

# TOMORROW KNIGHTS™

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## WEB PREVIEW



AN ACTION-PACKED  
ROLEPLAYING  
GAME BASED ON  
THE EXCITING  
COMIC BOOK  
SERIES!

**M&M**  
SUPERLINK

Whigham

# TOMORROW KNIGHTS™

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## DEDICATIONS

**Roy Richardson and Rod Whigham:** For Archie Goodwin, Russ Manning, Wally Wood, and all the others whose shoulders we stand on.

**Eddy Webb:** To my muses (M, Ifer, and Genka), and the rest of my Tribe.

**Cynthia Celeste Miller:** I want to dedicate this book to the most wonderful kids in the whole world, Troy Greene, Lindsey Babineaux, and Jon Miller.

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TKU:

# BACKSTORY



# TKU: BACKSTORY

--BEEN SPECULATED THAT WASHINGTON WAS ANNIHILATED BY AN ACCIDENTAL SOVIET LAUNCH, AND THAT LENINGRAD WAS SACRIFICED IN A "FAIRSAFE" PACT, BUT THAT'S STRICTLY--



--WHATEVER THE SPECIFICS, THE FACT REMAINS THAT AMERICA AND RUSSIA SOMEHOW MANAGED TO AVOID TOTAL NUCLEAR DESTRUCTION-- HOWEVER, TWO EVENTS PREVENTED THE SUPER-POWERS' STATUS QUO FROM CONTINUING --



--PRESIDENT'S "LOOKING GLASS" WAR OPS PLANE CRASHED, KILLING ALL ABOARD, AND LEAVING THE U.S. LEADERLESS--



--CHINESE INVADED RUSSIA, WHICH INVOLVED THE TWO COUNTRIES IN A PROTRACTED CONVENTIONAL WAR THAT PREOCCUPIED THEIR LEADERS FOR MONTHS--



--UNITED CORPORATE COUNCIL APPEARED, STEPPING IN TO "TEMPORARILY" FILL THE LEADERSHIP VOID. WITH ITS CALM ASSURANCES THAT IT ONLY WANTED TO REINSTATE "BUSINESS AS USUAL," THE UCC--

--U.N. UNDER HARSH CRITICISM FOR NOT AVERTING THE WAR, APPROVED THE UCC'S "PAX CORPUS" PEACE TREATY, THEN DISBANDED. THIS ENABLED THE UCC TO ESTABLISH THE CURRENT STATUS QUO--



--ULTIMATE CORPORATE TAKEOVER. WITH ITS MASSIVE ECONOMIC CLOUT AND HI-TECH PARAMILITARY ENFORCERS, THE REAM TEAM, THE UCC IS NOW THE GLOBAL SUPER-POWER--

"TIL "NEW RODINA" ATCKS IN, THAT IS."  
TAPES STOP.  
YEP I'M AFRAID THAT BOY MEANS TO FINISH WHAT HIS OL' MAN AND THE RUSSKIES STARTED, AND I DON'T KNOW IF WE CAN STOP 'IM."



# CHAPTER 2



HIS  
FLASH

FORWARD



Jay Bixley  
Atlanta Journal  
666 Peachtree St.  
Atlanta, GA  
30071

6/1/2023

Dear Mr. Patterson:

The following text was taken from the notes of famed historian Ayda Marick before her mysterious disappearance in 2023. These notes were eventually going to be compiled into a book, but, as you know, she vanished immediately before any contracts could be signed. Some speculate that the United Corporate Council was responsible for her fate, as she didn't paint a very flattering picture of them in her writings.

I would very much like to see her work finally see print. It offers a genuinely unique take on world events from 2005 to 2022 and I think it's high time that it is made available to the public. That's where you and your publishing company come in. I understand that it won't be easy to get such a book out to the masses. It's safe to say that the UCC will fight it at every turn and will likely play dirty in their effort to block it. Even still, this book could very well be the work that thrusts your company into the big time and cements your place in the publishing world.

All I ask at this point is that you consider my proposition. I have ut together a presentation made up of snippets from her text and a ew of the clippings that appeared throughout her numerous notebooks. I hope you find it all as illuminating and insightful as I did.

