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CREDITS

Writing

Chris Hartford
 Christoffer "Bones" Trossen
Rise of the Animal
 Christoffer "Bones" Trossen
Rules Annex
 Chris Hartford
 Christoffer "Bones" Trossen
 Joel Bancroft-Connors

Product Development

Herbert A. Beas II
Strategic Assistance
 Øystein Tvedten

Product Editing

Herbert A. Beas II
Editing Assistance
 Patrick Wynne

BattleTech Line Developer

Herbert A. Beas II
Assistant Line Developer
 Ben H. Rome

Production Staff

Art Direction
 Brent Evans
Cover Art
 Franz Vohwinkel
Cover Design
 Ray Arrastia
Layout
 Ray Arrastia
Illustrations
 Justin Adams
 Chris Lewis
 Randall Mackey
 Aaron Miller
 Mark Molnar
 Matt Plog
 Jeff Porter
 Ryan Portillo
 Robert Ruffolo
 Alex Williamson
Logos
 Ray Arrastia
 David Allen Kerber
 Chris Lewis
Maps
 Øystein Tvedten
Record Sheets
 David L. McCulloch

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Factcheckers and Playtesters

Ron Barter, Chris Callicoat, Rich Cencarik, Bill Derer, Jason Donahue, Bruce Ford, Joshua Franklin, William Gauthier, Keith Hann, Térence Harris, Johannes Heidler, Ken' Horner, John Kielman, Mike Miller, Darrell Myers, Craig Reed, Luke Robertson, Andreas Rudolf, Eric Salzman, Chris Searls, Jason Schmetzer, Chris Sheldon, Paul Sjardijn, Jeff Skidmore, Chris Wheeler, Patrick Wynne, Mark Yingling

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 PMB 202 • 303 91st Ave NE • E502
 Lake Stevens, WA 98258

Find us online:

Precentor_martial@classicbattletech.com
 (e-mail address for any BattleTech questions)
<http://bg.battletech.com/>
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<http://www.CatalystGameLabs.com>
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RISE OF THE ANIMAL

**São Paulo
Brazil, Terra
Terran Hegemony
27 December 2766**

Major General Albert Kannenberg stood up from his desk and stretched, having spent most of the day hunched over his computer reviewing the long list of year-end reports and awards nominations sitting in his inbox. Most of his command had been redeployed off of Terra to support the SLDF's response to the Periphery Uprising, but the virtual mountain of paperwork never seemed to decrease. He grabbed his service coat off of the coat rack in the corner of his office and put it on. It may be a bright sunny day, with the temperature reaching a balmy 31 degrees Celsius, but it was his way, even if he'd be sweating before he made it ten meters from his headquarters' front door. It was almost 1500, and he needed to stretch his legs.

He looked down at the parade field spread out in front of him. Normally it would be filled with Star League troops or 'Mechs or tanks. Now, he had only a handful of SLDF 'Mechs on-hand, most piloted by reserve personnel. A regiment of Rim Worlder "augmentees" also garrisoned his base, in theory giving him another battalion of 'Mechs and two battalions of infantry at his disposal, but as he found out shortly after their arrival, the damn Rim Worlders somehow didn't report to or through the usual SLDF chain of command. In fact, they were nothing but trouble.

There was a knock at his door before it swung open. General Kannenberg turned to see his guest, though he didn't need to. It was Colonel Kulich Otolo, commander of the "vaunted" Thirty-ninth Amaris Legionnaires, dressed in his field uniform. At least he knocked before he barged in.

"What?!" Despite the hundreds of administrative files he had worked his way through during the course of the day, Kannenberg had been feeling fairly cheerful, and was looking forward to visiting as many different offices as he could before heading back to his quarters for the day. At least until Otolo walked into his office. The Rim Worlds officer was flanked by his aide, Lieutenant Cray, and some Amaris sergeant he had never seen, only adding to the general's perturbation.

Otolo offered no apologies or small talk. "General, I have a most important communiqué from First Consul Amaris. A holiday greeting to every host base commander, as well as a gift. A token of appreciation for all of the outstanding support you have provided us." Otolo smirked as he spit out the final sentence. He clearly had no regard for the SLDF officer or apparently even his own nation's leader.

Kannenberg turned back to the window. He no longer wanted to give Otolo the satisfaction of spitting in his face. "You can leave it on my desk and then get out. I'll look at it when I get in tomorrow morning."

"But General," Otolo replied, with a bemused tone in his voice, "First Consul Amaris insists that this gift be personally delivered."

Otolo's watch beeped almost simultaneously with the general's, indicating it was precisely 1500. Though Kannenberg never saw it, Otolo drew a pistol from his waistband, leveled it at the general's head and fired. The laser pierced the back of Kannenberg's head and literally cooked the man's brain in an instant. His lifeless body fell to the floor in a heap.

The Rim Worlds officer turned to his aide, motioning at the general's desk. "Go through his files and make sure we've identified each reserve commander in the region. I don't want to miss anyone."



"Tony, are you done with that pile yet?"

Antonius Zalman swiveled in his chair away from the game he'd been watching on the tri-vid and back to the virtual pile of exams sitting front and center on his noteputer, trying not to think about the five identical icons above that one.

"Uhh, not quite," he responded sheepishly, picking up the noteputer from the desk and opening up the third exam of thirty-four.

"Did you even start yet? You know you've only got two more days to get those grades into the system."

