The Maret Family

The Maret Family is steeped in tradition and legacy. Their politics are rife with nepotism and the belief that your name matters more than your deeds. In battle, they favour large, slow moving, mechanical walkers protected by substantial ground forces. Piloting a Maret Walker requires forming a spiritual bond with the machine, and powering it with your own soul. As such, Walker Pilots are revered as heroes and even demi-gods.

- Mechanized Walkers
- History
- The Great Factories
- Social Castes of Maret

Mechanized Walkers

Mechanized Walkers of the Maret family come in two variations: Quadrupedal and Bipedal. Quads tend to be enormous in size, but relatively slow due to their bulk. They make up for this by being able to wield huge armories of mounted weapons and are a force unto themselves. Biped Walkers are usually smaller than Quads, and though they can move slightly faster their main benefit is that they are easier, and cheaper, to construct.

Acacia - Standing anywhere between 3 and 5 meters, Acacia walkers are the most numerous among the Maret forces. They rarely have volatile personalities and often are excited to form a bond with a pilot.

Redwood - Standing between 8 - 12 meters tall, Redwood walkers were once the standard Maret walker, but the expense in creating a Biped walker of such a height, along with the generally abrasive and antagonistic personality they tended towards meant that the Redwoods fell out of favour for most Maret pilots and only a few remain active.

Karst - The original Quad walker, standing at a respectable 5 meters in height, is a staple of the Maret's famous "rolling wave" assault. Karsts (and their pilots) are a commanding presence on the battlefield and many consider it an honour to serve alongside their pilots.

Mesa - A more recent design, the Mesas are usually no more than 10 meters at their highest point but take up a lot of horizontal space. They were a controversial step, and the first group were thought to be unusable, as no pilots were able to connect. That is, until it was discovered the monumental personalities contained within the machines required incredibly specialized training and fortitude just to talk with the machine. Mesa pilots are the most revered among the walker pilots for this reason.

History

The official story on how the Maret family came to use Walkers as their primary military is that several hundred years ago, a Patriarch named Lorenzo Maret was trying to create a war machine to combat the Laguerre tanks (this fact is highly opposed by Laguerre who created their tanks to oppose the Maret walkers). Unable to find something of significant enough power he prayed to the Lord Sovereign and the Machine he was working on answered him. Thus the first pilot/walker relationship occurred. The voice in the machine instructed him on how to create the Walker Cores and how to connect a pilot to them to bring the walker "to life" in order to accomplish physical feats regular machines would never be capable of.

Since then, Walkers have been a staple of Maret society, functioning in civilian and military roles (though every Walker pilot is a commanding officer in some respect).

Personalities

The specifics of Walker Personalities are still mostly a mystery, even to the Maret. The wide belief is that they are personifications of the Lord Sovereign who guides each pilot in different ways. Others believe they are simply a gift given by the Lord Sovereign as proof of a Pilot's worthiness. Ultimately, there remains no consistent answer, and the personalities themselves have offered no clear answers.

When a pilot first connects to a walker, they must contend with the personality within. For most pilots this introduction takes several hours at minimum, and a connection is not always guaranteed. Indeed, if the pilot is unable to contact the personality of the Walker they often are required to go through their pilot training a second time (which can take multiple years to complete).

Most pilots describe a personality connection like a second set of emotions coursing through their body, urging them towards goals and actions. Some claim to hear whispered words or, very rarely, even a clear voice. Pilots need to learn to understand the personality within the Walker before they can properly work with it. Without the personality, it is little more than a cumbersome machine, but when Pilot and Walker have found their consensus, the machine becomes a tool of destruction and beauty.

Most Walker personalities are more than happy to work together with their pilot, once a connection has been made. Mesa Walkers, on the other hand, are a different story. When the Mesa was first created, it was not considered that the personality would be any different than the others, until the first pilot to attempt a connection with the machine was killed within minutes. The discovery stunned the Maret family and several months of deliberation took place before another pilot was found to try again. More precautions were taken than usual, but ultimately it was impossible to know what had happened. The new pilot, a woman by the name of Eliza Beret von Maret was a veteran Walker user who had been urged by her own Karst walker to attempt a connection with the Mesa.

