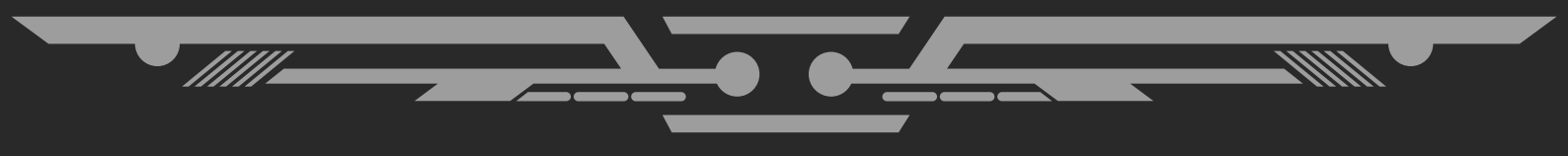




THROUGH THE JAWS OF DEFEAT



A BATTLETECH REPORT



CONFLICT BACKGROUND

The Ueda system, while not strategically important, has been a hotbed for conflict due to its location on the Steiner-Kurita border. A Lyran planet during the era of the Star League, it was fought over several times, changing hands twice during the succession wars, ultimately becoming part of the fledgling Free Rasalhague republic. Thankfully, during the clan invasion, Ueda did not get attacked, and with the Truce of Tukayyid, under the protection of Comstar, it seemed like the planet would remain peaceful.

Unfortunately, this was not to be, due to the ambitions of one man. Daimyo Jared Eikōno saw the peace as an opportunity to advance his own ambitions.

Daimyo Jared Eikōno had seen the loss of his father's domain to the honorless mercenaries of the Lyran Commonwealth, knowing his father perished defending his realm as a true bushi. Young Jared believed that the Coordinator, in his great wisdom, would drive the invaders out and give the Eikōno clan back their rightful holdings. The birth of the Free Rasalhague Republic killed his dream, turning the hopeful young noble bitter and cruel, even by the standards of the Combine, traits which served him in the DCMS during the Clan invasion.

After the Truce of Tukayyid and Comstar's subsequent schisms, Daimyo Jared knew his time had come, calling in all favors he could to invade the world of Ueda. Companions from the DCMS, underground contacts with the Yakuza and other nobles dissatisfied with the outcome of the Ronin Wars, he amassed an army of his own, riding out at its head to rightfully claim what was his birthright.



If he could succeed in his invasion, the Coordinator would surely see the wisdom of re-taking the worlds that rightfully belonged to the Dragon. Forgiveness would come easier than permission after victory. And so late in the summer of 3058, war came to Ueda once again.

However, things did not go well for the Daimyo. Despite several initial successes in the planetary assault against local forces, the Rasalhagians were quick to plead assistance from Comstar and Mercenary forces. Of the latter, there were plenty of experienced units and veterans of the Clan Invasion (alongside rumors of some Clan troopers offering their services as well to satiate their lust for battle). These mercenary forces were able to turn the tide against the Kuritan forces, with units such as 'the Vendetta from Verthandi', 'Bryant's Banshees' and the '62nd Urbanmech Alliance' making names for themselves in the fighting.

One such mercenary group was the Carmine Company (See the Sharktooth Gambit, page 6.), which was able to send out a full Company's worth of 'mechs, one lance of which participated in the pivotal, last fight of the conflict.

The personal emblem of Daimyo Jared alongside the crest of the Eikōno clan. Both feature the beautiful trees found in the forests of Ueda, though the effects of the Daimyo's personal life are clear in his emblem. Little is known of the clan and it's current master, though rumours of Yakuza dealings after the loss of their holdings on Ueda have been plentiful on the court of Luthien.

Following a disastrous last push leaving him unable to defend even the territories claimed thus far, Daimyo Jared was still under the delusion he could clutch victory from the jaws of defeat. He believed if he could make it off-planet and plead his case, he could amass enough support to turn the tide of battle. In reality, he would most likely be stripped of rank or executed for his failures.

