

by Max Barry



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**Lyras**  
Ambassador

Posts: 1145  
Founded: Jul 26, 2004  
Iron Fist Consumerists

by **Lyras** » Sat Apr 09, 2016 7:03 pm

QUOTE

+++ Two weeks ago +++  
+++Grid 02180226+++  
+++1400 Local+++

It was sleeting, in Bredubar. Again. Or, perhaps more accurately, still. It was a record, at least for the last 20 or so years. March was normally wet, with the prevailing winds from the east, over the Lughenti deserts, shifting to come from the south-west, picking up moisture over Port Finch, and dumping it in a broad swathe from Bredubar all the way up to the mountains south of Highcain. This year, though, unseasonal squalls in the Gulf of Kush, and once-in-a-generation cyclonic activity in the Ironharbour Bight had combined to push an intense low pressure system over Bredubar and its hinterland. The competing airflows had created a near-stationary storm cell, parking its overly-potent backside right on top of the city, almost as if a coterie of angry deities were united in wrath against the Protectorate that so insolently demanded that the calls of war be silenced.

It was an odd juxtaposition. Lyras, the Protectorate, so long the near-embodiment of militarism, not just within Greater Dienstad, but the world over, had insisted that violence cease, though admittedly under threat of retaliation on an unprecedented scale. The resultant peace, however, was tenuous at best. The armies didn't demobilise. Millions of personnel were still under arms, and the strategic weapons were still far too close to both sides' go-to option.

The ceasefire with the Stevidians was holding, as Warmarshal Krell had, to be frank, suspected it might. The Stevidians were too professional, too disciplined, and on otherwise good terms with the Protectorate, recent conflict notwithstanding. There had been no history of tension, and the conflict itself, fought with requisite diligence, had been almost perfunctory.

Well, it was perceived that way within the Protectorate, Krell chuckled to himself. He suspected that the Stevidians may feel differently. Millions of Stevidian servicepersonnel had been killed on Lyran orders – his orders, to be precise. Not in an abstract, course-of-the-war, fashion, either. It had been, quite literally, his orders that had the 7th Order pulling the trigger on the Stevidian 5th Fleet. Less directly in the case of the Hellions fired by 11th Order, but the buck very much stopped on his desk. He was, in his opinion, unlikely to receive a street parade in his honour down the main boulevard of Stevida Capita.

He drummed his fingers in rhythm with the horrendous rain hammering against the reinforced windows. The Morridane-Imbrinium stoush was, to be frank, of far more concern. It was the most tense border within Greater Dienstad, at a time when the brewing conflict between Fedala and Valdra was front and center of Lyras' priority list. Unity

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within Greater Dienstad was crucial. And the echoes of this last war were broadcasting their aftershocks at the worst possible time. A knock echoed from the open door to the hallway behind him, and he shuffled his stiff torso and legs to face the arrival.

"Colonel Natasha Krell, reporting as ordered, sir."

He sighed, suppressing a cough as he did so.

"You do know you do not absolutely have to call me 'sir' when we are on our own, yes?"

His daughter raised an eyebrow, before walking over to a spare chair next to his desk and flopping down into it.

"Ok, dad. But when you order me and my team off the line, and insist on my seeing you at the earliest possible moment, you do make it sound official."

Her tone softened.

"How are you? You look well, for what it's worth."

The Warmarshal didn't bother to comment on her use of contraction in speech. It was, apparently, a tough habit to break, and he had other things that needed discussing. Her forays into Diplomatic Command, many years ago, in the Dictatorial Republic of Sumer had broadened her experiences, and taught her a great number of nifty tricks for immobilising and destroying armoured vehicles, and had smoothed out some of the personality traits that the rest of Greater Dienstad considered quintessentially Lyran... but that included introducing her to speech contractions, and he should have known it. Still, he had more pressing matters to discuss with her.

"I am well, daughter mine, considering. But according to my latest scans, and yours, I would expect to outlive you by quite a while. I would have, in fact, expected you to be dead about two months ago. More to the point, however... why did I have to learn this from someone other than you?"

The silence in response was more charged than the electrical storm outside. Jagged forks of uncertainty flickered across the younger Krell's features.

"I didn't think it'd be an issue. Wanted to throw myself into the fight. Lead my team for the time I had. I thought I'd be dead, with a bullet in my chest, and you'd remember me as someone that wasn't wasting away with tubes in my nose."

The moment stretched, and the Warmarshal said nothing. His daughter's already frayed nerves stretched further as the tension dragged.

"I wanted to be useful. I didn't want to shrivel in my bed, while my team takes fire from an enemy I could have drawn from them or suppressed."

Still, the older officer said nothing, and watched as his daughter began to fidget still more, then spoke again.

"I didn't want pity, or sympathy, or false hope. I wanted to die with my Stormhammer in my hand, like a Lyran."

