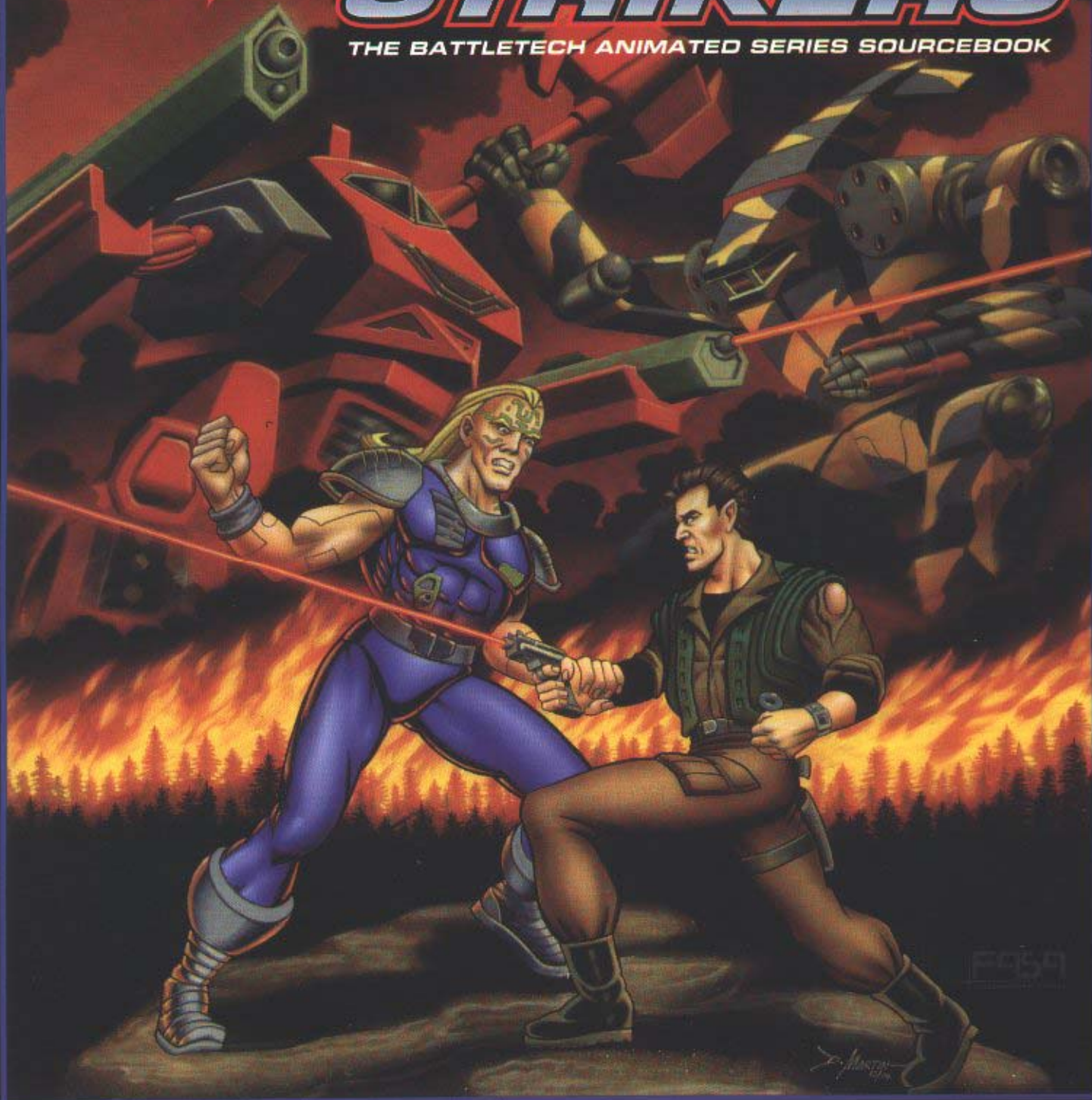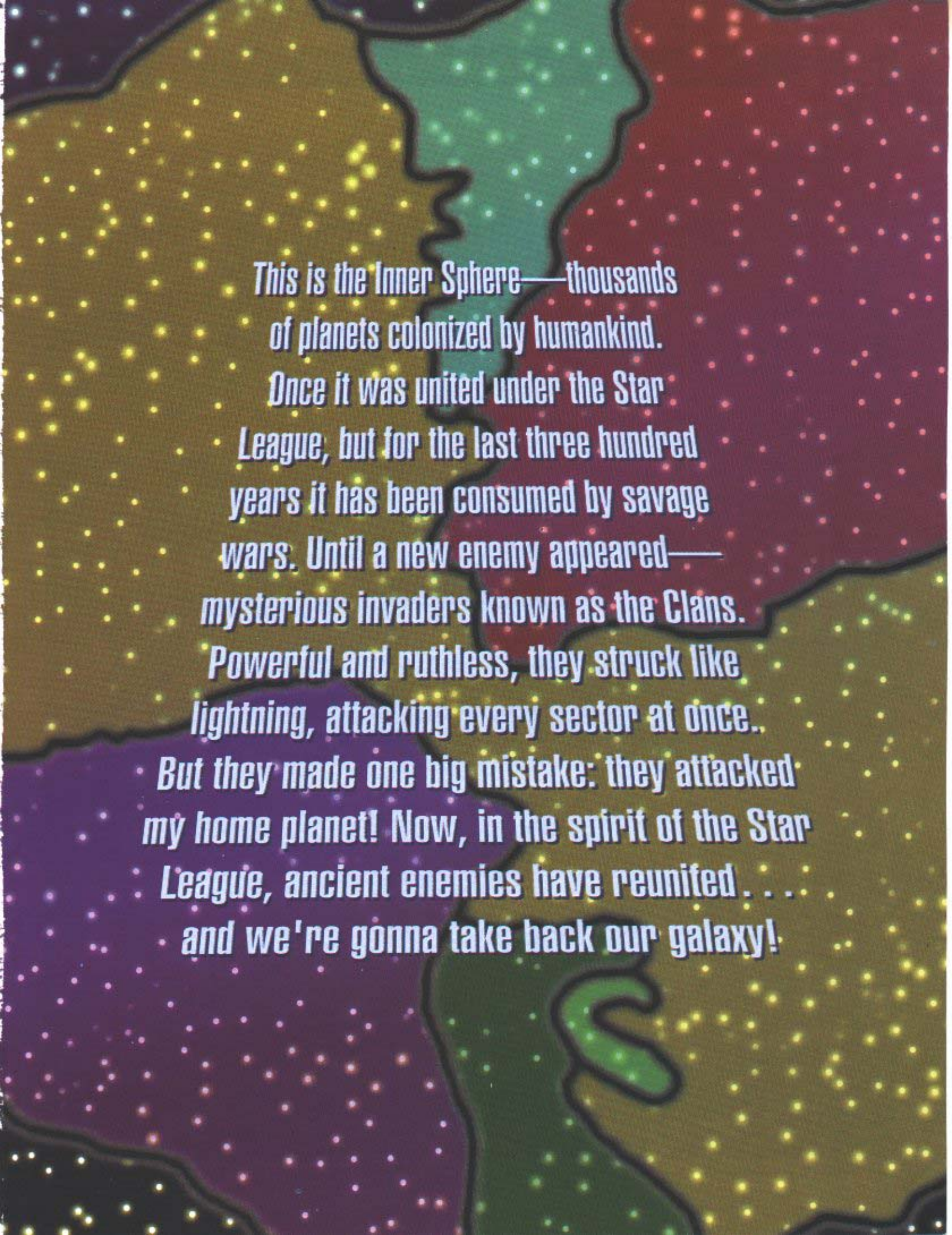1687

BATTLETECH®

1st S☉MERSET STRIKERS ™

THE BATTLETECH ANIMATED SERIES SOURCEBOOK

This is the Inner Sphere——thousands
of planets colonized by humankind.
Once it was united under the Star
League, but for the last three hundred
years it has been consumed by savage
wars. Until a new enemy appeared——
mysterious invaders known as the Clans.
Powerful and ruthless, they struck like
lightning, attacking every sector at once.
But they made one big mistake: they attacked
my home planet! Now, in the spirit of the Star
League, ancient enemies have reunited. . . .
and we're gonna take back our galaxy!

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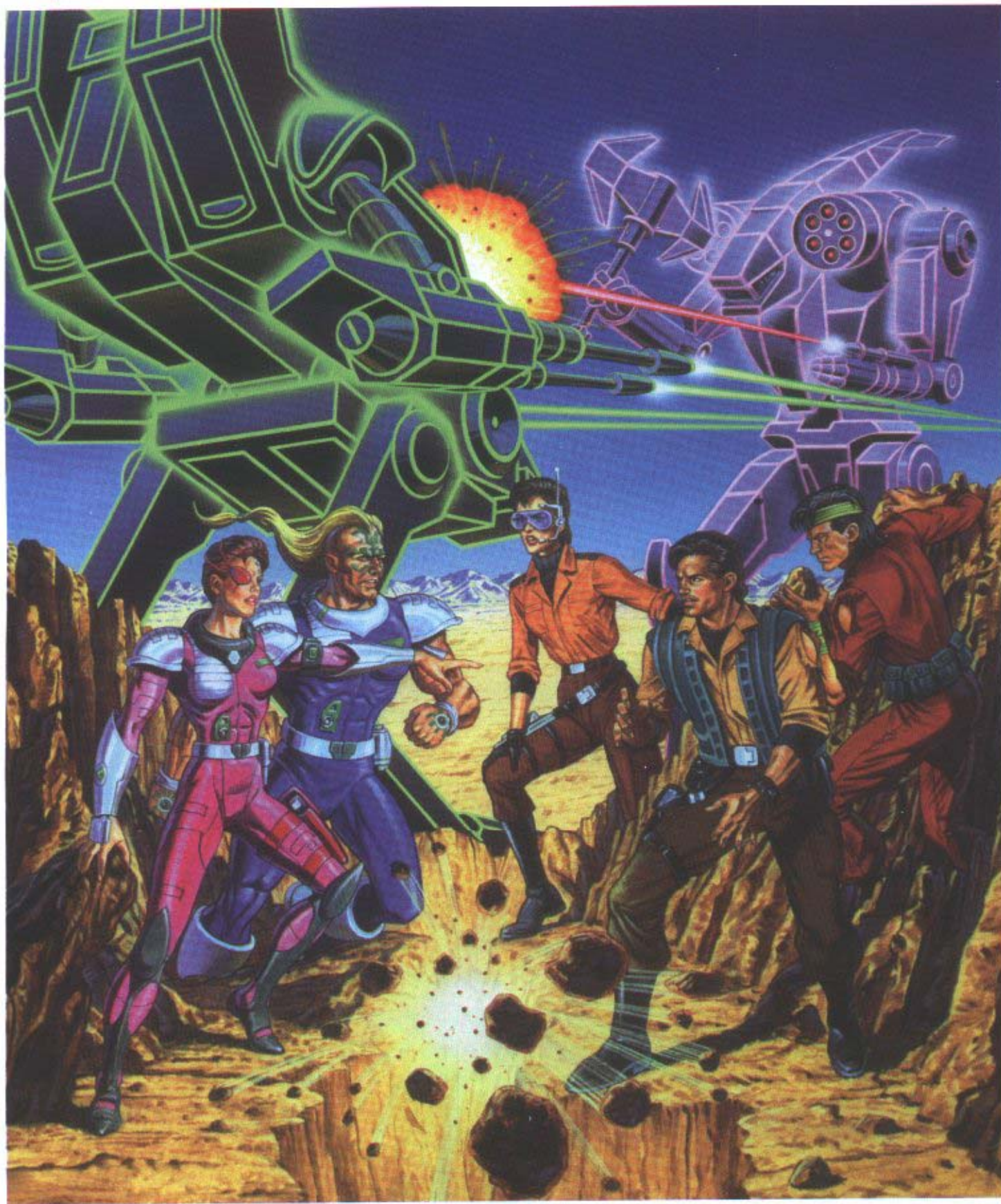Mike Nielsen
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INTRODUCTION

It is the year 3050. Man now inhabits the stars, but he has taken his warlike nature with him. The thousands of worlds radiating out from Sol, first sun of the human race, were once bound together in a Star League that fostered technology, expansion, and prosperity for all. Led by the illustrious Cameron family, the Star League endured for 250 years, until treachery brought it down.

For twelve long years, General Aleksandr Kerensky led the Star League Defense Forces in a bitter battle against the usurper of the Cameron Throne. The Star League Army won, but the fragile unity between the League's interstellar nations had been damaged beyond repair. With the fall of the League in 2781, a Dark Age descended, as each of the five surviving star empires began warring for dominion. Unable to stem the tide of conflict, General Kerensky led his army out of the Inner Sphere in the epic journey known as the Exodus, hoping to found a new Star League somewhere beyond known space.

With the last defenders of the Star League gone, war raged unchecked throughout the Inner Sphere. The leaders of the five great star empires styled themselves the Successor Lords of Houses Davion, Kurita, Steiner, Liao, and Marik. The devastating battles they have fought among themselves almost continuously for nearly three centuries came to be called the Succession Wars. To this day, none of the five Successor Lords has decisively triumphed and become supreme over the others. For generations, all of them regarded each other as bitter enemies, but mutual hatred burned hottest between House Kurita of the Draconis Combine and the rulers of the realms that would one day become the Federated Commonwealth.

To fight the Succession Wars, the Successor Lords used armies of BattleMechs—gigantic, vaguely humanoid battle machines bristling with lasers, particle projection cannons, long- and short-range missile launchers, autocannons, and machine guns. The Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth fought battle after bloody battle against the Draconis Combine, and millions died in the conquest and reconquest of a handful of planets. As the BattleMechs ruled the battlefields, so intrigue and plots ruled the courts of the Inner Sphere, as each ruler sought to win by deceit what he could not achieve through force.

That bloody history appeared to change when Prince Hanse Davion of the Federated Suns married Melissa Steiner, heir to the Lyran Commonwealth. Though the marriage triggered the Fourth Succession War, that cruel conflict seemed to be the last gasp of a dying age of civil war in the Inner Sphere. The union of the Successor States' strongest military and economic powers created the Federated Commonwealth, a vast new realm possessing the potential power to found a new Star League. With the birth of Prince Victor Steiner-Davion, the first child of the Steiner-Davion dynasty, the historic Federated Commonwealth seemed destined to light the way toward a new and blessed unity among the star-spanning empires of the war-torn Inner Sphere ... until Fate intervened.

Even as the first generation of Steiner-Davions grew to adulthood, apocalypse was approaching. Beyond the Periphery, the boundary of known space, a people born and bred to war prepared to launch an invasion that would crush the Inner Sphere and the dreams of a Steiner-Davion Star League with it.

In 3049, an unknown enemy attacked the Free Rasalhague Republic—a small nation that had once been part of the Draconis Combine—using BattleMechs of awesome destructive power. The invaders took world after world, conquering nearly all of the Republic in brutal, lightning strikes. Having devoured Free Rasalhague, they turned their war machines against the Draconis Combine and the Federated Commonwealth. Frightened citizens in the war zone believed them a race of alien barbarians come to conquer humanity. The unknown marauders had indeed come to conquer humanity, but they were not aliens. They were the Clans, warrior descendants of the legendary Aleksandr Kerensky's vanished Star League Army. Kerensky's children had returned to the Inner Sphere to purify it with fire and sword.

THE 1ST SOMERSET STRIKERS

The **1st Somerset Strikers** is a companion to the **BattleTech** animated series. It follows the adventures of Major Adam Steiner and the 1st Somerset Strikers, a freelance military unit on a mission to fight the Clan invaders and liberate Major Steiner's homeworld

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INTELLIGENCE SECRETARIAT INTERNAL DOCUMENT NO. 329/649e

INTELLIGENCE TRAINING MANUAL

The Federated Commonwealth Intelligence Secretariat (MI7) oversees the operations of the Department of Military Intelligence (DMI) and the civilian Ministry of Information, Intelligence and Operations (MIIO). MI7, under the direction of the Intelligence Secretary, informs both intelligence branches of all planned operations, general intentions and goals and coordinates all joint operations. MI7 answers directly to the Archon. In addition, the Intelligence Secretary acts as the Archon's principal intelligence advisor.

The DMI is primarily responsible for all foreign espionage and military intelligence. The department is divided into the following seven branches: MI1 (Command), MI2 (Analysis and Speculation), MI3 (Electronic Information Gathering), MI4 (Covert Operations), MI5 (Counterinsurgency), MI6 (Special Forces), and MI7 (Intelligence Secretariat).

The MIIO is primarily responsible for internal intelligence affairs, although it shares many of the DMI's responsibilities as well. The MIIO is divided into the following branches: Information-gathering Services, Covert Operations, Bureau of Internal Investigation, Counterintelligence, and Regional Operations. A central Command Group oversees MIIO operations.

EXCERPT FROM ISF TRAINING MANUAL

In 2300 our Founder, Shiro Kurita of New Samarkand, began a military campaign to conquer the worlds surrounding that planet. Recognizing the need for intelligence on enemy militaries, he formed an intelligence corps using agents drawn from his army. That corps proved instrumental in the success of Shiro Kurita's campaign, and it helped our Founder to build the proud and glorious nation that he named the Draconis Combine. As the Combine's first Coordinator, a grateful Shiro Kurita expanded his fledgling intelligence organization into what has become the Internal Security Force—the ISF.

Though the Coordinator—at present Takashi Kurita, long may he reign—formally commands the ISF, the sheer size of this agency and the number of operations conducted by it prohibit the Coordinator from personally overseeing the agency. Personal management of the ISF falls to the director, currently Subhash Indrahar. In his honored position, Director Indrahar is responsible for all ISF policy decisions, mission assignments, and security in the realm.

A team of five high-level operatives has the honor of aiding the director in his duties. In the event of the director's death, these operatives administer the agency until the Coordinator approves a new director. Additionally, each operative oversees one of the ISF's five divisions: Covert Operations, Internal Security, Voice of the Dragon, Metsuke, and Special Units.

The Covert Operations division handles all foreign and domestic espionage activities. The Internal Security division detects and eliminates foreign agents operating in the Combine, and also monitors and re-educates the Combine's few dissident subjects. The Voice of the Dragon, the public-information arm of the Combine government, works closely with the Metsuke, which monitors all information entering into and disseminating from the realm.

The Special Units division is comprised of the Combine's Draconis Elite Strike Teams (DESTs). These teams represent some of the most highly skilled covert units operating today. Every DEST member undergoes years of rigorous training in a variety of areas, ranging from the ancient art of ninjutsu to BattleMech operations. All exhibit expert-level skills in piloting, armed and unarmed combat, and surveillance techniques.

In addition to performing the standard espionage duties of a House intelligence service, the ISF acts as a weapon in the hand of the Coordinator to safeguard the realm from internal enemies. In those rare instances where the good of the Combine requires it, the ISF even plays an active role in determining the succession of Kurita leaders.

THE INNER SPHERE
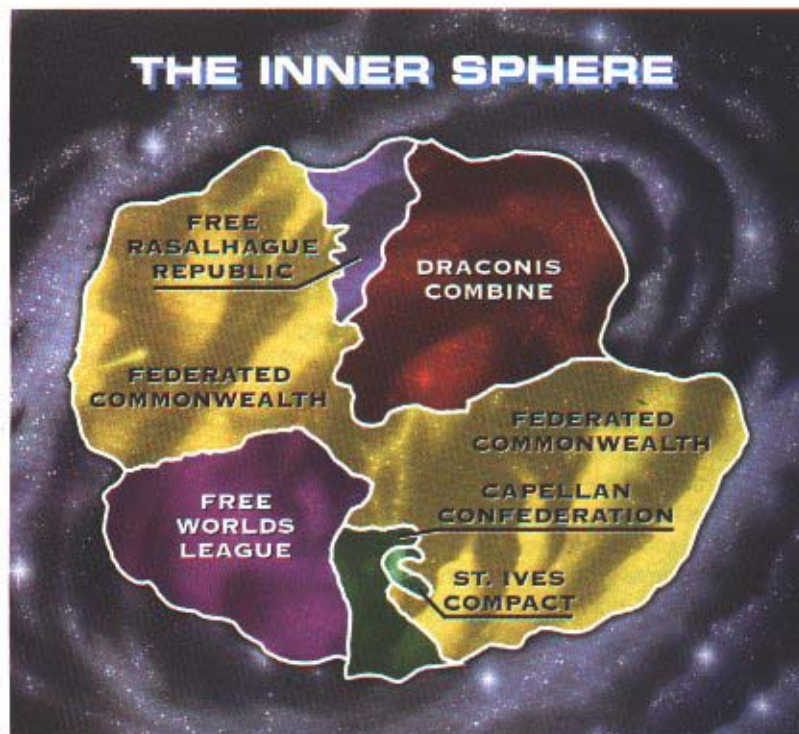
of Somerset from the clutches of Clan Jade Falcon. This sourcebook includes a comprehensive guide to the first season's exciting episodes; a complete cast of characters printed in full color; detailed information, game rules, and color sketches of the machines, weapons, and other technology used in the series; and **BattleTech** game scenarios based on the series episodes. The scenarios and episode guide are based on the original scripts and storyboards, and so certain details may differ slightly from the broadcast episodes.

The 1st Somerset Strikers introduces fans of the series to the **BattleTech** game and universe, and allows **BattleTech** players to play out the thrilling events of the **BattleTech** animated show. New fans and experienced players alike get an in-depth look at the **BattleTech** animated series, including original artwork and designers' notes on how the popular **BattleTech** game became an exciting work of animation.

WHAT IS BATTLETECH?

The background and technology for the **BattleTech** animated series comes from the **BattleTech** game first published more than ten years ago. Over the past decade, the fiction surrounding the game has grown and evolved; the dozens of **BattleTech** novels and sourcebooks in print describe a richly detailed universe of dark intrigue and unending war.

BattleTech is a board game that pits 'Mech against 'Mech on the war-torn battlefields of the Inner Sphere. Each player controls one or more BattleMechs, deciding how each 'Mech moves, when to fire its weapons, and at what targets. The wide variety of weapons, 'Mechs, and mapsheets available mean that no two battles are exactly alike. The outcome of each battle is determined by the players' decisions combined with the luck of the dice.
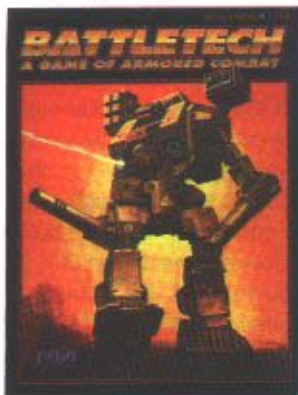
BATTLETECH, THIRD EDITION

Players new to the **BattleTech** game system should begin with **BattleTech, Third Edition**. This boxed set contains everything you need to play, including mapsheets, plastic miniatures, and dice. The rules are presented in a clear and easy-to-read format that teaches you the game as you play. The rulebook introduces players to the Inner Sphere of the year 3025 and describes BattleMech technology in detail.
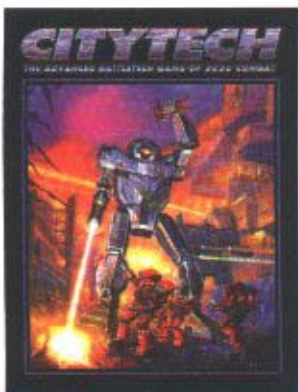
CITYTECH, SECOND EDITION

The all-new **CityTech, Second Edition**, is the **BattleTech** game for the intermediate player. Like **BattleTech, Third Edition**, **CityTech** is a stand-alone boxed set that includes everything you need to play. **CityTech** updates the rules to include the technology available in 3050 to both the Inner Sphere and the Clan invaders. It also expands the scope of the game, with rules for infantry, armored vehicles, and urban combat.

BATTLETECH COMPENDIUM: THE RULES OF WARFARE

BattleTech Compendium: The Rules of Warfare is the single-source rulebook for advanced **BattleTech** players. It includes basic **BattleTech** and **CityTech** rules, as well as special rules for artillery, hostile environments, air and naval forces, and much more. This deluxe hardback book is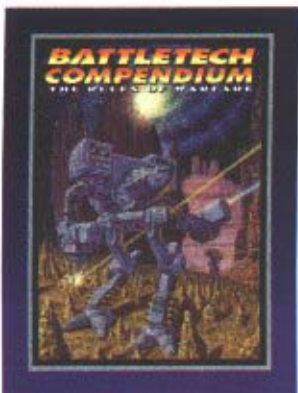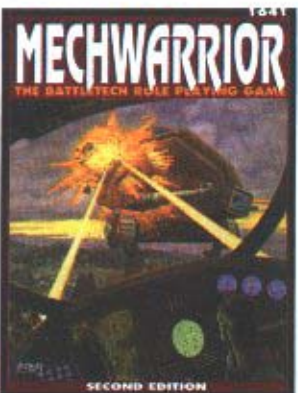 lavishly illustrated, and includes fictional text and a full-color map that paint a complete picture of the Inner Sphere of 3057.

MECHWARRIOR, SECOND EDITION

You can practically climb into the cockpit and live the life of a 'Mech jock when you play **MechWarrior, Second Edition**. While the other **BattleTech** games focus on the machines of war, **MechWarrior** explores the human side, challenging you to take on the imaginary role of a character in the **BattleTech** universe. You can create your own unique character, choosing from roles such as MechWarrior, aerojock, technician, free trader, or even a member of the invading Clans.

COMSTAR CLASSIFIED REPORT

ALPHA LEVEL CLEARANCE
BTP—188—DTC

FROM: Anastasius Focht, Precentor Martial of ComStar, Hilton Head Island, Terra
TO: All ROM field agents and related ComStar personnel
RE: Investigating the Clans

The arrival of a new and dangerous enemy in the Inner Sphere poses a greater threat to the peoples of all the Successor States than the bloody centuries of the Succession Wars. These invaders who call themselves the Clans are more than a match for every Inner Sphere realm militarily—their war machines move faster, take more punishment, and deliver far more devastating firepower than anything we have ever seen. The battle recordings that various ComStar personnel have smuggled out to us from captured planets prove the futility of combat against them, at least at this point. We have only one hope of defeating them or even battling them to a standstill. We must gather as much information about them as possible so that we can discover their weaknesses and exploit them.

To that end, I hereby charge all ComStar ROM operatives and related personnel to undertake the following mission: go among the Clans, openly or covertly, and learn whatever you can. Learn about their military strength, their weapons, their organization, their ways of thinking, their perceptions of their place in the universe. This mission has priority over every other surveillance mission and covert operation previously assigned.

Our ROM intelligence network stretches into every corner of the Inner Sphere, and ever since its inception centuries ago has had a single defining mission: to protect ComStar and the Inner Sphere from harm so that one day we may restore the glorious Star League. It is time to turn our unparalleled intelligence-gathering resources toward understanding the deadliest foe we have ever faced. With our control over the hyperpulse generator network across all the Successor States, ComStar alone can collect and disperse potentially vital information fast enough to be of use against the Clans. I urge you all not to fail in your duty—the survival of the Inner Sphere may depend on it.

PROLOGUE

Of all the enmities between the various Successor States of the war-torn Inner Sphere, none is as bitter or as long lasting as the ongoing feud between the Draconis Combine and the Federated Commonwealth. Even before the union of the Lyran Commonwealth and the Federated Suns into a single, vast state, the Draconis Combine fought many a war of conquest against both enemy nations. With the formation of the Federated Commonwealth in 3028, the Draconis Combine found a compelling new reason to fight: fear that the newfound power of its ancient foes would enable the united Commonwealth to conquer the entire Inner Sphere and re-establish the long-lost Star League under Steiner-Davion rule.

When the Fourth Succession War ended in 3029, the Draconis Combine had lost fifty star systems, many of them to the Federated Commonwealth. The fact that the Combine had also conquered several Commonwealth worlds was no consolation for the territory they had lost, especially since the high command of the Combine military knew that only the brilliance of the Coordinator's son, Theodore Kurita, had saved the realm from disaster. In 3030, Coordinator Takashi Kurita grudgingly acknowledged Theodore's invaluable contribution to the war effort by naming him Gunji no Kanrei, Deputy of Military Affairs. The new Kanrei used his position to revamp the Draconis Combine Mustered Soldiery, rebuilding the badly battered elite Genyosha and Ryuken regiments and replacing the tradition of preferment through social rank with advancement by merit.

In addition to revamping the military, Theodore strengthened his realm by adroit political maneuvering. In 3034, he acquiesced to the formation of the Free Rasalhague Republic, allowing several Combine star systems to secede from his own realm. Though to some this move looked like a loss for the Combine, it created a buffer state between the Combine and the Lyran half of the Federated Commonwealth; just as importantly, from the Combine's point of view, the formation of the new nation cost the Lyran enemy almost all the worlds they had taken from the Combine during the Fourth Succession War. Rumors persist that Theodore also received another military gain by freeing Rasalhague; in a supposed "secret deal" with the Primus of ComStar, Theodore gave his support for the Free Rasalhague Republic in exchange for several Star League-era BattleMechs. These BattleMechs served the Combine well in the brief but hard-fought War of 3039, launched by Prince Hanse Davion in a futile attempt to take back worlds lost to the Combine during the Fourth Succession War. By using his new, eminently superior BattleMechs and stretching his troops to the limit, Theodore beat back the powerful Federated Commonwealth military and launched a strong counteroffensive that came close to capturing the capitol of the Commonwealth's Draconis March. This offensive, coupled with a commando raid on a meeting of the Steiner high command that killed many top Lyran officers, forced the Steiner-Davion military to end the conflict after a scant six months of fighting.

In the decade since the end of the War of 3039, the Draconis Combine and the Federated Commonwealth have kept a wary eye on each other, reluctant to start another conflict yet fearful of attack. In the end, all their preparations for war against each other would prove virtually worthless against the new enemy that both states were soon to face.

RISE OF THE CLANS

Though many in the Inner Sphere believe the Clans to be an alien race, they are actually the descendants of members of the Star League Defense Force who fled the Inner Sphere after the collapse of the Star League nearly 300 years ago. Determined to rebuild their beloved Star League elsewhere, these elite soldiers traveled far away from the crumbling Inner Sphere in an epic journey that came to be called the Exodus. In their descendants, that determination has translated into a frightening imperative—to conquer the Inner Sphere and found their own version of the Star League, imposing their by-now utterly alien society on all the peoples of the Successor States.

When the forebears of the Clans first made planetfall on the five worlds that they called the Pentagon, they welcomed the chance to build a society very much like the one they had left—but without the nationlistic, ethnic, and political conflicts that had torn the Inner Sphere apart. Within two decades, however, the settlers' dream of a society built on mutual respect and tolerance had fallen victim to old hatreds and a savage civil war. Nicholas Kerensky—son of the great General Aleksandr Kerensky, who had led the Exodus—saw the human need for war as insatiable, and designed a society in which hatred and conflict could be controlled and limited through a system of social castes and ritualized, honor-driven combat. He then led his supporters in a second Exodus to the world of Strana Mechty, where he and his followers put his new society—the Clans— into practice.

Born and bred to war, the Clans glorified it, but only within the framework of rituals they recognized as "honorable." Only those with the greatest skills and natural ability were allowed to practice the art of warfare, and everyone else served society in the capacity for which they were innately best suited. Each individual's place in the Clans was determined by constant, rigorous testing. The first great achievement of this new society—of its warriors in particular—was the retaking of the Pentagon worlds. With overwhelming force, the Clans swiftly ended the civil war and imposed their new order upon the grateful survivors.

Though Nicholas had intended all the castes to serve Clan society as a whole, over the years the importance of the warrior caste grew until everything in Clan society became geared toward enhancing its power and prestige. Generations of selective breeding, reinforced by constant testing, have made Clan "truebirths" the ultimate soldiers. Clan truebirths are genetically engineered, and their children are born and raised in groups called "sibling companies," or "sibkos." From the moment of birth, sibko children are tested and trained in battle and strategy. Those found unfit are weeded out, relegated to one of the four lesser Clan castes in order to ensure the purity of the warrior caste. Lesser "freebirths," born and raised by natural parents, can become warriors, but they are deemed imperfect by nature and therefore scorned by their truebirth fellow warriors. Rarely allowed to honor themselves in battle, freebirth warriors usually mop up and hold planets conquered by truebirths.

The right to have one's genes added to the truebirth processing pool is an honor a Clan warrior fights for all his life, and it is designated by the possession of a surname—known among the Clans as a "Bloodname." Any major failure by a Clan warrior, Bloodnamed or not, means that his or her genes are not worthy to be passed on to future generations. Because the Clans believe that each generation is superior to the one that preceded it, they have no respect for old age. Older warriors are assumed to have "lost their edge," and they are either assigned to raising and training the new generation of sibkos or sent to serve in dangerous areas as cannon fodder.

Highly skilled in combat, possessing BattleMechs and weaponry more powerful than anything the Inner Sphere has ever known, and convinced that any way of life different from their own is a symptom of evil to be eradicated, the Clans are the most dangerous enemy the Inner Sphere has ever faced. Only by setting aside their long history of suspicion and strife to fight as allies can the Successor States hope to prevail against the Clan threat.

COMSTAR/ROM ACTIVE ARCHIVE FILE NO. 541783X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE BIDDING FOR SOMERSET, 4 JULY 3049 ALPHA LEVEL CLEARANCE

Chistu: I am Galaxy Commander Vandervahn Chistu, commander of the Jade Falcon Galaxy. I lay claim to the Trial of Possession for the planet Somerset.

Mattlov: I am Galaxy Commander Angeline Mattlov, commander of the Peregrine Galaxy. I dispute the claim of Vandervahn Chistu and lay claim to the Trial.

Malthus: I, Khan Timur Malthus, recognize the claims of both warriors. By the Rede that binds us all, I open this battle to bids.

Chistu: For this Trial I commit the Falcon's Claws Keshik, commanded by Star Colonel Nicolai Malthus, and the 94th Striker Cluster, commanded by Star Colonel Kristen Redmond.

Mattlov: Your bid shows your lack of heart. The planet shall fall to the 89th Talons with 3 additional 'Mech Trinaries.

Chistu: We will end this now. Star Colonel Nicolai Malthus will lead a Trinary to destroy the forces at the sibko, while Star Colonel Kristen Redmond's forces will take the remaining rabble.

Mattlov: Well bargained and done.

Malthus: By the Rede that binds us all, the right and honor for this attack goes to the forces of Galaxy Commander Chistu.

PATH OF THE KATANA

MAP KEY

KATANA'S PATH

OUTSIDE BOUNDARY OF INNER SPHERE

BORDER BETWEEN FEDERATED COMMONWEALTH & FREE RASALHAGUE REPUBLIC

Gotterdammerung

Butte Hold

Lackhove

Benzinger

Erewhon

Here

Apollo

Toland

Anywhere

Somerset

Star's End

Bone-Norman

Dark Nebula

Steelton

Barcelona

Icar

Woten

Winfield

Persistence

New Caledonia

Newtown Square

Golandrinas

Derf

Chateau

Verthandi

Black Earth

Maxie's Planet

Csesztreg

Beta VII

Trell I

Harvest

Mogyorod

Malibu

Butler

Romulus

Hot Springs

Kikuyu

Roadside

Twycross

Seiduts

Planting

Blackjack

Waldorff

Evciler

Riddserkerk

Blue Hole

Goat Path

Vantaa

Clermont

Denizli

Svarstaad

Kooken's Pleasure Pit

Apolakkia

Leskovik

Machida

Chahar

Aiyina

Deli

Pasig

Devin

Zoetermeer

Zhongshan

Parakoila

Baker 3

Vulcan

Mkuranga

Sevren

Babaeski

Dompaire

Dela

Antares

Graus

Colmar

Blumenort

Sudeten

Mississauga

Great X

Morges

Cusset

Yeguas

Sargasso

Zanderij

A Place

Blair Atholl

Montmarault

Esteros

Dustball

Santana

Koniz

Benfled

Bountiful Harvest

Ballynure

Buque

Timkovichi

New Exford

La Grave

Atocongo

Graceland

Wroclaw

Pandora

Orkney

Krevci

Kandersteg

Crimond

Toman

Arc-Royal

Hamilton

Dukambia

Borghese

Incukalns

Cumbres

Grunwald

Summit

Upano

Suron

Kelenfold

Lyndon

Alma Alta

Garrison

Odessa

Arcturus

Westerstede

Pherkad

Lucianca

Horneburg

Cameron

Forkas

Ginestra

Apostica

Gibbs

Crevedia

Leganes

Thorkad

Donegal

Kockengen

Talersen

Hillerod

Breukelen

EPISODE 1:
THE GATHERING
STORM

SOMERSET

As a combat-experienced soldier of the Federated Commonwealth and a respected instructor at the Somerset Military Academy, Commander Andrew Steiner considered himself fairly immune to surprises of the military type. The sight of an unfamiliar DropShip descending on his home planet, and the absolutely foreign message from it that demanded to know what forces he intended to use to defend Somerset, left Commander Steiner at a complete loss. When Star Colonel Nicolai Malthus declared his intention of conquering the planet by force of arms, however, Andrew Steiner knew exactly how to respond—he assembled his cadets in a well-rehearsed defense plan and set out to repulse these strange invaders. Unfortunately, the self-proclaimed Clan Jade Falcon warriors possessed the advantage of superior firepower and technology, and the hard-fought battle quickly ended in humiliating defeat for the FedCom soldiers. A single, apparently invincible Clan 'Mech withstood everything the cadets threw its way, then destroyed Commander Steiner's 'Mech by breaching the machine's reactor shielding. This same 'Mech captured Commander Steiner's escape pod when the Commander punched out of his doomed machine.

As Clan 'Mechs herd the survivors, including Commander Andrew Steiner, into makeshift encampments, Star Captains Nicolai Malthus and Kristen Redmond declare that Clan Jade Falcon now controls the world of Somerset, as it will soon control the entire Inner Sphere.

Far away on the planet Tharkad ...

As Andrew Steiner fights an alien enemy using the standard tactics of the Inner Sphere military, his brother Adam tests yet another student in his continuing search for cadets capable of learning and benefiting from his unique tactical strategy, which he brought to Nagelring, Tharkad's prestigious academy, from the Somerset Military Academy. Cadet Katiara Kylie, also a native of Somerset, washes out of the program because she failed to heed one of Major Steiner's guiding principles: information is ammunition. Adam provides that information to his troops through his tactical operations officer, long-time friend Rachel Specter, who operates by gathering all available transmissions pertinent to the battle and then feeding the most crucial information to the unit officers.

Major Steiner faces stiff opposition to his innovative strategy. His greatest detractor on his own staff is his arrogant assistant, Ciro Ramirez, a young man fanatically devoted to the old ways of specialization and service to only one branch of the military.

When the sporadic transmissions of the fight on Somerset reach Tharkad, Adam leaps to the conclusion that the FedCom's traditional enemy, the Draconis Combine, has made a daring attack against his home planet. When Rachel informs him that the invaders came from beyond the area of space known as the Periphery, Major Steiner understands fear for the first time as he wonders how his brother fared against this brutal force.

Determined to return to Somerset and discover the fate of his friends and family, Adam Steiner decides, for the first time in his life, to use his distant relation to Archon Melissa Steiner-Davion and request permission from the FedCom leader to lead a force against the Clans and retake Somerset. When the Archon denies his bold request, Adam sweetens his offer by pointing out that his mission would also allow the unit to gather much-needed information that would increase the Inner Sphere's chance of successfully defending against the Clan juggernaut. Though

With respectful greeting to Your Excellency, I submit this latest in my series of confidential reports regarding the nature of the Steiner House and realm. I can tell Your Excellency little of the Archon Katrina's inner self, as it is well-nigh impossible to penetrate the wall of her formidable charm. However, I offer the following observations of Tharkad and the Steiners in general in the hope that these may provide you with some insight.

Though it was Archon Alistair Marsden who moved the capital of the Lyran Commonwealth to his arctic homeworld of Tharkad, popular history depicts it as the birthplace of the Steiner dynasty. The first reigning Steiner ruled the Commonwealth from Tharkad after her husband's death in battle, and every Steiner since has been born and raised among Tharkad's snows. Rugged mountains, pine forests, and plants and animals common to the northernmost reaches of Terran Europe abound on Tharkad. Though it has a temperate season, the world is renowned for the blizzards and bone-chilling cold of its long winters. Tharkad City, the capital of the realm, is heated to a bearable living temperature by a fusion reactor deep beneath the earth.

The Steiners themselves, of mixed Scandinavian, German, and Scottish descent, seem perfectly suited to their cold but hauntingly beautiful home planet. It is said of them, particularly of the Steiner women, that they possess the beauty of the snow in sunlight, the strength of the mountains, and the fierce rage of the blizzard when crossed. The first is certainly true of the Archon Katrina—as for the second and third, I do not yet know enough to judge. ...

INTELLIGENCE SECRETARIAT ARCHIVE FILE NO. 33416/DMA

From the personal diary of Intelligence Secretary Alex Mallory, entry for July 10, 3052

... It is curious to realize how often in history the most remarkable heroes spring from the most obscure and unlikely sources. Adam Steiner, commander of the 1st Somerset Strikers, is only the latest case in point. Many of those who came to know of him after the fact point with great pride to his connection to the Nagelring; they find it only fitting that a hero of the Clan War should have come from the Commonwealth's oldest and most prestigious military academy. Indeed, some officials in the AFFC speak in the same breath of Major Steiner and the Nagelring's illustrious past as a Star League academy, as if that ancient history somehow made Adam Steiner what he is. They point to him as the latest sterling example in a long line of talented instructors at the Nagelring, which leads all the way back to the Star League officers who stayed on when the Commonwealth took the school over. Of course Steiner's a hero, these people say. Nagelring instructors and graduates are the best the Commonwealth military has to offer; how could he be anything else?

They forget that Major Adam Steiner is not, in fact, a product of the vaunted Nagelring. He taught there, it is true, but for less than a year before the Clans conquered his homeworld. Adam Steiner is a product of Somerset and of its undistinguished, backwater military school. The Somerset Military Academy infinitely smaller, less prestigious, and less well-funded than the Nagelring on Tharkad—gave the Commonwealth a heroic military commander that any nation would have given its eyeteeth to possess.

Just goes to show that you never know where real talent will pop up. ...
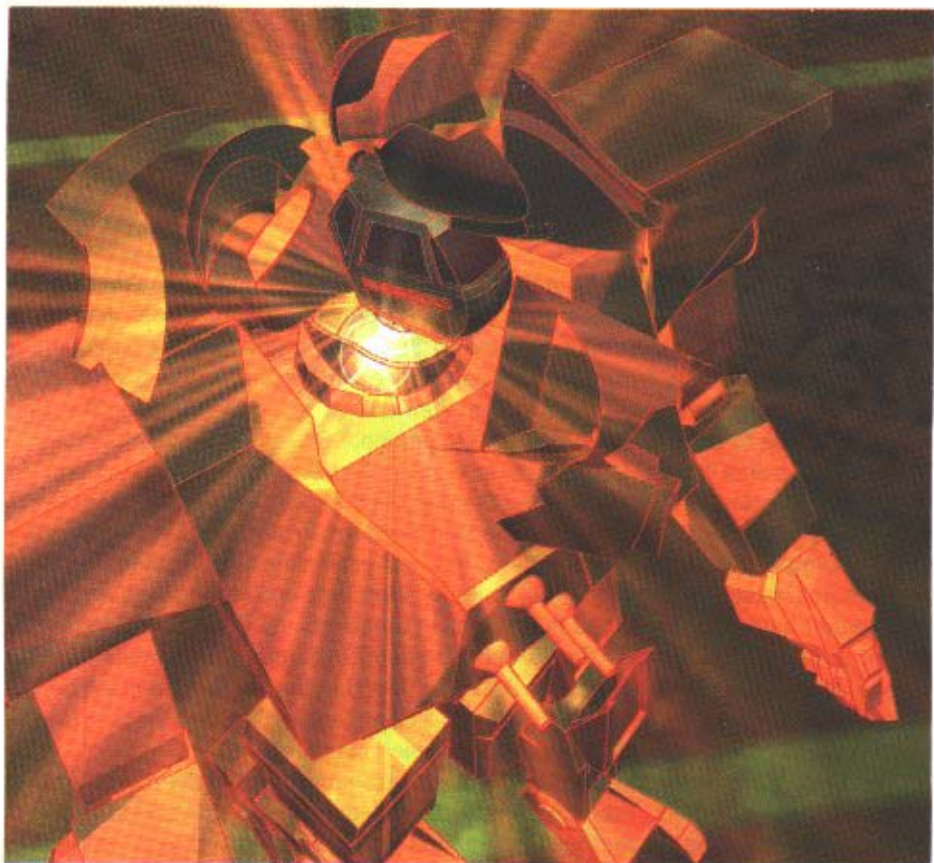
Archon Steiner understands that information might be the only weapon capable of giving her realm an advantage in the coming fight, she regretfully turns down Major Steiner's plan for lack of an available JumpShip to take his unit into Clan-occupied space.

At the nadir jump point of the Tharkad system ...

The Draconis Combine JumpShip *Katana*, apparently on legitimate business for Isesaki Shipping, is preparing to jump out of the system when it receives a distress signal from an out-of-control DropShip. Franklin Sakamoto, the Kurita businessman who hired the JumpShip to illegally transport Federated Commonwealth weapons into the Draconis Combine, immediately concludes that the DropShip's request for emergency docking is a ruse. Captain Frestadt of the *Katana*, however, insists that he must respond to the signal or risk losing his license and his ship. Sakamoto's fears prove well founded. When the airlock between the DropShip and JumpShip opens, Captain Zachary Miles "Hawk" Hawkins of the Federated Commonwealth Intelligence Secretariat rushes through, disarms the waiting crew members, and announces that the ship's smuggling days have ended.

Back at the Nagelring ...

Still regretting his absence from Somerset in its time of need, Adam is not consoled by Rachel's assurances that had they been on the beleaguered planet, they would only have shared the fate of Adam's family and friends. He refuses to give up his plan of returning to his home planet and wresting it from the Clans. Though Ciro openly doubts Adam's claim of kinship with Archon Steiner-Davion, all three are surprised when a holographic message from her arrives in Adam's quarters. At first mystified by the fact that the FedCom leader apparently took time from her busy day to simply inform Adam of the Secretariat's successful mission to stop a Combine smuggling operation, it is Rachel who grasps the real message—that as a field-grade officer in a time of war, Adam can commandeer the confiscated JumpShip for his

own mission. Having received permission to raise his own unit, Adam now needs to reach the JumpShip and claim it before anyone else gets the same idea.

"Stuck" with ferry-pilot duty after failing to make the grade in Major Steiner's program, Cadet Kylie shuttles Adam, Rachel, and Ciro to the space station where the *Katana* is docked. During the flight she learns that Steiner plans to return to Somerset.

Aboard the DropShip Kwaidan ...

Major Adam Steiner invites the crews of the DropShip and JumpShip to serve under his command and join him in the fight against the Clans, but the crew cannot simply walk away from the centuries-old prejudices of Kurita against Steiner. A fight erupts, and the advantage swings from one side to the other before Steiner gains the upper hand. Defeated but not beaten, Franklin Sakamoto demands to know what will happen to him and his crewmen at the end of the war. Assured that he will be allowed to return his ship to its owners, Franklin agrees, on behalf of his crew, to serve under Major Steiner for the duration. The expression on his face as he accepts the FedCom officer's offer, however, shows that he has ulterior motives. Steiner also takes this opportunity to draft Captain Hawkins into service, bringing his personnel count to four.

As the DropShip crew loads the FedCom 'Mechs and other supplies, Major Steiner and his crew settle into their new quarters. Ciro takes this opportunity to explain to Steiner that he understands the major's plan and considers it a stroke of genius for him to gain the Kuritans' trust and then attack the Draconis Combine, thereby uniting the Inner Sphere into a force so powerful that these invaders would not dare stand against it. Steiner angrily responds that cooperation between Houses is the only hope the Inner Sphere has of defeating the Clans, but Franklin Sakamoto overhears only Ciro's xenophobic rant. He sets in motion a plan to retake control of his ship by arranging for loyal forces to meet it at the destination of its next jump.

The *Katana* jumps and immediately comes under fire from aerospace fighters. Franklin Sakamoto arrives on the bridge just in time to take credit for the attack, but he realizes at the same time as Steiner that the fighters intend to destroy the ship and everyone aboard her, against his direct orders. Forced to choose between remaining loyal to Sakamoto or saving his ship, Captain Frestadt throws his lot in with Steiner, and Adam marshals his forces to mount a defense. Though his ship carries two experimental *Banshee* fighters, Adam has no aerospace pilots, and so he risks sending his BattleMechs into space to ward off the enemy craft.

Adam's unconventional defense narrowly averts additional damage to the JumpShip and DropShip but leaves the 'Mechs vulnerable to enemy fire. At the last moment, one of the *Banshee*s blasts free of the *Kwaidan* and destroys the missiles heading straight for the 'Mechs, then blows the first enemy fighter into shrapnel. Only at this moment does Major Steiner discover that Kylie stowed away on his ship. Though he expresses his displeasure, he is grateful for her help in defeating the attackers. Adam cripples the second Combine fighter, and the 'Mechs and Kylie return to the *Kwaidan*, where Adam learns that Kylie has forged his name to papers drafting her into his unit. Faced with her fait accompli, Steiner graciously welcomes the newest member of what he officially names the 1st Somerset Strikers.

Later ...

Rachel informs Franklin Sakamoto that he will be dropped off with FedCom security at the next jump destination. As Adam joins Rachel and Franklin in Sakamoto's quarters, Captain Frestadt patches through a communication from Tharkad—a message from Archon Steiner and the Draconis Combine ambassador to the Federated Commonwealth. This message authorizes Major Steiner's unit, in conjunction with the Draconis crew, to act as a coalition strike force against the Clan threat. Franklin bows to the will of his Coordinator that he serve honorably on this experimental force, and Adam has no choice but to accept him.

Finally ...

Rachel and Adam acknowledge to each other the difficulty of molding such diverse personalities and backgrounds into an effective fighting force, but they know it must be done—for the sake of Andrew Steiner, and for Somerset.

COMSTAR/ROM INTERNAL BULLETIN NO. 7832515

TO: Primus Myndo Waterly
FROM: Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht
RE: Clan Culture/Ongoing Reports

By this point in the war against the invaders, nearly every member of the Inner Sphere military has heard the term *batchall*, and most know what it signifies, if not exactly what it means. The *batchall* is the ritual combat challenge that Clan warriors issue before engaging an opposing force in battle. Every *batchall* incorporates the following elements: the attackers state their identity and their objective, then request to know the units with which the opposing force will defend the objective. The defenders state these forces and may also choose the battlefield. Further, the defender may bargain to claim a prize of equal or lesser value than the objective if the defending force wins. Cleverly worded *batchall*s offer one source of hope for Inner Sphere victories.

Violation of the spirit of the *batchall*, however, may cause Clan attackers to declare an opponent a bandit or barbarian without honor. A dishonorable enemy is not entitled to ritualized combat, and so the Clan commander becomes free to use all forces at his disposal necessary to crush the opposition. Indeed, honor requires that he do so.

Soldiers who lose to the Clans become what the invaders call *isorla*. I was unable to learn the exact meaning of the word, but evidence suggests that all spoils of war—land, people, mineral rights, manufacturing facilities—can be claimed as *isorla*. Competing Clans sometimes offer *batchall*s in order to win certain *isorla* away from each other.

Early settlers to this small and inhospitable desert planet came expecting to find rich deposits of gemstones. Orbital reconnaissance and spectrum analysis showed concentrations of precious minerals near the surface, but years of excavation revealed only trace amounts present. All of the prospectors left the planet at this point except for the enterprising Malthus family. Refusing to abandon their investment on Dustball and not above criminal activity, they established a complex of casinos, nightclubs, and hotels near the main spaceport. A massive climate-controlled dome was constructed over the complex to provide visitors with comfortable surroundings. Aggressive advertising brought thousands of rich tourists to Dustball, and an empire was born.

Successive generations of Malthuses increasingly used blackmail to cover evidence of their criminal activities. Over the years many allegations were made, but no Malthus was ever convicted of any wrongdoing. Sources report that in 3029, an ambitious young aide to President Vander Malthus known only as Tybus seized power through the time-honored tradition of blackmail. Further details regarding his rise to power are unavailable, thanks mainly to Tybus's tight-fisted control of information flowing to and from Dustball.

Since taking control of Dustball, Boss Tybus has avoided using blackmail as a tool to escape prosecution, well aware of how this tactic failed his predecessor. Instead, Tybus cloaks his criminal activities in the appearance of legitimacy. Phantom corporations and dummy shipments have led Federated Commonwealth agents on numerous raids, each one turning up no solid evidence incriminating this kingpin.

You are expected to succeed where others have failed by entering Tybus's employ and gaining his confidence. That way, you may gain access to irrefutable proof of his criminal activities. Be especially mindful of DeVries, his security chief and right-hand man. Our last operative on Dustball met his death at DeVries's hands. You are advised to maintain radio silence until you have obtained the needed evidence. Once the evidence is secured, a detachment of troops will advance on Dustball to wrest control of the planet from Tybus and restore a legitimate government in his place.

End Coded Transmission ... page 1 of 11

EPISODE 2: WELL BARGAINED AND DONE

DUSTBALL

Dustball. An inhospitable desert world with vast stretches of wasteland between its domed cities. The largest of these domed settlements, New Monaco, is home to numerous casinos, nightclubs, and exotic hotels. Dustball is lorded over by the notorious Boss Tybus, a criminal scoundrel greasy enough to slip through the smallest cracks in Federated Commonwealth law.

The Strikers have landed on Dustball to recruit MechWarriors to fill the ranks of their fledgling unit. Adam, Hawk, and Rachel make their way through the tourist-clogged streets of New Monaco, looking with awe and disgust at the garish buildings towering above them.

Suddenly, an alarm is raised as a VTOL takes off from the roof of the Circus Tybus Casino, and it draws laser fire from security officers nearby. A security force *Centurion* charges down the street in hot pursuit. The VTOL veers off course under the laser fire, then pulls straight up and crashes through the city's domed ceiling. The *Centurion* engages its jump jets and follows the VTOL out of the city and into the desert.

A well-placed shot from the *Centurion's* autocannon brings the VTOL down in a sand dune. The 'Mech lands next to the fallen craft. The *Centurion* pilot climbs out of his 'Mech, drags the shaken but alive pilot from the VTOL's cockpit, and handcuffs him, then leads him to a nearby security transport.

The Strikers watch from inside the city. Hawk is flabbergasted at such a reckless display of 'Mech jockeying, but Adam and Rachel quickly decide "that's our man."

Meanwhile, in the Circus Tybus Casino ...

Boss Tybus negotiates with Star Colonel Kristen Redmond of Clan Jade Falcon via holographic transmission from her incoming DropShip. He is eager to see an end to FedCom interference in his plans. She is anxious to gain a foothold in the sector, despite the fact that it lies well beyond the current limit of the Clan advance. As they talk, Tybus becomes confused by her strange Clan terminology. He just wants to hand the planet over, while Kristen insists on a "Trial of Possession." Her forces for the trial will consist of two 'Mechs which will engage his lance in the hills north of the city. Still confused, Tybus agrees.

Just as Tybus's conversation with the Star Colonel ends, the *Centurion* pilot enters the room. He is Valten Ryder, a down-on-his-luck 'Mech jockey who owes Tybus a large gambling debt. In a brief conversation, Val insists on trading the spy he just captured for his mortgaged BattleMech.

Later, at the One-Armed Bandit ...

Adam and Hawk meet with Val over a holographic 'Mech combat game. They discuss his questionable service record and superior skills. Adam offers to sign him on as a lieutenant with the Strikers. Val refuses, stating that he "gave up fighting for your relatives a long time ago." Disappointed, Adam pays for the game and leaves with Hawk.

Meanwhile ...

Boss Tybus sees Adam sliding money over to Val on a security monitor. His security chief, DeVries, identifies Hawk and Adam as important FedCom figures. Making the false assumption that Val is taking bribes from the "Fedrats," Tybus decides to send him on *one last mission*.

Later that night ...

Val leads a unit of security 'Mechs across the desert in a *Centurion*. He's in a jovial mood, confident that this is his last mission for Tybus. He spots a pair of "shooting stars" in the distance and decides to check them out. The stars are the inbound drop cocoons of Star Colonel Redmond's 'Mechs: her own *Vulture* and a *Hunchback IIC*. Val's lance encounters the Clan 'Mechs in a narrow pass, and battle is joined. The other 'Mechs of his lance retreat from the combat, leaving him to face the Clanners alone.

Val quickly discovers that his weapons have been sabotaged. The *Vulture* punishes Val's helpless *Centurion* with close-range fire; just as he seems done for, the Strikers join the battle. They had detected the Clan 'Mechs with equipment on the *Kwaidan* and quickly scrambled to engage them. The battle intensifies briefly, until Star Colonel Redmond orders the Clan 'Mechs to retreat. Assuming from the Strikers' appearance that Tybus has broken the terms of the Trial of Possession, Redmond angrily refuses to fight such "dishonorable cowards."

Adam sends Kylie and Ciro back to the DropShip, while he and Hawk investigate the fallen *Centurion*. They pull an injured Val from the cockpit, and radio to the *Kwaidan* for medical help. As Dr. Nakamura prepares to leave, Franklin slides a laser pistol into her medi-kit in spite of her objections, saying that she will need it to defend herself against the FedCom enemy. She quickly drives to the scene and tends to Val's broken leg. Just as they prepare to leave, security 'Mechs surround them.

New Monaco Security Headquarters, the next day ...

Speaking to Kristen Redmond via holographic transmission, Boss Tybus tells her he has no idea where those other 'Mechs came from. She refuses to listen, promising that his fate is sealed. As the transmission ends, security troopers shove the captured Strikers into the room. Tybus fingers Hawk as a FedCom agent and tells him he should get his story straight with his "partner."

The confused Strikers are escorted to a holding cell, where they meet the spy Val shot down and discover what Tybus was talking about. The spy introduces himself to Hawk as Juan Martinez of FedCom Intelligence. He tells them he was about to nail Tybus when Val blew his VTOL out of the sky, and that a FedCom battalion is nearby awaiting his order to raid the planet if he can somehow send them a signal.

Smiling broadly, Val produces Dr. Nakamura's laser pistol from his boot, where he had managed to conceal it during the confusion when they were captured. He blasts open the door, and they quickly escape. Martinez heads for the ComStar transmission station to contact his unit, while the others follow Val's lead toward the security hangar. There, they find their captured BattleMechs.

As the Strikers prepare to mount up, Tybus arrives in the hangar with a squadron of guards. Just then, explosions rock the building. Adam realizes that it must be the Jade Falcon forces. DeVries confirms this over the radio to Tybus. As more explosions echo through the hangar, Adam pleads with Tybus to let the Strikers free to repel the Clanners. Furious at his shattered deal, Tybus agrees.

Val and Adam confront the retreating Boss Tybus. A sliding panel reveals Val's *Centurion*. Tybus says Val can have it if he can go free. Left with no time for bargaining or revenge, Adam convinces Val to take his 'Mech and let Tybus go. Adam radios Rachel to send Ciro and Kylie out, and the Strikers mount up.

Moments later ...

As the Striker 'Mechs rendezvous outside New Monaco, Adam points out that the Clan 'Mechs have been baking in the desert heat as they approached the city. The Strikers, on the other hand, are relatively cool. Even though they are outnumbered, the Strikers should be able to force their opponents into overheating by engaging them in an extended running battle.

