

Ozawa-Addicks Mercantile Alliance

History

“There are two sides to any coin, but it is always just one coin.” – Daniel Davion.

The unofficial mantra of the Ozawa-Addicks Mercantile Alliance, that phrase is applicable in more ways than one. The simplest way of taking it would be to say that the Alliance values money. They do. But a more complex, and perhaps more correct, way would be to compare them to Proserpina. On Proserpina, you can buy anything if you have the money. Similarly, the Alliance will sell to anyone who has money. While still a simplistic way of explaining it, the coin analogy works between the two areas of space. Proserpina is one side of the coin, the Alliance is the other. Between the two sides, you can purchase anything.

But while Proserpina is a lawless mass of chaos, the Alliance is an orderly, peaceful place that is friendly to tourists and other outsiders. Owing little more than its name to the old Ozawa Mercantile Alliance, the modern Alliance has not fought a single war, and suffers the least from raiding of any known government. Formed during the fires of the Jihad, Addicks was the first planet of the Alliance to leave the Federated Suns.

Given the choice of burning under Word of Blake guns or going independent, the powerful Johnston family took exactly three minutes and five seconds to come to a decision. At least that is the folk tale. Whatever the truth of the matter is, they called up the local Marshal, Daniel Davion, and “strongly suggested” that he do as the Word of Blake demanded. Some sources say that the Marshal didn’t support the idea of leaving at first, but that when the Johnston Family showed him several pictures of himself and one of their cousins in a “compromising position”, he agreed quickly. Once again, we don’t know if this is true, but the two have been very happily married since 3068.

After going independent, the Johnston family knew they would have to make allies or risk being taken over by someone else. They found another powerful family more than willing to make a new alliance. The Achernar family of Achernar had lost a fortune when their factories were destroyed during the bombardment of New Avalon, but they had already made another small fortune with the new Achernar IndustrialMechs company on Achernar. Still owning the plans to more than half a dozen BattleMech designs, the Johnstons wanted the Achernars on their side. And the Achernar family was happy to attempt a new start.

The months that followed found Johnston and Achernar representatives jumping through numerous nearby systems to convince the locals to join in their alliance. By mid-3069, many of the planets that make up the current Alliance were on board. Deneb Kaitos was ready, bringing along the 4th and 8th Deneb Light Cavalry with them. The 12th Deneb, more loyal to Robinson than their nominal homeworld, stayed with Robinson and fought well against the Dragon.

Tigress, the old homeworld of the Capellan unit Laural's Legion also joined up, and sent a message to the Legion saying that new management was more than happy to welcome them home. Tasked with bringing Ningpo under Capellan domination, a task not proving to be easy especially with rumors of collusion between Sun-Tzu and the Blakists firing up the resistance, the Legion found itself unwilling to continue the fight. Doubting their mission, their leaders, and having an open invitation to return to the home the sons and daughters of former Legionaries had always dreamed of, Laural's Legion didn't hesitate. They made a mad dash for Tigress.

Finding itself with enough protection to breath safely, the new alliance of worlds began looking to formalize their union. Months of negotiations went on, with various names and political structures proposed and shot down by the systems involved. In January of 3070, the (then) little-known historian David Barclay of Ozawa brought up the name of the ancient mercantile alliance centered on Ozawa. Defeated by Galedon in the opening moves of the formation of the Draconis Combine, the name had not been seen outside of history books for centuries, but it caught the attention of the representatives. It had promise.

After another three months of negotiations, the final treaty ratifying the formation of the Ozawa-Addicks Mercantile Alliance found itself in the hands of a dozen system rulers. By December 3070, the Alliance was a reality. Ruchbah's oddly-named Michaelson Heavy Industries built a large number of combat VTOLs that found their way into the Alliance even though it was not officially a part of the Alliance but was still under the rule of New Syrtis. In combination with Johnston's Goblin infantry tank and *Dagger* OmniFighter, the realm was well defended, though they lacked any 'Mech construction capabilities outside the IndustrialMechs Achernar had been building since 3060. They had a good-sized BattleMech contingent, but no way to replace the losses from raiders that were beginning to hit them.

The Achernar family pooled its resources and upgraded the IndustrialMech factory, built on the site of the Star League-era factory they'd owned during Star League days, to produce the *Dervish* BattleMech they'd built all those centuries ago. As months and years passed, they traveled around the expanding borders of the Mercantile Alliance to check on old factories long abandoned. The Maltex Corporation and Diplyan 'Mechyards on Errai and Ozawa, badly damaged and abandoned when House Davion took the worlds, looked like the perfect places to continue their process of rebuilding their lost fortunes. Achernar BattleMechs acquired the factories and began upgrading them to build some of the other BattleMechs they had plans for.

