

STARSIEGE 2845

**Story Design Document
Plot_MissionBreakdown_Chapter1.rtf**

**By
N. David Griffin**

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1. PURPOSE

To provide a brief outline of the first chapter of the single player campaign as a blueprint for location description work as well as more detailed "screenplays" of each of the individual missions.

2. LOCATIONS

Colonial Training Facility, Codename VAGRANT
Kuiper Belt Object 1138
Kuiper Defense Platform 4
Interior - FCV Verity Vargas
Cybrid Deep Space Platform, Codename NEMESIS

3. NARRATIVE GOALS

Chapter 1 has three primary goals (aside from the obvious: be fun to play) as concerns the overall plot and the progression of the story. First is naturally to hook the player, which we intend to accomplish by way of the boarding and possible destruction of the Vargas, thus establishing that while humanity is on the offensive their victory is far from certain, and then also through conveying a sense of growing tension between Dawo and his comrades in the fleet (probably including his father) as regards their mission and the nature of the Cybrid threat. Secondly this chapter should propel the player forward into the meat of the plot, through revelation of the vast numbers of Cybrids now appearing in the outer reaches of the system, the suspicion of possible further treachery undermining the fleet's mission and by increasing clues as to the wide breach in Cybrid society which will be accompanied by increasing personal peril for Dawo. Third and lastly this chapter should sow into the mind of the player some foreshadowing elements that while not obvious at first, will enrich the experience of the later chapters by way of their presence and also increase replay value. Some examples of this include the initial confrontation between Dawo and Orlanda, the constant Trojan Horse threat, and subtle clues regarding the Godseeds. Others are planned, and still more may be inserted as opportunity presents itself.

4. OVERVIEW

The introductory chapter follows Dawo Otope as he leads a Company of the renowned Tharsis Dragoons on the first leg of the Artemis Campaign. As our story begins the First Colonial Expeditionary Unit, consisting of one full division, over 18 thousand men, has just rendezvoused with Imperial Task Force Ravenous Shield. The Artemis Armada is complete and their mission to hunt down and destroy what remains of the Cybrids begins at the edges of the Kuiper Belt, where the shattered remains of Pluto have begun their slow drift back into the obscurity of the larger debris cloud.

The fleet's first priority will be the recapture of Kuiper Defense Platform Four, and the gathering of crucial intelligence to lead them after the fleeing Cybrid remnants. On their way to the platform the combined Imperial and Colonial forces will encounter an odd colony of monks who seem to revere the Cybrids, and will survive a surprise attack that cripples one of their flagships and maims many of their support vessels. When the fleet arrives at KDP-4 they encounter substantial resistance, but liberate the station and acquire key information that will lead them to a massive Cybrid deep space platform they codename "NEMESIS."

During the assault on KDP-4 the growing enmity between Dawo and Orlanda comes to full flower when her unit suffers its first casualties of the campaign as a result of Dawo's behavior during a ground-side mission.

Throughout the campaign Dawo raises concerns about the apparent divisions that remain in Cybrid society, noting such odd behavior as pilotforms which appear to be under some form of detention, odd destruction of certain units and structures to prevent their capture, and differing behavior of warform units that seems to be linked to markings and color schemes. His speculations are dismissed by Fleet Command, and he is even reprimanded by his own father. His very public misgivings about the wanton destruction of Cybrid units and facilities along with knowledge of his own religious convictions (see "Darwins Forge Philosophy" in the timeline) combine to make him the target of much derision among the fleet.

Finally as the assault on Nemesis draws to a close Dawo is faced with a choice regarding his beliefs. Throughout the chapter he has become more and more convinced that there is a mystery that needs unraveling regarding the continuing divisions in Cybrid society, and his final mission will present him with the opportunity to explore that mystery, but at the cost of human lives. He will have to weigh the immediacy of concern for the mission at hand and his fellow pilots against the possibility that his suspicions, if proven, could save lives in the long run. His own personal vindication and possibly the fate of the Artemis fleet rest in the balance of his decision, but the criticisms of his comrades will be a compelling goad to see first to the well being of his fellow soldiers.

5. MISSIONS

Mission: "The Enemies of My Enemy" (0-1)

Location: Colonial Training Facility, VAGRANT

Mission Score: 1

Mission Type: HERC

Squadmates: 1

Mission Goals: GUI and HUD familiarization. Training Mission.

Plot Progression: Couched in the premise of shaking in some new technology for the Colonial forces, this mission introduces Dawo Otobe to Francisco Navarre and floats the red herring of Imperial-Colonial conflict. Out-of-mission text (logs, news articles, etc...) should reinforce this idea while also seeding fodder for future missions and establishing the opening stanzas of central themes such as the father-son relationship and the nature of humanity.

Notes: This mission is purely optional for us. Everything related to the plot that is conveyed here can be conveyed elsewhere. If however we are to have a training mission this is how I would like to approach it, as a sort of prologue to the story proper that will allow us to set up the central themes and establish some of our initial plot threads.