Silence. The Warmarshal didn't respond, but watched his daughter become ever more agitated in front of him. Lightning flashed in the window, and the answering crack was almost instantaneous, booming across the sky like the supernatural blast of an angry god's arquebus.

"Dammit, Dad, say something."

Rolling echoes subsided, bouncing their dying rumbles between the buildings of central Bredubar. It didn't last as long as it would have in some cities. There were no towering commercial spires, like those of Nephi, in Lamoni, or Sasha, in Greal. There were no colossal temples to the many faces of the divine, as could be found in Uruk or the immense basilicas of Holy Marsh City or Stevida Capita. Nothing tall, wide and vulnerable to bounce sound from structure to supersized structure. This was Bredubar, Lyras, and the city was, low, squat and solidly built. Reinforced walls sprouted machine guns the way buildings in many other countries had flowerbeds. Pillboxes with emplaced anti-tank weapons lay concealed next to fire hydrants and double-redundant building generators. Basements and below ground levels went into the double-digits. Subterranean mass-transit systems and concrete-ceiling-ed utilities nourished the beating heart of the Protectorate, near impervious to the watery fury the atmosphere was hurling at it.

"Ok."

The younger Krell was so shocked her jaw dropped.

"Ok? That's it? Ok?"

The Warmarshal raised an eyebrow.

"Want me to lecture you instead? Want me to scream and shout at you? Want me to say you were irresponsible, or selfish, or something of the sort?"

Natasha had no answer, but the old Warmarshal wasn't finished.

"Because I could, you know. I could rant or yell or plead. I could order you, or confine you or try to make you feel guilty."

He sat down, placing both hands on top of his desk.

"But what would that achieve? You evidently are not dead, and are looking like you are going to remain not dead for some time, barring the unforeseen. Touch wood."

He pulled a folder from his top draw and dropped it in front of his stunned daughter.

"Your team's reports from your operations within Former New Empire."

Natasha looked at him quizzically, her mind a blur, reaching for the folder almost automatically.

"I found particularly interesting the part where you threw the fellow through a wall, after leaping six meters across the gap between buildings."

The folder opened, almost of its own volition, and her mind fled back to that day, eyes not seeing the words on the page in front of her. *Something hot and wet spilled over her gloved hands, and poured down the front of the man's giant chest. Fighting past the pain, Krell didn't stop until she felt her fingers wrap around cold metal. In one smooth movement, she yanked the pin from the grenade and slammed her helmeted head into the soldier's unprotected face. There was a sickening and unmistakable crack of bone and cartilage giving way followed by a few warm drops of blood splashed across Krell's forehead, then she picked him up by his belt, and shoved him forward, sending the man backwards down the stairs with a gurgling howl.*

Natasha closed the folder sharply, papers flying out and around the room.

*Reaching into the room beside her, Corporal Amanda Hudson brought one of the heavy steel filing cabinets crashing into the hall by tipping it from the top, a few scraps of paper spilling out onto the tile floor. Managing to squeeze most of her slight frame behind the cabinet she brought her LY20 to bare with an incongruous grin. "So, you having fun yet 'Tasha?"*

*Quirking a brow, Krell could only shake her head. "Oh yeah. Best birthday ever."*

Krell looked back at her father, fighting back memories from what was arguably the darkest part of her life.

"What do you want, Dad? Why did bring me here?"

He left the folder, lying closed in front of his daughter, some of the contents still strewn over the polished hardwood floors.

"Because you, more than anyone else, can be the face of Lyras. And in that, daughter-of-mine, I need you. But I need YOU, and need you here, in the now."

She cocked her head slightly to the left, gaze moving quizzically to meet her father's.

"Try not to look so surprised. I know that something happened to you. I saw the reports of your actions at Port Finch. I am sorry it went the way it did. Truly."

A hint of the haunting knowledge that must stalk the Warmarshal's psyche flittered into view, before being sealed once more behind the steely visage that the world was far more used to.

"But I also know that you are still here. At least, physically. But I need your mind, as well. Not on the battlefield. I have millions that can do that."

The Warmarshal wasn't joking, nor exaggerating. Brilliant as she was, there were billions of soldiers and millions of officers in the Protectorate. Her skills as a special forces colonel, while exceptional, weren't what she was here for.

"I need you for who you are, as well as for what you know. I need you as my daughter, as much as an officer. I need the world to see, plainly and clearly, that this is not nothing we are undertaking."

Dread filled the younger Krell's heart. She knew what was coming, knew she wouldn't be able to say no, and knew that she was going to dread every minute of it...

"I need you to second High-Marshal Wallins of Diplomatic Command in the coming negotiations. You need to put an end to this conflict, as there are others to come, which we will find potentially far more

necessary than this sorry mess we can fight our way through without hurting those who must stand with us."

He moved back behind his desk, smooth movements giving no hint of the cancer that was eating away at his body, and retrieved another dossier, this one considerably thicker.