The Strikers clash with the Clan forces, desperately trying to keep them moving away from the city. As a *Mad Cat* sneaks up behind Adam's *Axman*, Val joins the fight in his *Centurion* by blasting the Clan 'Mech from behind. "Captain Valten Ryder reporting for duty, sir," he says. With no time to protest Val's self-imposed high rank, Adam welcomes him to the team.

As the fight continues, Rachel notices that the Strikers' 'Mechs are reaching critical heat levels while the Clan 'Mechs continue to function at normal efficiency. As the other Strikers realize that Adam's plan has backfired, the Clanners close in for the kill.

Suddenly, FedCom DropShips land behind the Clan lines. Martinez's battalion has arrived in the nick of time. As Kristen Redmond prepares to engage the new foes, she receives a transmission from Star Colonel Malthus demanding that she cease her unauthorized campaign at once. When she asks on whose authority he makes such demands, Galaxy Commander Chistu appears on her screen and informs her that he gave no clearance for this operation. The Clan forces begin their retreat.

Later ...

The *Kwaidan*, loaded with the Strikers and their 'Mechs, lifts off. Adam gazes thoughtfully out of the viewport in his quarters as the planet Dustball shrinks into the distance. It's still a long way to Somerset, but thanks to information gained from Martinez, he now knows that his brother Andrew is still alive, and he is more determined than ever to find him.

EPISODE 3: WARRIORS OF LIGHT AND STEEL

ROMULUS

On the idyllic world of Romulus, a planet of fertile earth and well-tilled fields, the 1st Somerset Strikers prepare to fight their Clan enemies. Using Star League-era training facilities belonging to the Romulus Militia and overseen by a retired militiaman named Ben Hartmann, the Strikers do mock battle against holographic foes—but the unit's fragile camaraderie quickly breaks down under fire as every MechWarrior fends for himself. Ciro Ramirez briefly rallies the troops using tactics that were wildly successful against Draconis Combine 'Mechs. Unfortunately, the holographic enemy 'Mechs are fighting Clan-style, and the 1st Somerset Strikers are "destroyed" in minutes. Adam Steiner's prospects for welding his motley group of recruits into a disciplined, unified fighting force do not look good.

Meanwhile ...

A Clan Jade Falcon WarShip moves into position high over Romulus. Flush with his recent victory over the planet Wotan, Nicolai Malthus orders his troops to prepare for a combat drop—another conquest awaits them on the tranquil world below.

Down on Romulus ...

Franklin Sakamoto takes the DropShip *Kwaidan* to Remus Spaceport for supplies, landing at the port just as Clan OmniMechs rain down from the sky. The Romulus Militia immediately engages the attackers, but their machines are no match for the Jade Falcon OmniMechs. As the Clan 'Mechs cut a deadly swath through the planet's defenders, Remus City erupts in panic. Captain Frestadt attempts to warn Major Steiner of the Clans' arrival, but the Clans have destroyed the planet's communications satellite and Frestadt cannot get through. Both he and Lieutenant Rachel Specter, aboard the JumpShip *Katana*, keep trying to warn the Strikers, but to no avail.

At the same time ...

The Strikers saddle up and begin another training exercise, but Adam aborts it when he cannot get through to Rachel. Seconds later, the Strikers see plumes of smoke rising in the distance from the embattled spaceport. They head toward the port, but Clan Elementals in battle armor suddenly land in front of them and bar their way. Eager to get off the first shot at them, Ciro rushes ahead of his fellow Strikers, convinced that these armored Clanners are no match for a BattleMech. He soon learns otherwise; several of the Elementals swarm over his *Wolfhound*, attacking its leg joints and bringing the giant machine crashing to the earth. Several more Elementals attack the rest of the Strikers' 'Mechs—their leader, Star Commander Natalya, claws her way into the cockpit of Hawk's *Mauler*. Hawk fires his laser pistol at her, but the shots bounce harmlessly off her battle suit. Tiring of the game, Natalya reaches out with her armored talons and crushes the gun's muzzle like a beer can.

Kylie turns the tables in the Strikers' favor, buzzing low over Ciro's fallen *Wolfhound* in her *Banshee* fighter and sending the Elementals diving for cover. Ciro's machine regains its feet, and he goes to the aid of his embattled comrades. The Strikers force the Elementals to retreat; but before the unit can savor

INTELLIGENCE SECRETARIAT
PRELIMINARY FIELD REPORT NO. B-227/899

TO: All Military Intelligence Dept. Heads
FROM: Field Agent Kenneth Teller
RE: Invasion targets/Romulus

I regret to inform you that the planet Romulus appears to be a likelier target for a Clan assault than was previously believed. Before I left Tharkad to take up this monitoring assignment, I agreed with the prevailing consensus that other worlds in the general path of the invasion force would prove more tempting to Clan Jade Falcon—after all, Romulus has no natural resources to speak of save for its agricultural produce, it is not strategically valuable as we usually understand that term, and it has no important military installations. Indeed, the only sizable installation on the entire planet is Remus Spaceport, which handles a high volume of import/export DropShip traffic.

I believe, however, that Romulus—specifically, Remus Spaceport—has strategic significance for the Clan invaders that we have overlooked. Though Remus Spaceport is not a military installation, it would nevertheless make a valuable acquisition for the enemy—it is large and well equipped enough to handle the heavy ship traffic needed to move vast stockpiles of ammunition, materiel, and such to Romulus. With such stockpiles in place, Clan Jade Falcon can easily turn Romulus into a staging base for further planetary assaults in the region. In addition, the first of Romulus's two yearly harvests is almost at hand. At best, the Clan conquest of this planet will disrupt food supplies in many parts of the Federated Commonwealth; at worst, food grown by Commonwealth citizens will go to feed the invaders. For those among you who do not see foodstuffs as a militarily important resource, let me remind you of the famous dictum that "an army travels on its stomach." I believe we cannot allow the fertile fields of Romulus to fall into Jade Falcon hands.

In light of the threat, I strongly urge you to send troops to reinforce the Romulus Militia. We must be prepared to fight a brief but decisive engagement to limit collateral damage—the city surrounding the spaceport is large and densely packed, and so any long drawn-out battle will cause unacceptably high civilian casualties.

I urge you not to spend too much time debating your course of action; the survival of Romulus may depend on a swift response.

Current rumors that Jade Falcon garrison troops are inferior to front-line troops are both true and false, because the "inferior" Clan soldiers are still far superior to many of our own best fighting forces. Garrison units are largely composed of warriors past thirty years of age who have not achieved enough battlefield glory to win a "Bloodname," a coveted prize among the Clans. These warriors are known as "solahma," a word for which I know no exact translation, but which seems to mean old and useless. The Clans consider garrison duty demeaning, and unfit for a true warrior, and they reserve the task for solahma units—secondrate soldiers who are of no use in any other capacity, except as cannon fodder.

It is interesting that the Clans consider the relatively young age of thirty to be old. Simply because of their failure to attain distinction in combat by a certain age, large numbers of able soldiers are relegated to the sidelines by the label "solahma," and the Jade Falcons cannot benefit from their skills or experience. The concept of the solahma warrior indicates a cultural bias toward short-term thinking, which we may be able to turn to our advantage.

its victory, Kylie spots wave after wave of Clan OmniMechs marching toward them.

The Clan machines swiftly surround the Strikers' 'Mechs, herding them into the shadow of the rocky ridge on the Romulus Militia's training ground. Knowing that the Strikers can't possibly take on the Clan 'Mechs and survive, Adam challenges Nicolai's forces to fight him single-handedly. Malthus accepts the challenge, and the OmniMechs close in for the kill. Adam swings his 'Mech's ax into the rock face behind him, and then jumps away. The rock face crumbles, sending a shower of boulders crashing down on the OmniMechs. Taken by surprise, the Clan 'Mechs dodge and fire until they have reduced the avalanche to a pile of smoking pebbles. In the confusion, the Striker 'Mechs make their escape.

That night ...

The Somerset Strikers go to ground at Ben Hartmann's farm, hiding from the Clan forces while they repair their battle-scarred machines. Ciro, still smarting from the humiliation of retreat, demands to know why Adam ordered the unit to run. Unable to take out his anger on the Major, Ciro picks a fight with Val. Hawk and Adam break up the brawl, and Hawk comments disgustedly that "all the Clans gotta do to win is leave us alone with each other."

At Remus Spaceport, a Clan solamha unit led by the aging Pytor boards the *Kwaidan* and demands to see its cargo. Smiling and affable, Franklin Sakamoto and Captain Frestadt lead their Clan captors to the cargo bays. Unnoticed by the boarding party, Franklin triggers a secret comm signal; in the cargo bay, false wall panels slide down over the fighter bays and the compartments full of 'Mech weapons and ammo. When the Clan forces reach the cargo bays, they see nothing but a vast empty space. Annoyed at their failure to discover anything that might make their "conquest" more glorious, Pytor and his forces pack off Franklin, Captain Frestadt, and the unit's mechanic, Patch McGuire, to a refugee camp where they will undergo suitable "re-education."

Later ...

After tracking the Strikers to the Hartmann's farm, Malthus and his troops demand that the Inner Sphere warriors come out and face them. As the OmniMechs raze their home all around them, the Hartmann family flees into the darkness. The Strikers fight a desperate, losing battle against the Jade Falcons until Adam Steiner gets a crazy idea. Noticing that the Clan 'Mechs always engage the Strikers one-on-one, he orders the Strikers to assemble in parade formation. The Clan 'Mechs line up opposite the Strikers, but before they can fire a shot, Kylie's *Banshee* bathes them in flaming jet exhaust. One Clan 'Mech overheats and explodes, forcing the remaining Clan machines to back off.

Before the Strikers can follow up on their brief advantage, they see more Clan OmniMechs marching toward them. Knowing they are beaten—at least for now—the Strikers begin to retreat. As they move out, they see the Hartmanns running right into the path of Nicolai Malthus's *Thor*. Without thinking, Ciro throws his *Wolfhound* toward the huge *Thor*, crashing into it and sending it reeling away from the Hartmanns seconds before it would have crushed them beneath its armored foot.

Adam starts to go to Ciro's aid, but too late. The Clan reinforcements—all five OmniMechs—converge on Ciro's *Wolfhound*, covering it in laser fire. Within minutes, the *Wolfhound* explodes, with Ciro apparently still trapped inside. Stunned and shocked at the loss of their comrade, the Strikers pick up the Hartmanns and retreat toward the disused mine tunnels nearby.

Hours later ...

As dawn breaks over the charred remnants of the Hartmann's farm, a bruised and battered Ciro forces open his escape pod and falls to the ground. He begins to drag himself away from the pod, but he has barely gotten a few yards when the sound of malicious laughter stops him. He looks up to see Nicolai Malthus standing over him and realizes that he has become a prisoner of Clan Jade Falcon.

COMSTAR INTERNAL BULLETIN NO. 586443s

TO: PRIMUS MYNDO WATERLY
FROM: PRECENTOR ROCHELLE ANDREWS

To the Primus of ComStar, respectful greetings and the peace of the Blessed Blake.

As you no doubt know, the Clan invaders have captured Romulus. During their assault on the planet, a Clan WarShip took the drastic step of destroying Romulus's only planetary communications relay satellite. This act of war has severely disrupted ComStar's ability to send and receive insystem transmissions, contributing greatly to the distress of the local citizens. As I understand the agreement made only last month between the Clan forces and Precentor Martial Focht, the Clans pledged to leave ComStar installations alone in return for our neutrality. I believe the destruction of the satellite may be a violation of that agreement—please advise as to how I should proceed in this matter.

TO: PRECENTOR ROCHELLE ANDREWS
FROM: PRIMUS MYNDO WATERLY

You are to take no action against the Clans. The destruction of the satellite does not constitute a violation of the agreement, as Romulus's HPG stations are still intact. A minor disruption of local service is not worth creating an incident—under the circumstances, even a formal complaint is inappropriate.

You can best serve the interests of ComStar and Romulus by refraining from publicizing this unfortunate event any further.

INTELLIGENCE SECRETARIAT REPORT NO. D-241/966

TO: Andrea Milestone, Commanding Officer, Jesup Region, MIIO
FROM: Intelligence Secretary Justin Xiang-Allard
RE: Operation Undergound

By now, you will have heard the reports of the loss of Romulus to the Jade Falcons. If we are to continue to fight the invaders on that world, we must resort to the methods previously discussed. Per your request at our earlier meeting, I have reviewed the personnel files of the Romulus Militia, and I believe I have discovered a potential agent and resistance leader—assuming that the man in question is still alive.

Captain Benjamin Hartmann, a MechWarrior currently serving in the Romulus Militia, performed with distinction as a member of the Second New Ivaarsen Chasseurs during the War of 3039. He fought well throughout the conflict, and his lance captured their objectives more often than not. When his own superior officer was killed in a fierce firefight, Captain Hartmann's quick thinking and assumption of de facto command turned a disorderly rout into an organized retreat with far fewer casualties than might have been expected. This man has initiative and courage, both qualities that will be needed in any resistance movement.

Captain Hartmann's psychological profile is equally promising. He appears to have left active service out of a moral distaste for what he called "pointless wars" and a desire to raise a family in peace. For the past ten years he has farmed on Romulus, enlisting in the Romulus Militia in order to supplement his sometimes chancy living with reserve officer's pay. His position also enables him to keep piloting a 'Mech—like many MechWarriors, Captain Hartmann seems to have "BattleMech fever" in his blood. He appears deeply attached to his home, and his moral convictions will make him fight hard against a remorseless enemy such as Clan Jade Falcon. In effect, the Clan conquest has provided Hartmann with a "good war" to fight for the well-being of his planet and his family.

I have taken preliminary steps to discover Captain Hartmann's whereabouts on Romulus. If he is still alive and in fighting shape, I believe he will serve our purposes well.

In addition to ilKhan Ulric Kerensky's express order against orbital bombardment of cities on captured worlds, other factors will keep the Clans from committing any more such atrocities. These factors are most clearly seen by comparing the Jade Falcon bombardment of Remus City on Romulus with Clan Smoke Jaguar's destruction of the city of Edo on Turtle Bay. Both Clans were "provoked" by the armed revolt of local citizens and chose to teach the rebels a lesson. However, they differed markedly in the violence of their response.

The Turtle Bay incident was an atrocity on a scale unknown in the Inner Sphere since the long-ago massacre on Tintavel that led us to adopt the Ares Conventions. The Smoke Jaguars used their WarShip's batteries to level the city and slaughter everyone within it. No attempt was made to evacuate or warn the people of Edo before the attack commenced. By contrast, the Jade Falcons who bombed Remus City evacuated all its inhabitants before unleashing their firepower. I have received reports of a similar incident on the planet Quarell, where the Jade Falcons leveled the rebellious city of Vreeport after evacuating its inhabitants. Evidence suggests that the people of Vreeport were shipped offplanet to an unknown destination; we have not ascertained whether the same fate befell the citizens of Remus City.

The Jade Falcons' reluctance to engage in wholesale slaughter, contrasted with the Smoke Jaguars' apparent bloodlust, shows clearly that the Clans are not the monolithic entity we have believed them to be; in fact, they are quite different from one another in some ways. What we have learned of them suggests that each Clan will deal with rebellion in its own way, and that most will be inclined to show the lenience of the Jade Falcons rather than the Smoke Jaguars' savagery even though their reasons may be quite different.

EPISODE 4: RETRIBUTION

ROMULUS

Its militia defeated and all but destroyed, Romulus lies under Clan occupation. Only a handful of militia Mechs escaped into the hills to join a few of the 1st Somerset Strikers in hiding. The Strikers are in disarray—their DropShip and crew have been captured, their JumpShip cannot contact them, and one of their MechWarriors is apparently dead in battle. The four remaining Strikers—Major Adam Steiner, Kate Kylie, Captain "Hawk" Hawkins, and Val Ryder—have taken refuge in abandoned mine tunnels while they plan their next course of action. Cut off from their JumpShip and tactical officer, out of ammunition, and without transport offplanet, their options look distressingly limited.

Ben Hartmann offers to help the Strikers replenish their ammunition. He knows the old mine shafts like the back of his hand, he and can lead them through the underground maze to a munitions dump where they can stock up. Adam agrees to the mission, but he sends Kylie off in her *Banshee* to find the JumpShip and somehow restore communications with Lt. Rachel Specter. Adam, Hawk, Val, and the few remaining MechWarriors of the Romulus Militia saddle up and follow Ben Hartmann through the rocky maze.

Meanwhile ...

Nicolai Malthus is having a wonderful war. His latest target lies vanquished, he has made Ciro Ramirez his bondsman, and his recently-demoted rival, Star Captain Kristen Redmond, has arrived on Romulus to begin a humiliating stint of garrison duty. He orders his own troops to prepare for departure, eagerly looking forward to the new challenges awaiting him. Star Commander Pytor, an older warrior with greater experience and sharper instincts than Nicolai, tries to warn his commanding officer that the DropShip *Kwaidan* and its crew are more than the simple merchants they seem—but Nicolai, dreaming of new worlds to conquer, rudely refuses to listen to an "old man's opinion." He orders the DropShip crew taken to a re-education camp, and washes his hands of them.

In orbit ...

Kylie reaches the JumpShip *Katana* and tells Rachel what's been happening planetside. Rachel is shocked and saddened to learn of Ciro's death; though arrogant and unpleasant, he was a fellow Striker. Using equipment from the JumpShip and from Kylie's *Banshee*, Rachel starts rigging a makeshift comm system inside the fighter. Once it's in place, she and Kylie can take the *Banshee* close enough to Romulus to establish a direct link to the spaceport and the training ground, where they expect to find at least some of their missing comrades.

Down on Romulus ...

The Strikers and the militia MechWarriors reach the munitions dump, but Adam spots a patrol of Elementals guarding it. He and his fellow MechWarriors melt back into the tunnels to lay a trap for the Clanners. Elsewhere on the surface, Franklin Sakamoto pulls off a daring takeover of the cattle truck transporting him and his fellow crew members to the re-education camp. He turns the truck around and speeds toward the spaceport, determined to liberate the *Kwaidan* from Clan hands.

Aboard the Clan WarShip ...

Ciro gets his first taste of life as a Clan Jade Falcon bondsman. Browbeaten, shoved around, and insulted by his captors, he refuses to betray the Somerset Strikers' location and strength. Malthus assigns him to latrine duty.

Meanwhile ...

At the munitions dump, Adam fires at the Elementals and then flees into the mine tunnels, forcing them to pursue him. His *Axman* and the other 'Mechs lead the Elementals on a merry chase through the underground maze, drawing them into a cavern where a militia *Wolfhound* stands loaded with explosives. One of the militiamen triggers this improvised bomb, causing a section of tunnel to collapse and burying the Elementals under a pile of rocks. Adam and his fellow MechWarriors run for the munitions dump—with the Elemental guards penned up underground, the stores of ammo are ripe for the taking.

Franklin and his fellow crew members reach the spaceport, only to see Clanners swarming over their DropShip. Almost to himself, Franklin comments that "getting past them would require an army." Patch asks if he intends to pluck one out of thin air—and his sarcastic words give Franklin a crazy, brilliant idea.

Later ...

Adam leads the fully loaded Striker 'Mechs through the mine tunnels toward the spaceport. When Hawk asks if he's sure he knows what he's doing, Adam replies that he doesn't intend to lose the DropShip crew the way he lost Ciro. The 'Mechs come up to the surface near Ben Hartmann's devastated farm; Adam spots Ciro's fallen *Wolfhound* and is puzzled by the lack of escape-pod wreckage. Before he can speculate any further, missile fire cuts through the air. More Clan Elementals have arrived to take down the Somerset Strikers.

TO: Morgan Kell, Commander, Kell Hounds
FROM: Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht

Dear Morgan,

I have news of your son Phelan, who went missing in action against the Clans a year ago. For reasons that I may not divulge at this time, I must ask you to keep secret what I am about to tell you. I should not be telling you at all, but Phelan asked me to send you word.

Phelan is alive and reasonably well. He is not a prisoner in our sense of the word ... and yet, in a way, he is one. The Khan of Clan Wolf has made Phelan his bondsman, their term for people captured in combat. I have seen his bondcord, the woven bracelet that marks his status. To set your minds at rest, I will try to explain what a bondsman is.

First of all, a captive is only made a bondsman if the Clans perceive him to be of some worth. Someone they intend to keep as a mere slave, or an ordinary prisoner of war would not be given the dignity of a bondsman's status. A bondsman becomes a member of the laborer caste, the lowest class of workers, of the Clan that captured him. By working hard, proving himself conscientious, and showing an aptitude for greater things, a bondsman may eventually earn a position in the higher castes—as a merchant, a technician, a scientist, even a warrior.

Though it may pain you to hear this, Phelan will most likely follow in the footsteps of many bondsmen and become an accepted member of Clan society. If this happens, please try not to think of your son as a traitor. I believe he will continue to strive for what is honorable and right, and in doing so will aid the Inner Sphere in ways we cannot yet imagine.

I have received your request for access to training facilities for your newly formed unit. As the request came through normal channels, I only learned of it by accident. It is fortunate that I did; normally a newly formed company like yours has low priority. However, because the Archon obviously regards your mission as an important one, I have personally arranged for you to use the finest facilities in the Federated Commonwealth.

The AFFC training facilities on Romulus utilize the finest Star League-era technology for realistic training. The facility is equipped with sensor and data feeds that tie directly into your 'Mech's battle computer. When your 'Mechs engage in combat, the signals fed to them provide each 'Mech's sensors with virtual opponents. All weapons fire, your own or a simulated enemy's, is evaluated by a central computer. The simulated 'Mechs then show appropriate damage. The computer simulates damage to your 'Mechs by cutting out weapons and motive systems as appropriate. The sensor feeds cover the complete elctromagnetic spectrum. Additionally, the training range is covered by holographic projectors that give you complete visual, thermal, and electromagnetic sensor readings. In short, your people will not be able to tell that they are not in real combat.

The Romulus Militia is currently operating the facility. I have informed them of your priority needs, and I know they will give your unit as much help as possible. If I can be of additional assistance, please let me know. Also, please convey my best wishes to the Archon when you next see her.

Elsewhere ...

Franklin, Patch, and Frestadt reach the deserted training facility. Its power has been shut off, and Patch goes to work restoring it while Franklin and Frestadt try to figure out how the holographic-imaging systems work. Patch succeeds in powering up the systems, and suddenly the three men hear Rachel's voice over the comm line. Startled but relieved to have tracked down at least some of her fellow Strikers, Rachel gives Franklin a few suggestions for firing up the holographic imaging. Between them, the Strikers figure out the right password, and dozens of phantom 'Mechs pop up on the training field.

Near the spaceport ...

Adam and his fellow MechWarriors have held their own against the Elementals, but can't seem to turn the tide in their favor. Without warning, the Elementals break off the attack and bound toward the training field. Taking advantage of this unexpected distraction, the Striker 'Mechs head toward the spaceport, only to run straight into a contingent of Clan 'Mechs led by Star Captain Kristen Redmond. As the Strikers gird for renewed battle, the Elementals back at the training field realize that they have been battling ghosts. They set off in pursuit of the Strikers, catching up to them within minutes.

Redmond calls off the Elementals, preferring to defeat the Strikers herself. In quick succession, she takes down Val's *Centurion* and Adam's *Axman*. Hawk stops his *Mauler* to pick up Val, who crawls out of his totalled 'Mech and climbs up on the *Mauler*'s leg. Just as Redmond lines up her sights on the *Mauler*, Adam raises his fallen 'Mech to a sitting position and fires a salvo of missiles at the fragile knee joint of Redmond's *Vulture*. The joint blows apart, sending the *Vulture* crashing to the ground. Adam wrestles his *Axman* back to its feet, and the two remaining Striker 'Mechs dash for the spaceport. Long before they reach it, they see the *Kwaidan* blasting off. Hawk begins to curse Franklin Sakamoto and the Dracs for their treachery, when suddenly a huge shadow blots out the sky above them. Hawk looks up to see the *Kwaidan*, come to rescue them from the pursuing Clan 'Mechs.

At Remus Spaceport ...

The surviving 'Mechs of the Romulus Militia surround Kristen Redmond's DropShip, dumping explosives all around it. From a safe distance the militia MechWarriors trigger the explosives, and the DropShip blows up in a huge fireball. Meanwhile, the *Kwaidan* docks with the *Katana*. The Strikers board their JumpShip and prepare to depart, confident that the armed and rebellious citizens of Remus City will be a constant thorn in the Jade Falcons' side.

Hours later ...

The *Katana* receives a holovid transmission from Nicolai Malthus's WarShip. Over a horrifying image of Remus City reduced to blackened rubble, Malthus intones, "These are the wages of those lesser castes who dare take up arms against the rightful rule of trueborn Clan warriors. Any further resistance will meet the same fate." Shocked and furious, the Strikers contemplate the destruction, knowing that only orbital bombardment could have done so much damage. After a few minutes, Adam sends a stinging reply to the Jade Falcon WarShip, "My unit was responsible for the uprising on Romulus. If Star Colonel Nicolai Malthus has a quarrel with me, let him take it up personally."

EPISODE 5: TRADE SECRETS

TWYCROSS

The 1st Somerset Strikers have lost their first member, Ciro Ramirez. Though Major Steiner found no hard evidence to prove Ciro's death, neither did he find his downed compatriot, and so the unit holds a memorial service to honor Ciro's sacrifice.

As a matter of fact ...

Isorla of Clan Jade Falcon; beaten, but not defeated Ciro Ramirez puts his military training to good use and escapes from his prison in the bowels of the planet Twycross. Nicolai Malthus recaptures Ciro and reveals that he hopes as fervently as Ciro does that Adam Steiner will mount a rescue mission—but for very different reasons.

On the DropShip Kwaidan ...

Adam Steiner proposes to steal technology from Clan Jade Falcon by conducting a commando raid on its most recent target, the planet Twycross. When he announces the strike team and assigns Rachel to her usual task of coordinating the attack, Rachel loses her temper, angry at being relegated once again to a support role.

The *Kwaidan* begins its descent through the atmosphere of Twycross, and Kylie takes a *Banshee* out to scout a path through the storm that Adam plans to use to cover the ship's landing. She crash-lands on the planet's surface. Following her trajectory, the DropShip makes a rough but safe landing, and Dr. Nakamura, Hawk, and Adam retrieve Kylie from her damaged fighter. Dr. Nakamura subsequently pronounces the young pilot unfit for further duty. When Kylie tries to protest, Dr. Nakamura administers a medipatch to put Kylie to sleep. Valten Ryder, hanging about as always to check on the welfare of the female members of the unit, finds it fascinating that the patch induces sleep so quickly by altering brain-wave patterns.

When Franklin Sakamoto protests Adam's cavalier treatment of his DropShip, Adam brushes off his complaints, and so Franklin privately vows to protect the *Kwaidan* himself.

As Adam and Val don desert-commando gear, Rachel joins them and begins suiting up. When Adam protests that she is most valuable in her capacity as TOO on the ship, Rachel silences him by quoting his own credo, "Specialization is the way to defeat."

On the planet Twycross ...

Val, Adam, and Rachel trudge through a long, deep valley and emerge at the edge of a wide plain, where they see the Twycross Militia making a valiant stand against the Falcon's Claws led by Nicolai Malthus. The three Strikers use the battle as cover to make their way across the plain. After easily defeating the militia, the Clan unit returns to its base, and the raiders track the 'Mechs by their heat signatures, which suddenly disappear. Val's offhand remark about the machines simply sinking into the ground reminds Adam that the Twycross Militia did maintain an underground base in the general vicinity. They scan for the base entrance, but when they find it and move toward it, all three quickly sink below the surface of the sand.

Meanwhile ...

Galaxy Commander Vandervahn Chistu congratulates Star Colonel Nicolai Malthus on his capture of Twycross and orders him to turn over garrison duties to Star Captain Kristen Redmond. Malthus takes advantage of this opportunity to taunt Redmond with her failure to hold the planet Romulus by asking Chistu for further time to ensure that Twycross will not suffer the same difficulties. Chistu grants Malthus an additional 48 hours on the conquered world, time that Malthus hopes will bring the 1st Somerset Strikers into his grasp.

On the surface ...

The wind smooths all signs of the three Strikers' presence. A minute or two later, an explosion below the surface creates a small depression in the sand. The Strikers drop into the underground base through a large tear in the roof of the complex, created by a shaped charge set by the ever-resourceful Val.

Meanwhile, on the Kwaidan ...

Hawk surprises Franklin in the act of appropriating a crate of explosives from the 'Mech bay. When Hawk questions his actions, Franklin stands on his dignity and faces down the older MechWarrior. Hawk returns to the innards of his 'Mech, and Franklin takes off with the crate, a secretive, satisfied smile on his face. A short time later, dressed in desert commando gear, Franklin climbs out of the DropShip through an escape hatch carrying a rucksack containing the crate of explosives. He sets out in the direction in which the raiding team headed, planting charges every fifteen meters along the sides and floor of the pass and priming the detonators.

Back in the Clan's underground base ...

Val, Rachel, and Adam work their way deeper into the base and locate the operations center. Val takes care of the solitary guard by stunning him with a medipatch, and Rachel quickly accesses the computer files. She finds the armory almost immediately, but continues feeding commands into the computer just a few seconds too long. Adam and Val step out of the ops center to secure the corridor for their next move, but the Clan guard finally shakes off the effects of the patch and orders Rachel to cease and desist. Reacting instinctively, Rachel fires a flash grenade at the guard that knocks him down but also sets off every alarm in the base. Rachel apologizes for her foolish action as the trio runs down a corridor, but her companions stop listening when they find themselves surrounded by the business ends of countless laser rifles.

Nicolai Malthus informs Ciro that the Clans have captured Major Adam Steiner and two other Strikers, then continues to undermine Ciro's loyalty to his unit by implying that, in comparison, the circumstances under which the Clan captured Ciro showed Ciro's basic superiority. Malthus then goes to lord it over his newest *isorla*, arriving in the midst of mutual recriminations between Adam and Rachel. Rachel stops Malthus in mid-gloat by signaling the main computer to activate the virus she downloaded during the few minutes she had access to the system. Seconds later, the virus shuts down every part of the base. Val, Rachel, and Adam make a run for it, taking advantage of the confusion to hide themselves in the ceiling until the soldiers searching for them pass by.

Outside the armory ...

The only obstacle still standing between the Strikers and their goal is the Elemental named Natalya. The team eventually subdues her with multiple medipatches, then opens the door to the armory to reveal a long row of Toad suits. Val, Adam, and Rachel each climb into one, and the faceplates automatically close. When Val wishes out loud for a salvo of short-range missiles to scatter the guards flooding into the armory, the Strikers discover that the suits function on voice command. The trio clomps through the door toward an elevator. While they wait for it, both Malthus and Kristen Redmond arrive leading five Elementals each and lay claim to the Strikers as *isorla*. Adam and Rachel fire their lasers above the Falcons' heads, burying them in sand.

The Strikers use the suits' jump jets to rocket up the elevator shaft and break through the surface, then jump again to escape the OmniMechs waiting for them. They land in the pass they traversed to reach the base. Five Clan Elementals land in the pass in front of them. Suddenly, Hawk's *Mauler* appears behind the Clan toads. He effectively turns their attention away from Val, Adam, and Rachel, but when he fires his laser cannon, the pentaglycerine planted by Franklin explodes and buries the *Mauler* under half the wall of the pass. Franklin launches the *Banshee*, using it to blast the Elementals away from Hawk and then clear away the boulders holding the 'Mech down.

Val, Hawk, Adam, Rachel, and Franklin return safely to the *Kwaidan*, and Captain Frestadt immediately lifts off in order to shake the Elementals clinging to the ship. In recognition of his newly revealed skills, Major Steiner invites Franklin Sakamoto to join the 1st Somerset Strikers.

Inside the underground base ...

Malthus taunts Ciro with the fact that the Strikers made no attempt to rescue their fallen comrade. When Ciro retorts that the long-departed Star League Defense Force will surely return to punish these invaders, Malthus replies, "We *are* the descendants of Kerensky!"

After delivering this stunning line, Malthus returns to his command center and receives a transmission from Galaxy Commander Chistu, who sarcastically congratulates him on being the first to hand over the Clan's technological edge to the Inner Sphere. Kristen Redmond taunts Malthus for falling victim to an un-Clanlike personal vendetta, and Nicolai Malthus swears to make Adam Steiner pay for this insult.

EPISODE 5A:
NO GUTS,
NO GALAXY

TWYCROSS SYSTEM

Having escaped from the Clan forces on Twycross with the valuable prize of three Toad battlesuits, Adam Steiner reports to Archon Melissa Steiner-Davion on the progress of the Strikers' mission. Meanwhile, Nicolai Malthus faces the fury of Galaxy Commander Chistu for not only having allowed the "Inner Sphere barbarians" to steal Clan technology, and also for obsessing over the destruction of one unit while all the other Jade Falcon commanders are taking planets and winning glory for their bloodlines. A seething Nicolai swears that Adam Steiner will pay dearly for his actions.

Aboard the JumpShip Katana ...

Captain Frestadt jumps the *Kwaidan* and the *Katana* through hyperspace to the relative safety of the Butler system. Adam begins his report to the Archon, while Rachel examines the captured Clan battle armor. She and Adam both know that unlocking the secrets of the armored suits may be the Strikers'—and the Inner Sphere's—only hope against the Clan enemy.

Meanwhile, aboard the Falcon's Nest ...

Malthus attempts to deflect Galaxy Commander Chistu's rage by reminding him that the Inner Sphere barbarians are exactly that—barbarians. By Clan standards they lack all honor, and Adam Steiner is the most dishonorable of them all. Malthus insists that the honor of Clan Jade Falcon requires him to go after Steiner and make an example of him. To bolster his argument, Nicolai shows his superior a little judiciously chosen battle footage ...

Flashback to ...

The *Falcon's Nest* moves into orbit over the planet Somerset. Nicolai Malthus, eagerly anticipating his first battle in the reconquest of the Inner Sphere, issues a proud challenge to the planet under his ship's guns, "I am Star Colonel Nicolai Malthus of the Falcon's Claws! What forces stand ready to defend this planet?" When the ranking military officer on Somerset—Commander Andrew Steiner of the Somerset Military Academy—responds with a mixture of defiance and confusion, Nicolai angrily demands to know whether Andrew is refusing his *batchall*. "Refuse your what?" Andrew replies. A furious Nicolai warns Andrew to prepare to face the wrath of the Falcon's Claws—then the transmission winks out. Minutes later, the Jade Falcons descend in force on the lightly defended planet.

Weeks later, in the rural heartland of the planet Romulus, Nicolai Malthus leads a Star of 'Mechs toward the Hartmann family's quiet farmstead. Stopping his own 'Mech near the farmhouse, he calls for the Somerset Strikers to come out of hiding, threatening to kill the Hartmanns unless the Strikers comply. Ben Hartmann steps out from behind an AgroMech with a missile launcher on his shoulder. He fires at Malthus's *Thor*. The shot does no damage—but the sight of a "labor caste drone" attacking Clan warriors enrages Malthus. He orders his fellow Clanners to destroy the farmstead. As they launch their attack, the Strikers emerge from hiding and engage them in battle.

Back aboard the Katana ...

Continuing his intelligence report to the Archon, Adam tells her that the key to defeating the Clans lies in using their own technology against them—particularly the armored battlesuit, which has turned the tide of many a recent battle in the Clans' favor. To drive home his point, he shows some alarming battle footage. ...

Flashback to ...

Ten Clan Elementals in battle armor march through the disused mine tunnels on Romulus, searching for the fleeing 'Mechs of the Romulus Militia and the 1st Somerset Strikers. They stride into an open chamber, spy a disabled *Wolfhound* 'Mech, and swarm over it. The 'Mech, booby trapped with explosives, blows up and sends the Elementals flying. After several seconds, the downed Elementals struggle to their feet and continue their march, virtually unscathed by the improvised bomb.

Segue to ...

Adam, Val, and Rachel drop silently through the roof of the underground military base on Twycross. They evade the Jade Falcons' notice long enough to find out where the Clanners' weapons and armor are stored but are captured before they get any further. Unknown to the Clanners, however, Rachel has injected a virus into the base's computer system. As Nicolai Malthus gloats over the captive Strikers, Rachel uses the computerized gear she is wearing to trigger the virus. Lights, door locks, and all other systems shut down temporarily, and in the confusion the Strikers escape. They swiftly make their way to the armory, climb into empty Toad suits, and battle their way out of the Falcons' clutches.

Back aboard the Falcon's Nest ...

Galaxy Commander Chistu, unmoved by Malthus's arguments, reprimands him sharply for the loss of the battlesuits. Malthus points out that the Somerset Strikers have no idea how to use the Clans' sophisticated enhanced-imaging targeting system, and so the purloined armor is useless to them.

On board the Katana ...

Adam continues his report, telling the Archon that the Strikers have also downloaded several Clan technical files from the Twycross base. Using this information, Federated Commonwealth weapons designers can create BattleMechs on
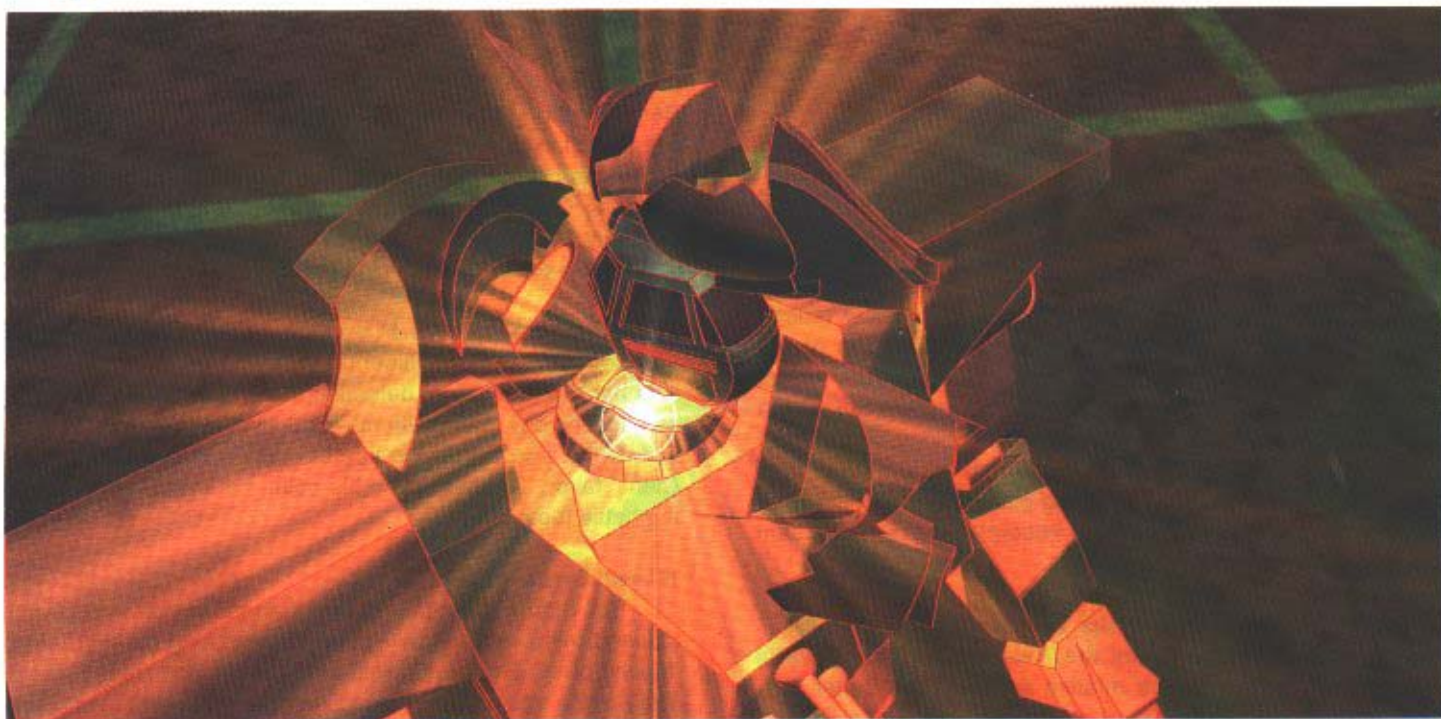
a par with the powerful and deadly Clan machines. Just then, Rachel interrupts him, saying she has found something.

Adam watches one of the vidfiles that Rachel stole from the Clan base. It shows the battle for Somerset from the point of view of the Clan 'Mechs that fought it. Every image, from BattleMechs to buildings, appears in the computer graphics of a remarkably sophisticated imaging and targeting system. As they watch the footage, Rachel recognizes one of the buildings as Somerset Academy. A *Wolfhound* steps into view, and Adam recognizes it as his brother Andrew's 'Mech. Adam watches in anguish as Malthus's *Thor* blows the *Wolfhound* apart, limb by limb.

Back aboard the Falcon's Nest ...

Playing his last trump card, Nicolai tells Chistu that his pursuit of Adam Steiner and the Somerset Strikers has gained the Clan something of immense value: Malthus's new bondsman, Ciro, a skilled Inner Sphere warrior whose family was honored by the revered General Aleksandr Kerensky himself. Malthus boasts that Ciro will prove an able Clan warrior and an invaluable asset against the soldiers of the Inner Sphere, particularly against Adam Steiner—Ciro understands Inner Sphere trickery and has unmatched insight into the way Adam Steiner's mind works. With Ciro's help, Clan Jade Falcon need no longer fall prey to the deceptive tactics of Inner Sphere warriors.

On board the Katana ...

Adam asks the Archon to convey his condolences to Ciro's parents on the death of their son. Despite the loss of a valued member, he reports, the 1st Somerset Strikers are shaping up as a viable team. Even Franklin Sakamoto, whose fierce loyalty

to the Draconis Combine and strong distrust of the Federated Commonwealth made him a chancy ally, has fully thrown in his lot with the Strikers. Indeed, Sakamoto is proving to be a man of many valuable and unsuspected talents. ...

Flashback to ...

In a deep rift on Twycross, Hawk's *Mauler* stands buried up to its shoulders in sand and rocks. Clan Elementals advance on the helpless BattleMech, firing as they go. Suddenly, a *Banshee* fighter streaks into view and begins firing on the *Mauler*. Frightened and furious, Hawk demands to know what the crazy pilot thinks he's doing. Franklin Sakamoto's voice crackles over the comm line, "I believe, Hawk-san, that I am saving your life." The fighter's lasers blast away the rubble, freeing the imprisoned 'Mech. His machine's arms no longer pinned, Hawk fires the *Mauler*'s guns at the Elementals as the *Banshee* flies away.

Adam concludes his report ...

Using battle footage, Adam reports his unit's materiel losses to the Archon. On Twycross, an avalanche buries the *Mauler* and a powerful hit from a Clan 'Mech sends Adam's *Axman* to the ground. Both 'Mechs are severely damaged, as is one of the unit's two *Banshees*. Val's *Centurion* and Ciro's *Wolfhound* were both completely destroyed. "If we are to continue this mission," Adam says grimly, "we will require new supplies." Later, Rachel asks Adam how they can possibly retake Somerset if the Archon does not give them the new equipment they need. "One way or another," Adam declares, "we're going to beat Malthus and take back our homeworld!"

EPISODE 6: PROTECT AND SURVIVE

BUTLER SYSTEM

While recharging the *Katana*'s jump drive in the tranquil Butler system, the 1st Somerset Strikers receive a message from the FedCom JumpShip *Strongbow*. One of the *Strongbow*'s DropShips, the *Hejira*, has gone AWOL and is heading the Strikers' way. Adam goes out in a *Banshee* to investigate; with Cadet Kylie still healing from injuries she suffered in the raid on Twycross, Adam has no choice but to take Franklin Sakamoto as his wingman.

Adam hails the errant DropShip, identifying himself as an officer of the armed Forces of the Federated Commonwealth. He receives no reply. Suddenly, Franklin sees the DropShip training its laser cannon on Adam's fighter. He shouts a warning and fires at the DropShip, destroying the cannon. The DropShip opens fire with its remaining weapons, buffeting both *Banshee*s with near misses. The voice of Galen Cox comes over the fighters' comm lines, identifying himself and the ship's distinguished passenger—Victor Steiner-Davion, Prince of the Federated Commonwealth.

Minutes later ...

The *Hejira* docks with the *Katana*, and Adam and Franklin board the DropShip. When they meet Victor, he explains that he needs their JumpShip to take him back to the planet Trell I, where the Twelfth Donegal Guards are fighting a losing battle against the Clans. The Twelfth Guards is Victor's unit, and he refuses to be spirited away to safety while his men are fighting and dying. Forcibly evacuated from Trell I by Galen, Victor found himself stuck aboard the *Strongbow*, whose jump drive needs several weeks' worth of repairs. Taking advantage of the situation, Victor persuaded the DropShip pilot, Captain Gray Stephens, to give him a lift to the *Katana*.

Aboard the *Kwaidan*, Victor sees the three suits of Elemental battle armor that the Strikers captured on Twycross. He suggests using them to infiltrate the Clan forces on Trell I—if he and the Strikers can pull that off, they can turn the tide in favor of the Twelfth Donegal Guards and beat the Jade Falcons off the planet. Then the victorious Twelfth can liberate Somerset, which lies only a short jump away. Ecstatic at the prospect of freeing his homeworld, Adam enthusiastically agrees to the prince's scheme. When Adam tells Rachel his plans, however, she informs him that the *Katana* has just received orders to escort Prince Victor to a FedCom base on the secure world of Sudeten. Disappointed, Adam consoles himself with the knowledge that he has a week to decide what to do; the *Katana* will take at least that long to recharge its jump drive.

That evening ...

Dressed in a black jumpsuit, Franklin moves stealthily through the *Katana*. He freezes against the wall briefly to avoid being seen by Hawk, who is patrolling at the far end of a corridor. Satisfied that the corridor is empty, Hawk strides into a turbolift. Franklin steps out of the shadows and continues his silent progress.

In his quarters, Victor gets ready to retire for the night. He tells the ever-suspicious Galen to go get some sleep. Unwillingly, Galen obeys.

I regret to inform Your Excellency that our hopes for the swift dissolution of the Federated Commonwealth have proved greatly exaggerated. It is understandable that many of my predecessors believed this giant, unwieldy union of two previously warring states could not survive as a political entity. After all, many times in history marriage has proven ineffective as a means of political alliance between former enemies; given that the marriage of Archon-designate Melissa Steiner to Prince Hanse Davion led directly to the brutal Fourth Succession War, it seemed reasonable at the time to suppose that the pressures of that conflict—despite the fact that the Federated Commonwealth won new territory from it—would inevitably prevent the alliance from becoming a working political reality.

After studying the Federated Commonwealth for the two decades of its existence, however, I must regard it as a viable state. Certainly the Archon and the Prince are strong and able rulers, and the young heir, Prince Victor, seems likely to govern as well as his illustrious parents. The single ray of hope lies in two factors that may or may not become important enough to be of use to us. First, the current goodwill between the two halves of the Federated Commonwealth stems more from the charismatic personalities and obvious affection between the Archon and the Prince than from genuine trust between their two peoples. Second, Prince Victor will rule alone over the entire realm—and already some circles see him as his father's son more than his mother's. We can only hope that Lyran discontent may make itself felt in the next generation, so that our agents may exploit it wherever it arises.
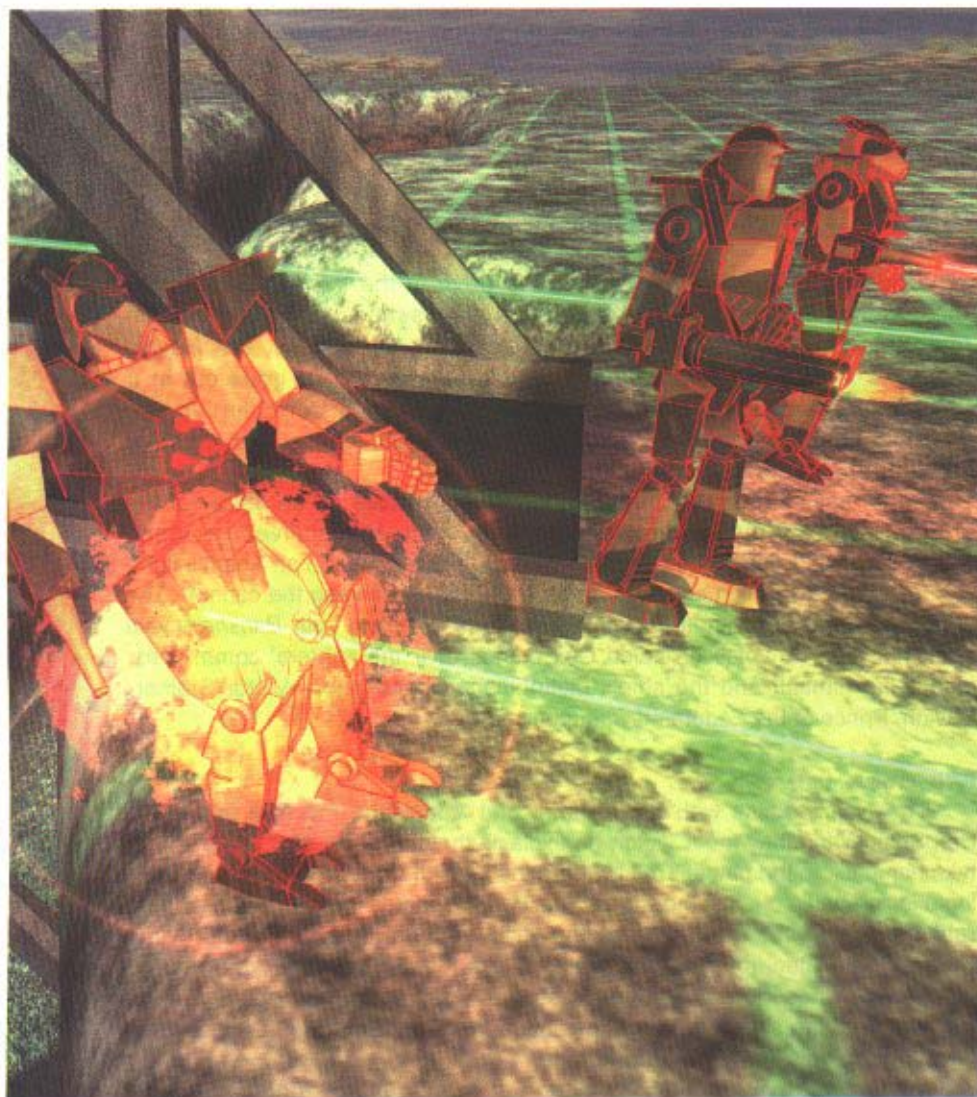
A few hours later ...

The door to Victor's darkened quarters slides soundlessly open, and a masked figure in black steps inside. The blade of a katana glints by the figure's side. The intruder creeps closer to the sleeping prince, then raises the blade to strike. Victor wakes up and instinctively throws himself to one side of the bed. The katana comes whistling down; its sharp edge slices neatly through the straps of Victor's zero-G sleep harness. Victor slips free of the bed and floats away from his assailant, who takes another swing at him with the sword. Kicking himself toward the bulkhead, Victor presses a silent alarm, then turns to fight. He grapples briefly with the would-be assassin, but the mysterious figure breaks free and flees.

The assassin charges out of Victor's quarters right in front of a surprised Hawk, who chases after him. Losing his quarry, Hawk alerts Adam, who orders Rachel to perform an immediate head count of all personnel aboard the *Katana* and the *Kwaidan*. Within minutes, Rachel reports to Adam that all personnel are accounted for except Franklin Sakamoto. He cannot be found on either of the Striker ships.

Minutes later ...

Adam, Hawk, Captain Stephens, and Galen Cox find Franklin aboard the *Hejira*, snooping through the ship's computer. Galen angrily demands to know what Franklin is doing, but Franklin refuses to say. Stephens enters the DropShip bridge, carrying a black

mask and a katana that someone tossed down a ventilation shaft aboard the *Hejira*. Hawk carts Franklin off to the brig, satisfied that they have caught the would-be killer—but Adam feels uneasy. Unable to believe that Franklin Sakamoto would stoop to assassination, Adam searches Franklin's quarters and discovers that someone forced open Franklin's foot locker and stole his katana.

In the cargo bay ...

Hawk finds out that one of the Elemental armor suits is missing. Convinced that Franklin has something to do with the theft, Hawk charges to the brig and confronts him, demanding to know who he really works for. Hawk threatens Franklin with a laser pistol; as they grapple for the weapon, it fires into the bulkhead, sparking an electrical fire. Flame-retardant foam pours out of the bulkhead, temporarily blinding Hawk. Taking advantage of Hawk's predicament, Franklin escapes.

Meanwhile ...

Alarms blare through the *Katana*'s corridors. From inside his quarters, Victor tries to call Galen to find out what is going on. Suddenly the door to his quarters bursts inward. The assassin stands in the shattered doorway, clad in the missing suit of Elemental armor. His voice unrecognizable, the assassin says, "Galen is indisposed right now. But I have other plans for you, Victor." He steps inside the room and opens the suit's visor; a shocked Victor recognizes his would-be killer as Captain Stephens. Saying that "certain factions in the Federated Commonwealth prefer a more worthy successor to the throne," Stephens closes his visor and levels the laser arm of his suit at the helpless prince. Before he can fire, Adam and Hawk appear in the doorway with pistols drawn and order Stephens to back off. He turns toward them, distracted; behind him, a second suit of Elemental armor floats to the deck. The second Elemental fires on Stephens, knocking him down. Adam and Hawk lunge for Prince Victor, pulling him out of harm's way. The second Elemental lifts its visor, revealing Franklin Sakamoto. Stephens fires his suit's jump jets, rocketing out into the corridor.

Franklin chases Stephens into the elevator shaft. Locked in combat, the two of them fall down the shaft and then burst into the cargo bay. Franklin fires at Stephens's laser arm, disabling the weapon. Stephens fires his last flight of missiles at Franklin, who leaps out of their way at the last moment. The missiles blow a hole in the bulkhead. Explosive decompression sucks out into space countless crates, barrels, and other assorted debris. Franklin grabs a support scaffold with his suit's claw arm, barely able to keep his grip against the force of the departing atmosphere. Stephens, flailing desperately for a handhold, shoots through the shattered bulkhead and out into space.

Later ...

As a *Kwaidan* crewman in a *Banshee* captures Stephens in the fighter's grappling arm, Franklin reveals his reasons for snooping in the *Hejira*'s computers. He was looking for evidence that the DropShip had actually meant to fire on Adam, and had discovered that someone had programmed the ship to self-destruct upon landing on Trell I. When Adam asks why Franklin refused to tell him this before, Franklin replies coldly, "Would you have believed me?"

Victor thanks Franklin for saving his life and compliments Adam on the courage of his crew, commenting that they'll need that kind of valor on Trell I and Somerset. Gently, Adam tells Victor that they won't be going to Trell I; the *Katana* has orders to ferry Victor to Sudeten and safety. Before Victor can protest, Adam reminds him that they have a greater responsibility to the Commonwealth than to any one unit or planet. The Somerset Strikers have gathered quite a bit of intelligence on the Clan enemy; the best way to fight them is to put that hard-won knowledge to good use.

In answer to your question, I'd say we won't have a problem if we watch for the early signs and stamp them out wherever we see them. The real determining factor in the long-term survival of the Federated Commonwealth is Prince Victor, and on that score I have few worries. He's bright, perceptive, thoughtful, and intelligent enough to spot the pitfalls of being the first ruler of a vast empire that used to be two independent states. He also cares enough about both his father's people and his mother's to want to avoid those pitfalls. Provided the public sees that commitment in Victor's words and actions, I think he can keep the realm together against the separatist agitators who will always be with us.

I agree that the biggest potential problems are public relations and outside forces beyond our control, like these damned Clan invaders. They're cutting a swath through the Lyran half of the Commonwealth, which might well lead to fierce resentment. We can't do anything about that, though, so I'll go on to the PR problem.

Already, Victor tends to be seen as more Davion than Steiner, though this isn't yet a liability. We'll have to keep it from becoming one. People don't yet see him as exclusively Davion; it's more a vague feeling that he isn't like the famous Steiners of the past. If the Lyrans do start regarding him as Davion rather than Steiner, we could have major trouble—so let's head it off now, before it happens. Our job, starting now and ongoing after Victor ascends the throne, is to make him seem more like a Steiner in the eyes of the Lyrans. It is imperative that everyone in the Federated Commonwealth see Victor as both Steiner and Davion, and therefore acting in everybody's best interests. He's fairly well liked by most people now, and I see no reason why that should change. With a little judicious spin control, we can ensure that Victor's popularity with all the Commonwealth's people goes up and stays up.

Let me know what ideas you have on the best way to give Victor a Steiner makeover. We should meet about it soon—say, next week?

EPISODE 7: IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

WALDORFF SYSTEM

The WarShip *Falcon's Nest* hangs in space near the Waldorff system. Aboard it, Nicolai Malthus and Kristen Redmond engage in a fierce battle, which is watched by the aging Clansman Pytor and Ciro Ramirez. Though not to the death, the combat is swift and brutal, as both Clan commanders lash out at each other with electrified Medusa whips. Fascinated and repelled, Ciro asks Pytor why Kristen and Nicolai are fighting each other. Pytor explains that this battle is a Trial of Possession, one method by which the Clans settle disputes. This particular Trial is over a unique and valuable new weapon—Ciro.

Aboard the JumpShip Katana ...

As the ship glides into orbit around Waldorff V, Adam and Hawk break up a miniriot between Franklin Sakamoto, a few Kurita crewmen, Val Ryder, and Kylie. Val accuses Franklin of stealing the Strikers' supplies, a charge Franklin angrily disputes. He was, he says, taking nonvital pieces of equipment to trade for necessities such as food—all within the scope of his responsibilities as de facto supply officer for the Kurita ships. Adam briefly calms the hot tempers by reminding them that they'll soon land on Waldorff V and replenish the supplies they so desperately need. The bad feeling between Kurita and FedCom personnel, however, remains a real danger to his unit.

On Waldorff V ...

The supply sergeant in charge of Waldorff's Quartermaster Depot refuses to give the Strikers anything without the proper paperwork and can't be budged by Franklin's bribes or Hawk's threats. A ComStar official comes looking for Adam, saying that Archon Melissa Steiner has sent him an urgent message.

Melissa informs Adam that the 1st Somerset Strikers' intelligence-gathering mission has been suspended. Instead, they are to fieldtest new equipment made from the Clan technology that Adam and the Strikers appropriated on Twycross. She gives him permission to take any steps necessary to carry out this new mission, "even if it means going to a planet currently being held by Clan forces." Overjoyed, Adam realizes that the Archon has just granted him oblique permission to liberate Somerset.

Meanwhile ...

Adam Steiner is not the only one listening to the words of his Archon. The Jade Falcons have intercepted the transmission, and Kristen Redmond listens to it with interest. She comments to Ciro, whom she won from Nicolai in the Trial of Possession, that defeating the Strikers and their powerful new weapons will bring her great glory. When Ciro refuses her demand for his help against his former comrades, Kristen suggests that the Strikers would be better off as her captives than as Nicolai's—Nicolai would probably kill them all. She, on the other hand, would make bondsmen of them. Of course, she will need the right person to command them and teach them Clan ways ... and who better than Ciro, who knows his compatriots so well?

Back at the depot ...

The supply sergeant, suddenly eager to please, shows the Strikers their new equipment: two BattleMechs and two suits of battle armor. The *Awesome* and *Bushwacker* 'Mechs, as well as the smaller *Infiltrator* and *Sloth* battlesuits, are deadlier-looking than any other battlefield machines the Strikers have ever seen. Adam, lacking a 'Mech while his *Axman* undergoes repairs, takes the *Awesome*. He gives Val Ryder the *Bushwacker*, assigns Kylie to the Infiltrator, and gives Franklin the Sloth, answering Hawk's objections by pointing out that Hawk is the only Striker with a functioning 'Mech. New tech in hand, Adam orders his unit to take the field for a few practice runs.

