GATHERING FORCES...

In 2765, the Star League Defense Force was the greatest military ever assembled, unparalleled in numbers and technological prowess—but it was not alone. The House Lords and the rules of the Territorial States in the Periphery each amassed armies of their own. While none of these powers alone could challenge the sheer size and might of the SLDF, each stood ready to defend their own interests against the avarice of their neighbors.

Field Report 2765: AFFS describes the state of House Davion’s Federated Suns just before the events described in Historical: Liberation of Terra (Part 1), including the overall military and logistical condition of one of the Great Houses that would eventually survive the collapse of the Star League and face a new age of endless war.
TO: Aleksandr Kerensky  
FROM: Aaron DeChavilier  
Date: 12 April 2765

Alex,

Having bracketed them with the first two reports, it’s high time you got a look at the state of the Federated Suns. While Richie and Johnny boy may have erected a diplomatic firewall to the League, their MIIO boys are still not up to scratch to compete against IntelCom. After the Combine, the Suns is our biggest threat if they ever decide to wander fully off the reservation. Fortunately, if they do go wandering, it will likely be to go dragon hunting, Cappie or Drac take your pick.

—Aaron

TO: All RAF Brigade Commands  
FROM: Brigadier General Evan Falange  
Date: 23 October 3090

As part of our continuing follow-up to the SLDF readiness reports forwarded to all general officers, we will also be providing this series of historical military intelligence overviews prepared for SLDFCOM shortly afterward. Once again, the goals of these reports are to provide historical perspective for the earlier SLDF report, and to refresh our commanders in the origins of the military forces they may face in the coming years. Armies, like nations, develop their own cultures and values; understanding where an enemy “comes from” can mean the difference between survival and total destruction.

For the AFFS, the most important lesson is to look beyond paper strength to the power behind those numbers. Despite a powerful army, deep reserves and amassed resources, the Suns nearly fell in the First Succession War. Armies are only as good as the men and leaders in them.

—Brigadier General Evan Falange, for the RAFHQ

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**Special Thanks:** Joel would like to thank Herb Beas, for letting him play around with his favoritest state in the whole world—and not just because Herb is actually writing this special thanks for him at all.

**Developer’s Thanks:** A very huge thanks to Joel Bancroft-Connors from helping me get this series done!

**Developer’s Note:** For more information about the Armed Forces of the Federated Suns, or the state of warfare before and during the Star League see Historical: Reunification War, Era Report 2750, Field Manual: SLDF, and Historical: Liberation of Terra Vol I and Vol II.
FEDERATION OVERVIEW

Outside of the Terran Hegemony, the Federated Suns is one of the most homogeneous states in the Star League. Though made up of a highly diverse demographic of cultures, ranging from the well-known Anglo-French of the ruling family to the obscure descendants of Amazonian societies found on Zacatecoluca, the people of the Suns are united behind common principles of individual freedoms, protected under the strong leadership of a structured monarchy. The Federated Suns primarily joined the Star League to enjoy the League's economic benefits, rather than the military security that primarily drove Lyran and Capellan nations. Alexander Davion believed in the dream of the Star League, and that belief passed down to his descendants relatively unmarred to this day.

But if that belief in the Star League dream has finally faded, there may be little to keep the Suns from striking out on their own path.

STRATEGIC UPDATE

On paper, the Federated Suns is the strongest of the Star League Member States. This perception of strength has lent the AFFS the aura of being second only to the SLDF in might and power. Yet, a careful review of the realm's military performance by SLDF Liaison Command has revealed a reality much different from what propaganda—and perhaps even the AFFS' own commanders—realize.

Somehow, the sum of the AFFS' parts does not add up to the whole.

Well before the 2752 repeal of Council Edict 2650, the Federated Suns launched a state-wide campaign of military fortification. Through the Preparedness Act of 2735, First Prince Richard Davion created a militia program, designed to bolster his realm's defenses against incursions like those seen from House Kurita during the Davion succession crisis. Working within the limitations of its conscript system, the Federated Suns created a system of compulsory reserves and local defense forces backed by enhanced training and field equipment. By the time 2650 was repealed, the Suns had created a healthy supply of trained personnel and had two decades of stockpiled war material. Not only did this allow the AFFS to expand, it also allowed for the strengthening of the state's planetary militias, some of which now rival front-line formations in raw combat power. In rare cases, even the skills of these local troops measure up to front-line standards, as seen in the case of the New Avalon Defense Brigade's draw against the Fourteenth Avalon Hussars during war games last year.

