurrences he is determined to prevent.

IRIAN TECHNOLOGIES (IrTech)

Main Plant Locations: Kirin River (Irian), Shimgata (Shiro III), Passion (Clipperton)

CEO: Sigmund Hughes

Main Products (Irian BattleMechs Unlimited of Irian): *Albatross*, *Awesome*, *Blackjack* (Omni), *Guillotine*, *Hermes*, *Hermes II*, *Owens* (Omni), *Tempest* and *Trebuchet* BattleMechs; Inner Sphere Standard, Achileus, Longinus and Phalanx battle armor

Main Products (Irian BattleMechs Unlimited of Shiro): *Blackjack* (Omni), *Hermes II*, *Quickdraw*, *Stalker*, *Strider* (Omni) and *Wasp* BattleMechs

Main Products (IMB Systems or Irian and Carbonis): Military and consumer electronics

Main Products (United Fiber Optics): Communications hardware and systems

Main Products (Irian Non-Ferrous): Mining and refining of non-ferrous materials

Main Products (Irian Technology Transfer): Research and development; surveying; marketing

Main Products (Irian Naval Systems of Clipperton): *Hamilcar*, *Leopard*, *Leopard CV*, *Merlin* and *Union*-class DropShips; *Scout*-class JumpShip; *Agamemnon*-class WarShip

Profile:

Founded in July of 2182, Irian Technologies is one of the oldest corporations in the Free Worlds League and certainly the most influential. From its humble beginnings as a communications hardware provider (United Fiber Optics), IrTech has risen to dominate the planetary economy and now spans numerous nearby systems, its corporate influence far exceeding that of many worlds and provinces. IrTech is, to all intents, a nebulous "corporate province" with vaguely defined borders but formidable influence. The main employer on five worlds, it maintains a sizable presence on a dozen more. Since 2255, IrTech has been the legal government of Irian; corporate negotiations brought the world into the League half a century later, at considerable profit to the top corporate echelon. At several times in the company's history, its CEO has served as MP for Irian, and all MPs for the planet have had close links to Kirin River. IrTech's influence is rumored to extend far beyond the limits publicly acknowledged in corporate financial filings via a network of political and economic alliances and a succession of shell companies. If the rumors are true, this network would make the company the largest non-governmental organization in the Inner Sphere. Thus far, such stories remain the province of conspiracy theorists, but they have persisted for several centuries despite the best efforts of IrTech's notoriously litigious legal department.

Though founded as a communications company, BattleMech technology made the corporation's fortunes, especially IrTech's participation in the retro-engineering of Terran Hegemony BattleMechs (with blueprints acquired from the Lyrans) and the development of the Free Worlds' first native 'Mech design, the *Icarus* testbed. More general military technology—aerospace craft, tanks, and more



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recently, personal arms—has broadened this industrial base and ensured constant business. The past two decades have seen considerable revitalization of IrTech's military lines, spurred on by the recovery of original Star League-era technology and the introduction of Clan tech. The corporation remains at the cutting edge of such activities, working on its own initiative and at the behest of the federal government. Though it has yet to regain its pre-Succession Wars strength, IrTech has four-fifths of its facilities in constant use; the remainder are expected to undergo refits and re-enter use over the next decade. Director Nathaniel Rivarez currently oversees Irian BattleMechs Unlimited, personally appointed by CEO Hughes and changed with making IBU the pre-eminent 'Mech producer in the League. The company currently ranks second, with Earthwerks way ahead of Irian BattleMechs in production quantities.

War materiel is IrTech's most prestigious line of business, but Mirka Kjellsdottir's IMB Systems consumer electronics division is its most profitable, particularly in the newly affluent League. The same cannot be said of the oldest portion of the business, United Fiber Optics. Despite massive investment and technical assistance from the Word of Blake, this division struggles to retain its market share. UFC director Samuele Dilani seems unlikely to remain in that post if the subsidiary's troubles continue. Like IMB Systems, the mineral extraction operations of Irian Non-Ferrous have proved lucrative, particularly the extraction and refining of precious metals (mostly silver and platinum) as well as germanium and other elements vital to the manufacture of K-F drives. The division head, Chris Blocher, has something of a confrontational relationship with CEO Hughes, but the "old man" of IrTech appears to relish his sparring matches with the younger officer. The Technology Transfer division, once little more than a market research operation, has become a key voice in research and development. Much of this expansion can be traced directly to Timotheus Wepf, whose ambition and intellect have allowed him to pull these disparate strands of IrTech under the ITT banner. Nominally an independent entity, the naval vessels division on Clipperton has grown considerably under the governance of Gilles Friedli, but the massive investment in the complex means it has yet to turn a profit despite FWLM contracts to build the *Agamemnon* class vessels there.

KALI-YAMA WEAPONS INDUSTRIES INCORPORATED (KYAMIN)

Main Plant Locations: Westport (Kalidasa), Lakeland (Kendall)

CEO: Alison Ryce-O'Neil

Main Products (Kali-Yama of Kalidasa): *Hunchback*, *Hercules*, *Orion*, *Perseus*, *Trebuchet* and *Wasp* BattleMechs; Inner Sphere Standard, and Longinus battle armor

Main Products (Kali-Yama/Alphard Trading of Kendall): *Hercules* and *Orion* BattleMechs

Profile:

One of the Free Worlds' most significant military manufacturers, tied with Irian as the second largest after Earthwerks-FWL, Kali-Yama has benefited greatly from mass exports to other Inner Sphere powers. Though such exports offer a lower profit margin than domestic sales because of border tariffs, they have nonetheless netted the company considerable sums of cash and credit, much of which Kali-Yama has invested in modernizing and upgrading factories and the development of new technologies. The company's scientists worked closely with the LCCC on the development of OmniMechs, most notably the *Perseus*, of which Kali-Yama remains the sole manufacturer. The company also pioneered the development of missile and ballistic weapon technologies used to upgrade classic 'Mech designs like the *Hunchback*, *Trebuchet* and *Orion*.

The past few years have seen CEO Ryce-O'Neil locked in protracted negotiations with Kali-Yama's business partners, the Alphard Trading Corporation. The Taurian corporation is a minority shareholder in the Kendall plant, and Ryce-O'Neil has worked to either secure sole ownership of the plant or purchase the partner company outright and make it a subsidiary. The Alphard board seems open to the possibilities, but the CEO's efforts have been hampered by the Taurian government, especially given the problems currently wracking the Concordat. Security concerns have curtailed Kali-Yama trips to Perdiction (where ATC produce vehicles like the *J. Edgar* and *Fulcrum* with the technical assistance of Kali-Yama, who in turn serve as Alphard's agents in the FWL), and Ryce-O'Neil has vented her frustration through a series of political maneuvers on Kalidasa's unofficial Merchants' Council. The main targets of these operations are her business competitors in Quikscell. This rivalry has raged between the two companies for decades, but Baroness Hestor Hepburn-Marik has used her influence with local FWLM forces to keep the peace. Kali-Yama's own security force—including a battalion of 'Mechs, officially for demonstration purposes—guards the Kalidasa facility against foreign aggression. The Kendall plant is less well protected, fielding only a company of 'Mechs, but the 'Mech company is augmented with a substantial infantry force, including battle armor.



KALLON INDUSTRIES (UNLISTED)

Main Plant Locations: Benedict (Asuncion), Sao Fernando (Bernardo), Fidelity (Loyalty), Ithaca (Thermopolis), Nanking, Kirklin and Talon (FS)

CEO: Justine Nakoma

Main Products (Kallon Industries of Asuncion): *Crusader* and *Falcon Hawk* BattleMechs

Main Products (Kallon Industries of Bernardo): *Crusader* BattleMech and personal arms

Main Products (Kallon Industries of Loyalty): *Kuan-Ti* and *Vengeance*-class DropShips; Partisan tank

Main Products (Kallon Industries of Thermopolis): *Exterminator*, *Rifleman* and *Wolverine* BattleMechs; personal arms

Profile

Legally a subsidiary of Earthwerks, relations between Kallon and the FWLM have been erratic. Kallon's non-League status puts it in a poor competitive position compared to its cousins in Earthwerks-FWL, forcing Kallon to absorb the sales tax levied on imports in order to remain competitive (and to ensure that League authorities grant export licenses for sales from the factories on Bernardo and Asuncion). Earthwerks-FWL has repeatedly petitioned the court to transfer Kallon's factories to Earthwerks' control (as Kallon was part of the Earthwerks conglomerate), but in a surprising defiance of the industrial giant, the courts have consistently refused. Kallon CEO Justine Nakoma, who has led the company under Capellan and FedCom governments, rarely visited the company's League plants before the Clan invasion. In the years since, however—with the rapprochement between the League and its neighbors and the "supply deal" between the Captain-General and Hanse Davion—she has made the trip bi-annually despite her advanced age.

KERR-MCGUINNESS (KerrMc)

Main Plant Locations: Shenville (Umka)

CEO: Alicia Padier

Main Products: Armor components

Profile:

Though frequently denounced for poor production standards and quality control, Kerr-McGuinness is one of the League's largest armor manufacturers, supplying almost all 'Mech and vehicle manufacturers in the League. Critics have singled out the company's reactor shielding, and though there no conclusive proof exists of faults in the manufacturing process, sales have dwindled significantly in favor of armor composites (standard and ferro-fibrous) and CASE systems. CEO Alicia Padier has worked diligently to overcome Kerr-McGuinness' poor reputation, calling on all the skills she developed at SynoCon to shape public perception of her brand. Her constant courting of major Free Worlds defense industries (and many abroad, such as the Lyran company Thar-Hes) led to a significant upswing in sales revenue in the 3060s, though critics continue to decry the company's products.

KONG INTERSTELLAR CORPORATION (KongCorp)

Main Plant Locations: Skellig (Connaught)

CEO: Ryan Phillipousis

Main Products: *Black Knight* and *Ostsol* BattleMechs; IndustrialMechs; repair and refit services

Profile:

Dating back to the Star League, Kong Interstellar Corporation (KIC) on Connaught was badly damaged in the First Succession War and only managed to survive as a repair facility in the centuries that followed. During the Succession Wars, KIC continued to make parts for its primary products—the *Ostsol*, *Ostscout* and *Black Knight* BattleMech lines—and provided basic factory overhauls and refits for them. When new technologies began to reemerge in the League during the late 3040s, Kong, as a major refit agency, became involved in their deployment, providing field upgrades of its *Ost-* designs. (The number of *Black Knights* left in service by that time was deemed too small to warrant a new model, though KIC did assist efforts to restore several designs to their original Star League configuration.) Over the past decade, Kong's fortunes have increased further from the revenues raised by company refit operations, first with the 3058 re-opening of Kong's IndustrialMech plant at Ranelagh and then with the completion in 3065 of a production line for new *Ostsol*s, beginning with the new 7M variant. Plans for a new *Ostscout* line remain on track for a 3070 opening, with the first runs already sold in advance to the FWLM.

MAGNA METALS INC (MagMet)

Main Plant Locations: French Bluff (Lopez), Taurus (TC)

CEO: Elizabeth Shirman

Main Products: Vehicle weapons and power plants

Profile:

Though best known as a manufacturer of power plants, the Magna factory on Lopez is entirely dedicated to weapons production. Energy systems have been Magna's stock-in-trade (though the company also produces a limited range of ballistic and missile systems) and the weapons division has performed well in the current boom. In addition to classic designs, Magna pioneered the development of advanced technologies, including extended-range and pulse variants. Magna's developments in the PPC field, however, have truly caught the attention of the business world. Reactivated shortly before the Fourth Succession War, the Lopez plant's production remained low until relatively recently, when massive investment in the 3050s opened up two new lines that have begun to resolve the historical shortage of particle weapons in the FWLM.

Former FWLM MechWarrior Liz Shirman has led Magna's FWL operations since 3065, based at the Lopez weapons plant but also involved with the drive-manufacturing facilities scattered across the League (including massive plants on Regulus and Stewart). With licensing a key part of Magna's business, Shirman oversees a team of negotiators who make the rounds of partner companies, domestic and foreign, though Shirman personally handles major clients like IBU, Gibson Federated and Earthwerks. Her relations with the Magna board are less cordial; the Degasan family of Andurien, substantial shareholders in the company, continues to oppose Shirman's installation while seeking to put their own representative in her place.



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NIMAKACHI FUSION PRODUCTS (NikFus)

Main Plant Locations: Kamagawa (Tematagi), Baron (Dalton), Lapida II/Tematagi Minor (Draconis Combine)

CEO: James Sommers

Main Products (Nimakachi of Tematagi): *Spider* and *Vulcan* BattleMechs

Main Products (Nimakachi of Dalton): *Condor* and *Octopus*-class DropShips

Profile:

During the glory days of the Star League, Nimakachi's influence spanned the Inner Sphere, with factories dotted across the member-states. Tematagi in the Free Worlds League was the company's home, however, a corporate world reminiscent of Irian or Keystone. The Draconis Combine was Nimakachi's largest "foreign" market, and in 2602 Nimakachi purchased the bankrupt Sendai mining complex in the city of Mulifanua on Lapida II, transforming the subterranean complex into a self-contained manufacturing enclave. Nimakachi-Lapida soon prospered. Nicknamed "Tematagi Minor" by many in the workforce, it earned contracts from the DCMS and the SLDF. Today, the twin factories of Lapida and Tematagi remain intertwined with the two militaries, aided by the loose provisions of the Concord of Kapteyn. The Lapida/Tematagi Minor plant produces 'Mechs under contract to the DCMS (the signature *Spider* as well as the *Venom* and *Bishamon*), while the original Tematagi plant produces designs for the FWLM (notably the *Vulcan* and the *Spider*). Plans are afoot to resume production of the classic *Warhammer* design, suspended on the eve of the Fourth Succession War, though the configuration of the new model is not yet known.

Nimakachi is also deeply enmeshed in DropShip manufacture, producing the *Octopus* tug and *Condor* troop transport at its Dalton plant. Third-party corporations produce many of the components used in this process, but the orbiting yards build the spaceframes and interplanetary drives as well as carrying out final assembly. Demand for both models remains high, with the League government the largest purchaser. A civilian version of the *Condor*, the cargo-carrying *Stork*-class, is undergoing pre-delivery trials in advance of full-scale production scheduled to commence in 3069.

ORIENTE WEAPONWORKS CORPORATION (OrWeps)

Main Plant Locations: Cadiz (Oriente)

CEO: Jenson Halas-Sukhanov

Main Products: Vehicle missile systems

Profile:

Best known for its Hovertec and Delta Dart vehicles, Oriente Weaponworks' products are solid and workmanlike but rarely inspired. The company has made a few forays into advanced technology—but most notably with the atypical Model O autocannon system—but for the most part remains content to produce classic designs using modern materials and production technologies. Managed by a distant relative of the Duke of Oriente, the formerly state-owned company has nominally been a private enterprise since the start of the Third Succession War. Most profits go to its shareholders (including the Duchy of Oriente) and relatively little to research and development. The autocannon project was a lucky accident, stemming from the reactivation of a production line idle since the fall of the Star League thanks to recovered materials technologies. Because of Oriente Weaponworks' lackluster record, the FWLM has been wary of sharing advanced missile technologies with the company, though the satellite plant at Cordoba is involved in testing sub-munitions and a technology transfer deal with Lycomb-Davion IntraTech of New Avalon has allowed the manufacture of streak-class SRM systems.

QUIKSCCELL, INC. (Quik)

Main Plant Locations: Port Royal (Kalidasa), Gordon (Oliver), Richvale (LA), Ares (CC), Layover (FS)

CEO: Josef Kenworth, Sean Veranov (FWL)

Main Products (Quikscell of Kalidasa): Standard and heavy armored personnel carriers, Hetzer and Scorpion tanks

Main Products (Quikscell of Oliver): LRM Carrier, SRM Carrier and Scorpion tank

Profile:

Never renowned as a quality manufacturer, the rush to exploit the export sales market led Quikscell to cut even more corners in an effort to maximize profits. The company's infamous cost-over-quality dogma—even when cutting costs means using sub-standard materials—has given Quikscell its well-deserved "cheap and nasty" reputation. Less well known is the company's practice of dual-sourcing many key components, reserving higher-quality versions in products slated for domestic use. This keeps the FWLM and the federal government mollified and helps avoid unpleasant investigations, though export buyers pay the price of noticeably poorer maintenance and field performance. Despite its quality issues, a solid market exists for Quikscell's products, particularly among planetary militias and other groups working within harsh budget constraints.

Manager of the company's Free Worlds operations, Sean Veranov is a consummate diplomat and shrewd businessman, playing a key role in Quikscell's contract negotiations while ensuring good corporate relations with the FWLM. Once one of the League's most infamous playboys, Veranov appears to have mellowed in recent years. Though he continues to play hard—frequently taking part in adventure sports and sponsoring extreme sports challenges across



the Inner Sphere—he reportedly abandoned the rest of his hedonistic ways after adopting a Shilohan founding in 3065. Only fourteen years old, young Camilla is a regular companion on Veranov's trips and has proved almost as adept at the intricacies of business negotiation as her adoptive father.

STARCORP (FWL) INDUSTRIES (StarCorp)

Main Plant Locations: Ivanograd (Emris IV), Crofton (FS), Kuala Lumpur (Terra), Loburg and Son Hoa (LA), Menke and St. Ives (CC)

CEO: Mandrinn Trenton Volgers, Leo Terajima (FWL)

Main Products (StarCorp-FWL of Emris IV): *Longbow* and *Warhammer* BattleMechs

Main Products (Holly Industries): Missile systems

Profile:

Though the *Warhammer* is Starcorp's most profitable finished product, first sold in 2515 and remaining a classic of the modern battlefield, recent years have seen the distinctive *Longbow* become Starcorp-FWL's signature product. This design, which went out of circulation in the mid-3010s after Anton Marik's revolt wrought hor-

rendous damage on the Ivanograd plant, has made a slow but sure return thanks to high-profile use by units such as the Regular Hussars and Wolf's Dragoons. A new *Longbow* line opened in 3045, complementing the *Warhammer* production lines on Emris IV. Starcorp subsidiary Holly Industries (with plants on Emris IV and Terra) manufactures a wide range of missile systems that remain popular across the Inner Sphere. The Emris IV plant has taken up a substantial cut in Terran military exports during recent years.

FWL manager Leo Terajima is frequently at odds with his counterparts in other parts of the Starcorp empire (notably Son Hoa in the Lyran Alliance, Crofton in the Federated Suns and St. Ives in the Capellan Confederation), thanks principally to his gloating over the success of his division. He makes no secret of his desire to one day head the entire Starcorp group, which has alienated many at the company's Capellan Confederation headquarters on Menke. In particular he has sought to build a rapport with Mandrinn Trenton Volgers, with whom he shares a passion for fine wines. Volgers has so far kept Terajima at arms' length but cannot deny his Marik deputy's business acumen.

NAVAL ENGINEERING

Straddling the civil and military sectors, with many companies producing merchant and battlefield craft, the naval engineering sector has expanded considerably since the end of the Fourth Succession War. Initially such endeavors were limited to expansion of civilian DropShip and JumpShip production, but military technologies have increased markedly in the past fifteen years since the alliance with the Word of Blake. Many FWLM JumpShips have been equipped with lithium-fusion battery systems and shipyards upgraded to manufacture or refit WarShips, giving the League the largest and fastest-growing navy among the Great Houses.

DELLER, BINGHAM & FOUTS (SHARES SUSPENDED)

Main Plant Locations: Atreus City (Atreus)

CEO: Alenka Simonov-Shah

Main Products: *Gazelle*, *Hannibal* and *Mammoth*-class DropShips

Profile:

Once a major manufacturer on Atreus, a series of industrial disputes and accidents resulting from component failure drove DBF into receivership in 3060. Since then, the company has operated under the dictatorial leadership of FWCB appointee Lenka Shah, who has radically streamlined various processes and made quality control more transparent. DBF has slowly recovered market share over the past half-decade, but remains significantly below its 3055 peak. In addition to managing the corporation, Shah has actively sought a buyer for it, but while several companies have expressed interest in DBF's facilities and personnel, they regard the Deller, Bingham and Fouts name as a poisoned chalice. Under the Financial Regulation Act of 2691, Shah has the power to break up the company, but she has so far proved unwilling to do so. The LCCC is on record stating their concern that extant contracts for the *Gazelle*, *Hannibal* and *Mammoth* be met; how Shah and DBF achieve this is the company's problem.

ILLIUM NAVAL ENGINEERING (UNLISTED)

Main Plant Locations: Illium Yard (Ionus)

CEO: Admiral Brant Optin

Main Products: *Eagle*, *Thera* and *Zechetinu*-class WarShips

Profile:

Though legally an independent corporation, Illium engineering is owned almost entirely by the Free Worlds government, its status a piece of financial and legal trickery to avoid some of the budgetary problems associated with a multi-billion eagle project like the *Eagle*, *Thera* and *Zechetinu* WarShip programs. Ostensibly a "non-governmental agency," Illium has a freer hand with financing and materials procurement, avoiding potential interference by Parliament as provinces jockey for lucrative contracts. In practice, the operation is a joint FWLM-SAFE affair with substantial Blakist involvement. Detachments of troops and vessels guard the orbiting shipyards and component assembly plants on Ionus with a level of watchfulness matched only on Atreus and Marik, while a dedicated SAFE task force screens all personnel working on the projects (and many in supporting roles). Reporting directly to the LCCC, Brant Optin—a retired admiral—has so far achieved every benchmark laid out for him, producing a succession of vessels that are the pride of the League's growing fleet. Much of the work is only possible thanks to the assistance of Word of Blake personnel; outside of Gibson, Ionus has the largest Blakist population in the League.



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IMSTAR AEROSPACE (ImStar)

Main Plant Locations: Dormuth (Marik), Panhandle (Amity), Atreus City (Atreus)

CEO: Sriparna Antoniou

Main Products (Imstar of Atreus): *Cheetah* aerospace fighter; *Agamemnon*-class WarShip

Main Products (Imstar of Amity): *Cheetah* aerospace fighter

Main Products (Imstar of Marik): *Cheetah* aerospace fighter; Planetlifter air transport

Profile:

Until recently only known for the *Cheetah* aerospace fighter and Planetlifter transport, Imstar was a surprise candidate for inclusion in the League's WarShip program. Despite a lack of experience in constructing large craft, Imstar had extensive zero-g refining facilities above Atreus, coveted by program technicians. When details of Imstar's involvement became known, the lucrative combat JumpShip contracts seemed as much a means of ensuring that Illium and other manufacturers had access to Imstar's facilities as of bolstering the FWLM navy with new vessels. To the surprise of many, the *Agamemnon* program has proved successful, and income from the project has allowed significant upgrades at Imstar plants on Amity and Marik in addition to the one on Atreus.

SELASYS INCORPORATED (SelaSys)

Main Plant Locations: Fidelity (Loyalty), Jamestown (Wallis)

CEO: Sydney Deakin-Jones

Main Products (SelaSys Inc. of Loyalty): *Star Lord* and *Tramp*-class JumpShips

Main Products (Ronin Inc. of Wallis): *Marauder* and *Warhammer* BattleMechs

Profile:

One of the oldest and most experienced JumpShip manufacturers in the Free Worlds, its pedigree dating back to before the first Star League, SelaSys made a natural partner in the FWLM's WarShip program. The company was hired to bring back into service a number of mothballed vessels, most notably the FWLS *Neuva Badajoz* (hull CH4, the former SLS *Impetuous*). SelaSys also plays a significant role as a component supplier for Technicron and Illium, and was instrumental in the design of the *Impavido*-class vessel (manufactured at Technicron). The corporation's involvement in the League's first WarShip project allowed it to install its own candidate, the CEO's cousin, Ian, as the first vessel's initial commander. An undistinguished naval officer, the now-retired Commodore Ian Deakin brought little to his command role, but his experiences serves SelaSys well—SelaSys has employed him as a consultant on the *Venturer*-class light cruiser currently under development; the first new WarShip class to be constructed at the yards.

Like many of its naval engineering peers, SelaSys also manufactures BattleMechs, having acquired Ronin, Inc. in 3016. One of several companies stripped from supporters of Anton Marik after his brief rebellion, Ronin is little more than an assembly facility for designs developed elsewhere. The simmering industrial disputes on Wallis have so far limited the company's ability to compete in the wider market,

resulting in little innovation, though its production capacity has increased substantially over the past two decades. That appears to be changing, however, as Ronin recently opened a new light Gauss rifle plant and has petitioned for a license to produce a new *Warhammer* variant.

