

Marik-Stewart Commonwealth

History

To most people, the Jihad began in December of 3067 when the Word of Blake showed their true colors after being denied entry into the Star League and having their corruption brought into the light. But for Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik it began many years earlier when Captain-General Thomas Marik allowed her mother to be killed by Lyrans during the FedCom Civil War. He never lifted a finger to save Kristen Marik and then had Marshal Jeremy Brett publicly reprimanded for sending a rescue force against orders.

That action caused the first major split in the Marik line since Anton Marik's rebellion, but Alys wasn't another Anton. She took her war to the Parliament in the open and forced the other Mariks to make their stand. Most sided with her, but Paul Marik and his daughter Corrine stood beside the man they thought was his brother. Never able to gain a majority of the Parliament, Alys' crusade was presumed lost when Thomas Marik was voted in as the new First Lord of the Star League.

The rumors of Word of Blake treachery fanned the flames of discontent with the Captain-General though and the Parliament began to fight even harder over what to do next. Some believed he'd been duped, others that he was duping them, and some still sat on the fence, not sure of what to do. Then a Free Worlds League navy squadron centered on the *Thera*-class *Delos* arrived at Atreus and attempted to attack the world. It was the first inkling the Parliament had that anything was wrong, but the quick actions of the *Corinth* and her battle group told them that others knew and hadn't told them. We know now of course that the first proof was laid down at the Star League conference, but at the time no information had been presented to the Parliament. All they knew was that their own powerful fleets were fighting and shattering themselves. And shatter themselves they did, leaving both fleets in rubble that rained down on Atreus for three weeks.

Horried at the assault, the young firebrand Alys demanded that Thomas be removed as Captain-General for incompetence and that the Word of Blake be forcibly removed from the League. The Parliament supported her second demand, but by a decreasing margin held off her first demand, and the call went out to remove the Word of Blake. Few expected the next stage of the war to begin as quickly or as closely as it did. Within minutes of the vote, news hit the Parliament that the 8th Free Worlds Legionnaires, the defenders of Atreus, were fighting each other and that a Word of Blake covert team had gassed the First Knights of the Inner Sphere and that none of them survived.

Surrounded by the 8th as it self-destructed in the rolling hills of the capital city, the small guard of the Capital Building tried desperately to hold off the numerous Word of Blake units in the 8th, but it was collapsing and nobody expected it to hold more than a few more minutes. Then the Word of Blake forces began falling to shots from behind as the First Knights of the Inner Sphere, not so dead as news suggested, arrived to relieve the beleaguered defenders. Though the 8th effectively died in the fighting, the First Knights had saved the Parliament from destruction.

With Atreus safe for the time being, other League formations began to spread out on their hunt for the Word of Blake with Thomas Marik picking many of their targets. Casualties mounted on all sides as numerous regiments thought loyal shattered under Word of Blake infiltrators or defected wholesale. Other regiments ran into traps and were slaughtered, causing many to doubt that they could win. Then in January, messages began to flood the HPG network showing that Thomas Marik was a Word of Blake plant.

After verifying the information, the Parliament removed him as Captain-General and raised Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik to the position against her objections. But she'd proven herself willing to fight the Captain-General and had built up an alliance of the many who opposed him, so she got the honor of the position as Thomas was spirited away to his wife's home in the Oriente. It was an honor she would have gladly not been given, but she took it and prepared to fight the Word of Blake with a new strategy that would hopefully work better.

Unfortunately, even as her orders began to spread throughout the League, the Word of Blake commenced their next stage of the war, shutting down the HPG network and giving individual systems the choice of leaving the Mariks to rot or dying under Word guns. Many systems and polities chose to leave or remain neutral, and the new Captain-General found herself without the ability to command most of the League troops or worlds.

