

Duchy of Tamarind-Abbey

History

An alliance of the Duchy of Tamarind and the Abbey District, this nation is different than many of the others in the League. It has no long history like the Oriente, the Commonwealth, Regulus, or the Anduriens, and once was considered a burnt out wreckage of worlds after the Succession Wars drove them to the brink of destruction. But after the Third Succession War, they had half a century to rebuild and take stock of their situation. And much of that time, Marshal Jeremy Brett of Tamarind protected them, gaining their trust.

When the Lyrans attacked Kristen's Krushers and drove them to Arcadia Marshal Brett sent a force against Thomas Marik's orders to rescue them in 3063. Though Kristen Marik herself, Thomas Marik's sister, and all but one daughter died before Brett's forces arrived, he gained much popular support by occupying the world and bringing back what was left of the mercenary unit. The official reprimand he received for that action simply seemed to make him more popular in the eyes of the people. Though the forces finally withdrew in 3067 as a peacekeeping gesture towards Peter Steiner-Davion, Marshal Brett maintained his popularity.

Thomas's elevation to the First Lord seat in November of 3067 was considered a mixed blessing by many in the Duchy of Tamarind, mainly because of the reaction still going through the people over Kristen's death. But the sudden rumors about Word of Blake betrayals galvanized them to support Marshal Brett even more. When information about Thomas's real identity came out, the people were already half way to supporting Marshal Brett over Thomas. That information solidified support for Marshal Brett and as Thomas fled to the Oriente, chaos began to ripple through the Free Worlds League.

World after world fell to Word of Blake sabotage, even as they tried to recover from the loss over Atreus. And then their demands began to come down the line to leave the Mariks to fight alone or die. Marshal Brett knew he couldn't hold if the Word of Blake attacked, so he publicly accepted their demands and pulled the Duchy of Tamarind out of the Free Worlds League. Then he "banished" the 2nd Free Worlds Guards, commanded by his son Photon Brett-Marik, and the 1st Brigade of the Fusiliers of Oriente when Photon and the 1st Brigade's commander "disputed" his decision. The 2nd Knights of the Inner Sphere and the *Thera*-class *Sardis* left with Photon as well, jumping to support what was left of the Marik family.

The 6th Orloff Grenadiers were quickly called home to Vanra to sit out the war as the Orloffs refused to become involved, and the 1st and 5th Oriente Hussars returned to the Oriente where they would fight in the war against the Blakists. That left the Marshal with two major military formations under his command, the 2nd and 3rd Brigades of the Fusiliers of the Oriente. Feeling betrayed by the Oriente after being put under direct LCCC control, they agreed to stay under Marshal Brett's command to protect both the Abbey District and the Duchy of Tamarind. With only the two formations, Marshal Brett

spent the entire Jihad trying to stay under the radar of any involved parties while snapping up worlds to make them “neutral” and no longer targets of the Word of Blake.

Trellisane, abandoned by the 1st Oriente Hussars, was one of the first to join the Duchy out of self-preservation. Then he secured an agreement with the leaders of the Abbey District to form the Duchy of Tamarind-Abbey and to remain neutral. As time went by, more worlds joined the Duchy, as well as two more military formations. Badly damaged by Word of Blake assaults and unable to hold out, the 6th Marik Militia and the 5th Brigade of the Fusiliers of the Oriente fled to the Duchy for protection. The Word of Blake almost ignored their understanding with the Duchy, but when Marshal Brett promised to enforce neutrality on them, the Blakists went on to other targets. They assaulted the former Circinus Federation and badly mauled the Aquilum Legion in 3070. In response, he arranged for relief supplies from Maxwell to be sent to the civilians harmed in the fighting. Word of Blake, seeing the chance to look better in the eyes of those in the former Federation, allowed the shipments through. Many began to think of Marshal Brett as a Word of Blake collaborator, but nothing could have been further from the truth, as studies of the Jihad have since confirmed.

Word of the Regular bombardment of Gibson rushed through the Duchy like wildfire, igniting the hearts of the people, as news of Caesar Julius’ death on Alphard sobered them. Photon Brett-Marik’s retreat from Marik, complete with orbit-to-jump point firefights, exploded across the holonets and made him an instant hero in the eyes of the people. That flight proved the inspiration for dozens of holodramas, few of them even close to accurate, but the best according to nearly all critics and viewers was *Thirteen Days*.

Chronicling the flight, beginning with the disastrous fight over Marik itself in which nearly two dozen War Ships on either side were lost, the series followed the run of Photon’s command, and the 2nd Knights, as they shot through asteroid belts and anything else that would make them harder to detect on their way to find a hidden JumpShip force that could take them to Augustine where another assault was underway. While the drama was overly fantastical in the situations that both the DropShip force and Photon himself found themselves in, it is still considered to have shown the feelings of loss, worry, and eventual elation at escaping better than any other. Much of that success is assuredly placed at the hands of the talented group of actors and actresses who played the parts, and the writers who created the excellent, if at some times unbelievable, dialog.