Iliad company of the 1st Amphigean Light Assault Group, sent to participate in the war as they had been deemed expendable and hungry enough for glory for the task, were one of the last surviving vestiges of his army. Two lances had secured an escape route and were guarding a dropship ready to lead the Daimyo to safety while Achilles lance was tasked with escorting him to safety.

Believing in his own invulnerability, he led the unit right into a mercenary ambush...



ACHILLES LANCE

Consisting of two Jenner's and two Panthers, Achilles Lance of the First Amphigean Light Assault Group is famed for maneuvering into position to strike at the heels of their opponents using the superior mobility of their light 'mechs. Many a commander has not realized the speed of the PNT-9ALAG until it has been too late. While armed with weaponry from the Succession War era, this has not been a problem for the unit's soldiers so far.

With one Jenner disabled during securing the escape route for Daimyo Jared, the rest of Achilles lance was given the honour of escorting the warlord back to safety.

PANTHER PNT9-ALAG **CHU-I ZAKU HEISEN (3/4)**

Chu-i Heisen has long since resigned himself to the will of the Dragon, with near religious reverence to the concepts of duty, honor and bushido. He, like many others, has found these to sometimes to be with odds with the orders from his superiors.

PANTHER PNT9-ALAG **SHUJIN JOHN ADAMS (3/4)**

Embodying the spirit of reckless aggression, Shujin Adams is a great soldier. However, this has prevented him from further promotion to lead his own lance. Truthfully? He does not mind, as long as he gets to pilot a 'mech.

JENNER JR7-K **SHUJIN HOMURA KEINÄNEN (3/4)**

Nicknamed 'Homusubi', a fire demon of myth by her peers, due to her seeming disregard for heat during combat, Shujin Keinänen prefers spiking the heat levels of her Jenner for devastating alpha strikes before basking in the destruction of her opponents or rapidly retreating to cool down, only to attack again moments later.



CATAPULT CPLT-K2K **DAIMYO JARED EIKŌNO (2/4)**

Hopeful youth turned bitter adult, Daimyo Jared has spent most of his life as a mechwarrior, excelling with landing PPC shot after PPC shot into his enemies. The clans method of waging war appealed immensely to his sense of personal glory and honor, even if he is known to execute surrendered opponents with a well-placed shot to the cockpit. Jared's entire purpose in life has been this conflict, and for it's sake he is willing to do anything.

BATTLE LANCE

Named for it's task and reflecting the businesslike nature of it's Lyran commander, the Battle lance of the Carmine Company consists of 'mechs that can support each other, both up-close and from a distance. Having been on the frontlines of the Clan Invasion, they have been able to salvage, trade and barter for some top-of-the-line 'mechs of the era for themselves and bring their full might to bear against their enemies, be they clanner or spheroid.

Hungry for more work after the Truce of Tukayyid, the Carmine Company agreed to help defend Ueda against the Kuritan invaders. For a hefty paycheck, of course.



GRIFFIN GRF-3M

HAUPTMANN KATARINA HAAS (4/4)

A former LCAF leutnant, Katarina Haas found the constant ineptitude of her superiors to be stifling and left to start her own mercenary command as soon as her tour of duty was over in 3027.

Hauptmann Haas realizes that she will soon need to start piloting a desk, but intends to participate in combat operations for as long as she can. She has more than proved herself and her views on the "social generals" to be correct but like any true Mechwarrior, she wants to lead from the front.

MARAUDER MAD-5S

FIRST LEUTNANT VASILI ANTONOVA (3/4)

Vasili is a true marksman, able to fire hit after hit with the powerful PPC's and Gauss rifle of his favoured 'mech. His ability to do so while keeping an eye on the tactical situation has well earned him his promotion.

ARCHER ARC-2R

LEUTNANT SHIINA MEGUMI (4/5)

While she understands and begrudgingly accepts that as a new pilot to the company she does not get the shiniest of toys, Shiina does not like her Archer. This has reflected on her combat record, but her superiors hope she will get over her ego before getting killed.

