

The planet 'Aides was left irrevocably scarred by those three years of warfare, considered exceptionally brutal even by the rough standards of that more bellicose age.

The Interplanetary Development Alliance, though its resources were far from exhausted, had found itself eager to shift its focus from its rebellious former member planet to the Orouran Empire and the beginnings of its universal expansion.

Thus, with the armistice of 4 Messidor 525, armed conflict upon 'Aides officially, mercifully came to an end, though intermittent skirmishes with Alliance loyalists and separatist movements would continue in the years to come.

In this context, a mere ten days following the armistice, Oliver Gracchon, commander of the 'Aides Revolutionary Coalition, made his celebrated proclamation.

COMPARERES!
THE OLD WORLD OF
'AIDES IS DEAD...BUT
I OFFER NO EULOGY.

FOR TODAY
IS A JOYOUS
OCCASION, THE
BIRTH OF OUR
SHARED DREAM,
OUR SHARED
DESTINY.

TOGETHER,
WE FOUGHT TO
FREE OURSELVES FROM
FOREIGN DOMINATION,
FROM OPPRESSIVE
SYSTEMS, FROM
EXPLOITATION.

WE FOUGHT TO
WIN A WORLD IN WHICH
WE ARE ALL FREE TO LIVE
OUR LIVES TO THE FULLEST,
A WORLD MADE POSSIBLE
BY ONE THING AND ONE
THING ALONE...

...OUR MOST
SACRED DUTY: OUR
RESPONSIBILITY TO
ONE ANOTHER.

The Revolutionary Coalition, intoxicated by its improbable victory, had dedicated itself to creating something theretofore unseen, pre- or post-Dispersion.

On 14 Messidor 525, Commander Gracchon relinquished control of the planet to a truly democratic, egalitarian civilian council selected by sortition.

MAKE NO
MISTAKE...OUR PATH
IS A DIFFICULT ONE,
OUR STRUGGLE FAR
FROM OVER.

BUT WE
ARE ALL, EACH OF
US, BLESSED TO
STAND HERE, AT THE
FOUNDING OF THE
FIRST COMPLETELY
FREE PLANET IN
ALL OF HUMAN
HISTORY:

LUTHERIA!

I AM AN OLD SOLDIER, SO BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY THIS WAR IS NEVER EASY, NEVER WELCOME, NEVER GLORIOUS.

IT IS ALWAYS ADHORENT TO A FREE AND JUST SOCIETY, TO BE AVOIDED AT ALL COSTS.

AND YET, IT HAS BEEN MY PRIVILEGE AND MY GREATEST HONOR TO SERVE YOU IN OUR WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

FOR TOO LONG HAVE WE LIVED IN THRALL TO THE INTERMEDIATE DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE, SUBJECT TO THE RAPACIOUS DESIRES OF THE CORPORATIONS THAT CONTROL IT, CONTENT NOT HERE TO RULE...

...BUT INTENT UPON SURRENDERING THOSE WHO NEED IT LEAST, SEIZING EVERYTHING OF VALUE FROM OUR LABOR, TO THE FRUITS OF THAT LABOR, TO THE VERY LIVES... OF LUTHERIA...

...THE ORDAINANCE COURSE BENEATH YOUR FEET, THAT WHICH HAS MADE US A TARGET FOR ALLIANCE AND SHREVE ALIKE BUT WILL ULTIMATELY ASSURE OUR INDEPENDENCE.

AN INDEPENDENCE THAT HAS BEEN FORGED THROUGH ONLY LUTHERIAN AND OFFWORLDER, MILITARY AND CIVILIAN, SURRENDER AND ALLIANCE BORN, EVEN HUMAN AND ROBOTIC.

OUR STRIFE, OUR STRUGGLES, OUR PASSION, THE FLAMES THAT HAVE TEMPERED THE STEEL OF OUR RESOLVE.

NEVER FORGET THEM, NOR THE DISCIPLINE REQUIRED TO MOVE PAST THEM.

