

WAVE TWO AND COUNTERATTACK

"The value of a partisan's work is not measured by the amount of property destroyed, or the number of men killed or captured, but the number he keeps watching."

—John Singleton Mosby (aka the "Gray Ghost"), Confederate States of America

"Winning is important, yes, but not as important as simply fighting."

—Sho-sho Jonathan Fujimoto, Commander, Fifth Sword of Light

The second wave of the War of 3039 was intended to expand the area of space under allied dominion and to consolidate existing gains, absorbing a number of the worlds bypassed in the initial assaults. Key objectives like Dieron would be further reduced, though the LCAF and AFFS planned to wait until the third wave before reducing that particular keystone of the DCMS defense. Theodore Kurita, however, had other ideas. Even as the allies drew breath to resume their invasion, the *Kanrei* unleashed his counteroffensive. The most spectacular element of this was the DEST's attempt to decapitate LCAF leadership of the Commonwealth Thrust. After General Nondi Steiner was grievously injured in the Combine attack on her HQ, command of the invasion thrust passed to her unimaginative subordinates, who played into Theodore's hands. Elsewhere, spoiling attacks took place to forestall further allied advances. On many worlds the DCMS launched full-scale counter-assaults, often in conjunction with intelligence service operatives and ISF-sponsored insurrections.

In the Commonwealth Thrust, the ascendancy of Kathleen Heany as theater commander prompted a swift and devastating reversion to "old school" tactics, a reliance on weight and firepower rather than skill and finesse. The LCAF troops under Heany's command quickly lost the initiative and found themselves on the defensive. Closer to Dieron, Field Marshal Vanessa Bisla too found her worlds under assault. The DCMS fought an even more devastating counteroffensive in this region than against the LCAF's Vega-based forces, incorporating several Sword of Light regiments and the Genyosha. Field Marshal Bisla voluntarily abandoned some of the worlds she had seized in favor of others, in order to minimize territorial losses and save her troop formations. The Dieron Thrust eventually achieved roughly half of its Wave Two objectives, but at the cost of all of its gains in the initial wave.

In Galedon and Benjamin, the AFFS found the going little better than their Lyran allies. Field Marshals James Sandoval and Ardan Sortek launched attacks on many of their Wave Two targets, but the Combine counterattack took them by surprise and temporarily stunned them into inaction. The Galedon and Benjamin campaigns never recovered from that blow. The loss of initiative cost the AFFS forces horribly, though Prince Hanse Davion's trepidation cost them even more. Uncertain of the extent of the Combine's reserves, he ordered a temporary hold on Wave Two operations that left entire regiments and RCTs stranded in space, while Theodore Kurita's under-strength DCMS continued to fight to regain every meter of lost territory. That halt in the invasion ended the war, though it would take five more months to sort out the mess.

COMMONWEALTH THRUST

"Half a league, half a league, half a league onward,

All in the Valley of Death rode the six hundred"

—Alfred Lord Tennyson, Charge of the Light Brigade

"A frontal assault on the enemy? Oh, very inspired."

—Brevet-Marshal James Seymour, Third Davion Guards, Vega

Having faced more substantial resistance than the incursion into Dieron, the Commonwealth Thrust fully expected to bear the brunt of the DCMS counteroffensive. However, while military force played a prominent role in the Kurita counterattack, psychology and special operations were vital elements of the DCMS operations. The Vega Strike (see p. 64) was central to the offensive against Operation WINTERSCHNEE, breaking the unified command under General Nondi Steiner into a series of isolated islands of occupation against which the DCMS could act as it saw fit.

WAVE 2 OBJECTIVES

Commonwealth Thrust

Algedi, Alphecca, Alya, Dromini IV, Kaus Borealis, Kaus Media, Shitara, Skondia, Tsukude

Dieron Thrust

Al Na'ir, Ashio, Cylene, Markab, Murchison, Nirasaki, Shinonoi, Skat, Yance 1

Benjamin Thrust

Homam, Irurzun, Ludwig, Reisling's Planet

Galedon Thrust

Beta Mensae V, Iqualada, Misery, Waldheim

WAVE 3 OBJECTIVES

Commonwealth Thrust

Aubisson, Buckminster, Cebalrai, Dabih, Gram, Kaus Australis, Minakuchi, New Wessex, Rukbat, Shimosuwa

Dieron Thrust

Albalii, Altair, Ascella, Chichibu, Deneb Algedi, Dieron, Kuzuu, Piedmont, Shimonita, Styx, Waddesdon

Benjamin Thrust

Junction, Proserpina, Tannil, Umijiri, Waddesdon

Galedon Thrust

Hun Ho, Kaznevov, Matsuida

ALNASI (JULY-AUGUST)

As Theodore Kurita unleashed his decisive counterblow against Vega, he also moved to assault the enemy-held worlds governing the approach to the prefecture capital. Though uncharted systems were sufficient to facilitate the Second Legion's surprise attack on Vega, a more secure supply route would be required to hold the objective.

