

COMSTAR

HISTORY

Since the death of the Star League, ComStar has been the neutral (and sometimes not so neutral) center of learning and technology in the Inner Sphere. They were the organization that knew everybody's secrets, the organization that controlled communications, the organization that had access to technology other realms could not hope to match after the devastation of the first two Succession Wars. Their mission was to lead mankind out of the fires of death and destruction into a brave new world, with ComStar in charge. It is ironic that in a way they did.

The Clan Invasion and the knowledge that Terra was their target irrevocably changed ComStar from the role of not-so-neutral religious watcher to that of the secular defenders of the Inner Sphere against the Invading Clans. Their conversion caused the schism of the Word of Blake-the heart and soul of the old ComStar-and indirectly caused the Jihad. Some believe that ComStar would have done something similar no matter what, but this historian is not so certain.

But whatever the case may be, post-schism ComStar had taken up its mantle as defenders of the entire Inner Sphere very-for lack of a better word-religiously. They became the martial arm of the Star League when it was reformed to take the war to the Clans, and it was, in part, their intelligence assets that uncovered the duplicitous nature of the Word of Blake before the fateful Star League Conference of 3067.

The Conference itself went well at first, with Thomas Marik voted in as the next First Lord of the Star League. The vote was unanimous, with none able to raise voice or hand against his nomination. But when matters came to the vote on Word of

Blake membership in the Star League, ComStar brought forth its findings. Other nations noted similar suspicions, and in the end the Word of Blake was officially censured and declared persona non-grata in the Star League. Once again, the vote was unanimous.

The Word of Blake response was to attack those who had voted against them. They started with the capital of each House, and ComStar's unofficial headquarters on Tukayyid. The battle of Tukayyid shattered a quarter of ComStar's fleet, including the *Sovetskii Soyuz*-class *Blake's Vengeance*, and left the rest of the orbiting fleet in ruins. The Word of Blake also fired a large number of nuclear warheads at Tukayyid, hoping to wipe out ComStar's central command, but they were thwarted by advanced anti-missile defenses placed around ComStar's compounds. Many of the warheads did hit the planet, causing heavy damage to the ecological system that has still not been repaired, but few ground-based military assets were lost.

ComStar wasted little time assaulting the Word of Blake in return, but to effectively fight the scattered Word forces they, had to split their forces up. Soon ComStar ground and naval forces could be seen throughout the Inner Sphere in small numbers, fighting their former brethren. The *Cameron*-class *Invisible Truth* joined up with the damaged Wolf's Dragoon's fleet to support the main action against the Word of Blake near Terra. The *Black Lion*-class *Blake's Strength* and its detachment, on the other hand, jumped into the Federated Suns to hunt down the Word fleet there. After a number of battles throughout the disintegrating House, they hunted the Word down over Dieron and Galax in 3071.

Though the damage to those systems' industrial capabilities was catastrophic, the losses inflicted on the Word fleet forced them to retreat from further battles with ComStar. ComStar split up further and a series of sharp battles between them, the Federated Suns, and the Word ran throughout the rest of 3071 and the better part of 3072 until the Word presence in the Federated Suns ceased to exist. Returning to Outreach in early 3073, the *Blake's Strength* and the Federated Sun's *Avalon*-class *Melissa Davion's* escorts spent much of the year repairing battle damage and preparing for the next stage of the war. The Federated Sun's ships, smaller in number, relaunched first, but the *Blake's Strength*, horribly damaged in the last battle over Delavan, was unable to leave until late 3073.

Meanwhile, the *Invisible Truth* and the Wolf's Dragoons' fleet moved to engage the Word of Blake near Terra with a heavy assault across all fronts. Supported on the ground by the Allied Mercenary Command as well as the Ridzik brothers and their allies, it was ComStar and the Wolf's Dragoons that fought the Word fleets, opening the worlds of the Word Hegemony up to ground assault. In late 3072, they surrounded Caph, destroyed much of the remaining Word fleets, landed troops from every allied nation, and smashed the Word of Blake's First, Fourth, and Fifth Divisions into wreckage. The last stronghold short of Terra, the Word forces fought to the death in a bitter scorched earth campaign that nearly wiped out the world. But under assault by overwhelming firepower and unable to retreat the system due to WarShip interdiction, the Word presence on Caph effectively ceased to exist.

