

RETURN TO CAT'S EYE

Storyline Book Three (1939-1941)

INCREASE IN CROSS-POOL COMMUNICATIONS IS NOW IN EFFECT - CONFIRMED - SEVERAL INSTANCES OF NEAR-DISCOVERY - SECRECY IS PARAMOUNT - WITNESSES HAVE BEEN DEALT WITH - MOST UNFORTUNATE BUT NECESSARY - THOSE INCLUDED DISSIDENT FACTION - SOCIOPOLITICAL CONFLICT HAVE BEEN USED AS COVER - THEY AUTHORIZED THE UNPLANNED EXPERIMENTS AND PROVIDED REQUIRED DATA - THIS WILL YET SERVE THE GREATER GOOD - YES - ONE CANNOT EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO DIRECT ALL - NEW AGENTS HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED - AGENDA WILL BE REVISED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT MODIFICATIONS - IS THE CONTROLLED EXPERIMENT IN PROGRESS - YES, ALL PROCEEDS ACCORDING TO PLAN - ARE WE IN AGREEMENT WITH FOREIGN FACTIONS? - ON MAJOR POINTS - ANY DISAGREEMENT WILL BE DEALT WITH - ARCHETYPE FIGURE MAY HAVE BEEN FOUND - COULD WELL PROVE IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTROL - ONLY IF WE LOSE TRACK OF THE MAIN AGENDA - MUST NOT - THE STAKES ARE TOO GREAT - FOR THE GREATER GOOD OF ALL - AGREED - INCREASE IN CROSS-POOL COMMUNICATIONS IS NOW IN EFFECT - CONFIRMED - SEVERAL INSTANCES OF NEAR-DISCOVERY - SECRECY IS PARAMOUNT - WITNESSES HAVE BEEN DEALT WITH - MOST UNFORTUNATE BUT NECESSARY - THOSE INCLUDED DISSIDENT

HEAVY GEAR

RETURN TO CAT'S EYE

Storyline Book Three (1939-1941)

03 Summer 1939 - 19 Autumn 1941

"We thought we had seen it all. We thought we had suffered enough, and that the future would get better, not worse. We could not have been more wrong. From this time on, we would have to face not only ourselves but our long-lost siblings, and somehow find a way to survive and prosper together again."

"It is safe and nice, hiding under the bedsheets. But one cannot ignore the outside world forever."

— Nicosa Renault

The cataclysmic destruction of a Terranovan city-state has brought the Interpolar War to an abrupt halt. Intelligence agents work tirelessly to find who had access to mass-destruction weaponry, while others seek to manipulate the situation to their advantage. The sudden arrival of a visitor from one of Earth's lost colonies may have brought the missing element to solve the mystery, but it comes at a terrible cost. Now the Terranovans know that the fascist government of the New Earth Commonwealth is once again active, and drastic measures will have to be taken to guarantee the future and continued safety of their fledgling world.

Return to Cat's Eye, the third Heavy Gear Storyline Book, is the sequel to the critically acclaimed Crisis of Faith and Blood on the Wind. It traces the cataclysmic events on the world of Terra Nova, the setting of Heavy Gear, through a collection of journals, articles and conversations. Master spy Nicosa Renault searches through her mighty records in search of explanations for the world-shaking events, and the reader follows her inquiries. Return to Cat's Eye also features a useful appendix with a full time-line of events, advice for Heavy Gear players and profiles of important characters.

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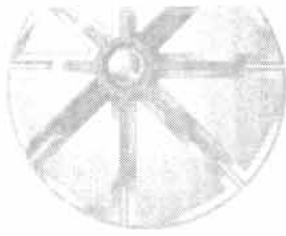
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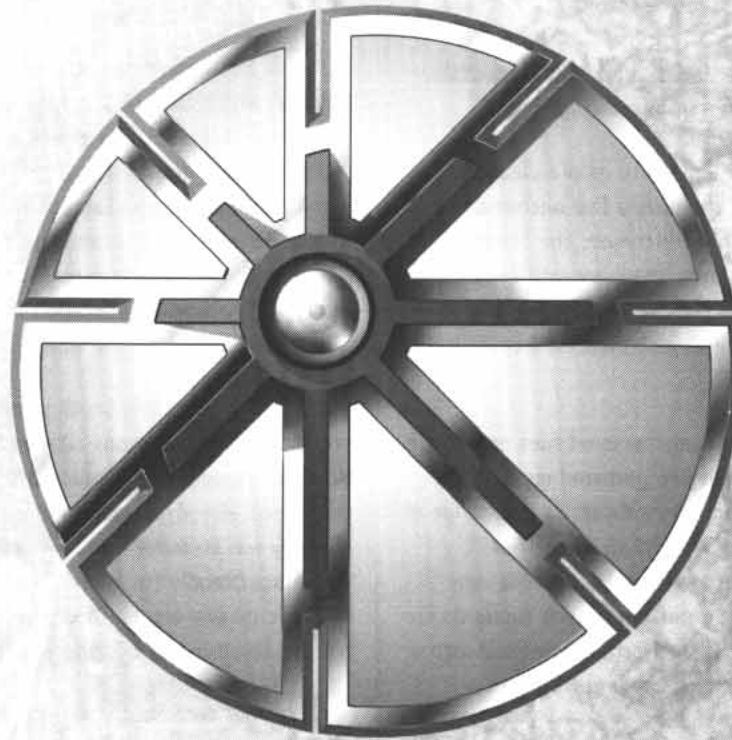


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HEAVY GEAR



Return to Cat's Eye



Heavy Gear Storyline Book 3

03 Summer 1939 to 19 Autumn 1941

Cycle of Hell

From the Journals of Nicosia Renault

(08 Autumn 1939) — This has truly been a cycle of hell, to cap a generation of suffering. The history of our planet is bloody, to be sure, but it has always been limited to skirmishes and minor brushfire wars. Terrible, of course, for those living them, but mattering little in the grand scheme of things. And now, within a mere twenty cycles, we faced an invasion from interstellar space, a plague, a major polar war, and the complete destruction of a powerful city-state. It reminds me of the old Mekong curse: “may you live in interesting times.”

(09 Autumn 1939) — I’ve been attempting to gain a clearer picture of the situation by placing all the pieces of the puzzle I’ve uncovered so far into one coherent whole: the assassination of Thor Hutchison, the Interpolar War, the plague in the Humanist Alliance. Unfortunately, there are still some major holes in the picture, and I doubt the validity of some of the information my agents have uncovered. Too bad I don’t go out as much as I used to; I could have made parallel verifications myself.

I’ll skip the War of the Alliance for now; my personal files have more than enough information on it already, most of which I’ve gathered myself. The afterwar tensions were easy to foresee for anyone with a modicum of knowledge of Terranovan politics. The first major event happened in TN 1935 when Thor Hutchison, the leader of the Revisionist Church, was assassinated. Northerners assumed Southern agents were involved, and even I entertained such thoughts for a while. It was the easy solution, after all. With this, the North drove itself into a fervor and it was only a matter of time before all-out war began.

Using the evidence I’ve gathered, I’m forced to assume Garner Fulan acted alone, though I have a nagging feeling that there is more to it. Could someone have talked him into it somehow, discreetly? After all, the Second Follower did utter “of course” before he was shot, implying that he knew something. Was he referring to one of his personal enemies? Perhaps I will never know; it matters little now.

At roughly the same time (a little earlier, in fact), the leaders of the Southern Republic discovered they had a serious problem: Farzhad Hemami, the

person they placed to oversee the Humanist Alliance, had been brainwashed by Humanist nationals. I had long suspected this, but I wasn’t sure. This made the Alliance a real threat and the Republicans launched a desperate action to eliminate it; when Hutchison was assassinated, it was too late to back out.

Republican special forces let loose a deadly virus in the Humanist Alliance, which they hoped would weaken the league enough that it could be annexed with ease. Unfortunately, the locals proved more tenacious than expected and the plague got harder to control. The Humanists were not the South’s only problem, either. In the Eastern Sun Emirates, the rebellion in Basal had spread to several other city-states and their leader Nigel Shirow had even gained control of a Humanist city seeking protection from the Republic. The Republic was committed to a long mop-up operation in the Allied Southern territories, just as they were facing troops for the North.

With the South weak and their blood boiling, the North declared war preemptively two seasons after Hutchison’s death. It began with a massive Northern assault; they would have moved troops near the Humanist border as a precaution already - hence the reports I received about lost landships. Northern strategy was to move into the weak territories (ESE and Humanist Alliance), move through a friendly (or at least neutral) Mekong Dominion and then crush the Republic on two fronts. Of course, the Dominion resisted them and they then got bogged down in the ESE and HA, far away from secure supplies.

The Southern response was to secure their borders, using the Humanist Alliance and the rebel parts of the Emirates as buffers, and then bring the war home to the North thanks to lightning assaults on the Arctic regions. Landships moved and clashed across the Badlands, trans-orbital transports dropped troops right in the enemy’s lap and some units stationed across the globe entered the fray.

Strangely, though, the space forces stayed pretty much out of the conflict. Either the governments were holding them up as trump cards, or the reports I’ve discovered about a special space coalition are true.

Cycle of Hell

Images from Terra Nova



Cycle of Hope

From the Journal of Nicosia Renault

(10 Autumn 1939) — This is the hard part. I kept avoiding the recent files, but I can't hide from the facts for much longer. After close to four cycles of war, both poles were suffering and a political impetus for peace had begun to build in the city-states. Behind the scenes, several people knew that Earth was still a threat and still had agents on Terra Nova, but they didn't have enough proof or clout yet to stop the war.

And then Peace River — the neutral Badlands city-state selling arms to both sides — was devastated by a nuclear detonation. Everyone stopped, and though the accusations flew, they quickly discovered that neither side was responsible. I have several suspects, but I can barely begin to believe most of them capable of this kind of brutality. I've seen too many friends die, often for nothing. I'd hate to think that someone I respect could be responsible.

(10 Autumn 1939) — The reactions to the bombing returned some amount of my dwindling faith in the human race. I was glad to see that we were still able to draw the line at some atrocity, that we were still horrified by what we were capable of doing.

Most of the fighting has died down by now, and the efforts are being redirected into emergency relief. Though the physical city of Peace River has been destroyed, its people have not, and they've been hard at work trying to get their lives back into some semblance of normality. Human beings are notoriously resilient to hardship, or so I've noticed along the cycles. I have faith in them.

(18 Autumn 1939) — I would say that the bombing has forced a lot of people to put aside their personal ambivalence and chose sides, and we learned a lot by watching the fallout. Just as I long suspected, I finally confirmed the existence of a "star chamber" of anti-war politicians. I had known for a long time that Lang Regina and Lord Protector Tanaka were still talking covertly, but I had no idea they had a formal group. They stepped forward with the evidence they have gathered: Earth did it, through one of their covert agents. They ended with a clear reminder that Terra Nova should be looking elsewhere for its enemies.

For the moment, though, most investigations point in the direction of the BRF, the Badlands Revolutionary Front, although they have not yet claimed responsibility for the bombing. They had the means and the motive, but I don't believe they could have laid their hands on a mass destruction weapon that easily.

(19 Autumn 1939) — I managed to track down the BRF leader, Ernesto Jaxon. One of my contacts in the BRF tipped me off in the hope that I could help him establish his innocence. I decided to meet him in person, just to convince myself.

He was quite startled when I arrived, of course. He's caught up in a lot more than he bargained for. What started as a simple defensive movement has blown completely out of proportion, and he's in way over his head. I don't think he's responsible, now. Even though the evidence available says the BRF had at least a hand in getting the weapon to Peace River, they were not told the full plan. Jaxon himself had apparently no inkling, though he's taking the entire blame right now. I can't help him for the time being, though I'll try to at least shield him for a little while. I have a feeling he will be of help in the future, and now he's in my debt.

(20 Autumn 1939) — The arrival of the Liberati woman, Del Pulciano, is a wild card. I've just found out about her, even though she's been in-system for nearly a cycle now. Of course, she spent most of that time coming back from the Gate aboard the *Laban Emuro*, and I don't have anyone on that ship. I've managed to intercept a few communications, but nothing more. What I have found so far is interesting, though. Apparently, our long-lost brethren have been having even more severe problems than we did with the New Earth Commonwealth.

Her arrival wasn't expected at all, and she adds an interesting element to the puzzle. With any luck, she'll help us find the information we need, and maybe get our planet ahead in the game.

There may be hope yet.



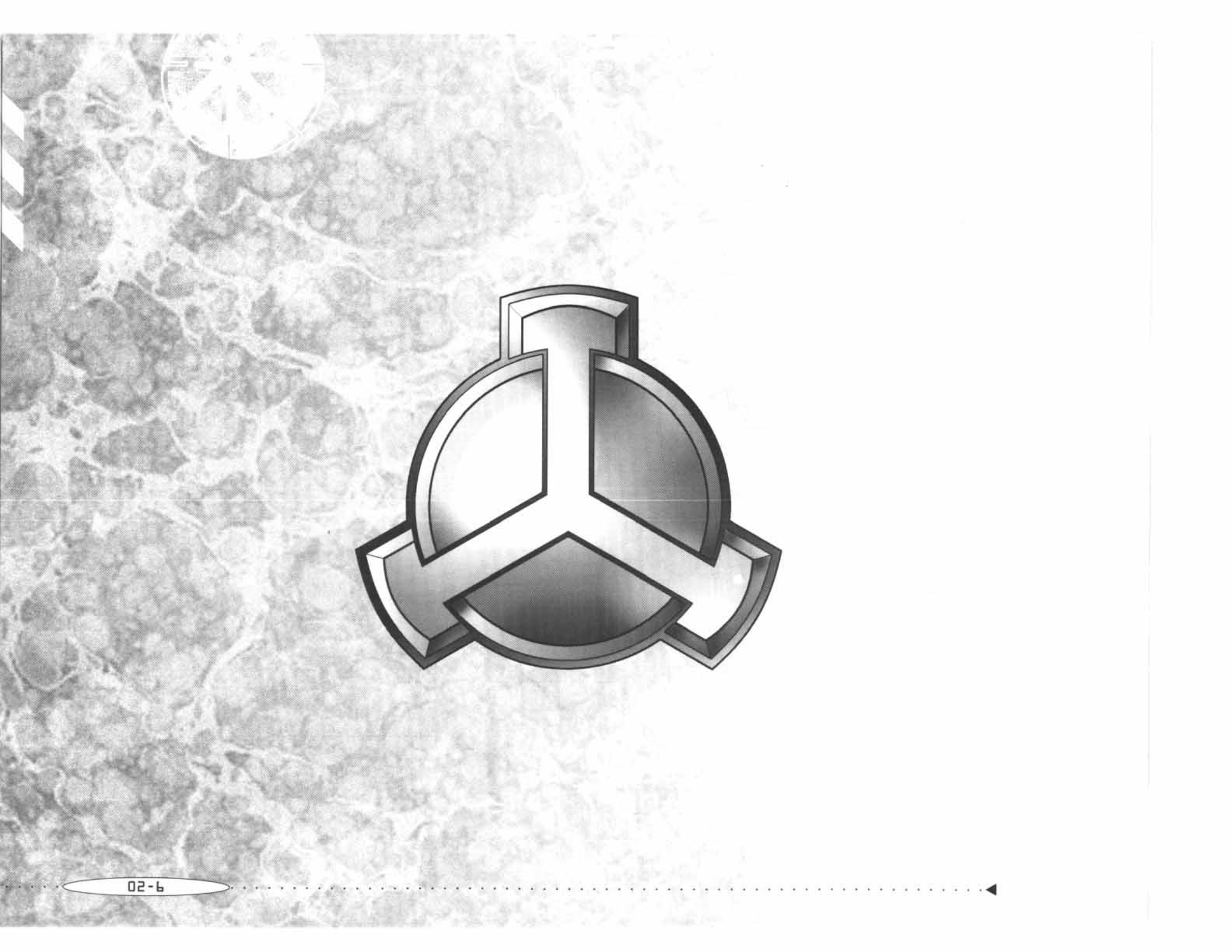
Cycle of Hope

BRF Safehouse, Badlands

19-AU-39

personal journal

02-5



First Wave: the North

From the Journals of Nicosia Renault

(20 Autumn 1939) — I sit here pondering the future of the planet, and I can't help but worry. There are developments in the North that I don't like, which could spell trouble in the near future. Thankfully, though, there are also some more positive changes brewing.

The most obvious new development is within the structure of the Confederated Northern City-States. Historically, the Norlights have always held the upper hand in the policies of the confederation. The death of Yves Banderas and the arrival of Solomon Davi to power in the United Mercantile Federation may signal a change in this, especially since the Norlights took the brunt of the negative popular sentiment against the war because of the conflict's religious connotations.

If the UMF indeed becomes a leading player in the Confederation, we can expect some radical policy changes to occur. Somehow, though, I don't see the religious authorities just sitting this one out — Fajil and her band have been through much worse, and I don't think we can count them out just yet.

Speaking of religion, I expect to see a fracture between the secular and religious aspects of Northern society in general very soon. If the current popular backlash continues, fueled by the inability of the Church to find a new Second Follower, there may be a swing back to the conservative secular side. Old man Stark would just love that, though I suspect Lang would have the most to gain. Another thing to fight about with her wife.

(21 Autumn 1939) — An alliance between the north and south is looking more likely every day. I know that Lang and Tanaka have been talking for a long time, and they each command the loyalty of a lot of people. This could very well give them the political clout to put a new alliance together and push it past any objectors, especially if they can pin the bombing of Peace River on the back of the CEF. The question will be whether the governments will put up with something so very close to a major power grab.

I can't help but feel there are greater forces at work here. No one can control the flow of history, but it is possible to influence it. History is made, after all, of a succession of small events.

Time will tell, I suppose.

>end log<

>open file/ north 1<

Looking for Clues

Northern Guard Intelligence Service

>full encode<

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>decoding - - -<

To: Col. Zucco Beatrice

From: Captain Phillips Hans, NGIS, Peace River

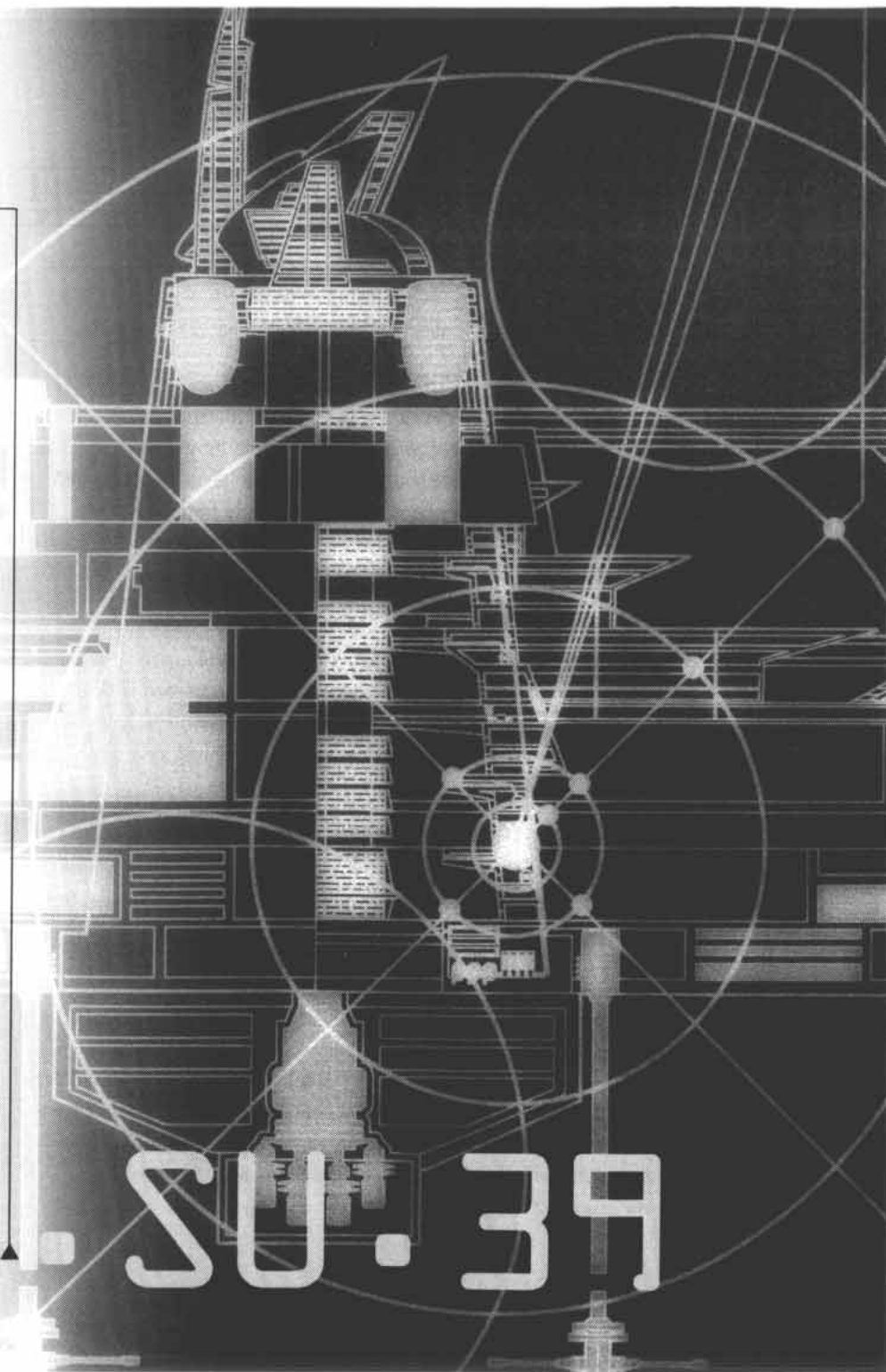
Re: Status Report on Peace River Bombing

Here is the promised update on our progress; the level of the damage has made it very slow going, and it may be difficult to be finished by our original target date. It has taken a while to reach the site and secure permission to perform our investigation. The administration and government is in chaos, and no-one seems to know what's going on.

Those civilians remaining in Peace River seem to welcome any help they can get, however; we've seen experts from across the globe digging in the ruins. Emergency crews have been moved to standby, and most are being used for corpse removal instead of search and rescue. My only worry is that the guilty party might try to make some vital clue disappear. I think my suspicions are shared, because most teams are of mixed origins, keeping a weary eye on one another. The last thing we need is another incident.

