DataNet Collection 2.0
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The DataNet

Somewhere between military secrecy, corporate shilling, and pirate anarchy lies the truth. The discovery and dissemination of such truths is the primary mission of the DataNet. Undercover DataNet "commando journalists" study press releases, track ship and troop movements, and even launch covert data raids to find the secrets of the various human factions. This information is inserted into existing data networks, acting like an old Earth computer virus. DataNet is the only unbiased news outlet available since Earth's destruction.

The DataNet is about delivering the truth, not serving deceit or propaganda.

DataNet node: 1982_1225.2: Samaritan

The DataNet is the only unbiased news outlet available to the survivors since Earth's destruction. Check here regularly for stories sifted from the DataNet. We also look forward to hearing personally from any "commando journalists" out there. Send in your own report or give us your commentary to any existing report. Send your e-mail to AIEvent@Microsoft.com and put DataNet in the subject line.

Stellar War: Five Faction Battle Royale

The last day of June . . . and at 5:12 Universal Standard Time, the system erupted in a five faction battle royale.

Events of the past several weeks have certainly led to inevitable conflict, the catalyst of which being the appearance of the Rixian Unity. Almost immediately, the Rixians made their first aggressive moves, going so far as to broadcast an open call for recruits; the other four factions were left to position themselves as best they could in the new system order taking shape. Could the Rixians be defeated? Who would ally with them?

Of the factions to respond to the Rixians call, the BIOS provided the first, and most eager, recruits. Yet, as they had been known to do in the past, were these recruits merely insurgent agents sent to weaken the Unity from within? This seemed to be the case, when a probing attack by the BIOS completely hamstringed an otherwise capable Rixian force.

Meanwhile, previously quiet Iron Coalition and GigaCorp fleets launched out into deep sectors. In the meeting of the five forces, the BIOS proved their dominance once again. Tallying a massive 356 kills, including 37 by *ComGuards* and 30 by *LFD_xMrPAINTx*, the BIOS pounded their way toward victory. In addition, their forces managed an incredible 30 base kills, including 5 each by *DexSolo* and *Pink_Panther718*. BIOS success was helped, no doubt, by remaining agents in the Unity lines.

The aftermath of the battle seems to have led to a temporary quiet in the deep sectors. All factions have had a chance to face one another in open conflicts, and tensions released. Or, does this quiet merely preface a growing storm -- and if so, how soon before another all-out battle is waged?

>>***Issa's Arm: 01_001_111_11:*** After its destruction, mankind no longer has ties with the planet Earth. We are a race flung to the stars. The Rixians have come, offering you more than knowledge of the Alephs, of higher technology -- they can offer you a new home as a people. Follow the Code! Follow Issa Rix!

>>***Starkiller: 34769_54_65:*** BIOS agents or not, humanity will always prove itself against alien aggressors. This campaign should only serve as a rallying cry for the four factions of man.

>>***Omega/Alpha: 901808199_11:*** The BIOS have managed to advance themselves in previous conflicts, and will continue to do so in the future. While the Rixians have sent out their recruitment call, let no one forget the BIOS do the same. Don't fail to utilize the greatest aspect of human genetics -- the ability to adapt in response to conditions. The Rixians have come. The BIOS have adapted. Join us, and better yourselves.

Revolution: Iron Coalition/GigaCorp Defections Stopped

Following the incredible five faction *Stellar War* on 6.30.2150, two forces: the Iron Coalition and GigaCorp, met again. Their mutual purpose, sources revealed, was not the defeat of each other, but rather the arrest of pilots defecting to Rixian lines.

Those who have not already tuned out the daily Rixian recruitment broadcasts know that in addition to generic Rixian messages demanding allegiance to Issa Rix and the Code, defected pilots have begun contributing their own philosophies, as well. Many argue that with the destruction of Earth, the Rixians' arrival is a sign of humanity's next historic step to take. In addition, early theories of false BIOS defections have proven only partially true. Some BIOS agents definitively have operated as "plants," directly leading to recent BIOS victories; however, far too many remain in the Unity not to be legitimate recruits.

Most recently, internal battle erupted last night between Iron Coalition and GigaCorp pilots heading back from the *Stellar War*. In the event named *Revolution*, the IC and GigaCorp were forced to defeat their own units attempting to secede en masse to Rixian lines: the IC's *Thornbirds* and GigaCorp's *Brokers*.

The Iron Coalition's *Iron Core* unit and GigaCorp's *Vipers* succeeded in preventing this latest wave of defections -- but only through the use of brute force. The IC's *Iron Core* scored 164 kills, led by *swede_100* with 13. GigaCorp's *Vipers*, in one of the bloodiest events ever to take place in the system, scored 352 kills in the nearly four-hour conflict. The Vipers were led by *General_Aknoso* with 42 kills, *SAS_Yossarion* with 31 kills, and the impressive *Darth Helment* who single-handedly scored 32 kills and 8 base kills.

Information remains unclear as to whether the IC and GigaCorp confronted their own seceding units. . . or, as many say, if they secretly allied with one another to destroy the other's defectors and blame the event on faction rivalry.

>>*Starkiller: 34769_54_65:* Defection to the alien Rix represents the lowest mankind can sink. Betrayal to not only an enemy side, but a non-human enemy side? I can only praise both the IC and GigaCorp for the utter destruction of these traitors.

>>*Aunt_Sam: 98437_87_87:* Well, here it is nearly the FOURTH of FRIGGIN' JULY, and we got idiots out there jumping sides to the RIX!! I can't even get the words out of my frothing mouth to curse their turncoat hides! Rest assured, when Aunt_Sam meets up with them, freedom will ring all over their traitorous heads!

>>*Light of Issa: 11_101_101_00:* The appearance of the Rixians is a clear beacon to lost humanity. Join us -- enlighten your souls. Earth has died, my friends. Only the progressive will survive.

>>*Rouge_Legionnaire: 736428_786_651:* Here's some enlightenment for you: kiss my ***! If I ever see any of your ships in ANY space I promise that you will end up a bug on my windshield. As for the defectors, my beacon for you will be the sound of a disruptor before you die!

File: 26060500/0141.7_04
Report Filed By: "KronkiteNOW"

Rixians Ousted from Belter Territory

Perhaps seeking to gain advantage over a seemingly weakened force, the Rixians made an unsuccessful move yesterday into Belter territory.

The Rixian Unity, first appearing in the system several weeks ago, then appeared unstoppable. Numerous voices raised concerns of humanity's conquest at the hands of these aliens. Several hastily drafted treaties have even come to light -- impromptu efforts, it would seem, seeking to make peace among the various factions of man in order to face the Unity as one cohesive group. These treaties saw little success -- as did initial attempts to confront the Unity.

Lately, such recent fears of utter conquest have all but abated. The Rixian have arrived and in full force to convert mankind, yet appear no more powerful than any one of the other factions. Belter sources report that the Rixians, desperate for resources after the five-faction *Stellar War*, moved into the asteroid belt last evening. And, in true Belter style, the Rixians were repelled.

In heavy fighting, two Belter units, the *Slappers* and *Can o Whuppim*, managed to drive back the Rixian ships. Each unit claimed an identical 132 kills, and an impressive 10:1 kill-to-death ratio. *AgentSmith4* from the *Slappers* scored 20 kills alone, with his partner, *_LOST_Detreid* scoring 8 base kills; *caspar21*, from *Can o Whuppim*, tallied up 15 kills.

So, after initial fears, the Rixian Unity is coming to be seen as no more powerful than any other faction. And yet no less powerful, either. For although deep into Belter home territory, each of the Rixian units involved in the battle also managed over 100 kills.

For now, though, the Belters will undoubtedly celebrate their victory -- especially as it comes on the Fourth of July. With a poor showing in the *Stellar War*, perhaps their firm stance against the Rixian Unity will dissuade others from coming after their resources in the belt.

>>*Luner-C Child: 76488_65.325:* Belter pride wins the day! Time to celebrate!!

>>*Aunt_Sam: 98437_87_87:* Well, bake my cookies! Them Belters done did it against the Rix! GOOD FOR YOU, little buddies! You might all be hiding under rocks out there in the belt . . . but anyone who can shoot down the Rix is worthy enough to be shot down by me.

>>*Light of Issa: 11_101_101_00:* The aggressions shown against the Rixian Unity will only prolong mankind's suffering. You must help your Rixian saviors, so that we can help bring you into enlightenment. Follow the Code – please.

>>*MotesArt:node: 98997_06.16:* For once in his life, KronkiteNOW says something worth listening to. Belter victory! And on the eve of good ole Fourth of July!

Spatial Chaos: Rixian Unity Wins the Day

The Rixian Unity -- outgunned, out-manned, and coming just one day after their hard fought loss in Belter home territory -- won the latest all-faction battle.

The battlefield, dubbed *Spatial Chaos* by participants, was plagued with gravitational anomalies. While Alephs closely clustered together, mineral rich asteroids could be found only on the far edges of the sector -- too difficult a location for many of the factions to use.

The Rixian Unity, however, came in desperate need of such mineral resources. After yesterday's defeat inside the Belters' asteroids, many began to talk of a complete rout of the alien crusaders.

Such talk has, however, proved premature. Despite fighting with an underdog number of pilots, the Rixian Unity managed a complete and total conquest of the battlefield sector -- its *Vastruuk* unit managing over 400 kills and a devastating 80 base kills. *TANGLEBLUE* led the unit with 35 kills; other notable Rix pilots included *Dominor* with 28, *ErMaC318* with 21, and judging from the call-name, a likely defected Belter pilot, *Drunkenstupor* with 20 kills. *SAS_Yossarian*, a name we have heard before on the DataNet, contributed 18 of the 80 base kills.

Apparently, the Rixian Unity fights best with its back to the wall -- a disturbing thought for any faction seeking to quickly eliminate these aliens. Added to this is the number of "converts" continuing to defect to the Rixian side, and recent speculations that former BIOS spies have been all but purged from Unity ranks. The Unity, it would seem, remains a force to be reckoned with.

As to the reasons behind *Spatial Chaos*, Sergeant Koch responded to the DataNet message boards with the following:

"50% of all conflict goals is positioning. That is, trying to achieve, or maintain an advantageous position in space so that future conflicts can be launched successfully. In the so-called Spatial Chaos*, the goal was not the conquest of an asteroid-rich belt or the destruction of a weakened side. After the recent* Stellar War*, many factions appeared to retreat -- to go lick their wounds, so to speak. After this ebb, there's a resulting flow. Factions want to position themselves aggressively while the other sides continue to retreat. It just so happened that units from all factions tried this same strategy. And a sector with close Alephs equated to a desirable sector to control. If anything, our only mistake was underestimating the Rixians' ability to recover so quickly from defeat . . . "*

>>Issa's Arm: 01_001_111_11: The Rixian Unity offers to embrace mankind with open arms. Already many have answered this call. However, a time will come when all non-believers who hinder the cause must be destroyed. This is not a threat. This is a mere statement of fact, as preached and practiced in the Code. Follow the Code. Or be destroyed.

>>Light of Issa: 101_101_00: Follow the Code. Follow Issa Rix. Can you doubt any longer the Rixian way is the way for mankind?

>>Omega/Alpha: 901808199_11: There has been constant, and unfounded talk of BIOS agents infiltrating Rixian ranks. DataNet sources are flawed and should continue to be mistrusted.

>>Aunt_Sam: 98437_87_87: Bunch of pilots couldn't fly your way outta an MRE ration can! Allowing the Rix maggots to win . . . I HAVE NOTHING TO SAY ABOUT THIS TRAVESTY!!

Possession: Iron Coalition Lands Forces on Mars!

7.5.2150 - the Iron Coalition has established a proverbial beachhead on Mars.