Sincerely,

Jay Bixley

changes, both politically and technologically. The resulting events that transpired during the years that followed altered nearly every aspect of our lives and continues to do so to this day.

Russian-born metallurgist Stephen Kartiakowsky (nee Karr) wasted no time in performing radical experiments on the element. He synthesized a zionite/zirconium alloy that was virtually indestructible by conventional means.

When at its strongest, this alloy could deflect even the most potent firearms without suffering so much as a scratch. What isn't commonly known, however, is that Karr managed to hide a key component from both the United States and Russia.

Even still, the Russian government filled in the missing pieces of the zionite "puzzle" within five years, fielding a revolutionary zionite battle pod (a suit of mechanized armor), which was used to crush the Islamic Revolt of 2011. This marked not only the first and last use of the

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: THE ZIONITE DISCOVERY

The now-infamous moon mission of 2007 saw the discovery of an intriguing element by Russian cosmonauts. Although officially labeled Extraterrestrial Element #7, the Russian refusenik scientist who discovered it dubbed the new mineral "zionite." This discovery served as the catalyst of numerous global

alloy in an armed conflict, but signaled beginning of the catastrophic 13 Hour War as well. The 13 Hour War In response to the deployment of the powerful battle pods, Iran retaliated by unleashing a low-yield nuclear device. This devastating strike laid waste to the mechanized armor in an instant, prompting the Russians to nuke Iran. The events that followed were unclear. The chain of effects happened so fast that they blended together, creating a maelstrom of tragedy.

In 2008, a group of renegade Native Americans released a virulent biochemical weapon in the heart of Manhattan, leading to the death of nearly eight million people. In what seems the final blow in a war that was begun with the colonization of America, a second-hand Chinese plague bomb spread a toxic virus that turned the streets of NYC into a vast tomb, which scientists say will be unlivable for at least seventy years. The group, known as the Ghost Dancers, led by activist William Blackhorse, claimed that U.S. corporations and the government had been storing nuclear waste and lethal chemicals on Indian reservations, causing cancer and disease, and culminating with the Deer River meltdown. The death toll from the bombing is still being tallied. Blackhorse and his group were rumored to have died when the bomb was set off, but this was never confirmed, and rumors persist that the Ghost Dancers continue to menace society.



Ground Zero 11 minutes after the attack- staff photo

“temporarily” fill the so-called leadership void. The UCC was a conglomerate of multinational cartels that evolved from the old military-industrial complex.

Still teetering from the war, the citizens of the world longed desperately for peace. Sensing this desire, the UCC promised them exactly what they wanted and positioned itself as the only solution to the world’s problems. Unfortunately, the populace bought into this charade completely.

The UCC rapidly moved in for the kill by sponsoring the Pax Corpus Treaty, a document that would set the stage for the ultimate corporate takeover. The humiliated UN approved the treaty and then quietly disbanded, handing its power over to the UCC.

This act was the final nail in the coffin for the free world.

## MUNICH FOOD RIOT MASSACRE

The 13 Hour War claimed much of Munich, Germany as a casualty, leaving the city mostly in ruins. This brought about severe food shortage issues among the survivors, which in turn resulted in rioting.

City after city was decimated by small-scale nuclear exchanges, including Washington, St. Petersburg, Tehran, Jerusalem, Beirut, Damascus, and a host of others. The entire world seemed swept up in some sort of vengeance-driven hysteria, leading to even more cities being wiped out by chemical or nuclear strikes; Johannesburg and Tokyo served as the most brutal examples of this hellish exchange.

In less than 13 hours, more than 30 million people died. Surprisingly, neither the U.S. nor Russia emptied their silos. Many experts believe that Washington was annihilated by an accidental Russian launch and that St. Petersburg was sacrificed in a failsafe pact, but the fact remains that both nations somehow managed to avoid total nuclear destruction.

Two events kept the status quo from continuing. First, the President’s “Looking Glass” war ops plane crashed, killing all aboard and leaving the U.S. leaderless. The second was the Chinese invasion of Russia, pitting the two countries in a protracted conventional war that preoccupied the two sides for months.