In May 3073, the Federated Suns fleet came out of the docks of Outreach to bolster the ComStar and Wolf's Dragoons' fleet under the flag of the Star League, and followed them into Terra on the first major

assault. The Word of Blake pushed the Star League fleet out of the Terran system with heavy casualties, and the fleets pulled back to Outreach for repairs. By the end of the year, as the *Blake's Strength* and her force prepared to jump into Lyran Alliance space, a fleet from the Free Worlds League arrived to support the Star League. Small numbers of League and Federation ships supported the *Blake's Strength* and her escorts, but most prepared to hit Terra again with the *Invisible Truth*. They entered the Terran system in late July, smashing through the first level of Word of Blake defenses, but they soon found themselves surrounded by over a thousand Word of Blake small craft and retreated rather than risk complete destruction of the fleet.

The Star League fleet, centered on *Blake's Strength*, entered the rump Lyran Alliance in December 3073, and quickly moved to quell the risk of Blake reprisals on worlds caught supporting Archon Adam Steiner and his shattered armies. A heavy battle over Gibbs resulted in a Word defeat, and the Star League used the Ioto Galactic yards there to repair damages before jumping on to Donegal in March. Fierce Word resistance at Donegal destroyed a quarter of the Star League fleet but left the Word presence in tatters, allowing the Archon's troops to take the world in mere months. The fleet returned to Gibbs for more repairs as the Archon finished his preparations to hit Tharkad. In September 3074, the Star League and the Archon finally made their move and hit Tharkad with all of their remaining forces. The Word put up another heavy fight, leaving the *Kimagure*-class *Katherine Steiner* as the only Lyran WarShip left. Of the Star League force that hit Tharkad, the *Aegis*-class *Avenging Sword* was the largest survivor, but its K-F drive would never work again. In the end, the shattered ship was scrapped for spare parts. Only the *Essex*-

class *Hammerstrike* returned to Outreach, but it brought with it the *Katherine Steiner* and the remains of the Archon's army.

As the Star League fleet in the Lyran Alliance prepared for the battle of Tharkad, the Star League fleet at Outreach jumped out to hit Terra in August 3074. A series of sharp naval engagements pushed the Word forces back until, by November 3075, the Star League navy had secured their hold on the outer Terran system. The battle for the powerful Titan Yards in May was especially gruesome for all sides, but ComStar knew the Word would destroy it rather than let it fall into their hands again. They attacked it hard, forcing the Word to commit their small craft and remaining naval defenses to battle. ComStar then put a secret plan into motion. An hour later, as the Word and Star League navies sparred on the outskirts of the yards, a series of powerful neutron bombs exploded in the yards, killing every living organism in them. The Word naval forces retreated, with their small craft escorting them, to the inner system where the fortifications of Mars stopped the Star League fleet. Unable to advance further, the Star League forces invaded every major rock in the outer system as they repaired their damage at Titan Yards.

In March 3076, the navy said it was ready and began the advance with the Lyran *Katherine Steiner*, leaving the Titan Yards behind to begin accelerating into the inner system. After achieving a significant fraction of the speed of light, the navy launched a large salvo of missiles, turned around, and began slowing down for a final combat over Mars. The missiles shot in on their terminal runs, moving faster than any point defense system expected, as the fleet closed the range. They exploded in a rolling barrage of dirty nuclear explosions around Mars that shredded the minefields, the forts supporting them, and many of their fighters

and small craft, allowing the Star League fleet to move directly to Mars.

But the Word of Blake refused to let them go in easily and marshaled what remained of their space forces to hold off the Star League fleet. The last five Word of Blake WarShips, over a hundred DropShips, over a thousand fighters, and nearly five hundred small craft went out to meet the invaders and drew a line in space. The Battle of the Line as it became known was a bloody fight that shattered half of the Star League fleet-including the *Invisible Truth*-and left its fighter assets in tatters. But it left the Word of Blake without a measurable space force. The remains of the Star League fleet entered Martian orbit and supported the landings of forces from every nation involved in the war, subduing the planet easily.