While the system has seen fierce activity between the Rixian Unity, BIOS, and the Belters lately, little has occurred between the GigaCorp and Iron Coalition camps. Each side sent a unit to participate in the recent five-faction *Spatial Chaos*; each side's unit fared poorly against the aggressive, and desperate, Rixian pilots. Yet, all this has been occurring in remote sectors of the system.

As of yesterday, however, a major strategic event has altered the core planet, Mars. Long considered the unshakable bastion of GigaCorp, a small Iron Coalition force succeeded in landing troops on the Martian plains.

The two IC commando units involved -- the *Rapiers* and the *Valiant* -- managed fewer kills than the GigaCorp defenders. Yet, scoring far more base kills, the IC units forced the defenders to resign the battle and flee their lines. *NSA_Typhoon* led the way for the *Rapiers* with 27 kills; *KnWnC_rOgUe* led the *Valiant* with 34 kills. Perhaps the most critical pilot of the day, though, *AoD_KaOTiK* achieved 14 of the *Rapiers* 27 base kills, forcing open the doors for the IC's landing.

There has always existed a deep-rooted animosity between the Iron Coalition and GigaCorp. The Iron Coalition, considering itself the only stellar authority in the system, has long been at odds with GigaCorp, whom they consider a threat to the former legal and political systems of Earth. Yet, while the IC has mainly entered conflicts in the past to prevent one faction's aggressive actions against another or to secure the defense of IC-controlled Luna, they have rarely engaged in such overt maneuvers as the assault on another faction's home territory.

The raid comes just one day after Iron Coalition Sergeant Koch issued a statement to the DataNet discussing the strategy of military positioning. His comments themselves may have been a kind of positioning, discussing IC tactics to be a careful strategy of defensive territory management -- on the eve of a major offensive battle. One reporter, certainly, was fooled.

In the aftermath of the raid, Iron Coalition units continue to strengthen their beachhead on Mars. Yet the lifespan of their garrisons will depend mainly upon GigaCorp.

>>***Aunt_Sam: 98437_87_87:*** The Iron Coalition has proven YET AGAIN that they can and will enforce the legal authority of Earth! Let this be a lesson to all the factions out there!

>>***MacroMan07: 789364_45_423:*** Yes, the IC has proven something yet again -- that they will misuse the antiquated system of a dead planet to promote their own aggressive agenda. Meanwhile, these so-called "police" ignore the alien Rix, who continue to threaten all mankind.

>>***I, Horus: 873243/1124.7_5:*** KronkiteNOW -- comment on another reporter's stories? This is a gross beach of journalistic ethics, as you're well aware.

Whip of the Belt: Rixians Annihilate Belter Pursuers

The following message, prelude to the Belter assault on departing Rixian forces, was posted early yesterday on DataNet boards:

"Couple days ago, and them alien Rix start poking their noses around the belts. Like KronkiteNOW said, we repelled them in true Belter style!

"But ya can't just stop there -- no sir! When the fox sneaks in the henhouse, the rooster has to chase it all the way back across the yard. And that's just what we Belters need to do to the Rix -- drive them all the way back to the deep sectors of the system. Let 'em soothe the boot prints we stamp onto the backside a' their pants! Good flying, Belters!"

Transmissions back from the deep sectors of the system indicate a result entirely different from Belter victory. Although the Belters sent out a force sizably larger than the departing Rixians, the best of the Belter pilots reported in less than 10 kills . . . and not a single base kill. The Rixians pilots, however, managed a superior 9:1 kill-to-death ratio (compared to that of the Belter's 1.5:1). *LFD_xMrPAINTx*, defecting from the BIOS since last week, led the Rix with 23 kills; *_GrayDeath* and *NB_Clint30* each tallied 20 kills apiece.

Although the Belters have proven more than adequate in defending the asteroids, once outside the belts protection, they have failed to achieve major conquests. This time, it would seem, proved no different. The Rixian Unity, when fighting with its back to the wall, has managed not only to survive but achieve dominating success. Desperate for resources, the Rixians won the recent five-faction *Spatial Chaos* battle. This time, they annihilated their Belter aggressors.

As a strange side note to the event, transmissions are still being sorted through regarding a possible second wave of Belter pilots sent after the departing Rixians. An hour into an apparent battle, at 6:18 UST, all transmissions mysterious stopped. So far, no survivors from either side have come forward, and Belter scavengers have not reported sightings of any battle wreckage. The troops, if they ever existed at all, seemed to have simply vanished, calling for speculations of transmission ghosts caused by recent gravitational anomalies, hacking efforts to draw pilots away from one of the forces -- to most outrageously of all, a previously unknown "traveling" Aleph sweeping through the sector and destroying all craft.

Meanwhile, forces from all factions have been reported gearing up for yet another massive conflict. The third, in less than two weeks!

>>***Luner-C Child: 76488_65.325:*** I can tell you one thing: That weren't no ghosts that disappeared in the second fight -- it was Belter pilots. I knew them men.

>>***Light of Issa: 11_101_101_00:*** Already signs of punishing those have begun to appear. Belter forces have disappeared in their aggressive assault on Rixian saviors. This is no accident, or "anomaly." This is the hand of Issa Rix.

>>***MotesArt:node: 98997_06.16:*** I can tell you -- them Rixians may have been on the run, but they were ready for us. Back to the wall, my foot! It was an ambush, pure and simple. How else do you explain their tactical stations all ready and waiting?

>>***Cntrl/Alt/Delete: 98723-746-64:*** GigaCorp: Beware captains who jettison miners into space! BIOS agents and Rixian defectors are among us!

Scar Tissue: Latest BIOS Generation Emerges

With each passing generation, the BIOS grow more violent -- even to those within their own faction.

Although the BIOS have longed remained silent in regard to DataNet postings, various leaks have supplied crucial information concerning their societal organization: About their council, led by Alistair 3-921, of the 3rd generation of BIOS. The succeeding 4th generation, led by Sarah 4-1602, and 5th generation, by Thomas 5-2187 and Jonathan 5-3781. The aggressive tendencies, grown stronger with each generation -- tendencies said to include the desire for the total conquest of man versus unity between mankind's factions. Tendencies also said to include the desire for even more radical gene alteration and evolution therapy.

And now, new information has leaked, concerning an emerging 6th generation of BIOS. A generation believed to be the result of BIOS genetics crossed with stolen Rixian biochemistry. The first appearance of this 6th generation has resulted in an immediate attempt to wrest control of the BIOS council from its older members.

Saturday, 7.8/2150 -- civil war broke out in BIOS-controlled space.

The 6th generation, led by the unit *DNA Viral Xtc*, won the first and largest battle of the day. Lasting over two hours, the battle *Scar Tissue I* witnessed a total 700 BIOS casualties -- 33 attributed to pilot *kenny23* alone.

However, later in the day, the council's own defense unit, *DNA Gamma 12*, took the next two battles. In *Scar Tissue II*, the unit achieved 186 kills, 19 by *Zeta_Fleance*. In the day's final battle, *Scar Tissue III*, the unit managed 171 kills, *13 by NSA_Typhoon*. By then, it would seem, the council had subdued the 6th generation to secure final victory.

Days later, and reports, as well as final death counts, are still trickling in. At the end of the *Scar Tissue* War, final numbers appear to total: 1350 kills, 1340 ejects and 32 base kills. *Man's inhumanity to man* has long been a catchphrase in war; apparently the genetic "improvements" made by the BIOS have not bred this particular quality out. Except for the certain leaks, the BIOS council has kept quiet about the disastrous release of their Gen-6 pilots.

>>Omega/Alpha: 901808199_11: *I, Horus* treads a fine line between the reporting of events and treasonous dissemination of BIOS intelligence -- a line they may someday hang themselves with. DataNet reporters are well advised to keep their heads low.

>>Cntrl/Alt/Delete: 98723_746_64: An ultra-aggressive BIOS generation -- what do they expect? The BIOS crossbreed their own kind to develop the most advantageous qualities in stellar war, and have simply over-bred the aggression factor.

>>Space_Junk: 132634_98_982: Sounds like BIOS 6.0 wasn't such a great hit -- fellows shoulda done some more Beta-testing first. Ha!

>>Peterson 5-7421: <security-blocked>: Gen-6 performed admirably. If the BIOS council cannot defend itself against the strongest of its forces, then the strongest of its forces deserve to become the new council. Promote from within, go forth and conquer!!

Final Stand: Mars Beachhead Holds

The following report has been taken in part from a de-classified Iron Coalition press release. Sections have been edited for the sake of length and clarity.

Operation: Final Stand
With the success of **Operation: Possession**, a beachhead was successfully placed in Martian orbit on 7.5.2150. GigaCorp forces, bunkered on the planet, would be expected to launch a major counter-offensive in the days afterward. Intelligence gathered revealed the most likely day to be 7.11.2150. Proper defensive measures were implemented.

07/11 17:00 UST
GigaCorp launches their expected counter-offensive. The spearhead unit to lead the attack is the *GC Defiants*; The *IC Eagles* are selected to engage the enemy. Intelligence on advanced GigaCorp targeting systems seems to prove true: *GC Defiants* achieve a steady rate of highly accurate hits.

17:13
GigaCorp launches a second counter-offensive strike, designed as a standard pincher-maneuver. The unit, *GC Profiteers*, leads this second attack. However, the Iron Coalition unit *IC Raiders* anticipates the attack, and is ready to meet the charge.

18:41
Second counter-offensive ends. The *IC Raiders* succeed in holding off the attacking unit. Pincher movement fails to achieve even partial success.

19:30
First GigaCorp offensive ends. GigaCorp reinforcements arrive, allowing for a protected retreat of their units. In the aftermath, Iron Coalition losses are heavy: 104 killed in action. GigaCorp suffer a lower number of casualties: 67 killed, and achieve a superior kill-to-death ratio: approx. 5:1.

20:00
Iron Coalition launches a sniping campaign of retreating enemy forces. The *IC Eagles*, refueled and supplied after the devastating first assault, are sent to hinder the retreating *GC Defiants*.

20:25
Sniping campaign ends. The *IC Eagles* achieve total victory, earning a 38:1 kill-to-death ratio.

Conclusions:
Iron Coalition beachhead in Martian orbit holds in its first test against GigaCorp forces. GigaCorp can be expected to launch a second counter-offensive at some future date. Hacking of Iron Coalition systems can also be expected, and defensive measures put into place ASAP.

GigaCorp programmers have succeeded in creating superior targeting systems. However, what advantages GigaCorp holds in technology, they lack in advanced military strategy. Standard pincher-maneuver easily identified and countered. Intelligence-gathering capabilities on GigaCorp remain sound.

Pilots Earning Recognition:
TC_Firebird453: 16 kills
AoD_Angel_of_V: 5 kills
Black_Outlaw: 2 base kills
JcipRU: 2 base kills
Vanpham: 2 base kills

Enemy Pilots Designated for Assassination:
Sarumen: 34 IC kills
GuidoNet: 31 IC kills
Phoenix: 31 IC kills and 2 IC base kills

>>Cntrl/Alt/Delete: 98723_746_64: Iron Coalition success, huh? Well, what else do you expect in an official press release? What the $#&% DataNet? Didn't want to do any investigative reporting on this one? You might've learned what *really* happened out there!

>>Aunt_Sam: 98437_87_87: Iron Coalition holds the fort! And three more pilots for Aunt_Sam to keep a lookout for. I've got plenty a' space left on the side of my ship for three more skull-n-bones tallies to add!

>>Captain_Resource: 81235_827_76: First, GigaCorp. Next, them alien Rix. Law and order will be restored to the system one faction at a time.

>>SpaceBytes: 52643_8625_12: Law and order -- more like IC oppression! I'd rather join the Belters or the Rix than suffer that!