Elsewhere on Waldorff ...

The DropShip *Kwaidan* lands, and the newly outfitted Somerset Strikers disembark into a dismal swamp. As Kylie and Franklin wade into the murky water, Franklin starts hopping around. Seconds later, he opens his suit's faceplate and tosses out a handful of snakes. Kylie and Val laugh, pleased with the success of their prank. Hawk gruffly tells them to knock it off, and orders the two battlesuits deeper into the swamp.

Franklin reports that his suit is taking on water and acidly demands to know if this is another prank. He tries to retreat to dry land, but is stuck in the thick swamp mud. Kylie goes to his rescue only to find herself trapped in the muck alongside him. The heavy battlesuits sink too quickly for Hawk and Val to reach them. In the few seconds it takes for Hawk's *Mauler* to reach the swamp's edge, all that remains of Kylie and Franklin are a few ripples on the water's dark surface.

Within seconds ...

Val's *Bushwacker* steps forward and dips one clawed arm into the swamp's murky depths. He pulls the Infiltrator out of the muck and sets the grime-streaked suit on a patch of relatively dry land. He then rescues Franklin's Sloth, but upon hearing a

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Your Highness,

As you requested, enclosed is a full evaluation of the impact of the technical information we received from the Somerset Strikers. It is a bit long and filled with jargon, so I'll summarize it below.

We received technical maintenance documents for the *Vulture* Class BattleMech, as well as documents and samples of the Toad class power armor suits. The long-term impact on our weapons programs will be considerable. The Clans have made great improvements in fire-control systems, weapons, power plants and basic metallurgy. The Strikers' information will save our R&D teams years of development time in these areas.

These documents have also had an immediate payoff. As you may recall, the BSW-X1 *Bushwacker*'s electronics have been plagued with electromagnetic interference from its fusion plant. The Clan *Vulture* has a similar interior arrangement. Using the *Vulture* as a guide, our engineers have reconfigured the *Bushwacker*'s engine, solving the interference problem.

The technical data on the Toad battle armor also helped us surmount a technological barrier in our IFR-X and SLH-X battlesuit programs. The myomers we used to drive the legs were too short to generate the power necessary for the suits to maneuver effectively on the battlefield. As you know, the longer the myomer, the greater its contraction when exposed to an electric current. A review of the Clan technical data showed that Clan designers solved this problem by giving their myomers a pseudolength twice their actual length.

The *Bushwacker*, Sloth and Infiltrator programs are now ready for operational testing, which would not have been possible without the Strikers' data. The next step is to get these prototypes to a suitable combat unit for field testing.

In the course of many conversations with the Loremaster of Clan Wolf—the keeper of the Clan's traditions and history, and a greatly respected individual—I have come to understand the overwhelming importance of genetics and bloodlines in Clan culture. So vital is the bloodline to Clan warriors that they carry their own personal genetic information with them at all times, in what they call a codex.

A part of a Clan warrior's uniform much like the dogtags worn by our own soldiers, the codex is each warrior's personal record. In addition to information about the warrior's military career, it includes the names of the original Bloodnamed warriors from whom a warrior is descended, the warrior's generation number, his Blood House, and the codex ID, an alphanumeric code noting the unique aspects of that person's DNA.

More than simply a means of identification, the codex carries considerable emotional weight. Each Clan's version of their epic poem The Remembrance, a collective record of the Clans' history, includes verses about the codex. The verses I have heard speak of it with the reverence that most Inner Sphere cultures reserve for religious icons. Many Remembrance verses show the codex as the key to a warrior's true identity, a physical representation of his inmost soul. Containing as it does the two things about a warrior that the Clans value most—his battlefield accomplishments and his genetic heritage—such beliefs make perfect sense.

stream of abuse from its occupant, drops him back into the swamp to "cool off." Hawk, despairing of ever building a working unit out of people who refuse to get along, orders an end to the hazing.

Franklin is still in for one more nasty surprise, however. In an attempt to avoid low-level laser fire from Hawk's 'Mech, Franklin runs into the part of the swamp being used by Val and Adam as a firing range. Val launches a missile flight, then realizes to his horror that Franklin is standing right in their path.

Aboard the Falcon's Nest ...

Kristen Redmond and Nicolai Malthus bid for the honor of taking Waldorff V and destroying the 1st Somerset Strikers. Nicolai forces Kristen to make a staggeringly low final bid: her own 'Mech with its lasers deactivated, plus a mere two Elementals. Noticing Nicolai's satisfied smile, Ciro wonders why Nicolai seems so thrilled at having lost the bidding war. Pytor, looking grim, tells him that Star Captain Redmond cannot hope to defeat the Strikers and take the planet with a single 'Mech and a pair of Elementals. She will be forced to call upon Malthus for assistance—and the fate of the Somerset Strikers will then be in Nicolai's hands.

Meanwhile, planetside ...

Val tries frantically to disarm the missile flight, but the missiles do not respond to his signal. Adam fires his lasers at the treetops around Franklin, setting them on fire. The heat confuses the missiles' heat-seeking circuits; they veer away from Franklin seconds before impact and explode among the trees. Burning debris rains down on Franklin, burying him. His armored suit takes the punishment, and within a few minutes he stands up unharmed. Wthout answering the concerned hails from Adam and Val, Franklin runs off into the jungle.

Hours later ...

Rachel alerts Adam that she has detected a Clan 'Mech and two Elementals dropping through space toward the Strikers' position. Adam leads his unit—minus Franklin—to the invaders' estimated landing site. Though the odds seem to be with the Strikers, Kristen Redmond and her two Elementals quickly turn the tide of battle in the Jade Falcons' favor. Redmond takes out Hawk's *Mauler* and Val's *Bushwacker*, and cripples the targeting array on Adam's *Awesome*. Just as Kristen trains her guns on Val's fallen 'Mech, Franklin breaks the surface of the swamp and affixes a mine to the belly of Kristen's *Vulture*. Klaxons shriek through the OmniMech—reactor core breach imminent! Kristen punches out of her 'Mech seconds before it explodes.

From the Clan DropShip ...

Badly confused by the debacle he has just witnessed, Ciro demands to know why Malthus refused to save Redmond from defeat. "The Jade Falcon grows strong on success, not failure," Nicolai replies. With a sharp, calculating look at Ciro, he continues, "We grow ever stronger as the old and weak are replaced by new blood." Ciro fingers his Star League medal, thinking hard about Nicolai's words.

On Waldorff ...

Kristen Redmond dashes through the jungle, desperate to escape the pursuing Strikers. Hearing Adam and Hawk close behind her, she turns and points her laser pistol at them. Before she can fire, a murky pool behind her bubbles angrily, and Franklin's *Sloth* rises out of it. Kristen whirls and fires at him, but the shots bounce harmlessly off the armored suit. With a sweep of one powerful arm, Franklin knocks the gun from Kristen's hand. She backs away from him, straight into Hawk's arms. Defeated, Kristen pleads with Adam to make her his bondsman—but Adam does not understand what she means.

EPISODE 8: BOUND BY HONOR

WALDORFF SYSTEM

Star Colonel Nicolai Malthus's next target is the world of Waldorff. Though he initially intends to destroy the Strikers as they resupply at the depot on Waldorff, bondsman Ciro convinces him to try instead to capture them and show the Strikers the superiority of the Clan way.

On the planet Waldorff V ...

Major Steiner, Rachel, and Hawk interrogate Kristen Redmond. When asked about her facial tattoos, Kristen tells them that the markings are actually specialized neurocircuitry that allows Clan warriors to access the enhanced-imaging systems in their 'Mechs with the ease and speed of thought. In the middle of the interrogation, Franklin hails Adam, informing him that Nicolai Malthus and a single Star of OmniMechs have executed a hot drop directly on top of the Quartermaster Corps depot and have shot down the DropShip full of crew and supplies. Though Kristen demands to be allowed to prove her worth as a bondsman in battle, the Strikers leave her in the detention cell as the *Kwaidan* makes a suborbital hop to drop the Strikers behind the attacking Clan 'Mechs.

The Strikers engage the Falcons and occupy them long enough for the crew of the DropShip to escape. Adam orders a tactical retreat to save their own 'Mechs and DropShip.

Above Waldorff V ...

Rachel and Adam continue interrogating Kristen Redmond, who again protests their treatment of her as dishonorable and unfitting for a descendant of Aleksandr Kerensky's exiled Star League Army. She tries to make her point by comparing the Strikers' attitude toward her and the Clan's treatment of bondsman Ciro, stunning her questioners with the knowledge that their fellow soldier is still alive. Unable to abandon a member of his unit under such circumstances, Adam immediately decides to arrange a trade of Kristen Redmond for Ciro, for once giving the opportunity to gain valuable information second priority. When Major Steiner hails the Clan DropShip and offers his prisoner in exchange for Malthus's, Kristen informs him that only if he follows the Clan way and challenges her former commander to a Trial of Possession will Malthus answer.

At the same moment ...

At practically the same moment that his former comrades discover he still lives, Ciro fully accepts the Clan way and credo, shedding his bondcord and taking on the status of a Clan warrior. He also undergoes the process necessary to implant the synthetic neurocircuitry that will allow him to interface directly with his BattleMech.

On the DropShip Kwaidan ...

Major Steiner and Star Colonel Nicolai Malthus bargain to establish the terms of a Trial of Possession. Adam agrees that if he loses, the Strikers will surrender to Nicolai Malthus and return Kristen Redmond to Clan Jade Falcon. If Adam wins, Malthus will return Ciro Ramirez to the 1st Somerset Strikers. Malthus chooses to fight in single combat using BattleMechs, and Adam chooses the location of the battle, an abandoned refinery on a small moon orbiting the planet Waldorff VII.

Kristen again offers to contribute to her new unit, this time by upgrading

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MIIO GENERAL ARCHIVES—
INDUSTRY—DOCUMENT NO. 455732

TO: Barbara Edwards/CEO/Vickers Mining
FROM: Victoria Jones/ CEO/Jones Consulting
RE: Profitabilty of mining operations Waldorff VII
DATE: 10/05/3022

Dear Babs,

I'm glad you came to me for that second opinion on the viability of the Waldorff extraction facility. Your instincts were right. Your in-house staff are trying to downplay some significant problems.

The formal report is 10 megs of graphs, charts, net present value analysis and the like. But I know you prefer a boiled-down, straight to the point report, so here goes.

Shut down the Waldorff refinery as fast as you can and run. The plant is one massive financial and moral disaster just waiting for a spark to set it off.

I know Waldorff VII looks like a gold mine. Through a mistake in geology and who knows what else, the planet is blessed with vast reservoirs of the most amazing fuel since petroleum: a high-quality hydrocarbon that has its own oxidizer bound into it. Heat the stuff up to 800o and bango, one nice explosion. Great stuff. Better yet, all the planetary deposits appear to be interconnected! One big extraction facility, that's all you need. The transportation costs to Waldorff II (where local industry would kill for this type of fuel) are minimal. The planet's industrial infrastructure hasn't converted fully to the fuel, but given its advantages you can expect 50 percent of all planetary transportation to convert within 10 years. Worst case, the planetary reserves are rated at 100 years.

Problem is, Waldorff's literally a time bomb waiting to go off. Before the extraction plant started operations, the fuel was safely buried under at least a kilometer of non-porous rock. Below it was another layer of solid granite stretching almost to the center of the planet. Operations at the extraction plant have drilled multiple holes through the rock, straight into this volatile mixture. Think of them as fuses. One errant spark at that facility, and it'll go up in in flames; in fact, the entire planet could explode. You've had enough systems training to know that regardless of what safety measures you take, sooner or later disaster will strike. Your staff is soft-pedaling the risks, and people will die because of it.

I know you'll make the right decison—you won't put profit above the lives of your workers.

Vicky

TO: Secretary Alex Mallory
FROM: Captain Gerald O'Mara, Psych Division
DATE: 3 January 3052
RE: Psych Profiles, Phelan Kell/Ciro Ramirez

Here are the profiles you requested. These two men make an interesting study. Though both apparently made the same choices, the differences in their reasons are intriguing and often startling.

Both men attended the Nagelring, and Ciro graduated near the top of his class. Ciro's parents are of minor noble rank; their son seems to have been an insufferable social climber and a real by-the-book man when it came to military strategy. Clan Jade Falcon captured him from the First Somerset Strikers on Romulus, and within a few months he reappeared as a MechWarrior in the Falcon's Claws.

Phelan Kell could have claimed nobility through his distant relation to the Steiner royals. However, he downplayed his family connections and resented any suggestion that they had earned him anything. The vehemence of his reaction to such comments suggests that he secretly feared they were true. After his expulsion from the Nagelring, Phelan found a place with the Kell Hounds. He was captured by Clan Wolf on The Rock early in the Clan War.

Judging by Major Adam Steiner's report at the time of Ramirez's capture, Ciro became more "Clannish" than the Clans, wholeheartedly embracing the Jade Falcon credo that the Inner Sphere must be forced to accept the Clan way in order to be part of a restored Star League. Ciro's predisposition to see most people as suited to a predetermined role in life must also have contributed to his rapid acceptance of the Clan caste system. The arrogance of the Jade Falcons meshed perfectly with his belief in his own superiority, enabling him to reject the Inner Sphere once his captors "proved" us inferior.

Phelan Kell switched allegiance to Clan Wolf because his captors offered him a place in their society based strictly on his merits as a soldier. He earned his rank among them solely through triumph in combat. According to recent reports, as a bondsman Phelan played a major role in the Wolves' bloodless conquest of Gunzberg. By allowing Phelan to save so many lives early in his captivity, Clan Wolf reinforced his natural altruism and his sometimes shaky belief in his own worth, as well as his conviction that merit rather than membership in a certain class determines one's status. To this day, Kell sees Clan society as a meritocracy, and admires it.
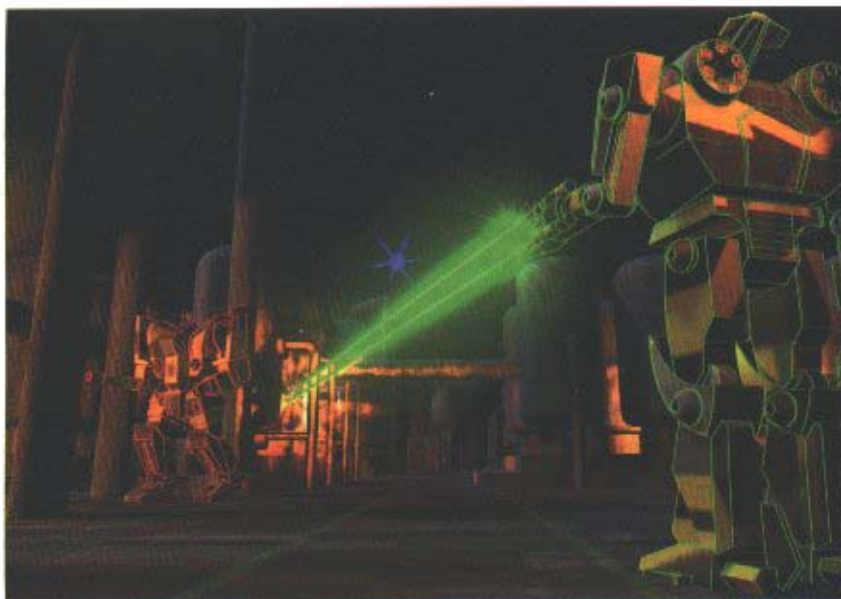
Major Steiner's BattleMech to Clan standards. When Adam turns her down yet again, she escapes her guards and makes the upgrade without permission, though Rachel and Patch run a complete diagnostic on all systems and find no evidence of Kristen's tinkering.

On the surface of the Waldorff VII moon ...

Rachel informs Adam that Kristen Redmond escaped from her guards again, and this time left the *Kwaidan* in an escape pod. Adam immediately suspects Kristen and Malthus of using the Trial of Possession to set a trap to kill him. When Adam calls the trial a sham and demands that Malthus release Ciro, Malthus responds to Adam's "dishonorable behavior" by sending Ciro out to battle Adam as part of his Trial of Position. Ciro emerges from the Clan DropShip piloting Adam's *Axman*, which the Strikers abandoned on Waldorff and Malthus gave to Ciro as *isorla*.

Malthus informs Ciro that the Trial of Possession will serve as his Trial of Position. As soon as Malthus leaves the field, Adam offers to cover Ciro's run for the *Kwaidan*, but Ciro's only response is to engage enhanced imaging. Confused by Ciro's words, Adam echoes his opponent's command and discovers that Kristen made a contribution to his trial after all—she installed a version of enhanced imaging in his neurohelmet.

As Adam Steiner jockeys his 'Mech to avoid Ciro's attacks and tries to reason with his opponent, Ciro tries to convince Major Steiner to join the Clans, and Adam finally accepts that his former lieutenant has fully embraced the Clan way. When a flight of long-range missiles ignites a gas tank, the explosion triggers seismic activity that tears the planetoid apart. Both Ciro and Adam reach their respective DropShips and lift away from the moon with seconds to spare.

Above Waldorff V ...

While Rachel and Adam consider their latest mission a success because they obtained another piece of Clan technology for the Inner Sphere to use in the fight to stop the invading forces, they must also face the horrible possibility that the Clans might succeed in convincing every citizen of the Inner Sphere to accept the Clan way as easily as they turned Ciro Ramirez. Meanwhile, their former companion-in-arms reveals to his new family the Strikers' ultimate destination: Adam Steiner's home planet of Somerset.

EPISODE 9: ROAD TO CAMELOT

SOMEWHERE IN THE DARK NEBULA

While scouting for Clan ships, Franklin and Kylie pick up a mysterious transmission. Flying closer to the source, they are attacked by dozens of tiny drones. Rachel identifies the drones as leftovers from the long-ago Second Succession War. Kylie offers to clear them from the Strikers' path, but Adam says they can't afford the risk. He orders both pilots to return to the *Kwaidan*.

As they fly to safety, Franklin tells Kylie that the drones were not the source of the strange transmission. Kylie wonders where it came from.

Back aboard the Kwaidan ...

Franklin discovers the transmission may have come from a Star League naval beacon, and he tries to persuade Adam to investigate. If he's right, the Strikers might discover a Star League base and a motherlode of valuable technology. Adam, however, refuses. Analysis of the transmission indicates it could just as easily have come from pulsars, and Adam does not believe Franklin's "Star League base" theory. Privately, Franklin vows to seek out the Star League base on his own.

Several hours later ...

As Franklin prepares for his unauthorized expedition, he is joined by Val, Kylie, and Patch. All three, for their own reasons, insist on coming along. Crowded into two *Banshees*, the four head off into the Dark Nebula. Franklin worries about encountering more attack drones, but Patch transmits an old code from the Second Succession War that identifies the *Banshees* as friendlies.

Deep within the nebula ...

The Striker fighters break through the Dark Nebula's gas clouds and see a manmade planetoid—a floating base emblazoned with the Cameron Star, the symbol of the Star League's ruling family. Transmissions from the planetoid's landing beacon welcome the Strikers to Camelot Command in the name of the Star League.

Within minutes ...

The Strikers swiftly locate the base's command center. Franklin figures out how to start up the computer systems, then requests a historical summary of Camelot Command beginning on July 7, 2784—the day the Star League Army left the Inner Sphere. The computer tells them that General Aleksandr Kerensky ordered the Star League Army to assemble at Camelot Command, that each division was assigned enough scientists, technicians, and civilians to become self-sufficient for the long journey, and that these divisions came to be called *clans*. The Strikers are stunned to realize that their enemies are the descendants of the Star League's protectors.

Meanwhile ...

A Jade Falcon DropShip lands at Camelot Command. Star Commander Pytor and Ciro have arrived to reclaim the long-lost Star League base for Clan Jade Falcon. Shortly afterward, another Clan DropShip lands nearby. Aboard is a sizeable force of Elementals, who have come to reclaim Camelot Command for Clan Wolf.

ComStar/ROM Active Archives File No. A637

TO: Demi-Precentor Lisa Morella, ROM Information and Analysis
FROM: Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht
RE: Clan origins

I was as shocked as you were to hear that two major points of historical fact had been repudiated by vintage computer logs found aboard the derelict Star League facility known as Camelot Command. As soon as Adept Marcus informed me of your department's findings, I took it upon myself to correlate this data with what we already know about the Clans. Clan Wolf's Loremaster was instrumental in clarifying the facts.

The first point—the supposed gathering of the Exodus fleet at Camelot Command—is clearly impossible. Every schoolchild knows that the entire Exodus fleet assembled in the New Samarkand system for the final jump into the Periphery on November 5, 2784. Upon examining the exact wording of the data, however, a somewhat different picture emerges.

When the Camelot Command archives mention the "Star League Army," the reference must mean the SLDF Twelfth Army, stationed in District Two of the Lyran Commonwealth Military Region. Camelot Command would be a logical rendezvous point for this division; it lies near the District Headquarters of Deia and offered the excellent cover of the Dark Nebula to conceal the fleet's movements. Presumably the Twelfth stripped everything useful from the station and then proceeded to New Samarkand.

The second, more confusing point concerns the nature and origins of the Clans.

"As each division arrived, it was assigned additional personnel—scientists, technicians, and civilians—in order to become self-sufficient for the long journey. These divisions became known as clans."

As far as I can tell, the clans mentioned in the Camelot files were task forces formed for logistical purposes during the Exodus. I have found no data that explains the use of the term "clan" in this context. My contacts within the Clans offer no insight, nor can they confirm if Nicholas was inspired by his father's use of the term when he dubbed his people the Clans more than fifteen years later.

Inform your field agents of my findings immediately. We cannot have such misinformation circulating throughout our Blessed Order undisputed. Also, keep me updated on any further transmissions regarding Major Adam Steiner or the 1st Somerset Strikers. This small expeditionary force may be more than it seems.

Back aboard the *Kwaidan*, Adam and Rachel discover their fellow Strikers' disappearance. Searching for clues to where their compatriots have gone, they find Franklin's holographic message telling them to come looking if he and his companions do not return within twelve hours. At that time, a second holograph will appear with the necessary information. Rachel immediately starts tinkering with the computer to find that second message.

Inside Camelot Command ...

In search of Star League weapons that will make him rich, Val sets off for the munitions bay. Halfway there, he runs into several Wolf Clan Elementals. The other three Strikers run into the Jade Falcons. All four Strikers run, leading the two Clan forces straight to each other. Jedediah, leader of the Wolf Elementals, challenges Natalya of the Jade Falcons to a Trial of Possession for Camelot Command. While the Clans squabble, the Strikers sneak away. Franklin orders Kylie and Val to keep the Clanners busy while he and Patch head back to the command center in hopes of finding a way to use its systems to their advantage.

Minutes later ...

Hoping to find some useful weapons, Kylie and Val head for the munitions bay, only to find it empty. The shadow of a BattleMech falls over them— Adam's *Axman*, piloted by Ciro, and Pytor's *Hunchback* have their deadly weapons pointed straight at the two Strikers. Thinking quickly, Val shoots out the lights. He and Kylie begin a dangerous game of cat and mouse, dashing in and out of the 'Mechs' exterior spotlights. Kylie runs around Pytor's *Hunchback* in circles; he fires his lasers at her again and again, missing Kylie and cutting through the bay floor. Finally, he fires one shot too many; the weakened metal collapses, taking the *Hunchback* with it.

At the command center ...

Jedediah pounds on the door, shouting, "Open up in the name of Clan Wolf!" As the door shudders under repeated blows, Patch figures out how to activate the monitors all over the base. Within seconds, the Wolf assault on the command center appears on a monitor near Natalya and her Elementals.

Natalya's forces head for the command center, where they confront and defeat the Wolves. Just as Patch congratulates himself on the success of his strategy, Natalya batters at the door, shouting, "Open up in the name of Clan Jade Falcon!"

In the munitions bay ...

Working together, Kylie and Val trick Ciro into challenging Val one-on-one. Ciro climbs out of the *Axman*'s cockpit and crawls across the giant machine toward Val, who is clinging to one of the 'Mech's shoulders. Kylie slides into the empty cockpit and begins to work the controls. Feeling the 'Mech move, Ciro shouts, "No! This was between the two of us!" He climbs off the *Axman* and runs toward the gaping hole in the floor. Ignoring Val's pleas to come back to the Strikers, Ciro leaps through the hole and lands, far below, in the palm of the *Hunchback*'s hand.

Aboard the Kwaidan ...

Rachel breaks the lock that Franklin had placed on the computer and finds his second message containing the flight path taken by the missing Strikers. The *Kwaidan* heads off into the Dark Nebula.

On Camelot Command ...

Franklin tries to contact the *Katana*, but no signals can penetrate the Nebula. Close to panic, Franklin stares up at the portrait of General Kerensky on the command center's wall. A slow smile spreads across his face as a plan takes shape in his mind.

Val pilots the *Axman* down a corridor, heading for the command center. Five Wolf Elementals suddenly appear and charge the 'Mech, but Val fights them off. The tide of battle turns against the two Strikers, however, when the *Hunchback* steps up behind them and fires its autocannon into the *Axman*'s back.

At the same time ...

Natalya and her forces break through the door to the command center. Just as Natalya claims the base for Clan Jade Falcon, Jedediah's forces burst through a wall and claim the base for Clan Wolf. The Elementals start fighting, but they cease as a holograph of their beloved founder appears before them. Kerensky's image also reaches Ciro and Pytor, shocking them into immobility. The phantom Kerensky castigates the Clanners for fighting each other, calling them unworthy to be his successors. In a bitter voice, Kerensky orders the base computer to initiate its self-destruct sequence so that Camelot Command will not fall into "inferior hands."

Shamed and afraid, the Clan forces leave Camelot Command. From the safety of cold space, they watch it erupt into a huge fireball.

Inside the base ...

The holographic-imaging system runs out of power, and the images of Kerensky and the devastated base flicker out of existence. The departing Clanners, gazing mournfully back at what they took for a burning planetoid, see the fiery wreck disappear. Camelot Command hangs in space, pristine and whole. Furious at the deception, the Clan commanders order their ships to turn back.

Near Camelot Command ...

The *Kwaidan* appears suddenly, and Adam Steiner orders the Clan ships to back off. As he speaks, dozens of attack drones cluster around the Clan ships, strafing them with laser fire. Adam claims he has hundreds more drones to throw at them—the Clanners can either leave or be destroyed. Unsure whether or not to call Adam's bluff, the Clan commanders demand that Adam grant them hegira—the right to withdraw honorably from the field of battle. Adam agrees, and the Clan DropShips disappear into the Nebula.

Later, aboard the Kwaidan ...

Adam threatens to court-martial the errant Strikers if they ever pull a stunt this crazy again. Franklin stops the tirade by dropping into Adam's hands a stack of disks that contain Camelot Command's complete technological files. Adam's fellow Strikers have one more surprise for him—his *Axman*, recovered from the Jade Falcons in working condition.

ISF MEMORANDUM NO. 76-54-993/J

TO: His Excellency, Coordinator Takashi Kurita
FROM: ISF Agent Shin Masura, Wolcott Command
RE: Clans, General Information

Your Excellency has asked me to inform you of anything that might help us understand and possibly predict the Clans' behavior, and I am pleased to report something of interest. There is a rumor, rife among several Clan Smoke Jaguar garrisons, that when Kanrei Theodore and Prince Hohiro defeated the Clan Smoke Jaguars on Wolcott, the Smoke Jaguar commander requested "hegira," and that Prince Hohiro refused. I have learned that hegira is a courtesy often extended by victorious Clan commanders to defeated opponents; hegira allows them to withdraw honorably from the field without further combat or cost. Essentially, the losing side acknowledges their defeat, and is then allowed to retreat without loss of face.

This concept is not at all alien to the warriors of House Kurita, as you know. We are accustomed to honoring our foes, and I cannot believe that either Prince Hohiro or Kanrei Theodore would have refused such a request. I believe this rumor is being deliberately spread by Smoke Jaguar officers to enrage their people against us. By painting us as "dishonorable" enemies, they free their warriors from the restraints of Clan honor, which handicapped them on Wolcott and almost everywhere else that Inner Sphere forces defeated them.

Delivering BattleMechs onto a hostile planet is one of the most dangerous operations a military commander can undertake. Swift delivery of combat forces onto a planet ensures the success of a raid or invasion. But if the enemy has time to organize or disrupt the initial phases of the assault, then the entire enterprise can quickly turn into a disaster.

The 'Mech pilot's preferred insertion method is for the DropShip to simply land on the planet and extend its ramps so that the 'Mechs and other troops can easily disembark. However, planetary defense forces will not just allow an enemy DropShip to land unopposed, and the size of such ships makes it almost impossible to avoid enemy sensors. Once detected, the trajectory of the ship is easily plotted; the planet's defenders can intercept it or quickly mass troops at the landing zone. If this happens, both the attacking 'Mechs and the DropShip delivering them are placed in jeopardy.

If opposition is expected, the initial assault forces execute a combat drop from orbit. This delivery method is more dangerous for the 'Mech pilot, but gives the attacking force the advantages of speed and surprise. Each 'Mech is encased in an ablative re-entry pod. The DropShip approaches the planet and at the proper time ejects the pods on a preset trajectory. Because the pods are so small compared to a DropShip, their time of launch and trajectory are not likely to be plotted by the defending forces, thus lessening the chance of interception.

The pod's ablative coating is burned off during re-entry, at which time the pod separates from the 'Mech. The discarded pod has one last function to serve—its fragments are large enough to give enemy radar false returns, thus decoying any aerospace assets that happen to be in the area.

Once free of the pod, the 'Mech uses its internal jump jets or strapped-on retro rockets to slow its descent. Obviously, this is a dangerous procedure that requires skillful pilots and no small amount of luck.

EPISODE 10: THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY
NEAR THE CLAN FRONT

In a renegade action, Nicolai Malthus captures the Federated Commonwealth JumpShip *Excelsior*. He intends to use his conquest to lay a trap for his nemesis, Major Adam Steiner of the 1st Somerset Strikers. A furious Galaxy Commander Chistu pursues Malthus, arriving nearby just as the captured *Excelsior* prepares for a hyperspace jump. Chistu demands that Nicolai cease his unauthorized activity. Nicolai answers with defiance, provoking Chistu to fire on him, but the *Excelsior* winks out of normal space seconds before the WarShip's laser pulses hit. Enraged, Chistu orders Kristen Redmond and Pytor to pursue and apprehend Nicolai, in any condition.

Elsewhere in space ...
Aboard the DropShip *Kwaidan*, Rachel shows off her new pride and joy to Adam: a tactical operations center inside an armored personnel carrier that uses various Star League-era technologies taken from Camelot Command. Among the most useful capabilities are Clan-style enhanced imaging and sophisticated electronics that should allow Rachel to confuse Clan sensors. Though the Clans will doubtless come up with some way of getting around the latter, the ability to interfere with the Falcons' sensors will help the Strikers immensely in the short term. The show-and-tell session is interrupted by a transmission from Captain Grimmer of the JumpShip *Excelsior*. Grimmer says that a resistance group led by Commander Andrew Steiner is operating on the planet Apollo but is desperately short of troops. The Commonwealth cannot spare any units from the front lines; the Strikers are the only fighting unit that can possibly reach Apollo in time to help.

On the bridge of the Excelsior ...
With a Clan Elemental's laser pointed at his head, Captain Grimmer finishes recording his transmission. In the background, Nicolai Malthus asks Ciro why Major Steiner should respond to such a message. Ciro replies that the Major will do anything to help his brother, a reaction Malthus finds impossible to understand.

The JumpShip Katana heads for Apollo ...
Though he knows it may be a trap, Adam cannot pass up the chance that Grimmer's message is genuine. He intends to drop to Apollo's surface alone to check it out, but the rest of the Strikers insist on going with him—including Rachel, who takes her APC down in a "hot drop." With Kylie and Franklin flying cover in *Banshee* fighters, the Strikers drop to the planet, straight into a Jade Falcon ambush.

The Strikers land ...
Firing as they go, the Striker 'Mechs hit the surface a short distance from the Clan forces. Malthus leads his five-'Mech unit in hot pursuit, engaging the Strikers in a fierce firefight. As the Strikers battle for their lives, Rachel warns Adam that another five Clan 'Mechs are heading his way.

The two groups of Clan 'Mechs surround the Strikers on both sides. Instead of finishing them off, the second 'Mech force hails the first. Star Captain Kristen Redmond gives Malthus an ultimatum from Chistu: surrender or be destroyed.

Malthus replies ...
Defiant, Malthus orders his troops to resume firing on the Strikers. Kristen, leaping at the chance to bring down her rival, orders her unit to fire on Nicolai's 'Mechs. As the

Jade Falcons duke it out, Adam leads the Strikers to the ruins of Apollo's Astronomical Survey Station, where they can hide and make a few repairs ... and where he hopes to find some trace of his brother Andrew's resistance unit.

The Clan forces battle each other to a stalemate, with each side reduced to three 'Mechs. Noting the Strikers' departure, Nicolai proposes that he and Kristen join forces to destroy their mutual enemy. Kristen agrees, and the Jade Falcons set off in pursuit of what they think are the fleeing Strikers. Unknown to them, Rachel is leading them far afield with false electronic signals.

In hiding ...

Patch starts on the necessary 'Mech repairs while Adam goes looking for traces of the resistance unit. He finds nothing and concludes bitterly that they've been led into a trap. Adam orders Kylie and Franklin to find a landing spot for the *Kwaidan* and escort the DropShip down—the Strikers will need a quick ride off-planet before the Clans discover them. Just as he gives the order, Pytor's *Hunchback* appears behind him and fires its autocannons at pointblank range. Adam's *Axman* hits the ground hard. Rachel tries frantically to contact him, but Adam does not respond.

As the Hunchback closes in ...

The *Axman* lies motionless on the ground. Suddenly, it fires its large laser at the unsuspecting *Hunchback*, sending it staggering backward. Then Adam fires a second, concentrated laser burst at the *Hunchback*'s chest and disables its heat sinks. Pytor ejects from the cockpit as the heat sinks go critical, and the *Hunchback* crashes to the ground.

Minutes later ...

Rachel and Patch drive up in the APC just as Pytor steps out of his escape pod and offers himself to Adam as a bondsman. Patch hands him a crowbar and orders him to cannibalize his *Hunchback* for spare parts. The sight of the fallen *Hunchback* gives Adam a bright idea for setting the Clan forces once more at each other's throats. He asks Rachel to install the *Hunchback*'s IFF transponder in his *Axman* so that the Clan forces will read it as Pytor's 'Mech. Suitably camouflaged, Adam follows the Clan 'Mechs to the Apollo Mountain Pass.

As the Falcons search for the phantom Strikers ...

From the side of the mountain, Adam fires missiles at Nicolai's 'Mechs, then at Kristen's. Believing that Pytor is firing on them, Nicolai fires back at Kristen's 'Mechs. As Adam slips away over the shoulder of the mountain, both Falcon commanders charge toward each other, ready to resume their earlier battle. Realizing within moments that they've been had, all six Clan 'Mechs pursue the retreating *Axman*.

A few miles away, Kylie's *Banshee* hovers near the *Kwaidan* as it lands on a large patch of flat ground near a reservoir and dam. Franklin has disappeared, saying cryptically that he knows "a better way to protect the *Kwaidan*" than by flying fighter escort.

As Adam heads for the survey station ...

The Clan 'Mechs climb over the mountain, firing at Adam's retreating *Axman*. The *Axman* reaches the ruined survey station just as Patch finishes his repairs. As the Clan 'Mechs stride down the slope toward them, the Strikers fire eveything they've got into the hillside. The earth crumbles, sending the Clan 'Mechs tumbling wildly into the valley below. Ciro curses as the Strikers retreat toward the *Kwaidan*, but Nicolai reminds him that the Falcon Elementals can easily finish off an enemy who has no more ammunition.

As the Strikers near their DropShip ...

Ten Elementals, led by Star Commander Natalya, burst out of the nearby woods and swarm over the Striker 'Mechs. Their ammunition exhausted, the Strikers swat frantically at the armored Toads clinging to their limbs. Suddenly, the *Kwaidan*'s entry ramp opens to reveal the intimidating bulk of the *Awesome*. As it moves down the ramp, firing barrage after barrage at the Elementals, Franklin's voice comes over the commlines, saying, "Perhaps I might provide some assistance?"

Just then, three OmniMechs charge out of the woods toward the fleeing Strikers. Franklin shouts for his comrades to run for the DropShip while he holds off the Clanners as long as he can. "No!" answers Adam. "I led you into this trap. Now I'm going to get you out." He fires his jump jets and lands near the Clan 'Mechs, close to the dam. "Malthus! Kristen! Ciro!" he shouts. "I challenge you all to a Trial! You all want me—now who's got the guts to come for the prize?!"

Seconds later ...

All three OmniMechs converge on Adam, firing all their weapons. The rest of the Strikers can only watch as the *Axman* takes hit after hit. Adam advances toward the Clan 'Mechs, then suddenly runs between them, right in front of the dam. They pivot and fire on him, blasting both of his 'Mech's arms off. A barrage of stray shots hits the dam, and the concrete surface begins to crack. As the OmniMechs line up their sights for the coup de grâce, the dam gives way. Adam leaps out of danger a split second before a wall of water hits the OmniMechs, sweeping them away. As they struggle uselessly against the surging water, Adam and the Strikers board the *Kwaidan* and head for orbit.

EPISODE 11: SHADOW HEIR

APOLLO SYSTEM

When it became known that Hohiro Kurita, heir to the throne of the Draconis Combine, had fallen into the hands of Clan Smoke Jaguar on Turtle Bay, forces long opposed to the rule of Coordinator Takashi Kurita activated certain agents to set in motion a years-old plan to place a shadow heir on the throne. The primary sleeper agent was Captain Jeroen Frestadt of the DropShip *Kwaidan*. The weapon to be used against the current regime was Franklin Sakamoto, illegitimate son of Warlord Theodore Kurita, grandson of Coordinator Takashi Kurita—businessman, MechWarrior, aerospace pilot, and samurai.

On the DropShip Kwaidan ...

As the Strikers prepare for their final jump into the Somerset system, explosions rock the ship. A cursory investigation reveals that the explosions came from inside the *Kwaidan* and that Captain Frestadt abducted Franklin Sakamoto. Major Adam Steiner quickly realizes that the *Kwaidan* has been expertly disabled—even the remaining *Banshee* has been sabotaged to prevent the Strikers from pursuing the one Frestadt used to escape. Further, the communications-system panel explodes when the *Kwaidan* attempts to warn the *Katana* of Frestadt's treachery. The Strikers are forced to watch helplessly as the *Katana* jumps, stranding the DropShip behind enemy lines.

Only moments after the *Katana* jumps, another JumpShip appears in the Apollo system, this one belonging to the Draconis Combine Internal Security Force. Agent Toshiro Okura demands the arrest of Captain Frestadt as a member of the Black Dragons, a rebel faction accused of conspiracy against the Coordinator of the Draconis Combine. Though that piece of information begins to explain Frestadt's actions, the Strikers do not understand what Frestadt's intrigue has to do with Franklin. Okura offers the *Kwaidan* a ride on the JumpShip *Ishiyama* to pursue the *Katana* into the Bensinger system, the suspected location of the rebel faction's base, where the Strikers may retake their JumpShip.

On the surface of Bensinger IV ...

Franklin awakes from his drug-induced sleep to find himself dressed in the traditional robes of the Kurita royal family and wearing his own katana. Determined to learn the reason for his abduction and then return to his ship, Franklin moves silently through the corridors of the unfamiliar building. When he confronts Captain Frestadt, the secret agent reveals his faction's plan to place Franklin at the head of a force that will depose Takashi Kurita and crown Franklin in his place. Though Franklin must accept that his veins flow with Kurita blood when Frestadt proves that Franklin's family sword bears the royal seal, he remains skeptical of the rebels' chances of success.

Franklin Sakamoto is the illegitimate son of Theodore Kurita and Kathleen Palmer, an ISF agent assigned to watch Theodore while he attended the military academy on Pesht. During Theodore's last weeks on Pesht, Kathleen conceived his child. Subhash Indrahar, Director of the ISF, elected to have Kathleen carry the child to term and raise it because he feared that Theodore, who had shunned all the arranged marriages proposed by his father, would not produce a legitimate heir to the Combine throne.

Theodore eventually married and had legitimate children. Franklin became a liability, and Indrahar ordered his assassination. However, Kathleen Palmer recognized the danger and sent Franklin to the Coordinator's cousin, Marcus Kurita. Kathleen was killed along with another child, whom the ISF mistook for Theodore's son. Soon afterward, ISF agents eliminated Marcus Kurita and shattered his organization for plotting the overthrow of the current government.

At this point the story becomes murky. We know Franklin was raised by the Sakamoto family, merchants with Iseskai Shipping. Iseskai has ties to the ISF, yakuza, O5P, and even the Black Dragons—virtually every shadowy criminal and political organization in Kurita space. Franklin received a military and classical education, rose rapidly up the ranks in Iseskai, and made many successful smuggling runs into Commonwealth space, most at the behest of Hachiman Taro Electronics. That company belongs to another member of the Kurita royal family, Chandrasekhar Kurita.

Most evidence points to the Black Dragons as the people who attempted to use Franklin as the focus for a rebellion against the ruling family. We know little about this faction, though many supporters of Marcus Kurita reportedly joined the Black Dragons after Marcus's death. New evidence proves that Nathaniel Frestadt, a native of Rasalhague, once served as Marcus Kurita's shuttle pilot.

Currently, Franklin Sakamoto appears to have come out of the shadows. He has denied his lineage, and the Combine accepts him at his word. Captain Frestadt has vanished, most likely executed by the ISF.

Nevertheless, questions remain about the so-called Shadow Prince. For example, how did the ISF know of the base on Bensinger IV(?) or that Captain Frestadt was a Black Dragon agent assigned to keep an eye on Franklin? Why did mercenaries supposedly employed by Iseskai Shipping attempt to kill Franklin along with the rest of the *Katana/Kwaidan* crew in the Hamilton system? If the mercenaries were working for someone else, who employed them? I recommend that we continue to monitor the situation.

Above Bensinger IV ...

Okura's willingness to risk using the quick-charge method—recharging his JumpShip's hyperdrive using the ship's auxiliary power source—to make a second jump through hyperspace in mere hours confirms the Strikers' suspicions that Okura wants to do more than capture Captain Frestadt. However, they must retrieve their JumpShip before they can investigate Okura's motives. When the *Kwaidan* hails the *Katana*, the only response they receive is laser fire. The *Ishiyama* sends aerospace assets to target the *Katana's* laser array, while Rachel and Adam gain access to the JumpShip using an electronic override device that manually opens the ship's airlock from the outside.

Okura assures Adam that the Strikers may safely resume their mission while he rescues Franklin from the rebels. Just as he was unwilling to abandon Ciro to the Clans, however, Adam refuses to continue on toward Somerset without Franklin.

On the surface of Bensinger IV ...

Under cover of night, Franklin Sakamoto steals a rebel 'Mech and travels to the aerospace landing field, intent on returning to the Strikers by any means necessary. Captain Frestadt anticipates Franklin's attempt to escape and intercepts him at the airfield, trying once again to convince Franklin to fall in with the rebel plan. Their argument is interrupted by the arrival of Okura, leading a 'Mech force of ISF agents assembled specifically to eliminate Franklin and capture Frestadt. Operating from a mobile tactical operations center installed in Adam's *Awesome*, Rachel intercepts Okura's transmitted threat to kill Franklin. The 1st Somerset Strikers attack the ISF unit, creating a window of opportunity for Franklin and Frestadt to climb into a *Hatamoto-Chi* and flee the area.

Though enhanced imaging and Rachel's efforts give the Strikers a tactical advantage, the ISF 'Mechs and the rebel forces together outnumber Adam and his troops. Leaving his unit to engage the Strikers and the rebels, Okura follows Franklin and Frestadt. The rebels fall quickly under the combined fire of the Strikers and the ISF, but when the ISF then squares off against the Strikers, Adam calls for a cease-fire in order to help Franklin and avoid an unwanted incident between the two temporarily cooperating nations. Meanwhile, Rachel tracks Okura and identifies the rebel base to which Franklin and Frestadt ran.

Adam enters the compound and Okura threatens to kill him for interfering in the ISF mission. Adam protests that he has no interest in Okura's conspiracy theories and is only protecting his friend. He then knocks Okura's laser pistol from his hand. As the two men wrestle for the weapon, Adam questions the wisdom of diverting attention and resources away from the fight against the Clans, and Okura answers by knocking out his opponent and retrieving his gun. Captain Frestadt then arrives on the scene and threatens to kill Okura, but Franklin stops him. He turns Frestadt over to the ISF agent, denying all claim to the throne, by breaking his katana in two, and rejecting any affiliation with those who would put him there.

Okura refuses to accept this denial, as does Captain Frestadt. Frestadt breaks free of Okura and grabs the agent's laser, training it on Franklin as he shouts, "If you will not live up to your royal lineage, then you will not live!" Just before Frestadt pulls the trigger, Adam knocks him out with a medipatch. Franklin hands the broken sword to Okura and asks the ISF agent to return it to the Coordinator.

Aboard the DropShip Kwaidan ...

To Franklin's great sadness, the crew of the DropShip and Dr. Nakamura acknowledge him as a member of the Draconis Combine's royal family, forever changing his relationship with them. The Strikers, however, reassure him that he is truly part of their team. When Agent Okura informs Adam and Franklin that Prince Hohiro has been safely retrieved from Turtle Bay and officially relieves Franklin of all responsibility to lead his country, Franklin accepts the Strikers as his new family.

EPISODE 12: HOMECOMING

SOMERSET SYSTEM

The 1st Somerset Strikers implement a clever deception to enter the Somerset system. Adam, Rachel, Val, and Kylie hide in an apparently derelict *Banshee* and allow a Jade Falcon merchant ship to pick up the fighter as scrap, and then they overpower the ship's crew and force them to return the ship to Somerset. Once on the surface of the planet, the team splits up, Rachel and Val to scramble the orbital scanning system in order to allow the *Kwaidan* to enter the system and drop to Somerset, and Adam and Kylie to join the prisoners and find Adam's brother Andrew.

On the surface of Somerset ...

After dropping off Kylie and Adam with the Clan guards to be interned with the other prisoners, Rachel and Val—dressed in Clan uniforms bearing the technician and merchant caste insignia—bluff their way into the Somerset Military Academy building, now in use as the Clan occupiers' headquarters. Ostensibly there to confirm that all useful electronics have been stripped from the building, Val stands guard while Rachel finds an active terminal outlet and infiltrates the Academy's computer system. When Rachel discovers that the Clans have protected the system against viruses using their own software, she is forced to crash the computers so that the *Kwaidan* can drop unnoticed. Moments after Val gives their DropShip the all clear, a Clan warrior arrives to escort "Technician Rachel" to the command center to repair the malfunctioning orbital scanning system. When Val and Rachel arrive in the command center, they are greeted by Star Captain Kristen Redmond.

Meanwhile ...

As Kylie and Adam view an indoctrination holovid in the courtyard of the reeducation camp, Adam tries to surreptitiously question the cadets to learn where the Clans are holding his brother. He receives a beating for his efforts, but he learns that Andrew occupies one of the "sweatboxes" located on one side of the camp. Kylie creates a distraction as the prisoners march back to the barracks, allowing Adam to slip away from the rest of the group. He overpowers the Clan warrior guarding the enclosure where prisoners who refuse to cooperate with the Clans are kept, then begins checking each box for his brother. When he finds Andrew, he learns that the Clans have been spreading disinformation to demoralize the prisoners by claiming to have captured Tharkad, the Commonwealth seat of government.

Adam tells Andrew that he has four BattleMechs and an armored personnel carrier full of explosives with which to retake the Academy and the planet, and Andrew eagerly falls in with Adam's scheme.

Back in the center compound ...

Determined to capture Major Adam Steiner, Kristen Redmond decides to use Val and Rachel as bait. She assembles the prisoners in the compound to demonstrate what happens to saboteurs. Relying on Adam's strong sense of loyalty to draw him out in a rescue attempt, Kristen uses Rachel's commlink to broadcast her intent to kill Rachel, Val, and also Kylie, who steps forward in a useless attempt to spare her companions' lives. When Adam careens into the compound driving the APC, the *Hunchback* that Kristen used to threaten Rachel, Val, and Kylie turns its weapons against the speeding vehicle and fires its lasers, igniting the payload of explosives. The APC blows up, destroying the 'Mech's legs.

Kylie breaks away from her captors as Adam and Andrew converge on Rachel and Val and blast their chains. Under cover of the general confusion, the entire party

After nearly five months under Clan occupation, I have learned much about them that makes me afraid for the Inner Sphere. We rightly fear the Clans as conquerors, but I had hoped they would prove less threatening to our ways as rulers. What I have seen of the Clans on Somerset, however, proves that their entire society is inimical to all the values and traditions that we hold dear.

They have no concept of freedom, individuality, or self-determination. They classify people even more rigidly than do the Draconis Combine and the Capellan Confederation, the two Inner Sphere states with the most stratified and class-bound societies. The Clans divide people into five castes: warrior, scientist, merchant, technician, and laborer. Each caste is ranked according to its value to society, as the Clans understand value, placing the warrior caste at the top of the ladder and descending in order to the laborer caste. Though this system appears to have the virtue of assigning everyone a definite niche in life, in practice it devalues everyone outside the warrior caste.

Among the Jade Falcons, and presumably to some extent among all the Clans, the value of every caste is measured solely by the worth of its function to the warriors. The laborers, who attend to the day-to-day running of society, are regarded as little better than livestock. Scientists, on the other hand, are given the highest amount of respect after the warrior caste because their discoveries enable the warriors to conquer and kill more effectively. It is almost impossible for a member of a given caste to enter another one. The Jade Falcons believe that anyone born or placed into a given caste is by nature suited only to that caste and cannot possibly function anywhere else. Exceptions to this rule do exist, but they are few and far between.

Such rigid thinking, with no concessions to individual wants and needs, makes a mockery of the ideal of freedom held up by the ancient Star League. We must somehow stop the Clans, lest in destroying us they destroy those ideals as well.

Many ships lend themselves to only one purpose, especially in time of war. The *Leopard* Class DropShip is a notable exception. As the Clan Jade Falcon merchant caste (and, one assumes, all other Clan merchant castes) has proven, the *Leopard* can be easily converted to carry cargo rather than the four BattleMechs included in the original Star League era design.

Because the *Leopard* offers extremely cramped crew quarters and only the minimum required life-support systems, this DropShip might seem an unlikely candidate for the extended or repeated trips that merchants must engage in to make a profit. However, our limited understanding of the Clans leads us to believe that comfort plays a minor role in their lives compared to duty. The appeal of the *Leopard* as a merchant ship obviously lies in its nimble maneuverability and generous cargo capacity, which represents nearly half the ship's total tonnage.

The *Leopards* used as merchant vessels no longer possess the ample weapons array they had in the Star League era. However, they can easily be fitted with energy weapons and long-range missiles sufficient to defend a *Leopard* commandeered by the Clan warrior caste. What little information I have tracked down about the security of the merchant ships suggests that the Jade Falcons do not allow such vessels to carry weapons; instead, a merchant ship facing a potentially perilous journey takes along a security detail of warriors to defend it if necessary.

heads for the landing field. Franklin uses the *Banshee* to cover the Strikers' run for the DropShip, and Hawk moves to draw the Clan's fire while the others mount up. Hawk heads straight into the compound to drop crates full of laser rifles and grenades in the midst of the Somerset cadets.

The defending Clan 'Mechs gang up on Hawk, but just before Kristen can administer the coup de grâce, the remaining three Striker 'Mechs arrive and fire on Kristen from behind. During the ensuing skirmish with the Clan 'Mechs, Andrew learns the value of Rachel's tactical operations center the hard way when Adam rescues him from a rear attack by Pytor. When Kristen targets Andrew, mistakenly assuming that Adam is piloting the *Axman*, the brothers begin jockeying to be the one to take out the *Vulture*. Rachel finally orders both Steiners to adjust their targeting and fire simultaneously on the *Vulture's* heat sinks, pushing the 'Mech's temperature into the critical range and forcing Kristen to eject in the escape pod. In an ironic echo of his own capture, Commander Andrew Steiner catches Kristen's escape pod in the air.

Meanwhile ...

Protected by the Infiltrator suit, Kylie leads a charge of cadets against the command center. Clearly outnumbered and outgunned, the Clan warriors surrender to the cadets, who march them out into the compound while Kylie blows up the computer control panel in the headquarters.

The tables are truly turned when the Somerset cadets once again raise the flag of the Federated Commonwealth over the Academy and the Clan warriors find themselves behind bars, but Major Adam Steiner's victory is short-lived. Even as he assures the cadets that tomorrow they will help the Strikers recapture the entire planet, Star Colonel Nicolai Malthus interrupts Adam's announcement to declare his imminent arrival, and three Stars of OmniMechs make a combat drop onto the Somerset Military Academy.

EPISODE 13: TRIAL OF POSSESSION

SOMERSET

With the Somerset Military Academy liberated from Clan Jade Falcon, the Strikers face a counterattack from Nicolai Malthus. No longer interested in conquest or *isorla*, Malthus wants only one thing: to destroy Adam Steiner.

As the battle begins ...

Malthus leads his forces in a march on the Academy, where the Strikers and the Academy's infantry meet them in a head-on clash. Franklin Sakamoto leads the infantry into the nearby hills; the Strikers and Andrew Steiner swiftly follow as wave after wave of Clan 'Mechs head their way. The Strikers lead the enemy into an ambush, knocking them down with PPC blasts and then setting off explosives all around the fallen 'Mechs. Two Clan 'Mechs counterattack, blasting Adam's *Awesome* backward toward a high ridge, where ten Elementals stand ready to leap down on the *Awesome* and bring the giant machine to its knees.

Seconds later ...

Spotting the trap, Franklin hurls himself forward, firing every weapon at his battlesuit's disposal. His infantrymen follow, engaging the Elementals in a desperately uneven battle. Adam comes to the rescue, ordering Franklin to pull out and get the infantry back to the Academy—without battlesuits, they are no match for armored Clan troops. The Elementals swarm over the *Awesome*, but before they can do much damage, the giant shadow of Malthus's *Thor* falls over Adam's 'Mech.

Malthus fires his lasers at poinblank range ... right at the Elementals clinging to the *Awesome*. As Elementals fly everywhere, Malthus laughs maniacally. "Now we come to the heart of the battle, Adam Steiner. You and I!"

Some time later ...

Val, Franklin, and the infantry reach the now-quiet Academy and discover that Ciro has freed Kristen Redmond and Pytor. As the Clanners run toward their DropShip, Ciro blasts Franklin, reducing his armored suit to a smoldering heap. Val steps toward him, guns ready, but Ciro blasts the legs from under Val's *Bushwacker*. Kylie swoops down in her *Banshee*, but the fighter's overloaded lasers no longer function. Kylie aims her *Banshee* straight at Ciro's *Mad Cat*, blowing up both machines. Kylie and Ciro parachute to safety as Val watches from the wreckage of his BattleMech.

Some distance away ...

Ciro and Kylie land near the Clan DropShip and crawl out of their escape pods. Ciro turns his laser pistol on Kylie, but she swiftly disarms him. As Val arrives and congratulates Kylie, Kristen Redmond and Pytor emerge from the DropShip in a *Vulture* and a *Hunchback*. The two Strikers flee the Clanners' barrage of lethal PPC fire.

Kristen stops to pick up Ciro, then resumes her dash toward Adam's beleaguered *Awesome*. Pytor strides far ahead, almost within firing range. Andrew Steiner, his heat sinks failing, hurls his dying *Axman* headlong into Pytor's 'Mech. Both pilots bail out as their machines explode.

As you have no doubt heard, the First Somerset Strikers have recently retaken the planet Somerset from its Jade Falcon conquerors. You may not, however, know the circumstances behind that victory, or understand how hollow it is. Major Adam Steiner of the 1st Somerset Strikers won Somerset in a Trial of Possession but did not get what he expected. The latter fact is particularly disturbing, for reasons I will go into later in this report.

A Trial of Possession is a Clan combat trial in which two sides battle for possession of the same planet, person, and so on. The attackers issue a formal challenge to the defenders, identifying themselves and their objective, and then asking what forces will be defending it. This is the *batchall*, a word with which we have become all too familiar. The defenders state what forces they will field and choose the site of the battle. The trial for Somerset was a duel fought by Major Steiner and the Clan commander, Star Colonel Nicolai Malthus. This in itself is highly unusual—I cannot think of any other case like it so far. Even more unusual, however, was Malthus's reaction to having lost.

As the price of his victory, Major Steiner demanded his homeworld of Somerset. The Jade Falcons were to leave the planet and never set foot on it again. Nicolai Malthus honored precisely the terms of the trial—his forces departed, but took the entire population of Somerset with them.

Nicolai Malthus interpreted Clan tradition in a way that allowed him to perpetrate a fraud of gigantic proportions. He ceded the planet, as agreed—but because the people were not specifically mentioned, Malthus chose to regard them as his to dispose of. To split hairs in this manner is extremely un-Clanlike behavior—Malthus certainly knew that the planet included the people in Major Steiner's mind, and true adherence to Clan honor would have required him to leave them alone. His deception indicates that he has learned to think like the "treacherous Inner Sphere freebirths" he affects to despise.

If the Clans are learning to think in lies and intrigues as we do, they will become an even more dangerous enemy.
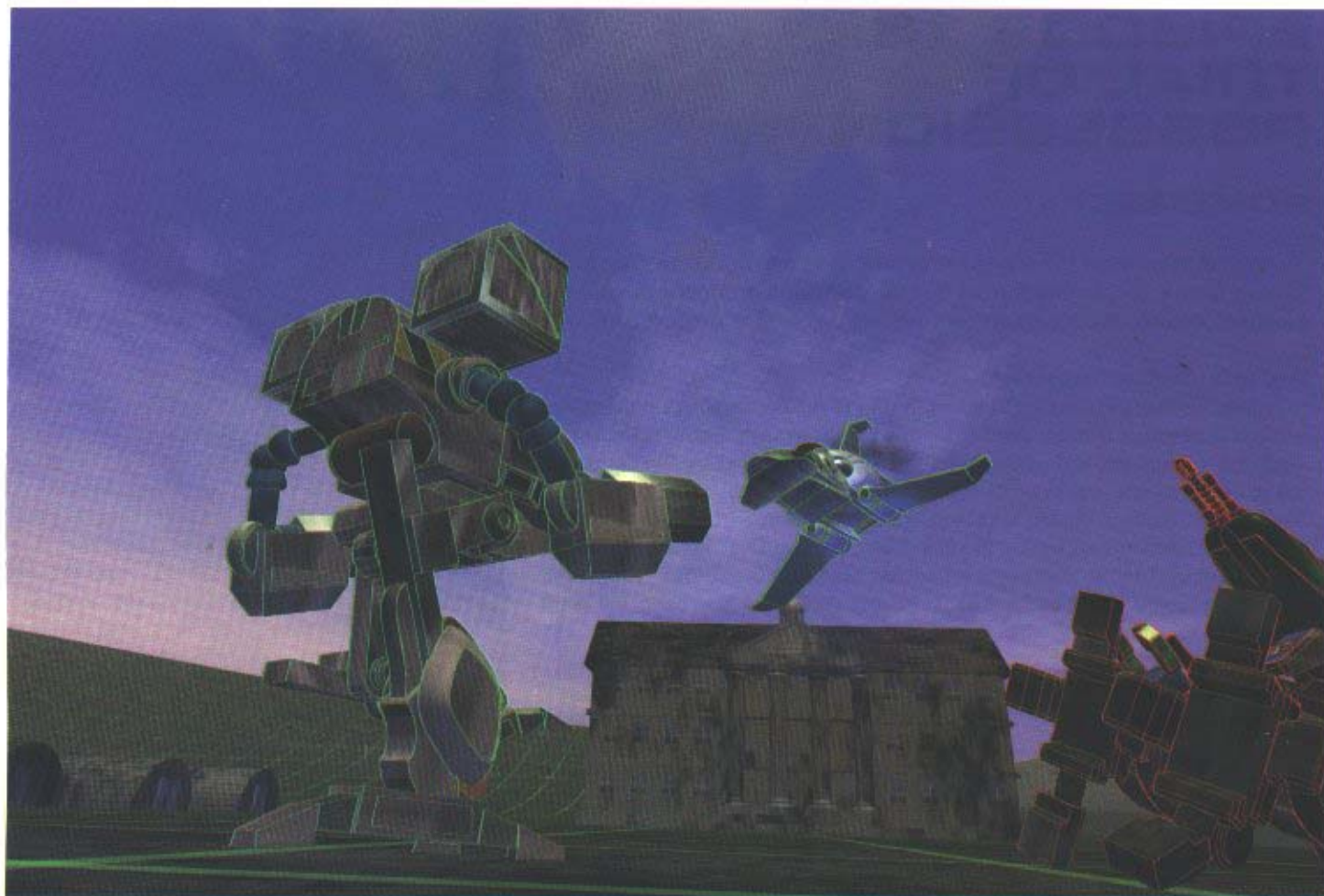
Elsewhere on the battlefield ...