Eliza sat upon the Mesa's pilot seat for days. Her retainers kept her fed and watered, but she sat silently until, after ten days had passed, her eyes opened and the Mesa came to life. Unlike other Walkers, the personality within the Mesa was immense. A dark sea of emotion and drive, unwilling to bend to even the strongest of will. Eliza discovered that it could be reasoned with, but was unwilling to take a back seat (figuratively speaking). Moreso than other walkers, when a pilot bonds with a Mesa, the bond is unbreakable. Eliza was never quite the same again. The Mesa, unlike the other Walkers, followed her out of the machine. The ocean was behind her eyes from then on, always urging for release. Though she was able to leave the seat, more and more often she refused, and the last years of her life were spent entirely within the pilots seat. When she finally passed, her Mesa refused to move for nearly a decade, rejecting three pilots and killing one before another was finally able to take up the mantle.

New Mesas are still made, and pilots continue to try to connect with them. Despite the risks, the rewards and honour that come with being the one chosen by a Mesa are more than enough to tempt anyone.

History

Recent History

The Maret family's history books detail the family's ties to the inner circle of the Lord Sovereign. Even though a thousand years have passed since his time, this knowledge has shaped all of the family's decisions. In fact it was due to this knowledge that a Maret decided to "unite the world once more" bringing several houses under their banner before the others felt threatened enough to ally together against them, thus beginning the second Great War.

The actions of this Maret of course have been denounced publicly and the perpetrating family stripped of honour, but the knowledge still lies fresh in the minds of many; that Maret believes they own the world.

Since the second Great War Maret has worked tirelessly to repair their good name, unfortunately their constant conflicts with Laguerre often make it difficult to create lasting bonds with other families. No one wants to pick a side between Maret and Laguerre and so most simply keep a safe distance.

Maret's lands are by far the largest, and their resources seemingly endless. They have perfected the mass production of simple and effective tools and weapons. Money flows freely into their territories as they pump out a constant stream of firearms, motors, and all other industrial necessities. While they lack the beauty and precision of other manufacturers, no one can beat out Maret for quantity and reliability. As such, much of the world uses their products in their day to day life. A common phrase in the other territories is "The World Runs on Maret".

The Great Factories

Since Maret first began constructing Walkers, mountains worth of resources were poured into their creation. They began designing buildings, towns, and other infrastructure around the factories themselves. Whole towns were dedicated to the creation of various parts of the Walkers while others were founded around the yards and warehouses that stored surplus and other goods for trading.

As Maret grew, so did its need for more Walkers and so the towns spread further. Forests were laid low and the beautiful rolling hills at the base of the mountains soon became covered in industry.

Now, the majority of Maret territory is covered by great stretches of rusting metal buildings. Thousands upon thousands of houses crammed into multi-layered shanty towns around the factories that belch black smoke into the air. Nomadic gangs roam the barren wastes between towns, riding on patched together vehicles and the large insect-like creatures that call these empty plains home.

Within the mountains, thousands of tunnels connect various underground mining towns, dedicated to procuring the resources Maret so desperately need.

Social Castes of Maret

Citizens

Maret Citizens are those born outside of Noble status, which is most of them. Citizens are expected to find work either in the mines or factories. Other jobs that you would expect to see in a society, ie. grocer, baker, tailor, etc, are all owned by the Maret Nobles and run by various Military branches. Food, water, clothes, and other basic needs and entertainments, are provided at low or no cost to citizens at various frequencies.

Lets take a family of four as an example. Assuming both parents are working on one of the more lucrative (and dangerous) mining operations, they can expect to bring home between 2-4 silver a month. Food and Water Rations are supplied weekly: a loaf of bread, 3 pounds of meat (usually pork or chicken) Given that their hard work is recognized by higher authority they may be granted allowance to purchase extra food or clothes.

Military

Citizens may, every two years, take a rigorous testing program to determine if they are eligible for Military Service. Those who pass enter the Maret Reserves and are given a position at one of the many "businesses" run by the Maret nobility. Reservists, and those who pursue deeper military careers, receive Food and Water rations on request (barring minimal stipulations) and as such being a reservist is a coveted job among Maret citizenry. In addition, a reservist can expect to receive between 3-7 silver per month on top of the provided amenities.

Reservists who are not satisfied with a life running a bakery can enter full military service at any time, becoming a Private in the Maret Forces. Choosing this life requires a minimum of 2 years to be served under the new rank, after which the private can choose to return to reservist life, or can then begin to climb military ranks as their leadership sees fit. Career military members are granted many things that would mostly be restricted to the lavish lifestyles of nobility, including a private home for any family they might have.

Nobility

Nobles are determined by birth. Anyone born into a family of nobility, is considered to be a noble, and anyone not born to nobility can never achieve it, even through marriage (which is a rare occurrence at best). Barring the Knights that pilot the Walkers, most nobility rarely leave their mountain homes. They do their dealings through servants and spies, exchanging resources and "businesses" like currency while enjoying the safety of heavy steel doors and maze-like hallways.