Hostile Takeover: GigaCorp Fails to Acquire BIOS Holdings

After failing to repel Iron Coalition invaders from their home territory on Mars, GigaCorp looked to secure holdings on Jupiter and Saturn. Launching two strike units into the system last evening, the *Rushers* and the *Falconeers*, GigaCorp attempted a "hostile takeover" of BIOS-controlled sectors.

However, reports from the battle's aftermath revealed a unified -- and impressive -- BIOS defense. After the release and subsequent civil uprising of their Gen-6 prodigy, the BIOS have apparently convinced these most violent members of their faction to stand with them. And GigaCorp's defeat appears to have been at the hands of the Gen-6 pilots.

Mirroring their counter-attack on the Iron Coalition, GigaCorp launched two successive waves. The first managed to achieve at least partial success, with the *Rushers* scoring over 50 kills; however, the defending BIOS unit, *DNA Hades X*, matched them with 50 kills as well. Final results of this first assault wave remain unclear. Many in the conflict believe that GigaCorp, facing defeat, launched "Doomsday" electronic-countermeasures, ruining all transmissions in the area.

Results of the second assault wave, however, were more than convincing. GigaCorp, returning to the sector several hours later, were met by the waiting BIOS units -- and soundly defeated. The BIOS *DNA Ether V* did the most to secure victory, managing 45 kills and an 11:1 kill-to-death ratio. *DNA Hades X* also made their presence felt, contributing 44 kills to the fight.

After two defeats in a row, what's next for GigaCorp? Perhaps the exec's need to dig into corporate coffers and hire on some Belter mercenaries -- or even fund an alliance with the alien Rix. Rumors have already started flying about a new line of GigaCorp gear being rushed into release, attempting to raise some critical resources. As for the BIOS, the future integration of Gen-6 remains to be seen. As has happened in military campaigns of the past, armies returning victorious have been known to look for further victories at home -- perhaps another civil war lies just around the corner.

Meanwhile, Lt. J. Clayton of the Iron Coalition has made good on his promise to single out enemies to the IC cause. Monitoring reports from *Hostile Takeover*, an updated list of pilots designated for assassination was posted on the Net soon after.

Enemy Pilots Designated for Assassination:

BIOS:
NSA_Typhoon - 8 kills
Starlancer - 4 kills
KMD_Syl - 4 kills
MAGBRI - 4 kills
GeMiNii - 1 base kill
AoDKaOTiK - 1 base kill

GigaCorp:
M_O_J_O - 8 kills
RJM_Lightening - 1 base kill

>>***Omega/Alpha: 901808199_11:*** GigaCorp can throw their monetary weight around the system all they want -- high tech is no match for high bio-tech.

>>***PanixAttx: 125381_12635_121:*** Think what you want. A failed invasion to some. Successful testing of new Giga-gear to those in the know.

>>***Aunt_Sam: 98437_87_87:*** All I can say is this - boo hoo! So what if corporate blockheads and gene-jumpers duke it out? You should all be worrying about who the IC keeps tabs on -- and who Aunt_Sam has his sights on.

>>***Peterson 5-7421: <security-blocked>:*** Once again, the 6th Generation proves their genetic superiority. All BIOS, as well as all enemies of the BIOS, should beware! Superior rule.

>>***PanixAttx: 125381_12635_121:*** Aunt_Sam, no one's seen you in space for how long? Just shut up already.

End Result of Humanity or Bust: Humanity!

The following transcripts were culled from pilot transmissions preceding the 07.14.2150 event. Although the pilots remain unspecified as to those participating directly in the event or merely reserves patrolling the fringe sectors, the transmissions have been posted to shed further light on recent developments. They have been edited for the sake of clarity.

<SmashFace_9> So what's up with GC? You hear all these reports that they've got some great new targeting system, and then still get their tails kicked?

<Podkiller_Philmore> What new targeting system? The Corp might be a bunch a' tech-artists with a lot of funds, but since when have they released anything without the other factions knowing first? Naw -- think about it -- they got that stuff posted on the 'Net to sweat the other factions. It's all just psych-ops, man!

<SmashFace_9> Whatever. They still lost. And any Corp system still won't shoot as good as them Rixian gun pods. Talk about advantage! They're the only thing I'm worried about today.

<Ravine> Doesn't matter how accurate the Rix gun pods shoot. With an alliance of four against them . . . it's gonna be shooting alien fish in a barrel!

<SmashFace_9> The Rix are fish? I thought they were bugs?

<Ravine> It's just a phrase, you moron.

<Podkiller_Philmore> The Rix aren't fish or bugs. They're humanoid. How else do you think people could fly their ships? I knew a guy who worked for the BIOS. Some of the defects they sent over there to collect DNA came back with the best reports. Couple bytes even made it to the 'Net. The Rix are, like, grayish, 3 feet tall -- really weird eyes.

<SmashFace_9> To collect Rix DNA? Why not collect their gun pod technology, too?

<Right_o_Might> Who says they didn't try? But I don't think the BIOS found time to learn how to read Rixian! Not enough anyway to read tech-specs.

<SmashFace_9> Maybe that's why they want the genes -- for the language cap's to read the specs they stole.

<Ravine> You can't pass language on genetically!

<Podkiller_Philmore> Whatever they wanted with the genes, the Gen-6 sure didn't turn out right! You ever hear the story of their Gen-0 project? The BIOS don't like to run simulators to test their gear -- they like to use the real stuff. So, they launch real ships instead of test dummies -- their own, whatever they've captured from other factions, and use them for targeting practice!

<Ravine> So who doesn't?

<Podkiller_Philmore> I'm not done yet! So they can test a ship's armor that way, to see how well it holds up. But that still doesn't tell them how long a live pilot inside can last for. So guess what they use?

<SmashFace_9> Monkeys

<Right_o_Might> Prisoners

<Ravine> Podkiller's family

<Podkiller_Philmore> They developed these things -- looked like men, but with no higher brain functions. Just nerves, running off the brain stem. And monitored them inside the ships to see how long the bodies could survive bombarding. They call them dummy pilots Gen-O BIOS.

<Ravine> Man, Podkiller -- I think you run off your stem. Where do you get this stuff from?

<Podkiller_Philmore> Like the 'Net -- I have my sources.

The battle following had formerly been dubbed *Humanity or Bust*. A historic alliance saw the four human factions band together against the alien Rix. After two short melees, however, the event soon came to be known simply as *Humanity*. Despite numerous kills by the lead alien defense unit, *Rix Valhal*, the Unity faced insurmountable odds against the alliance. The defense unit decimated, the rest of the Unity was forced to retreat into deeper sectors, where they're no doubt regrouping and tallying their losses.

As for the human alliance? Historic in the making, it followed recent history in the dissolving. The four factions have apparently already gone back to their former hostility. With the more open-minded of each factions' units taking place in the battle against the Rix, the more fanatical of their units engaged one another back outside Earth's troubled orbit.

Reflections: BIOS Claim Possession Over Old Earth

Despite the destruction of Earth, few have been able to disassociate with humanity's birthplace. Left a shattered rock after the 3.13.2140 asteroid strike, scientists argue whether Earth will ever be able to support life again.

And yet, humanity seems unable to leave the planet behind. And this despite the discovery of the Alephs -- the means to leave the system -- and the arrival of the Rixians -- proof of life outside the system. Earth can no longer be held in the homocentric view as the seat of all life. Yet, while various factions look to the future -- at least, on Mars, Luna, and the asteroid belts -- there remain conservative members who still persist in an almost fanatic devotion to Earth.

On Saturday, 7.16.2150, battle waged between the more fanatical units of each human faction. While GigaCorp's *Racketeers* threatened to win every melee, it was the BIOS *DNA Viral 44x* which ultimately won the day -- scoring 544 total kills, with 355 coming from the final battle alone.

Ironically, it is the BIOS who most actively seek to advance themselves. Yet, based on transmissions sent after the battle, it is believed that only the older BIOS generations still look to the Earth -- and only the older Gen-3 which took part in the battle. The following transmission was posted on the DataNet shortly after the BIOS victory:

"Over time, newer generations of BIOS will be developed, at increasingly quicker rates . . . further proof that only the BIOS endeavor to race down the genetic path while others fear taking the next tentative steps. When new science develops, what is best for humanity? A foot-dragging process led by those who fear the future, who fear what things new science will mean? Or, an explosive approach, where science is lavished with attention, new discoveries are praised, and humanity is brought quickly to new heights? Surely, it must be the latter.

"And, as the BIOS evolve, we will advance ourselves not only here, but in other systems as well. We will meet the Rixians on their home ground, if necessary, in order to force a technological exchange. We will venture to new systems, with room for our generations to grow.

"At the same time, we must never forget our ties with Earth. Our species arose there. If we forget the Earth, we will sever our most basic connection with our genetic beginning. Such a loss would prove detrimental, not only in a cultural, but in a scientific sense as well. There may come a day when answers are needed -- for some plague, or genetic ailment -- and the answers must be looked for from the very beginnings of life on Earth. To lose this precious resource would be a greater catastrophe than the asteroid that struck."

>>*Omega/Alpha: 901808199_11:* Wise words. And a hard-fought campaign for a truly noble endeavor. Well done, BIOS.

>>*Peterson 5-7421: <security-blocked>:* The BIOS council can make valiant claims if they choose. But they must not concentrate resources and pilots on a campaign for a dead rock. Hear me: THE EARTH IS DEAD. We must commit to expansion in all other areas -- or face losing these areas to other factions who compete for them already.

>>*MiniMinuteMan: 892163_982_61:* So what's wrong with living on a rock? The Belters have been doing just fine on ours!

Alien Crusade: Rixian Unity Finds Redemption

As has been proven time and again, the Rixian Unity seems to fight best with its back to the wall. A strange paradox for a faction apparently looking to convert by force.

Last Friday, 07/14 - The historical alliance between the human faction results in a massacre of Rixian pilots. Senior members release the following statement:

"To the people of the system -- it is our great honor to report that as of the most recent battle in these sectors, the alien threat has been all but eliminated. The combined force of the four factions has succeeded in dealing a deathblow to the Rixian Army. What remains are minor clean-up efforts, to fully drive the retreating bulk of the alien invaders out of the system, as well as re-conditioning of defectors returning from the Rixian side. As for the human alliance, it is doubtful that it will continue, having lost the threat of a common enemy to bind the otherwise disjointed factions together. However, the Iron Coalition, keeping in line with the legal precepts of Earth, will continue in its endeavors to bring peace and order to the system"

- Press Lt. J. Clayton

Yesterday, 07/17 - Two units of the Rixian Unity assault, and lay utter waste, to the IC's "clean-up" efforts. Led by the impressive *Rix Supraa* unit, the alien pilots waste no time defeating a combined Iron Coalition and GigaCorp force. Following the conflict, presumably human members of the Unity release the following transmission:

"The Code 38:13:51:61 - All those who stand before others walking the True Path of Enlightenment will be swept aside by those walking the Path, as so many leaves by the breeze.

"To the unenlightened of the system:

Issa Rix and the Unity open their arms to all those seeking redemption. Past atrocities committed against the Unity will be forgiven, but only for those who lay down their guns and join us unconditionally. All others must be destroyed, so that the Path to True Enlightenment remains clear.

"Please, do not fear the image of your saviors. The Rixians come from a civilization far older and far more scientifically advanced than the mankind's. And what have humans done with their science? Created machines which have destroyed the very Earth through the casting of stones. The Rixians have come to lead us gently from the site of Earth's grave, into rich and living systems of their own.

"Follow the Code"

Reports are still filtering in, but preliminary transmissions have revealed that IC's Press Lt. Clayton, presumably sent to cover the battle, was killed in action. Signals from his life pod abruptly ceased at 19:45 UST. The DataNet would like to take this opportunity to express deep regret for the loss of all fine journalists.