TECHNICRON ENGINEERING (TechEng)

Main Plant Locations: Mal Kham (Tamarind), Atlanta (Savannah)

CEO: Josiah Barron

Main Products (Technicron Naval Engineering/Forerunner AG): *Invader*-class JumpShip; *Impavido*-class WarShip; Jump sails

Main Products (Technicron Military Engineering, Savannah): *Awesome* and *Quickdraw* BattleMechs

Profile:

While its primary business is the manufacture of massive space vessels—the *Invader*-class JumpShip and the monolithic *Impavido* WarShips—Technicron, like rival SelaSys, is a diverse high-technology manufacturer. Its ground and space facilities at Tamarind focus on spacecraft, while the factory complex on Savannah assembles several BattleMech models. The company's experience in orbital manufacturing gave Technicron a head start in the production of advanced armor and chassis materials, but Technicron Military Engineering excels most in the manufacture of precision power plants. The division played a key role in the reintroduction of extralight technologies, using them first with a licensed Pitban design and then expanding their use to other models. These endeavors also led to the development of several other engine technologies, boosting power-to-weight ratios and resilience, though none of these advanced systems are yet commercially available.

The desire for quality products prompted Technicron to acquire jump sail supplier Forerunner, A.G. in 3059. Quality control issues concerning sails for *Impavido* WarShips caused several significant delays, and with the tacit approval of the LCCC, Technicron staged a hostile takeover. The years since have seen slow but steady improvement in the reliability of Forerunner sails, their overly complex furling mechanism being replaced by a simpler and more robust model without compromising the sails' superlative power-transfer capabilities. The former management of Forerunner has staged several legal challenges to the takeover and their disenfranchisement, all of which have been dismissed.



CIVIL ENGINEERING AND AGRICULTURE

Even excluding the military-industrial complex, engineering is the Free Worlds' largest industrial sector with the sole exception of agriculture (with which it is inextricably entwined). Ranging from the smallest self-employed plumbers and joiners to consortia responsible for feeding and housing an entire planetary population, such endeavors are the backbone of the economy. Few companies operate outside the League, but this has not stopped some of them amassing vast wealth over the decades and centuries.

AGRIFARM PRODUCTS (AFarm)

Main Plant Locations: Cadiz (Oriente)

CEO: Mitchell Summers

Main Products: Agricultural products

Profile:

Though many worlds contain a mixture of Terran and native species, not all creatures and plants of Terran origin have prospered across the Inner Sphere. Conversely, some have done considerably better elsewhere than on their original homeworld. Agrifarm Products began by specializing in the melding of ecosystems, adapting species from Terra and beyond to survive on target worlds. This aspect of the business has declined markedly since the 26th century, and though it remains a branch of company operations, Agrifarm's principal focus now is breeding cattle and horses for export from Oriente to other League worlds. While some of this work occurs at Agrifarm's complex at Cadiz, much of the program is carried out by "gentlemen farmers" scattered across the planet. These individuals, often minor nobles, breed cattle and horses as a hobby, their efforts coordinated (and marketed across the League) by Agrifarm. The horse ranches are among the stereotypical images of Oriente often conjured by outsiders.

Less prestigious but more profitable is Agrifarm's crop division, which over the years has developed numerous hardy strains of wheat, corn and maize (as well as other staples) that have become the mainstay of League agriculture. Though many of Agrifarm's patents have lapsed over time, the company still receives residual royalties from several of its agricultural strains. Agrifarm continues to develop new strains, increasing the number of worlds on which agriculture is viable and increasing yields in existing crops.

CURTISS HYDROPONICS (CHydro)

Main Plant Locations: Reunion (Paradise)

CEO: Alessandra Wong

Main Products (Aquiculture Technologies): Hydroponic food systems

Main Products (Purification Technologies): Pure water and filtration systems

Main Products (Power Systems Division): Civil engineering and power-generation technologies

Main Products (Ryan IceShip group): Pure water

Main Products (Curtiss MiliTech): *Eagle*, *Wraith* and *Yeoman* BattleMechs

Profile:

Water is a staple of life, but relatively few Inner Sphere worlds have it in sufficient immediately usable quantity to prosper. The TriFil process employed by Curtiss Hydroponics, licensed from the first Star League but becoming Curtiss' property after the Amaris Coup, is an essential aspect of life on many worlds, as are the company's hy-

droponics and power-generation systems (which include solar and geothermal systems in addition to the more famous hydroelectric mechanisms). In 2668, Curtiss purchased the assets of the near-bankrupt Ryan Ice Cartel, the group that had made colonization of the stars possible so many centuries earlier.

In addition to a reputation for foresight that allowed it to build up significant stockpiles of equipment and resources in advance of the Succession Wars, Curtiss Hydroponics has invested heavily in field and technical staff. This commitment extends to Curtiss making numerous scholarships available for those wishing to attend the FWL Technical College, at vocational, university or doctoral levels, in exchange for an employment contract whose duration depends on the extent of the scholarship (though most scholars remain with the company beyond the mandated period). In addition, the company is the single largest employer of non-scholarship graduates from the FWLTC.

By combining practical and scientific development, Curtiss Hydroponics has built a reputation for efficiency and innovation, as well as dedication to its customers. Knowing how vital its services are, the company has also shown its willingness to cut deals with colonies (and no small number of vessels) that rely on its services, often making alternative arrangements—trading services, in-kind goods, station-share and the like—in lieu of the usual fees. While this means the company has not made the profits it might have with a more hard-line management in power, these arrangements gained it considerable power and influence across the League and beyond. Consequently, Curtiss can tap into an entire network of favors and good relations when needed.

Alessandra Wong, CEO of Curtiss Hydroponics, shares her authority with two other executive directors—the aged general Blanton Stilwell, who has managed the 51 fragile vessels of the Ryan IceShips Division since the 3020s, and Nigel Marcantuani, a civil engineer who spends most of his time overseeing Curtiss' field installations. The charismatic Wong, who takes after her playboy father, serves as the public face of the organization and is a fixture at the courts on Paradise and Atreus. Her estranged husband, Mathieu Kassel, manages the little-known military technologies division (best known for the *Eagle*, *Wraith* and *Yeoman* BattleMechs). Neither has allowed their personal difficulties to hinder Curtiss' business endeavors.



ECONOMICS

DURAPAQ SOLUTIONS (DuraPaq)

Main Plant Locations: Pireus (New Olympia)

CEO: Natalia Shen

Main Products (DuraPaq): Packaging

Main Products (NorthStar, Inc.): Preservation and shipment systems

Main Products (Deep Blue): Fish products

Main Products (Highlife): Retail outlets

Profile:

Beginning life as a cannery for the tuna and other fish products caught by New Olympia's fleet, the DuraPaq Company of Kasnov-Greenland has grown to become one of the largest manufacturers and shippers of foodstuffs in the Free Worlds. The company's patented packaging systems (manufactured at Durapaq factories on New Olympia, Atreus, Regulus and Andurien) are used by ninety percent of foodstuff manufacturers in the League and roughly a third of those across the Inner Sphere, though disputes over foreign royalties and licensing frequently cause problems (and will be a subject at the forthcoming trade talks associated with the Star League conference).

In the century since its acquisition by DuraPaq, NorthStar, Inc., makers and distributors of heating/refrigeration transports and

sterilization/irradiation equipment, has become a major name in the transshipment of goods despite operating at a different product scale than its parent company. Though it operates few vessels of its own, NorthStar equipment is used by a wide variety of freight companies, particularly those that employ storage canisters on an as-needed basis.

DuraPaq's ties to the fishing industry go back several centuries, but the incorporation of Deep Blue into the DuraPaq empire in 3047 was a major departure for the company, signaling a shift from simple packaging and shipment of goods to acquisition and processing. Rumor has it that the true objective of the Deep Blue acquisition was access to the Highlife chain of food retail outlets through which "Deep Blue Ocean Fresh" products have been sold across the League. This shift into production and retail was the pet project of CEO Natalia Shen, who seeks to make DuraPaq's share of the League and interstellar economy even larger in this time of peace and prosperity. Ironically, the modernization of DuraPaq's facilities on New Olympia has reduced the need for workers at company facilities, contributing to the planet's emigration trend.

SERVICES

Though benefiting least from the upsurge in new technologies, the service industries of the Free Worlds remain among the largest and most profitable sectors of the economy. Including everything from broadcasting and publishing to transportation and healthcare, these "soft" industries wield disproportionate influence in League affairs, their products being as much ideas as physical objects. While other companies deal in the physical staples of life, the service industries shape (and sometimes measure) people's ideas and opinions.

THE CARITAS AGENCY (UNLISTED)

Main Locations: Fidelity (Loyalty)

CEO: David Moss

Main Products: Entertainment contracts

Profile:

With Loyalty the home of the League's principal performing arts school, the Loyalty Theatrical Academy, it made sense that those seeking to employ LTA graduates would establish a presence there as well. The Caritas Agency is the largest and best known, with a history of finding work for LTA graduates almost since the academy's founding. Existing as a neutral broker in academy affairs (despite the efforts of various networks and publishers to influence LTA's curriculum throughout its history), Caritas has become the academy's principal agency only in the past four decades, its primacy closely linked with the Duchesne takeover of the school in 3028. Seeking to normalize relations with broadcasters and studios, Holly Duchesne saw Caritas as a buffer between her institution and the outside world, signing an exclusive ten-year contract that looks set to be renewed for the fourth time next year.

CARREÑO LIFE SCIENCES (CarLife)

Main Plant Locations: Atreus City (Atreus)

CEO: Cedric Alarcon

Main Products: Pharmaceuticals and bio-engineering

Profile:

Though military sciences and technologies have benefited most obviously from the rediscovery of the Helm data core, life sciences have undergone a quiet boom as well. With information gleaned from the memory core, many pharmaceutical companies learned to produce refined versions of existing products—pain-relievers, antibiotics and the like. One such company, Carreño Life Sciences, built on the rediscovered Star League technologies, developing new techniques from them over the years. While many of these remain experimental (or even classified), the release of ReLive in 3042 took the markets by storm. An expensive and intricate process costing roughly 5,000 eagles per month, ReLive slows the apparent aging process, allowing recipients to retain their looks from the time treatment begins (apparent aging occurs at around one-fifth the normal rate). ReLive does not prolong life—an average person undergoing treatment can still only expect to live until his or her eightieth or ninetieth birthday—and must be taken continuously. The public face of ReLive is FWLM Commodore Tania King, the 45-year old commander of the Fourth Oriente Fusiliers' naval detachment. King, who has appeared in many advertisements for the product, looks no more than 25 years old, having been among the first batch of ReLive



recipients. While officially the FWLM frowns upon its officers' involvement with corporate promotions, they have made an exception for the glamorous King, thanks in part to Carreño's involvement with the royal court (and also because of the advertisements' positive effect on FWLM recruitment).

FAITH PUBLISHING ALLIANCE (UNLISTED)

Main Locations: Atreus City (Atreus), Pireus (New Olympia), Cadiz (Oriente)

CEO: None.

Main Products: Religious materials

Profile:

A loose collection of religious publishers, the Faith Publishing Network coalesced in the mid-3050s in response to what its members called "a decline in society's spiritual values." Including respected publishers such as Cormorant Press of New Olympia and Spire Books of Oriente, as well as fringe groups like Atreus' White Dove Publications, the Alliance puts out a stunning array of religious material, including 27 different translations of the Bible, Koran and Vedas, plus numerous academic treatises on faith and religion. The Alliance's more extreme elements have attracted the greatest public attention, most often for espousing the primacy of specific faiths or publishing sensational tales of the supernatural. The negative press these elements have brought to the group has led some of its mainstream publishers—particularly those associated with the major faiths—to question the Alliance's long-term value.

FREE FLIGHT, LTD (FreFli)

Main Locations: Bounty Station (Fletcher)

CEO: Astrid Balaesque

Main Products: Shipping

Profile:

Shortly to celebrate its bicentennial, Free Flight remains committed to the transport of goods within the Free Worlds League and neighboring states. The past forty years have seen company fortunes wax and wane, suffering a measure of hardship as it carried out military supply runs during the Andurien War but making significant profits during the League-wide peace that followed. The company fleet has almost doubled in size since the Fourth Succession War, now comprising twelve JumpShips and almost forty DropShips, divided equally between long-term freight contracts (between the dispatch centers of Fletcher, Holt, Atreus and Maxwell) and pay-to-hire agreements. Two vessels even work in close conjunction with federal authorities, providing a secure courier service in cooperation with ships of the Communications Command. In addition to its own craft, Free Flight has longstanding agreements with a number of independent (mostly family-run) vessels, expanding its reach even further.

In some regards, Captain Balaesque regrets giving up command of her JumpShip, the Infinity, but the challenge of managing an entire fleet keeps her busy, and she revels in the corporation's affairs. On her recommendation, Free Flight has commissioned the construction of

two cargo waystations (one at Dieudonné and the other at Tamarind) and pushed through the design of a new cargo-carrying JumpShip class, the Clipper series, at the Technicon shipyards. Balaesque is also negotiating with the FWLM for battle armor suits with which to train the corporation's substantial and ever-present marine force.

HIGHPOINT TRADERS (HiPoint)

Main Locations: Cienfuegos (New Delos)

CEO: Corey Chang

Main Products: Trade

Profile:

A venerable trading corporation dating back to the original Star League, Highpoint improved its favor markedly when Corey Chang acquired it (in a game of cards, according to popular myth) in 3020. Despite skirting the fringes of the law, both in goods transported and in compliance with health and safety regulations, the company prospered thanks to trade with the Capellan Confederation and the Draconis Combine prior to the Fourth Succession War. Postwar smuggling of goods into and out of the Federated Commonwealth earned Highpoint much of its current wealth. Though authorities frown on the company's activities and Customs cutters frequently target its vessels, Highpoint has achieved a degree of official recognition, serving as official couriers for numerous federal goods and passenger shipments (and allegedly as a conduit through which SAFE operatives cross into foreign territory). Officially, the small corporate fleet—five JumpShips and thirteen DropShips—operates aboveboard, but its shadier operations are an open secret. Allegations that Highpoint vessels commit piracy in the Periphery and the Chaos March have surfaced on several occasions, but no solid evidence has emerged, perhaps a testament to CEO Chang's cunning and ruthlessness.

IRIAN MEDIA INTERSTELLAR (IMI)

Main Locations: Kirin River (Irian), Pireus (New Olympia)

CEO: Lucy Tsagarides

Main Products (Irian News Interstellar): News broadcasts

Main Products (Irian Entertainments): Vid productions

Main Products (Charybdis Publishing): Books

Profile:

The pre-eminent news provider in the Free Worlds League, IMI produces and distributes a wide variety of materials. Its best-known "product" is its INI news broadcasts, syndicated across the League (and sometimes beyond), which often serve as the main source of foreign-affairs news on the worlds IMI reaches. IMI's coverage is diverse, ranging from hard-hitting investigative journalism, business and current affairs to technology and fashion. Though facing stiff competition from foreign companies like DBC and INN, IMI remains a respected broadcaster and has won numerous journalism awards. Ironically, the company's largest viewing figures are for the often-scurrilous Tattle Tales, a lifestyle program whose focus is the lives and scandals of the rich and famous.

IMI's other main subsidiary, Irian Entertainments, produces several fictional programs for domestic and foreign markets, ranging from



ECONOMICS

sitcoms and period dramas to “cult vid” series and fantasy epics. One series, Fringers, centering on the lives of colonists on the League’s Periphery edge, recently completed its ten-thousandth weekly episode and is looking forward to its bicentennial in seven years. Famous for the ups and (much more often) downs of its ever-shifting inhabitants, Fringers appeals to many across the League, who see in its gritty misery people whose lives are consistently worse than their own.

Charybdis Publishing of New Olympia, famed for its mix of novels and nonfiction publications, is a new acquisition by IMI. The addition of a print-media string to IMI’s bow gives them access to whole new markets across the League part of CEO Tsagarides’ efforts to make IMI the media concern in the Free Worlds.

KENSAI HOLOGRAPHIKS (KnHolo)

Main Location: Portent (Gibson)

CEO: Tatiana Vanderbilt

Main Products: Holographic simulations

Profile:

Though they exist elsewhere in the Inner Sphere, Recreational Hologram Environments (RHEs) have established a solid grip in the Free Worlds League thanks largely to the marketing efforts of Gibson-based Kensai Holographiks. Producing holo players and materials to play on them, Kensai can manipulate the market in ways that smaller companies cannot, in particular by forcing its own equipment standards on the marketplace, regularly releasing new hardware (with attractive recordings that can only be played on the latest equipment) and forcing competitors to play catch-up.

The lack of substantive combat by the FWLM has denied Kensai access to its usual source of combat holovid footage, and so the company keeps up with demand by tapping into the Clan front and the Chaos March, paying mercenaries for battlerom recordings (and, in a landmark case thrown out by the courts, allegedly instigating a raid against a Chaos March world solely to get the requisite footage). Wildlife and landscape RHEs remain popular, as do those of sports events and the arts. Unlike some of its competitors, Kensai officially does not tap into the seedier side of RHEs, but some suggest that it exploits the “blue” market via one or more unlisted subsidiaries.

Though no longer the diva she was in her youth, Tatiana Vanderbilt continues to govern Kensai effectively, her ability to spot trends and outguess the corporation’s rivals allowing her to remain in charge despite her ongoing clashes with the company’s board of directors. Almost ninety, she shows little sign of slowing down, and remains as involved as ever in scouting talent, testing out new equipment and brokering distribution deals.

LAURENT INFOMEDIA (UNLISTED)

Main Location: Portent (Gibson)

CEO: Arnaud Rai

Main Products: Publishing and data services

Profile:

First appearing in 3054, Laurent InfoMedia quickly established a reputation as a publishing house for “fringe” materials. Taking advantage of the openness of Gibson (before the Blakists established their presence), Laurent’s revisionist take on science and history is often at odds with accepted facts, but that has not stopped the company from garnering huge sales among the conspiracy-theorist fringes, many of whom find Laurent’s version of the facts more palatable. A book on the alleged “alliance of Great Houses” that led to the murder of Simon Cameron on New Silesia is a company best-seller, closely followed by volumes on the Selaj family’s secret alliance with the Mariks, the alleged “truth” behind the assassination of Janos Marik (Thomas did it!), information on the Romas’ role as spies for the Clans, and the details of Hanse Davion’s ongoing manipulation of the Federated Suns after his faked death following the Clan War. Laurent’s latest volume describes SAFE’s greatest coup—the assassination of Yoguchi Kurita by Snow Fire while blaming the affair on the Lyrans—and is likely to be as successful as it is preposterous.

MEDIQUICK SERVICES (CHARITY 9374)

Main Location: Arzenburg (Rochelle)

CEO: Carine Hesse

Main Products: Medical services

Profile:

A boardroom coup during the first months of the Clan invasion stripped away most of Mediquick’s disreputable business practices and left a lean organization geared to doing what it was originally founded to do: saving lives. Taking a leaf from Médecins Sans Frontières and other charitable medical concerns, Mediquick became synonymous with trauma care and relief services. As people fled from the Clan juggernaut, Mediquick abandoned its traditional base of operations in the Free Worlds League and moved to support the refugees (the initial decision not to do so triggered the internal coup). The company soon became a channel through which the League could aid Clan war refugees without the political problems associated with direct government aid. That the federal government remains Mediquick’s largest donor is an open secret, particularly as the organization remains entangled in bringing emergency aid to worlds stricken by the FedCom Civil War.



Ironically, abandoning its profit motive allowed Mediquick to grow drastically. In just fifteen years it has expanded from three JumpShips and twelve DropShips (three with onboard hospital suites) to a staggering eleven JumpShips, nine medical DropShips and fifteen cargo haulers. Two of the JumpShips and hospital ships ply the backwater worlds of the League, providing the needy with routine medical assistance and specialist operations (such as eye surgery). The remainder of the fleet (and the bulk of donations received by the group) deploys wherever Mediquick's directors dictate—presently the Lyran Alliance the Federated Suns, though one vessel is in the Taurian Concordat and another is awaiting maintenance at the Atreus dockyards.

SCARBOROUGH LICENSING PLC (ScarLic)

Main Plant Locations: Whitby (Scarborough)

CEO: Victor Black

Main Products: Licensing

Profile:

Once the home of Scarborough Manufacturing, the Whitby industrial complex was shattered in the First Succession War and in the years since has been home to little more than a scattering of light industries that use the workshops within the factory shell. Management of the facility lies in the hands of Scarborough Licensing, PLC, all that remains of the once-powerful manufacturer. For a fee, Scarborough allows small companies to use its facilities (and to display the Scarborough logo on products made there). The licensing corporation also provides mail-forwarding and business registration services for companies that wish to use Scarborough as their legal base of operations—including no small number of foreign companies seeking to win coveted “FWL Company” status and avoid import taxes.

One such company is the Scarborough Corporation in the Draconis Combine, whose legal headquarters are in the League, but which has its main factory complex on Al Na'ir. The legal pretense allows the Combine-based corporation to maximize its profits in the League—its largest client—without having to physically relocate. This practice remains legal in the Free Worlds, if somewhat dubious. Some large companies such as IrTech have called for tighter regulation of “shell shops” like Scarborough, while companies in direct competition—such as the Exeter Corporation—have proposed an outright ban.

SYNERGY-INNOVATION CONCEPTS (SyNoCon)

Main Locations: Atreus City (Atreus), Cadiz (Oriente)

CEO: Rocio Chevalarias

Main Products: Market research, political polling

Profile:

In a nation whose lifeblood is trade, information on product appeal and advertising effectiveness can often make the difference between a substantial profit and a disastrous loss. Synocon is far from unique in the market research services it offers, but it has garnered considerable fame through its political and lifestyle polls, frequently quoted in media articles. Most of Synocon's clients are A-list companies like IrTech, Curtiss or IMI, but the corporation also undertakes contracts for provincial and federal authorities, and also does some fee-free work for League-based charities. The epitome of the “something from nothing” company, Synocon's opponents regard it as a parasite, existing to draw off their resources while providing little in return. CEO Rocio Chevalarias prefers the Schrödinger's Cat analogy, however, and is often fond of saying, “Would the marketing potential exist if we didn't look for it?”



HOUSE MARIK: RULES ANNEX

The following rules cover roleplaying as well as the *Classic BattleTech* board game, allowing all types of players to emulate the unique qualities of Free Worlds Leaguers in their games.

CLASSIC BATTLETECH RPG RULES

This section provides several new Life Paths to supplement those found in the character creation rules for *Classic BattleTech RPG (CBT: RPG)* and the *Classic BattleTech Companion (CBTComp)*. These rules enable players and gamemasters to create characters better tailored for FWL-based campaigns.

MechWarrior, Third Edition: *MechWarrior, Third Edition (MW3)* was originally published by FASA Corporation. Upon its reprint by FanPro LLC, the name was changed to *Classic BattleTech RPG (CBT: RPG)*. This section refers to pages in *CBT: RPG*, but the page numbers are identical regardless of whether you own *CBT: RPG* or *MW3*.

SUB-REGIONS

The Free Worlds League regions described on pp. 33-34, *CBTComp*, are the four largest provinces out of 154. Providing *CBT: RPG* details for

every FWL province is beyond the scope of this tome, but the table below expands on the information presented in *CBTComp* (which is repeated here for consistency). Many of the provinces included are cultural (though not always political) satellites of the League's four primary regions; where rules or Life Paths refer to those primary regions, they apply to affiliated sub-regions as well.

Members of a sub-region get the bonus listed for the primary region and also, where appropriate, for their own province. Worlds not in a named sub-region may gain the benefits of the closest primary region or choose the values given under Other FWL Worlds.

TRAITS

The following section contains new traits and expanded rules for existing traits. Unless otherwise stated, these traits follow the rules in *CBT: RPG* (see p. 78).

Some of the new traits are so closely related to existing traits (such as Quirks) established in previous rulebooks that players can exchange them at the end of character creation to give existing characters more flavor. When making such trait swaps, the player must switch among similar traits of equal point values, with the gamemaster determining whether the exchange is appropriate.