The bomb was most likely a small suitcase type anti-proton trap. These are rugged and simple, and wouldn't need more than a small power supply to maintain containment. It would certainly be simpler to smuggle in than a suitcase nuke. The total quantity of anti-matter must have been no higher than a few micrograms, total, since part of the city is still standing. We don't know if that's by design or miscalculation. The radiation clouds in the underground were certainly an expected side-effect, and has led to rampant speculations among the teams here.

There's no word on whether the bomber survived. If he was a BRF terrorist, as we suspect, he (or she) was probably willing to die to ensure the success of the mission.



An Old Nemesis

Coded Audio Log

>automatic record<
>datetag: 18 Summer TN 1939<
>timetag: 32:23:45<
>connect from — private phone<
>routing: <SECURE><
>connect to — Lang Residence Coded Phone, Fort Henry<

Voice 1: . . . yes?

>**Voice id:** 100% Lang Regina, Fort Henry Proconsul, WFP, Maderan faction head<

Voice 2: Regina. We need to talk.

>**Voice id:** 90% Kenichi Tanaka, Lord Chancellor, ESE<

Lang: what . . . what time is it? Couldn't this wait?

Tanaka: I'm sorry about the time, but I've found some things that you need to know. My agents have been reporting to me, and I'm almost certain that we've uncovered evidence of Earth involvement in the Peace River. . . incident.

Lang: . . .

Tanaka: Hello?

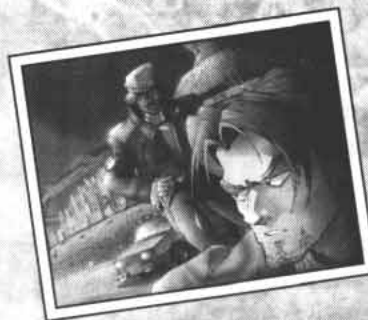
Lang: I'm awake. Talk to me.

Tanaka: The line is secure on my end. I'm sending through a series of pictures I received from one of my contacts this afternoon; the scruffy man you see with the rover . . . Garrick, I think . . . and the woman, Sundra Gabriel, is an Earth agent. Witness corroboration puts Gabriel in the city just before the bombing, and Garrick has vanished into hiding.

Lang: I see. Any idea where this agent is now? This man Garrick is likely a former Earth collaborator — I don't think they'd trust just any rover; if he's our best lead, we should send teams to find him and get what we can out of him. With our luck the way it's been, the agent will be back to CEF space by now.

Tanaka: It gets worse. Gabriel was a known BRF agent; they haven't claimed responsibility for any of this yet, but that may just be because of the number of civilian deaths. They must realize that they'd lose all public support if they were involved.

Lang: You think there is some truth to the rumors of BRF involvement? This isn't their style. It's possible that she wasn't acting on behalf of the whole group. You send your people after Garrick, I'll send mine to find the BRF leader. One of us, at least, may find some answers.



◀ Sundra Gabriel



Arrival? ▲



◀ Vallis Garrick

private conversation

A Planet in Shock

Special to the Valeria Times

The streets of Massada are quiet today. The sounds of gunfire and explosions, so prevalent, so *routine* over the past few weeks, have given way to a hushed silence that blankets everything with a thick cloud of despair. The sounds of fervent prayer rise from all the churches, Revisionist and Jerusalemite alike, as the citizens hold tearful vigil. All across the Badlands, indeed, all across Terra Nova, the scene is the same. The fighting has ended, but at what cost?

Not even the Prophet could have predicted the events of this past week. The Interpolar War has been called to a halt, but not by any suggestion of peace. Rather, the fighting has stopped as everyone around the world mourns for the dead and dying of Peace River, following the massive explosion last week, that wiped out almost 60% of the Badlands' largest city. Citizen deaths have climbed past the hundred-thousand mark, with more bodies being uncovered daily.

Emergency crews from all across the globe have arrived in the city, helping in the search-and-rescue efforts, as well as setting up triage centers and medical aid for those less-seriously wounded. A call for volunteers has been sent out to the populace at large, along with a list of goods needed by the rescue operation. Blankets and water purifiers, along with radiation suits, are among the top items requested.

It has been a week since the terrible event, and we are no closer to understanding than we were before. Investigative teams have been working alongside the emergency crews, and representatives from all of the leagues are pooling their resources to come up with an explanation for the tragedy. Both the north and south have been ruled out as the force behind the attack, and the involvement of the CEF is under investigation. Rumor of Earth agents on Terra Nova has been floating around for some time, and reports from the site of the disaster seem to confirm those rumors.

Paxton Arms, the largest conglomerate in Peace River and the largest arms manufacturer on Terra Nova, was devastated in the bombing, and may have been the intended target of the destruction. Almost the entire compound was wiped out in the blast, leaving only the warehouses on the outskirts of the city unscathed. Production has shut down completely for the time being, and all surviving workers have been given time off with pay until a decision as to the company's future can be made.

Scavenging teams have been sent into the wreckage of the factories in order to ascertain the amount of salvage available, but the company has remained silent about their future plans. Indeed, many of the surviving executives have been seen working alongside emergency crews among the rubble of their former glory.

Battles have been halted along the entire front, though most units were already under cease-fire orders for the duration of the peace talks. Churches and temples have seen a huge resurgence in the number of people attending masses and services, and many small chapels have been erected in the war zones. Regional boundaries seem to have been all but forgotten in the wake of this tragedy, and soldiers from both sides have been seen at work and prayer together. It can only be hoped that the peace found in the wake of disaster can be maintained in a time of calm.

Death Toll

Special Report to the Federal News

This is another update on the current situation in Peace River. Despite the immediate response of emergency teams, the death toll continues to mount with every excavated building. Victims of the blast and the shockwave which followed number in the hundred of thousands. Hope of finding some of the missing alive has been all but lost, as a week has passed since the blast itself. Many victims who were not killed outright died soon afterwards from the massive injuries they sustained. Even if there are some who survived the collapse of their homes and offices, the week without food or water would be devastating.

Not since the War of the Alliance have we seen death and destruction on such a massive scale. Morale in the area has hit an all-time low, and you would be hard-pressed to find someone who has not been affected by this tragedy. Friends, family and lovers of the missing and deceased have been invited to a special memorial vigil, to be held outside the city itself.

In addition to the initial radiation front, most victims suffered from deep burns caused by the expanding shockwave. Even those located deep within industrial complexes were not spared, as the solid rock structures channeled the boiling gases through corridors and into open areas. Many areas underground are still shut off to emergency crews, because of the high amounts of radiation still present in the underlying structures. The damage and casualty levels cannot be estimated at this time.

Fortunately, not all of the population was concentrated in the main city, and the outlying settlements survived the blast. There are also scattering of Paxton facilities in the Badlands, so despite the blow, Paxton Arms remains functional, if badly crippled.



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The Secret Council

Meeting Minutes

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for agreeing to hear us out tonight. I know that these are trying times, and I will endeavor to come directly to the point and not waste your time.

I come to you as the spokesperson for a very select group of people. You know most of us already, but the fact that we have been talking together may come as a complete shock to some of you. This private council of ours is made up of both Northern and Southern interests, along with some affiliated with groups rather than regions. No sir, we are not traitors. We have never used our connections to betray our fellow countrymen.

For safety reasons, we have collectively decided to keep a certain portion of our membership secret. This makes us less vulnerable to infiltration from the outside. Most of the public contact with the group will go through myself, Lord Chancellor Tanaka, and my co-chair, Proconsul Lang Regina.

I will represent the interests of the South, while Proconsul Lang will do the same for the North. We can rely on a number of close friends throughout the governments of the planet, who fully support our endeavors and have agreed to let us speak for them.

Why are we doing this? Most of us served together under one banner during the War of the Alliance. We went through hardships and shared terrible ordeals, and frankly we cannot, even after all these cycles, see each other as enemies. We have seen the evils committed by the forces of the New Earth Commonwealth, and we all knew they would not go away quietly.

This is why we kept in contact. All the members of our group share one desire: to see our world freed from the hand of war; free from the sense of dread and horrible anticipation that alternately looms and lingers in the air. We all want peace.

We have slowly gathered large amounts of evidence of NEC involvement here, on Terra Nova, and we were fully prepared to use this knowledge to end the senseless war. We almost succeeded - indeed, we managed to organize the Peace River ceasefire talks. Of course, events did not go quite as we planned.

There will always be those who do not want to see peace become a reality. Whether for profiteering, political or personal reasons, they strive to bring out the worst in all of us through sabotage and rumor-mongering. We cannot bow to these forces, cannot allow them to usurp power and undo everything that we have accomplished thus far.

We have done our best to salvage the situation since the disaster, and we did manage to find some answers, which will be communicated to your respective staffs at the earliest opportunity. We wish to help guide Terra Nova in her renewed defense against Earth. We are not here to usurp power, nor are we seeking glory. We only want to ensure a future for our children, and for their children, the next generation of Terranovan leaders.

Special Forces

Security Memo

To: *Special Council*

From: *Kenichi Tanaka & Lang Regina, Acting Allied Commanders*

Re: *Establishing a special forces unit*

A squadron of elite pilots are to be sent on covert missions against our most deadly enemy: the Colonial Expeditionary Force, the armed wing of the New Earth Commonwealth. This operation is code-named Black Talon and the operatives' end goal is to begin the struggle against Earth, to ensure the future safety of our world. They will seek out and destroy NEC installations on Terra Nova and then lead an intelligence gathering mission to Caprice, the world that lies between here and Earth, via the Tannhauser Gate system. If we are to carry the fight back to Earth we must have detailed intelligence about Caprice and the NEC forces currently occupying it. Gathering this intelligence will be the Talons' main responsibility.

We need not, we hope, remind you just how critical this mission is. We Terranovans had foolishly turned our attention away from Earth and fallen into our own squabbles when the city-state of Peace River was vaporized by an anti-matter device placed there by NEC commandos. In an instant, the largest arms-manufacturer on Terra Nova became so much dust. Before other cities become targets, we must strike back. The Black Talon team will be the vanguard in this attack.

This document contains our recommendations for both the mission envelope and the team itself. We have gathered information and intelligence from diverse sources to compile background data on the operation. This document also includes the names of some pilots and soldiers that we would like to include.

General Gervase Aschenbach will be placed in charge of the program. He is a conservative and consummately professional man. The General is highly dedicated to the mission at hand and has little patience for North-South squabbling when Earth presents a much greater threat.



Future Plans

Valeria, NLC

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Lang: I'm glad to see you've all arrived safely. I apologize for asking you all to take the risk of traveling here, but there are many things we must discuss, and it is best to do so in person.

Tanaka: Indeed. I believe my presentation to the heads of state went over well. I assume you've been watching over the closed circuit?

Gerty: Of course.

Lazarus: Our security committee must take a more pro-active role in the destiny of this planet.

Gerty: Agreed. We cannot let them waste our strength in petty power plays while a greater danger looms over us.

Lang: We have the ability to affect some real changes, especially now. I say that we should use our connections to form the core of a new government.

Achernsback: The leagues will never go for that.

Lang: They will have to, if it is presented as a non-partisan, independant source of strength while simulteneously being non-threatening to their power base.

Tanaka: I think Regina has a key point here. An "advisory council" will be better received than an attempt to take power.

Gerty: Again, agreed. A council presents the image of impartiality that we need, if we're ever to be taken seriously. We do need contingency plans, however, should our announcement be taken more poorly than we hope. The people are unpredictable nowadays, with no rhyme or reason to their whims.

Lazarus: They may decide that we're a larger threat than the war. . . We all are, technically, traitors; our good intentions may make that all the worse. Who knows, really. Morality takes so many different forms in these times. We need people with us who are more sympathetic. The group of us are all higher-up; removed from the community at large. We need someone who can work the PR, as it were. And we need a name.

Lang: I suggest we call our council the Westphalia Cabinet, in memory of the treaty that ended the devastating conflict with Earth. Maybe that name will bring us the same good fortune in our future dealings with our ancient enemy.

Lazarus: It sounds good. It has that ring of hope to it.

Tanaka: Are all in agreement, then, over this course of action? We have to keep this short, I'm afraid. . . we all have other business to attend to.

All: Yes.

Tanaka: It is decided then. Now we only have to convince the people.

Perfidy

Personal Letter

To: Cmd. Mikal Mortis

From: Director Matthias Tior

Mikal:

As I'm sure you've heard, things are moving far more quickly than we previously anticipated. This Westphalia Cabinet seems to have sprung from nothing; I wonder if it will vanish again as quickly. Tanaka is out of his mind - can he really expect this to work? While his end goal is valuable, I have serious doubts that this Chamber will have any lasting effects on Terra Nova. The politicians are just not ready to stop their incessant power struggles. I fear for his vision.

Even more than that, I am struck wondering exactly how Tanaka and Lang could have arranged this in such secrecy. Did you have any advance warning of this declaration of theirs? I don't quite understand how such an organization could exist without the knowledge of at least one person in our little circle, but we are placed before a *fait accomplie* and must make the best of this situation.

I fully expect most of the politicians from both sides to fall in line with this endeavor - the popular voice is just too loud; people are crying out for peace, no matter how it is eventually achieved. I think that our best course of action is to go along with the Cabinet for the time being, until we can find a way to use the situation to our advantage. Personally, I can see a number of advantages to be found in (finally!) having a unified government for this planet.

After all, our plans have never been set in stone. If we can gain control of the Cabinet, by overt or covert means, the task of unifying the planet will have already been accomplished. Don't you agree?

02 - AUG 39



Talon Recruiting

Investigator's Report

Lieutenant Juno Vesping is a native of the city-state of Rapid City in the United Mercantile Federation and served for a brief time in the corporate security service of Northco, the North's giant Gear manufacturer.

After a corporate raid gone wrong, she decided to leave the private sector and join the military. Vesping served with distinction in the Northern Guard Intelligence Service as both an operative and an analyst. She left the intelligence service six years ago to join the Cat's Paws, an elite commando Gear regiment in the Northern Guard. There she served with distinction under Colonel Stacey Diggs.

The Lieutenant, with over a decade of experience in covert operations, would be a true asset to the Black Talon Squadron. She is a veteran of many spectacular commando raids with the Cat's Paws, including a daring one on Port Oasis itself in TN 1938 that earned her the Guard's highest commendation. Vesping's analytical mind, however, is probably her best asset. Trained to interpret intelligence, she will be the best suited to interface closely with Liberati and other locals once on Caprice.

Lieutenant Vesping is a surprisingly well-adjusted woman, given her background in covert operations. She does not suffer from any significant stress disorders or antisocial tendencies.

Vesping does put a strong value on innocent life, however, and has twice in her career disobeyed orders that put civilians at risk. In both instances she managed to find another solution (a testament to her creative thinking), but this could be a problem in a mission like the excursion to Caprice.

Sir, please find
attached the report
on Juno Vesping.

I believe, having
reviewed her files,
that she will make
a useful addition to
the Talons.



Domestic Turmoil

Recording/Private, time: 14:32:34

Lang: I'll be there in a minute. I just have to finish. . .

Edden-Smythe: You always "just have to finish" something, Reg. We promised the girls that this would be a sit-down family dinner.

Lang: It'll only take a minute, Vic. I said I'd be there in a minute. And don't even start trying to blame this all on me. I'm not the one who chose to work hours away from our home and our daughters; not to mention your wife.

Edden-Smythe: Why am I the one at fault here? All I want is to sit down and enjoy a few moments like a normal family. And I see no reason why I should be the one to change jobs. You're never home either! And when you are home, you're always working. "I have to do this" — you just don't care about any of us . . .

Lang: Oh, would you just leave me alone? I swear, ever since you met Fajil's band of religious nutcases, you've spouted nothing but trite dogma! Have you been completely brainwashed? What happened to the woman with a mind of her own?

Edden-Smythe: How *dare* you? It's certainly not my fault that you've slipped away from faith; assuming you had any to begin with. And what of your own brainwashing? You spend endless days and nights with that southerner Tanaka; if I didn't know any better, I'd say that you were planning to switch sides!

Lang: You know full well that my work — that *our* work — is vital to the future of the planet itself! I am building a future for our daughters, Victoria. I am trying to build peace. And meanwhile, all you can do is yell at me about how I've lost my faith? I am sick and tired of hearing it, Vic. I have just about had enough.

Edden-Smythe: Fine, then! You go and be with your precious Tanaka and your important work — I certainly don't need a faithless, spineless, hopeless traitor in my life! And another thing. . .

Eliza: . . . mommy? . . .

39

Plea for Peace

Sorrento, NLC

(03 Autumn TN 1939)

The First Follower has made the trip to Sorrento to make his much awaited speech on the current political turmoil. The frail holy man was believed dead in the aftermath of numerous attacks on the city-state of Massada, in the Karaq Wastes, but high members of the clergy smuggled him out and have been tending to him in secret.

Thin and prematurely graying, the First Follower made a remarkable speech in the Revisionist main cathedral yesterday. The short speech, which took place right after the evening service, will be remembered by many for its historical significance. It has already begun to create controversy in the Church.

Here are some of the more notable excerpts from yesterday's speech:



"Brothers and sisters,

"I come to you with a message, not as a leader, not as a preacher, but as a fellow man. I have seen too many horrors, and my heart suffers to see the message of Mamoud trampled in the dust of our human frailties. One cannot save the soul by harming the body.

"It is time for reconciliation. I urge you to support the initiative for peace started by wise leaders on both sides of the conflict. Do not see them as traitors, but as courageous servants who dared to take great risks for your sake and that of your children. The Westphalia Cabinet may well prove to be the key to a renewed future, free of fratricidal conflict.

"We must also look beyond the political dimension, to our inner soul. Our beloved church has learned a hard lesson, with her people divided and the holy city laying in near ruins. In truth, I said this to you: it is not the place or title that define's one beliefs, but one's faith in them.

"It is time to end the schism. In the name of peace, I am ready to accept whomever the faithful chose as a new guide.

"May the Gentle Spirit be upon you."

Strange Acquisitions

Field Agent Report: NISA

>incoming transmission

To: Satlink 55-39I-86

>receiving

ID: 5546-F9-9/332GT-221

>verified

From: Field Agent 'Apostle'

>searching...

>id: Samuel Turin, file #7297303

>logging initiated

Attention:

My placement within the cartel continues without difficulties. The documents have been accepted without question, and I have been included in a number of high-risk operations. The most recent was the acquisition and delivery of a large number of highly intricate electronic components to an anonymous purchaser. Details are following.

3-AU-39/20:49:07 — Agent summoned to briefing by operation leader, informed of contract signed to procure a certain set of electronic components for an undisclosed price. Payment of operatives contingent upon success, equalling one tenth of shipment value. Agent agreed to participate, given details of pickup only. Details of drop to be provided upon successful 'liberation' of shipment.

3-AU-39/29:03:20 — Operatives mobilized. Team consisted of four members of the cartel, both middle and inner circle. Estimation of importance of operation increased fivefold. The pickup was carried out successfully, with minimal property damage and no loss of life. Shipment revealed to be lot number 33-221-D, marked as product of Virtech Industries. Shipment has not yet been reported missing to authorities, leading this agent to suspect internal involvement. Recommend investigation or further agent placement.

3-AU-39/31:37:52 — Examination of the packages revealed little aside from shipping information and product codes, which have been appended in an attached document. Many may prove to be false. Shielded packaging prevented even the most thorough scans; more testing could not have been performed without observation by other operatives.

3-AU-39/01:14:56 — Operatives present at drop site. Unmarked transport arrived, no registration, no transponder signal transmitted. Two operatives and agent exited vehicle, three of the purchasers emerged from other transport. Package was examined extensively, pronounced acceptable. No physical money exchanged hands; codes were entered electronically, presumably to shift appropriate funds. No visual identification could be made, but a voice recording has been made of main purchaser. Analysis gave 98% probability of voiceprint match to Tarani Singh, known agent of Emir Raphael Bravo.

4-AU-39/03:41:12 — Operatives returned to placements with no further words of explanation. The money transferred to the operatives has been traced back, and verified as coming from the cartel's main holdings. Operation appears legitimate. It is currently unknown as to why Bravo would be interested in these components. Virtech is primarily a manufacturer of military spacecraft, and the Free Emirates are not known to have interests in that area. It is possible that Tarani has switched allegiances, and is working for a currently unknown patron. Advise closer watch on Free Emirates and Emirate agents in particular.

NOTE:

Bravo's people seen performing salvage operations on ship husks as of 02-AU-39. Notify Director Thames to begin moving agents.

02-19

field report



Second Wave: the South

From the Journals of Nicosia Renault

(19 Winter 39) — While the North seems to be getting its affairs in order, the South is heading towards disaster at a break-neck speed. There are a thousand separate plots at work, and the few who seem to have some inkling of what's going on refuse to talk. Families scheme against each other, and bonds of friendship and allegiance last only as long as nothing better comes along. The turmoil has begun to fray the seams of this confederation; I only hope that the renewal of an outside threat is enough to keep the leagues from ripping each other apart.

The Humanist Alliance has turned almost completely insular, absorbed in its own problems. Never a league heavily involved in the confederation, it has become even more withdrawn since the plague began to sweep through its citizens. The influx of emergency workers and the drastic measures taken have managed to finally halt the spread of the plague, at least for now, but the borders have been closed in many of the areas worst affected.

To add to the isolation, many of the emergency crews and doctors left the league to add their aid to the groups working in Peace River after the bombing. If the plague manages to break out again, the lack of aid and supplies may be the deciding blow.

As for the Emirates, the revolution continued to swallow resources and lives like an angry behemoth. Despite the aid brought in from the Southern Republic, the impossible seemed to happen. Not only did Basal survive, Shirow and his allies managed to take and hold ever-increasing ground against the Patriarch and his troops.

It's no wonder, really, that things happened when they did and how they did. It was only a matter of time before Masao finally snapped; it was only a question of how many people he would take down when he did. It will take some time for the league to fully recover, although I would venture to say that they have a much better chance now, after the events of this cycle, than they have had in a very long time.

I suspect that the Mekong Dominion has been taking advantage of the turns of events to settle some old scores. Now that the world's attentions have been turned elsewhere, they've been using their temporary reprieve to muddy the waters even more. Their treachery against the UMF during the early weeks of the war has not gained them much respect from their allies, although I'm certain the southern leagues appreciated the results. The Dominion is beginning to garner quite a reputation; it'll be interesting to see what they do with it.

Through all this, the SR is striving to maintain control over their little forced coalition. I fear that, like a juggler with too many knives flying through the air, they will make overextend themselves and make a fatal mistake.

The South is a powder keg that will need watching.

>end log<

>open file/ south 1<

Alliance

Valeria, NLC

"Thank you all for coming here tonight. As you now know, numerous prominent figures from our political arena have been in contact with people from the other side. Some people would no doubt call it treason; we call it reason. As the bombing of Peace River has shown us all, our petty conflicts have no place anymore. We must turn our focus towards the true, external enemy.

"Our security committee, currently named the Westphalia Cabinet, is to form the core of a new, united Terranovan government. Delegates will be taken from each league and legitimate political group, to provide a forum for every voice and every point of view. We must begin to work on a sharing of ideas and resources if we are to build the strength we need.

"It is not our intention to meddle in the affairs of the individual Terranovan leagues, nor do we think they would stand for it. We are not attempting to take over in any political fashion; we merely seek to provide a venue for discussing and coordinating the various political efforts of the leagues to achieve peace, prosperity and defensive strength on this planet.

"Our new coalition has been formed for a number of purposes, but our main thrust must be to move towards Caprice and the old colonies. They are from the same stock as we are; we must reclaim our heritage and break free of our self-imposed isolation. We gain nothing by remaining here and bickering amongst ourselves like children. We cannot afford to remain isolated anymore.

"The known presence of CEF infiltrators on this world, and possibly within these high echelons, prevents us from discussing any more of our plans with you here tonight, but rest assured we will take a pro-active stance to prevent any further unnecessary bloodshed."



Through the Mirror

Internal Memo to Illustrious

DSEC Command — Port Oasis

To: *Commandant Rikar Maxwell, SRGS Illustrious*

From: *Sous-Prefect Antonia Marz, Deep Space Exploration Corps*

Re: *Progress Report*

This memo is sent on the behalf of the Westphalia Cabinet to the entire allied space force. Standard communication protocols are to be observed to keep the involvement of the Cabinet with the space force as secret as possible. My suggestion is that you confer with the other captains and commanders and send me a general report.

The events of recent weeks have forced us to move a bit faster than expected, but it may turn out to be a good thing after all. We have secured additional resources for our off-planet operations, including the recruitment of additional personnel. They have started advanced training at a number of facilities throughout the land, but it may take a few seasons before we are fully ready. In the meantime, you will be the ones holding the fort, so to speak. Do not falter in your duties — we are not ready to defend ourselves just yet.

How is the research progressing on the new Gate program? The *Laban Emuro* should have met with you by now. I trust you took the precautions I asked for before you revealed our plans to the crew. Give them all the help they may require of you. Their scientists may well be able to break the detection problem, and we'll need that technology if we are to prevent more infiltrators from coming over. I don't think I will be able to sleep soundly until we manage to track them down; I've even sent my family to live out of town for a while.

Make sure your crew continues their efforts to bring the Gate drive back online. I know it hasn't been used for cycles, but we may need Gate operation soon to send infiltrators of our own — kind of ironic, isn't it? We shall be fighting fire with fire. Further instructions and briefings will be transmitted soon to you and the other ships in the group.

For the time being, continue with the standard plan.

Coded Communication

>separating datastream

>unscrambling data

To: *Home Base*

From: *Francis, Illustrious*

Re: *Next Communications*

This will be my last transmission using the usual channels. The captain has announced that we would be running silent from this moment on, and that no personal message will be allowed out for the time being. Seems there's a big announcement coming, and they want to make sure no one knows about it dirtside.

I've already taken alternate arrangements so I can continue to keep you updated of our location and actions. I had myself assigned to the Astrocartography department, where I'll be handling the late shift. There's a big optical telescope there, to which I have full access. Now, a telescope works both way: I'll modify an ultra-violet lamp with a pulse coder to fit the camera bay. In effect, I'm going to make one big brutal torchlight, except this one will emit UV. Have a ship stationed at the coordinates attached to this message — that's where I'll aim every night. I feel pretty confident this is going to work. The beam will be too narrow to be intercepted or seen. Just make sure you're precisely at the coordinates I sent, or you'll miss all the fun.

Seems the Director was right to have suspicions about the captain and the senior staff. Unlike that fool Gautier, I have the good sense to lay low and not attract attention.

>streaming coordinates

>log out

The Fox Lies in Wait

Port Oasis, SR

>Personal Recorder Log<
>Discussion with Molay, Jacques<
>Safehouse, Port Oasis<
>recording on — secure<
>time index: 19:12:59<

deRouen: This was not completely unexpected. Someone was bound to take advantage of the situation, you know.

Molay: I know. But it should have been us. This lack of initiative can have far-reaching consequences, and they may not be beneficial for me.

deRouen: For us, you mean.

Molay: Of course, my dear. Forgive me. I am an old man, and I have spent far too long working for my own interests, as well as those of the Republic.

deRouen: No matter. I've set plans into being to react to this. . . Westphalia Cabinet and their plans for conquest.

Molay: I take it you do not believe their claim of being nothing more than an advisory council?

deRouen: Of course not. No one would go to such length just for moral principles and duties. Frankly, I did not expect you to be that naïve.

Molay: Ah, the impetuosity of youth. I was merely looking at a possible angle. Perhaps you should reign in your enthusiasm; it may cause you great harm if you are not careful.

deRouen: And I would return the same to you, sir. My plans involve nothing if not circumspection and prudence. In fact, we shall be laying low for a while, to observe the situation. I refuse to take actions until I know the identity of the remaining Cabinet members. For all we know, my father could be among them.

Molay: Your father, sharing power? What an amusing thought!

deRouen: I will be investing the time thus freed into establishing a new web of contacts. I suggest you do the same.

Molay: And then?

deRouen: When the time comes, I will be ready. The Cabinet will eventually be weakened by their campaign against the CEF and other ghosts of the past. Then, we strike at them and gain total control of the planet in one fell move.

Molay: And your father?

deRouen: I'll deal with him in time. Patience, patience.

>end log<



Thorn in Our Side

Port Oasis, Southern Republic

>**To:** Lord Protector Jacques Molay
>**From:** Prime Minister Louis-Phillippe deRouen
>**Re:** ESE Situation

I have reviewed the reports from the agents in the Emirates. The situation as it currently stands is unacceptable, and something must be done to correct it with all due haste. I submit that Oliver Masao is the root of almost all of the disturbances, and should be the focus of any planned corrective measures. While the Emirates have never been calm, as such, his reign has been chaos personified. As his insanity grows, it becomes more and more important to reassert the controls which should never have been removed in the first place. My suggestion is to use one of the agents currently present in the Emirates to remove the problem.

As for the transfer of power, I do not believe that Shirow would be in any way amenable to our interference. He is willful and sly, and cannot be easily manipulated nor overtly pressured. He has married the Lysia woman, now that her traitorous husband is dead. Both of them should be dealt with later, once a young heir has been produced. An heir, especially a young and pliable one, can be cared for by a good regent, which we would obligingly provide.

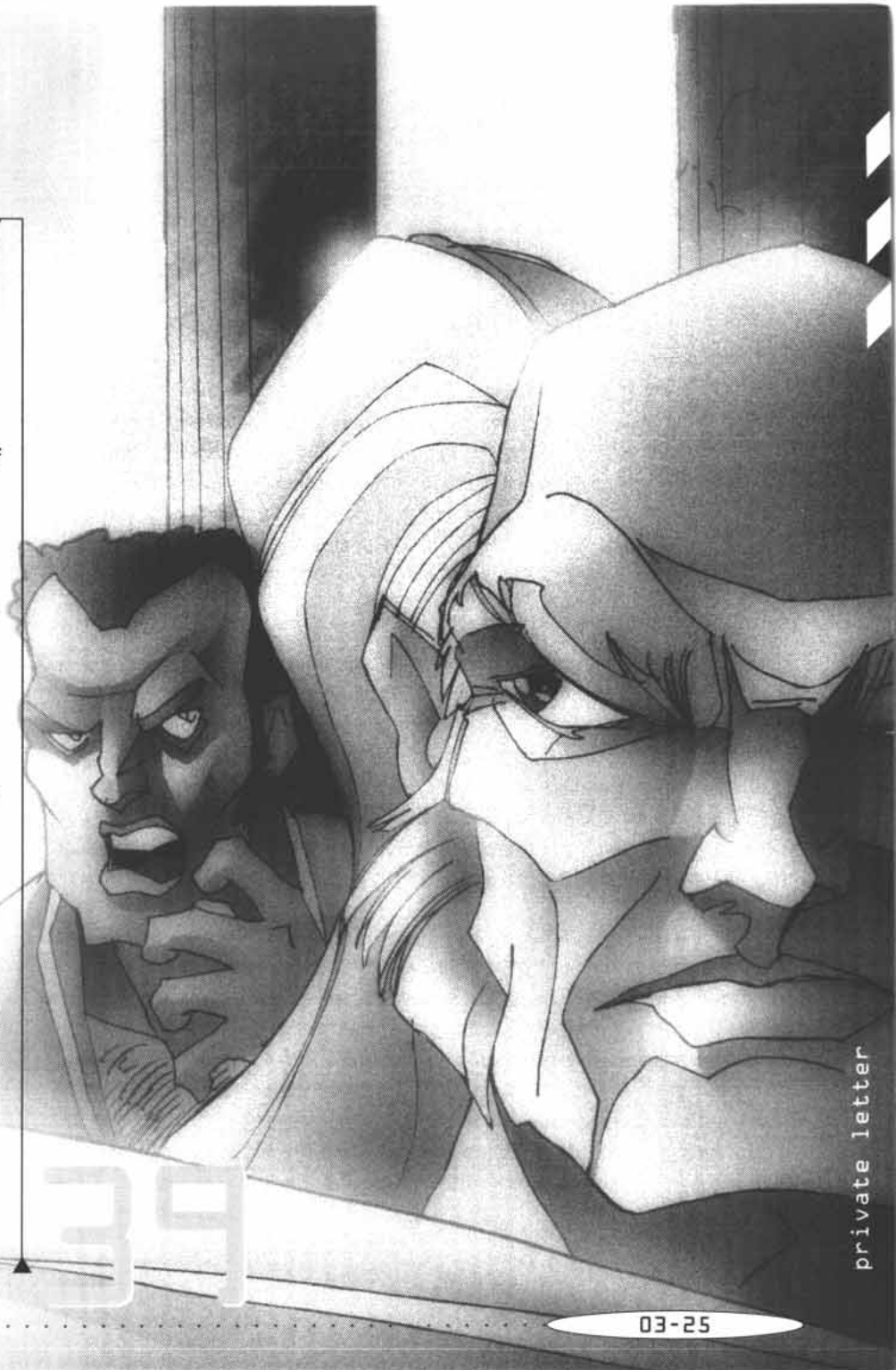
Despite the recent changes, the ESE remains a part of the Allied Southern Territories, and it is our duty to help our fellow southerners maintain a strong leadership. Agents are in place, and there is no reason why we should not use them. If the ESE can be brought back under direct control, we can afford to turn our attention towards other things.

I will meet you later to discuss the particulars of the schedule.

35-AU-39

03-25

private letter



Dangerous Games

Field Intelligence Report

Agent Delphi, reporting:

I recognize that this report is earlier than expected, but this is something that you should really know about. Toria Kahrvi, Masao's Assistant Director of Public Relations, was executed this morning on charges of attempted assassination of Masao himself. The Patriarch presided over the execution this morning, laughing hysterically as she was beheaded. He seems to truly enjoy the older methods of killing — called it 'more personal.' I think he would have gladly tortured her to death, had his advisors not had the little bit of influence over him that they do. As a final touch, her head has been mounted on a pike outside the palace gates, as a warning. It's at times like this that I truly wish he were not quite so careful.

A brief investigation gave me enough informatino on the attempt to make this first report. I am still attempting to uncover the other members of the plot; I'm sure that she had to have help from the inner circle to even get close enough to Masao in the first place. Toria was introduced to Masao two years ago at a diplomatic function — I am focussing on the other attendees at this time. While Masao's harem is enormous by any standards, it is well known that his desires are even more all-encompassing. It would be relatively simple to introduce another young desirable into his spheres.

Palace gossip has it that Toria was destined for Masao's bedchamber, even though she was one of his more junior ministers. I suppose the lure of having your child become ruler of the emirates is enough to degrade anyone. At any rate, she was beautiful enough to attract his attention, and pliant enough to keep it. They were playing a game of cards yesterday afternoon in his chambers, with others attending but not playing. About halfway through the game he stormed out in a huff, accusing her of cheating. She seemed unnaturally upset at his mood swing, crying out for him to come back and finish the game, before gathering up her cards and leaving in what looked strangely li pa ..

Later that day he came down with severe internal pains and retired to his rooms, complaining of lightheadedness. His physicians attended on him instantly, and proclaimed that he had been affected by a slow-acting contact poison, probably picked up by something he had been touching for a while. He instantly called for his entire household to be tried and executed, and only the news of a poisoned card found lodged behind a bookcase — where, presumably, it landed when he flung his cards across the room — kept him from slaughtering the lot of them.

It turned out that Toria had been immunized against the poison, but had expected the game to last longer than it actually had. It's too bad, really. But it was certainly shoddy planning.



Curtain Call

Security Report 678JH8778

To: Southern Republic Intelligence Directorate

Attn: Sous-Directeur Enrique Valdez

From: Corinth Brabant, Bethany Regional Office

Coded: Blue-Theta, Priority Two.

As requested, I'm sending you an update of last night's incident. We still cannot figure out exactly what happened — beyond the obvious, of course. Our first thoughts suggested a robbery attempt gone bad, but the subsequent retrieval of the security network's data showed us this was more like a planned execution. I have no idea why anyone would order the mass killing of a group of performers.

The Yang Dancers had been traveling all over the Southern Territories for the past few cycles. I think the end of the war prompted them to resume a more intensive touring schedule. I do wonder why this happened here, though; I've always believed the Republic to be one of the safest places around, as long as you minded your own business.

I've had my deputies check their hotel suites immediately after the incident, just in case we might find additional clues. Everything was normal, but I think someone came in before us. If that's true, the work was expertly done: we didn't find any trace of tampering.

Oh yes, one last thing: we found seventeen bodies in the hallway. As far as we know, though, there were eighteen dancers in the group. The state of some of the bodies prevent us from positively identifying the survivor, if indeed there is one. We may just have not found the body yet.

The data from the vidcapture has been enclosed with this report; if your people can come to any further conclusions, please let me know.

Vid-capture 1:

Another vaguely boring evening on night watch. Wait a moment — I'm reading an unauthorized entrance. Someone's coming into the building.

Vid-capture 2:

That's very strange. . . almost looks like PaxSec armor! Some kind of hold-up? Watch room to security — get your men down to the floor now!

Vid-capture 3:

<bzzt> They're opening fire. . . there are two — three of the attackers are opening fire on the Dancers. How did they get in? Security post! Is anyone there? Get moving *now*!

Vid-capture 4:

Cameras are being jammed in the floor itself — auxiliaries are still operational, but. . . dammit! I can't get a clear picture! Can anyone see their faces? Security?

Vid-capture 5:

Seal the outside doors! My controls aren't working. . . someone must have hit the breakers. I'm counting three attackers in total, and. . . and no survivors.



Rogue Trooper

Recorded Meeting

>recording, time index: 16:30:00<

>open log<

Interviewer: Thank you for accepting to meet us, Sergeant.

Antoine Maillaux: I have been wondering what you people wanted with a man like me. What is this special force I've heard rumor of?

Interviewer: You're remarkably well-connected, Sergeant. Indeed, we would like to offer you a position in a new unit that is being formed right now. We've been looking over your personal file — quite impressive, I must say.

Maillaux: Is that so? I wonder if you really know that much about me.

Interviewer: Sergeant Antoine Maillaux, born in Aquitaine, on the border of the Southern Republic, quickly got into trouble with local authorities and fled into the Badlands. Hooked up with rovers and smugglers and began the life of a rogue, serving briefly with the Peace River Army at the end of the War of the Alliance. Once Earth was defeated, became a full-time smuggler, making treks between Wounded Knee, Port Arthur, Hsi Tsang and other lawless towns.

Maillaux: Very good. Your sources are excellent.

Interviewer: In TN 1936, operated on the Republican border and got drafted into the Southern MILICIA. Because of skills and experience, assigned to the 11th Regiment (the Rapiers), then became an elite auxiliary to the Légion Noire. Served with distinction...

Maillaux: I cannot say that I appreciated the opportunity, mind you.

Interviewer: ...but remained a rogue and wasted no opportunity to challenge authority. Maillaux will follow orders, but rarely does so to the letter. He respects only those troops who have earned such treatment in his eyes.

Maillaux: And you still want me aboard? <snort> You must be kind of desperate, non?

Interviewer: We don't care about your personal conduct, Sergeant. What interests us are your skills as a smuggler and rover, particularly stealth and hit-and-run operations.

Maillaux: Planning a raid of some sort?

Interviewer: You could say that. Tell me Sergeant, have you ever been in space?

>log out<



Down the Rabbit Hole

Progress Report

DSEC Command — Port Oasis

To: *Sous-Prefect Antonia Marz, Deep Space Exploration Corps*

From: *Commandant Rikar Maxwell, SRGS Illustrious*

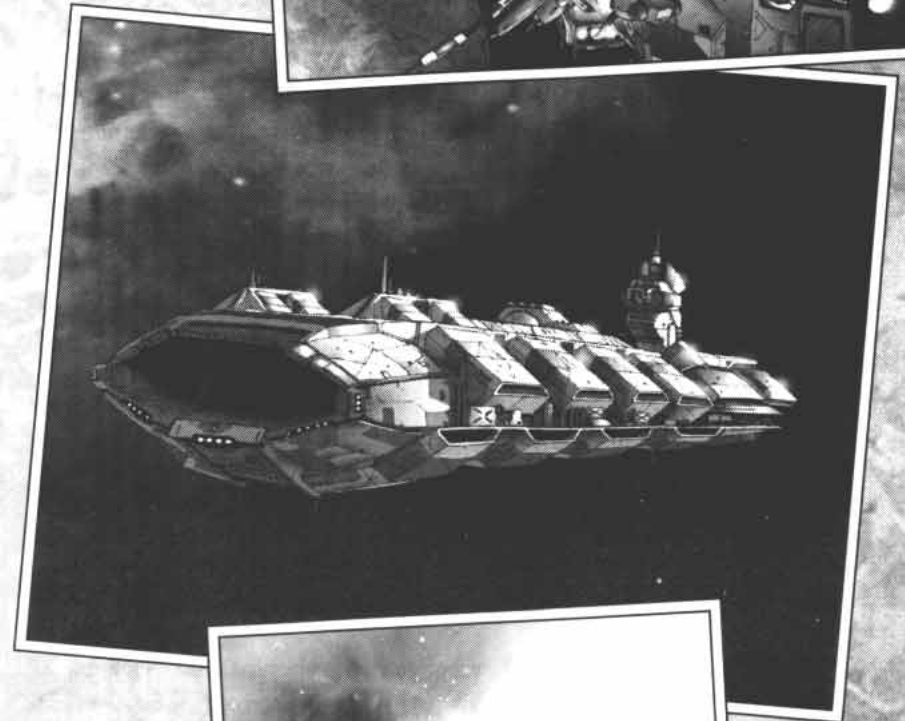
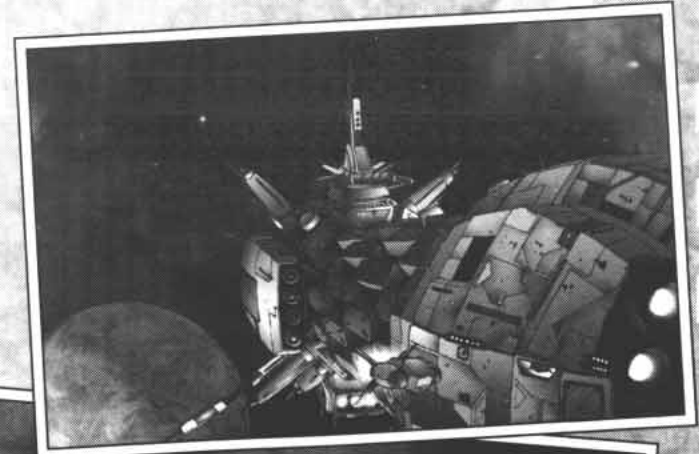
Re: *Progress Report*

Illustrious has met up with UMFGS *Laban Emuro* as planned. A few of the crewmen expressed some problems with the pride of the Republic joining forces with a Northern ship, but fortunately we did not have to put anyone in the brig. I'll have some of my most trusted people keeping an eye on possible troublemakers.

They've been spending a lot of time debriefing the Liberati woman and looking over the intelligence data she brought. It jibes exactly with what little we know, and I'm inclined to trust her. Thankfully, the others agree with my evaluation. It could have gotten sticky.

Fortunately for us, her pursuers most likely think she's dead, vaporized along with her ship. It nearly happened, too. They'll be looking for more escapees, while they should be worried about people coming *in*.

We now have a list of coordinates and possible emergence points for the next few missions. The plan is to split the paths of the two ships to cover as many Gates as possible. If the orbital mechanics make it possible, we'll insert agents of our own — we're not lacking volunteers.



Entrenchment

Internal Memo - Most Secret

To: Jonas Kia

From: Arron Logan

Re: Future Movement

Status: Coded PPR — 0515 R63-1M9.211

In continuance of our meetings of last week:

Approval is granted for the bids that we discussed. All funding will be transferred to the appropriate departments by the end of the day. Ensure that extensive precautions are taken in regards to access to the documents involved; recent rumors have led me to suspect the attempted placement of a leak within your people. Until I am absolutely satisfied that this is false, all high-level communications are to be assumed for your eyes only.

You will instruct Section Seub-Yi to withdraw from their operations in the Republic. I will send orders for Matahari to return here within the week to give a full report on the current status of the council. The rest of the Section are to remain in place, but will stay inactive until further orders are sent.

We have spent far too much money and time on their placement to remove them now, but the incident at Peace River will keep the Republic busy for quite a while. Any further efforts we make now will be wasted until such a time as the political logjam clears; it is most prudent simply to wait and watch.

For the time being, I accept your recommendations to look towards the Emirates. I received a copy of a report that was intercepted yesterday, and I believe that things will be coming to a head shortly. The time has come to consolidate our holdings there and begin to push. The time for subtlety is at an end, and certain things must be accomplished before the end of the cycle if our plans are to proceed apace.

Send instructions for our people to move into position and begin their assigned tasks. Others will be moving in once the level of the upcoming chaos becomes apparent, and it is imperative that we use this advance warning to solidify our advantage over those of other interests.

I fully expect the issue to be settled by this time next week, at which point we can return to our standard operations.