His wife Mara knew him too well, one of the many reasons he still loved her after eighteen years of marriage. He sighed and got back to the work he'd been putting off, resolving to ignore the many distractions at hand but knowing deep down that he would probably fail at that task, likely sooner rather than later. "Yes, dear," was the most he could muster.

It was his own fault, a fact that he'd admitted to himself probably thousands of times throughout the years. Whereas most of his other colleagues created simple multiple-choice or single-entry tests, Antonius Zalman was the opposite. His students were the future of the Hegemony, and he felt it was his duty to ensure they understood the history and culture of the nation they would soon become full citizens of. He loved teaching and inspiring, even if many of his peers didn't understand why he made his own job so difficult upon himself, or scoffed at the way he continued to espouse the ideals of the Hegemony and the Star League. He just hated the paperwork, be it filling out supply requests or individually grading the nearly two hundred essay-format exams in front of him.

"You know, Dad," his son David chimed in from the living room, with all the glee of a seventeen year old able to give back some of the same medicine he'd been given all his life, "if you'd gotten your homework done early, you wouldn't be in this mess."

Zalman couldn't help but smirk, but quickly affected the best—make that worst—whiny-teen voice he could. "But David, the game was on, and I've got all day tomorrow to get it done."

He heard chuckles from all over the house as he dug into the exams in front of him, soon enough tuning out the household noises and losing track of time as he focused upon the task at hand. He never felt the distant rumble nor heard the sirens wailing throughout the city, and barely even registered his son's voice as David tried to capture his attention. Only the touch of his wife's hand on his shoulder brought his attention partially away from his noteputer. He responded with an absent-minded, "hmm?"

"Tony."

The terror in Mara's voice was palpable. Zalman immediately snapped his head up and focused on the tri-vid in his den, which was showing images his mind simply couldn't comprehend. Scenes of mushroom clouds rising over locations labeled as Unity City, Sverdlovsk and Curitiba, the last just a few hundred short kilometers distant. Talking heads looking just as confused and frightened as he was at the moment. And continuous text scrolls indicating there were battles being fought apparently all across the globe.

"What the hell?" was all Zalman could mutter as he bolted up but stood transfixed. The shock only lasted a few moments though. His face flush and heart pounding in his chest, he sat back down and grabbed his comm-link, selecting his commanding officer from his contacts list and pressing the connect button as he placed the earpiece in his left ear. The connection was made almost instantly.

"Geo—" Zalman started, but had to force a swallow down his dry throat before continuing. "George, are you seeing this?"

"Yes, stand by," was the matter-of-fact reply before he heard a beep in the background. "Okay, Tony, you're on with Nat, Logan, Din and Milosz"—one of his fellow battalion commanders, the regimental exec, the first sergeant and the support battalion commander, respectively. "Nothing's on the Def-Net yet, but it looks like Unity City's been hit, so we have to assume the Citadel's been at least knocked off-line for the moment. Wait, now I'm seeing something. We've got action up top. Metz Station is reporting engaging the Rim Worlds fleet."

"Christ." That was Major Logan Dietz, the regimental exec. "We're compromised."

Colonel George Loc continued on without missing a beat, though Zalman could hear the growing fear in his voice. "Status updates are coming in now, from all over the planet. We're under siege." Zalman could hear his regimental commander take a deep breath over the open line before speaking again, clearly collecting his thoughts. "Okay, the 3843rd is on alert. Get the regiment mobilized. Logan, you—What the—"

Zalman heard a commotion over the line, followed by a series of pops and what sounded like explosions, then nothing but the sound of people talking in the background. Unfamiliar people, barking concise commands.

"George," Major Milosz Brkcic yelled into the comm-link. "George, are you okay?"

"Shit." That was Dietz again. "Go secure and get your people together. Watch out for these bastards. We'll talk again in two hours on Tac-Seven-Green."

The line went dead and that was it. For the first time in centuries, Terra was at war again. Zalman took only a moment

to consider that before he switched his com-link to SECURE mode, which would encrypt his communications and disable the device's emergency tracker, and began contacting his company commanders. As the commander of an SLDF reserve battalion, he led a mix of MechWarriors, armor crews and infantry, along with attached support personnel, all living in and around São Paulo, headquartered at an armory located on the west side of the metro area. His regiment's other battalions were scattered throughout the southern half of Brazil. So while he could hope to get at most of his battalion together in the span of just a few hours, at best it would be twenty-four hours before the whole regiment could form up. Probably longer considering the chaos gripping Terra.

Three of his four company commanders answered his calls, and he began briefing them as a dark thought crossed his mind. He used his noteputer to remotely log into his armory's security feeds and found just what he was afraid of.

"Dammit. Looks like they've got a lance of 'Mechs and at least a platoon of infantry stationed outside the armory," he reported. *Goddammit!* Zalman took another moment before continuing. "Okay, get your people moving. No uniforms, though! I don't want these Rim bastards IDing any of our people before we can hit them. Tell them to arm themselves with whatever they have at home. Mustering point is the Alfonso Franco Preparatory Academy"—Zalman's school, the first place he could think of that could both hold his battalion's complement and was within just a few clicks of the armory—"I'll send you coordinates."

After receiving a trio of confirmations, he disconnected, headed up the stairs into his bedroom and began gathering his gear when another troubling thought came to mind. He called to his wife downstairs who, along with their three children, was still staring with rapt attention at the tri-vid. "Mara! Five minute drill! Grab a couple of bags, we're *all* leaving."