But pieces of the League fleet slowly began to return to Atreus, fighting through the Word of Blake fleet as it came, and by June the *Santorini* and her task force arrived requesting repairs. The *Essex*-class *Raven* arrived, having lost her sister-ship the *Schrack* to a Word of Blake assault in Hellos Minor. Others slipped in as well, some escorting entire regiments of troops, and soon half a dozen WarShips were ready to escort the repaired *Santorini* back out into battle. The 2nd Free Worlds Legionnaires, with Corrine Marik, were one of the last to arrive and she and Alys took little time putting the past behind them. They'd been on opposite sides concerning Thomas, but now they agreed with what had to be done. Unable to command from Atreus amongst the shattering HPG network, Captain-General Alys Rousset-Marik went with the *Santorini* and the fleet began to smash through the Word of Blake forces like a hammer, gathering more BattleMech units as it went.

They arrived on Stewart in December of 3068 to find the Home Guard shattered and the Juggernaut trying desperately to hold out against Word of Blake forces. The fleet and attached ground elements quickly relieved the remaining Stewart Dragoons before moving on with several Stewart assault DropShips to other systems suffering under Word of Blake assault. They met the *Sardis* and Photon Brett-Marik at Amity where they defeated the Word of Blake force occupying it and "acquired" a number of *Cheetahs* to rebuild their dwindling number of fighters. Then the full fleet went on to Irian in April of 3069 to find the 7th Free Worlds Legionnaires locked in battle with the 13th Marik Militia for control of the factories on the world.

It took nearly three months for the fleet and their ground forces to destroy the 13th Marik Militia and push the Word of Blake out of the system, though their losses were heavy enough to force a trip to Marik for more repairs and rearming. The rest of 3068 and 3069 found the *Sardis* and the *Santorini* taking turns jumping into nearby systems to look for and engage the Word of Blake. In January of 3070, the Word of Blake finally organized a response with a heavy force while the *Sardis* and Photon Brett-Marik were in Ariel. Arriving at a pirate point only a few hours from Marik, the *Thessaly* and her battle group swooped in to smash the *Santorini* and her escorts into ruin. The *Zechetinu*-class *Sparta* and *Tirana* died protecting the super carrier, while the *Agamemnon*-class *Menelaus* fell under the guns of the *Aeneas* and *Troy*. The *Raven*, *Janos Marik*, *Olympic*, and *Eagle*-class *Lancelot*, and *Galahad* organized a counter attack that forced the Word of Blake to allow the shattered *Santorini* to run, leaving the wreckage of the *Hippolyta*, *Ixodida*, *Haptopoda*, *Leodegrance*, and *Percival* behind them as they passed. Unfortunately, the *Galahad* took critical damage in the last minutes of the battle and fell into the atmosphere, burning on the way down to smash into surface.

By the time the *Sardis* returned with the *Impavido* and the *Zechetinu*-class *Attica*, both under orders from the Oriente, to push the Word of Blake out of the system, they'd performed a general bombardment of Marik and killed millions. The Word of Blake fleet had taken heavy casualties breaking down Marik though, and Photon Brett-Marik took the *Sardis* out to chase them as the battered remnants of the *Santorini*'s battle group traveled towards Ionus for much-needed repairs.

Along the way, they ran into several small Word of Blake squadrons and smashed them flat, but each battle hurt them a little more and by the time they arrived at Ionus in April they were on the verge of collapse with most of their armor in tatters and only one of the *Santorini*'s main decks able to support fighter craft. Meanwhile, the *Sardis*, Photon Brett-Marik's people, and the Oriente forces with him continued to track down any Word of Blake forces they could, usually done by following their trail of bombarded planets. Rumors of whole scale use of weapons of mass destruction in the Regular territories, normal communications cut off like every other system from the Marik Commonwealth, flooded through the grape vine as many Marik soldiers began to do the same thing with weapons captured from the Word of Blake. It was the worst year of the Jihad for the Marik Commonwealth, with nearly every world seeing the flash of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction. Nearly 50% of Ariel was rendered inhabitable by their usage, and that is simply one example among many.