On 22 July the Kurita assault force jumped into the same pirate point used by the allied invaders three months earlier. This counter-assault force comprised the Sixth Alshain Regulars and the First Sun Zhang Cadre. Had the planet's defenders been at full strength, such a relatively weak force would have had little chance of dislodging them, but the *Kanrei's* plans used several factors to multiply the relative strength of his troops. The low-level guerrilla campaign staged by Alnasi's planetary garrison never fully ended, and a combination of sabotage and civil disobedience further hampered the Commonwealth's efforts to extend their power on Alnasi. The LCAF enjoyed qualitative superiority, but LCAF troops could not be everywhere, and ultimately the Lyran military found itself reacting to DCMS and ISF actions rather than pushing its own agenda. This situation, marginal for the first months of the occupation, worsened when the Argyle Lancers were pulled off Alnasi in preparation for the second invasion wave, leaving the infantry-heavy Twenty-sixth Lyran Guard as the planet's only occupation force.

The downscaling of the occupying units, together with several intelligence failures that left key Combine and ISF agents operating on the world, created a series of circumstances that undermined the LCAF position, though that would not become apparent until the Kurita counterattack. The experienced Twenty-sixth should have been able to hold off the Alshain Regulars and Sun Zhang Cadre with little problem, but on Alnasi they were on unfamiliar ground and faced a hostile population. The unit also faced severe supply problems.

The first contact between counter-invaders and occupiers came in high orbit as the Twenty-sixth's aerospace support wing struck at the inbound DCMS 'Mech carriers and infantry transports. The fighter attacks failed to destroy any of the transports, though two suffered enough structural damage to make re-entry difficult, requiring them to transfer their cargo to other vessels for the landing. DCMS fighters and assault DropShips eventually repulsed the Lyran attack. Bloodied, the Lyran fighters withdrew to the surface to protect the Guards' installations and their limited supply caches. The unit had expected to serve as a garrison, and had not come prepared to defend against a DCMS counteroffensive.

On July 24, the Alshain Regulars grounded some 250 kilometers west of Gantarius. The Twenty-sixth immediately launched a battalion-scale assault on the LZ, Beta battalion's medium and heavy 'Mechs and armor screened by the lighter units of the Sigma Lightning Company—the latter a feature of the Guards since the Fourth Succession War. Though far from confident of victory, the Guards were stunned by the ferocity of the Regulars' offensive, in particular the reach and stopping power of several 'Mech designs unfamiliar to the LCAF. The bat-

tle for the LZ lasted scarcely thirty minutes before Major Zaubel of the Twenty-sixth decided to cut her losses and pull back to the main defensive position. That single half-hour had cost the battalion almost two lances of 'Mechs.

The DCMS forces quickly sent out scout lances of light and medium 'Mechs, keeping their main strength within a few kilometers of the LZ. Almost overnight, they assembled a small city of supplies and support facilities. A Lyran air raid damaged the Sun Zhang HQ, but failed to injure any senior officers. When the Lyrans attempted a second raid early on July 26, they met formidable anti-aircraft defenses, and only one lance from the Guard squadron returned to Gantarius.