"What?" was her confused and frightened response.

"No time." He hoped he wasn't right, but he had the feeling he was. "Get some stuff together and get the kids into the vehicle!" The Rim Worlders had apparently found Colonel Loc and there was no telling who else they would target. "David! Pull everything out of the gun safe! We're taking it all with us." The instincts of a twenty-year SLDF veteran combat officer were kicking in. The Rim Worlders had been on Terra for months, worming their way into every base and every office. Who knew what information they'd stolen? Or what they would do next. They'd already used nukes. The thought of what they might do to anyone that opposed them—or their families—chilled him.

"Tony, are you sure?" Mara appeared at the base of the stairs on the verge of hysteria, tears streaming down her face. She was a civilian, a paper-pusher with no military training, unprepared for her world to come crashing down.

"Yes, one hundred percent. Now get going, we don't have much time." Zalman didn't have time to explain or be supportive. That would have to come later. For now, he had to get his family moving and get them somewhere safe, though he didn't yet know where that somewhere was. Or how they'd get there.

Zalman snapped his fingers. "Support," he said to no one in particular, grabbing his comm-link. He brought up another contact and pressed the connect button, getting back to throwing his uniforms and other gear into a transport bag as his call connected "Kalli, are you watching?"

Kalli Andrushka was an old friend who had retired from the SLDF a few years ago, a former jump infantry platoon sergeant who lived just a block away from Zalman. "Yeah. What the hell is going on?"

"Looks like Amaris' cronies. No time to go into it." Zalman's mind was racing at a kilometer a second. "Listen, they hit my CO's house and I'm not waiting around for them to do that to us. Get together anyone you can for an escort. We're bugging out in five." That they should arm themselves heavily was left unspoken but understood.

"Wilco," was all she said before disconnecting. Andrushka could still be all business.

Zalman threw the last of his gear into his "go-bag" before strapping on the ankle holster and pistol belt he kept in a locked box under his bed, the former carrying a seven-shot hold-out slugthrower and the latter his issue laser pistol. He grabbed his gear and flew down the stairs to his home's main floor. His wife was wrangling their two younger children upstairs yet while he could hear his son David packing the last of his collection of rifles and pistols into their cases in his den. He walked in as David started dropping boxes of ammunition into a hard transport case. Zalman picked up one of his rifles, loading one full magazine into the weapon and tucking the other into a pouch on his belt before slinging the rifle over his shoulder. He then picked up his favorite auto pistol. He loaded one magazine into the pistol and handed the other two—both full—to his son.

"David," he said in a low and calm voice, "grab one of the holsters and keep this under your shirt. You know how your mom gets." He paused a moment as the fear grew on his son's face, placing his hand on the shoulder of the now-trembling young man. "I don't expect there's going to be trouble, but there might be. Keep your eyes open. If there is trouble, it's your job to protect your mother and your brother and sister. Okay?"

The younger Zalman swallowed hard and nodded his head. Antonius put on the best supportive smile he could while trying to hide the tremble in his hands. "Good, now get this stuff into the vehicle. Make sure we can get at it."

"Oh— Okay." David sputtered the words, but Zalman saw the reality dawn on David's face as he squeezed his son's shoulder one more time. He lingered only a moment longer. There was too much to do.

Zalman headed out to the garage, his "go-bag" and one gun case in tow. He hefted both into the back of his vehicle, then opened the back of his wife's in expectation for the bags she'd be bringing down and headed back into the house. "Time to go!" he bellowed.

He could hear his wife and children still rummaging around upstairs, his daughter Susan frantically searching for her favorite

something or other. Zalman headed back upstairs, passing David, who was carrying three rifle cases out of the den. "Split the case between the two vehicles," he yelled over his shoulder as he bounded the stairs two at a time. He found his wife in their bedroom, her largest travel case lying half-filled on the bed his own case had just been on. Mara was nearly hyperventilating, staring at her closet like she had no idea what to grab or take. He came up behind her and put both hands on her shoulders. She was shaking uncontrollably. He turned her around and wrapped his arms around her. "Listen, it'll be okay," he improvised. "I just want to make sure you and the kids will be safe." Zalman stroked her hair for a second as he searched for the next thing to say. Coming up with nothing, he went with simple and easy. "Grab some comfortable clothes, a pillow, some towels and a sheet or two and meet me in the garage. I'll get the kids. Okay?"

Just in the few seconds he'd been holding her, Mara's breathing and shaking had calmed a bit. She nodded her head and managed an "Okay."

He squeezed her again before letting go. "Good. See you in a second." He turned away and went to collect his two younger children.

"I'm ready, Dad," his fifteen-year-old son James shouted as he bolted down the stairs, his camping gear on his back and a satchel in his hand, containing what Zalman guessed was his noteputer along with a dozen other electronic devices.

"Good boy," Zalman whispered to himself. He and his children loved the outdoors. He knew they always kept their camping gear ready to go at a moment's notice for one of their father's "surprise deployments"—weekend trips he'd announce just minutes before packing the entire family into one of the vehicles and heading out into Brazil's wilds. "Put that in your mom's vehicle," he yelled down the stairs after his son, then turned towards his daughter's room.

Ellie was twelve, in that awkward age. Chances were, she was spending more time deciding which teddy bear to take than packing. Zalman's suspicions were confirmed when he reached her door. Her bright green overnight bag lay open on her bed, packed full save for a spot just large enough for one of her stuffed animals. He said but one thing to her: "Mister Bugsie." She looked at him and smiled, grabbing the comically stuffed armadillo. "Meet you downstairs, bug," he said to her. He headed into David's room to grab his eldest son's camping pack and noteputer bag. An instant later he was back downstairs with the rest of his family. "Put all your stuff in the Zoom," Mara's vehicle.

