

Teaser Overview

It is 2199, 36 years since the St. Petersburg Atrocity. The nuclear world war that would later be known as the Unification Wars, which has oscillated between cold and hot for decades, has finally entered its final, permanent hot phase, though its participants do not yet know this.

On the North American mainland, the Second US Civil War has never been less than lukewarm, with the two claimants to the mantle of legitimacy never quite feeling satisfied unless their troops were shooting each other somewhere, anywhere.

Up until this point in the conflict, despite two large-scale nuclear exchanges and a bevy of major offensives, neither side has yet managed to achieve a decisive advantage. Massive exchanges of territory back and forth over the Great Plains, Mexico, and the heavily contested, ruined Northeast; have resulted in nothing but further war-dead. After a period of confused territorial exchanges early in the war, both sides had settled into effective defensible core strategic positions, one anchored on the Pacific behind the Rocky Mountains, and the other on the Atlantic behind the Appalachians.

In 2199, the war again burns red-hot. The Western administration of President Atallah Amsing—the latest in a series of Presidents chosen by the provisional Congress-in-hiding—flush with a string of victories, has hurled the West's best, fully-robotized divisions into a bloody assault on the environs of the city of Pittsburg, aiming to seize the old Interstate 76 and flank the East's divisions in the Northeast. It is an old dream: finally secure the vital ports of the North Atlantic Seaboard, once some of the nation's greatest and oldest cities, and secure solid logistical connections with UF allies in Western Europe.

Against this backdrop, the by-now firmly UF-aligned MSY has assigned a single Black Heart operations team to reconnoiter the city of Washington DC, and investigate reports of unusual activity in the city in the advance of a potential UF entry into the area. Satellite and naval reconnaissance indicates a surprising amount of construction activity in the former Government district, more than can be explaining by the FA's grandiose commitment to rebuilding the city's monuments. More disturbingly, statistical analysis of arriving newly-contracted refugees reveal a complete and unexplained lack of such refugees arriving from the entire Washington/Baltimore area. The team's primary mission will be to ascertain the cause of this anomaly, and resolve the situation if it proves to be a threat to the UF war effort or the MSY itself.

Background Material

A Brief History of the Second Civil War

The Second US Civil War dates back to the break-up of the Union in the January Coup of 2161, in the aftermath of the bitter and acrimonious Election of 2160. As in the rest of the world, the US had teetered on the brink of instability, with the country increasingly divided between what would later be the UF and FA-aligned political worldviews. Increasing political battles between the haves and the have-nots led to the fracturing of the old two-party system, something that had not happened since before the last Civil War—first the breakup of the Republican Party into a set of pieces that included the radical Freedom Party, and some years later, in 2159, the breakup of the Democratic Party after the formation of the upstart New Workers' Party led to the clear drawing of class-warfare style battle lines between the FP and the NWP.

A series of transparent vote-rigging initiatives by Freedom Party under the guise of state-level “Voter Education Acts” led most election forecasters to predict a close victory for the FP in Presidential Election of 2160, but the NWP shocked observers by managing to prevent the FP from winning an Electoral College Majority, throwing the election into the House of Representatives, where the NWP controlled a narrow majority, which went on to elect the NWP candidates Shelton Mayson as President and Tu Ling as Vice-President. Since the NWP also narrowly controlled the Senate (and the filibuster had been abolished nearly a century ago), this gave the NWP complete control of the Federal Government.

This result triggered both celebrations and riots throughout the nation, particularly in the Northeast where the election had been most closely contested, in some cases overwhelming the ability of local police authorities to respond.

On Inauguration Day, 2161, Freedom Party leaders, along with allies in the Secret Service, military and private mercenary armies affiliated with several major corporations, poured troops into the streets of Washington DC, seizing the government district of the city and arresting the most of the US Congress and the about-to-be inaugurated President and Vice-President, claiming that they were defending the Constitution versus widespread fraud and illegal activity by the NWP.