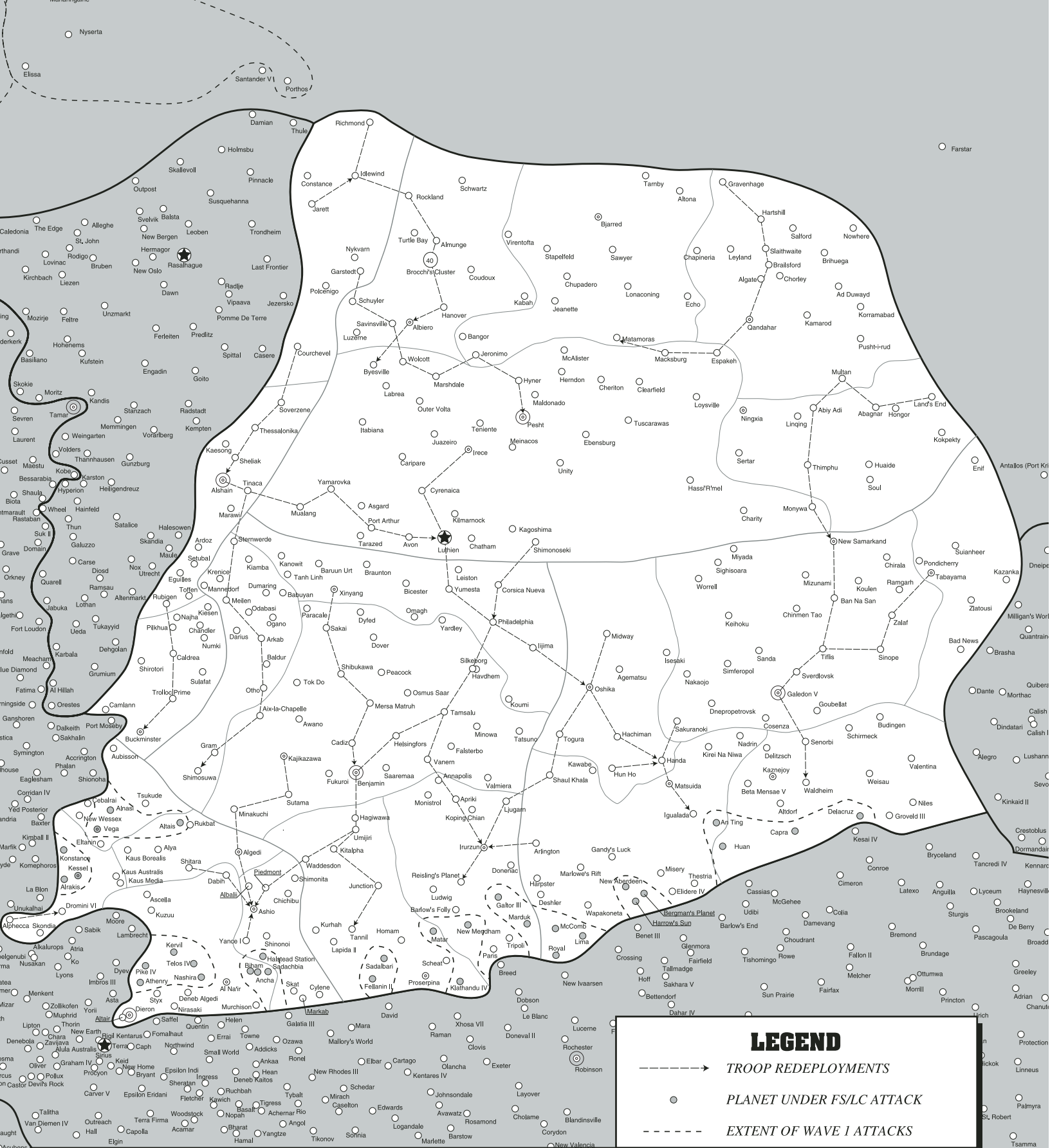
On the morning of July 29, the Alshain Regulars launched a series of probes against the LCAF defenses from the west, quickly identifying strong points and defensive lines. Thirty minutes after the Alshain assault began, as the defenders pushed back against the incursions, the Sun Zhang Cadre attacked the capital city from the northeast, having staged a forced march overnight. Unfortunately, the Cadre lost the element of surprise when they stumbled on an LCAF patrol that radioed in details of the encounter before being overrun. The Sun Zhang 'Mechs then ran headlong into a hastily repositioned LCAF armor battalion that sniped at the attackers from the cover of the industrial suburbs. Despite this turnabout, the Sun Zhang probe successfully distracted the Lyran defenders, who also faced an increasingly antagonistic local population. The Sun Zhang Cadre took formidable casualties, but their pressure forced the Lyrans to give ground, and by the end of July 30 General Woodruff Patterson ordered his blocking force to abandon their positions and withdraw deeper into the city.

The main assault by the Sixth Alshain pressed the Twenty-sixth Lyran Guard hard, but the unit and its Regimental Combat Team managed to throw back five successive Combine assaults. Militarily, the Guard might have held out for several months, but General Patterson also faced increased opposition from the locals, who in association with Ninyu Kerai's ISF operatives staged a series of irregular actions against the Steiner RCT. Bombings and rocket attacks became increasingly prevalent in the first week of August. On August 5, a suicide attack by a truck bomber killed General Patterson and twenty-six of his troops. Bereft of its leader and many senior officers, the Twenty-sixth was in grave danger of collapsing in disarray. Two days later, the senior surviving officer, Colonel Joy Corelli (whose de facto command of the RCT would be confirmed by the LCAF after the war) ordered the RCT to abandon Gantarius and the planet. The last LCAF DropShip boosted for orbit from Alnasi on August 11. The DCMS, exhausted by their endeavors, let the enemy force escape unmolested.

ALRAKIS (JULY-AUGUST)

May and June were peaceful for the Steiner forces on Arakis, only a handful of sniper attacks against isolated guards interrupting an otherwise uneventful posting. July likewise began calmly, and the Arcturan troops let themselves relax into their garrison duties. Many felt uncomfortable on the high-G world, but availed themselves of the refreshments, entertain-





LEGEND

- > TROOP REDEPLOYMENTS
- PLANET UNDER FS/LC ATTACK
- - - - - EXTENT OF WAVE 1 ATTACKS

**DRACONIS COMBINE
COUNTERATTACK MOVEMENTS**

© 3067 COMSTAR CARTOGRAPHIC CORPS

LEGEND



90 LIGHT YEARS OR 20.1 PARSECS

MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS

