



# MECHS & MERCS

BLACK TALONS



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## THE STORY SO FAR:

Not long ago, the galaxy was dominated by two warring factions: the United Space Federation (USF) and the Alliance of Free Worlds.

Engaged in a bloody conflict, the USF and the Alliance threw everything they had against each other. This happened for years, and cost the lives of millions.

Until the day that an alien species arrived in the galaxy - the Gark - and started attacking both the USF and the Alliance forces without warning. The powerful Gark fleet seemed unstoppable, crushing all resistance and destroying entire planets. Both sides were caught unaware, and were unable to halt the advance of the aliens.

Former enemies became allies, and so the USF and the Alliance started working together to fight their common enemy.

The Gark were eventually defeated, but with a high cost. With most of their fleets destroyed, the USF and the Alliance weren't able to maintain their grasp over their territories. Planetary governors declared independence, and warlords rose to power.

The Great War had ended, but now there was chaos in the galaxy. Every ambitious warlord was now planning to extend his territory.

The Tzanar Union, a conglomerate of rich states from the industrialized planet Sartana has just started its expansion too.

First by claiming small backwater planets, and then by occupying richer planets of weaker political and military power.

Their next target is the planet Genai, home of the Noctae Republic.

Like the Tzanari's previous targets, the Noctae Republic isn't able to offer great resistance against an invading army. Their numbers small, the Noctari had always relied in the protection of the USF.

Aware of an impending attack, the Noctari decided to ask the help of all nearby mercenary units.

One of these units is the Black Talons, your unit.

Stationed aboard the "Paladin", a refitted battlecruiser from the Great War, the Black Talons roam the galaxy looking for conflicts and possible contracts. This was a big contract, impossible to refuse.

But when the Black Talons arrived in Genai, it was too late. The planet was already occupied by the Tzanari, and a system blockade was already underway. Supporters of the Noctari were being hunted, which made the Black Talons a target too.

The only way to get out alive is to defeat the Tzanari, and the only way to accomplish that, is to help the Noctari retake their planet.

## THE OBERON SYSTEM:

Oberon is a class 5 star system located in the galaxy's inner systems. It contains 5 populated planets, each with its own government – or governments.

### Planet Abrios:

Abrios was one of the first terraformed planets on the Oberon system.

It was once rich in Zitanium deposits and Nergoth crystals, but extreme (and nowadays forbidden) mining processes quickly depleted the planet of its natural resources.

When the mining companies abandoned Abrios, it was left as an almost uninhabitable rock. The planet is nowadays a wasteland with little strategic interest, only used by pirates, gangs or anyone else trying to hide from the authorities.

The Northstar Legion has several bases on the planet, serving as their homebase.

### Planet Genai:

Genai is an agricultural world with an Earth-like atmosphere and environment.

Its vast mineral resource fields allowed the population to live a comfortable life with the income from off-world exportations.

The planet was ruled by the Noctae Republic, a democratic regime established 70 years ago when the first settlers arrived in the planet.

Nowadays the Tzanar Union's invading army is occupying the capital and the larger cities, space ports and mining facilities.

Genai is currently ruled by an appointed governor from the Union.

### Planet Thora:

Thora is the homebase of the powerful Revati Global Corporation, a multiplanetary weapons and cybernatics manufacturer.

The planet was once ruled by a democratically elected governor, but high levels of corruption and governmental inefficiency eventually led to the people's disbelief in the system, thus opening the path for the powerful and rich Revati to rule the planet.

The RGC now manage the planet as one of their many businesses, stripping the population of most basic rights, and using their armored branch - the Tech Guard - to keep the population in check.

This oppressive regime has led to the quick growth of the Eternal Life Cult's presence in the planet, which is gaining new followers day after day, supported by off-world cultists and rebels who intend to take down the RGC.

## Planet Thulkan:

Thulkan is the home planet of House Leonis, the last noble House of Oberon. The planet was awarded to Lord Kunivar as a reward for his naval victories in the Q'uxan campaign, where Kunivar also earned his Lordship status. Thulkan became a thriving world under the rule of Lord Kunivar, who was a brilliant strategist, and a strong and respected leader.

Unfortunately for House Leonis, his descendants had little interest in politics and leadership, and were more interested in building their own fortunes. The House eventually fell into decay, with plots, intrigues and internal battles as everyone fought to gain more personal power. The newly appointed leader of the House - Lord Castan - has stated that he's going to bring Leonis to its ancient status of glory and power.