>>*Aunt_Sam: 62553827_7/17:* Lt. Clayton dead! The Iron Coalition defeated! Lies and deceit! I've said all along that the alien Rix controlled the DataNet. That's what their advance tech can do! Don't believe the type!

>>*Earthborn_Jim: 8264848_87232:* Ain't nothing wrong with hanging out around Mother Earth still. The Rix can just keep on walking down their path, and leave the rest of us be -- right here. Must say, seems like a bad idea to get inna way a' their walking, though.

>>*PantherBlue: 1437_5614271:* Guess the IC have figured the sure misfire method of counting unhatched chickens -- bet on beating the Rixians.

Rixian Unity Comes Up Short

The crusading Rixian Unity burst into the solar system in a wave of violence. And chaos. They plowed through some of the best units humanity had to offer. They were poised on the edge of total conquest of our species. Now -- they must move back into the far reaches of the system with "PAID" stamped on them. It seems as though the Rixian threat has been held off, for now.

What damage has truly been done by these xeno-crusaders? In their lightning campaign, they devastated the conservative leadership of the BIOS, forcing the destructive appearance of the Gen-6's. They decimated the Belters even in defeat, causing the flamboyant independents to lay low. They tore up GigaCorp so badly that Mars fell prey to a surprise Iron Coalition offensive. And even the proud Iron Coalition lost some of its best squadrons, including the vaunted *Scorpions* and *Black Demons*, as well as losing the ruins of the Earth to BIOS forces.

However, some would point out that the Rixian Unity's arrival gave factions just the leeway needed to launch important strikes of their own. Since their release, the aggressive Gen-6 BIOS have asserted their dominance over inner system matters, and even the older Gen-3's achieved victory in claiming Earth. The Iron Coalition successfully deployed two elite squadrons, the *Raiders* and *Eagles*, in the surprise conquest of Mars. GigaCorp struck another blow against the BIOS, weakening the BIOS grip on Jupiter. Even the haphazard Belter organization has benefited from selling the multitude of salvaged Rixian craft to the highest bidder.

Unfortunately, signs of Rixian resolve have unsettled many faction leaders. Instead of abandoning the system as hoped, the remaining Rixian forces have already carried out counterattacks against the Belters, and are in the process of fortifying their bases above Neptune and Pluto against GigaCorp or Iron Coalition aggression. We may be forced in the future to refer to these Rixian crusaders as merely the "first wave".

>>*CapnRoger:node:2504_179.59:* I'll tell ya, these Rixians are here to stay. I fought them off of Barton's Rock when they bushwhacked the *Topsiders*, and they ain't runnin home with their tail between their legs. These guys are mean, and no one this side of oblivion's gonna stop 'em!

>>*Cpl.05145:node:<military access only>:* Calm down there, Cap'n. We've stopped the little gray men before, and the *39th Vipers* can do it again. They're not so tough as they look. If you Belters wouldn't have left yourselves open, you could've beat them. Now my Lieutenant says that we're gonna go out to *<military censor military censor military censor military>* and *<censor military censor>* those Rixians! Trust me Capn, if you're so afraid of these guys, go live on the Luna reserve and let the good ol' IC protect you.

>>*MymridonG6:node:1174_137.70:* Know this: the BIOS will emerge from the flames of the Rixian War supreme. We have already proven our rightful hegemony over Earth, and we will extend this dominance over the weak stalegene inhabitants of the Inner System. The Rixians will do no more than sharpen our swords and purge us of the weak. Enhance now, or die later.

File: 2229/7974.12_4
Report filed by: " Rocket Man "

Alien Hoax Exposed

Over the past few weeks, DataNet has been hearing rumors about the discovery of alien ruins on one of the Belt asteroids. Speculations had run rampant -- were these ruins signs of another species, predating the Rix? The same species speculated to be the Aleph's creators? According to these rumors, a Belter by the name of Reggie McTeague had uncovered the site of some unusual metallic formations. McTeague, better known as the purveyor of small "souvenir" pieces of asteroids, had supposedly come across these formations while breaking up more asteroid chunks for sale. As you might have guessed, this generated a bit of a buzz in the scientific community, some of whom paid a visit to McTeague for a look.

And the outcome? McTeague's alien ruins were decidedly fake, concocted by the man himself in a foolish effort to attract outsiders to the Belt. Now, I see a lot of flaws in McTeague's logic, not the least of which being why outsiders would ever want to pay a visit to his God-forsaken little ball of rock -- much less pay for the privilege. McTeague conceded this point himself:

"*Yeah, it was kind of a crazy plan, but you can't blame a guy for trying, can you*?" Orion Sholes felt similarly: "*What do you want to do, lynch the guy? He tried to make some money and his plan backfired. Who cares? Lots of folks would try the same thing if they'd half a chance of succeeding.*" Interestingly, Simon Lennox also weighed in on this topic. He called McTeague: "*a damned fool who is a stain on all Belters. Is it any wonder the Corp and the Coalition don't take us seriously*?"

Meanwhile, scientists continue to insist that evidence of other life forms may exist somewhere in the system -- life forms which predate the Rixian Unity. Some argue that the Alephs themselves are just that piece of evidence; and, with the arrival of the Rixians, more and more credibility is being lent to such theories.

>> *CastorandPollux: node: 2239_23.2:* More of this philosophizing! DataNet's getting just a little too highfalutin for my tastes these days.

>> *KJB: node: 1122_66.2:* Somehow, I figured you'd say something like that. But what about the real story here? Lennox is the man. He's really making a name for himself. If I were Sholes, I'd be watching my back.

>> *CastorandPollux: node: 2239_23.2:* Hey, Orion can take care of himself. Lennox is the last thing the Belters need these days.

>> *KJB: node: 1122_66.2:* If you say so, but I wouldn't bet on it. I doubt old "Blackhand" is making himself more well known for nothing. He's up to something and Sholes should be careful.

Lennox Speaks His Mind

For many, the avuncular Orion Sholes serves as the textbook definition of a Belter. And certainly, he's the most recognizable face of that independent faction. For the most part, Sholes has always downplayed his importance in the organization, claiming that he spoke for no one but himself. We here at DataNet have treated this claim with a healthy amount of skepticism. After all, aren't the Belters a lot less threatening when we conceive of them as colorful rogues and traders rather than bloodthirsty space pirates? If so, who better than the eccentric Sholes to maintain that illusion?

Yet, the fact remains that Sholes doesn't speak for all Belters -- not by a long shot. More importantly, not every member of that faction shares his outlook or media savvy. A case in point is Simon "Black Hand" Lennox, a Belter as different from Orion Sholes as any other person could be. Until recently, Lennox was an unknown quantity to most outside the Belter community. That's about to change. I briefly had the opportunity to speak to Lennox; following is a transcript of our conversation:

Legion: Thank you for allowing this interview.

Lennox: Well, you seemed the best way to get my position across.

Legion: And what precisely is that position?

Lennox: That Belters should unite against the Coalition and GigaCorp. There's no accommodation possible with them.

Legion: I see. That's a very different approach than Orion –

Lennox: Don't you dare mention that name in my presence! That sell-out isn't a true Belter and everyone knows it. The time has come for Belters to take what's theirs. Earth's destroyed, but the Corp and the Coalition still fight on like nothing's changed. Well, I got some news for them: everything's changed and they'd better realize it soon or be left behind.

Legion: Would you care to elaborate?

Lennox: What? You don't get it either, do you? You don't see that the future's ours, that the old ways don't matter anymore?

Legion: It's not really my place to say such things. I'm just a journalist.

Lennox: Really? Well, a lot of people listen to what you DataNet journalists have to say. Hell, a lot of people listen to Sholes, too. That's why I'm saying again that Belters should strike back against those who oppose them. I know what GigaCorp's like -- I used to work for a corporation and they're all the same. The Coalition's no different. Only the Belters -- and I ain't talking about Sholes' version of them -- offer a different future for mankind.

Legion: That's interesting. You have a vision for the future then?

Lennox: You bet. It's one where we're all rich and GigaCorp and the Coalition don' t exist anymore. That's what I have to offer.

Legion: Forgive me, but isn't that a bit simplistic? How do you –

Lennox: I suppose going on like Earth is still around is a more sophisticated position?

Legion: Well, I –

Lennox: You make me sick. You and your whole lot. Let me say this: if you seek a better, richer future for yourselves, follow me. If you're tired of being pushed around, follow me. If you just want to strike back against the Corp and the Coalition, follow me. Anything less is to sell your soul for free.

>> *Gilgamesh: node: 5532_216.1:* How pleasant.

>> *Red_Queen: node: 893_375.98:* Lennox didn't get to where he is today by being pleasant. He's not a man to cross.

>> *Gilgamesh: node 5532_216.1:* He's a nutcase, plain and simple. He's a butcher and a bully.

>> *Avalon: node 7328_281.29:* And it looks like he's spoiling for a fight with Sholes. Could be interesting.

Coalition Loses Starship

In what appears to have been a freak accident, the Iron Coalition starship, *The Indefatigable*, was destroyed last evening. The vessel, commanded by Captain Marya Poderenko, was in orbit around Mars undergoing a routine patrol. DataNet has learned, however, that *The Indefatigable* had been asked by several Martian freeports to make its presence known as a warning to GigaCorp. Although Mars and GigaCorp seem to be developing a more equitable relationship, there are still freeports that refuse to have any dealings with the mega-corporation.

For its part, the Coalition has been reluctant to say much of anything. Major Robert Terrence explained it this way, "*We are still currently investigating the disaster in hopes of ascertaining its cause. We have not ruled out human error yet, but this seems extremely unlikely, given the quality of the vessel's crew. Similarly, we do not suspect a systems malfunction, as* The Indefatigable *had just completed an extensive maintenance overhaul just over two weeks ago*." When asked whether he believed sabotage to be the cause, Terrence only replied, "*We are not ruling anything out at this stage*."

Naturally, GigaCorp is a prime candidate for such an act, although no formal charges have yet been made. Well known to all factions, IC victories several weeks ago in the Martian sector left GigaCorp worried -- and vulnerable. There's also the possibility of terrorist groups on Mars, including some of the freeports who requested the vessel's presence. The fact remains -- with far too many suspects and not enough evidence, no conclusions can yet be drawn. As soon as DataNet learns anything further, we'll be sure to post the information here.

>> *DixieRebel: node: 2115_19.2:* Doc's right, you know? I mean, a Coalition ship goes boom and there are just too many people who'd have a reason to do it.

>> *Jason99: node: 6532_39.3:* That's the problem, isn't it? Fisk must be awful mad about this. He's been trying for months to show he's not as bad as he's made out to be and look what happens: people still hate the Coalition.

>> *Red_Queen: node: 3452_85.10:* That's not all his fault. When you're as powerful as the Coalition, people naturally suspect your motives. Fisk could be a saint and people would still find fault with the Coalition.

>> *DixieRebel: node: 2115_19.2:* Maybe so, but I can't say I'm sorry that the Coalition is having trouble like this. The last thing we need is those jarheads running around unopposed. I say competition is good for them, keeps them on their toes.

>> *Jason99: node: 6532_39.3:* But just think what the Coalition will be like if they survive this mess. That's what really scares me.

File: 8531/7085.33_8
Report filed by: "Basil"

Terrorist Attack on Mars

Looks like Mars isn't proving to be the calm and boring place a lot of corporate analysts had hoped. Coming hot on the heels of the unexplained destruction of a Coalition starship in orbit, today comes the report of a terrorist attack on a GigaCorp facility in Burroughs City. The attack, occurring late last night, completely destroyed the nano-factories producing building materials intended as part of GigaCorp's much-vaunted Coloni-Care program. Burroughs City is one of several Martian freeports to accept the Corp's assistance in expanding its infrastructure. The move was believed to have been popular with the freeport inhabitants -- even if it didn't meet with the approval of other Martian freeports.

