

THE BLACK THORNS™

A BATTLETECH SCENARIO PACK

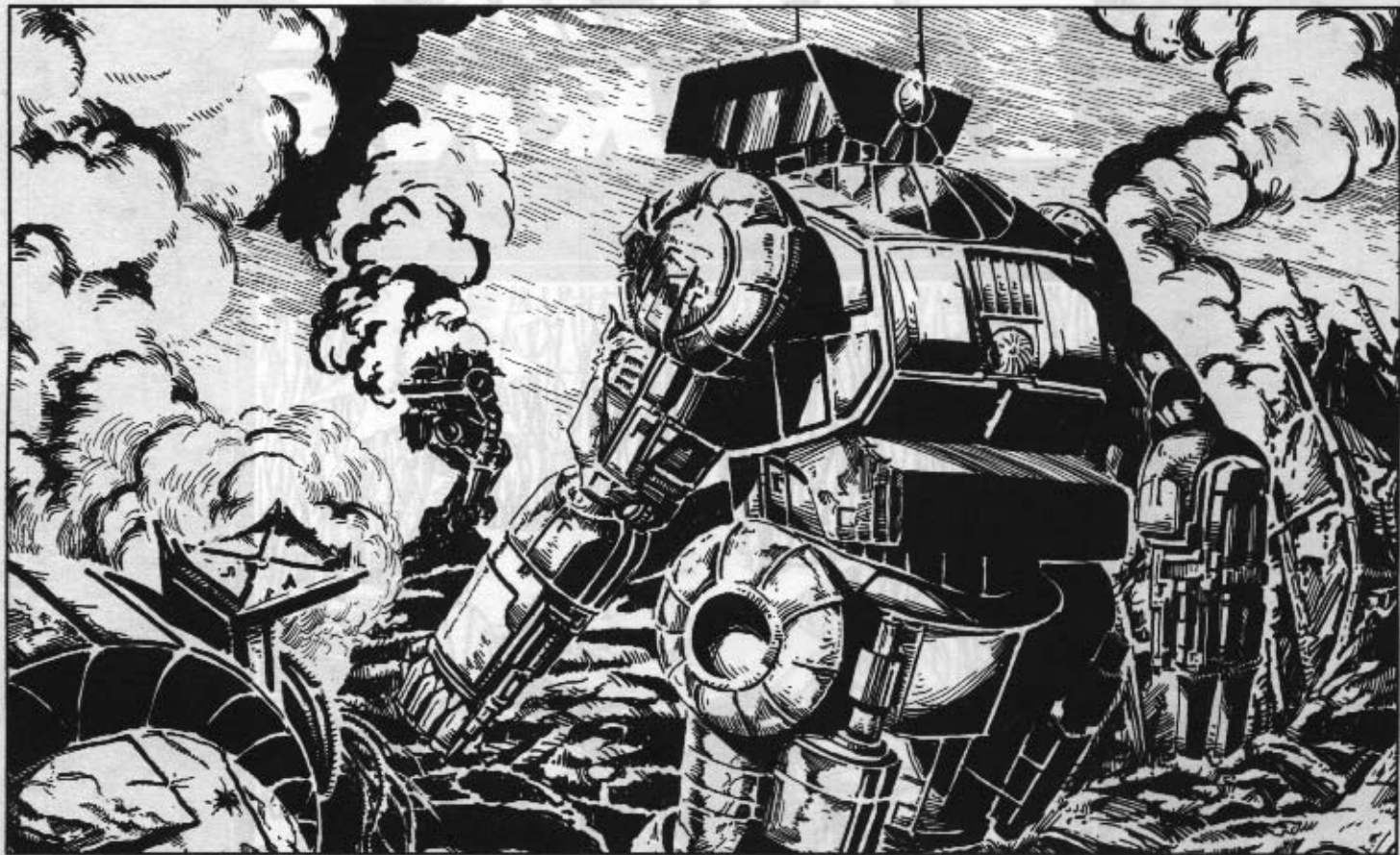


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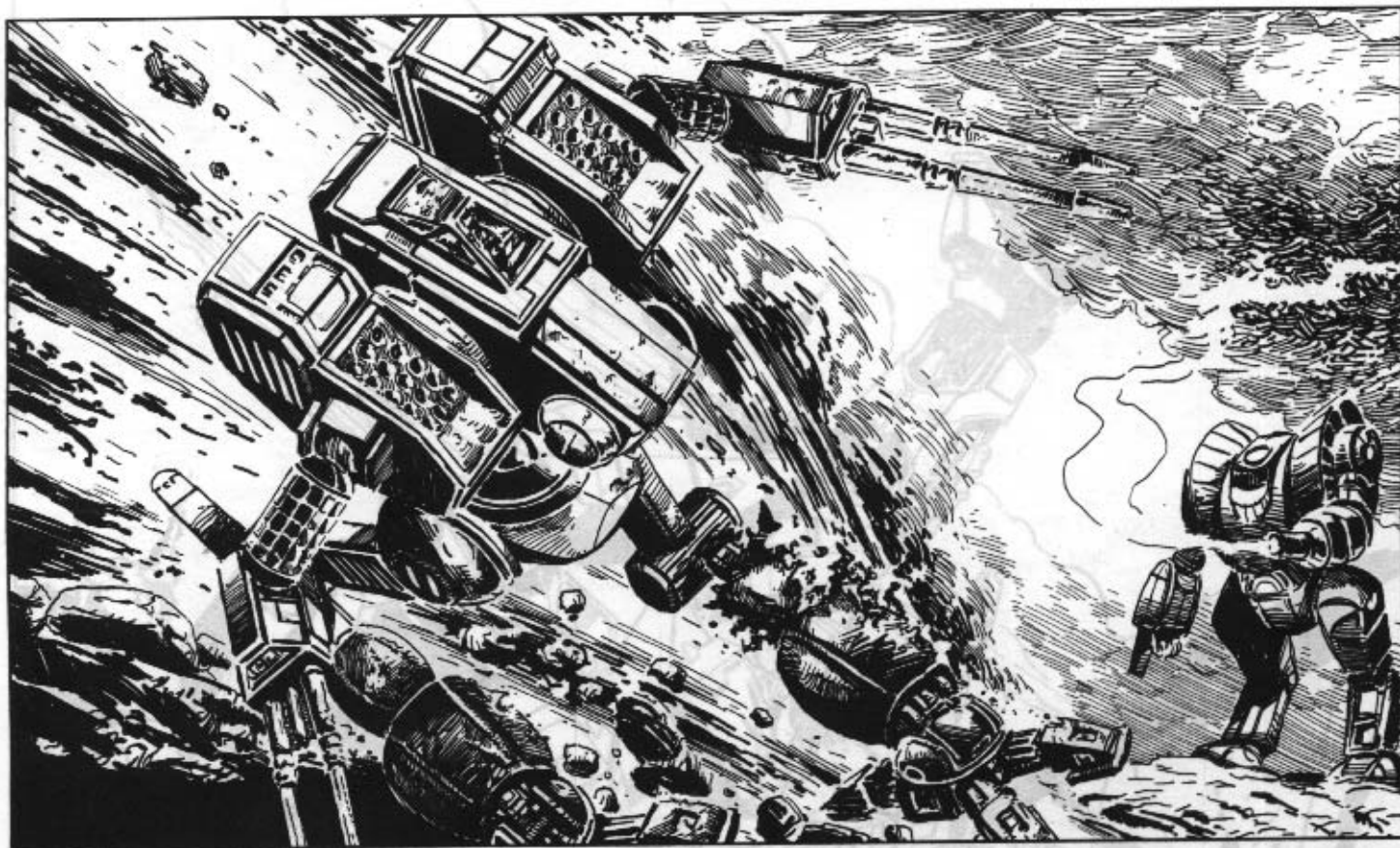
BATTLETECH® 1689

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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

"More often than not, it is the small things that we forget in the larger scheme of conquest and acquisition, thinking the beaten and bloodied opponents of our victories have no hope of rising again to challenge us anew. It is that same shortsightedness that teaches us to never underestimate our opponents ... and to never show them mercy."

—Alexander the Great

The Inner Sphere is home to a multitude of MechWarriors, pilots, and foot soldiers. Some never reach their potential; others rise to the heights of heroism by being in the right place at the right time. Still others stride grimly along, seeking only to successfully complete the job at hand, never pursuing the limelight or adulation given to the likes of the Gray Death Legion, Wolf's Dragoons, or Rhonda's Irregulars. Such a band of warriors is the Black Thorns. Though by no means the biggest or the best of the hundreds of mercenary units trying to scratch out a living in the Inner Sphere, the Black Thorns and their leader have managed to accrue an unusually colorful career in a brief span of time.

The Black Thorns have bravely taken the lumps meted out to every new unit, but Lady Luck has smiled on them more than once. Unlike most mercenary units, the Thorns earned most of their lumps courtesy of the Clans—and scavenged Clan equipment as their reward for their pain. The sheer amount of Clan tech the Black Thorns possess gives them special status in most potential employers' eyes.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The **Black Thorns** is a scenario pack for use with the **BattleTech** game system. Most of the scenarios in this book use the standard **BattleTech** rules found in the **BattleTech Compendium**. (This book provides page references for both the **BattleTech Compendium** and the **BattleTech Compendium: Rules of Warfare** (1994).) Several of the scenarios use rules presented in the following sourcebooks and boxed sets: **AeroTech**; **BattleSpace**; **MechWarrior, Second Edition**; **Solaris VII**; and the **BattleTech Tactical Handbook**. **BattleTech Map Sets 2, 3, and 4** are also required to play the scenarios. Game stats for the 'Mechs, vehicles, and aerospace fighters are found in the **BattleTech Technical Readouts 2750, 3025, 3026, 3050, and 3055**.

Each scenario in this book allows players to recreate the exciting adventures of Jeremiah Rose and his Black Thorns mercenary unit. The book is divided into four main sections: **Unit History**, **Personalities**, **Scenarios**, and **New 'Mechs**. **Unit History** recounts the formation and history of the Black Thorns, provides an overview of the unit's exploits to date, and supplies the current Table of Organization and Equipment. **Personalities** provides descriptions and **MechWarrior** game statistics for the major characters among the Thorns. **Scenarios** contains 15 individual scenarios that recreate the epic battles fought by the Black

Thorns and their founder, one-time Com Guard Jeremiah Rose. **New 'Mechs** supplies descriptions and game statistics for four new 'Mechs encountered by the Thorns in their battles with the Clans or by Jeremiah Rose during his days with ComStar.

Except for those rules published in the various **BattleTech** supplements listed above, the rules included in each scenario provide all the information needed to understand and play out that scenario. Each scenario begins with a personal account of the engagement and ends with a brief description of the battle's historical outcome. The individual scenarios also include sections titled **Game Set-Up**, **Attacker**, **Defender**, **Victory Conditions**, and **Special Rules**.

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

Attacker and **Defender** describe each scenario's combatants. These sections also contain directions for deploying forces.

Victory Conditions describes the possible outcomes of each scenario. In combat, an action rarely continues until one side is obliterated. Often both sides claim victory if they have achieved their tactical objectives. **Victory Conditions** simulates this conduct by listing specific objectives that each side may seek to achieve in a scenario along with the conditions needed to satisfy those objectives.

Special Rules lists any rules needed to play the scenario not covered in the standard **BattleTech** rules.



