

Free Worlds League

History

In 3067, everything was looking up for the Free Worlds League. Oh, there was the common infighting and of course the Great Debate that raged through the end of 3067 actually showed promise of doing the unthinkable. Ending the rule of the Captain-General. But Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik of Augustine proved incapable of commanding enough support to actually do that. Many in the Parliament did not attack her, not wishing to bring extra sympathy to her cause, but rumors ran rampant that she was simply lashing out at Thomas because he'd 'wisely chosen not to become involved in the FedCom Civil War.' That fact that her mother had died in it still brought sympathy to her, but not enough votes. Despite the Great Debate, the Free Worlds League looked strong and healthy, looking forward to a bright future.

Then came the Star League Conference of 3067. The first round of business, to choose a new Star Lord, went smoothly and well. If anything could of taken the heart out of the Great Debate it was seeing Thomas Marik voted in as the new Star Lord. In fact, it looked like the Great Debate would die stillborn, until the Star League Conference continued unto the next round of business. The voting in of a new member state. When Thomas Marik himself put the Word of Blake's name to the floor, it looked as if they would be voted in easily. Few trusted them, but they'd been careful not to step on any toes of late and nobody knew what they were up to.

Except ComStar. ComStar didn't know everything, not by half, but in recent months a few sources, since silenced by the Word of Blake ROM, had managed to send them just enough information that Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion was able to figuratively nail their hands to the table. Seeing proof of even a handful of their actions was enough to stop the Council from voting them in, and a subsequent vote to censor them gained a unanimous backing. Even the new Star Lord was horrified by what he saw in the records.

HPG signals flashed throughout the Inner Sphere, signaling the censor of Word of Blake, except in the Capellan Confederation and Free Worlds League where the Word of Blake controlled the HPGs. But Thomas had other ways to get information into his realm, and as the information filtered in, even Word of Blake began to splinter. The more moderate forces of the Word had no wish to be pulled into hell along with the more fanatical elements of their organization. And word spread quickly, even through the fleet.

Over Atreus, the FWLS *Corinth* and her battlegroup cleansed themselves of Word of Blake crewmembers just in time to die. As other squadrons arrived, under Word of Blake control, the *Corinth* challenged them, and the fighting that erupted decimated both forces, defender and attacker alike. It took three weeks for the wreckage of the *Corinth* to rain down on the world. But she'd died saving the Word of Blake's target. The Parliament.

Horried at the sudden loss of their own fleet, the Free Worlds League Parliament declared war on the Word of Blake instantly, and ordered what forces they had left to kill

or capture any Word of Blake member they found. Whichever was easier. As the League military spread out across Atreus and the other nearby worlds, fighting a massive Word Fifth Column buried in their own space, the Word of Blake prepared another strike. The Star League was about to vote to bring its whole force down on the Word of Blake as a united whole. The Word wanted that whole disrupted, so they arranged for proof of Thomas Marik's true lineage to be released into the public in January 3068.

The news flashed across the HPG network like wild fire, and the Star League Council fractured in horror at the idea that they'd elected a Word of Blake plant to the First Lordship. At the same time, the Free Worlds League was similarly fracturing at the same news. It took mere days for them to come to the conclusion that the news was correct. Genetics did not lie. The vote to remove him as Captain-General was nearly unanimous. The vote to place the title on Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik garnered even more votes, hers being one of the few that voted against it.

But she was stuck with the post, and she took it regretfully. As she began to try to come to terms with her new position, the Word of Blake's next stratagem came active as they sent word to worlds saying if they left the Free Worlds League and allowed House Marik to rot as it so richly deserved, they would be left alone. Tamarind, Zion, Andurien, Abbey District, and dozens of other worlds instantly took them up on the offer, confused by the recent events. Stewart and Oriente stood by the new Captain-General though, and they fought side by side as the Word of Blake moved in for the kill. The Regulans fought their own war though, trying desperately to survive as the Word of Blake kept hitting them.

For two long years, the original founders of the Free Worlds League fought their two separate wars against the Word of Blake, pulling together their shattered fleets and BattleMech regiments to fight the shadows who had lived in their midst for so long. The damage cascading through the heart of the Free Worlds League was a devastating sight to anyone watching, but they kept fighting on. And when the Regulans pulled out their own weapons of mass destruction to match what the Word was throwing at them, everything went from bad to worse.