FWL SUB-REGION TABLE

Primary Region

Secondary Region

Skills, Traits and Modifiers

Marik Commonwealth

Marik Commonwealth
Stewart Commonality
Duchy of Tamarind
Abbey District
Silver Hawks
Duchy of Graham-Marik
Sirian Concordance
Border Protectorate

Appraisal +1, Negotiation +1, Protocol +1
Wealth, Well Equipped, Stigma/Thomas Supporter
Academics/Law +1, Well Equipped, Stigma/Thomas Supporter
Survival +1, Fit, Poverty
Tracking +1, Natural Aptitude/Perception or Survival, Stigma/Thomas Supporter
Academics/Religion +1, Survival +2, Gremlins, Quirk/Thomas Opponent, Toughness
Negotiation +2, Wealth, Well Equipped, Stigma/Thomas Supporter
Survival +2, Poverty, Pain Resistance, Quirk/Thomas Opponent
Administration +1, Training +1, Combat Sense, Unhealthy, Unlucky
Negotiation +2, Protocol +1

Principality of Regulus

Principality of Regulus
Regulan Free States
Principality of Gibson
Rim Commonality

Interest/Regulan History +1, Bad Reputation, Gregarious, Quirk/Thomas Opponent
Interest/Regulan History +1, Alertness, Impatient
Bureaucracy +1, Well Equipped, Stigma/Blakist ties, Tech Empathy
Hunting +1, Survival +1, Property, Quirk/Thomas Opponent

Duchy of Oriente

Duchy of Oriente
Duchy of Orloff
Ohren Province
Zion Province
The Protectorate

Appraisal +1, Negotiation +1,
Technician/Any +1, Good Reputation, Natural Aptitude/Any Technical skill
Leadership +1, Natural Aptitude/Tactics or Strategy, Proud Heritage, Quirk/Honorable
Appraisal +1, Survival +1, Wealth, Quirk/Hate Liao
Survival +2, Quirk/Hate Liao, Quirk/Thomas Opponent, Fit
Protocol +2, Well Connected, Shameful Heritage, Stigma/Rebel Stronghold

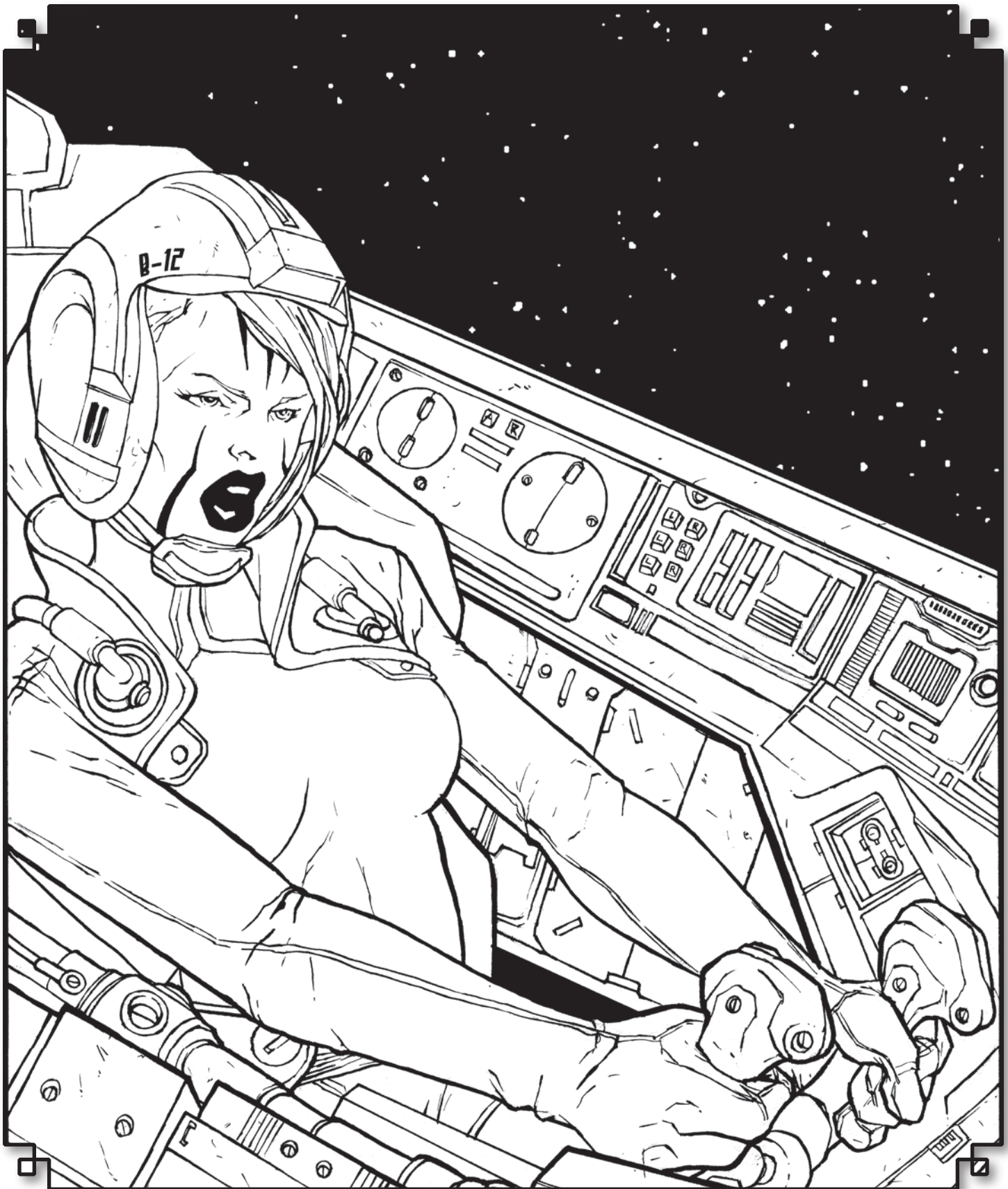
Duchy of Andurien

Duchy of Andurien
Mosiro Archipelago

Fast Talk +1, Protocol +1,
Perception +1, Stigma/Andurien, Quirk/Hate Liao, Quirk/Thomas Opponent, Combat Sense
Fast Talk +1, Thin Skinned, Introvert, Well-Connected

Other FWL Worlds

Appraisal +2, Protocol +1





HOUSE MARIK: RULES ANNEX

INVESTMENTS (NEW)

Cost: 1-5

Wealth confers an initial lump sum of cash, while Well Equipped provides a character with equipment to survive the rigors of the universe. Investments provides little initial benefit, instead representing long-term planning by the character. Whether money lent to start-ups, the purchase of bonds or an investment in the stock market, the Investments Trait provides the character with an ongoing (if somewhat erratic) source of cash.

Once per month, the gamemaster rolls 1D10 for each character with the Investments Trait. On a result equal to or less than the character's Investments Trait level, the character receives a dividend. To determine

the size of the dividend, the player makes a 1D10 roll and then applies a multiplier linked to the Investments Trait level. For example, a character with the Investments Trait at Level 2 receives a dividend. He rolls a die and gets a 4. The character receives 1,000 C-bills (4 x 250, the multiplier for Level 2).

INVESTMENT MULTIPLIER TABLE

Investment Trait Level	Multiplier
1	x100
2	x250
3	x500
4	x1,000
5	x2,500

MAGNETIC PERSONALITY (NEW)

Cost: 1/2/4

Some people just have it—the ability to work a crowd, to see into others' hearts and divine their desires and secrets. Presentation skills and oratory can be learned with hard work and determination, but true masters of manipulation exploit innate talents and insights. Characters with the Magnetic Personality Trait gain bonuses when using their skills in social situations. The trait functions on three levels: individual/small group (1-4 people, costing 2 points), large group (5-15 people, for 3 points) and mass gathering (16+ people, for 4 points). A character who can influence large groups can also influence individuals and small groups, and a character who can manipulate mass gatherings can do likewise with large and small groups.

When attempting to use any social skill on an appropriate group, a character with Magnetic Personality reduces the target number of the skill check by 2. For example, if a character with the large group level of Magnetic Personality talks to a dozen onlookers, his target number would be reduced by 2. However, if the group comprised twenty people, the character would gain no advantage.

SKILLS

The following section contains new skills and expanded rules for existing skills. Unless otherwise stated, these skills follow the rules in *CBT: RPG* (see p. 95).

SLEIGHT OF HAND (NEW)

Sleight of hand is a difficult skill used as often by dishonest folk as by stage magicians throughout the Inner Sphere. This skill relies on a combination of gestures, props, and sometimes eye contact and raw charisma to produce almost any illusion the character can imagine. At lower levels, the skill is generally limited to card tricks, pulling coins from behind children's ears and concealing small weapons. As the character grows more talented, tricks—often aided by special props—might include sawing a man in half, faking one's own death or even making a DropShip disappear.

Because the nature and style of sleight-of-hand illusions vary so widely, the gamemaster must determine the target number for any Sleight of Hand Action Checks, after the player describes what the character will be attempting. Set the base difficulty using the size of the illusion, and then assign modifiers based on how many people are to be fooled, the nature and sophistication of any props, how much advance preparation is done, and how many skilled partners are involved in the trick's final execution. (DEX/RFL, Difficult)

PERFORMANCE (NEW)

Standing in front of an audience and manipulating their emotions—whether through acting, singing, delivering a public address or dancing—is a simple skill to learn but a hard one to master. Most people have played "let's pretend," sung in a bar or danced with their partners, but few have the ability to do so professionally and make a living from the fickle arts.

Performance involves interwoven skills: the ability to present a work (projection, image, delivery, pacing, intonation) and to create new works (choreography, scriptwriting, etc). Performance governs how well a character interacts with large groups, delivering his or her performance and convincing the viewers of its reality, emotional content and truthfulness (as appropriate). Most performers are drawn to the stage or screen, where they use their skills to entertain. Others use their abilities to advance their own position—for example, in politics, where oratory is extremely beneficial, or in criminal endeavors (where a con man must convince his mark of his honesty). In these instances, Performance is to some degree interchangeable with aspects of Leadership and Deception, though in general it has a much broader reach.

Depending on his skill level, an active performer can foster emotions in his audience, variously inciting, calming, convincing and inspiring them. Speechwriters and playwrights can also use Performance to produce material that may be used by others (albeit much less effectively, unless in the hands of another talented performer). (CHA/WIL)



ADDITIONAL LIFE PATHS

The following section contains four new Life Paths unique or closely tied to FWL life. Players and gamemasters can use these paths in conjunction with those presented on pages 33–35 of *CBT: RPG* and pages 37–91 of *CBTComp*. In addition to minimum required Attributes, the following paths list prerequisite paths a character must complete before entering them.

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

EVENTS

These paths feature unique events similar to the paths presented in the *CBT: RPG* rulebook. Use the standard rules for determining character events (see p. 24, *CBT: RPG*), with one exception. Instead of rolling 2D6, players roll 2D10 to select an event. After rolling dice for an event, the player can increase or decrease the dice roll results by 1 or 2, or reroll using a single expenditure of Edge (see *Edge and Events*, p. 25, *CBT: RPG*).

STAGE 4: CAREER BUREAUCRAT

Open to any affiliation. Characters from any Free Worlds League or Lyran Alliance world may add +1 to all event rolls.

They're everywhere, often derided for their apparently single-minded devotion to procedure and protocol, viewed as mere drones in the monolithic governments that rule cities, planets and interstellar empires. Yet without the bureaucrats to do the work, nothing could happen. Though many who make a career of it often find their lives every bit as tedious as popular opinion claims, those who "hang in there" long enough gain an intimate knowledge of the workings of government and can even play a key role in affairs of state from well behind the scenes.

Time: 2 years

Attribute Minimum: SOC 3

Attribute Thresholds: SOC –1

Traits: Stigma/Bureaucrat, Introvert, Patience, Contact (2)

Skills: Administration +3, Negotiation/Political +2, Protocol/Affiliation +2, Career/Bureaucrat +1, Computer/Any +1

Previous Paths: Any University or Civilian Job path.

Next Path: Career Bureaucrat (4), Civilian Job (4), Travel (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4)

CAREER BUREAUCRAT EVENTS

- 2 Ground zero in a spy scandal. How were you supposed to know "Bob" was an enemy agent when he asked for those classified reports? Nope, the courts didn't buy that one... [SOC –2, Bad Reputation (4), Bloodmark (2), Stigma/Traitor (2), add 3D6 years to the time spent in this path, next path must be Ne'er Do Well]
- 3 A little abuse of power can go a long way, but what happens when you get caught? (Character determines nature of "abuse.") [SOC –2, Computer/Any +2, Streetwise/Affiliation +2, Bad Reputation (3), Enemy (2), Greedy, Stigma/Criminal (2), lose all Contacts and add 2D6 years to the time spent in this path, next path must be Ne'er Do Well]
- 4 Just because you're with the government doesn't mean you don't pay your taxes—no matter what your bosses may pull. [Bad

Reputation (2), Greedy, Poverty (3), Stigma/Tax Evader, next path must be Ne'er Do Well or Civilian Job; if Civilian Job, apply –1 to all event rolls]

- 5 Worn down after years of the same old thankless routine, you finally snapped and shot your mouth off to the wrong colleagues about how you really feel. Guess you didn't like this job as much as you kept saying. [Fast Talk –2, Bad Reputation, Impatient, Madness/Berserker, Poverty, next path must be Ne'er Do Well or Civilian Job]
- 6 It never fails. The nobles and the politicians have their power plays, and guess who gets to do their dirty work? [Characters who try to stay neutral and "honest" take Negotiation/Political +3, Brave, Enemy (3), Poverty (2) and lose one Contact. Characters who choose sides take Dark Secret (2), Enemy (2), In For Life, Patron, Quirk/Paranoid, Timid and Wealth]
- 7 It's impossible at any job for everyone to like you, and the bureaucracy is no different. [Take two one-level Enemies]
- 8 Assigned to another one of those well-intentioned offices placed in the kind of neighborhood where you need bars on the windows. [SOC –1, Protocol/Affiliation –1, Streetwise/Affiliation +2, Brave]
- 9 With duties so mundane they numb the mind, you spend every night trying to escape the fact that your life is a colossal waste. [Career/Bureaucrat –1, Administration –1, Streetwise/Affiliation +2, +2 to Art/Any, Seduction, Gambling or Interest/Any, choose one: Addiction, Impatient or Quirk]
- 10 Another two years of your life gone. There has to be more to human existence than cubicles and computer screens. [Career/Bureaucrat +1, Computer/Any +1, Protocol/Affiliation +1, +1 to any other skill, choose one: BOD –1, STR –1, Addiction, Impatient or Night Blindness]
- 11 Just doing your job like everyone else. [Career/Bureaucrat +1, Negotiation/Political +1]
- 12 You excel at streamlining TPS reports. [Natural Aptitude: Administration, Quirk/Meticulous]
- 13 Sometimes it's not about who you know; it's about who they think you know. [Negotiation/Political +3, Career/Bureaucrat +1]
- 14 Assigned to a traveling dignitary's retinue, you get the chance to go out and see the universe. [SOC +1, Protocol/Affiliation +2, Career/Bureaucrat +2, Negotiation/Political +2, Gregarious, next path must be Travel, but add +1 to the event roll result]
- 15 Your duties involved a lot of coordination with the local military command, who didn't mind teaching a thing or two to a mere paper-pusher. [+2 to any three Basic Training Field skills, Contact (2)]
- 16 Years of hard work and a talent for taking the initiative land you a coveted position as aide to the local duke. [SOC +1, Career/Bureaucrat +4, Protocol/Affiliation +3, Negotiation/Political +3, Leadership +2, Contact (3), Enemy (2), Gregarious]
- 17 Routine aptitude tests showed you had far more potential than the usual folks who work in cubicles like yours. [INT +1, Fast Learner, Patron (3), may take any state-run Academy or University path next]
- 18 Years of working behind the scenes, seeing how the pros do it and performing above and beyond the highest standards in public service have really paid off. Have you considered running



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for office? [SOC +1, Career/Bureaucrat +3, Protocol/Affiliation +3, Negotiation/Political +3, Administration +3, Leadership +2, Gregarious, Wealth (2), Property]

19 Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results

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

AGITATOR

Available to any affiliation. FWL characters receive a +1 bonus to all event rolls; characters from Regulus or Andurien gain +2.

Demagogues have long played a role in social issues, but in the unstable Free Worlds League they have become major players, raising political agitation and direct action to an art form. One part orator and political operative, one part terrorist and saboteur, the agitator mixes social and military skills to lethal effect.

Time: 2 years

Attribute Minimum: CHA 4, STR 4

Attribute Thresholds: CHA -1

Traits: Magnetic Personality, Bloodmark (2), Toughness

Skills: Sleight of Hand +2, Performance +2, Leadership +2, Negotiation/Political +2, +1 to any two skills in a Military Field

Previous Paths: Any Military, Police, Political or Street

Next Path: Ne'er Do Well (4), Agitator (4), Covert Ops (4), Career Bureaucrat (4)

AGITATOR EVENTS

- 2 It was supposed to be a simple "awareness campaign." Who knew the civilian guards would be loaded for bear? [BOD -2, First Aid +3, Unlucky (2), Bad Reputation, Enemy (2), choose two: Clumsy, Gremlins, Impatient, Lost Limb (2), Timid or Unhealthy, next path must be Ne'er Do Well]
- 3 It's hard enough fighting the "forces of oppression;" fighting a two-front war against people in the movement puts you in a world of hurt. [Administration -1, Negotiation/Political +2, Leadership -2, Streetwise/Any +2, Enemy, Stigma/Troublemaker, choose Dark Secret or Bad Reputation, add 2D6 years to time spent in this path]
- 4 A major success—or a dismal failure—forces you to lie low until the heat dies down. [BLD -1, Stealth +2, Sleight of Hand +1, Alternate Identity, Enemy (2), Poverty (3), add 1D6 years to time spent in this path]
- 5 Sometimes ideologies don't mesh. This time you're the one who has to move on and find a new band of comrades. [Negotiation/Political +2, Streetwise/Any +2, Oration +2, Bad Reputation, Poverty (2), Stigma/Outsider, next path must be Ne'er Do Well]
- 6 Slam! You're lucky they didn't execute you out of hand—perhaps they didn't realize who they had—but your tour in a "correctional facility" allowed you to hone your skills and gained you a host of "business associates." [SOC -2, Streetwise/Any +2, Stealth +2, Fit, Bad Reputation, Stigma/Criminal Record, Enemy (2), Contacts (2), choose one: Addiction, BOD -1, Glass Jaw. Add 1D6 years to time spent in this path, next path must be Ne'er Do Well or fugitive]
- 7 "Come and see the violence inherent in the system." You earn a reputation for sterling work, but pay the price. [Fast Talk +1, Streetwise +2, Performance +2, choose one: Glass Jaw, BOD -1, Poverty]

- 8 You spend time "finding yourself." Revolution can happen in the mind as well as with the body. [Madness/Any, INT +1, Performance +2]
- 9 Boom and bust—your efforts at agitation fizzle. [Negotiation/Political +2, -1 to all other skills earned in this pass]
- 10 Your dalliance with the slumming noble brings interesting gains and repercussions. [Seduction +2, Streetwise/Any +1, Contact, Dependent]
- 11 You do all the work ... someone else gets the credit. [+2 to any two skills earned in this pass, Enemy]
- 12 More often than not, the quiet ones they don't see coming pose the greatest threat. [Stealth +2, Investments]
- 13 In the ongoing struggle between the bullet and the ballot box, sometimes the latter is more effective. [Pistols +2, Leadership +1, +2 to any two other skills]
- 14 A word—or a bullet—in the right ear can do wonders. [Promotion, Negotiation/Political +2, Stigma/Ruthless]
- 15 Make friends and influence people. Make enemies and influence even more people. [Negotiation/Political +1, Patron, Enemy]
- 16 War to the knife, and the knife in your enemy's back. You have a choice—to kill a rival or to disgrace him. [Characters who choose to kill take Pistol +2, Well Equipped, Dark Secret; characters who choose disgrace take Negotiation/Political +2, Property (2), Enemy]
- 17 Does the poacher turn gamekeeper? You have the option to turn your activism into a career in politics or law enforcement. [Characters who choose to do so take Negotiation/Political +2, Bureaucracy +2, Administration +2, Streetwise/Any +2, Stigma/Turncoat, Well-Connected, next path must be To Serve and Protect or Parliamentary Politician; characters who refuse to "sell out" take +2 to any two skills, Good Reputation, Stigma/Martyr to the Cause, EDG +1]
- 18 A "spectacular" success nets you fame and influence in equal measure. [Negotiation/Political +3, Demolitions +1 Survival +1, Promotion, Good Reputation]
- 19 Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results
- 20 Choose two events or roll three times and apply each result

TOUR OF DUTY: TEST PILOT

Available to any affiliation. Characters from any Free Worlds League or Lyrans Alliance world may add +1 to all event rolls, as may graduates of NAIS.

The Inner Sphere's resurgence in military technology following the Clan invasion has led to the rapid development of new tools of war, particularly in the industrial powerhouse of the Free Worlds League. Before it can enter service, however, each new BattleMech, aerospace fighter or tank design must be pushed to its limits and often beyond, frequently being tested to literal destruction. Only the best and bravest (some say suicidal) serve as test pilots. Some are icy-cool professionals, secure in their skills and reputation; others constantly strive to demonstrate their prowess, only feeling alive when adrenaline courses through their veins.

Time: 4 years

Attribute Minimums: BOD 4, STR 4, RFL 4, WIL 4, EDG 5

Traits: Enemy, Well Equipped, Promotion, Brave, Vehicle, Quirk/Risk-taker



Skills: Piloting/Any +4, Career/Soldier +2, Bureaucracy/Any +2, Leadership +2

Previous Paths: Any Tour of Duty

Next Path: Tour of Duty: Any (4), Civilian Job (4), Travel (4)

TOUR OF DUTY: TEST PILOT EVENTS

- 2 They say any landing you walk away from is a good one. Shame you couldn't. [Administration +2, Bureaucracy/FWL +2, Enemy, Bad Reputation, BOD -2, RFL -2; lose all vehicle, rank and Well Equipped traits; choose two: Addiction, Clumsy, Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (2), Low Endurance, Poor Hearing, Poor Vision, Poverty, add 1D6 years to time spent in this path, may take no more military paths]
- 3 Maybe it wasn't your fault the controls were reversed, but you were at the helm and just destroyed a valuable prototype. Welcome to the ranks of the unemployed. [Piloting/Any +2, Bad Reputation, Enemy (2), Poverty, lose all vehicle and rank traits, may not retake this path]
- 4 Impossible criteria and a faulty machine, but you nearly prevailed. Unfortunately, close only counts with horseshoes and hand grenades, not hyper-expensive R&D projects. [+3 to any piloting skill, +3 to any gunnery skill, +2 to any two other skills, Stigma/Failure, Enemy, lose all vehicle and rank traits, choose one: Poverty, Addiction, Bad Reputation, next path must be Tour of Duty or Ne'er Do Well]
- 5 Who does he think he is? Clashes with your rival take things to dangerous extremes. [BOD -1, EDG +1, Piloting/Any +2, First Aid +1, Bureaucracy +1, choose one: Bad Reputation, Enemy, Demotion]
- 6 Work hard, play harder. Why take things carefully when tomorrow may be your last day alive? [Seduction +2, Fast Talk +2, Streetwise +1, Gregarious, choose one: Addiction, Dependent, Dark Secret, Slow Learner]
- 7 Faint heart never won fair lady, nor piloted high-performance 'Mech. [SOC +1, EDG +1, INT -1, Gregarious, Impatient, Career/Soldier +1, choose one: Ambidextrous, Attractive, G-tolerance, High Endurance]
- 8 Someone doesn't like you and sabotages your efforts. Frustrating, but it's nice to know you have them scared. [Administration +2, Negotiation/Legal +2, +2 to any combat skill, Enemy, Demotion]
- 9 Things are slow, but you make solid alliances that help your endeavors. [Career/Soldier +1, Interest/Any +2, add 1D3 years to time spent in this path]
- 10 Who do they think they are? You're the best and you know it, though a rival's attention spurs you to new heights. [+2 to any two relevant piloting or combat skills, Impatient, Quirk/Big Man on Campus]
- 11 Bah, technology. You're there to use it, not to understand how it works. [+2 to any two relevant piloting or combat skills, Gremlins]
- 12 You're the best and everyone knows it. [Career/Soldier +1, Seduction +1, choose one: Contact (2), Good Reputation (2) or Well-Connected]
- 13 The only way to succeed in this game is to seize the tiger by the tail. Second place might as well be last and there's no way in hell you're going to lose. [Streetwise +1, Fast Talk +1, +1 to any Military Field skill, Contact, Dark Secret (2), Good Reputation, Impatient, Well Equipped]
- 14 Some people crash and burn while others rise from the flames of adversity like a phoenix. You have a lucky escape and learn from what happened. [Administration +1, First Aid +1, Tech Empathy]
- 15 Your insights—technical as well as piloting—prove vital in the finished product. [Tech Empathy, INT +1, SOC +1, +2 to any two technical skills, Training +2, +1 to any two other skills, Good Reputation, Promotion (2), Well Equipped (2), Combat Paralysis, Enemy (2)]
- 16 Your reputation precedes you, for good and ill. [SOC +1, Seduction +1, Leadership +1, Fast Talk +1, +2 to any two Military Field skills, +2 to any single other skill, Commission, Good Reputation (1), Enemy, Stigma/The One to Beat]
- 17 You mourn the loss of your associates, but you know the best way to honor their sacrifice is to succeed. [+2 to any two piloting or combat skills, +2 to any two technical skills, +1 to any two other skills, Good Reputation, Quirk/Honor the Fallen, choose one: Natural Aptitude, Patron, Promotion, Wealth, Well Equipped]
- 18 What could be better than being the best pilot? Being asked to lead the team! [SOC +1, CHA +1, Leadership +2, Training +1, Career/Soldier +1, Good Reputation, Commission, Well Equipped, Vehicle (3), Enemy (3), choose one: BOD -2, STR -2, Dark Secret (2), Gremlins or Unhealthy]
- 19 Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results
- 20 Choose two events or roll three times and apply each result



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CREATURES

This section provides several new creatures native to planets in the Free Worlds League. All of them follow the rules for creatures presented in *CBTComp*. Additional FWL creatures may also be found in *CBTComp*: the branth (p. 134), the Syramon thunderbird (p.147) and the tabiranth of lost Jardine (pp. 147–148).

