

BATTLESTAR RAVEN BATTLE GROUP

ADVENTURES

= FLIGHT OF THE RAVEN =



Chapter 01
Battlestar Raven Battle Group Adventures
FLIGHT OF THE RAVEN



presented by the Battlestar Fan Club



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Prelude

This is the story of how the Battlestar Raven escaped the Fall of the Twelve Colonies of Kobol.

High above the Colony of Aerilon, two fleets are intertwined. The planet's vibrant colors outline the stark silhouettes of two Battlestars, accompanied by escorts and trainee vessels. Between the two imposing giants, squadrons of vipers are caught in the intricate dances of battle. Markers flare up, blank shots explode on impeccable armor, where the most daring pilots compete not a wingspan apart.

During the war-game exercises, the CIC of Battlestar Raven remains calm and silent. The occasional chatter of pilots is interrupted by orders and maneuvering directions, as the course of battle unfolds on DRADIS screens. For the purpose of maneuvering exercises, all networked systems have been deactivated and run a complex simulation under the close supervision of the admiral. It takes a printed note, handed to her from the communications officer, to relay news addressed to her from beyond the battlefield.

She is the first to learn that bombs have fallen.

By the time the admiral has read these lines, the pilots are blinded by a cascade of flashing light far below. Explosions like red, blossoming flowers, erupt from within the atmosphere. Sirens howl, the chatter of the simulation dies, there are screams from those few who see it with their own eyes - Aerilon is burning.

Through the aether echo panicking messages from the Guardian Fleet, then suddenly, their voices fall silent.

Humanity's children are returning home.



At the End of Days

"This is the admiral. We just received word that a Cylon Attack against our homeworlds is underway. We do not know the size or the disposition or the strength of the enemy forces. But all indications point to a massive assault against colonial defenses. Picon Fleet Headquarters is not responding, there is no word of the Guardian Fleet. Our readings indicate thermonuclear detonations on Aerilon moments ago. The planetary defenses appear unresponsive."

Claxons scream as condition one is set throughout the ship. Red lights flicker in the CIC, systems are rebooting, the jump-drive charges up. On both ends of the central table, the admiral and commander look up to DRADIS monitors.

"Attention fleet! This is Raven Actual, all vessels prepare to jump to emergency coordinates immediately."

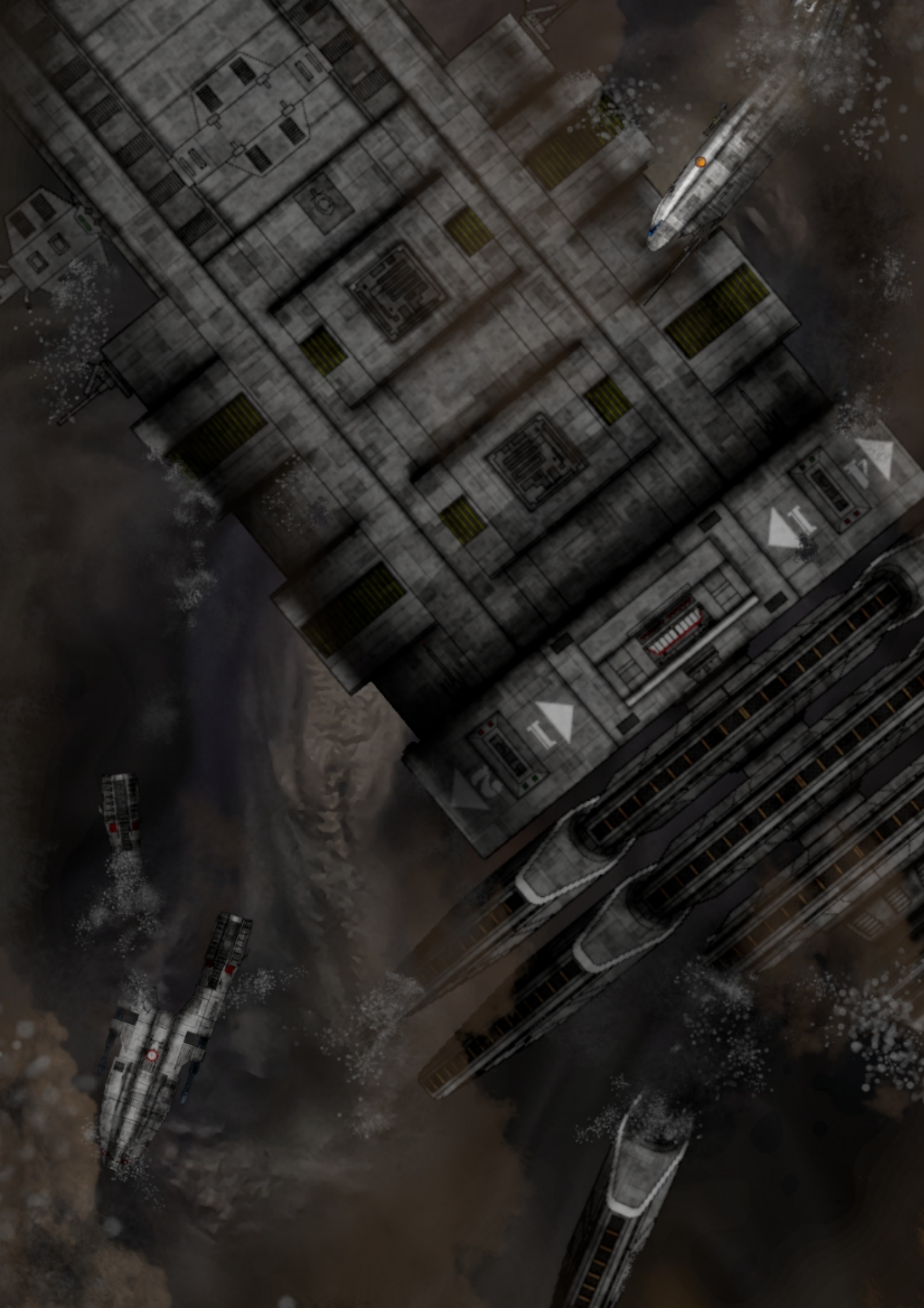
Vipers and Raptors are racing the clock, rushing toward the glowing hangar bays. Thrusts of their engines glow before Raven's massive bow, as it turns away from the approaching enemy. The Cylon light awakes. A red glare, sweeping across the formation of colonial vessels. Sirens sing and die down, the backdoor has opened.