AeroSpace Fighters flying with nukes assaulted Word of Blake WarShips, gases not seen in centuries were flung at Word of Blake BattleMechs, and Regular space became a firestorm of destruction. It climaxed when the Regular fleet arrived over Gibson and dropped hundreds of nuclear missiles on the world, wiping it free of human life and all works of mankind. It was the ultimate Final Solution to the Word of Blake Problem.

In the meantime, the Stewarts, Mariks, and Oriente found themselves fighting their own losing battle. Their fleets shattered over Marik in 3070, they watched helplessly as the Word of Blake bombarded the world from orbit. But like the Regulans they fought on. Unlike the Regulans though, they didn't have any secret stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction. More than once though, they used weapons "liberated" from the Word, and they welcomed Word of Blake defectors into their midst more than the Regulans did. The Word of Blake was still winning, but chaos ruled in Stewart, Marik, and Oriente

space as League and Word forces moved from planet to planet without any clue of what they would find next.

When the Regular fleet, fresh from victory over Gibson, smashed into Marik space and dealt with another Word fleet over Atreus, they signaled the end of the Word assault on the League. It would be another two years before the joint Marik-Stewart-Oriente-Regular fleet destroyed them in 3072, but the battle over Atreus was when the balance shifted. After seeing a Fifth Column war of a ferocity not seen since the Amaris War, the Marik Commonwealth of 3072 was a shattered wreck of its pre-war strength.

The Anduriens for their part, finally seeing the Capellans getting their due, saw the chance to retake their former territory, and hit Sun Tzu where it hurt. In the backside. As that war raged, what remained of the Free Worlds League repaired their shattered fleets, licking their wounds and waiting to return the favor. When the Federated Suns fleet and the remnants of ComStar fleet attacked Terra under the ComStar banner, the Free Worlds League fleet moved to support them. Arriving too late for the first battle, they supported the survivors of the defeat as they went in again and again, trying to dislodge the Word fleet.

In 3076, after nearly four years of fighting in and around the Terran star system and receiving more reinforcements from the remains of the Lyran Alliance, the Star League fleet finally shattered what was left of the Word of Blake fleet and took command of the orbitals. It took two more years of fighting, with the Regulans willing to fight the Word with atrocity for atrocity, before the Star League finally defeated the Word of Blake. Shattered by nearly a decade of fighting, the remaining Star League member states returned home to see what they could rebuild.

Captain-General Alys Rousset-Marik set aside her rank before a reduced Parliament and put forward a motion to repeal Resolution 288 and the Addendum to Incorporation. They passed with flying colors, and the Free Worlds League ambassadors moved throughout the governments once a part of their realm, trying to bring them back into the fold. The vast majority of worlds and governments returned, though the worlds conquered by the Federated Suns and Lyran Commonwealth during the Fourth Succession War declined, having already chosen en masse to join the Tikonov Free Republic.

But by the turn of the decade, the Free Worlds League Parliament hosted nearly as many representatives as it had before the Jihad. Business continued, and the various governments of the League went their own way, no longer lorded over by the central government. The League still kept a small military and a few worlds under central authority. Atreus and Gibson were two of those worlds. But the Free Worlds League as it existed under Thomas Marik was gone.

Gone was the slow loss of regional biases he spent decades to fight. Gone was the feeling of unity seen in the League of 3067. Gone was the massive economy and feeling of wealth. The League was a collection of nation states that often did little to help each

other. They left each other to do what they wanted and fought their battles alone, rarely calling on the League for help.

It was purely Andurien forces that attacked the Capellans in support of the Trinity Alliance in 3085 for instance. But in 3097, when the Capellans struck Andurien and the Oriente, the Free Worlds Guards moved in to support them. To this day, the Guards continue to dispute Capellan control of Kwamashu with near-constant raids, but no one knows how much longer they will be able to keep it up. Facing heavy casualties and the need to repair and refit, many believe they will be forced to give up the fight for that world soon.

The Free Worlds League of today is a fractured memory of the League of 3067, a sleeping giant with little memory of being awake, and no wish to return to it again. Since Captain-General Alys Rousset-Marik stepped down, there has not been a single Captain-General, and the League Parliament rarely convenes to do more than debate resolutions that will never be passed. The member states are on their own. They like it that way.

League relations with their neighbors are spotty. They are generally friendly with the Marian Hegemony and Magistracy of Canopus, even though both realms have captured some League systems, but the member states often pick fights with their periphery neighbors. The Capellan border is a constant hot zone, while the border with Tikonov is uneasily quiet at most times. The League wants their systems back, but has never had the power or the drive to take them by force. The border with the former Lyran Alliance however is much easier. There is limited Lyran presence on the former border, and in fact the Duchy of Tamarind-Abbey has captured many systems that once belonged to the Lyrans.

