

## **Solaris Cooperative**

### **History**

The Jihad came to Solaris like a thief in the night, with the Word of Blake smuggling many BattleMechs onto the world and taking over numerous minor stables and cooperatives. The warriors of Solaris, having no warning of the coming assault, welcomed the time of the Star League Council with celebratory fights and parades marched through the streets as they prepared to close out the year in a dramatic culmination of matches. The year closed out more dramatically than Solaris could have ever imagined.

The Word of Blake struck soon after beginning the Jihad, catching Solaris by surprise. They hadn't expected the Word to come to the games world after all. What the Word did after taking over Solaris City and the main arenas shocked Solaris even more. They staged executions of captured MechWarriors and broadcasted them throughout the Inner Sphere. It shocked both Solaris and the Inner Sphere, and a call went out to assemble a force and liberate the world. From throughout the Inner Sphere mercenaries and soldiers who had once fought on Solaris smuggled themselves onto Solaris to fight the Word and join the resistance.

Then Erik Gray, the MechWarrior that had secured the help of the cooperatives, fell in battle against the Word and it appeared as if resistance would collapse. Until Grand Champion Kelly Metz and a company of former Solaris warriors arrived in Nowhere, the resistance's holdout. They rallied the fighters and went out on the assault, opening up the Word positions. Within days they destroyed the HPG with a targeted assault that stopped the broadcasts of executions before beginning to hit widespread targets that hampered the Word's ability to defend Solaris City.

Most histories credit her with saving the resistance on Solaris, though more thoughtful analyses note that others had far more to do with it than her. They note the sudden support of the Yakuza as a turning point, and their ability to smuggle more former Solaris warriors on-world would prove to be a major part of the resistance's success. But whether she was the brains of the operation or a figurehead, few debate that as Grand Champion she was a symbol the other warriors could rally behind.

By the end of the first week, "true battlefield holos" of her had achieved major circulation both on Solaris and beyond, though military analysts of the time rolled their eyes and labeled them as obviously staged. Feminist movements protested her "untoward posture" to which their detractors just laughed. "The Word of Blake is nuking people and you are worried about a little skin?" was one of their more common refrains. Within months, she became the most popular postergirl since the famed Black Widow, a not-insignificant feat on its own merits.

By the time Erik Gray, much the worse for wear, returned she was entrenched as the new leader. She wisely welcomed him back though and chose to work with, rather than

against, him. The two led the resistance after that, and with the help of the Yakuza and a continuing supply of former Solaris warriors began to shore up the resistance's ability to fight even as the Word recovered their breath and pushed them out of Solaris City again. They also received aid from the DropShip Irregulars, a mercenary unit that had fought the Word of Blake in the past and were looking for another chance to teach them a lesson. Doctor Raisley, wanting a bit of payback for his capture at the Word's hands, moved his research from Bethel in the neutral Syrtis Federation to Solaris where he used it to help the resistance fight the Word. The war continued for years though, with the DropShip Irregulars and the resistance, who quickly coined themselves the Solaris Irregulars, barely able to hold onto Nowhere and Blue Point Weapons and the Word unable to completely crush them due to the resistance of the various crime syndicates that had begun to follow the Yakuza's lead.

By 3073 though, the Irregulars were beginning to lose heart. Unable to push the Word off, every former Solaris warrior that would come had arrived and they were running low on everything from pilots to spare parts. The handful of hardened warriors that remained were dangerous individuals accustomed to fighting with each other and able to fight like demons, but with resources drying up even the most stubborn of them were coming to the conclusion that they could not win. Then in June the Fourteenth Skye Guard RCT arrived to support them.

The Word of Blake hammered them with all their AeroSpace assets and destroyed three-quarters of the force, but the survivors landed and linked up with the Irregulars in Nowhere. Stunned by the Word's fanatical resistance, the Skye soldiers nearly didn't venture out of Nowhere to fight again but as the Word ground forces stepped up their assaults to a fevered pace they moved out to support the resistance. With most of their chain of command shattered they followed the orders of the remaining Solaris warriors rather than being the conquering heroes they'd planned to be. But they gave the Solaris and DropShip Irregulars the infusion of manpower and machines they needed to push the Word back from Nowhere once and for all.