It hits those who are combat ready. The Vipers of Gunstar Ispolin fall suddenly silent. Beyond control, they hurtle into the vessel spinning helplessly, shattering against unyielding armor. More escorts experience mass systems failure, their engines unresponsive, weapons and communications falling victim to the invisible force.

Others are in luck. Aboard the Raven, simulated systems register the intruding data streams coming from the raiders inbound, but they are not connected to real hardware aboard. The systems engineer does not hesitate. As he rips all cables from the console, a manual jump is initiated. The XO sets the clock - twenty seconds.

Cylon Bombs set the sky aflame. Nuclear blasts drown the firmament in blinding white and with it many ships by the Raven's side. Their silhouettes sketched in black against the light, disintegrate and finally disappear. Even the giant is shaken. The Raven sways under a barrage of impacting missiles, bulkheads buckle and bend, the ship creaks under pressure. But its spine cannot be broken. In a sudden flash of lightning, the Battlestar disappears, following others who managed to jump away.

No-one dares to look down at burning Aerilon, where the fallout of a hundred bombs blankets the weeping and pleas of a dying world. Colonial emergency signals, automated messages, and a billion voices are sent against the stars, guiding further bombs of the Cylons and silenced, one by one. The golden-green marble grows gray as the fields of Aerilon wilt.



Hestia Anchorage lies in ruins.

When the Raven reaches the appointed coordinates, it is alone, surrounded by the wreckage of an entire Battle Group and the Anchorage station itself. Its massive carcass is bent and broken, the glowing lights of it shine no more.

There are two priorities at hand:

They have to learn how the Cylon could cause mass-systems-failure in so many of our vessels and how to prevent it. And the Raven Must must recover as many survivors and ships as possible.

The longer the ship stays undetected, the better are the chances for their systems specialists to identify the Cylon backdoor and render it harmless. However, few colonial vessels will find a ship silent running, if no additional action is taken.

"Among all this wreckage, we can easily hide by powering down all primary systems. By running silent, we'll minimize the risk of the Cylons detecting us."

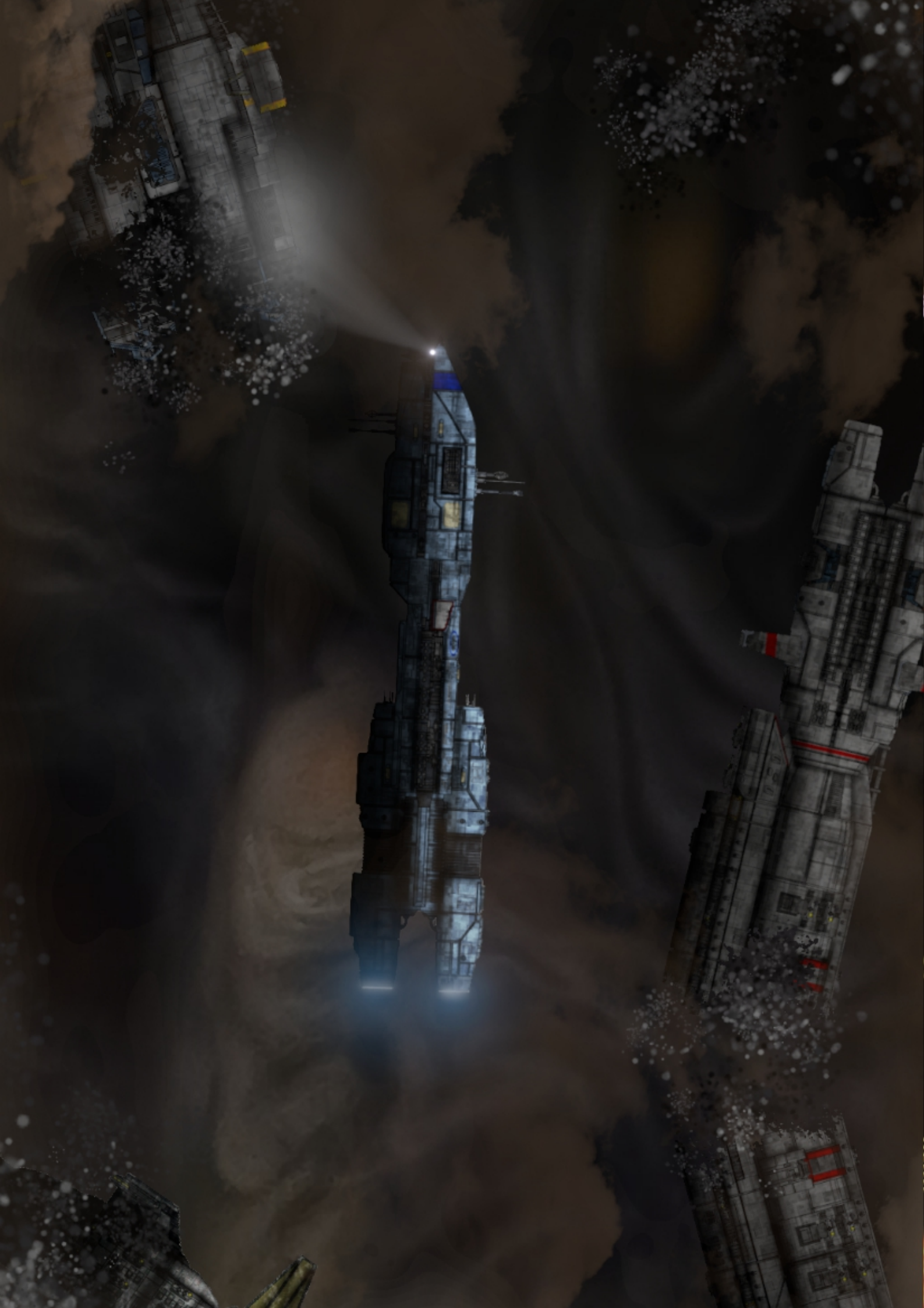
Orders are given, covert operations arranged. Silent raptors launch from the Raven's bays into the cloudy night of Hestia. Far above them is the storm, the endless maelstrom of destruction set in motion by the Cylon Invasion.