Then the Star League fleet moved on to Terra itself, the homeworld of mankind. The only resistance came from a scattering of old Reagan Space Defense System positions on Luna and Terra. The Regular *Black Lion*-class *Xanthos* and the rest of her fleet simply nuked the Word of Blake positions in response, and mushroom clouds billowed over Africa to the horror of the rest of the Star League. Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion and many others protested the action, but few had much fire in their words. Every nation had seen the Word nukes, and even the most idealistic of them felt a small amount of vindication in seeing the Word get their own medicine. So they protested the assault, salving their conscience by saying they were against it, and then did nothing as the Regulans did it again. They protested again, of course, but even less forcefully this time. By early 3077, the entire SDS had been wiped out by orbital strikes, but the Word of Blake fought on.

But even while the SDS survived, ComStar hit every continent of Terra with

every ground force they could pull from every world in the Inner Sphere, and the true war for Terra began. On every continent, weapons flared and the world suffered as ComStar and the Word fought tooth and nail—no quarter expected, no quarter given. The FedCom Civil War was a mild sibling squabble compared to what ComStar and the Word did to each other as 3076 and 3077 passed.

In Africa the Regulans supported them, South America saw the Allied Mercenary Command and Tikonov, Western Europe was the target of Lyran combat drops, while the Federated Suns supported the attack on Australia. The Mariks, Stewarts, and the Oriente supported the war in Asia, but on Antarctica and North America they were alone at first. Antarctica fell relatively quickly to ComStar, as the African front collapsed into an orgy of weapons of mass destruction. North America soon proved to be a stalemate, but South America found the Word collapsing and the Star League slowly rolled up into North America as the Regulans marched through the ancient Middle East, where fossil fuels had once been prominent.

The war in Western Europe and Asia proved painful as well, with the Word unwilling to surrender and the Star League unable to destroy them, until the Regulans hit Moscow and cut off the two sectors of resistance from each other. With the western steppes of Russia and their bountiful food production denied to the Word, the Star League slowly began to grind them down, starving them into submission. July 3077 saw ComStar's Third Army, with AMC and Tikonov support, smash into the North American subcontinent with a vengeance. They captured Wichita, the base of North American Defense, in August and continued on to Hilton Head, marching in force. What remained of the Word of Blake defenses (mines, weapons turrets, dug in infantry,

vehicles, BattleMechs, and even the last of their AeroFighters) pushed them off, just as they had defeated every previous attack. Stalemated again, ComStar prepared for a long siege of Hilton Head.

Then, in a show of force that once again shocked the Star League member states and even the Word of Blake, the Regular *Xanthos* flew into an orbital pattern over Hilton Head and wiped it off the face of the Earth in a sustained bombardment that all but erased the island from existence: the Final Solution to the Word of Blake Problem. This time, only Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion had the heart to protest the action, but even he seemed drained by it and had little force behind it. The rest of the war was simple cleanup actions, and in 3078 Terra was declared cleansed of Word of Blake activity. In reality, scattered pockets of Word resistance, along with the odd Word terrorist, continued to trouble Terra into the early 3080s, but their power had been broken and they received little support. There has been no discernable footprint of Word activity since the March 3085 bombings in London and Paris.

On 24 November 3078, Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion declared a year of mourning for the lost lives in the Jihad, one that would end on 25 November 3079, with the first Star League Conference on Terra in four centuries. The various nations of the Star League returned to their own business for that year, beginning the long process of rebuilding, as ComStar did the same on Terra. It no longer had a home in what had once been the Rasalhague Republic, having joined with the Ghost Bears during the Jihad, and they put all of their effort into Terra, uncovering and reinvigorating its shattered industries and economy.

On 5 March 3079, a single JumpShip arrived from the Combine, claiming to carry

a member of the Kurita family. With Hassid Ricol in command of the Draconis Combine it had become a hostile place for the Kurita family, but it was an open secret that the Azami protected their ancient allies, and had been trusted in turn by Theodore Kurita when he was Coordinator. When the Star League searched the ship, it soon became known how much Theodore had trusted them. Long thought dead to a bomber's plot, Omi Kurita was alive and well, and had been in Azami care since her "tragic death."