WASP WSP-3M

LEUTNANT SOLOMON SAWYER (3/4)

Leutnant Sawyer is an excellent Mechwarrior, preferring light 'mechs which he pilots with almost dancer-like grace, leaping over lumbering behemoths or weaving past heavy fire. Though sometimes, he seems too focused on harassing his opponents than actually taking them down.



ACHILLES LANCE, ILIAD COMPANY. PREPARING TO LEAD DAIMYO JARED EIKŌNO TO SAFETY

“Chu-i-Sama, we’re holding the escape corridor for you. Please bring back Eikōno-Sama” had been the last transmission between Achilles lance and the rest of Iliad company. Chu-i Heisen had met with the Daimyo on schedule, the remaining two warriors of his lance standing guard in their ‘mechs over the meeting.

“Caution?” the Daimyo asked, raising a brow and daring to be questioned. “This is my planet, and we hold this area.” he swept a hand across the printouts before drawing a finger from their current location to their destination. “We will move through here.”

Heisen studied the printout, glancing at the hastily-erected dome of the tent. The two soldiers guarding the tent were clearly exhausted and menials were rushing back and forth, evacuating what they could and destroying what they couldn’t. It was clear to everyone but the Daimyo that this was a lost cause. Still, duty was not beholden to whim. Heisen nodded wearily. “As you wish, Eikōno-Sama.”

“Don’t worry. Even if there would be some resistance on the way, I have something prepared.” the Daimyo stood and gestured Heisen to follow, leading him across the damaged base to a hangar, where a pristine Catapult stood, being prepared for combat. “I did not wish to sully this beautiful machine with warfare and wished to save it for the victory parade. Still, it will come in handy now.” he stated with a sneer, dismissing Heisen to his own ‘mech, staring up at the colors of his family painted upon the cockpit of the powerful ‘mech. What mercenary could possibly stand against him in such a machine, he thought.

"He's either overconfident, a fool, or suicidal." the radio spat out into Katarina's helmet. She recognized the voice as Vasili's.

"Radio silence. You know better than this." she chastised the other Mechwarrior, peering out the cockpit of her shut-down Griffin. If she didn't know where to look exactly, she'd never have been able to pick out the spot the camouflaged Marauder had been hidden. She wished her Griffin looked the same from the outside.

Shiina and Solomon had played their part perfectly, overconfident mercenaries going against superior forces. Appealing directly to the Kuritan lords martial pride, they were drawing him directly into the ambush. She chuckled quietly. It didn't seem to matter where they came from, the nobles of the Inner Sphere she met were fools.

Their objective was clear. If the enemies broke past, the rest of the 1st ALAG's company would tear her lance to shreds if she gave chase. They would need to intercept the Daimyo and his escort here.

She watched the Kuritan force advance, the Daimyo's mech painted in his own colors, making it easy to target him. He saw Vasili burst out from cover and launch a devastating volley, gripping the controls as she began her own startup procedure as a Panther broke out from behind cover some two hundred meters to her right, lining up her PPC before she'd be spotted...



BATTLE LANCE, CRIMSON COMPANY. MOVING TO INTERCEPT THE KURITAN INVADERS

BATTLE REPORT

SCENARIO RULES

As per the rules from the fanmade 'Instant Action' supplement. Both sides made a lance with 4 mechs worth 6000 BV with no restrictions on pilot skill levels. After this, they selected an agenda for their lance.