Phoenix

Into the swirling clouds of Hestia descends another ship, alone Gunstar among the wreckage of many colonial vessels. At last, the Raven is not alone, but in careful consideration, both vessels maintain radio silence. Lighting flickers from the bow of Gunstar Deimos, sending morse code messages to the recovering Battle Group.

Their arrival is met with applause in the Raven CIC. For once, good news comes from the outside world. The commander stands silently amid a field of disemboweled consoles and loose cabling. All stations have been ordered to disconnect the computer systems, the crew rips the insides of the Battlestar apart, rendering it immune to Cylon trickery with their systems. Gunstar Deimos is instructed to do the same. One more ship prepares to fight back the onslaught of humanity's children.



"Raven Actual, this is Battlestar 359 Vindication, we have arrived"

"Gunstar Alcaeus reporting in"

"Flak Escort Ravener, all stations ready"

"Trireme to Raven, this is Leonidas..."

The fleet is reporting in. One after another, DRADIS contacts appear in the nebulae of Hestia. colonial vessels, scattered and few, draw together around the remnants of the Anchorage station. There are escorts and traineeships of Raven's maneuver Battle Group, Clippers returning from patrol, orphaned raptors and support vessels from Battle Groups overrun. Two Battlestars made it in time. The Vindication, still in fighting condition, and the old Kharon, damaged beyond repair.

Covert raptors managed to bring a sizable battle group together, Raven's reserves are restocked with a dozen recovered Vipers and countless spare parts are brought aboard. The work keeps the crew busy, they and a thousand souls returned from the devastating battlefield. There is left no chance to think, to grief nor falter.

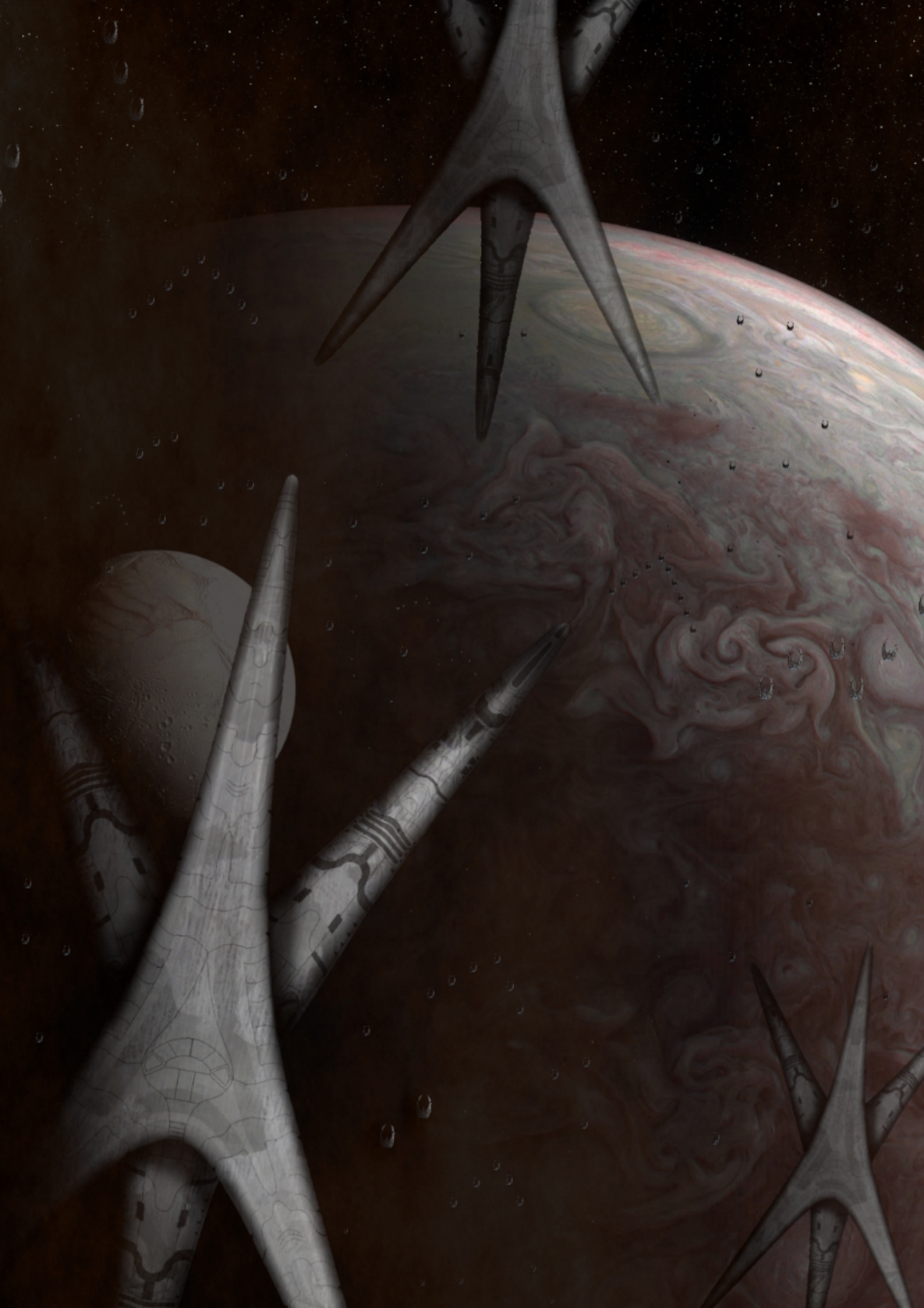
Time is running out. Every second, millions die at the hands of the invading force. The weight of the world rests on the specialist aboard the Raven. She has identified the CNP backdoor at fault, removed all trace of it from the systems. Orders are given to all ships to disconnect their systems, set all stations to manual duty.