## Planet Uver:

Uver once belonged to a powerful noble house of Oberon system - House Nuxos. The financial and military decay of House Nuxos eventually led to a rebellion that ended with the nobles murdered in the capital city.

Since that day, there has never been peace on Uver. The war of the seven began, opposing seven powerful warlords fighting for the supremacy of the planet. The conflict only came to an end when Colonel Santos arrived with his regiment, defeating the weakened armies of the warlords. The warlords have called a truce between them, and are now united against Santos and his occupying force.

## FACTIONS:



### Black Talons:

The Black Talons are an independent mercenary company stationed aboard the battlecruiser "Paladin". Veterans of countless wars, the Black Talons roam the galaxy aboard their ship, which allows the company to be extremely mobile and able to rapidly deploy anywhere in the sector. The Black Talons have been hired to assist the Noctae Republic in repelling an invading army of the Tzanar Union.





## Tzanar Union:

The Tzanar Union is a conglomerate of rich states from the industrialized planet Sartana. Before the Gark War, the Tzanar were strong suppliers of military equipment for the United Space Federation. After the war and the decline of the United Space Federation, the Tzanar started selling their hardware to the highest bidder, earning trillions of credits in the process. The Union's excessive refining and manufacturing have left their home planet almost dry of resources. The decision to invade a nearby resource rich planet was voted unanimously by all its members. Planet Genai was the weakest, and was chosen by the Union's high generals to be annexed. The Union's military branch is strong, large and heavily armed.



## Noctae Republic:

The Noctae Republic was a democratic regime on the planet Genai.

Having good relations with all the nearby planets, Noctae never invested too much on its military, keeping a highly trained small military force – the Noctae Guard - strong enough to garrison the planet.

As a member of the United Space Federation, this was more than enough to ensure the planet's security. But after the Gark War, the USF lost most of its power and influence, and the stronger and more militarized worlds started preying on the weakest.

When the Tzanar Union arrived in the system, it immediately launched an assault on Line, overwhelming the Noctae Guard and the planet's paramilitary forces by sheer numbers.

The remaining units of the Noctae Guard are fighting an organized resistance against the Tzanar invaders.



## Santos' Raiders:

Santos' Raiders are an ex-USF unit led by Colonel Santos. Colonel Carth Santos was the leader of the famous 245th Marine Corps stationed on the Epsilon sector. Respected and considered a tactical genius, Santos won countless victories for the United Space Federation. His extreme and ruthless tactics earned him the nickname "The Beast", well known among both allies and foes. Ultimately Santos decided to abandon the USF, and led his rogue unit to Uver. The planetary defenses were no match for the Colonel, who appointed himself the new planetary governor. This situation caused some discomfort among the USF, but probably

due to the Federation's weakened state and lack of manpower, no troops were ever sent to bring Santos to justice.



## Uver Liberation Army:

After the armies of the Uverian warlords fell to Colonel Santos, their remaining army units scattered outside the wastelands of the capital city. In the following months, the surviving soldiers eventually reorganized under the leadership of General Jonas Zanix, who united the resistance under his banner, in guerrilla attacks against Santos' occupying army.

The resistance fighters of the Uver Liberation Army are experts at infiltration and sabotage.



## Eternal Life Cult:

The Eternal Life Cult is a religious sect that believes aliens to be humanity's true gods. When the first alien contact with the Gark was made public, the cult gained a considerable number of followers, who were convinced that the aliens had arrived to punish humanity for its sins. The cult is nowadays one of the most powerful organizations in the galaxy, with followers in almost every colonized world. The rapid and aggressive expansion of the cult is very worrying to many who see them as nothing more than religious fanatics. Reports say that the cult doesn't tolerate any other religions or beliefs, and often resorts to violence to "convince" non-believers to join them.



## Revati Global Corporation (RGC):

The RGC is a corporate government established on Abrios. Masters of research, technology and cybernetics, the RGC has its own established army, planetary fleet and defense force. Accused by some of employing brutal tactics and enforcing the implant of cybernetics on their population, the RGC is nonetheless one of the most powerful governments in the regions. The RGC soldiers – the Tech Guard – employ high-tech military implants, drones and sophisticated equipment.



## Northstar Legion:

The Northstar Legion is a conglomerate of pirates, cut-throats and mercenaries currently operating in Oberon. Their leader is Jason Zentar, a famous mercenary and ex-military who was able to unite all the gangs under his command. The Legion gained notoriety after it was united under Zentar's command, becoming one of the largest paramilitary forces in the system. The Northstar members are mostly military veterans and deserters looking for higher profits.