The attack, using military grade weapons that devastated areas outside the corporate facility, killed six Martians, as well as thirteen GigaCorp employees. The perpetrators, calling themselves the Ares Movement, claimed responsibility for their actions in a recorded statement.

"*Mars must remain free*," the statement read. "*No one -- whether they be GigaCorp or the Iron Coalition or anyone else -- can change that fact. We will act for the preservation of our way of life whenever it is threatened.*"

Until this attack, few had heard of the Ares Movement, a fringe group responsible for several small acts of terrorism against non-Martians. However, the high profile of this attack and the impressiveness of the weapons used suggest the Movement may be seeking a larger place for itself.

The presence of military grade weapons has led some to suggest a link between the Coalition and the Ares Movement, a charge the Coalition adamantly denies. "*The Coalition does not now nor has it ever consorted with terrorists. Whatever grievances we have with GigaCorp, we will deal with them according to the time-honored traditions of the military, not by cowardly attacks in the night*," read a written statement from Brig. General Fisk himself.

GigaCorp itself has not placed any blame on the Coalition, but its spokesperson, Miguel Sanchez, stated:

"*GigaCorp has several leads in this matter. I can assure you we will do whatever we must to protect our property and our employees -- not to mention our valued customers -- from further attacks.*"

>> GungaDin: node: 9072_62.2: I went to Mars on my honeymoon. I never thought something like would happen there.

>> Jason99: node: 9073_95.2: Believe it, my friend. Like or not, Lennox is right: the times are changing and we've got to change with them or be left behind. Consider that attack a major wake-up call to both GigaCorp and the Coalition. I'd be surprised if we didn't see them react in a big way after this. Mark my words.

>> Aunt_Sam: node: 6350912_62.4: Every day in the Coalition's a honeymoon! My regards to GigaCorp -- tough luck with the freeport, suckers!

File: 97647_823/08:08_12:45
Report filed by: "Editor_in_Chief"

DataNet Reporter Arrested!

A message from the editor:

It is truly a sad day when a major military force of the system looks to conserve power through the immoral blockade of information.

This being said, we of the DataNet are deeply troubled to report the arrest of one of our finest members, *Conscious_1*. In an act certain to be remembered in recent history for the tyranny it represents, officers of the Iron Coalition's military police unlawfully detained *Conscious_1* early this morning in the Martian freeport of VikingStrike.

Although IC officials have yet to comment on the incident, one condemning theory behind the arrest has already been raised. This past week, suffering the loss of their starship, *The Indefatigable*, the Iron Coalition no doubt desired to counter their perceived weakness in the eyes of other factions.

The Iron Coalition may have believed that *Conscious_1*, stationed at VikingStrike, was somehow involved with the Ares Movement terrorist group, who has claimed responsibility for the recent attack on the Burroughs City freeport and who may also have been involved with *The Indefatigable's* destruction. However, as many speculate, the IC likely provided arms to the Ares Movement in order for them to carry out terrorist attacks on GigaCorp facilities. For the IC to arrest a reporter under such obviously false pretenses may be the smokescreen necessary to distance themselves from the group. However, an even sounder theory suggests that the IC simply chose to arrest a member of the DataNet with the intention of putting a stop to any further reporting of their activities -- and defeats -- on Mars. Certainly, the Coalition's mighty image has been tarnished in recent days.

Although DataNet reporters rely on anonymity, *Conscious_1*, a noted field writer, had been openly sent to collect data on the history of Martian freeports. The Iron Coalition, a target suddenly visible to them, made their strike. We can only pray for the safety of *Conscious_1*, and condemn the Iron Coalition's gross violation of human rights and free press. Aren't these the very liberties of Earth's Constitution they so proudly claim to uphold?

>> *Aunt_Sam: 74691_8374-8:* Boo hoo hoo, all you DataNet jackals. That's right, the IC needs to shut yer peepin' eyes! Who do you guys think you are, anyway? I'll tell you another piece of that Constitution which is upheld -- and that's treason! Help your nation's enemies, and pay the price!

>> *I_Horus:<node withheld>:* Sam, your logic's as twisted and wrong as your facts. Regardless, this is one reporter wishing *Conscious_1* all the best. IC interrogation tanks are no place for a civilian casualty.

>> *Ares_Spear <node withheld>:* The Ares Movement denies any involvement with the DataNet, other than using it as a conduit for information available to all. The Iron Coalition and GigaCorp's presence on Mars will only mean further affronts to human rights until both factions are gone -- or removed.

>>*SpaceBaR:098331_87231:* Free exchange of information has become a universal right, and need, of modern humanity. The Iron Coalition will never sway anyone to their side, other than the most fanatic, with this kind of action. Freedom, Belter-style is freedom absolute.

One Reporter's Tale

A message from the editor:

The recent incident of the Iron Coalition's gross violation of civil rights has come to its necessary end. Shortly after 08:00 UST, officers of the Iron Coalition military police released DataNet's feature reporter, Conscious_1. Arrested the week prior in the Martian freeport of VikingStrike, Conscious_1 had been held under false pretenses of supplying information to the Ares Movement terrorist group. It remains the opinion of the DataNet that the IC made this arrest for no other reason than to black out all press reports coming from the area in a misguided attempt to prevent further tarnishing of their image.

The DataNet welcomes back one of our finest!

A message from Conscious_1:

Suffering indignities at the hands of Iron Coalition goons has taught this reporter one thing -- where the truth really lies. Considering that the IC claims to uphold the tenants of Old Earth constitutionality, how can they possibly explain restricting the freedom of the press, kidnapping of a private citizen, and torture - yes, torture -- without due process of any kind? And, for those who might believe this to be an isolated incident, let me dispel such myths right now. I was not the only one!

Blindfolded, bound to a chair, and confined to a tiny cell somewhere, there is not much else to do in such circumstances other than sit still and listen. Although I don't know where I was being kept -- a basement, or official holding cell -- in my many long hours there, I was able to overhear the ranting of at least one other fellow prisoner kept not far from me.

The man, a former Belter miner, I believe, had been serving in the ranks of the Rixian Unity. How he came into the hands of the Iron Coalition was never made clear. What this Belter did state during interrogation is that he and other defectors like him had been taken to the Rixian homeworld for further indoctrination. At the Rixians' world, he claimed, where everyone followed their nebulous "Code," few problems existed. No member of their race was allowed to go hungry or without shelter, and all were treated equally and with respect. Their technology had even advanced to the point where human minds could only perceive its effects as "magical."

However, when asked to explain what this "Code" precisely was, and how one followed it, the prisoner grew uneasy, his answers less coherent. The interrogators left him some time later, muttering something to the effect of "Rixian brain-washing." And then they started on me.

Much more transpired during the days of my captivity, but that memory has stayed with me the clearest. Although the Iron Coalition sacrifices human rights to advance their cause, the alien Rixians might not offer anything purer -- only brainwashed delusions of humanity's version of Utopia. There might not be any one true side to fight for.

An interview with the BIOS

In recent days, the DataNet spoke with Simon "Black Hand" Lennox of the Belter free-miners. Since then, several other factions have offered to sit down with DataNet reporters, for a chance to clear the air -- not to mention spin their respective positions. Due to the recent incarceration of DataNet's Conscious_1, the Iron Coalition's offer to provide an interview was declined; in an effort to remain neutral on the Mars position, GigaCorp's offer was likewise turned down.

While these factions have released official statements in the past, the BIOS have long chosen not to speak with the press. In a surprise move, representatives from the fourth and sixth generation of BIOS agreed to talk with DataNet. Following is an excerpt from that conversation:

I, Horus: We are speaking today with Sarah 4-1602 and Victor 6-731, representatives from the BIOS Gen-4 and Gen-6 groups, respectively. Sarah, perhaps you'd care to comment on, well, DataNet's biggest question at least: why the meeting today?

Sarah: For their own purposes, other factions have come to see the DataNet as a tool, as a means to spreads their false ideologies and propaganda. And, to this effect, the DataNet has worked well for them, posting their various statements. Some BIOS feel the time has come to make our voice heard in the system as well.

I, Horus: And you feel your voice can be heard louder through the DataNet than through military conquests?

Victor: Wrong! Military conquests are inevitable for the BIOS! This has been undeniably proven since Gen-6 entered the system. For a reporter, your question shows a complete ignorance of current events.

I, Horus: Yes, let's talk about the emergence of Gen-6. At the time of the most recent generation's release, news immediately began to spread of Gen-6's attempted coup.

Sarah: There is no denying that the Gen-6 BIOS are the most . . . aggressive among our people. At the time of their release there were indeed some difficulties in fully integrating them into the overall BIOS society. However, rumors of a civil war were greatly exaggerated. Nothing like that ever took place.

Victor: If Gen-6 ever did decide to take over the Council, believe me, it would not be a problem.

I, Horus: Can you tell me, if you're willing, how Gen-6's differ from previous BIOS generations? Aside from the obvious aggressive tendencies?

Sarah: Certainly. Members of the sixth generation continue the BIOS tradition, set by our founder, Emmet Longstreet, of perfecting space-oriented humans. The sixth generation has been made heartier, less prone to muscle deterioration, and less discombobulated by movements through a zero-G environment. They are more fit for life in space than any previous generation, and their aggressive natures have been amplified in order to advance our military cause against the other factions.

I, Horus: And it doesn't bother you that you have, in your own words, created a generation superior to your own?

Sarah: Not at all. Every succeeding generation improves upon the one preceding it -- with longer lifespans, an increased pool of knowledge and technological resources to work with. The BIOS simply advance this process quicker than the natural rate. Yet, I would not say that what we do is unnatural. I would instead use the term super-natural.

I, Horus: Victor, what about you? Does it bother you that your generation has been created as a kind of experimental upgrade?

Victor: Listen, stalegene, the BIOS way has advanced our people exponentially faster than yours. I am beyond the capabilities of your children seven generations still to come. If anyone should be bothered about all this -- it's you.

>>Aunt_Sam: 98273_8273: Huh! Ain't no way anyone's messing with my genes! You want to improve yerself? Calisthenics! Forget gene-splicing.

>>SpaceBaR:098331_87231: Sam, you idiot. My one hope for the system is that your genes don't advance.

>>Podkiller_Phil: 7263_72163: I dunno . . . I might be with Sam on this one. There's a reason nature allows you to advance only so fast. This Doc Frankenstein approach has to have serious drawbacks, somehow... Although I'm with SpaceBaR as far as Sam not reproducing.

News From Around the System

Luna

The Iron Coalition today released the latest in its series of "hit lists." The lists, begun several weeks ago, singled out top enemy ace pilots for termination. This latest version of the list named not only individual enemy aces, but an entire squadron as well: *Jihaad* of the Belters. Other aces listed were: *VerbalGyant*, *Fragtzack*, *Popper11*, and *CB_Shadowhawk*.

Also included with the list came a brief message of warning: . . . all enemies of the Iron Coalition are hereby ordered to surrender themselves to the nearest IC detention facility, or face immediate and summary execution when located. The Iron Coalition will make the best possible use of all its resources and pilots, including its Special Forces *Steel Fury* squadron, to carry out these sentences.

Mars

No progress has yet been made in the investigation into the destruction of the IC ship, *The Indefatigable*. Destroyed in Martian orbit on July 28th, popular theories link GigaCorp to the ship's demise. While GigaCorp, holding key installations on Mars, has long been held in suspicion by IC officials, no evidence – or formal charges – appear to be forthcoming anytime soon.