The fleet brought together is eager to fight, in their hearts burns the desire to finally retaliate. Under Raven's leadership, two combat-ready Battlestars and a dozen support ships are prepared. In the CIC of the leading Battlestar, a plan is made for a desperate, perhaps final attempt at a counteroffensive. One name is written in black on the white tactical maps of the Raven:

Aerilon's Vengeance

Even when all cities are leveled and the skies are burning, the will of Aerilon cannot yet be broken. There are hidden nuclear weapons silos, equipment caches and fall-back points for the marines.

We will engage the enemy here, at our home, and send strike-teams down to recover and reactivate as much as possible.



Aerilon's Vengeance

Like a beast alive with the raw emotions of all souls aboard, the Battlestar Raven rises through the clouds of Hestia. Fear, anger, mourning - the shock of the ongoing invasion has taken hold in the few hours past, as news of the destruction of all twelve worlds reaches the fleet. No longer is their hope of a safe retreat, no longer a way for this war to end in victory. There only remains retaliation, the last chance for humanity's survival. This realization sobers them all, from the deckhands to those in command. On all ships of all colonies, listening to the last transmissions of their dying civilization, the people come together.

Gods be with us say some as they pray, for themselves, loved ones and all who vanished already. Others seek solace in their duty, even in menial immediate tasks, polishing the squadron's emblems, straightening uniforms, clearing the deck.

During these minutes before the final jump, they are all in purgatory. The fate of humanity hangs from a thread and more than any time before in history, the future is an uncertainty.

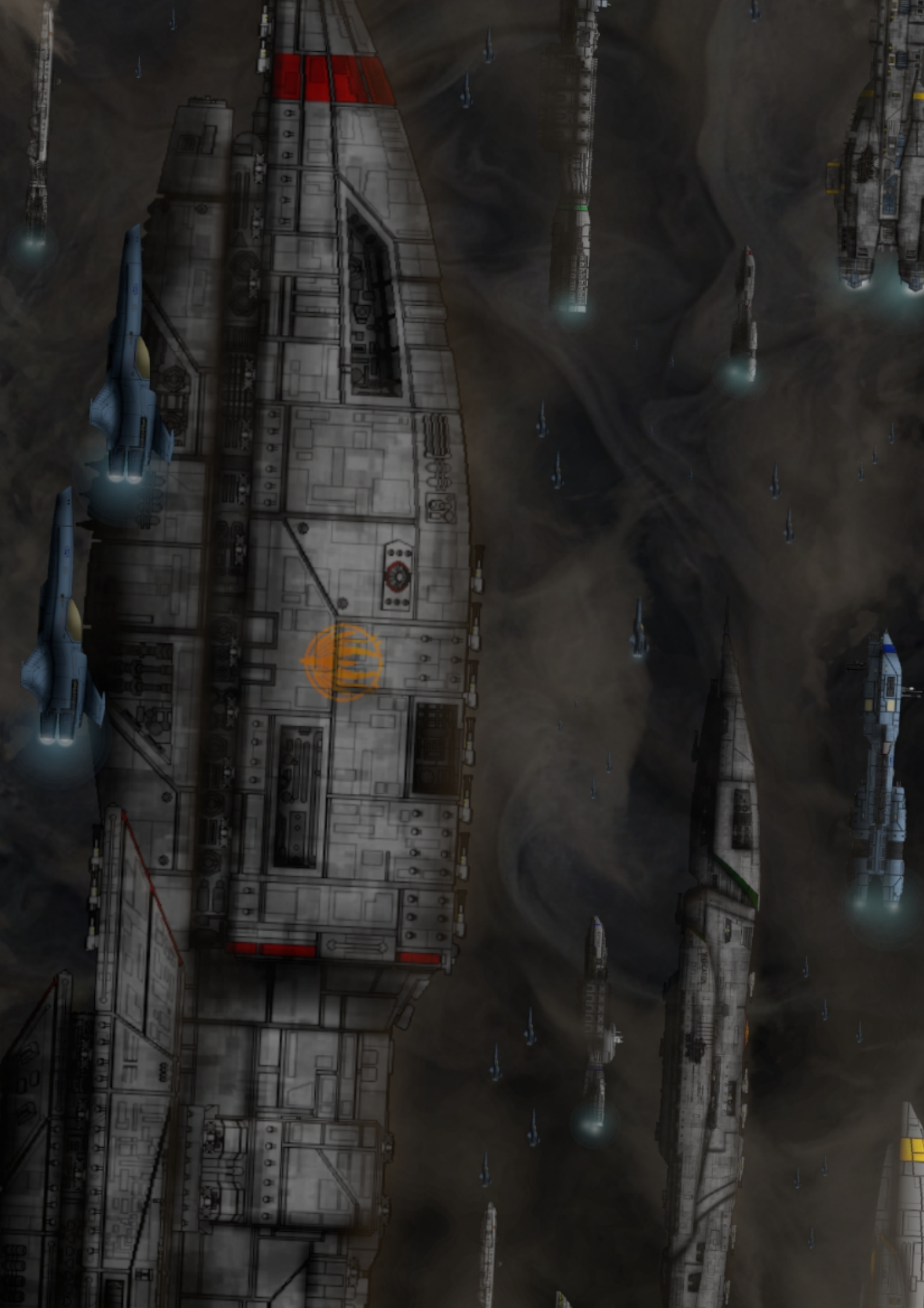


Silence.