UNIT HISTORY

Jeremiah Rose was born to members of the famous Northwind Highlanders, and followed in his MechWarrior mother's footsteps by entering warrior training at an early age. Deeply hurt and angered when his mother died fighting for House Davion in the War of 3039, Rose left the Highlanders and joined the Com Guards, believing that he was leaving senseless conflict behind. His departure created a permanent rift between Rose and his father, Cornelius, who remains a staunch Davion loyalist. During Jeremiah's service with ComStar, he was stationed on several different worlds; his natural aptitude for piloting a 'Mech soon earned him the rank of adept. Among the worlds on which Rose was stationed during the Clan invasion was Luthien, where he lived for several years before the epic battle against Clans Smoke Jaguar and Nova Cat took place on that planet. Rose soon learned to love Luthien, regarding it almost as a second home. He found it particularly intolerable, therefore, when the ComStar commanders on Luthien informed all local Com Guards units that they would not be allowed to help defend the planet. As the Clans threatened to overrun the Imperial City, Rose could only sit and watch. The timely arrival of the Kell Hounds and Wolf's Dragoons saved the city and the planet, but his orders had shown Rose a side to ComStar of which he had been unaware and definitely did not like. Following the battle of Luthien, he attempted to resign his commission, but his superiors refused to allow him to leave the Guards.

Eventually, his unit traveled to Tukayyid for the famous, climactic battle against the Clan invaders. Rose's command fought the Smoke Jaguars, then battled Clan Wolf. Despite initial successes, Rose and the rest of his command were constantly forced to mount hasty defenses with little or no resupply. Eventually, the Wolves' better 'Mechs whittled down Rose's command to nothing. The Com Guards won the fight, but all of Rose's comrades died in the final battle. By the time the last of the Clans withdrew from the planet, only Rose survived from his command and his 'Mech, a *Shootist*, was destroyed.

Rather than wait for a replacement 'Mech, a disillusioned Rose cashed his commission and went home to the planet Northwind. Though he had not been there in many years, he felt sure the Highlanders would accept him back into the fold; the unit was famous for sticking by its own. His hopes of raising a Northwind unit to fight the Clans were dashed however, when only two warriors agreed to join him. The bitterest sting to Rose's pride came when his father, now a senior technician and the patriarch of the Rose family, spoke against him in the Assembly of Warriors. Cornelius Rose's refusal to support his son's plans destroyed Jeremiah's chances of building an anti-Clan unit of Highlanders; only his sister Rianna and a half-cousin believed in his dream strongly enough to follow him. Still determined to build a unit and strike at the Clans, Rose went to the game world of Solaris in an attempt to find a new 'Mech while Rianna traveled to Outreach, the so-called Mercenary's Star. There, she hoped to recruit warriors, but knew her most

likely candidates would be jocks desperate enough for work that they would follow an unknown commander.

VICTORY ON SOLARIS

Though Rose stayed on Solaris for only a few weeks, he managed to cause quite a stir among local 'Mech stable operators. His DropShip landed during the final stages of the championship season, and Rose immediately went prospecting among the stables for a 'Mech. Because he could not offer his Com Guards service record to any of the stablemasters, most of them reflexively labeled Rose a spy. Local owners refused even to allow him to purchase a 'Mech for fear he would enter one of the championship games and change the odds of the fight. Forced to take a desperate gamble, Rose created his own opportunity and entered the championship games in an unusual lance-on-lance combat with his borrowed 'Mech as the prize. Rose's lance emerged victorious, winning him the 'Mech he so desperately needed. After the match, he asked two of the warriors who had fought with him to join him on Outreach. They accepted his offer, and the Black Thorns were born.

FIRST CONTRACT

On Outreach, Rianna Rose had also recruited a few members for the fledgling unit. While she nosed around for the best possible contract, Rose started training his unit to fight as a team. He had scarcely begun, however, when the Black Thorns ran afoul of Wolf's Dragoons. In a simulated combat, one of the Dragoons broke the rules of engagement by physically assaulting one of the Thorn 'Mechs. The Thorn pilot retaliated in kind, causing serious damage to the Dragoon 'Mech and severely wounding its pilot. Though a hearing officially cleared the Thorns of wrongdoing, many Dragoons now held a grudge against the "upstart" mercenaries. As the situation deteriorated around them, the Thorns finally chose to accept a contract that offered little except a quick way off Outreach. The Black Thorns agreed to form the nucleus of a defense force for the planet Borghese, a Federated Commonwealth world near the border of the Jade Falcon occupation zone. The planet's immediate need for its defense force cut short Rose's recruiting efforts by several weeks, and so the Black Thorns left for their first job with only seven 'Mechs.

The Thorns arrived on Borghese to find that many members of the planet's ruling council opposed their presence. Though the council agreed to honor the contract signed on Outreach and allowed the mercenaries to stay, relations between the Thorns and Borghese's government remained strained. The contract Rose accepted called for the Thorns to help defend the planet from probable Jade Falcon raids, but he discovered, to his amazement, that a vocal minority of the population and several members of the ruling council actually welcomed a Clan presence on the planet. Within weeks, the

UNIT HISTORY

Black Thorns became a lightning rod for both pro-Clan and anti-Clan sentiment.

Matters reached a crisis when unknown persons stole the DropShip *Bristol*, a civilian ship on which the Black Thorns depended for transport. The ruling council, by now firmly pro-Clan, accused the Black Thorns of the theft and declared them outlaws. The Thorns fled into the wilderness pursued by several units of Borghese's planetary militia, whom they had until recently been training in anti-'Mech tactics.

RAGGED DEFENSE

Rather than fight the soldiers they were sworn to protect, Rose and his unit led the militia in a wild chase through uninhabited areas of Borghese, successfully eluding the infantry forces for several weeks. Eventually, however, their pursuers cornered them in a heavily wooded area and forced the mercenaries to fight. Just as the battle began, the Thorns discovered that Jade Falcon forces had arrived in-system and were approaching the planet. Several agents acting in the name of the ruling council had invited the Clans to Borghese and planned to turn the entire system over to the invaders in the hope of profiting from the change in rulership. Though skeptical of the offer, several Jade Falcon warriors bid for the right to accept Borghese's surrender. The Clan forces consisted of little more than a reinforced raiding unit, but the high-powered Falcon 'Mechs were more than a match for the planetary militia, especially since most of Borghese's best troops were off chasing the Thorns. By the time the militia could disengage and return to the capitol, it would be firmly in Falcon hands. As the only 'Mechs on the planet piloted by anti-Clan warriors, only the Black Thorns stood in the way of a Clan Jade Falcon conquest.

The Black Thorns managed to defeat the pro-Clan militia in a hard-fought battle, but only because one of the militia MechWarriors eventually sided with the mercenary unit. After making the necessary minor repairs to their 'Mechs, the Thorns charged back to Borghese's capitol to meet the Clans. In a series of running battles that cost unit member Angus Lochart his life, the Black Thorns fought their way to the planet's ComStar compound and sent a frantic plea for help to the Armed Forces of the Federated Commonwealth. Unwilling to fight a capable enemy in order to hold a planet

they could not properly supply, the small Clan raiding unit departed from Borghese.

WORKING FOR THE DRAGON

By the time the Gray Death Legion arrived on Borghese to relieve the Black Thorns, Rose's unit had already signed a contract with the Draconis Combine to defend the garrison world of Wolcott. The contract allowed for numerous supplemental contracts, which the Black Thorns found especially to their liking.

Unlike many mercenary commanders, who had vivid memories of the Combine's long-standing contempt for mercenaries, Rose actually wanted to work for House Kurita; having lived and worked on Luthien for many years, he felt more loyalty to House Kurita than to House Davion.

Wolcott was one of the few worlds on which the Clans had been defeated in their initial, virtually unstoppable conquest of Inner Sphere planets. As a condition of its failure to capture the world, Clan Smoke Jaguar agreed not to attempt conquest a second time. However, the Clans constantly raided the planet and had placed the entire Wolcott system under siege. For Inner Sphere forces, Wolcott made a perfect launching point for strikes and raids on Clan worlds deep behind the front line. Though the Wolcott job was a dangerous assignment, the multiple contracts and phenomenal bonuses that

Coordinator Theodore Kurita offered the Thorns made the offer too good to refuse.

Draconis Combine forces delivered Rose and the rest of the Black Thorns to the planet past a blockade of Clan OmniFighters. The trip to the planet was anything but peaceful, and Rose once again found himself on the bad side of his employer. The unit's Mercenary Liaison Commander was a former Com Guards officer with whom Rose had previously quarreled, and for whom he might have refused to work if his unit could afford to abandon the contract. However, the Black Thorns were allowed to take their pick of supplemental contracts appropriate to the size of their unit, which had grown to full company strength. It seemed that this time, the Black Thorns had landed on their feet.



COURCHEVAL

Rose chose a contract to raid the planet Courcheval, deep in the Clan Nova Cat occupation zone. The Clans had nearly completed a new factory complex on Courcheval, and the local underground believed that a successful strike against it could set the Clans' military buildup of the planet back several years. On the inbound flight to the planet, however, Clan OmniFighters ambushed the Thorns' DropShip, forcing the unit's 'Mechs to drop to the planet well short of their objective. Clan 'Mechs attacked the Thorns the moment they hit the ground, but the Thorns managed to slip away from the Clan pilots in a series of running battles. As they closed in on their objective, a force of Clan 'Mechs and Elementals ambushed and severely mauled the already damaged Black Thorn 'Mechs. Only the arrival of the local underground saved the unit; a hovercraft led the battered Thorns to an abandoned mine where they could rest and make repairs.

The underground leaders informed Rose that the unit's DropShip had been forced to crash-land several hundred kilometers from the underground's base and was firmly in Clan hands. To make matters worse, the planetary garrison had recently been reinforced by the Nova Cat Cavaliers, a front-line unit rotated to Courcheval for rest and relaxation. A discussion with the underground leaders convinced Rose that the unit's only chance of survival lay in retaking the captured DropShip and leaving the planet. The Black Thorns succeeded in rescuing the DropShip crew and retaking the area around the vessel, and earned safe passage off the planet when Rose defeated the Nova Cat commander in single combat.

FUTURE PLANS

Upon the Thorns' return to Wolcott, Rose married the captain of the *Bristol*, long-time lover Rachel McCloud. He still burns with the desire to fight the Clans, but the unit's near-defeat on Courcheval has tempered his fire with caution. The Black Thorns are currently rebuilding, concentrating on recruiting and training new pilots. Though prospects look good for another supplemental contract, Rose knows that he must allow his unit to recover from the horrors they faced on Courcheval. Until then, the Black Thorns continue to train, awaiting the proper moment to strike back at the invaders.

UNIT DESCRIPTION

The Black Thorns is a company-sized BattleMech unit that grows and shrinks according to battlefield losses and recruiting. The unit currently numbers twelve 'Mechs, organized in three four-'Mech lances. Captain Jeremiah Rose chose to use this formation despite his training in the Com Guards, where units are based on the number six, because his executive officer convinced him that classic Inner Sphere formations would assist new recruits in training and ease the logistical burden of supplying the unit.

The command lance is the lynchpin of the unit and normally lands in the thick of the fighting. Rose commands this lance and uses its heavy 'Mechs to lead by example. This lance always takes considerable damage and is usually the last to receive repairs. Rose counts on the experience of the pilots to keep these heavy 'Mechs in operation during campaigns. To avoid trouble when he must devote the bulk of his attention to planning strategy, Rose works with a bodyguard 'Mech. Rianna Rose, the company's executive officer, also fights with this lance.

The battle lance is composed exclusively of heavy and assault 'Mechs. When acting as a defending force, the Thorns use these 'Mechs to reinforce the command lance. When the unit is attacking, the battle lance provides the extra punch often needed to secure objectives. Because these 'Mechs are the slowest in the mercenary company, this lance most often guards static targets or assaults stationary objectives. In most cases Rose assigns any liaison officer attached to the unit to this lance. The addition of a fifth 'Mech further increases the lance's offensive power and keeps the liaison officer within arm's reach of Rose.