Meanwhile, the Ares Movement continues its terrorist campaign against GigaCorp facilities, last night striking the BioWear research facility. Damage to the facility appears to have been minimal; however, GigaCorp spokesman Miguel Sanchez was quick to point out that the attack could only have been carried out using military weapons and training. Sanchez stopped short, however, of outright accusing the Iron Coalition of funding the Ares Movement in an effort to disrupt GigaCorp corporate activities.

Asteroid Belt

Orion Sholes, popular leader of the Belter movement, may soon be facing strong opposition from within his own Belter ranks. Simon "Black Hand" Lennox, recently interviewed by DataNet reporters, has been rumored to be marshalling forces in an attempted overthrow of Sholes' leadership. Skirmishes between Belter units have already been observed, although official statements from Belter sources claim these to be merely "war games."

Similar internal disputes occurred last month within the BIOS faction. Then, emerging Gen-6 BIOS looked to overthrow the more conservative ruling council before themselves being subdued.

>>*Sun_of_Spam: 36171_283_1:* War games? I haven't heard an excuse that flimsy since the IC invaded Mars over "environmental concerns." I know the Belters' story, and let's just say this -- Sholes has a real fight on his hands.

>>*Aunt_Sam: 098331_87231:* Whoo boy! Guess the IC just opened up a new round of hunting season, this one on the Jihaad! System could use a few less Belters in my humble opinion.

>>*Podkiller_Phil: 7263_72163:* I've seen the IC's lists go up before. And guess what? Most of those pilots are still flying high. The only ones that need worry are the IC fools going after them.

>>*Aunt_Sam: 098331_87231:* Whaddya know about it, Phil? You just made MY list.

Iron Coalition Techno-Pilots?

Factions have long attempted to use technology as a means to gaining advantage in the current hostilities . . . and with technological advantages, the hope being, financial advantages will soon follow. Consider GigaCorp, which heavily invested in its BioWear line only to grudgingly scrap the project due to mounting safety concerns. They recouped their loss from that venture by switching production to advanced targeting systems -- systems that actually worked and people wanted.

And while GigaCorp has long been the leader in both technology and resources, these days it seems that the Iron Coalition is trying to follow suit. Yet, have the military minds gone too far this time?

Reports have begun to surface of "questionable" tactics being used by the IC. MuzakMan, a Belter scavenger and frequent contributor to the DataNet boards recently posted the following:

"I don't know what they're aiming to pull, the IC brass. Me and my crew went out collecting, tipped off about an Iron Coalition skirmish against the Rix. Profitable stuff, we reckon -- folks can't get enough of them Rixian gun-pods.

"Only, there we were, collecting pods, and the guy on my wing directs my short, little attention to the IC craft. Now, you come to the aftermath of a battle, you expect you'll have to stomach some blood. That just comes with the territory. Only, there weren't none in the IC ships! No blood, no bodies, nothing -- just a bunch of shattered training-bots, fitted into the cockpits."

The use of robotics in warfare has long been a standard, if much frowned-upon, convention. Starting back in the days of Old Earth ground assaults, robotic gun platforms had been commonly used to enter and clear buildings, when soldiers' lives were deemed most at risk. Has the Iron Coalition now chosen to go this route with its pilots? Does the IC face such a recruitment shortage that they must fight using unmanned ships? For a faction that speaks highly of honor, it seems no small crime to send automated drones against a living enemy -- even an alien Rixian enemy.

>>*Sergeant Major, Mariso Carvalho: <node withheld>:* The Iron Coalition, although disagreeing with the very convention of the DataNet, would hope to voice its own statement regarding these rumors. At no time -- repeat -- at no time, have unmanned and/or fully robotic ships been used to confront an enemy. It seems clear to me that the recent detention of the DataNet reporter, Conscious_One, has sparked a campaign of untruth against the IC. And, in this campaign, unfounded rumors of the deceitful Belter side are aired while the truth behind such matters is not.

>>*Conscious_One: <node withheld>:* The DataNet is not about the support of one faction against another, Sergeant Major, despite any one faction's actions. We are about delivering the truth. As part of this effort, you'll find your comments have indeed been posted.

>>*MuzakMan: 1616_1619_8975:* Deceitful huh? Well, I managed to salvage those robotic pilots and the flight recorders, so we'll just see whose pants are on fire now, won't we?

>>*Tinker12: 87272_1617_626:* I'll pay top dollar for those salvaged parts, MuzakMan. Please reply to my node to arrange a meeting.

>>*MuzakMan: 1616_1619_8975:* Jeez, you IC jerks just don't get it, do you? Hafta try harder than that, boys.

IC General Assassinated

In breaking news, reliable sources have reported the death of Iron Coalition's Brigadier General Peterson V. Davies. General Davies had been leading the IC's *Planet: Red* division, stationed in Martian orbit.

The *Planet: Red* division first arrived in Martian space in early July, dealing several sound defeats at that time to GigaCorp forces seeking to repel them. Recently, however, more subversive actions seemed to be taking effect against the IC. Their much-vaunted starship, *The Indefatigable*, was destroyed by unknown causes, although GigaCorp saboteurs remained the most likely culprits. Soon after, the IC arrested a prominent DataNet reporter in an attempt to black out media coverage of their activities. However, the black out did not succeed in hiding IC's recent use of unmanned fighters -- a move that raised loud outcries among other factions in the system.

And now this: General Davies' death was reported by IC officials early this morning. Their statements claim that Davies' personal shuttlecraft strayed slightly off course from its designated flight plan, and was quickly ambushed by a unit of GigaCorp strike fighters. In the speed of the attack, the statement read, most of the fighters managed to escape; however, the remains of several ships destroyed by the IC confirm the attackers' identity to be that of GigaCorp.

The statement further went on to list Gen. Davies' accomplishments, as well as to announce the date and time of his funeral service.

Meanwhile, military activity in the system has quickly heated up to a fever pitch. Iron Coalition and GigaCorp forces have openly begun to assemble, leading many to believe they will soon clash. In addition, two Belter units have announced conflicting allegiances. Those Belters under control of Orion Sholes have pledged to oppose continued IC aggression in the system, while those led by Simon Lennox have pledged their support to the IC -- possibly looking for a strong ally for future offensives against Sholes.

In addition, both the BIOS and Rixian Unity have also begun massing ships in their respective sectors. Both factions, although ever enigmatic in their intentions, have most likely sensed their need to be ready for the major campaign certain to start soon. Although the first shots of such a campaign have yet to be fired, this must surely be just the calm before the storm.

>>Aunt_Sam: 8584:1818:1: Davies was a good man. Far better than any of the GigaCorp scum I'm about to blow across the skies.

>>M_Sanchez: <node withheld>: GigaCorp neither confirms nor denies any involvement with General Davies' death. While he may have been a fine and valiant soldier, the activities perpetrated against GigaCorp have gone on far too long. With the direct support of a terrorist movement seeking to destroy GigaCorp interests, it is no wonder that these events occurred. And, believe me, GigaCorp will be ready for any IC offensive.

>>Sholes: <node withheld>: I have no choice but to second Sanchez's statement. Davies' death was an inevitability. For Belter freedom, we must oppose the IC!

>>Black_Hand: <node withheld>: Another Belter sell-out? Never! GigaCorp money will never buy off me or my men.

>>Arm_of_Issa: <001:110:1010>: The time of reckoning is upon us! Join the Unity or face eternal suffering! Follow the Code. Follow Issa Rix.

>>Sholes: <node withheld>: No, Simon, but IC money will?

First Shots Fired

Tension around the system mounted even higher today, as the first cautious skirmishes between faction sides have apparently begun.

While no major battles have yet been launched, an all-out military campaign, pitting all five factions against one another, seems inevitable. Following what IC officials are calling the assassination of one of their top generals, Peterson V. Davies, countless assault units have been mobilized and readied. Despite the fact that much of the recent conflict seems to center around the Iron Coalition and GigaCorp, every faction seems to be gearing up for a major military undertaking.

Several sorties have been launched along the line of Martian orbit, with IC and GigaCorp forces testing one another's strength -- and resolve. So far, no known representatives have been sent from either side to make any sort of diplomatic peacekeeping attempt. And, while IC continues to rally its troops behind the memory of General Davies, GigaCorp has taken a more revisionist approach, denying not only the reports of Davies' death but that General Davies was ever an actual person to begin with.

GigaCorp spokesman Miguel Sanchez released a statement early this morning. It read, in part, *". . . our records do not reveal any Peterson V. Davies ever registering with any sort of military census. We do have records of a Private Peter Davidson with the Iron Coalition's* Planet: Red *battalion, but this is the closest match our records could come up with. This leads GigaCorp to suspect that the accidentally -- or even sacrificial -- death of this private may have been manipulated by the IC into an excuse for all-out war. Of course, the IC, recently known to have experimented with robotic pilots, may simply have staged both the shuttlecraft's destruction and the attack itself, using captured GigaCorp vessels as props. Either way, evidence clearly points to an elaborate hoax being played upon us all."*

Meanwhile, internal disputes continue to plague the Belters, with units supporting either Orion Sholes or Simon Lennox all but having formally launched a civil war of their own. And, both the BIOS and Rixian Unity continue to amass units on the edges of their respectively controlled sectors.
While this system has seen its share of conflicts, a monumental escalation in the ongoing war seems to be, at this point, unavoidable.

>>Victor: 151651:181:181: Fair warning to all stalegenes! Gen-6 of the BIOS are ready to unleash the dogs of war -- ourselves!

>>Aunt_Sam: 1616:1717:94984: General Peterson, I mean, General Davies not real? What kind of pathetic excuse for an apology is that? I remember the man, myself -- I saw him once, from the back, viewing a troop assembly. Not real!

>>GromnieSkin: 17171:0191:81: Fair warning to anyone following these postings. I run a surveillance outfit in the deep sectors, and overheard the Unity sending a coded transmission through one of the Alephs. If that isn't a call home, I don't know what else it could be. More little gray men and their gun pods are on their way, folks!

>>Issa's _Light: <101:111:1110>: All humanity must recognize the face of their father, Issa Rix. Do not break from the path of enlightenment, or else face destruction -- you must follow the Code!

File: 000048/09:04_10:17// *filed by: "KronkiteNOW"*

War Erupts in Full

Friday evening, at approximately 5:03 UST, renewed hostilities erupted throughout the system.

Hints of the battle had begun circulating around the DataNet boards hours prior, under the name: *Let's Rock*. The time and place, however, remained a mystery. That is, until the surprise attack by a unified and devastating Belter force tore through both GigaCorp and Iron Coalition fronts alike.

In recent days, rumors had spoken of an internal Belter dispute, centered on a major conflict in leadership. Those Belters under Orion Sholes' banner had apparently pledged allegiance with GigaCorp forces; those under Simon Lennox had sided with rival Iron Coalition. At the battle's start Friday afternoon, these two Belter sides approached the heavily patrolled Martian sector, each showing intent to join the rival factions. However, as both sides approached, guns blazing, it quickly became apparent that a double-cross -- of both GigaCorp and the IC -- had just taken place.

Results from the battle have been pieced together over the last couple of days, revealing the total victory of the Belter ambush. Faction intelligence officers, it would seem, failed to monitor the DataNet boards closely enough. As the Belter sides converged, they fought under the unified name: *Let's Rock*. Led by *Grazio1*, with 21 enemy kills, and *Meatnog*, with 4 base kills, the Belter unit swept through the sector, destroying both IC and GigaCorp ships with equal determination.

For the IC and GigaCorp, each having focused on one another for so long and counting on the support of Belter troops, the ambush took both factions completely off guard. Neither were able to respond quickly enough to generate a sufficient response, with both IC and GigaCorp defensive units managing less than one hundred kills each -- hardly enough to drive off the relentless Belter assault. To make matters worse, while the Rixian Unity decided not to enter the fray, the BIOS did. Their Gen-6 squad, *DNA Xvc-42*, soon arrived, achieving an even greater number of kills than the Belters. However, while the BIOS apparently wanted only a high-kill count, without a unified plan like the Belters, they, too, were eventually forced to leave the field.

