

## Duchy of Andurien

### History

Long a troublesome part of the Free Worlds League, Andurien has been traded back and forth between the League and the Confederation enough that it hates both governments with nearly equal abandon. They even seceded from the League in 3030 to ally themselves with Canopus against the Capellans, and only the complete subjugation of the Duchy after their defeat in 3040 kept them under the heel of the League. By the late 3060s, many of the people of the Duchy actually supported the League but the nobles still chafed under the velvet covered iron fist of Atreus.

Even their right to defend themselves had been denied them, but the nobles never completely gave in to the Captain-General and prepared for a day when they would regain their freedom. Falsifying factory reports, they managed to squirrel away a lance or so a year of BattleMech production and similar amounts of vehicles and aerospace fighters. Andurien AeroTech of Lopez, a major Research & Development firm for the League, turned failed prototypes over to the Humphreys for a price rather than breaking them down for spare parts and occasionally “lost” other items of interest.

Over the years the Humphreys built a sizeable force that the League intelligence service, SAFE, never uncovered. Reports suggest that the Word of Blake discovered the duplicity of the Humphreys in the 3050s, but instead of informing the League they actually helped hide them without the Humphreys’ knowledge. Whether or not those reports are correct, the League never knew that the Defenders of Andurien were being rebuilt, and that the various security forces protecting the factories of the Duchy were actually used to recruit warriors into the Defenders. Only those who proved their dissatisfaction with the central League government by taking actions against it were “demoted and removed from service” so the Humphreys could show their “undying loyalty to the Captain-General”. In reality, they were the core of the new Defenders of Andurien.

When the Jihad began in 3067, Duchess Dalma Humphreys had the chance she’d been trying to generate for years and she quickly declared the Duchy of Andurien “independent of the failed Marik line.” General Tracy Fenton of the 1<sup>st</sup> Free Worlds Legionnaires, having already forged close ties with Force Commander Steven Humphreys and his older sister, the Duchess of Andurien, agreed to support her move. Using information given months before by Fenton, Andurien operatives on the WarShips *Karelia* and *Phrygia* stopped them from acting to suppress the rebellion as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Free Worlds Legionnaires publicly supported the Duchess. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Free Worlds Legionnaires on Sadurni, with Corrine Marik as their standard bearer, left the Duchy in disgust to support their home against the Word of Blake threat while the 5<sup>th</sup> Legionnaires shattered under conflicting loyalties. The bulk of their first two battalions left for Vanra with General “Misha” Orloff while most of the rest remained on Lopez where they had made friends over the years and supported the Duchess. Negotiations with the Mosiro Archipelago, long an opponent of the Marik, quickly brought them into an alliance with Andurien as well.

Modern Andurien histories state that the two WarShips under its control made the new Duchy of Andurien powerful enough to threaten anyone who attacked it and that is why neither the Word of Blake nor the Free Worlds League ever sent anything to deal with them. The fact that they were spending their time blasting each other into a new dark age had nothing to do with the fact that Andurien was given time to stabilize if you read those histories. The wonders of the modern educational establishment astound this writer.

Whatever the reasons, the Duchy of Andurien had time to reorganize, bringing the Defenders of Andurien out into the public eye and formally renaming the 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> Free Worlds Legionnaires as the Defenders of Andurien with the same numbers. The Duchy watched on the sidelines as Regulus, Marik, Stewart, and the Oriente fought the Word of Blake of tooth and nail, watched the Capellan Confederation collapsing to the Word of Blake on their other side, and simply prepared for war as they ruthlessly drilled the Defenders of Andurien. The core of the Defenders had been given little time to drill after their “dismissals” from service and their rebellious attitude tended to affect more than just their dislike of the Mariks. Many, most in fact, were fully loyal to Andurien, but they were also opinionated and rebellious and the Duchy’s first growing pains were filled with problems attempting to convince them to work as a team.

