

Clans Hell's Horses, Steel Viper, and Ice Hellion

History

Not much is known about these Clans compared to the others in the Inner Sphere, mostly attributed to the fact that no purely Inner Sphere organization has engaged them in heavy combat. Snord, Falcon, Wolf, and Rasalhague forces have, but all of them are wary of sharing information about a Clan with the rest of the Human Sphere. The Star League recognizes the Clans Hell's Horses, Steel Viper, and Ice Hellion, and it is known that they have enough forces to protect their regions of space from enemy raiders. They have assigned forces to work with Star League task forces sent into the Barrens and are currently marshalling forces in the Columbus system to support the "recon in force" past the Veil of Kerensky, but we know little of why they left in the first place.

From other sources we have found out that the Blood Spirits and Star Adders were engaging in heavy warfare that seemed to be spilling over onto the other Clans, and from that speculate that the Hell's Horses decided to leave. We are also aware that they took heavy casualties in the 3060s, fighting the Ghost Bears and the Goliath Scorpions, and did not have the power to take over numerous worlds from any of the Invading Clans. We can only assume that Vlad Ward's Wolves knew this as well, that being the reason they did not immediately marshal their forces to stop the Hell's Horses invasion.

All we really know is that the Hell's Horses forged an alliance with the Steel Vipers, another Clan evicted from the Inner Sphere, and the Ice Hellions, a Clan that had never been to the Inner Sphere but had showed great passion for being a part of the Invasion and was not heavily involved in the Star Adder/Blood Spirit conflict. It seems that in order to assault the Inner Sphere even the normally insular Hellions were willing to ally with the Horses. The Hell's Horses left first, the Steel Vipers and Ice Hellions maintaining their position to give the impression of normalcy, and jumped around the area now called the Barrens. At that time under the control of the Wolves, the Horses did not wish them to realize they were there until the Horses had a base of operations. They chose Star's End to be that base.

That system had been the hideout of pirates for centuries, and even the vaunted Wolves had been unable to drive the pirates out. The Hell's Horses realized that this was not necessarily because of the pirates' power but because the Wolves could simply not afford to spend the resources to take them out. The Hell's Horses on the other hand had nowhere else to go. Many suggest that they could have taken over numerous other areas, but those that do forget one thing. Both the Horses and the Vipers had been Invading Clans and they wanted that honor back. And the Hellions still smarted from the dishonor of not being allowed to Invade. Therefore they chose to take systems in the Inner Sphere rather than in the Periphery. And they theorized that they could take Star's End if they hit it with everything they had.

The Hell's Horses fleet arrived at Star's End in July of 3070 and began to carefully thread its way through the asteroid field surrounding it in an effort to take it from the New Belt

Pirates. The pirates fought with asteroid-based laser systems and mines, lightly damaging the Hell's Horses fleet, but the return fire shredded the defenders one after another. Unable to move through the asteroid field at significant speed, it took the Horses two full months to capture and hold the main installations in the system. In late August they nearly captured the leaders of the New Belt Pirates, but an unknown *Aegis* slipped from behind an asteroid and crippled the *Congress*-class *Bucephalus* in a single volley before following the remains of the pirates out of the system. The Hell's Horses let them escape, unwilling to brave the guns of that ship and the asteroids at the speed required to run the pirates down. But with the departure of the pirates, the Hell's Horses held the system and the various zero-gee yards that the pirates had used for centuries to repair JumpShips and the *Aegis*.

In conjunction with the various bases on Star's End itself, the Hell's Horses had the base of operations they needed to assault the Wolves, which they did in September. Instead of expanding coreward and attacking the old pirate realms though, they jumped into the Inner Sphere proper and began attacking the heart of the Wolf Occupation Zone as the Ice Hellions and Steel Vipers began to make their exodus from the Clan Homeworlds. At first the Wolves didn't take the Hell's Horses seriously, only sending smaller forces to hold them, but as 3071 began to show the Horses' long advance into the heart of the Wolf Occupation Zone, Khan Vlad Ward finally moved to deal with them for good.