"This is a file of our key positions, personnel and objectives. Study it on the way to meet with Wallins. You are going to be his senior agent. Bring our viewpoints, and our earnest desire that this end to all involved parties, from Prime Ministers Stephanos and Conroy to President Milano, Foreign Minister Ley, and everyone in between. You are being granted full diplomatic status, and the requisite immunities, and I am not interested in how far you have to go to make this happen."

Natasha locked eyes with her father, and he spoke again, this time with the undertone of dismissal.

"I need you to be with us, Tasha. Now, more than ever. What happened, happened. Fight through. Because if you do not, there will be 120 million Lyrans that will have to fight through for you."

+++Present Day+++

+++Grid 02180226+++

+++1630 Local+++

To say the Colonel was exhausted would be an understatement. The whirlwind diplomatic efforts, almost entirely behind-the-scenes, had been far more harrowing than she had expected. Very little fanfare, very little public acknowledgement, but harrowing nonetheless. More than once she'd had to check what day it was, so out-of-sync was her body clock.

But it had worked, at least in theory.

The Morridane and Imbrinium governments, who would doubtlessly issue their own statements in the days to come, had come to agreement-in-principle on a medium-term peace plan. In some respects, it was remarkably simple, but the interchange was remarkably complex. Nothing was ever done during the public negotiations. It was almost always done during the breaks, behind the façade of refreshments and civility. The senior-diplomats parroted the same arguments, almost as if they hadn't heard each other, while their Seconds put their heads together to conduct the actual negotiation.

More than once, Krell had seriously considered just letting them go at it. But she couldn't do that to the countless civilians that would be, once more, caught up in the crossfire.

Borders at status-quo-ante; In some respects, the easiest part to agree on. Neither party wanted to concede, nor to accept detrimental changes. The status quo ante was a logical step, and no one lost face.

Lyro-Lamonian controlled border-zones and 'regulated force parity'; A little blurry, and doubtlessly the devil would be in the detail, but the Protectorate and Free Republic enjoyed one of the most cordial relationships around, and had the military strength to make the border-zone tough to chew on. Keeping the two states apart, literally, ought to lower the tensions, until interactions could normalise... which might take a while. The exact size of what constituted the 'border-zone' was still in discussion, but was expected to be resolved relatively soon. Neither side had anything to gain by playing loose with the peace.

Ongoing Lyran assistance to both Morrdh and Imbrinium to facilitate recovery from conflict's effects; Oddly touchy. Neither side, for obvious reasons, would accept responsibility for the conflict, and the Protectorate saw no advantage in pushing either to do so. With no other way forward, the Protectorate offered to take the lion's share of reconstruction costs upon itself. In some ways, Lyras was very well placed to do so, with literal armies of construction and engineering troops able to operate in all sorts of conditions, already on the payroll, and able to move at relatively short notice. The Lyran efforts to assist recovery would also feed into goodwill, aimed back at being able to hold the peace together. It would be a fairly potent opportunity cost, but the Protectorate didn't expect to require those

particular forces urgently...

The next war was brewing, and the likelihood of needing construction battalions in that conflict was regarded as remote. Valdra could stay rubble, as far as Krell was concerned...

#### Quotes

[Lyrans Arms](#) - [Lambda Financial](#) - [Foreign Holdings](#) - [Tracker](#) - [Photo](#) - [OOC sentiments](#)



**Lamoni**  
Game Moderator

Posts: 9045  
Founded: Antiquity  
Inoffensive Centrist  
Democracy

by **Lamoni** » Sun Apr 10, 2016 4:26 am



“

"My most sincere apologies, what should have been a short update ended up with needing a lot more attention. We had to stage a photo or two so the press would still believe we were in the city having these talks. Now, we have a few minutes before the talks continue. How may I help you?"

"The Imbrinium question is something, that divides us deeply. On one hand, their actions have cost us more lives and grief than I care to admit. From Varathon Blood Fever breaking out, in this very nation, to the very real threat of invasion of Morrdh and Federal lives lost in their, mostly legitimate, attacks. We've already kicked their forces out of Mokastana Proper, but on the other hand, I don't want to risk PUF positions in the West and being more destruction home over two allies' disputing claims on an far away island. We are doing our best to negotiate with the Kingdom to prevent them from going 'all out' on Morrdh, but it's up to Parliament if we commit further."