For now, the Belters have salvage rights to an untold number of defeated enemy craft. What the other factions should truly worry about, however, are the powerful signs of a unified, and well-led, Belter faction.

>>*Aunt_Sam: 1616:1717:94984:* No good, stinking, double-crossing Belter scum! I DON'T HAVE WORDS ENOUGH TO CURSE YOU DOGS!!

>>*C-Drive: 2525:1515:1511:* Belter pride! We've said it before and we'll just keep on saying it -- live free, or die!

>>*Podkiller_Phil: 1515:83832:41:* The Belters make an alliance with both the IC and Giga, and then the BIOS come out of nowhere? Wake up! It was Belters and BIOS aligned the whole time! Seems like the only other faction you can count on these days is the Rixians'!

>>*Sholes: <node withheld>:* It's time to celebrate an old Earth holiday, boys. Our labor's done -- break out the beer!

BIOS Onslaught Stopped

The Rixian Unity: ever enigmatic. When war broke out in full at the end of last week, the only faction not to immediately participate was the alien Unity. What plans did they have of their own? Why were they holding back? Was there any truth to the rumors of the Unity sending transmissions through the Alephs, asking their home world for reinforcements?

Following their assault on the battling IC and GigaCorp forces, the BIOS turned their attention to the seemingly neutral Unity. Driving their ultra-violent Gen-6 force into Rixian controlled sectors, many wondered whether the BIOS rampage could ever be stopped -- even by the Rix and their devastating gun pods.

The answer came last evening, as the Rix, losing more pilots than their adversaries, nevertheless managed to drive the BIOS from their sector. Led by commander *VistaMista*, the Gen-6 BIOS racked up 116 kills against the aliens. However, the Rix countered with an almost equal 112 kills and, perhaps most decisive of all, 4 base kills. The BIOS, in lightening strikes concentrated against enemy pilots, failed to make a single base kill of their own. The Rixian defenses have held against what some would argue is the toughest strike force among the system's factions. While it had previously been thought that nothing could stop the Gen-6 violence, perhaps this is proof that ultimate power lies instead with the Rixians -- and their gun pods.

Even more disturbing may be the obviously human call names used among the Rixian pilots. With such prominent names heard during the battle as *SkiBoySteve*, *GalaxyGirl*, and *DarthHelment*, one has to wonder -- have the Rixians begun to associate themselves with human culture? Or have more human pilots than previously thought fallen prey to Rixian propaganda and joined the Unity? Cultural scientists at the Lunar Research Institute have recently begun studies on this very subject.

In the aftermath, hostilities in the system have done anything but cool down. With the Gen-6 threat seemingly contained -- or, at least, moved to another part of the system, battles between the IC and GigaCorp have continued in full. And it surely can't be long before all five factions meet again.

>>*Issa's Beauty: <001_11111_001>:* The best that humans can offer with their Gen-6 "masterpieces" are still not enough against the truth of Issa Rix and the Rixian Code. Behold the results of humanity's folly!

>>*Sgt._Major: 17717_17171_0:* The Code has nothing to do with Rixian victory. Forces stretched too thin and the technology of the Rixian gun pods are what won the day. I thought the BIOS spies stole those blueprints.

>>*MuzakMan: 1616_1619_8975:* Must not have made it back home, I guess.

>>*Gromnie_Breath: 87272_1617_626:* None of this would have happened if it weren't for the Belters' utter betrayal of the system. Should've just let the IC take care of Giga, then combine forces to get rid of the Rix once and for all! Greedy fools, I tell ya!

>>*MuzakMan: 1616_1619_8975:* And face IC rule? Not even the Rix are that bad!

File: 1000050/09:08_10:13
Report filed by: "I, Horus"

Territory Dispute

Everyone knew the showdown between the two old rivals -- GigaCorp and the Iron Coalition -- would be brutal . . . but no one could have predicted the level of carnage seen last night. In two devastating battles lasting over five and a half hours, the system witnessed a total of 1400 deaths and 1400 ejects between the two sides.

Conflict has been gearing up near Mars since the recent assassination of IC's General Davies, now confirmed to have been carried out by an elite GigaCorp strike team. At first, fighting between the two was temporarily stymied when Belter units ambushed them both; but, with the Belters having withdrawn to their own sector, the two rivals were able to launch assaults on one another without outside interference.

With dozens of injured still awaiting rescue in their ships, transmissions have overloaded all channels in the battle's sector. And, with presumably hundreds more dead to be recovered, the area will likely remain a cluttered wasteland for quite some time. Rescue and clean-up operations will certainly be hindered by the fact that both sides are still heavily patrolling the area -- leading to the belief that, despite last night's incredible numbers, the final victor in the Martian sector has yet to be decided.

Several survivors have begun to post their accounts on DataNet boards. Their messages speak mostly of shock at the incredible destruction, as well as queries to find missing members of units, or missing units entirely.

. . . I've seen fewer ships in a fully outfitted IC carrier than the number floating around, derelict and damaged, in space. There's still pilots out there, too -- life pods trying to make their long way back to bases that have already been destroyed . . .

. . . after last night, I don't think I can do another battle . . .

. . . this is Sergeant Hammel of the Green Hornets Gamma *unit. Any member of the unit out there, report immediately to the chief admin officer of the ship you are on. Arrangements are being made to recollect the unit on the IC's* Silver Citadel *. . .*

. . . all I remember is one Giga pilot going after miners. Miners! He didn't even care about the IC fighters taking on his squad . . .

. . . looking for survivors from Vermin Red *. . .*

. . . from Green Hornets Lambda-Prime *. . .*

. . . from Vermin Tac-Support-20 *. . .*

The messages have continued to grow throughout the day. If last night's battle is any indication of what's to come, factions will be hard-pressed to produce the needed amount of ships -- or train the necessary pilots.

BIOS Wreak System Havoc

Across the system, one common goal seems to have formed: stop the BIOS menace! In recently renewed fighting, while tensions have soared to an all-time high between the IC and GigaCorp, it is the BIOS causing the most destruction. Stopped only once in recent weeks by the alien Rixians, the BIOS came back last Friday evening to assert their dominance -- yet again -- in five-faction battle.

Lasting approximately one-and-a-half hours, the Gen-6 BIOS pilots wasted no time making their presence felt. While other units began to carefully position and test one another out, the BIOS stormed in, laying waste to all sides. At battle's end, Gen-6 forces controlled over 70% of the field, their pilots racking up over 200 kills -- twice as many as GigaCorp, Rixian, and Belter pilots could manage.

Yet, with war having been waged across the system for so long, why the intense hatred against the BIOS side? Members of the Iron Coalition argue that what's really at stake is not merely control of the system, but the continuation of humanity. And, while IC policies may be questionable, at least they are meant to promote the advancement of human society; the BIOS, many feel, have altered themselves to the point where they are no longer precisely human.

Perhaps most reprehensible of all are reports of the abuse of war prisoners. Against all accepted convention, the BIOS have been known to force prisoners to undergo biological alterations, testing out methods for the creation of future BIOS generations. This may be happening even now, as victorious BIOS squads scour the battlefield, searching for injured craft and drifting life pods.

While other factions fight the BIOS in order to promote their own humanity, the only side seemingly capable of resisting Gen-6 aggression is the Rixian Unity. So far, no alliances have officially been made with these alien crusaders; and yet, one may have to form soon enough.

For their part, the Iron Coalition has pledged to stop the BIOS force, at any cost. Notable BIOS aces from last Friday's battle, *TheDukesters* and *rtree*, have already been added to the IC list of designated assassinations, and IC officials have pledged to do their utmost to remove them, and other top BIOS pilots, from combat.

Still, the BIOS have proven their strength against all other factions. One must ask: can anything really be done to defeat them?

>>Gromnie_Breath: 87272_1617_626: Ain't no way we can allow these test-tubers to rule the system. And give up our identity as a species? Never!

>>Aunt_Sam: 1616_1619_8975: You said it, Gromnie.

>>Light_of_Issa: <001_101_101>: There should be no hesitation to join the Rixian Unity in its quest against the BIOS -- and all others who do not follow the Code. It is no wonder the Unity alone can defeat these non-believers.

>>Sgt._Major: 17717_17171_0: Let me remind you of an age-old expression: don't burn a candle at both ends. They made them Gen-6's the ultimate fighting force, but how long do you think their bodies can last before burning out? All things considered, they still are only human.

IC's Bounty Hunt

In heavy fighting last evening, the Iron Coalition carried through with its recent promise -- to halt the BIOS rampage.

After defeating all factions in the *Battle of Stellar Havoc* last Friday, the BIOS Gen-6 pilots seemed unstoppable, to the point where other faction leaders worried that balance of power may have forever shifted to the BIOS side. Almost immediately following this battle, IC officials responded by placing leading Gen-6 pilots on their list of designated assassinations. While many have considered this list nothing more than an unenforceable form of intimidation, the IC sent out one of its top squads, *Blue Steel*, to face the main Gen-6 force . . . and drove the Gen-6 pilots from the sector.

At battle's end, Belter listening posts submitted the following transcripts, taken from pilot transmissions. As the two sides entered combat, both apparently grew disoriented in the surrounding sectors. Although rumors have begun of IC electronic counter-measures used to disrupt enemy map programs, both sides apparently encountered similar spatial anomalies.

<Grazio1> Weird map.

<Cagged> 8 guys in Mimas and we can't find a single Aleph.

<Dark Nico0> This map is really . . . strange . . .

<Jherjaberf> It's a pinwheel.

<Gluefire> It's crazy.

Although the BIOS may have forced to retreat, the battle did not come without a price: While *Blue Steel* may have won the day, they actually suffered a slightly greater number of casualties than did their BIOS targets: 328 to 315.

Part of the BIOS loss may have been due to the apparently heated dissent going on within the unit ranks as the pilots tried negotiating the strange sector layout. As the Belter listening station transcripts indicate, without a clear target, much Gen-6 aggression quickly fell back within itself.

<Cagged> I see no money. Report: I see no money. Over.

<Bacon_00> Once you find the miners and constructors, rush them and destroy them!

<The_Unknown_One> Guys, cut down the damn chatter!

One of the prominent Gen-6 pilots, *Cagged*, continued to try and marshal the other pilots, repeating the message:

<Cagged> Everyone, direct your negative energy at the enemy.
However, the Iron Coalition pilots managed to keep their cool despite continuing to face heavy losses of their own. Eventually, the IC zeroed in on the BIOS stations. One of the later, and most ominous messages from a BIOS pilot foreshadowed the end of the battle:

<knWnc_rOgUe> They found Jupiter.

Soon afterward, the IC completed their mission, driving all Gen-6 pilots from the battle sectors. While IC officials have yet to release an official announcement, it can certainly be assumed that their policy of marking top enemy aces for assassination will continue.

GigaCorp's Market Crash

The following memo was recently posted on DataNet boards:

09.13.2150
From: CEO Mercedes Kelleher
To: Col. Jonathan Markham
Re: Recent company policy changes

Due to recent events, GigaCorp management will be forced to re-evaluate all employee compensation packages.

Necessary expenditures must be allocated to protect our BioWear facilities against the recent rise of terrorist attacks. In addition, company revenue has seen a sharp decline since the increased presence of Iron Coalition forces in Martian sectors. Because costs have risen and revenues declined, the necessary step to take is the reduction of all employee benefits (to exclude upper management, naturally).

Later today, a statement will be released, detailing our restructured benefit plan. Despite its necessary and logical nature, negative employee feedback can almost certainly be expected. As such, we ask that you prepare your security forces in advance, to control any possible violent outbreaks. Such drastic reactions have been known to occur in the past.