At Csesztreg in September the Wolves planned to bring overwhelming firepower against the Hell's Horses. Instead they met a heavy Hell's Horses fleet supported by the Ice Hellions, the first of the two Clans to arrive in force. They destroyed the Wolf flagship *Nicholas Kerensky*, with Khan Vlad Ward on board, and scattered or captured the rest of the Wolf fleet, leaving the Clan in chaos. The ground battle was equally one-sided, with Wolf losses heavy and Horse and Hellion losses light, and in a matter of days the Wolf Alpha Galaxy effectively ceased to exist.

With their Khan, their fleet, and the best of the touman destroyed, Clan Wolf began to fold before Horse and Hellion advances. By 3072, as the Steel Vipers finally arrived in force, the Horses and Hellions had begun to capture Wolf worlds easily as they moved towards Tamar. The Vipers supported a Horse move on the Jade Falcons, wishing to punish them for their ejection from the Inner Sphere. At first they met little resistance, the Falcons being busy fighting Tamar and the Lyrans, but in March of 3072 the Vipers ran into Clan Snord and lost the *Essex*-class *Martial Legacy*, and *Lola III*-class *Snake Pit* and *Anaconda* at Persistence to boarding parties. It proved to be a heavy blow to that Clan, though one it could shake off.

A heavier blow came in May of 3072 when the Hell's Horses and Ice Hellions hit Tamar and met not only the last remnants of Clan Wolf but also the Wolves-in-Exile. The battle proved devastating, though not crippling, for the Ice Hellions as they lost the *Aegis*-class *Chaos Sailor* and *Taney*, *Fredasa*-class *Whelp*, and the *Lola III*-class *Impaler* to the Wolf fleets. They shattered the Wolf fleets in return, but their losses in space and on the ground forced the Hell's Horses and the Ice Hellions to fall back from Tamar in an

attempt to recover. But like their assault on the Wolves after Csesztreg, the Wolves gave them no time to recover from Tamar.

Assaulted by the Wolves-in-Exile on multiple worlds that had not been fully pacified, the Hell's Horses and the Ice Hellions found themselves forced to fall back again and again. After the heavy casualties inflicted on Tamar though, the war became more conservative, with capture once again becoming more important than destruction. Both naval and ground forces fought until defeated, not destroyed, and the Wolves-in-Exile showed their ability to win on such a field of battle.

November of 3072, during the midst of this conflict, witnessed the arrival of a shattered Clan Goliath Scorpion fleet in Hell's Horses' space, having passed through the chaos of the former pirate realms once controlled by the Wolves. The Horses sent a fleet to hold them off, but the Goliath Scorpions didn't attempt to take any Horse or Viper worlds, instead attempting to fight trials of possession for spare parts needed to repair their battered ships. The Horses successfully defended most of their supplies and drove the Scorpions out of their space at WarShip-point. In January their fleet followed the Scorpions into the Dark Nebula to Camelot Command, but when Clan Snord marshaled its forces the Horses jumped back out. The fleet was needed at Csesztreg, not fighting the Scorpions or the Snords.

They arrived at Csesztreg in time to link up with the remaining Horse and Hellion fleets before the Wolves-in-Exile arrived in June, and the trials for that system began. One trial after another raged in orbit and on the ground, and different sectors of the planet switched ownership on a daily basis. As the month came to an end, and the fleets and ground forces of each Clan felt the wear and tear of the long campaign, the Clans agreed to fight one final trial for the entire world. The Horses and the Hellions won by a BattleMech, but the Wolves secured the return of all Wolf bondsmen in return for the return of Horse and Hellion bondsmen. After that the Wolves returned to their space, leaving the Horses and the Hellions to recover from the long fight.