"President Milano, we have seen repeatedly through the conflicts against Stevid and Morrdh, just how little that Imbrinium is willing to take advice from other nations, even when it is in their best interests to do so. Even when Lyras proclaimed that they were going to hold Imbrinium on a very tight leash, the Kingdom still lashed out in ways that are very damaging to the future peace and prosperity of our region. If Imbrinium were to get it into their heads that the PUF were somehow a threat to them, they would be likely to lash out blindly, and painfully. I'm sure that you remember the massive anti-satellite attack that they still refuse to pay compensation for? Their only excuse for launching such a massive attack was that they felt that the satellites of everyone else in the region were going to be used on them. In other words, intense paranoia. My government had no reason to pursue such a policy against the Kingdom, until their anti-satellite attacks, and the subsequent conflicts; and nor did we. As both of our nations are rational, I doubt that we were going to see any Mokastanan godrod attacks, or anything of the sort against the Kingdom of Imbrinium, correct?

The only major over-reaction of both conflicts by the Kingdom which we could call justified was the bombing of Lindun, even if it was a civilian target. I'll put my cards on the table. Even if there is a peace agreement resulting from these talks, my government remains entirely concerned that there will eventually be another over-reaction from the Kingdom of Imbrinium, and that whatever form it takes, it will be a disaster for the region. Losing forces during the conflict may or may not shorten their fuse, in our opinion.

What my government is asking for, essentially boils down to asking what steps can our two nations take together, in order to ensure that the Kingdom of Imbrinium does not continue to provide problems for the rest of the region. Additionally, my government would be interested in seeing what joint projects that our governments could work together on, in order to increase the already amicable Lamonian-Mokastanan relations."

[National Anthem](#)  
Resides in [Greater Dienstad](#). (Former)  
Mayor of [Equilism](#).

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**Mokastana**  
Ambassador

Posts: 1554  
Founded: Feb 20, 2007  
Democratic Socialists

by **Mokastana** » Sun Apr 10, 2016 5:56 pm

QUOTE

“Lamoni wrote:

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Milano listened carefully to what Foreign Minister Tanya Ley had to say. She had a few good points, but her story was missing a few details that would affect the Mokan decision. While she talked, Henry opened a drawer in his desk, pulled out two tumblers and a glass bottle of what smelled like Mokan Rum. He poured himself a glass and offered one to Ley. The sip he took was one of thoughtfulness, giving himself time to collect his thoughts before responding to what he had just given.

"Before I begin, I would like to tell you a story of my youth. Forty some odd years ago, I was an intelligence officer for a small yet resilient militia known as the Socialist Workers Army of Mokastana. When I had initially joined, we were in serious trouble. The People's Union of the South of Gran Mokastana, who had been our main backer and supplier, had recently collapsed due to civil war with their cartels. For back then Mokastana was not unified. Suria was a different Nation, so was Mejico, Florida, Belmotin etc. We were only fighting for control of the Island of Moka, and to overthrow the military dictatorship of Franco Prats, but then a new threat emerged. The Cartels who had turned Suria into a Narco State, had begun to move into the Islands, setting up operating in the South where our



main bases were. They set up refueling camps, farms and factories, all in an effort to get product to Morrdh at the time. Now we could not have fought off the Cartels and the government at the same time, so we had to think of a new solution.

The only thing Prats hated more than us socialists, was the drug Cartels. and now we were both conveniently located in the same parts of the island. He could have let us tear each other apart, but instead he had gotten the idea we might form an alliance against him. We scaled back our operations as the Cartel's racked theirs up, and soon he was sending in his best men vehicles and aircraft to combat the Cartels. They didn't last. Prats may have been a mass murderer, and a very serious threat to the Mokan way of life in his day, but if there was one thing he was good at, it was eliminating threats to his rule. It wasn't until his assassination did the Socialists stand a chance. But today, neither Prats nor those particular Cartels exist, yet here I am, a member of the Socialist Worker's Party as President over all of Mokastana.

So to get back to your question. No the Kingdom of Imbrinium does not play nice with others, and their owners the Lyras have done poorly when it comes to keeping their pets on a leash. If the People's Unified Federation was to look like a threat, they would certainly come to our shores with every weapon they could bring, but the Foreign Ministry has been working tirelessly to ensure that we do not look like a threat to the Kingdom. And despite the hundreds of Federal lives already lost or affected by the Kingdom's actions, I intend to keep it that way.

To lay my cards out on the table, so to speak, the Kingdom is a rabid dog, a danger to any who get its way. You suggest we find a way to contain it, I suggest we find it a new chew toy. As of now, the Empire of the Macabees wages a war against their enemies in Gholgoth and the Federation backs the enemies of Fascism in Greater Dienstag. There are certainly enemies out there that one could argue deserve the treatment the Kingdom can deliver.

But to answer your rhetorical question Mrs. Ley, if a nation such as Imbrinium came to our shores with intent to invade, we would use every available weapon at our disposal to combat them. At the moment, the Federation can only raise a 40 million strong Army to defend itself with, maybe more if we start pulling anyone off the street with a gun. 40 Million, the equivalent of one Lyrans order, spread across five continents and some 400 islands. In lieu of the endless manpower the rest of the world has, we have to rely on other methods to maintain our sovereignty and way of life. That would include weapons the rest of the world considers, unpleasant.