The images of burning Aerilon are met without a word in the situation room. Nobody speaks on the recording. The Seeker Squadron sent to the colony are running silent, penetrating the Cylon blockade. They brought information on deployment plans and invasion forces, a map of the planet as a whole. The lower east quadrant of the map is empty - two Raptors did not return.

Population centers and military installations are drowned by the glaring red icons of deadly radiation. Fallout shrouds the most populous continent where one billion lie slaughtered by the Cylon bombs.

The Admiral waves the red away, her eyes fixed on the few symbols remaining yellow and green, where casualties are presumed not total. Hidden missile silos and aerospace weaponry installations, the Colonial Marines HQ Alpha Site, nuclear bunkers of the inter-colonial wars and the fall-back positions of the corps - they are few, and far between. But they are the seed of Aerilon's Vengeance.





The clock is set in CIC.

At thirteen hundred hours, the Raven and a selected strike fleet will perform a high-altitude jump and deploy strike teams bound for the surface. Every last able body in the scrambled fleet will be deployed. The Raven's air-wing will provide immediate firing support, identify all those who remain to join the fight. They all know those stranded on the burning world, their brothers and sisters in service. They must not - will not let them down.

Their collective goal: To reinstate planetary defense, allow the remaining fleet to breach the blockade and evacuate whatever survivors remain.

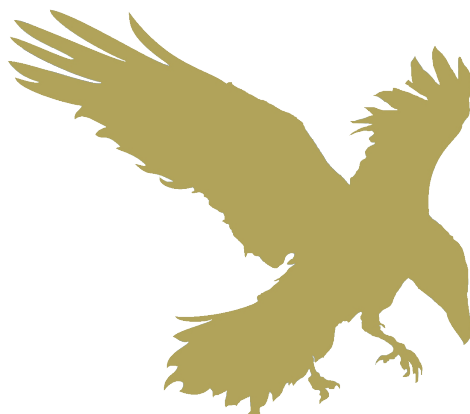
This is the Admiral

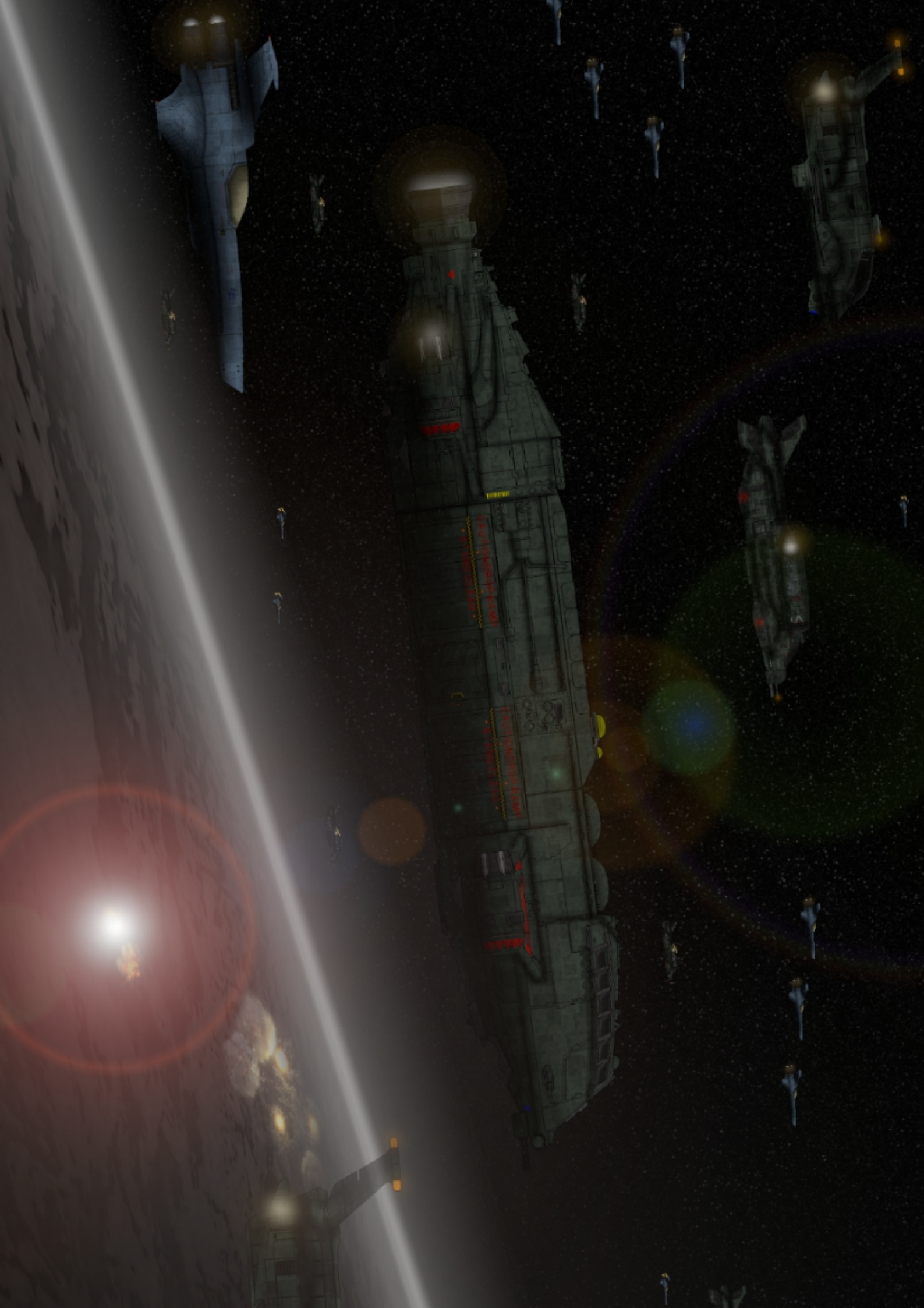
We have seen the end of our worlds. Reports indicate the decimation of military installations and population centers on all Twelve Colonies. There's no more word of the Fleet. For all we know, the Cylon plan the complete and utter genocide of the human race.