The AFFS regular army has seen no less improvement in its raw power. While only seeing a fifty percent increase in the number of BattleMech regiments, several of its premiere commands have been reinforced with an additional battalion of 'Mechs. The Davion defenses have also been further bolstered by the creation of the March Militia units, which draw from the best planetary militias in each regional March, and augment them with superior equipment and mobile assets that enable them to back up the line troops in protecting their assigned March. While not fully on par with the front line regiments, these March Militias are an analog to the Capellan Home Guard—albeit one with better equipment and a broader mandate than its CCAF counterpart.

But the creation of so many new 'Mech commands, in such a brief time, was only possible by drawing on existing local forces—in some cases completely stripping 'Mech and heavy assets from some worlds—so even though quality appears to have gone up across the board, the reality is more “top-heavy” than it might appear. It is thus understandable that Davion and non-Davion observers alike perceive the Suns to be a sleeping bear, rather than the paper tiger it is.

FRACTURES REVEALED

I was inspired to write this book during my tour in the Star League Defense Force Office of Liaison Command. During this time, I had the opportunity to witness firsthand as the Federated Suns and the Capellan Confederation brought themselves to the brink of all-out war. The border war of 2760 to 2762 ranged over sixty light years of frontier and involved close to a dozen worlds before cooler heads prevailed. What inspired me to write this book was to challenge the “common thinking” that the League wants us all to believe.

“Common thinking” says that the Federated Suns was the military winner, and Barbara Liao the diplomatic winner of the conflict. After all, had not the Federated Suns decisively taken control of Redfield? Was not the Confederation’s “occupation” of Chesterton hotly contested not only by the Syrtis Fusiliers, but by the very populace of the world? Did not the AFFS greatly outmass the Confederation in every service branch? Surely, no one could deny that the New Avalon was the clear victor in this negotiated peace? And everyone knows that Barbara Liao’s “birthday truce” was obviously the desperate move of a state that realized it was being overrun by a vastly superior force.

Yet I found that the reality of these claims to be far different. I spent two years in the SLDF, documenting disturbing realities of the conflict, combined with the last two years spent pouring through every piece of publicly available information on the Federated Suns. What I have found is not a realm of mighty power, but instead a state barely standing upright upon a rotting foundation. I will reveal this rot and expose a truth about the League’s supposedly “best and brightest” Member State.

—Is the Sun Setting on the Sword? Thurston K. Payne, Oxford University Press, 2765

IntCom: Former Captain Payne’s book is highly sensational and allegedly violates several secrecy acts (charges are pending). With that said, his analysis and the facts he reveals are very telling. This book is recommended reading for any SLDF senior commanders serving throughout the Federated Suns Military Region.
A LONG HISTORY OF “INDEPENDENT” FORCES

As noted in the Capellan Confederation briefing, neither DeChavilier nor the Inspector General’s Office ever mentioned the employment or deployment of mercenary commands—or, in the terminology of the era, “independent defense contractors” (IDCs). It is thus easy to overlook the role of such forces in the days of the Star League.

In the case of the Federated Suns, IDCs were remarkably absent from the forming of the Crusis Pact and throughout the Age of War. The principles the Crusis Pact was based upon, and the entrenched tradition of military honor and service in the Federated Suns, made it a realm that tended to see these non-state forces as money grubbing opportunists. The allegiance to the almighty currency, and a willingness to abandon a fight if “it wasn’t in the contract” simply did not fit with the ideals the Suns placed in its AFFS.

This began to change with the accession of Richard Davion and his Preparedness Act. At first, IDCs were used as part of the shell game Davion played with the Edict of 2650. Limited in the total manpower of the AFFS, the First Prince allowed “retired” officers-turned-IDCs to recruit from the trained reservist force. These IDCs were then hired by the AFFS to garrison Periphery border worlds, and to conduct “pirate hunting” missions.

As the Third Hidden War escalated, these pseudo-mercenary commands were augmented by true freelancers. Whenever possible, the Federated Suns would use these mercenary forces to retaliate against “bandit” activity coming from their neighbors, using their independent status to add a further layer of deniability in the Hidden Wars.