In 3072 though they thought they had the worst of the problems dealt with, and watching the Confederation splinter beside them proved to be a sight too tempting to ignore. They attacked the shattered Confederation on a front stretching from Palladaine to Sax, smashing the demoralized Confederation soldiers easily. Unfortunately for the Duchy, they still had numerous problems with the Defenders and when Treyhang Liao arrived to fight them he ruthlessly capitalized on them. He shattered the 2<sup>nd</sup> Defenders on Primus and commenced to push every Defender regiment back to the original border with tactics learned over the years against numerous opponents, including the Word of Blake. By 3074 the Duchy had to admit defeat and sued for peace. Needing time to rebuild and repair and knowing that any attempt to conquer the Duchy would deny him both, Treyhang Liao supplied them with his terms and pulled his forces back.

The Duchy of Andurien, badly wounded by the war, sat back and reexamined itself as the rest of the Jihad flashed by it. Learning from its errors, the Duchy rebuilt the Defenders into a more powerful force as it shoveled resources into upgrading the Andurien AeroTech shipyard at Andurien until it could build a new class of WarShip, the *Humphreys* frigate.

Flush with its newfound power, the Duchy agreed to rejoin the Free Worlds League only so it could make sure the League could never dictate to a member state again, and spent the rest of the 3070s and the first half of the 3080s minding its own business. Continually voting against any bills that could make the League stronger, it built up its own military as quickly as possible while waiting for a chance to avenge its defeat at the hands of the Confederation. It saw its chance when the Trinity Alliance declared general war on the Confederation in 3083 and began preparing its military while diplomats went to Canopus to confer with their “honored Periphery brethren.”

In 3085, ready for payback, they poured across the border again and hit the Confederation with everything they had. Entire squadrons of *Humphreys* frigates with *Intruder* DropShips supporting them smashed through the Capellan space defenses so the Defenders could land and engage the Confederation on the ground. At first they found their going easy, but soon the Confederation reacted and Andurien found its pace of conquest slowing to a crawl. Willing to take any losses to hold their ground, and using scorched earth tactics when forced to retreat, the Capellans fought like madmen.

But the Anduriens hated the Confederation and deeply wanted to reacquire worlds lost to the Capellans centuries ago, so they continued on with their invasion. By 3090 they'd secured a half dozen systems from the Capellans, but even though they actually sported more advanced technologies, the Confederation soldiers simply refused to surrender. Once again, like in the 3070s, the Duchy was on the verge of losing and it began suggesting that the Trinity Alliance begin thinking about a peace treaty.

The talks began in early 3091, but the governments couldn't even agree to a cease-fire and the war continued to rage and casualties mounted on all sides. Finding its military weakening badly, the Duchy knew it had to do something quickly or everything would be lost. It sent a deep raid composed of a dozen *Humphreys* frigates, twenty-seven *Intruders*, the WarShips *Karelia* and *Phrygia*, and elements of the 1<sup>st</sup> Defenders of Andurien to Sian in early 3092 to obtain the numerous advanced technologies the factories there had only recently begun building again. Had the raid failed, the Defenders of Andurien would have completely collapsed under Confederation pressure, but the fleet fought itself through the defenders of Sian and sacked the factories. They returned to the Duchy with examples of the most advanced Confederation technologies and forced the Capellans to pull numerous units off the front lines to protect their capital.

That removed enough pressure from the Andurien border that the Defenders were able to hold their own while the peace talks continued. The Confederation was understandably enraged, but it was feeling the strain every bit as much as the Anduriens and the Trinity Alliance was. Most military historians say that the war probably would have gone on forever with the various sides destroying each other if the Raven Alliance hadn't stepped in. They helped the Trinity Alliance retake Mendham, quietly telling the Capellans that the war had to end. The exhausted Anduriens sat back in relief when Janice Calderon and Treyhang Liao came together and arranged an agreement for peace in 3093.

