



# INTERSYSTEM

## N E W S

**Remembering Reach**

**Rehabilitation and  
re-terraforming effort**



# Pre-Colonization and history

*Satellite image of Reach from 2532*

Reach, the fourth largest planet in the Epsilon Eridani system. Colonized in 2362, at ten and a half light years from the Sol system, it is located at Earth's metaphorical doorstep. Originally colonized during humanity's first wave of extrasolar colonization in 2362 by the Odyssey.

For a young planet with an age of less than one billion years, compared to Earth's 4.6 billion year existence, Reach is remarkably geologically stable. Larger than Earth, having a diameter of 15,273 kilometers, compared to the 12,756 kilometers diameter of Earth, Reach was originally inhospitable for human life, requiring some degree of terraforming before it could be colonized.

Mostly a rugged and harsh wilderness filled with towering mountains, deserts and weather-beaten forests, Reach's surface is pockmarked with meteor impact craters, some of these forming large seas. Reach has a strong aurora phenomenon, to the extent the planet is covered in an "aura" of aurorae. This may be caused by a stronger magnetic field. Reach has two natural satellites; the large, ringed Csodaszarvas and the small, cratered Turul which was captured into Reach's orbit as recently as some 70-80 thousand years ago. Reach's oceans also experience strong tidal phenomena.

Reach was colonized for its rich titanium deposits. It was so abundant that entire spires of the element rose up from the very ground. Reach quickly became the largest exporter of titanium, and as a result its economy and industry flourished. Companies such as Traxis and Sinoviet turned Reach into an Industrial powerhouse. While Earth was rightly seen as the UNSC's commercial, political, and cultural center; Reach was undeniably the hub of its military power.

Reach's purpose was not solely military however; the surface of the planet also featured farmland and civilian towns and districts. Many of the original settlers hailed from Eastern Europe, particularly Hungary, which is reflected in the names of locations on the planet. Many of the planet's inhabitants also spoke Hungarian as their first language. Despite Reach's harsh nature, some settlers chose to live in small communities of homesteads, referred to as "Kivas," in the wilderness instead of the major cities. Rounded and enclosed, they were comfortable but practical, shuttered against Reach's forceful climate and bunkered into hillsides. It also related their independent nature; powered by wind turbines and hydroelectric plants, they were off the grid and self-sustaining.





# The Fall of Reach

*UNSC soldiers celebrate a victory outside Esztergom.*

Reach was the most important headquarters for the United Nations Space Command outside of Earth and the main supplier of military and civilian spacecraft, and the location of the UNSC's largest and most active shipyard. High Command, Fleet Command and the Marine Corps maintained headquarters on Reach. It was also where the UNSC's most elite troops, including the ODSs as well as the SPARTANs, were trained.

By the 2550s the UNSC had become exhausted. With much of the fleet transferred to star systems such as Sol and Epsilon Eridani, the Covenant began pushing into the UEG's Inner Colonies with little resistance. On the night of July 23rd, 2552, contact with the Visegrád Relay was lost. UNSC command suspected local insurrectionist activity and trooper fire teams were sent to investigate.

Now a Spartan IV, Petty Officer Dylan Whitaker was a member of Unit Three Charlie, one of the first to engage the Covenant. Now a Spartan IV, Petty Officer Dylan Whitaker was a member of Unit Three Charlie, one of the first to engage the Covenant. Intersystem News managed to acquire this exclusive interview.

"Tell us about the night of the twenty-third."

"We were ordered to the Visegrád communications outpost, after contact was lost. Command suspected insurrectionist activity. Instead we found an advanced Covenant scout party.

"Did the UNSC expect Covenant presence on Reach?"

"No, not at the time. We knew they were coming, we had known they were coming for two decades, but it still came as a massive shock. Reach was a fortress, we expected more warning."

"At the time, what was the mood and morale of the UNSC?"

"In a single word: Somber. The war had been going on for over twenty years. Billions of lives had been lost by then. Many believed that it was only a matter of time before humanity fell to the Covenant."