Malthus destroys Hawk's *Mauler*, leaving Adam without allies. As Adam duels with Kristen Redmond, Malthus fires on the *Awesome*, right through Kristen's *Vulture*. His shot cripples the Clan 'Mech—it crashes to the ground, the impact knocking Kristen unconscious and pinning Ciro inside the ruined cockpit.

With his people badly hurt and their 'Mechs shot out from under them, Adam tries a last bold gamble. He challenges Nicolai to a Trial of Possession for Somerset.

Malthus almost rejects Adam's challenge, but he accepts after hearing Ciro's passionate plea to remember the ideals of the great Kerensky. Nicolai chooses BattleMechs as the weapon. Adam, left to choose the site of their duel, selects the rugged terrain of Somerset's North Country. If he wins, Somerset is his and no Clanner will ever again set foot on it; if he loses, the planet and the Strikers belong to Nicolai.

In the North Country ...

Scanning his surroundings for his enemy, Adam strides over the rough ground. As he reaches the crest of a ridge, Malthus's *Thor* suddenly appears and fires at him. Battered by repeated assaults, Adam flees into the nearby redwoods with Malthus hot on his heels. Adam turns his 'Mech and fires at the huge trees around them. The redwoods go up in flames, engulfing Malthus in fire and driving his OmniMech's internal temperature to critical levels. Malthus races desperately through the burning woods in search of escape. He reaches the edge of a cliff, and sees below it a glacier-fed lake. Malthus leaps off the cliff, plunging his *Thor* into the icy waters.

By the lakeshore ...

Adam waits and watches, but the lake remains still. As the last wisps of steam from the *Thor* dissipate in the wind, Adam wades slowly into the lake to make sure his enemy is vanquished. Suddenly the *Thor* rears up behind him, firing everything it has into the *Awesome*'s back. Seconds before the *Awesome* explodes, an escape pod rockets out of its cockpit. The pod floats gently down, right into the *Thor*'s huge armored hand. Malthus rips open the pod, but Adam Steiner is not inside.

Near the fallen 'Mech ...

Adam crawls out of the *Awesome*'s shattered head and flees into the redwoods with Malthus in pursuit. As Malthus searches for his quarry in the trackless forest, Adam places small but powerful explosives on a circle of trees surrounding a clearing. His task finished, he steps into view. With a roar of triumph, Malthus chases him. As the *Thor* reaches the center of the clearing, Adam sets off the bombs, burying Malthus under an avalance of tree trunks, branches, and sawdust.

Minutes later ...

From a safe hiding place, Adam watches the *Thor* dig itself out and march off in search of him. As the *Thor* passes a high ridge, Adam leaps from the ridge onto its back. He clambers around to the front, blasts open the cockpit hatch, and leaps inside.

Adam and Malthus fight a vicious hand-to-hand battle as the *Thor* stumbles crazily through the forest. Malthus wrenches a metal bar from a cockpit wall and swings it at Adam, but misses. Adam grabs the bar to keep Malthus from crushing his throat with it, while the 'Mech lurches through the thinning trees toward the shimmering mass of a glacier. It steps onto the glacier and begins to slide down the steep icy slope.

As the Thor falls ...

Adam throws himself out of the open hatch, tearing the metal bar from Malthus's grasp. He lands hard on the ice and jams the metal into it. The bar cuts a deep groove in the ice, slowing Adam's mad descent. The *Thor* slides downward and tumbles over the lip of the glacier, falling a thousand feet down to the bottom of a ravine. The massive explosion sends a tower of thick black smoke into the air. Adam stops sliding at the very edge of the glacier, and with a mighty effort swings himself upward to safety. As he peers over the edge to watch the *Thor* burn, Nicolai lunges up from a ledge just underneath and grabs him.

Adam pulls away as Nicolai swings himself up on the glacier. Nicolai charges at Adam, sending them both plunging over the edge. Tumbling from ledge to ledge, they grapple with each other all the way down to the bottom of the ravine. Adam stumbles toward the burning *Thor*. Malthus leaps after him, and the two exhausted men continue their trial on the hot metal corpse of the shattered OmniMech.

As the final battle begins ...

Enraged that Adam is still standing, Nicolai rips a length of hot metal from the *Thor* and swings it at him. Adam dodges the blow, trips, and falls flat. Scenting victory, Nicolai swings his weapon again and again at Adam, who frantically rolls out of its path. Suddenly, Adam spies a sparking power cable a few feet away. He grabs for it, his own body shielding it from Nicolai's eyes. With a shout of triumph, Nicolai lunges toward Adam. Adam turns to face Nicolai, shoving the live cable against the metal bar. Nicolai stiffens, then howls in agony as ten thousand volts of electricity pour through his neurocircuitry.

Malthus falls semiconscious to the ground, aware of the bitter taste of defeat. Acknowledging his loss, he orders Kristen Redmond to begin the evacuation of Somerset.

Some time later ...

The *Kwaidan* lands near the Somerset Military Academy. Adam and Hawk step out, expecting cheering crowds, but eerie silence greets them. They wander through the rubble, increasingly worried at the deserted landscape.

They find the rest of the Somerset Strikers huddled against the side of a half-broken wall, staring into space as if in shock. Tears welling in her eyes, Rachel tells Adam the dreadful truth—the departing Clan DropShips took with them every single living soul on Somerset. Grimly, Adam Steiner vows to liberate his people—no matter what it takes.

INTELLIGENCE SECRETARIAT INTERNAL MEMO NO. 7688—G

TO: Marshal Daniel Darwith/MI2/Tharkad
FROM: Hauptamn Neil Stanger
ROUTING: MOST URGENT
RE: Depopulation of Somerset

CLASSIFICATION: EYES ONLY

We have received the initial report on Major Steiner's actions on Somerset, along with supplemental materials (see enclosures). An analysis of these materials lead to a terrifying conclusion.

Somerset has been totally depopulated. Not a single citizen of the Federated Commonwealth remains. According to Major Steiner's report, this event occurred in less than an hour.

As of the 3045 census, the population of Somerset numbered roughly one million people. The number and types of Clan DropShips that lifted off from Somerset were well documented by sensors from the DCJS *Katana*. At maximum loads, these ships could have only carried a total of 10,000 people. Analysis of their engine thrusts indicate that these ships were carrying only 84.6% of their maximum load. These ships left the planet within 50 minutes of the evacuation orders.

It is obvious that the Jade Falcons could not have, and in fact did not, evacuate the planetary population immediately after the "Trial of Possession" won by Major Steiner. Therefore, the population of Somerset must have been forced offplanet prior to the arrival of the Strikers!

The transcript of the interrogation of a Falcon technician gives us a vital clue as to what really happened. The technician, known as Olga, stated that "... most have been indoctrinated into the Way of the Clans, absorbed into either the technician or labor castes."

The implications are clear. The Clans are indoctrinating Federated Commonwealth civilians and then forcibly transporting them from their homes to serve the Jade Falcons in whatever capacity the Clans deem appropriate. The Clans call these new citizens "bondsmen," but we in the Inner Sphere have another name for them ... slaves.

ADAM STEINER

MAJOR
1ST SOMERSET STRIKERS

Born on the Federated Commonwealth world of Somerset, Major Adam Steiner grew up there and attended the Somerset Military Academy, graduating as a highly skilled 'Mech pilot. Invited to become an instructor at the Academy because of his innovative concepts for BattleMech fighting tactics, Steiner combined combat strategy, instant field intelligence-gathering techniques, and the ability to think on his feet into a unique approach to battle that earned him another invitation, this time to demonstrate his system at the prestigious Nagelring military academy on Tharkad.

The combination of earning his current rank of major at age 24, his illustrious name, and his lack of combat experience forced Adam Steiner to work harder than his peers to become a success. His superior officers expected more of Steiner because of his name, and his peers and subordinates assumed that he got where he was because of his Steiner connections. Only Lieutenant Rachel Specter, his tactical operations officer and best friend, understands Adam's true abilities and his gift for strategy. Though he earned Rachel's respect long ago, he must begin each new assignment by proving himself worthy of others' respect and loyalty.

Expected by his superiors to forge his unconventional group of personnel into a fighting force, Adam Steiner takes on many roles—soldier, psychologist, dictator, diplomat, teacher, and student—in his effort to cajole and prod his people into forming a working team. Through hard work and successful performance, Adam Steiner has proven himself a capable leader who deserves the respect of the 1st Somerset Strikers. His intense focus on honing and refining his tactical system in order to keep his people alive, however, often keeps him from showing how deeply he cares about each member of his unit.

HAWK HAWKINS

CAPTAIN
1ST SOMERSET STRIKERS

Zachary Miles "Hawk" Hawkins is a veteran MechWarrior who's survived more battles on more worlds than most people live to tell about. He takes on special assignments for the Federated Commonwealth, the latest turn in a long and varied military career. Born to well-to-do vintners on the world of Ryde, Hawkins left the family wine business to begin his career as a grunt soldier. His gradual rise in the ranks came about through dedication and sheer hard work rather than planning; Hawk has always cared more about getting the job done than ensuring his own advancement by angling for plum assignments. His career has taken him all over the Inner Sphere but left him little opportunity to form bonds outside the units in which he served. Family ties are few, though he sends regular messages home to his younger sister and her family. Hawk has a special affection for his oldest nephew, Matthew, who dreams of following him into the military someday.

Gruff but good-natured, Hawkins values his comradeship with his fellow soldiers. He also feels a certain grudging respect for the troops of the Draconis Combine, with whom his nation has long been at war. Somewhere underneath his instinctive suspicion of the Dracs, Hawkins recognizes them as soldiers like himself, fighting for a nation they hold as dear as he does his own. Honest, often brusque, but always ready to help a friend, Hawk takes it upon himself to keep order in any unit in which he serves. His peacemaking abilities are tested to the breaking point among the 1st Somerset Strikers.

As a soldier's soldier, Hawk learned to trust his own experience and to distrust the judgment of higher-ups whose rank and social position could not make up for their lack of combat ability. When the well-connected but wet-behind-the-ears leader of the 1st Somerset Strikers commandeers Hawk's services for the fledgling unit, Hawk finds himself in the situation he hates most: having to take orders from a commanding officer who's never fought a real battle. Initially skeptical of Major Adam Steiner's abilities, Hawk soon discovers that the "schoolboy" has what it takes to lead troops into combat, and he becomes Steiner's most loyal supporter.

VALTEN RYDER

CAPTAIN
1ST SOMERSET STRIKERS

A talented MechWarrior, Val Ryder is a lovable scoundrel with a shady past. Seven generations of his family served the Commonwealth as MechWarriors, and Val followed in his forebears' footsteps. Rather than join the regular army, however, Val found the life of a mercenary more to his taste. Shortly before he turned 18, Val joined a small merc unit by the name of Monk's Marauders. He spent the next few years knocking around the Inner Sphere, battling various opponents and discovering his own flair for down-and-dirty fighting tactics. He also discovered a taste for the high life, in which his less savory acquaintances happily indulged him. He ended up owing several of his fellow mercs quite a bit of money, and he leaped at the chance to escape his debts by accepting a slot in a regular Federated Commonwealth army unit. His gambling habit followed him, however, resulting in a dishonorable discharge. Val finally hit rock bottom on the world of Dustball, when he lost big to Boss Tybus, a major underworld crime figure. To pay his huge debt to Tybus and keep himself in food and shelter, Val began working for the crime lord, who held his family's 'Mech as collateral. He became increasingly resentful of Tybus's hold over him, loathing the fact that this slug of a man owned the only thing that really mattered to Val: his BattleMech.

Though inclined to sit out the action unless there's something in it for him, Val is a brilliant fighter when he feels he has a point to prove. He's flashy, cocky, and more than a touch selfish, but he never lets his fellow warriors down. In fact, he prides himself on his ability to get other people—as well as himself—out of impossible jams. Very little gets to him for long; he sees each setback as just another challenge against which to show off his skill and cleverness.

Val has the boundless confidence of the good-looking, smooth-talking guy who hears even the baldest put-down as a flirtatious comment. His "what's in it for me" pose makes him a pain to work with, but if a fellow Somerset Striker gets in trouble on the battlefield, Val rides to the rescue without a moment's thought.

RACHEL SPECTER

LIEUTENANT
1ST SOMERSET STRIKERS

As the tactical operations officer for the 1st Somerset Strikers, Lieutenant Rachel Specter occupies a unique position in the military of the Federated Commonwealth. Together, she and Adam Steiner devised a tactical strategy centered on constant intelligence gathering on the battlefield, allowing a unit's commander to change strategy as required and providing a bird's-eye view of a fight to individual MechWarriors as necessary. Rachel serves as Major Steiner's eyes and ears on the battlefield, providing her commander with the information he needs to modify his tactics in the thick of combat. Her true talent in this capacity, however, lies not only in successfully monitoring the flood of information she receives from other friendly units, radar, satellite pictures, and the occasional pirated signal from the enemy, but in identifying the information that will prove strategically relevant.

Specter trained on Somerset at the Academy with Adam Steiner, and they grew to be close friends. Over time and through the rigors of training, their relationship changed. Like brother and sister, they shared their innermost hopes and fears; like comrades-in-arms, they pledged to each other their unquestioning loyalty and undying support. Rachel Specter considers Somerset her adopted home and shared Adam Steiner's devastation at the unknown fate of their friends, though she has never expressed even to Adam any concern for the whereabouts of her estranged sister Lea, who was on Somerset when Clan Jade Falcon invaded.

No one in the Somerset Strikers but Adam knows why Rachel Specter always wears a glove on her right hand, though every member of the unit has a pet theory. Some believe it is a virtual-reality glove that serves as part of her gear while in the tactical operations center. Others who agree with that theory speculate that she never takes it off because her position in the unit is the only way she defines herself. Still others postulate that the glove hides the scars of an accident, perhaps the result of whatever estranged Rachel and her sister.

CIRO RAMIREZ

LIEUTENANT
1ST SOMERSET STRIKERS

The son of a minor noble, Ciro Oquendo y Ramirez is an arrogant idealist with unfortunate convictions. He values honor and courage above all, but he refuses to recognize that these qualities can exist in anyone who is not of good family. As a big fish in a small pond on his homeworld in the Isle of Skye, Ciro grew up with the unconscious assumption that his noble birth made him better than everyone else. When he reached the Nagelring and discovered otherwise, he compensated for his disillusion by clinging all the harder to his belief in his own superiority. To Ciro, the ultimate proof of his own and his family's worth lies in the distant past, before the collapse of the Star League, when the long-vanished General Aleksandr Kerensky honored a Ramirez with the Star League Order of the Star. Ciro treasures this link with the lost Star League, which in his mind was a perfect society in which the noble classes ruled benignly over the vast mass of lesser humanity.

Upon graduation from the Nagelring in the top 5 percent of his class—the same class as Prince Victor Steiner-Davion—Ciro had expected an assignment worthy of his abilities and noble blood. Instead, he received the unprestigious post of Assistant Instructor to Major Adam Steiner at the Nagelring. Ciro deeply resents Adam Steiner, first for existing and so presenting him with this humiliating assignment, and second because the major is what Ciro wants to be a scion of the Commonwealth's royal House, with a name everyone automatically respects as well as brilliant tactical skills. Ciro sees himself as one of the few worthy successors to the ideals of General Kerensky and the Star League, but the failure of others to recognize this has forced him to waste his time and talent teaching a bunch of inferiors how to pilot BattleMechs. Ciro wishes things were different in the Federated Commonwealth; he secretly dreams of a society in which everyone knows his place, and in which Ciro's own place is near the top of the heap.

KATIARA KYLIE

CADET
1ST SOMERSET STRIKERS

Kate Kylie always wanted to fly. Growing up in a small town on Somerset, the youngest of six children, she dreamed of piloting an aerospace fighter in the Armed Forces of the Federated Commonwealth. Blessed with quick reflexes and amazing natural talent, Kate honed her flying skills on every plane and hovercraft she could get her hands on. Though she loved her home and family, she also badly wanted to see more of the Inner Sphere than the little farming town of Haskell, and saw military service as the most exciting way to do that. At the age of 16, she entered the aerospace pilot's training program at the Somerset Military Academy. After two years, she applied for a transfer to the Nagelring, the Federated Commonwealth's most prestigious military academy. There she became a student of a fellow Somerset native, Major Adam Steiner.

Young, brash, and eager, Cadet Kylie is a brilliant aerojock and a commanding officer's nightmare. She acts on impulse and has not yet learned the difference between courage and recklessness. She loves spitting in danger's eye and takes crazy risks for fun. Emotional and intense, Kylie gets impatient with people who, in her words, "spend so much time thinking that they forget which way is up." She wants to take action, the sooner the better.

Initially refused a place in the Somerset Strikers, Kate joined the unit when she just happened to rescue it from an untimely death. She wants nothing more than to liberate Somerset from the iron grip of the Clans. Though her frustration at every delay in reaching Somerset sometimes makes her think of striking out for home on her own, she knows deep down that only the Strikers can possibly hope to free Somerset from the Clan enemy. Kate is sharpening her fighting skills, biding her time (with difficulty), and doing the best she can to prepare herself to liberate her homeworld.

FRANKLIN SAKAMOTO

1ST SOMERSET STRIKERS

The illegitimate son of Warlord Theodore Kurita of the Draconis Combine and Kathleen Palmer, a skilled agent of House Kurita's Internal Security Force, Franklin Sakamoto's life has been filled with danger, intrigue, and secrets practically from the moment of his conception. Sakamoto believed that his parents died when he was very young and that the uncle who raised him did so out of love and loyalty to his departed sibling—he had no idea that he had spent most of his life as a pawn of a faction opposed to the current ruler of the Draconis Combine. When Captain Jeroen Frestadt, a sleeper agent of the rebel faction, kidnapped Sakamoto and attempted to force him into accepting his heritage and making a bid for the throne, Franklin rejected the rebel plan and renounced all claim to the royal family.

The events of the past few months have changed Franklin Sakamoto. His association with the Somerset Strikers has shown him that the old stereotypes cannot be accurately applied to all citizens of the Federated Commonwealth. As his commanding officer, Adam Steiner has won Sakamoto's respect through fair treatment and competent leadership, and the unit's willingness to sacrifice its ultimate goal of retaking Somerset from the Clans in order to rescue a single member deeply touched the Kuritan.

Intensely loyal, disciplined, and honorable, Franklin Sakamoto makes a dangerous enemy and a strong ally. Major Adam Steiner has seen both sides of Sakamoto, and he much prefers to stand as his friend. Sakamoto's tangled history might offer more surprises for the Strikers and for Franklin himself, but Adam feels confident that whatever else Franklin learns about his past, that knowledge will not change his new friend's commitment to the unit.

JEROEN FRESTADT

CAPTAIN
DROPSHIP KWAIDAN

As a loyal citizen of the Draconis Combine, Captain Frestadt resented his government forcing him to place his ship and skills at the disposal of a snotty-nosed officer of the Federated Commonwealth. He hated taking his merchant ship into combat situations, and kept close watch on Patch McGuire's makeshift repairs and refits. Though Frestadt never learned to like Major Adam Steiner, he gave his commander grudging respect for succeeding in, or at least surviving, every combat situation the Strikers entered. Frestadt also gained some insight into his personal performance, discovering a capacity within himself for often brilliant maneuvers and inspired leadership of his crew.

Though Captain Frestadt spent most of his adult life secretly working to accomplish the goals of a rebel faction intent on replacing Coordinator Takashi Kurita with the Combine leader's illegitimate grandson, Franklin Sakamoto, he never felt those goals conflicted with his loyalty to his nation. In his mind, his greatest service to the Draconis Combine would be bringing to power a new, stronger Kurita to lead the nation on to ever- greater heights of glory. The ISF officers who removed Captain Frestadt from the rebel stronghold on the marginally habitable moon Bensinger IV and returned him to the Combine for trial did not agree.
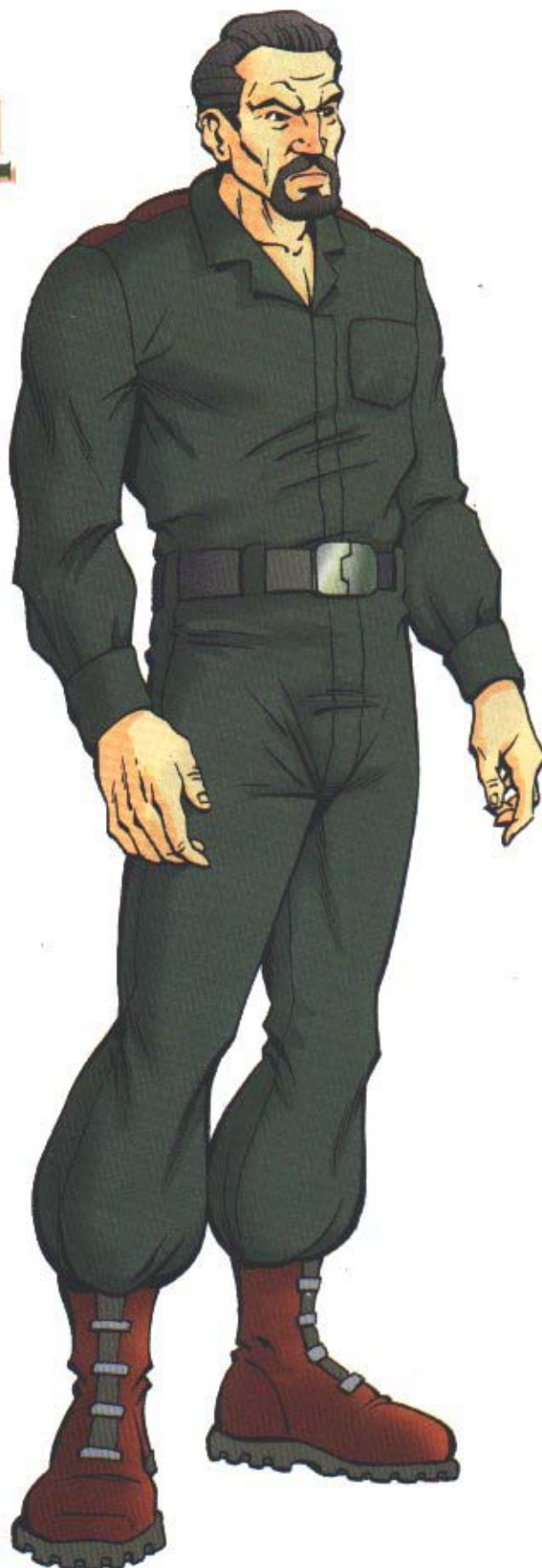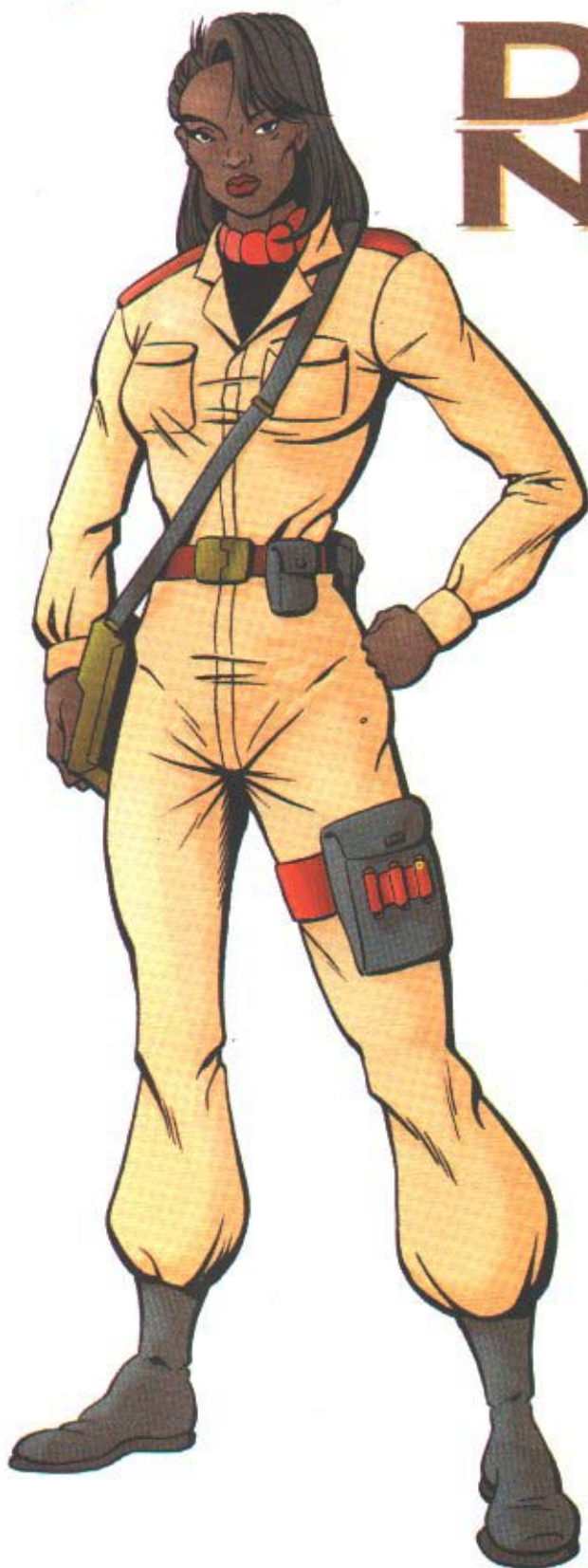
DOCTOR NAKAMURA

1ST SOMERSET STRIKERS

Deirdre Nakamura was born into a proud, aristocratic family that can trace its lineage back to the samurai of ancient Terra. Growing up with three older brothers, Deirdre learned to compete early on. She displayed a keen intellect in school and had become an accomplished martial artist by the age of thirteen. Fortunately for the strong-willed young girl, her family's social standing exempted her from the traditional subservient role Kuritan society usually relegated to women, and she entered the the prestigious Wisdom of the Dragon military academy at the age of 18.

A year later, Deirdre shocked her family by leaving the academy and announcing her intention to travel across Luthien alone on a journey of self-discovery. She returned some two years later wearing the robe of a monk and expressing a desire to serve humanity. Within weeks she was studying medicine at Luthien University. After graduating at the top of her class, she again surprised all by enlisting in the Draconis Combine Mustered Soldiery's medical corps and volunteering for combat duty.

Dr. Deirdre Nakamura remains something of a mystery to her shipmates. She is a very private individual with a cold, formal manner. Few if any of her shipmates feel any affection toward her, but they all respect her professional attitude and her dedication to the healing arts.

PATCH MCGUIRE

1ST SOMERSET STRIKERS

Ernest McGuire is one of those rare people who is apparently born with a natural affinity for machinery of any type. He earned his nickname of Patch at the age of nine when he snuck into the building that housed the atmospheric-control system for his family's apartment complex and jury-rigged a repair to correct a faulty subsystem that optimized oxygen recirculation. The ambiguity of his punishment for this unauthorized refit and the pride he felt at improving his family's quality of life stuck with him for the rest of his life, making him an enthusiastic tinkerer.

Patch enjoys the MechWarriors' friendly bidding for his services, though he often reminds his fellow Strikers that he can only work on each machine in its turn. He relishes the opportunity to constantly improve the unit's 'Mechs, and derives a great deal of glee from modifying Captain Frestadt's JumpShip every time Major Steiner calls on him for necessary repairs.
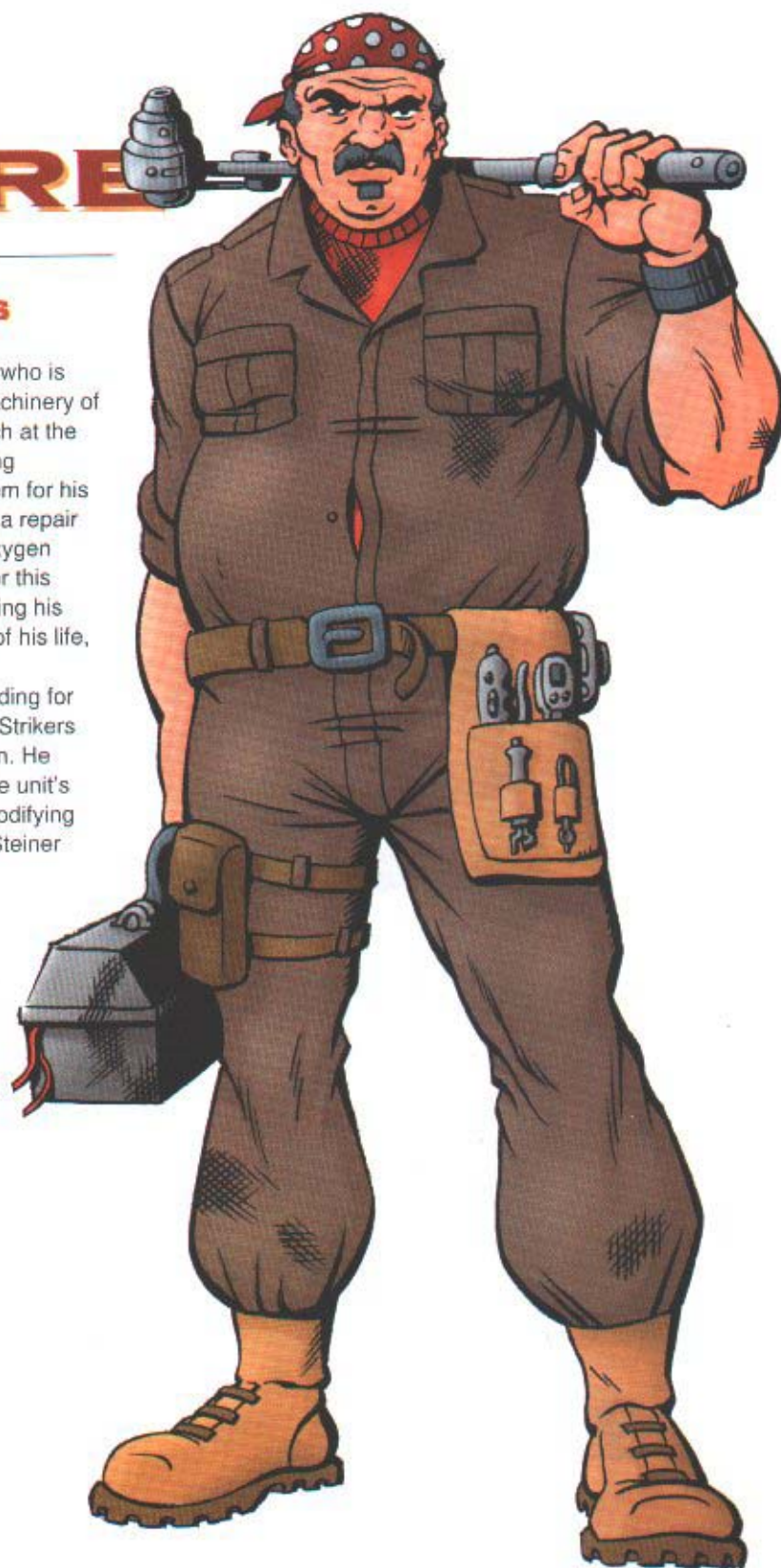
ANDREW STEINER

HAUPTMANN KOMMANDANT SOMERSET CADET CORPS

Andrew Steiner was born and raised on the Federated Commonwealth world of Somerset. The son of two MechWarriors, Andrew had barely learned to walk when he first expressed an ambition to pilot one of the massive machines. Within a few years, Andrew had a younger brother, Adam. The younger Steiner came to share his older brother's fascination with the massive machines, and the two boys often spent their afternoons at the training field of the nearby military academy. There, they would watch the cadets train in their BattleMechs and dream of the day when they, too, would become MechWarriors.

Andrew studied diligently at school—as his parents told him a future MechWarrior must—and later won admission to the Somerset Military Academy, fulfilling his childhood dream. He piloted a BattleMech as if he were born with a neuro-helmet on his head and consistently bested his fellow cadets in mock BattleMech duels.

He entered military service immediately after graduation and soon found himself honing his MechWarrior skills in the low-level skirmishing so common in the Inner Sphere prior to the Clan Invasion. Later, he was assigned to the Somerset Military Academy, where he now serves as commander of the cadet corps.

MELISSA STEINER-DAVION

ARCHON
FEDERATED COMMONWEALTH

Groomed from early childhood to assume leadership, Melissa Steiner-Davion proved herself a much stronger and more effective leader than anyone really expected, least of all her husband and co-regent, the legendary Hanse Davion. From an awkward, bookish, solitary child, Melissa Steiner-Davion grew to be a wise, caring, and poised Archon, able to maintain a loving relationship with her powerful and strong-willed husband, raise a family, and successfully navigate the treacherous political waters of an oft-uneasily consolidated realm.

Though well schooled in the theory of leading a nation, Melissa Steiner-Davion learned the true meaning of what it meant to rule when she traveled in disguise to spend time with her fiancé before their marriage. When the DropShip she was traveling on was highjacked and it became clear that an enemy agent had penetrated her deception and arranged the incident to gain control of the heir to the FedCom throne, Melissa was forced to reveal her identity and take charge of the situation. This incident revealed to the Archon-Designate the true pain of sacrificing the few for the good of the many, and forcefully brought home the realization that her people would willingly die to preserve her life.

Her capable leadership during the Clan invasion shows that she clearly has accepted this early lesson and many others, and the battlefield performance of her son Victor proves that she has successfully taught her children the precepts of rulership as she herself was taught.

VICTOR STEINER-DAVION

ARCHON PRINCE
FEDERATED COMMONWEALTH

Groomed from his earliest days to rule the Federated Commonwealth, Victor is an intelligent, thoughtful, and serious young man. Shorter than average, he is self-conscious about his height and sometimes wonders if his small size keeps people from taking him seriously. He has always known that the task of leading his nation would someday fall to him, and the weight of that responsibility has shaped his life since childhood. Though close to his parents and four siblings, he is wary of other people, finding it difficult to distinguish between genuine potential friends and those who want to claim friendship with him because of his position. Because of this uncertainty, he prizes true friendship wherever he finds it. He despises flattery and has little patience for diplomatic niceties.

Like every member of the royal family, Victor entered military service as an adult, and currently commands a battalion of the Twelfth Donegal Guards. He is determined to prove worthy of his command, particularly since he believes he may owe it more to his position as heir to the throne than to his actual ability. He is troubled by the thought that his royal heritage may bring him undeserved honors, and bends over backward to make sure he earns everything that comes his way.

Victor feels he must live up to both of his parents, particularly his famous father. Prince Hanse Davion, nicknamed "the Fox" for his political skill and renowned as a brilliant general, casts a long shadow over his eldest son. Victor is determined to step outside that shadow and prove himself on his own. This drive to succeed on his own merits makes Victor intense, impatient, and often sharply critical—but he always reserves his harshest criticism for himself. Refusing to rely on the easy advantages of his royal name, Victor never settles for anything less than his personal best.

NICOLAI MALTHUS

STAR COLONEL
FALCON'S CLAWS

Jade Falcon geneticists conceived Nicolai Malthus with the finest genes the Clan possessed, intent on creating the most fearsome warrior the universe had ever seen. Their efforts seemed destined to succeed as Malthus grew under the watchful eyes of his instructors in the Clan sibko, where he underwent a rigorous program of training designed to prepare him to take his place among the honored warriors of the Jade Falcons.

The young Malthus excelled in the competitive world of the sibko, consistently emerging at the top of his company in the classroom and the training field. His accomplishments and abilities earned him the grudging respect of his fellow truebirths, and soon Malthus emerged as a natural leader. Few of his sibkin, however, felt any affection toward Malthus, who had come to view himself as innately superior to all around him.

Following his graduation from the sibko, Malthus rose through the ranks of the Clan with astonishing speed, driven by a ruthless ambition that gained strength with each success. Soon he had earned the rank of Star Colonel and command of the Falcon's Claws, an elite unit of Jade Falcon's fiercest MechWarriors. The unit rapidly captured a number of Inner Sphere worlds after Malthus took command, and Nicolai seemed destined to finally best his Clan rival, Star Colonel Kristen Redmond. Then the Falcon's Claws encountered Adam Steiner and the Somerset Strikers, and their fortunes changed.

Although Malthus had tasted the bitterness of defeat before, he had never been bested by a "barbarian" from the Inner Sphere. The loss shamed him before the other commanders of his Clan, and Malthus vowed to destroy the FedCom commander and his upstart unit. However, Steiner and his Strikers continued to outwit their Clan opponents, and now Malthus's determination to destroy the young MechWarrior has turned into an obsession that threatens to consume the Clan commander.

KRISTEN REDMOND

STAR COLONEL
BLACK VISION

A brilliant fighter and tactician who places the honor of the Clan above all, Star Colonel Kristen Redmond is a true Clan warrior. For the glory of Clan Jade Falcon, she leads her troops into battle against seemingly impossible odds. She controls her reckless streak well enough not to take foolish chances, however; though willing to risk quite a bit for victory, she won't throw her unit blindly into a battle they have no chance of winning. Despite her natural impulse toward aggressiveness, she knows when to gamble and when not to. The only flaw displayed by this otherwise exemplary warrior is her ongoing feud with her longtime rival, Nicolai Malthus.

In recent months, the bitter rivalry between Malthus and Redmond has led the Star Colonel to confuse Clan Jade Falcon's honor with her personal honor and to justify taking on engagements simply to match or surpass Malthus' exploits. Her desire to bury Malthus in an avalanche of her own heroic feats has allowed her to indulge her reckless tendencies and has begun to seriously impair her judgment. The need to be better than Nicolai Malthus is becoming more important to Kristen Redmond than the overall good of the Clan or obedience to the orders of her superiors.

Shrewd, calculating, and fiercely proud, Kristen Redmond rarely backs down once she has committed herself and her command to a course of action. A bold and tenacious fighter, she accepts defeat only if the good of the Clan requires it—and even then, she regards such losses as temporary retreats that serve a larger strategy. As a Bloodnamed warrior, Star Colonel Redmond is assured a place in her Clan's genetic legacy unless some deep disgrace should befall her. She will do everything in her power to make her legacy a glorious one.

PYTOR

STAR COMMANDER
FALCON'S CLAWS

At 37 years old, Star Commander Pytor is a "useless old man" by Clan standards. Having spent his entire adult life as a MechWarrior in a society geared toward combat, his age gives him experience that would be invaluable in the Inner Sphere but is brushed aside among the Clans. Pytor has believed in and striven to uphold Clan ways and ideals since his childhood, and he wants nothing more than to keep serving his people. Because of his age, however, he is not allowed to offer much. The combat skills and tactical abilities he honed to a sharp edge over many years, the breadth of his military experience, and his insight into Clan honor matter less than nothing to his young, ambitious commanding officer, Nicolai Malthus. Malthus pays Pytor scant respect, and Pytor's wise counsel often falls on deaf ears.

After a lifetime of devoting all his energies to serving Clan Jade Falcon, Pytor finds it galling that the Clan to which he gave unquestioning loyalty now regards him as little more than disposable cannon fodder. Simply because he has aged beyond what the Clans consider his fighting prime, this once-proud trueborn warrior has been relegated to a shamefully limited supporting role. Adding insult to injury, his superiors recently demoted him from his former rank of Star Captain. In his younger days, Pytor accepted Clan Jade Falcon's disdain for older warriors without question; now that he has become a victim of that same attitude, his deep sense of hurt is beginning to make him question the Clan values that he once held so dear.

Though his pride still makes him carry out his orders to the best of his ability, Pytor is no longer sure that there is any point in doing so. He is a confused man, struggling to define the true meaning of honor in a society that has, in a sense, betrayed him. Once sure of his role and his worth, he must decide whether to cling blindly to old ideals or find a new truth whose existence he has barely begun to suspect.

VANDERVAHN CHISTU

GALAXY COMMANDER
CLAN JADE FALCON

An ambitious man, Galaxy Commander Vandervahn Chistu considers the invasion of the Inner Sphere a perfect opportunity to earn glory for Clan Jade Falcon and win a prominent position in his Clan. A better warrior than a leader, Chistu's greatest trial in this military action is Star Colonel Nicolai Malthus, a ruthless tactician who represented Chistu's most promising avenue of success until the subordinate officer became obsessed with destroying Major Adam Steiner and the 1st Somerset Strikers.

Galaxy Commander Chistu firmly believes in the Clan way. Because Chistu has personal goals of his own, he finds Star Colonel Malthus's willingness to abandon his duty of advancing the goals of the Jade Falcons to pursue a personal vendetta understandable, but considers his subordinate's actions wholly dishonorable. Though not yet willing to cut his losses, Galaxy Commander Chistu accepts that one day soon he may be forced to destroy Nicolai Malthus.

NATALYA

STAR COMMANDER
FALCON'S CLAWS

Star Commander Natalya is intensely loyal to her commanding officer, Nicolai Malthus, partly because she believes she owes him loyalty as a subordinate officer but also because she sees his exploits as her best shot at battlefield glory. Natalya wants nothing more than to win a Bloodname, and at 24 years old, she feels her time is beginning to run out. Her driving need to distinguish herself in combat makes her a particularly bloodthirsty adversary.

A Clan Elemental, Natalya is larger, stronger, and able to endure more physical punishment than the average Inner Sphere warrior. She is proud of her strength and combat skill, and dreams of passing them both on to another generation of Clan Jade Falcon. She is willing to go to any lengths accomplish any feat of bravery to earn the Bloodname and the place in her Clan's future that she so desperately seeks.

COMSTAR TECHNICAL BRIEFING
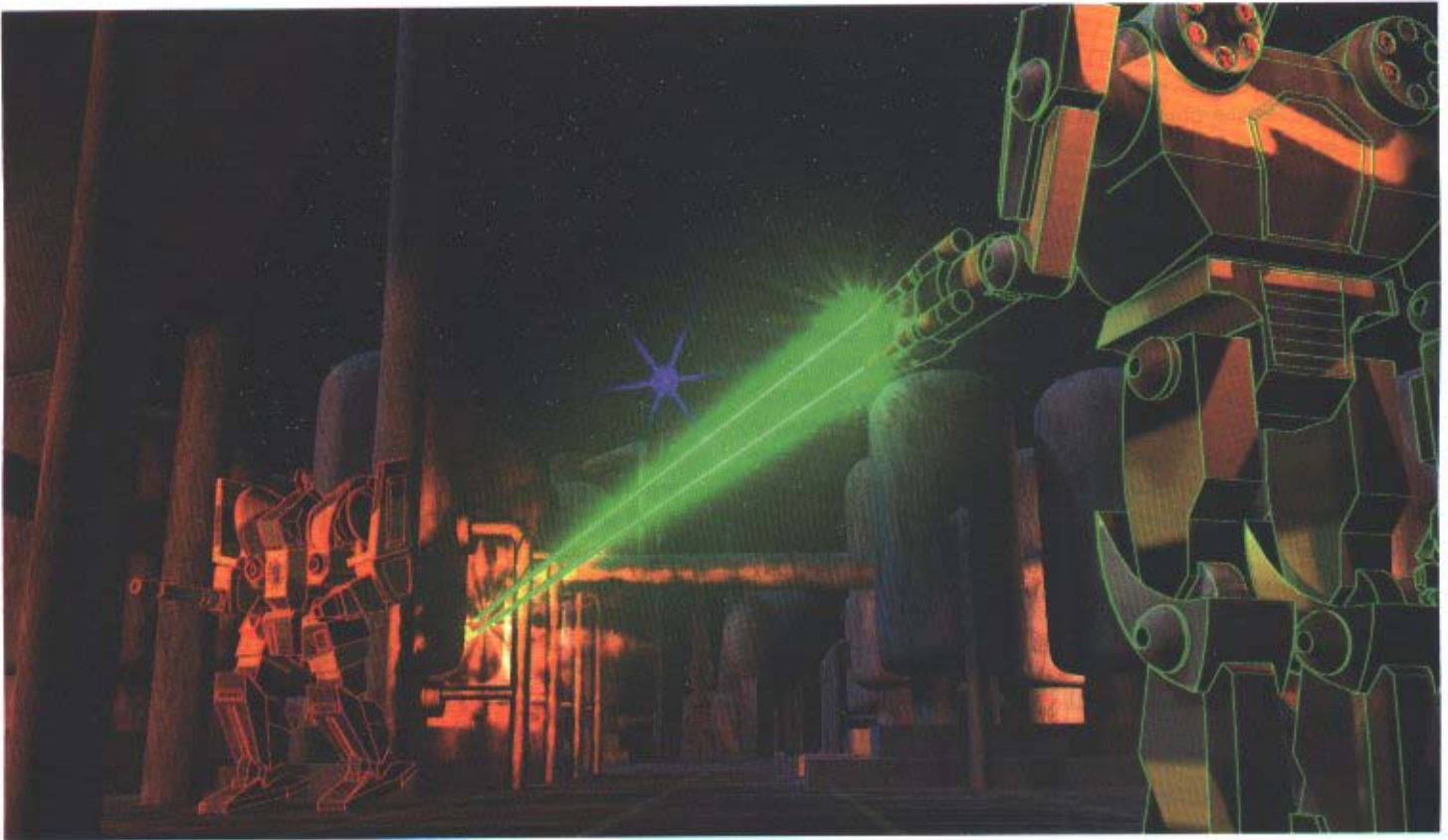
The following report on Clan and Inner Sphere technology has been compiled by our Blessed Order's expert technological analysts. For the benefit of those readers who have not served as MechWarriors, this report begins with a brief discussion of the workings of BattleMechs, followed by all available descriptions of the cutting-edge BattleMechs and battle armor, vehicles, spacecraft, and special equipment used by the Clan invaders and certain Successor State armies and special units, including the 1st Somerset Strikers of the Federated Commonwealth. Readers are advised that the technology in this report represents only the war machines that ComStar adepts have so far observed in action; it is probable that we have not yet seen the complete arsenal at the Clans' disposal.

THE BATTLEMECH

In 2439, the introduction of the first BattleMech—the MCK-5S *Mackie*—revolutionized modern warfare forever. Though the *Mackie* would be considered primitive by today's standards, the machine represented the most advanced battlefield technology of its day.

The modern BattleMech is perhaps the most complex machine ever produced. Each 'Mech contains thousands of different components, far too many to explain in anything shorter than a technical manual. The following overview highlights the principal systems and the capabilities of BattleMechs, providing a succinct and accurate summary of the ultimate war machine.

Skeleton

Every BattleMech contains a "skeleton" made up of several dozen "bones." Each "bone" is a honeycombed, foamed-aluminum core wrapped with stressed silicon-carbide monofilament and protected by a rigid, titanium-steel shell. Each of these artificial "bones" has attachment points for the myomer "muscles" and servos that drive the BattleMech. This skeletal construction helps make BattleMechs less vulnerable and easier to repair than vehicles supported by stressed-skin shells.

Muscles

Two different systems are used to drive BattleMechs and control their movements. Small, electrically driven actuators move a 'Mech's light weapons and sensor arrays. Bundles of polyacetylene fibers called myomers control a 'Mech's limbs and main weapons. Myomers contract when exposed to electrical current, much like human muscles. If a BattleMech's myomers are damaged in battle, technicians can replace the fiber bundles with new ones or "transplant" myomers from other parts of the 'Mech's skeleton. Transplanted myomer bundles cannot restore full function to a damaged limb, but they do provide limited mobility and strength.

Armor and Weapons

Two separate layers of armor provide modern BattleMechs with protection against energy and projectile weapons. Usually, aligned-crystal steel is used for an outer layer of armor. The aligned-crystal steel has excellent heat-conducting properties, and so it provides excellent protection against lasers and particle-beam weapons. An inner layer of boron nitride impregnated with diamond monofilament stops high-explosive armor-piercing (HEAP) rounds and fast neutrons. This second layer of armor also prevents any armor fragments from damaging the BattleMech's internal systems.

BattleMechs usually carry charged-particle-beam weapons or lasers as their primary armaments, because energy weapons can be powered virtually indefinitely by a 'Mech's onboard fusion reactor and do not require ammunition reloads. In addition to energy weapons, many BattleMechs carry launching racks for short- or long-range non-nuclear missiles. Still other 'Mechs mount rapid-fire auto-cannons or machine guns for use against infantry, aircraft, and other BattleMechs.

Weapons and Heat-Dissipation Strategies

Because a BattleMech's systems are pushed to their limits during combat, 'Mechs engaged in combat generate large amounts of waste heat rapidly. We've already discussed how excessive internal temperatures can disrupt a fusion reactor's magnetic containment shields, but excessive heat can also impair or permanently damage a 'Mech's electronics and computer systems, slowing the BattleMech's movement and reducing the accuracy of its weapons.

Heat sinks are one way of controlling the heat build-up in a 'Mech, but the heat pouring out of these radiators can produce strong infrared (IR) signatures, which can make a 'Mech easy to target. To solve this problem, MechWarriors have found other ways to control heat build-up. Often, MechWarriors will place their machines in shallow lakes or rivers. Through the processes of conduction and convection, the running water helps dissipate the 'Mech's internal heat, allowing a higher rate of activity. On temperate or cold worlds, the atmosphere itself can help dissipate waste heat in the same manner. On the other hand, the high outside temperatures of a desert or jungle environment can exacerbate a BattleMech's heating problems.

Perhaps the most common way MechWarriors control heat build-up is by manually regulating the movement and firing rates of their machines or by reprogramming the machine's movement control computer and its secondary systems. These computers can be used to limit the 'Mech's rate of activity and the resulting heat build-up. For example, when a 'Mech is sent to a high-temperature world, its activity-rate setting may be lowered. The 'Mech will move more slowly and fire less often than it would on a temperate planet. When a 'Mech is sent to fight in an arctic climate, the setting is raised, allowing faster movement and a higher rate of fire.

Reprogramming is usually carried out while the BattleMech force is enroute to its assignment aboard DropShips. The process takes aproximately two weeks.

Because BattleMechs are always adjusted for the expected external temperature of their combat environments, sudden increases in outside temperature can have a devastating impact on a 'Mech's ability to dissipate waste heat. Tacticians have developed a whole series of battle tactics to take advantage of this 'Mech characteristic. For example, commanders regularly set forests on fire while enemy BattleMechs are advancing through them. The superheated air roaring around the 'Mechs can overload the machine's cooling systems or drastically reduce their efficiency, thus hampering the machines' combat capabilities.

Power

BattleMechs require a large, constant power supply for movement and combat. The fusion reactor, which produces enormous amounts of electricity from ordinary water, is the most efficient system for providing this power. Because the fusion reaction created by a BattleMech's power plant does not release neutrons, the power plant can operate indefinitely without becoming radioactive.

The fusion plant produces electricity by a process known as magnetohydrodynamics. In this process, magnetic fields are used to channel plasma from the fusion reaction into a loop. This plasma is electrically conductive, and so the loop functions as a powerful generating coil, producing both electricity and waste heat. Every BattleMech carries radiators called heat sinks to help dissipate this waste heat. Heat sinks are especially important, because excessively high internal temperatures can disrupt the magnetic containment fields around a BattleMech's reactor. If a power plant's magnetic "jar" is disrupted, an uncontrolled fusion reaction may occur, releasing neutrons and exposing the BattleMech's internal systems and its crew to damaging and lethal radiation.

Movement

BattleMechs can attain walking or running speeds that range from 40 to 100 kilometers per hour in open terrain. Dense forests, swamps, and steep slopes will slow a 'Mech, but very few terrain features can stop one. In addition, many 'Mechs can jump over obstacles by superheating air with their fusion reactors and jetting it out through so-called jump jets. Jump-capable BattleMechs operating on worlds without atmospheres often carry small quantities of mercury to use as reaction mass for their jets. All BattleMechs can move underwater when crossing rivers or small lakes.

Spaceborne BattleMechs can make assault landings from low orbit. Special reaction jets housed in their feet allow them to soft-land from altitudes of up to 320 kilometers. During re-entry, breakaway ablative shields protect a BattleMech's vulnerable sensors and weapons.

CLAN BATTLEMECHS

HUNCHBACK II-C

This BattleMech's basic design has remained largely unchanged since the days of the Star League. Initial hardware assessments of this new version observed among the Clan forces suggest incorporation of more compact and technologically sophisticated components, allowing the installation of two rapid-fire autocannons rather than a single AC-20. The higher tech also allows room for the installation of jump jets, which greatly enhance the *Hunchback*'s effectivness as an urban and woodland fighter.

This version of the tried-and-true *Hunchback* is similar to its Inner Sphere counterpart in at least one respect: in both cases, the 'Mech is lightly armored for a unit of its weight class. Indeed, the *Hunchback*'s overall design makes it ill-suited to endure a protracted engagement with hostile forces. In addition to the weakness of its armor, the BattleMech's main weapons—its Ultra autocannons—carry sufficient ammunition for only about 20 seconds of sustained fire. The addition of jump jets has done much to improve the usefulness of this design in long-term battles by giving it extra mobility, but the jump capability may not compensate for the design's apparent flaws. Even with the abillity to jump out of weapons locks and crossfires, the *Hunchback* II-C remains an average heavy weapons platform. Given the advanced materials and systems observed in other Clan 'Mechs, the question of why this design is still among their first-line units deserves further study.

Mass: 50 tons
Chassis: Endo Steel
Power Plant: Hermes 200 XL
Cruising Speed: 43,9 kph
Maximum Speed: 63.5 kph
Jump Jets: 4
    Jump Capacity: 120 meters
Armor: Standard
Armament:
    2 Ultra 20 Autocannons
    2 ER Medium Lasers
Manufacturer: Unknown
    Primary Factory: Unknown
Communications System: Unknown
Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

CLAN BATTLEMECHS
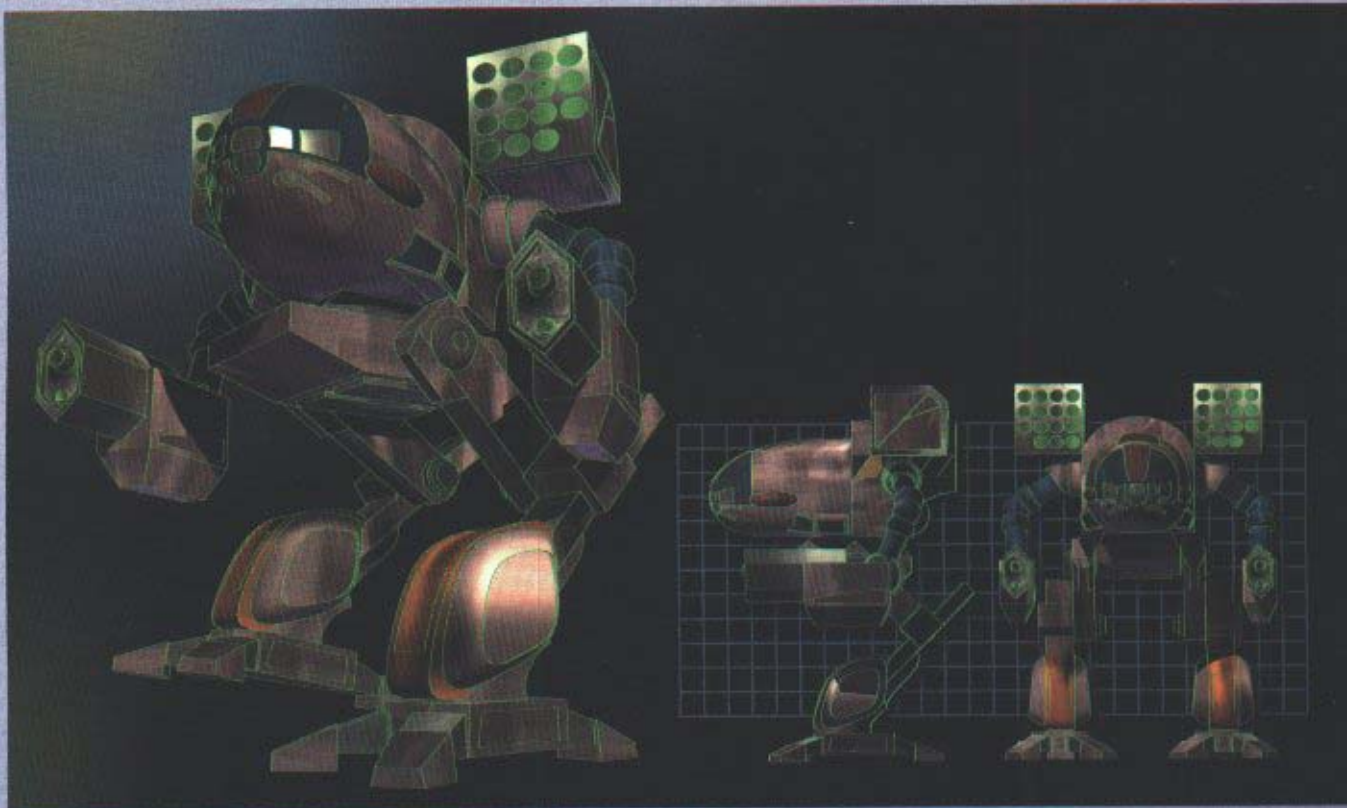
MAD CAT

In the first days of the Clan invasion, the Kell Hounds mercenary unit first encountered this OmniMech during operations in the Periphery. Transmissions from that initial encounter provided the data contained in this combat assessment by our Blessed Order. ComStar codenamed the 'Mech the *Mad Cat* because of its hunched-over appearance, which resembles both the *Marauder* and the *Catapult*.

The *Mad Cat* was the first OmniMech encountered by Inner Sphere forces. These units use standardized modular components, making field repair and replacement simpler and enabling MechWarriors to easily change their machines' weapons configuration to suit changing situations. The *Mad Cat* shares lower torso, leg, and many upper torso and arm components with the OmniMech known as the *Vulture*, and can swap parts with it if necessary. This kind of multiuse planning, more common during the Star League era, unfortunately died out during the centuries of dominance by the Inner Sphere's Great Houses.

The *Mad Cat* is a fast, well-armed, and heavily armored 'Mech. With double heat sinks handling the load from its medium and large lasers, it rarely overheats. Its extensive weapons array allows it to cover all ranges with accuracy and considerable punch.