The Thorns' recon lance is composed exclusively of light 'Mechs, most of which are jump-capable. Despite the short life expectancy of light 'Mechs in battles against the Clans, the recon lance of the Black Thorns has done remarkably well. Rose normally keeps this lance out of combat unless their help becomes absolutely necessary, using them primarily to locate the enemy so that the heavier lances can move in against the opposition. Having seen the damage that assault OmniMechs can inflict on an Inner Sphere light 'Mech, Rose limits this lance's duties to scouting and recon.

PERSONNEL ROSTER (AS OF 13 JULY 3057)

Command Lance

Captain Jeremiah Rose, Elite, *Masakari*
Executive Officer Rianna Rose, Regular, *Phoenix Hawk*
MechWarrior Antioch Bell, Veteran, *Banshee*
MechWarrior Jamshid Al-Kalibi, Regular, *Mad Cat*

Battle Lance

Lieutenant Esmerelda, Elite, *Mad Cat*
MechWarrior Badicus O'Shea, Regular, *Warhammer*
MechWarrior Hawg, Regular, *BattleMaster*
MechWarrior Greta Podell, Regular, *Charger*

Recon Lance

Lieutenant Ajax, Elite, *Raven*
MechWarrior Yuri Dogdovich, Veteran, *Dasher*
MechWarrior Leeza Rippitucue, Regular, *Mercury*
MechWarrior Katherine "Kitten" Kittiallen, Green, *Panther*

PERSONALITIES



JEREMIAH ROSE

Age: 32

Home Planet: Northwind

Mech Type: Masakari

MechWarrior Data

Attributes

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

Characteristics

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

Edge: 3

Advantages

Sixth Sense

Assets: 1,430,000 C-bills (all tied to mercenary unit)

Equipment

Ablative/Flak Cooling Vest

SLDF Neurohelmet

Star League Laser Pistol

Range: 1-4/5-12/13-20

Power Use: 1

Damage: 4D6

Note: Silent

Skills

Target Number

Bureaucracy	2	(6+)
Communications/		
Conventional	1	(5+)
Gambling	2	(4+)
Gunnery/Mech	5	(1+)
Leadership	3	(5+)
Medtech	1	(5+)
Negotiation	2	(6+)
Perception	3	(3+)
Piloting/Mech	4	(2+)
Small Arms	3	(3+)
Strategy	3	(3+)
Survival	2	(4+)
Tactics	4	(2+)
Technician/Mech	2	(4+)
Unarmed Combat	2	(6+)

The Black Thorns' company commander, Rose grew up in the military, first with the Northwind Highlanders and later in service with the Com Guards. A warrior first and foremost, Rose is a capable leader and an excellent tactician, but his social skills fall somewhat short. Forced to assume the role of a dashing mercenary on Borghese, Rose discovered that being his own boss meant more than the freedom to do as he



pleased. After the unit's near-defeat on Courcheval, he learned that effective leadership of a mercenary unit requires more than combat skills. Having learned the hard way just how important public relations can be to a mercenary unit, Rose is working hard to improve his diplomatic skills.

Rose is driven by a deep-seated desire for revenge against the Clans, who destroyed his first command, a Com Guards unit. Following the death of his entire unit during the final stages of the battle for Tukayyid, Rose became obsessed with revenge. Time has mellowed his anger somewhat, but he still feels he must wage war against the Clans if he is to be true to the memory of his former comrades. His Achilles heel is the close personal bonds he makes with those in his unit. Rose takes the death of every warrior in his command personally and will go to great lengths to prevent his troops from getting killed. He has finally resolved his on-again, off-again relationship with Captain Rachel McCloud by marrying her, but the chaos that surrounds their lives will continue to cause difficulties. Though he loves Rachel and their twin infants dearly, he still feels his first duty is to the Black Thorns.

In battle, Rose is almost recklessly confident. He refuses to allow other members of the Black Thorns to take unnecessary chances, but the same rules do not apply to him. He refuses to send another MechWarrior into a situation he would not enter himself, which makes him an extremely well-liked commander, but often places him on the front lines where his command skills are not as useful to the unit.

RIANNA ROSE

Age: 23

Home Planet: Northwind

'Mech Type: *Phoenix Hawk*

MechWarrior Data

Attributes

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

Characteristics

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

Edge: 2

Advantages

Natural Aptitude: Administration

Assets: 1,250 C-bills

Equipment

Mydron Pistol
Personal Communicator
Portable Computer

Skills

Target Number

Administration	3	(4+)*
Computer	1	(6+)
Gunnery/'Mech	2	(6+)
Medtech	1	(6+)
Negotiation	1	(6+)
Piloting/'Mech	4	(4+)
Running	1	(7+)
Scrounge	1	(6+)
Small Arms	2	(6+)
Survival	1	(6+)
Technician/'Mech	3	(4+)
Unarmed Combat	1	(8+)

Despite her youth, Rianna is a capable executive officer. She has a gift for logistics and keeps the Black Thorns well-stocked with parts and materials. Rianna grew up at home with her father and brothers, training as a MechWarrior (despite her father's disapproval) after Jeremiah's departure. She graduated at the head of her class on Northwind, and is a talented pilot. As the youngest member of the unit she tends to attract a lot of unwanted protection from her fellow mercenaries. Well-liked by all, she serves as an excellent counter to her frequently quiet and reserved brother.

Rianna had a difficult childhood. The death of her mother disturbed her greatly, and Jeremiah's abrupt departure from home increased her emotional turmoil. Unable to bond with her withdrawn father, Rianna drew close to her only remaining sibling, Danny. Danny's death in the first wave of the Clan invasion



sent Rianna into a deep depression. Months passed before she became her old self again, and she had become more driven and reflective. She threw herself into her training, graduating at the top of her class and receiving her first 'Mech, a brand-new *Phoenix Hawk*, as a reward. She was awaiting her first posting when Rose returned to Northwind.

Despite his long absence, Jeremiah remained an important part of Rianna's life. She welcomed his return, and rather than let him leave her behind again, she chose to join her brother as the first member of the Black Thorns (the name she picked for the new mercenary unit). She finds life as a mercenary more exciting than she ever imagined. Like Jeremiah, Rianna tends to take the deaths of her comrades in battle personally, and will do anything to keep the unit alive and well.

ESMERELDA

Age: 39

Home Planet: Solaris VII

'Mech Type: Mad Cat

MechWarrior Data

Attributes

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

Characteristics

Athletic 7+
Physical 7+
Mental 8+
Social 10+

Edge: 3

Advantages

Toughness

Assets: 52,150 C-bills

Equipment

Sternsnacht
Vibro dagger

Skills

Target Number

Appraisal	2	(6+)
Blade	2	(5+)
Gambling	4	(4+)
Gunnery/'Mech	5	(2+)
Leadership	4	(6+)
Perception	4	(3+)
Piloting/'Mech	4	(3+)
Small Arms	3	(4+)
Streetwise	4	(6+)
Survival	2	(6+)
Tactics	3	(5+)
Technician/'Mech	5	(3+)
Tinker	4	(4+)
Unarmed Combat	3	(4+)

Until she joined up with Jeremiah Rose, Esmerelda spent her life eking out a living in the games on Solaris. First on the outer circuits and later in Solaris City, she fought in more duels than she can remember. Despite her skill as a 'Mech pilot, she could not advance in individual competitions. When lance-on-lance dueling gained popularity, however, she began her ascent through the best arenas on the planet. Careful planning and a few lucky breaks enabled her to purchase a 'Mech and begin re-fitting it into a first-class fighting machine. When Rose arrived on Solaris and fought shoulder-to-shoulder with Esmerelda in a lance duel, he impressed her enough that she left the arenas for the position of Battle Lance Commander in his just-forming mercenary unit.



Esmerelda never served in the military, and has found the life of a mercenary quite a change from that of a 'Mech duelist. Though aware that the change is for the better, she has not fully come to terms with what it means to be a member of a team that supports its own both on and off the battlefield. She works reasonably well with her fellow warriors during combat or training, but spends most of her off-duty hours by herself or with her old friend, Badicus O'Shea. She finds life in the field especially hard, but is slowly learning to adapt to her new situation. On the whole, she enjoys her new life as a member of the Black Thorns, though most of her lancemates would be surprised to hear her say so. Her gruff manner has not changed, and she still prefers to spend her free time tinkering with her BattleMech.

(Historically, Esmerelda was killed in action on the planet Courcheval.)

BADICUS O'SHEA

Age: 40

Home Planet: Nestor

Mech Type: Warhammer

MechWarrior Data

Attributes

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

Characteristics

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

Edge: 4

Advantages

Extra Edge (2)

Assets: 3,500 C-bills

Equipment

Sunbeam Laser Pistol

Skills

Target Number

Drive	2	(6+)
Gambling	4	(5+)
Gunnery/Mech	4	(4+)
Medtech	2	(7+)
Perception	3	(6+)
Piloting/Mech	4	(4+)
Quickdraw	5	(3+)
Seduction	3	(5+)
Small Arms	4	(4+)
Streetwise	4	(4+)
Technician/Mech	2	(7+)
Unarmed Combat	3	(4+)

O'Shea is a lover of all things, of life most of all. He walks through life acting carefree and happy, keeping the rest of the unit in good spirits no matter what the conditions. His jovial exterior hides a nimble mind, and his considerable size belies his quick reflexes. He is the first to come to the aid of a friend and the last to leave the bars at night.

Badicus never really quits anything; he gets bored and lets things slip away. He loves challenges and is quick to take up a new adventure. He brings the same gusto to everything he does, from simple maintenance work to a night on the town. His sheer zest for living makes him the most popular member of the Black Thorns.

O'Shea never discusses his experiences in the military beyond the freely-made admission that he was discharged under "less than favorable circumstances." After drifting around Lyran space for several years, he wound up on Solaris and met



Esmerelda. She was just beginning to fight in the lance-on-lance duels, and Badicus fit right in with the team she was building. Though O'Shea possessed more combat experience than Esmerelda, he was content to let her handle the lance while he spent his free time and winnings in the bars.

(Historically, Badicus O'Shea was killed in action on Courcheval.)

AJAX

Age: 40

Home Planet: No Return

Mech Type: *Raven*

MechWarrior Data

Attributes

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

Characteristics

Athletic 8+
Physical 6+
Mental 6+
Social 9+

Edge: 3

Advantages

Sixth Sense

Assets: 132,700 C-bills

Equipment

BattleMech Repair Kit
Medical Kit

Skills

Target Number

Cryptography	2	(4+)
Gunnery/Mech	4	(2+)
Interrogation	5	(4+)
Leadership	4	(5+)
Medtech	2	(4+)
Perception	4	(2+)
Piloting/Mech	5	(1+)
Protocol	4	(5+)
Running	2	(6+)
Small Arms	3	(3+)
Survival	4	(2+)
Tactics	3	(3+)
Technician/Mech	3	(3+)
Unarmed Combat	5	(3+)

Ajax joined the Black Thorns after fleeing the Warrior House Hiritsu in the Capellan Confederation, evading Liao forces and landing on Outreach with his 'Mech intact. After careful examination of several possibilities open to him, he chose Rose as his new commander. An excellent scout, Ajax fills his role as leader of the recon lance effortlessly. Ajax quietly assumed temporary command following the death of the lance's first commander, and initially refused formal promotion when the Clans left Borghese. Eventually he accepted it, more out of respect for Rose's decision rather than from any belief that he deserved it.

Quiet and unassuming by nature, Ajax speaks little of his life before joining the Black Thorns. In truth, he would prefer to forget it. As a member of one of the famed Liao Warrior



Houses, he was constantly required to demonstrate his worthiness to be named among the best warriors in the Inner Sphere. In addition, he was required to show fanatical nationalism and to live according to every doctrine handed down from the Celestial Throne. When Ajax discovered he could no longer live with the deeds he was being required to commit, he chose to leave the Warrior House and try to right some of the wrongs he had done in its name.