Bring Out Your Dead

Coroner's Report

File Number: 143-572-1B

Attending Physician: Dr. Alphonse Verdigrun

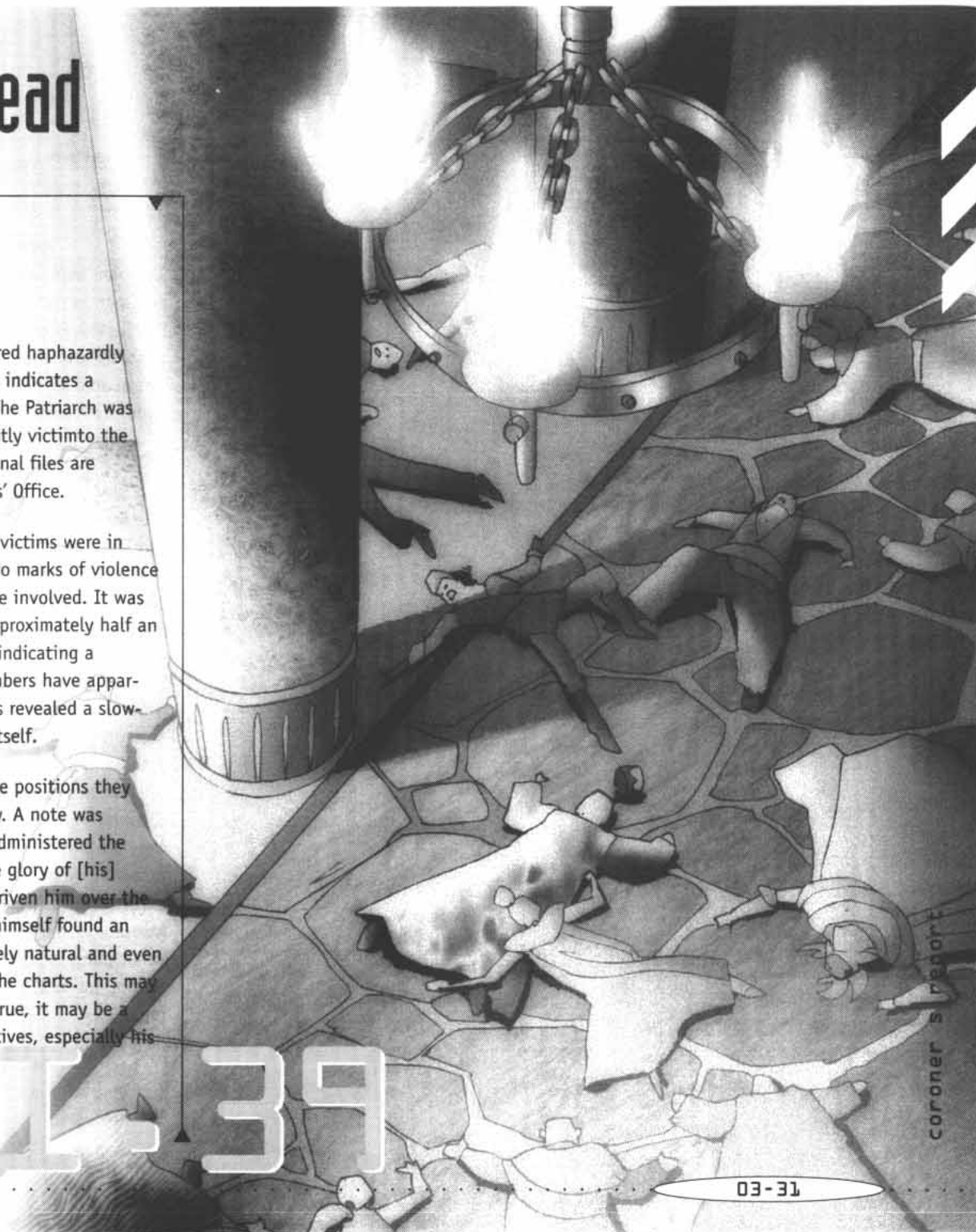
Date Filed: 25.WI.39

The bodies were found in good condition, scattered haphazardly across the floor of the hall. The randomness of their placement indicates a simultaneous time of death, as well as a relatively quick end. The Patriarch was found sitting on his throne at the end of the chamber, apparently victim to the same phenomenon. See attached photo for visual aid; the original files are available for inspection upon request, at the Medical Examiners' Office.

First examinations showed that almost all of the victims were in relatively healthy condition, with no obvious cause of death. No marks of violence were found on the bodies, indicating that there was no struggle involved. It was found that all of the deceased had consumed a large supper approximately half an hour before time of death, and all had eaten the same things, indicating a banquet of some sort. Conversations with surviving family members have apparently confirmed that suggestion. A test for toxins in the bodies revealed a slow-acting poison, which was apparently ingested at the banquet itself.

The levels of poison present in the bodies and the positions they were found in indicate that death may not have been voluntary. A note was discovered on the Patriarch's body indicating that he himself administered the poison, as the nobility was "no longer worthy of basking in the glory of [his] presence." One can only assume that his madness had finally driven him over the edge. One thing that is of note: a tox-screen on the Patriarch himself found an unusual combination of chemicals in his brain, chemicals entirely natural and even expected in small amounts, but both rounds of tests went off the charts. This may have been the reason for the growth of his madness. If that's true, it may be a genetic condition. I would advise testing for his surviving relatives, especially his sister, to verify that they are unaffected.

25-WI-39



Coronation



ETN Special Broadcast

Entertainment Terra Nova — This is Kendi Bourgeois, and you're watching Entertainment Terra Nova! The biggest news buzz today is not a new program, but a new ruler. Nigel Shirow and Lysia Masao ascended to the thrones of the Eastern Sun Emirates today, after the mass murder-suicide of the former ruling class. Shirow, the leader of the rebellion that had plagued the state for some time, was quoted as saying "My heart goes out to the families of the deceased. I just hope that today heralds the true beginning of a new era for the Emirates."

Shirow and Lysia married last year, only a brief time after Lysia's first husband, Farzahd Hemami, was shot in an apparent attempt on Lysia's own life. Rumor spread soon after the wedding that Lysia was pregnant and the marriage was a sham attempt to pass off her baby as Shirow's heir, but that rumor was soon discredited when months passed and she showed no signs of being with child. The couple have been living in Shirow's palace in Basal, and have only made a few public appearances together since then.

The coronation took place in the Patriarch's Palace this morning, in what was said to be "an attempt to bring joy back into this place of despair," according to one of Shirow's top aides. The arches and balustrades were swathed with banners and streamers of every color in the rainbow, and guests dazzled the eye, each couture outfit more spectacular than the last. Shirow himself cut a splendid figure in the green and gold ceremonial robes of the Patriarch, and Lysia wore the priceless Nacia emerald, on loan from the Bentley Museum for this once-in-a-lifetime occasion. The ceremony took a number of hours to complete, with both traditional and new elements fused into a moving and breathtaking ritual. Afterwards, the new Patriarch and Consort were weary, but all smiles. When asked about plans for the future, Shirow embraced his wife and said only that they were looking forwards to starting a family and building both the state and their life together.

Emir Raphael Bhervo was conspicuous in his absence, the only surviving emir not to attend the ceremony.

Ashes to Ashes

SR Intelligence Directorate: Report

Report, received 12:19:32

Activity in Okavango is increasing again, and Bh Bravo is in the center of it all. He was not attending the coronation of Shirow and Masao today, because he was in the graveyards in the mountains, directing his workers.

I cannot even begin to guess at the reasons, but Bh Bravo is having the corpses of the first crew disinterred from the graveyards and transported down to his palace. Teams of twenty workers are digging in each grotto, sifting through the dirt for bone fragments and scraps of rotting cloth. A priest is attendant upon each group, apparently blessing the remains as they are placed into containers for the journey down to the lowlands.

I can only assume that this is some vestige of their ancestor cult, because I can think of no other reason why the emir would disturb the bodies of those his people hold in utmost reverence. The funeral containers are placed in heavily guarded trucks; we've been unable thus far to establish their final destination, but we are working on it and we will get back to you with the information as soon as we acquire it.

The boy-emir seems almost exuberant as he moves from site to site, asking questions and directing the workers personally. His advisors seem a bit disturbed by the process, but there is an air of anticipation surrounding the endeavour that I do not like at all.

Please advise on further actions.

SR Intelligence Directorate: Report

Report, received 21:48:01

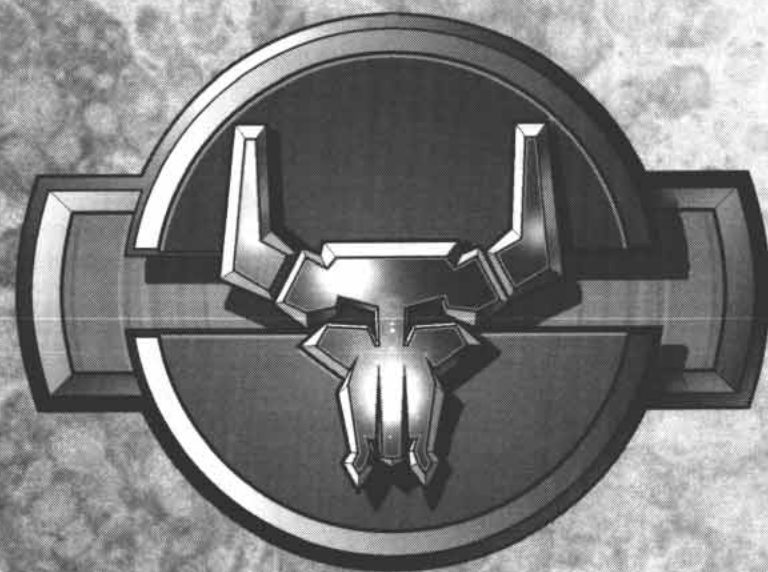
Shirow and Masao were crowned today in the Patriarch's palace. They've moved in to the massive building, but Shirow is keeping a large part of his staff at Basal for the moment. They've ordered the removal of a lot of Oliver's "improvements," but work won't begin for a few weeks yet. The ceremony went off without a hitch, despite some rumblings to the contrary. Despite the deaths of the entire hegemony, tensions are still high in the Emirates. I doubt the place will ever be calm.

Bh Bravo, as I'm sure you've already heard, did not attend the coronation. This would seem, in this operative's opinion, to indicate a possible breach in the alliance that stood up to Oliver Masao's insanity. It's not surprising that a bond based on war would begin to dissolve with peace.

What worries me, though, is that this breach could be more than a simple parting of ways; it could, conceivably, lead to another civil war. Bh Bravo, I am certain, had designs on the throne himself, and having it stolen out from under him by his putative ally might have large ramifications on his psyche.

I strongly advise keeping a close watch on the boy and Skavara itself. There's been a disturbing increase in smuggler activity in the region, and strange disturbances in the palace itself. I find it highly unlikely that these actions are being taken without the emir's approval — or at least his awareness — and could mean that he's begun to prepare for something that we can't even begin to guess at.

31. WI. 39



Third Wave: the Badlands

From the Journals of Nicosia Renault

(17 Winter 39) — The situation in the Badlands is somewhat grim, but despite all of the troubles, I see faint rays of hope shining through.

With Peace River effectively removed as a major player in the Badlands, other factions are trying to fill the void left behind by the giant's fall. Port Arthur, of course, has been quick to offer assistance and support to any community within the PR Protectorate, though I doubt they can back their promises. As far as I know, their long range transport assets are limited to a few aging shuttles and space planes, if that.

The New Human Republic has emerged as a power, but Proust is either incapable of holding them together or he has made too many enemies. The Republic's borders are shifting every day. I'm much more worried about the news I received from Jan Mayen last season. Now that Proust has one of the hybrid babies, I fear both for the child and for the future. The ramifications for unity would be unimaginable if Proust's GREs figure out how to reproduce.

The Khayr ad-Din Army has been wildly successful, and they have managed to keep the Gamma MagLev open — so far. I'm not exactly sure how, but Sanz seems to have been able to recruit not only her duelist pupils under her banners, but several local rover gangs as well.

She has also made alliances that even I did not see coming. Reports that Sebastopol's forces and the Desert Wolves have been striking at targets along the Great White Desert borders, in support of KADA actions, have me wondering.

NuCoal has tightened its structure in answer to the strength of the confederations; I think the Badlanders are finally starting to realize that oceans of sand cannot shield them from the greed of the polar peoples. I just hope they can be happy with their isolation for a little while longer. If they can, we might yet see a new league emerge from the chaos of the late Thirties; the first new major political entity on this planet in centuries.

(19 Winter 39) — I've received a surprising memo today from DuBeau-Slovenski. Apparently, the Westphalia cabinet has come to some sort of an accord with her, as she is now the senior Paxton officer. I knew that Paxton maintained several communities and factories outside Peace River proper, but I did not think they could get back on their feet so quickly.

Apparently, we've only seen a stun, not a knock-out. The match is far from over.

>end log<

>open file/ Badlands 1<

Loss of a Loved One

Hospital Monitoring System Recording



◀ Helena Hftashi



Hey there. . . The doctors said that you couldn't hear me, that you were. . . too far away. Too deep within your own mind to notice anything I might say or do. That's something of a switch, don't you think? After all this time that I've been buried deep within my own head, huddled within my own pain. . . I don't really know what to say, 'Lena. I don't even know if you can hear me. Maybe that will make this easier. The not-knowing.

I'm here, Helena. Like you asked me to be, so long ago. Like you needed me to be, before. Before I saw the need in your eyes and got scared. Before I ran. You once accused me of feeling nothing, of having ice in my veins. The truth is, I felt too much. I felt so much... so much that it burned inside. It still burns.

Ever since that first day, when you smiled at me with warmth in your eyes, I could feel the walls melting; I could feel myself yielding, giving way to you, to your eyes and your warmth and your laugh. And it terrified me beyond words, beyond reason, beyond thought. I didn't need you, I couldn't let myself rely on you; I could survive on my own. . .

I didn't realize then, didn't realize until now, when it's too late. I survived on my own. I *lived* with you. You were — you *are* my light, Lena; you're my heart and my light and my love. . .

>alert: cardiac arrest. Crash cart required, room G672

Lena?

>alert. alert. alert. alert. . .

Reason to Live

Observation Report

To: <Nico>

From: Arim Seekar, PI

Miss,

As you requested, I've been keeping tabs on Miss DuBeau-Slovenski, of the late Paxton conglomerate. Not an easy task, let me assure you. She never goes anywhere without her bodyguards, and I was unable to do more than take long range shots of several events.

The most interesting occurred two days ago, in the cemetery outside of town. That's where they buried most of the victims of the Peace River explosion — the ones they managed to dig out of the rubble, anyway. I can only suppose Miss Dubeau-Slovenski was visiting the grave of a relative or a friend. I had taken position on one of the outside walls with my telelens, but the few snapshots I got are pretty uninteresting: grief, crying, what one would expect of a survivor.

Things got interesting when the second man arrived. I don't know how he got past the guard at the gate; perhaps there's another entrance to the place? The woman was startled as well, and I think that for a second she and her goon reached for a weapon. The man made an open-hand gesture and talked slowly, remaining a good distance away. I've included a few pictures and vids; perhaps you can match him to someone in your files. Start with the Blue Crescent — the tattoo on his head is pretty much a giveaway.

They talked for a long time. I don't know what they discussed, but they seemed to reach an agreement after some time. They left together. Perhaps Miss Dubeau-Slovenski has been convinced to join the movement, for emotional support? I know you don't like me to spout theory, so I'll just conclude here. My full weekly surveillance report is attached to this message; you know where to reach me for additional details.

Anyway, I don't think she'd look good bald.



Hunted Man

Private Letter to the B.R.F.



My dear companions,

I write this while hiding in what I believe to be a safehouse for the moment. I write "for the moment" because I'm sure they've found me. . . somehow. There are a lot of people looking for me. Over the cycles I've become somewhat used to watching over my shoulder, but this pressure is nothing like I've ever experienced.

They think we did it! Never mind that the accusations don't stand up to even a simple examination, they believe we brought the bomb to Peace River!

It never crossed their minds that if we were rich and powerful enough to get our hands on such an engine of destruction, we would have had far better ways of dealing with Paxton than blowing up the city.

The others have dispersed, under my direct orders. They'll lie low for a while, and stay as far away from me as possible. We know we're innocent -- we never wanted so many civilians to die.

But you know what the worst thing is? Even though my hands are free of blood, I still feel guilt and remorse. Life couldn't be more unfair.



Traitor Exposed

Personal Recording

>Personal Journal

>Data Entry: 675SP

>encoding -- log in

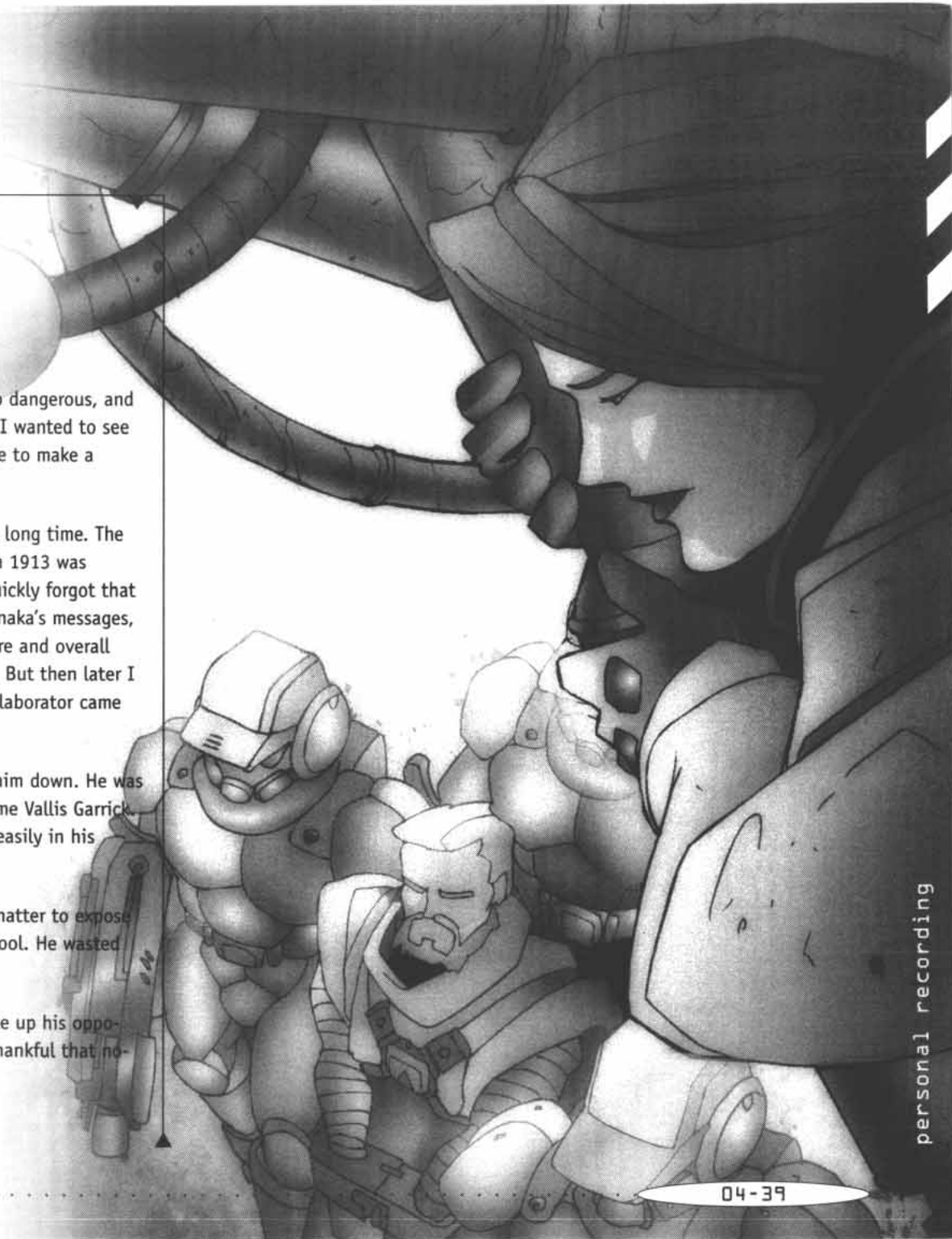
I don't usually get out in the field anymore. It's too dangerous, and I'm no longer as young as I used to be. Still, this was something I wanted to see with my own eyes. The consequences of this were too large for me to make a decision without seeing him myself.

I thought I had forgotten him. Perhaps I had, for a long time. The young intelligence agent that barely escaped with her life back in 1913 was shaken by the experience, but I had to face much worse, and I quickly forgot that heart-pounding night. When I first came across his pictures in Tanaka's messages, the man only looked vaguely familiar. Something about his posture and overall demeanor, maybe. The face certainly didn't mean anything to me. But then later I remembered the name Gar Morrack, and images of the masked collaborator came back to me.

It took me months, but I finally managed to track him down. He was laying low, living the rough life of a Badlands rover under the name Vallis Garrick. He was still the lapdog of the Earthers, though. You could see it easily in his gestures and the company he kept.

Once I had located him, it was a relatively simple matter to expose Garrick. Tanaka doesn't know who sent the message, but he's no fool. He wasted no time in sending people.

Garrick did not resist. Either the man is quick to size up his opponents, or he is a coward, but he did not fight back. I should be thankful that no one was harmed; why do I feel depressed, instead?



The Hunt

Ops Audio Net



CAM 01

Vid-capture 1:

Voice 1: Yes — the source assured us he was here. Team Two, move to Nav Beta. Stay down. We don't want to alarm the target.

Voice 2: I don't see anything.



CAM

Vid-capture 2:

Voice 3: There he is!

Voice 4: He's making a break for the roof!

Voice 2: Team Two, he's heading your way!



CAM

Vid-capture 3:

Voice 5: Affirmative, Team One. Flanking left.

Voice 4: He's an agile little <static>, isn't he?

Voice 1: Cut the chatter!



CAM 02

Vid-capture 4:

Voice 6: Jaxon is armed, repeat, Jaxon is armed. Torrez's down. Watch your backs!

Team Leader: I'm moving Torrez out of the area. We'll rendezvous with you at base.



CAM 01

Vid-capture 5:

Voice 1: He's on the roof of the hostel. We're approaching from the north.