Then in July the Jade Falcons smashed into the Steel Vipers with everything they had, destroying numerous ships and ground forces in a lightning campaign of battle hardened troops. The Hell's Horses continued to support the Vipers, but with their resources at Csesztreg holding off the Wolves the Vipers were forced to take up the burden of fighting the Falcons. They went into the fighting happily, those who hated the Falcons the most taking point in the battles. The Falcons responded in kind and the most fanatical of each Clan began to bleed each other. They continued to fight throughout 3073, but the Vipers lost heavily in conflict. The worst loss was the *Nightlord*-class *Dark Asp* over Waldorff that nearly sunk the Vipers' ability to hold off the Jade Falcons. In fact, they lost numerous systems after that catastrophe but they didn't go down alone. The wreckage of the most fanatical Falcons died with them and the Wolf assault on the Jade Falcons in February of 3074 saved the Vipers from being completely shattered. They continued to fight throughout the rest of the year, forcing the Falcons to bleed precious men and materials away from the fight with the Wolves and Tamar, but finally ended their assault

in April of 3075 when the Khans came to the conclusion that further war would do no good.

They allowed the Falcons and Wolves to continue to fight as they began to rebuild their losses, a stance they have taken ever since. The last twenty-five years have seen the Vipers willing to garrison their worlds, engaging in trials with the other Clans for experience and spare parts, but they have avoided another major war with the Falcons. Though they are rivals, they have come to acknowledge each other's presence and have come to the conclusion that they can live with each other. Or that they can't afford the losses it would take to *not* live with them. The Hell's Horses and Ice Hellions have taken the same attitude with the Wolves and the Dominion, commonly engaging in trials but not participating in another major war that could mushroom out of control. They cooperate with ComStar and the Star League, even though trials of possession for the contents of spaceships moving through their space is not uncommon, in numerous areas, including periodic drives into The Barrens to deal with the pirate problem. They have also sent a number of ships to Columbus where they are working with ComStar and the rest of the Star League on the mission to break through the Veil of Kerensky. Beyond that, the three Clans seem content enough to simply survive, something they probably consider to be better than whatever happened in the Clan Homeworlds.

Military

Hell's Horses

With the largest remaining naval and ground touman, the Hell's Horses are the most powerful of the three allied Clans. They make heavy use of the *Poseidon*-class assault frigate in their naval stars, and use numerous vehicles and ProtoMechs in their frontline formations, sometimes even in place of BattleMechs. The massive *Thunder Stallion* BattleMech is a common sight in their touman, often found working with heavy ProtoMechs and assault vehicles. The arrival of such a mixed trinary often brings a swift conclusion to a trial. *Crossbows* and *Battle Cobras* are also often seen, but the most common military unit is easily the Epona Pursuit Tank, a versatile vehicle using omni technology that can adapt to any battlefield in mere minutes.

Alpha Naval Star

Congress-class Bucephalus

Liberator-class Jerome Winson (captured at Csesztreg 3071)

Lola III-class Black Knight, Red Knight, and Gold Knight

Beta Naval Star

Carrack-class Golden Clydesdale

Potempkin-class Steel Shield, Armageddon, and Blood Horse

Volga-class Mount Olympus

Gamma Naval Star

Cameron-class Sleipnir

Vincent-class Relentless Pursuit and Trailblazer (both captured at Csesztreg 3071)
Poseidon-class Poseidon and Pegasus

Frontline Formations

Hell's Keshiks

Alpha Galaxy (Stampede of Steel)

Beta Galaxy (The Apocalypse)

Gamma Galaxy (The Bloodriders)

Delta Galaxy (The Lightning Riders)

Epsilon Galaxy (The Stonewall Brigade)

Ice Hellions

Often called "Clan Temper Tantrum" by other Clans, the Hellions have never been amongst the most-loved Clans. Preferring swift hit-and-fade actions and known to have a "loose" definition of honorable combat compared to the other Clans, any force fighting them can expect to be surrounded by a pack of small and fast BattleMechs, ProtoMechs, or vehicles that can be very difficult to hit. The only heavy BattleMechs they make a habit of using are the swift *Linebacker* OmniMechs recovered and reengineered from the Ghost Bears. Their navy is composed primarily of the ultra-fast *Rogue Wind*-class harasser frigates that are known to out accelerate numerous fighter classes. While lacking in heavy weaponry compared to most modern WarShips, the *Rogue Winds* usually hunt in packs and can be extremely difficult to hunt down.