Normally we have relied on our network of alliances in the past, but this war has shown how fragile those things really are. This is what worries me Foreign Minister. When the Morridanes deactivated their nuclear weapons, your government volunteered to take them under your nuclear umbrella. Yet now they sit with a radioactive crater where one of their cities once stood, and you tell me you consider such attack justified? The Morridanes may have started this particular war, so it's entirely within your right to let them suffer the consequences thereof, but where is the line in the sand so to speak? For the Federation, our stance has always been an invasion of the Morridane homeland will bring us into the war. We want the war to stay in Mordent. We've made that very clear to the Kingdom many times over, but for the Free Republic, what exactly is your 'do not cross' line?

You ask me to work with you to secure the threats of the Kingdom, but so far it seems the only nation who *IS* fulfilling their promises is Imbrinium, despite how terrible those promises might be.

But Minister, do not take this as an insult against the Free Republic, our relationship is one of mutual respect and growth. I intend to keep things pleasant between us. But if you wish to bring the Kingdom of Imbrinium 'under control' so to speak, it will not be with the threat of war. The King is a proud man, who would be willing to take on Lyrans if

the situation called for it. We may think of pride as irrational, but if you understand it, there is a thought process behind it. Insults, sanctions, threats, they are not the way to go. You want to keep him from burning down Dienstad? Give him something else to burn down while this whole affair blows over."

Last edited by [Mokastana](#) on Mon Apr 11, 2016 8:02 pm, edited 4 times in total.

[Factbook](#)  
[Montana Inc](#)

Quotes about Mokastana:

[QUOTES](#)



ONLINE

**Stevид**  
Chargé d'Affaires

Posts: 497  
Founded: Antiquity  
Moralistic Democracy

by **Stevид** » Sat Apr 23, 2016 7:47 am

**QUOTE**

*If it is possible,  
as far as it depends on you,  
live at peace with everyone.*

12:18

Romans

### **Palace of Nipotas Fedala**

The talks had gone from being incredibly slow and methodical to a whirlwind in just a handful of hours following the Imbrinium nuclear strike on Mordent. Sir Gregor had felt he had the upper hand in the talks, but the strategic situation across the Greater Dienstad warzones had been fluid and difficult to track. There was also the other theatre of war, fought solely between Morrdh and Imbrinium. It was a sensitive subject for the Holy Empire as the two staunch allies of the Commonwealth and the Empire had found their friendship stretched to breaking point. Stevid had done well to distance itself from the talks regarding the war in Mordent, doing so had meant Sir Gregor did not have to make hard political choices that could make or break Stevid's international friendships for the next decade.

During the first recess Sir Gregor had been told that Stevidian agents were monitoring the other talks with limited success. It was decided that the Empire would have to secretly intervene in those talks in order to perhaps progress the ones regarding Stevidian South Greal – that had reached an impasse with neither side making head way in their demands. Before word got back to Sir Gregor with the results the Golden Throne called the delegates to reconvene. Haize delegates had been quiet since their lambasting by the Imbrinium prime minster and had already taken their seats. Sir Gregor had been deliberately late, again, but he didn't know how short this next round of talks was about to become. PM Stephanos hand him a large envelope and called a recess to allow Sir Gregor to look over the details. Inside were the final details of what Imbrinium would do to bring about peace. Full troop and equipment withdrawal over the course of two years, access to eastern coastal ports and airbases for the duration of the withdrawal to speed up the process. The Kingdom would not pay for the damage caused and would not officially take responsibility for starting kinetic engagements. Stevidian forces would be allowed to advance back to the east



coast unmolested but would not assist in the withdrawal and, thus, not interfere with Imbrinium operations or approach Imbrinium forces. Territorial lines would return to status quo aside from the minor territorial concessions the Empire had already made to Wanderjar in order for them to keep the ceasefire.

*'Not ideal.'* Sir Gregor thought. *'Hashed out and rushed.'* But he was relieved that that all they were demanding. The previous demands of reduced troop numbers, ships, and no stationed bombers – together with Stevid's own outlandish demands were quashed for something simple and indeed workable. Sir Gregor knew that the pressure was not on him, it never had been; the Protectorate of Lyras had the pressure on Imbrinium's imaginary clavicles, forcing them into a settlement. This had backfired incredibly and horribly with the nuclear strike in Mordent. Now Lyras threatened to escalate the war in the north to point where the beleaguered warring parties could not muster strength to resist. It was critically important to the Kingdom to sign peace off with Stevid and focus on their weakened relationship within the Covenant. Sir Gregor's patience had paid off. Without the war concessions he hoped to get he had succeeded in the government's primary goal at the talks, which was the removal of Imbrinium from South Greal completely. It was good enough and workable. There was a smaller envelope for the Stevidian Prime Minister and addressed solely to him. Sir Gregor had a feeling it was a personal letter and an olive branch of some sort to the Holy Empire – but he nonetheless pocketed it and did not tell his staff of its existence. He'd hand it to the Prime Minister personally.