What they will do in the future is anyone's guess, but if the past is any guide the fractious nature of the Free Worlds League will keep them from doing anything that would threaten other realms.

Military

The Free Worlds Navy is commanded by the *Olympic*, an *Aegis*-class battleship, and is escorted by a squadron of *Impavido* cruiser and *Eagle II* escort frigates at all times. League *Eagle IIs* are also seen on every border of the League, watching for pirates and other unwanted individuals. The largest collection of them, along with an *Impavido* cruiser are currently based out of Antipolo where they have spent the last three years sparring with the Capellan fleet. Most WarShips coming out of the Atrean Imstar Shipyards are sold to the member states though as the League navy does not have the funds to maintain them. The primary fighter of the Free Worlds Navy is the small but fast *Cheetah* AeroSpace Fighter.

The Free Worlds Guard vehicle companies are organized primarily around the Galleons built on Kendall. A fast tank, it gives them the ability to flank most forces they run up against, though their firepower is deficient. Many modern Galleons replace the Beagle

Probe with ECM though, making them harder to find and kill. The assault BattleMech companies are usually made up of *Orions* and *Riflemen*, while their medium companies are built around the faster *Wolverine* and *Hercules* BattleMech designs. Lighter BattleMech companies tend to be composed of whatever the League is able to buy from its member states or salvage on the field of battle.

Factories

Atreus – Deller, Bingham, & Fouts – *Gazelle*, *Hannibal*, and *Mammoth* DropShips
– Imperial Automatic Weaponry – Various autocannons and Gauss Rifles
– Imstar Aerospace – *Cheetah* AeroSpace Fighter
– Imstar Shipyards – *Impavido* cruiser and *Eagle II* frigate

Gibson – Brigadier Corporation – *Fury*, *Buccaneer*, and *Monarch* DropShips

Kendall – Brooks Incorporated – Galleon Light Tank
– Kali Yama / Alphard Trading Corporation – *Hercules* and *Orion* BattleMechs

Thermopolis – Kallon Industries – *Wolverine* and *Rifleman* BattleMechs

Systems

Antipolo – Governed by a participatory democracy, after the Capellans conquered nearby Kwamashu this world welcomed Free Worlds Guards to help them defend their world. Housing a major, if new, League base, this will be a difficult world for the Capellans to take if they try.

Atreus – During the 3060s, environmentalists screamed about the loss of the Atrean landscape to the encroaching blight of population and manufacturing as Thomas centralized the power of League. The Atreus of 3100 however has had three decades to repair itself as people have gone back to their homes. Once again a sparsely populated world, the forests that once dominated the world have grown back to take over the lands taken by man. Atreus City still proudly proclaims itself as the capital of the League, but even it is a mere shell of its former size. Centered around the House of Government, Atreus City does little beyond serving the needs of the Free Worlds Parliament and the industries that support it.

Gibson – Burned by a massed Regular nuclear assault, the surface of Gibson was destroyed beyond the ability of a mere handful of decades to repair. Long-term efforts to repair the planet to a livable status are underway, but few expect any significant progress to be seen for decades, if not centuries. Maintained as a memory to those who died in the Jihad, the memorial space stations over Gibson see hundreds of thousands of tourists a year.

Kendall – People have fit comfortably into the ecology of this anomalous world, whose lopsidedness and eccentric orbit compensate to create mild seasons. The dominant life

form is a large insect that migrates around the planet. Kendall cereal grass is a cheap and nourishing food, and Kendall honey is known across the Human Sphere. “Smooth as Kendall Honey” is a phrase known everywhere. Out near the border with the Marian Hegemony, a major Free Worlds League base has been setup there to play host to visiting Marian dignitaries.

Mansu-ri – This world welcomed Free Worlds Guards to help them defend their world after the Capellans conquered nearby Kwamashu. Not as large a base as on nearby Antipolo, the Mansu-ri base is still very impressive by modern standards, and Free Worlds Guards keep a constant presence on the planet.

Thermopolis – Near the border of the old Lyran Commonwealth, this system is a major nexus of trade. The starport cities contain magnificent bazaars, teeming with merchant houses, wholesalers, and speculators who can find a profitable market (legal or otherwise) for virtually any commodity, making this world loved by the Lyran merchant princes who travel through it often. The Clan Sea Fox convoys also come through the system often, replenishing supplies and finding wares even they miss in their travels. This world also hosts a major Free Worlds League base to house visiting dignitaries.