LESSER BRANTH (DRACO MINORIS LOPECIS)

Better known as the branth-rat, the lesser branth is—as its name suggests—a smaller version of the well-known lizard. It is unclear whether the lesser branth is a wholly native creature or whether early settlers on Lopez engineered them to serve as pets. Rarely measuring more than 50 cm, the small creatures are widely sought after as familiars by the Andurien nobility. Like their larger kin, the lesser branth do not prosper when removed from Lopez, and few live away from their homeworld for more than a few months. On Lopez, the small winged lizards have prospered. They occasionally gather in packs that ravage the countryside in search of nourishment before collapsing in a bloody frenzy of cannibalism. Lesser branth packs (or branth swarms, as the natives call them) are closely monitored by farmers, who frequently call in the planetary militia to deal with pest outbreaks that threaten to overwhelm local exterminators.

Homeworld: Lopez, Duchy of Andurien, Free Worlds League

Environment: All

Type: Native, possibly engineered

Body Shape: Winged

Coloring: Brown

Length: 50 cm

Height: 35 cm

Weight: 8 kg

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
2	10	3	6	1	4	1

Traits: Aggressive, Camouflage, Good Hearing(2), Good Smell, Good Vision, Pack Hunter (2-10)

Skills: AniMelee +3, Climbing +3, Perception +5

Size: Extremely Small (-3)

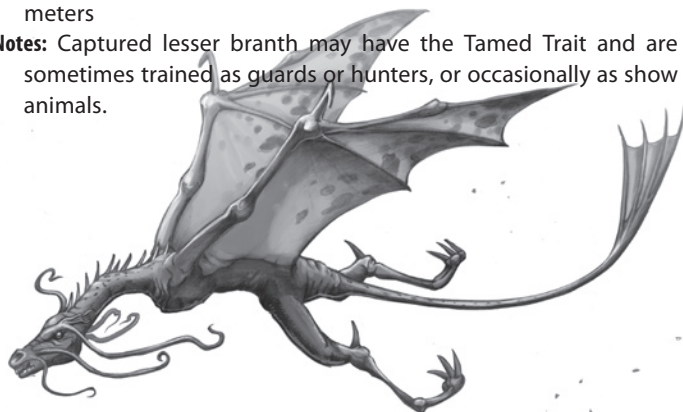
Armor: Hide [1/0/0/0]

Attack: 1 x 2D6 (claws)

1 x 3D6 (bite)

Movement: Air 5/8/16; Ground 9/20/50; Sprinting 5 turns; Jumping 5 meters

Notes: Captured lesser branth may have the Tamed Trait and are sometimes trained as guards or hunters, or occasionally as show animals.



HODSON FLYER (CARCHARODON HODSONENSIS)

Big-game fishing has long been a human preoccupation, and the Marik Commonwealth world of New Olympia has become the focus of sportsmen from across the Inner Sphere. In addition to imported species like marlin and tuna, numerous native species have become prey for fishermen, most notably the elusive and prestigious Hodson flyer.

Measuring more than four meters long and weighing more than a ton, the flyer is nonetheless sleek and swift, capable of outrunning all but the fastest fishing boats. Though predominantly subsisting on plankton and small fish, flyers gain valuable diversity in their diets by consuming Olympian birds that they catch by leaping from the water. Such feats—also used as a form of play by these intelligent fish—can carry the flyers though almost ten meters of open air, their wing-fins allowing minute adjustments to ease hunting. The creatures are incapable of true flight, but these fin-controlled leaps led the initial settlers on Olympia to bestow the name “flyer” on them.

Homeworld: New Olympia, Marik Commonwealth, Free Worlds League

Environment: Subtropical seas

Type: Native

Body Shape: Fishlike

Coloring: Blue-gray scales

Length: 420 cm

Height: 120 cm

Weight: 1200 kg

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
38	30	2	3	2	5	1

Traits: Aggressive, Good Smell (3)

Skills: Acrobatics +2, AniMelee +2, Perception +5, Swimming +10, Tracking +2

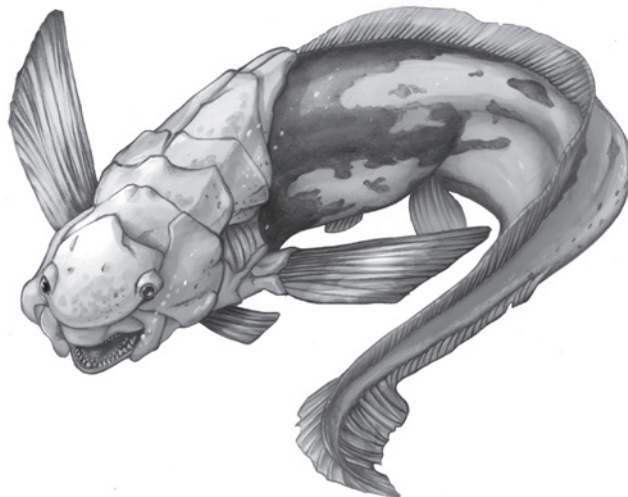
Size: Large (+1)

Armor: A flexible cartilaginous covering protects the Hodson flyer's main body from harm (torso and head only) [2/3/2/2], but its wing-fins have minimal protection [1/1/1/0].

Attack: 1 x 5D6 (bite)

2 x 4D6 (ram)

Movement: Water 10/15; Jumping 10 meters





TARISE (TAURIS TAISENSUS MAXWELLUS)

The large-eyed tarise closely resembles the bovines of Terra and fills many of the same niches on its homeworld of Maxwell. Sure-footed wild tarise roam the planet's many mountain ranges, but domesticated examples appear all across Maxwell and on many surrounding worlds, where they are used as beasts of burden, mounts or to draw wagons and farm machinery. Some communities regard the tarise as holy avatars; others use them as a food source, though tarise milk and meat are less popular than that of Terran cattle.

Domesticated tarise are placid and friendly, able to follow simple spoken commands. They frequently pester their handlers and passersby for fruit or sweets, nudging them with their prehensile snouts (which they also use to feed themselves). Though not naturally aggressive, wild tarise are territorial and seek to scare off those approaching their herds. Bull tarise form the mainstay of these defenders, but the largest and most aggressive members of the herd are the gigantic matriarchs, some massing up to two tons, who jealously guard their young.

Homeworld: Maxwell, Abbey District, Free Worlds League
Environment: Mountains (wild), all environments (domesticated)
Type: Native
Body Shape: Four-legged
Coloring: Black, brown or tan hide
Length: 370 cm
Height: 165 cm
Weight: 900 kg

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
32	18	2	4	2	4	1

Traits: Bad Vision(2), Domesticated, Shy
Skills: AniMelee +1, Climbing +2, Perception +5, Tracking +1
Size: Medium (+0)
Armor: Leathery hide [1/0/0/0]
Attack: 1 x 3D6 (ram)
 2 x 3D6 (kick)
Movement: Ground 8/20/40



TELLMAN BATS (MEGADERMATIDAE VAMPYRUS TELLMANENSIS)

When humans first landed on Tellman's Mistake, they soon encountered the ever-present bat analogues that dominated the planet's ecology. Though not aggressive, the bats did bite in self-defense or panic, leaving a small wound that caused little discomfort. A natural anesthetic in the bat saliva (also containing a natural anti-septic and anti-clotting agent), part of the bat's feeding mechanism, caused these effects.

For most people bitten by Tellman bats, the only noticeable effect is a fever that lasts a day or two before full health returns. In fact, more than full health returns for most. Chemicals in the bat's "poison" stimulate the bite victim's metabolism, boosting resistance to other infections. Unfortunately, a few of those exposed to a bat bite suffer an allergic reaction that occasionally turns lethal. Tellman bat farmers, who keep "herds" that are "milked" for their medicinal properties, carry anti-venin designed to prevent accidental fatalities among their workforce, but ill-prepared travelers remain at risk from feral bats.

Homeworld: Tellman's Mistake, Free Worlds League
Environment: All
Type: Native
Body Shape: Winged
Coloring: Black, brown or red fur
Length: 55cm
Height: 20 cm
Weight: 6 kg

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
2	1	2	3	1	3	1

Traits: Bad Vision, Bloodsucker, Night Vision (2), Shy
Skills: AniMelee +5, Climbing +2, Perception +2, Stealth +3
Size: Extremely Small (-3)
Armor: Fur [1/1/1/1]
Attack: 1 x 1D6 (bite, poison)
 1 x 1D6 (claws)
 Poison [3D6; Subduing; Injected; 5 turns, 2 doses]

Movement: Air 7/11/22; Ground 0.5/1/—

Notes: The victim of Tellman bat poison should roll 2D6. On a result of 2, the damage inflicted is lethal. On a result of 7-12, the character gains the Toughness Trait for 1D6 days once the poison has subsided. Other results have no effect. A player must make this test every time his or her character is bitten by the bats.





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MORDRED LIZARD (CARCHARODONTOSAURUS CAMLANNENSIS)

If the long dark nights of Camlann aren't enough to discomfit visitors, the numerous large saurians that roam the planet are. Among the best known, though least often encountered, is the Mordred lizard, a massive, evil-looking quadruped resplendent with horns and irregular scales that bear the scars of numerous fights. With its blade-like teeth, the Mordred lizard certainly fits the billing it receives in local folklore (where it often features as the bogeyman in bedtime stories). However, few have studied this lizard's life cycle closely. These big saurians are omnivores, but they prefer to dine on the branches of native trees that they shear off using their scissor-like teeth. The most feared and reviled of Camlann's giant lizards, the Mordreds are little more than overgrown cattle.

This reality has not prevented people from hunting the lizards to near-extinction. Currently, a governmental protection order seeks to safeguard the scattered remnants of the species, with mixed success. The illegality of Mordred-hunting has given it added cachet among some elements of League society and the authorities maintain a constant vigil for stealthy hunting parties.

Solitary animals except when with young, Mordreds are shy and generally passive but quite capable of defending themselves. While a lone lizard might flee an attack as often as it stands its ground, one with young will fight viciously and mercilessly, using its sharp claws and teeth to lethal effect.

Homeworld: Camlann, Free Worlds League

Environment: Woodlands

Type: Native

Body Shape: Two-legged

Coloring: Black

Length: 1,100 cm

Height: 500 cm

Weight: 4500 kg

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
90	65	2	5	3	4	1

Traits: Camouflage, Cold Blooded, Good Hearing (2), Good Smell (2), Night Vision, Shy, Terror

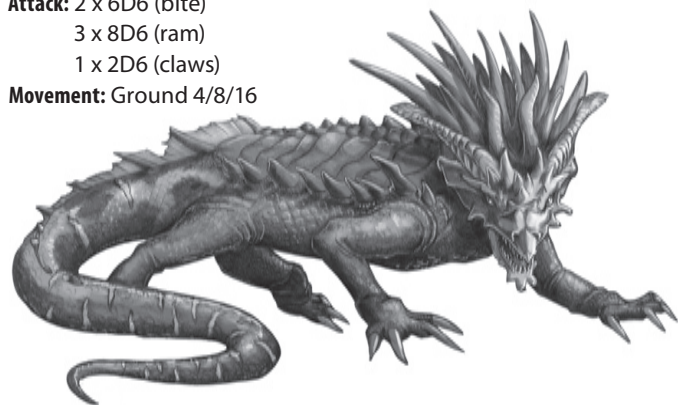
Skills: AniMelee +5, Perception +3

Size: Very large (+2)

Armor: Hide [2/1/0/0]

Attack: 2 x 6D6 (bite)
3 x 8D6 (ram)
1 x 2D6 (claws)

Movement: Ground 4/8/16



CHALICE HUNTER (DEINONYCHUS CAMMLANENSIS)

One of the smallest saurians on Camlann, distantly related to the Mordred lizard, the chalice hunter is among the most feared. Though it averages only a meter in length, this lizard is a finely tuned killing machine, demonstrating formidable intelligence and social cooperation as a pack hunter. A group of chalice hunters has little fear of taking on a much larger opponent, relying on speed and cooperation to bring down the prey, using vicious talons and razor-sharp teeth. Unafraid of humans, chalice hunters will attack if they feel they have the advantage. They usually withdraw from large groups or those demonstrating martial prowess.

Camlann authorities have placed a bounty on chalice hunter pelts, deeming the beasts a menace to the human population. Thanks to the efforts of human hunters, most urban areas are spared chalice hunter predation. Indeed, conservationists fear that sport-hunting of these lizards over the next decade will threaten the wild population, compromising family groups and leaving the designated no-hunting zones as the species' only refuge. Few Camlann residents, however, would mourn the decimation of the chalice hunter.

Homeworld: Camlann, Free Worlds League

Environment: Plains

Type: Native

Body Shape: Two-legged

Coloring: Brightly colored

Wingspan: 110 cm

Height: 80 cm

Weight: 210 kg

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
12	9	3	7	6	7	4

Traits: Aggressive, Blood Rage, Cold Blooded, Good Hearing (2), Pack Hunter (2-5), Showy Coloring

Skills: Acrobatics +2, AniMelee +4, Perception +4, Stealth +5, Tracking +5

Size: Medium (+0)

Armor: Hide [1/0/0/0]

Attack: 2 x 6D6 (bite)
2 x 5D6 (talons)

Movement: Ground 10/20/80





CALLOWAY WILDEBEEST (TAURINUS CALLOWENSIS)

Among the most prominent technological successes of modern League history is the rescue from extinction of the prized Calloway wildebeest. Wiped out in the 24th century by over-hunting, only a few preserved carcasses survived the ensuing decades until scientists on Oriente, using technologies recovered from the Helm data core, cloned the animals and began raising them in conjunction with native species. Though initially attempted as a scientific curiosity, examining the age of materials that could be successfully cloned, the project has expanded into a full-fledged effort to re-establish the species. Herd numbers remain too small to be a viable brood stock, but they are growing steadily, and the project team believes that a combination of natural breeding and cloning will create a herd of sufficient size and diversity to be self-perpetuating within a decade. For the moment, the recreated Calloway wildebeest exists in two well-guarded secret compounds on Calloway VI. The first are expected to be released into the wild in the coming months.

Homeworld: Calloway VI, Duchy of Oriente, Free Worlds League

Environment: Classified

Type: Native (cloned)

Body Shape: Four-legged

Coloring: Brown or tan, occasionally black

Length: 340 cm

Height: 190 cm

Weight: 800 kg

STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	EDG
25	18	1	3	2	2	1

Traits: Bad Vision (2), Domesticated, Good Hearing (2), Night Blindness (2), Shy, Tamed

Skills: AniMelee +2, Perception +2

Size: Large (+1)

Armor: Thick hide [1/1/0/0]

Attack: 1 x 2D6 (hooves)
2 x 3D6 (ram)

Movement: Ground 8/16/32; Sprinting 20 turns



PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

The equipment described below follows the standard rules in *CBT: RPG*, *CBTComp*, *Lostech* and *Combat Equipment*. Unless otherwise specified, all of these items have a Free Worlds affiliation, and so their availability to non-Free Worlders may be restricted.

ANTI-AIRCRAFT (AA) WEAPONS

During the Succession Wars, the steady loss of technology rendered man-portable anti-aircraft weapons almost extinct as the required advanced electronics were increasingly reserved for other roles. The resurgence of this technology in recent years, most notably microelectronics, has allowed the reintroduction of these weapons.

Principally comprising a motor block and a sensor head with a relatively small shaped-charge warhead, the overall damage potential of AA weapons remains relatively low. Instead, the weapons rely on their ability to punch through armor and damage systems behind it. This capacity is particularly important when engaging aircraft at low altitude, for which even the slightest system failure means the difference between flight and a high-speed impact with a hillside.

Two principal man-portable AA systems have come into vogue in recent years, one a lightweight disposable system good for a single use and the other a more robust but somewhat less portable squad support weapon.

Mark 1 Light AA Weapon

This light AA weapon is designed for use by individuals and as a squad support weapon. Its light weight means that an infantry team can carry several, giving them rudimentary protection against air attack at relatively little cost. The system is best employed where soldiers may need air defense, but that need is low or contingent on other factors. In many regards, the weapon's psychological advantage for those carrying it—and disadvantage to pilots against whom it is employed—outweighs its actual military effectiveness.

Skill: Support

Ratings: D/D/E

AP: 5

Damage: 3d6

Type: B

Range (S/M/L/E): 40/160/320/650

Shots: 1

Cost/Reload: 1,000/NA

Weight: 5 kg

Affiliation: All

Notes: Restricted Targeting (Air), Disposable

Mark 2 Man-portable AA Weapon

This heavier system trades portability and ease of use for battlefield effectiveness. Its considerable weight makes it unlikely to be employed purely as a contingency; instead, it provides air defense where attack by VTOL or fixed-wing aircraft is a real possibility. The substantial warhead makes it a lethal anti-armor weapon as well, though the seeker-heads on the missiles are calibrated to target aircraft heat plumes and electronic emissions rather than vehicles and power armor, making it grossly inaccurate in such a role.



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Skill: Support

Ratings: D/D/E

AP: 6

Damage: 6d6

Type: B

Range (S/M/L/E): 60/360/900/1,800

Shots: 4

Cost/Reload: 3,500/1,000

Weight: 35 kg

Affiliation: All

Notes: Encumbering, Crew: 2, Restricted Targeting (Air). Reloading the four-shot magazine is a Complex Action.

NEW WEAPON TRAITS

Restricted Targeting (Specific): Weapons with this trait are limited in the targets they may engage, either through design (sensor heads, effectiveness and so on) or as a side effect of their construction or employment (restricted firing arcs, slow tracking ability and so on). When used against their intended target type, they gain +2 to all to-hit rolls. Against other classes of target, they suffer a -3 to-hit penalty. For example, a weapon with Restricted Targeting (Air) gains a +2 to-hit bonus when used against air (VTOL or AT2) targets, but a -5 penalty when employed against ground targets.

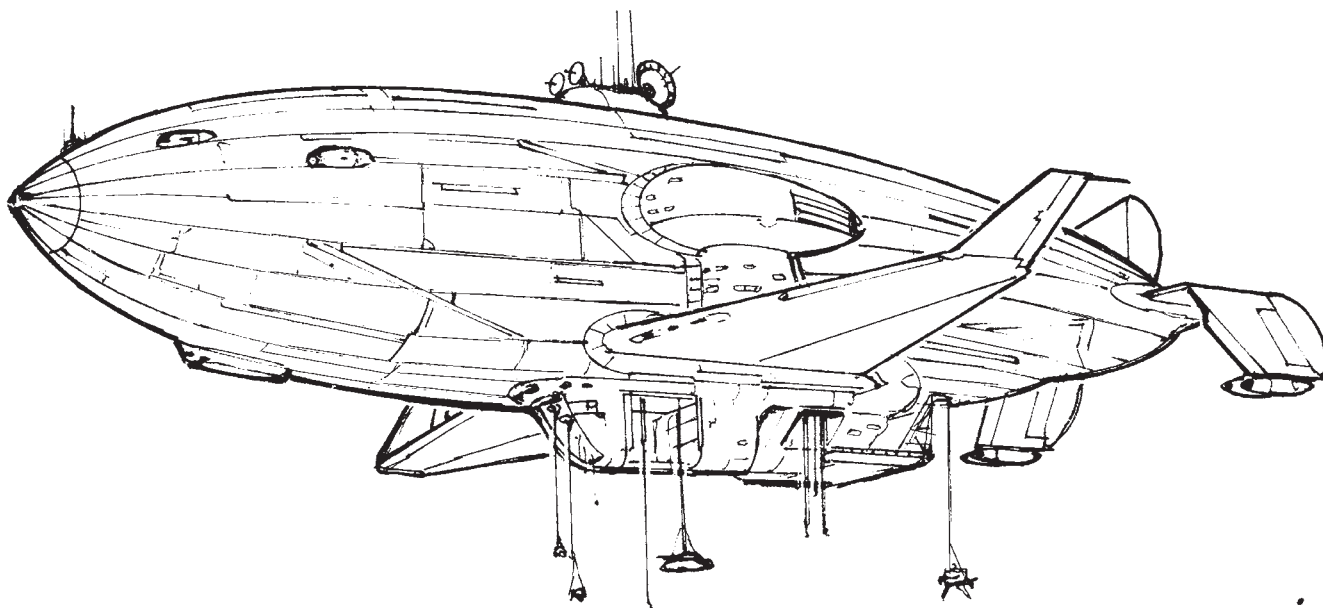
Disposable: Once used, a disposable weapon cannot be employed again.

VEHICLES

The following vehicles appear more commonly in Free Worlds territory than elsewhere in known space. Where applicable, they follow the standard rules for vehicles and support vehicles in accordance with *CBT: RPG*, *CBTComp*, *AT2* and the support vehicle construction rules found in *Combat Equipment*.

POSEIDON MOBILE ENGINEERING PLATFORM

Originally built as a mobile fishing platform for use on New Olympia (hence its name and amphibious capabilities), the Poseidon has become a workhorse of Free Worlds industry in the past two decades. Common at construction sites, serving as a mobile crane and engineering rig, the Poseidon's ability to quietly and effortlessly work above existing structures is highly prized. Massive storage batteries allow the solar-powered airship to operate even at night, though the long charge time (roughly an hour of inactivity per hour of charge) limits such operations. These batteries hold sufficient energy for about eight hours of operation and also power secondary systems on the airship, though some Poseidons carry additional ICE and fuel-cell generators to power navigation and communications as well as lighting and heating. Few Poseidons used in civil engineering carry the original design's weaponry (installed to safeguard against aerial and marine attack), though many used in prospecting retain their armament. Legally, all Free Worlds Poseidons retain their paraglider lifeboats, though a surprising number have been cannibalized for parts or sold to adventure-sports enthusiasts, who modify them for use in micro-light air races.



HOUSE MARIK: RULES ANNEX



Type: Poseidon Mobile Engineering Platform

Chassis: Airship (Large)

Tonnage: 800 tons

Equipment Rating: D/D/C

Equipment		Mass
Chassis/Controls:	Airship	420
Engine/Transmission:	Solar	184
Safe Thrust:	0.5	
Max Thrust:	0.75	
Heat Sinks:	0	0
Fuel:	0	0
Armor Factor (BAR: 4):	50	1.5
	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Front	16	14
R/L Side	16/16	12/12
Rear	16	12

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Tonnage
Machine Gun	Front	.5
Machine Gun	Front	.5
Machine Gun	Left	.5
Machine Gun	Left	.5
Machine Gun	Right	.5
Machine Gun	Right	.5
Machine Gun	Rear	.5
Machine Gun	Rear	.5
Ammo (MG) 2,000	N/A	10
Beagle Active Probe	Front	1.5

Crew: 9 (5 crew, 2 gunners, 2 officers)

Passengers: 10

Life Boats: 5

Cargo

56 tons standard 2 doors (Left and Right)

Notes: Features Amphibious Chassis and Control Modification, 1 heavy-duty pile driver (10 tons, front), 2 lift hoists (3 tons each, front/rear), 1 mining drill (3 tons, rear), 2 mounted searchlights (0.5 tons each, left/right), communications equipment (5 tons), 1 field kitchen (3 tons), 9 crew quarters (0 tons), 10 second-class quarters (70 tons) and 2 first-class quarters (2 tons).

HECTOR ROAD TRAIN

Many worlds lack the rail infrastructure to move large quantities of goods, and air or suborbital DropShip transportation is prohibitively expensive for most bulk shipments. The solution on many worlds is the so-called road train, massive tractor-trailer combos that can tow 150 tons of cargo or more up to 2,500 kilometers. The Irian-built Hector, though far from the only such system, is one of the most familiar, designed to travel relentlessly for up to four day before delivering its cargo. With this in mind, the tractor module has cabins for the two off-duty drivers as well as a kitchenette and miniature bathroom. The Hector can even be equipped with double-decker passenger modules, each capable of transporting 300 passengers and a handful of attendants.

Type: Hector Road Train

Chassis: Wheeled (Large, Tractor)

Tonnage: 160 tons

Equipment Rating: D/B/A

Equipment		Mass
Chassis/Controls:	Tractor	35
Engine/Transmission:	ICE	72
Cruise MP:	4	
Flank MP:	6	
Heat Sinks:	0	0
Fuel:	2,500 km	18
Armor Factor (BAR 3):	50	1
	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Front	16	9
Front-R/L Side	16/16	8/8
Rear-R/L Side	16/16	8/8
Rear	16	9

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Tonnage
None	—	—

Crew: 3

Cargo

12 tons standard 1 door (Rear)

Notes: Features Tractor Chassis and Control Modification, 2 Crew Quarters (14 tons), communications equipment (1 ton), 1 lift hoist (3 tons, Rear) and an IR camera (5 tons, Front). The Hector may operate independently, or may pull up to 2 trailer modules with attendant performance reductions (see p. 77-78, *BMR*, and p. 100-102, *Combat Equipment*).