[Most of these NWP officials, and Shelton Mayson himself, were later executed for purported high treason]

While FP supporters both inside and outside the military were able to seize key cities and bases throughout their electoral strongholds in the old South, their ability to grasp the whole of the 50 states proved lacking, with nearly the entire West refusing to cooperate with the coup planners, while the Northeast fell into chaos, with firefights in the streets and military bases as popular uprisings began on both sides. The Western states declared their fealty to the “True Government”, recreating the United States’ institutions of power in a Provisional government based in San Francisco. While they lacked the access to land forces that the FP had, most army bases in the West supported the San Francisco government, including the key bases in the Nevada desert that controlled the nuclear missile silos and much of the existing air force. The West was able to gather additional strength when most of the US Carrier Groups at sea voiced their support, and set sail back towards the home states.

With these resources, including the all-important threat of nuclear launch and mutual destruction, the Western government was able to withstand the initial tremendous assault launched from the East despite having to rebuild their military leadership, winning key defensive battles at Denver and Second Glorieta Pass that crushed the East’s armored spearheads, setting the stage for decades of war and stalemate.

The entire period was one of chaos, with mutinies and insurrection from lower-ranking officers and troops routine on both sides, and US occupied bases on foreign soil suddenly isolated and tenuous. The dwindling US hegemony, already evaporating, would never recover.

Opening Briefing:

San Francisco, CA

Provisional Capital of the United States (UF Version)

Somewhere in the Transamerica Pyramid (home of the United Front Delegation)

Working Title: Sacred Myths***A To the Stars RP*****Setting: 2199, Primarily United States****Main Locations:**

- San Francisco (Provisional Capital of the United States, UF variant)
- Washington, DC (Disputed Territories, currently FA-held)
- ?

Protagonists:

- Black Heart Team _____
- Members:
 - ?
- Affiliated: UF Spec Ops

Antagonists

- FA drones
- FA Spec Ops
- FA Regular Infantry
- FA Elites
 - Pending
- FA affiliated Magical Girls
- The “Patriots”
- ?

The meeting room has all the look and style of a corporate meeting room from centuries ago, though the cleaning drones of the UF delegation kept it from having the corresponding wear and tear. The amenities—drink machine, holographic projector, etc.—are modern, however. The large central wooden table, with projector mounted in the middle, dominates the room.

It’s not the expected style for a mission briefing to what is now the equivalent of the MSY military, but there is always a need to keep things from appearing as expected.

Black Heart North American Operations Commander Nora Jarvis is hawkish-looking, brunette, and tall, with a touch of age wrinkles around her eyes—the kind of affectation a woman who also doubles as a UF

Counsellor to the United States needs to exude proper gravitas. She is the one who summoned you, for a special assignment.

“Good evening.” She says.

“I won’t mince words or waste your time. We all know why you’re here. Let’s begin the briefing immediately. You may save your questions and comments for afterward—I recommend you write them into your tablets so that we may save them for orderly discussion.”

[OOO: Do type notes/questions into OOC and Nora will go through it at the end. You may interject if you like, but unless it is something insightful that **has** to be said on the spot, you will lose reputation with Nora; you will gain it if you pull it off, though.]

She waves her hand, and the hologram projector on the table comes to life, beaming over the table what appears to be an overhead view of an American city, from the looks of it. It is probably one of those fancy projectors that manages to look the same to every seat at the table.

“Satellite, drone, and naval reconnaissance suggests a massive level of construction activity in the symbolically important city of Washington DC, currently controlled by FA forces. This level of construction is inconsistent with either the enemy’s stated policy of rebuilding the city’s monuments, or with the process of fortifying the city for an eventual siege. While Washington is of little relative importance strategically, the successful seizure of Pittsburg in the current campaign would immediately threaten its fall, and its position on the coast and so close to Norfolk makes it threatening due to proximity alone. Further, the FA will fight rabidly to defend a target of such immense symbolic value; the UF will, of course, fight just as hard to assure its seizure. As such, any unusual activity in the city is of overriding interest.”

Nora gestures, and the hologram switches to a larger, area map, with a large area in the middle highlighted.

“While it is of course the policy of the MSY to support UF operations whenever possible without threatening the masquerade, we have our own interests in the region outside of the purely military. Statistical analysis of magical girl refugees arriving in the Pittsburg lines reveals an unexplainable lack of refugees arriving from within the environs of the Washington/Baltimore area.”

