

The



Arrow

Book One

A Battletech © Story Line

By Mark Mohr

Forward

This short story is the first installment in a series chronicling the tales of what will eventually become the mercenary unit Orion's Arrows. I hope to write a series of installments that take place between 3057 and 3068, encompassing the FedCom civil war and the events that led up to it. This series focuses on my Mechwarrior © character Johannes Mohr and his associates, who will eventually form that unit.

I will attempt to stick to the canon story line whenever possible, but there are some inconsistencies I will have to address along the way. If anyone has suggestions for this, please feel free to contact me via email at kc8sgo40m@twc.com.

For the technical stuff, I refer you to Orion Aerospace Technical Readout 3062, TRO62A, which can be found on this wiki.

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Ship's log, FCS Stargazer, 22 June 3057

The formal christening of the ship was held this morning at 0900 hours, New Avalon local time. Needless to say, I am quite proud of the ship and the people who built her. I am looking forward to the planned five year journey that will take us throughout the Inner Sphere and Periphery, showcasing the products of Orion Aerospace.

" Commander on deck! " someone announced as I drifted through the hatch to the bridge.

" At ease, people " I replied as my magnetic boots made contact with the deck. I turned toward the captain's chair, where captain Sterling was seated.

" Ship's status, captain? " I asked.

She swiveled the chair to face me.

" All stations report ready for jump, sir. The drive is fully charged, sail furled. The jump calculations are complete and programmed into the controller. Ready to jump on your command, sir ".

Captain Sterling was a model of efficiency due to her six years of experience as a jumpship commander. We were fortunate to have her.

" Very good. You may proceed ".

She thumbed the intercom switch on the armrest. " All hands, prepare for jump in thirty seconds, mark ".

I took a seat at the engineering station and fastened the seat belt. The countdown timer ticked down to ten seconds. Captain Sterling began the countdown.

" Jump in ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, jump! "

There followed the few seconds of disorientation typical of a hyperspace jump. All the bridge crew recovered swiftly. Captain Sterling pressed the intercom switch again.

" All stations report status to the bridge. Navigator, our position? "

Lieutenant Mitchell looked up from his instruments.

" Torrance system, within two kilometers of zenith jump point, captain. Bull's eye "

" Excellent work. Contact system control for our parking station ".

“ Aye, captain “. Mitchell nodded to the communications officer. Moments later,

“Parking coordinates received and relayed to the helm, ma’am “.

“ Excellent. Helmsman, put us on station “.

“ Yes ma’am. Maneuvering thrusters “.

I could feel the gentle nudge of the thrusters moving us to our assigned recharge station. It took several minutes.

“ Now on station, captain. Recharge operations may commence “.

“ Very good. Engineering, deploy the sail and begin recharge operations “.

The first jump was safely behind us.

Ship’s log, FCS Stargazer, 7 September 3057

We have arrived safely in the Midale system, last stop before entering Taurian Concordat space. The ship is running normally, with no issues. We have completed recharge operations, and are preparing for the final jump. I received disturbing news via Comstar HPG relay this morning, from my father on New Avalon. While I am not certain what all it entails, it seems Prince Victor has committed a major “ faux pas ” involving Joshua Marik, son of Captain General Thomas Marik, ruler of the Free Worlds League. Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion is recalling all Lyran military units to the now Lyran Alliance. I have sent word ahead to Taurus IV of our impending arrival.

I was once again seated at the engineering station on the bridge, from which I assisted with the jump calculations. I needed the practice.

“ All stations reporting ready for jump, captain ” announced Commander Martin, the first officer. Captain Sterling pressed the intercom switch.

“ All hands, prepare for jump in thirty seconds, mark “.

Once again, the seconds of disorientation.

“ All stations report status to the bridge. Navigator, report “.

Lieutenant Mitchell looked up from the instruments.

“ Taurus system, within three kilometers of zenith point. We are being hailed by Taurus system control “.

“ Patch it through to my station, commander ” said captain Sterling.

“ You’re on, ma’am ”.

“ Taurus control, this is Captain Sterling of the FCS Stargazer. What can I do for you? ”.

“ Captain, the delegation from the Taurian Defense Force is ready for transfer to your vessel. And I have your recharge station coordinates ”.

“ Very good. I will dispatch a shuttle to pick them up once we are on station ”.

“ Excellent, captain. And welcome to Taurus ”.

“ Thank you, Taurus control. Stargazer out ”.

Several minutes later, we arrived at our designated parking coordinates.

“ Commander, who’s on rotation for shuttlecraft duty? ”.

First officer Martin consulted the duty roster.

“ That would be Lieutenant Martinez, ma’am ”.

“ Very well. Have her report to the aero bay, and prep the S-7A for launch ”.

Commander Martin keyed his intercom switch.

“ Lieutenant Martinez, report to the aero deck for S-7A duty. Aero deck, prepare the shuttle for launch ”.

The voices of lieutenant Martinez and the aero deck chief responded.

“ Captain, I’m heading for the aero deck. I’d like to meet the delegation in person. You may commence recharge operations ”.

“ Very well, sir ” replied the captain.

The aero bay was several decks aft of the bridge. Getting there took me through the hydroponics bay, and I relished the scent of green things growing. By the time I reached the aero bay, lieutenant Krystala Martinez had the shuttle powered up and was completing the pre-flight checklist. I took the co-pilot’s seat.

“ Ready when you are, lieutenant ” I said.

“ Yes sir. Pre-flight checklist complete. Aero bay depressurizing ”.