## RISE OF THE UCC

After the 13 Hour War concluded, the United Nations came under attack for its failure to prevent the mass devastation. The UN disbanded, and like a phoenix rising from the ashes, the United Corporate Council (or UCC) appeared, stepping in to



UCC General Committee in session —ADP Photo

“... as a not-unforeseen result of the Pax Corpus Treaty of 2012, most governments are now controlled, openly or clandestinely, by the United Corporate Council. The UCC, a union of huge multinational cartels that evolved from the old military-industrial complex, promised peace to a world still reeling from the limited nuclear exchange now known as the 13 Hour War. The Treaty outlawed open warfare, restricted weapons research, made mandatory military service illegal, and limited the possession of nuclear weapons to those of a defensive nature. To a global community that had just lost 30 million citizens, the Treaty seemed heaven-sent. It was approved unanimously by the United Nations in its last official session.

Hailed as the manifesto of a new Golden Age, the Treaty was in fact the catalyst for the ultimate corporate takeover. To solve the problem of who would enforce the Treaty, the “politically unbiased” UCC “volunteered” several of its major weapons conglomerates to organize their own legal mercenary army as a peace-keeping force. The acceptance of this paramilitary group paved the way for a massive transfer of political, economic, and military power from government to the private sector. This snowballed into the current state of worldwide anarchy, where all-out war is virtually impossible, but political assassination, economic blackmail, and corporate guerrilla warfare are every day occurrences.

Each major Corp has its own mercenary army, plus technologically-enhanced operatives (via bionics, battlesuits, bioengineering, etc.). These agents are used constantly in covert action against uncooperative nations and competitive companies. There is constant competition between Corps and governments to overcome their “Merc-Gaps”. Only these feuds and power struggles keep the UCC from gaining total control of the world’s economy. The Cold War has been revived, but the combatants are now divided by profit margin concerns much more concrete than the Iron Curtain ever was.”

*-Excerpt from the President’s Commission on World Affairs Report, 5/12/2020.*

# TOMORROW KNIGHTS

Germany's first squad of battle-armored military police, led by the highly capable Captain Wilhelm Stachel, was sent in to pacify the rioters. The events that followed were kept hush-hush, but what is known is that the troops opened fire on the rioters without physical provocation. Hundreds were killed or wounded and the entire unit was dishonorably discharged, though they served no jail time for their deeds.

## PROJECT: NEW RODINA

In 2022, KevKorp, the corporation run by the unscrupulous Kievyn Karr (son of the Russian metallurgist, Stephen Karr), wrecked the world economy to build "New Rodina" ("The New Motherland"), a 300 million metric ton asteroid that has been hollowed out and converted into a space colony. To top it off, Karr – who held the patent to the alloy his father created – developed an illegal zionite battlesuit and planned to build an entire army of them with the intent to pillage what he needed from the earth to complete New Rodina.

The United States government took the initiative to send a group of freelance mercs known as Starkweather Ltd. (aka the "Tomorrow Knights") into space in order to put a stop to Karr's devious plan. It was by no means an easy task, but the heroic group saved the day by ending Karr's life as well as sending New Rodina off to the outer reaches of the solar system. The asteroid will not return for some fifty more years.

Despite the far-reaching effects of this macabre world event, the UCC has managed to keep knowledge of the New Rodina incident away from the public at large. A huge cover story was used as for why KevKorp fell from grace as well as for how the economy plummeted so dramatically. The governments "in the know" haven't come forward yet, assuming (correctly) that the UCC would simply deny any accusations and claim that KevKorp was merely a rogue corporation.

## HERE AND NOW

KevKorp is now little more than a small corporation (run by Karr's "girl Friday", Ivonka Toth), a shadow of its former self. The world is still feeling the effects of Karr sucking the economy dry and this has caused a lot of upheaval; in short, everyone seems to be desperately grasping for what little is left. This often results in more than one faction trying to reach for the very same piece, which inevitably leads to conflict.

The UCC still controls the world's affairs and there appears to be no end in sight to all the corporate espionage, political maneuvering, and clandestine conflicts. In other words, it's back to anarchy as usual.