BUT FOR THAT FLAME TO CONTINUE BURNING, INSPIRING THOSE WHO REMAIN UNDER THE BOOT HEEL OF OPPRESSION, IT MUST BE EVER FED WITH FURTHER ACTS OF BRAVERY, IMAGINATION AND COMPASSION.

OURS IS AN INDEPENDENCE THAT HAS BEEN EARNED THROUGH HEROISM AND AUDACITY, THE REVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL IN EACH OF US... YOUR UNPRECEDENTED EXAMPLE IS A BEACON OF HOPE FOR THE UNIVERSE ENTIRE.

WE HAVE BEEN CONFRONTED WITH THAT MOST UNBEARABLE IRONY: THAT SURELY, FREEDOM, EVEN PEACE CAN BE PURCHASED WITH BLOOD AND BLOOD ALONE.

MOST OF ALL, OUR INDEPENDENCE HAS BEEN BOUGHT BY SACRIFICE, BY ABANDONING LOSS, BY THE UNDESIRABLE SUFFERING THAT IS INTRINSIC TO EVEN THE MOST JUST WARS.

BUT EVEN AMID SUCH UNBEARABLE SACRIFICE, FREEDOM, A PLANET, CASTING OFF THE YOKES OF TYRANNY, IS FAR LESS COMPLICATED, FAR LESS DIFFICULT, THAN MAINTAINING THAT FREEDOM.

PROTECTING WHAT WE HAVE WON IS A CONSECATED MISSION THAT CAN ONLY BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH FEROCIOUS LOYALTY TO LUTHERIA, TO OUR SHARED DREAM, AND TO ONE ANOTHER.

BUT TODAY, COMPANERES, I STEP DOWN FROM COMMAND WITH AN UNTRAMBOLED MIND, FOR I LEAVE YOU UNDER THE PROTECTION OF... THERE'S NO OTHER WORD FOR THEM...HEROES.

CAPABLE, VIGILANT, AND SELFLESS, THEY HAVE ANSWERED THE CALL TO GIVE UP THEIR OWN FREEDOM SO THEY MIGHT BETTER SAFEGUARD YOURS.

ON THIS DAY, THE BIRTH OF THE FIRST TRULY FREE PLANET, I PRESENT TO YOU YOUR ORBITAL LIBERATION AND DEFENSE BATTALION OR, AS I PREFER TO CALL THEM...



THE FREEDOM GUARD!

The Orbital Liberation and Defense Battalion's inaugural roster reflected the eclectic nature of the Revolutionary Coalition itself.

Initially, the Freedom Guard, as it was popularly known, was composed exclusively of individuals who had made invaluable contributions to the war effort.

The battalion was led by Gloria Sunandez, an Alliance officer who had staged a mutiny upon the IDAS Dominion, the flagship of the notorious Commandant MacLiu.

Acting as Sunandez's right hand was the robot Talun, an experimental battlefield analyst whose evolving intelligence prompted their defection from the Alliance.

Ironically, Sunandez's battalion also included Victor MacLiu, the son of her erstwhile commander. Though regarded as a brilliant tactician, his contributions have been debated.

MacLiu was joined by his blood brother, Kean Surroko, whose United Surroko gave the former's fledgling guerrilla squadron much-needed numbers and experience.