Sir Gregor asked the representatives of the Golden Throne to call Imbrinium back to the table. Once they were all sat down Sir Gregor gave the leader of Imbrinium his response.

*"Prime Minister Stephanos. My government of the United Kingdom and Holy Empire of Stevid and Rubet, gratefully accepts your terms for peace and the complete cessation of hostilities between our two countries."*

Sir Gregor noted the smiles from almost everyone present; he started to smile himself as the true realisation dawned on him and everyone present that the war was over.

*"We believe the terms are workable, if not simple. My government asks that Imbrinium make every effort to remove itself from Stevidian South Greal earlier than the two-year projection and Stevid will assist whenever it can to make this possible. Stevidian forces will no harass Kingdom forces in South Greal but will continue to operate on a war footing to defend the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Stevidian South Greal. Where the fighting ends animosity will remain. In time, perhaps sooner than we think, we may be able to forge a more concrete relationship with the Kingdom. But for now let us celebrate the achievement of ending the fighting once*

*and for all."*

Sir Gregor stood up and offered out his hand to PM Stephanos to shake.

**12th Royal Lancers (The Twelfth)**  
**Att. King's Own Cadian Regt**  
**SE Erpel**  
**Stevidian South Greal**

The stalemate that was [The Battle for Erpel](#) was unchanged since the ceasefire. Though throughout the Christmas period there had been some nervy close calls where sentries had thought they'd seen something moving or getting too close, civilians moving in around buildings making stag positions jumpy at being outflanked. But all in all the winter had passed by without incident, albeit slowly. It had been an extremely cold winter and only now with the encroachment of spring did the snow and frost give way, although the warmer air now brought heavy rain and wet, muddy conditions.

The town remained edgy but on the banks of the River Iller that lay west of the town right on the edge of the suburbs things were more relaxed. Elements of the 12th Royal Lancers were deployed here as part of their ad hoc attachment to the regiment; an attachment that had been a stroke of genius without knowing as the tanks of the Twelfth were enough to prevent elements of the Imbrinium force surrounding the town. They were one of the few units still using Lyran made Wolfhounds but their point of origin really didn't matter, the fact that the regiment had any armoured support at all was welcome especially one with the experience of the Twelfth – a unit that had since action since the fall of Vanderburg. A Squadron, now comprising of just four tanks was at the forefront of the armoured line held along the river; Major Marc Vibius, a seasoned officer having been with the squadron since Vanderburg, led the squadron.

The Latinate name Vibius betrayed the Major's privileged upbringing and overall wealthy background. However his name also belied his actual upbringing, he was never a man to have been fed with a silver spoon – his father had made sure that the family's wealth was better spent on making the young Major the finest Stevidian possible. Home tutored from a young age with a father, also an officer in the Twelfth, who led very disciplined classes meant that young Marc Vibius was well suited to a military run preparatory school. The school itself was one of the principle and finest examples of military private schools in Stevid with many of its students going on to pass through Stevid's most prestigious and venerated military academy RMA Chillenden. Again, the fact Vibius attended, passed with distinction and made it into the Twelfth in the first place was lost on the junior ranks who on occasion still addressed him by his Latinate family name with the stigma that he was a posh toff with daddy's money getting him

through life. War had changed all of that. The miracle that was the Stevidian withdrawal from Vanderburg was met head on by this newly promoted captain who led the squadron in several delaying actions against Imbrinium armoured units surging out of Vanderburg. Although he started the war with eight tanks, the four that remained had carved their own battle honours and had impressive kill lists. Following a series of successful skirmishes against enemy armoured infantry units Vibius was given the field promotion of Major and tasked with attaching his unit of vehicles and associated manpower to the King's Own Cadian Regiment and defending Erpel. The defensive action was a success and he now had, and himself led, A Squadron formed up and dug in hull down in the tree line overlooking the opposite bank of Iller. The broken, burning suburbs of Erpel to the left and the smouldering wrecks of enemy vehicles to the front that had tried to encircle the town.

The Major sat in his commander's position inside the Wolfhound listening to the pattering of the rain lashing on the hull of the tank. He diligently watched the terminal screen in front of him that showed him whatever the external camera was looking at. 'Rather in here than out there' he thought as he shifted uncomfortably in his seat. The thought of sitting in a hole in the middle of that town in this pouring rain was not worth thinking about. Not like he hadn't done it before or likely do it again, but he'd take the discomfort of a tank over the moistness of flooded stag position any day.