TACTICAL OPERATIONS

The following rules from Tactical Operations: Advanced Rules were used:

- Floating criticals
- Careful stand

MISSION SELECTION

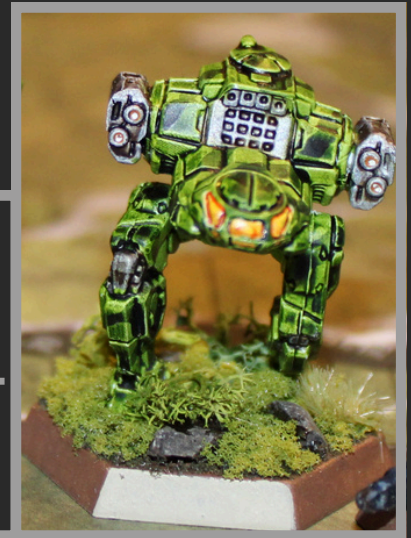
ACHILLES LANCE

AGENDA: RECON

BATTLE LANCE

AGENDA: CONFRONT

MISSION: RUNNING RETREAT



MAPSHEETS: FOOTHILLS #2 AND GRASSLAND #3



α Hidden Marauder MAD-5S **Ω** Hidden Griffin GRF-3M

RUNNING RETREAT

[CONFRONT VS RECON]

"Hey, Lieutenant? I'm seeing something on the sensors, got a weird ping on the radar, and - CONTACT! Fusion engine startup, woah, those are big signatures. We need to get out of here no - CONTACT! Another engine, starting up behind it! We need to push through!"

MISSION BRIEF

First, the Confront player chooses half of their 'Mechs (round down) to set up in concealed positions somewhere on the map using the Hidden 'Mech rules. The Recon player then chooses one short map edge to be their Escape Zone. The other Confront 'Mechs will move onto the battlefield normally at the beginning of the first turn, arriving from the Escape Zone. The Recon player's 'Mechs will move onto the battlefield from the short map edge opposite the Escape Zone.

VICTORY

Starting in turn 8, the Recon player's 'Mechs may move off the map via their Escape Zone. The game ends when all Recon 'Mechs have either left the map or been destroyed or immobilized. The Confront player wins if they have destroyed or immobilized half or more of the Recon force, while the Recon player wins if more than half of their 'Mechs have moved off the board edge.

(Instant Action written by Rawbert, the 'Running Retreat' mission copied here from the supplement for the sake of simplicity)



Ueda is known for its heavy rainfalls, which played a key part during several operations of the war. During this pivotal conflict, there was a pause in the rainfall, allowing for both sides to act unimpeded. This was an issue for the 1st ALAG, who would have preferred the cover of rain under which to advance.

INITIAL MANEUVERS

Paying little heed to the possibility of an ambush and seeing glimpses of two enemy 'mechs, Daimyo Jared forged onwards while his companions spread out, advancing more carefully lest they move past an opponent and end up pincered. However, as luck would have it, Daimyo Jared walked directly towards Vasili's Marauder, prompting him to break from hiding to deliver a devastating first volley, removing all but one point of internal structure from Shujin Adams' Panther's right arm with his Gauss rifle while savaging the Catapult with one PPC and pulse laser shot. However, the return fire was withering, opening up the Marauder's left torso while melting armor from all over the 'mech, leaving it one good PPC blast away from engine shutdown.



Led by their fearless (or foolish) commander, the Kuritan force march towards the two mercenary 'mechs presenting themselves as bait.

"Reactor startup! Daimyo-Sama, please—" the rest of the message was scrambled into a shriek of static as the feedback from the PPC shot momentarily disabled his Catapults electronics. Furious, he pounded the firing studs of all of his weapons, watching with satisfaction as the mercenary 'mech teetered, it's armor shredded. Yet it did not fall. Quickly, he steered to the side to outmaneuver the opposing 'mech.

Where had this ambush come from? This area was supposed to be secure! He swore to kill every last mercenary on the field.



SAVAGE FIGHTING

With the trap sprung and the First Amphigean scattering to cover their lord from further ambushers, Katarina's Griffin revealed itself as well, trading fire with Chu-i Zaku's panther. Solomon's Wasp moved to harass the remaining Panther and Shujin Keinänen's Jenner while the Marauder stood still, pounding fire into the running Catapult, who returned fire while starting to rapidly overheat from the repeated alpha strikes. With the Griffin and Archer adding their firepower into the mix, it was starting to look dire for Daimyo Jared.