Omi and Victor instantly began plans for their long-delayed wedding, as the Star League Council grew closer. On 25 November, the delegates had arrived and the Council met to vote for the next First Lord. None had been elected since 3067, though Victor had taken up many of the duties of that position. He was elected by the existing members of the Star League as the First Lord, despite Coordinator Ricol's protests, and then the Council moved to the process of accepting applications from the various new states into the Star League. The debate became a howling match between the House Lords that refused to admit they no longer "owned" the nations trying to enter, and the House Lords who refused to allow the others to gain "ghost votes" in the Council. In the end, only the Tikonov Free Republic, having shown itself to be neutral in the matters of the Houses, was allowed into the League, though the Ghost Bears successfully defended the Rasalhague Dominion's claim as sole beneficiary of the Rasalhague Republic's old seat.

But possibly the most explosive event in that Council was ComStar's report on the status of the Inner Sphere and their plan to rebuild it. The flagship of that plan was a new form of K-F drive. Discovered by ComStar in the ruins of a Star League base within the old Lyrn Alliance, it was a very old form of the K-F drive, one that predated the modern definitions of DropShip

and JumpShip. The smaller drive came from the pre-Star League days when JumpShips accelerated directly to planets without relying on DropShips. ComStar passed out the plans, offered to support every nation in refitting their factories to build the new drives and the larger engines that would make the JumpShips mobile again, and once again affirmed its ancient role as neutral in all matters.

Then, as the Council closed on 12 December, Omi Kurita and Victor Steiner-Davion performed their marriage ceremonies before the assembled members of the Star League and the other nations that had come for the Council. Only Coordinator Hassid Ricol, after having his extradition request for the "renegade Omi Kurita" laughed out of the Council, refused to attend the ceremony.

For the next ten years, ComStar sat back as a neutral provider of HPG services, using the income to rebuild Terra and to begin manufacturing a massive network of defenses on every world within thirty-five light-years of Terra. To this day, the Federation of Skye has refused to allow ComStar to set up any defenses on their worlds, distrusting ComStar "neutrality", though the Ridziks have seemed happy to allow someone else to fortify their worlds. In another area, ComStar helped the various factories in the Human Sphere to refit the JumpShip factories to the lighter K-F drive standard.

It also saw the Star League slowly accepting new members every three years at the Councils, though always with bitter arguments from many of the House leaders. More than once, ComStar negotiated favorable HPG contracts to gain votes for smaller nations, in exchange for more expensive contracts for the nation they were helping. This "vote buying" using ComStar as an intermediary expanded the Star League greatly in the 3080s but is no longer needed

now as the membership has grown far beyond the original handful of nation states. The old Houses no longer have a stranglehold on votes in the Council, a fact they sometimes bemoan. The “new” members, all of whom had ComStar as a champion, now hold the majority of seats in the Council. If any one organization can claim to control the Star League, it is ComStar. ComStar, of course, does not make that claim.

In the 3091 Council, ComStar came out with another proposal that has further cemented their position of power, though as with HPGs, it is simply to help the Human Sphere become a better place. The proposal included a number of stations built throughout the Human Sphere with banks of batteries designed to replace spent Lithium-Fusion batteries on JumpShips to allow them to make a jump within a day of arriving in system, safely and for a modest fee. The first station was built over Terra in 3092, and a link to Outreach was finished in 3093, allowing for swift travel between the two worlds. It was extended to Hall in 3093, and has continued to expand since then as the “modest fees” continue to build up. Reinvesting the profits into the “Jump Stations”, ComStar now has a station at every system within 150 light-years of Terra, and “Jump Lines” out to many capital worlds further out. ComStar made it clear in the beginning, and has continued to do so since, that the “Jump Lines” are for civilian use only. They never replace batteries on

WarShips and have made it clear that they will Interdict any nation that attempts to force them to do so. No nation has attempted to force the issue.