## House Leonis:

Leonis is the last noble house in Oberon. Decades of spending and decadence have turned Leonis from a once major player to a regional power. The House's new leader – Lord Castan – is a ruthless man willing to do anything to regain the power and influence of ancient times. Although Leonis lost the financial and military might of past days, it still has a loyal army and a now thriving planetary economy.



## United Space Federation (USF):

The USF was the most powerful faction in the galaxy, a federation of advanced and militarized worlds working for a common goal. After the Gark War, a considerable amount of planets left the federation, decreasing both its influence and its military power.

Nowadays the USF has just a few planets under its control, but still tries to maintain peace throughout the nearby sectors. The ground forces of the USF – the Federation Marines – are among the finest warriors of the galaxy. Strong, disciplined and heavily armed.

## THE CAMPAIGN:

The Black Talons have been hired to help the Noctae Republic repel the invading army. That is the main objective of the game. But to accomplish it, the company will need to have powerful units and strong allies.

Units and equipment can be bought with credits earned from contract missions. Specialized allied units can be recruited from friendly factions.

Factions will be friendly towards the Black Talons by doing contract missions for that faction. But they will be hostile if the Black Talons complete contract missions against them. Missions can take place in different planets and regions, each with its own environment.



# THE BATTLECRUISER:

The Battlecruiser is the mobile base of the Black Talons. This is where the player manages the campaign and his company.

The ship is divided in different sections, each with its purpose.

## Command Center:

The command center is located on the ship's bridge. This is where the system map and available contracts can be checked. Incoming messages can also be accessed here.

## Barracks:

The infantry squads of the Black Talons can be found on the barracks.

On the left side of the screen is the detailed info of the selected squad. Units can be scrolled with the arrows. On the right side of the screen is the available equipment for the squad. Different squads can carry different sets of weapons.

The squad's skill tree can be expanded with the arrow below the squad leader portrait.

## Engineering room:

This is where the ship's technicians maintain the battlecruiser in combat readiness. Upgrades and new equipment can be installed by clicking on the panel on the bottom.

## Mech Bay:

The company's MCUs (mechanized combat units) also known simply as "Mechs" are stored in this area. Mechs can be inspected and equipped with different weapons and equipment, and also assigned with operators.

Note that a mech needs to be assigned an operator before starting a mission, or else it won't be able to be called down into battle.

## Black Market:

Off duty crew members go to the bar to relax. But they're not the only ones. Local merchants, weapons dealers and mercenary providers have their representatives in here. When new troops or mechs are needed, this is the place to go to.

One of the dealers provides troops, while the other provides mechs.

## Hangar:

This is where the Paladin's dropships are stored and maintained. When a contract has been accepted, infantry squads and mechs (if the mission parameters allow it) can be loaded into the dropship.

Different units have different weights, and the dropship has a limited amount of weight available, so the units must be chosen carefully. Units that don't go on the initial drop may still be called during battle, after the dropship has returned to the paladin.

## THE BATTLE:

When on the ground, the mission objectives must be completed. These can range from the destruction of a certain structure, defense of a location, assassination or others.

Regardless of the objective, there are certain key structures and areas that are vital to success.



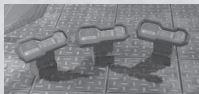
### Landing zones:

Secure area where dropships can land and deploy troops. This is the only area where reinforcements can be called, where squads can replenish their numbers and mechs repair their hulls.



### Resource pumps:

Resource pumps generate command points, which can be used to call reinforcements. Landing zones are useless if there are no command points available.



### Computer terminals:

Computer terminals provide direct control over a specific system, like a turret, a power bridge or a door. Terminals can be hacked by engineer squads.

### Cover ground:

Areas where infantry units can take cover and get a substantial defensive bonus. These are usually crates, barrels, rocks, sandbags and defensive fortifications.

### Defensive ground:

Areas where infantry units can take cover and get a small defensive bonus. Usually located in dense vegetation.

## High ground:

Higher areas where infantry units get an attack bonus.

## Exposed ground:

Areas where infantry units receive a cover penalty. These are usually located in bridges and over-exposed areas. There are also several defensive structures which can be deployed by engineers:



### Bunkers:

Defensive fortification that can be garrisoned with an infantry squad. Provides high defensive bonus to the garrisoned squad.



### Turrets:

Automated sentry weapons. There are several types of turrets in the game: ballistic (effective vs infantry), plasma (effective vs mechs) and mortar (weaker but effective against all types of enemies).

## Minefields:

Concealed explosives that detonate when enemy units are nearby. Can only be detected by recon squads.