Ajax has had much broader training than most of the other members of the Black Thorns, and serves as something of a jack-of-all-trades for the unit as well as being Recon Lance Commander. Some of his skills, however, he refuses to use except under extreme circumstances.

Though content to battle the Clans, Ajax secretly hopes to one day fight for the Federated Commonwealth. He would consider such duty a form of pay back for the raids and skirmishes in which he fought against House Davion during his days with House Hiritsu.

HAWG

Age: 29

Home Planet: Kookien's Pleasure Pit

'Mech Type: BattleMaster

MechWarrior Data

Attributes

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

Characteristics

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

Edge: 2

Advantages

Extra Edge (1)

Assets: 3,500 C-bills

Equipment

Ablative/Flak Vest
Auto-Pistol w/15 reloads
Basic Field Kit
BattleMech Repair Kit
Medkit

Skills

Target Number

Communications/		
Conventional	1	(6+)
Computer	2	(5+)
Gambling	1	(6+)
Gunnery/'Mech	3	(3+)
Medtech	1	(6+)
Perception	1	(6+)
Piloting/'Mech	2	(4+)
Running	3	(3+)
Small Arms	2	(4+)
Special Interest/		
Literature	3	(4+)
Strategy	1	(6+)
Survival	2	(5+)
Swimming	2	(4+)
Technician/'Mech	4	(2+)
Unarmed Combat	3	(3+)

Hawg is a huge individual with a physique that looks as if it should be cast in bronze. Though he talks as if he just walked out of the backwoods, he is a Renaissance man. Well versed in almost every subject from poetry to tactics, Hawg can quote Byron or Rommel with equal ease. Intensely loyal, Hawg works tirelessly to make the Black Thorns a successful unit. He serves with distinction in the unit's battle lance and is the Thorns' most skilled technician.



Upon joining the Black Thorns, Hawg received a promise from Jeremiah and Rianna Rose not to reveal his true name to the other members of the unit. As far as the Thorns are concerned, he has no other name.

In many ways, Hawg remains boyish. Even after fighting several hellish engagements against the Clans, he still sees life as a glorious adventure. Even in the most dangerous situations he maintains the deep-rooted conviction that everything will turn out fine. Whether confidence or naiveté, this attitude allows him to keep his head and think clearly when others are prone to panic. More than once, Hawg's coolness under fire has helped the Thorns out of tight situations.

Though Hawg possesses many likable characteristics, and his eruditeness comes as a pleasant surprise in the face of his intimidating size and unrefined speaking style, he often walks along the fringes of sanity—he has an unexpected and uncontrollable crazy streak.

RACHEL MCCLOUD

Age: 35

Home Planet: None

Ship Type: *Union Class DropShip, the Bristol*

MechWarrior Data

Attributes

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

Characteristics

Athletic 10+
Physical 9+
Mental 7+
Social 7+

Edge: 2

Advantages

Wealth

Assets: 3,436,000 C-bills (all tied to the DropShip *Bristol*)

Equipment

Armored Vest

Personal Communicator

Skills

Target Number

Administration	2	(5+)
Appraisal	4	(3+)
Bureaucracy	3	(4+)
Communications/		
Conventional	2	(5+)
Computer	2	(5+)
Gunnery/Spacecraft	3	(6+)
Leadership	2	(5+)
Medtech	1	(6+)
Navigation	3	(4+)
Negotiation	2	(5+)
Perception	1	(6+)
Piloting/Spacecraft	5	(4+)
Protocol	2	(5+)
Small Arms	1	(8+)
Technician/		
Electronics	2	(5+)
Technician/		
Mechanic	2	(5+)
Unarmed Combat	4	(6+)

Born and raised in space, Rachel McCloud feels much more at home with the metal deck of a ship under her feet than solid earth. Being a merchant is difficult for her; being a soldier is almost impossible. The captain of the *Union Class DropShip Bristol*, McCloud initially agreed to transport the Black Thorns out of economic necessity. Short on cargo, she was forced to



take the mercenary unit to Borghese to meet the stringent demands of the bank holding the note on her beloved *Bristol*. Since the unit's first engagement, McCloud's on-again, off-again relationship with Jeremiah Rose has stabilized into marriage and she has become a full member of the Black Thorns. Though she never considered herself a soldier, she is slowly becoming one.

At times McCloud feels almost overwhelmed by the burden of debt she owes to the bankers who hold the note on the *Bristol*. For a time she flirted with the idea of becoming a pirate, but realized she was too honest to skip out on her obligations. As a result, she spends most of her time on the ground figuring out how to keep the old ship in parts and supplies. Rianna Rose has been a great help to her in this endeavor.

In space, McCloud becomes an entirely different person. Unburdened by the cares that hound her when she is planet-side, she can relax and acts more carefree. Rose fell in love with this side of her, and hopes to free her from all her worries by eventually purchasing the *Bristol* outright for the Black Thorns.

ANTIOCH BELL

Age: 32

Home Planet: Orkney

Mech Type: *Banshee*

MechWarrior Data

Attributes

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

Characteristics

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

Edge: 5

Advantages

Extra Edge (2)

Assets: 32,000 C-bills

Equipment

Ablative/Flak Vest
Deluxe Field Kit
Laser Pistol
Medipack

Skills

Target Number

Administration	1	(7+)
Computer	2	(6+)
Driving	4	(4+)
Gambling	2	(6+)
Gunnery/Mech	5	(3+)
Leadership	2	(5+)
Medtech	2	(6+)
Perception	3	(5+)
Piloting/Mech	4	(4+)
Seduction	3	(4+)
Small Arms	3	(5+)
Survival	2	(6+)
Tactics	2	(6+)
Technician/Mech	2	(6+)
Unarmed Combat	3	(6+)

A native of the Federated Commonwealth, Bell resigned his commission in the AFFC when his entire unit was implicated in black-market dealing. Though not actively involved, Bell knew that his own commanding officer was in charge of the operation, but said nothing out of loyalty. After the scandal broke, he followed his former commander and best friend to Borghese in the belief that together they would start a mercenary unit. Instead, his former friend joined the pro-Clan forces on Borghese and Bell joined the Black Thorns.

Rose and Bell are kindred spirits, sharing many of the same interests. They have a friendship whose ease belies its

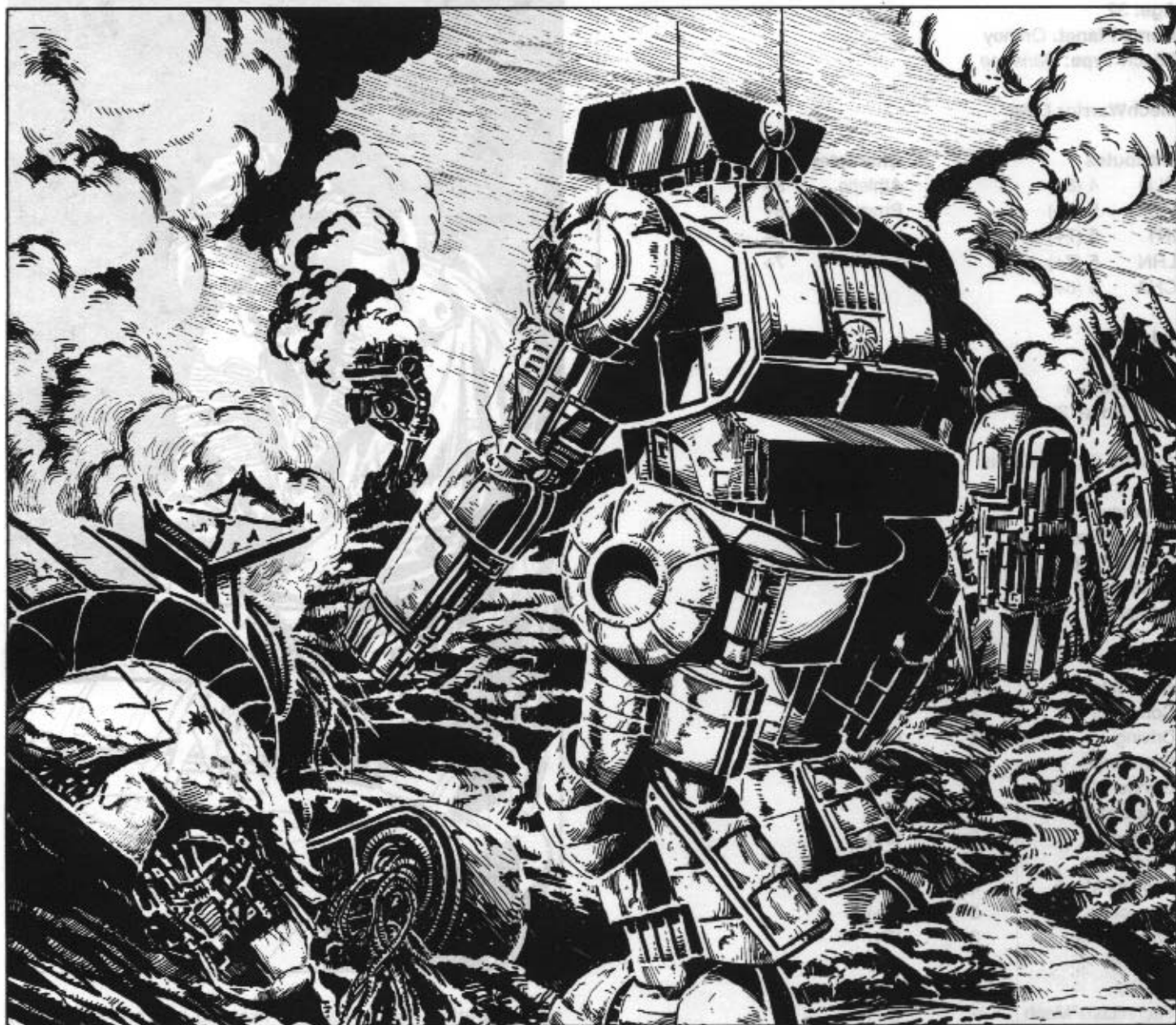


short duration. Bell is easy to like and has no shortage of friends, but he feels a special bond with both Jeremiah and Rianna Rose. In battle, Bell keeps close to Jeremiah, providing protection and support as needed. He feels more at home with the Black Thorns than he has with any unit in which he ever served, and is fiercely loyal to all members of the mercenary unit.

Bell continues to feel haunted by the criminal actions of his former commander. He is determined to make sure that he need not leave the Black Thorns one day because of anything he may be asked to do. As a result, he often acts as the unit's conscience. Though Bell understands the often harsh realities of war, he also knows the Black Thorns can make a difference in the lives of the people they protect.

RIDGE LINE

JES HOOITVA



—Transcript of Acolyte Julia Tiegard's report following initial contact with Clan Smoke Jaguar forces

"It felt almost like fighting in a fog. I'm no stranger to combat—hell, I've fought enough to know what it's like—but this was different. I felt like we were fighting a machine rather than flesh-and-blood soldiers. I'm not saying the Clan warriors are robots or anything like that. I know they're human, or at least close to it. I also know they die when you shoot them—trust me on that one. But they are different than any other enemy I've ever faced.

"Following our initial exchange, I figured they'd back down for sure. Anybody with any brains at all would have called it a day and backed off after that first salvo, but they didn't. It almost seemed as if they didn't care that they were going to die. For some reason they decided that bloody ridge was worth getting killed for, and on they came.

"It's hard to think of your actions in glowing terms when you look back at a battle like that, if it really was a battle in the first place. I know they outgunned us and they might even have had a slight advantage in tonnage, but it was like the charge of the Light Brigade out there.