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Type: Hector Road Train, Trailer Module

Technology Base: Inner Sphere

Chassis: Wheeled (Medium, Trailer)

Tonnage: 80 tons

Equipment Rating: D/B/A

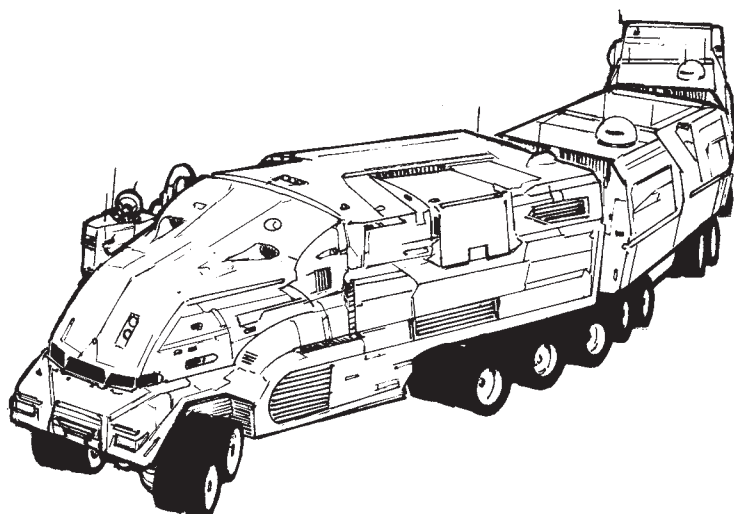
Equipment		Mass
Chassis/Controls:	Tractor/Trailer	12
Engine/Transmission:		0
Cruise MP:	N/A	
Flank MP:	N/A	
Heat Sinks:	0	0
Fuel:	0	0
Armor Factor (BAR 3):	34	1
	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Front	8	9
Side	8/8	8/8
Rear	8	9

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Mass
None	—	—

Cargo

Each trailer may utilize one of the following configurations:

67 tons standard cargo (67 tons)	4 doors (1 each side)
60.5 tons liquid cargo (67 tons)	4 doors (1 each side)
58 tons refrigerated cargo (67 tons)	4 doors (1 each side)
55.5 tons livestock (67 tons)	4 doors (1 each side)
Passenger Module	3 doors (Left/Right/Rear)
[3 Field Kitchens (3 tons each), 11 Infantry Compartments (55 tons–308 passengers), standard cargo (5 tons)]	



IBEX RV

Originally designed by Earthwerks-FWL as a rugged off-road utility vehicle for use by farmers and rural communities on the League's more rugged worlds, the Ibex RV has gained cult popularity since its launch in 3049. It is not uncommon to see these huge trucks in the League's major cities, driven by the social elite as a status symbol (implying that they live a rugged life in stark contrast to the reality of commuting and dropping the kids off at school, leading to the nickname of "snob tractors") and by security services, whose personnel appreciate the design's combination of resilience and power. A militarized version serves with the FWLM, complete with enhanced armor and light weapons (originally light machine guns, replaced in the past few years with twin King David man-pack Gauss rifles).

Type: Ibex RV

Chassis: Wheeled

Tonnage: 2,000 kg

Equipment Rating: D/A/A

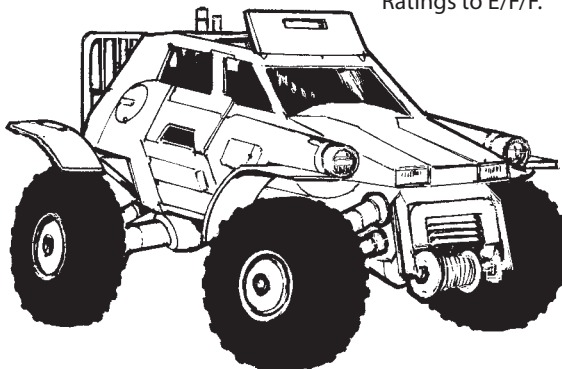
Equipment		Mass
Chassis/Controls:	Off Road	360 kg
Engine/Transmission:	ICE	218 kg
Cruise MP:	5	
Flank MP:	8	
Heat Sinks:	0	0
Fuel:	500 km	11 kg
Armor Factor (BAR 4):	8	210 kg
	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Front	1	2
Side	1/1	2/2
Rear	1	2

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Mass
None	—	—

Cargo

601 kg standard	1 door (Rear)
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Notes: Features eight seats (600 kg. total) and four passenger doors (2 Left/2Right). The Militarized Ibex has a BAR of 7 (adding 150 kg to the armor weight) and carries twin pintle-mounted King David light Gauss rifles (with a combined mass of 63 kg), which reduces the cargo capacity to 388 kilograms and increases the vehicle's Equipment Ratings to E/F/F.





COST OF LIVING IN THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

With the Clan invasion and the FedCom Civil War weakening its traditional mercantile rival, the Lyran Alliance (nee Commonwealth), the FWL has emerged as the Inner Sphere's economic powerhouse. A substantial proportion of the Inner Sphere's armed forces are partly equipped by League-based industries, and non-military industries have piggybacked onto this martial boom. The wealth from such deals—even though much of the military debt will not be repaid for decades to come—has flowed into the hands of common League citizens, who generally enjoy a prosperous (and in many cases exuberant) lifestyle. However, these riches are far from universal in the FWL. Many League worlds deliberately eschew high technology, most notably Shiloh in the Silver Hawks Coalition, and thus have not benefited from the influx of capital. Indeed, while the League's rich citizens have grown richer in the past two decades, the position of the poor has worsened markedly. Individuals on core industrial worlds are likely to have higher incomes and pay proportionately less for goods than those on poorer backwater planets.

The Typical Salary and Price Guide Table below reflects these differences. The table shows average salaries for various economic and social classes within the League by region (plus an "Other" category for worlds outside these regions or their satellites), with percentage modifiers based on the location and importance of a given world, as well as the relative cost and availability of equipment in such regions. The equipment modifier tables allow players to determine the cost, availability and legality of equipment and services in each region as well, with the cost expressed as a percentage of the item's listed price and the availability modifiers given in terms of rating levels. Positive modifiers increase the percentage of the item's cost or its equipment levels as indicated, making items harder to acquire, while negative modifiers reduce cost or levels.

All applicable modifiers for major worlds, border worlds and backwaters are combined when determining final modifiers. For example, Atreus, a major world in the Marik Commonwealth, receives the major world modifier on its Marik Commonwealth prices and salaries, while the world of Umka, an isolated staging area located near the Canopian border, uses the Other column and modifiers for a Periphery Border world.

In many cases, the gamemaster determines into which categories a world may fall. For border worlds, the definition depends on

whether the world lies within two jumps of the relevant region or border. Major worlds consist of regional capitals or major industry or trade centers. Backwaters, by contrast, are sparsely populated worlds largely lacking in major industries or even a native military defense force. In the Free Worlds League, roughly two-thirds of all interior worlds not classed as major might be considered backwaters, while the rest boast a modest local economy slightly above subsistence level.

There is no limit to how much modifiers may change the percentage of an item's final cost, but availability and legality levels may not fall lower than A or rise higher than F.

As of late 3067, a rough parity exists between the FWL Eagle (M-bill) and the ComStar C-bill.

The Black Market

Just as a world's location and relative industrial, economic or political importance influence its economy, these factors also affect the local black market (if any). As always, the efforts of local law enforcement and the predominant needs of the planet's inhabitants can produce varying results at the gamemaster's discretion. In general, however, players can find the price for any piece of hardware or service required by determining the item's availability and legality ratings, modified for the appropriate region (in the Typical Salary and Price Guide Table), and consulting the Black Market Base Cost Table below. Additional modifiers to the base costs are provided as well, based on the character's location in Marik space. A character may negotiate these prices using the Negotiation/Commercial Skill, but gamemasters should also keep in mind that black markets are typically illegal, fly-by-night operations, and most who trade in illicit goods and services don't have the patience for drawn-out bargaining.

As with the cost of living modifiers above, prices fluctuate based on where a character is in the FWL, with all applicable modifiers combined. A black market on Atreus, for instance, can reduce prices by 2 percent (Atreus gets the Marik Commonwealth and Major World modifiers, resulting in a combined modifier of 0.95 ; $0.97 \times 0.98 = 0.95$). By contrast, Sadurni, a military command center less than two jumps from the Liao border in the Duchy of Andurien, receives modifiers for Major World, Duchy of Andurien and Capellan Border. These factors make the black market so risky that prices can rise by roughly 8 percent ($0.98 \times 1.00 \times 1.10 = 1.078$ or 1.08).



HOUSE MARIK: RULES ANNEX

TYPICAL SALARY AND PRICE GUIDE TABLE
(Prices and Salary Rates as of Fiscal Year 3067)

Biweekly Salary (in Eagles)	Marik Commonwealth\$	Duchy of Oriente**	Principality of Regulus††	Duchy of Andurien ‡‡	Other	Major World	Periphery Border/ Backwater
Minimum Wage	160.00	158.00	155.00	148.00	120.00	+3%	-7%
Lower Class	600.00	610.00	580.00	560.00	550.00	+3%	-5%
Middle Class	810.00	800.00	775.00	775.00	765.00	+4%	-4%
Upper Class	3,250.00	3,100.00	3,100.00	3,150.00	3,000.00	+4%	-3%
Knight†	4,750.00	4,250.00	4,500.00	4,175.00	4,000.00	+5%	-1%
Marquis†	9,500.00	8,500.00	9,100.00	8,500.00	8,250.00	+7%	-1%
Baron†	18,000.00	17,000.00	17,500.00	17,000.00	16,500.00	+8%	-1%
Viscount†	35,000.00	34,500.00	34,750.00	34,500.00	33,000.00	+8%	-4%
Count†	70,000.00	69,000.00	69,500.00	69,000.00	66,000.00	+9%	-4%
Duke†	725,000.00	700,000.00	710,000.00	700,000.00	650,000.00	+9%	-5%
Grand Duke/Prince†	6,000,000.00	5,500,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,250,000.00	5,000,000.00	+12%	-5%

Cost Modifier (%) / Availability Modifier / Legality Modifier (by Region/World Type)

Item/Expense	Marik Commonwealth \$	Duchy of Oriente**	Principality of Regulus††	Duchy of Andurien ‡‡	Other	Major World	Periphery Border/ Backwater
<i>Weapons</i>							
Blades, unpowered	95/+0/-1	98/+0/-1	95/+0/+0	92/-1/-1	98/+0/+0	+0/-1/+1	-5/-1/-1
Blades, powered	110/+0/+1	105/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	95/+0/-1	110/+0/+0	-3/+0/+0	+2/+1/-1
Staves	100/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	-2/-1/+0	-8/-1/-1
Archery	105/+0/+0	98/+0/-1	95/-1/+0	100/+1/-1	100/+0/+0	+0/-1/+0	-10/-2/-1
Pistols, ballistic‡	95/-1/+1	95/-1/+0	98/-1/+0	95/-1/-1	95/+0/+0	-5/-1/+1	-8/-1/-1
Pistols, energy	105/+0/+1	100/+0/+1	105/+0/+1	105/+1/+1	110/+1/+0	-3/+0/+1	+4/+1/+0
Rifles, ballistic‡	95/-1/+1	98/-1/+0	98/-1/+0	95/-1/-1	95/-1/+0	-5/-1/+0	-10/-2/-2
Rifles, energy	110/+1/+1	108/+0/+1	103/+0/+1	105/+0/+1	115/+1/+1	+0/-1/+1	+3/+2/+0
SMGs	95/-1/+1	98/+0/+1	100/-1/+0	95/-2/-1	100/-1/+1	-5/+1/+1	+5/+1/+0
Shotguns	100/-1/+1	97/+0/+0	98/-1/+1	95/-1/-1	98/-1/-1	-5/+1/+1	-15/-2/-1
Throwing weapons	105/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	+0/+0/+0	-5/-1/-1
Support weapons	105/-1/+2	110/+0/+1	115/+0/+2	95/+1/-1	105/+1/+1	+5/-1/+1	+8/+1/+0
Demolitions	108/+0/+2	110/+0/+2	105/+0/+1	105/-1/+1	105/+0/+1	+5/-2/+2	+10/-1/-1
<i>Weapon Accessories</i>	100/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	105/+0/+1	95/+0/-1	100/+0/+0	-5/-1/+1	+5/-1/-1
<i>Power Packs/Rechargers</i>							
Standard	95/-1/-1	95/-1/+0	93/-1/-1	90/-1/-1	93/+0/-1	-4/+0/+0	-10/+0/+0
High-Capacity	98/+0/+0	98/+0/-1	97/+0/+0	98/+1/-1	93/+0/+0	-6/-1/+0	+3/+1/+0
Quick-Charge	95/-1/+0	105/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	94/-1/+0	98/+0/+0	-6/-1/+0	+3/+1/+0
Rechargers	100/+1/+0	98/-1/+0	98/-1/+0	99/-1/-1	98/+0/+0	-4/-1/+0	-3/-1/+0
<i>Armor/Combat Garb</i>							
Flak	98/+1/+1	95/-1/+0	95/+0/+0	90/-1/-1	95/+0/+0	-5/-1/+1	+2/-1/-1
Ablative	100/+1/+1	98/+0/+1	98/+1/+0	90/-1/-1	98/+0/+0	-5/-1/+1	+3/+0/-1
Ablative/Flak	105/+1/+1	100/+0/+1	100/+1/+0	85/+0/-1	103/+0/+0	-5/-1/+1	+5/+1/-1
Ballistic Plate	103/+1/+1	100/+0/+1	103/+1/+1	95/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	-2/-1/+1	+8/+1/-1
Leather	95/-1/+0	95/-1/+0	100/-1/+0	90/-1/+0	95/+0/+0	-5/-1/+0	-5/-1/-1
Miscellaneous	105/+0/+0	102/+0/+1	110/+0/+1	105/+1/+0	110/+1/+1	+0/+0/+0	+10/+1/+0
Camo/Sneak Suits	95/+0/+2	115/+1/+2	110/+0/+1	120/+0/+1	125/+1/+2	-2/-1/+1	+20/+2/-1
Battle Armor	100/+0/+2	125/+1/+2	130/+2/+2	140/+2/+1	150/+1/+2	-5/-1/+0	+25/+0/+0
<i>Misc. Equipment</i>							
Communicators	95/-1/-1	100/-1/+0	105/+0/+1	85/-1/-1	95/-1/+0	-3/+0/+0	+0/-1/+0
Kits	98/+0/+0	102/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	+0/-1/+0	+5/+1/+0
Computers	95/-1/+0	98/+0/+0	100/-1/+0	105/-1/+0	100/-1/+0	-5/-1/+0	+10/+1/+0

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Item/Expense	Marik Commonwealth §	Duchy of Oriente**	Principality of Regulus††	Duchy of Andurien ‡‡	Other	Major World	Periphery Border/ Backwater
Music Sets/Musi-chips	85/-1/+0	90/-1/+0	92/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	90/-1/+0	-8/-2/+0	+5/-1/+0
Tri-vid Sets/Cameras	80/-1/+0	90/-1/+0	95/-1/+0	95/+0/+0	95/-1/+0	-5/-2/+0	+10/+1/+0
Holovids	85/-1/+0	92/-1/+0	95/-1/+0	98/-1/+0	98/-1/+0	-3/-2/+0	+15/+0/+0
Print Media	80/-1/+0	85/-1/+0	88/-1/+0	95/+0/+0	90/-1/+0	-5/-1/+0	-5/-1/+0
<i>Personal Gear/Expenses</i>							
Clothing	92/+0/+0	93/+1/+0	98/+0/+0	90/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	+5/-1/+0	+5/-1/+0
Food	95/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	90/-1/+0	98/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	+5/-1/+0	-5/+1/+0
Housing, Rental	100/+0/+0	102/+0/+0	92/-1/+0	95/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	+15/-1/+0	+5/+0/+0
Utilities	90/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	90/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	+10/+0/+0	-5/+0/+0
Housing, Owned	95/-1/+0	105/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	+12/+1/+0	-10/+0/+0
Utilities	90/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	90/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	+10/+0/+0	-5/+0/+0
Hotel Rental/Expenses	90/-1/+0	95/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	110/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	+5/-1/+0	+10/+0/+0
Fuel	95/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	98/+1/+0	95/+0/+0	+0/-1/+0	+5/+1/+0
<i>Personal Vehicles</i>							
Civilian, Ground	95/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	+0/-1/+0	+5/+1/-1
Civilian, Air	105/+0/+1	100/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	-3/-1/+1	+3/+1/+0
Civilian, Seagoing	100/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	110/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	+0/-1/+0	+8/+1/+0
Civilian, Spacecraft	110/-1/+1	110/-1/+1	120/-1/+1	125/-1/+1	130/-1/+1	-5/-1/-1	+10/+2/+0
Military, Unarmed	90/+1/+0	95/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	105/-1/+0	100/+0/+0	+0/-1/+1	+10/+0/+0
Military, IS-Armed	95/+1/+1	98/+0/+1	102/+1/+1	105/+0/+1	110/+0/+1	+5/-1/+1	+25/+2/+0
Military, Clan-Armed	130/+1/+1	150/+2/+1	150/+2/+1	150/+2/+1	150/+2/+1	+10/+0/+1	+50/+3/+0
Fusion-Powered	+5/-1/+0	+8/+0/+0	+10/+0/+0	+8/+1/+0	+8/+0/+0	-3/-1/+0	+8/+1/+0
ICE-Powered	-5/+0/+0	-5/-1/+0	-5/-1/+0	-5/+0/+0	-5/-1/+0	-5/-1/-1	-10/-1/-1
<i>Medical/Survival Gear</i>							
Medical Kits	90/-1/+1	95/-1/+1	98/-1/+0	96/-1/+0	95/-1/+0	-3/+0/+0	+5/+0/-1
Cybernetic Limbs	130/+0/+1	125/+1/+1	125/+0/+1	128/+1/+1	140/+1/+1	-5/-1/+0	+20/+2/+0
Bionic Eyes/Ears	125/+0/+1	125/+1/+1	120/+1/+0	125/+1/+0	130/+1/+0	-4/+0/+0	+15/+2/+0
Other Medical Gear	95/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	-5/-1/-1	+10/+1/+0
Medical Services	100/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	+5/-1/+1	+5/+1/+0
Survival Kits	95/+0/+0	98/-1/+0	98/-1/+0	95/+0/+0	97/-1/+0	+5/+1/+0	-2/-1/+0
Other Survival Gear	90/-1/+0	95/-1/+0	95/-1/+0	95/-1/+0	95/-1/+0	+5/+0/-1	-2/-1/+0
<i>Travel/Entertainment</i>							
Surface Travel	95/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	-5/-1/+0	+5/+0/+0
Atmospheric Travel	98/+0/+0	110/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	102/+0/+0	-8/-1/+0	+10/+0/+0
Oceanic Travel	105/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	100/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	-3/+0/+0	+8/-1/+0
Space Travel, In-System	105/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	102/+0/+0	110/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	-2/-1/+0	+5/+1/+0
Space Travel, Interstellar	98/+0/+0	105/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	+0/-1/+0	+15/+1/+0
Concerts/Theaters	90/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	08/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	95/+0/+0	+5/-1/+0	-5/+0/+0
Sporting Events	95/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	102/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	98/+0/+0	+5/-1/+0	-5/+0/+0

*To convert M-bills to C-bills or other currencies, consult the FWL Units of Currency and Exchange Rates Table in the *Economy* section, p. 123.

†For further explanation of titles and landholds, see *CBT Comp*, pages 202-209.

‡ Ballistic weaponry includes all Gauss, gyrojet and needler weapons not classified as support weapons.

§ Including Stewart and other satellites

** Including Zion Province, Duchy of Orloff and other satellites

†† Including the Regular Free States, Principality of Gibson and other satellites

‡‡ Including Mosiro Archipelago



HOUSE MARIK: RULES ANNEX

ROLEPLAYING IN THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

The following information for gamemasters and players of *CBT: RPG* campaigns covers other aspects of League characters and life in the Free Worlds League, and should be used to add more local flavor to such campaigns and characters.

ADVANCED EXPERIENCE BONUSES

Negotiation, compromise and acceptance are the way of the Free Worlds (for the most part, at least), and these traits affect how League characters gain experience. The following table provides a guide to experience awards for Free Worlds characters, and essentially replaces the one provided on page 209 of the *CBT: RPG* core rulebook for League characters only. This table merely serves as a guideline for gamemasters; additional awards may be made based on the situation and the characters' unique ways of handling it. Also, these awards are faction-specific. A character who lives and works primarily outside the Free Worlds and who was not born and raised as a League citizen should not receive them, nor should Free Worlds characters receive faction-specific awards earmarked for other factions.

BLACK MARKET BASE COST TABLE

Legality	Availability					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
A	0.5	1	1.25	1.5	2	4
B	1	2	2.5	2	3	6
C	2	3	4	3	4	9
D	3	4	5	6	8	14
E	5	6	7	10	15	21
F	7	9	11	13	20	30

Additional Modifiers

Marik Commonwealth (+ Satellites)	x0.97
Duchy of Oriente (+ Satellites)	x0.95
Principality of Regulus (+ Satellites)	x1.02
Duchy of Andurien (+ Satellites)	x1.00
Alliance Border*	x1.05
FedSuns Border*	x1.12
Capellan Border*	x1.10
Chaos March Border*	x0.95
Periphery Border*	x1.05
Major World*	x0.98

*Border worlds lie within two jumps of the associated faction (Alliance, FedSuns, Capellan Confederation, Chaos March or Periphery). Major worlds serve as regional, provincial or national capitals, or as centers of major industries (such as worlds that host the companies featured in the *Economy* section of this book, or that can locally manufacture items of Tech Level D or better).

The Middle Ground

Tolerance (though not always acceptance) is the central trait of most League characters. They put up with others' foibles and accept differing points of view, but have no desire to see their own agendas trampled underfoot. Striking this balance makes the art of compromise an essential part of Free Worlds life, and gives League citizens a distinct edge in negotiating and haggling. Free Worlds characters do not universally accept violence as a means of solving disputes, but neither do they necessarily deem it a mark of failure. Indeed, many of the League's noble houses wage a quiet war of assassins where the only measure of success is survival. Winning is the key, however, and in most cases leaving the opponent to appreciate his defeat or disgrace is preferable to vanquishing him. Indeed, League affairs can become positively Machiavellian, with the ends justifying the means and scheming the norm. The Advanced Experience Table below reflects different modifiers for combat and non-combat actions.

NATIONALITIES

Despite being the oldest of the Successor States, the FWL has never had the internal cohesion of its rivals, instead divided by local

ADVANCED EXPERIENCE AWARDS (FREE WORLDS) TABLE

Action	XP Award
<i>Mission (Group)</i>	
Combat failure	-1/1/2
Combat partial success	1/2/4
Combat total success	2/4/8
Non-combat failure	-2/1/2
Non-combat partial success	1/3/4
Non-combat total success	2/5/9
<i>Campaign (Group)</i>	
Adventure off-track	1
Advanced minor campaign goals	3
Advanced major campaign goals	5
Politics- or business-related advance	+1
Advanced through negotiation or compromise	+(1-3)
<i>Roleplaying (Individual)</i>	
Totally out of character	0
Often out of character	1
Usually in character	2
Always in character	3
In character despite danger	4
Entertained the group	+1
Roleplay of Negotiation or political skills	+1
Trigger-happy	-1
<i>Miscellaneous (Individual)</i>	
Minor subplot started/resolved	1
Major subplot started/resolved	3
Devised clever plan	+1
Devised heroic plan	+2
Devised complex scheme	+3
Critical feat accomplished	+1



interests and politics. This diversity inevitably leads to considerable animosity and friction, yet is simultaneously one of the League's greatest advantages. The League's broad cultural base gives its population immense strength and resilience, as well as a willingness to at least tolerate different points of view. Little religious or cultural bigotry exists in the FWL, where the right to a distinct cultural identity is enshrined in law. Most serious friction arises from politics and economics, commonly geared to power plays in Parliament or business.

To a large extent, the reactions of disparate groups within the League to each other can be predicted—for example, the largely federalist Marik Commonwealth is frequently at odds with the regionalists of Regulus—though exceptions to the rule always exist. Citizens of Tamarind have an abiding distrust of the Lyran state, but are ambivalent toward House Liao, while citizens of Andurien and Zion provinces are the opposite. The world of Shiloh is staunchly anti-technology, while Irian (a satellite of the Marik Commonwealth) is equally in favor of technology. Details of regional biases and outlooks can be found in the *Touring the Realm* section (see pp. 57-77).