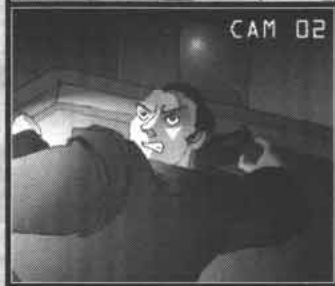
Voice 5: We're holding position. Where's air support?



CAM 01

Vid-capture 6:

Voice 3: He's not going anywhere now. . . moving in to make the arrest. Stay back and hold fire, would'ya?



CAM 02

Vid-capture 7:

Voice 3: Damn! He's not exactly cooperating! <grunt of pain> Can I get a little backup here?

Voice 4: Carnet! Get out of the way!



CAM 02

Vid-capture 8:

Voice 4: I've got him all lined up — just like shooting a duck in a barrel. <gun shot>

Voice 2: Team One Leader to base — Jaxon has been apprehended. Prepare for our immediate arrival.

Jailbreak

Security Report

>**From:** Agent Terrel, Port Oasis
>**To:** Sonia Gerty, NGID
>**Re:** Garrick Escape
CODE: BAJA

We received some most disturbing news today. Seems that the collaborator arrested last week by Tanaka's men — the man going under the name Vallis Garrick — has escaped. A well-executed commando operation massacred the guards at the local holding facilities and sprung him. They were using standard CEF infantry tactics, and I think I saw at least one Morgana-type GREL among their number on the vid-records, though most seemed humans.

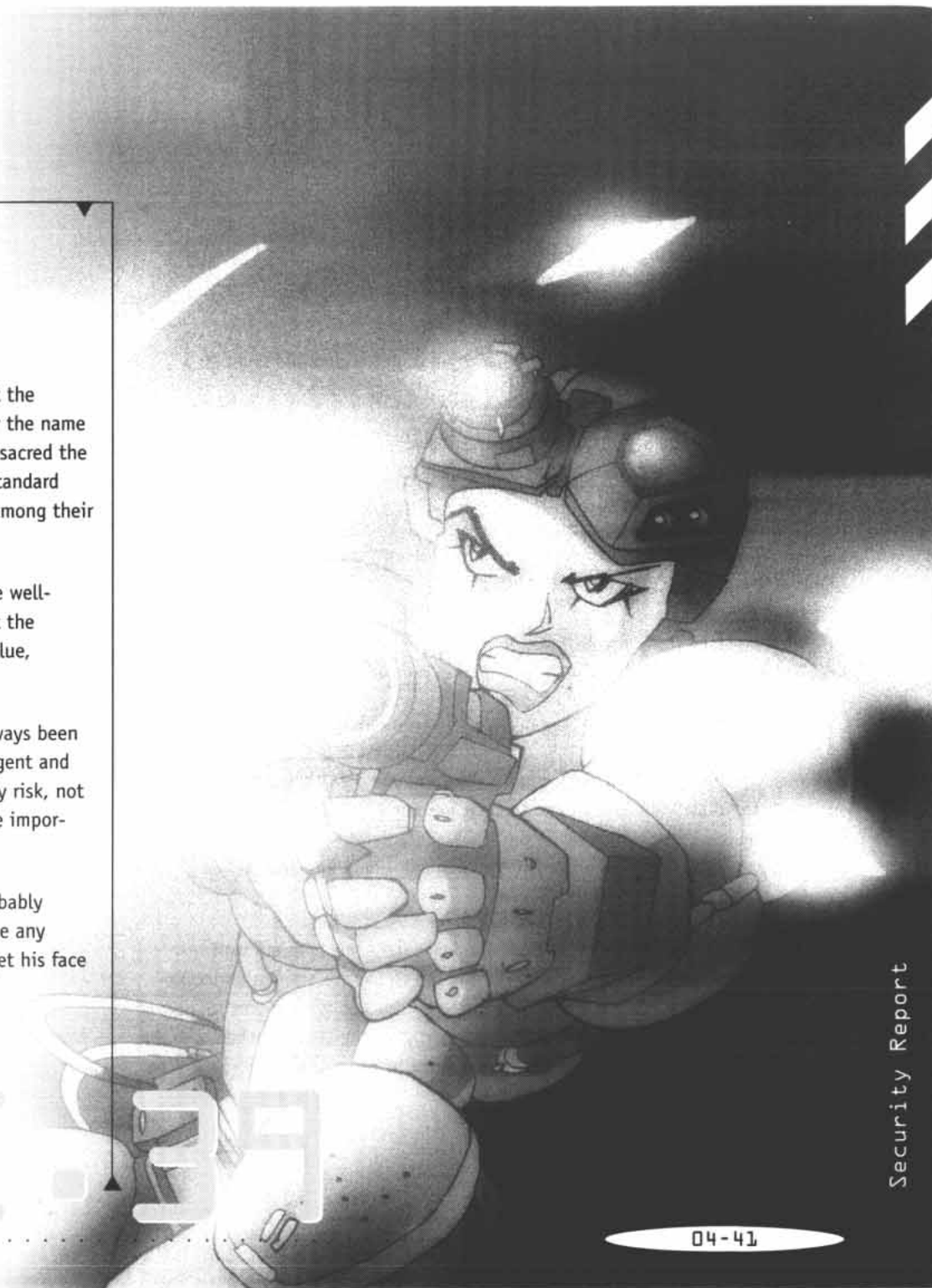
I have no idea where these guys came from, but they were well-informed and very methodical. Tanaka's guys managed to shoot one, but the attackers took the body with them. DNA analysis of the blood gave no clue, though the genetic markers' variance confirmed he came from Earth.

The whole thing has me somewhat baffled. Garrick has always been a minor player, and the biggest thing he did was to support the Earth agent and facilitate his transfer. Frankly, I'd expected them to kill him as a security risk, not free him. Perhaps he called in an old marker or something, or he is more important than we thought.

They will have moved him to a safehouse by now, and probably outside the city entirely. They may try to get him off-planet, if they have any aerospace asset left. That's about the only place he'll be safe once we get his face on the news.

Heck, even sending him to Caprice might not be enough.

54-WI-39



Talons Unsheathed

Operational Briefing

>Location: Timbuktu, Terra Nova

>Speaker: General Achernback

"Welcome all. I trust you had time to get acquainted and talk a little to one another.

"Your team, designated the 1st Black Talon Squadron, has been selected from the elite of the various armies of Terra Nova. It is a truly international force, as befits its critical role in our struggle to maintain our collective freedom. You will need to be careful, however, that old conflicts between the various leagues do not manifest themselves in the field. We should not have to reiterate the need for absolute professionalism.

"The team is now ready to undergo the very thorough training program we have put together for you. Various bases will be at your disposal for training purposes in the following weeks, including a mock urban setup outside Azov and a zero-gee simulator near Smyrna.

"Once the training period is over and you are used to working with one another, you will be called upon to clear out any CEF bases that can be identified by the combined forces of our intelligence services. This will serve the triple purpose of testing you under fire, gaining additional intelligence and clearing out hostile forces on this planet.

"Once we have neutralized the immediate threat to our world — without tipping off the enemy — you will proceed to Caprice and gather intelligence on the New Earth Commonwealth's forces entrenched there. A critical part of this enterprise will be to establish a close rapport with the Liberati rebels who are currently leading a struggle for freedom on Caprice. Without their aid, you will be largely ineffective and the mission will be doomed to failure.

"Make sure to use the missions on Terra Nova to get your team into shape and work out any problems you might have. Once on Caprice, there will be no way for you to deal with problem pilots.

"To improve your chances, an extensive series of new vehicles and field weaponry are being placed at your disposal. Black Talon Werks, a top secret team composed of some of the best minds in the field of weapon design, has gathered at an undisclosed location to craft the tools you will need to explore the Caprice system. These resources include the Fury assault transport that will take you to the planet and a squad of high tech Gears.

"All Black Talon Gears are derived from existing models in order to save time and resources and keep to the original schedule, but they have been extensively modified. Emission control systems and an advanced skin composite replace the ones already in place, drastically reducing the sensor signature of each machine. We have also replaced as many internal systems as possible with devices adapted from or inspired by the Hunter Gear to reduce their maintenance requirements once in the field.

"This newfound modularity will allow you to swap armament to suit the mission at hand, and possibly to use new weapon systems should you come across them. Your training sessions will be the first true field tests of these machines, so be careful not to break anything.

"Or at least, if you do, be sure to take notes for the tech heads."

First Strike

BattleLogs

Location: Southern Republic, approximately 200km outside Timbuktu, Terra Nova

Time of Day: Early Morning

It seems that the GREL nation known as the New Human Republic had active involvement in the destruction of Peace River. This information has been confirmed by a GREL officer named Calesto.

Calesto, who is currently one of Proust's Lieutenants, claims to have vital information on the next operations being planned by Proust and the Earth forces present on the planet. Calesto wishes to defect from the NHR and help prevent more atrocities like Peace River from occurring again. In exchange for his liberation, he has agreed to provide us with the information he possesses.

The plan is to make it appear that Calesto's unit was destroyed by a strike force from Marabou. This will allow Calesto to disappear without arousing Proust's suspicions and making them change their plans. Calesto has provided us with the location and tactical strength of each squad in his unit. Once the Talon units have destroyed all the objectives at each Nav Point set in the briefing, they will rendezvous with Calesto and find out what he knows. Once the pick-up is made, extraction will be provided by one of our Hammer-class shuttles.

If the operation is a complete success and Calesto's unit is destroyed, Proust will hopefully assume that the Marabou troops discovered them. Calesto's defection will thus not arouse suspicion and we can expect Proust will continue with his current plan.

Good luck!



12.SP.40

Survival

Outskirts of Peace River



Tanaka: Ms. Dubeau-Slovenski — thank you for coming.

Dubeau-Slovenski: Lord Protector.

Tanaka: I heard about your recent loss. You have my deepest sympathies.

Dubeau-Slovenski: thank you. She was... a good friend. But you haven't called me out here just to ease my pain, have you?

Tanaka: no, indeed not. Tell me, what do you see around yourself?

Dubeau-Slovenski: I fail to see what you are driving at, My Lord.

Tanaka: Prudent to the last. A good survival trait, miss. But I merely wanted to direct your attention on the situation at hand.

Dubeau-Slovenski: Which is?

Tanaka: This planet is in grave danger. Hostile forces threaten within and without. The destruction of your city-state was only a prelude. We must take drastic action now, if we are to avoid another bloodbath.

Dubeau-Slovenski: And how do you propose we do such a thing?

Tanaka: By now you have heard of the Westphalia Cabinet. We are strong, but we need more support yet. As the senior surviving Paxton officer, we would like you to join our little cabal. We know that the remaining Paxton installations will be brought under your control. Will you help us?

>pause<

Dubeau-Slovenski: I will, with one condition . . .

The Wolf and the Monk

Great White Desert

My dearest Jana,

It was good to be able to talk to you once again. I miss you very much, and these occasional letters and calls are a great source of comfort to me. This long campaign is thankfully almost over, and I will be able to rest soon.

I have now traveled deep into the Great White Desert to see Zaya and Roskiman. I had much trouble to find them, for they were still hiding from Proust. It took a lot of convincing to get a Sand Rider guide to take me to them, and even then I think they kept an eye on me throughout the proceedings. Suspicious lot, they are, but it is a survival trait these days in the region.

Zaya and Roskiman were pleasantly surprised to see me. They were greatly relieved to hear of our victories over the NHR forces, but Roskiman later told me, while Zaya was resting, that he'll never feel safe until Proust is dead. Zaya is almost due: her stomach has swollen to an immense size, and she can barely walk. The tribe's elders say she will give birth very soon. I won't be there, because I wanted to get back to you as soon as possible. I left the following day with some provisions.

On the way back, I have had some most extraordinary encounters. The one that stands out the most in my mind is the meeting I had with Sebastopol. I've always thought that Jan GREs were bad news, and were to be approached with caution at all times. Sebastopol is the exception to the rule. Somehow, he has made peace with his inner drives, and now lives as a monk, wandering with a group of followers.

He told me the sad tale of the attack on Jan Mayen. Surely you have heard of it by now. The people of Jan Mayen had managed to produce two half-breed children, twins. The attack separated them, and Sebastopol managed to escape with Derek. Unfortunately, Proust took Tara with him. I shudder at the thought of what he will do to the poor kid. I wish we could go get her, but I'm pretty sure the GREs will defend her with everything they have. I don't think we'd succeed. Sebastopol was equally concerned with Derek.

Unless I encounter trouble, I will be home in one or two weeks at the most. If you get a chance to speak to him, say hello to Davood for me.

Antoni Moss

Antoni



Liberation

Prince Gable Free Press

(56 Spring 40) — The Western Desert and the surrounding areas are now free of hostile forces. The announcement was jointly made today by commanders of the KADA (hereafter referred to as KADA) and the allied forces of the New Coalition.

The conflict which is now referred to as the White Desert War began in Autumn of TN 1935 when forces of the New Human Republic, sent by their leader Colonel Proust, entered into conflict with the Desert Wolf rovers in the Western Desert. The exact reasons for this are as of yet unknown, but with the completion on 35 Winter 1936 of the Arthurian Korps' Firebase Karat, a base in NuCoal territory designed to support locals against the incursions of the New Human Republic and others, the "White War" began in earnest.

By Spring 1936, KADA was formed from the disenfranchised Duelists and mercenaries of the city of trash. The Army soon dedicated itself to keeping the Gamma maglev open between Khayr ad-Din and the New Coalition. During that time, Colonel Proust continued to convert increasing numbers of Arthurian GRELS over to his New Human Republic, bringing additional troops to the battle.

By mid-Summer, all three maglev lines were cut by Northern and Southern powers alike. The "White War," now raging along the western fringe of the Great White Desert, hit full force as the Desert Wolves, New Human Republic, Arthurian Korps and KADA all became involved in the region, along with intervening polar forces.

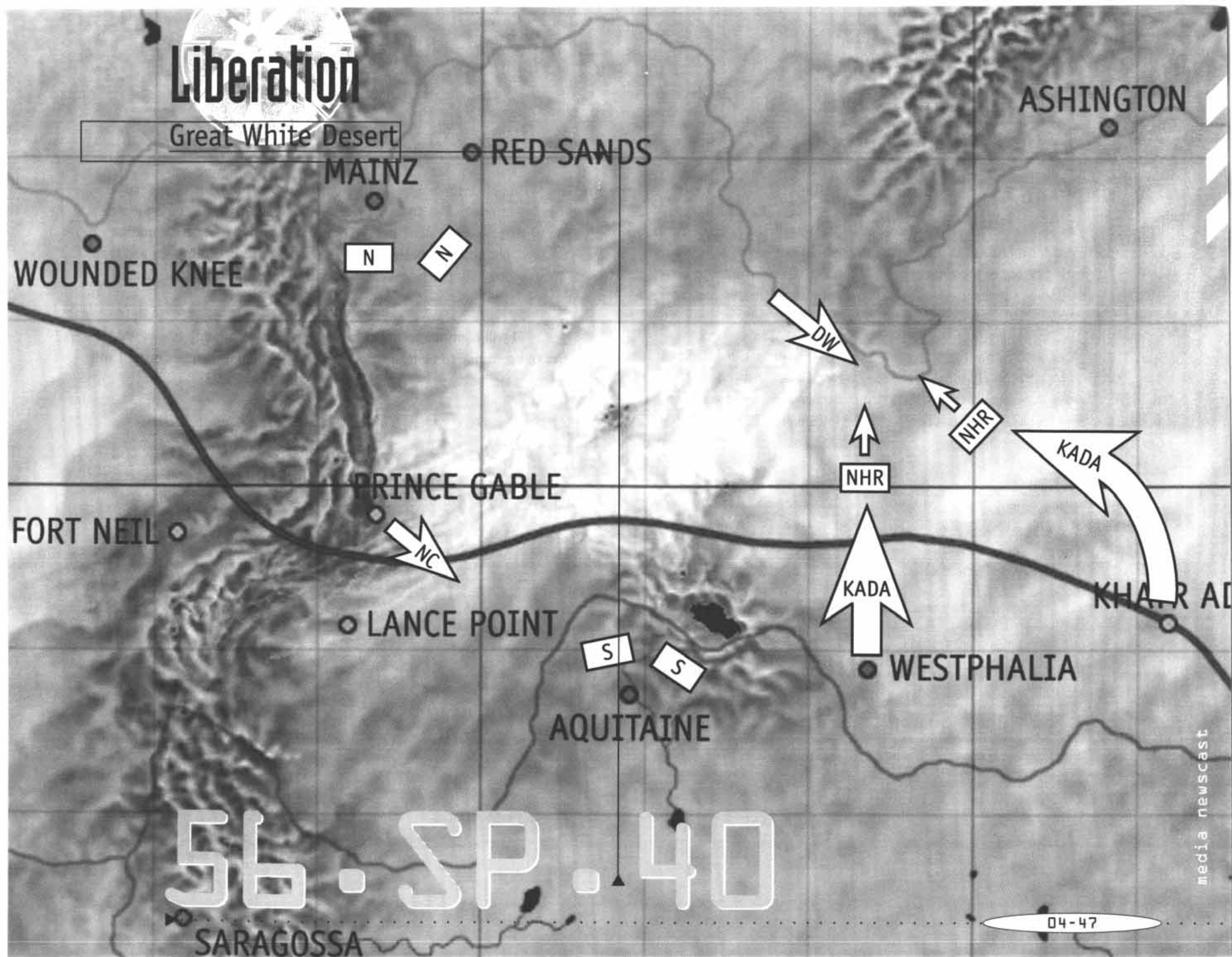
By late Autumn 1937, the combined forces had managed to push back the New Human Republic, forcing them to withdraw from the western edge of the Great White Desert. The war died down somewhat by then, with only occasional skirmishes in scattered locations.

The last big push occurred only last season, when KADA, moving in from the South, managed to liberate the eastern edge of the White Desert. Additional forces, such as NuCoal troops being moved by maglev and Desert Wolf-allied raiding parties coming in from the North, boxed in most of the surviving NHR troops.

As a result of this latest battle, the GRELS' New Human Republic has shrunk dramatically; most of their people have been forced into exile and have scattered to friendly outposts in the Western Desert. They are not defeated completely, but it will take many cycles before they become a threat once more, if they ever do.

The liberated territories have been given a choice, to continue to self-administrate or to join a new protectorate being put in place by KADA in an alliance with NuCoal.

Liberation



Reunion

Event Report: Confidential

Sir,

As you asked, I have been keeping watch on the twins since our last communication. I have felt no need to report since, until last night, nothing terribly interesting or out of the ordinary has happened. They continue to serve with the Khayr ad-Din army, and remain respected within the group. They show no signs of collaboration with any outside force, if that is of any comfort.

Last night, however, may mark a change in their plans. I had followed the pair to the Sand Stone, where they were to meet their compatriots in an evening of drunken debauchery — the usual routine. About an hour after their arrival, I noticed a woman, her face hidden by the folds of a large cloak, come in to the bar. Something seemed familiar about her, but I was unable to place it.

She approached the bartender, and I saw a large amount of money change hands. He nodded her towards the duelists, and the woman sat in the corner and watched the Khayr ad-Din soldiers for some time. Eventually she seemed to gather her nerve, and as she approached the table I recognized the Western Duelist, Cornice Dafnae.

As you know, Cornice and Danghen Jarak were quite close for some time before his defection, and she was apparently quite good friends with his sister as well. They seemed somewhat shocked to see her when she approached them, and I do not believe that they had any previous hints that she would be joining them in exile now — she had previously promised to come and then changed her mind. After a moment of startled silence, Cornice and Danghen fell into each others' arms. The reunion was the stuff of bad trideo dramas, really, all melodrama and silliness.

As of this morning, Cornice Dafnae has left the Guard, and has stated her intentions to live and work with the Khayr ad-Din army for an indefinite span of time. Again, I don't believe that there is any enemy collaboration going on here, nor anything besides a very personal crisis of conscience and the heart. They're a terribly cutesy couple, now that they're back together. Almost sickeningly blissful.

I will continue to watch for as long as is required. I assume that payments will continue to be made to my account. Should difficulties arise, I will contact you immediately.



A Happy Event

Private Letter

My Dear Brother,

A most extraordinary event has occurred today. The young Zaya, daughter of Mira, has given birth to a baby boy, her firstborn. He escaped the Curse, and appears to be in remarkably robust health. She is also well, albeit exhausted. The child is large, and she is quite small. The last month of her carriage was difficult, as was the birthing.

As I said, the baby is strong and in good health. He looked none the worse for his difficult birth, and has already become the darling of the clan. If he survives his first year, he should become a tall and strong man. We will teach him well, and when the time comes for his adulthood rites, I suspect he will surely be destined to accomplish great things.

While this is remarkable in itself, what is even more amazing to us is the identity of the father. Zaya claims, and there is no reason to deny, that the father of her child is the gene-soldier we accepted in our midst as her mate, many moons ago. The child bears some of his features as well, proving the truth of her words. He told us he could not sire a child, but he has.

Could there be some strange influences at work? Pray write and tell me if you have heard of anything of this nature before.





Fourth Wave: Elsewhere

From the Journals of Nicosia Renault

(10 Autumn 1941) — Isolationism never seems to be a good policy; one has to be aware of his surroundings at all time. I wish we had been more careful, had set up watchers and stayed on guard rather than hiding our heads in the sand after the War of the Alliance.

In fact, we should have been more careful even before that. Who knows what bloodshed might have been avoided if a defense fleet had been waiting at the door of our solar system? Better not to dwell on it, though; the past cannot be changed.

In retrospect, I think it was foolish on our part to assume that a government aggressive enough to attempt a planetary invasion — *planetary!* — would stop after the first setback. But we had suffered so much, and so many people had given their lives. . . Well, it just seemed like an all-encompassing victory to us. Perhaps, for all our talents at intrigue and deception, we've found our superiors?

Strange how many events are linked to space recently, though. I've been following Lang's efforts to place as many of her people aboard the Terranovan ships as possible, and I'm grateful for her initiative. I still remember Baja, and the Interpolar War would have been so much worse if the various governments had started to order artillery strikes on targets across the globe. At least we had some cooler heads up there to prevent this.

(12 Autumn 1941) — I've had a chance to talk briefly with the Caprician woman, Del Pulciano, before she left with the rest of the Black Talons for the Caprice mission. Hers was a tragic tale, really. It seems that collaboration brought almost as much suffering to her world as resistance did to us. At least our way seems to have been better: we're now free of the Earthers' tyranny, though we're not out of the woods yet.

I've managed to convince the Westphalia Cabinet to give me access to the transcripts of the Talon mission. Or perhaps they just knew that I would get my hands on them sooner or later, and decided to cut to the chase. I'm not entirely convinced the Talons will be successful, but at least it's a step in the right direction. Their early reports surely hinted that much. The various information they managed to recover will be incorporated with the rest of my datafiles — perhaps I can use the new perspective to help me predict the next moves of the New Earth Commonwealth and whatever allies they may have found out there in the Gate Web.

Like it or not, a new element has entered the equation: Caprice, the Gate World. It will be interesting to see whether we have truly found new allies or just a new competitor.

>end log<

>open file/ Caprice 1<

12-AU-41

Fragment

Recovered Intelligence

>To: Milani DuBeau-Slovenski, Acting CEO, Paxton Corp.

>From: Lieutenant Gerald Chomer

>Re: Investigation Report

TAG: MOST SECRET

Miss,

The following document was found by one of our patrols operating near the Northeastern edge of the Great White Desert. They were out testing some of the Elite vehicles, and they met and defeated what is assumed to be a NHR or Arthurian patrol — proper identification is difficult, and the only thing we know for sure is that some of the bodies are GRELS.

The commander, or at least an important character, was caught trying to escape. Some of our new machines are fast! The document I've joined to this report was recovered from the wreckage of his command(?) vehicle. I apologise for the poor quality of the reproduction, but our technicians had a lot of work to do to restore it to a legible state — the original was apparently burned quite thoroughly by a self-destruct device, and only the quick thinking of Lieutenant Kage prevented us from moving the document folder and irreparably scrambling the fragile carbon sheet.

I think it's pretty obvious the general message is referring to us, but some of the information is a little more cryptic. A copy has been turned over to the Intel boys to see if they can make sense of it all.

Due to the nature of the Elite program and the sensitive nature of the information, we have kept the whole incident under tight secrecy. Please advise on further handling.

>encrypt 679jh678<

From: Beachhead H

To: Command Node 3

Re: PR

209 was implanted as planned. Recovery was difficult, but alternate channels were found for later ops.

Operation was successful. Amy did her job. The Tiger is declawed.

Gar did well. He has proven adept at providing support. Recommend evaluation for further ops.

We have no further news of 209. Assume cancelation and follow standard post-ops rules.

Eagle Eye

Monitoring Post, RSS *Montaigne*

Officer: I got here as soon as I could. What have you got?

Technician 1: We have managed to pinpoint a rough location for the suspected base. Darn hard to see, regardless of wavelength.

Tech 2: We picked up a patrol by pure chance. These guys are really good at covering their tracks.

Officer: What do you think it is?

Tech 1: The main CEF base in the Helios system, what else?

Tech 2: You're kidding . . .

Tech 1: No. It's the only explanation coherent with all the data we have so far.

Officer: The captain's gonna have a fit. How come we missed that for ten cycles?

Tech 1: Maybe it wasn't there then. They could have laid low for a couple of seasons, moving from safehouse to safehouse. Then their friends on the other side of the Gate start sending them gifts, using the little shuttles like the one the Caprician woman came in with. They could have built it slowly, right under our nose.

Tech 2: Damn sneaky.

Officer: Indeed. Guess they figured an underhanded approach would be more efficient than a brute force assault.



Into the Dragon's Mouth

Pioneer, United Mercantile Federation

>Black Talon briefing

>Speaker: General Gervase Achernback

"We've had a good run with the training sessions and first few missions, but don't let that lull you into a false sense of security. You've been up against mostly unprepared forces until now, and things will be much different once we enter Caprice's space — an enemy-held system. Some people are not fully integrated yet, at least not to my standards —

>noise<

"Don't smirk, Sobek, this is a serious matter. I expect you to get past your differences of opinion and start to work as a real team — or else.

"This being said, on to the matter at hand. We've got a really tough assignment ahead; we'll be taking out an actual CEF base . . .

>noise, indistinct questions and exclamations<

"Enough! Quiet down, people. There'll be time for questions later, Lieutenant Vesping. Yes, there are CEF installations remaining on the planet. The CEF troops know our equipment, and they've got a lot of wilderness to hide in, so don't look so surprised. We pushed them back, we didn't eliminate them. The whole matter has been kept extremely quiet to avoid panic in the civilian population, so watch who you speak to about this.

"The base is located in the arctic region, far from most settlements. In fact, it's so isolated we learned of its existence only a short time ago, thanks to the efforts of a Republican monitoring ship. It will be up to us to go and clean it out.

"Most of the combat vehicles you'll encounter will probably be crewed by Minerva-class GREs. Do not let their reputation scare you — their piloting and gunnery are fast and precise, but their tactics tend to lack imagination. Use it against them.

"We know the forces stationed there are in possession of captured Gears. If they have reprogrammed their GREs, expect these to be fielded against you as well. Make sure your IFF is functional — I don't want any friendly fire casualties."



Dragon Slayer

Field Report

>**From:** General Achernsback, Black Talon Command
>**To:** Westphalia Cabinet
>**Re:** Sortie Report

Norlight intelligence has long suspected the presence of a covert installation — belonging to the New Earth Commonwealth — in the mountains of the North. Recent satellite scans of the area have detected increased localized levels of radiation. It was presumed that an anti-matter device like the one that destroyed Peace River was being housed in the area.

The forces we suspected to be in control of this base were remnants of the Colonial Expeditionary Forces from Earth left over from the War of the Alliance. As such, they fielded outdated hovertanks as well as stationary defenses left from the war or salvaged from Badlands operations.

Thanks to the information we gained in our first few operations, we set our team down in a uninhabited area of Terra Nova's arctic. We intercepted a returning patrol and covertly tracked it back to the hidden CEF base. Once we located the installation, we managed to capture the anti-matter device and destroy the compound. Their defenses were surprisingly strong, but surprise and a swift strike got us the advantage.

The entire CEF base was captured mostly intact, despite an unexpected level of resistance by the troops there. We found evidence of regular resupply runs, and I suggest we investigate the departments responsible for keeping an eye on the skies. There's been some laziness, incompetence or treachery somewhere.

We recovered quite a bit of intelligence data, most of it through luck. Seems the self-destruct virus they enabled when the base was overrun crashed the main computer before it could wipe out all the files. The core has been sent to Marathon under heavy guard for further analysis.



40

The Gauntlet

UMFGS Laban Emuro, Terra Nova Orbit

Del Pulciano: The Capricians can help you turn the tables on the CEF, you know. We've got heaps of resources and manpower, and we want to get rid of the Earth Forces as much as you do.

Cristobal: I do not doubt that, miss. But mounting a campaign across a planet is already difficult enough; waging a conflict across interstellar space will be almost impossible. The Earthers proved it themselves.

Del Pulciano: So you don't mount a frontal assault! We can provide lists of contacts, basic knowledge, anything we'd need to wage a partisan war. If you can support us, we can make it too costly for them to stay.

Cristobal: It could work, yes. But it would take immense amounts of planning. What kind of obstacles can we expect to face?

Del Pulciano: Several, unfortunately. But we have considered our options before I was sent here, and we think we can work around most of the difficulties.

Cristobal: The first problem is, obviously, how to get there. They'll be watching the main Gates.

Del Pulciano: So we don't use them! I have a schedule of their supply runs. We can insert tiny one-man ships like mine without their knowledge, if we time it right.

Cristobal: And how will the agents reach the planet?

Del Pulciano: There are Waystations outside a Gate's gravity field. These were initially built to regulate the flow of traffic, but with the arrival of the CEF they've been transformed into fortresses and checkpoints. They are, however, still visited by mining ships.

Cristobal: Miners?

Del Pulciano: Yes. The Loki System is framed by two asteroid belt, the Blessed and the Lesser Belts. They're made up largely of frozen methane, ammonia and water asteroids, and both belts serve as Caprice's lifeline — that's where we get most of our volatiles. Harvesting frozen asteroids for water is a full-time pursuit for the Caprician fleet, and a ship doing a detour to pick up something isn't likely to be noticed.

The pick-up solution also gets us around another potential problem: Arclight. Caprice is a young system, and there's a lot of junk floating about out there; plus, the planet's atmosphere isn't thick enough to burn away larger meteors. To worsen matters, continued activation of Tannhauser discontinuities near the Blessed Asteroid belts affects the precarious orbit of several asteroids. The Arclight weapon platforms handle any and all inbound meteorites that are too large to burn up in the atmosphere. When the CEF invaded Caprice, however, they seized the platforms as a potential military threat. Smuggling the agents aboard one of the ice ships is the only way to get past, unless we can find a good set of transponder codes.



Into the Unknown

Ops Net Recording

>to: Ops Center

>from: Launch Bay

>status report log

We're almost ready down here. He's been put into stasis and the medic has cleared him for flight. My team is doing the final hookups to the life support systems.

What? Yes, we'll be on schedule. Yes, I know we have a deadline to meet. You can't rush these things. Not much value in getting him over there if he doesn't survive the trip, no? Yes. . . yes, I understand. Give me a few more minutes.

The tech crew is giving me the thumbs-up. It's looking good.

>update<

He's sealed in now. We've got green across the board. I'll have someone down there in the bay until the very last minute to make sure there's no damage to the hull coating. Err, you're sure that the Gate won't irradiate us all?

>update<

Okay, here we go!

>update<

The vehicle has cleared the bay, I repeat, the vehicle has cleared the bay. Stand by to initiate ullage thrust on my mark. . . Mark. Booster firing in three, two, one. . . booster ignition confirmed. He's going in, straight down the middle.

There's a flare. . . I think he's reaching the threshold. Jack, get me confirmation of that, would you.

>update<

He should be there by now. Have NavComm check for the laser pulse. If he made it, they'll know well before us.

Good luck, buddy. You'll need it.

>end record<



recording

A Friend in a Faraway Place

Intelligence Report, Caprice

(51 Winter 1940) — This is my first report, mainly to confirm my safe arrival in system; I've targeted my laser at the Gate; I just hope we got the timing right, or you'll never get this message. The contact ship was there as planned, and I was picked up without any problems. The ice miner has continued its operations, and pauses will be more difficult to organize the closer we get to Caprice — the CEF — itself.

I'll give you a brief overview of the Caprice system, so we can compare it with the data already available.

Caprice is known as the Gateworld because its system contains Tannhauser Gates that lead, directly or indirectly, to all other colony worlds and to Earth itself. It was the first target of the CEF and is still held by the invaders to this day. Caprice will surely be the key to any lasting victory against Earth.

The planet itself is on a highly elliptical orbit around its sun, Loki, and is largely devoid of native life. Most of the planet is barren rock, with only a thin atmosphere. These wastelands are rich in mineral deposits, however, and dotted with mining camps and other industrial sites. The planet's major feature is the massive Cat's Eye Trench, a huge canyon that cuts the globe like a gaping wound. Here the atmosphere is thick enough to support human life. The trench has become a massive urban and industrial sprawl known as the city of Gommorrah. Anything and everything is available here — for a price.

The mega-city is home to the many huge corporations that rule Caprice. It was these mercantile houses that betrayed their world and allied with the CEF when it launched its attack decades ago. Since then, Caprice has become a staging ground and industrial resource center for the invaders, allowing them to send forces to the other colony worlds with ease. Seduced by the possibility of endless profit, the corporate bosses have sold off their future and their world.

My Liberati contact was, thankfully, in place. For centuries, groups of ragtag rebels have fought off the corporate order from hiding places on the barren surface. Since the invasion, they have become more like global freedom

fighters, leading the struggle to free their world from the shackles of Earth. They strike from hidden bases in attempts to weaken the CEF's hold on Caprice, but do not yet have the strength to take back their home. The Liberati will welcome any and all support from Terra Nova, but be forewarned: they will not accept even the slightest hint that they are being viewed as servants or underlings. Allies are welcome; new overlords are not.

The CEF also has several installations across the Loki system. These installations are very secret and I have not been able to gather, as of yet, any real intelligence on them. We believe, however, they house shipyards or the growing Gate-fleet. More data will be coming with my next report.

(8 Spring 1941) — This may be my last report, so I've got to make it count. I'm aiming this comm laser at the Gate; I hope the timing's right and that you'll get it, because it's crucial information.

I'm aboard one of the Liberati iceships. We're boosting outsystem at maximum acceleration and being pursued by CEF ships. I'm parallel-uploading the blueprints I've stolen on one of the NEC shipbuilding facilities. I'm not sure, but if the training session were correct these are files regarding 3rd generation Gate technology.

>pause - streaming data<

I just spoke to the pilot; unless we're very lucky, we won't outrun the seeker missiles following us; we may well run out of fuel before

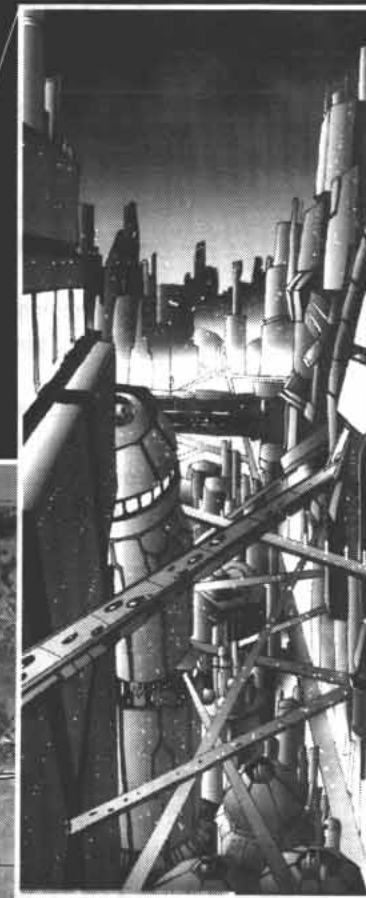
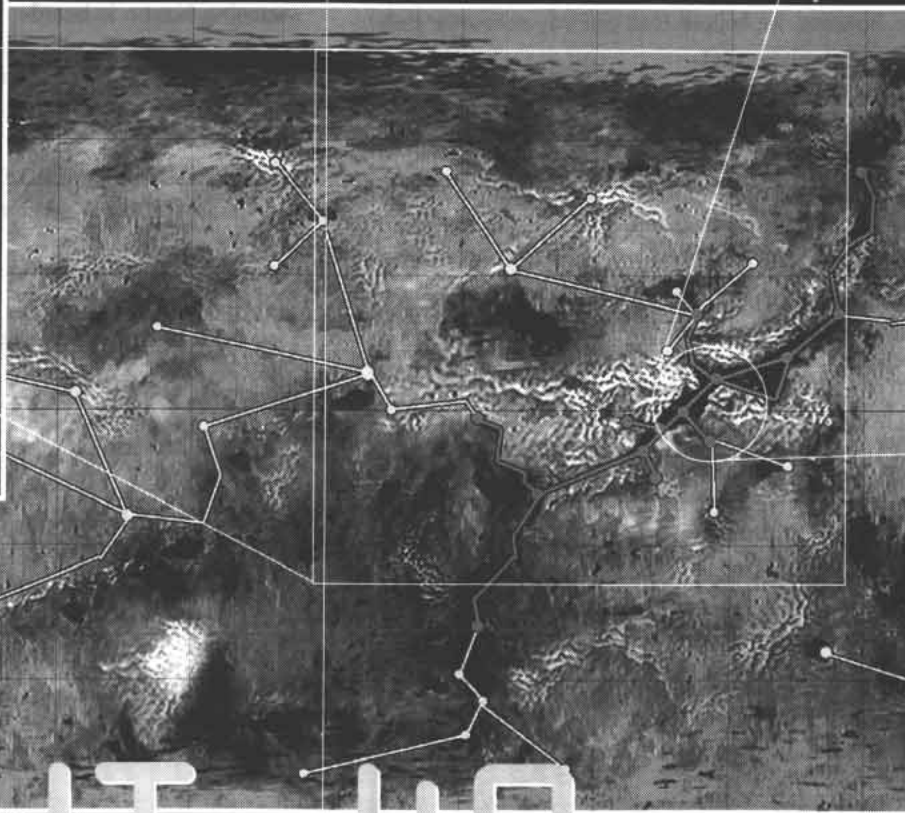
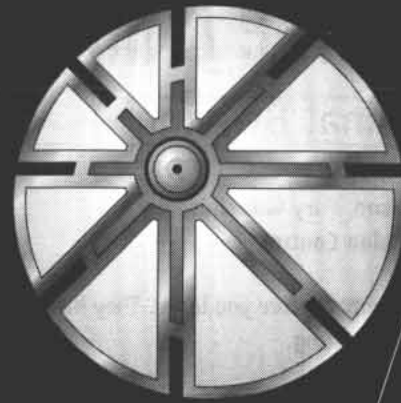
>static

>signal loss

>file saved

Caprice, the Gate World

Map of Caprice and Gommorah



51-WI-40

intelligence report

05-59

Leap into the Unknown

Black Talon Final Briefing

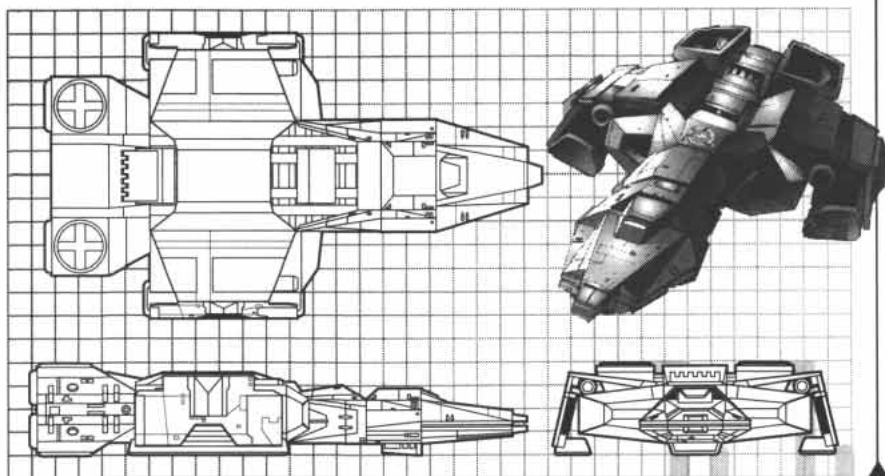
>To: Black Talon Command, Fury Gateshuttle

>From: Black Talon Mission Control

I am sending some final notes before you leave. They have been covered in the briefing, but they bear repeating.

CEF forces have used a large variety of spacecraft in attacking our world, and they retreated with many of their vessels still intact. Given the highly focused nature of Black Talon, however, we believe that you may encounter only certain types of vehicles during your mission set.

The CEF field a large number of warships and fighters, and we expect that they still have a sizable fleet stationed in the Caprice system. According to our historical files, the planet is also ringed with orbital defense platforms to protect it against the system's frequent asteroid storms. It is unlikely you will encounter any of the above during your trip in-system — the Fury has extensive stealth capabilities to prevent just that — but if you do, run and hide. You are not, I repeat not, equipped to face them down, and trying to do so will only bring a swift end to the mission.



05-60

Audio Logs, Bridge, UMFGS *Laban Emuro*

Captain: if the data is correct, they should be sending something through any second now.

Del Pulciano (over radio): I assure you, Captain, the information is correct. Many good men and women died to get it here.

Captain: I hope they were right — we have a lot riding on this.

>warning klaxon is heard<

Technician: I've got something here. . . an increase in neutrino flux, 30%. . . 40%. . . it keeps rising, sir.

Di Smit: It's them — it has to be!. Look at those waveforms. . . they're unmistakable. They're sending something through.

Captain: Fury, get ready. The show's about to begin.

Fury Pilot (over radio): Roger that. Black Talons, hot and ready.

Technician 2: Gatedrive charged and hot, sir. Just give the word.

>bright flash<

Di Smit: here it comes. >key clicks< Gate override process launched!

Technician: look at that thing . . .

Captain: Fury, you're cleared. May the Gentle Spirit be with you!

Arrival

Black Talon Field Report

>date: 15•SP•41

>Location: Caprice system

We have just entered Caprician space through the Tannhauser Gate. We need to disable the Gate station on this side so that NEC forces on Caprice will not be alerted to our presence. We've begun to destroy the communications modules around the antenna array. We probably only have a few minutes before they send a distress signal, so time is of the essence. Our intel shows that several turrets guard the station along with a small garrison of zero-g infantry.

Update:

The Gate station was disabled before a distress signal could be transmitted. We released a number of canisters of TZ gas inside the installation before departing. All remaining personnel were neutralized, and we should be able to use the station for our return trip. Helene Del Pulciano has provided us with civilian transport codes to help us clear the Caprician defense net. Let's hope the codes are valid — we've heard they've got heavy defensive installations in orbit.

Update:

We are now heading toward Caprice, where we will attempt to rendezvous with the Liberati rebels. According to Pulciano, they are willing to help us in our mission to gather data and assess the truth of the threat posed by the New Earth Commonwealth.

>date: 37•SP•41

>Location: arctic region, Caprice

The Fury has set down near Bastille Alpha, the prison where the Liberati leader, Petrus, is being held. As the Liberati are preparing for their assault, we will recon the prison and determine the best method of attack. The Liberati have located an observation point near the boundary of the compound

where we can make a detailed examination of the prison. A Liberati Scout is coming to escort us to the overlook position where we will perform a full reconnaissance of the prison's major structures and threats.

Update:

We are ready to assault the prison compound. The Liberati are providing ground support and have promised to bring in a transport vehicle to remove the prisoners once the area is clear. They also have two striders packing artillery missiles — Prophet knows where they got them! They will blow the prison gates once we are in position.

Update:

We have liberated Petrus, and although he is suspicious of our motives, he seems to be grateful for our intervention. The Liberati have a great deal of knowledge of NEC activities on Caprice, and have agreed to work with us, at least for now. Petrus knows of several supposedly secret NEC installations where we could gather valuable intelligence. They are well guarded, and the Liberati do not have the firepower to tackle them alone. That's where we come in. We are proceeding to a military staging area in Caprice's volcanic region. Petrus will brief us when we arrive.

Carly Pinter, one of the prisoners liberated during the Bastille Alpha ops, has offered to join the Black Talons. By all accounts she is a top notch walker pilot, and it seems that she has become disenchanted with the murderous ways of Earth's government. Although some of the team don't like this idea (see attached official notes), we need all the qualified pilots we can for this mission. We will welcome her to the team but we'll keep a close eye on her.

Secrets

Black Talon Field Report

Update:

In the northern volcanic regions of Caprice lies the Nabakov Range, a massive expanse of dormant volcanoes. An NEC military staging area is near one of these, Mt. Boniface. Petrus claims that the installation contains detailed data on NEC troop deployment throughout Caprice. With the assistance of the Liberati we will raid the compound. Our squad will make a diversionary assault while the Liberati sneak in and steal the data.