"The Precentor Martial thinks we can win, and maybe he's right. Hell, he probably *is* right. He's been right about everything so far. I can tell you one thing, though—plenty of MechWarriors won't be around to enjoy the victory if the Clans continue to fight like they did today. If they continue to act as though a life for a life is a good trade, we're in big trouble. The Clanners might not be afraid to die, but I am. Death scares me a lot. Despite my calling as a MechWarrior, I'd like to live a long life. After today, I'm not sure I'm going to get my wish."

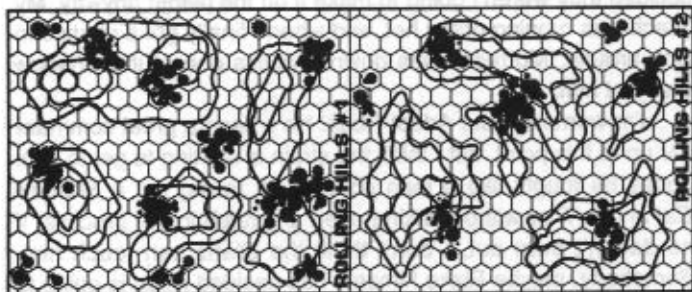
SITUATION: TUKAYYID, MAY 3052

When the Clans agreed to the proxy fight for Terra on Tukayyid, the Com Guards became the first and last line of defense between the oncoming invaders and the rest of the Inner Sphere. Though many individual members of the Guards had combat experience, as a unified army they were largely untested. Tukayyid proved to be their baptism of fire. Those who lived through it, as did Jeremiah Rose, often represented the sole survivors of units and commands shattered by the Clan juggernaut.

In the early stages of the Tukayyid campaign, everything seemed to be going the Clans' way. Individual Com Guards won a few victories, but defeat and retreat were the order of the day. The engagement in this scenario, fought by Jeremiah Rose and his command, is typical of many that occurred soon after the Clans first arrived on Tukayyid. The irresistible force of Clan OmniMechs met the immovable object of Com Guards BattleMechs in a brutal contest that only flesh and nerve could decide.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** maps end-to-end as shown to create a long playing area. Use the Rolling Hills maps 1 and 2 found in **BattleTech Map Set 3**.



N ↑

DEFENDER

The Defender consists of Kimmelry's Raiders, members of the Com Guards 103rd Division.

Kimmelry's Raiders

Adept Jeremiah Rose (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*), Shootist
Acolyte Mark Jenkins (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 4*), Thug
Acolyte Scott Hopper (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 4*), Crab
Acolyte Stephen Morressy (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*),
Exterminator
Acolyte Oliver Batteil (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 4*), Black Knight
Acolyte Julia Tiegard (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), Highlander

Deployment

The Defender sets up first on the eastern mapsheet at any location and any facing he chooses, but his units may not begin the game hidden.

ATTACKER

The Attacker consists of members of Alpha Claw 1, Trinary Bravo, First Jaguar Guards.

Trinary Bravo

Star Commander Gorson (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*), Vulture-A
MechWarrior Elam (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*), Vulture-A
MechWarrior Coldrain (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*), Ryoken
Prime
MechWarrior Vigord (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*), Ryoken Prime
MechWarrior Winstalf (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*), Ryoken
Prime

Deployment

The Attacker enters on Turn 1 from the west edge of the map. All 'Mechs must enter the map at the beginning of Turn 1.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The side with the last functional 'Mech left standing wins the scenario. Keep in mind that the Smoke Jaguars want to secure as much ground as quickly as possible. They believe themselves invincible and do not consider the six Com Guards BattleMechs much of a threat.

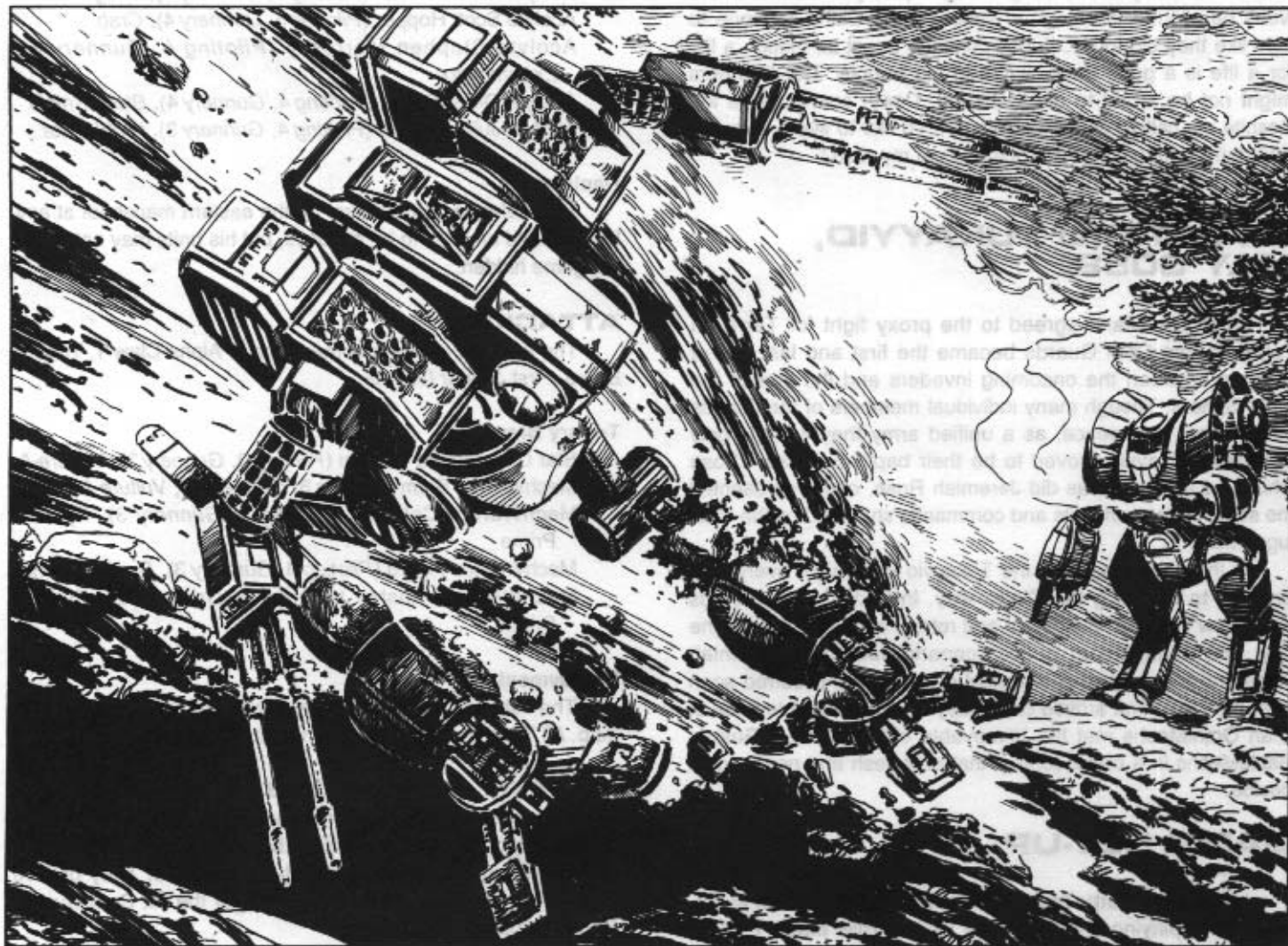
SPECIAL RULES

Neither side will give ground in this fight, and so no units may exit the mapsheets.

AFTERMATH

Though Rose and his troops beat the Jaguars in this battle, the Clans seemed unstoppable. Even when all hope of victory was gone, Clan troops continued to fight. The attacking Trinaries followed up their initial successes with extra troops; wherever their advance halted, they moved additional OmniMechs to the front to force their way through Tukayyid's defenders. Initially shaken by the ferocity of the Clan assault, the Com Guards were forced to pull back and reorganize their defenses. By the time the sun set on the first day of combat, the Smoke Jaguars were securely entrenched on Tukayyid.

RED RAGE



—Excerpted from the personal diary of Acolyte Mark Jenkins

After seven days of misery, we finally pushed the Smoke Jaguars off Tukayyid. I'm not sure whether I should rejoice at our hard-won victory or cry over the cost of it. I guess in the final analysis I'll end up doing both.

Morressy did not survive the battle. We were among the lead elements attempting to overrun the Jaguars' drop zones as they lifted off the planet. Things seemed to go pretty well for us, even in the initial stages of the attack when the Jaguars had position on us and we were stuck in open terrain. We hit their line like a steel hammer. I'd like to think ours was the first unit to breach the Clan lines, but it looked as if their whole line crumbled en masse.

I didn't even see Morressy fall. The whole unit was taking fire from a group of Jaguar Omnis whose pilots had apparently

decided they weren't going to make it off the planet anyway. My 'Mech was running pretty hot, and when I finally got a chance to look around, Morressy was down. I guess one of the *Shadow Cats* got him.

I'm worried about Adept Rose. He's been a great commander up to this point, but I think the strain is starting to get to him. Today he fought like a man possessed, taking out a *Shadow Cat* and a *Thor* without taking even a scratch in the process. If he doesn't burn out, I don't think the Clans can touch him. Somebody, maybe Blake himself, has decided Rose is going to make it out of this one.

The rest of us probably won't be so lucky. Tiegard wants us to all meet, without Rose, later tonight—I think I know what she wants. She's thinking of the hereafter, and I guess I feel the same way. I doubt I'll be making many more diary entries ... but I might get lucky enough to make it off this rock. And maybe my *Thug* will sprout feathers and fly ...

SITUATION: TUKAYYID, MAY 3052

Even though the Smoke Jaguars' 'Mechs outmatched those of the Com Guards, the Clan forces could not keep their supply lines open. After several days, they realized that they could not even keep their DropShips secure, let alone continue to advance against the Com Guards. After a string of defeats caused as much by underestimating their ComStar opponents as by lack of supplies, the Smoke Jaguars found their bases overrun by Com Guards eager to close in for the kill.

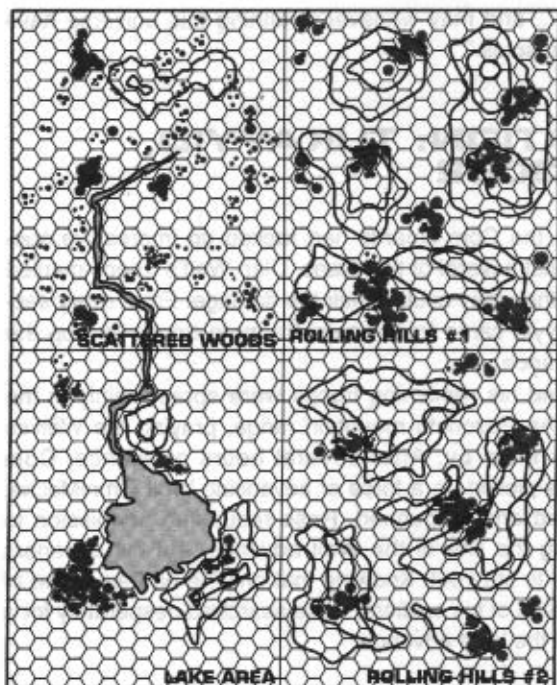
Marshaling their most skilled MechWarriors to act as a rearguard, the remaining Smoke Jaguars dashed for their DropShips, intending to retreat off-world. Seeing a chance to turn the Jaguars' retreat into a rout and possibly cripple the Clan for years to come, Precentor Martial Focht threw everything available at the Smoke Jaguars, hoping to break through their lines and destroy their DropShips before they could lift off-planet.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** maps as shown, placing the Scattered Woods and Lake Area maps, found in **BattleTech Map Set 2**, end to end to create the west side of the playing area and placing the Rolling Hills maps 1 and 2, found in **BattleTech Map Set 3**, end to end to make the east side of the playing area.

DEFENDER

The Defender consists of members of Beta Claw 2, Trinary Alpha, First Jaguar Guards.