In truth it had been a busy day and would prove to be a busy night too. Imbrinium forces had taken the Stevidian garrison at Erpel completely by surprise, but not in offensive action. Almost overnight nearly 80% of the enemy force had withdrawn from Erpel with the remaining force slowly trickling out from the immediate frontline so as to appear at full strength. But the view of the banks of the Iller was good enough to see and here the movement of heavy vehicles and trucks. The Twelfth were now tracking and recording enemy vehicles moving in and out of Erpel whilst diligently tracing the more dangerous ones with the Wolfhound's heavy 140mm cannon.

*"Three more IFVs, Corporal." He said, sounding bored. "That's fifteen today alone. There can't be many in there now."*

The corporal given the unenviable task of actually writing down these vehicle movements on paperwork hummed in agreement, equally bored if not more so. *"Having said that sir, it's more than likely we'll be moving forward soon."*

It was almost as if someone had read his mind. The BATTLEnet radio buzzed to life making everyone jump.

*"ZERO Kilo-Oscar-Charlie-Romeo calling all Cadian callsigns. 48 hour notice to move. Repeat. 48 hour notice to move. Gold*

*command to brief all OC officer's and above.  
EOD platoon en-route to Erpel ETA 8 hours.  
Out."*

Vibius smiled broadly. "Everybody out!" He shouted down the local vox radio to the rest of the squadron, other OCs in the sister squadrons did the same. All the tanks crews immediately began digging out their vehicles and harbour areas in preparation to move, camo netting was dragged down and engines started. Vibius knew the time to push forward for the first time in nearly three years was upon them though realistically this was probably because peace was now on the cards – but a breakthrough must be close by. The arrival of an EOD platoon meant that the powers that be believed the enemy would be rigging every nook and cranny with mines and IEDs to welcome the Stevidian advance. He didn't care, not now he knew they would be moving forward at long last.

His own private jubilation was outwardly echoed by those around him, especially his own men who had taken the lull in battle and its subsequent boredom quite badly. There was now gossip about where they were going and why now Imbrinium had withdrawn from the town. Was it peace? Was it a fresh offensive? Stevid certainly had the numbers to actually mount offensives now so why not? Irrespective of the reason, Vibius allowed his men to gossip, he thought it healthy given the lack of morale of late; it made them work faster at any rate – doubly so when the news of a movement forward was confirmed and then celebrated within Erpel.

Holding the frontline at the moment was 2nd Battalion 'The Redeemers', better known as 2 CADIA. Once EOD had cleared out a large portion of the north of the town, typically lasting all of the 48 hours notice to move every unit had, the King's Own Cadian Regiment were ordered to the next town along from Erpel only some ten miles. Imbrinium had long since evacuated the area and so some typical pomp and circumstance was allowed for the initial advance forward. 2 CADIA led the line in column; the CO, OC, RSM mounted on horseback though in dirtied fatigues, 2 CADIA line infantry in their entirety followed with the Regimental colours at their front, the pipes and drums followed on behind them. The Cadians were known in Stevid for their ceremony and they rarely abandoned it completely in the field though they wore full combat fatigues and weaponry and not ceremonial dress. This was more a celebration of survival rather than a victory march and they all knew it, but it was still an excuse to show off and what locals that had remained showed up in force to celebrate with him.

Playing the marching tune of 2nd Battalion, ['March unto the Cairn'](#), the whole regiment, including the 12th Royal Lancers in tow at the back with freshly washed down yet battered tanks, marched through Erpel in fanfare.



**Morrdh**  
Powerbroker

Posts: 8417  
Founded: Apr 16, 2008  
Democratic Socialists

by **Morrdh** » Tue Apr 26, 2016 11:04 am



### **Volograd Lenton Island Mokastana**

"Hm, looks like the recess will be ending soon." Sir Gedney muttered as he glanced at his pocket watch. "And so will our pleasant little chat."

"I have, what you could consider, a parting gift." Said Sir Gedney as he got up to retrieve a briefcase from near his desk and handed its contents, a light brown paper folder, to the Stevidian. "A gift that I'm sure you'll find most interesting."

"Indras is, as you know, one of a number of places that Morridane soldiers are currently engaged on operations. Thanks to a loss of some of our assets and the Kessler Syndrome we've had to use RSF photo-recce craft in order to maintain an 'eye in the sky' over our various theatres of operations, Indras being one of them." Explained Sir Gedney, only pausing to sip his drink before continuing on. "The Imbriniums had ambitions in Northern Indras, though said ambitions were swiftly brought to an end by your efforts...least so we thought."

"In that folder you hold are photos of we believe to either be a secondary Imbrinium base in Northern Indras or a smaller Macabean base that they're using for their own operations, some of the aircraft at the base are rather interesting. The folder also contains what intel we could piece together on Imbrinium ship and aircraft, in particular those connected to Indras, over the past few months. Though it would be better if we had confirmation from other sources, especially to fill in any gaps."