From this moment on, your duty is no longer to the Twelve Colonies of Kobol, but humanity as a whole. Our actions will decide the fate of our species, our civilization, the memory of every life in history.

We have not yet fallen. Before us lies perhaps the last battle this planet, this ship - any of us will ever see. Let us make sure it is one humanity will remember.

Action Stations!





Action Stations!

Thunder roars throughout Raven's hull, moments after the Jump is concluded. All around the mighty ship, the skies are set ablaze. Lightning flares where escorts jump into position, from the launch tubes Viper Squadrons race into battle. Within seconds, the Raptors are away, jumping deeper into the atmosphere. As the invasion commences far below, the battle for Aerilon has begun.

The Raven's forces are insufficient to hit all targets at once, as they descend through fire and atmosphere. Before them unfolds the full extent of nuclear destruction. Three targets are assigned:

According to Colonial Marine Corps contingency plans, an alternative command site off the grid is to take control should Aerilon HQ be destroyed. This is where the surviving Marines of Aerilon will be waiting.

Unlike the Capital Goath, Promethea has not been bombed directly. Its major spaceport holds the greatest number of remaining spaceships on Aerilon, including fields of mothballed old military vessels.

Success in taking Promethea Port will secure our means of evacuating as many civilians as possible once the blockade is breached.

The Cylons effectively destroyed the command and guidance systems of the planetary defenses - but due to their decentralized nature, many missile silos and other installations could be manually reactivated. Success in reactivating the planetary defense will significantly disrupt the Cylon fleet. With their targets in sight, strike teams of Raven's marines are dispatched.

*Batteries Koppa, Jupiter, Sampi, switch to counter fire.
Affirmative, targets acquired.*

The harsh, guttural crescendo of firing KEW batteries rings as deep as the CIC at the heart of the fighting ship.

White, blinding fire engulfs the first Baseship to rise from Aerilon's burning atmosphere. In the throws of death the ship unleashes missiles like shooting stars, crossing the black void between it and the relentless Raven. Warheads of the Cylon attack have torn chunks of armor from the Battlestars prow, nevertheless the charge cannot be halted.

As explosions cascade along the first Baseships spine, the Ravens main batteries turn to the next enemy above the horizon.

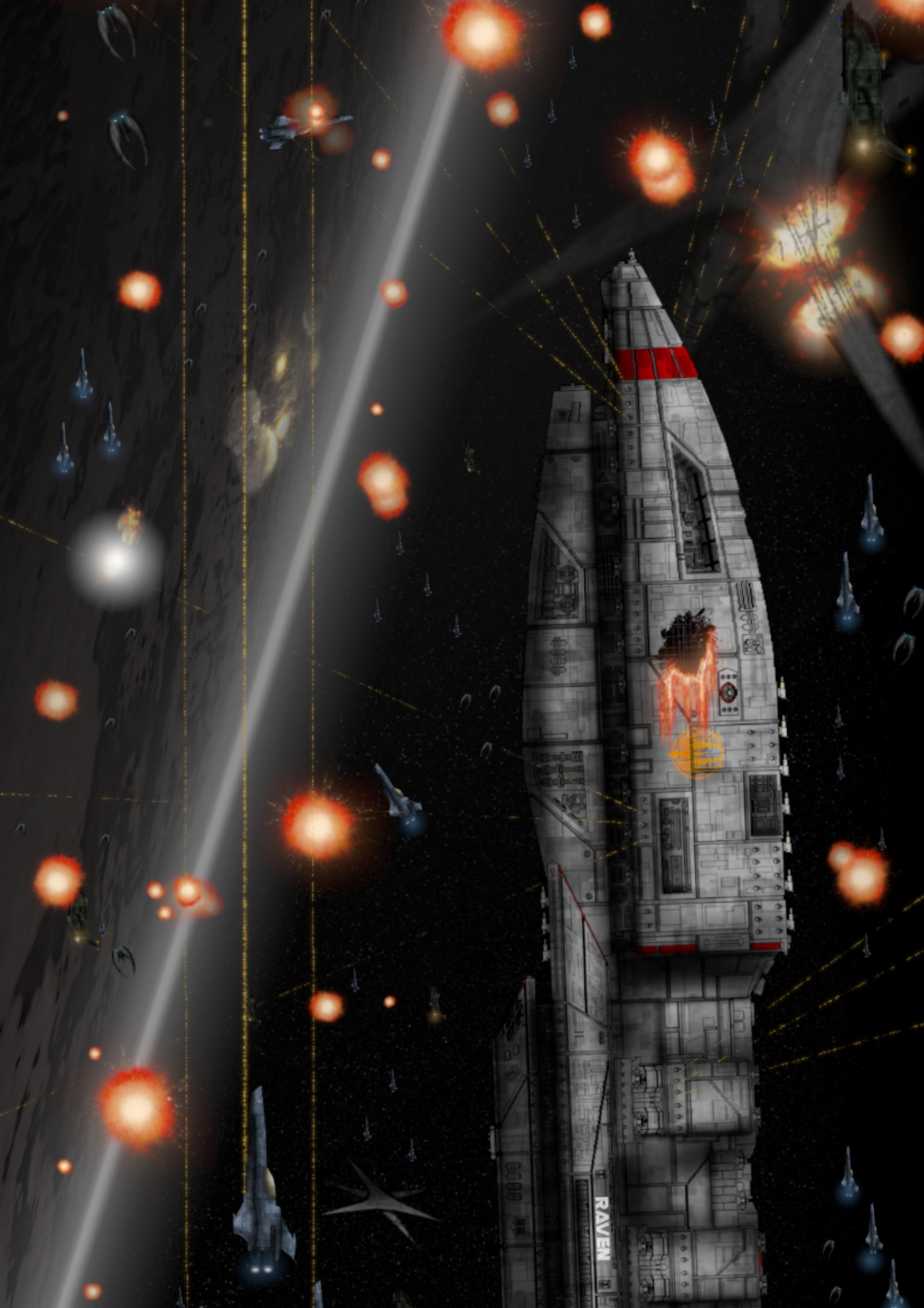
The last of the strike teams have departed, all troop transports are deployed, their fate is in Ares' hands.