Trinary Alpha

Star Commander Biaster (*Piloting 2, Gunnery 2*), Thor Prime MechWarrior Thrain (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 2*), Masakari Prime MechWarrior Yrsin (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*), Mad Cat-A MechWarrior Kenel (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*), Shadow Cat-A MechWarrior Fejensk (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*), Shadow Cat-B

Deployment

The Defender sets up first on either of the western mapsheets at any location and any facing, but his units may not begin the game hidden.

ATTACKER

The Attacker consists of members of the Com Guards 103rd Division.

Kimmelry's Raiders

Adept Jeremiah Rose (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*), Shootist Acolyte Mark Jenkins (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 4*), Thug Acolyte Scott Hopper (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 4*), Crab Acolyte Stephen Morressy (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), Exterminator Acolyte Oliver Batteil (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 4*), Black Knight Acolyte Julia Tiegard (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), Highlander

Deployment

The Attacker enters on Turn 1 from the east edge of the mapsheets. All 'Mechs must enter on Turn 1.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Rose and the rest of his company are attempting to fight their way past the Jaguars' rearguard and attack the Clan DropShips. Victory goes to the side with the highest total points. Award points as follows:

Com Guards

- 1 point for each Smoke Jaguar 'Mech destroyed
- 1 point for each Com Guards 'Mech that exits off the west edge of the mapsheets

Smoke Jaguars

- 1 point for every Com Guards 'Mech destroyed

SPECIAL RULES

Rose fought the entire battle in a berserk fury and remembered little about it afterward. To represent his mental state apply the following rules:

1. Rose must always fire at the closest target and may not split shots between targets.
2. Rose must fire every weapon capable of hitting a target unless such firing would result in an automatic shutdown.
3. Rose's 'Mech must stay on the mapsheet until all Com Guards 'Mechs have either exited, been disabled, or been destroyed.

WHAT PRICE VICTORY

SITUATION:
MAY 3052



—Excerpted from the personal diary of Acolyte Mark Jenkins

"It's been quiet for a couple of hours now. I guess that's good, but for the life of me I can't say why. We're maintaining strict radio silence, so I've been cooped up in this oversized tin can with nothing to keep me company but the beating of my heart. I guess it's some consolation that I'm still alive.

"From here I can pretty well make out all the other 'Mechs in the command. The others may be drawing some kind of strength from the knowledge that we're not alone, but it doesn't seem to help me any. I mean, what good is companionship when it's fifty meters away and quiet as a church mouse? Might as well be back on Luthien as in these hills, for all the comfort I get.

"The way I figure it, we've got to hold this line until dawn. If we make it until dawn, we'll be all right. By the clock, we don't have much longer to go, but the time seems to be crawling by.

"I wish I had half Adept Rose's confidence. If he were in charge of this sector you can bet your last C-bill we wouldn't be stuck in these godforsaken foothills with our nearest support halfway back to base. Rose would cover us—with his own 'Mech if that was all he had. We sure wouldn't be hanging out to dry like we are now.

"My scanners are picking up multiple inbound targets. Looks like we won't make it until dawn after all. Once more into the breach ... and may whoever's running this universe have mercy on our souls."

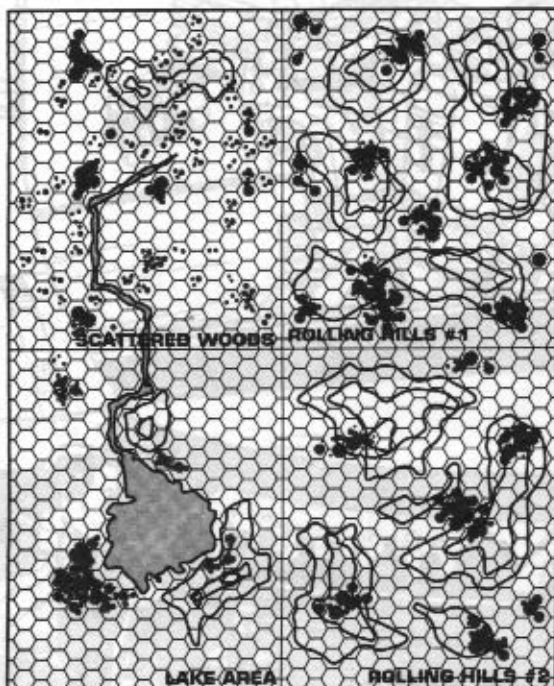
SITUATION: TUKAYYID, MAY 3052

Though the Com Guards had racked up impressive successes against several of the Clans, Clan Wolf's troops mauled them faster than they could repair the damage. From every sector on Tukayyid came frantic calls for more troops to stop the Wolves' advance.

Rose and his remaining troops were spread thinly in the foothills of the Pozoristu mountain range, praying the Wolves would pass them by. After several hours of silence, Com Guards units picked up a force of advancing Wolf OmniMechs. Outnumbered and outgunned, Rose requested permission to retreat along the line of the Wolf advance, but his superiors ordered him to stay put. Knowing that only he had any hope of saving the lives of his soldiers, Rose searched desperately for a way to blunt the Wolf advance.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** maps as shown, placing the Scattered Woods and Lake Area maps, found in **BattleTech Map Set 2**, end to end to form the west side of the playing area and placing the Rolling Hills maps 1 and 2, found in **BattleTech Map Set 3**, end to end to form the east side of the playing area. The Rolling Hills maps represent the ridge where the Com Guards waited and hoped that the Wolves would pass them by.



DEFENDER

The Defender is comprised of members of the Com Guards 103rd Division.

Kimmelry's Raiders

Adept Jeremiah Rose (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*), *Shootist*
 Acolyte Mark Jenkins (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 4*), *Thug*
 Acolyte Scott Hopper (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 4*), *Crab*
 Acolyte Oliver Batteil (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 4*), *Black Knight*
 Acolyte Julia Tiegard (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Highlander*

Deployment

The Defender sets up first on the eastern mapsheets at any location and any facing, but his units may not begin the game hidden. In addition, no Com Guards 'Mech may begin play closer than 7 hexes away from Rose's *Shootist*.

ATTACKER

The Attacker consists of members of Bravo Second Star, Trinary Second, Wolf 279th Battle Cluster.

Bravo Second Star

Star Commander Galvin (*Piloting 2, Gunnery 3*), *Ferris Prime*
 MechWarrior Nokkin (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 2*), *Mad Cat-A*
 MechWarrior Lucian (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 4*), *Mad Cat-B*
 MechWarrior Bisston Carns (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Puma-A*
 MechWarrior Wetten (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*), *Puma-A*

Deployment

The Attacker enters on Turn 1 from the west edge of the mapsheets. All 'Mechs must enter the map on Turn 1.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

When the Com Guards reinforcements arrive, determine the victor according to the conditions listed below:

No Com Guards 'Mechs remaining	Decisive Wolf Victory
1 Com Guards 'Mech remains	Pyrrhic Com Guards Victory
2 Com Guards 'Mechs remain	Marginal Com Guards Victory
3 Com Guards 'Mechs remain	Substantial Com Guards Victory
4-5 Com Guards 'Mechs remain	Decisive Com Guards Victory

SPECIAL RULES

1. This engagement occurred during the hours between midnight and dawn. Apply standard night-combat modifiers (see **Night Combat**, p. 61, **BattleTech Compendium**, or p. 94, **BattleTech Compendium: Rules of Warfare**).

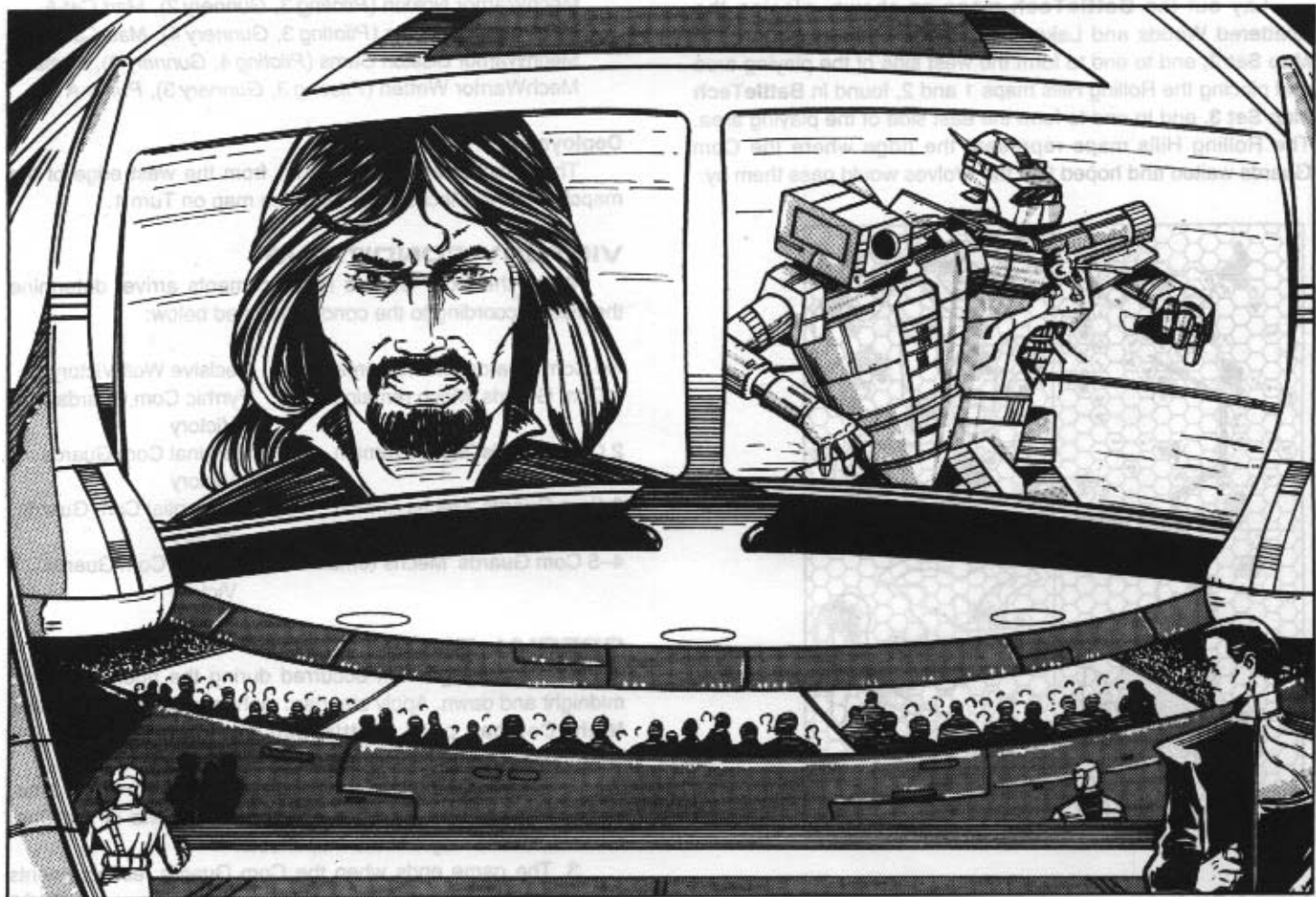
2. Because the Com Guards are defending an entire area, they are honor-bound not to retreat and so none of the Com Guards 'Mechs may exit the mapsheets.

3. The game ends when the Com Guards reinforcements arrive. To determine when the reinforcements show up, roll 1D6 in the End Phase of each turn beginning with Turn 5. Reinforcements arrive on a result of 6 in Turn 5; on each subsequent turn, subtract 1 from the result needed for reinforcements. For example, reinforcements arrive on a result of 5 or 6 in Turn 6, a result of 4-6 in Turn 7, and so on.