Mass: 75 tons
Chassis: Endo Steel
Power Plant: 375 XL
Cruising Speed: 54 kph
Maximum Speed: 86.4 kph
Jump Jets: None
    Jump Capacity: None
Armor: Ferro-Fibrous
Armament:
    28 tons of pod space available
Primary Weapons Configuration:
    2 Machine Guns
    2 ER Large Lasers
    2 ER Medium Lasers
    2 LRM 20
    2 Medium Pulse Lasers
Manufacturer: Unknown
Communications System: Unknown
Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

CLAN BATTLEMECHS

THOR

The *Thor* appears to be one of the heaviest 'Mechs in the Clan Jade Falcon arsenal. This OmniMech is an excellent all-around fighting machine, carrying an array of weapons that cover a wide variety of ranges and requirements in all observed configurations. This ability to blend firepower and manuverability seems to be the key to the uniquely successful OmniMechs created by Clan military designers. The *Thor* is neither the swiftest nor the most heavily armed Clan 'Mech, but its unique blend of equipment makes it one of the most versatile units used on a modern battlefield.

Some observers have characterized the *Thor* as a collection of deficits that combine to confer unusual advantages. Large by Inner Sphere standards, the 'Mech stands more than one meter taller than any other design. Its height seems to extend the range of the head-mounted sensor blister without hindering its specially designed stabilization systems. The *Thor*'s cool running temperature gives it amazing speed and agility for its size in the field.

Overall, the *Thor* represents a creative juggling act on the part of Clan designers, a trait they unfortunately display again and again in their combat designs.

Mass: 70 tons
Chassis: Standard
Power Plant: 350 XL
Cruising Speed: 54 kph
Maximum Speed: 86.4 kph
Jump Jets: Five
    Jump Capacity: 150 meters
Armor: Ferro-Fibrous
Armament:
    22.5 tons of pod space available
Alternate Weapons Configuration M:
    1 Streak SRM 6
    1 ER PPC
    1 LB 10-X Autocannon
Manufacturer: Unknown
Communications System: Unknown
Targeting and Tracking System: Narc Beacon

CLAN BATTLEMECHS
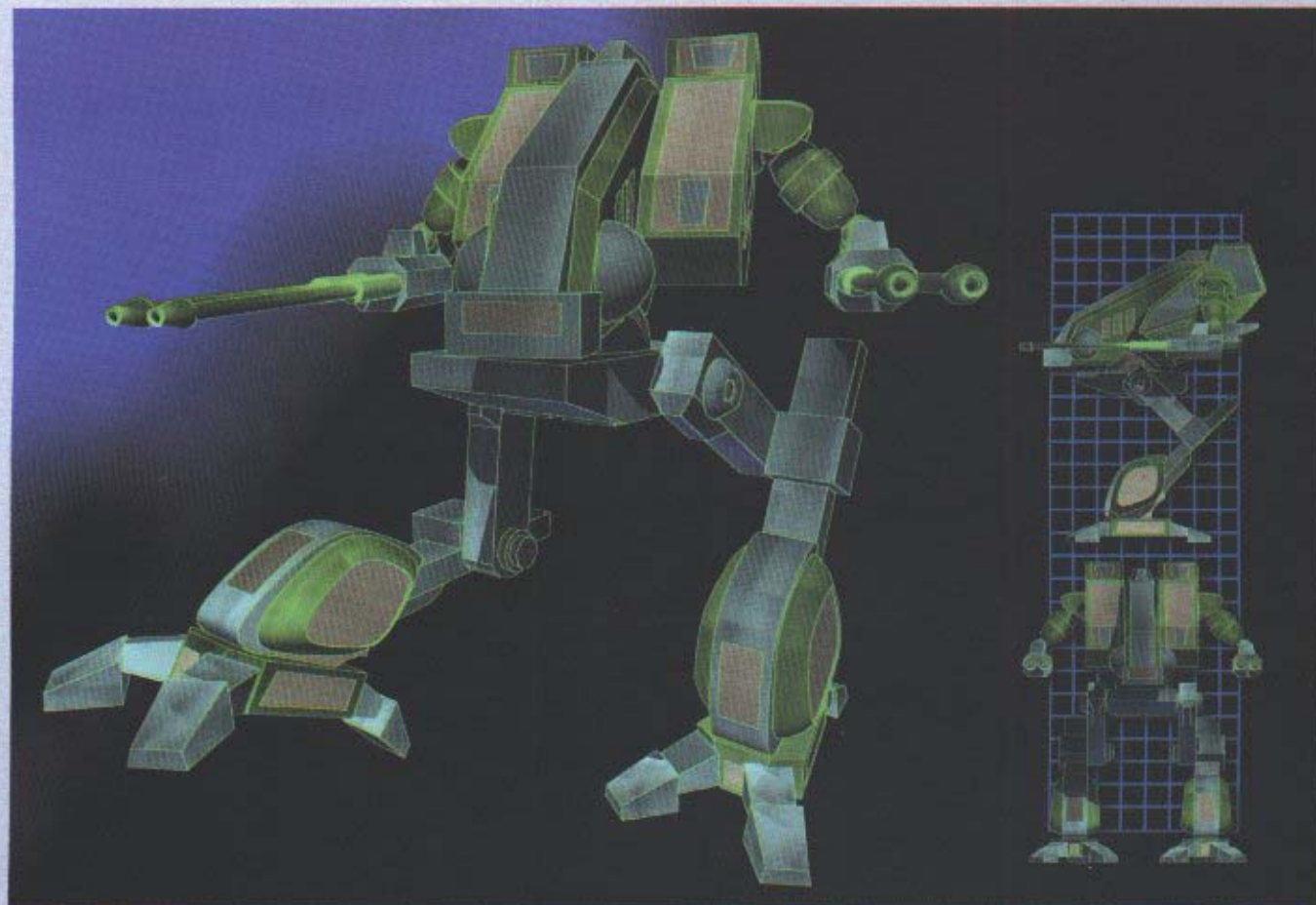
VULTURE

Its hunched appearance and birdlike legs earned the Vulture its nickname as soon as it appeared in battle in the Free Rashalhague Republic and the Draconis Combine. Like its namesake, this OmniMech can stand far back from the battle and wait for a chance at a sure kill. Unlike real vultures, however, the 'Mech is busy from a distance, accurately firing wave after wave of its long-range missiles into the ranks of opposing forces. Large and medium lasers on the 'Mech's arms round out its firing capabilities, making it a good fighter at all ranges. Like most OmniMechs, the *Vulture*'s interchangability allows for unique weapons configurations dependent on its mission. It also shares the speed, durability, and cool running temperatures that are the trademark of Clan OmniMechs. The *Vulture* is similar in many respects to the *Mad Cat*, sharing all of its lower torso and many of its upper torso components. In all combat situations so far observed, this 'Mech has proven a tough, effective, and quick adversary.

Mass: 60 tons
Chassis: Standard
Power Plant: 300 XL
Cruising Speed: 54 kph
Maximum Speed: 86.4 kph
Jump Jets: None
Jump Capacity: None
Armor: Ferro-Fibrous
Armament:
28 tons of pod space available
Primary Weapons Configuration:
2 Large Pulse Lasers
2 LRM 20
2 Medium Pulse Lasers
Manufacturer: Unknown
Communications System: Unknown
Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

CLAN BATTLE ARMOR

TOAD BATTLE ARMOR

Among the most terrifying Clan forces faced by the armies of the Inner Sphere are the Elemental warriors clad in suits of seemingly indestructible battle armor. These suits embody a level of technical sophistication rivaling that of the long-lost Star League. Our Blessed Order has only begun to plumb the depths of this marvel of combat technology. Based on observation of combat footage from Clan assaults on many worlds, ComStar has synthesized this preliminary assesment of the so-called Toad battle armor.

Initial estimates indicate that even 'Mech-mounted machine guns and medium lasers cannot penetrate the dense armor of these suits. The material used seems impervious to flamers or other heat-based attacks. When a Clan battlesuit is finally breached (after taking considerable damage,) a liquid substance whose composition is unknown to us flows out of the armor to seal the opening. The suit continues to operate, as any damage to it seems to have little effect on the soldier inside. Toad battle armor also boasts impressive weapons; most suits are equipped with one small laser and an antipersonnel machine gun on each arm. In addition, a short-range missile launcher is mounted on the Toad suit's back. These armaments are supplemented by clawed hands strong enough to peel away armor plating, and jump jets that provide incredible mobility. Even a small group of infantry clad in Toad suits can destroy a BattleMech all by themselves while easily evading or resisting defensive fire.

Mass: 1 ton
Chassis: Unknown
Power Plant: Unknown
Crusing Speed: 36.8 kph
Maximum Speed: 48.45 kph
Jump Jets: 3
    Jump Capacity: 90 meters
Armor: Ferro-Fibrous
Armament:
    1 Small Laser
    1 SRM-2
Manufacturer: Unknown
    Primary Factory: Unknown
Communications System: Unknown
Tracking and Tracking Systems: Unknown

INNER SPHERE BATTLEMECHS

AWS-9MA AWESOME

A vintage assault 'Mech with a sterling battlefield record, the *Awesome* combines the three best qualities of such a machine—speed, armor, and firepower—in a single, well-integrated package. The model fielded by the Federated Commonwealth owes much to the variants originally manufactured in 2665, during the Star League era. The reintroduction of Star League-era technology to the latest model of the *Awesome* has corrected many of the deficiencies that crept into the 'Mech's design during the tumultuous centuries that followed its original manufacture and deployment.

The particular units referred to in this intelligence summary are typical of the new generation of *Awesome*. Combat intelligence reports received thus far indicate that logistical support requirements and fighting tactics for this 'Mech remain largely unchanged. As with all special-purpose units, the welfare of an *Awesome* in the field still depends greatly on the ability of the 'Mechs and vehicles screening it to prevent the enemy from mounting flanking attacks.

The *Awesome*'s main weapons include three Fusigon particle projector cannons, a Diverse Optics Small Laser 10, and a heavy battlefist for close-quarters engagement. The *Awesome* is well armored with Duraflex Heavy Special plating, which has no gaps or weak spots. Overall, the *Awesome* is superbly designed for its job of punching through enemy forces. Its principal disadvantage is common to all well-designed 'Mechs: its operational performance drops steeply in conditions not suited to its capabilities.

Mass: 80 tons
Chassis: Technicron Type G
Power Plant: Hermes 320 XL
Cruising Speed: 44.1 kph
Maximum Speed: 65.6 kph
Jump Jets: None
    Jump Capacity: None
Armor: Duraflex Heavy Special
Armament:
    3 Fusigon Longtooth Extended-Range Particle
      Projector Cannon
    1 Diverse Optics Type 10 Small Laser
Manufacturer: Technicron Manufacturing,
    Irian BattleMechs Unlimited
    Primary Factory: Savannah (Technicron),
    Irian (Irian)
Communications System: Garret T19-G
Targeting and Tracking System: Dynatec 2780
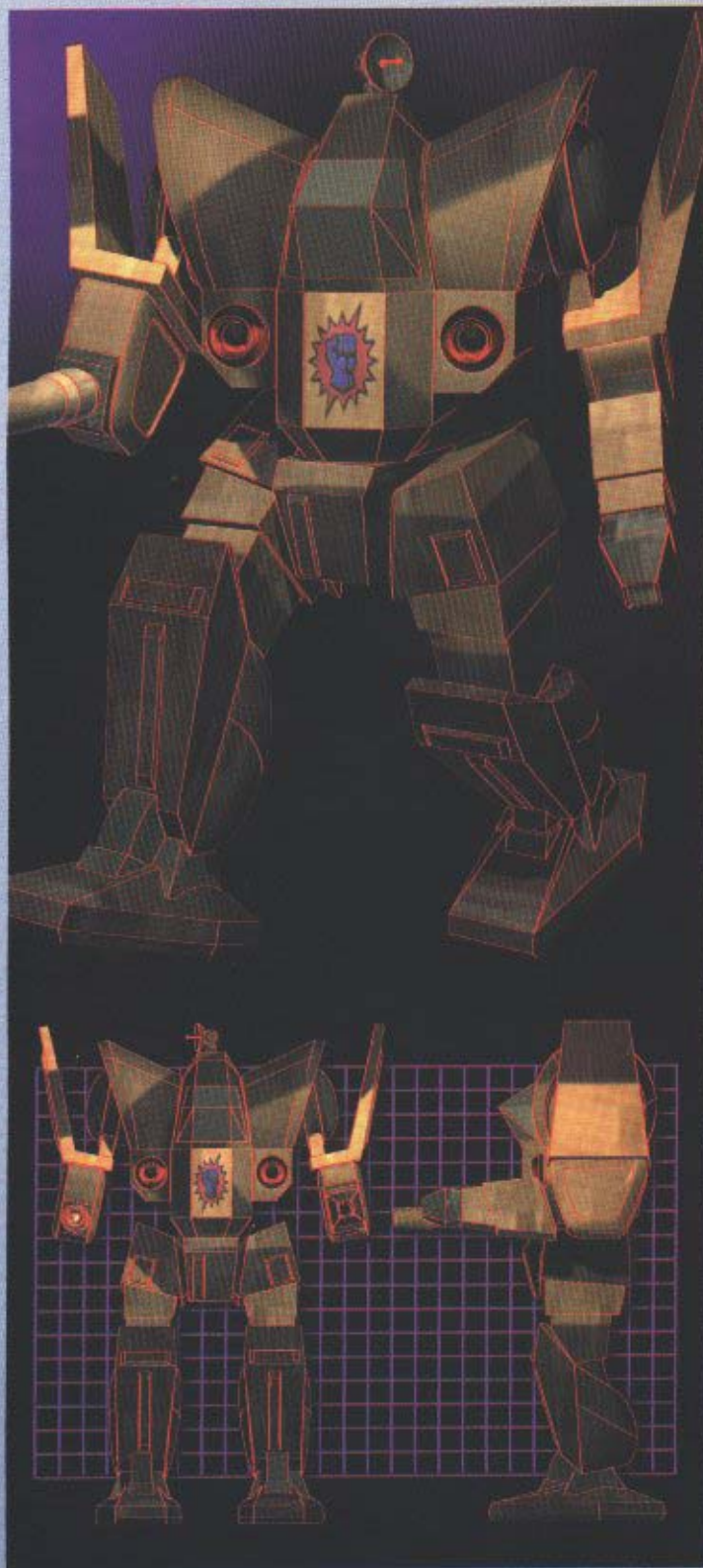
INNER SPHERE BATTLEMECHS

AXM-2N AXMAN

The *Axman* is a new 'Mech only recently deployed by the Federated Commonwealth. Though a realistic combat evaluation of the unit is unavailable, we may make educated guesses on the basis of the past performance of many of the 'Mech's components. Overall, the *Axman* seems to be an extremely effective combination of armament and armor. However, the unorthodox off-center placement of its power plant to make room for the cumbersome Devastator-20 autocannon may lead to accelerated heat build-up. The autocannon may prove to be the 'Mech's weakest component, having developed a reputation for jamming during its testing period. Whether these potentially debilitating weaknesses have been adequately corrected in the final design remains to be seen. At least one variant, which replaces the Devastator with an additional long-range missile pack on the 'Mech's left shoulder, already exists and seems to be performing well; Major Adam Steiner of the provisional unit dubbed the "1st Somerset Strikers" has piloted it effectively on the battlefield. It is unclear whether the removal of the autocannon was accompanied in this model by a repositioning of the power plant.

Mass: 65 tons
Chassis: Dorwinion Standard
Power Plant: General Motors 260 Extralight
Cruising Speed: 43.2 kph
Maximum Speed: 64.8 kph
Jump Jets: HildCo Model 12
   Jump Capacity: 120 meters
Armor: Kallon Unity Weave Ferro-Fibrous
   with CASE
Armament:
   2 Coventry Star Fire LRM Missile
Systems
   1 Sutel Precision Line Large Pulse Laser
   3 Intek Medium Lasers
Manufacturer: Johnston Industries
   Primary Factory: New Syrtis
Communications System: Johnston Wide
   Band
Targeting and Tracking System: Rander
   Pinpoint-HY

INNER SPHERE BATTLEMECHS
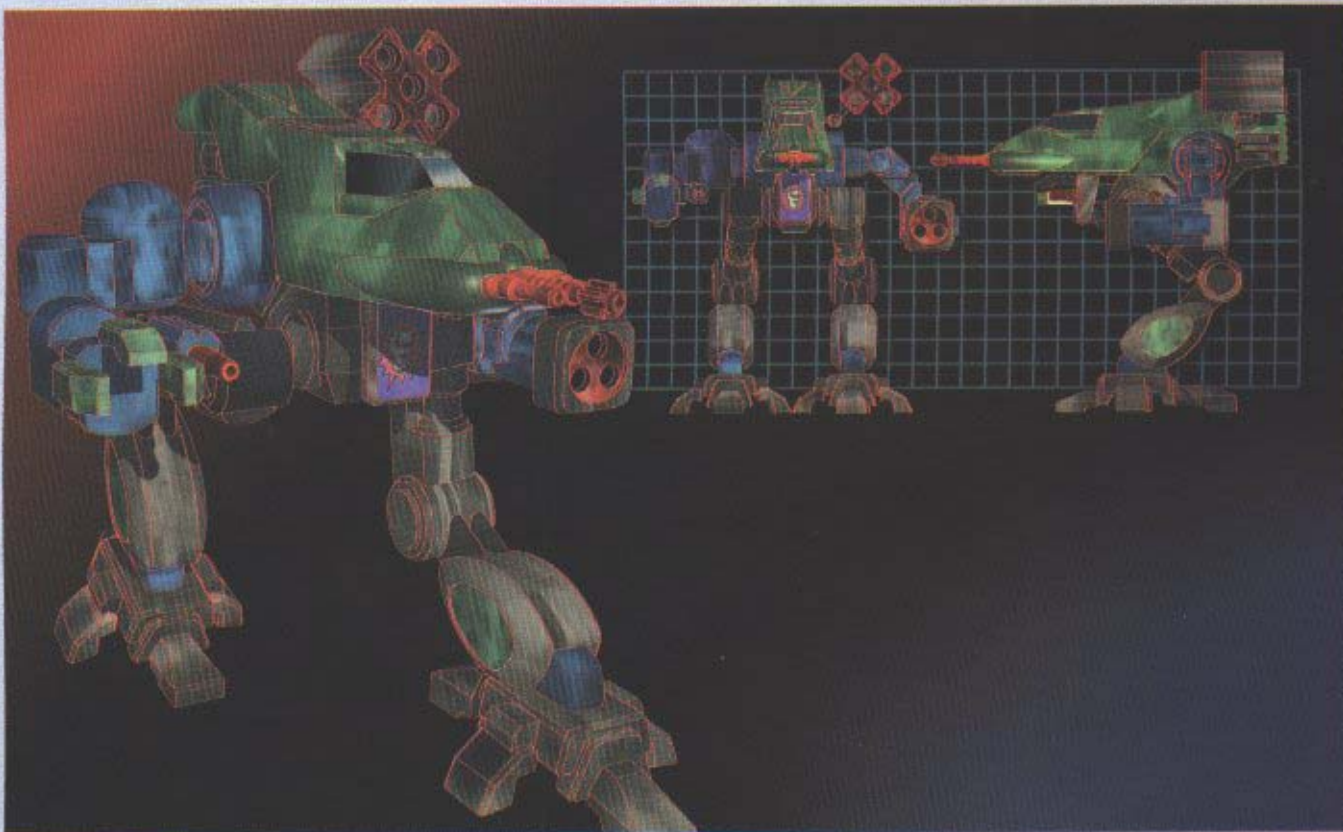
BSW-X1 BUSHWACKER

This 'Mech prototype has recently been deployed for operational testing with the provisional 1st Somerset Strikers unit. Up until its deployment, the best available intellegence indicated that this design had been all but scrapped. Originally envisioned as a compact machine that would provide a minimum forward profile to enemy]Mechs, the *Bushwacker* suffered from inadequate electromagnetic shielding, causing unacceptable interference with its fire-control and communications systems during peak combat operations. These problems seem to have been solved in the *Bushwacker*'s present incarnation, but our own engineering analysts cannot tell us how. Their best estimates to date conclude that the 'Mech's design cannot possibly provide adequate shielding for its electronics, and yet the *Bushwacker*'s success in the Strikers' combat operations indicates otherwise. This situation clearly requires further study.

Apart from its electronic eccentricities, the *Bushwacker* constitutes a formidable fighting unit in a remarkably small package. Field reports indicate the prototype has a varied arsenal, providing effective firepower at several ranges, with something of an overemphasis on long-range armament. The prototype's seeming success may owe more to the pilot than to the BattleMech, but only a detailed evaluation of the 'Mech and consequent computer modeling will provide any definitive conclusions about this extremely unorthodox design.

Mass: 55 tons
Chassis: Earthwerk GRF
Power Plant: Hermes 275 XL
Cruising Speed: 57.1 kph
Maximum Speed: 81.5 kph
Jump Jets: None
    Jump Capacity: NA
Armor: Kallon Unity Weave Ferro-Fibrous with CASE
Armament:
    2 Federated 5-Shot LRM Missile Systems
    1 BlazeFire Seetshot Extended-Range Large Laser
    1 Mydron Model B Autocannon

INNER SPHERE BATTLEMECHS

CN9-D CENTURION

The *Centurion* is another example of a venerable design regaining many of its original features with the advent of rediscovered Star League technology. Problems once thought endemic to the 'Mech's unusual autocannon-loading system have been solved, and various miniaturization and lightening techniques have sufficiently reduced the 'Mech's volume and mass to accommodate much more accurate targeting electronics for the long-range missile launcher. The incorporation of new Cellular Ammunition Storage Equipment (CASE) has greatly reduced the risk of an ammunition explosion if the magazine is hit, making storage of the LRMs much safer.

In operational terms, the *Centurion* continues to perform its traditional mission of flanking attacks and defending slower-moving units in the field with renewed vigor and effectivness. The principal factor limiting the new version's deployment seems to be a lack of refitting facilities at the New Avalon and Jalastar manufacturing plants. Speculative intelligence suggests that FedCom manufacturers will soon open new refitting facilities elsewhere to keep up with demand. Meanwhile, intelligence reports indicate ongoing testing of many new variants of this proven design, evidently in order to expand this reliable machine's combat role.

Mass: 50 tons
Chassis: Corean Model KL77 Endo Steel
Power Plant: General Motors 300 Extralight
Cruising Speed: 64.8 kph
Maximum Speed: 90.7 kph
Jump Jets: None
    Jump Capacity: None
Armor: StarGuard III with CASE
Armament:
    1 Mydron Excel LB 10-X Autocannon
    1 Luxor 3R LRM-10
    2 Photech 806c Medium Lasers
Manufacturer: Corean Enterprises,
    Jalastar Aerospace
    Primary Factory: New Avalon (Corean),
      Panpour (Jalastar)
Communications System: Corean Transbanc-J9
Targeting and Tracking System: Corean
    B-Tech with Artemis IV System

INNER SPHERE BATTLEMECHS
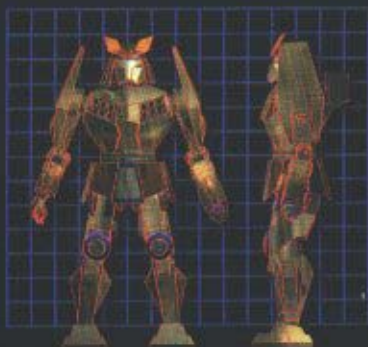
HTM-27T HATAMOTO-CHI

The *Hatamoto-Chi* was one of the first BattleMechs to benefit from rediscovered Star League technology. This major conversion of the CGR-1A1 has a skeletal frame made of endo steel, an alloy stronger and lighter than conventional steel. The tensile strength and lightness of the endo steel frame allows this BattleMech to carry weapons and armor of greater weight and volume. Its armor has been beefed up considerably, so that the *Hatamoto-Chi* can take even more punishment than its highly regarded predecessor. The *Hatamoto-Chi* also features the CASE modular munitions storage system, greatly reducing the risk of ammunition detonation when the magazine is penetrated. (The CASE system is quickly becoming standard equipment on Inner Sphere BattleMechs.) The 'Mech's long- and short-range missile launchers, combined with its additional weapons, give it excellent fire-power at various ranges.

This BattleMech has been observed in combat more often than almost any other 'Mech whose design utilizes recovered technology. It has performed suprisingly well, though debate continues among the tactical-analysis experts in our Blessed Order as to the specific benefits and deficits conferred on the *Hatamoto-Chi* by Star League-era technology. Almost all experts concede, however, that the *Hatamoto-Chi* is an impressive addition to the modern BattleMech arsenal.

Mass: 80 tons
Chassis: Earthwerks VOL Endo Steel
Power Plant: Pitban 320
Cruising Speed: 43 kph
Maximum Speed: 65 kph
Jump Jets: None
   Jump Capacity: None
Armor: Mitchell Argon with CASE
Armament:
   2 Tiegart Particle Cannon
   2 Bical-6 SRM Launchers
Manufacturer: Maltex Corporation
   Primary Factory: Errai
Communications System: Colmax 90
Targeting and Tracking System: Garret D2j

INNER SPHERE BATTLEMECHS
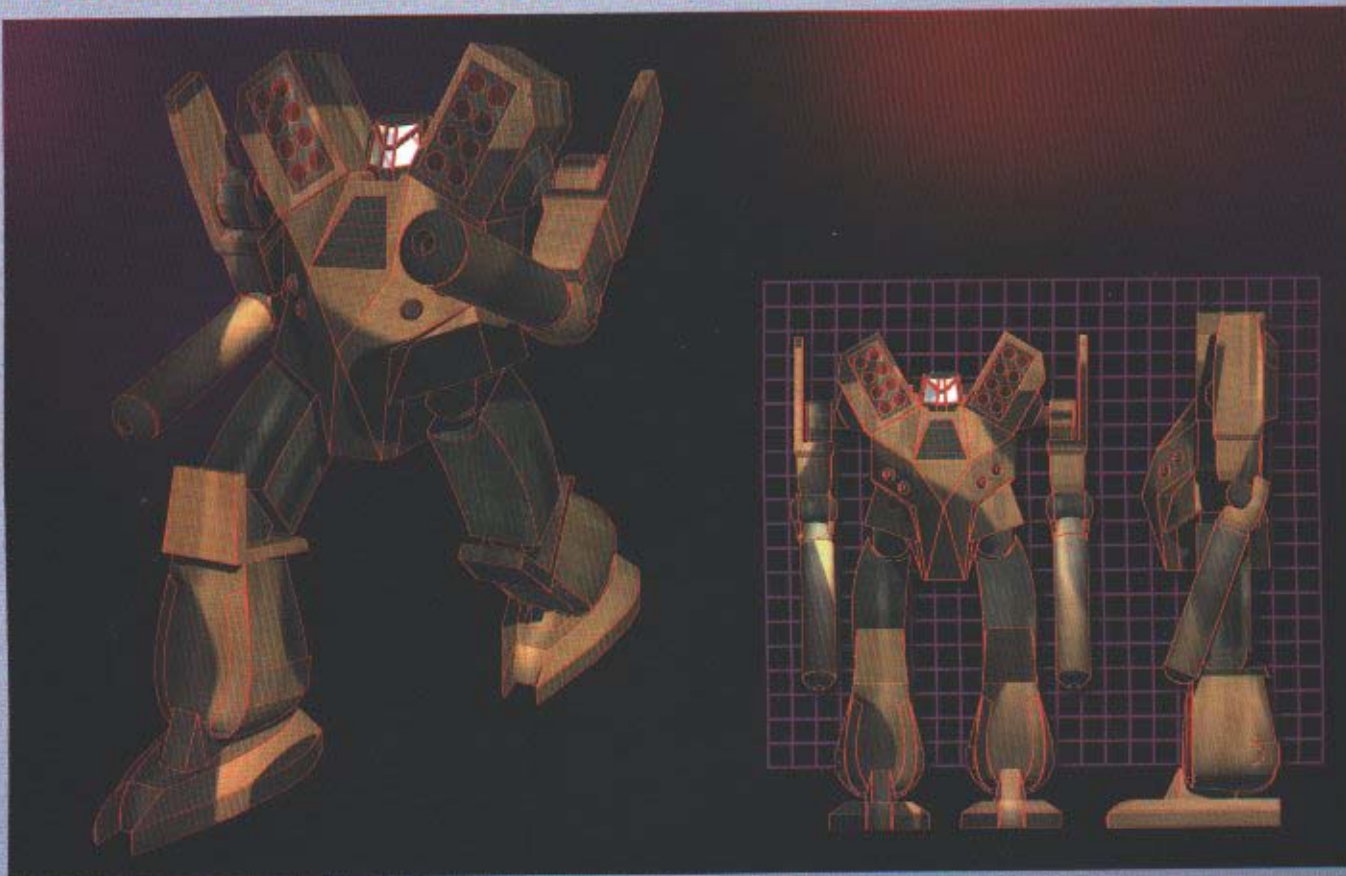
MAL-1R MAULER

The development and deployment of the *Mauler* has been rapid and secret. Adept Jimmus's report on the *Mauler* has proven less than accurate, as this report clearly shows. Initially thought to be in the prototype stage, significant numbers of *Maulers* have in fact been deployed with select DCMS units along the Federated Commonwealth border since 3038. No adequate explanation for ComStar's error in assessing this 'Mech's status has yet been found, though an internal investigation is ongoing. During the War of 3039, Federated troops captured many *Maulers*, and the new assault 'Mech became a fast favorite with the AFFC command. Shortages of available parts and technicians experienced at working with *Maulers*, however, forced the AFFC to deploy their *Maulers* away from the front lines of that war. Providentailly, the *Maulers* ended up along what became the front lines of the Clan invasion of Steiner space. To date, the machine has performed extremely well, its combination of lightweight frame and devastating firepower providing an effective counter to the destrcutive capacity of Clan 'Mechs. Collection of more detailed data on this BattleMech continues to be one of ComStar's highest priorities.

Mass: 90 tons
Chassis: Alshain Class 101
Power Plant: Hermes 270 XL
Cruising Speed: 32.4 kph
Maximum Speed: 54 kph
Jump Jets: None
    Jump Capacity: None
Armor: New Samarkand Royal Ferro-Fibrous with CASE
Armament:
    2 Victory Nickel Alloy Extended-Range Large Lasers
    2 Shigunga Long Range Missile 15-Racks
    4 Imperator Smoothie-2 Autocannon
Manufacturer: Luthien Armor Works
    Primary Factory: Luthien
Communications System: Sipher Security Plus
Targeting and Tracking System: Matabushi Sentinel

INNER SPHERE BATTLEMECHS

WLF-2 WOLFHOUND

*Wolfhound*s have proven their combat effectiveness, and the Federated Commonwealth has begun deploying them in great numbers. Though it is unusual for a light 'Mech to rely so heavily on laser weapons, the *Wolfhound*'s design has racked up amazing successes in field operations thus far. Recently, the 'Mech's robust production schedule has been slowed to allow for necessary retooling of production facilities on Tharkad so that newer *Wolfhounds* can incorporate elements of recovered Star League technology. The latest variants of the *Wolfhound* have replaced the 'Mech's Setana Heavy Laser with a Cyclops XII Extended-Range Laser system and installed double heat sinks. Though extra heat-shedding capacity is not normally required on such a small BattleMech, the *Wolfhound*'s exclusive use of lasers makes the double heat sink a prudent investment and adds utility to an already outstanding fighting unit.

Mass: 35 tons
Chassis: Arc-Royal KH/3
Power Plant: GM 210
Cruising Speed: 64 kph
Maximum Speed: 95 kph
Jump Jets: None
    Jump Capacity: None
Armor: Duraflex Medium
Armament:
    1 Cyclops XII Extended-Range Large Laser
    4 Defiance B3M Medium Lasers
Manufacturer: TharHes Industries
    Primary Factory: Tharkad
Communications System: O/P COM-22/H47
Targeting and Tracking System: Digital Scanlok 347
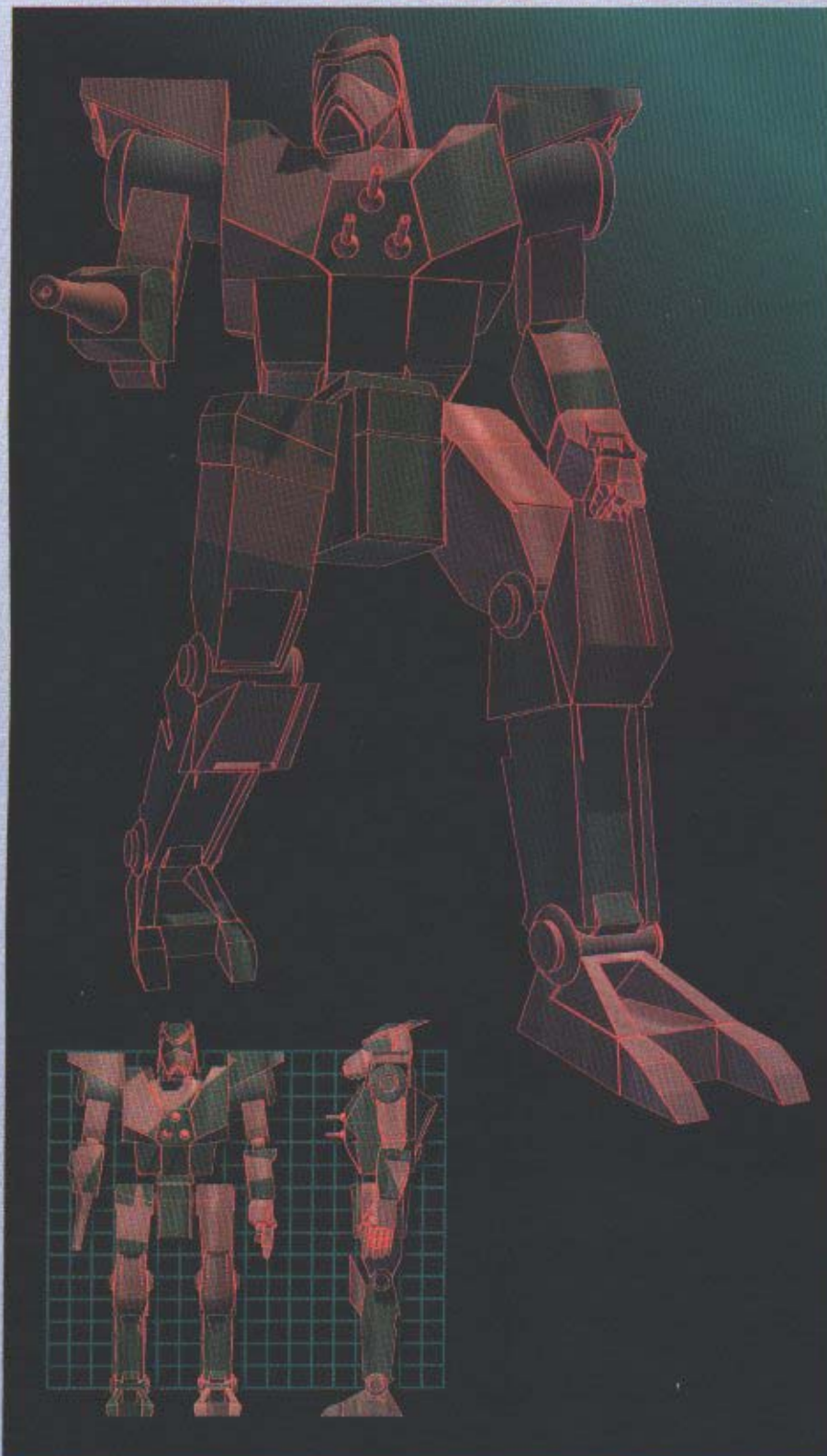
INNER SPHERE BATTLE ARMOR
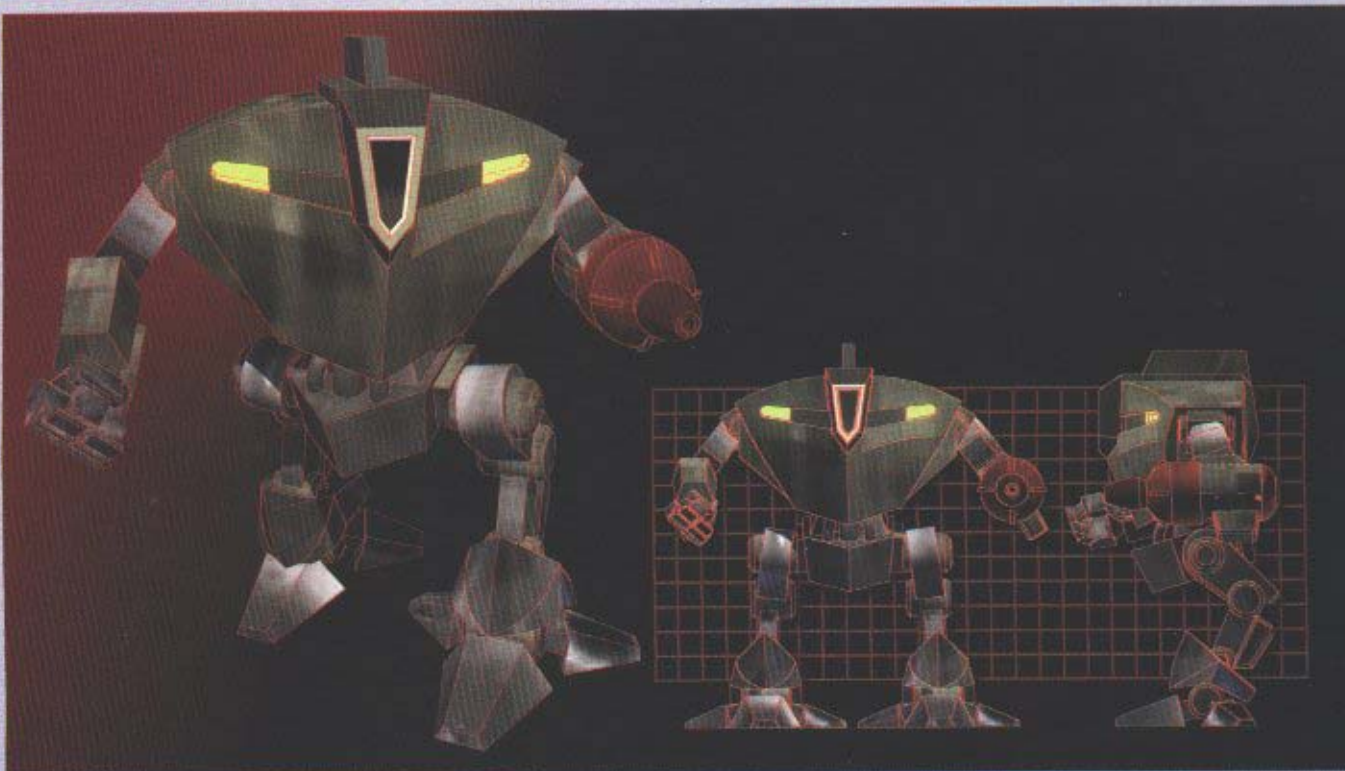
INFILTRATOR BATTLE ARMOR

This remarkable suit of battle armor is apparently based on Clan technology acquired during operations by the 1st Somerset Strikers. Only one example of the Infiltrator currently exists, though duplicates of many of its systems are most likely somewhere in the research labs of the New Avalon Institute of Science. ComStar is currently engaged in an aggressive program to obtain better intelligence on this potentially revolutionary battlesuit.

Much of the technology required to construct this light reconaissance unit has existed for some time, though only recently have tactical planners begun to appreciate all the possibilities of fielding such complicated and well-integrated systems in such a small package. The Infiltrator is lightly armed with a single grenade launcher. The relatively weak armor is meant to resist only small arms fire, and the grenades can provide only the most generalized defensive fire. The unit's most effective defense is to avoid the sensors of hostile forces, a task it executes remarkably well. Designed for fast tactical scout missions in heavily monitored enemy enviroments, the Infiltrator relies almost exclusively on radar and infrared suppressive systems to achieve its goal of blending in with overall ground clutter by using variations on effective conventional techniques. It is unclear how the unit defeats acoustic sensors, which have frequently provided an effective counter to similar mechanized stealth units. The Infiltrator mounts an impressive array of sensing and recording equipment, ranging from passive infrared heat sensors to sensitive magnetic-anomaly detectors. The ability to position such sophisticated intelligence-gathering equipment deep within enemy-occupied territory may well justify what must be the staggering cost of producing the Infiltrator.

Mass: 1 ton
Chassis: Earthwerk INF
Power Plant: Omni mini-5
Cruising Speed: 11.47 kph
Maximum Speed: 22.94 kph
Jump Jets: None
    Jump Capacity: NA
Armor: Star Slab
Armament:
    1 Johnston Mk XII Autogrenade launcher
Manufacturer: Acernar BattleMechs
    Primary Factory: New Avalon
Communications System: Achernar Air Whistler
Targeting and Tracking System: Federated Hunter

INNER SPHERE BATTLE ARMOR
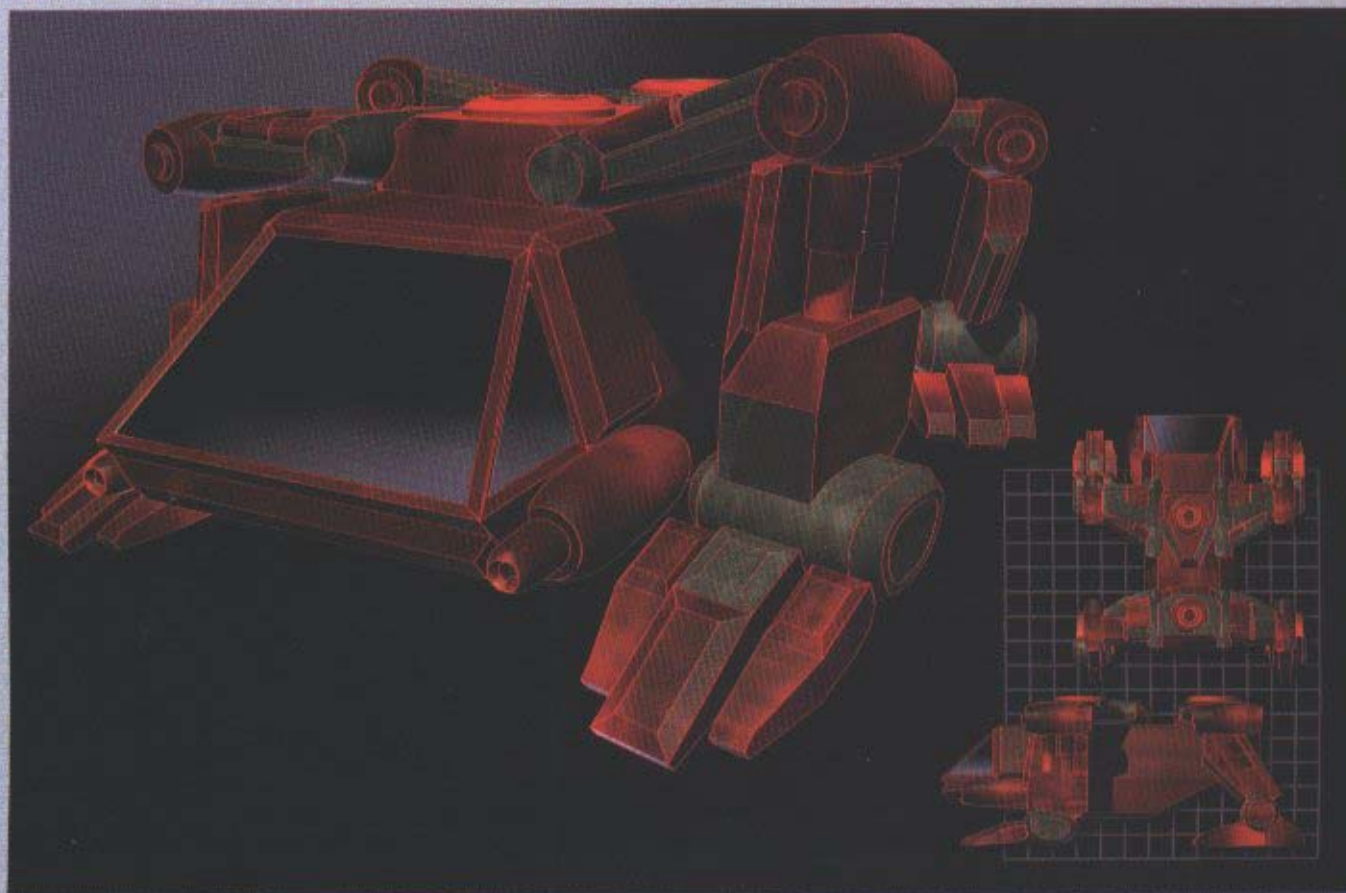
SLOTH BATTLE ARMOR

Another development based on captured Clan technology, the Sloth seems to have originated from the battlesuits acquired during operations by the 1st Somerset Strikers. As with the Infiltrator, only one Sloth battlesuit is currently known to exist, though duplicates of many of its systems can doubtless be found in NAIS research labs. ComStar is currently attempting to obtain better intelligence on this potentially revolutionary battlesuit.

Recently deployed to evaluate its combat effectiveness aginst comparable Clan units, the Sloth prototype has thus far demonstrated its usefulness as a close-range fighting vehicle. Though incapable in its current form of doing any severe damage to a BattleMech, the Sloth is quite effective against vehicles and Clan battle armor. The Sloth's quadruped design provides an extremely stable firing platform. FedCom engineers seem to have gone the Clan model one better, installing a unique mine-launching system in the suit's aft-dorsal area.

The Sloth is a technological coup of staggering proportions. ROM is allocating considerable resources to continue detailed scrutiny of the prototype's performance.

Mass: 1.5 tons
Chassis: Earthwerks QUAD
Power Plant: Omni Mini 5
Cruising Speed: 22.57 kph
Maximum Speed: 34.2 kph
Jump Jets: None
   Jump Capacity: None
Armor: Starshield A
Armament:
   2 Defiance A5L
   Small Lasers
   1 Defiance MagMine
Manufacturer: Defiance Industries
   Primary Factory: Hesperus II
Communications System: Neil 6000-b
Targeting and Tracking System: Angst Accuracy

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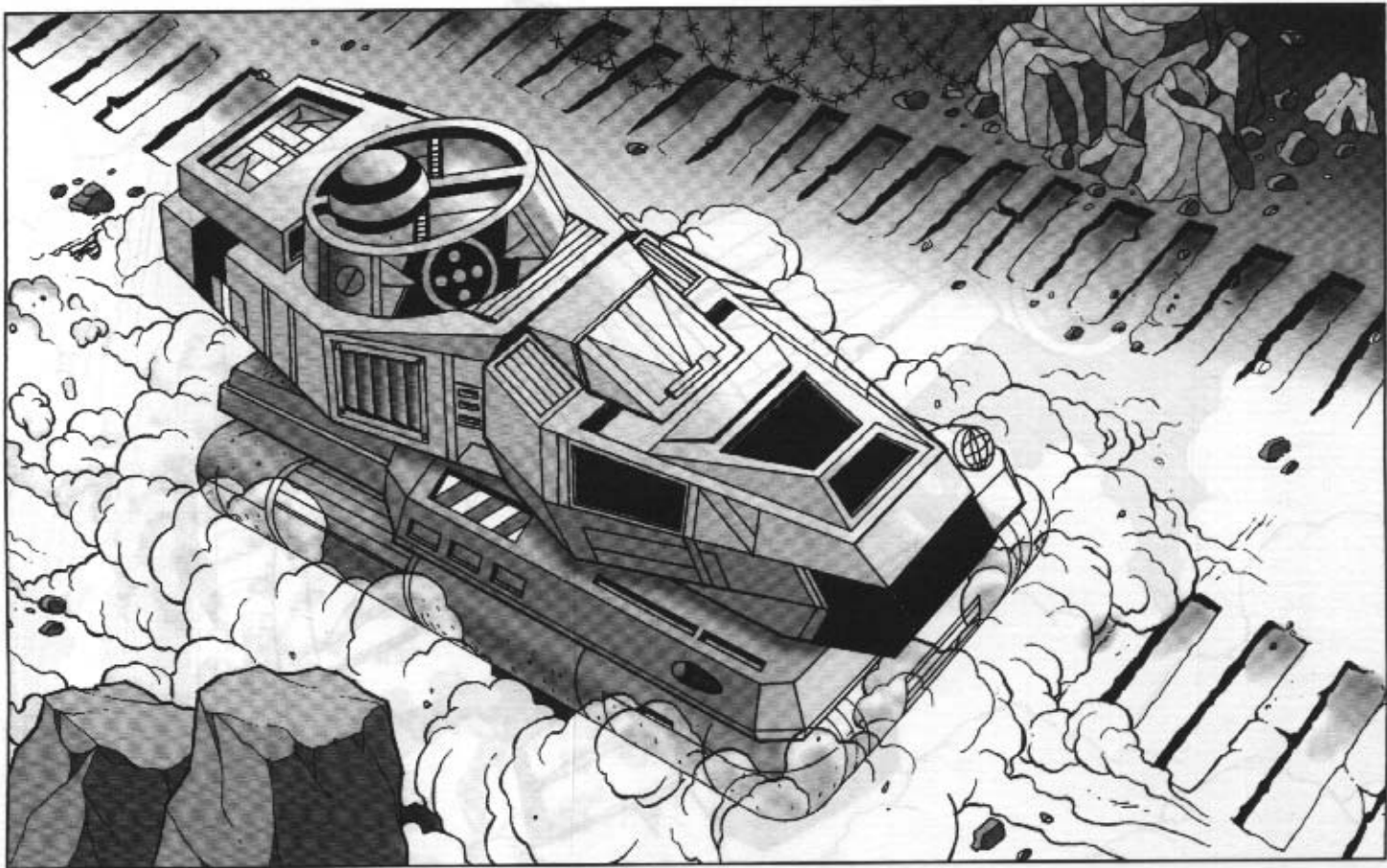
HOVER APC

A ubiquitous fixture of the 31st-century military, the Hover APC is an integral component of any mechanized infantry unit. Made by several manufacturers on various worlds, all models of the Hover APC have certain basic design features in common. Large turbofan engines inflate the hover skirt, which provides the pillow of air upon which the vehicle they can travel across a wide range of terrain. Armored crew and troop compartments are usually located above the engine, and can be isolated from one another to minimize damage in case hostile fire penetrates one of the compartments. A loading ramp at the rear of the troop compartment facilitates quick deployment of the infantry when the vehicle arrives at the battlefield. Most Hover APCs are equipped with light infantry support armaments and electronic countermeasures equipment. The vehicle's most effective counter to enemy fire, however, is its speed and maneuverability. Capable of cruising speeds in excess of 90 kilometers per hour, these craft can easily outrun pursuing 'Mechs and are agile enough to dodge most incoming fire. The vehicle's principal defect is the heat signature of its engines, which is easily spotted by infrared homing devices.

Mass: 10 tons
Movement Type: Hover
Power Plant: I.C.E. Type 80
Cruising Speed: 108 kph
Flank Speed: 162 kph
Armor: SimplePlate Manufacturers
Armament:
Various Machine Guns
Manufacturer: Various
Communications System: LongCom
Targeting and Tracking System: OptiTrack Techniques

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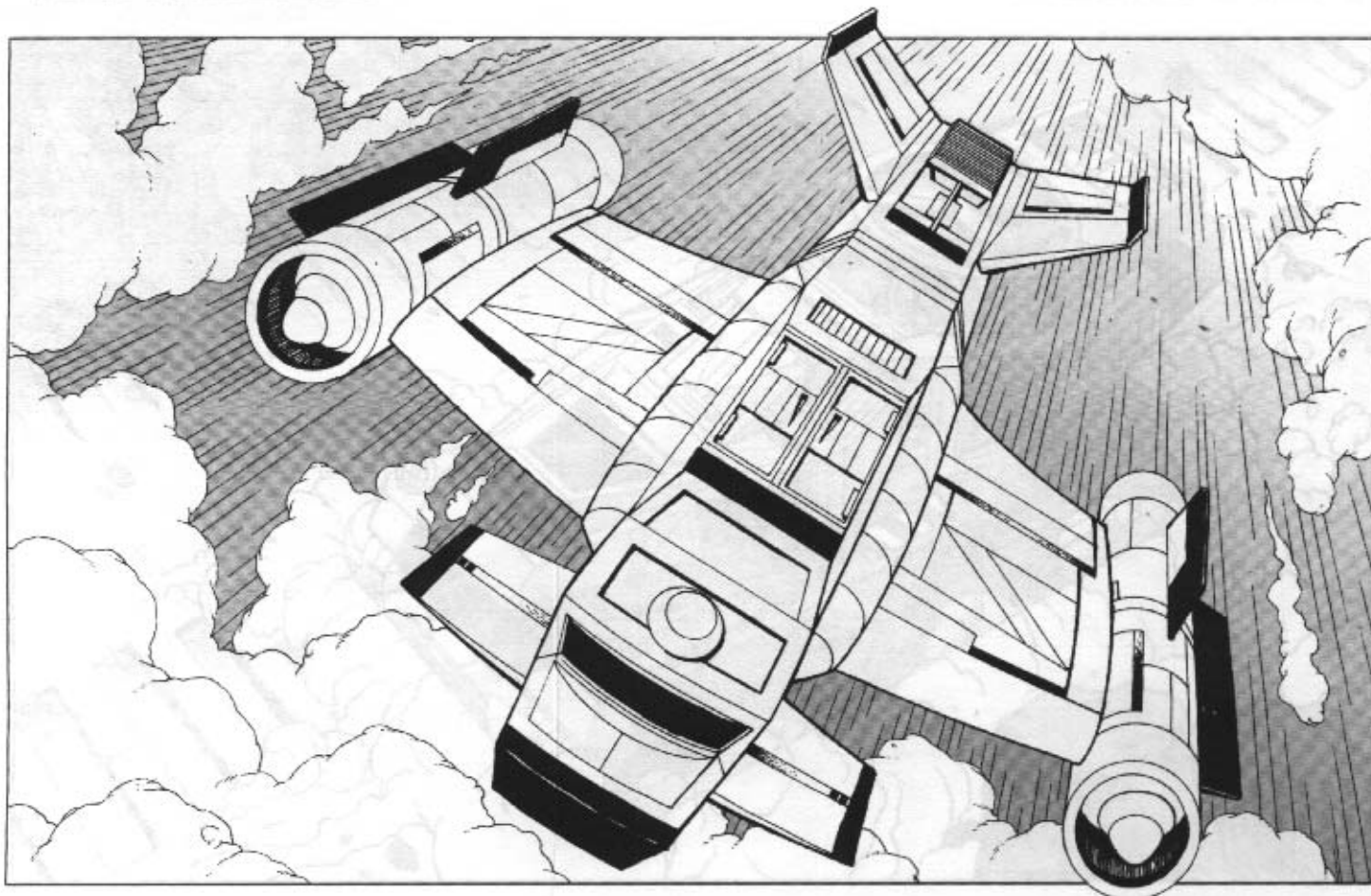
KARNOV UR TRANSPORT

The Karnov was originally designed as a military cargo air-craft for use on habitable worlds with dense, breathable atmospheres. It is an unfortunate reality that military operations rarely occur under such benign conditions. The conditions referred to as "habitable" vary wildly within the Inner Sphere, and so the term tends to be loosely applied. In recognition of this fact, designers have recently adapted the Karnov to diverse environments. In the particular variant analyzed in this report, the usual twin-rotor engine has been replaced with vectorable high-bypass turbofans. Simpler pieces of equipment, these fans are easier to shield from atmosphere-borne contaminants such as ash, corrosive gas, and sand. The fuselage has also been modified for hostile atmospheric conditions with the addition of screened air inlets and a reinforced, abrasion-resistant skin. The new Karnov's avionics are optimized for low visibility, using extensive radar-augmented visual flight systems. The augmented autopilot can maintain the craft's heading even in powerful crosswinds. This variant of the Karnov cannot carry the same load as the rotor version but can fly in conditions that would thwart most other transports of similar mass. The revamped

Karnov's durability and comparatively modest operating costs make it a true asset for tactical operations in less-than-ideal enviromental conditions.

Mass: 30 tons
Movement Type: VTOL
Power Plant: DAV 190 I.C.E. gas turbine
Cruising Speed: 119 kph
Flank Speed: 184 kph
Armor: Star Slab 1.5
Armament:
None
Manufacturer: NETC
Communications System: Johnston Q-Rotor
Targeting and Tracking System: None

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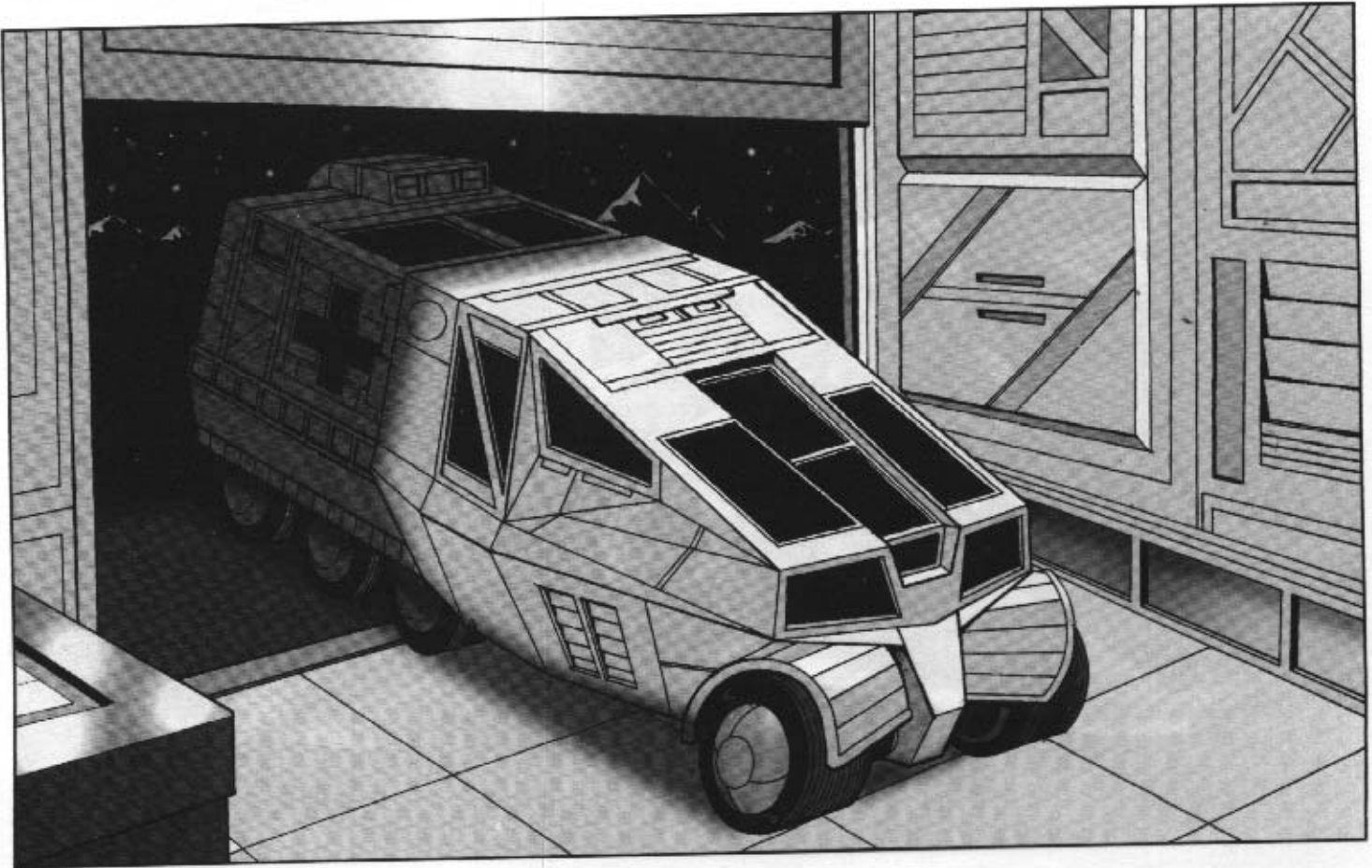
PACKRAT WHEELED TRANSPORT

Designed as a mobile center for commando operations, the Packrat is built to support its own long-term independent operations far behind enemy lines. To this end, a modular spare-parts storage system is built into the vehicle's floor and under-carriage. The Packrat rides on six independently suspended solid tires, enabling it to reach speeds greater than 120 kilometers per hour on flat terrain. Its standard cruising speed is slightly less than 80 kilometers per hour. Most Packrats are armed with a flamer and a single SRM-6 pack, sufficient for self-defense. The Packrat is well-armored for its size, with the heaviest protection around the cabin and main drive-train. Standard operations for the Packrat often involve demolition of hardened enemy facilities, and so the standard design takes into account the need to safely carry a variety of high-yield explosives. The Packrat's powerful communications system can uplink to orbiting vehicles and send coded pulse tranmissions across vast distances. The vehicle's interior can accomodate up to ten fully equipped troopers, though the average crew is smaller. Overall, the Packrat is a useful special-purpose vehicle, well constructed for its vital mission of gathering battlefield intelligence.