## OVERVIEW OF THE WORLD

## FLASH FORWARD

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- 2007:** Zionite discovered by Russian cosmonauts.
- 2008:** The Ghost Dancers release a toxic virus in Manhattan, killing almost 8 million people and ruining New York City for what scientists say will be 70+ years.
- 2011:** The tragic 13 Hour War devastates the world. A short while later, the Pax Corpus Treaty is signed, paving the way for the UCC to rise to full power.
- 2013:** Munich Food Riot Massacre occurs.
- 2022:** The New Rodina incident occurs, wrecking the world's economy.

## MAJOR GROUPS AND FACTIONS

The world of the Tomorrow Knights is full of organizations, corporations, and other groups. This section gives you a bit of information on some of them. More detailed information on these (and other) groups can be found in Chapter 5, though your Game Master might wish to keep some (or all) of that knowledge under wraps, so ask before taking a look.

### STARKWEATHER LTD. (AKA THE TOMORROW KNIGHTS)

Led by John Gabriel Starkweather, this freelance mercenary group was granted "privileged mission status" by the President of the United States, who then code named them The Tomorrow Knights.

Starkweather is an ex-Marine and an ex-CIA agent who was awarded a congressional medal of honor for his part in saving a space shuttle from destruction, but he quit the CIA to form Starkweather, Ltd.

Aside from Starkweather himself, the team is comprised of the mysterious Akiko Kuniyoshi, the cloned daredevil Felix A. Merrin, the French armor tech Isabelle "Izzy" La Salle, the battle pod pilot Edgar "Jock" Christian, and computer specialist Jesse Nelson.

### UNITED CORPORATION COUNCIL (UCC)

A conglomerate of the world's most powerful corporations. They have used the Pax Corpus Treaty to become more powerful than any nation's government.





## ***GAPO, INC.***

This mishmash corporation was created from the ranks of the Mafia and other criminal syndicates. While not the largest corporation in existence, they are known to possess a great deal of influence and can “get things done”, in spite of their endless infighting.

## ***SOCIAL STRUCTURE***

A lot has changed since the 13 Hour War plunged the world into a state of chaos, paranoia, and subterfuge. The rise of the UCC, and the signing of the Pax Corpus Treaty signaled a new chapter in history.

## ***THE CORPORATIONS***

The Corporations, namely the ones who boast UCC membership, are all-powerful. The UCC controls the governments of the world’s nations ... and keeps them on a very short leash. This control is sometimes blatant, but just as often, it is more subtle and less obvious.

The UCC-affiliated Corps possess their own merc armies as well as specialized technological operatives that fulfill their various needs. Furthermore, they can often call upon the might of the elite R.E.A.M. Team for truly sticky situations.

## ***THE GOVERNMENTS***

While the governments haven’t been disbanded by any means, they no longer enjoy the amount of influence that they once did. They are, when it comes down to it, secondary ruling bodies. Their corporate masters wield the real power and the governments claim whatever power the UCC chooses to give them.



## ***THE MERCENARIES***

Freelancer groups have become increasingly common in this age of corporate espionage and covert warfare. Each group hires itself out to various corporations, governments, or other such groups in return for a hefty fee. They do the work for organizations that either don’t wish to get their own hands dirty or simply don’t want anything traced back to them.

## ***THE CITIZENS***

Ten years after the 13 Hour War, most of the world’s population has adjusted to the new sense of normalcy. However, there is a lot of nostalgia for the days before daily rad counts, armored hoodlums, and corporate

## ***R.E.A.M. TEAM (AKA THE REAMERS)***

Short for Regulatory Enforcement Agents, Mechanized, these battlesuited agents act as UCC’s biomechanical corporate watchdogs and private army.

## ***KEVKORP***

Founded by Stephen and Alexa Kartiakowsky (later changed to Karr) as Kevtech, and later run by their son, Kievyn Karr. The company held the patent to the zionite process, and grew wealthy manufacturing parts for the aerospace industry. Kiev bankrupted KevKorp in order to create a new prototype zionite battle suit and fund the asteroid-based space colony, New Rodina. What was left of the company nearly died with Kievyn after he was plunged into outer space. It exists as a small company that still holds the patent and is run by Ivonka Toth, Karr’s former Girl Friday.