Moments later, the S-7A cleared the bay doors and turned toward the Olympus station. I was always impressed when I saw one of these. Enormous hubs for system control and cargo transshipment, they were all too rare these days.

It didn't take long to reach the Olympus. It was showing signs of wear, but was fully operational. We were guided to a shuttle bay, and docked. The bay doors closed, and the bay repressurized. The warning light over the airlock changed from red to green. Lieutenant Martinez popped the hatch.

As we floated out of the shuttle, the airlock hatch opened. Four people emerged—two men and two women. Of the four, two were in TDF uniform, two in business suits. I was in my old AFFC dress uniform, lieutenant Martinez in flight uniform. Magnetic boots made it possible to walk on the deck. There were five other shuttle bays on this deck, three of them occupied. We met the delegation midway to the shuttle.

" I am Johannes Mohr, CEO of Orion Aerospace. This is lieutenant Krystala Martinez, shuttlecraft pilot. "

I extended my right hand in greeting. The senior uniformed officer, an admiral if I understood Taurian insignia, smiled and returned the handshake.

" Welcome to Taurus, major. I am admiral Bertram Miller, of the Taurian Defense Force Navy. My aide, captain Alexandria Connor. Ministers Michael Adams, Cheri Davenport "

" My pleasure, sir. If you're ready, we can take you to the ship now "

" We are eager to see your jumpship and the other vessels as well. That's a serious looking jumpship you have there. Whenever you're ready, sir. "

All six of us returned to the shuttle. We were shortly cleared for departure as the bay doors opened. Moments later, we were headed for the Stargazer, which was in the process of deploying the jump sail.

" The FCS Stargazer. A Mercury class jumpship, military version. She launched in October 3056, and completed space trials in March of this year. A direct replacement for the Merchant class jumpship ". I was, of course, filled with pride.

" A handsome ship, major. If I understood your literature correctly, this version sells for four hundred and ten million C-Bills? "

The admiral seemed genuinely impressed.

" Correct, sir. The civilian version is ten million less "

" I see. By its specifications, a bargain. How did you do it?"

" Standardized, modular construction techniques and a slightly less costly version of the K-F drive. Which works quite well. She's got fifteen jumps under her belt, with no issues "

His aide raised an eyebrow.

" I don't suppose you'd care to tell us about this lower cost jump drive?" the captain asked.

" As you know, a standard jump drive occupies ninety five per cent of the ship's mass. Yet it's possible to build a compact core drive that only takes up forty five point two five per cent of the ship's mass. But it's prohibitively expensive. "

The admiral nodded in agreement.

" I put forth the idea of building a K-F drive that weighs eighty five per cent of the ship's mass. All the mathematical models and computer simulations said it would work. So we purchased a second hand Merchant jumpship and modified it's drive. It worked. This ship is the result. The most expensive component of a K-F drive is the germanium drive coil. With ten per cent less germanium, it costs ten per cent less "

The captain nodded with understanding. I continued.

" The drive design is, of course, patented. This ship also uses a carbon composite structure that saves thirty five per cent of the standard structural mass. The ship has a structural integrity of two, twice that of standard ships. Think of it as a warship without maneuvering drives. And here it is "

We were approaching the aero bay of the Stargazer by now. The two civilians were craning their necks to see the grav deck, spinning on it's hub. The woman asked the next question.

" That is an enormous grav deck, major. Why so large? "

" The Mercury is designed for prolonged voyages, so the comfort of the crew is very important. All the crew quarters are on the grav deck, as well as twenty first class passenger quarters. The ship carries enough fuel to travel an average of six hundred light years without refueling. We didn't quite use half our fuel getting here. Might as well be comfortable, eh? "

The admiral chuckled at that.

" That would go a long way toward improving crew morale. You seem to have thought of everything, major "

I grinned.

" I tried, sir. And here we are "

With that, lieutenant Martinez maneuvered the shuttle into the aero bay. The captain noticed them first.

" Aerospace fighters too? "

“ Yes. This ship carries a full squadron of six fighters. Those are AF-16 Falcon medium fighters. But enough of me bragging about the design. Shall we disembark and head for the bridge?”

“ I think that is a good idea, major. I’m sure it will be most interesting ” said the admiral.

Ship’s log, FCS Stargazer, 18 November 3057

The past two and a half months have seemingly flown by. We depart the Taurus system with orders for four Mercury jumpships, two each C and M variants. Orders for six squadrons of AF-16 Falcon fighters. Eight Thor and three Valkyrie dropships. This journey has proven to be far more profitable than I imagined.

The TDF delegation was treated to what the admiral termed a luxury vacation. They departed quite satisfied. They left us with a gift of fine Taurian brandy, two cases. As well as spices and other food items unique to the Taurian Concordat. I even got the chance to meet Protector Jeffrey Calderon-a very pleasant young man. The crew enjoyed shore leave on Taurus IV. We depart fully refueled and provisioned.

The news from home has only worsened. Captain General Thomas Marik has launched an invasion into the Sarna March, along with the Capellan Confederation. The separation of the Lyran Alliance from the Federated Commonwealth has been completed, with the expulsion of FedCom ambassadors and staff. I can only hope it is still safe to return to New Avalon by the time we get there. I will stay in contact with my father as we draw near home.

Overall, things are well aboard ship. Morale is high, despite the disturbing news from home. The ships and fighters performed well, and shipboard operations were smooth and uneventful. But not too soon for me to see the stars of home.