But in November, rumors about the total bombardment and decimation of Gibson by the Regular fleet began to shoot through the Marik Commonwealth. Then in December, the Regular fleet, led by the *Delphi* and the Black Lion-class *Xanthos*, followed the retreating Word of Blake fleets to Atrous where they destroyed the *Thessaly* and broke the back of the remaining Blakist fleet in the Free Worlds League. But the *Delphi* did not survive the engagement, caught by the *Aegis*-class *Nueva Badajoz* with a full broadside that penetrated her ammunition stores and ripped her apart from the inside. The *Nueva Badajoz* did not survive the battle either, shattered by the *Delphi*'s fighters and the *Xanthos* in retribution.

Remaining in Atreus for repairs, they coordinated the next wave of the war with the Marik Commonwealth fleet in Ionus as the Silver Hawk Irregulars and a small fleet of converted carriers filled with Amity-built *Cheetahs* arrived there to support Alys and her fleet. By February of 3071 the fleets headed out again, leaving behind the permanent defenders of Atreus and Ionus just in case the Word of Blake tried to hit them again, and began the last campaign to destroy them in the League. It wasn't until 3072 that they'd cleansed the Blakists from League territory, but it was never in question after 3070 that the zealots were losing. And lose they did, though they pulled every trick in the book and wiped out entire planets on their way out.

By September of 3072, only a handful of planets in any of the remaining League member states were left untouched and billions were dead. Interstellar trade was nonexistent and only military convoys moved between systems, leaving the economy of the Commonwealth and the League at a standstill. But with ComStar help the HPG network slowly began to come online again as Regulus, the Oriente, Marik, Stewart, and the Silver Hawks Coalition repaired and assembled their fleets at Ionus and Atreus. Assault DropShips and carriers from the Duchy of Graham-Marik came to support them as well, coming out of what was left of the factories as fast as possible.

Hearing of the planned Star League assault on Terra, the factions of the League performed their repairs as quickly as possible and then launched the fleet for Terra in July of 3073. The *Santorini*, still unable to operate fighters out of her port deck, the *Sardis*, and the *Xanthos* led the fleet, along with smaller escorts, dozens of JumpShips, and over a hundred DropShips. They arrived at Outreach in October to rendezvous with the Star League fleet that had already experienced defeat over Terra. It would take three years of fighting, even with reinforcements streaming into Outreach from other Star League member states, to break down the Word of Blake defenses and finally take over the Terran system and its orbitals, and the *Janos Marik*, caught by several Word of Blake WarShips in June of 3074, never returned home.

But in 3076 they finally managed to drop their ground forces on Terra and the slow battle to take it back and destroy the final elements of Word of Blake began. But like in the League, they fought without regard to civilian casualties, or perhaps even hoping to cause them, and weapons of mass destruction wiped out entire cities in order to kill even a few attackers. The Regulans responded in kind, dropping nukes and other similar weapons on any Word of Blake base they could find. By early 3077, the Reagan SDS had been annihilated by these strikes, and in a shot that shocked even the Word of Blake, the Regulans turned Hilton Head into a crater.

By 3078, the Word of Blake had been wiped out, but over a billion Terrans had died in the war and the economy of Terra was in as bad a situation as the League, or anywhere else for that matter. With the Inner Sphere in chaos, ComStar moved most of what was left of its forces onto Terra and the nations that fought under the Star League banner against the Word of Blake returned home to rebuild. The League fleet returned to Atreus for repairs, after stopping off at Marik to pick up Captain-General Alys Rousset-Marik.

As the fleets underwent repairs at the yards, she stood before the Parliament and relinquished the position of Captain-General. She returned home aboard the *Olympic*, it's last trip under her command, before it returned to Atreus for a much-needed full refit. There has never been another Captain-General of the Free Worlds League.

Upon arriving at Marik, she began negotiations with Stewart to formalize the Marik-Stewart Commonwealth, in effect putting a legal name to the union of nations they'd become during the Jihad. By 3080, the Duchy of Graham-Marik, the Silver Hawks Coalition, and numerous other systems around the Marik-Stewart Commonwealth had also become a part of the Commonwealth, though like the League they kept their independence from Marik as well. Officially "honored allies of Marik," without them the Commonwealth never would have been able to rebuild.