## ***DER TOTENWULFEN***

Der Totenwulfen is a band of battlesuit-clad mercenaries who aren’t terribly unlike the R.E.A.M. Team, except that they have no corporate affiliation. Rather, they sell their services to the highest bidder. Whereas Starkweather’s crew are known to have scruples, the members of Der Totenwulfen are ruthless, merciless, and morally ambivalent – it’s all about the payoff.

## ***YAKUZA SHOGUNATE***

The Yakuza Shogunate is an alliance of the Japanese Mafia with powerful local corporations. They came together after the 13 Hour War to undermine what was left of the legitimate government and instituted a return to feudal rule, with their leaders as the overlords.



## SLANG



- **5 by 5:** Loud and clear.
- **Amigo/amiga:** male and female friend, often used casually or ironically.
- **Biomech (AKA los hybrids, BoyGodz, uberkinders):** Crudely modified biowarriors used by third world countries as expendable anti-armor suicide troops.
- **Black tech (AKA black ops):** 1) outlawed biotechnology. 2) Unarmored, technologically-enhanced agents.
- **BodTech (AKA HarTar, bullet stoppers, pincushions):** Enhanced bodyguards.
- **Comprendo?:** Do you understand? Do you get it?
- **Data-Net:** Data network used by major organizations, such as the police.
- **Hi-Tech (adjective):** cool, awesome.
- **Lo-Tech (adjective):** not cool. Sometimes used to describe a person as a moron or loser.
- **Mech (AKA battle suit, battle armor, mechanized, rig, tin can, etc.):** generic colloquial term generally used to describe any powered armor with a human operator inside.
- **Mech tech (AKA MTs, mech men, leadheads, anti-mechs):** Highly modified anti-armor cyborgs.
- **Monitor:** A computer operator that watches over mercenaries operating in the field.
- **Op:** Operative, a mercenary that works in the field.
- **Prelim:** a preliminary report, akin to an executive summary.
- **Pudknocker:** mild insulting term for someone who is an idiot.
- **Reaming:** good, high quality — used in the same context as “cool”.
- **Rog (noun):** Roger, affirmative. To “have a rog”.
- **Rotate:** Get bent, stick it, sit and spin.
- **Screensucker:** derogative term for a monitor.
- **Seal it up:** mercenary term for “shut up”.
- **Seamless:** good, wonderful — used in the same context as “awesome”. Can also be “utterly seamless” and “seamless city”.
- **Sex Tech (AKA matas, marlenes, blue angels, sex bombs):** slang for spies that use sex as their primary tool of information gathering.
- **Suck:** Bad, terrible. Can be used as a noun, as in “this is a real suck”, as well as the more familiar use as a verb.
- **Tech it out:** similar to “check it out”, specifically used in regards to nice technology.
- **Ut!:** An exclamation of surprise.

overlords. Some citizens, such as Nadir’s Raiders, have tried to fight against the new corporate order, but most folks are just happy to make whatever living they can and stay off the corporate radar.

### SETTING THE STAGE

The Tomorrow Knights universe is a big place, layered with interesting details. But before you can effectively delve into all that, you’re going to need to become familiar with the basic genre and concepts that everything else in the setting is built upon.

#### GENRE LEANINGS

First and foremost, the Tomorrow Knights setting is near-future science fiction. That, of course, is a gross generalization, but it should help you get a handle on what kind of world you’re dealing with. Other genres could also be applied, such as cyberpunk, espionage, film noir, and even pulp. All these aspects mesh together to form a rich tapestry of this world-gone-to-hell.