In the meantime, the Johnston family was busy with pursuits of its own. During the Star League Tybalt's Jolassa Armored Vehicles had built the Fury, a capable command tank with the ability to defeat BattleMechs. In serious need of a 'Mech killer fast, and wanting a design to complement their Goblin, Johnston Industries acquired the rundown Jolassa factory and refurbished it to build the basic hull of the Fury. In the decades since, they have actually been able to duplicate the Nirasaki-400X computer system and have been

able to expand the facility to build the Glory fire support vehicle that Johnston Industries also still builds on New Syrtis.

The sole offensive campaign the Alliance has conducted began in 3089. The Draconis Combine had begun to collapse under a Civil War in 3087, and in 3089 the Ridzik brothers ordered an assault on the wounded nation. Seeing a chance to recover mineral-rich Halstead Station, a world colonized by the old Ozawa Mercantile Alliance, the new Alliance sent their crack troops to liberate it. They also “liberated” Ancha and Birham with little losses, giving them a secure supply line to and from Halstead. Since then they have returned to their purely mercantile ways and have made it clear that they have no plans for further “liberation” operations.

Not unsurprising for a realm of such mercantile leanings, the Alliance sells its production to anybody with the money to afford it. Producing some of the most advanced fighters, BattleMechs, and vehicles in the Human Sphere, Alliance designs compare favorably even against the various Clan designs seen wandering the stars, a significant achievement for such a small nation. Because of this, they are seen throughout the Human Sphere, piloted by every major and most minor government in at least small numbers.

The amount of money flowing into the Alliance because of this practice makes them, per capita, the richest nation in the Human Sphere. The Achernar family has devoted all of the profits from their Ozawa branch into cleaning up Ozawa, clearing out the hot zones left over from nuclear assaults during the Succession Wars, and rebuilding Prosperity City. The new Alliance Capital Building in Prosperity, finished in 3095, is possibly the most ornate capital building of any nation in the Human Sphere, proudly mixing art styles from the Azami of Ankaa, the Japanese of Ozawa, the Grecian styles of Helen and other styles from every world in the Alliance.

The medical industries on Hean continue to develop some of the most advanced gene therapies in the Human Sphere, while Helen and New Rhodes III bring millions of tourists every year flocking to the Alliance to see the old “Sunken City” of the Star League or the massive Colosii Chain. The Three Houses touring company, based on Addicks, travels through the Human Sphere, entertaining billions of paying customers in live acts alone, not counting the transmissions that reach even more. They also double as the Alliance’s primary information gatherers on other realms, a task they do well.

For a government made up of a mere twenty systems, the Alliance has a long reach. The Azami of Ankaa give them a line to maintaining friendly relations with the Azami Caliphate, while sales of *Daggers* and other war machines keep them friendly with the nearby Robinson Republic. Buying WarShips and hiring mercenaries from the Federated Suns maintains friendly relations there, and the Johnston family’s connections in the Syrtis Federation keep everybody above board there as well. Galatia III, working with Outreach and the Federated Suns Mercenary Command on New Avalon, has become one of several major mercenary-hiring hubs in the Human Sphere. Finally, they have cemented peaceful trade with the Lyran Merchant Princes and Clan Sea Fox convoys, giving them a simple way to distribute their goods to all interested buyers.

It is their closest neighbors that have them most worried however. Allied with the Tikonov Free Republic, the Alliance has a strong friend on their border, but actions pursued by the Ridzik brothers in the last few years have them worried. Centuries ago, before the Star League formed, the old Tikonov Grand Union claimed many worlds now in the Alliance, as well as the Chesterton Worlds that are currently controlled by the Styk Commonality. In recent years, Tikonov has begun giving the Chesterton Worlds aid separate from the aid they have also given Styk, and many people have begun preaching on the corners about the virtues of being independent from all flavor of Capellan power.

Believing that Tikonov is trying to swallow the Chesterton Worlds without breaking its alliance with Styk, the Ozawa-Addicks Mercantile Alliance has begun to find itself wondering when the Ridziks will turn their gaze to the former Grand Union worlds under Alliance control. Not wanting that to happen, the Alliance has begun sending aid to the Chesterton Worlds, as well as selling weapons of war to them at cut-rate prices, while suggesting under the table that a stronger Tikonov would be bad for everybody. Apparently they are not the only ones worried by the Tikonov actions as aid from numerous other nations is also pouring into the Chesterton Worlds, making them a very rich collection of systems.

The Alliance sees the Chesterton Worlds as a shield to protect them from Tikonov adventurism, and hope to keep it around as long as possible. Beyond the small, but present, worry about being swallowed by their friendly ally, the worlds of the Alliance are a friendly collection, with few things to fear. The citizens can afford any luxury they wish, and travel between systems is common.

The Business Council is formed via one representative from each member system, and block voting is common with the Achernar and Johnston families securing the largest blocks of systems willing to align with them. While the two families do not always agree and have butted heads more than once, they value the cooperative nature of their alliance and have learned when to grease palms and when to let something through, with the knowledge that the next time they want something, the other family will let it through. This back and forth arrangement between the two families has seen the Alliance through many disagreements.