## THE UNITS:

Units are persistent and advance from mission to mission, earning valuable experience that allows them to level up and learn special abilities and power ups. While infantry squads earn new abilities and bonuses (each infantry role has its own development options), mech operators earn experience that allows them to pilot heavier mechs.

## INFANTRY SQUADS:

The company's infantry units are divided in three categories: light, medium and heavy armored.

**Light armored squads** are faster and stealthier; medium armored squads have a balance between speed, armor and available weapons and heavy armored squads are massive and slower, but are able to carry heavy weapons into the battlefield.



**Recon Squads** are tasked with scouting and infiltration missions.

The squad is equipped with light armor and weapons for increased mobility, and special equipment for cloaking and detection.

**Tactical Squads** are generally used in every mission, as their versatility allows them to adapt to any role.

The squad can be equipped with all types of armor and weapons.

**Assault Squads** are specialized in direct assault and close combat training.

The squad is equipped with light or medium armor and carries close combat weapons, like shotguns or submachine guns.

**Support Squads** are tasked with deploying long range fire on the battlefield.

The squad is equipped with medium or heavy armor and carries long range heavy weapons, like chainguns, rocket launchers and laser cannons.

**Engineer Squads** carry electronic systems into battle.

The squad is able to deploy defensive turrets, bunkers, minefields and also hack computer systems like turrets, doors and power bridges. Engineers carry light armor and weapons, and should not be used in direct combat.

**Infantry units** from other factions have specialized roles, and are able to provide useful abilities and unique weaponry to the roster.

Squads earn valuable experience when deployed. Experience allows the squad to level up and unlock new abilities and improve its stats. Levelling up is done on the barracks.

## MECHANIZED COMBAT UNITS:

MCUs or Mechs are heavy weapons platforms (usually bipedal) controlled by an operator, are capable of bringing tremendous firepower to the battlefield.

### Mech Classes:

There are 3 mech classes: Light, Assault and Support.

Light mechs are smaller and faster, carry lighter weapons and armor.

Usually seen in infantry support roles.

Assault mechs are slower, but have stronger armor and are able to carry heavier weapons. Usually seen in armored assaults, against both infantry and mech units.

Support mechs are the slowest and heaviest of all. Strong armor and an array of heavy weaponry available to carry into battle. Usually seen leading armored companies.

## Mech Stats:

**Weapon slots:** The number of slots available to attach weapons. Most mechs have 2 slots, and can attach 2 weapons.

**Hit Points:** The last line of defense – the hull integrity of the mech. When this value reaches 0, the mech is destroyed.

**Armor:** The armor rating of the Mech, from 0 to 300 (maximum). The higher the value, the higher the possibility of deflecting a shot.

**Shields:** The first line of defense of the mech. Absorbs enemy fire before it damages the hull. Slowly builds up over time.

**Available Weight:** The total weight that can be used to equip weapons and equipment. Stronger weapons and systems are also more bulkier and heavier.

## GAME USER INTERFACE:

The GUI is divided in 4 sections. On the top left of the screen are the mission objectives. The mission objectives are updated as the mission goes on.



On the lower left of the screen is the minimap. Friendly and hostile units and structures can be seen on the minimap.



Above the minimap is the unit quick selection. Clicking on a unit portrait selects that unit.



On the top right of the screen is the resource information: the available command points, the dropship readiness timer (when the timer is 0, the dropship is ready to deploy) and the number of available landing zones.



On the bottom right of the screen is the unit information: the squad leader's portrait, the number of soldiers and weapons and the squad's stats. Below the squad info are the action icons.



**Move / Rapid move:** Squad will move but stop to attack enemy units it encounters / Squad will move and ignore enemy units.

**Crouch / Stand:** Squad will crouch and move slower, with a small bonus to armor and accuracy / Squad will move quickly but with no bonuses.

**Long range attack / Short range attack:** Squad will attack in long range / Squad will move closer to attack in short range.

**Fire at will / Hold fire:** Squad will attack any enemy unit it encounters / Squad will ignore enemy units until fired upon.

**Stop:** Squad will halt its movement.

**Constructions:** Opens the constructions tab (engineers only)

On the right side of the squad leader's portrait are the squad's special actions icons. Grenades, explosives and others.