Mass: 20 tons
Movement Type: Wheeled
Power Plant: Doorman 140 Fusion Reactor
Cruising Speed: 75.6 kph
Flank Speed: 118.8 kph
Armor: 1/Star Slab
Armament:
    1 Harvester 20K Six Rack Short-Range Missile Rack
    1 HS Flamer System
Manufacturer: Robertson Technologies
Communications System: O/P COMTES
Targeting and Tracking System: O/P 2000JSA

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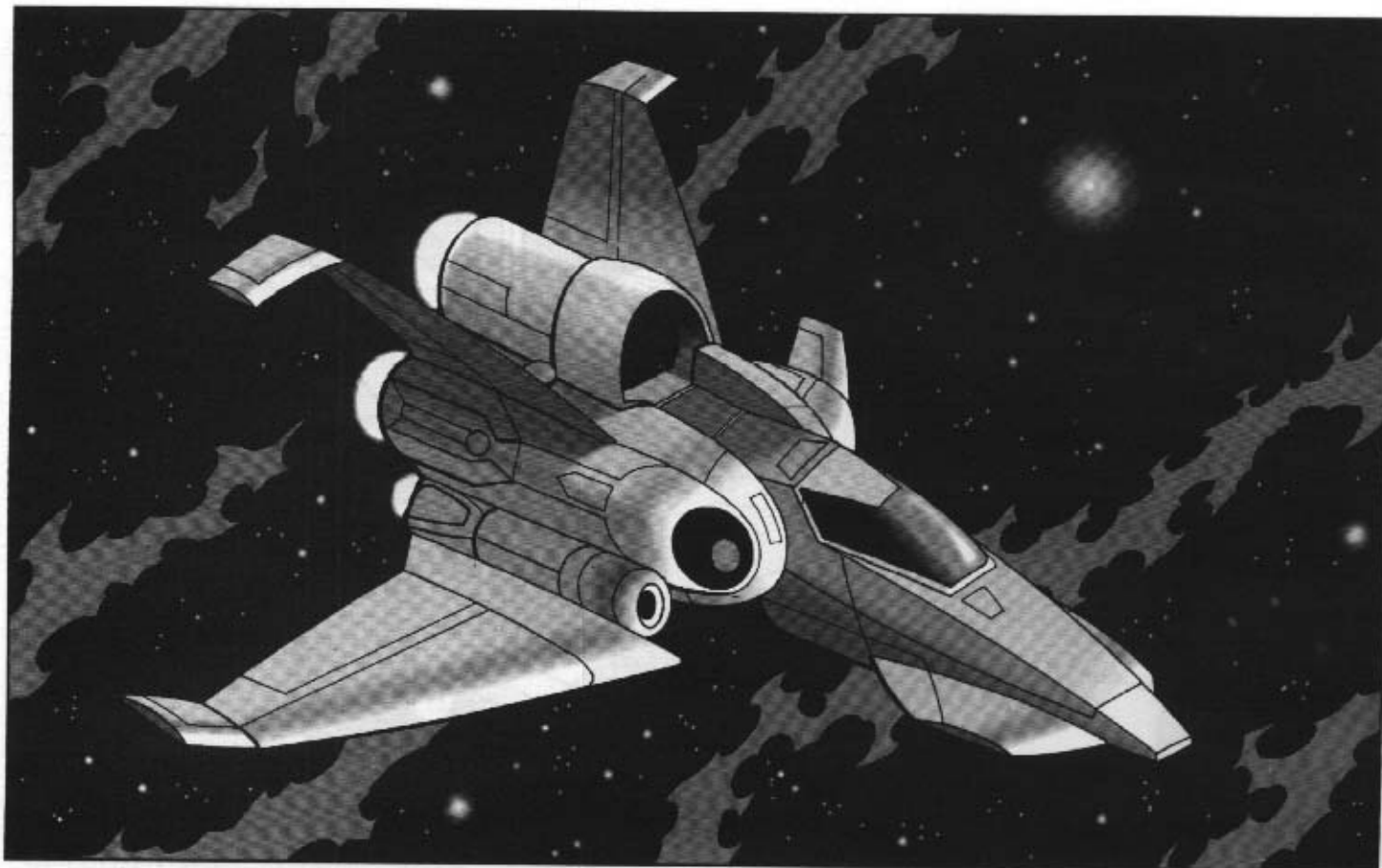
BANSHEE AEROSPACE FIGHTER

The *Banshee* is a prototype aerospace fighter currently being tested by the Federated Commonwealth. It incorporates a number of advanced features that the AFFC hopes to install in many of its other fighters to enhance their operational capabilities. Should the overall design prove successful, the AFFC will likely retrofit several of the *Banshee's* improvements into other existing fighter designs.

Among the *Banshee's* design improvements is the cockpit module, which incorporates a computer-directed seat system designed to respond to G-stress on the pilot. Often in combat maneuvering, the fighter can withstand much more stress loading than the pilot can. The cockpit seat is designed to squeeze out the last often-critical tenths of a G that frequently make the difference between victory and defeat. The cockpit can also pivot 90 degrees, allowing the vehicle to land just about anywhere and freeing it from dependence on support equipment.

The *Banshee* also incorporates an air-breathing jet engine for atmospheric operations. Though heavy, the jet greatly improves the craft's combat performance. Using the latest recovered Star League-era technology, the *Banshee's* design-

ers provided a smoother interface between the pilot and reliable redundant systems.

It is imperative that our Blessed Order acquire a *Banshee* for closer examination.

Mass: 50 tons
Frame: Wangker III
Engine:
  Aerospace: WAS 150
  Conventional: Wangker 250 Turbine
Armament:
  2 Maxell Medium Lasers
Manufacturer: Wangker Aerospace
Communications System: Ranker 200
Targeting and Tracking System: Ranker TA 950

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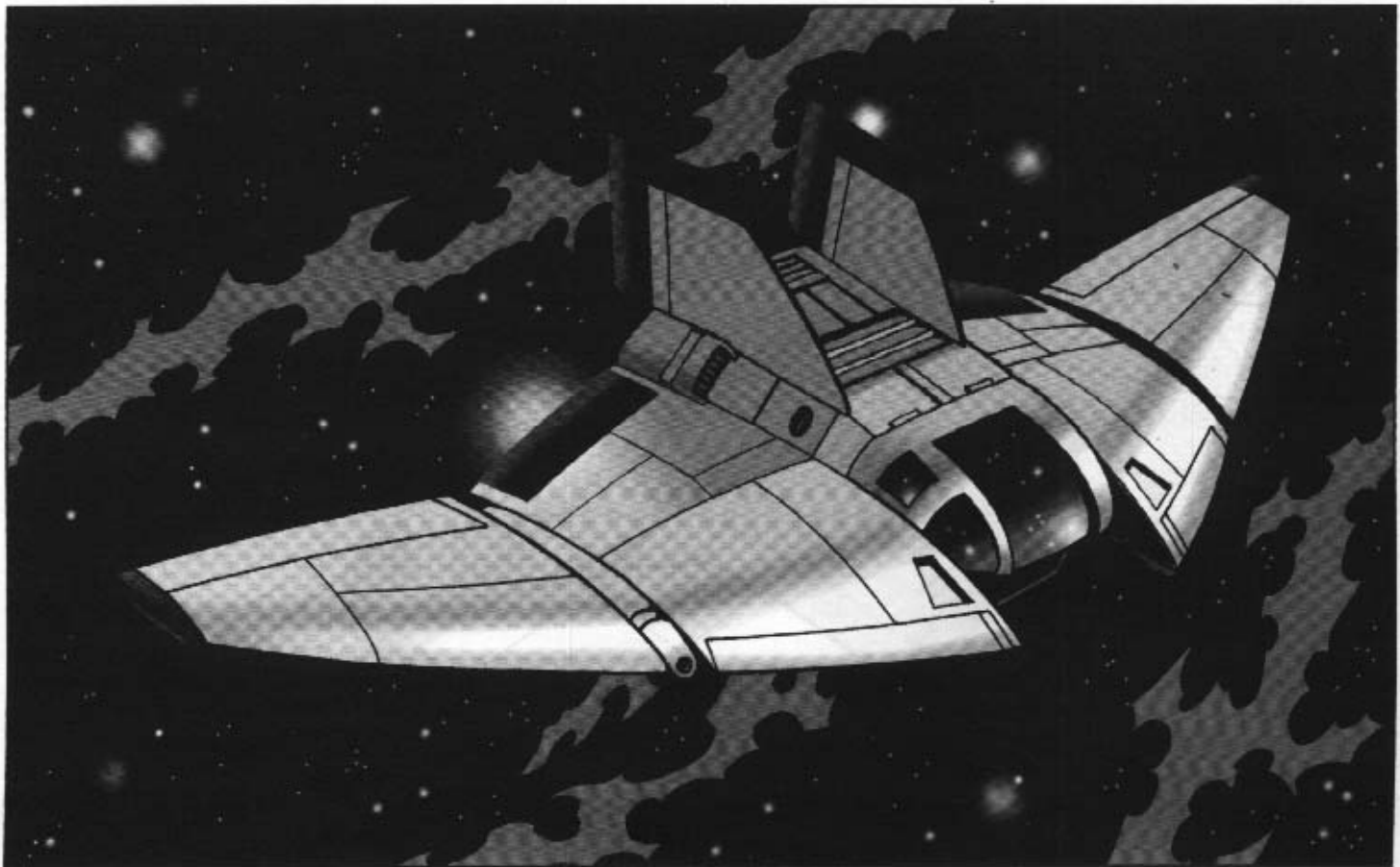
SL·17 SHILONE AEROSPACE FIGHTER

Unusually large for its weight class, this medium aerospace fighter is equipped with a diverse collection of weapons, making it one of the better-armed medium-weight units. The *Shilone* mounts forward-firing long-range missiles and a large laser in its nose, a set of forward-firing medium lasers on wing hardpoints, and a short-range aft-firing missile battery from a tail mount. This combination makes the *Shilone* a superior vehicle for operations against other aerospace fighters. This fighter also has proven effective against lighter 'Mech and vehicle formations, delivering solid firepower swiftly to the battle site.

The *Shilone* is used principally by the Draconis Combine military, though in recent years other House armies and even a few mercenary units have utilized it. This increasingly popular craft has spawned several variants, many of which replace the forward-firing missiles with a large autocannon. This modification, while increasing effective engagement range, comes at the expense of reducing the fighter's overall firepower. It serves best in engagements with lighter aerospace fighters and ground vehicles that are less of a match for the *Shilone*'s weaponry.

The *Shilone* is an efficient multipurpose aerospace fighter, capable of effectively engaging both ground and air units.

Tonnage: 65 tons
Frame: Wakazashi III
Engine: Shinobi 260
Armament:

    1 Shigunga Long Range Missile 20-Rack
    1 Diverse Optics Type 10 Large Laser
    2 Diverse Optics Type 20 Medium Laser
    1 NCK "Thornbush" Short Range Missile 4-Rack

Manufacturer: Wakazashi Enterprises
Communications System: Duoteck 100
Targeting and Tracking System: RCA Instatrac Mark XI

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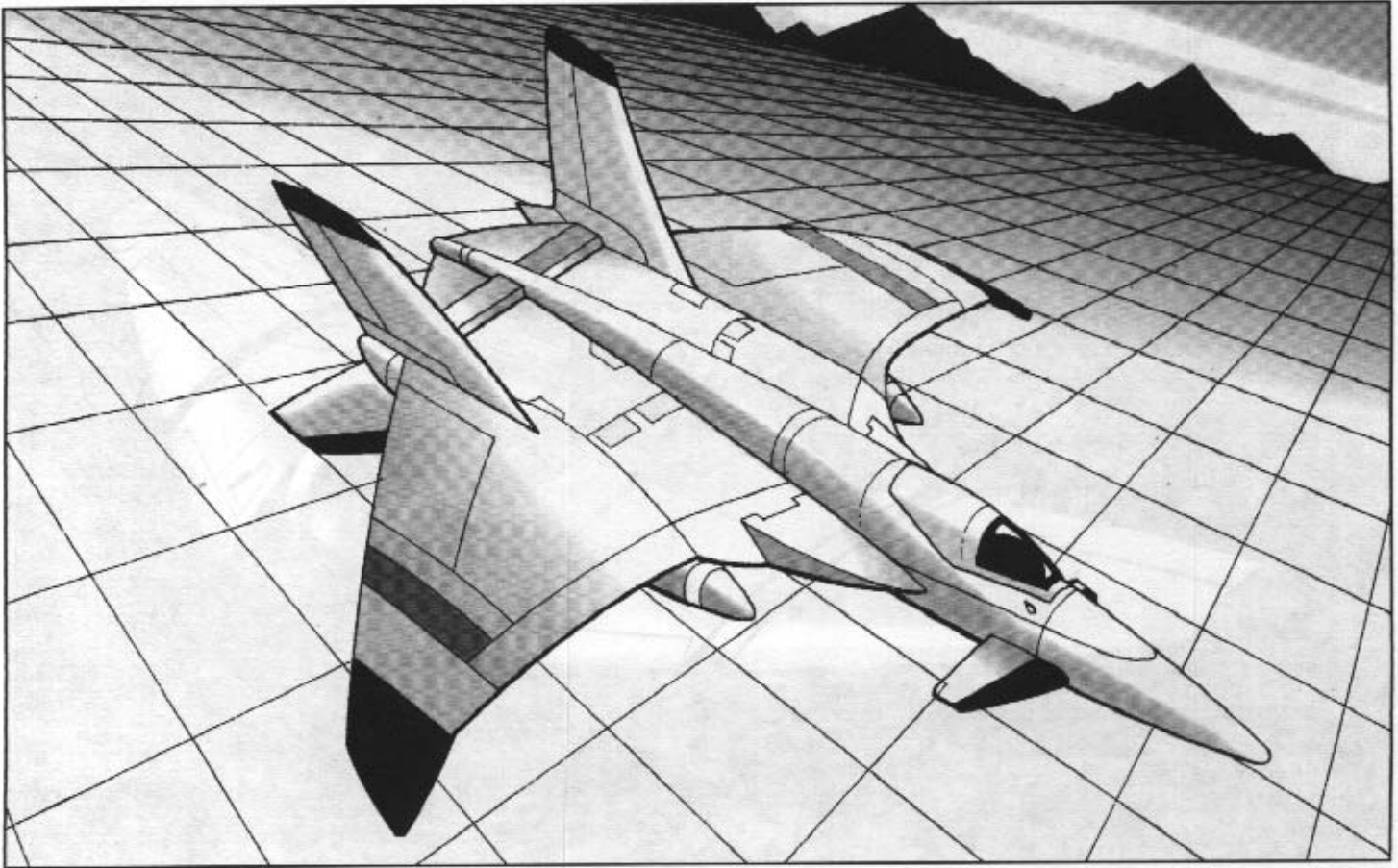
BATU AEROSPACE FIGHTER

This aerospace fighter has been observed most frequently in the forces of Clan Steel Viper, though a few have shown up in battles fought by several Clans, including the Jade Falcons and the Nova Cats. The *Batu* fighter seems to act as a heavily armed interceptor, though the sheer power of its weapons also allows it to participate in ground assaults. *Batu* fighters have conducted many such operations, including the initial assault on the planet Somerset. The *Batu's* principal weakness seems to be limited combat endurance. On many occasions, the fighter has broken off from a dogfight to return to its base of operations, providing an excellent oppurtunity for an opposing fighter to achieve the upper hand as the *Batu* struggles to conserve its fuel. This flaw has hindered the *Batu's* operations in all but the most one-sided fights. Despite the craft's impressive weapons, its subpar fuel capacity means that the victory in a dogfight frequently goes to the Inner Sphere pilot.

Mass: 40 tons
Frame: Unknown
Engine: 280 XL
Armament:
18 tons pod space available
Manufacturer: Unknown
Communications System: Unknown
Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

SPACECRAFT

LEOPARD CLASS DROPSHIP

One of the oldest DropShip classes still in operation, the *Leopard* is a tried and true design. Originally conceived as a BattleMech transport, it has proven exceptionally versatile. The modern-day *Leopard* easily fulfills its original purpose of landing a lance of BattleMechs in intense combat conditions. In this capacity, it functions primarily in planetary assaults, swiftly landing }Mechs at critical weak spots and providing aerial covering fire. Additional missions carried out by the modern-day *Leopard* include providing armed escort for transports in and out of contested space. For the latter purpose, the DropShip is equipped with large and medium lasers, a potent long-range missile system, and two PPCs.

The *Leopard* can also be modified for a variety of special purposes. Throughout its long history, this DropShip has served as everything from a hospital ship to a tanker. Perhaps the most unusual adaptation of the *Leopard* has turned up in recent years: its conversion to a peacetime freighter, such as the Clan Jade Falcon merchant ship *Prosperity*. The 1st Somerset Strikers traveled incognito aboard the *Prosperity* and had the opportunity to make certain observations about the layout of its cargo bays. All of the *Prosperity*'s 'Mech and fighter bays had been removed, yielding 900 tons of usable cargo space. The Clan invasion, however, has made similar conversions of Inner Sphere *Leopard*s unlikely in the forseeable future.

Tonnage: 1700 tons
Crew: 9 crew
      6 MechWarriors/Aerospace Pilots
'Mech Complement: 4
Fighter Complement: 2
Armament:
    2 PPCs
    3 LRM-20 Racks
    7 Medium Lasers
    5 Large Lasers
    (All of miscellaneous manufacture)
Manufacturer: Various
Drive System: Star League V84
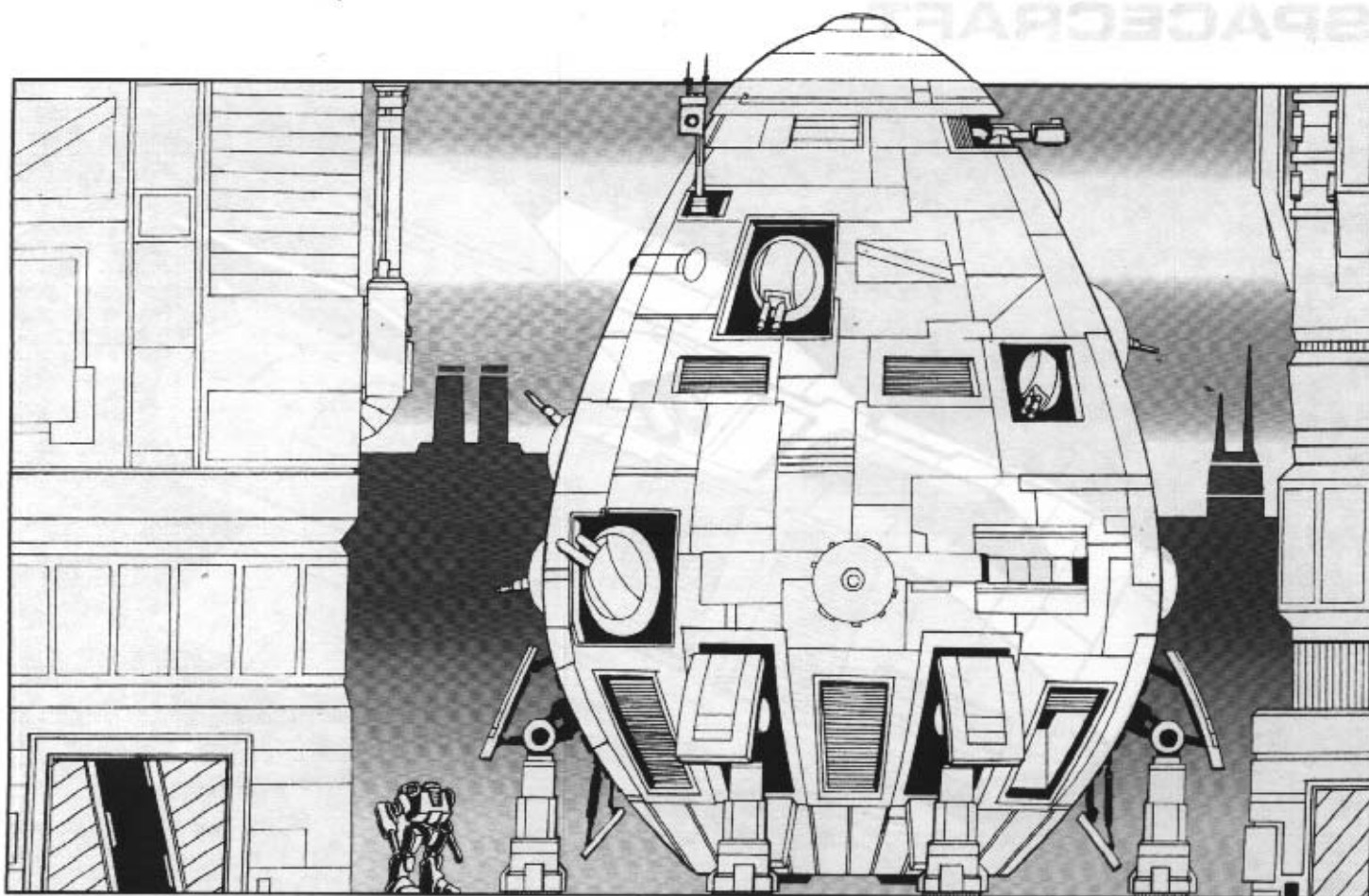
OVERLORD-C DROPSHIP

The *Overlord* DropShip design dates from the Star League era, though the Clan version of this vessel appears to have been considerably reworked. The major exterior differences are a moderate distension of the spacecraft's nose and a slight repositioning of its maneuvering system. We can only assume that the internal differences are considerable, given the capabilities of the Clan *Overlord*s. The Clan DropShip can carry up to 45 'Mechs, as compared to 36 for the Inner Sphere version. The ability to carry such a large load of 'Mechs and the corresponding additional load of MechWarriors and technicians has apparently come at the cost of the fighter complement carried by Inner Sphere *Overlord*s; the Clan variant appears to lack fighter bay doors. Based on the *Overlord*-C's performance in combat, its weapons appear to have been significantly upgraded, both in variety and destructive capacity. The vessel's armor on all surfaces has also been greatly improved. The main drive and maneuvering system must have also been upgraded in order to provide the top-notch performance so far observed. The statistics provided in this report for the Clan *Overlord* variant represent ComStar's best estimates based on analysis of acquired combat intelligence.

The *Overlord*-C shares with its Inner Sphere relative only one weakness: poor weapons coverage in its aft quarter. For this reason, many of the tactics developed to neutralize Inner Sphere *Overlord*s work equally effectively against the Clan version. Aside from that one weakness, however, the *Overlord*-C is a superior DropShip in all respects. ComStar is making every effort to enhance our Blessed Order's knowledge of this ship's systems.

Tonnage: 11,550 tons   **Crew:** 45 MechWarriors
'Mech Complement: 45   **Fighter Complement:** 0
Armament:
   6 ER PPCs
   6 Ultra AC/5s
   2 Ultra AC/20s
   3 LRM-20s with Artemis
   3 Large Pulse Lasers
   12 Medium Pulse Lasers
   3 ER Large Lasers
   (All of miscellaneous manufacture)
Manufacturer: Unknown
Drive System: Unknown

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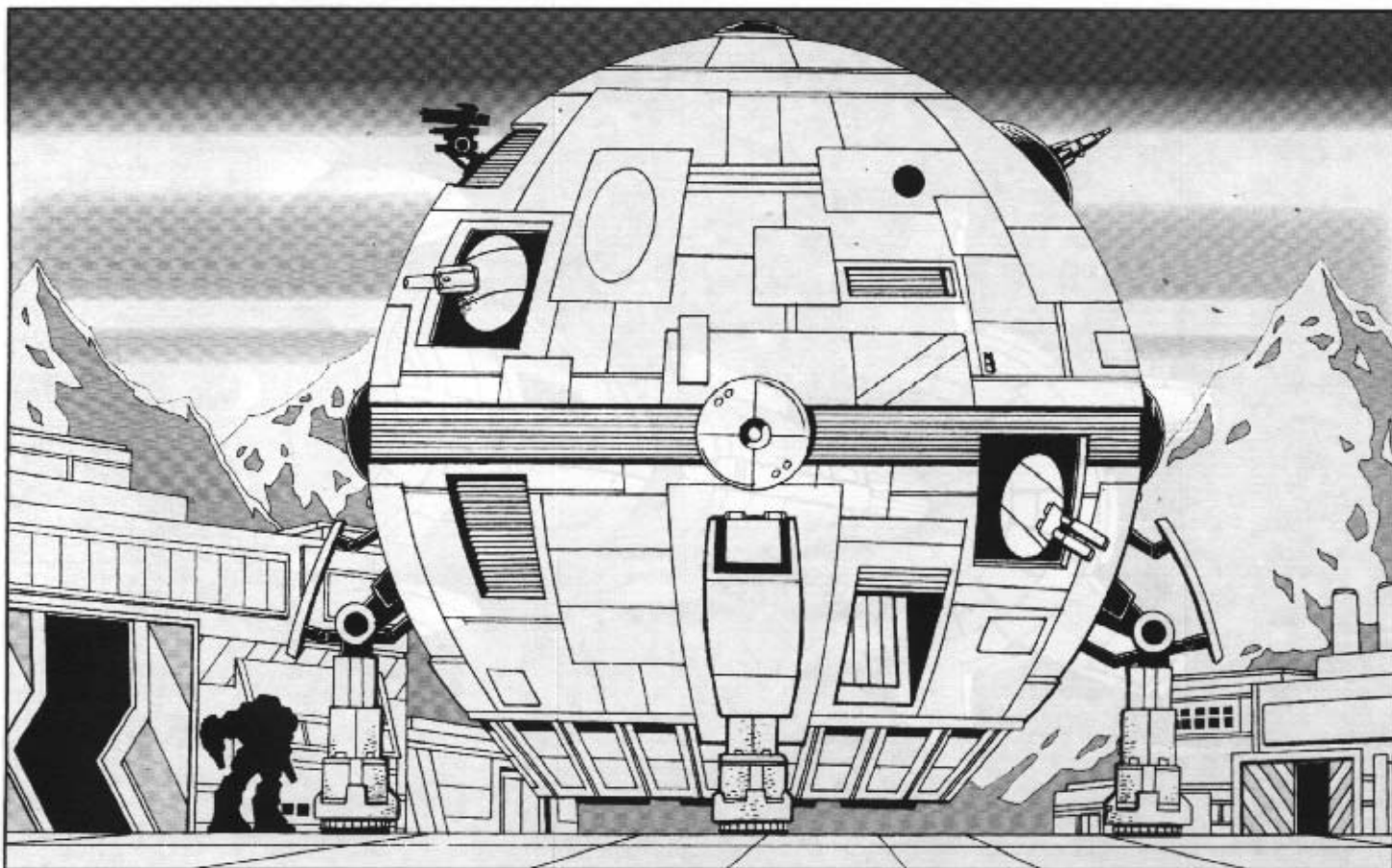
UNION CLASS DROPSHIP

The *Union* was designed to provide combat landing and recovery operations for a company-sized 'Mech unit, as well as associated fighter and maintenance support. Combining solid all-around armor coverage with an extensive, powerful weapons array and a compact, maneuverable hull, this vessel is often considered the most effective DropShip in its weight class. Many experts consider it the most effective of all DropShip designs. Though the *Union*'s spheroid shape is not the most attractive configuration for an aerospace vehicle, the DropShip's designers believed the economy of surface area and high degree of agility intrinsic to the round shape more than made up for the lack of a streamlined look. The placement of the craft's oversized altitude jets make it one of the most maneuverable DropShips. The *Union*'s spheroid shape also allows its weapons to cover all firing arcs, making this DropShip a formidable opponent for aerospace figters. The *Union* class DropShip also carries two of its own aerospace fighters for extra protection.

The *Union*'s unique internal layout enables it to quickly drop 'Mechs, and it also facilitates efficient servicing and repair of its 'Mech and fighter complements. Because the DropShip's interior space has been optimized for machinery, accommodations for MechWarriors and crew are somewhat spartan. Few crewmen serving on *Union* Class DropShips complain about this, however, possibly because of the widespread feeling among them that useful equipment is more important than creature comforts.

Tonnage: 3500 tons   **Crew:** 14 crew
'Mech Complement: 12   14 MechWarriors/AeroSpace
Fighter Complement: 2   Pilots
Armament:
  3 PPCs
  6 AC/5s
  6 LRM-20s
  12 Medium Lasers
  5 Large Lasers
  (All of miscellaneous manufacture)
Manufacturer: Various
Drive System: Star League V250

SPACECRAFT
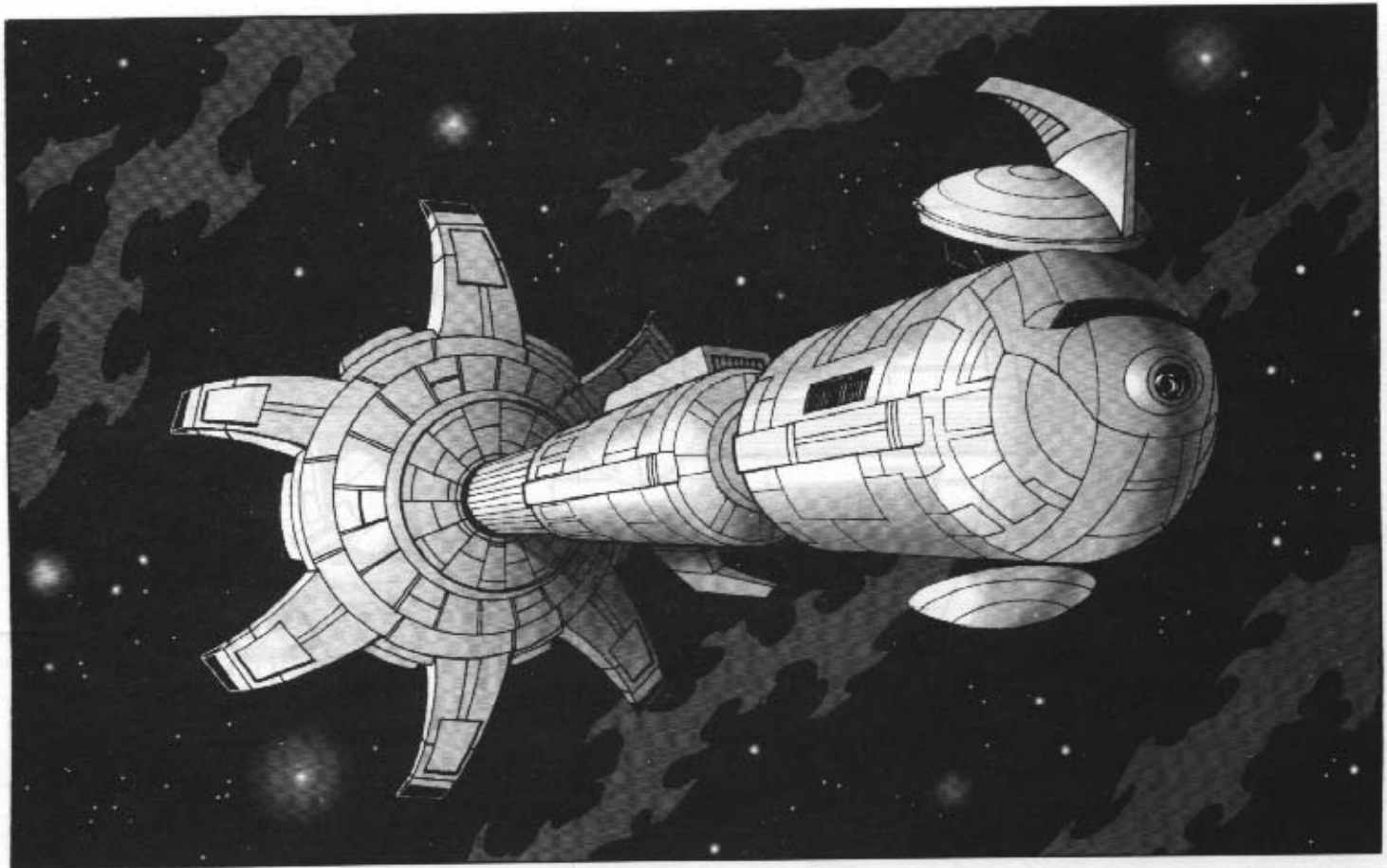
INVADER CLASS JUMPSHIP

More than half a kilometer long and sporting a solar collector of twice that in diameter, the *Invader* is an impressive-looking ship. Like most JumpShip designs dating from the long centuries of the Succession Wars, these craft display an odd mixture of technologies. Many seem like one-of-a-kind hand-built masterpieces, while others appear slapped together from spare parts. Popular with both the military and merchant shippers, the *Invader* design is one of the most widely produced classes of vessel in the Inner Sphere.

The *Invader* has a simple layout. Command facilities and living quarters are located in the craft's bow, flanked on two sides by enormous hydroponic domes. Along the ship's central spine are three docking hardpoints for DropShips. The Kearny-Fuchida hyperdrive takes up the ship's core. The stern holds the fusion drive and power converters for the solar collectors.

Tonnage: 152,000

Dimensions
  Length: 505 meters
  Sail Diameter: 1,024 meters

Crew:
  22 crew
  2 Small Craft Pilots

DropShip Capacity: 3

Small Craft Complement: 2

Drive System: KF Mark VIIa

First Introduced: 2631

Frequency of Sighting: Common

SPACECRAFT
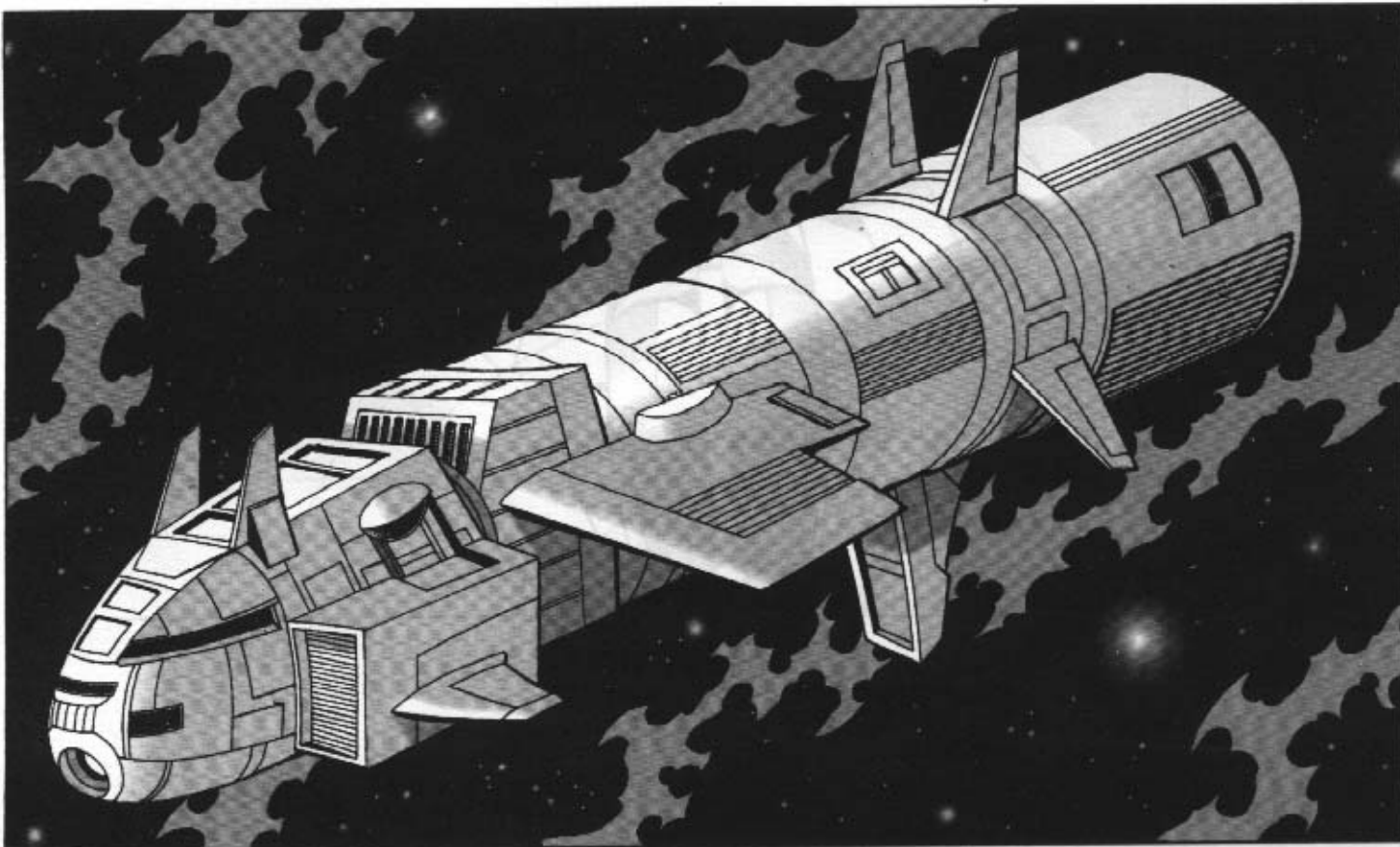
TEXAS CLASS BATTLE CRUISER

The original design of the *Texas* Class battle cruiser represented the state of the art in the WarShips of its day. Sheathed in laminated composite armor, its hull was light but tough. It had potent and numerous weapons, and its contingent of 40 aerospace fighters provided a virtually impenetrable screen against enemy vessels. The *Texas* was suprisingly fast and manuverable for a battle cruiser, and its lithium-fusion batteries enabled it to beat a fast retreat in the face of overwhelming opposition.

In the frenzy of violence and ceaseless warfare that followed the Amaris Coup, all but seven of the original 52 *Texas* Class ships were destroyed. The seven surviving battle cruisers left with General Kerensky in the Exodus Fleet. Intelligence reports to our Blessed Order indicate that five vessels bearing the names of those lost *Texas* Class ships are among the fleets of the invading Clans. Four of them differ in external configuration from the original models, but so little that the changes might plausibly be put down to necessary modifications and field repair of battle damage. The last of the five, a command ship in the Jade Falcon fleet, appears to have its original hull intact and shows little of the wear one might expect on such a vessel after 300 years of active service. Detailed observation of this ship would be invaluable, but our attempts to get a close look at it have so far proved futile.

Mass: 1,560,000
Crew: 702
K-F Drive System: KF Tiger 1
Interplanetary Engines: 3 Rolls Royce Krakens
Hull: Galadin SYN
  Length: 1,209 meters
  Sail Span: 1,375 meters
  DropShip Capacity: 6
  AeroSpace Fighter Capacity: 40
  Small Craft Complement: 16
Armor: Panthex YM1
Armament:
  16 Sunspot-3L Naval Particle Projector Cannon
  4 Killer Whale Missile Tubes
  2 Winchester-Boeing Autocannon
  48 Omicron-45 Series Heavy Naval Lasers
  8 Maelstrom AR-10 Missile Tubes
Manufacturer: Unknown
Communications System: Unknown
Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown
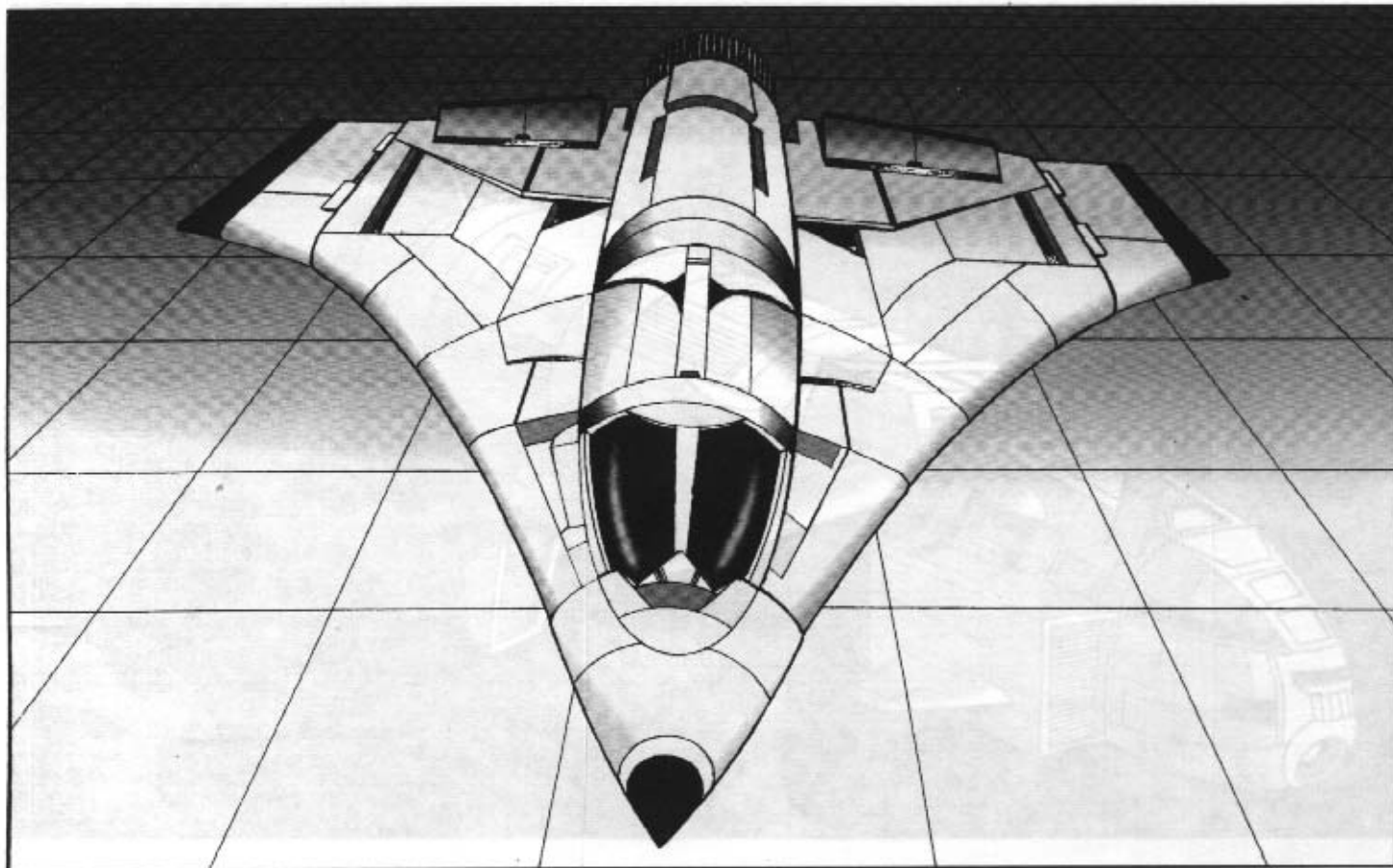
SPACECRAFT

ST-46 SHUTTLE

A common spacecraft in the Inner Sphere, the ST-46 is used to move supplies from large JumpShips to orbital facilities or to the surface of planets with atmospheres. Unlike DropShips, this winged craft cannot land vertically and therefore must rely on prepared runways for landing and takeoff. The chief advantage of the winged ST-46 design is the small amount of onboard fuel necessary to fly it. The small saize of the shuttle's fuel tanks means the greatest possible amount of room for passengers and cargo. Most variants of this craft can carry about 50 tons of cargo and up to eight passengers. The ST-46 is not typically armed, nor is it equipped for anything more than perfunctory evasive maneuvers. The craft's minimal armor guards it against docking and landing accidents, and protects it from damage by micrometeroids. Surprisingly, craft similar to the ST-46 have been observed in Clan military forces. The question of why the Clans would use such defenseless, stripped-down craft remains to be answered. The decidedly unmilitary nature of the ST-46, however, has prompted some experts to speculate that those seen among Clan forces must be captured Inner Sphere craft.

Tonnage: 100
Dimensions
    Length: 22 meters
    Sail Diameter: 19 meters
Crew: 1
Cargo Complement:
    74.5 tons
    9 passengers
Drive System: Entech 200c
First Introduced: 2528
Frequency of Sighting: Common

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

ENHANCED-IMAGING/ ELECTRONIC-IMAGING OPTICS

Enhanced-imaging (EI) optics is a fascinating piece of Clan technology that is essentially a virtual-reality visualization system that synthesizes aggregate battlefield intelligence into a cohesive, real-time, updated tactical display. As with any system of this type, the composite is only as good as the individual sensors in the array. It should come as no surprise that the Clans have a striking advantage in this arena, though the extent to which this advantage is pivotal remains a subject of intense debate. We have discovered that some Clan warriors possess direct brain-computer interfaces that greatly heighten the EI system's performance; these so-called neural networks give the Clan 'Mech pilots an uncannily accurate overview of the moment-by-moment tactical situation.

TACTICAL OPERATIONS CENTER

Tactical operations centers (TOC) have existed ever since the first use of motorized equipment in combat. This modern-day example, much of it the result of pioneering redesign work by Lieutenant Rachel Specter of the 1st Somerset Strikers, is equipped with state-of-the-art communications systems, remote sensors, and tactical computers. The TOC is a vital resource in combat operations that involve any size BattleMech force, from lance on up. Against such a powerful foe as the Clans, a unit without such a TOC is fatally handicapped.

The tactical operations center serves as the brain of a BattleMech combat unit. The innovative improvements made by Lieutenant Specter to the standard TOC's communications sys-

tems allow them to exchange information with satellites, DropShips, aerospace fighters, distant JumpShips, and 'Mechs simultaneously. Sophisticated cryptography algorithims ensure that all such transmissions remain indecipherable to the enemy. Information gathered by the TOC's own sensors and those of all vehicles and satellites with which it is in communication are downloaded into the TOC's powerful computers, which synthesize the input and produce a real-time assessment of the tactical situation. The tactical officer can then make appropriate judgements about the battlefield environment, enemy capabilities, and how best to achieve the unit's tactical objectives. The TOC makes the immense complexities of field operations quickly and easily comprehensible to the commander in the thick of battle.

NOTEPUTER

This small hand-held computer sends images, text, and audio messages, allows the user to take and save notes, and also stores large amounts of data—both text and graphics. The noteputer performs essential data acquisition and management tasks, freeing administrators from the burden of copious paperwork and thereby making his or her job infinitely easier.

PENTAGLYCERINE

When properly detonated, this extremely stable compound yields a devastating high-energy explosion. Developed in the continuing effort to produce stable but energetic high explosives, pentaglycerine is derived from its ancient namesake, nitroglycerine. It consists of pentathalamyne, glycerated and polymerized to stabilize this otherwise highly unstable substance. The resultant plastic-explosive blocks remain inert until exposed to an electrical detonation or excessive heat. Used for a variety of engineering and military purposes, ranging from demolition of battlefield fortifications to digging new riverbeds, pentaglycerine is one of the most versatile explosives in the Inner Sphere.

COMMLINK COMMUNICATOR

This device incorporates real-time digital data encryption and encoding into a medium-range scrambled communicator. Built specifically to provide an unjammable, secure communications channel for battlefield conditions and covert operations, this compact piece of equipment piggybacks its low-powered transmissions onto already-existing uncoded signals. The commlink's sophisticated microsubprocessor is designed to examine all transmissions within its range and break out any signals originating with other, similarly programmed commlinks. The subprocessor then descrambles those signals before decoding them into voice or data signals, which may themselves be additionally encrypted.

DESIGNER NOTES

In late 1993, FASA started to work on the **BattleTech** animated series. We went into production with two objectives in mind. First, we wanted to keep the show true to the **BattleTech** universe. We recognized that modifications would have to be made for the new media we were using, but we wanted to keep changes to a minimum.

Second, and just as important, we wanted to produce a show that the uninitiated viewer, most likely younger than players of the **BattleTech** game (between eight and fourteen years old, as opposed to fourteen or over), would enjoy. At times, our two objectives came into conflict with each other. However, we always chose solutions that strengthened rather than weakened the series story line.

The **BattleTech** universe is a decade-old, ongoing space opera of epic proportions. The millions of words of published fiction about it cover 30 years of active game history and about 400 years of background history. Published materials range from board games, roleplaying games, sourcebooks, adventure modules, novels, and software packages. Despite the sheer volume of material, all of the stories told in those products are part of one continuous integrated story line in which the motivations and goals of the leaders and people of the Inner Sphere constantly shifted as their battlefield fortunes rose and fell in each game product.

The greatest challenge we faced was figuring out how to present all the depth and dynamism of the **BattleTech** universe without confusing the uninitiated viewer. To accomplish this, we came up with a set of criteria for the animated-series story line. First and foremost, we needed to keep the story's focus to manageable proportions, which meant keeping the number of characters, 'Mechs, and political entities small. Rather than denying that the rest of the **BattleTech** universe existed, we chose to present the vast amount of information about it in small, comprehensible chunks over the course of the show.

Second, the "good guys" and "bad guys" needed to be strongly established and clearly differentiated. The hundreds of fictional characters, nations, and political factions in the **BattleTech** universe are always painted in shades of gray, just as they are in real life. Each game product is written from different fictional points of view, reflecting the prejudices of the fictional writer. In one product, the fictional author may wax eloquent on the Federated Commonwealth as the hope of mankind, while another fictional writer in another product will denounce the Federated Commonwealth as an evil empire that routinely expands its territory through war. This relativistic approach makes for engaging stories. Unfortunately, each episode of the animated series only lasts 22 minutes. Spending ten of those minutes explaining to the viewer who this week's villain is and why, especially if he was last week's hero, would confuse viewers and leave scant time for exciting events to take place.

Finally, though the story was to take place within the BattleTech universe, we wanted to keep the series writers from being straitjacketed by previously published materials. We have found that writers are at their creative best when they are allowed to tell stories of their own choosing, and basing the series story line too closely on material already published would have required us to delve into too many complexities at once. If we had chosen to dramatize the **Blood of Kerensky** novel trilogy, for example, the series writers would have ended up telling the novelist's story rather than their own, as well as dealing with a huge cast of characters and their widely varied motivations. The sheer scope of such a work could not be made intelligible to the uninitiated viewer.

Our criteria for developing the **BattleTech** series are similar to the ones we use when commissioning a new BattleTech novel. One or two novelists write what we call an "umbrella" novel about a major event in the **BattleTech** universe. For example, Mike Stackpole has written the definitive novels about the Fourth Succession War, the Clan invasion, and the breakup of the Federated Commonwealth. Bob Charrette wrote the definitive novels on the evolution of House Kurita's leadership and on the mercenary unit Wolf's Dragoons. Once an umbrella story line is finalized, other novelists write stories about smaller-scale events that happen in the context of the main story line. In the case of the animated show, we treated all of the published **BattleTech** products as the umbrella.

Once we had settled on our own guidelines for the series, the first order of business was to develop a story premise and characters. The "bad guys" were easy; the Clans, more importantly a Crusader Clan, made the obvious choice. The Crusaders want to conquer the Inner Sphere and impose their way of life, the Way of the Clan, upon all of humanity. Their single-minded purpose and alien mindset made them wonderful villains for the show.

Creating the Inner Sphere opposition was more difficult. We tried raiders based on Wolcott, mercenaries operating behind the lines, and even a multinational force based on Tukayyid. Each time, the story either started getting too complex or became so simple that we lost the larger picture of the **BattleTech** universe.

We finally decided on the Somerset Strikers story because it met all the objectives and criteria that we had set for ourselves. By setting the story at the start of the Clan invasion and focusing on the Jade Falcon invasion corridor, we limited the major players in the story line to just two sides. Setting it in 3050 also freed us from having to explain the epic battle of Tukayyid and its consequences, the breakup of ComStar, the impending FedCom civil war, and the rest of the complex political morass that is the Inner Sphere in 3058.

Adding the Draconis Combine JumpShip/DropShip crew allowed us to talk about the Inner Sphere's past wars and the animosities between the ruling Houses, and helped make the

Strikers a microcosm of the Inner Sphere as a whole. The slow development of acceptance and trust between the Dracs and Fedrats on the DropShip *Kwaidan* mirrors the same change between the ruling Houses of the Federated Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine during the Clan invasion.

The high-level politics of the Inner Sphere have always been rich ground for **BattleTech** stories, and the constant infighting and intrigue are important touchstones for all **BattleTech** fiction. By making Major Adam Steiner a distant cousin of the Steiner royal House, we can give viewers a taste of the politics without overwhelming them with details. In addition, making Adam a Steiner gave us a plausible excuse for the extraordinary latitude given to such a small unit by the military of which it is supposed to be a part. After all, not every company commander gets rare and costly prototype BattleMechs and equipment, let alone permission to go off and do what he wants with them.

Once Jordan Weisman had finished outlining the basic premise of the series, we turned things over to the teleplay writers, Bob Skir and Marty Isenberg. They immediately went to work on the first thirteen episode story arc. Using the umbrella events from existing **BattleTech** fiction, they crafted a story about the Strikers' quest to retake Somerset—Adam Steiner's captured home planet. Over the course of that quest, the Strikers discover who and what the Clans are, overcome their own distrust for each other, and gradually show the viewers the depth and richness of the Inner Sphere. The villains—Nicolai Malthus and rest of the Falcon's Claws—were created to be the antithesis of the Strikers. Highly regimented, unified, and working toward a common goal at the start of the series, the

Claws are torn apart over the course of the story arc. The petty jealousy between Nicolai Malthus and his rival, Kristen Redmond, soon flares into outright hatred. Malthus's obsession with destroying Adam Steiner grows with each failed attempt he makes to capture his quarry, and the Clan warrior's methods become increasingly ruthless as his baffled anger builds.

While the writers hammered out the story arc, we made some necessary choices about the series artwork. We had decided early on that we needed to visually differentiate the

Jade Falcons from the Strikers, and so we exaggerated the differences in the looks of the Clan warriors and their Inner Sphere counterparts. In this way, we made maximum use of the visual media to communicate the power and alienness of the Clans. We felt that images would get the point across more vividly than having Adam or Rachel spend an episode briefing the viewers on how different the Clans are from the Inner Sphere.

To show the Falcons' unity and discipline, we gave them tight-fitting uniforms that never seem to get dirty or torn. In contrast, the Striikers and other Inner Sphere characters wear a motley collection of baggy, ripped, and frayed uniforms that need a good washing. To further differentiate the Clan warriors from the "good guys," we added weird haircuts and distinctive facial tattoos.

The tattoos also served another purpose; they gave us a way to include computer graphics in the show. The fictional rationalization of what is known in the series as enhanced imaging already existed in the **BattleTech** adventure module titled **Unbound**. We took this idea and ran with it, and the Clan facial tattoos became the neural circuitry that gives the Jade Falcon warriors such impressive control over their 'Mechs' tactical information and targeting systems. The compromise we had to make on this element of the animated series involved the timing. Clan use of EI isn't discussed in any of the **BattleTech** products prior to the show, though hints of it do exist. By assuming that only 10 percent of Clan warriors use EI and making it a tool favored by younger, more aggressive MechWarriors like Nicolai Malthus (note that Galaxy Commander Chistu, a senior Falcon officer, does not use it), we were able to connect it to the previously established **BattleTech** fiction without any major breaks in continuity.

One of the last big choices we had to make was the number of 'Mechs to use in the show. For production reasons, we could only use a limited number. **BattleTech** has hundreds of different 'Mech designs but we could only model a limited number for the computer graphics in the time available. So we selected several pre-existing 'Mechs, made modifications to them where we thought necessary, and added a couple of new 'Mechs just because they looked cool. Of course, our choices necessitated a few story line compromises on the individual 'Mechs. For example, the **BattleTech Technical Readout: 3050** cites the *Mauler* as a design exclusive to Draconis Combine military forces, but the animated show has everybody and his brother operating one.

After the story arc and general look of the show received the final stamp of approval, existing characters and 'Mechs were vetted and modified by Jordan Weisman, Charlie Fink, and Kaaren Brown. Producer Kurt Weldon put his to work staff generating models for all of the characters, 'Mechs and settings. The writers got to work on the scripts, using touchstone events from the **BattleTech** novels and other fiction to flesh out their story.

The use of common characters and key events in multiple products is key to the way FASA produces its **BattleTech** fiction, and the animated show was no exception. The writers started going through the **BattleTech** fiction and came up with a lot of small plot hooks that they wanted to explore. The Franklin Sakamoto story line, for example, is first introduced in Bob Charrette's novel **Heir to the Dragon**. The character Ciro Ramirez first appears in Mike Stackpole's novel **Lethal Heritage**; that same novel includes Victor Steiner-Davion's forced evacuation from the battle against the Clans on Trell I. The Star League military base known as Camelot Command appears in the game module titled **Rhonda's Irregulars**. As we had hoped, the scriptwriters used these materials as background to help their own story line along.

We also had to make some minor changes in the conventions of mainstream **BattleTech** fiction to keep the story simple and manageable for the series. Planets are fought over by ten or fewer 'Mechs rather than the hundreds used in the fiction. Somerset is one of the first planets invaded, rather than falling in the second wave of Jade Falcon attacks. Instead of remaining in Jade Falcon hands, Somerset is "liberated" by the end of Episode 13, though we plan to do something about that during the second series. Similar media-driven changes have been made for **BattleTech** computer software and the **BattleTech** games of Virtual World Entertainment, but as always we have made these changes with a great deal of thought.

Whenever the nature of the animated show made changes necessary, we tried to use the strength of the visual media to support a creative solution. For example, 'Mech battles had to be kept short and simple for technical reasons. Watching a typical **BattleTech** slugging match play across the TV screen isn't very exciting. But the sight of Clan 'Mechs taking little to no damage while dispatching the Inner Sphere 'Mechs with one or two shots quickly gets across the idea of Clan superiority.

The events and characters in the animated show are also feeding back into new **BattleTech** fiction. In Bob Thurston's novel **I Am Jade Falcon**, we meet Pytor six years after the events of the animated series. Adam Steiner and crew will make cameo appearances as appropriate in future novels. Like Star Commander Joanna, Jaime Wolf, Phelan Kell Ward, Sun-Tzu Liao, Rhonda Snord, Jeremiah Rose, and many other recurring characters, the Somerset Strikers have their place in **BattleTech** fiction. As we see it, this feedback between stories is vital to the ongoing popularity of the **BattleTech** universe.