Through all of this, Marshal Jeremy Brett continued to arrange for relief supplies to be sent to anyone in need, and the Word of Blake allowed them through, provided that none of them went to military units they were fighting. Even genocidal maniacs it seems had a sense of understanding when it came to waging wars of public opinion. When they were so nice to let supplies through, many people actually believed them when they said that everything was just the fake Thomas’ betrayal and that the Blakists were simply defending themselves. They also waved the flag of Kristen’s death, suggesting that it might have simply been the fake Thomas’s first step towards killing *all* of the loyal Marik family.

This set of double-speak and compassionate actions by the Word of Blake split the Duchy down the middle, with many supporting them and Marshal Brett and others denouncing them for the liars they were and the Marshal for being a traitor. Most historians now believe it was probably a calculated assault by the Word of Blake, designed to cripple a possible threat without using a single 'Mech. Whatever the truth of the reasons behind their actions to this day many people think that the Word of Blake was betrayed and destroyed by Thomas Marik, gaining their ire for all time. Then there are the people who believe he was duped by the Word of Blake and should burn for *that* crime. He doesn't have many supporters anymore.

The war continued, passing the small Duchy by on all sides, and the Marik-Stewart-Oriente-Regulan fleets finally shattered the main Word of Blake forces in the Free Worlds League in 3072. Once again, Colonel Photon Brett-Marik's star shown on the holonets as more dramas continued to tell his harrowing tales of death and danger from Ariel to Zosma. In the Duchy, the Marshal pulled in still more systems until he finally controlled the entire Lyran border from Bella I to Cerillos. He might have been a collaborator, but at least one thing was certain. If your system joined the Duchy, both the Blakists *and* the Lyrans left you alone. Many systems liked that deal. Not that they had to worry about any major Lyran assaults for the short term of course. Their side of the border was even *more* chaotic if that was possible. But they'd live with the Lyran boogiemer for generations and with the Free Worlds League collapsing they wanted to be prepared.

Finally in 3073, with the Word of Blake presence in the League shattered, Marshal Brett sent the fleet slowly built and hoarded over Tamarind to support the League fleets as they moved to Terra to help the Star League fight the Word of Blake. Many began to wonder if he'd changed his mind, simply feeling the winds of change and trying to stay on the side of whoever seemed to be winning. His support was sharply divided and found itself falling through the floor, even as his son's popularity shot to stratospheric levels. Every month or so another drama came out, expanding on the, now mostly fictional, tales of Photon Brett-Marik and his courageous men and women. Often portrayed as the white knight fighting the evil Word of Blake, or sometimes the misunderstood and persecuted Word of Blake, the holodramas that performed the best and kept the most accurate feel, if not facts, of the war were the dramas put out by the team that did *Thirteen Days*.

By the war's end, that team had completed over twenty series, ending with the hyper-detailed and fantastic *From the Moon to the Earth* that cemented their position in the annals of holodrama history. Once again playing fast and loose with the facts, and sporting interpersonal relationships inside the units that had military veterans gagging at the absurdity, the film was the highest grossing movie of all time in the Duchy, still standing on that throne to this day. Sporting, as that team's movie always did, believable and flawed villains and heroes, they didn't put the heroes up on a pedestal and they resisted the urge to paint the Word of Blake soldiers as monsters. Instead they told tales of people on both sides that were believable, if not factual, for people from every belief

structure. Those who hated the Word of Blake and those who loved them could both find things they loved about the movie, a feat rivaled by few other films of the time.

The victorious heroes returned (the remnants of the former 2nd Free World Guards, 1st Brigade of the Fusiliers, and the 2nd Knights of the Inner Sphere) to throngs of adulating citizens, ecstatic to see their hero and waiting for him to take command from his father. After all, everybody knew that Photon had been exiled, along with the Knights and the Guards. So he had to be coming back to claim the Duchy for himself, right? Marshal Brett's control of the Duchy was as threadbare as could be and the people would have driven him out in a second if Photon had asked. They had two great shocks when he left the DropShip.

First was that the Photon Brett-Marik who left the DropShip was neither as good-looking, well dressed, or as friendly with the ladies as the character many of them had grown up watching on the holonets. It was a rude surprise, but a decade of fighting against the Word of Blake had burned out any of the pretty boy elements of his personality that had ever been there. The second surprise was when father and son met for the first time in years and Photon noted simply that the mission was a complete success before asking for time to rest and refit his units.

It was the first official indication that the "exile" had been staged, and when Photon publicly supported his father as Marshal, public support for removing Jeremy Brett all but disappeared. To this day, there are still many conspiracy theorists that think he was a weak-willed Marshal who only survived because his son covered for him, but they are a stark minority in the modern Duchy.