With the war over, the Duchy pulled its fleets back for long-needed repairs as it began rebuilding (again) the Defenders of Andurien. It always planned to hit the Confederation again, but it spent the next three years repairing its shattered military with the technologies gleaned from the raid of Sian. Unknown to the Anduriens, the factories on Sian had been repaired again and the Capellans were incorporating those same technologies into their elite forces as well. In early 3097, judging their incorporation sufficient for a test, the Confederation struck Andurien like a hammer at Jacomarie and began rolling the Defenders of Andurien back.

Then a second assault smashed into Goodna, between Andurien and Oriente space. For several months the Oriente and the Duchy fought to hold off the Capellan invaders, but the Confederation cut through them all the way to Kwamashu before the League military was able to allocate forces to stop them. Having taken eight new systems from the League and recovering five systems from the Anduriens, the Confederation judged its rebuilding to be sufficient and pulled many of its forces back for resupply as it sent others to hold the new territory. With the League military in the fray and with the Trinity Alliance maneuvering to hit them as well, Treyhang Liao was happy to consolidate his holdings.

The undeclared general cease-fire has held for the last three years, only broken by the standard raiding that now fills the Human Sphere and continued fighting for Kwamashu, though many wonder if Duchess Dalma Humphreys is planning an assault on the Confederation. The last three decades have seen enough fighting between the two realms that few believe it is over for good, no matter how devastating the wars were for either side. Whatever her plans are, relations between the Duchy and the Confederation are somewhere between frigid and cold with heavy raiding going on at almost all times.

The Duchy has comfortable to warm relations with the Magistracy of Canopus, the Fronc Federation, and the Taurian Concordat, and has even traded some advanced technologies with the Trinity Alliance. Relations with the other member states of the Free Worlds League, and the League itself, are chilly and raiding goes on between the Duchy and the other realms fairly often.

## **Military**

The Andurien fleet is led by the Impavido-class *Catherine Humphreys* (formerly the *Phrygia*) from Andurien itself and is usually supported by the *Zechetinu*-class *Karelia* and a half dozen or so *Humphreys*-class frigates. Most of the frigates are on the Capellan border protecting it from assault by Capellan fleets though. The modern primary DropShip of the Andurien fleet is the small *Intruder*-class DropShip and many variants of it are in common production. Some of them are dedicated fighter or small craft carriers, some are designed only to carry armor, others move BattleMechs between worlds, and some hold mass numbers of infantry in their decks. Some have even been seen mounting capital-class weaponry that can threaten WarShips with destruction, and more than one Capellan fleet has felt the sting of these “light escort” ships.

*Stingrays*, and *Rievers* are the primary standard AeroSpace fighters of the Andurien fleet, while the *Shiva* OmniFighters give it a much-needed modularity and are seen primarily in the most elite formations. The re-introduced *Deathstalkers* are mainly seen in planetary militias where their low technology and sturdy airframe are loved by weekend technicians. Possibly the most interesting concept that the Andurien fleet follows is their heavy use of small craft though. In the 3070s, Duchess Dalma Humphreys ordered that the *Aquarius* and *Lyonesse* escort craft be upgraded with modern technologies and that lines be reopened to build them. Those two classes are seen throughout the Duchy,

carried by *Humphreys* frigates and other ships or based off planets, and their superior firepower and armor has made them a severe threat to many Liao fleets.

Saladin, Saracen, Scimitar, and Harasser hover tanks form the standard fast-response armored assets of the Defenders of Andurien, while the Galleon and Ontos tanks form the majority of the tracked scout and assault formations. *Wasp* BattleMechs, many of them outfitted with stealth armor, are the main Andurien scout units and the *Hermes II* fills out most medium lances. *Stalkers* are the main assault BattleMech built and used by the Defenders of Andurien, and massed lances of these machines have stopped more than one Liao attack in its tracks.