The last two decades have seen the Marik-Stewart Commonwealth avoid war at every opportunity as it has simply attempted to rebuild what was lost during the Jihad. Sharing a border with the Lyran Commonwealth's Gienah Authority, the Solaris Cooperative, the Tikonov Free Republic, and being within jumping distance of the Federation of Skye, they have been forced to walk a fine line between pacifism and gunboat diplomacy, but so far the Duchess of Marik has been able to keep tensions at a minimum. Raids are common, as they are throughout the Human Sphere, but she has been able to stop any major wars from occurring, though the recent standoff on the unaffiliated League world of Wing between Commonwealth and Federation fleets in 3096 nearly sparked one.

Claiming the world as a former member of the Federation of Skye, a Federation fleet moved to "liberate" it after unrest swept its cities. The Commonwealth responded, sending a squadron of *Eagle IIs* led by the *Raven* to protect the world from "outside dominion." After weeks of a slow ratcheting of pressure that nearly resulted in weapons fire, Alys' 21-year-old daughter Kristen Marik, groomed since a child to become the next leader of the Commonwealth, arrived to mediate the situation. The current Duchess of Augustine put an investigation into effect that uncovered Federation support of the gangs causing the unrest as she talked with them, attempting to come to a satisfactory conclusion to the matter. Using the diplomatic training Alys had given her, she kept the Federation representatives talking for weeks until she had the proof she needed. Once it was verified, she placed it on the table, informed the Federation representatives that this report would be sent to Atreus and Terra if they didn't leave immediately, and then leaned back in her chair as she awaited their decision. The Federation fleet left the next morning without firing a shot.

Now 25 years old, Kristen Marik has personally spoken with the leaders of every major nation within two hundred light years of the Commonwealth borders, sent on those trips by her mother to familiarize herself with the people she will soon be dealing with as equals. Most consider her to be much like her mother when she was the same age, a bit of a firebrand when goaded to action, but very controlled and diplomatic at all times. Like her mother, she is on good terms with Regulax and the Oriente, and those nations are

content with the idea that she will soon be the leader of the Marik-Stewart Commonwealth.

Military

The primary fighter of the Marik-Stewart Commonwealth is the light but fast *Cheetah* fighter, and it is seen flying off the many *Eagle IIs* that patrol Commonwealth space. The *Thera*-class *Santorini* is the flagship of the Commonwealth fleet and is always escorted by the *Eagle*-class *Lancelot*, the last surviving ship of her class. The *Vincent*-class *Liberty* and *Essex*-class *Raven* are the only other pre-Jihad WarShips in the navy and the smaller *Eagle IIs* are much more commonly seen. Also often seen are *Impavido*-class cruisers purchased from the League factories at Atreus.

Mercury-class BattleMechs are the primary scout 'Mech of the Commonwealth and *Tarantulas* are often seen in "Thundering Herd" formations with their larger *Sirocco* brethren. It is the *Locusts*, *Stingers*, *Wasps*, and *Jackals* that make up the majority of the light BattleMechs in the Commonwealth military though. The *Blackjack* OmniMech is seen everywhere in the Commonwealth as well, often working with *Hunchback* BattleMechs, though the *Phoenix Hawks* and *Griffins* are the standard fast support BattleMech of the ground forces. The *Thunderbolt* is often seen in heavy lances, working with *Yeoman* fire support BattleMechs and *Tempest* snipers in militia forces, but *Perseus* OmniMechs are much more common in the elite units. Assault lances are primarily made up of *Awesomes*, *BattleMasters*, and *Thugs*, all heavily PPC-oriented BattleMechs, though there are also many *Siroccos* in the previously mentioned "Thundering Herd" formations.

The Commonwealth armored assets are composed primarily of vehicles that are built in Commonwealth factories. The skirmisher units are normally made of Harrasser, Stygian, and Pegasus hovercraft, making them fast and powerful. Their heavy missile armaments give them the capability of using the many specialty missile ammunition developed over the years to hinder enemy movements. The Galleon is used primarily for scouting missions, while the Scorpions, Main Gauche, Hetzer, and Partisan tanks are used in the main armored lines to defend against attackers and hold ground.