His comm-link chimed. A quick look showed him it was Kalli Andrushka. "I'm here," he answered.

"So are we," Andrushka replied. "And it looks like they are, too. Two black MPCs"—motorized people carriers—"pulling up. Very inconspicuous."

"Dammit!" He was out of time, his mind racing.

Andrushka cut him off before he could say anything more. "We can do this. Get your family down. Looks like there's only a few of them. When you hear the noise, open up the garage door and hit them from behind. They'll never know what hit 'em."

It took him a second to process what she said before he replied with a simple, "Wilco." He looked at his family, staring wide-eyed in front of him. "Slight change of plans. Everyone in the cellar." He spread his arms wide and shooed them towards the cellar door. "I'll be back in a minute," he said while rushing them down the cellar stairs. "Keep the door closed until I give the all clear. David, you know what to do." They all looked back in terror as he closed the door behind them, David giving him a nervous nod as his left hand unconsciously moved to the pistol on his hip.

Zalman rushed back into the garage and pulled the rifle from the front seat of his vehicle, maneuvering its sling over his head. He slapped the bolt release to chamber a round with a satisfying "chunk" and clicked the safety off as he crouched behind his open vehicle door, within easy reach of the automatic garage door control on his dash.

He only had to wait a few heart-pounding seconds before he heard the squeal of tires and shouts outside. "Here we go!" he heard Andruschka say over the still-open comm-link. Amid a flurry of shouts, Zalman hit the garage door control. The gunshots erupted a second later. As the door rose, he could see the two black MPCs, one parked behind the other perpendicular to the end of his driveway, with a quartet of dark, masked shapes huddled between them, trying desperately to return fire at the two vehicles that had blocked off the road ahead of them—Andruschka and her ad-hoc escort team. They'd already taken one of the dark forms down, the body laying unmoving on Zalman's lawn.

Andruschka's team was pouring heavy fire into the front MPC. One of the four dark figures moved toward the driver's door of the rear MPC. Zalman never gave it the chance, firing a pair of short bursts that dropped the figure. The form clutched its left leg, clearly only wounded despite the shots Zalman was sure he'd placed center of mass. He fired another series of short bursts, targeting the figure's lower extremities. Confident of scoring at least another debilitating hit, he switched fire to the other three, this time loosing bursts meant to drive them to the other side of the MPCs and right into Andruschka's line of fire. They turned to face him and fired into his open garage, backing up as they did. Zalman could hear the bullet strikes around him as he ducked behind his vehicle door for a moment. Hearing Andruschka's team unleash a steady volume of fire, he rolled back out and added his own to the cacophony, emptying his magazine.

Zalman dropped behind cover again as he hit the magazine release ahead of the trigger with his right hand, dropping the empty, and slapped a fresh magazine in and hitting the bolt release with his left in one practiced move. He popped back up and made a crouched run down the twelve-meter length of his driveway, all the while firing bursts at the two forms he could still see on the other side of the MPCs. Just like he'd been trained to do back in basic training two decades earlier.

Just as suddenly as it had begun, the firefight was over. All five black-clad forms were on the ground, three still writhing in pain from their wounds. Andruschka approached Zalman while her five other comrades, one sporting a facial wound that looked like it had been caused by shards of broken glass, secured the scene

and disarmed the black figures. "It was just these five," Andruschka reported. "Amateurs." She moved to the still-writhing form Zalman had dropped and pulled off his mask, revealing a young Latin man screaming in pain. "I'd guess local hired guns."

"Not all of them." A burly man in his forties wearing an old-style SLDF infantry vest and helmet with his rifle slung across his chest lifted the head of another still-alive attacker for both Andruschka and Zalman to see. He had a shark tattoo on the side of his neck close to his left shoulder, a common sight among Amaris' most strident Rim Worlders.

Zalman looked around, scanning up and down the street for any signs of further trouble. Seeing none, he decided, "Okay, let's use what they gave us here. Strip their vests and weapons, and check them for ID. Throw the dead ones in the back of the front van. We'll dump that somewhere else if we can get it started. We'll use the other van to get us through any roadblocks they might have. Kalli, can you drive Mara and the kids? I'll take this van."

"Roger that, Major."

Andruschka turned around to direct her five other teammates. Zalman took one more look around the neighborhood, mentally saying a good-bye to the place he'd called home for the past twelve years. Some of his neighbors were peeking out of the corners of their windows, frightened by the gunfight that had pierced the calm of their neighborhood, though Jose Campanello across the street stood brazenly in his front window, three bullet holes prominent in the siding less than half a meter to his left. The man raised a glass in silent salute to Zalman, who smiled briefly and nodded in return.

Antonius turned and rushed back into his house, knocking gingerly at the door to his cellar, but standing to its side just in case David was a little trigger happy. "It's me," he said as calmly as he could. "Everything's okay." He opened the door slowly, and glanced in. His wife appeared at the bottom of the stairs, shaking hysterically. He did his best to reassure them all. "It's okay. We're going to go now. Come on, let's go." One by one, his family filed up the stairs, each one of them clearly shaken to the bone. He ushered them out to the garage, where Andruschka stood next to the Zoom with one of the black-clad assault team vests in her hand. "You all remember Kalli, right," he said motioning to her. "She's going to drive you guys, and I'm going to take the black MPC out there. We'll leave my vehicle here. It'll be okay."