By 2765, the Federated Suns had formally changed its stance on IDCs. In addition to having formed the Department of Contractor Relations (later renamed the Department of Mercenary Relations), House Davion employed sizable numbers of IDCs by this point, including BattleMech forces and even naval raiding outfits—made up of both AFFS “retirees” and true independents.

It is these strides in IDC relations that are credited with the number of SLDF commands that flocked to the Suns after the Kerensky’s Exodus. Augmented by analysts from House Davion’s intelligence services, the Department of Contractor Relations armed the AFFS with skilled negotiators who could recognize the needs of these leftover SLDF units, and extend to them compelling offers to fight alongside the armies of the “true First Lord.”

What even First Prince John Davion does not appear to see, is just how deep the cracks in the façade run. The two largest threats to the Suns’ military might are those of inter-service rivalry and regional factionalism. The latter is a specter thought banished with Alexander Davion’s victory in the civil war two centuries earlier. Complacency and stagnant defense deployments have undone Alexander’s work; many of the realm’s best military forces are emotionally and physically tied to their home regions or even home worlds.

The former is first and foremost a byproduct of the MechWarrior knight culture that the Federated Suns (and other Member States) have promoted heavily. Far from the Arthurian chivalric ideal, the superior attitude of Davion MechWarriors has created a pecking order of military service, with each arm of the military fighting for its place as second best. Unlike the Draconis Combine’s (where obedience to the Dragon is bred into the state’s culture), in the Federated Suns, this stion of the service arms is creating deep divisions of distrust throughout the realm’s armies.

The individual excellence of the Fourth Davion Guards, Ceti Hussars or other elite units will only allow the Suns success in limited engagements. So long as the AFFS continues to focus on building up the individual service arms at the expense of combined service operations, and stripping local defenses to bare bones while concentrating their best assets into more localized formations elsewhere, then the state’s defenses will remain dangerously flawed, and prone to collapse in any protracted conflict.

GOALS OF THE STATE

The socio-political makeup of the Federated Suns is the most like the Star League of all the Member States, with similar cultural influences and political structures. It is thus often easy to forget that the Suns is its own realm, with its own agendas and personality.

At one time the Federated Suns might have easily been counted upon to stand by the League through the darkest of times. Unfortunately, we only have ourselves to blame for the loss of this once-stalwart ally. When Jonathan Cameron failed to prevent the War of Davion Succession, his inaction drove a wedge between the Suns and the League. Since that time, through the actions of Richard Davion (and carried on by his heir, John Davion), this divide has widened. Where the borders between the Hegemony and Suns were once open highways of commerce, today our trade has slowed to a mere trickle. Meanwhile, the industrial and technical might of the Federated Suns has spent the last three decades stockpiling the AFFS in an obvious effort to bring its active military up to the most technologically advanced force short of the SLDF’s Royal Divisions.

The picture is not completely without some rays of light. After-meeting reports from Commanding General Kerensky, filed with Intelligence Command, show First Prince John Davion to be a man of strong character and forceful will. While his first concern will always be the safety of his realm, he sees the Star League as the vehicle that will bring that safety and prosperity. Though First Lord Cameron has been vexed by many of the Member State leaders, he has commented on John Davion’s ability to explain and negotiate as a “light of hope among the black depravity” of the House Lords.

For now, the Federated Suns’ primary goals appear to be aligned and complimentary to the Star League. But, as with the other Member States, we should be ever mindful of the potential danger that these armies could present if turned against the Hegemony or the Star League itself.
**LOGISTICAL STATUS**

The Federated Suns has a long tradition of training excellent soldiers, backed up by an industrial capacity able to deliver a technological edge surpassed only by that of the Terran Hegemony. If anything, the Suns’ chief weaknesses lie in officers who have more connections to their homeworlds than with the service, and an industrial base so large and dispersed that it finds itself hard-pressed to keep all of its secrets hidden and safe.

**ACADEMIES AND COMMAND CENTERS**

The greatest challenge to the Suns’ officer training program is the sheer size of the realm. Though only possessing roughly a hundred more worlds than the neighboring Capellan Confederation, the Federated Suns is spread over nearly three times the space. Even with the new academies founded since the Suns’ entry into the Star League, there are only a handful of high-end, state-level training centers here, placed across the breadth of this vast realm. This means that prospective officers must often travel hundreds of light years to receive proper training for service in the AFFS.