Update:

We got a little more than we bargained for in the attack. While we were able to penetrate the Mt. Boniface installation, a contingent of NEC forces escaped with the data we were hoping to secure. To make matters worse, much of Petrus' forces were killed. It seems that Petrus' estimates of NEC troop strength are questionable, at best. It's unclear if the rebel leader is courageous or just suicidal.

Update:

Liberati scouts have discovered an NEC army encampment southwest of our location. It's likely that the APC carrying the data is heading towards this battleground. If they make it there, it will be extremely difficult to acquire the data, and all of our efforts to this point will have been in vain.

Update:

The APC was disabled, and we have obtained the necessary data. We are heading back to the Fury to study it and set out our next plan of action.

Update:

We've run the data we obtained through the decoding systems on the Fury, and it looks like we've got the locations and functions of most of the NEC military sites on Caprice. There's also some heavily encrypted information about an

"Operation Brimstone." We'll let the onboard computers chew on the encoding format, but it may need the big machines back home to crack the code. In the meantime, we've turned up the location of a covert research installation nearby. We'll head there in the Fury while we continue to crunch the data. Let's hope this coded fastline message gets back to you.

The data we obtained tells of an NEC biogenetics facility somewhere in the volcanic wastelands around Mount Giovanni. Apparently the NEC is researching and trying to develop a new generation of genetically engineered super-soldiers to supplant the GRELS, and the Mt. Giovanni installation is critical to their research.

Our intelligence doesn't provide the exact location of the research facility, but the Liberati have observed long range patrols in this region on a regular basis. We have located one of these patrols bivouacked for the night. There are several unarmed APCs in the encampment, and if we can target the vehicles, we can lock them in the Fury's long-range tracking system. Then we attack the camp, eliminate all combat forces, but allow the support vehicles to escape. Once they have returned to the research facility, we can track them in the Fury and pinpoint the installation's coordinates.

Update:

The NEC forces have abandoned their position, and we are currently plotting the route of the remaining patrol vehicles. Our tracking has a functional range of over 50 kilometers. It's unlikely that the NEC would employ patrol radii larger than this, but due to our lack of familiarity with the enemy's combat tactics, we should make no assumptions. We'll follow the fleeing patrol in the Fury.

Gommorra

Black Talon Field Report

>date: 50•SP•41

>Location: Gommorrah, Caprice

We have tracked the NEC patrol to the research facility. The Liberati have reconnoitered the site, and the outlook is not promising. The installation is set into the crater of an active volcano(!), and the compound is heavily defended with turrets and laser fences. The entire site is apparently powered by a geo-thermal power station, which is drawing lava from the crater.

The Liberati claim that their engineers can move in and shut down the station if we can seize the area and hold it. Once the power to the NEC fixed defenses is cut, we can move in and blow the installation with artillery support.

Update:

The research complex was completely devastated. Our work here should set back the NEC's war effort considerably. Petrus has informed us that the Liberati will rig the entire crater with explosive devices. When the NEC sends a salvage team to the site, they should be in for a surprise.

Two Liberati pilots, Tharne Nulf and Robie Bray, have volunteered to join us. Petrus says they're his best. They obviously don't have much experience with Gears, but they can learn, and we're in no position to turn down help.

Update:

We have had another breakthrough in decoding the NEC data packs. The primary site for development of NEC martial technology is in the city of Gommorrah, in an area called the Paladin Lots. This is apparently where they are producing their own version of our Heavy Gear, the 'Frame' (see attached data files). Seems the lessons of the War of the Alliance weren't lost on them. We must find a way into the Paladin Lots, in order to gather as much information about these new Frames as possible.

Petrus has informed us of a network of mining tunnels that run under the city of Gommorrah. The Liberati believe the area has not been actively mined for some time, but they cannot confirm this information. Petrus has assigned us a guide to take us to the mining zone, but the Liberati are not willing to enter the mines with us. The Liberati also tell us that the heavy mineral deposits in the mines will wreak havoc with our sensors. If we draw attention to ourselves, we will have no escape route.

Update:

We've found a lift that will take us into the heart of Gommorrah. The Liberati have moved in and set up a temporary repair/rearm facility that will enable us to service our Gears. While Gommorrah is an incredibly dense city, certain areas have been designated off-limits for surface building. Paladin Lots is one such place. The facility is built in the interior of a huge mesa. Once inside, we'll gather any intelligence we can from the Frame construction facility, and get out as fast as possible.

Update:

We somehow survived an excursion into the heart of the enemy-held territory. The data we obtained should prove invaluable. However, our most immediate concern is how to get back to the Fury and get off of Caprice with the information intact! Luckily, a hidden Liberati resistance cell was close enough to provide an adequate safehouse to repair and rearm.

The monorail we boarded to flee Gommorrah has taken us into a series of hydroponic agricultural domes. It's likely that the NEC is aware of our presence by now, so we should expect to meet resistance. When we find a way out of the domes, we'll contact the Fury and make our way off Caprice and back to Terra Nova.

Vega Space Port

Black Talon Field Report

>date: 29•SU•41

>Location: Gommorrah, Caprice<

We've escaped the Hydroponic Dome complex, but while we were in Gommorrah, the Fury was discovered and destroyed. Our team survived, but we'll have to find another way off the planet. Don't count us out just yet.

Update:

We've lost the Fury, so we'll have to find another way to get off Caprice. According to our intelligence, Vega Spaceport is nearby. The spaceport seems like our best bet, but it offers some pretty long odds. The NEC controls the spaceport, and it is sure to be crawling with hostile units, all of them looking for us. We'll try to find a low profile way in, if possible.

Update:

We managed to enter the spaceport without raising too much of a ruckus. The NEC doesn't seem to know we're here, yet. We'll make our way to the airfield and try to find a ship capable of transporting the squad off-planet.

Update:

Our operation on Caprice was a success. We have obtained valuable intelligence on NEC troop strength and deployment, locations of their military bases, and the state of their technology. We also managed to cripple several of their sites and, most surprisingly, we got off the planet alive.

Unfortunately, the ship we commandeered isn't Gateworthy, so we still have no way to get back to Terra Nova. We will proceed toward the asteroid mining fields. There is a star port there where we should be able to find a Gate-capable ship or, failing that, to hide until a rescue effort can be mounted.

Update:

After days of searching the asteroid fields, we have located the NEC's shipyards. As far as we can tell, this is the primary repair facility for Gateships in Caprician space. Several Gateships are moored here, and we should be able to locate one that will take us back to Terra Nova.

Update:

Success! The Gateshuttle we hijacked appears to be fully operational, and we've set course for the Gate. We should assume that the NEC has plans for a Gatefleet of an incredible magnitude, and our work has only crippled them temporarily. They will rebuild, and it won't be long before they are prepared for an assault on Terra Nova. The information we've gathered should help to prepare a defense for the imminent storm. Luckily this won't be our problem — our job is complete.

Brimstone

Black Talon Field Report

>heavy static<

. . . G . . . at . . . e . . . B . . . Talon One her . . . >static< Priority Cod . . .
. >static< . . . One . . .

. . . This could well be our last transmission . . . >static< . . . is
crucial that you act on it!

>filter processing . . . processing . . . successful<

. . . In transit to the Gate, our intelligence officer has finally
cracked the NEC's most protected file. It turns out Operation Brimstone is a
gigantic massdriver that will be used to initiate a new invasion of Terra Nova.

Apparently, this device is capable of hurling asteroids at incredible
rates of speed to precise targets. The bad part is that it's been coupled with a
Gatedrive, so it can in effect bombard the planet with impunity from the Caprice
system!

>static<

If we can't find a way to disable the space station, the devastation
it will unleash on Terra Nova will be unimaginable, with no possible way for us to
retaliate. Cursory scans of the vessel indicate that it is fully manned and opera-
tional. We are expecting heavy resistance.

In the first year of command school they teach you never to enter a
combat environment you don't fully understand. We're about to break the hell out
of that rule! We've seized a cargo airlock, and are working to open the hatch.
We're not sure what we're going to be able to do once inside . . .

>static<

. . . We found a tactical nuke aboard the liberated Gateship —
luckily for us the NEC uses them to mine asteroids for ice. >static< It would take a
dozens of them to bring down a station this size, but we've just got the one, so
we'll have to be a bit clever. We're cutting into the station's maintenance systems,
so you'll get more information as we com . . . up . . . >static< . . . ith it. >static<

>heavy static<

>attempting to compensate<

. . .

/signal loss

/signal loss

/signal loss

37.SU.41

05-65

Grim Future

Data Transmission

>**To:** Westphalia Cabinet, Terra Nova

>**From:** UMFGS *Laban Emuro*, Deep Space

>**From:** First Officer Alan B. Carter

>**Re:** Black Talon mission — report addendum

We've been keeping station for the past few weeks around the Gate, just like the mission plan called for. There's tension in the air over here: despite the best efforts of the bridge crew, news of the 1st Black Talon's last few ominous messages are making the rounds — hard to keep a secret aboard a ship — and all hands are pretty worried about them, I think.

The Talon mission itself is not the only source of headaches, either. The Gatedrive is showing signs of strain from its near continuous operation, though our tech teams are working around the clock to nurse it along. There's only so much we can do with this old equipment — the *Emuro's* drive is nearly five hundreds cycles old, after all. Yesterday I suggested we shut it down for a few hours, to give it a chance to cool down, but the captain wanted to make sure the Talons had a way of contacting us at all times. Reluctantly, I had to agree with him, but even the present few centimeters opening of the Gate might cause an overload of the drive if we keep it up too long. I shudder to think what will happen should the Talons survive and send us the signal to open it up fully again. It would be ironic to survive their dangerous mission, only to be killed by the explosion of their transfer ship, wouldn't it?

We've lost two men already to a coolant pipe bursting in sector G5, near the drive core. An helium valve got stuck and shattered (the full accident report has been sent on a separate channel). Shipmate Mayita was killed instantly by the explosion, and Ensign Stone died of his cryoburns a short while afterward. I fear they are not the only ones to have given their lives for the success of this operation.

According to NavComm, we've just beamed over the last transmission we've received from the 1st Black Talon. Of course, by the time you read it, it will have taken a few hours to reach you. We're keeping ready to open the Gate, just in case they do make it through, but the information they've been reporting leads us to expect the worst. The last laser pulse transmission told us they're on some kind of heavily guarded CEF or NEC installation.

Given what we now know about the CEF, and the precarious position of our advance team, I can suggest three possible outcomes:

1) The Talons make it through, having caused enough damage to stall their pursuers and force the CEF into clean-up mode for a few seasons. This would be the best outcome, but is also the least likely.

2) As above, but the Talons do not make it. We'll have lost some exceptional people, but their deaths will not have been in vain.

3) The pursuing CEF forces transfer in-system in reaction to the Black Talon operation. I doubt they would be able to start an invasion immediately, but they can certainly send enough ships to destroy the *Emuro* and any other vessel in the vicinity.

We've ordered three squadrons of destroyers and cruisers to join us, but they won't be here for several hours, days for some of them. We can't do anything about the laws of physics. Get any remaining drone online, and send them our way. I also suggest you put all the planetary defense forces on an alert status, just in case.

I doubt that any CEF force will try to come through after the Talons, but better safe than sorry.

Grim Future (cont.)

Videocapture Sequences

>**To:** Westphalia Cabinet, Terra Nova

>**From:** UMFGS *Laban Emuro*, Deep Space

>**Re:** Black Talon mission -- additional data

The images and vidfiles we're beaming down to you are part of the last transmission we've received from the 1st Black Talon. They were piggy-backed on the laser pulse they sent us through the Gate. To tell the truth, we've managed to recover only part of the data. Whomever's aiming the beam at the other end is having a devil of a time keeping it on the Gate, and that doesn't bode well for our boys and girls.

Most of the images concern CEF troop movements on Caprice. We can only assume the Talons are relaying data from the ground, or recent records they obtained from the Liberati. Either way, we have no reason to doubt the authenticity of the images. They all bear the agreed-upon coded watermark, so we know there's trouble brewing over there.

We don't know yet whether the CEF troop movement shown in the pictures and vidclips are part of a pre-planned campaign or if the Earth forces are moving in reaction to the Talons' activities. I almost hope it's the latter — that would mean they wrecked a whole lot of Earthers things over there, and that made the CEF pretty mad. If it's a pre-planned campaign, though, it can mean only one thing: invasion.

I doubt they will be coming after us again, but we are not the only human colony world in the Gate Web.

Document 1:

Those are standard CEF troop landers (codename "Tarantula") coming down from the fleet in orbit. My guess is they are bringing additional garrison forces.

Document 2:

More GRELs in the street. They must have sent them out for the intimidation factor — notice they're not wearing the full combat suit with helmet.

Document 3:

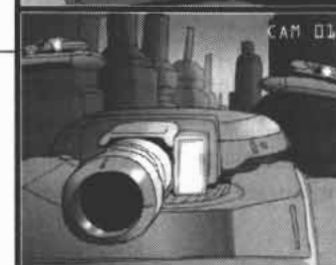
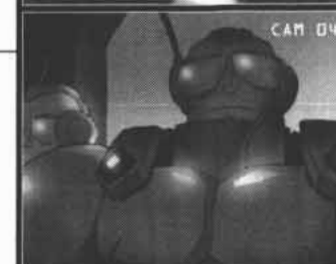
HT-72 hovertanks in the streets and on the highways — perhaps a bit overkill?

Document 4:

Strange. We would have thought they would have deployed tracked or wheeled vehicles instead. Could they have equipment shortages?

Document 5:

Sweet Prophet! More? How many do they actually have down there?



43.SU.41

Ad Astra

Skavara, Eastern Sun Emirates

>login

>run encoding 98092219

Sir — this is of the utmost urgency! The situation in Skavara has hit critical mass. Bhravo's troops have entered the city-state in force, despite the agreement between Shirow and the young Emir. The whole city-state is in turmoil, and entire neighborhoods are being abandoned en masse! Emir Bhravo has ordered a complete evacuation, and has his soldiers going through the streets, herding people towards the outskirts of the city.

People are forced to flee from their homes at gunpoint, and no explanations are being given. Could this be an echo of Oliver Masao's massacre? Remember that Bhravo wasn't at Shirow's coronation, even though they were purportedly allies. His advisors never gave an explanation for that, either. It wouldn't be unheard of for an emir to imitate the Patriarch to ridiculous extremes.

We don't know what's going on; no-one has any clear information. One of my agents has seen the emir and his entourage go up to the wreck of the ship, which has been off limits to all but nobles for the past season. That, combined with the other reported activities from the past year are beginning to lead me to a very unpopular conclusion. I think, sir, that Bhravo is preparing for war. For some reason unknownst to us he seems to be trying to consolidate his entire state within the heart of the *Eastern Sun*!

We've noted movement around the wreck for the past few weeks now, and it's gotten busier than ever today. Wait...

>pause: 2 minutes 32 seconds<

It seems that Bhravo is having his people loaded onto the *Eastern Sun*... what is he thinking? Does he know something we don't, or is this some childish fantasy, brought to the fore by their religious devotion to that old ship?

Some here think that they're trying to relocate all the seat of power in a well-defended location; perhaps they have managed to reactivate the ship's defense grid? If they've gotten the weaponry and rad shields going again, it could be a perfect bunker... with enough supplies and some hydroponics bays, they could conceivably survive in there for decades!

Wait, there's movement . . .

<loud, dull noise in the distance>

What's that? Something's happening . . . the ground is trembling . . . what the . . .

<loud noises>

By Mamoud . . . he didn't . . . he dared . . .

They are leaving! The ship! It's moving! It's

>static<

>static<

>carrier lost



END OF PART ONE

04-69

Appendix

References for Readers of *Return to Cat's Eye*

Return to Cat's Eye is the third Heavy Gear Storyline Book. Like its predecessor, **Crisis of Faith** (DP9-033) and **Blood on the Wind** (DP9-034), it reveals the critical events unfolding in the Heavy Gear universe through the thoughts, conversations and journals of the characters involved. Like the previous books in this line, **Return** eschews the traditional roleplaying game book format of game statistics and omniscient narration to present a more atmospheric and involving approach to Heavy Gear's epic story. This can be a little disconcerting, however, and this appendix has thus been provided to help keep everything straight. The *Who's Who on Terra Nova* section (pages 71-75) gives brief profiles on 30 of the most important people appearing in **Return to Cat's Eye** along with indications of where to find more information about them (see abbreviation guide, below). The *Timeline of Events* places all the events in this book in strict chronological order, along with page references. They appear organized by region in the main text. Following are a few other elements to help in the reading experience.

What Has Gone Before: Terra Nova was once a rich colony of Earth, but was abandoned by an isolationist government centuries ago. Some twenty cycles (local years) ago, Earth returned and tried to invade. North and South patched together an alliance and repelled the invading Colonial Expeditionary Force after four cycles of bloody warfare. Détente was the order of the day after the war, but old tensions soon started to erode any goodwill. In the South, chaos began to take hold when Basal, one of the member cities of the feudal Eastern Sun Emirates, rebelled against the Eastern despot.

In **Crisis of Faith**, the last hopes for peace died out as chaos grew across the planet. The rebellion in the ESE spread to two more city-states, creating the Free Emirates. The Free Emirates negotiated a deal with the powerful Southern Republic to ensure their non-intervention. The North, meanwhile, became more fervent in its Revisionist faith and came to identify the South as an immoral and even heathen enemy. Northern leaders received information that the economically powerful Mekong Dominion would break with the South and side with them in case of a war. The Southern Republic became aware of a serious espionage threat coming from the Humanist Alliance. In the Badlands, Colonel Proust (an Earth-

made supersoldier abandoned on Terra Nova) established a desert league of his own and recruited many other GREL supersoldiers to his cause. This growing chaos reached new heights when Thor Hutchison, the charismatic leader of the Northern faith, was assassinated on live trideo. With his death, many said, all hopes for peace were lost.

In **Blood on the Wind**, fifteen cycles of suspicion and tension finally come to a head: the Interpolar War explodes after a skirmish between Northern and Southern forces in the Badlands turns ugly. Mighty armies clash across the sands of the planet, reducing entire communities to ruins. The Mekong Dominion traps the North with its false promises, while the Humanist Alliance, stricken with a deadly bio-engineered agent, is all but absorbed into the Southern Republic. A few individuals band together to try and prevent innocents from becoming victims to the power-mad confederations, but their efforts are only partially successful. The conflict goes on for three cycles before a truce is called. But as efforts to put together a peace conference come together, the powerful neutral city-state of Peace River is razed by a mass destruction weapon.

Advice for Gamers: This book is not intended as a gaming aid in the traditional sense. It is much more like a novel or comic book. Heavy Gear is a roleplaying and tactical game, however, and many of the events in this book are designed to be fodder for game ideas. For example, many of the key battles of the Interpolar War are portrayed in various tactical supplements, mainly the Tactical Pack series.

Useful Abbreviations: All page references in this appendix are to this book, except when noted. To save space in the character profiles, we have used abbreviations for our main books. They are as follows: **CC1:** Character Compendium 1 (DP9-021); **DH:** Duelist's Handbook (DP9-005); **HALB:** Humanist Alliance Leaguebook (DP9-032); **HG2:** Second Edition Heavy Gear Rulebook (DP9-101); **ITB:** Into the Badlands (DP9-018); **MDLB:** Mekong Dominion Leaguebook (DP9-036); **SRLB:** Southern Republic Leaguebook (DP9-030); **TN2:** Second Edition Life on Terra Nova (DP9-102).

Who's Who on Terra Nova

Characters of Note

Charles Arthur III

The exiled Earth officer who built Port Arthur, Charles Arthur is living through very difficult times. His allegiance with the Humanist Alliance has been undone by the effective death of that league, while his enemies are growing in strength, and Colonel Proust recruits more GREs with every season. His alliance with the New Coalition, and through them the Khayr ad-Din Army, has proven fortuitous, however, and Port Arthur is growing as a Badlands power. See **TN2**, page 123.



Rafael Bhervo

The child-Emir of Okavango, Rafael Bhervo is an almost religious figure among Easterners. Now 20 cycles old, the young Emir seems enlightened and wise beyond his years. He was partner with Emir Nigel Shirow's rebellion, but was less willing to make political compromises. He was becoming a serious rival for overall leadership of the Free Emirates when Shirow was sacred Patriarch. Bhervo reacted by taking his people and the population of Skavara to space. See **SB2**, page 43.



Eva Bukharin

A military officer in Port Arthur, Eva Bukharin is also the leader of the secretive Yakut Brotherhood. This shadowy order of expatriate Earthers maintains loyalty to the New Earth Commonwealth and its ruling party. They fully expect to aid in a second attempt to conquer Terra Nova. Bukharin thinks of Col. Charles Arthur as a traitor, and maintains contacts with loyalists across the globe. See **TN2**, page 129.



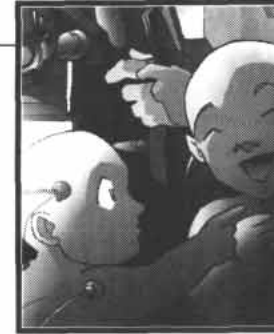
Solomon Davi

Minister of Defense of the United Mercantile Federation, Solomon Davi assumed the position of interim Treasurer when Yves Banderas died and was later officially confirmed in the position. Davi is a consummate soldier and an ally of the conglomerate Northco. He is rumored to dislike Grand-Marshal Victoria Edden-Smythe, the overall Northern commander. He supported the war effort.



Derek and Tara

The product of the GREL fertility program in Jan Mayen, these twin GREL-human hybrids are perhaps the only chance for a future for the displaced supersoldiers. When Jan Mayen was destroyed during a North-South battle, Derek was rescued by Soldier Sebastopol and Tara by Colonel Proust. See **TN2**, page 113.



Louis Philippe deRouen

The ruthless Prime Minister of the Southern Republic, Louis Philippe deRouen does not hesitate to eliminate his enemies. Indeed, he ordered the use of the "Twin Falcon Contingent," a deadly biological weapon, against the Humanist Alliance, which the Republic then quickly annexed. DeRouen is unaware his own daughter is plotting against him with the help of his long-time rival, Jacques Molay. See **TN2**, page 74.