7th Marik Legionnaires – The Steadfast – Irian
1st Marik Guards – The Amazons – Marik
12th Atrean Dragoons – The White Sabers – Augustine
1st Knights – The Golden Ones – Marik
30th Marik Militia – David's Heirs – Loyalty
31st Marik Militia – The Enlightened – Paradise
9th Marik Hussars – The Future Guards – Ionus

Stewart Dragoons – The Juggernauts – Stewart
2nd Stewart Legionnaires – The Stygians – Stewart

Silver Hawk Irregulars – Falcon, Gryphon, and Hawk – Kalidasa

20th Silver Hawk Militia – The Pit Bulls – Concord

34th Silver Hawk Militia – The Zealots – Amity

1st Commonwealth Naval Squadron – The Knights’ Own – Marik

2nd Commonwealth Naval Squadron – Raven Flight – Ionus

3rd Commonwealth Naval Squadron – Liberty’s Guardians – Loyalty

Stewart Navy – Dragon’s Heart – Stewart

Silver Hawk Navy – Silver Legacy – Amity

Factories

Amity – Imstar Aerospace – Cheetah Aerospace Fighter

Campbelton – Fusigon Heavy Weaponry – Lasers and PPCs

Connaught – Kong Interstellar Corporation – *Black Knight* BattleMech. Fusion Engines

Ionus – Illium Shipyards – *Zechetinu* destroyer and *Eagle II* frigate

Irian – Brooks Incorporated – Harasser and Stygian Hovercraft. Galleon and Main Gauche tanks.

– Diverse Optics Incorporated – Laser Weapons

– IMB Systems – Targeting and Tracking systems

– Irian BattleMechs Unlimited – *Hermes*, *Tempest*, and *Awesome* BattleMechs.

Blackjack OmniMech.

Kalidasa – Kali Yama Weapons Industries Incorporated – *Wasp* and *Hunchback* BattleMechs. *Perseus* OmniMech

– Quikscell Company – Various APCs, Scorpion tank, and Hetzer Wheeled Vehicle

Keystone – Earthwerks, Incorporated – *Stinger*, *Jackal*, *Phoenix Hawk*, *Griffin*, *Thunderbolt*, *BattleMaster* and *Thug* BattleMechs

– Exeter Organization – Pegasus Hovercraft

Loyalty – Kallon Industries – Partisan tank, *Kuan Ti* and *Vengeance* Dropships

– SelaSys Incorporated – *Tramp* and *Star Lord* JumpShips

Marik – Imstar Aerospace – Planetlifter Conventional Aircraft and *Cheetah* Aerospace Fighter

Paradise – Curtiss Militech – *Yeoman* BattleMechs

Savannah – Technicron Manufacturing – *Awesome* BattleMech

Stewart – Corean Enterprises - (MacAdams-Suharno) – *Locust, Tarantula, and Sirocco*
BattleMechs

Systems

Amity – Amity's large, widespread islands are linked by maglev trains and Ground Effect Vehicle (GEV) causeways. The planet features a tropical atmosphere with temperate zones near the poles. Hurricanes are commonplace, and the tremendous cost of constant rebuilding keeps the economy unbalanced, even with funding from the Commonwealth. A member of the Silver Hawks Coalition, this world had a long hatred for the Marik family and welcomed the arrival of the Word of Blake, supporting them with *Cheetah* AeroSpace fighters during the Jihad. Marik and Silver Hawks forces sabotaged the lines many times rather than destroy them outright and after the Jihad it has become an unwilling member of the Commonwealth. Only the Silver Hawks Coalition independence within the Commonwealth has kept them from outright rebellion.

Angell II – With 90% of its water contaminated, the society of this world at the time of Jihad had become stratified between the rich who had access to clean water and the poor who had to survive on the doling of water they were given. When the Word of Blake came and offered them a brighter future, the “drones” signed on willingly and rebelled, killing the aristocrats of planet and helping to fuel the Word of Blake with new recruits. It took many years to drive the Blakists from this world, and it continues to be uneasily under the control of the Marik-Stewart Commonwealth though Duchess Rousset-Marik maintains a steady hands-off approach to the world as the new management seems to be doing fairly well.