*An artist depiction of the FLEETCOM Military Complex in Reach's Highland Mountains.*



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# Remembering our Fallen

*Image of a Spartan Fireteam in the Highland Mountains*

On the night of August 11, 2552 Noble Team discovered the location of a large Covenant Strike Force amassing in the Viery Territory. The following morning detachments from different military branches including the Army, Marine Corp, and Navy advanced onto Covenant targets across the Viery valley. Also a Spartan IV, Specialist John Tunudo, was an ODST part of the 22nd Shock Troop Battalion.

“The Battle at Szurdok Ridge is one of the most well known offenses during the Fall of Reach, tell us about the night before the battle.”

“Everyone was on edge, most of the Viery valley turned into a free fire zone, skirmishes became common. In the middle of the night we received orders to take part of a major counter offensive on covenant structures in the Viery.”

“What kind of structures?”

“Some kind of giant spire, it was protected by a giant dome sheild. Later on it was discovered that the spire was being to to mass teleport covenant troops onto the surface of the planet.”

“Was your ojective successful?”

“Yes, the sheild on the spire came down and it was destroyed by a MAC round from the UNSC frigate Grafton. It was a great moment, we could see

the giant spire collapse from across the valley. We made the bastards pay for stepping onto Reach, we were going push them off our planet. And then, all our hopes were lost.”

“What do you mean?”

“As the spire fell a Covenant Supercarrier revealed itself by glassing the Grafton and surrounding UNSC ground forces, causing us all to fall back. It was like someone flipped a switch, our celebration instantly turned into hopeless defeat. What can we do against such reckless devastation?”

Overall it is unknown if the UNSC managed to achieve their goals, it is known that the Assault on Szurdok Ridge ended with terrible losses. However, the previously unknown Supercarrier The Long Night of Solace was discovered.

On August 14, 2552 the UNSC achieved the destruction of the Long Night of Solace through an improvised slipspace bomb. Although much of the details of operation remain classified, the success of the operation was short lived. Only minutes after the supercarrier was destroyed, another Covenant fleet exited Slipspace above Reach and began a full-scale assault on the planet. As the Covenant grew in number and in strength, the UNSC began to lose their initial home-field advantage. On the ground, the UNSC would never go on the offensive again.





*Image of Reach from 2525*

Throughout August 2552 UNSC soldiers fought defiantly against increasing overwhelming odds. Despite hopeless odds, devastating losses, and defeat after defeat, UNSC soldiers managed to inflict disproportionate losses to the Covenant. Even against the militarily and technologically superior enemy, outnumbered 2:1. UNSC soldiers continued to fight valiantly, allowing the safe evacuation of civilians from the planet.

The UNSC lost their second largest military-industrial complex, after the Sol System, and sustained crippling military losses at Reach, losing over a hundred ships, including irreplaceable cruisers and supercarriers such as the UNSC Basra, UNSC Trafalgar, and the UNSC Musashi, not to mention the large numbers of civilian and military personnel killed by the invading Covenant forces.

With the Epsilon Eridani system in Covenant hands, there were no further major stop points before Sol. The Fall of Reach was a disaster for the numerically-inferior UNSC fleet, despite the Super MAC Guns, resulting in the planet's destruction by means of glassing. When UNSC forces finally abandoned the planet, a small Covenant occupation fleet remained in the system.

In November 2553, a pioneer group arrived on Reach for an initial search and preparation for the planet's reterraforming. Due to its symbolic

and strategic value, Reach was quickly selected for rehabilitation and full-scale recolonization by the Unified Earth Government, classified as a priority redevelopment area.

Although an ambitious and lengthy project, Reach's recolonization is aided by the planet's handful of surviving settlements and the remaining space elevators, though hindered by the devastation to all major military sites and population centers during the Fall of Reach. Reach currently has a population of 121,000; UNSC presence is currently minimal.

Operations conducted by the UNSC on Reach are under strict ONI security classification, classified to other UNSC personnel regardless of rank or position. Terrestrial and orbital operations were complicated by the presence of unaffiliated local civilians, contractors of the Unified Earth Government, and unlicensed Kig-Yar salvagers.

By 2589, Reach had been restored to a habitable state, and new human colonists were re-settling the planet. The planet was still evidently littered with destroyed ship and debris from both the Covenant and UNSC, thirty-seven years after the fall of the planet. By 2610, at least two cities on the planet, New Alexandria and Esztergom, were reconstructed.



*Image of Reach from 2553*