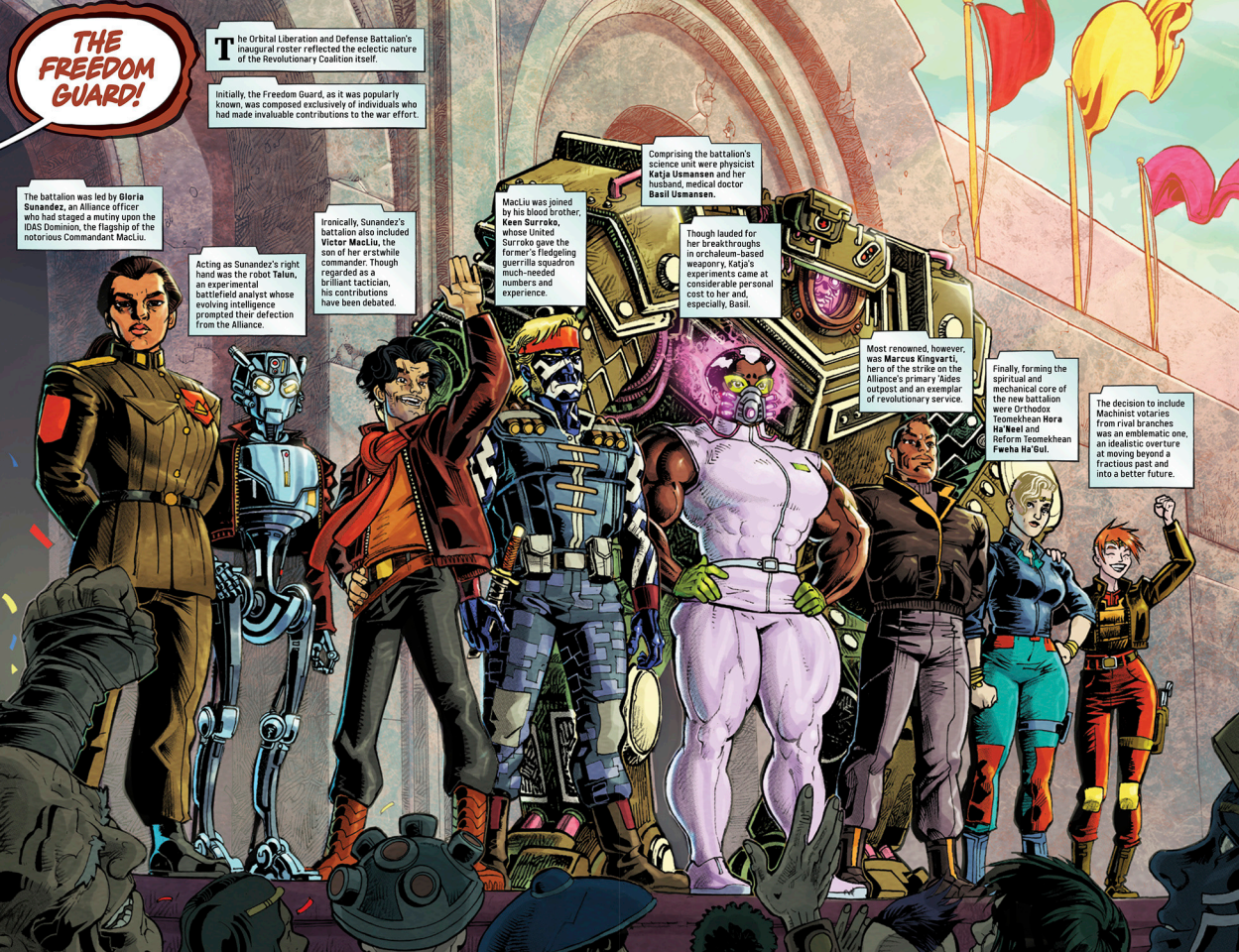
Comprising the battalion's science unit were physicist Katja Usmanen and her husband, medical doctor Basil Usmanen.

Though lauded for her breakthroughs in orchalearn-based weaponry, Katja's experiments came at considerable personal cost to her and, especially, Basil.

Most renowned, however, was Marcus Kingvarti, hero of the strike on the Alliance's primary 'Aides outpost and an exemplar of revolutionary service.

Finally, forming the spiritual and mechanical core of the new battalion were Orthodox Teomekhan Nora Ha Reel and Reform Teomekhan Fweha Ha Gul.

The decision to include Machinist votaries from rival branches was an emblematic one, an idealistic overture at moving beyond a fractious past and into a better future.







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