## Factories

Andurien – Andurien AeroTech – *Stingray*, *Deathstalker*, and *Riever* AeroSpace fighters, *Aquarius* and *Lyoness* escort craft, *Intruder* DropShip, *Merchant* JumpShip, and *Humphreys* frigate

– Brooks Incorporated – Harasser hover tank and Galleon tank

Lopez – Andurien AeroTech – *Riever* AeroSpace fighter and *Shiva* OmniFighter

– Magna – Numerous lasers, particle cannons, and LRM launchers

Scarborough – Scarborough Limited – Saladin, Saracen, and Scimitar hover tanks

Shiro III – Grumman Amalgamated – Ontos tank

– Irian BattleMechs Unlimited – *Wasp*, *Hermes II*, and *Stalker* BattleMechs

## Systems

Andurien – Capital of the Duchy, it is most famous for its extensive Botanical Gardens, which boast samples of rare plants and trees from across the Human Sphere.

Claybrooke – Sporting ranch and dairy products, as well as natural gas and fossil fuels, this world was one of the first worlds “welcomed” into the Duchy during the Jihad. The Defenders of Andurien were sent to “guard” it from other nations and have never left. Situated on the border between the Duchy and the Magistracy, it sees much traffic between the two nations.

Cursa – The Cursan red pepper is sold throughout the Human Sphere and is greatly prized.

El Giza – Once home to Broker's Haven, a Star League mint, it was destroyed during the First Succession War. Andurien and Mosiro incentives helped reopen the mint in 3095 and it now does for the Anduriens what it once did for the Star League. Since the Capellan offensive of 3097 though, it has become a magnet for many Capellan raids.

Kanata – Numerous efforts to expunge the K'Wara, a Moslem offshoot religion, from this world by the Andurien government have all failed. A near-Luddite religion that even the nearby Mosiro Archipelago does not support, it hates bionics even more than most League member states.

Leyda – The 'Mech repair facilities at Leyda, which served the Star League Regular Army during the Reunification War, still remain amongst the most efficient in the galaxy. The world is also famous for its blue-black onyx, which is a popular staple in jewellery throughout the Human Sphere.

Lopez – A hot jungle world, it is home to a major AeroSpace factory and the dragon-like Branth, a flying creature that can be trained and ridden. Sold throughout the Human Sphere, the Duchy makes much of its money off the Branth.

Mosiro – Center of the Moslem faith in the Duchy and capital of the Mosiro Archipelago, this is a grand world that bases its civilization on the ancient Moslem civilization that arose during the Dark Ages of western civilization on Terra. Beautiful minarets dot the landscape and the culture is more inclusive than most worlds.

Niomedé – This world's claim to fame came from the exquisite silver filigree that came from here to enhance the glow of the marble in the Court of the Star League in Unity City.

Principia – Once the seat of the Capellan judicial system and the vacation spot for numerous nobles, this warm and temperate world's only current claim to fame is the number of raids that hit it every year. The locals actually calculate their age by the number of Capellan raids they have weathered more often than by the orbit of their world around the star.

Sadurni – Sadurni marble was used in the construction of the Court of the Star League in Unity City, in conjunction with Niomedé silver filigree.

Scarborough – Home of Scarborough Limited, this world was the sight of an “altercation” between Capellan and League forces in 3029. The resulting war caused heavy damage to the League and hurt the image of the Marik, something the locals never felt very sad about.

Shiro III – The major port of entry for traders entering Andurien space along the Capellan border, trade still actually seems busy despite the constant raids between the two nations. The starport cities on this world contain magnificent bazaars, teeming with merchant houses, wholesalers, and speculators who can find a profitable market (legal or otherwise) for virtually any commodity.

Xanthe III – A cold, blue world covered in poisonous blue ice, every attempt to colonize it has failed. Currently only the Duchy military uses it as an elite testing ground for winter maneuvers where its constantly changing surface is a challenge for any visitor.