In *Classic BattleTech* RPG games, players can use the following tables to determine the attitude of League characters toward those from another League region or from other realms, though many groups may prefer to roleplay any such encounters. When using this system, the gamemaster makes a 2D10 "attitude check" roll whenever characters from different places interact, using the FWL Reaction Table below to find the appropriate modifiers. The result can help determine the first impression a League NPC (the "reacting character") might have of a player character from a different region or nationality (the "receiving character"). Apply an additional -3 modifier for every level of a Quirk (or its equivalent) in which the reacting character hates those of the receiving character's region, such as the Quirk/Hate Liao received by citizens of Andurien.

Gamemasters may also use this system to establish the "gut feeling" a FWL player character might have under similar circumstances, by making the player character the reacting rather than the receiving character. Such checks should only be made if the character's origins are obvious or known, such as by speaking a particular language or dialect common to a given region, sporting regional insignia and so forth.

Characters who receive a negative impression may still help those they dislike, but will act more standoffish and be less inclined toward idle chatter. Characters who receive an extremely negative impression will not be helpful at all and may even act hostile, possibly to the point of hindering a mission thanks to their prejudices. Characters more positively disposed toward those of another realm may react with fascination toward the "out-of-townners," eager to help with information or—when extremely impressed—goods and even their own services free of charge.

In addition to the above, the gamemaster may impose a reaction result modifier on all social skill Action Checks made by the receiving character when dealing with the reacting character. This modifier reflects the degree of open- or closed-mindedness the receiving character experiences based on first impressions.

Crossing Borders

Thomas Marik has made considerable effort to streamline the League bureaucracy, but regional rivalries frequently cause problems

for vessels traveling between provinces. Though officially covered by a laissez-passer agreement, administrative delays (deliberate or otherwise) occur daily. Indeed, foreign vessels (neutral in most regional contretemps) commonly clear administrative chokepoints faster than domestic traffic because of such rivalries. Most League captains curse the Customs and law-enforcement cutters of the provincial authorities. Surprisingly, though more closely guarded and with larger and more militarized patrols, the border regions (within two jumps of neighboring realms and the Periphery) are relatively free of such problems, falling under direct FWLM jurisdiction rather than that of local agencies.

In game terms, a border crosser (either the JumpShip captain or the most prominent character aboard the border-crossing vessel) may determine the likelihood of an encounter during an attempt to cross the FWL's many regional and national boundaries by making a modified Reaction Check described under *Nationalities* (see p. 158). For this roll, additional target-number modifiers may apply based on various circumstances, including character traits belonging to the border crosser. Certain Action Checks, made before the vessel hops the border or soon after its arrival, may further modify the circumstances surrounding such travel.

This modified Reaction Check, generally made as soon as the border crosser enters a new system and completes any related Action Checks (unless otherwise noted), determines what kind of response—if any—the border crosser and his vessel arouse among local security forces. All modifiers added to those in the standard Reaction Table during a border crossing appear in the Additional Reaction Modifiers section of the table below.

To determine a specific encounter or reaction from local military or security forces, or even bandits present in the system, the border-crossing player should roll 1D10, then apply the appropriate reaction result modifier and consult the appropriate column of the Border Crossing Roll Results Table for the region into which the vessel has just crossed. The encounter descriptions provide a more detailed explanation of each encounter type, allowing gamemasters to further develop whatever reaction the arriving vessel and its crew receive.

FWL ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Free Worlds League prides itself on its economic, political and social diversity, which is its greatest strength and its most significant weakness. The sheer scale of diversity gives players and gamemasters a phenomenal range of adventure possibilities, driven by or featuring these disparate factors. Depending on the time period, these factors may be divisive or serve to bind the League together. A weakness in 3025 might be a strength forty years later, or allies might become enemies. The Free Worlds League is in constant flux, but can this tide be controlled or will it drown the established order? The following paragraphs cover a small selection of plot hooks to consider when adventuring in the Free Worlds League, key factors that may be used singly or together in a campaign.

A House Divided (Internal Politics)

Niccolo Machiavelli wrote, "the fact is that a man who wants to act virtuously in every way necessarily comes to grief among so many who are not virtuous." This is the problem facing Thomas Marik, who has sought to "do right" by his people yet



HOUSE MARIK: RULES ANNEX

FWL REACTION TABLE

Reacting Character Origin	Reaction Roll Modifiers Receiving Character Origin																		
	FWL				Clan					Inner Sphere					Other				
	MC	PR	DO	DA	JF	WC	WX	GB	Oth	DC	LA	CC	FS	FR	CS	WB	Per	CM	
Marik Commonwealth	+0	-2	+1	-1	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	+1	-1	-2	-1	+0	-2	+2	-1	-1	
Principality of Regulus	-2	+0	+0	+0	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	+0	+0	-1	-1	+0	-1	-1	+0	0	
Duchy of Oriente	+2	+0	+0	-1	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	+0	-1	-2	-2	+0	-1	+0	+0	-1	
Duchy of Andurien	-2	-1	-2	+0	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	+0	+0	-4	-2	+0	-1	-1	+1	0	
Lyrans Border	-2	-1	-1	-1	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	+1	-1	+0	-1	+1	+0	+0	+0	0	
Capellan Border	-1	+0	-2	-3	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	+0	+0	-1	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	-1	
Chaos March Border	+0	+0	-1	+0	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	+0	-1	-2	-1	+0	-1	+1	+0	-2	
Periphery Border	+0	-1	+0	-1	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	-2	0	

Receiving Character Origin Key:

MC = Marik Commonwealth

PR = Principality of Regulus

DO = Duchy of Oriente

DA = Duchy of Andurien

JF = Jade Falcon Clan

WC = Wolf Clan

WX = Wolf Clan (in Exile)

GB = Ghost Bears

Oth = Other Clan

DC = Draconis Combine

LA = Lyrans Alliance

CC = Capellan Confederation

FS = Federated Suns

FR = Free Rasalhague Republic

CS = ComStar

WB = Word of Blake

Per = Periphery

CM = Chaos March

Additional Reaction Modifiers (for Border Crossing)

Condition or Circumstance	Reaction Roll Modifier
Major military activity underway in region	-2
Border crosser is commercial/government-employed	+1
Border crosser is independent vessel	-2
Border crosser is mercenary/friendly military	+2
Border crossing vessel is military	-1
Border crosser Contact Trait used*	+2/level
Border crosser Well-Connected used*	+1/level
Border crosser has Enemy/Bad Reputation Trait	-1/level
Border crosser has In for Life/Dark Secret Trait	-2
Border crosser has Unlucky/Bloodmark Trait	-1/level
Border crosser uses Bureaucracy/Protocol Skill†	+1/2 MoS
Border crosser attempts pre-emptive bribery‡	+1/2 MoS
Border crosser attempts bribery at crossing‡	+1/3 MoS
Border crosser failed in bribery attempt‡	-MoF
Border crosser failed previous crossing§	-5 (+1/month since failure, max result of 0)

*To be relevant, the Contact/Well-Connected Trait must be applicable to the Free Worlds League in the region where the border crossing occurs and must be extensive enough to influence the locals. The border crosser must make a successful Protocol or Bureaucracy check (against a target number of 10 minus the trait value) to use the appropriate connections.

†Skill Checks are required for these efforts at the time of the border crossing, reflecting advance communications or responses to hails from local security agencies, with modifiers based on the margin of success (MoS).

‡Bribery attempts require a successful Negotiation or Fast-Talk check against a target number of 15 (plus any reaction modifiers from the FWL Reaction Table) to compute their modifier. This Action Check is modified by -1 for every 500 C-bills or 5 percent value of any cargo being smuggled (whichever is greater) by the border crosser(s), as well as by the relevant reaction roll modifiers from the FWL Reaction Table. Double this monetary cost if the bribe is attempted at the time of crossing, rather than arranged ahead of time. A failed Action Check during a bribery attempt automatically adds the margin of failure (MoF) to the border-crossing target number.

§Repeat the reaction roll for every world visited after the initial failure, regardless of location or border status. This modifier increases over time by 1 point per month (based on the time elapsed since the last failure) to a maximum modified result of 0.



BORDER CROSSING ROLL RESULTS TABLE

Modified 1D10 Result	Encounters (per Region Entered by Border Crosser)					
	Lyran Border	Capellan Border	Chaos Border	Periphery Border	Provincial Border	Interior Region
0 or less	Attacked!	Attacked!	Attacked!	Pirates!	Bandits!	Attacked!
1	Bandits!	Raiders!	Attacked!	Attacked!	Scout	Scrutiny
2	Raiders!	Bandits!	Bandits!	Bandits!	Scrutiny	Scout
3	Scout	Bandits!	Scout	Interception	Scrutiny	Interception
4	Interception	Scout	Scout	Interception	Interception	Inspection
5	Conscription!	Interception	Raiders!	Scout	Interception	Inspection
6	Scrutiny	Interception	Raiders!	Conscription!	Inspection	Inspection
7	Scrutiny	Conscription!	Interception	Conscription!	Inspection	Conscription!
8	Inspection	Scrutiny	Interception	Inspection	Conscription!	Registered
9	Inspection	Inspection	Conscription!	Inspection	Registered	Registered
10	Inspection	Inspection	Conscription!	Registered	Registered	Ignored
11	Registered	Registered	Inspection	Registered	Ignored	Ignored
12	Registered	Registered	Registered	Ignored	Greetings!	Greetings!
13 or more	Greetings!	Greetings!	Greetings!	Greetings!	Greetings!	Greetings!

ENCOUNTER TYPES

Type	Description/Effects
Pirates!	A veteran bandit force of equal or greater strength in aerospace and marine support attacks the border crosser(s) with the intent to cripple and plunder the vessel(s) and enslave everyone on board. Over major worlds, such as industrial centers or regional capitals, treat this as an <i>Attacked!</i> result.
Bandits!	A bandit force of equal aerospace strength and average skill attacks the border crosser(s) with the intent to board and plunder the vessel(s). Over major worlds, such as industrial centers or regional capitals, treat this as a <i>Raiders!</i> result.
Raiders!	A small strike force (of equal or lesser strength in aerospace and marine assets) from the nearest military power attacks the border crosser(s) with intent to disable or capture the vessel(s) and prevent them from warning local/regional security.
Scout	An unregistered and unknown JumpShip is discovered nearby. It does not respond to hails, but may attack or flee if provoked.
Attacked!	A veteran local military/security force of equal or greater aerospace and marine strength attacks the border crosser(s) with the intent to capture, cripple or destroy the vessel(s), believing them to be hostile invaders or dangerous criminals.
Interception	A local military/security force of equal strength in aerospace and marine assets and average combat skills orders the surrender of the border crosser(s) and attempts to detain and board the vessel(s) on suspicion of subversive activities or the smuggling of contraband. Will attack with intent to cripple or destroy if provoked or if the border crosser(s) resist.
Inspection	A random Customs inspection, backed up by minimal force, is requested of the border-crossing vessel(s). Any attempt to resist or stone-wall the inspection may result in local security scrambling an interception force from the nearby jump station or patrol vessels, if any (see <i>Intercepted!</i>).
Conscription!	A current military crisis or emergency prompts local military/civil authorities to demand that the border-crossing vessel(s) immediately surrender command to an appointed officer for possible transport of refugees or materiel. Any resistance will result in the scrambling of interceptors to take the vessel(s) by force (see <i>Intercepted!</i>). If there is no military or local crisis, treat this result as an <i>Inspection</i> .
Scrutiny	The border-crossing vessel(s) are flagged by local security or military for further observation by other regional forces. Roll for an encounter in the next system, regardless of location and border status, with an additional -2 reaction roll modifier.
Registered	Local sensor probes or solitary patrol craft query the border-crossing vessel(s) regarding their identification, nationality, destination and business, but otherwise leave the ships alone unless they engage in overtly hostile action or their responses to any inquiries fail to check out. In such cases, local authorities may call for an inspection (see <i>Inspection</i>).
Ignored	Aside from a casual scan by local sensor satellites or wandering patrol craft, the border-crossing vessel(s) are left alone and unacknowledged by local authorities and traffic.
Greetings!	Friendly vessels and/or patrols operating close by issue trusting hails to the border-crossing vessel(s). Aside from a genuine eagerness for conversation, news from beyond the system or trade, these greetings have no ulterior motive.



HOUSE MARIK: RULES ANNEX

faces massive internal opposition. Historically a loose association of states bound into a parliamentary democracy, domestic League politics has always been confrontational. Usually this factionalism has been restricted to Parliament on Atreus, but occasionally it spills over into armed conflict, fostering the overblown impression that the FWL suffers a constant state of civil war. For the most part, domestic conflicts take place in the political or economic spheres, but occasionally differing parties resort to violence (either armed force or more subtle methods) to resolve matters. The federal government overlooks minor confrontations, which they judge to be “internal matters,” but will step in to mediate whenever local disputes become too heated or threaten federal interests.

Parliament remains the final arbiter of conflicts within the FWL, serving as the League’s highest court and its lawmaking body. However, since the onset of the Succession Wars Parliament has delegated much of its military authority to the Captain-General, ostensibly as a temporary measure for the “duration of the crisis,” but in reality creating a ruling dynasty for the League. The balance of power between the Captain-General and Parliament has seesawed over the years, and currently lays solidly in the hands of Thomas Marik thanks to the Addendum to the Incorporation. Not all find this state of affairs to their liking; in addition to House Marik’s traditional enemies—the duchies of Regulus and Andurien, for example—the Captain-General faces a threat from within his own ruling house. Noble houses and provinces fight each other and the Captain-General, while Thomas Marik’s very position is under threat from those like his niece who want to declare the “crisis” over and the office of Captain-General no longer necessary.

Player characters may easily become embroiled in the League’s internal politics. They may carry information or intercept enemy agents, pressure a recalcitrant ally or perhaps undertake a series of missions to remove political or economic rivals.

Byzantium Reborn (Bureaucracy)

A key legacy of the League’s federal structure is its convoluted and often contrary administrative systems. Unlike internal politics, where the emphasis is on changing the status quo, these bureaucratic systems are enmeshed in a grand effort to ensure that different groups retain their control of petty kingdoms within the government. The staunchest opponent of this Byzantine feudal array is the Captain-General, but despite his best efforts (particularly in unifying the military), the bureaucracies have fought a valiant rear-guard action. Most provincial governments retain control of their own finances, for example, as well as more esoteric elements like the arts and health care. The piles of paperwork required to ensure health coverage in Regulus, or for citizens of Oriente, can make even an accountant or lawyer break into a cold sweat, all part of the various principalities’ efforts to balance their budgets and ensure just reparations from non-residents. Other areas such as education have achieved a delicate peace between centralists (who seek to consolidate power with Parliament and the Captain-General) and regionalists (who seek to ensure the primacy of provincial authorities). Atreus dictates the core curriculum and educational policies, but the provinces have consid-

erable leeway in interpretation and implementation. This situation reflects a rare partnership; most confrontations between federal and provincial governments are more akin to the forced integration of the FWLM.

Players can easily become enmeshed in this bureaucratic civil war. Perhaps a petty bureaucrat questions their documentation, or one side or the other hires them to deal with a particular problem. Characters hired to clear squatters from a federal building site may get involved in a complex legal challenge, even one that questions the federal government’s right to build the installation without local permission (the getting of which may be a complex and arcane process, thanks to statutes that protect cultural identity).

Profit Motive (Economics)

Prior to the Clan invasion, the Free Worlds League had the Inner Sphere’s second most powerful economy, as capable of large-scale manufacturing and sales as its Lyran neighbors but lacking the Lyran’s killer business instincts. The return of Kerensky’s children destroyed that balance of power as the League—not directly targeted by the Clan military juggernaut—became central to rebuilding the shattered DCMS and AFFC (which neither realm will finish paying for until the end of the century). The war gave the Marik realm’s economy a massive boost and netted it considerable military technology, with Clan-front salvage used to defray the immense cost to the Combine and the Federated Commonwealth. This military-industrial growth prompted a resurgence in civil sectors (always strong in the FWL), including domestic and foreign markets.

The sums involved in the revitalized FWL economy are immense, and competing companies will go to great lengths to secure a market or an innovation—or to deny the same to a rival. Industrial espionage is endemic, leading to a corresponding emphasis on physical and electronic security. The theft of ideas is as profitable as that of physical goods; even getting a heads up about an opponent’s plans in the coming months can be worth a small fortune. True innovation—revolutionary products and markets—is the holy grail of business and much sought after. Can characters protect an invention from those who want to “liberate” such an item from its designer?

Building Bridges (External Politics)

Thomas Marik is the longest serving of the House Lords, officially governing the FWL for thirty-one years (though in practice, like Theodore Kurita, his reign dates to the end of the Fourth Succession War). Others view him as an “elder statesman,” the diplomat who—while seeking the greatest good for his realm—plays fair and honest, adhering to the rules. His relationship with Victor Steiner-Davion, against whom he fought a war over the deception surrounding Joshua Marik’s death but with whom he cooperates at Star League councils, epitomizes this basic fairness. Some took the installation of the Free Rasalhague Republic’s leader as First Lord at the last Star League council as an insult to the Captain-General, but others see it as a master stroke, allowing Thomas to avoid the difficulties associated with governing during the recently finished FedCom Civil War while largely guaranteeing his election to the post at the forthcoming Star League conference on Tharkad.

League relations with the Lyran Alliance and Federated Suns are cold but businesslike. Links between the Free Worlds and the



Capellan Confederation, whose military efforts Thomas Marik subsidized throughout the 3050s, have sunk to a new low since the ejection of Isis Marik from the Capellan capital of Sian. Though the true extent of Sun-Tzu Liao's manipulations are not public knowledge, public distrust of their Capellan neighbors has increased markedly among League citizens, many of whom question the wisdom of the prior alliance. The Magistracy of Canopus, allied with Andurien in the war of the 3030s and now closely tied to House Liao, has become a target for many SAFE operations seeking to uncover the full extent of—and perhaps to break—the Capellan-Magistracy axis. The FWL is on “good” terms only with the Draconis Combine, with military and financial exchanges between the two for mutual gain.

Characters may become embroiled in the League's external affairs in several ways. They may conduct unauthorized raids into the Capellan Confederation, serve as spies in the Lyrans Alliance or as traders in the Combine. Such involvement may occur through manipulation or secret contacts (though the FWL eschews the use of mercenary troops, it still employs them for unsavory activities to ensure “deniability”), or the characters may act openly as diplomats or agents for the League.

Cuckoo in the Nest (FWL-WoB relations)

According to legend, the ancient Terran cuckoo insinuates itself in the nest of an unsuspecting host, fattening itself at the expense of native young and establishing its dominance over its “parents.” This

analogy fits the relationship between the Free Worlds League and the Word of Blake, the latter of whom received sanctuary in League space following the ComStar schism. Since then, the Blakists have infiltrated many aspects of League government, most notably communications, espionage and technological research. Though this relationship has brought the League considerable technological benefits, many question the wisdom of such an alliance (though few as bitterly as the attempt by a Regular “rogue” to use the Cameron-Jones family's private stockpiles of atomic weapons against the Blakists on Gibson). Even the Captain-General, once a ComStar acolyte, has taken a step back from the Blakists, perhaps distancing himself from them in advance of the Star League conference (where they stand to be accepted as council members) or perhaps in response to some WoB gambit that adversely affects the League—rumors of financial irregularities have circulated for years.

Player characters in the FWL may easily come into contact with the Word of Blake, for good or ill, and get caught up in furthering or foiling the group's schemes. SAFE in particular, despite being thoroughly compromised by Word of Blake ROM agents, has sought to keep track of Blakist activities and might turn to “freelance” operatives to circumvent WoB infiltration. Unfortunately for the Free Worlds League and Thomas Marik in particular, the Word of Blake knows which closets contain House Marik's skeletons, including the deepest, darkest secrets upon which the entire house of cards rests...



HOUSE MARIK: RULES ANNEX

CLASSIC BATTLETECH RULES

The following rules supplement those in *BattleTech Master Rules, Revised (BMR)* and cover combat in various terrain and environmental conditions that players may encounter in the BattleTech universe. All players should read through these rules and agree to their use before beginning play.

NEW ENVIRONMENTS

With well over two thousand worlds in human-controlled space, humankind in the BattleTech universe has settled in some very strange environments indeed. The following rules cover some new environmental conditions.

TAINTED AND TOXIC ATMOSPHERES

Many worlds in the BattleTech universe where warriors are often called upon to fight do not possess the same concentrations of elements in their atmospheres as Terra does. Taints and toxins, such as elevated carbon dioxide, unsafe oxygen levels, leftover nuclear fallout and residue from biochemical weapons have left many planetary atmospheres unsafe for continued exposure. To rate these hazards,

many worlds are described as having a breathable atmosphere, a tainted atmosphere or a toxic one. Breathable atmospheres, while they may smell a bit different from Terran standard or have slightly different levels of various chemicals, are safe enough for prolonged exposure and have no additional effect in game play. Tainted atmospheres require special safeguards, and may yield unpredictable side effects when weapons begin blazing. Toxic atmospheres, where the taints are so excessive that only full environmental sealing can negate their effects on personnel, may eliminate the availability of some military units (most commonly infantry), forcing commanders to adapt their tactics accordingly.

The exact natures of various taints and toxins are many and varied, but for simplicity's sake, the most common atmospheric taints fall into three broad categories: caustic (corrosive or burning to organic tissues), radiological/poisonous (atmospheres that human respiratory systems cannot metabolize, or rendered such by natural or manmade poisons and nuclear fallout) and flammable (atmospheres that either naturally or artificially are more conducive to starting or spreading fires). The Tainted and Toxic Atmospheres Table below outlines the effects of these categories in Classic BattleTech combat.

TAINTED AND TOXIC ATMOSPHERES

Atmosphere Type

Effects

Breathable

No effects

Caustic

Tainted: All non-battlesuit infantry must wear respirators or environmental gear, but any weapon attack against them deals an additional 1D6 damage points. Vehicles whose armor is breached suffer a Crew Stunned result. BattleMech or aerospace fighter pilots suffer one extra MechWarrior/pilot hit if the cockpit/crew location takes damage in combat.

Toxic: Non-battlesuit infantry and unsealed armor may not be fielded. Vehicle hull breaches or cockpit armor breaches in BattleMechs instantly kill vehicle crews and MechWarriors. Battlesuited troops whose suits take damage are considered destroyed on a separate 2D6 roll of 9+ (10+ for Harjel-equipped suits), even if they have armor remaining.

Radiological/Poisonous

Tainted: All non-battlesuit infantry must wear environmental gear. They take double damage in combat and cannot remain in the field outside a properly shielded shelter or vehicle for more than 30 rounds before suffering 1D6 damage per round thereafter. Vehicles not equipped with environmental sealing cannot remain in the field for more than 90 rounds before suffering a Crew Killed result.

Toxic: Non-battlesuit infantry and unsealed armor may not be fielded. Breaches of sealed armor or cockpits instantly kill vehicle crews and MechWarriors. Battle-armored troopers are killed on a separate 2D6 roll of 9+ (10+ for Harjel-equipped suits) after any damaging hit in combat.

Flammable

Tainted: Increase rolls to determine the likelihood of starting fires by 2, and players must make checks for starting accidental fires when making weapon attacks against any non-water hex. 'Mechs at 15 or higher heat may spontaneously ignite the hex they are standing in on a 2D6 result of 10+ at the end phase of the current turn. Aerospace fighters and other jet-propelled craft may ignite all hexes in their rear arc, out to a distance of two hexes, upon takeoff, on a 2D6 result of 6+. Jump jets may ignite the lift-off and landing hexes on a 2D6 result of 7+. Non-battlesuited infantry struck by AC, missile or flame-based weapons suffer double damage.

Toxic: Increase rolls to determine the likelihood of starting fires by 4, and players must make checks for starting accidental fires when making weapon attacks against any non-water hex. Fires caused by inferno rounds and explosive ordnance (such as AC rounds and missiles) instantly spread to all adjacent hexes. Aerospace and other jet-propelled units may not launch in lower atmosphere. Jump jets instantly create a fire hex at the point of lift-off and landing. Non-battlesuited infantry struck by AC, missile or flame-based weapons suffer quadruple damage.



AA INFANTRY RANGE MODIFIER TABLE

Target Altitude	1	2	3
To-Hit Modifier	+0	+2	+4

AA INFANTRY DAMAGE TABLE

Troopers Surviving	AA Damage Inflicted
1-3	1
4-5	1
6-8	1
9-10	2
11-12	2
13-15	2
16-17	3
18-19	3
20-22	3
23-24	4
25-26	4
27-28	4

In *CBT: RPG* terms, characters exposed to atmospheric taints without respirators or environmental gear may suffer the effects of a Lethal poison that does base damage of 1D6 to 4D6 for every three full rounds of continuous exposure, as determined by the gamemaster. For tainted atmospheres, these effects may be staved off for a number of minutes equal to the Margin of Success on a BOD Check against a target number of 12.