Alpha Naval Star

Lola III-class Cold Hunter, Nature's Wrath (captured at Csesztreg 3071), and *Radiant McKenna-class Cage's Pride*
York-class Pack Leader

Beta Naval Star

Carrack-class Maker
Fredasa-class Hellion's Pride and Swift Bait
Potempkin-class Coterie
Volga-class Provider (captured at Csesztreg 3071)

Frontline Formations

Alpha Galaxy (Ghost Wind)

Delta Galaxy (Swift Death)

Steel Vipers

The Steel Viper's took heavy damage during the Jihad while fighting the Jade Falcons, losing many of the most fanatical members of their touman, and have still not sufficiently recovered to be a major threat outside their immediate zone of control. More balanced in combat styles compared to the Hellions or the Horses, they tend to fight well in most engagements. The *Ophidian*-class frigate is neither as fast as the *Rogue Wind* nor as powerful as the *Poseidon*, but it does mount stealth systems that make it very difficult to detect. More than once a pirate force has thought it was safe and clear until an *Ophidian* lit up its drives and accelerated into combat range. They tend not to like the results. Their frontline forces use the OmniMechs built on Kirchbach and The Edge primarily, supported by the numerous BattleMechs they build on Trel I. Garrison clusters that are often seen throughout the Shared Occupation Zone, and have often enjoyed killing pirates, have relatively few OmniMechs, mostly built around BattleMechs, vehicles, and some ProtoMechs.

Alpha Naval Star

Vincent-class *Coiled Serpent*
Whirlwind-class *Constrictor* and *Snake-in-the-Grass*
Congress-class *Snake Leader*
Ophidian-class *Elapidae*

Beta Naval Star

Carrack-class *Pride of New Kent*
Potempkin-class *Ophidian* and *Serpentes*
Ophidian-class *Hydrophidae* and *Boidae*

Frontline Formations

Alpha Galaxy (Steel Viper Galaxy)
Beta Galaxy (Steel Fangs Galaxy)

Factories

Shared

Kirchbach – *Black Lanner* and *Linebacker* OmniMechs; Anhur Transport; Asshur Artillery Spotter, Donar Assault Helicopter, and Svantovit Infantry Fighting Vehicle

Star's End – *Batu* OmniFighter; *Tyre* and *Xerxes* Aerospace Fighters; *Broadsword*, *Mercer*, *Noruff*, and *Outpost* DropShips; *Ophidian*, *Poseidon*, and *Rogue Wind* frigates

The Edge – *Battle Cobra* and *Crossbow* OmniMechs; Ares Medium Tank, Hachiman Fire Support Tank, Huitzilopochtli Assault Tank, Ku Wheeled Assault Tank, Mithras Light Tank, Odin Scout Tank, and Oro Heavy Tank

Hell's Horses

Verthandi – *Thunder Stallion* BattleMech; *Centaur*, *Minotaur*, *Roc*, *Satyr*, and *Siren* ProtoMechs; *Athena* Combat Vehicle, *Enyo* Strike Tank, *Epona* Pursuit Tank, *Hephaestus* Scout Tank, *Ishtar* Heavy Fire Support Tank, and *Mars* Assault Vehicle

Ice Hellions

St. John Mechworks – *Hellion* OmniMech; *Devil*, *Ice Storm*, *Roadrunner* and *Snow Fox* BattleMechs

Steel Viper

Trell I – *Black Python* (*Viper*), *Matador*, *Scylla*, and *Vapor Eagle* (*Goshawk*) BattleMechs

Systems

Shared

With no more than fifty percent of these worlds controlled by any of the three Clans on average, these shared worlds are defended by all three and are considered to be a Shared Occupation Zone where any of the three allied Clans are welcomed. Three major factory worlds are included in this zone and their production is shared with each Clan.