“UF agents in the area, both in deep cover and newly planted, have universally gone missing. The Incubators, in their typical fashion, have refused comment, other than that it would be extremely prudent for us to send a team into the area.”

“You will be that team. You will be airlifted beyond the front lines for a HAHO jump, whereupon you will be tasked with infiltrating and operating behind enemy lines to survey the situation in the DC area and determine the cause of this unusual activity. Your primary objective will be to explain the unusual lack of refugees arriving from the city; your secondary objective will be to explain the unusual construction.”

“Following the retrieval of this information, you are authorized to take additional direct action if it is your belief that it will neutralize significant underlying threats, whatever they may be, to current military operations. Relay any vital information about these threats before blowing your cover or risking team loss. On occasion one of our very long-range telepaths may contact you in order to receive updates and provide intel, but I’m sure you know VLT time is precious and carefully rationed.”

“When you land after your jump, you will proceed to a designated rendezvous with a friendly resistance group in the area. They will provide you with a guide to help you on your way. The area you will be landing in should have only light FA military presence, though this will of course change once you reach the environs of DC. Most of the civilian population is neutral with regard to the UF or FA, but there will be some who are partisans of one side or the other.”

[OOO: Your various implants are loaded with the relevant mission details on this front, including the relevant rendezvous signals for your contact. The contact will be wearing an old Christmas sweater, and you should greet him with:

"Good evening sir, how are you? The weather outside is frightful today."

The proper response is: "Yes, but the fire is so delightful. Why not come in and rest a little?"

The implants will emphasize that exact wording is critical here.]

“While FA surveillance in occupied territories is not as strenuous as within the home territories, drone surveillance and checkpoints will be a constant issue, to be evaded whenever possible. You will be provided with holographic facial distortion technology to aid in eluding face recognition, but be aware that these devices will not hold up to careful scrutiny.”

[OOO: Generally speaking, FA personnel you encounter will try to register you into the surveillance database if you successfully convince them that you’re just an unregistered refugee of some sort. Try not to let them get your actual face or one you’ll be frequently using in the area.]

“Factors that may affect your operations include local Economics, Crime --both spontaneous and organized in nature--, and resistance forces. As always, the climate and geography will have significant impacts on your operations, so be sure to review the data provided to your implants.”

“Of special note is the local magical girl presence. While evading conventional FA forces and surveillance is not difficult for a team of your nature, aspects of this situation suggest possible involvement by outlaw magical girls, who may be of considerable power and local influence. Even if they are not involved, you may run into them. Be prepared to negotiate for your presence, and terminate where necessary. There is a good chance you will also encounter newly contracted magical girls. It is at your discretion what to do with these new contractees, but be very aware that your footprint in the area should be as small as possible to prevent discovery.”

[Questions, Discussion]

“Very well, dismissed. You have 24 hours until you are expected to report back in, so feel free to explore and use the amenities or prepare. For security reasons, we ask that you do not leave the city of San Francisco or participate in any demon-hunting activity.”

[OOO: Interfaces in the table and wall, as well as hyperclass/specOps implants your characters may have, will provide information about MSY facilities hidden in the building and immediate area, as well as the city as a whole. These include an armory, a sparring facility for combat practice, a reading room, as well as bars and other general amenities (you can sleep in a sub-basement secret facility). You can also go to the top of the TransAmerica building and have a look out at the scenery. There are plenty of chances to interact with NPCs and explore the city, should you so choose to. I will monitor time lightly—don’t feel

obligated to count the hours, but I will raise an eyebrow if you explore all of San Francisco, visit 10 bars, sleep with 5 people, sleep for ten hours, go fishing...

For the time being, I will not monitor Soul Gem expenditure (outside of the sparring facility combat practice), because that would be sort of needlessly burdensome at the present time.

The MSY "Recommended Activities" Handbook for San Francisco suggests a visit to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), the Refugee Section of Town, a tour of the barracks of the Capitol Garrison and Provisional Capitol Building]. For the more military-minded, there is Golden Gate Park and Bridge. Many of these will require advance contact to a MSY rep to help gain access to the juicy bits or book a ticket, should you prefer. Finally, in the local vicinity there is a bar, the "Seismic Rift" which is popular with MSY-minded patrons.

For the sake of your poor GM, don't split into too many groups ;_]