In toxic conditions, characters must wear heavy environmental suits or other sealed, full-body protection to withstand the atmosphere's effects. Exposed characters immediately begin to suffer the effects of Lethal poison with a based damage of 4D6 to 8D6 for every round of continuous exposure, as determined by the gamemaster. These effects may only be staved off for a number of rounds equal to the character's Margin of Success in a BOD Check against a target number of 17.

NEW UNIT TYPES

The following are new battlefield unit types available in the Free Worlds League. Unless otherwise stated, they follow the rules laid out in *BMR*, *AT2*, *Combat Operations (CO)* and *Combat Equipment (CE)*.

ANTI-AIR INFANTRY

For more than a millennium, ground forces and aerial vehicles have jockeyed for military supremacy. The advent of the BattleMech shifted the balance of power solidly in favor of ground troops, though only vehicles and 'Mechs retained the sophisticated tracking systems required to accurately engage fast-moving combat aircraft. Man-portable AA defenses were largely abandoned during the first Star League and the Succession Wars, but the military revolution spurred by the Clan invasion led Free Worlds League scientists to revisit the concept that had lain dormant since the 22nd century.

Using micro-electronics and advances in sensor systems, League teams adapted the LAWs and SRMS used by many existing infantry units to make them effective against aerial targets, albeit at the expense of their traditional fire-support role. Deployed at squad level alongside existing weapons, the man-pack AA systems gave infantry units added flexibility and greatly improved their morale on the battlefield. Though they have yet to see active duty, man-portable AA systems have performed well in trials and the FWL is gearing up to meet internal and foreign demand.

AA Infantry Game Rules

Unlike regular infantry (see p. 39, *AT2*), AA infantry may engage aerial targets (including VTOLs). The limited range of AA infantry means they may only engage targets that attack their BattleTech hex (though they need not be the target of the aerial attack) or an adjacent hex. The AA infantry's range only applies when determining the altitude band (in *AT2* terms) to which they may fire and the modifiers that apply to such attacks.

Players may purchase AA infantry in addition to regular ground infantry abilities (rifle, MG, SRM). AA infantry may not be used in conjunction with anti-Mech training or by battle-armored troops. In a turn, an AA unit may make a regular attack or employ its AA attack, but not both. Finally, AA infantry training multiplies the cost of the Infantry unit by 3.



HOUSE MARIK: RULES ANNEX

ARGO

Designed as a submersible aircraft carrier for use on the League's numerous water worlds, the Argo class vessel has been drafted into various secondary roles. Well armed, it can serve as a mobile fire platform—its turret-mounted cannons are prized for their fire-support capabilities in campaigns along the littoral, while its fighters bombard enemy positions even further distant—and its cavernous holds allow the transport of more than 9,500 tons of cargo. Some variants of the Argo replace these cargo holds with strategic weaponry, including long-range surface-to-surface missile arrays.

Type: Argo

Chassis: Naval (Naval Vessel, Large, Template C)

Tonnage: 30,000 tons

Equipment Rating: E/E/F

Equipment		Mass
Chassis/Controls:	Naval Vessel	11,704.5
Engine/Transmission:	Fusion	2,632.5
Cruise MP:	3	
Flank MP:	5	
Heat Sinks:	136	136
Fuel:	0	0
Turret Equipment:		18
Armor Factor (BAR 10):	1,589	89
	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Front	45	216
Front-Side	45/45	212/212
Rear-Side	45/45	212/212
Rear	45	159
Turret (1)	45	183
Turret (2)	45	183

Weapons and Ammo

	Location	Tonnage
4 LR Torpedo 20	Front	40
Ammo (LRT) 48	Hull	8
2 SR Torpedo 6	Front	6
Ammo (SRT) 15	Hull	1
4 ER Large Lasers	Front	20
2 ER Medium Lasers	Front	2
2 ER Medium Lasers	Left (3)	2
2 ER Medium Lasers	Right (3)	2
4 LR Torpedo 20	Rear	40
Ammo (LRT) 48	Hull	8
2 SR Torpedo 6	Rear	6
Ammo (SRT) 15	Hull	1
4 ER Large Lasers	Rear	20
2 ER Medium Lasers	Rear	2
3 Long Tom Artillery*	Turret (4)	90
Ammo (Long Tom) 30	Hull	6
3 Long Tom Artillery*	Turret (5)	90
Ammo (Long Tom) 30	Hull	6

Crew: 140 (9 crew, 107 gunners, 24 officers)

Passengers: 40

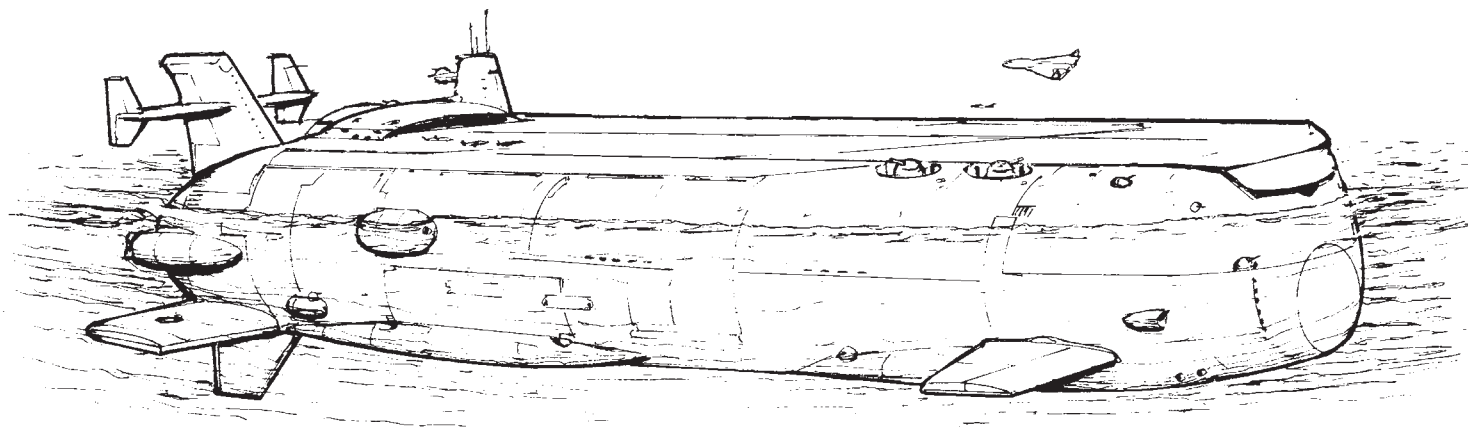
Fighters: 18

Life Boats: 20

Cargo

9,517.5 tons standard, 1 door (Rear)

Notes: Features Submersible and Armored Chassis and Control Modifications, 140 crew quarters (0 tons), 40 second-class passenger quarters (280 tons), 1 MASH unit with 8 operating theaters (10.5 tons), 1 flight deck (2,500 tons, occupies forward 4 hexes on template), communications equipment (10 tons), 18 fighter bays (2,700 tons) and an advanced fire-control system. The Argo's turret-mounted long toms and the flight deck may not be used when the vessel is submerged.



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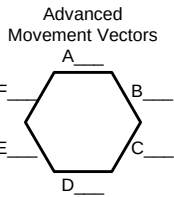
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AEROTECH 2™

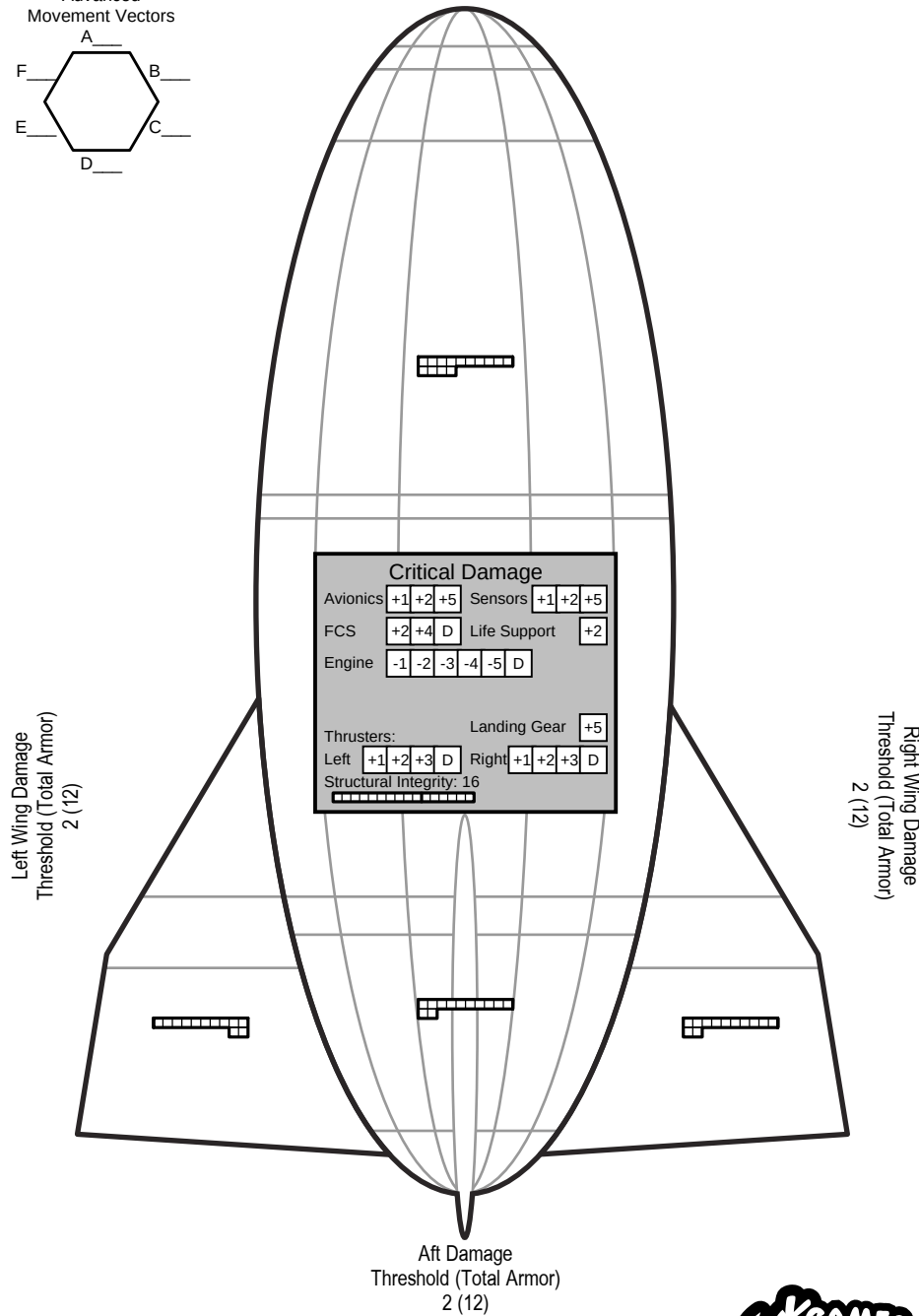
LARGE AIRSHIP RECORD SHEET

ARMOR DIAGRAM

BAR 4



Nose Damage
Threshold (Total Armor)
2 (14) - Standard Scale



VESSEL DATA

Name: **Poseidon Mobile Engineering Platform**
 Type: **AirShip (Large, Amphibious)**
 Mass: **800 tons**
 Thrust: Safe Thrust: **0.5** Max Thrust: **0.75**
 Tech: **D/D/C**
 Fighters/Small Craft: 0 / 0 Launch Rate: 0 / turn
 Life Boats/Escape Pods: 5 / 0

Weapons & Equipment Inventory:

Standard weapon ranges, hexes: (0-6) (7-12) (13-20) (21-25)

Standard Class	Bay	Loc	Heat	SRV	MRV	LRV	ERV
2 Machine Gun	Nose	0	0(4)				Point Defense
2 Machine Gun	LW/RW	0	0(4)				Point Defense
2 Machine Gun	Aft	0	0(4)				Point Defense
1 Beagle Active Probe	Nose	0	0(0)				Point Defense

Cargo: Bay 1: Cargo (56 Tons, 2 doors)

Notes: 1 Heavy-Duty Pile driver (Front), 2 Lift Hoists (Front/Rear), 1 Mining Drill (Rear), 2 Mounted Searchlights (Left/Right), Communications Equipment (5 tons), 1 Field Kitchen.

Velocity Record

Turn #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Thrust																				
Velocity																				
Effective Velocity																				
Altitude Level																				
Fuel Pts	0																			



Ammo: MG (2,000)

Total Heat Sinks: 0 Single
Heat Generation per Arc: (0 Total)

Nose: 0 Left/Right Wing: 0 x 2
 Left/Right Wing (Aft): 0 x 2 Aft: 0

Crew Data

Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Modifier	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	Incap

Crew: 9 Passengers: 12 Other: 0

LARGE WHEELED SUPPORT VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

Total Armor Pts = 50
(BAR 3)

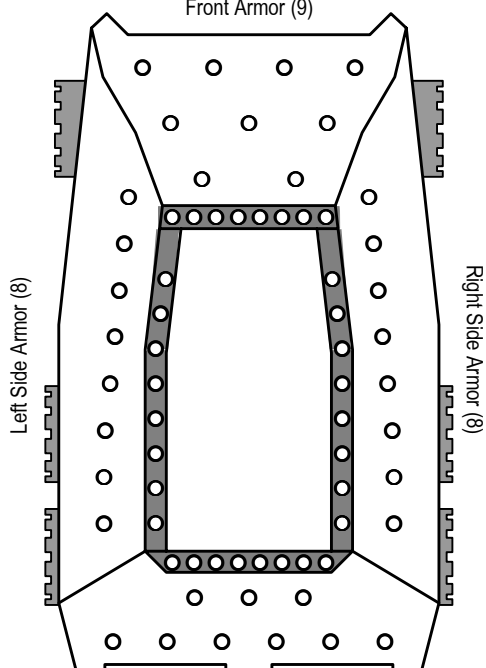


CLASSIC BATTLETECH®

WHEELED SUPPORT VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

Total Armor Pts = 34
(BAR 3)

Front Armor (9)



Rear Armor (9)

Type: Hector Land Train (Cargo)			Weapons Inventory						
Config: Wheeled (Medium Trailer)		Tons: 80	# Type	Loc	Dmg	Min	S	M	L
Equipment Rating:			1 Trailer Hitch	F	-	-	-	-	-
Cruising MP:	Flank MP:		1 Door	F	-	-	-	-	-
D/B/A			1 Door	RS	-	-	-	-	-
3025 Level 2	-	-	1 Door	LS	-	-	-	-	-
Crew: None			1 Door	R	-	-	-	-	-
Gunnery Skill:	Driving Skill:		1 Trailer Hitch	R	-	-	-	-	-
Ammo			Body Inventory						
Ammo Type	Rounds		Cargo: 67 tons						
			Or						
			Cargo: 58 tons (Refrigerated)						
Critical Damage									
Axle Destroyed ☐									

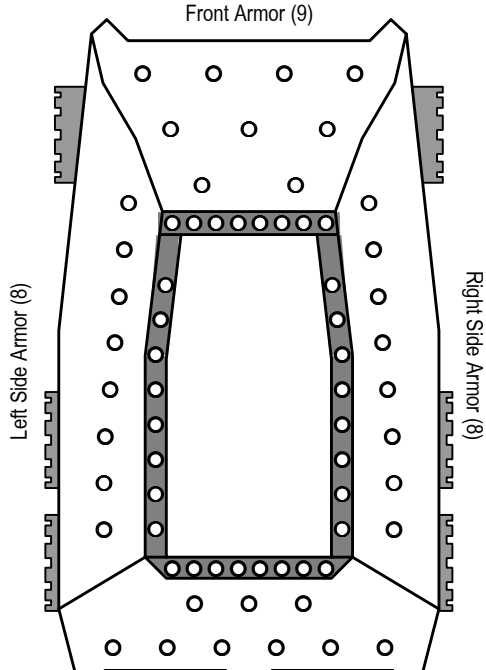
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CLASSIC BATTLETECH®

WHEELED SUPPORT VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

Total Armor Pts = 34
(BAR 3)

Front Armor (9)



Rear Armor (9)

Type: Hector Land Train (Passenger)			Weapons Inventory						
Config: Wheeled (Medium Trailer)		Tons: 80	# Type	Loc	Dmg	Min	S	M	L
Equipment Rating:			1 Trailer Hitch	F	-	-	-	-	-
Cruising MP:	Flank MP:		1 Door	F	-	-	-	-	-
D/B/A			1 Door	RS	-	-	-	-	-
3025 Level 2	-	-	1 Door	LS	-	-	-	-	-
Crew: None			1 Door	R	-	-	-	-	-
Gunnery Skill:	Driving Skill:		1 Trailer Hitch	R	-	-	-	-	-
Ammo			Body Inventory						
Ammo Type	Rounds		Passengers: 308						
			Cargo: 5 tons						
			Field Kitchens: 3						
Critical Damage									
Axle Destroyed ☐									

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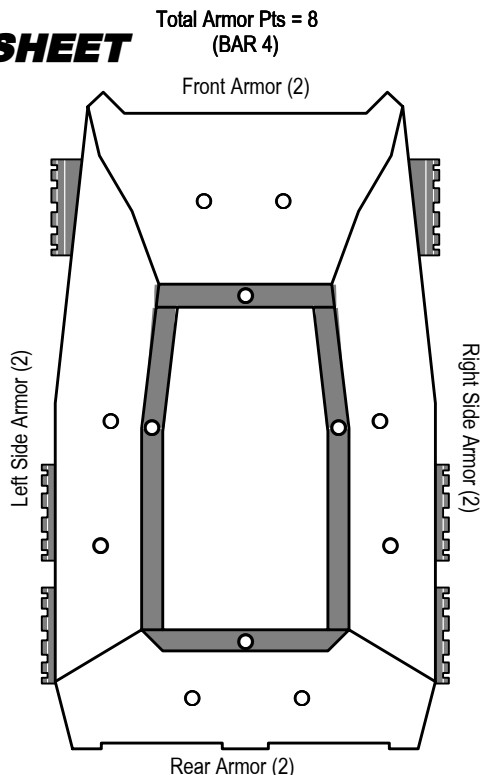
CLASSIC BATTLETECH®

WHEELED SUPPORT VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

Type: Ibex RV		
Config: ICE Wheeled	Tons: 2	
Technology Base:	Cruising MP:	Flank MP:
Inner Sphere (D/A/A)	5	8
3049 Level 2		
Crew: 1		
Gunnery Skill:	Driving Skill:	
Ammo Ammo Type Rounds		
Critical Damage Drive Damaged ☐ Engine Hit ☐ Axle Destroyed ☐		

Weapons Inventory							
#	Type	Loc	Dmg	Min	S	M	L
2	Doors	LS	-	-	-	-	-
2	Doors	RS	-	-	-	-	-
1	Door	R	-	-	-	-	-

Body Inventory	
Fuel:	11kg (500km)
Cargo:	601kg
Passenger:	7



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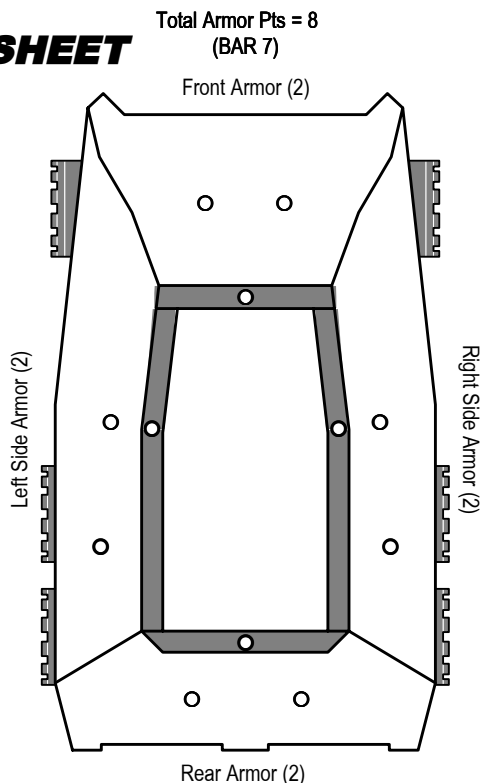
CLASSIC BATTLETECH®

WHEELED SUPPORT VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

Type: Ibex RV (Militarized)		
Config: ICE Wheeled	Tons: 2	
Technology Base:	Cruising MP:	Flank MP:
Inner Sphere (E/F/F)	5	8
3049 Level 2		
Crew: 1		
Gunnery Skill:	Driving Skill:	
Ammo Ammo Type Rounds		
Critical Damage Drive Damaged ☐ Engine Hit ☐ Axle Destroyed ☐		

Weapons Inventory							
#	Type	Loc	Dmg	Min	S	M	L
"King David"	Lt. Gauss	LS	1	0	3	6	9
"King David"	Lt. Gauss	RS	1	0	3	6	9
2	Doors	LS	-	-	-	-	-
2	Doors	RS	-	-	-	-	-
1	Door	R	-	-	-	-	-

Body Inventory	
Fuel:	11kg (500km)
Cargo:	388kg
Passenger:	7



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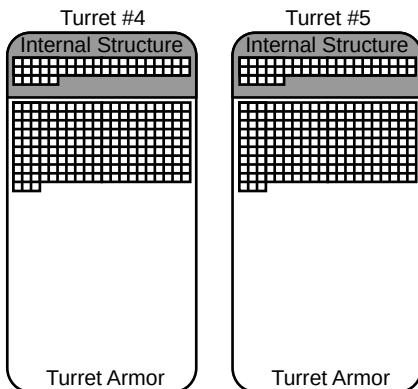
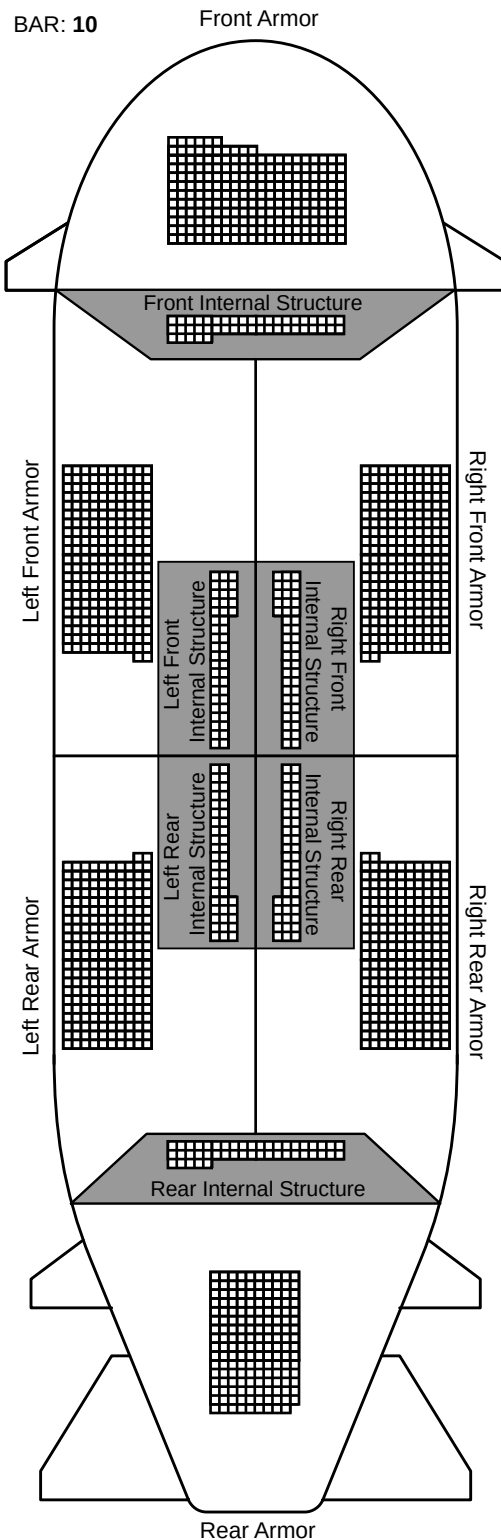
CLASSIC BATTLETECH®