He wasn't particularly sure of that, but he had to say something. He took the vest from Andruschka, which drew a gasp from Mara as he put it on. He needed all of the advantages he could get.

His comm-link chimed. When he glanced at the device's tiny screen, he saw that it was a comm from the SLDF. He pressed the connect button and said, "Hello?"

"This is an automated message for Major Antonius Zalman. The SLDF Command and Information Center Director of Operations has declared an emergency recall and activation of all reserve personnel. The Terran Hegemony is under attack by the Rim Worlds Republic. Contact your chain of command immediately and report to your mustering station as soon as possible."

He shook his head as the line clicked dead. "Perfect timing."

Devlin,

While producing the recent volume on the Reunification War it became apparent we were telling the start of a much larger tale. The Star League has been mythologized by both the Clans and the Inner Sphere, while Amaris and his Rim Worlds Republic have become bogeymen. Yet the true history of the great Cameron experiment is much more nuanced, with heroes and villains on both sides. Let us not forget that the Periphery Uprising is known as the Freedom War beyond the Inner Sphere, winning as it did the independence of the territorial states from Terra's control, and that Amaris' scheming not only provided the Periphery with its chance at freedom but also removed a despot who threatened to destroy the Star League—Richard Cameron.

This isn't an attempt to rehabilitate Amaris—I still put him up there with Adolf Hitler and Jinjiro Kurita—but it should serve as a warning to anyone who believes such conflicts are entirely black and white. Ambition and greed were to blame for the fall of the Star League and even Kerensky, deified by the Clans as he is, was guilty of misjudgments before, during and after the campaigns.

Above all, the Periphery Uprising and the downfall of the Star League show that even grand dreams can be flawed, brought down by petty actions scarcely contemplated by their noble instigators. David thought you might appreciate the parallel.

—Paladin Victor Steiner-Davion, Santa Fe, Terra, 3090.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

BattleTech Historical: Liberation of Terra, Volume 1 is the latest in a series of products that explore the major yet little-detailed conflicts in the past of the BattleTech Universe. In this case, we cover the start of the conflict between the Star League and Stefan Amaris' forces. As with the other books in the *Historical* series, *Reunification War* is part sourcebook and part rulebook, detailing the background and major events of the conflict as well as providing tools relevant to players who wish to recreate battles of the historical era in question.

Rise of the Animal, the introductory story, details the first shots of the conflict from the perspective of Antonius Zalman, later a major player in the formation of the Clans. The first full chapter is *The Rise and Fall of the Star League*, which details the history of the Star League, including the trials and tribulations that lead to the Amaris Coup. *The League's Might* details the structure and practices of the SLDF while also providing military overviews of the Star League member states and Periphery nations. *Personalities* details the political and military notables involved, either directly or in a supporting role, in the early campaigns. The next three chapters detail the conflict itself: *Conquering the Hegemony* expounds on Amaris' occupation and efforts to control the Terran Hegemony; *The Rim World's Campaign* showcases events in the Periphery, including Kerensky's occupation and reduction of Amaris' home nation; and *The Hegemony Campaign* covers the initial period of Kerensky's efforts to retake the Terran Hegemony.

The *Rules Annex* includes a number of items designed to aid play in the late Star League era, including rules for generating SLDF and Republican forces. *New Combat Units* provides game stats for the greatest technological achievement the Star League military ever produced: the Space Defense System and its drone WarShips.

A Note on Sources:

Select details of the Amaris Coup and Operation CHIEFTAIN (the SLDF's liberation of the Terran Hegemony) have appeared in numerous volumes: the *Star League Sourcebook, Handbook: Major Periphery States* (and its precursors, *Periphery Sourcebook*, first and second editions), and the *Handbook* series (and their *Housebook* precursors), as well as several Technical Readouts (notably, but not exclusively, *TR2750* and *TR3075*). The era has also appeared in fiction: The early Star League (and the "kids clique") form the backdrop of the BattleCorps novel *Fall from Grace* by Chris Hartford and the first meeting of Aleksandr Kerensky and Michael Steiner on Tharkad appears in the *Destiny's Call* serial by Loren Coleman. The subsequent histories of several notable SLDF and RWA personalities can be found in *Historical: Operation Klondike* as well in the *Wolf Clan* and *Jade Falcon* sourcebooks together with *Invading Clans*. *Field Manual: SLDF, Era Report: 2750*, and the *2750 Field Report* PDF-exclusive series will provide additional detail on the military and political situation across the Inner Sphere prior to the Periphery Uprising and Amaris Coup.

THE AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE: ONCE MORE INTO THE BREACH

So here we are at the fifth volume of the Historical series. Actually, it's the fifth and sixth, the massive war between Kerensky and Amaris being split across two volumes. As with the previous volume, *Historical: Reunification War* (which in many regards is the first volume of the trilogy that these books will complete) the basic structure of the conflicts that comprised the *de facto* Star League Civil War have been known since the earliest days of BattleTech but a lot of the fine detail was missing. The scale of the conflict is staggering, with around four thousand regiments employed by the SLDF alone. The ramifications are still being felt in the modern BattleTech universe, their full impacted unrealized until the end of the Dark Age. Without the Amaris Coup, the war that ensued and Kerensky's Operation EXODUS there would be no Clans, no ComStar (and, by extension, no Word of Blake or Jihad), and no Republic of the Sphere.