The oldest and most prestigious academy in the Federated Suns is the Albion Military Academy on New Avalon. Founded in the 2400s, its status rose even higher when it was designated an official Star League Military Academy in 2604. Some of the finest SLDF officers graduated from Albion, including SLDF Commanding General, Admiral Armin Peterson. Normally, Albion graduates are obligated to serve five years in the SLDF Regular Army, but when Richard Davion ascended the throne, he exercised a loophole in the academy’s Star League charter that allowed a graduate to “buy out” his training and thereby avoid the SLDF service requirements. Since the 2740s, this practice has grown common, with the AFFS often footing the bill to “buy out” officers, so it may then directly employ them in the AFFS.

Founded ten years after the SLDF took over Albion, the New Avalon Military Academy was built to serve as a direct AFFS officer training academy. Inadequately resourced, NAMA has come to rival Albion for the quality of its training and the officers it graduates. What most sets it apart is the heavy political training, designed to ensure that its warriors hold loyalty to the First Prince and the AFFS above all else.

The Tancredi War College, on Tancredi IV, holds a prestige nearly equal to its two New Avalon counterparts. Capable of training MechWarriors and Aerospace pilots, the TWC’s true specialty is in infantry and artillery. Built at the dawn of the twenty-sixth century, this college favors local candidates, leaving only fifty percent of its enrollment open to off-worlders. The competition to be accepted is therefore quite fierce.

Managing to stay above the political bickering that has wracked the recent decades of Star League-House Davion relations, the Sakhara Academy continues to turn out officers of the very highest caliber. Since the majority of Sakhara graduates can go on to serve either in the SLDF or AFFS, Sakhara graduates can be found in nearly every army in the Star League.

One time officer’s club turned competition course, the Warrior’s Hall of today is capable of training in every military discipline except for JumpShip and WarShip crews. Its BattleMech training ground may not be the most technologically advanced, but it has proven time and time again to be one of the best of its kind, and produces some of the finest MechWarriors in the AFFS.

The Federated Suns’ two remaining academies lie in its rimward regions, where they produce a majority of conventional-force officers, an apparent consequence of receiving far less of New Avalon’s attention. This does not mean that either the Point Barrow or Kilbourne academies are inferior in quality, however. Like the other state training centers, these schools generate excellent officers, but remain focused on the less glamorous roles of cavalry and infantry service. And these officers are every bit as proud of their role as are the MechWarriors; where a Warrior Hall graduate will serve with the certainty that his is the most important role on the battlefield, an infantry graduate from Point Barrow will be equally certain that said MechWarrior is a useless addition to the universe.

**NAVAL DEFENSE DOCTRINE**

As with the SLDF (prior to the Peterson reforms), the mission of the Federated Suns Navy (FSN) is based on defense and transport of the AFFS. This mission has long meant a naval arm that relies heavily on conventional aerospace assets. Under the restrictions of Edict 2650, the Federated Suns shifted its spending into transport, anti-commerce raiding, and customs patrol work over offensive fleet capabilities. This meant that even before Roger Davion’s militia programs, the FSN maintained a large conventional naval force. When the Edict was repealed, this solid foundation of conventional assets enabled the Federated Suns to focus a larger proportion of their defensive expansions on their naval arm, allowing for the re-commissioning of most of their mothballed fleet.

The Department of Naval Transport (DoNT) makes up the largest conventional naval force in the FSN. JumpShips and carrier DropShips form the backbone of the transport division. Escort DropShips and aerospace wings are then assigned to these transport squadrons as integral defenses, and train with them regularly.

The Department of Naval Defense (DoND) is made up of dedicated DropShip squadrons whose mission is to patrol the Suns’ borders and defend against commerce raiders or incursions from hostile states [SLDF Ed: It should be noted this official mission has not changed despite there being no official “hostile” state in nearly two hundred years]. One of the most common formations consists of a fighter wing, two Leopard CVs, two Achilles, an Intruder (With Ares close assault landing craft for marine boarding operations), and a cargo DropShip. These groups often employ a Star Lord JumpShip for transport.

The Department of Naval Assault (DoNA) is the smallest conventional naval division. Made up of the very best DropShip crews and fighter wings, the DoNA are the first in and last out of any hostile zone. Though only equipped with a bare skeleton force of “show units” in 2740, the ratcheting up of “pirate” raiding over the last two decades has seen this once-barren division revitalized with new men and

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