In addition to those endeavors, ComStar’s Explorer Corps has continued to explore the area around and in the Human Sphere, constantly looking for old Star League bases and for foes that could threaten it as the Clans once did, or perhaps still do. Since the Jihad, even the Invading Clans have been cut off from the Homeworld Clans and no ship passing the Veil of Kerensky has ever returned. Coupled with the stories the Diamond Sharks (before retaking their old name) and the Hell’s Horses told of a major Blood Spirit-led assault on the Star Adders shortly before contact was lost, many within ComStar wonder what, if anything, hides behind the Veil of Kerensky. These questions have so far remained unanswered, but Precentor I Arthur Marik-Steiner-Davion has been spending the last three years assembling a fleet at Columbus to make a recon in force of the Veil and the Clan Homeworlds. A small number of destroyers and frigates from the member states of the Star League and the nearby Inner Rim realms have joined the fleet as well. The combined fleet is scheduled to leave on 5 January, after Precentor XVI Lisa Reine arrives with her flagship, the *Manassas*, to take command. ComStar plans to put their findings before the Star League Council of 3100 when it convenes in November.

MILITARY

ComStar's military is spread throughout the Human Sphere, guarding HPGs and working with local systems to fight pirates. They never take sides in international fights, maintaining strict neutrality between established states. The massive *Dante*-class cruisers built by Titan Yards, and the smaller *Mars*-class destroyers that escort them, dominate the main battle fleet, but smaller *Terra*, *Venus*, and *Titan* ships are often seen throughout the Human Sphere and beyond, patrolling or exploring the vastness of space. The *Huscarl* Omnifighter is the most common small escort seen surrounding ComStar ships, but the *Champion LAM* and other spacecraft of Star League design are also seen often. Kept secret from all other nations is the fact

that all ComStar WarShips can jump thirty-five light-years at a time. The few ships that survived the war have been retrofitted to the new standard, and all new production uses the new K-F drives.

The *Viking* OmniMech is the most common BattleMech seen on ComStar garrisons. It is capable of being outfitted for nearly any mission and of defending HyperPulse Generators against nearly any foe. A large number of Star League BattleMechs have also been seen in the ComGuard, but no one knows if they are new-builds or retrofitted old BattleMechs. Chevalier scout tanks and *Beowulf* OmniMechs accompany every Explorer Corps mission as well.

KNOWN FACTORIES

Other nations assume that numerous other factories of Terra and other worlds under its command have been rebuilt, but have received no substantiation of their beliefs. Only these are confirmed, and only because new units of these classes have been confirmed built since the Jihad.

Terra - Aldis Industries - Demolisher and Schrek tank

- Bluth Corporation - *Buster Class XXX* HaulerMech, *Carbine* ConstructionMech

- Donovan-Miter - Donovan-Miter Magellan Series Five

- Millennium Industries - Chevalier Wheeled Scout Tank

- Mitchell Vehicles - *Viking* and *Beowulf* OmniMechs; Prowler 2 Exploration Tank

- O'Neil Yards - *Magellan* JumpShip

- Titan Yards - *Dante* cruiser, *Mars* destroyer, *Titan* scout, *Venus* patrol frigate, and *Terra* escort frigate; *Huscarl* Omnifighter; *Champion* LAM

- Windancer Marine Technologies - Silverfin Coastal Cutter

SYSTEM INFORMATION

THE TERRAN SYSTEM – The Terran system is the cradle of mankind, and the single most densely industrialized system in the known the universe. Its factories fueled the exodus of humanity into the greater universe, and to this day it continues to provide the resources that ComStar needs to scout the far reaches of our new homes out there. It is home to four habitable worlds and thousands, if not tens of thousands, of settled asteroids and moons, and the oldest schools and research centers in the universe. Terra is the cradle, and the Terran system was our first playpen. But do not think that we have grown beyond it. The known universe is centered on Terra for a reason, and ever will it remain so.

TERRA - Terra was, without a doubt, the most beautiful planet in the universe when the Star League was in full flower. By the 26th century, technology had eliminated pollution. This coupled with the exodus of more than three-fourths of the planet's population over the years, allowed Terra to regain some of her natural beauty. Forests grew back over abandoned farms, streams and rivers washed themselves clean, and the air became sweet again.

Because so many people left Terra for the colonies, many cities were abandoned and were eventually reclaimed by Mother Nature. The cities that remained, usually ones with great historical significance, were restored and improved to take advantage of modern transportation and sanitation. Heavy industries were confined to parks outside the cities.