Photon spent the next year rebuilding his 2nd Free Worlds Guards and the 1st Brigade of the Fusiliers of Oriente into the 1st Brigade of the Fusiliers of Duchy with any BattleMechs he could find. It didn't take long for him to realize that in the Duchy BattleMechs were very hard to come by. With the Free Worlds League trying desperately to rebuild its loyal units it had nothing free to sell to the Duchy, so Photon began looking outward, literally. The Marian Hegemony, though badly damaged by the Jihad, still had the ability to build BattleMechs and vehicles, something none of the Duchy worlds had. What they lacked was money, something the Duchy had in abundance. So they worked together, the Hegemony helping the Duchy build the infrastructure required to build BattleMechs and military vehicles while the Duchy sunk enough money into the Hegemony that it could recover as well.

Both nations prospered, even as the Duchy once again sent representatives to Atreus in 3079 to vote in the Free Worlds Parliament, what was left of it, and Marian BattleMechs began to appear in ever-growing numbers in the Duchy military. In 3080, a year after the Syrtis Federation and Capellan Rump States went to war, the Duchy and the Hegemony assault the StarCorps Line, the heavily-fortified systems running the length of the Duchy and Hegemony border with the Lyran Commonwealth. Son Hoa and Loburg, major StarCorps factories, were the primary targets of the war as both the Duchy and the Hegemony wanted more advanced BattleMech construction facilities.

Leonis and Aquilum Legions struck first, hitting Son Hoa itself in a failed bid to take the world, but they sucked defenders off the rest of the StarCorps Line. Seeing the opening, the Photon's 1st Brigade, the rebuilt 5th Brigade, and 6th Brigade (formally the 6th Marik Militia) smashed into the StarCorps Line on their border, taking Cavanaugh II and Timbiqui before StarCorps, with the monetary support of Acrux and SeraVideo, put mercenaries in place to stop them on Penobscot. The conflict for that system ground on for two years as StarCorps poured everything they had into holding the world as the Hegemony continued to hit them on the Periphery. The Duchy blockaded the world in 3081, enforcing the blockade with the *Thera*-class *Sardis* and her flotilla of *Impavido*-class cruisers. The defenders surrendered in 3082 after the fourth and final StarCorps assault fleet failed to break the blockade, giving the Duchy the invaluable petroleum resources of the world.

By 3083, the Hegemony had Son Hoa surrounded and the Duchy was continuing to march into the StarCorps Line, taking Pencader, Abramkovo, and Zdice, but StarCorps assaults from Dixie continued to harass Trellisane, badly damaging the factories there. And the defenders of Son Hoa fought on, holding Leonis and Aquilum Legions to minimal gains. Finally in January 3084 the Hegemony and the Duchy hit the StarCorps line with everything they had, adding Limitanei Legion and the Silver Knights (formerly the 2nd Knights of the Inner Sphere) to their assaults on Son Hoa and a new assault on Dixie. A long-time staging ground of attacks into the Free Worlds League, and now into the Duchy, Dixie was a heavily protected world that required the full might of the Duchy to break. But in March it fell and the Duchy breathed a sigh of relief as they shifted their forces to deal with the rest of the StarCorps Line. In April the Hegemony finally secured Son Hoa and stopped advancing, licking their wounds.

StarCorps, seeing the end of the Hegemony advance, shifted their forces to meet the Duchy and fighting over Zdice and Abramkovo exploded to a fever pitch until August when the *Sardis* broke the back of the StarCorps navy. Unable to force the issue in space, StarCorps fell back to rebuild as the Duchy looked at its shattered ground forces. Unable to commit to another major invasion after the casualties of those final months, the Duchy shifted into a holding pattern similar to the Hegemony's. By year's end the war had faded into a series of raids that remain the standard to this day.

Relations have cooled significantly since then between the Hegemony and the Duchy however. Photon felt that the Hegemony abandoned the Duchy when it stopped attacking the StarCorps Line, and blames them for the deaths of many of his men and women as he continually seeks to punish them with punitive raids on Circinus and the other border worlds. The Hegemony has returned the favor with raids of their own, and the continual push of forces back and forth across the border has kept them from further diminishing the StarCorps Line and taking Loburg.

Ascending to the position of Marshal in 3091, Photon Brett-Marik continues to maintain friendly relations with his cousin, Alys Rousset-Marik of the Marik-Stewart Commonwealth, but relations with the other League states are minimal. The Duchy, like

the other states, wishes to be left alone by them and the League itself, though they do buy military equipment from the League and Marik-Stewart factories. They also sell much of their production to the League and the Commonwealth, but keep most of it for themselves.