Risking overheating for a devastating alpha strike, the Jenner failed to score more than three SRM hits on the Wasp, but managed to keep the machine from shutting down, the Panther likewise failing to inflict damage on the Wasp, who in turn did negligible damage to the Panther. The mercenaries had the advantage initially, the ambush taking the Kurita forces by surprise and leaving the Mercenaries with the initiative over several of the first game turns.



Solomon Sawyer danced through the lattice of laser-fire weaved by the Jenner in his 'mech, snapping a shot at the opposing Panther and loosing a flight of LRMs. Watching the missiles explode against the rain-soaked dirt while the laser savaged the right leg of the panther. He was severely outgunned and out-tonned but smugly thought that atleast he wasn't outclassed. That Jenner pilot must have been cooking inside his 'mech by now.

"Hauptmann! I can keep harassing these two, but I'm not going to be able to stop them on my own!" he called out into the radio, engaging his jumpjets once more to continue the running battle with the two enemy lights.



Out of the 200 missiles Shiina fired at the incoming opponents over the first five rounds of the game, only 12 hit their target, helping damage the Catapult. However, her archer played a vital role in the final moments of the encounter.

ZAKU'S GAMBIT

Seeing that the Daimyo would be destroyed as three 'mechs kept firing away at it, Chu-sa Hensen did what any true Bushi would do, exposing himself to immense personal danger in order to complete his mission, moving directly into the open. However, it was not enough. While the Marauder took the bait and fired most of its weapons at the Panther, it did still manage a Gauss rifle shot at the Kuritan Catapult, which alongside the Griffin's fire destroyed its left arm and disabled the right arm PPC.

On the northern end of the battlefield, Keinänen's Jenner did not fire to help itself cool down, while Solomon's Wasp and Adams' panther failed to hit each other for any meaningful damage.

No physical attacks hit either, with the Marauder managing to knock itself down, but thankfully avoided any critical damage, but left both its torsos and arms with negligible amounts of armor left.

BREAKTHROUGH

Despite the heavy mauling of the Kuritan forces, none had been crippled or disabled, leading to the Kuritan forces breaking through the mercenary lines, forcing Katarina to relocate in her Griffin and the overheating Marauder to give chase to the faster Kuritan heavy 'mech. If enough of the First Amphigean broke through, they could regroup with the rest of their company and attack before Katarina could extract their target, the Daimyo. That could not be allowed.

Keinänen's Jenner made a run for safety, finding itself under fire as Solomon gave chase in his Wasp. It and the Archer's back-mounted lasers destroying her left arm and removing all but a smidgen of armor from her left leg. However, the ploy had paid off, as it allowed a perfect shot at the Wasp's back for Shujin Adams, coring the Wasp's center torso with a perfectly placed kill-shot, sending the mech crashing to the dirt mid-run.



"Verdammt! Don't let them get past!" Katarina cursed into her comms, though she already saw two of the enemy 'mechs rushing past. There was a brief moment of hope that Solomon would tackle the opposing Jenner down, dashed as a PPC shot cored the heart of the 'mech with ease. There was no time to check if Solomon was okay, though, as Katarina had to try and stop his 'mech's killer from advancing.

The shot went clear off the mark. She really was getting old, wasn't she? No time for self-pity, she thought, adjusting her aim, idly noting Shiina's report that the two enemy 'mechs had retreated beyond cover and she had no way of engaging them. The remaining two 'mechs would not pass, even if it meant frying in her cockpit.

Maneuvering around the Marauder, firing shot after shot at it, Daimyo Eikōno knew victory was certain. One good hit, and that Marauder would be done for. Other mechwarriors reported in. He saw the mercenary Wasp dance around the Panther and Jenner gracefully. He could not enjoy the spectacle and impending doom of his opponent, however, shifting to the side to avoid another flight of LRMs. He would enjoy destroying that 'mech after dealing with his current opponent. Or opponents, rather, a PPC blast striking the right leg of his 'mech as the Griffin leaped to face him from cover. The fool. He pushed the firing studs for his PPCs with white-knuckled hands. Then he did so again. Nothing happened.