Once more, writing these volumes required combing through multiple sources and reconciling different accounts of some events. The assistance of the fact-checking and MUL teams in keeping us on the straight and narrow is much appreciated and any continuity issues are entirely our fault.

Volume 2 will pick up the tale where this book leaves off—at the end of 2774—and follow the campaign through to its conclusion. It will also look at the catastrophic aftermath of the war and the fall of the Star League that will lead to the Succession Wars and the Exodus of the SLDF, in turn leading to the formation of the Clans.

INNER SPHERE - 2765

Lyran Commonwealth

Tamar Pact

- 1) Trelshire
- 2) Tamar Domains
- 3) Camlann Shire

Protectorate of Donegal

- 4) Coventry Province
- 5) Alarion Province
- 6) District of Donegal
- 7) Furillo Province

Federation of Skye

- 8) Kannon Shire
- 9) Virginia Shire
- 10) Rahneshire
- 11) Isle of Skye

Draconis Combine

Pesht Military District

- 1) Kagoshima Prefecture
- 2) Coudoux Prefecture
- 3) Bjarred Prefecture
- 4) Pusht-i-rud Prefecture
- 5) Ningxia Prefecture

Galedon Military District

- 6) Oshika Prefecture
- 7) Matsuida Prefecture
- 8) New Samarkand Prefecture
- 9) Kaznejov Prefecture

Rasalhague Military District

- 10) Radstadt Prefecture
- 11) Trondheim Prefecture
- 12) Tinaca Prefecture

Benjamin Military District

- 13) Baldur Prefecture
- 14) Xinyang Prefecture
- 15) Kajikazawa Prefecture
- 16) Proserpina Prefecture
- 17) Irurzun Prefecture
- 18) Kuzuu Prefecture
- 19) Ashio Prefecture

Federated Suns

Draconis March

- 1) Robinson Operational Area
- 2) Fairfax Operational Area
- 3) Woodbine Operational Area

Crucis March

- 4) Markesan Operational Area
- 5) Minette Operational Area
- 6) Chirikof Operational Area

Capellan March

- 7) Kathil Operational Area
- 8) Taygeta Operational Area

Capellan Confederation

- 1) Tikonov Commonality
- 2) Chesterton Commonality
- 3) Sarna Commonality
- 4) Capella Commonality
- 5) Sian Commonality
- 6) St Ives Commonality
- 7) Andurien Commonality

Free Worlds League

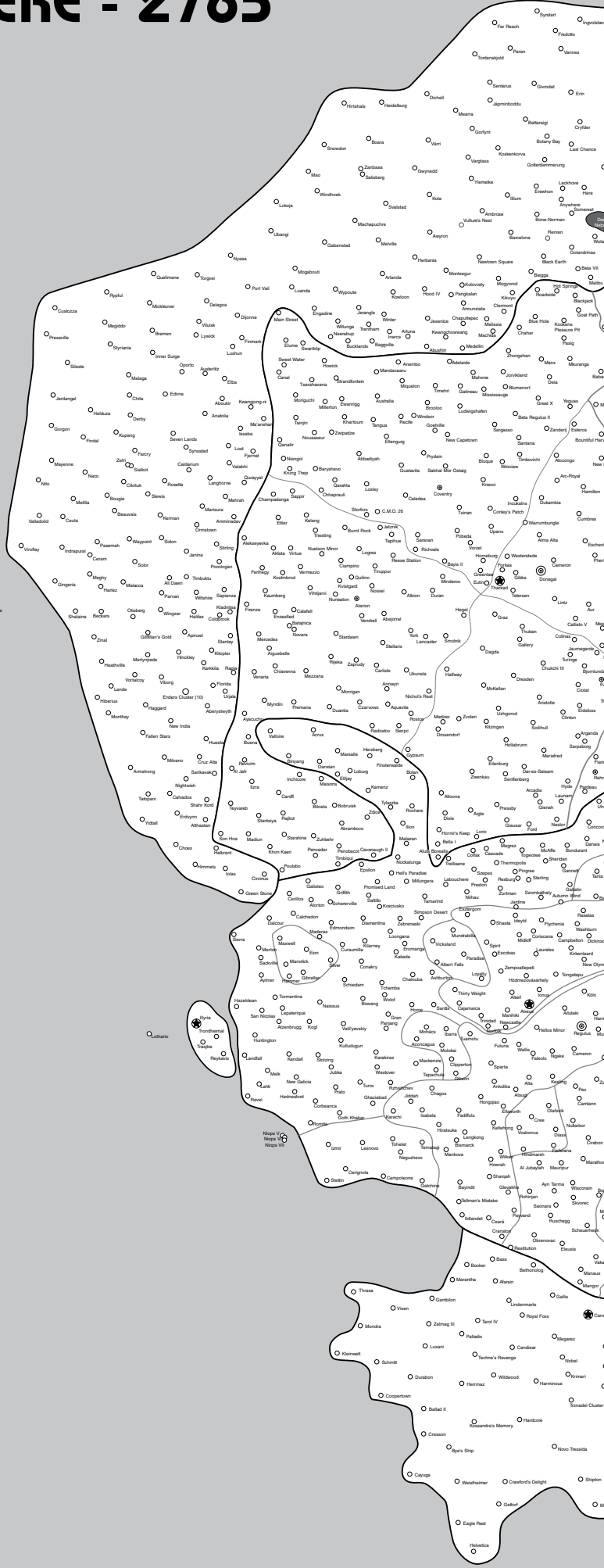
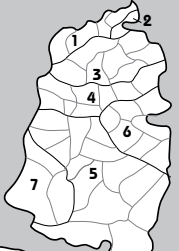
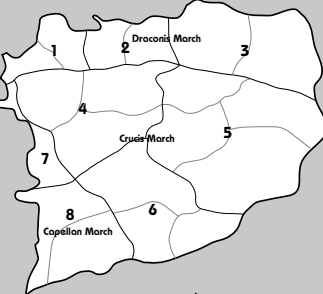
- 1) Marik Commonwealth
- 2) Federation of Oriente
- 3) Principality of Regulus
- 4) Duchy of Andurien
- 5) Stewart Confederation
- 6) Duchy of Graham-Marik
- 7) Rim Commonality
- 8) Regulan Free States
- 9) Principality of Gibson
- 10) Abbey District