AFTERMATH

The Com Guards won the war, but Rose and his unit lost the battle. Soon after this engagement the Wolves retreated from Tukayyid, leaving the victorious Com Guards in possession of the planet and the treaty for which they had fought. Jeremiah Rose spent months recovering from the emotional scars of losing his entire command, and to this day feels that the victory on Tukayyid came at too high a personal cost. His initial depression over the deaths of his friends turned to anger, and he resigned his commission. His Com Guard superiors protested this decision, but Rose refused to take no for an answer. He left Terra and traveled home to Northwind, determined to form a mercenary unit to carry the fight to the Clans.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL



—Transcript of a pre-flight interview with Jeremiah Rose prior to the first Solaris Lance Championship

QBNC: "MechWarrior Rose, what are you thinking about right now?"

ROSE: "You're not a pilot, are you, ma'am? If you were, you wouldn't have to ask."

QBNC: "MechWarrior Rose, I'm sure all our viewers want to know how you feel about entering this possibly lethal engagement. Is it true you're a last-minute substitute?"

ROSE: "Yes."

QBNC: "And how does that make you feel?"

ROSE: "How does that make me feel about what?"

QBNC: "How do you feel about the upcoming battle? You must be a little nervous."

ROSE: "Why do you say that?"

QBNC: "I—we—assumed you'd be a little shaken at the prospect of your first arena duel."

ROSE: "Pardon me, ma'am, but you're the one that looks a little shaken. Is this your first interview?"

QBNC: "Certainly not! Do you have anything else to say to our viewers prior to this championship fight?"

ROSE: "No. I do have something to say to you, however."

QBNC: "And that is?"

ROSE: "You're blocking the door."

SITUATION: SOLARIS CITY, SOLARIS, AUGUST 3054

Jeremiah Rose's luck had run out on Solaris. With only a week left in the gaming season, he had failed to secure a functional BattleMech from any dealer. After checking with several sources and coming up dry, Rose concocted an elaborate last-ditch plan to acquire a 'Mech. Knowing that the Carstairs and Warwick Stables were soon to face each other in a lance-on-lance arena battle, Rose decided to put one of the Carstairs fighters temporarily out of action and take his place, with the 'Mech he would fight in as his prize if the Carstairs lance won.

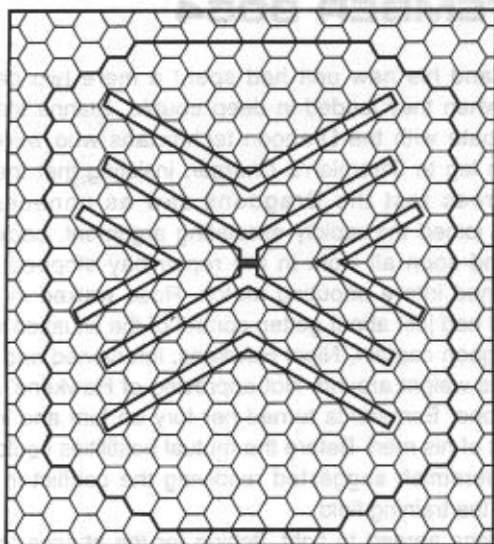
UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

In a desolate alleyway near a popular local bar, Jeremiah waited for the Carstairs warrior Badicus O'Shea and his girlfriend. As they passed him, Rose jumped O'Shea and disabled him after a brief struggle. To Rose's shock, O'Shea's girlfriend turned on them both with a gun; she was an agent for the Warwick Stables on a mission to kill O'Shea and assure Warwick's win. The female assassin managed to wound Rose with her needler pistol before Rose killed her with a head shot from O'Shea's Sunbeam laser.

After presenting himself to Mr. Carstairs and relating a carefully edited version of his encounter with O'Shea, Rose talked himself into the lance position and a 'Mech. If Carstairs' warriors lost the battle, the salvage went to the Warwick Stables. If Carstairs Stables won, Rose could not claim any of the lance's salvage—but he would get to keep the 'Mech for which he had bargained. Neither Rose nor his lancemates knew, however, that the two stable masters had cut a private deal that eliminated the use of ranged weapons in the fight.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out Solaris VII Map 1: Steiner Stadium. All walls are down and in the locked position. Have the players roll one die; the player who achieves the highest result places 4 Light Building counters at random locations in the arena.



DEFENDER

The Defender consists of warriors from the Warwick Stables.

Warwick Lance

"Mad Dog" Maddox (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), HCT-3NH Hatchetman

Chuck Isibell (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), CHR-3K Charger

Ann Hawkins (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 4*), CN9-AL Centurion

Andrew Norris (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 5*), JVN-10F Javelin

Deployment

The Warwick 'Mechs enter from the east edge of the map-sheet.

ATTACKER

The Attacker consists of Jeremiah Rose and warriors from the Carstairs Stables.

Carstairs Lance

Jeremiah Rose (*Piloting 2, Gunnery 1*), SHD-2D2 Shadow Hawk

Esmerelda (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 2*), WHM-7M Warhammer

Mary Hodges (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), STG-3G Stinger

Jackson Carter (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 4*), HBK-4H Hunchback

Deployment

The Carstairs 'Mechs enter from the west edge of the map-sheet.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

In this winner-takes-all battle, each side fights until his 'Mechs can no longer continue. Whoever defeats the enemy lance wins the scenario.

SPECIAL RULES

All weapons are non-functional, and ranged systems may not be fired. Therefore, players may only make physical attacks during the battle. Use the **Dueling Rules**, pp. 45–50, **Solaris VII Gamemaster's Book**. Note that none of the walls in the Steiner Stadium will be raised.

AFTERMATH

Brutal and swift, the match lasted six minutes and cost the Warwick Stable four 'Mechs. Carstairs kept his bargain with Jeremiah and allowed him to keep the *Shadow Hawk* in which he had fought. Later that evening Rose joined Carstairs in his office to fulfill the second part of his agreement for acquiring the 'Mech; he told Carstairs the story of his battle against the Clans on Tukayyid. Just before Rose left the office, Carstairs surprised him by offering to sell him a refitted *Charger*. Rose accepted the offer.

Later that evening Jeremiah paid O'Shea a visit to return the Sunbeam laser pistol the big man had dropped during their scuffle. Esmerelda was in O'Shea's small apartment, and before the evening ended both had accepted Rose's offer to join the newly forming Black Thorns. A few days later, Jeremiah Rose left Solaris with three 'Mechs and two new pilots for his unit.

BUILDING A LEGEND



—Excerpted from *And I Get to Wear a Laser?* by MechWarrior Hawg, Avalon Press, 3057

I'd only been with the unit for about 24 hours when we got our first call to action. I'd been in combat a couple of times before and I thought I understood how these things were supposed to go. Back then, of course, I was still getting used to my new comrades, and to tell the truth they blind-sided me with the first one.

I learned later that Esmerelda was sneaky. Me, I'd have charged right in and challenged the Dragoons to a duel, but not Esmerelda. She wanted them to make the challenge—or at least, it looked that way.

We were in the Dragoon's repair bay, gathered around the foot of the *Charger*, when she launched her opening salvo. Like any good commander she started with a feint, in this case from Rianna. Rianna took on a Dragoons' assistant tech, arguing with her about the best way to reattach a severed leg to a 'Mech. When the junior techie crumbled, Rianna pounced quick

as a *Locust* on the senior tech in charge. He put up a fight but it was clear from the beginning who would win. When Esmerelda jumped into the fray, Rianna drifted to the background with a couple of verbal jabs and a stare that would freeze water. Just as the senior tech was sending up a white flag, a dapper little snot of a Dragoon captain wandered into the line of fire and got hit with both barrels. He roared back, but Esmerelda tossed him a casual insult and provoked him into demanding a duel. What a puppet! He never realized he'd been manipulated into challenging the Thorns. Smooth lady, our Esmerelda. I was impressed.

Of course, she denied the whole thing. Esmerelda claimed she was genuinely furious because the techs were questioning her competence, and that she'd mouthed off to the Dragoon captain in the heat of anger. I didn't buy that for a minute. Esmerelda had better control than that over her temper. The way I see it, taking on the Dragoons so early in our career posed quite a few risks, but Esmerelda must have figured the benefits of beating them outweighed the dangers.

SITUATION: HARLECH, OUTREACH, SEPTEMBER 3054

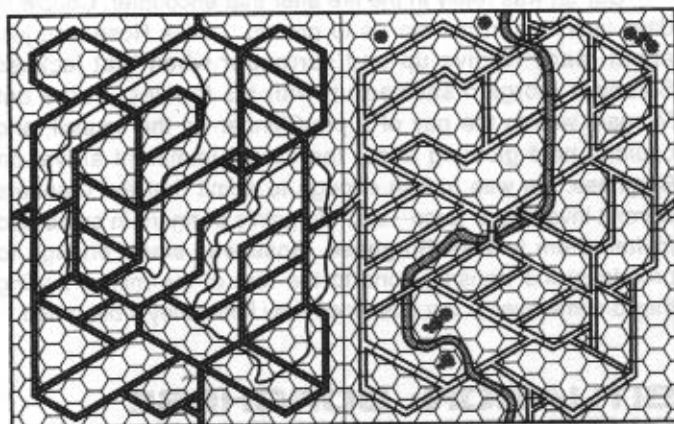
Rose and his new unit had spent a mere two days on Outreach when they landed in deep trouble. Rianna started a heated debate with the Dragoon technicians who were reattaching the leg to Jeremiah's *Charger*, insisting that they perform a stress test the Dragoons saw as unnecessary. Esmerelda joined the rapidly escalating argument, backing up Rianna, and soon all work in the repair bay stopped as the debate turned into a shouting match. Rose walked in on the dustup and had just about gotten control of the situation when a young Dragoon captain, Nigel Hawkens, intervened and began throwing his weight around. Not approving of Hawkens' condescending tone, Esmerelda turned her fury on him and insulted him in front of his men. Before the mutual hostilities could come to blows, Jeremiah suggested resolving the conflict in 'Mech combat on the training field.

Hawkens agreed to fight, itching for the chance to make an example of the Black Thorns. By insulting him in front of his men, they had reminded him just how little many of his fellow Dragoons respected or even liked him. Despite having survived several pitched battles and proved his piloting skills under fire, too many Dragoons believed Hawkens had risen to the rank of captain so quickly because his uncle sat on the Commission. By beating the Black Thorns to a pulp, Hawkens could regain some of the face he had lost. "We will teach those upstart malcontents to respect us!" Hawkens told his sergeant later. "I want them to understand who they're dealing with. We'll do whatever it takes to show them what happens to fools who tangle with Wolf's Dragoons."

BUILDING A LEGEND

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** maps as shown, placing the City Hills/Residential Maps 1 and 2 from **BattleTech Map Set 3** side by side to form an even playing area. The Dragoon player should place 10 Light buildings on the east map to represent the mock town in the Dragoons' training field.



CITY (Hills/Residential) #1 CITY (Hills/Residential) #2



DEFENDER

The Defender consists of elements of Wolf's Dragoons.

Dragoons Gamma Regiment Lances

Captain Hawken (Piloting 2, Gunnery 2), ANH-1A
Annihilator
Sergeant Hudson (Piloting 3, Gunnery 2), ARC-2W Archer
Corporal Wood (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), WVR-7M
Wolverine
Corporal Thomsen (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), WVR-7M
Wolverine
Lieutenant Richardson (Piloting 3, Gunnery 3), IMP-2E Imp
Sergeant Dickens (Piloting 3, Gunnery 3), CRD-3K
Crusader
Sergeant Adams (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), ZEUS-6T Zeus
Corporal James (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4), SHG-2E Shogun

Deployment

The Dragoon units deploy as hidden units (see p. 57, **BattleTech Compendium**, or p. 89, **BattleTech Compendium: Rules of Warfare**) on the east mapsheet.