Icar

Kirchbach – Home to a Swedenborg Heavy Industries factory, this border world is constantly raided by the Wolves. One of many worlds that consider themselves to be Rasalhague, it has sometimes been difficult for the Horses and their allies to maintain order.

Liezen – On the border with the Wolves, this is a planet of lush forests. It has only three major cities of which Salzmin is the capital.

Lovinac

Star's End – Star's End is a barren, desolate world shielded by a dense asteroid field, salted with minefields and laser turrets. The system is also rocked by frequent ion storms that make orbital navigation hazardous. The first system captured by the Hell's Horses and their allies, they evicted the New Belt Pirates and have used the yards in this system to build numerous space going designs since then. On the border with The Barrens and Clan Snord, it is heavily defended and is often used as a launching point for punitive raids into the pirate-ridden Barrens.

The Edge – An industrial center on the edge of the Shared Occupation Zone, this world is often the target of pirate raids and is heavily defended by all three Clans at all times.

Hell's Horses

These four systems have Hell's Horses holdings equal to at least fifty percent of the total landmass, making their protection the priority of the Hell's Horses. The other Clans do fight when their landholds are targeted but otherwise leave these systems to the Hell's Horses as they focus on their own regions.

Chateau

Csesztreg – The location of the battle in which the Hell's Horses and the Ice Hellions killed Khan Vlad Ward, decapitating Clan Wolf, as well as the final major battle of that conflict with the Wolves-in-Exile, this border world is heavily protected at all times and is the target of constant trials by the Wolves.

New Caledonia

Verthandi – A desert world, an ancient asteroid hit near the northern pole to create what is now known as the Silvan Depression. The Depression and the surrounding area is the home to the majority of the local population and the capital of the Hell's Horses Occupation Zone. A grassy veldt reaches out for hundreds of kilometers beyond the Depression, fading into desert. The veldt ends at the Rimwall, the heavily eroded remnants of the ancient impact crater, where the Depression begins. Filled with forests, swamps, small seas, and the fertile growing land of the Silvan Basin, the Depression is heavily protected at all times by the Hell's Horses.

Ice Hellions

Bordering the Rasalhague Dominion, the Ice Hellion Occupation Zone is often the target of Dominion raids.

Alleghe
Bruben
Rodigo

St. John – A resource-rich world on the border with Rasalhague, this world has been taken over nearly fully by the Ice Hellions and functions as their capital. It is often the target of Dominion trials that they defend against fanatically.

Steel Vipers

The Steel Viper Occupation Zone is a constant battlefield as the Vipers and the Jade Falcons continually fight. The end of the Jihad, and the seeming loss of the most fanatical Jade Falcons and Steel Vipers, has resulted in an odd warming of relations

between the two Clans. They still highly dislike each other, but those that are left seem to be more willing to live with the other Clan than to spend more blood to try to kill them. Still, little love is lost between them and it is not uncommon for battles between them to become wasteful by Clan standards.

Maxie's Planet

Romulus – A major agricultural world on the border with the Falcons, Sea Foxes, and Wolves, it is the target of many trials and raids.

Trell I – Trellwan as its local population knows it has two small, landlocked equatorial seas with total 9% of the planet's surface. The planet's human colonies have grown in the relatively fertile regions within a few hundred kilometers of these sulfur-rich bodies. Very near to the solar primary, its year is 45 standard days long, but its slow rotation makes a local day equal to 30 standard days. The long periods of alternating darkness and light coupled with short and climatically severe seasons, pose a serious challenge both for native life forms and for human colonies located south of the mountains near the Grimheld Sea. A possession of the Steel Vipers before they were kicked out of the Inner Sphere by the Jade Falcons, that Clan holds nearly the entire world, having made it their capital, and protects it vehemently against trials and raids from Clan Snord, Clan Jade Falcon, and Clan Sea Fox.