But the Amaris Coup and the Jihad shattered much of it with nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. The two wars devastated many of its greatest cities, causing the loss of thousands of years of civilization, but the years since the Jihad have seen a new beginning for the cradle of humanity. ComStar has spared no expense to rebuild the worst wounded cities, to cleanse the lands of radiation, chemical, or biological poisons, and to rebuild its lost defenses.

The Court of the Star League in Unity City, the capital of the new Star League, has been cleansed and rebuilt, the

miraculously-spared Geneva is the capital of the Terran system, and dozens of factories in space and on Terra itself keep the rebuilding going. A busy world, the Jihad has driven a people long accustomed to sitting back and watching as things happen around them to work harder than they have in centuries. They have realized that Terra is vulnerable and now busily move from one task to another, always working to make Terra powerful enough to never again feel what happened in the Jihad and the Amaris Coup.

VENUS – The second of four habitable worlds in the Terran star system, Venus is closest to Terra and arguably the most habitable outside of the home world. Ancient Star League atmospheric factories have been replaced with plants that feed off the local atmosphere, converting it to breathable gasses and keeping its temperature to a bearable level. Millions of people have returned to Venus, taking once again the ancient abandoned cities for their own and expanding out on a yearly basis. A world that people once thought would die now has new life and a new future, much like that of Terra's. It is a world where people go to find a new life and where hard work is rewarded.

MARS – The third of four habitable worlds in the Terran star system, Mars' thin atmosphere requires all but locals, genetically engineered centuries ago, to wear breather masks, and in some cases even light environment suits, to survive. Home to numerous Star League and ComStar bases, it has a high proportion of military to civilian citizens. Its buildings tend to reflect its martial culture, low, heavily fortified, and lacking in most decorations. Martian trees are kept far away from nearly all buildings, as are any of the bushes that live on it now, to maintain clear-fire zones, and the Martian War Academy graduates hundreds each year in every major military branch.

TITANI – The last of the habitable worlds in the Terran star system, the word habitable is considered a loose definition. Colonized to support the orbiting Titan Yards, every building sports its own atmospheric recyclers, and all cities reside under massive domes. Maintained for the sole purpose of supporting the shipyards, the only civilians are the workers and their families, all of whom live separately from the military, which resides in its own bases.

THE BELTS – The main asteroid belt orbiting between Mars and Jupiter, the Kupler Belt, the Oort Cloud, and the La Grange points that lead and follow Jupiter in its orbit around Sol are home to over a billion Belters. Most of them live in massive rotating cities built inside asteroids, but they are always expanding into crude tunnel warrens in new asteroids, looking for more precious metals and other materials. They are an insular people, independent from planet-bound humanity for the better part of eight centuries. Despite this, they are friendly to visitors and they did finally join the Star League in the 3094 Council, accepting a seat to voice the concerns of Belters throughout the Human Sphere.

CAMBRIDGE PERIMETER DEFENSE STATION –

Controlled by the Jade Falcons before they abandoned the system during the Jihad, ComStar stepped in to take over and expand the defenses. Now sporting a number of large armed military stations at both major jump points, a constant fleet presence maintains its position as a major ComStar base in the Inner Rim.

BAZAAR – Jointly-held by ComStar and Clan Sea Fox, ComStar has defended this crossroads of trade in the Outer Rim since shortly after the Jihad.

CHAINELANE LIGHTHOUSE –

A former Jade Falcon transfer and cargo station near the Chainelane Isles, this world has become a major port of call on the route between the Inner Sphere and the Outer Rim. Its name comes from the ancient Terran lighthouses that warned of danger, much as this world warns that civilization is at an end. Corewards of it are the Chainelane Isles and The Barrens, lawless regions where pirates and small-time despots rule with an iron hand. Convoys protected by ComStar warships regularly take merchants from the Lighthouse to Clan Snord space where they can easily find convoys traveling deeper into the Inner Sphere.