Mission: "And We Built Houses Upon the Mountain of God" (1-1)

Location: Kuiper Belt Object 1138

Mission Score: 2

Mission Type: HERC

Squadmates: 2

Mission Goals: Combat familiarity, reconnaissance of the monastic colony, first Cybrid encounter.

Plot Progression: This mission introduces us to the Kuiper Monastic colony which lives side by side with a Metagen Cybrid outpost. The monks are an odd group, seeming to revere their Cybrid neighbors and profiting from cooperation with them. The communication between themselves and the Artemis fleet is strained because of their use of deeply religious language, but the similarity between their philosophy and Otobe's own Darwin's Forge philosophy endears them to him in spite of their strangeness.

Notes: This mission introduces both the first clues regarding the Doctrinal War, namely that Cybrids are existing side-by-side with humans without having destroyed them yet, and the first insight's into Dawo's personal belief system. Both of these elements are key to selling the difficulty of his choice in the finale and the nature of his ostracism later in the chapter.

Mission: "Pandora's Shadow" (1-2)

Location: Kuiper Belt Object 1138

Mission Score: 3

Mission Type: HERC

Squadmates: 3

Mission Goals: Destruction of Cybrid presence. Presentation of moral dilemma via Monks.

Plot Progression: After some halting communications with the monks it is decided that the fleet will relieve them of the Cybrid encroachment and move on without further disturbing the colony. As the mission progresses however the monks begin

throwing themselves in front of the Cybrid vehicles and structures as willing human shields. Dawo and his unit are forced in several circumstances to destroy them in order to complete their objectives. Dawo registers his discomfort with the situation, but follows orders nonetheless.

Notes: Dawo's dismay at having to kill humans who are presumably NOT trojan horses is a key point of the plot in this mission as it represents an opportunity to clearly convey his emotional disposition and offers some foreshadowing of future choices he must make. If we succeed in conveying this event properly it will help sell his internal tension and make his decision gate more believable.

Mission: "A Stable for Priam's New Steed" (1-3)

Location: Interior – FCV Verity Vargas

Mission Score: 5 (Set Piece)

Mission Type: Infantry\Pilot

Squadmates: 1

Mission Goals: Get to the bridge of the Vargas, eliminate Nagashima, get off the Vargas alive

Plot Progression: After the fleet leaves KBO #### they proceed on mission to Kuiper Defense Platform 4. While en route however the armada comes under attack by a large Cybrid strike force which focuses its attention on the colonial vessels. The colonial flagship FCV Vargas turns her guns on her own support vessels and makes no attempt to repel the rapid-assault boarding craft which assail her. Dawo, with the help of Francisco Navarre, must get to the bridge of the Vargas and eliminate Admiral Nagashima, who is a Trojan Horse, and somehow get off the Vargas alive while ensuring that the Cybrids cannot capture her.

Notes: This is one of our set piece missions, and our best opportunity to cement the player's interest early and quickly. The action should be fast-paced, chaotic, and frightening. Cybrid warforms will pour through breaches in the hull and swarm over the vast length and breadth of the Vargas and the sheer immensity of the assault must beat upon the player's psyche like a physical force. Wowing them now will cement their interest for the rest of the chapter.

Mission: "The Alternative Factor" (1-4)

Location: KDP-4

Mission Score: 3

Mission Type: HERC

Squadmates: 3 (+?)

Mission Goals: Witness a Metagen-Promethean battle. Observe and possibly interact with Metagen rescue attempt. Really piss Orlanda off.

Plot Progression: Upon arriving at Kuiper Defense Platform 4 the fleet finds it apparently abandoned. There is a very small naval detail guarding the base, which is quickly dispatched, and no sign of ground forces controlling the surface. Dawo's unit is sent down on a reconnaissance mission and gets caught up in the middle of a Promethean-Metagen battle. The Metagen units appear to ignore the humans, favoring engaging Promethean targets, but a few small Promethean forces are dispatched to destroy the animals. During a lull in the conflict Dawo decides to investigate a small Metagen detachment which appears to be moving stealthily around the perimeter of the base. When he follows them he observes them engaging in a rescue operation of sorts to retrieve detained pilotforms. While he is thus distracted however he has left Orlanda and her unit unsupported and they suffer heavy casualties from a Promethean strike force.

Notes: This mission has some strong foreshadowing, echoing Dawo's final choice and setting the stage for his moral dilemma there. Keys to the effective delivery of

this mission are the subtle differences between Metagen and Promethean units, communiqués from other squads and from Command to highlight the ongoing action without giving away too much, and the opportunity for Dawo to interfere with or aid the rescue attempt. Effective transmission of the cost in human lives and of the break in Cybrid society (without overplaying that particular aspect) will make the final choice both easier to sell and more dramatic for the player. Dawo should receive some fairly brutal criticism for his decision to investigate the Metagen rescue mission both during the mission and in the cutscenes that follow.