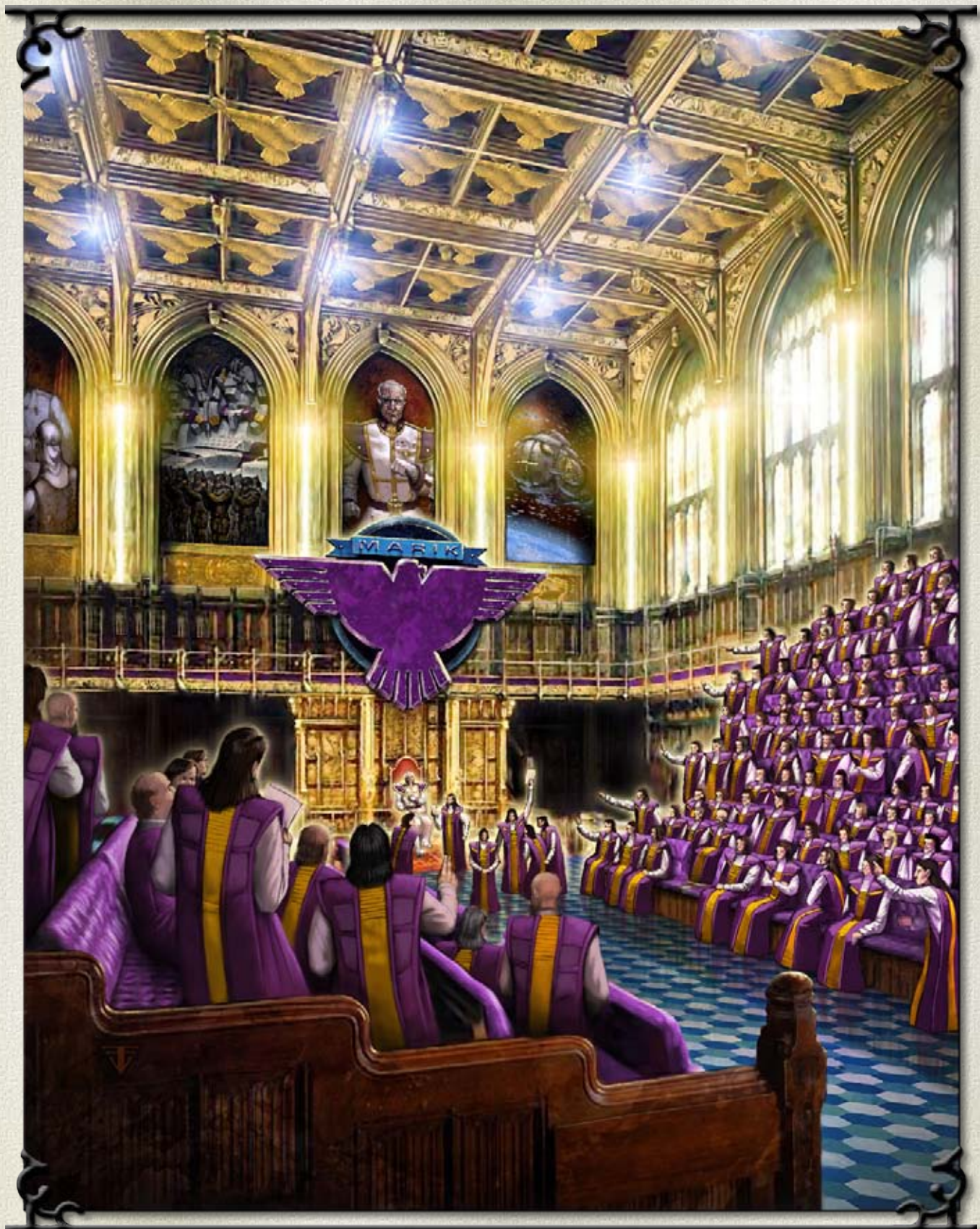
LARGE NAVAL VESSEL RECORD SHEET

Type: Argo Submersible Carrier						
Config: Template C	Tons: 30,000					
Equipment Rating: E/E/F 3050 Level 2	Cruising MP: 3	Flank MP: 5				
Crew: 140, 40 Passengers Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____						
Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Modifier	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	Incp.
Ammo Long Tom Artillery: 60 LRT 20: 96 SRT 6: 30						
Critical Damage Eng. Rm. Dmg'd ☐ Engine Hit ☐ Eng. Rm. Dest'd ☐ Turret #4 Locked ☐ Turret #5 Locked ☐						

Weapons Inventory							
#	Type	Loc	Dmg	Min	S	M	L
4	LRT 20s	F	Var.	6	7	14	21
2	SRT 6s	F	Var.	0	3	6	9
4	ER Large Lasers	F	8	0	7	14	19
2	ER Medium Lasers	F	5	0	4	8	12
2	ER Medium Lasers	LS(3)	5	0	4	8	12
2	ER Medium Lasers	RS(3)	5	0	4	8	12
4	LRT 20s	R	Var.	6	7	14	21
2	SRT 6s	R	Var.	0	3	6	9
4	ER Large Lasers	R	8	0	7	14	19
2	ER Medium Lasers	R	5	0	4	8	12
3	Long Tom Artillery	T4	20	-	-	-	-
3	Long Tom Artillery	T5	20	-	-	-	-
1	Door	R	-	-	-	-	-

Hull Inventory							
Advanced Fire Control							
Flight Deck (1-4)							
18 Fighter Bays							
MASH (8 Theaters)							
Communications Equipment (10 tons)							
20 Life Boats							
Cargo: 9,517.5 tons							

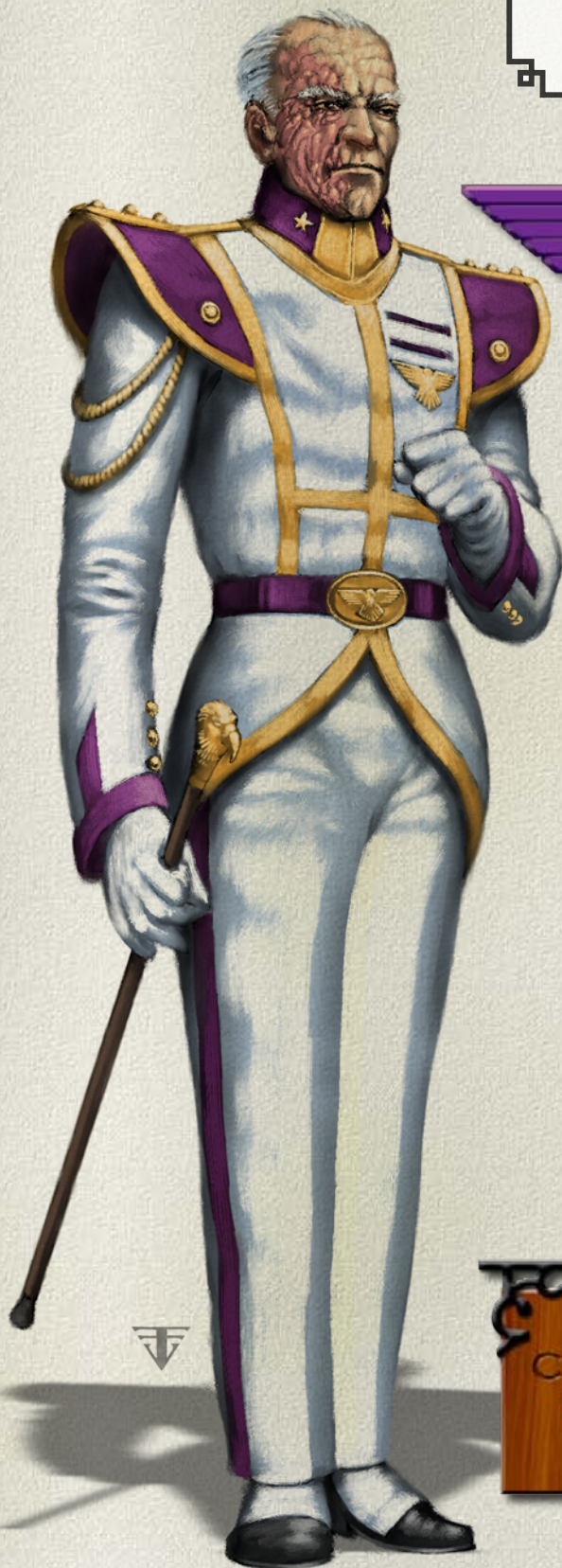




House Marik Crest



Free Worlds League
Currency Notes



CAPTAIN-GENERAL
THOMAS MARIK



Irian Industries

A testament not only to the League's economic might but its growing pervasive reach across the Inner Sphere, a technician at Irian BattleMechs Unlimited of Irian oversees the final installation of the Draconis Combine's newest weapon system (the Heavy PPC) on a new *Awesome* variant (AWS-10KM) that will see joint deployment to Combine and League forces.



Free Worlds League
Currency Coins



Marik
Commonwealth Crest

Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik, the Captain-General's niece, is the current focus for those seeking to challenge her uncle's authority via the "Great Debate" within Parliament.

Even a die-hard vid-watcher can become blasé with the plethora of programming available from an interstellar corporation such as Irian Entertainment and the endless local world affiliate programs beamed across the stars, if the money is right: one-thousand, two hundred and fifty seven channels and nothing on.



Atreus Mint
Currency Note

Earthwerks-FWL, Inc.

One of the largest BattleMech manufacturing corporations in the Inner Sphere, it dwarfs its closest rivals within the League for sheer output, contributing significantly to the industrial/economic strength of the Marik Commonwealth.



ch manufacturing corporations in the Inner Sphere, it dwarfs its closest rivals within the League for sheer output, contributing significantly to the industrial/economic strength of the Marik Commonwealth.





Selasys Incorporated



Though not as prestigious as Illium Naval Engineering or Imstar Aerospace, the Principality of Regulus is rightly proud of Selasys Incorporated, one of the oldest JumpShip manufacturers in the League and instrumental in the creation of one of the largest WarShip navies in the Inner Sphere.



Regulus Mint
Currency Note

With the "Great Debate" apparently gaining moment within Parliament, subversive Regularan elements organize an anti-Marik march in Regulus City on Regulus.



House
Cameron-Jones Crest



Principality of
Regulus Crest



A staunch opponent of Thomas Marik, Kirc Cameron-Jones currently wields the power to style himself 'prince'—a title unused since the death of the Selaj clan—despite a recent assassination attempt (resulting in his need for a cane).

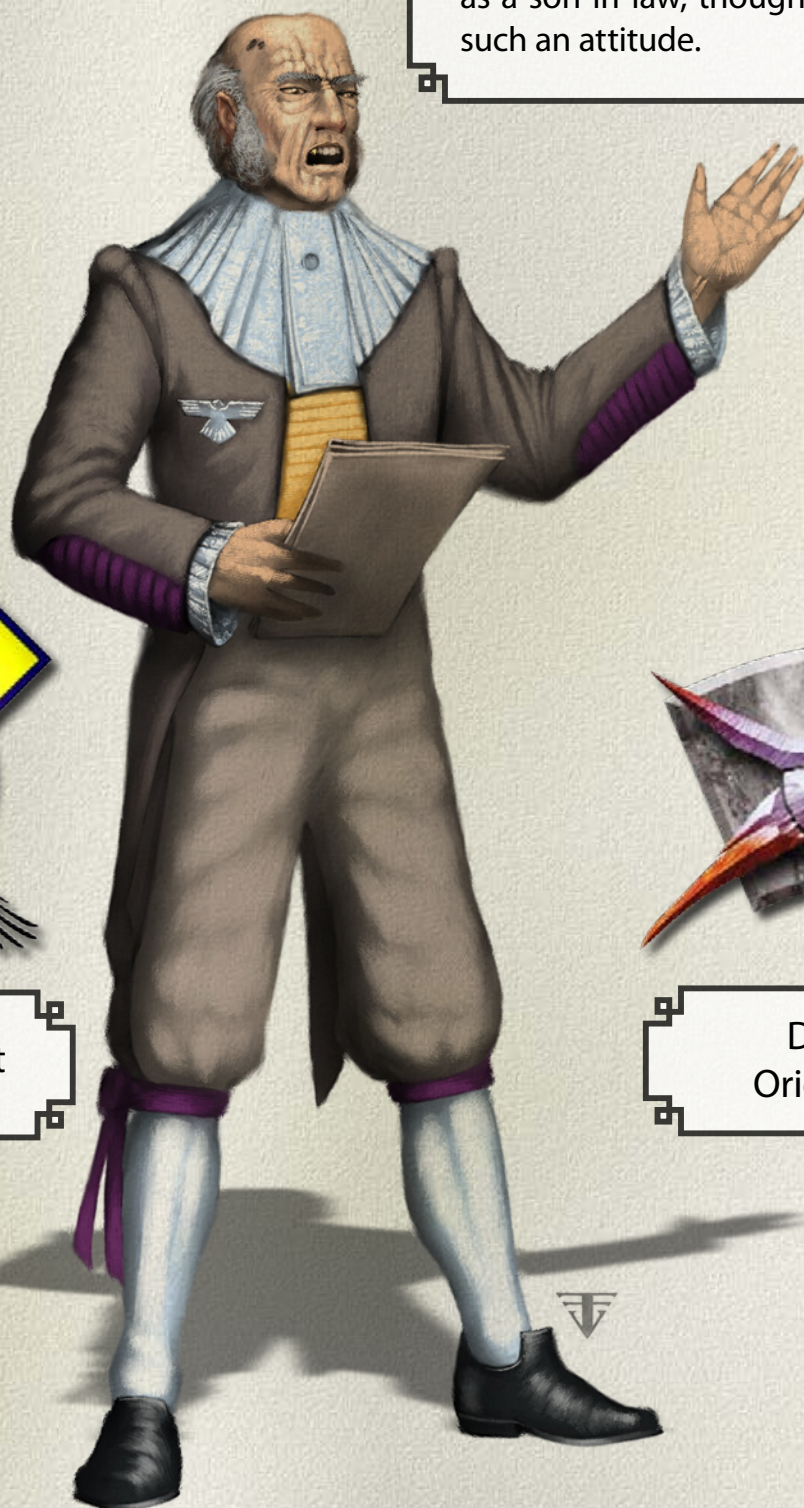
Grand Duke of Oriente Christopher Halas appears content with the waning of his power during Thomas Marik's centralization of authority; having Thomas as a son-in-law, though, might explain such an attitude.



House Halas Crest



Duchy of Oriente Crest





Oriente Mint
Currency Note

Oriente Weaponworks Corporation

Though not a powerhouse, Oriente Weaponworks Corporation nevertheless is a large supplier of the Free Worlds League Military; managed by a distant relative of Duke Halas, rumors circulate whether the private company is really 'private,' or a hidden state-owned facility, harkening back to its origins.



Aware of the Third McCarron's Armored Cavalry raid against Kyrkbacken, the Second Hussars stand vigilant against the possibility of a Liao strike against Oriente, only two jumps from their ancient enemy's border.



Free Worlds Defense Industries



Free Worlds Defense Industries has been ravaged by war more-so than perhaps any other corporation within the League, only to find itself practically co-opted into aiding the build up of Word of Blake forces in recent years; only since the Blakists gained Terra has FWDI regained control of its satellite facilities and begun the long haul towards reconstruction and consolidation.



Andurien Mint
Currency Note

In the rebellious Andurien, even straight-laced FWLM soldiers can find themselves the victims of blackmail and worse.

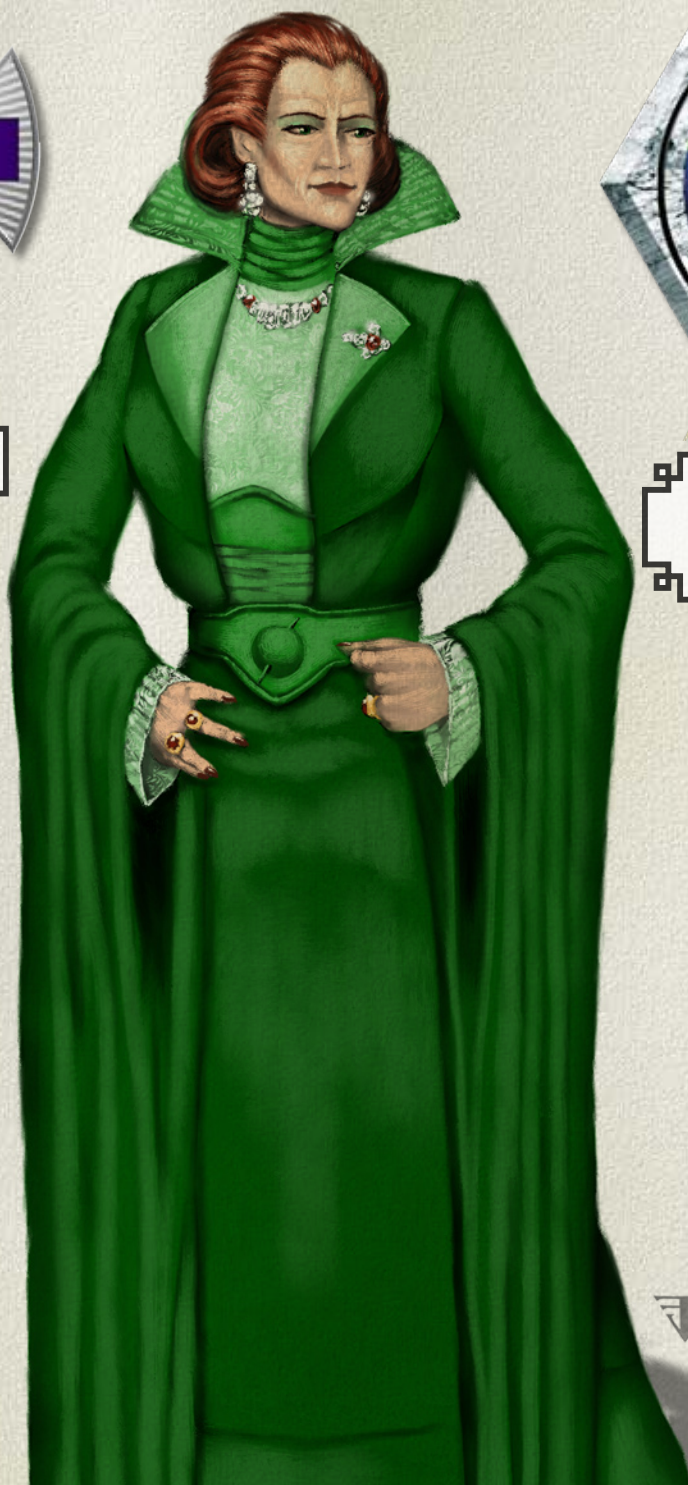




House
Humphreys Crest



Duchy of
Andurien Crest



Though a supporter of Thomas Marik in her younger days, Dalma Humphreys is now secure in her power, embracing the similarity many have noted between Dalma and her famous (or infamous depending on your point of view) grandmother, Dame Catherine Humphreys.



Earl Leonard Stewart, MP for Stewart, prepares to address Parliament.



Though Duke Hector Stewart has ruled the Stewart Commonality since 3018—he's generated a virtual bevy of heirs—he has no intention of stepping down any time soon.



House
Stewart Crest



A disinherited child of Captain-General Janos Marik, Duchess Therese Marik has ruled the Duchy of Tamarind for decades, bringing about years of prosperity, which has allowed for such extravagances as falconry.



Marshal Jeremy Brett—husband to Therese Marik-Brett, eldest surviving child of Janos Marik—is a power within the FWLM the Captain-General cannot ignore.



A group Exituri-followers listens to the wisdom of the *Daadi* on Shiloh.



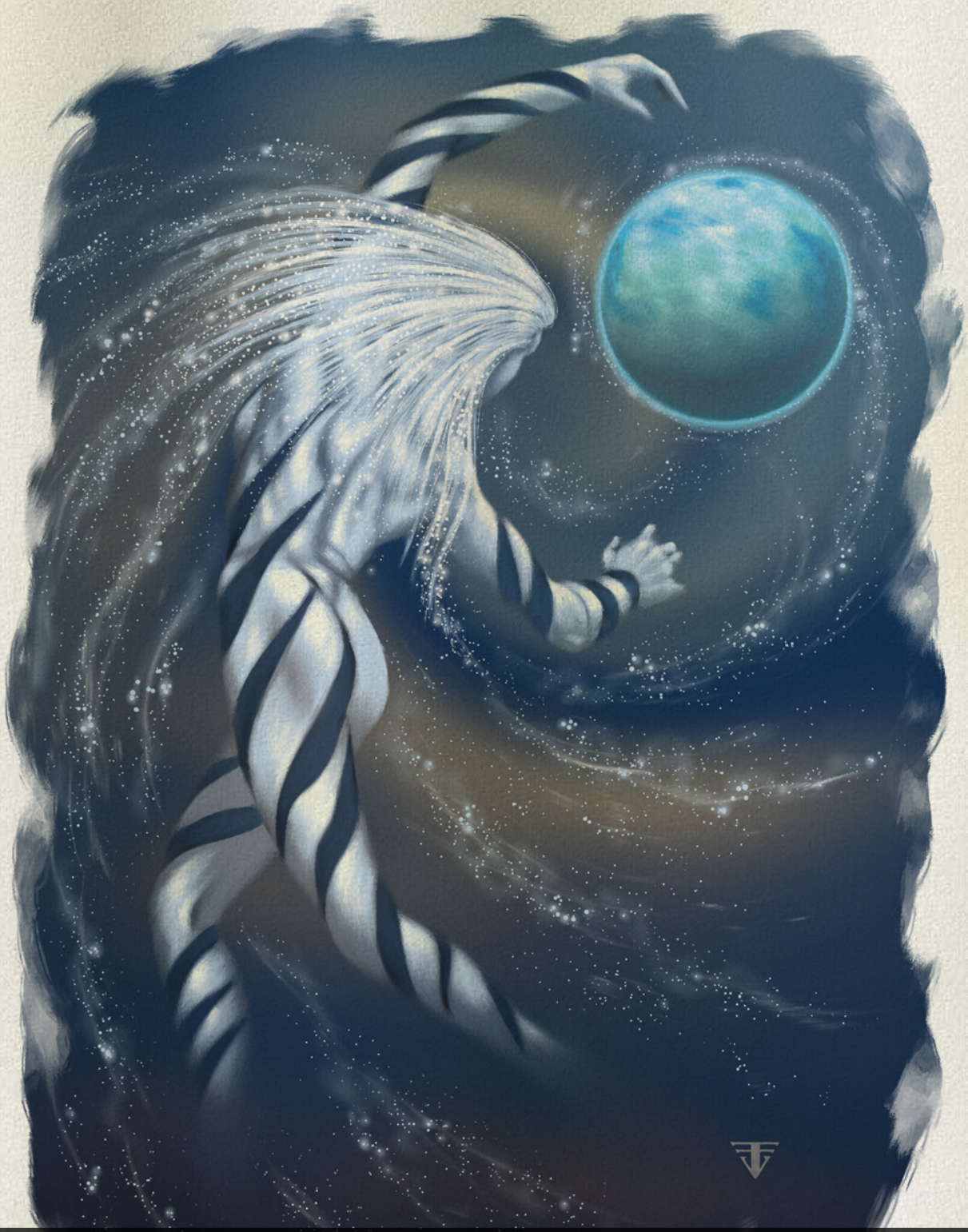
A corporate officer from Earthwerks Ltd. verifies sales figures on the newest variant of the *Grand Titan*.



An Eagle Corps member under goes final mission training in the Eyrie on Atreus' moon, before final deployment.



Concord Mint
Currency Note



The most popular Recreational Hologram Environment (RHE) in history, Gaiatherine has outsold almost all previous RHEs combined, only further cementing Kensai Holographiks dominance in the market and creating a blizzard of copy-cats that all fall short of the political/satirical nuances, while lacking the simple unadulterated joy-of-play of this masterpiece.



HANDBOOK: HOUSE MARIK



Captain-General



Marshal
(Fleet Admiral)



General
(Admiral/Vice Admiral)



Colonel
(Commodore)



Lieutenant Colonel
(Captain)



Force Commander
(Commander)



Captain
(Lieutenant Commander)



Lieutenant
(Senior Lieutenant)



Lieutenant
(Junior Lieutenant)



Sergeant Major
(Master Chief Petty Officer)



Master Sergeant
(Senior Chief Petty Officer)



Staff Sergeant
(Chief Petty Officer)



Sergeant
(Petty Officer First Class)



Corporal
(Petty Officer Second Class)



Private, 1st Class
(Able Spaceman)



Private
(Spaceman)



A new applicant is knighted and joins the ranks of the vaunted Knights of the Inner Sphere.



WINGS OF THE EAGLE



Wracked for centuries by civil wars, House Marik's Free Worlds League has endured by virtue of the tenacity and diversity of its people. Now, led by the strongest Captain-General in half a millennium, House Marik has stretched its wings, pushing the shadows of its influence across the Inner Sphere. Both by its revitalized military and an economic might that challenges even the ages-old dominance of House Steiner, the eagle soars proudly, as do the people who wave its banner.



The second in a new, dynamic Classic BattleTech® series, **Handbook: House Marik™** compiles the crucial history, politics and cultures of the Inner Sphere's first Great House. More than just a sourcebook, **Handbook: House Marik** includes rules for both Classic BattleTech and Classic BattleTech RPG™ campaigns, including new support vehicles, creatures, personal weapons, life paths and more!



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WKGAMES™

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