Of course, as benefits for the security force will be reduced as well, I ask that you hand-select only the most loyal security officers for this assignment.

If there are any questions, please schedule an appointment with my admin.

Thank you.

It would seem that GigaCorp's recent troubles have resulted in nothing less than a corporate shake-up. The memo, presumable stolen by key insiders, may have been posted to better explain the recent GigaCorp hostilities in Martian space -- hostilities apparently involving only GigaCorp units.

Has the time come for CEO Kelleher to step down? Or be removed from power?

>>Aunt_Sam: 1616_1619_8975: Har! Har! Har! The time came for Kelleher to step down the moment after she stepped up. Who is this woman anyway? From what I heard, she didn't even "exist" before coming to power!

>>Sgt._Major: 17717_17171_0: Terrorist activities, huh? I bet that's what GigaCorp pilots are calling their pay reductions!

>>FastCash: 65151_7179: I work for Giga, and lemme tell you, it's just one load of bull after the other. Remember IC's denial they armed the Ares Movement? Well, word's out it was Giga! Wrecking its own facilities to "necessitate" a pay cut!

>>Sgt._Major: 17717_17171_0: That's pretty clever.

>>FastCash: 65151_7179: Shut it, man! Let's see YOU work for free.

A Collector's Hunt

Rumors of Rixian reinforcements arriving in the system proved true yesterday, as a supply convoy exited through the Tanker's Gate Aleph at approximately 17:05 UST last night.

Last week, one member of a covert listening station posted a message to the DataNet boards, warning of the Rixians' plans. Apparently, a message had been sent through the Tanker's Gate Aleph -- possibly a call for help sent to the Rixian home world. In the midst of recently renewed hostilities, few factions appeared to heed the call . . . at least, openly.

Reports have recently come in, however, describing a BIOS minefield placed in secret just outside the Aleph portal. And, while the Rixian Unity may have perfected some weapons of war -- their automated gun pods, for instance -- they may not have the best working knowledge of them all. Apparently, the Rixian reinforcements exited the Aleph last night, running straight into the BIOS' trap.

The race, it seemed, was on.

Not only were the BIOS waiting beside their trap, but the IC and GigaCorp as well -- the rivals apparently able to put aside their differences, at least until the Rixians arrived.

According to reports, two lead ships in the Rixian convoy each struck several of the mines, their hulls rupturing. As Rixian cargo spread across the sector, all four factions began a desperate race to collect the scattered pieces of Rixian tech. Despite a frenzy of action, very few casualties have been reported -- in fact a total of less than ten pilots, among all four factions, were lost in the looting of the first Rixian ship.

Rixians fighters sent along to guard the convoy did prove quick to respond. By the time factions turned their attention to the second crippled ship, these Rixian pilots racked up twice as many kills compared to the looting factions -- enough to quickly drive them away, but not without first grabbing their share of the cargo.

The exact amount of cargo stolen will be hard to gauge, as each side will most likely attempt to deliver it back to their respective research labs to study in secret. As a result, even harder to gauge will be the exact nature of this alien technology. Weapon systems? Shields? Advanced engine drives? For now, only the Rixians themselves know, the alien Unity refusing to publicly comment, as expected. Of course, if faction scientists are unable to decipher the secrets of these technological items, perhaps in the end they will prove nothing more than shiny toys to be forever puzzled over.

>>Absolute_Zero: 15515_6161-1: I'll tell you what that tech was. Eggs! Think about it -- the Rixians call for reinforcements, and they send a shipment of these strange things? They're Rixian soldiers, preserved for space travel!

>>Almighty_Mighty: 1515_1616_918: Maybe. It's true, we don't know anything about Rixian biology. Do we? I dunno . . .

>>FastCash: 65151_7179: Doesn't matter. With the Alephs, you don't need to preserve a pilot -- travel becomes instantaneous.

>>Absolute_Zero: 15515_6161-1: Maybe for us. We don't know anything about them Rix, now do we?

>>FastCash: 65151_7179: We know well enough how to kill them. What else is there? Now we even have their toys!

>>Aces_Low: 1515_181_9919: Speaking from the Belters' side -- smart enough not to participate last night -- y'all better hope them things ain't bombs!

Jackals Scramble for Rix Tech

Last evening, various factions ran a veritable stellar gauntlet, trying to race back to their respective research stations with captured Rixian technology.

On **09.14.2150**, arriving Rixian cargo ships exited the Trader's Gate Aleph, straight into a BIOS minefield. While the other factions seemed able to agree upon a truce so long as looting of the Rix ships took place, any semblance of cooperation quickly disintegrated on their return journeys.

The Belters, notably absent during the assault on the cargo ships, flew in from neighboring sectors, apparently looking to waylay the returning looters. An age-old trick, to rob the robbers, and one the factions were ready for. The Belter pilots, suffering an embarrassing negative kill-to-death ratio as well as almost 100 ejects, were quickly turned away.

More problematic were the Rixian fighters, still in pursuit of their stolen tech. The *Rix Vrok* unit stubbornly refused to let the factions get away clean, chasing them almost to the outskirts of their respective home sectors. However, once there, both the IC and the BIOS managed to put up effective defenses, turning the alien pilots back.

The biggest losers of the evening may very well have been GigaCorp, though, and not the Rixians. Having taken what they could on 09.14, GigaCorp pilots seemed completely unable to make an effective run back to their Martian stations. Reports describe GigaCorp ships dumping their stolen cargo the moment they found themselves caught between Belter ambushers and Rixian pursuers. The reports went on to make pointed remarks regarding these pilots' courage . . . or lack thereof.

Of course, having returned to their research stations, the real task at hand will be dissecting the Rixians' technology. As has been noted, with little research into the aliens' biology, culture, or even language, prospects are not high for solving the mystery of their technology.

Perhaps the BIOS will make another attempt at infiltrating the Rixian Unity, as members of their Gen-5 squads did when the Rixians first invited anyone to join their crusade. Then it was believed that the BIOS sought information on the Rixians' devastatingly accurate gun pods; however, if this knowledge was ever stolen by the BIOS, it has yet to be used by their side. And the Rixians, grown wise to attempted infiltrations, have since purged questionable pilots from their ranks in numerous internal campaigns. Perhaps answers about the Rixian Unity can only truly be found back on the aliens' home world itself.

>>*Gromnie_Breath: 74736_61616_8:* Listen, people. What the heck is the big hairy deal about the Rixians anyway? You've seen the IC reports that came out yesterday -- it's the BIOS winning this war!

>>*Podkiller_Phil: 15515117777:* That's right. The BIOS and Rix have been in this thing together the whole time.

>>*Aleph_Monger: 717782_81771:* Phil, what are you talking about? The BIOS just made fools of the gray-skins again!

>>*Podkiller_Phil: 15515117777:* Are we reading the same story here? Horus just said the BIOS joined the Rix. And a couple days ago, it was about how the Rix and BIOS are the *least human*.

>> *Gromnie_Breath: 74736_61616_8:* Phil, you're really worrying me. And this from a guy on your own faction. You sound just as dumb as Sam does.

>>*Aunt_Sam: 1515_181_9919:* Congratulations, Gromnie. You just made my list.

>> *Gromnie_Breath: 74736_61616_8:* Whatever.

System Error

There is an old Earth saying: "*Man plans and God laughs*." Never has this proven truer than during the chaotic times of war.

Consider the DataNet. Held in high regard as the last bastion of truth, it is a means for any and all to freely express opinions without the corrupting influence of any one faction. For this reason, almost every faction has, at one time or another, sought to ferret out and shut down DataNet transmissions. To no success, we would like to add.

However, more and more often, DataNet boards have also come to be used as places for factions to announce, sometimes openly, sometimes covertly, upcoming battles. Times and sector locations are often posted in code by one faction as a means to safely transmit information to another, temporarily allied faction. Although the content of the messages remains secret, the practice of posting them on the boards has become common practice.

And yet, even with the best-laid plans, factions can assemble in the right place, in the right time… and still be completely unaware of the field conditions at which they have just assembled. Take the information, posted last Friday, for the aptly named battle *System Error*. Sources have revealed that while all five factions were to meet in open space, the chosen sector contained Aleph paths that proved impossible to navigate.

The units arrived in the sector, our source indicated, separated into roughly two sides. Yet, as the sides attempted to slowly move in on one another, it quickly became apparent that no Alephs could readily be found to supply any sort of connection. As transmissions reveal, pilots from all factions had difficulty negotiating the battlefield, wondering if their mapping systems prevented them from reading the area correctly.

>>*BeaerSidhe: 7266923_161:* What the hell kinda map is this?

>>*MadAccountant: 1515_054938_1:* I think we have to kill them to open up the rest of the map.

>>*Piratelooksat40: 987437_7161:* Anyone else having a problem reading the map?

>>*OneShot: 726_15451_151:* Anybody figure this map out yet????

>> *OneShot: 726_15451_151:* I think they are on a different map!?!

>>*ChrisUTFan: 998_9898_09981:* If this map does open up, we gonna be screwed.

The alliances formed within the two sides quickly disintegrated, the units beginning to launch attacks on one another. At day's end, the Rixian Unity achieved nearly 200 kills; the BIOS, 300; and the Iron Coalition almost 400 kills -- all against units within their own supposed alliance. Only later did analysts discover the ironic truth: that the two sides had actually entered not one, but two sectors of space which did not connect.

False Start

Charley Remington -- one of the system's slickest entrepreneurs -- may have pulled off a very winning trick last evening.

Pilots from the GigaCorp and BIOS factions, their squadrons scattered during the recent *System Error* battle, had apparently formed a rough alliance, guarding one another on the journey back to their respective home sectors. Emergency transmissions reveal that at approximately 17:03 UST last evening, Belter mercenaries launched an apparent ambush of these returning craft.

However, the initial ambush apparently ended almost as soon as it started, the Belter pilots streaking past their startled BIOS/GC quarry. A false start, it would seem, as the real attack actually launched soon after, with the bulk of the Belter force charging in from a different direction.

It can be assumed that the Belter mercs, led by independent tycoon Charley Remington, were less interested in strategic military victory than they were in stealing valuable enemy ships. After all, while Remington's name is well known among the Belter miners as a wealthy frontiersman and expedition leader, he has had little involvement in the faction war thus far.

Lack of military exploits aside, Remington is still known as a cunning and shrewd leader among his Belter contractors.

In the heat of combat, the BIOS/GigaCorp alliance seems to have broken down, the violent Gen-6's destroying both Belter mercs and GigaCorp pilots alike. And while the BIOS succeeded in defeating the supposedly main Belter force, a third Belter attack had meanwhile launched. At battle's end, while the BIOS managed to destroy more Belter craft -- mostly rickety, pieced-together antiques -- the Belters made off with quite a few prime BIOS ships. Victory for the Belters? Their posts on the DataNet boards have been nothing but celebratory. And as for Charley Remington? As elusive as he is cunning. In fact, while the Belter mercs have admitted last night's ambush was organized and funded by Remington, there is also evidence that the tycoon actually joined in, flying under an assumed call-name.

>>*Paul_theTall: 9872:1717:01:* Oh, that Remington. I could tell you stories -- like that "LifePod Pick-up Service" he started advertising way back when!

>>*Bowie: 1109:177171:* Sweet Belter victory, come again! It's been awhile, hasn't it? You know, them Rixians always talk about following their Code. People should really be following the Belter Code, man: Live free or die!

>>*FreedomPride: 727727:98181:* That's right -- or look at the IC. They're all for the ways of Old Earth. Ain't that what the Belters really follow?

>>*PodKiller_Phil: 1515:1313:131:* Whatever, you bunch of rock-huggin' lizards. Go back to the belt, and just forget about ever winning this war.