The Irregulars and the remaining Fourteenth followed the Word back to Solaris City and continued to hammer the occupiers, as the Yakuza and the other crime syndicates stepped up efforts to break the Word's back from behind. It took several months, but by February of 3074 they had finally smashed the Word forces down far enough that they were able to assault the DropPort directly. The Word of Blake crumpled under the attack, but not before gutting the bulk of the surviving Fourteenth and leaving Solaris City in ruins. Most of what remained of the Fourteenth chose to remain on Solaris and joined the Solaris Irregulars.

The quarter century since then has seen the Solaris Irregulars expand into a multi-regiment force with integrated naval units, but in 3074 they only numbered a few spaceships captured from the Word of Blake and what remained of the Fourteenth's spaceships. In BattleMechs, after all salvage was taken into account, they had nearly enough machines to fill out a battalion. The DropShip Irregulars had another short battalion and the surviving vehicles gave the world a total of a regiment in combat power.

With the Word driven out, many of the surviving Solaris warriors came out of hiding or left the Irregulars to return to the arenas, and for years the arenas hosted battles between battered vehicles or BattleMechs so badly damaged the Irregulars couldn't use them. It wasn't until 3080 in fact that new BattleMechs began to show their faces in the arenas again, but in the meantime Kelly Metz, Erik Gray, Doctor Raisley, and the other leaders of Solaris agreed that a buffer zone would have to be formed to protect Solaris from anything like this again. The Federation of Skye hadn't supported them for years and couldn't be trusted to defend them in the future. Defense would have to come from Solaris itself.

In March, Solaris officially seceded from the Federation of Skye and sent envoys to the surrounding worlds, offering them membership in the new Solaris Cooperative. Part of the offer included the placement of Solaris Circuit arenas on any world that joined the Cooperative, promising new jobs, money, and recognition. The worlds they targeted, including Uhuru and Rochelle of the Free Worlds League, agreed to join up with Solaris and have had few reasons since then to regret their decision.

The modern Solaris Cooperative is one of the most, if not the most, concentrations of wealth in the Human Sphere. The Solaris Circuit brings in royalties from action figures, toys, and mere transmission rights for matches that dwarf the economies of entire nations. Most of this is sent back into the Circuit in the forms of researching new technologies to make the fights more eye catching, or into maintaining and expanding the arenas. The Cooperative also plays host to a large gambling industry, which pays taxes of its own, and it is commonly known that in the Cooperative you can bet on anything you can imagine, and more things you couldn't before seeing them.

This concentration of wealth guarantees that pirates and privateers consider the Cooperative a plump target, but while raids are common the Solaris military has become good at repelling such attacks. The rich Cooperative can afford to spend money on its defenses, and it is a generally secure area to live. Battles are still common, both within and without its borders as the Solaris military returns the raiding favors, but the populace is safe from danger as most fights take place outside populated areas. Very rarely do pirates or privateers attempt to battle inside a city and most who have tried have not gained the benefit of a trial afterwards.

The Solaris Cooperative sports interesting relations with its neighbors. While raids are common, Solaris considers them to be "extended Circuit battles" where her military tests itself against others, and often such battles devolve into duels much like how the Clans fight. Solaris doesn't need the resources as much as they like to show themselves as being better than anyone else after all. This method of raiding has engendered a form of friendly rivalry with neighboring nations that has never threatened to spill over into full-scale warfare, and Solaris programs are common and highly rated there. It is common for Solaris warriors to fight in official tournaments in the surrounding nations as well, where the locals lustily cheer for their hometown heroes against the "evil invading Solarian" for

instance, and their good-natured (in most cases) acceptances of the fan “heal treatments” has made Solaris many good friends and friendly adversaries.

The Solaris Cooperative, in conclusion, appears to be a stable and rich nation in the modern Human Sphere. It is recognized throughout the Sphere by competitors as the best at what it does, even as they try to best it, and its programs can be seen everywhere holobroadcasts, and even ancient single-dimension broadcasts, are sent. Few nations can boast that, and it appears as though the Solaris Cooperative will be a powerful nation for the foreseeable future.