The handsome Jonathan Achernar, young at 30 years of age, currently leads the Achernar family, while the slightly younger Samantha Johnston only recently rose to prominence within her own family. Since her rise to power, the two families have begun to work closer than they have since the formation of the Alliance. While there is some grumbling in some ranks of their families, most members of the families see their “friendship” as a very good thing.

Military

Companies of Goblins and Glories commanded by Furies are a common sight in Alliance territory. More than one raider force, believing themselves to be safe after eluding

BattleMech defenders, have run into an entire company or battalion of Furies working with Goblins and Glories to protect them from lesser threats. Any raiders finding such a welcoming committee have not enjoyed the reception.

The modern Alliance BattleMech forces are dominated by the Achernar designs produced on Errai, Ozawa, and Achernar. The *Thug* and *Ostsol* BattleMechs and *Argus* OmniMech coming out of Errai, as well as the *Thunderbolts* from Achernar, form the vast majority of their heavy and assault lances, while *Phoenix Hawks* and *Enforcer IVs* from Achernar, as well as *Wyverns* from Errai, fill out their medium lances. Ozawa produces the light 'Mechs of the Alliance, including the *Locust*, *Wasp*, *Mongoose*, and *Osiris* designs. The Achernar-produced *Dervish*, Errai *Assassins*, and Ozawa *Jenners* are built solely for export, and fully half of each production run of *Enforcer IVs* are sold to the Federated Suns.

Michaelson Heavy Industries of Ruchbah, an official member of the Alliance since it left the Syrtis Federation during the St. Ives War, dominates the scouting and support services with the wide range of VTOLs they produce, while the Johnston Industries *Dagger* OmniFighter gives the Alliance AeroSpace arm a major bite. Of notable interest is the JAL 'Mech Construction Facility on Archernar. Finished in 3080, the cooperative venture between Johnston and Achernar began building *Phoenix Hawk* Land-AirMechs by 3081. One of the few factories to build those rare birds, the handful of designs it produces now are used to support the *Daggers* and the ground forces throughout the Alliance. Small WarShips purchased from Tikonov and the Federated Suns, led by the *Fox* 2-class WarShip *David Barclay*, give the Alliance the minimal extra security it requires from larger raiders.

Factories

Addicks – Johnston Industries – Goblin and *Dagger* OmniFighter

Achernar – Achernar IndustrialMechs

– Achernar BattleMechs – *Phoenix Hawk*, *Enforcer IV*, *Dervish*, and *Thunderbolt* BattleMechs

– JAL – *Phoenix Hawk* and *Nemesis* Land-AirMechs

Errai – Maltex Corporation (purchased by ABM) – *Assassin*, *Wyvern*, *Ostsol*, *Argus*, and *Thug* BattleMechs

Ozawa – Diplan 'Mechyards (purchased by ABM) – *Locust*, *Wasp*, *Osiris*, *Mongoose*, and *Jenner* BattleMechs

– Wunderland Enterprises – Various tracking and communications systems

Ruchbah – Michaelson Heavy Industries – *Cavalry*, *Hawk Moth*, *Mantis*, *Sprint*, and *Yellow Jacket*

Schedar – Rander Communications Equipment Inc. – Various tracking and communications systems

Tybalt – Jolassa Armored Vehicles (purchased by Johnston Industries) – Fury and Glory

Systems

Achernar – Achernar Family

Addicks – Johnston Family and Three Houses, a touring theater

Ancha – A viral taint killed the first colony that moved to this world, but the second colony was able to use the first colony's research to develop a serum against the taint before it killed them too. The remains of the first colony are still cared for to this day by the current inhabitants, preserved as a lesson to others of how deadly new worlds can be. All visitors must take the inoculation at regular intervals or they will become sterile. The world boasts a small but capable industry focused on civilian air and ground vehicles.

Ankaa – Founded by Sunni Muslims.

Biham – Devastated by rampant industrial pollution, this world's atmosphere is unfriendly to human life. The riches of oils, coal, and other materials though maintain a strong industrial presence on world. It also maintains a strong influx of workers traveling there to work for a few months or years before returning home with enough money to buy a new lifestyle.

Halstead Station – Built by the Ozawa Mercantile Association before its fall to the Draconis Combine, Halstead Station is a honeycomb of tunnels and surface constructs that allow humans to live on a deadly world. It was the primary target of the 3089 Liberation Program, and the Alliance has spent the time since then repairing the damage that centuries of Combine rule did to its systems. Rich in minerals, the Alliance uses its mines to help power their manufacturing plants on other worlds.

Hean – Medical Industries

Helen – Founded by Greeks – Has a “Sunken City” from the Star League and big whales

New Rhodes III – Colosii Chain brings many tourists

Ozawa – Hot Zones cleared and Prosperity rebuilt as the capital of the Alliance. A beautiful world again.