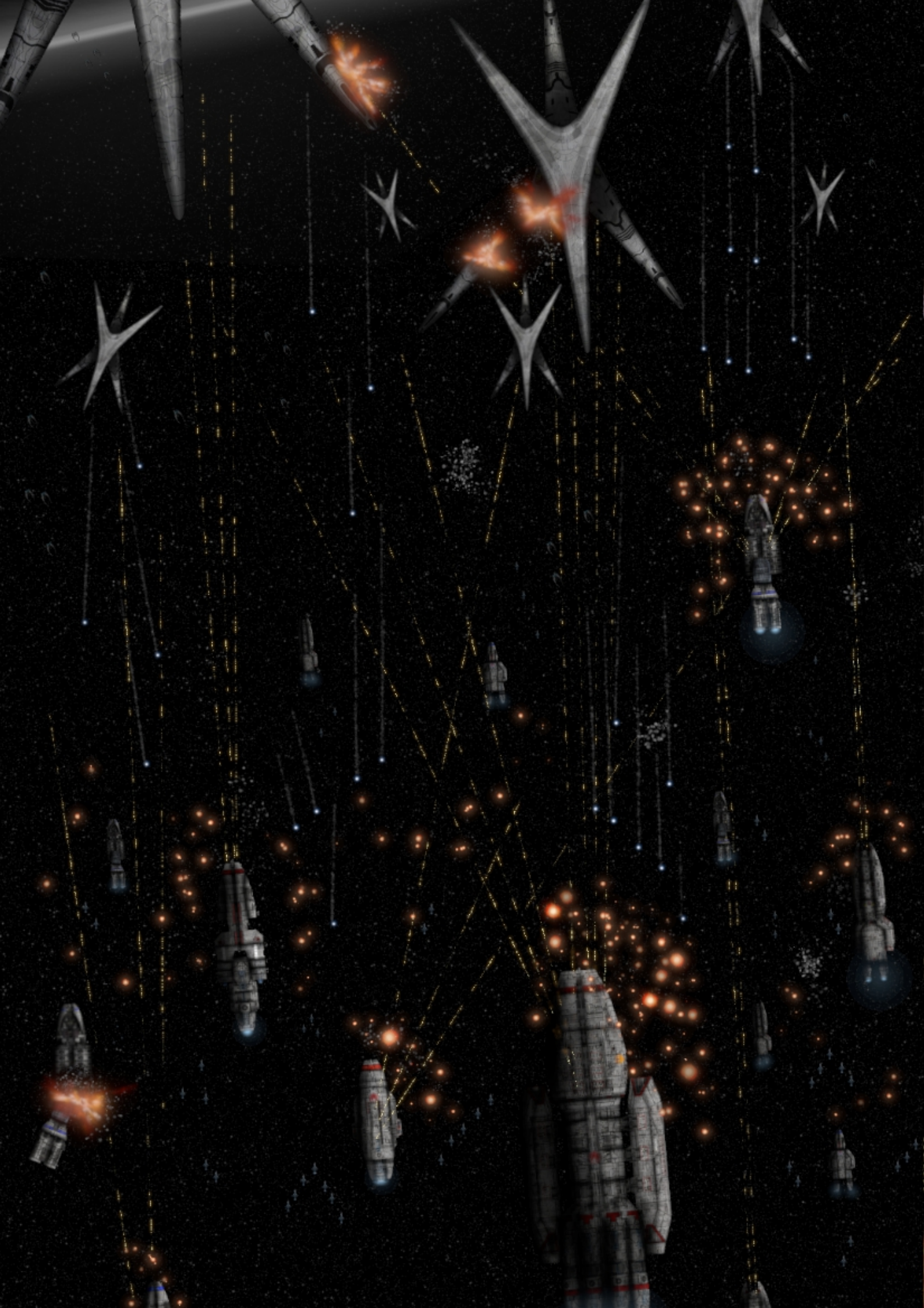
HERMES

RAVEN





RAVEN



The Battle for Aerilon

Promethea Port

Black rain, ash, and cinder are descending on Promethea. The ancient city crumbles under the ever-growing mass of debris falling from the sky. Blanketed in the smoldering remains of Aerilon and its people, every sound is stifled and the world falls silent.