## **Military**

The Solaris Cooperative Navy is composed mainly of *Noton*-class frigates. Fast and mounting numerous banks of short-ranged weaponry, these frigates are responsible for moving the Army from world to world to deal with raiders, or to perform punitive raids on others. The *Hirsch*-class DropShips they carry have numerous configurations, such as cargo carrier, BattleMech transport, AeroSpace Fighter carrier, and assault ship, and civilian models are common. Military models look identical to the civilian model and pirates rarely know whether or not a military model is in a convoy until they approach within weapons range.

The Solaris Cooperative Army is composed primarily of militias manned by competitors in the Solaris Circuit. Accustomed to fighting solo in small matches, these warriors are minimally-trained in group tactics, rarely fight as an organized whole, have individualized machines that any but “their” tech can’t work on, and simply do not excel in group combat. Luckily, most raiders don’t take advantage of this weakness.

The sole organized force, outside the navy, in the Solaris Cooperative is the Solaris Irregulars. Like the famed DropShip Irregulars, the Solaris Irregulars have turned practical jokes, especially ones that can be used to defeat an enemy, into an art form that must be practiced as much as possible to hone it into a deadly weapon. They are encouraged to practice on each other rather than other hapless individuals, but are known to make exceptions, especially in cases where friends or enemies are in other units. False weapons ports, exotic holographic emissions, and strange weapons invented for the Solaris Circuit are common, and the Irregulars use them all. They prefer to duel, consistent with their origins, but their birth of fire during the Jihad made them competent in large unit tactics to the chagrin of many enemies they have faced since.

They have a personal rivalry, friendly thank God, with the DropShip Irregulars and warriors from both units often fill the bars of Solaris telling and retelling increasingly impossible stories about the indignities they have performed on their enemies (or friends) as they seek to outdo each other. Often these debates turn into full scale mini-wars as the two forces pull practical jokes on each other to prove they are the best. Enemies who learn they are about to face either force after such a “war” have often fled the field of battle rather than fight, knowing that they have just learned new techniques and are looking forward to trying them out on a new enemy.

The Irregular's naval detachment is commanded by the *Cabol Hirsch*, an *Impavido*-class cruiser they normally call *Cabol* to keep from confusing it with the DropShips, and is protected by three *Notons* and a large number of *Hirschs*. *Nephilim* fighters constantly patrol space around the fleet and have supported the larger elements in many battles.

Supporting both the naval and ground forces of the Irregulars is the regimental-sized force of Land-AirMechs. Made up nearly completely of *Archangel* and *Serraphim*-class LAMs, there are also some other LAMs that survived the Succession Wars and the Jihad in the unit, as well as LAMs purchased from the Ozawa-Addicks Mercantile Alliance, but these rarer birds have all been refitted with modern Solaris technologies.

The core force of the Irregular's ground forces is one regiment strong and composed entirely of BattleMechs. *Kotos* with their swift movement, and the heavier but very mobile *Morpheus* and *Tsunami* BattleMechs dominate the Solaris Irregular's scout units. *Lynx* and *Maelstrom* BattleMechs make up the majority of the main combat arm, while the slower *Cestus*, *Nightstar* and *Colossus* BattleMechs maintain firepower in the assault forces. There are other machines in this regiment but they are rare as the regiment wishes to maintain as uniform a structure as possible. The BattleMech regiment is supported by vehicles, but as no standard vehicle is produced on Solaris the vehicle forces are decidedly less uniform, though still of excellent quality. The vehicles tend to be those salvaged or captured from other nearby nations, but custom vehicles are also seen.