Berenson – A water-rich agricultural world, Berenson's main export is corn. Easily conquered by the Word of Blake early in the Jihad, this was one of the last worlds liberated by the Marik government and still has not had its wounds completely repaired.

Helm – Once home to a Star League Castle Brian full of advanced weapons and a complete Star League Field Library core, the fortress was destroyed by some rogue ComStar and Marik nobles in their attempt to take it. In the end, the Grey Death Legion survived and sent copies of the core to every major nation. During the Jihad, the AgroMechs built on this world were retrofitted with weapons and used against the Word of Blake in support of Stewart and Marik troops. The AgroMechs were slaughtered and the factories burned to the ground. After the Jihad, Duchess Rousset-Marik allocated monies to rebuild the factories and care for the families of those killed by the Blakists.

Ideyld – Home to the great Golden Dome Mosque, this Moslem world has shown itself to be as peaceful and fun loving, especially between its two primary sects the Shi'ites and the Sunnis, as the Moslems have been for millennia. Duchess Rousset-Marik has tried to enforce peace on the world but getting past millennia of hatreds has proven difficult.

Kalidasa – The major port of entry for traders entering Commonwealth space along the Solaris Cooperative border, 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.

Loyalty – Opened one and a quarter centuries ago, the Loyalty Theatrical Academy is a lively institution that scouts for and hires actors and actresses for vidtape productions. During the Jihad, this world became a major target of both Marik and Word of Blake claims but the academy maintained neutrality and avoided any compromising situations with grace. After the Jihad, Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik offered them funding as long as they agreed not to use their productions to attack her. Now no longer under the purse string controls of the major networks and given complete creative freedom, other than the before mentioned limitation, the Academy has prospered and is considered the best school, and one of the best producers, for vidtape productions in the League.

Marik – The center of power for the Marik family, especially after the Captain-Generalcy was abolished, this world's powerful duststorms and tornados make it a hard planet to fight on. Many Word of Blake units were lost after being lured into them by savvy Marik defenders during the Jihad. The Burlingrad Hoverdrome hosts weekly individual and team speeder races that are vidtape entertainment staples.

Miaplacidus – In the tradition of a trading nation, an eye for beauty and a sense of value go hand in hand. The arts flourish in the Free Worlds League as a by-product of the focus on trade. Created objects (plas-sculptures and abstract myomer art) and created movement (null-G dance, plays and improvisational drama) are appreciated beyond their utility, as is natural beauty. They fact that that they can be hawked or shown for gain is merely a profitable side-benefit. Some art forms rise above the profit motive, however. Even enemy raiders have left the Paradise Jungles untouched.

Nathan – A rural world, used by some regular Marik units for R&R. The world is also a stop off for free traders from the Tikonov Free Republic, and the city of Fullson's open-air markets are quite famous.

New Olympia – The nation of Olympica is legally separate from the rest of the planet, a consequence of Regular support when Marik claimed control of this world, and is still very friendly with the Regulans. An important agricultural exporter to the rest of the Marik-Stewart Commonwealth and the League in general, its seas are abundantly stocked with marine life, including marlin, sea bass, speckled hoodoo, and Hodson's Fliers (a unique breed whose members can grow to over four meters and can leap more than ten meters out of the water). Also home to the Allison Mechwarrior Institute and the Lloyd Marik-Stanley Aerospace School, both of which were burned to the ground during the Jihad, Alys Rousset-Marik made rebuilding them after the Jihad a priority and they now graduate the best MechWarriors, AeroSpace pilots, and Naval crews in the League. In fact the League navy depends on graduates from this school, and the Duchess has gained much by allowing them to use those schools.

Paradise – major exports are rare hardwoods and miniature parrots.

Tania Australis – The major exports from this world are furs and rare gemstones.

Stewart – Home to many mining industries, Stewart is the staunchest support of the Marik line and a loyal ally of Duchess Rousset-Marik. Though its factories were badly damaged during the Jihad when the Home Guard fractured, they have been brought back online by Commonwealth funding.