Fourteen episodes after starting this project, we appear to have hit all our objectives. Though the series focuses on a single, simple story line, it has remained true to the richness and depth of the **BattleTech** universe. The Strikers stand ready to carry the fight into the Free Rasalhague Republic and the Draconis Combine. The Clans still have to face the defeats they will suffer on Twycross, Wolcott, and Tukayyid. But even with the knowledge that those defeats will come, the story of Nicolai Malthus and Adam Steiner is compelling. Even better, the Somerset Strikers story is having an impact on the development of new fiction. Like all things **BattleTech**, it just keeps going on and on.

The Staff at FASA
November 2, 1994

BATTLETECH
GAME INFORMATION

GAME INFORMATION

This section presents **BattleTech** and **MechWarrior** rules and game information for the characters and hardware featured in the **BattleTech** animated series, plus scenarios that allow both first-time and experienced **BattleTech** players to re-enact nine key engagements from the animated episodes. Game statistics for characters and hardware appear after the scenarios.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

The following rules apply to certain special equipment that players can use in **BattleTech** and **MechWarrior** campaigns. Unless otherwise noted, all special equipment may be used at any level of **BattleTech**.

BATTLE ARMOR

Complete rules for the use of Clan battle armor units (also referred to as "Toads" or "Elementals") appear on pages 66–69 of the **BattleTech Compendium: The Rules of Warfare**, as well as in **CityTech, Second Edition**. The following additional rules apply to the Infiltrator and the Sloth, the battle armor prototypes fielded by the Strikers. Treat the Infiltrator and the Sloth as standard battle armor unless the rules given below indicate otherwise.

An Inner Sphere battle armor squad usually consists of four troopers, though the size of units can vary from one to five troopers depending on circumstances.

Movement

Infiltrator units have 2 MP, Sloth units 3 MP. Neither type of unit can jump, and both are subject to all the standard movement restrictions regarding infantry and terrain. Inner Sphere battle armor units cannot travel with a BattleMech using the **Mechanized Battle Armor** rules.

Combat

The Infiltrator and Sloth carry different weapons than standard battle armor but resolve fire in the same fashion. Specific rules for the weapons carried by each type of unit appear below.

Each Infiltrator is armed with an auto grenade launcher. For game purposes, treat this weapon as a machine gun, except that each hit inflicts only 1 point of damage. Roll on the Battle Armor Direct Fire Table per standard rules to determine the number of hits. Against unarmored infantry, each hit from the grenade launcher inflicts 1D6 damage. The Infiltrator carries a limited supply of grenades, allowing the unit to fire only four times.

Each Sloth comes equipped with two small lasers and a magnetic mine launcher. During the Weapon Attack Phase, a Sloth unit can either fire its lasers or launch one or more mines, but not both. After a successful attack with small lasers, roll on the Battle Armor Missiles Table to determine the number of hits inflicted on a target.

A Sloth unit that begins the Weapon Attack Phase in the same hex as a BattleMech or vehicle may choose to launch one or more magnetic mines instead of making a standard weapon attack. Unlike standard battle armor missile attacks, the controlling player can choose to fire mines with some or all of the Sloths in a unit, marking off the ammunition expenditure for each one fired on the record sheet. Each Sloth carries only one mine, so an undamaged squad of four Sloths can fire from one to four mines. If a Sloth is destroyed before it fires its mine, that mine is lost.

The base to-hit number for a magnetic mine attack is 8, modified for movement and terrain as normal. If the unit is making a pointblank shot from hiding (see **Hidden Units**, p. 89 of the **BattleTech Compendium: The Rules of Warfare**), do not modify the to-hit number for movement or terrain. If the attack hits, roll on the Battle Armor Direct Fire Table to determine how many mines have become attached to the target, using the Point Members Active column that matches the number of mines fired by the Sloth unit. The mines hit the Center Torso if the target is a BattleMech, or the Front if the target is a vehicle. The attacker then rolls 2D6 for each mine that is attached and consults the Determining Critical Hits Table. If the result is 7 or less, the target takes 4 points of damage from the explosion. If the attack results in one or more critical hits, resolve those normally.

Their physical construction and lack of jump jets make it impossible for Infiltrators and Sloths to climb up onto a BattleMech, and so neither type of unit may engage in anti-BattleMech leg or swarm attacks.

Damage to Battle Armor

All standard rules regarding attacks against battle armor apply to Infiltrator and Sloth units. However, these units have an Armor Value of 5 points instead of the standard 10 for Clan battle armor, plus an additional point of damage that represents the trooper inside.

Infiltrator suits are specially constructed to baffle all types of sensors. This ability makes them very difficult to target at long ranges. Against Infiltrator units, increase the to-hit modifier for medium range to +3, and the to-hit modifier for long range to +6. In addition, Beagle active probes and their Clan equivalents cannot locate hidden Infiltrator units.

ENHANCED IMAGING

The enhanced imaging (EI) system used by the Jade Falcons in the **BattleTech** animated series has two components: standard EI equipment and the enhanced imaging neural implant. Each component is described below, along with rules for using the EI system in **BattleTech** and **MechWarrior**.

Standard EI

Most Clan 'Mechs in service in 3050 have standard EI, which is simply an enhanced "virtual reality" heads-up display.
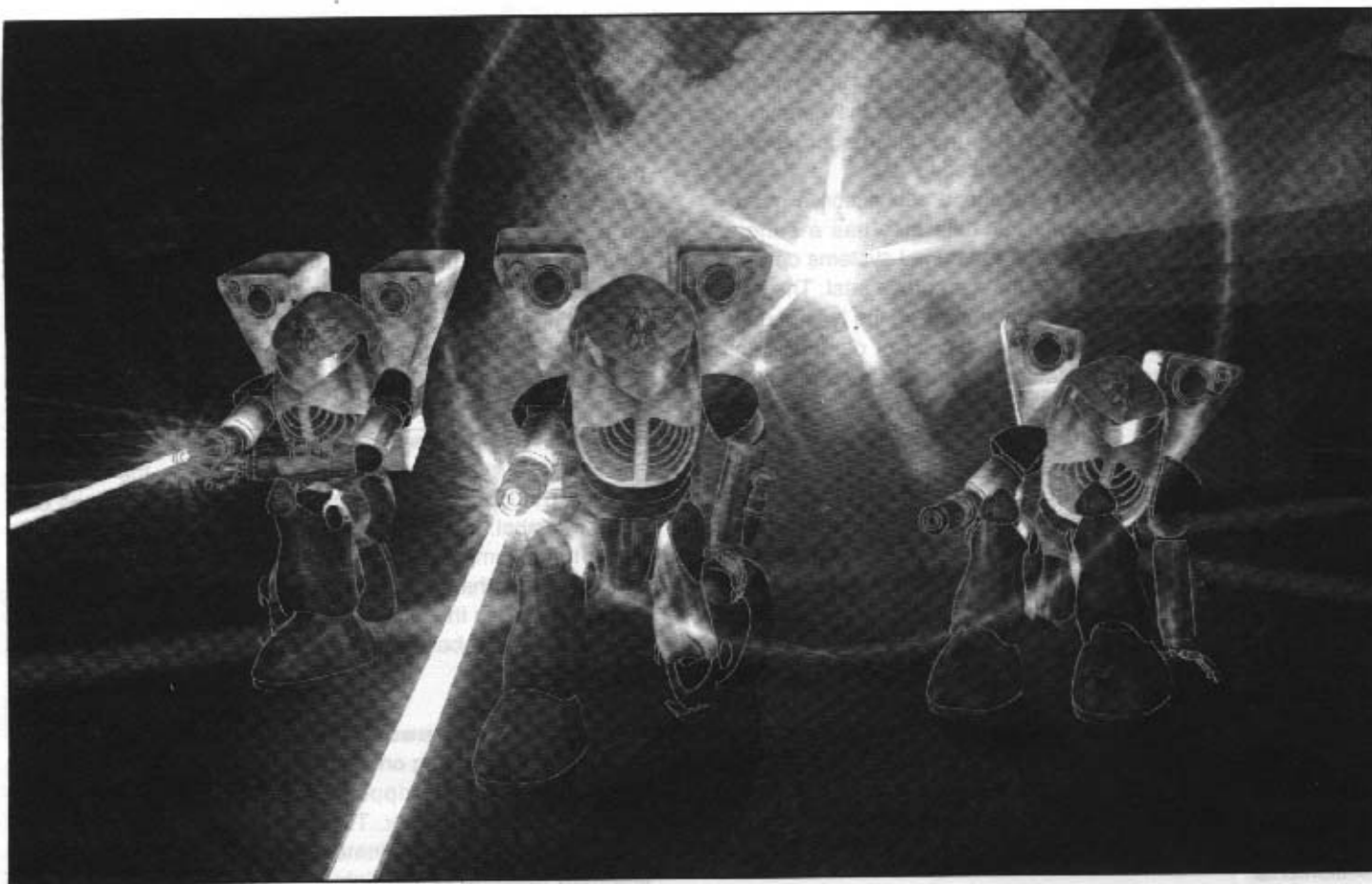
This system aids in battlefield coordination and targeting but confers no bonuses significant enough to make a difference in **BattleTech** game play.

Enhanced Imaging Neural Implant

The EI neural implant works in conjunction with the standard EI display system, allowing the MechWarrior to access and use his EI display simply by thought. Any unit equipped with an EI display can be operated much more effectively by a pilot with an EI implant. Needless to say, the implant does not work with a vehicle that lacks EI equipment. Battle armor units may use EI implants, but every member of a Point must be implant-equipped in order for the Point to receive any benefit.

The neural implant only benefits BattleMech and battle armor pilots. Conventional vehicle drivers and aerospace pilots derive no benefit from the implant because their machines do not have a humanoid shape.

Only the most fanatical Clan warriors use the implant, as it has dangerous and painful side effects. On the average, about 5 percent of all Clan MechWarriors have EI implants. Because they tend to operate in units with one another, however, the proportion seems somewhat higher to most Inner Sphere observers. The number of MechWarriors using EI implants is noticeably higher in Crusader Clans such as the Jade Falcons and the Smoke Jaguars.

Rules for the EI neural implant should only be used in Level Three **BattleTech** and **MechWarrior** play.

Using EI in BattleTech

A unit equipped with standard EI gains many advantages when piloted by a warrior with a neural implant. In the text of the scenarios in this book (see pp. 101–111), pilots equipped with neural implants are marked with a dagger (†).

The enhanced imaging system can be switched on or off during the End Phase of any turn. When the system is off, the unit acts as though it did not have EI; the pilot gains no benefits but also does not suffer extra feedback damage. The status of each unit's EI system must be clearly marked on its record sheet at all times.

While enhanced imaging is on, the unit gains the following benefits:

• All Piloting Skill rolls receive a –1 modifier.

• To-hit modifiers for shooting through woods and smoke are reduced, but normal line-of-sight rules for these types of terrain still apply. Firing through or into any number of Light Woods hexes adds a single +1 modifier. The penalty for firing through or into Heavy Woods or smoke-filled hexes is reduced from +2 per hex to +1 per hex.

• The night combat modifier does not apply.

• The unit may aim its direct-fire weapons at a specific location as though it had a targeting computer, though the modifier for such an attack is +6 rather than the usual +3. A unit that has both EI and a targeting computer gains all the benefits of both pieces of equipment. In addition, the called shot modifier for aiming at a specific location is reduced to +2.

Balancing its benefits, the enhanced connection a neuro-implanted pilot shares with his machine also has a serious drawback. Feedback from damage to internal systems delivers strong electric shocks to the pilot that can prove fatal. The specific effects of the feedback vary, depending on the type of unit.

In BattleMechs, the pilot suffers 1 point of damage each time an attack damages the 'Mech's internal structure unless the controlling player makes a 2D6 roll of 7 or better. A Sensors Critical Hit disables the entire EI system in addition to its other effects.

Elementals equipped with neural implants suffer 1 extra point of damage from every attack that hits them. For purposes of determining this damage, an attack refers to each hit that strikes a particular trooper, including clusters of LRMs and artillery damage.

Using EI in MechWarrior

In **MechWarrior**, any Clan character can begin play with an EI implant as a 1-point advantage. However, the gamemaster should point out to players that the implant has serious physical and mental side effects, as well as branding the character as a Clan warrior for all to see. Such easy identification will make it difficult, if not impossible, to infiltrate Inner Sphere settlements.

The neural implant confers no bonuses in personal combat. When engaging in **BattleTech** combat, follow the guidelines given above, with the following changes. Replace the 2D6 roll of 7 or better to avoid damage after taking an internal hit with a BLD Saving Roll. In cases where a pilot would take 1 point of damage using **BattleTech** rules, roll 2D6 Lethal Damage instead.

The gamemaster determines the specific mental side-effects of the neural implant, but in any case the character becomes increasingly mentally unstable. He degenerates over the course of a year or so until he is extremely abusive and paranoid. Clan scientists have developed special drugs and therapy that can delay this degeneration, but most player characters will not have access to such treatment. Even with the treatment, most EI subjects become so disturbed within three years that they are unfit for duty.

TACTICAL OPERATIONS CENTER

As the Strikers' Tactical Operations Officer, Lt. Rachel Specter uses a unique computer and communications setup to coordinate the battlefield activities of her unit. Her system laid the groundwork for the development of the Federated Commonwealth's version of the C³ network (Command/Control/Communications). Though similar in many ways to the C³ system, Rachel's equipment is more closely related to the Star League-vintage command console. The innovation of installing a slave computer in each unit in the network came along several years later, giving rise to the "true" C³ computer system.

For game purposes, the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) mimics the abilities of the command console combined with the Guardian ECM Suite. Rules for the command console appear on p. 64 of the **BattleTech Tactical Handbook**. Rules for the Guardian ECM suite appear on p. 116 of the **BattleTech Compendium: The Rules of Warfare**.

During the course of the **BattleTech** animated series, the TOC took several forms. Specific game rules for each version of Rachel's Tactical Operations Center are given below.

JumpShip-Based TOC

Rachel's system was initially installed on the JumpShip *Katana*. Though this placement safeguarded her from the dangers of combat, the considerable delay in transmissions from a planet to the jump point and back posed a major problem. The time lag meant that only small amounts of tactically useful information made it to the forces on the ground. To reflect this, players gain no game benefits when using a TOC system aboard a JumpShip.

Aerospace-Based TOC

During the fighting on Romulus **(Episode Three)**, Rachel hastily installed a stripped-down version of her system aboard a *Banshee* fighter. Though the fighter's close proximity to the battlefield eliminated the time-delay problem, the cramped quarters of the fighter's cockpit allowed for only a small portion of communications equipment. To reflct this, players gain no game benefits when using a TOC system aboard an aerospace fighter.

Vehicle-Based TOC

By the time the Strikers reached Apollo **(Episode Ten)**, Rachel had installed a full-sized version of her equipment in a Packrat LRPV and used it quite effectively during the subsequent battle.

The vehicle-based TOC is represented in the **BattleTech** game by a Command Console and a Guardian ECM suite. Players who do not have the rules for these pieces of equipment should simply add a +2 bonus to the Strikers' initiative while the Packrat is in play. For game statistics for the Tactical Operations Center, see the **Packrat**, p. 126.

'Mech-Based TOC

Rachel eventually installed a sophisticated version of the TOC in the cockpit of Adam's *Awesome*. Like the vehicle-based unit, the 'Mech-based TOC is represented in the **BattleTech** game by a command console and a Guardian ECM suite. Players who do not have the rules for these pieces of equipment should simply add a +2 bonus to the Strikers' initiative while the *Awesome* is in play. For the 'Mech's game statistics, see p. 121.

SCENARIOS

The following nine **BattleTech** scenarios re-enact some of the pivotal battles in the BattleTech animated series. In order to play these scenarios, players will need **CityTech, Second Edition**, or the **BattleTech Compendium: The Rules of Warfare**. A selection of **Map Sets** and miniatures will also be helpful.

HOW TO USE THE SCENARIOS

The individual scenarios include sections titled **Game Set-Up, Attacker, Defender, Victory Conditions**, and **Special Rules**.

Game Set-Up provides specific information needed to play the scenario, including instructions on laying out mapsheets, directions for special terrain features, and suggestions on appropriate **BattleTech** rules to use.

Attacker and **Defender** provide details on each scenario's combatants. These sections also contain directions on deploying forces and guidelines for running the scenarios as self-contained games.

Victory Conditions determine the outcome of each encounter and vary from scenario to scenario. It is important to note that the winner of a particular scenario need not always destroy every 'Mech on the other side. Because the scenarios are based on the adventures of the Somerset Strikers, many of them can be "won" by a timely retreat or even a partial defeat. In these cases, the level of victory is determined by comparing the performance of the players on a given side to that side's performance in the show. When the players equal or exceed the level of their side as seen in the show, they have achieved a **decisive victory**. When they meet some but not all of their objectives, they achieve a **marginal victory**. Both sides can win a marginal victory, but only one side can achieve a decisive victory.

Special Rules lists any rules needed to play the scenario that are not covered in **General Rules** (below), in the **BattleTech** rules, or in **Special Equipment**, pp. 98–100.

GENERAL RULES

The following text explains certain special rules that apply to all of the 1st Somerset Strikers scenarios.

Clan Honor

Clan warriors follow a strict code of honor that sets them apart from their Inner Sphere counterparts. To reflect this fact, all Clan warriors must adhere to the following guidelines unless otherwise mentioned in the text of a scenario. These guidelines are simplified for ease of play. For a more detailed treatment of Clan honor, see the **Tukayyid** scenario pack.

Each Clan unit (BattleMech or Elemental Point) must choose as its opponent one enemy unit among those the Clans are facing. Once an opponent has been chosen, the Clan unit must fight that opponent until the enemy unit has been destroyed or flees the battlefield. No other Clan unit will attack that enemy unit. If there are more Clan units than Inner Sphere units, some of the Clan units will simply hang back and wait for one of their comrades to fall. If there are more Inner Sphere units than Clan units on the battlefield, it is considered bold but acceptable conduct for a Clan unit to take on more than one opponent at a time.

Clan warriors find physical combat between BattleMechs distasteful. No Clan 'Mech will initiate a physical attack.

The proud Clan warriors consider it a disgrace to retreat from battle when facing an inferior foe such as the Inner Sphere. Unless the scenario rules specifically state otherwise, no Clan unit may exit off the map edges.

Aerospace Support

Several scenarios include a *Banshee* fighter on the Strikers' side. Simplified rules for strafing attacks are included in the **Special Rules** sections of those scenarios. If the players have access to more comprehensive rules, they should feel free to use those instead. Detailed aerospace rules can be found in **AeroTech** and **BattleSpace**. Simplified aerospace rules can be found in the **BattleTech Compendium: The Rules of Warfare**.

The *Banshee* may not carry bombs in any of the scenarios in this book.

Edge

In the **MechWarrior, Second Edition,** game, the player characters have a special attribute called Edge. This attribute represents (among other things) luck and experience. As its name implies, this attribute gives the player characters "the Edge" they need to win against incredible odds and come out looking like the heroes they should be.

Each character's Edge points are shown in his or her **MechWarrior** statistics (pp. 119–125). Players familiar with **MechWarrior** already know how to use Edge points in game play. However, players not using the **MechWarrior** game should use the Edge rules, or the Strikers side will play at a distinct disadvantage. The following rules describe how to use Edge points for the **BattleTech** scenarios in this book only. The gamemaster will tell players how to use Edge in his or her **MechWarrior** game.

During each scenario, a character can spend 1 Edge point to re-roll any single die roll (1D6 or 2D6 rolls). Rolls that can be affected by Edge include, but are not limited to: to-hit rolls, Piloting Skill rolls, hit location rolls, Missile Hits Table rolls, and rolls on the Determining Critical Hits Table. The character must accept the second roll or spend another Edge point to re-roll it again.

Each character's allotment of Edge points is renewed at the beginning of each scenario. This means that a character will always start a scenario with the full number of Edge points shown in his or her **MechWarrior** game statistics, even if the players have spent some of that character's Edge in a previous scenario.

CLASH IN THE CANYON

EPISODE 2

In orbit around Dustball, Rachel Specter spots incoming drop pods on the *Kwaidan*'s radar. She tracks the signal and directs her fellow Strikers to a narrow canyon, where they find two Clan 'Mechs about to destroy a fallen *Centurion*.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** mapsheets as shown to represent the canyon floor. Fold both maps in half so that only the area indicated below is showing (grayed areas should *not* show). Any hexes that are not Clear Level 0 terrain are considered Level 0 Rough terrain (this includes all hills, water, and woods).
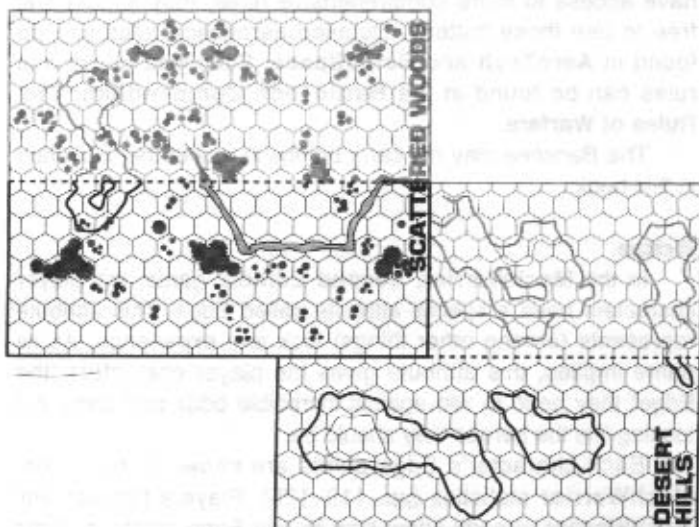
Attacker

The attacker consists of the 1st Somerset Strikers.

Strikers Lance

Major Adam Steiner (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2), AXM-2N *Axman*

Captain Zachary Miles Hawkins (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), MAL-1R *Mauler*

Lieutenant Ciro Ramirez (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4), WLF-2 *Wolfhound*

Strikers Air Support

Cadet Katiara Kylie (Piloting 3, Gunnery 4), BSE-X2 *Banshee*

Deployment

The Striker 'Mechs may set up anywhere within six hexes of the east end of the canyon, as long as none of them have line of sight to the Clan 'Mechs. See **Special Rules**, below, for rules regarding Kylie's *Banshee*.

Defender

The defender consists of two 'Mechs from the Black Vision.

Falcon Star

Star Colonel Kristen Redmond (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2†), *Vulture* Prime

MechWarrior Deval (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Hunchback* IIC

Deployment

The defender sets up first. Place the *Vulture* in Hex 0710 of the Desert Hills mapsheet, facing southeast. Place the *Hunchback* IIC in Hex 0609 of the same map facing east.

Victory Conditions

The Strikers win a decisive victory if they destroy both Clan 'Mechs. They win a marginal victory if both Clan 'Mechs are either driven off or destroyed.

The Jade Falcons win a decisive victory if they destroy all of the opposing 'Mechs. They win a marginal victory if both their 'Mechs escape through the west end of the canyon.

Special Rules

The north and south edges of the map represent the steep walls of a canyon, which are impassable. Units may only exit the mapsheets off the east and west edges. All partial hexes are considered part of the canyon wall; they block line of sight, and units may not move into them.

The Clan 'Mechs may only begin to retreat once they have line of sight to one or more Striker 'Mechs. They may only retreat out of the west end of the canyon.

The *Banshee* strafes the Clan 'Mechs just before the beginning of Turn 1. The Strikers player should choose one of the Clan 'Mechs and attack it with both medium lasers, hitting on a 7 or better. As the battle progresses, the fighter may turn around and strafe the battlefield up to three more times, during the Weapon Attack Phases of Turns 2, 4, and 6. Resolve hit location for all these strafing attacks as if they originated from directly east of the target.

DUSTBALL SHOWDOWN

EPISODE 2

The Clan forces have dropped onto Dustball in force and are ruthlessly advancing on New Monaco. Only the Strikers stand in their way.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** mapsheets as shown, face down with the blank side showing.
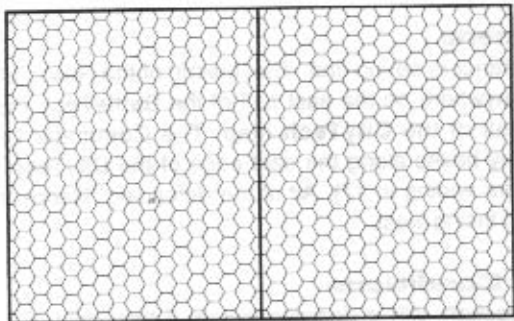
Attacker

The attacker consists of a Trinary of the Black Vision. The unit's aerospace wing is occupied with Dustball's security 'Mechs and conventional forces, leaving two Stars of 'Mechs to engage the Strikers.

Cluster Command Star

Star Colonel Kristen Redmond (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2†), *Vulture* Prime
MechWarrior Tanya Pryde (Piloting 3, Gunnery 2†), *Vulture* Prime
MechWarrior Deval (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Hunchback* IIC
MechWarrior Gengra (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Thor* M
MechWarrior Pith (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Thor* M

Alpha Talon

Star Commander Cyrill Hazen (Piloting 3, Gunnery 2), *Mad Cat* Prime
MechWarrior Jentry (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), *Mad Cat* Prime
MechWarrior Fatha (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), *Thor* M
MechWarrior Korthan (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), *Thor* M
MechWarrior Damil (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), *Hunchback* IIC

Deployment

The Cluster Command Star sets up first, on the west mapsheet in the hexes numbered 0113–0117. Alpha Talon does not enter the map until the beginning of Turn 3, at which point the 'Mechs are placed on Hexes 0113–0117 of the west mapsheet.

Defender

The defender consists of the 1st Somerset Strikers.

Strikers Lance

Major Adam Steiner (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2), AXM-2N *Axman*
Captain Zachary Miles Hawkins (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), MAL-1R *Mauler*
Captain Valten Ryder (Piloting 3, Gunnery 4), CN9-D *Centurion*
Lieutenant Ciro Ramirez (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4), WLF-2 *Wolfhound*

Strikers Air Support

Cadet Katiara Kylie (Piloting 3, Gunnery 4), BSE-X2 *Banshee*

Deployment

The Strikers set up second and may start anywhere on the east mapsheet facing any direction. Val's *Centurion* does not begin play on the map. During the Movement Phase of Turn 3, he enters play from any hex along the north or east edge of the map. For rules regarding Kylie's *Banshee*, see **Special Rules**, below.

Victory Conditions

The attackers intend to assault New Monaco, which lies just off the east edge of the map. However, they will gladly crush all resistance before moving forward. The attackers win a decisive victory if they destroy or drive off all the defending 'Mechs before the FedCom raiding party arrives.

Though they do not know it, the defenders only need to stall the Clans until the FedCom troops arrive. They win a decisive victory if they destroy four or more Clan 'Mechs while losing none of their own. The defenders win a marginal victory if none of their 'Mechs are destroyed. Note that Striker 'Mechs exiting the map off the east edge are not considered destroyed, but "driven off" by the Clans (see previous paragraph).

Special Rules

At the end of Turn 6, the DropShips of the FedCom raiding party begin to land, ending the scenario.

The hot desert sun of Dustball forces all 'Mechs to build up 1 extra point of heat during the Heat Phase of each turn. All Clan 'Mechs enter play with a heat point level of 13, including the Clan 'Mechs entering the map on Turn 3.

The Clan forces may not leave the map. The Strikers may exit the map off the east edge only.

The *Banshee* strafes the Clan 'Mechs just before the beginning of Turn 1. The Strikers player should choose one of the Clan 'Mechs and attack it with both medium lasers, hitting on a 7 or better. As the battle progresses, the fighter may turn around and strafe the battlefield up to three more times, during the Weapon Attack Phases of Turns 2, 4, and 6. Resolve hit location for these strafing attacks as though the attack originated from directly east of the target.

THE TAKING OF WOTAN

EPISODE 3

This scenario represents the climactic engagement of the battle for Wotan, where the Falcon's Claws clashed with the command group of the Wotan Tamar March Militia (TMM).

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** mapsheets as shown. Place Medium Elevation 2 buildings in the following six hexes: 0710, 0712, 0714, 0909, 0911, 0913.
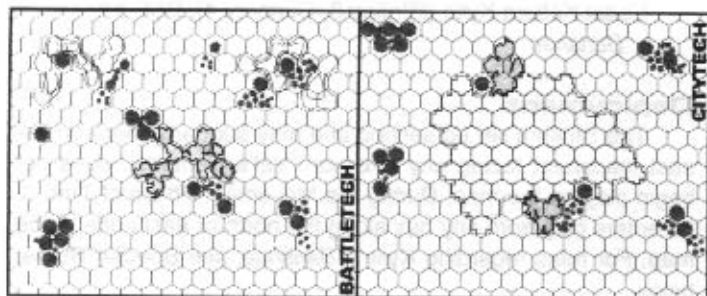
Attacker

The attacker consists of the Falcon's Claws Command Star.

Command Star

Star Colonel Nicolai Malthus (Piloting 2, Gunnery 1†), *Thor* M
MechWarrior Douglas (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), *Mad Cat* Prime
MechWarrior Jala (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), *Mad Cat* Prime
MechWarrior Leopold (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), *Vulture* Prime
MechWarrior Erin (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), *Vulture* Prime

Deployment

The Falcons enter from the west edge of the **BattleTech** map during the Movement Phase of the first turn.

Defender

The defender consists of two badly demoralized lances of the Wotan TMM.

Command Lance

Lt. General Ansel Cabrillo (Piloting 3, Gunnery 3), MAL-1R *Mauler*
Major Wilma Stenson (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), CN9-A *Centurion*
Sergeant Petrov Himmelmann (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4), CN9-A *Centurion*
MechWarrior Abel Rodriguez (Piloting 6, Gunnery 5), CN9-A *Centurion*

Recon Lance

Lieutenant Pamela Genaro (Piloting 4, Gunnery 4), CN9-D *Centurion*
Sergeant Edward Fitzgibbons (Piloting 5, Gunnery 5), WLF-1 *Wolfhound*
MechWarrior John Kerouac (Piloting 6, Gunnery 5), WLF-1 *Wolfhound*
MechWarrior Cedric Quentin (Piloting 6, Gunnery 5), WLF-1 *Wolfhound*

Deployment

The defenders set up first. The 'Mechs of the Recon Lance may start anywhere on the east half of the **BattleTech** map or the west half of the **CityTech** map. The Command Lance begins in any hexes along the east edge of the **CityTech** map (hex numbers ending in 17). All of the defending 'Mechs begin the scenario facing west.

Victory Conditions

The attackers win a decisive victory if they destroy all of the defending 'Mechs without losing any of their own. They win a marginal victory if they destroy all of the defending 'Mechs but suffer losses in the process.

The defenders win a decisive victory if they destroy all of the attackers. They win a marginal victory if they destroy three or more of the attacking OmniMechs.

Special Rules

The defenders are blocking the way to Wotan's capitol and will fight to the last 'Mech. Therefore, no defending unit may retreat off of the map. Additionally, the defenders are tired and demoralized in the face of the seemingly unstoppable Clan foe. To reflect this, the defending player must add a +1 to-hit modifier to all attacks and subtract 2 from all Initiative rolls.

RACE FOR THE KWAIDAN

EPISODE 4

The Strikers, badly battered from battling the Jade Falcons on Romulus, must stage a fighting retreat to the DropShip *Kwaidan*.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** mapsheets as shown.
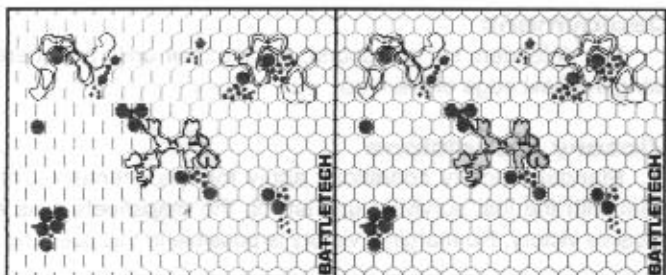
Attacker

The attacker consists of Kristen Redmond's Star.

Falcon Star

Star Captain Kristen Redmond (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2†), *Vulture* Prime

MechWarrior Jentry (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Mad Cat* Prime

MechWarrior Fatha (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Mad Cat* Prime

MechWarrior Korthan (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Vulture* Prime

MechWarrior Damil (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Hunchback* IIC

Deployment

Kristen's *Vulture* stands on the west map, in Hex 0804, facing east. The remaining 'Mechs of her Star are arrayed behind her in any fashion the Clan player desires. None may be in a Woods or Hill hex, and none may be further east than Redmond.

Defender

The defender consists of a detachment of the Somerset Strikers. All are badly damaged and low on ammo. Mark off half the armor (rounding up) on all locations on every 'Mech. All ammunition bins on every 'Mech are stocked with half their full capacity (rounding down). The *Centurion*'s LB 10-X autocannon is loaded with normal ammo (not cluster munitions).

Strikers Lance

Major Adam Steiner (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2), AXM-2N *Axman*

Captain Zachary Miles Hawkins (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), MAL-1R *Mauler*

Captain Valten Ryder (Piloting 3, Gunnery 4), CN9-D *Centurion*

Deployment

All of the Strikers begin the scenario on the east mapsheet. Place the *Centurion* in Hex 0801 facing west. Place the *Axman* in Hex 0702 facing southeast. Place the *Mauler* in Hex 0802 facing east.

Victory Conditions

The attackers win a decisive victory if Kristen Redmond destroys all of the defending 'Mechs without aid from the other 'Mechs in her Star. The attackers win a marginal victory if they destroy all of the defending 'Mechs.

The defenders win a decisive victory if all three 'Mechs escape off the east edge of the mapsheet. They win a marginal victory if one or two 'Mechs escape off the east edge.

Special Rules

Kristen Redmond has declared that she alone will deal with all three Strikers. Therefore, no other Clan 'Mech may fire its weapons or move closer to the defenders than Kristen. This restriction is lifted if Kristen's *Vulture* is destroyed or disabled. The *Vulture* is considered disabled if all of its weapons, both arms, or one or both legs are destroyed; if it shuts down due to overheating; or if Kristen fails a Consciousness roll.

Valten Ryder has decided he will hold off the Clanners while his teammates head for the *Kwaidan*. Therefore, he may not begin to move east until the other two Striker 'Mechs are at least halfway to the edge (Hexrow xx10 or farther). While Val maintains his courageous defensive posture, Kristen will fire only upon his *Centurion*. Once Val begins to retreat, Kristen may fire at any of the Strikers.

BATTLE IN THE SWAMP

EPISODE 7

Star Captain Kristen Redmond outbid Malthus for the honor of destroying the Strikers on Waldorff. To win the bid, however, she cut her forces dangerously low. The following scenario re-creates the battle in Waldorff's swamps.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** mapsheet as shown. All Water hexes are considered Depth 0.

RIVER DELTA/DRAINAGE BASIN #2

N
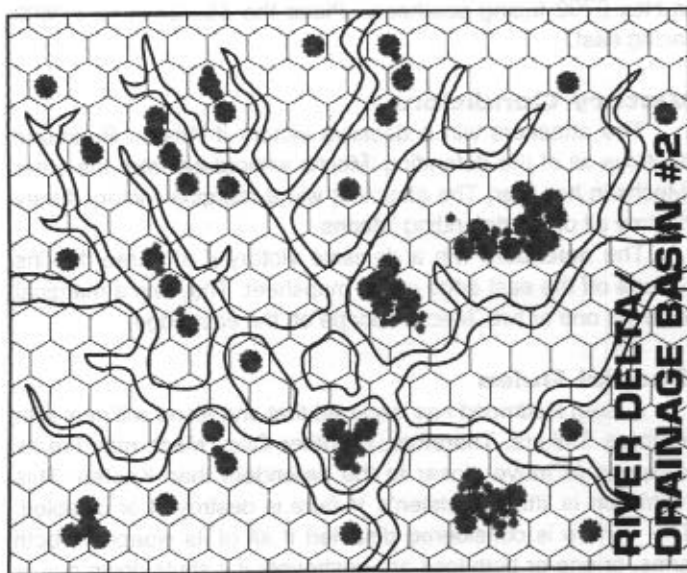
Attacker

The attacker consists of Kristen Redmond in her *Vulture* Prime and two Elementals in battle armor. The *Vulture's* medium pulse lasers have been disabled as part of the bid.

Falcon Star

Star Captain Kristen Redmond (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2†),
Vulture Prime
Point Commander Yartak†, battle armor w/small laser
Elemental Harris†, battle armor w/small laser

Deployment

The attackers set up first, placing their units anywhere along the west edge of the map.

Defender

The defender consists of the 1st Somerset Strikers.

Strikers Lance

Major Adam Steiner (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2),
AWS-9Ma Awesome
Captain Zachary Miles Hawkins (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3),
MAL-1R Mauler
Captain Valten Ryder (Piloting 3, Gunnery 4), *BSW-X1 Bushwacker*
Cadet Katiara Kylie, *IFR-X1 Infiltrator*
Franklin Sakamoto, *SLH-X1 Sloth*

Deployment

The defenders set up second, placing their units anywhere along the east edge of the map.

Victory Conditions

Standard victory conditions apply for this scenario. The team with the last surviving unit left on the mapsheets wins a decisive victory. No marginal victory is possible in this scenario.

Special Rules

Due to the small number of battle armored units available in this scenario, each armored trooper is deployed as a separate unit.

If the players wish to use the rules for **Hostile Environments**, treat all the River hexes as Clear swampy terrain (see p. 91, **BattleTech Compendium: The Rules of Warfare**).

The entire battlefield is covered in thick fog. As a result, attacks against standing 'Mechs suffer a +1 to-hit modifier, while attacks against prone 'Mechs and infantry suffer a +2 to-hit modifier. Clan EI neural implants reduce these penalties by 1. These modifiers do not apply to a target in a hex adjacent to the attacker.

ENEMY OF MY ENEMY

EPISODE 10

The Strikers execute a hot drop onto Apollo, expecting to find Adam's brother Andrew. Instead, they walk into a trap laid by Nicolai Malthus. To further complicate matters, Kristen Redmond arrives with orders from Galaxy Commander Chistu to stop Malthus's renegade activities once and for all.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** mapsheets as shown.

DESERT MOUNTAIN #1   DESERT MOUNTAIN #2

N
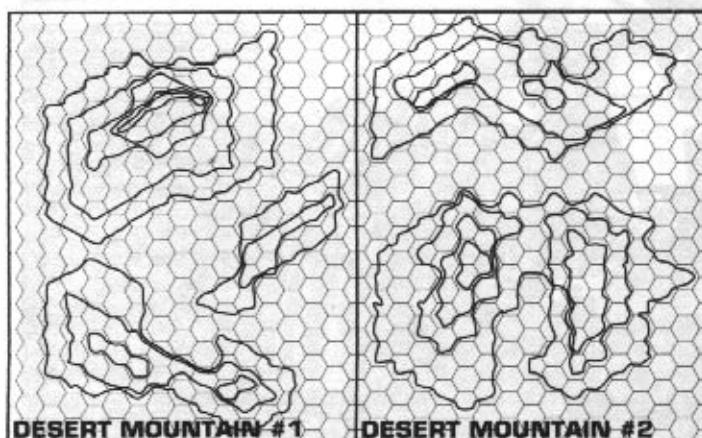
Attacker

The attacker consists of two distinct Clan forces, one led by Malthus and one led by Redmond.

Malthus's Star

Star Colonel Nicolai Malthus (Piloting 2, Gunnery 1†), *Thor* M
MechWarrior Ciro (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4†), *Mad Cat* Prime
MechWarrior Ross (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Hunchback* IIC
MechWarrior Uri (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Hunchback* IIC
MechWarrior Elaine (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Hunchback* IIC

Redmond's Star

Star Colonel Kristen Redmond (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2†),
  Vulture Prime
MechWarrior Pytor (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2†), *Hunchback* IIC
MechWarrior Jentry (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Mad Cat*
  Prime
MechWarrior Elston (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Mad Cat*
  Prime
MechWarrior Althea (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Mad Cat*
  Prime

Deployment

The Clans set up second. Place Malthus's *Thor* in Hex 1412 on the west map. The other 'Mechs of his Star may be placed in any Level 0 hexes within two hexes of the *Thor*. Set up Redmond's Star in the following five hexes of the west map: 0109, 0110, 0111, 0209, and 0210.

Defender

The defender consists of elements of the 1st Somerset Strikers.

Strikers Lance

Major Adam Steiner (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2), AXM-2N
  Axman
Captain Zachary Miles Hawkins (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3),
  MAL-1R *Mauler*
Captain Valten Ryder (Piloting 3, Gunnery 4), BSW-X1
  Bushwacker
Ernest "Patch" McGuire (Drive 9), Packrat Mobile Tactical
  Operations Center

Deployment

The Strikers set up first. Place Adam's *Axman* in Hex 0406 of the east map. The other Striker 'Mechs may be set up in any Level 0 hex within two hexes of the *Axman*. The *Packrat* may begin play in any Level 0 hex on the east map, and need not be placed until after all Clan units have been deployed.

Victory Conditions

Malthus's Star wins a decisive victory if the all of the Strikers' BattleMechs are destroyed without the cooperation of Redmond's Star. They win a marginal victory if the Strikers are destroyed after the two Clan Stars join forces (see **Special Rules,** below).

Redmond's Star wins a decisive victory if Malthus's Star is destroyed before the two units join forces. After that point, the two Clan Stars share a marginal victory if they destroy all the Strikers' 'Mechs.

The Strikers must survive long enough to discover that Andrew is not present on this planet, then make good their escape (see **Special Rules,** below). If all of the Striker units escape off the map after this point, the defenders win a decisive victory. If two or more units escape, they win a marginal victory.

Special Rules

This scenario should be played by three players: one controlling the Strikers, one controlling Malthus's Star, and one controlling Redmond's Star.

The Strikers are trying to locate Adam's brother, who is supposed to be leading the resistance on Apollo. They will eventually discover that he is not present, but they must continue to
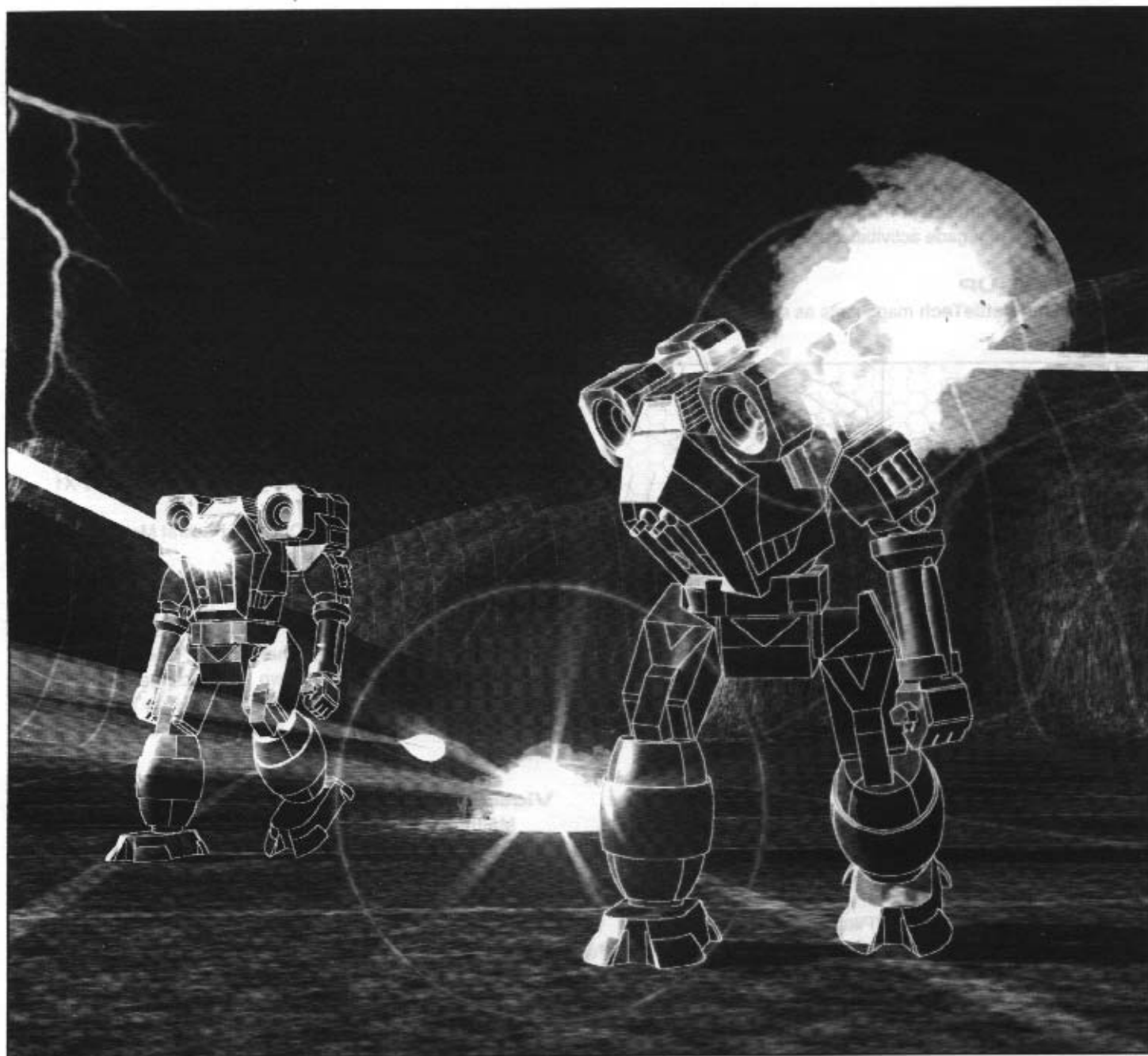
battle the Clan forces until they do. During the End Phase of each turn, the Strikers' player should roll 2D6. If the result is equal to or less than the current turn number, the Strikers may begin to retreat. No Striker unit may leave the map before this time. As luck would have it, they will have to exit the map through the side furthest from their slowest mobile unit. If two sides are equidistant, roll randomly to determine the side off which the Strikers must retreat.

At the beginning of the scenario, Redmond's Star may only attack Malthus's Star. She and her troops have specific orders to bring him in and are not concerned with the Strikers. Eventually, Redmond agrees to join Malthus in hunting down the Strikers. To determine when this happens, the two Clan players should roll 2D6 during the End Phase of each turn, beginning with the first turn in which Redmond's *Vulture* has a line of sight to Malthus's *Thor*. If the results of these die rolls are equal, the two Stars join forces against the Strikers.

Note that Rachel is coordinating the Strikers' efforts from the Packrat. For rules regarding her activities, see **Tactical Operations Center**, p. 100.

CHAOS IN THE JUNGLE

EPISODE 11

The Strikers join forces with ISF agents to free Franklin Sakamoto from captivity on Bensinger IV, only to find themselves once again trapped between two warring factions.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** mapsheets as shown.

HEAVY FOREST #1   HEAVY FOREST #2

N

Attacker

The attacker consists of two distinct groups: a lance of ISF 'Mechs led by Okura and a detachment of the 1st Somerset Strikers.

ISF Lance

Toshiro Okura (Piloting 3, Gunnery 2), CN9-D *Centurion*
ISF MechWarrior (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), CN9-D *Centurion*
ISF MechWarrior (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), CN9-A *Centurion*
ISF MechWarrior (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), CN9-A *Centurion*

1st Somerset Strikers

Major Adam Steiner (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2), AWS-9Ma *Awesome*
Captain Zachary Miles Hawkins (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), MAL-1R *Mauler*
Captain Valten Ryder (Piloting 3, Gunnery 4), BSW-X1 *Bushwacker*
Franklin Sakamoto (Piloting 2, Gunnery 3), HTM-27T *Hatamoto-Chi*

1st Somerset Strikers Air Support

Cadet Katiara Kylie (Piloting 3, Gunnery 4), BSE-X2 *Banshee*

Deployment

Okura's *Centurion* begins in Hex 0109 of the east mapsheet. The other 'Mechs of his lance may be placed in any hexes on the east mapsheet, as long as none of them start play with a line of sight to the *Hatamoto-Chi* or the rebel 'Mechs.

Franklin's *Hatamoto-chi* begins in Hex 1509 of the west

mapsheet. The other Striker 'Mechs may begin in any of the hexes along the east edge of the east mapsheet. For rules regarding Kylie's *Banshee*, see **Special Rules**, below.

Defender

The defender consists of a lance of rebel 'Mechs.

Rebel Lance

Rebel Lance Commander (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), WLF-1 *Wolfhound*
Rebel MechWarrior (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4), WLF-1 *Wolfhound*
Rebel MechWarrior (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4), WLF-1 *Wolfhound*
Rebel MechWarrior (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4), WLF-1 *Wolfhound*

Deployment

Place the four rebel 'Mechs in the following hexes of the West mapsheet: 1407, 1410, 1507, and 1511.

Victory Conditions

The Strikers win a decisive victory if all of their 'Mechs manage to exit the map off the west edge. They win a marginal victory if Franklin's *Hatamoto-Chi* exits the west edge of the map and a combined total of five or more ISF and rebel 'Mechs are destroyed.

The ISF wins a decisive victory if they destroy the *Hatamoto-Chi* and all the rebel 'Mechs. They win a marginal victory if they accomplish one or the other of these objectives.

The rebels win a decisive victory if Franklin's *Hatamoto-Chi* exits the west edge of the map and all the ISF 'Mechs are destroyed. However, this victory is reduced to marginal if the Strikers achieve a decisive victory.

Special Rules

This scenario should be played by three players: one controlling the Strikers, one controlling the ISF, and one controlling the rebels.

If they are available to the players, the rules for **Clearing Woods** and **Fire** should be used in this scenario.

The *Banshee* strafes the rebel 'Mechs just before the beginning of Turn 1. The Strikers player should choose any one rebel 'Mech and attack it with both medium lasers, hitting on an 8 or better. As the battle progresses, the fighter may turn around and strafe the battlefield up to three more times, during the Weapon Attack Phases of Turns 2, 4, and 6. Hit location for all these strafing attacks is resolved as though the attack originated from directly east of the target. After her first strafing run, Kylie may choose to attack either a rebel 'Mech or an ISF 'Mech.

Note that Rachel is coordinating the Strikers' efforts from Adam's *Awesome*. For rules regarding her activities, see **Tactical Operations Center**, p. 100.

THE LIBERATION OF SOMMERSET MILITARY ACADEMY

EPISODE 12

The Strikers finally arrive on Somerset, where they must battle the Clan garrison led by Kristen Redmond. Hawk arms the freed Somerset cadets with weapons, and they then join the fight.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** mapsheets as shown. Place Light buildings in Hexes 0606, 0608, 0610, 1006, 1008, and 1010 of the **CityTech** mapsheet. Place a Medium building in Hex 0806 of the **CityTech** mapsheet. Consider all unmarked Water hexes Depth 1.
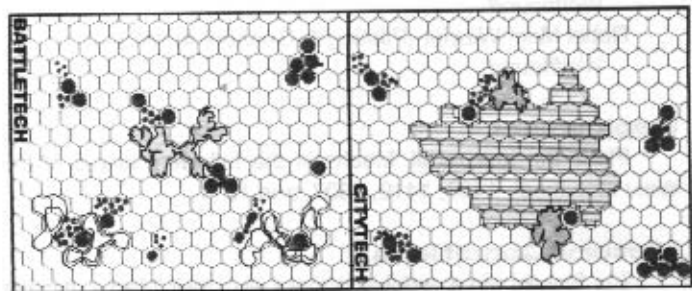
Attacker

The attacker consists of elements of the 1st Somerset Strikers, plus the cadets of the Somerset Military Academy.

Strikers Lance

Major Adam Steiner (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2), AWS-9Ma *Awesome*
Captain Zachary Miles Hawkins (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), MAL-1R *Mauler*
Captain Valten Ryder (Piloting 3, Gunnery 4), BSW-X1 *Bushwacker*
Cadet Katiara Kylie, IFR-X1 *Infiltrator*

Strikers Air Support

Franklin Sakamoto (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), BSE-X2 *Banshee*

Somerset Cadet Corps

Commander Andrew Steiner (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), AXM-2N *Axman*
Foot Infantry Platoon A1, Portable Lasers
Foot Infantry Platoon A2, Portable Lasers
Foot Infantry Platoon A3, Portable Lasers
Foot Infantry Platoon B1, Portable Lasers
Foot Infantry Platoon B2, Portable Lasers
Foot Infantry Platoon B3, Portable Lasers

Deployment

The Strikers set up after the Clan units are deployed. Place Hawk's *Mauler* in Hex 0812 of the **CityTech** mapsheet. Place one infantry platoon in each of the six hexes surrounding the *Mauler*. The remainder of the Strikers' ground forces, including the *Axman*, begin play on any hexes along the west edge of the **CityTech** mapsheet. See **Special Rules**, below, for rules regarding the *Banshee*.

Defender

The defender consists of elements of the Jade Falcon garrison of Somerset.

Redmond's Star

Star Colonel Kristen Redmond (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2†), *Vulture* Prime
MechWarrior Pytor (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2†), *Hunchback* IIC
MechWarrior Jentry (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Mad Cat* Prime
MechWarrior Elston (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Mad Cat* Prime
MechWarrior Althea (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Mad Cat* Prime

Somerset Garrison Infantry

Elemental Point†, Small Lasers
Foot Infantry Platoon, Portable Lasers

Deployment

The Clan forces set up first. The Point of Elementals begins play inside the Medium building in Hex 0806 of the **CityTech** mapsheet. Place the foot infantry platoon in hex 0808 of the **CityTech** mapsheet. Redmond's Star begins in any of the hexes along the east edge of the **CityTech** mapsheet.

Victory Conditions

The Strikers must destroy all of the Clan forces to retake Somerset Military Academy and proceed to the second part of the scenario (see **Malthus Attacks**, p. 111). If they fail, the Clans maintain control of Somerset.

Special Rules

The *Banshee* strafes the Clan units just before the beginning of Turn 1. The Strikers' player should choose one Clan unit and attack it with both medium lasers, hitting on a 7 or better. As the battle progresses, the fighter may turn around and strafe the battlefield up to three more times during the Weapon Attack Phases of Turns 2, 4, and 6. Resolve hit locations for all these attacks as though the attack originated from directly west of the target.

The Strikers benefit from an ecstatic level of morale during this scenario. Apply a +1 bonus to all to-hit, piloting, and Initiative rolls. Note that this bonus allows the Strikers to roll a 13, making otherwise impossible shots possible. This bonus is lost if Adam's 'Mech is destroyed.

Note that Rachel is coordinating the Strikers' efforts from Adam's *Awesome*. For rules regarding her activities, see **Tactical Operations Center**, p. 100.

MALTHUS ATTACKS

EPISODE 13

Soon after the Strikers liberate the Academy, Malthus's troops arrive to take it back.

Attacker

The attacker consists of elements of the Falcon's Claws.

Command Star

Star Colonel Nicolai Malthus (Piloting 2, Gunnery 1†), *Thor* M
MechWarrior Ciro (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4†), *Mad Cat* Prime
MechWarrior Ross (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Hunchback* IIC
MechWarrior Uri (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Vulture* Prime
MechWarrior Elaine (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3†), *Vulture* Prime

Elemental Star

Star Commander Natalya†, four additional Elementals
Elemental Point†
Elemental Point†
Elemental Point†
Elemental Point†

Deployment

Malthus's forces enter from the west edge of the **BattleTech** mapsheet.

Defender

The defender consists of whatever forces remain from the previous scenario (see **The Liberation of Somerset Military Academy**, p. 110). If Kylie survived the previous battle, she will switch to a *Banshee* fighter for this scenario. Franklin will pilot a Sloth battlesuit in this scenario.

Between battles the Strikers are able to reload ammunition, and can arm an additional three platoons of infantry before Malthus arrives. No other repairs are possible.

Strikers Replacements

Cadet Katiara Kylie (Piloting 3, Gunnery 4), BSE-X2 *Banshee*
Franklin Sakamoto, SLH-X1 *Sloth*
Foot Infantry Platoon C1, Portable Lasers
Foot Infantry Platoon C2, Portable Lasers
Foot Infantry Platoon C3, Portable Lasers

Deployment

All units begin this scenario in the same position they occupied at the end of the previous scenario. Place Franklin's Sloth in the position the Infiltrator occupied. Place the three new platoons of infantry in any three Light buildings of the Strikers player's choice.

Victory Conditions

The Strikers must destroy all of the Clan forces to take back Somerset and win a decisive victory.

The Clan forces win a decisive victory if they destroy all of the Strikers' units. They win a marginal victory if Adam Steiner is killed.

At any time during the battle, either player can call for a Trial of Possession for Somerset. Both players must aggree to the trial, and the winner will win the scenario. This trial must be a single combat between Malthus and Adam; no other units from either side may interfere, and Rachel must leave Adam's 'Mech, eliminating the TOC bonuses. If either Malthus's or Adam's 'Mech is destroyed before a trial can be called, no trial can take place and so standard victory conditions apply.

Special Rules

The *Banshee* strafes the Clan units just before the beginning of Turn 1. The Strikers player should choose one Clan unit and attack it with both medium lasers, hitting on a 6 or better. As the battle progresses, the fighter may turn around and strafe the battlefield up to three more times, during the Weapon Attack Phases of Turns 2, 4, and 6. Resolve hit locations for all these attacks as though the attack originated from directly east of the target.

The Strikers benefit from an ecstatic level of morale during this scenario. Apply a +1 bonus to all to-hit, piloting, and Initiative rolls. Note that this bonus allows the Strikers to roll a 13, making otherwise impossible shots possible. This bonus is lost if Adam's 'Mech is destroyed.

Malthus is bent on destroying Adam, but he thinks that Adam is piloting the *Axman*. Malthus will attack only the *Axman* until it is destroyed or the pilot ejects. After that, Malthus will take on the *Awesome*.

Note that Rachel is coordinating the Strikers' efforts from Adam's *Awesome*. For rules regarding her activities, see **Tactical Operations Center**, p. 100.

CHARACTER STATISTICS

The following are **MechWarrior, Second Edition**, game statistics for the major characters in the BattleTech animated show.