Reality came crashing in on him. Finally listening in onto the messages of the warriors under his command, pleading for him to keep moving as they tried to pull fire away from him towards themselves. He noticed the excellent dodge from the Chu-sa he had considered a mere menial, sending the 'mech over twice the weight of his own crashing to the ground, trying to keep it from pursuing him. A polite voice was telling him in Japanese that his 'mech had suffered grievous internal damage to both torsos, and recommended seeking repairs.

A tranquility came over him in that moment. He would not make it through these mercenary machines. He understood now that in his blindness to continue his war, he had put these fine mechwarriors to unnecessary risk. And while they were willing to throw their lives away for him as was fitting, he was not honoring that willingness with orders worth following. He had not acted as a honourable bushi like his father, but a tyrant, throwing away lives for his own ambition, even when it had turned into folly. It was all so clear now, in this moment of defeat. Where had he strayed on from the path...?

There was no time for introspection, however, the dazzle of a pulse laser melting away armor plating covering his cockpit as the Marauder stood up and engaged him once more. Turning to face his opponent, he flipped open his comms.

"Chu-i Heisen. Retreat with your lance. I will hold off the enemy as best as I can."

There was a moment of silence in the comms before a terse reply came back. It appeared that the lance leader understood the meaning behind his order without question. Jared truly regretted not getting to know the man better.

"Understood, Daimyo-Sama. You honor us and the Dragon with your sacrifice."

Daimyo Jared Eikōno, last of Clan Eikōno, heir to the rightful ruler of the Ueda system and mechwarrior of the Draconis Combine, crossed the disabled PPC of his Catapult's remaining arm over his cockpit to the best of his ability to acknowledge his opponent before rushing towards him, lasers firing.

PARTING SHOTS

In a surprising maneuver, the Kuritan commander turned back towards the Marauder, intent on finishing off the heavy 'mech and take some pressure away from his lancemates, two of which managed to reach cover that the mercenaries could not follow, effectively meaning that they had escaped the conflict.

The Panther that had shot down Solomon's Wasp was not as lucky, however, and remained out in the open for one crucial turn, allowing for the mercenaries to fire three flights of LRM-20's, one ERPPC shot and a Gauss rifle from the Marauder at him.

While the Archer had had abysmal luck with it's shots so far, this time both flights hit home, striking 12 points of damage to both the left torso and left arm of the 'mech. The gauss rifle struck the already-damaged center torso leaving it ripe for destruction. And while the Griffin's PPC missed, the LRM flight, despite being within minimum range struck home, disabling the Panther.

While this happened, Daimyo Jared fired his remaining lasers at the Marauder, scoring a critical hit at it's Gauss Rifle, destroying the side torso and forcing an engine shutdown, but not before the Marauder's return fire destroyed both of his side torsos in turn, disabling his 'mech in turn.

With the remaining Kurita 'mechs escaping at the start of turn 8, the game was over.



Watching the Jenner disappear behind the hill, Shujin Adams made a run after his ally. A missile warning made him turn, desperately shielding his 'mech's vulnerable center with it's left side as the Archer's volley struck home, leaving him reeling, but his 'mech still moved.

It was too late that he realized his maneuver had put him facing the opposing griffin directly, it's LRM salvo coring his 'mech, forcing him to eject.