Military

The Duchy navy is commanded by the *Thera*-class *Sardis*, supported by several *Impavido*-class cruisers and *Merlin*-class carriers. The *Merlins* are the most numerous ship in the Duchy navy, designed in 3089 to support the main fleet and give the Duchy better Aerospace support. Carrying mainly *Stingray* and *Lancer* fighters, the *Merlins* and the *Sardis* are a major threat to any force running into them.

The Gladius is the standard tank of the Duchy military, produced at no less than four locations. The Hegemony originally helped Correlated Traders set up a factory on Hammer, but in the years since then Correlated have setup other factories that build enough for the entire military and allow them to quickly reinforce nearly any front with a heavy force of these versatile tanks. Duchy scout lances are primarily composed of *Locusts*, *Ostrocs* make up most “medium” lances, while *Warhammers* and *Marauders* pair up in most heavy lances to hit the enemy hard. The *Goliath* is the standard assault BattleMech of the Duchy military, its stable firing platform a threat to any 'Mech.

1st Brigade, Fusiliers of Duchy – Dixie and Bella I
2nd Brigade, Fusiliers of Duchy – Maxwell, Dalcour, and Merton
3rd Brigade, Fusiliers of Duchy – Pencader, Galisteo, and Cerillos
4th Brigade, Fusiliers of Duchy – Zdice and Abramkovo
5th Brigade, Fusiliers of Duchy – Aylmer, Hammer, and Sackville
6th Brigade, Fusiliers of Duchy – Trellisane and Tamarind
Silver Knights – Promised Land

Factories

Dixie – Correlated Manufacturing – Gladius hovertank

Hammer – Correlated Manufacturing – Gladius hovertank

Penobscot – Correlated Manufacturing – Gladius hovertank

Promised Land – Correlated Manufacturing – Gladius hovertank
– Photon Productions – *Locust* and *Marauder* BattleMechs

Tamarind – Technicon Manufacturing – *Invader* and *Star Lord* Jumpships. *Impavido* cruiser and *Merlin* carrier. *Ostroc*, *Warhammer*, and *Goliath* BattleMechs.

Trellisane – Gutierrez Aerospace – *Stingray* and *Lancer* Aerospace fighters

Systems

Cavanaugh II – Founded by English, Welsh, and Scottish settlers, the Arthurian Actors Guild is still the most popular export of the planet. The head designer of the *Merlin*-class carrier came from this world and was a childhood member of that guild.

Dixie – Long a staging ground for raids against the Free Worlds League, the people have a long tradition of martial excellence and resilience.

Hammer – Home of Correlated Traders and Correlated Manufacturing, the germanium found on this world finds itself shipped throughout Hegemony and Duchy space, as well as deeper into the League to help maintain and build the League war and merchant fleet.

Kosciusko – The outer worlds of this system house radioactives that help fuel the Duchy's war machines and keep it safe from outside assault.

Loric – In 2821, representatives of the Steiner and Marik families signed a peace treaty to end the First Succession War between their two realms on the ruins of this world.

Maxwell – A world of high technology but few vehicles, it is a lush farmland that feeds many worlds in the Duchy and the Marian Hegemony.

Niihau – Niihau honey is a delicacy shipped throughout the Human Sphere, though primarily to the Lyran Commonwealth where the Merchant Princes savor its smooth flavor.

Pencader – Scarred heavily by the Succession Wars, a rebuilding effort has been in place for the last twenty years, attempting to repair it.

Penobscot – A major producer of petrochemicals, the capture of this system in 3082 was a major victory for the Duchy and the Hegemony. Denying the fuel from the StarCorps mercenaries was a major coup, while using it against them was even better.

Promised Land – Even though the borders have shifted, trade routes continue to flow through this world with its large star ports, magnificent bazaars teeming with merchant houses, wholesalers, and speculators who can find a profitable market (legal or otherwise) for virtually any commodity, and fine Champagne. Lyran Merchant Princes and Clan Sea Fox convoys often obtain or sell their goods here.

Simpson Desert – A beautiful world that is the home to spices valued throughout the Human Sphere, the world suffers from a name that does it little justice.

Tamarind – A home to artists and craftsmen of every kind, the shattered landscape brought about by centuries of war has been repaired and regrown into a lush ecosystem that mirrors the people in recent decades.

Timbiqui – Once considered the favored target of the late ilKhan Ulric Kerensky, Raasch Brewhaus brews Timbiqui Dark, one of the most well-known and popular drinks in the Human Sphere. Shipped throughout the Lyran Commonwealth, it is also very popular in the Clan Wolf systems and Tamar Pact.

Trellisane – A participatory democracy, Trellisane has one of the more odd election laws in place. The citizens are split into three groups based on random selection and one group is allowed to vote in the general elections that take place every two years. In effect, each citizen can only vote once each six years. It is also home to one of the two aerospace firms in the Duchy.