Mission: "Obliteration" (1-5)

Location: KDP-4

Mission Score: 2

Mission Type: HERC

Squadmates: 3 (+?)

Mission Goals: Reclamation of the defense platform, destruction of all Cybrid units.

Plot Progression: Allied command determines that the Cybrid infighting provides them with a golden opportunity to reclaim the platform with a minimal expenditure of force. When the Metagen force musters to flee the platform, the Prometheans come out of hiding to crush them. The Artemis commanders order an immediate attack. Both groups of Cybrids are obliterated and the platform secured.

Notes: This is a fairly straightforward combat mission. Secondary objectives can include Metagen transports coming down to evac their personnel. There is also an opportunity here to put Dawo at odds with his commanders again if we set the stage with orders to focus on the Metagens first (since they are trying to escape and it is imperative that none get off the platform alive) but have Dawo openly wonder if it might not be wiser to focus on the Prometheans since they seem to represent the greater danger. Perhaps the choice of tactics is one that we can leave up to the player in this regard.

Mission: "The Turnabout Intruders" (1-6)

Location: NEMESIS

Mission Score: 4

Mission Type: HERC + Infantry

Squadmates: ??

Mission Goals: Re-establishing the ever-present sense of danger to the fleet, highlighting Dawo's continuing ostracism due to his curiosity re: Cybrids.

Plot Progression: Dawo and his unit are on the surface of NEMESIS where a beachhead has been established on one of the massive base's outer rocks. When one of the Groups under his command drops off the comm he takes his own squad to go investigate and walks into a trap. After defeating the onslaught he exits his HERC to investigate a nearby facility which turns out to be a Trojan Horse factory where the surviving members of the missing groups are being converted. He rescues those he can and destroys the facility before escaping.

Notes: This is a two part mission, one part performed in HERCs and another in FPS mode and is one of our "set piece" missions. Both sections provide the opportunity for some intense action, and the interior of the Trojan Horse factory allows us to create some extremely spooky, edge-of-your-seat moments. This mission also presents us with some excellent chances to address Dawo's concern for his comrades and to play it against his natural curiosity where the Cybrids are concerned.

Mission: "Assault on Rock 937" (1-7)

Location: NEMESIS

Mission Score: 3

Mission Type: HERC (possibly combined arms?)

Squadmates: 3 (+?)

Mission Goals: To illustrate the immensity of the NEMESIS platform and to set up the Chapter finale mission.

Plot Progression: Allied command has established a secure footing on one of the exterior rocks of NEMESIS and is ready to open an assault on the first of the interior asteroids. Doing so requires crossing one of the giant superstructure lattices that holds the various chunks of rock together and destroying the fortresses that guard the gateway at it's far end. Dawo's unit is charged with leading the assault to secure a beachhead on the second rock. While crossing the lattice they are harassed by Cybrid aerospace fighters, and on the other side they must fight a fierce battle to win control of the fortresses. In the end hundreds of Promethean units pour onto the field of battle to overwhelm the invaders.

Notes: The entire message of this mission is that the Cybrid numbers out here in the Oort Cloud are massive and this platform could prove very costly to assault. This mission is the keystone of the 'kill em all' argument as it should impress to the player the grave danger the Cybrids still represent. Lurking in the subtext throughout however should be the unconscious message that humanity does not understand its enemy well enough to ensure complete victory. More must be learned if we are to survive.

Mission: "The Choices of Captain Dawo Otohe" (1-8)

Location: NEMESIS

Mission Score: 5

Mission Type: HERC

Squadmates: 3 (+?)

Objectives: Destruction of NEMESIS' battery shield, stark presentation of the choice between discovering the secrets of the Doctrinal War and the expenditure of human lives, and the resolution of Dawo's internal conflict.

Plot Progression: Having discerned that a frontal rock-to-rock assault will be far too costly, Allied Command settles on a plan to launch a coordinated set of commando raids on the key lattices defending the NEMESIS interior. The base of each of these lattices is to be wired with a gravitic explosive designed to destroy the lattices in their entirety and propel the attached rocks into the Oort Cloud, leaving the interior exposed to direct naval bombardment. Dawo's mission is to provide a distraction for Sunder Cain's commando squad and then to cover their exfiltration. During the course of the operation however he is offered the choice of proceeding on his mission or turning aside to investigate a possible answer to the Cybrid internecine conflict. In either case, Dawo never makes it off of his rock alive as the massive gravitic charges tear it to shreds while he is still groundside.

Notes: This is of course the climax of the first chapter and therefore a mission of supreme importance. My initial thoughts are that 1) Sunder voices distrust of Dawo covering his unit's escape based on his behavior on KDP-4, 2) The Metagens contact Dawo via a Trojan Horse created from a fallen member of his own unit from the Trojan Horse Factory mission. 3) Dawo's choice becomes one of destroying the Metagens and moving on to assist Cain or of following them to a top secret location and watching the evacuation of one of the Godseeds while hearing a cryptic explanation of the Doctrinal War.