END RESULTS

BEGIN TALLY

BATTLE LANCE

GRIFFIN GRF-3M - COMBAT READY

No structural damage
Pilot lightly injured
Approx. 85% of armor remaining

MARAUDER MAD-5S- SALVAGEABLE

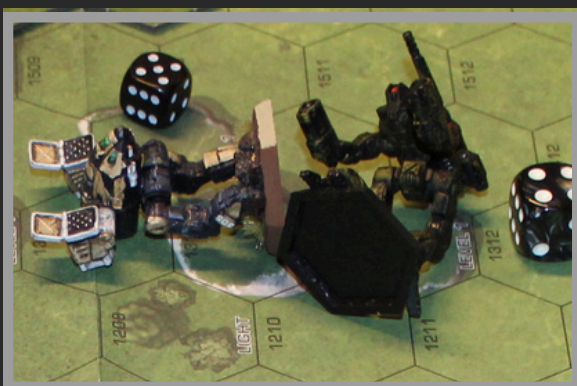
Right torso destroyed
Gauss rifle damaged
Left torso damaged
Right arm lightly damaged
XL engine damaged
Pilot lightly injured
Approx. 20% of armor remaining

ARCHER 2R - COMBAT READY

No damage sustained

WASP WSP-3M - DESTROYED

Center torso destroyed
Approx. 75 % of armor remaining



ACHILLES LANCE

CATAPULT CPLT-K2K - SALVAGEABLE

Left arm destroyed
Left torso destroyed
Right torso destroyed
XL engine heavily damaged
Two double heat sinks destroyed
Right arm heavily damaged
Pilot lightly injured
Approx. 30% armor remaining

PANTHER PNT-9ALAG - ESCAPED

Right arm heavily damaged
Approx. 20% of armor remaining

PANTHER PNT-9ALAG - DESTROYED

Right arm heavily damaged
Left arm heavily damaged
Left torso heavily damaged
Left shoulder actuator destroyed
Left lower arm actuator destroyed
Center torso destroyed
Approx. 30% of armor remaining

JENNER JR7-K - ESCAPED

Left Arm destroyed
Approx. 80% of armor remaining

END TALLY

MINOR MERCENARY VICTORY

AFTERMATH

Having secured the field and ensured the Kuritan forces would be in no shape to come back for another round, the mercenaries found that Daimyo Jared had taken his own life within the confines of his cockpit. With the loss of the warlord leading the war on Ueda, there was little fight left in the Kuritan invaders, turning their retreat into a rout and bringing the war to a quick end.

Carmine Company had lost no personnel during the conflict and while the loss of a Wasp stung, the chance to obtain the chassis of a state-of-the-art CPLT-K2K more than made up for it.

While it was first questioned why the First Alag returned without their commander, playback of the last communication between Chu-i Zaku and Daimyo Jared was proof enough that they had done as was right. It would look much better on their reports to claim that Daimyo Jared perished fighting for his dream against impossible odds rather than having him executed for incompetence on Luthien. Whether his true nature was that of a warmongering fool or a bushi would be something for historians to debate over, but for the most part, clan Eikōno would fade to obscurity while Iliad Company would move on towards other missions.

Chu-i Heisen took an appreciative sip of his tea, turning to look out of the tiny viewport of the dropship, the planet on the surface of which he had just fought and killed receding into a small dot of light in the distance. A quiet man by nature, he often took the time following combat to reflect upon his good fortune to still be alive. His thoughts wandered to who had been briefly been his commanding officer, Daimyo Jared.

He felt as if he had misjudged him, glancing at the steaming cup of tea. If the situation had been different. If he had not been so stubborn and prideful, maybe they could have shared a cup and discussed the art of war. It was doubtful he'd ever meet the man again, he thought and shrugged.

He firmly believed that in those last moments of the conflict, the Kuritan noble had shown his true colors. Those of a courageous, proper warrior. It was a shame that it had been at the very end of his campaign. Maybe things could have been different.

He found himself wondering about what could have been and turned back to writing his report. He had learned quickly that it mattered little what could have been, only what was. On one hand, he had not gotten trampled underneath that Marauder. On the other, if his aim had been a little bit higher, he could have taken the Mercenary leader's mech's head clean off. It mattered not. What mattered in that moment was that his cup was empty, and he still had pages to write.