"You're the first of the Commonwealth's allies that we've approached, we have yet to speak to the Lamonians and the Mokans about this little matter. Plus we don't plan to go public with the info...yet...it all depends on what steps the Imbriniums now take. If a peace agreement could be worked out and agreed upon during our time here then that folder will be locked away in a safe place until if and when its needed at some point in the future, if not...well I'm sure that you've already worked it out."

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### **Mordent**

Morale had improved when orders had come down the chain stating that NBC suits were no longer mandatory, though Geiger counters were still being widely issued and every single Commonwealth personnel were required to wear film badge dosimeters. In addition every person was being given potassium iodide tablets on a daily basis and subjected to weekly medical examinations, those who showed signs of radiation poisoning were quickly shipped out for treatment in either Stevid, New Garrack or Morrdh depending on how severe the symptoms were. A fair number of civilians who'd survived the nuking of Lindun had been evacuated to hospitals first in Stevid and then later on New Garrack and Morrdh, though the sheer scale of casualties was being quietly ignored for the time being.

With the ceasefire seemingly holding Morridane soldiers had been sent out with white armbands on so-called 'corpse patrols', their job was to comb the Mordent countryside and recover any body they came across. Morridane or Imbrinium, soldier or civilian it didn't matter as all were equal in death and warranted their last rites. It was a grim duty even if it meant the men weren't huddle up in some bunker or APC, plus they were aided by sniffer dogs that had been brought in especially for the task. Just like the men the hound had a dosimeter

to keep an eye on the radiation that it was exposed to.

A section was doing a corpse patrol sweep north of the crater where the town of [Moorby](#) had once sat and where alot of heavy fighting had taken place, already the section had come across dozens off bodies amidst wrecked APCs and left markers for the recovery teams. The sniffer dog barked again and stood there wagging its tail to show that it had found something, its handler came to give the dog some fuss as its reward whilst the section checked out what the hound had found.

"Yep, another stiff lads." The corporal muttered. "Imp from the uniform, looks like a private."

"Must've been here a while corp, smells pretty ripe." One of the Morridane riflemen stated.

"Aye, he don't look too healthy either..." Agreed the corporal. "You know the drill lads, break out a marker and lets have a looksie at the poor bugger's dogtags."

Dogtags. Two small pieces of metal that allowed the identification of a dead soldier, even contained the soldier's religion that would determine any special requirements for burial. Regarding Imbrinium soldiers the Morridanes were only interested in name and service number, mainly so that notification of the man's death could be sent on and burial arrangements made. Likewise details of any PoWs that the Morridanes had captured were also sent on, though the vast majority of PoWs had been handed over via third parties. Though some Imbrinium PoWs unfortunately lost their lives during the nuking of Lindun, a fact that was communicated to the Imbriniums.

"Corporal!" Another one of the riflemen called out. "Got one over here, looks like one of ours!"

"Right, I'll be over in a sec."

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### **Commonwealth Volunteer Corps Stevidian South Greal**

Despite being a 'volunteer force' the CVC had received a fair bit of unofficial support from the Morridane government and had grown to contain four divisions, one armoured made up of 216 Challenger I MBTs supported by 72 Scimitar CRVTs and the three infantry divisions that contained one mechanized battalion of FV432 APCs in each brigade in addition to divisional artillery and support units. The Corps contained around thirty thousand men along with their vehicles and equipment, mostly drawing on Morridane supply lines but Stevidian gear and equipment had sneaked in through various different ways. Despite being unofficial it was still a substantial amount of support, particularly since Morrdh had been heavily committed in Mordent and had troops on operations elsewhere. The bulk of the CVC was made up of Morridane volunteers drawn from the Morridane Armed Forces, but there was a fair amount of New Garrackers and even some Mordentish. Plus there was the CCA volunteers with the vast majority of these hailing from the CCA Colony of Gilbert. All-in-all a true Commonwealth force.

The CVC had seen heavy fighting in the northern and north-eastern sectors against Wanderjarian and Imbrinium forces, mainly holding the line but pushing back enemy forces on occasion. There had been losses amongst the various CVC units, but these had been replaced from Commonwealth sources to keep the units up to fighting strength. However since the ceasefire had come into effect in Stevidian South Greal the Corps had dug in and gradually a network of trenches snaked along its lines. Now acting-Lt.Colonel Gibbs (originally [Captain](#)) peered through his binoculars over the lip of the trench at the Wandjarian positions opposite his own, with the ceasefire there was little need for caution. Around him the 21st Battalion was busying themselves and preparing to redploy after



orders came down the chain citing a forty-eight hour notice to move, across No Man's Land it seemed that the Wanderjarians were abandoning their positions. Word on the grapevine had it that the Imbriniums were withdrawing their forces, little wonder that the Wanderjarians were falling back with their ally effectively quitting Stevidian South Greal.

Last edited by [Morrdh](#) on Tue Apr 26, 2016 11:05 am, edited 1 time in total.

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