COLUMBUS – The most prominent extra-Terran possession of ComStar, this Terran-like world has been the headquarters of the Explorer Corps for Coreward and Spinward missions since before the Jihad. DropShip yards on the planet allow it to repair any ship that can land, while its hollowed-out moon, Amor, can service or build any ship that can't land. Though its importance has faded in the years since the Jihad and the loss of contact with the Homeworld Clans, ComStar continues to send expeditions to find out what happened to them from time to time. But even now JumpShips are rare, and none that have passed Kerensky's Veil have returned, so such expeditions are rare. In the last three years, the level of activity has risen to levels never seen before as ComStar has been assembling a large multi-national fleet of WarShips over Columbus. Governor Haruka Otanashi has been working with these fleets closely, helping them generate plans to send them on another mission to breach the Veil.

CTESIPHON – A simple cargo relay station in the New Periphery, this world sports a settlement barely large enough to service the needs of visiting DropShip and JumpShip crews of any nationality.

DECUS ARAE – a small planet technically within the Marian Hegemony, this windswept world sports weather extremes that force most people indoors. Only the coasts are comfortable for human life, but mercenaries contracted by ComStar found a Star League storehouse and factory on it before the Jihad. All reports declare the factories destroyed during the Jihad by a Word of Blake assault, but afterwards ComStar established an Explorer Corps headquarters in system to administer anti-Spinward expeditions. Many wonder if the old factories are as dead as the reports declare, but information is scarce.

GEMINI – A system with two habitable worlds orbiting a common gravitational null point, the larger of the two worlds has an oppressively dense atmosphere and a powerful gravity field. The smaller world is much more Terran and is a comfortable place for people to live. Discovered between Randis and the Taurian Concordat by ComStar shortly before the Jihad, the Taurians arrived in 3064 to claim the system as their own. ComStar has maintained their presence in system, building a large base there that now administers all Rimward Explorer Corps expeditions.

GHEENT – Approximately 300 light-years Rimward of Kerensky's Veil, this is the most Coreward permanent garrison and cargo transfer point ComStar has been able to maintain. All attempts to start permanent bases closer to the nebula have failed, many for reasons unknown. Reports suggest that humans removed some however, or so ComStar believes.

GWITHIAN – A colony of Celtic ancestry occupied by the Diamond Sharks before the Jihad, ComStar took up formal protection of the system after that war. Clan Sea Fox continues to perform healthy trade with the small population, and has helped it

to build up substantial local industries.

HARRIS – This is a major recon, defense, and supply base that ships visit when jumping between the Hanseatic League and Nouveaux Paris, as well as the various minor trading worlds in the Outer Rim.

KINIBRACE – This is the primary junction that Hanseatic traders use to link up with the well-mapped trading route between the Inner Sphere and Nueva Castille, the edge of civilized space in the Coreward New Periphery. It has grown into a thriving colony in the last three decades, servicing travelers with a passion that would make a Herotitian or a Canopian blush.

NOUVEAUX PARIS – A thriving world of two billion inhabitants in the Outer Rim, this ComStar protectorate has made great progress in the last three decades. Having fallen nearly to nineteenth century technology in the years since ethnic French colonized the world in 2398, the influx of new technology that ComStar and Clan Sea Fox brought has started a revolution of sorts. In mere decades, they have returned to space, exploring and placing bases throughout their system, and only the lack of ability to build JumpShips has kept them from becoming a major power in the Outer Rim. They have however purchased several JumpShips and have been using them to colonize nearby worlds in order to limit “overcrowding” on their homeworld.

RAMSEY – One of many systems on the route to Nueva Castille, only a small settlement services passing ships.

SANTIAGO IV – Near Kinbrace, many people retire here where things are “quieter” but still close enough to easily travel to that central trade world. It also services traveling sailors but is a bit more reserved about its services than many other ports of call in the Outer Rim.

ST. JEAN – A colony founded by Franciscan monks, this world is one of the last links in the jump line that takes traders to Nueva Castille. Spanish influences from Castille are common here, as many from that area of space have moved here.

TRINITY – Yet another link on the jump line to Nueva Castille and the Hanseatic League, this small world sees many traveling traders.

WARK – Home to a former Steel Viper garrison, the animal that Clan was named after has managed to thrive here, to the dismay of the few people that live here. Mostly huddled around the space port and living behind walls, spacers are still cautioned about the dangers of that animal, as they have found their way past the walls in search of “sweet meats” in the past.