ADAM STEINER

Attributes			Characteristics	
BLD	4	(8+)	Athletic	9+
REF	5	(7+)	Physical	8+
INT	5	(7+)	Mental	7+
LRN	6	(6+)	Social	7+
CHA	6	(6+)		

Edge: 6

Skills

Administration	1	(6+)
Bureaucracy	1	(6+)
Gunnery/Aerospace	3	(5+)
Gunnery/BattleMech	6	(2+)
Leadership	2	(5+)
Medtech	1	(6+)
Perception	1	(6+)
Piloting/Aerospace	3	(5+)
Piloting/BattleMech	6	(2+)
Protocol	2	(5+)
SI: Military History	2	(5+)
Small Arms	2	(6+)
Stealth	1	(7+)
Strategy	3	(4+)
Survival	1	(8+)
Tactics	6	(1+)
Technician/Aerospace	1	(6+)
Technician/BattleMech	2	(5+)
Training	4	(3+)
Unarmed Combat	3	(6+)

VALTEN RYDER

Attributes			Characteristics	
BLD	5	(7+)	Athletic	8+
REF	5	(7+)	Physical	9+
INT	4	(8+)	Mental	10+
LRN	4	(8+)	Social	9+
CHA	5	(7+)		

Edge: 3

Skills

Appraisal	1	(9+)
Blade	2	(6+)
Computer	1	(9+)
Cryptography	1	(9+)
Demolitions	2	(8+)
Disguise	2	(7+)
Drive	2	(7+)
Escape Artist	1	(8+)
Gambling	3	(7+)
Gunnery/BattleMech	5	(4+)
Gunnery/Conventional	2	(7+)
Medtech	1	(9+)
Negotiation	2	(7+)
Perception	3	(7+)
Piloting/BattleMech	4	(5+)
Quickdraw	3	(6+)
Running	3	(5+)
Scrounge	2	(7+)
Security Systems	1	(9+)
Seduction	1	(8+)
Small Arms	3	(6+)
Stealth	1	(8+)
Streetwise	4	(5+)
Throwing Weapons	2	(7+)
Tracking	1	(9+)
Unarmed Combat	1	(7+)

RACHEL SPECTER

Attributes

BLD	3	(9+)
REF	4	(8+)
INT	6	(6+)
LRN	5	(7+)
CHA	4	(8+)

Characteristics

Athletic	11+
Physical	8+
Mental	7+
Social	8+

Edge: 4

Skills

Administration	3	(4+)
Bureaucracy	1	(7+)
Communications/		
Conventional	5	(2+)
Computer	4	(3+)
Cryptography	2	(5+)
Drive	3	(5+)
Gunnery/Aerospace	2	(6+)
Gunnery/BattleMech	4	(4+)
Gunnery/Conventional	3	(5+)
Leadership	1	(7+)
Medtech	2	(5+)
Navigation	1	(6+)
Perception	4	(3+)
Piloting/Aerospace	2	(6+)
Piloting/BattleMech	3	(5+)
Protocol	1	(7+)
Security Systems	1	(6+)
Small Arms	1	(7+)
Strategy	2	(5+)
Survival	1	(6+)
Tactics	4	(3+)
Technician/BattleMech	1	(6+)
Training	2	(6+)
Unarmed Combat	1	(10+)

CIRO RAMIREZ

Attributes

BLD	3	(9+)
REF	5	(7+)
INT	4	(8+)
LRN	4	(8+)
CHA	3	(9+)

Characteristics

Athletic	10+
Physical	9+
Mental	10+
Social	11+

Advantages

Title: Baronet (Heir)
Enhanced-Imaging Neural Implant (after capture by Clans)

Edge: None

Skills

Bureaucracy	3	(8+)
Gunnery/BattleMech	5	(4+)
Interrogation	2	(9+)
Leadership	2	(9+)
Medtech	1	(9+)
Piloting/BattleMech	4	(5+)
Protocol	3	(8+)
SI: Military History	4	(6+)
Small Arms	3	(6+)
Strategy	2	(8+)
Survival	1	(9+)
Tactics	4	(6+)
Training	2	(9+)
Unarmed Combat	2	(8+)

KATIARA KYLIE

Attributes			Characteristics	
BLD	3	(9+)	Athletic	9+
REF	6	(6+)	Physical	8+
INT	4	(8+)	Mental	11+
LRN	3	(9+)	Social	10+
CHA	4	(8+)		

Advantages
Natural Aptitude: Piloting/Aerospace

Edge: 2

Skills
Gunnery/Aerospace	4	(4+)
Gunnery/BattleMech	3	(5+)
Medtech	1	(10+)
Piloting/Aerospace	5	(3+)*
Piloting/BattleMech	2	(6+)
Small Arms	1	(7+)
Survival	1	(10+)
Swimming	1	(8+)
Tactics	1	(10+)
Technician/Aerospace	2	(9+)
Unarmed Combat	1	(8+)

FRANKLIN SAKAMOTO

Attributes			Characteristics	
BLD	4	(8+)	Athletic	8+
REF	6	(6+)	Physical	7+
INT	5	(7+)	Mental	8+
LRN	5	(7+)	Social	8+
CHA	5	(7+)		

Advantages
Title: Coordinator (Heir, renounced)

Edge: 2

Skills
Acrobatics	1	(7+)
Administration	4	(4+)
Appraisal	3	(5+)
Archery	2	(6+)
Blade	4	(4+)
Bureaucracy	3	(5+)
Communications/Conventional	1	(7+)
Computer	1	(7+)
Demolitions	2	(6+)
Drive	2	(5+)
Gunnery/Aerospace	4	(3+)
Gunnery/BattleMech	5	(2+)
Leadership	2	(6+)
Medtech	1	(7+)
Navigation	1	(7+)
Negotiation	2	(6+)
Perception	2	(6+)
Piloting/Aerospace	3	(4+)
Piloting/BattleMech	5	(2+)
Protocol	4	(4+)
Quickdraw	2	(5+)
Small Arms	2	(5+)
Strategy	1	(7+)
Tactics	2	(6+)
Technician/Aerospace	1	(7+)
Technician/BattleMech	2	(6+)
Unarmed Combat	3	(5+)

JEROEN FRESTADT

Attributes

BLD	4	(8+)
REF	5	(7+)
INT	5	(7+)
LRN	5	(7+)
CHA	4	(8+)

Characteristics

Athletic	9+
Physical	8+
Mental	8+
Social	9+

Edge: None

Skills

Administration	2	(6+)
Bureaucracy	3	(6+)
Climbing	2	(7+)
Communications/		
Conventional	3	(5+)
Computer	2	(6+)
Cryptography	3	(5+)
Demolitions	3	(5+)
Disguise	1	(7+)
Gunnery/Spacecraft	4	(4+)
Interrogation	2	(7+)
Medtech	1	(7+)
Navigation	6	(2+)
Perception	3	(5+)
Piloting/Spacecraft	5	(3+)
Protocol	2	(7+)
Security Systems	4	(4+)
Small Arms	5	(3+)
Stealth	5	(3+)
Streetwise	4	(5+)
Survival	2	(6+)
Swimming	2	(7+)
Tactics	1	(7+)
Technician/Spacecraft	2	(6+)
Tracking	3	(5+)
Unarmed Combat	4	(5+)

DR. DEIRDRE NAKAMURA

Attributes

BLD	2	(10+)
REF	4	(8+)
INT	5	(7+)
LRN	6	(6+)
CHA	4	(8+)

Characteristics

Athletic	12+
Physical	9+
Mental	7+
Social	9+

Edge: None

Skills

Acrobatics	3	(9+)
Administration	2	(5+)
Bureaucracy	1	(8+)
CS: Doctor	4	(3+)
Computer	2	(5+)
Drive	2	(7+)
Medtech	6	(1+)
Perception	2	(5+)
Protocol	2	(7+)
Survival	3	(4+)
Training	1	(8+)
Unarmed Combat	5	(7+)

ERNEST "PATCH" MCGUIRE

Attributes

			Characteristics	
BLD	5	(7+)	Athletic	10+
REF	3	(9+)	Physical	11+
INT	4	(8+)	Mental	9+
LRN	5	(7+)	Social	11+
CHA	3	(9+)		

Advantages
Natural Aptitude: Tinker

Edge: None

Skills

Communications/		
Conventional	3	(6+)
Computer	3	(6+)
Demolitions	1	(8+)
Drive	2	(9+)
Engineering	4	(5+)
Medtech	1	(8+)
Scrounge	2	(9+)
Security Systems	4	(5+)
Small Arms	2	(9+)
Support Weapons	2	(9+)
Technician/Aerospace	5	(4+)
Technician/BattleMech	6	(3+)
Technician/Mechanic	5	(4+)
Technician/Spacecraft	4	(5+)
Tinker	4	(5+)*

ANDREW STEINER

Attributes

			Characteristics	
BLD	5	(7+)	Athletic	8+
REF	5	(7+)	Physical	8+
INT	5	(7+)	Mental	8+
LRN	5	(7+)	Social	8+
CHA	5	(7+)		

Edge: None

Skills

Administration	1	(7+)
Blade	2	(6+)
Bureaucracy	2	(6+)
Computer	1	(7+)
Gunnery/BattleMech	5	(3+)
Interrogation	2	(6+)
Leadership	3	(5+)
Medtech	2	(6+)
Perception	1	(7+)
Piloting/BattleMech	4	(4+)
Protocol	1	(7+)
Small Arms	2	(6+)
Strategy	1	(7+)
Survival	2	(6+)
Tactics	3	(5+)
Technician/BattleMech	2	(6+)
Training	1	(7+)
Unarmed Combat	2	(6+)

NICOLAI MALTHUS

Attributes

BLD	6	(6+)
REF	6	(6+)
INT	5	(7+)
LRN	5	(7+)
CHA	5	(7+)

Characteristics

Athletic	6+
Physical	7+
Mental	8+
Social	8+

Advantages
Enhanced-Imaging Neural Implant

Edge: None

Skills

Gunnery/BattleMech	6	(1+)
Interrogation	3	(5+)
Leadership	2	(6+)
Medtech	1	(7+)
Perception	1	(7+)
Piloting/BattleMech	5	(2+)
Small Arms	2	(5+)
Strategy	1	(7+)
Survival	1	(7+)
Tactics	3	(5+)
Technician/BattleMech	2	(6+)
Unarmed Combat	1	(5+)

KRISTEN REDMOND

Attributes

BLD	5	(7+)
REF	6	(6+)
INT	5	(7+)
LRN	4	(8+)
CHA	4	(8+)

Characteristics

Athletic	7+
Physical	7+
Mental	9+
Social	9+

Advantages
Enhanced-Imaging Neural Implant

Edge: None

Skills

Computer	2	(7+)
Gunnery/BattleMech	5	(2+)
Interrogation	2	(7+)
Leadership	3	(6+)
Medtech	1	(8+)
Perception	2	(7+)
Piloting/BattleMech	5	(2+)
Small Arms	2	(5+)
Survival	1	(8+)
Tactics	3	(6+)
Technician/BattleMech	4	(5+)
Unarmed Combat	1	(6+)

PYTOR

NATALYA

PYTOR

Attributes

BLD	5	(7+)
REF	4	(8+)
INT	6	(6+)
LRN	5	(7+)
CHA	3	(9+)

Characteristics

Athletic	9+
Physical	8+
Mental	7+
Social	9+

Advantages
Enhanced-Imaging Neural Implant

Edge: None

Skills

Demolitions	1	(6+)
Gunnery/BattleMech	6	(2+)
Interrogation	1	(8+)
Leadership	2	(7+)
Medtech	2	(5+)
Perception	3	(4+)
Piloting/BattleMech	6	(2+)
Small Arms	3	(5+)
Strategy	2	(5+)
Survival	2	(5+)
Tactics	3	(4+)
Technician/BattleMech	3	(4+)
Training	2	(7+)
Unarmed Combat	2	(7+)

NATALYA

Attributes

BLD	7	(5+)
REF	5	(7+)
INT	4	(8+)
LRN	3	(9+)
CHA	3	(9+)

Characteristics

Athletic	6+
Physical	9+
Mental	11+
Social	11+

Advantages
Enhanced-Imaging Neural Implant
Toughness

Edge: None

Skills

Blade	1	(5+)
Demolitions	3	(8+)
Gunnery/Battle Armor	5	(4+)
Interrogation	3	(8+)
Leadership	1	(10+)
Medtech	1	(10+)
Perception	1	(10+)
Piloting/Battle Armor	4	(5+)
Small Arms	2	(7+)
Survival	1	(10+)
Swimming	1	(5+)
Tactics	1	(10+)
Technician/Battle Armor	2	(9+)
Unarmed Combat	3	(3+)

HARDWARE STATISTICS

BattleTech and MechWarrior game statistics for the BattleMechs and other equipment in the animated show appear below.

CLAN 'MECHS

HUNCHBACK
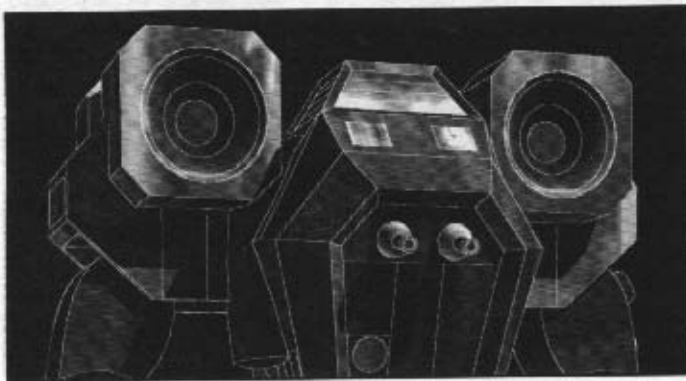
Type: **Hunchback IIC**
Technology Base: Clan
Tonnage: 50

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure: Endo Steel	2.5
Engine: 200 XL	4.5
Walking MP: 4	
Running MP: 6	
Jumping MP: 4	
Heat Sinks: 12 [24]	2
Gyro:	2
Cockpit:	3
Armor Factor: 96	6

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	8
Center Torso	16	18
Center Torso (rear)		4
R/L Torso	12	12
R/L Torso (rear)		3
R/L Arm	8	6
R/L Leg	12	12

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
Ultra AC/20	RT	8	12
Ammo (AC) 5	RT	1	1
ER Medium Laser	CT	1	1
ER Medium Laser	CT	1	1
Ultra AC/20	LT	8	12
Ammo (AC) 5	LT	1	1
Jump Jets	RL	2	1
Jump Jets	LL	2	1

MAD CAT
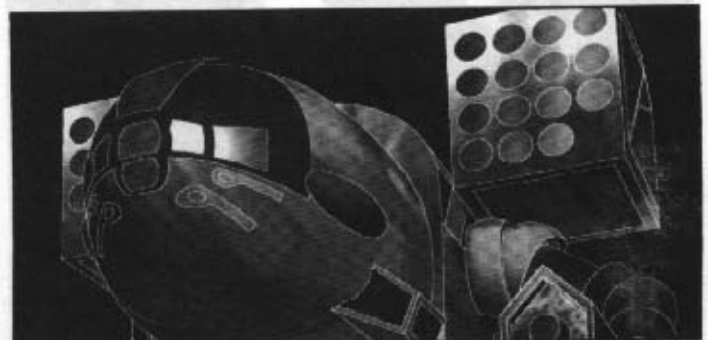
Type: **Mad Cat Prime**
Technology Base: Clan OmniMech
Tonnage: 75

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure: Endo Steel	4
Engine: 375 XL	19.5
Walking MP: 5	
Running MP: 8	
Jumping MP: 0	
Heat Sinks: 17 [34]	7
Gyro:	4
Cockpit:	3
Armor Factor: 230	12

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	23	36
Center Torso (rear)		9
R/L Torso	16	25
R/L Torso (rear)		7
R/L Arm	12	24
R/L Leg	16	32

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
Machine Gun	CT	1	0.25
ER Large Laser	LA	1	4
ER Medium Laser	LA	1	1
Medium Pulse Laser	LT	1	2
LRM 20	LT	4	5
Ammo (LRM) 6	LT	1	1
ER Large Laser	RA	1	4
ER Medium Laser	RA	1	1
Machine Gun	RT	1	0.25
Ammo (MG) 200	RT	1	1
LRM 20	RT	4	5
Ammo (LRM) 6	RT	1	1
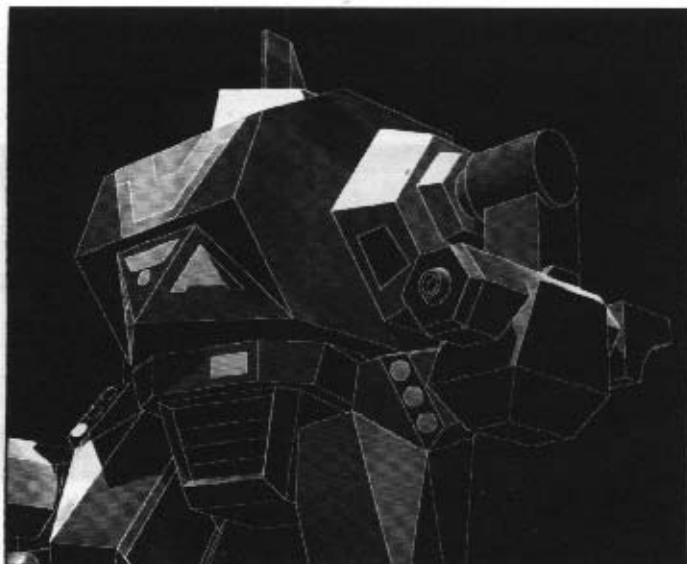
THOR

Type: **Thor M**
Technology Base: Clan OmniMech
Tonnage: 70

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure:	7
Engine: 350 XL	15
Walking MP: 5	
Running MP: 8	
Jumping MP: 5	
Heat Sinks: 14 [28]	4
Gyro:	4
Cockpit:	3
Armor Factor: 182	9.5

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	22	27
Center Torso (rear)		8
R/L Torso	15	22
R/L Torso (rear)		7
R/L Arm	11	17
R/L Leg	15	23

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
LB 10-X AC	LA	5	10
Ammo (LB-X) 10	LA	1	1
Streak SRM 6	LT	2	3
Ammo (SRM) 30	RT	2	2
ER PPC	RA	2	6
Jump Jet	CT	1	1
Jump Jets	RL	2	2
Jump Jets	LL	2	2

VULTURE
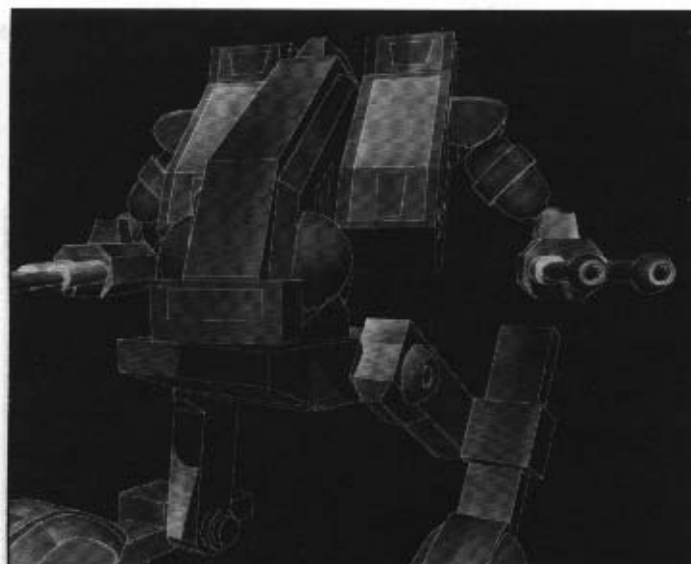
Type: **Vulture Prime**
Technology Base: Clan OmniMech
Tonnage: 60

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure:	6
Engine: 300 XL	9.5
Walking MP: 5	
Running MP: 8	
Jumping MP: 0	
Heat Sinks: 12 [24]	2
Gyro:	3
Cockpit:	3
Armor Factor: 163	8.5

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	20	23
Center Torso (rear)		7
R/L Torso	14	16
R/L Torso (rear)		7
R/L Arm	10	16
R/L Leg	14	23

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
Large Pulse Laser	LA	2	6
Medium Pulse Laser	LA	1	2
LRM 20	LT	4	5
Ammo (LRM) 6	LT	1	1
Large Pulse Laser	RA	2	6
Medium Pulse Laser	RA	1	2
LRM 20	RT	4	5
Ammo (LRM) 6	RT	1	1

INNER SPHERE BATTLEMECHS
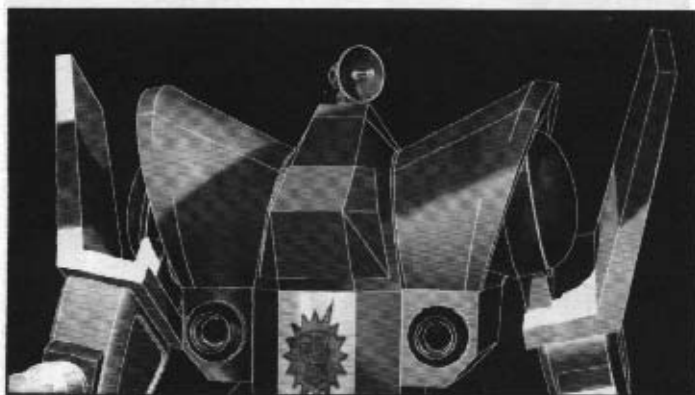
AWESOME

Type: **AWS-9Ma Awesome**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 80

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure:	8
Engine: 320 XL	11.5
Walking MP: 4	
Running MP: 6	
Jumping MP: 0	
Heat Sinks: 20 [40]	10
Gyro:	4
Cockpit:	3
Armor Factor: 247	15.5

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	25	30
Center Torso (rear)		20
R/L Torso	17	24
R/L Torso (rear)		10
R/L Arm	13	26
R/L Leg	17	34

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
ER PPC	RA	3	7
ER PPC	RT	3	7
ER PPC	LT	3	7
Small Laser	LA	1	0.5
Guardian ECM Suite*	LA	2	1.5
Command Console*	H	1	5
Command Console Sensors*	CT	1	—

*The Command Console (including the ECM Suite) is installed during Episode 11. For rules on the use of this Level 3 piece of equipment, see **Tactical Operations Center**, page 100.
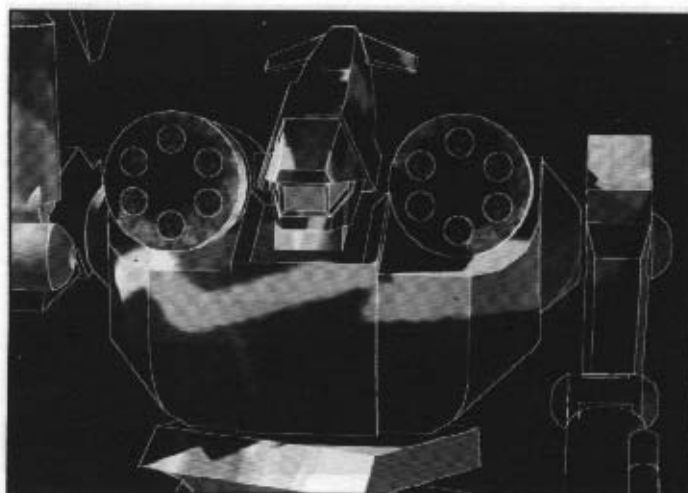
AXMAN

Type: **AXM-2N Axman**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 65

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure:	6.5
Engine: 260 XL	7
Walking MP: 4	
Running MP: 6	
Jumping MP: 4	
Heat Sinks: 10 [20]	0
Gyro:	3
Cockpit:	3
Armor Factor: 179	10

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	21	28
Center Torso (rear)		6
R/L Torso	15	21
R/L Torso (rear)		6
R/L Arm	10	17
R/L Leg	15	24

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
LRM 15	RT	3	7
LRM 15	LT	3	7
Ammo (LRM) 16	LT	2	2
CASE	LT	1	0.5
Medium Laser	RA	1	1
Medium Laser	RA	1	1
Medium Laser	RA	1	1
Large Pulse Laser	LA	2	7
Hatchet	RA	5	5
Jump Jets	RL	2	2
Jump Jets	LL	2	2
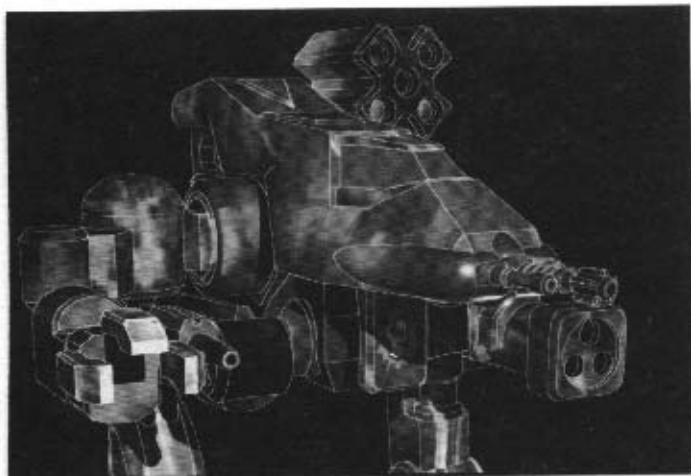
BUSHWACKER

Type: **BSW-X1 Bushwacker**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 55

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure:	5.5
Engine: 275 XL	8
Walking MP: 5	
Running MP: 8	
Jumping MP: 0	
Heat Sinks: 11 [22]	1
Gyro:	3
Cockpit:	3
Armor Factor: 161	9

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	18	26
Center Torso (rear)		8
R/L Torso	13	22
R/L Torso (rear)		4
R/L Arm	9	11
R/L Leg	13	22

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
AC/10	RA	7	12
Ammo (AC) 10	RT	1	1
LRM 5	LA	1	2
ER Large Laser	CT	2	5
Machine Gun	RT	1	0.5
Machine Gun	LT	1	0.5
Ammo (MG) 100	RT	1	0.5
CASE	RT	1	0.5
LRM 5	LT	1	2
Ammo (LRM) 24	LT	1	1
CASE	LT	1	0.5

CENTURION
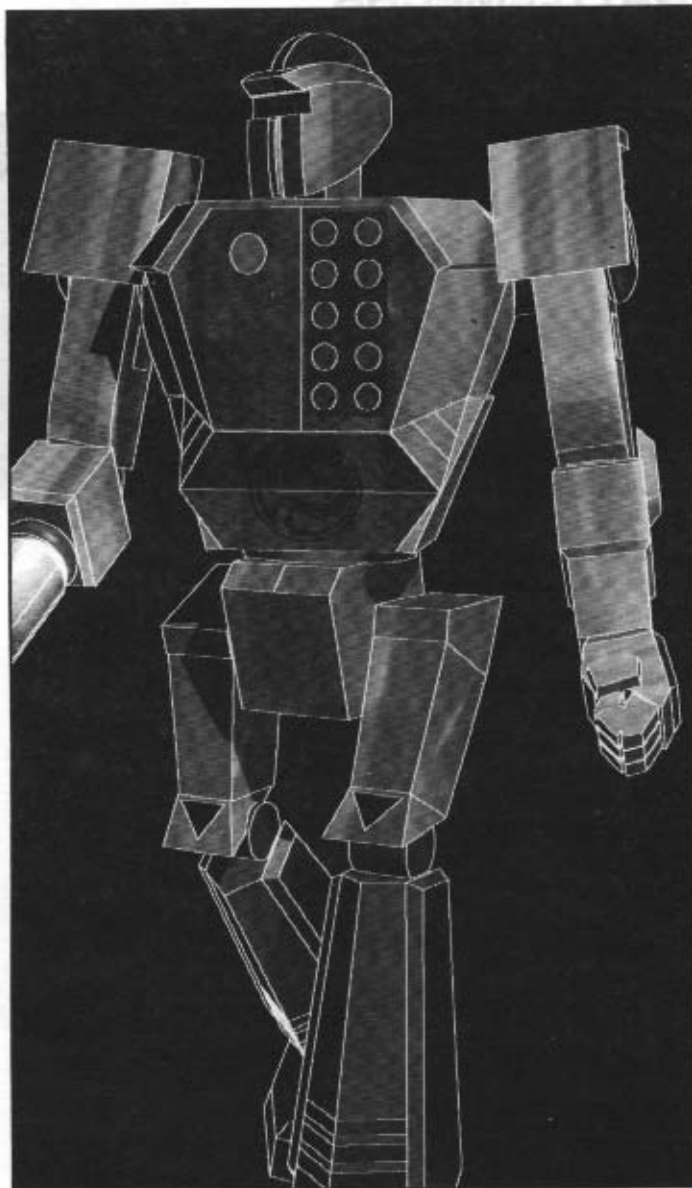
Type: **CN9-A Centurion**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 50

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure:	5
Engine: 200	8.5
Walking MP: 4	
Running MP: 6	
Jumping MP: 0	
Heat Sinks: 10	0
Gyro:	2
Cockpit:	3
Armor Factor: 136	8.5

CENTURION (CONTINUED)

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	16	18
Center Torso (rear)		7
R/L Torso	12	13
R/L Torso (rear)		6
R/L Arm	8	16
R/L Leg	12	16

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
AC/10	RA	7	12
Ammo (AC) 20	RA	2	2
LRM 10	LT	2	5
Ammo (LRM) 24	LT	2	2
Medium Laser	CT	1	1
Medium Laser	CT (R)	1	1

Type: **CN9-D Centurion (upgraded version)**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 50

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure: Endo Steel	2.5
Engine: 300 XL	9.5
Walking MP: 6	
Running MP: 9	
Jumping MP: 0	
Heat Sinks: 10	0
Gyro:	3
Cockpit:	3
Armor Factor: 136	8.5

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	16	18
Center Torso (rear)		7
R/L Torso	12	13
R/L Torso (rear)		6
R/L Arm	8	16
R/L Leg	12	16

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
LB 10-X AC	RA	6	11
Ammo (LB-X) 20	RT	2	2
CASE	RT	1	0.5
LRM 10	LT	2	5
Ammo (LRM) 24	RT	2	2
Artemis IV FCS	LT	1	1
Medium Laser	CT	1	1
Medium Laser	CT (R)	1	1

HATAMOTO-CHI
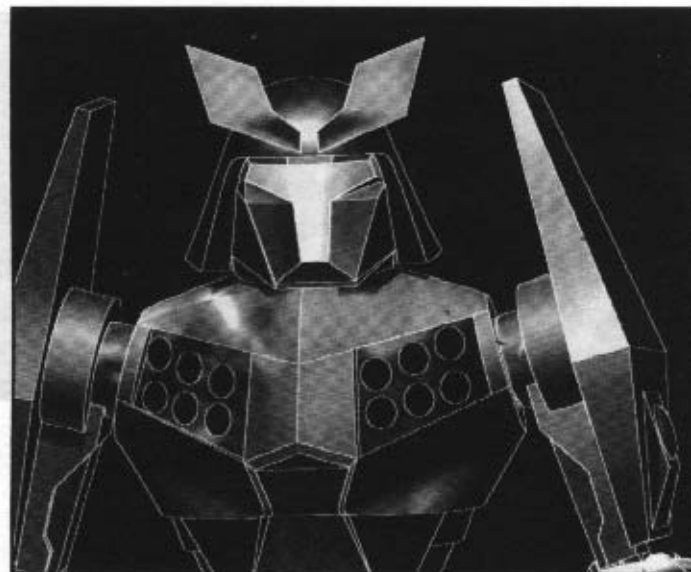
Type: **HTM-27T Hatamoto-Chi**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 80

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure: Endo Steel	4
Engine: 320	22.5
Walking MP: 4	
Running MP: 6	
Jumping MP: 0	
Heat Sinks: 18	8
Gyro:	4
Cockpit:	3
Armor Factor: 247	15.5

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	25	34
Center Torso (rear)		16
R/L Torso	17	25
R/L Torso (rear)		9
R/L Arm	13	26
R/L Leg	17	34

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
PPC	RA	3	7
PPC	LA	3	7
SRM 6	RT	2	3
Ammo (SRM) 15	RT	1	1
CASE	RT	1	0.5
SRM 6	LT	2	3
Ammo (SRM) 15	LT	1	1
CASE	LT	1	0.5
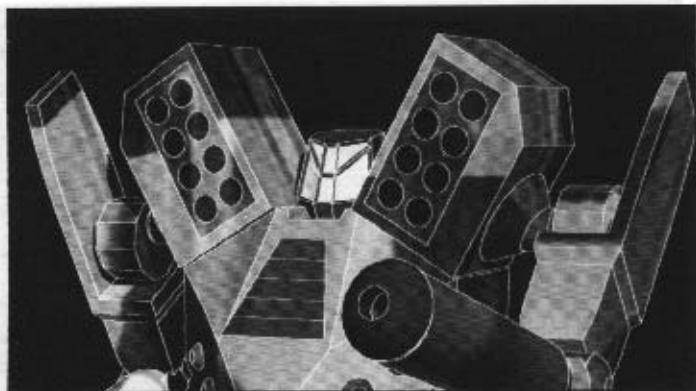
MAULER

Type: **MAL-1R Mauler**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 90

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure:	9
Engine: 270 XL	7.5
Walking MP: 3	
Running MP: 5	
Jumping MP: 0	
Heat Sinks: 11 [22]	1
Gyro:	3
Cockpit:	3
Armor Factor: 206	11.5

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	29	27
Center Torso (rear)		10
R/L Torso	19	26
R/L Torso (rear)		10
R/L Arm	15	22
R/L Leg	19	22

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
ER Large Laser	RA	2	5
ER Large Laser	LA	2	5
LRM 15	RT	3	7
Ammo (LRM) 16	RT	2	2
CASE	RT	1	0.5
LRM 15	LT	3	7
Ammo (LRM) 16	LT	2	2
CASE	LT	1	0.5
AC/2	RT	1	6
AC/2	RT	1	6
Ammo (AC) 45	RT	1	1
AC/2	LT	1	6
AC/2	LT	1	6
Ammo (AC) 45	LT	1	1

WOLFHOUND

Type: **WLF-1 Wolfhound**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 35

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure:	3.5
Engine: 210	9
Walking MP: 6	
Running MP: 9	
Jumping MP: 0	
Heat Sinks: 10	0
Gyro:	3
Cockpit:	3
Armor Factor: 119	7.5

WOLFHOUND (CONTINUED)

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	11	16
Center Torso (rear)		6
R/L Torso	8	11
R/L Torso (rear)		5
R/L Arm	6	12
R/L Leg	8	16

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
Large Laser	RA	2	5
Medium Laser	CT	1	1
Medium Laser	CT (R)	1	1
Medium Laser	RT	1	1
Medium Laser	LT	1	1

Type: **WLF-2 Wolfhound (upgraded version)**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 35

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure:	3.5
Engine: 210	9
Walking MP: 6	
Running MP: 9	
Jumping MP: 0	
Heat Sinks: 10 [20]	0
Gyro:	3
Cockpit:	3
Armor Factor: 119	7.5

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	11	16
Center Torso (rear)		6
R/L Torso	8	11
R/L Torso (rear)		5
R/L Arm	6	12
R/L Leg	8	16

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
ER Large Laser	RA	2	5
Medium Laser	CT	1	1
Medium Laser	CT (R)	1	1
Medium Laser	RT	1	1
Medium Laser	LT	1	1

VEHICLES

ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER
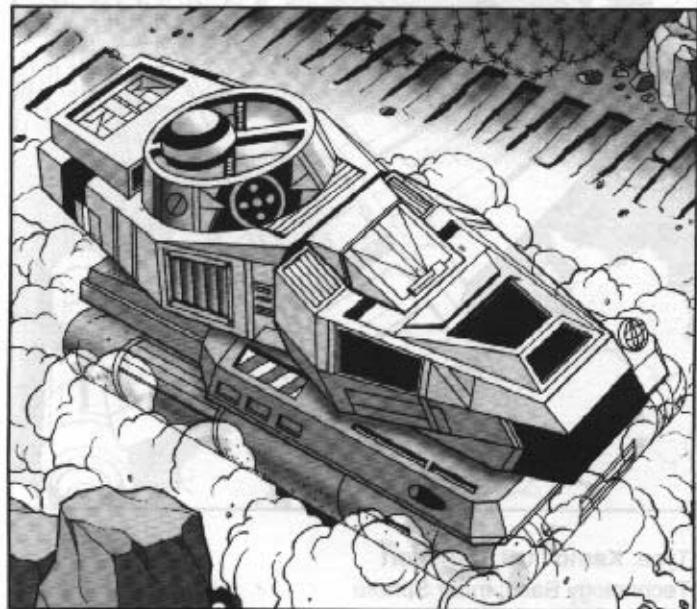
Type: **Hover APC**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Movement Type: Hover
Tonnage: 10

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure:	1
Engine: 60	3
Type: I.C.E.	
Cruising MP: 10	
Flank MP: 15	
Heat Sinks: 0	0
Control Equipment:	0.5
Lift Equipment:	1
Power Amplifier:	0
Turret:	0.5
Armor Factor: 24	1.5

	Armor Value
Front	5
R/L Side	5/5
Rear	4
Turret	5

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Tonnage
Machine Gun	Turret	0.5
Machine Gun	Turret	0.5
Ammo (MG) 100	Body	0.5
Foot Infantry Squad (7 troops)	Body	1
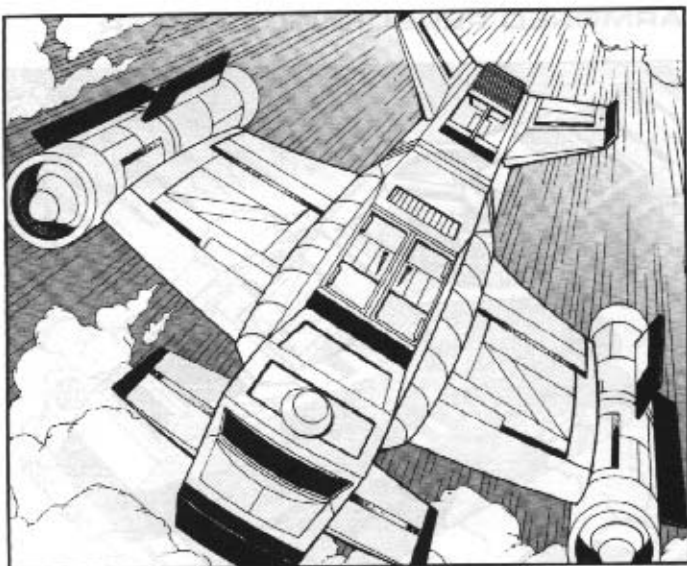
KARNOV

Type: **Karnov UR Transport**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Movement Type: VTOL
Tonnage: 30

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure:	3
Engine: 190	15
Type: I.C.E.	
Cruising MP: 11	
Flank MP: 17	
Heat Sinks: 0	0
Control Equipment:	1.5
Lift Equipment:	3
Power Amplifier:	0
Turret:	0
Armor Factor:24	1.5

	Armor Value
Front	6
R/L Side	5/5
Rear	6
Rotor	2

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Tonnage
Cargo	Body	6

PACKRAT
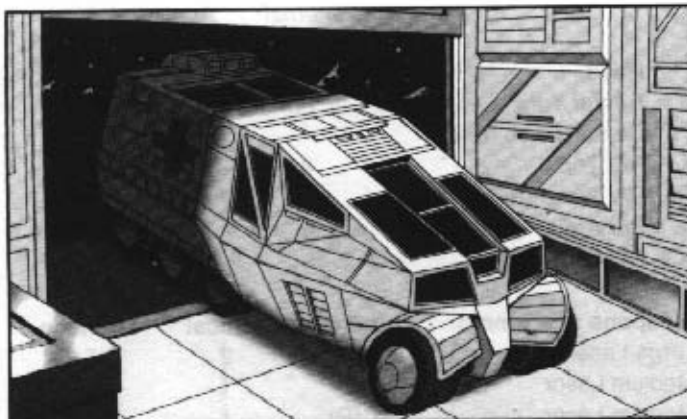
Type: **PKR-T5 Packrat LRPV**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Movement Type: Wheeled
Tonnage: 20

Equipment	Mass
Internal Structure:	2
Engine: 120	6
Type: Fusion	
Cruising MP: 7	
Flank MP: 11	
Heat Sinks: 10	0
Control Equipment:	1
Lift Equipment:	0
Power Amplifier:	0
Turret:	0
Armor Factor: 64	4

	Armor Value
Front	16
R/L Side	16/16
Rear	16
Turret	—

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Tonnage
SRM-6	Front	3
Ammo (SRM) 30	Front	2
Flamer	Rear	1
Passengers (10)	Body	1

Mobile Tactical Operations Center Configuration

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Tonnage
Command Console*	Body	5
Guardian ECM Suite	Body	1.5
Passengers (5)	Body	0.5

*For rules on the use of this Level 3 piece of equipment,
see **Tactical Operations Center**, page 100.

SPACECRAFT
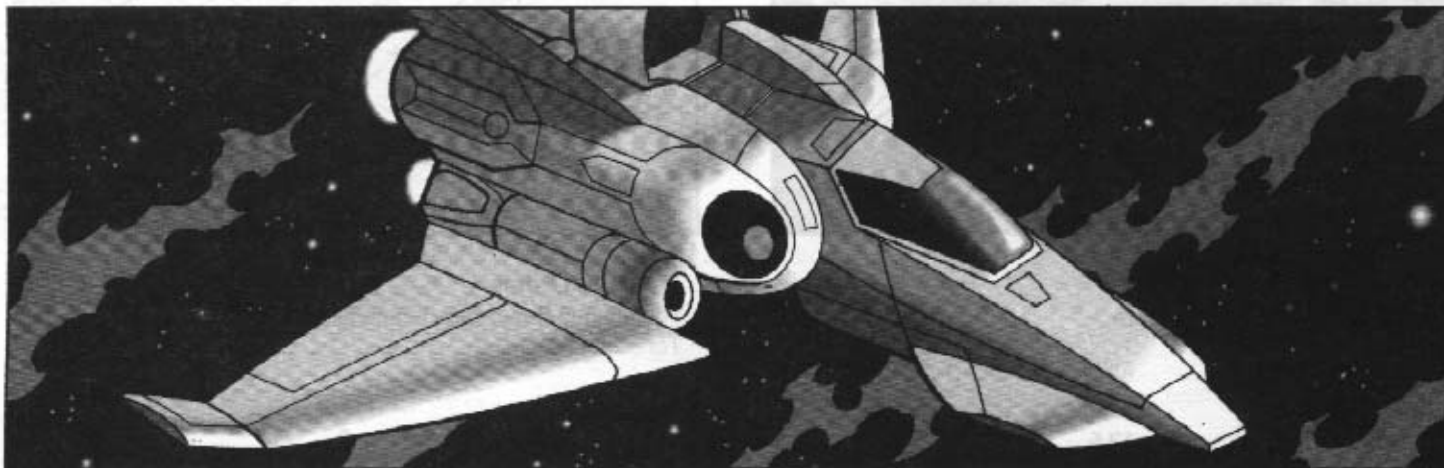
BANSHEE

Type: **BSE-X2 Banshee**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 50

Equipment	Mass
Aerospace Engine: 150 Fusion	5.5
Conventional Engine: 250 Turbine	25
Thrust: 5	
Overthrust: 8	
Structural Integrity: 5	
Heat Sinks: 10	0
Fuel: 75 (150)	5
Cockpit/Control:	5
VTOL Equipment:	2.5
Armor Factor: 64+10	4

	Armor Value
Cockpit	12
Nose	16
R/L Wing	12/12
Fuselage	12
Engine	10

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Mass
Medium Laser	LW	1
Medium Laser	RW	1

BattleSpace Conversion

Armor Value: 2
Safe Thrust: 5
Maximum Thrust: 8

Weapons			Range Values				
Arc	Type	Heat	S	M	L	E	Mounts
LW	Laser	3	1	—	—	—	1
RW	Laser	3	1	—	—	—	1

Special Rules

The *Banshee* is an experimental combination of conventional and aerospace fighter design. As such, it has a number of unique performance characteristics. Note that the construction of this vehicle required stepping outside the normal confines of the **AeroTech** rules, and as such this design is considered "Level 3."

While in space or at high altitude (medium or higher in **BattleSpace**), the *Banshee* operates as an aerospace fighter. However, when the craft is operating at low altitude (or very low or NOE in **BattleSpace**), it spends Thrust and maneuvers as a conventional fighter with VTOL capability. If the *Banshee* starts play in space or at high altitude, it has 75 Fuel Points. If it starts play at low altitude, the fighter has 150 Fuel Points. When the *Banshee* moves from low altitude to high altitude, immediately divide its remaining Fuel Points in half, rounding down. When the *Banshee* moves from high altitude to low altitude, multiply its remaining Fuel Points by 2.

When playing with the **Aerospace Support** rules (page 70, **BattleTech Compendium: The Rules of Warfare**), *Banshee* fighters are capable of making up to four attack runs before being forced to disengage.

The special cockpit design of the *Banshee* grants the pilot a +2 to his Piloting Skill roll when making a Blackout roll (see **High Thrust Maneuver Damage, AeroTech,** page 6; **BattleTech Compendium** page 78).
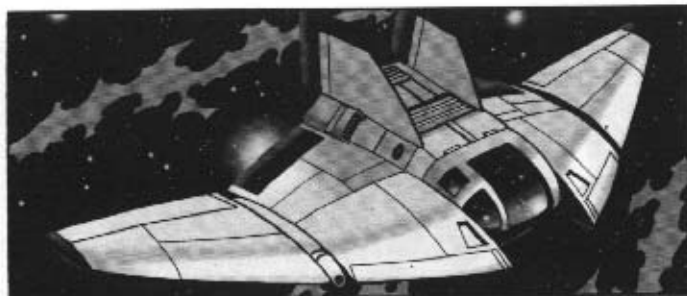
SHILONE

Type: **SL-17 Shilone**
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Tonnage: 65

Equipment	Mass
Engine: 260	13.5
Thrust: 6	
Overthrust: 9	
Structural Integrity: 6	
Heat Sinks: 20	10
Fuel: 75	5
Cockpit:	3
Armor Factor: 184+10	11.5

	Armor Value
Cockpit	15
Nose	45
R/L Wing	34/34
Fuselage	40
Engine	26

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Mass
LRM-20	Nose	10
Ammo (LRM) 12	Nose	2
Large Laser	Nose	5
Medium Laser	RW	1
Medium Laser	LW	1
SRM-4	Aft	2
Ammo (SRM) 25	Aft	1

BattleSpace Conversion

Armor Value: 5
Safe Thrust: 6
Maximum Thrust: 9

Weapons			Range Values				
Arc	Type	Heat	S	M	L	E	Mounts
Nose	Mixed	14	2	2	1	—	2
LW	Laser	3	1	—	—	—	1
RW	Laser	3	1	—	—	—	1
Aft	SRM	3	1	—	—	—	1

BATU
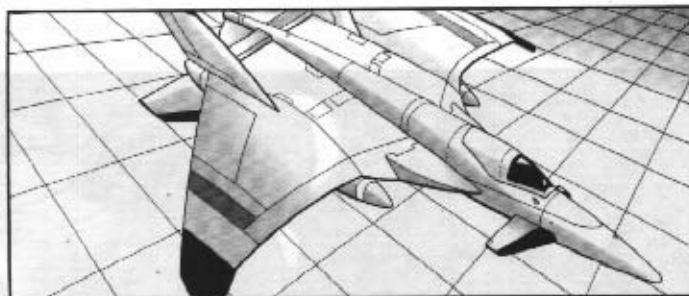
Type: **Batu Prime**
Technology Base: Clan OmniFighter
Tonnage: 40

Equipment	Mass
Engine: 280 XL	8
Thrust: 9	
Overthrust: 14	
Structural Integrity: 9	
Heat Sinks: 12 [24]	0
Fuel: 45	3
Cockpit:	3
Armor Factor: 154+10	8

	Armor Value
Cockpit	16
Nose	38
R/L Wing	30/30
Fuselage	30
Engine	20

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Mass
ER Large Laser	Nose	4
Medium Pulse Laser	RW	2
Medium Pulse Laser	RW	2
Medium Pulse Laser	LW	2
Medium Pulse Laser	LW	2
ER Medium Laser	Aft	1
Targeting Computer	Nose	3

BattleSpace Conversion

Armor Value: 4
Safe Thrust: 9
Maximum Thrust: 14

Weapons			Range Values				
Arc	Type	Heat	S	M	L	E	Mounts
Nose	Laser	12	2	2	2	2	1
LW	Pulse	8	2	2	—	—	2
RW	Pulse	8	2	2	—	—	2
Aft	Laser	5	1	1	—	—	1

LEOPARD

Type: Military Aerodyne
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Mass: 1,800 tons
Structural Integrity: 7
Safe Thrust: 4
Maximum Thrust: 6
Fuel: 100 tons (1,000)
Tons/Burn-day: 1.84
Crew: 9
Escape Pods: 2
Life Boats: 0
Heat Sinks: 70 [140]
Cargo: 5 tons

Bay 1: 'Mechs (4)	4 Doors	
Bay 2: Fighters(2)	2 Doors	
Bay 3: Cargo		

Armor
Nose: 14
Sides: 13
Aft: 10

Weapons			Range Values			
Arc	Type	Heat	S	M	L	E
Nose	PPC	30	2	2	2	—
Nose	LRM	6	2	2	2	—
Nose	Pulse	12	2	—	—	—
LW	LRM	6	2	2	2	—
LW	Laser	24	2	2	2	—
LW	Pulse	4	1	—	—	—
RW	LRM	6	2	2	2	—
RW	Laser	24	2	2	2	—
RW	Pulse	4	1	—	—	—
Aft	Laser	12	1	1	1	—
Aft	Pulse	8	1	—	—	—

OVERLORD-C

Type: Military Spheroid
Technology Base: Clan
Mass: 11,550 tons
Structural Integrity: 18
Safe Thrust: 3
Maximum Thrust: 5
Fuel: 360 tons (2,160)
Tons/Burn-day: 1.84
Crew: 43
Escape Pods: 3
Life Boats: 3
Heat Sinks: 122 [244]
Cargo: 1,181 tons

Bay 1: Cargo/'Mechs (15)	3 Doors	
Bay 2: Cargo/'Mechs (15)	3 Doors	
Bay 3: Cargo/'Mechs (15)	3 Doors	

Armor
Nose: 35
Sides: 30
Aft: 25

Weapons			Range Values			
Arc	Type	Heat	S	M	L	E
Nose	AC	2	1	1	1	—
Nose	Laser	12	1	1	1	1
Nose	LRM	12	3	3	3	—
Nose	PPC	30	3	3	3	—
Nose	Pulse	26	4	4	1	—
FL	AC	16	4	4	1	—
FL	Laser	12	1	1	1	1
FL	PPC	15	2	2	2	—
FL	Pulse	18	2	2	1	—
FR	AC	16	4	4	1	—
FR	Laser	12	1	1	1	1
FR	PPC	15	2	2	2	—
FR	Pulse	18	2	2	1	—
AL	AC	2	1	1	1	—
AL	Pulse	8	1	1	—	—
AR	AC	2	1	1	1	—
AR	Pulse	8	1	1	—	—
Aft	AC	2	1	1	1	—
Aft	LRM	6	2	2	2	—
Aft	PPC	30	3	3	3	—

UNION
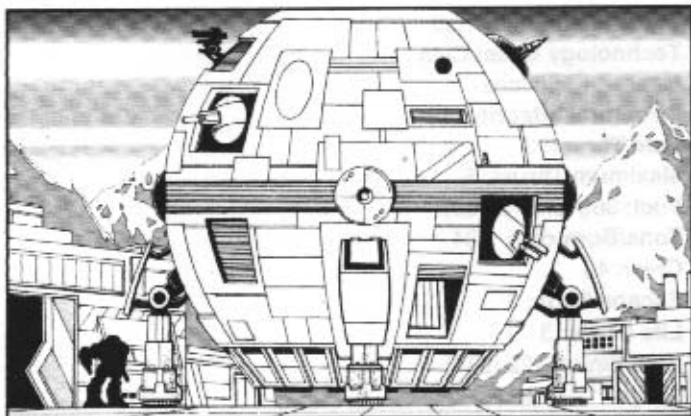
Type: Military Spheroid
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Mass: 3,500 tons
Structural Integrity: 11
Safe Thrust: 3
Maximum Thrust: 5
Fuel: 209 tons (1,254)
Tons/Burn-day: 1.84
Crew: 14
Escape Pods: 7
Life Boats: 0
Heat Sinks: 85 [170]
Cargo: 3 tons

Bay 1: Cargo/'Mechs (4)	2 Doors	
Bay 2: 'Mechs (8)	2 Doors	
Bay 3: Fighters (2)	2 Doors	

Armor
Nose: 18
Sides: 17
Aft: 12

Weapons

Arc	Type	Heat	S	M	L	E
Nose	PPC	15	1	1	1	—
Nose	AC	1	2	2	2	—
Nose	LRM	12	3	3	3	—
Nose	Laser	6	1	—	—	—
FL	PPC	15	1	1	1	—
FL	AC	1	2	2	2	—
FL	LRM	12	3	3	3	—
FL	Laser	18	2	1	1	—
FR	PPC	15	1	1	1	—
FR	AC	1	2	2	2	—
FR	LRM	12	3	3	3	—
FR	Laser	18	2	1	1	—
AL	Laser	18	2	1	1	—
AR	Laser	18	2	1	1	—
Aft	Laser	18	2	1	1	—

Range Values heads the S M L E columns.

INVADER
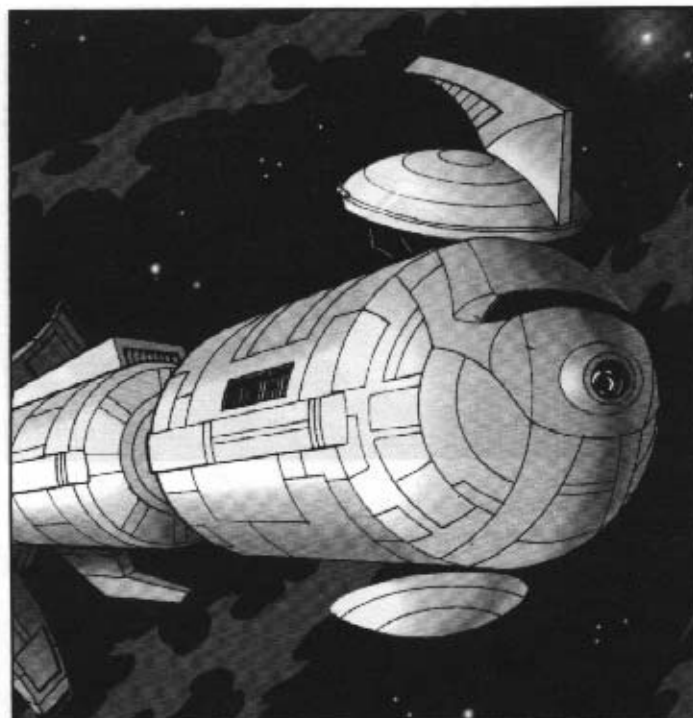
Type: JumpShip
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Mass: 152,000
Structural Integrity: 1
KF Drive Integrity: 4
Sail Integrity: 4
Station-Keeping Thrust: 0.2 (0.1G)
Fuel: 50 tons (50)
Tons/Burn-day: 19.75
Grav Deck: 1 (65-meter diameter)
Crew: 24
Escape Pods: 6
Life Boats: 0
Heat Sinks: 116
Cargo: 526 tons

Bay 1: Cargo	1 Door	
Bay 2: Small Craft (2)	2 Doors	
Bay 3: Cargo	1 Door	

Armor
Nose: 7
Fore-Sides: 7
Aft-Sides: 6
Aft: 5

Weapons

Arc	Type	Heat	S	M	L	E	FTR
LF	Laser	8	1	1	—	—	—
RF	Laser	8	1	1	—	—	—

Range Values heads the S M L E FTR columns.

TEXAS

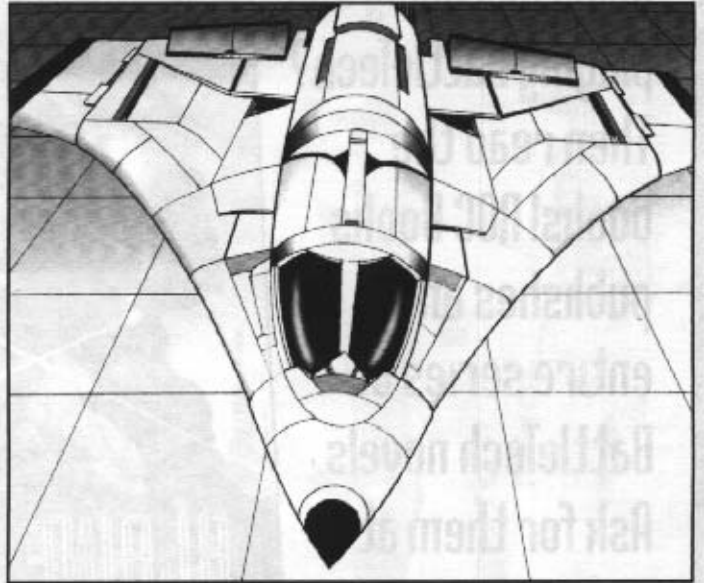| Weapons			Range Values				
Arc	Type	Heat	S	M	L	E	FTR
FL	NPPC	900	60	60	60	60	—
FL	Whale	40	8	8	8	8	Y
FL	NAC	135	40	40	—	—	Y
FR	NPPC	900	60	60	60	60	—
FR	Whale	40	8	8	8	8	Y
FR	NAC	135	40	40	—	—	Y
LBS	NL	840	54	54	54	54	—
LBS	AR10	—	—	—	—	—	Y
LBS	AR10	—	—	—	—	—	Y
RBS	NL	840	54	54	54	54	—
RBS	AR10	—	—	—	—	—	Y
RBS	AR10	—	—	—	—	—	Y
AL	NL	840	54	54	54	54	—
AL	AR10	—	—	—	—	—	Y
AL	AR10	—	—	—	—	—	Y
AL	NPPC	900	60	60	60	60	—
AR	NL	840	54	54	54	54	—
AR	AR10	—	—	—	—	—	Y
AR	AR10	—	—	—	—	—	Y
AR	NPPC	900	60	60	60	60	—

ST-46 SHUTTLE

Type: Battleship
Technology Base: Clan
Mass: 1,560,000 tons
Structural Integrity: 85
KF Drive Integrity: 30
Sail Integrity: 6
Safe Thrust: 3
Maximum Thrust: 5
Fuel: 1,400 tons (700)
Tons/Burn-day: 39.52
Grav Deck: 3 (55–, 65–, and 95–meter diameters)
Crew: 702
Escape Pods: 20
Life Boats: 35
Heat Sinks: 3,825 [7,650]
Cargo: 288,833 tons

Bay 1: Fighters (40)	10 Doors
Bay 2: Cargo	5 Doors
Bay 3: Small Craft (16)	2 Doors

Armor
 Nose: 234
 Fore-Sides: 342
 Aft-Sides: 342
 Aft: 234

Type: Civilian Aerodyne
Technology Base: Inner Sphere
Mass: 100 tons
Structural Integrity: 4
Safe Thrust: 4
Maximum Thrust: 6
Fuel: 5 tons (80)
Crew: 1
Passengers: 8
Cargo: 52.15 tons
Armor Value: 8

THE CLANS:

THEY CAME FROM BEYOND THE PERIPHERY, ATTACKING DOZENS OF PLANETS IN A MASSIVE BLITZKRIEG MORE DEVASTATING THAN ANY IN THE HISTORY OF WARFARE. WORLD AFTER WORLD FELL BEFORE THEIR TECHNOLOGICALLY SUPERIOR BATTLEMECHS AND ARMORED INFANTRY. NOTHING IN THE INNER SPHERE SEEMED ABLE TO STOP THEM.

MAJOR ADAM STEINER:

HIS UNIQUE BRAND OF BATTLEFIELD TACTICS EARNED HIM A TRANSFER TO THE PRESTIGIOUS NAGELRING WAR COLLEGE ON THARKAD. NO SOONER HAD HE LEFT HIS HOME WORLD OF SOMERSET THAN CLAN JADE FALCON ATTACKED, EASILY CONQUERING THE PLANET AND CAPTURING HIS BROTHER ANDREW. NOW ADAM MUST FORGE A RAGTAG BUNCH OF CADETS AND MISFITS INTO A TEAM IN ORDER TO RETAKE HIS HOME AND RESCUE HIS BROTHER.

1st Somerset Strikers is the official guide to the BattleTech Animated Series. This sourcebook describes and illustrates in full color every character, BattleMech, and vehicle from the show. Detailed accounts of each of the original fourteen episodes include a complete plot synopsis and special background information, and designer notes offer FASA's perspective on the production of the BattleTech animated series. A section of *BattleTech* rules for the equipment and characters in the show, and scenarios based on the episodes make this book a valuable resource for fans of the game as well as the animated series.

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