Promethea Port is besieged by the huddled masses. Hundreds of thousands, burnt and scarred from the initial blasts, have overrun the terminal and airfield. What few vessels remain are without hope to break free. Scattered remains and wreckage tell of those who tried to flee and were shot down immediately by the Cylon blockade. On these open fields, watching the city burn, the last of Aerilon feel the end is nigh. Hope arrives with the thunderclap of a sonic boom.

The Raptors descend like falling angels, spreading wings of white smoke and hot glowing flares. In their wake ride the Viper Valkyries of Battlestar Raven and a convoy of armed troop transports escorting them.

Soon the sky is aglow with Gunfire, the voices of Raptor pilots echo above the port. Within seconds, each and every soul on the ground looks up to see the arrival of their salvation. The Colonial Fleet has come at last.

"Raven Actual, this is Strikeforce Aleph Leader - Promethea Port is secure, I repeat, Promethea Port is secure! Our defensive Grid has been deployed, we have the toasters outgunned. Commencing evacuation!"



Aerospace Weapon Installation Bellerophon

The fields of Aerilon are already wilting. The last harvest will never be brought in.

Amid rural ruins far from any major city, Raptors land in seemingly random locations. On this world, they say, the land is as far as the sea. Nothing but fields and fire until the horizon. But buried in this fertile soil are secret instruments of grand destruction.

Strike teams swarm the hidden facilities, many carried over from times of Inter-Colonial War. This technology is ancient, immune against the Cylons Plan. It only needs a human hand to activate the doomsday devices.

*"Bellerophon Sites reporting in. God's be with us -
So Say We All!"*

Cleansing fire illuminates the sky and sweeps away the clouds, as a thousand warheads detonate and proclaim the fighting spirit of Aerilon one final time. The silhouettes of Baseships, edged black against the glowing sky, break apart and fall toward the horizon.

Countless eyes are raised toward the blinding light to see the Lords of Kobol wage war in the heavens. Then and there, they witness the last battle of Aerilon, fought among the fleets of Cylon and the Humankind. In the fading light around them, they see little hope, but the wrath of a dying people.

"Raven Actual, Strikeforce Beta confirms the launch of all nuclear devices. We are registering mass explosions in the higher atmosphere. The Blockade is in disarray."

"This is Raven Actual to all ships of the fleet: Jump in Attack formation. Action Stations!"



Colonial Marine HQ Alpha Site

White fire drowns out the sun, black smoke swallows the light and in the end, a gray tint envelops the world. As the battle for Aerilon rages on, the last of Raven's strike teams arrive at the valleys far into the mountains. Here, buried under layers of granite and slate, lie the last positions of the Colonial Marines Corps.

The Raptors approach at low altitude, under the DRADIS of any invading force watching. Far beyond the horizon, the clouds still burn and Battlestar Raven commences a full-scale attack. And yet, not all Cylons have been drawn to the fight.

Enemy contact approaching! It just jumped in!

The lone raider barely clips the trees, making a suicidal run at the strike force approach. The response Vipers are quick, a first blast rips one thorn from the Cylon's hull. Yet, before the vessel falls, it rips through time and space with another jump. Too slow.

Less than three minutes pass before bombs are detected on an approaching vector. No time for a warning, none for an evasive plan. In a hasty retreat, the Raptors withdraw, just in time, to see the white strikes descend.

The site is destroyed in mere seconds, lost with all souls, hundreds if not thousands of them. The mountains themselves are reshaped by the ensuing bombardment, leaving no hope for rescue of the troops left behind.

Strike Leader Gamma is not responding. Reported mass casualties at the MCHQ Alpha Site. The Marines are lost, command, repeat, Marine Corps Alpha Site has been lost!



Aftermath

For seven hours, Aerilon wages war.
Seven hours of fire, of death and retribution.
Seven hours in which heroes and traitors are born and die.
Seven hours, an era of which no tales will tell.

At the end of it all, every field is burnt, every city turned into dust, every last soul dead on the surface of this world. There is nothing left but cinder and fading memories.
That is the price for Aerilon's Vengeance.

And yet, on this day, the humankind claimed an unlikely victory. A single number is printed on the Admiral's final report, submitted to all the rest of the fleet.
One hundred and seventeen ships - Plus all atmosphere-capable vessels left to the Raven's Group, are packed with survivors of the fighting colony.
Humanity lives on. The colony lives on.

Those who lived look out the windows a final time, as the Raven and the remnants of its fleet set a course toward the outer Cyrannus system.

Through the corridors of many vessels sounds a song played on the fleet-wide radio. It's a soldiers tune well known among them all, a song called *Farewell Aerilon...*

So Say We All!





THIS CONCLUDES CHAPTER 1: THE FLIGHT OF THE RAVEN

I want to thank all members who participated and enjoyed partaking in this journey.

The original interactive story was posted on the BFC Group Forum:
<https://battlestarfanclub.com/group/the-adventures-of-the-battlestar-raven-battlegroup>

Visit Battlestar Raven: <https://www.battlestarraven-bfc-002.com/>

A special Thanks goes to the artists Keyser94 and Kelso363 who kindly offered assets of various vessels for use in this project. Their work can be found here:

<https://www.deviantart.com/keyser94>
<https://www.deviantart.com/kelso323>

I also want to give extra credit to the work of the late CanisD, who's responsible for the wonderful Cylon assets we've seen.
<http://www.wolfsshipyard.com/>
<http://s49.photobucket.com/user/CanisD/library/?sort=3&page=1>

All the original artwork for this project can be found here:
<https://www.deviantart.com/martechi/>

Further Thanks goes to DragonLady and Leslie Willis, as well as all other members of the Battlestar Fan Club who have been wonderful in their support of this project.