## STRATEGY TIPS & INFO:

- Avoid using direct assaults against entrenched infantry. Using smoke grenades or the protection of vegetation can help your troops gain the upper hand.
- Flanking enemy units is always a good strategy. If they're caught in crossfire, they'll suffer a defensive penalty.
- Engineers are not combat units. You should avoid putting them in a firefight.
- Veteran units get stronger with new abilities and upgraded stats. Try to get your men back from battle, their experience is invaluable.
- Mechs are tough, but not invincible. Heavy weapons can take them down easily.
- Squads can replenish their numbers and mechs can repair their hulls in landing zones, provided you have enough command points.
- Squads can be equipped with different sets of weapons, which can be more or less appropriate for the next mission.
- Allied factions bring unique and powerful units to your roster. But you can't have all of them. Having a new ally also means having a new enemy.
- Heavier Mechs need skilled operators. Novice operators can only pilot light Mechs.
- Laser weapons are strong against shields, but weak against basic armor.

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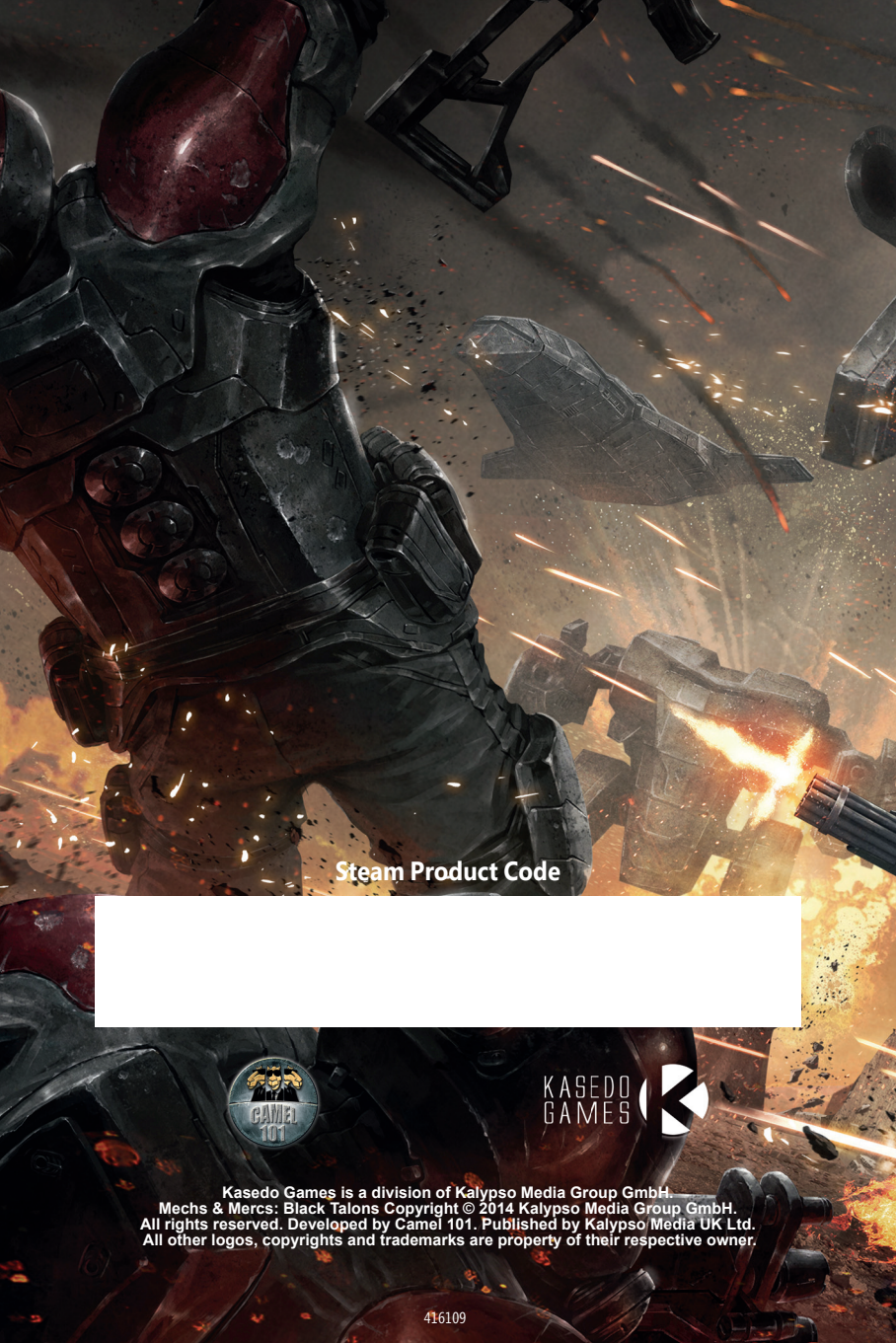
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Steam Product Code



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