## **Factories**

New Kyoto – Doering Electronics – electronics  
– RAMTech - lasers

Solaris – Crowded with design firms and small factories, these are only the major factories that produce weapons for the Solaris Cooperative Army and Navy.  
– Blue Shot Weapons – *Cestus*, *Lynx*, *Maelstrom*, and *Nightstar* BattleMechs  
– OmniTech Industries – *Colossus*, *Koto*, *Morpheus* and *Tsunami* BattleMechs  
– Solaris Naval Yards – *Hirsch* DropShip; *Noton* frigate  
– Trisagion Aerospace – *Archangel* and *Serraphim* Land-AirMechs; *Nephilim* AeroSpace Fighter

## **Systems**

Algorab – The sole habitable planet in a binary system, this world sports two polar seas where life is relatively comfortable, and hundreds of thousands of kilometers of wasteland (where the Solaris Circuit performs matches) in between linked by maglev rail lines and airships studded with climate-controlled mining outposts. Valuable for the raw minerals and fuels that can be found here, this world is regularly raided by Skye forces.

New Kyoto – An exotic yet terrestrial world, and dominated by the founding Japanese culture, this is a major center of Buddhist teachings and the temple of Tooshodai-ji

possesses the Inner Sphere's largest Amida Buddha sculpture (over 110 meters in height). The Kyoto College, devoted to the study of myomers and medical applications, is one of the best colleges of its kind in the Human Sphere and has an open enrollment policy that brings in money from all of known space. The particularly vicious local wildlife is used on the Solaris Circuit and is exported to Solaris where they are crowd pleasers in the arenas.

Rahne – Wracked by its massive moon Caliban, this inhospitable planet has four seasons: Storm, Calm, Cold, and Melting. Of the four, only Calm and Cold prove safe for humans to leave the subterranean cities as Storm sports winds that make any vehicular traffic treacherous and during Melting the temperature rises above 100 degrees Celsius. Humans remain on this world because of the rare metals, gems, and radioactive deposits on this world that make it valuable. The Solaris Circuit's best Rahne ratings come from fights during the Storm and Melting seasons.

Rochelle – A rich world in resources and soil, it was highly prized during the expansion of mankind to the stars and during the Star League. These riches nearly destroyed the world during the Succession Wars though, and by the time of the Jihad it was a mere shell of its former self. Its inclusion into the Solaris Cooperative however has brought a renaissance to the world, especially since 3080 when the first Solaris Circuit arena was permanently established on world. The proud and stubborn locals continue to live life as they always have, mining precious resources for the factories on Solaris, while the irradiated southern continent has become the permanent base of Solaris Circuit matches on Rochelle, and a way to tempt dissatisfied youngsters away from the mines into more exiting work. The high radiation and acid rains have proven to be popular obstacles for BattleMechs on the Circuit.

Solaris VII – The capital of the Solaris Cooperative and heart of the Solaris Circuit, this terrestrial world is home to one of the densest concentrations of wealth in the Human Sphere. The imaginative engineers and technicians of Solaris constantly think of new ways to out-design their competition, while factories watch to see what they want to build and gambling houses are home to wagers on who will be a success. Gambling, many say, is the heart of Solaris, and you can place a bet on anything you can imagine, from BattleMech fights to the next bed-buddy of the rich and famous. But it is truly the MechWarriors that are the heart of Solaris, and they fight in countless matches throughout the Circuit to prove that. Some of the most exiting matches take place on the comets that regularly fly in system, where the dangerous and unpredictable shifts have bested numerous warriors that claimed to be the best.

Uhuru – Devastated by the Succession Wars, entrance into the Solaris Cooperative has proven to be popular in recent years. The rising standard of living brought by the influx of funds and the Solaris Circuit has made life more enjoyable, and the Circuit has drawn off many dissatisfied individuals who see a greater life ready for them on Solaris. The local Circuit is widely regarded for the rough terrain it offers, especially the numerous nuclear craters that have proven to be fan favorites.

Zaniah – Largely land, with only small seas dotting it, Zaniah lacks significant natural resources or major industries, and the locals appear to concern themselves with little more than fishing and moisture farming. Famous for being the host world of the St. Marinus House, it has been the home of famous personalities such as Morgan Kell and Peter Steiner-Davion over its history, but this monastery is most known for the countless numbers of MechWarriors that have retired from the death and destruction of combat here. Numerous Solaris Champions have retired here over the centuries, and the Solaris Circuit hosts matches in the many deserts of this world in their names.