### MAJOR SETTING CONCEPTS

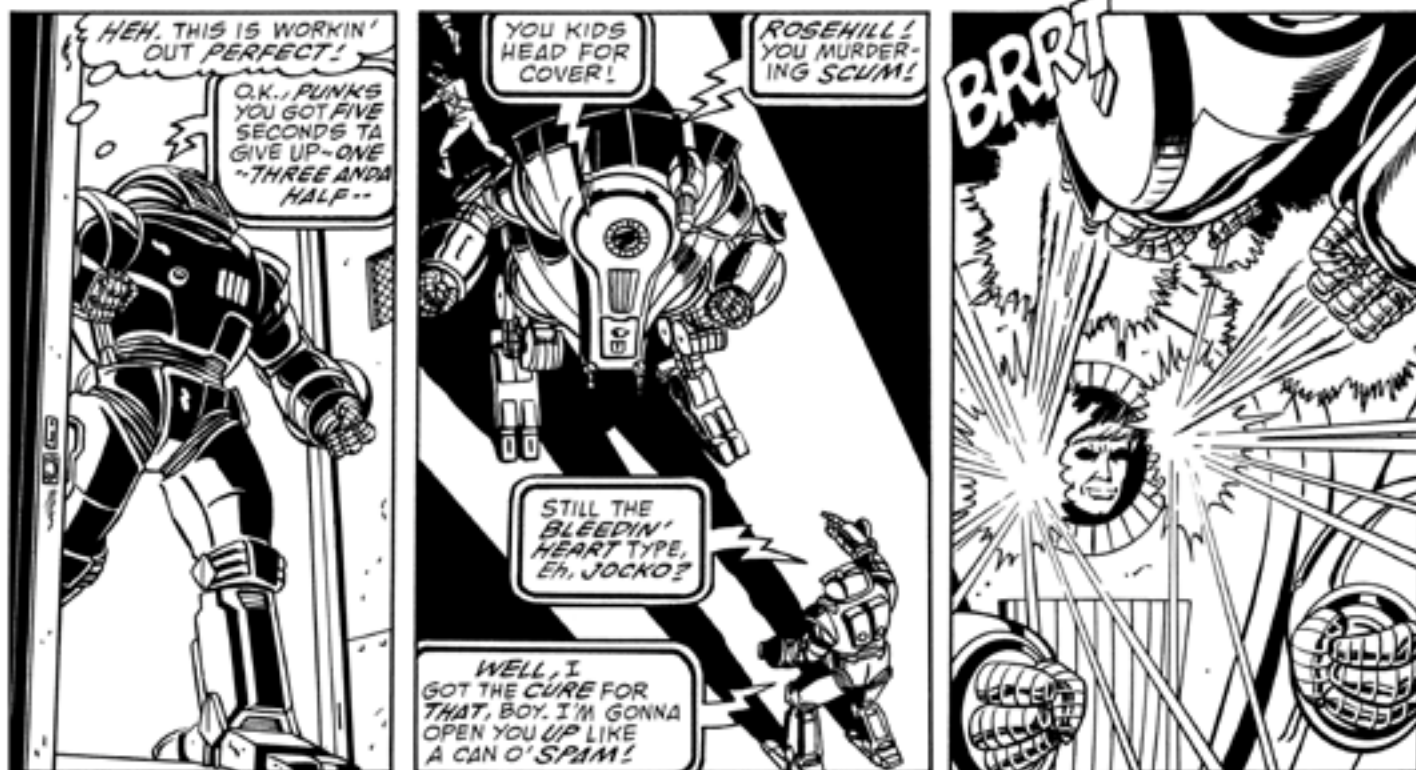
The Tomorrow Knights universe offers numerous themes and trappings that can be explored during the course of the game while still holding true to the comics it’s based on.

#### COLD, EMOTIONLESS CORPORATIONS

One prominent theme in the Tomorrow Knights comic was that the corporations now controlled much of the world, presenting a cold, uncaring sense of dictatorship over the common man. This makes the game primed for classic underdog stories about lowly mercs rising up to take on the Powers That Be.

#### MECHANIZED BATTLESUITS

In the TK universe, it’s not terribly uncommon to see operatives clad in mechanized assault armor or more traditional power armor. Fans of “mecha” fiction should rejoice, as there’s quite an emphasis on that kind of action in the setting.



### ***CINEMATIC (YET GRITTY) ACTION***

The action in the comics was highly dramatic, with heroes performing cinematic attacks and wildly imaginative evasions. At the same time, though, there was a deep sense of deadliness pervading nearly every

combat scene. This was established even in the very first issue, when the villains mercilessly slaughtered a batch of trouble-making teenagers!



### ***INVOLVED CHARACTERIZATION***

The characters found in the series were complex individuals with realistic personalities and foibles, from the heroes all the way down to the villains. One could

almost feel sympathy for the story's primary antagonist even though he's unquestionably a vile megalomaniac.