Terran Hegemony

- 1) Alliance Core
- 2) Lone Star Province
- 3) Lockdale Province
- 4) Tyrfin Province
- 5) Terra Firma Province

The Periphery

- 1) Magistracy of Canopus
- 2) Taurian Concordat
- 3) Outworlds Alliance
- 4) Illyrian Palatinate
- 5) Rim Worlds Republic
- 6) Tortuga Dominions



LEGEND

30 LIGHT YEARS

120 LIGHT YEARS OR 36.6 PARSECS

⊙ Region capital ⊙ District capital ⬤ National capital

MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS

Map compiled by COMSTAR.
From information provided by the COMSTAR EXPLORER CORPS
and the STAR LEAGUE ARCHIVES on Terra.

Coreward



Rimward



RISE AND FALL OF THE STAR LEAGUE

THE BURNED RECORDS

There has been much criticism of histories of the Star League era, claiming that the focus has been erratic—illuminating microscopic details of some events, while only covering others in the broadest detail. To some extent this reflects the biases of the historians in question, but it also reflects a stark reality of the history of this era: many records were destroyed or rendered inaccessible, leading to gaps in what we know of the situation. The Succession Wars caused much of this, but the Jihad played its part too. Archives and data repositories were frequently targets of these conflicts, their destruction commonly being referred to as the “burned records.” Frequently the material lost was that related to government-level documentation whereas private diaries and recollections survived the targeting of said infrastructure. As a result we are left with often-generalized historical data containing some fairly glaring gaps where information was “so obvious” to those at the time they failed to record it.

A classic example is the name of the Magistracy Campaign in the Reunification War. Broad histories survive, along with many diaries, but with the sacking of Atreus and Terra (more than once) a great deal of material joined the “burned records” or was placed out of reach by hostile governments who wished to conceal some past indiscretion or gain a strategic advantage by controlling the knowledge.

Ironically, the Clans filled in many of these gaps, the descendants of Aleksandr and Nicholas’ exodus having retained copies of the SLDF archives. Though the Clans have had a foothold in the Inner Sphere for almost forty years, they have been notoriously tight-lipped about their recent archives—while they happily talked about their own history, they were somewhat more guarded regarding the history of their blessed Star League era—and only with the publication of *Reunification War* have they allowed open access to some of their historical records “to correct the biases and inaccuracies inflicted upon our heritage” according to Laurie Tseng, Loremaster of the Council of Six. It wasn’t until the Council complained to the Republic about “misrepresentations” in our recent volume that the designation of the Magistracy Campaign as Operation ARDENT SHIELD became clear. To be fair, the name was known but it was one of a dozen operational names that appeared in documents of the era and its provenance was dubious

—*Personal annotation*, Paladin Victor Steiner-Davion

“Gueith camlann in qua arthur & medraut corruerunt et mortalitas in brittannia et in hibernia fuit.” (The strife of Camlann in which Arthur and Medraut perished, and there was plague in Britain and Ireland)

—*Annales Cambriae*, 10-13th Century

THE GOLDEN AGE

With the conclusion of the Reunification War in 2596 the Star League was complete and an era of peace and prosperity descended on the Inner Sphere and Periphery. Ian Cameron had only a little time to enjoy his victory; he died in 2602, two years after his wife, and was succeeded by his son Nicholas who bore the responsibility of reconstruction and political reunification. A serving SLDF officer, badly injured during peacekeeping operations in the Taurian Concordat, Nicholas knew firsthand the horrors of the Reunification War and worked diligently to repair both the physical and political damage inflicted on the territorial states. Despite this, the first great challenge for the new First Lord came not from the Periphery but from one of the Inner Sphere powers.

Never very stable, Leonard Kurita’s madness reached its zenith on 1 September 2604 when in a drunken rage he murdered one of the First Lord’s bodyguards, Tanya Kerensky, during a council session. He fled the Court of the Star League and for a few months war between the Star League and the Draconis Combine seemed inevitable. In the end, elements within the Combine dealt with the situation and a level of normalcy resumed.