Who's Who on Terra Nova

Characters of Note

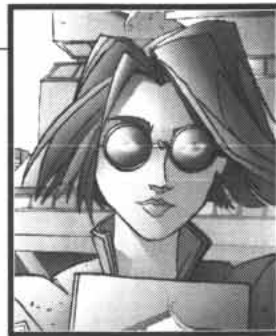
Louise deRouen

The only child of Prime Minister deRouen, Louise is his heir and confident. She is also his most dangerous enemy. Ambitious, she has used the secretive Order of the Falcon (and the cover identity of the "Dark Fox") to act against her father. She believes he is leading the Republic to ruin and she has made deals with army head Victor deBourgogne and AST Lord Protector Molay. She is currently laying low in the turmoil of the Peace River affair. See **SRLB**, page 29.



Gawaïne Di Smit

A renowned Northern astrophysicist, Gawaïne Di Smit discovered the possibility of micro-gates: very small Tannhauser anomalies that could link Terra Nova to new worlds. An admirer and ally of Proconsul Lang Regina, she has overseen tests aboard the Gateship Laban Emuros to detect these micro-gates. During one such test, she helped rescue the Caprician rebel Helen del Pulciano. See **TN2**, page 44.



Milani DuBeau-Slovenski

The Head Executive Officer of Paxton Arms, Milani has a reputation for utter ruthlessness. Milani's main concern is to keep her corporation and city safe and profitable during the war. To this end, Milani has backed Paxton President Simosa's plan to sponsor peace negotiations. The destruction of her city-state and the loss of her lover has dealt her a severe blow. She has since entered into numerous alliances to get her people back on their feet. See **HG2**, page 41.



Victoria Edden-Smythe

The Grand Marshal of the CNCS, Victoria Edden-Smythe has led the North to war against the South. A devout Revisionist, she sees the South as a dangerous enemy responsible for the death of Second Follower Hutchison. She had to deal with a much longer conflict than she expected, and the resulting fallout put a severe strain on her. She is now separated from her wife, Proconsul Lang Regina, due to personal, religious and political differences. See **TN2**, page 39.



Lang Regina

A hero of the war of the Alliance and the Proconsul of Fort Henry in the WFP, Lang Regina did her best to stop the Interpolar War. In cooperation with her Southern ally Kenichi Tanaka, she has been gathering allies to prepare for the days after the war, all the while keeping her eyes trained on the skies, where the threat of Earth still looms. When Peace River is destroyed, she decides to act and creates the Westphalia Cabinet, an international security council. See **CC1**, page 18.



Ernesto Jaxon

The charismatic leader of the Badlands Revolutionary Front, Jaxon is held responsible for the destruction of the city-state of Peace River by many. He quickly disbanded his organization and spent several seasons in hiding before being captured by the troops of the Westphalia Cabinet. See **ITB**, page 57.



Who's Who on Terra Nova

Characters of Note

Arron Logan ♟

The Taipan of the Mekong Development Corporation, Logan is utterly ruthless and is most directly responsible for the Interpolar War. The motives behind this grand deception are unclear but surely profit Logan, even though Northern assassins are now hunting him. He has put aside his plans for taking power for the moment, fearful of being connected with the Peace River bombing and the Theran Blight. See **MDLB**, page 22.



Lysia Masao ♟

The sister of ESE Patriarch Oliver Masao, Lysia was also the wife of Farzahd Hemami. She watched in horror as the Humanist Alliance crumbled, narrowly escaping assassination in the same strike that killed Farzahd. She took refuge with Humanist nationalists in Raleigh and eventually saw that city allied with the Free Emirates. She has agreed to marry Emir Shirow of Basal, and give him an heir, for protection. She has been crowned Consort recently. See **HALB**, page 35.



Oliver Masao ♟

The mad Patriarch of the eastern Sun Emirates, Masao was enchanted with bloodshed and had offered up his throne to his last living relative. This prompted massive slaughter among the Eastern aristocracy and led several Emirates to outright rebellion. He seemed unaware of the terrible price paid by his subjects and allies for his follies. He finally cracked under the strain and had his entire entourage poisoned before committing suicide. See **TN2**, page 92.



Jacques Molay ♟

The Lord Protector of the AST, Molay was once head of the dreaded Southern Republic Intelligence Directorate, and still holds sway there. An enemy of Prime Minister deRouen, he has entered into an agreement with his daughter Louise to eliminate him. Molay and deRouen helped each other rise to power and could ruin each other, so Louise deRouen may finally break the stalemate between them. See **TN2**, page 73.



Antoni "Solitaire" Mor ♟

Once a Duelist in Khayr ad-Din, Antoni Mor has returned to his family, the Desert Wolf rovers. They have fought a long brush war against the GREL Colonel Proust, who was seeking the fugitives Roskiman and Zaya, whom the Wolves had sworn to protect. Proust was ultimately driven back with the help of allies from Khayr ad-Din and elsewhere, and Antoni went to find Zaya and Roskiman in the Great White Desert to tell them. See **DH**, page 80.



Colonel Proust ♟

One of the supersoldiers abandoned by Earth, Proust has become convinced that the GREs must make their own destiny, as befits superior beings. Gathering other GREs around himself, he has founded the New Human Republic and embarked on a campaign in the Western Desert in pursuit of his former squad-mate Soldier Roskiman. A series of setbacks have reduced his realm to a fraction of its former size, however. Proust is raising Tara, one of the GREL-Human hybrid children. See **CC1**, page 46.



Who's Who on Terra Nova

Characters of Note

Nicosa Renault ♟

A legendary spy of the Judas Syndrome and War of the Alliance periods, Nicosa spent much of the last twenty cycles trying to balance intrigues. When Hutchison was assassinated she struggled to ensure that the Badlands was not devastated and helped organize the Khayr ad-Din Army. She is currently investigating the Peace River affair, all the while trying to understand the complex agendas leading Terra Nova into war after war. See **ITB**, page 11.



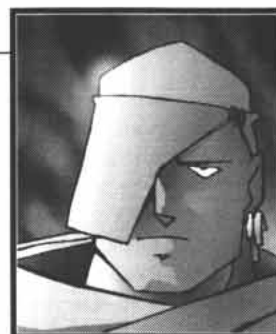
Katryne Sanz ♟

A famous Northern Gear trainer and one-time Duelist, Sanz was exiled from the North for her lack of faith. Traveling to Khayr ad-Din, she helped organize the motley Khayr ad-Din Army out of a collection of the best Gear pilots on Terra Nova. Together they have made a stand for Badlands independence, fighting to keep the gamma maglev open between Khayr ad-Din and the New Coalition. She currently engaged in talks with NuCoal.



Soldier Sebastopol ♟

Another GREL stranded by Earth, Sebastopol has spent the cycles since then struggling against his violent instincts. The father of the Perfect Form movement, Sebastopol is the opposite of Colonel Proust. The two struggled over the GREL-hybrid twins in Jan Mayen, and Sebastopol managed to save Derek, which he is hiding in the Great White Desert. See **TN2**, page 131.



Nigel Shirow ♟

Nigel Shirow has led a rebellion against the crazed Patriarch Oliver Masao since TN 1931, forming the Free Emirates. A growing rivalry between Shirow and Emir Bhervo of Okavango created a need for him to acquire added legitimacy, and he offered protection to Lysia Masao if she became his consort and produced an heir. The two married a short while later and were crowned Patriarch and Consort in a lavish ceremony. See **CC1**, page 38.



Kenichi Tanaka ♟

The Lord Chancellor of the ESE and a hero of the War of the Alliance, Tanaka shares his ally Lang Regina's doubts about the Terranovan conflicts. He believes in the honorable tradition of the South, but sees it being drowned out by power-mongers like deRouen and Molay. Along with Lang, Tanaka has founded the Westphalia Cabinet and recruited several key Terranovan figures into it. See **TN2**, page 73.



Vallis Garrick ♟

Vallis Garrick is a small-time Earth collaborator from the War of the Alliance that has been hiding out in the Badlands since the end of the conflict. The Peace River affair, and his subsequent arrest and escape, indicates he may be more important than most people think. See **Badlands**, page 54.



Who's Who on Terra Nova

Characters of Note

Soldier Roskiman

Once the right-hand man of the renegade GREL leader Colonel Proust, Roskiman escaped to become master of his own destiny. He went into the Great White Desert to escape Proust's assassins, and there fell in with the mysterious Sand Riders nomads. His mate Zaya just gave birth to a son, despite the supposed infertility of the GREL's body. See **SB1**, page 37.



Helen Del Pulciano

Del Pulciano is a refugee from the Caprice star system, which is currently held by the CEF. Del Pulciano is a member of the resistance group known as the Liberati, who smuggled her to Terra Nova to ask for assistance in fighting the Earth forces. She has been briefing the Westphalia Cabinet ever since and is now a member of the Black Talon covert action team. See **SB2**, page 68.



Gervase Aschenbach

An officer in the West Frontier Protectorate Army, Gervase Aschenbach fought under General Lang Regina at the decisive Battle of Baja during the War of the Alliance. He later became an instructor at the Western Military Academy, but kept in touch with Lang. She recruited him for the Westphalia Cabinet, and later placed him in charge of the top secret Black Talon covert operation program. See **SB2**, page 12.



Dreven Capac

The wise First Follower of the Revisionist Church has been trying to keep his people together through a terrible succession of conflicts. After the death of Hutchison and the destruction of Peace River, he traveled to Sorrento and offered to step down as First Follower if the religious councils reunited the two Revisionist branches. He succeeded and was later reconfirmed as spiritual leader of the North. See **ITB**, page 64.



Danghen Jarak

One of the best Gear pilots on the planet, Danghen was a Duelist in the Northern Guard before going AWOL. Followed by his sister Maena, he escaped to the Badlands to live an adventurous life. He joined the Khayr ad-Din Army almost as soon as it was formed, and is currently one of its leaders. Danghen and Maena were recently reunited with an old friend from their Dueling days, Daphnae Cornice. See **HG2**, page 4.



Petrus

The leader of the Liberati faction that Del Pulciano belongs to was imprisoned in Bastille Alpha, a giant prison-fortress located in the barren Caprician arctic. He was liberated through the intervention of the 1st Black Talon and provided them with the support they needed to complete their mission. See page 61.

No picture
on file

Timeline of Events

09•SU•39 to 10•AU•39

9 Summer 1939: Volunteers do their best to dig survivors out of the debris of the Peace River explosion. Emergency crews from every league unite in the rescue efforts.

10 Summer 1939: The rest of the planet is paralysed for a few days as the people and their governments sort out the aftermath. A full ceasefire is called and all fighting stops along the borders. (See pp. 10-11)

11 Summer 1939: Investigators and relief teams from across the globe arrive in Peace River.

18 Summer 1939: After analysing the debris, investigators confirm that an anti-matter bomb was used to destroy the city, probably a modified anti-proton trap device. Underground passageways and storage areas are flooded with toxic clouds of radioactive dust. (See p.8)

18 Summer 1939: Kenichi Tanaka, Lord Chancellor of the Eastern Sun Emirates, discovers evidence that would link the New Earth Commonwealth to the destruction of Peace River. He immediately contacts his Northern allies to share the information. (See p. 9)

29 Summer 1939: Lang, Tanaka and their circle of allies decide that the time has come for them to reveal themselves as allies and assume a position of leadership within Terranovan society. For security reasons, it is decided that only Tanaka and Lang will come forward to represent the group to the assembled heads of state. (See p. 12)

30 Summer 1939: A memo from Tanaka and Lang puts the wheels in motion for the creation of a covert action/recon team program codenamed Black Talon, intended to be the first line of offense against the Colonial Expeditionary Forces and Earth. General Gervase Achensback is appointed to be the head of the program. (See p. 13)

2 Autumn 1939: Lang and Tanaka's secret council officially takes on the name of "Westphalia Cabinet" and offers to act as an advisor, intermediary and mediator between the various Terranovan leagues and factions. Though the outward public response is enthusiastic, not everyone supports the idea, and certain factions openly or secretly plot against the Cabinet. (See pp. 14-15)

3 Autumn 1939: First Follower Draven Capac travels from Massada to Sorrento where he makes a remarked speech in favor of peace and the Westphalia Cabinet. In a completely unexpected move, Capac offers to step down as First Follower of the Revisionist Church in order to reunite the two branches of Revisionism. The Church's council reconfirms him in his duties and extends them to cover the Sorrento Church, in effect ending a long religious schism between the two factions. (See p. 18)

3 Autumn 1939: ESE agents, under orders from Raphael Bhervo, are discovered purchasing electronics from a smuggling cartel. The parts, stolen from a manufacturer of space and air vehicles, were highly intricate data chips meant to control on-board life support systems. Authorities were at a loss to explain why Bhervo wanted the chips, and suggestion is made that his agents may be working for other interests without his knowledge. (See p. 19)

8 Autumn 1939: General Gervase Achensback, commander of the 1st Black Talon, begins recruiting promising pilots for his outfit. Following the ideals of the Westphalia Cabinet, he does not restrain himself to any given league, but seeks the best pilots from every armed force. Following recommendations from trusted friends, he begins to speak with a number of possible members. (See p. 16)

10 Autumn 1939: Victoria Edden-Smythe and Lang Regina separate over irreconcilable differences of opinion. Each woman takes charge of two of the couple's four daughters, and Edden-Smythe returns to Valeria on a permanent basis. (See p. 17)

Timeline of Events

12•AU•39 to 31•WI•39

12 Autumn 1939: An alliance of leagues and factions is formed under the direction of the Westphalia Cabinet to reorganize the planet's efforts toward a more serious space effort and to explore the possibilities of recon missions to Caprice and the other colonies. With the ceasefire thoroughly settled, the Cabinet tries to redirect public attention towards the more external threat posed by the CEF. (See p. 22)

30 Autumn 1939: Louise deRouen and Lord Jacques Molay discuss the Prime Minister and recent news regarding the Westphalia Cabinet. Louise schemes to counteract the effects of the Cabinet and its leaders, and plans to keep a low profile for a time while she gathers more allies. (See p. 24)

35 Autumn 1939: Prime Minister Louis deRouen and Lord Jacques Molay decide that Oliver Masao has become too large a burden to the Allied Southern Territories. They agree that he has to be eliminated and plot his assassination. (See p. 25)

42 Autumn 1939: Agent Delphi reports that the assassination attempt on Oliver Masao has failed. Despite a relatively ingenious method, the assassin is quickly uncovered. She is beheaded and her head put on display as a warning to others. (See p. 26)

51 Autumn 1939: The Yang Dancers, covert intelligence agents and assassins in the service of the Mekong Dominion, are gunned down by unknown attackers. All but one Dancer perish. The whereabouts, even the identity, of the surviving Dancer is currently unknown. (See p. 27)

1 Winter 1939: The 1st Black Talon team is formed around a core of pilots of mixed origins. They begin training immediately at a series of facilities prepared for them throughout the leagues. Despite the inclusion of notoriously undisciplined soldiers, the Talons begin to forge themselves into a team. (See p. 28)

12 Winter 1939: The Republican Gateship *Illustrious* exchanges information with the UMF Gateship *Laban Emuro*, far from Terra Nova. The two vessels begin looking for more of the smaller Gates. A plan to insert secret agents in the Caprice system, using a procedure similar to the one described by Del Pulciano, is put in place. (See p. 29)

19 Winter 1939: Faced with unexpected difficulties, Arron Logan, Taipan of one of the Mekong Dominion's largest corporations, decides to put his plans for secession aside for the moment. He instructs his agents to concentrate on current upheavals in the Eastern Sun Emirates, hoping to make a grab for power during the instability. (See p. 30)

25 Winter 1939: The entire aristocracy of the Eastern Sun Emirates is poisoned under orders from Patriarch Oliver Masao, who promptly commits suicide afterward. He leaves behind a cryptic notes stating the unworthiness of his subjects. The coroner's report makes mention of a strange combination of substances found in the Patriarch's brain cells. The only survivors of the massacre are Raphael Bhervo, Lysia Masao and Nigel Shirow, along with distant relatives. (See p. 31)

27 Winter 1939: Ernesto Jaxon, leader of the Badlands Revolutionary Front, goes into hiding, attempting to escape the blame for the Peace River bombing. He sends a letter to his troops, ordering the BRF to cease its activities and disband. (See p. 38)

31 Winter 1939: Nigel Shirow and Lysia Masao are crowned Patriarch and Consort of the Eastern Sun Emirates in a lavish ceremony before the cream of Southern society. They move in to the Patriarch's palace, while keeping most of their households in Basal. Emir Raphael Bhervo is conspicuous by his absence. (See p. 32)

Timeline of Events

31•WI•39 to 08•AU•40

31 Winter 1939: Observers report that troops under the orders of Emir Raphael Bh Bravo are digging up bodies of the original crew of the *Eastern Sun*, as well as more recent exalted ancestors, re-embalming them and moving them back into the ship for no apparent reason. Agents begin to suspect that Bh Bravo has been stricken with a madness similar to that of Patriarch Masao. (See p. 33)

33 Winter 1939: Administrator Helena Hitachi dies in Peace River from wounds sustained during the bombing. Milani DuBeau-Slovensky is present at the time of death. (See p. 36)

35 Winter 1939: Paxton Acting CEO Milani DuBeau-Slovensky is approached by the Blue Crescent. (See p. 37)

39 Winter 1939: Earth collaborator Garrick Vallis is exposed by spy Nicos Renault. She promptly sends the information to Lord Protector Kenichi Tanaka. Garrick is taken into custody by Tanaka's men. (See p. 39)

45 Winter 1939: BRF leader Ernesto Jaxon is discovered and taken into custody by the Westphalia Cabinet's men after a brief firefight. He is taken to an unnamed facility to be debriefed. (See p. 40)

54 Winter 1939: Earth collaborator Garrick Vallis is freed from prison by what appears to be a CEF commando operation. He vanishes, presumably taken off-planet by his rescuers. (See p. 41)

1 Spring 1940: The 1st Black Talon take to the field for their first mission on Terra Nova, attacking an isolated New Human Republic firebase in the swamps of the South. (See pp. 42-43)

14 Spring 1940: Paxton Acting CEO Milani DuBeau-Slovensky is recruited into the Westphalia Cabinet by Lord Protector Kenichi Tanaka, as a representative for the struggling Paxton Arms Corporation. She also speaks for the remaining citizens of the city of Peace River. (See p. 44)

22 Spring 1940: Antoni Mor, member of the Desert Wolf gang, enters into an alliance with the rogue GREL monk Sebastopol. He discovers what happened to the GREL-human hybrid twins, Tara and Derek, but rejects as futile the idea of mounting a rescue operation for the girl. (See p. 45)

38 Spring 1940: A son is born to the GREL trooper known as Roskiman and his mate, the Sand Rider Zaya. While the birth is unprecedented, both mother and child are in excellent health. The family remain with Zaya's clan in the Great White Desert. (See p. 49)

56 Spring 1940: The Khayr ad-Din army, along with forces from NuCoal and Port Arthur, drives the remaining New Human Republic forces away from the Great White Desert region. The NHR is subsequently reduced to a shadow of its former glory. (See pp. 46-47)

12 Summer 1940: Rogue Duelist Daphnae Cornice leaves the Northern Guard and travels to Khayr ad-Din to join the KADA. She is reunited with her former lover Danghen Jarak and his sister Maena, and resumes her liaison with Danghen. Daphnae states her intentions to remain in the Badlands with KADA on a permanent basis. (See p. 48)

48 Summer 1940: An NEC memo regarding the planned destruction of Peace River is found by a Paxton patrol during field tests of their new Gear designs (the Elite program). The memo is kept secret to avoid divulging the existence of the remaining Paxton Badlands facilities. Salvage crews are sent into the still heavily-irradiated tunnels of the destroyed city-state to ascertain the level of damage. (See p. 52)

8 Autumn 1940: The main hidden CEF base on Terra Nova is found by the orbiting ship RSS *Montaigne*. The information is verified and then discreetly transmitted to the Westphalia Cabinet. (See p. 53)

Timeline of Events

46•AU•40 to 19•AU•41

46 Autumn 1940: The 1st Black Talon, now veterans of a few missions, are assigned the task of destroying the main Colonial Expeditionary Forces base on Terra Nova. (See p. 54)

1 Winter 1940: The main CEF base on Terra Nova is taken out by the 1st Black Talon. A large quantity of intelligence data, along with a single anti-matter warhead, is recovered. (See p. 55)

16 Winter 1940: Caprician Liberati Helen Del Pulciano exposes her plans to infiltrate the Caprice system with friendly forces, in preparation for a more ambitious mission. Cristobal agrees to her plan and begins to set the operation in motion. (See p. 56)

51 Winter 1940: The Westphalia Cabinet sends several agents to the Caprice system covertly using small one-man vehicles, mirroring the previous efforts of the CEF. The agents manage to recover vital pieces of information and intelligence, though not all of them survive the operation. The Liberati is recruited as an allied group. (See pp. 57-59)

11 Spring 1941: The 1st Black Talon departs for Caprice aboard the experimental assault shuttle *Fury* to recon the path of follow-up Talon missions. Using a Tannhauser Gate opened by CEF infiltrator forces, they break through to Caprice space. (See p. 60)

15 Spring 1941: The 1st Black Talon send back their first report from the Caprice system. They confirm the basic information provided by Del Pulciano and the previous missions. They proceed to make their way to an isolated desert wasteland on Caprice, where they build a firebase. They make contact with the Liberati resistance soon after. (See p. 61)

50 Spring 1941: The 1st Black Talon wage a guerilla war to free important Liberati personnel from the CEF prison at Bastille Alpha. Along the way, they acquire important data on the strengths and weaknesses of the CEF garrison on Caprice. (See pp. 62-63)

29 Summer 1941: The 1st Black Talon report the loss of the *Fury*, forcing them to commandeer a spacecraft at the Vegas Spaceport. They are now actively hunted by CEF forces. (See p. 64)

37 Summer 1941: The 1st Black Talon send back their last message, warning the Westphalia Cabinet of a weapon of mass-destruction (Project Brimstone) being assembled in space in the Caprice system. The transmission ends with the Talons announcing their intention to try and destroy the super weapon before heading back. (See p. 65)

43 Summer 1941: Intelligence data gathered by the Black Talon confirms that the CEF is reinforcing its planetary garrison, possibly in response to the Talon attack and the destruction of their main base on Terra Nova. The survival of the Black Talon is unconfirmed. (See pp. 66-67)

19 Autumn 1941: Emir Raphael Bhervo and his followers force all citizens of Okavango to board the restored *Eastern Sun* and blast off into space, nearly destroying the city-state of Skavara in the process. (See pp. 68-69)



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To the Heavy Gear II team and Activision — great job, guys!

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