By the late 2620s, the economic woes of the post-war era were finally put to rest and the Star League truly entered its golden age. The standard of living increased throughout the human sphere and both military and civilian technologies soared to hitherto unknown heights. On 1 January 2630, the universe suddenly shrank with the first use of the faster-than-light communications system now known as the hyperpulse generator (HPG). Unlike previous endeavors that were solely for military use (e.g. the “Black Box” system that first saw use in the Reunification War), HPGs would become part of the civilian infrastructure and revolutionized society in much the same way as the telegraph and telephone did in the nineteenth century. It was now possible to effectively govern an interstellar empire from the capital and several organizations emerged that had as their goal the deconstruction of the feudal society that had dominated the Age of War. For the most part these efforts failed—to many in the Inner Sphere and Periphery states the noble classes were seen as part of their cultural heritage—though some of the more extreme groups turned to harsher methods to get their message across. The best known of these is the Scourge of Death in the Free Worlds League who, in 2678, killed the Captain-General and many of the Marik clan. The backlash from that incident was devastating, resulting in both the annihilation of the organization and also the unseating of House Selaj, the Scourge’s backers, from Regulus.

Through the rose-tinted spectacles of hindsight, the years 2650 through 2750 are viewed as the Century of Peace. The reality was somewhat different. Though standards of living rose significantly, the riches and freedoms provided by the Star League were not enough for some and dissent rose, both within and between member states. As with the situation in the Free Worlds League, violence was often the result. Elsewhere proxy conflicts emerged.

The economy became a playground for speculators and governments alike, with the HPG network facilitating manipulations of unprecedented scale and geographical reach. Fortunes were lost and won and the Department of Economic Relations (DoER) suffered conniptions in its efforts to establish a pan-Star League currency, the Star League Dollar (SL\$), also referred to as the “Cameron Dollar” or “Cameron-Bill” (heralding the later C-Bill). Eventually the DoER was able to reign in the speculators but that didn’t head off large-scale economic troubles, most notably the Atreus Credit Crisis of the 2720s and 2730s.

THE FIRST HIDDEN WAR

More significantly for the SLDF was the militant nature of the Draconis Combine, many of whose warriors sought an outlet for their frustrations. The First Lord's Edict of 2650 had disenfranchised significant numbers of DCMS warriors, causing greater resentment than did the drawdowns mandated at the formation of the Star League (when the Reunification War provided an outlet for the Kurita warriors' frustrations). The Edict coincided with the rise in Combine militancy associated with Urizen Kurita's *Kokugaku* and the rise of interest in the ways of *Bushido*. The warriors disenfranchised by Michael Cameron's edict became *ronin*, masterless warriors, and the Kurita authorities on their new capital of Luthien disavowed all responsibility for their actions. At first, these troops sought to prove their strength against each other, forming schools and dojos. Like all such warriors, they sought greater and greater challenges and eventually they began to look beyond their social groups to the *gaijin*—foreigners—within their realm: the SLDF.

The first duel between the SLDF and *ronin* forces occurred on Benjamin in 2681. Amanda Kazutoyo, a dueling master in the Third Benjamin Regulars, issued a challenge to Fort Shandra. Initially the Star League forces declined the challenge but Kazutoyo refused to withdraw and for ten days maintained her vigil outside the gates. Eventually, Lieutenant Bradley Grebbers accepted the challenge—going against his commander's orders to do so—but lasted a little over ten minutes against the skilled Dueling Master. With the execution of Grebbers by Kazutoyo the SLDF became incensed, and what became known as the First Hidden War began. Over the next seventy years the SLDF and DCMS *ronin* fought more than 300 duels, with much of the early advantage going to the skilled Combine duelists. Eventually the SLDF fought back with the ACMS (Advanced Combat and Maneuvering Skills) Project, later renamed the Gunslinger Program, instilling select warriors with the skills needed to prevail in such encounters. The *ronin* were not discouraged by the improved SLDF performance—quite the opposite, in fact—but by the time of the last clash in 2751, the honors were more or less even between the combatants. Though wasteful—death was often the fate for the loser, either the subject of a *coup de grâce* or to atone for their failure—these duels served as a pressure-release valve for the militaristic Kurita warriors.

CLIQUEs AND CLASHES

The signatories of the Star League Accords were very aware of the fractious natures of the member states and knew that the only way of ensuring peace and stability was to build bridges between the future rulers of the member and territorial states. Though never official policy, many of the council lords positioned their progeny to benefit from the lessons of the war and to work together for the greater good; Nicholas Cameron, Rhean Marik and Kevin Dinesen all participated in the conflict to some degree and their shared experiences brought them together as a loose alliance among the heirs of the Great Houses. Joined by Zane Davion and Rinalla Centrella the "kids clique" gained a level of notoriety in the last years of the twenty-sixth century before the responsibilities of governing their respective nations caused them to drift apart. Those outside the clique may have felt slighted, none more so than the paranoid Leonard Kurita whose murder of Tanya Kerensky shocked the Star League and pushed the alliance to the brink of war, but their cooperation and understanding allowed the League to stabilize and prosper despite the difficult circumstances.

Unfortunately the balancing act could not continue. With the death of Magestrix Rinalla Centrella and the deposing of Captain-General Rhean Marik tempers flared in the council chambers at just the wrong moment. The cost of reconstructing the

Periphery realms and paying for the Reunification War had been managed by financial wizardry and diplomatic skill. With tensions rising, the economy and courts became proxy battlefields, plunging several states into difficulties. They would recover, but forty years of trust and planning were discarded. For all that it is perceived as a "golden age" the members of the Star League soon began to look for what would benefit them rather than what was best for humanity as a whole. Nowhere would this self-interest be more apparent than in the run up to the Amaris Coup and in the civil war that ensued.

—from *Leaders and Libertines*, Mikhail Von Bohrs, Terra Press, 2907