ATTACKER

The Attacker is the Black Thorns.

Black Thorns

Captain Jeremiah Rose (Piloting 2, Gunnery 1), CHR-3K
Charger
Rianna Rose (Piloting 4, Gunnery 6), PHX-3D Phoenix Hawk

Angus Lochart (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), VLK-QD Valkyrie
Badius O'Shea (Piloting 4, Gunnery 4), SHD-2D2 Shadow
Hawk

Esmerelda (Piloting 3, Gunnery 2), WHM-7M Warhammer
Hawg (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), ZEUS-6S Zeus

Deployment

The Thorns units enter on Turn 1 from the west edge of the mapsheets.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The first side to initiate a physical attack loses the battle. The scenario ends immediately after the first physical attack has been resolved.

If no physical attacks are made, the scenario ends when all 'Mechs on one side are destroyed or flee from the battlefield. In this case, the victory goes to the side with the highest total points. The Dragoons receive 1 point for every Thorn 'Mech destroyed. The Black Thorns receive 1 point for every Dragoon 'Mech destroyed and 1 point for every turn they remain in battle.

SPECIAL RULES

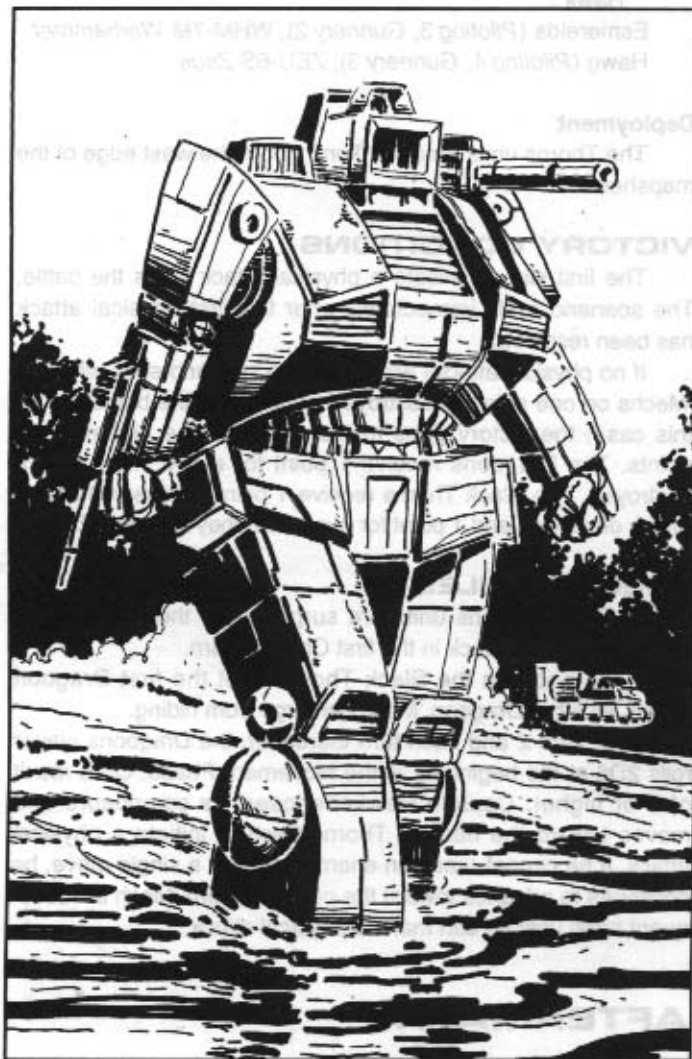
1. The Dragoons units are surprised by the Thorns, and therefore cannot attack in the first Combat Turn.
2. As soon as the Black Thorns spot the first Dragoon 'Mech, all other Dragoon 'Mechs emerge from hiding.
3. In Turn 2 and each turn thereafter, the Dragoons player rolls 2D6 at the beginning of the Movement Phase. On a result of 9 or higher, Captain Hawken loses his composure and moves toward the nearest Thorn 'Mech to initiate a physical attack. If he cannot reach an enemy 'Mech in a single move, he continues to advance toward the nearest Thorn 'Mech in subsequent turns until he can make a physical attack.

AFTERMATH

During the heat of battle, Captain Hawken lost his cool and tried to punch the cockpit of Esmerelda's *Warhammer*. His punch went wide of its mark, hitting the *Warhammer* in the chest. Esmerelda responded in kind; her 'Mech's massive arm found its mark, burying its PPC barrel in the cockpit of Hawken's *Annihilator*. The Dragoon captain suffered severe injuries, and narrowly escaped death. The Dragoon referees quickly activated the 'Mechs' myomer inhibitors, ending the battle. Captain Hawken was evacuated to a hospital for treatment, and both the Thorns and the Dragoons lances were taken into custody.

Later cleared of all charges, the Thorns were awarded an official victory over the Dragoons. Rising anger toward the unit among the Dragoons ranks, however, soon proved that life on Outreach would not be kind to the Thorns for long. Eager to get off-planet, they accepted their only offer: a garrison contract on the planet Borghese near the border of the Jade Falcon occupation zone.

A WARM WELCOME



—Excerpted from *And I Get to Wear a Laser?* by MechWarrior Hawg, Avalon Press, 3057

As planets go, Borghese's not a bad vacation spot. The locals were nice enough—with the possible exception of the protesters outside our compound gate—and the weather's great. We'd been there for several months when I got sick—one of those illnesses where you think you're not going to live and then you're afraid you will. I don't remember much of that time—mostly white walls and nurses in white uniforms. I'd just gotten back to active duty when everything hit the fan. The planetary council got taken over by a bunch of opportunists who figured they'd be better off under Clan occupation than by fighting, and they sent a big chunk of the militia after us.

We had to fight our way out of Houston—that's the capital—with the militia hot on our trail. Angus and Ajax led us through Borghese's version of the outback, and we almost lost the local soldier boys until one of their hovercraft spotted

Badicus' Mech during a river crossing. We could have nailed the hovercraft, but Badicus did the right thing by not shooting. After all, we'd sworn to protect the men in that flyer. Badicus always said he'd never have made the shot anyway at such a tricky angle.

Our fat was really in the fire after that encounter. Couple of days later, the militia ran us to ground. I think Rose was just about ready to give up and surrender when that jackass Salander Morgain showed up with his toadies. Turns out Morgain was in the pay of a pro-Clanner on the council, and couldn't help gloating about the Clans' imminent arrival on Borghese. He was foolish enough to admit that the Clanners weren't invading in force—that Morgain's partners in crime had invited them to take Borghese. Rose was smart enough to broadcast the transmissions to the rest of the militia, hoping they'd come over to our side once they knew they'd been had.

SITUATION: BORGHESE OUTBACK, JULY 3055

The Black Thorns arrived on Borghese to find, not the usual fanfare and acclaim, but protest and discord. A small faction of the local people believed that Clan occupation would be preferable to seeing their planet become a war zone, and they greeted Jeremiah and his crew with pickets and unflattering banners. Making his first real command decision, Rose formed up his unit and marched them down the capital city's main street all the way from the spaceport directly to the seat of government on Borghese. After a tense debate, Borghese's ruling council approved the Thorns' contract and uneasily welcomed their newly commissioned protectors to the planet.

The peace proved all too brief, however. The pro-Clan faction, known as the Preservationists, turned terrorist and hijacked the *Bristol*. Jeremiah led the Thorns to the spaceport to recover the DropShip, but arrived too late. As the unit watched the *Bristol* disappear into the sky, they received word that their base was under attack by the same terrorists. The Preservationists destroyed the base, leaving the Thorns with their Mechs and the clothes on their backs.

On the heels of this disaster came another. The Preservationists had recruited a local hero of the Clan war, Salander Morgain, as their spokesman. Morgain broadcast a planet-wide appeal to the people of Borghese to surrender to the invading Clan force that had recently arrived in the Borghese system and was only two weeks away from planetfall. Playing on his audience's emotions, he emphasized the horrific violence they would surely face if they resisted. Morgain also claimed that the Thorns had gone insane and killed a band of protesters picketing their compound, destroying it in the process before fleeing into the wilderness. Citing the fact that the DropShip *Bristol* had fired at several buildings on spaceport property and then blasted off without paying its debts, Morgain

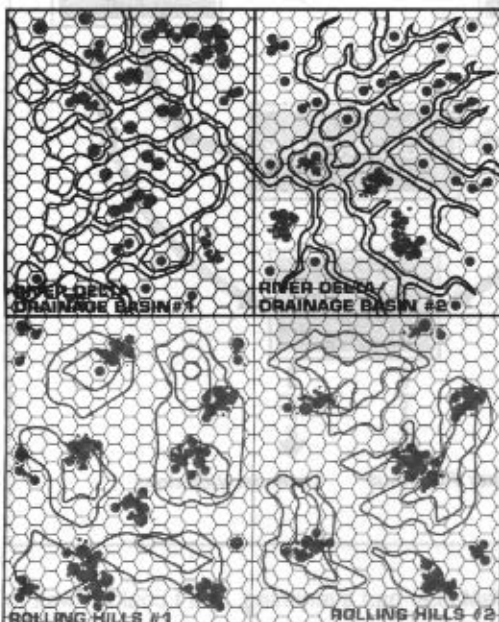
A WARM WELCOME

said that the governing council had no choice but to label the Black Thorns outlaws and to bring them to justice.

Though he did not want to, Jeremiah knew he would have to fight the local militia to prove his unit's innocence. Morgain, however, had other plans for the Thorns.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out **BattleTech** maps as shown, using Drainage Basin maps 1 and 2 from **BattleTech Map Set 4**. If a larger playing area is desired, players may add the Rolling Hills maps 1 and 2 from the **BattleTech Map Set 3**.



DEFENDER

The Defender is the Black Thorns.

Black Thorns

Captain Jeremiah Rose (*Piloting 2, Gunnery 1*), CHR-3K
Charger
Rianna Rose (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 6*), PHX-3D Phoenix
Hawk
Badicus O'Shea (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 4*), SHD-2D2 Shadow
Hawk
Esmerelda (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 2*), WHM-7M Warhammer
Hawg (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), ZEU-6Z Zeus
Ajax (*Piloting 1, Gunnery 2*), RVN-1X Raven

Deployment

The Thorns units set up on the western mapsheet(s).

ATTACKER

The Attacker consists of elements of the Borghese militia, led by Salander Morgain.

Borghese Militia Lance

Salander Morgain (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), MAD-4A
Marauder II

MechWarrior Matherson (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 4*), STK-4N
Stalker

MechWarrior Jamersmith (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 4*), BLR-3S
BattleMaster

MechWarrior Antioch Bell (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), BNC-3S
Banshee

MechWarrior Collin (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), AWS-8T
Awesome

Deployment

The attacking units enter from the east edge of the mapsheet(s).

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The first side to destroy all of the opposing 'Mechs wins the scenario.

SPECIAL RULES

1. Antioch Bell has come to despise Morgain, who was once his commanding officer, but is torn about betraying him and joining the Black Thorns. Bell does not fire on any Thorns unit, except to protect himself or his 'Mech.

2. Bell's unit always moves last during each turn's Movement Phase. Beginning in Turn 2, the defending player should roll 2D6 before moving Bell's unit to determine if Bell switches sides. On a result of 11 or higher in Turn 2, Bell joins the Thorns. After each unsuccessful roll, subtract 1 from the target number. In Turn 3, the defending player must roll a 10 or better for Bell to join the Thorns, in Turn 4 a 9 or better, and so on. If the defending player's rolls are all unsuccessful, Bell automatically switches to the Thorns' side in Turn 8.

3. If Salander Morgain is killed, all militiamen except Bell will break and retreat. Bell will surrender to the Black Thorns. If Jeremiah Rose is killed, the Thorns fall victim to a killing frenzy and fight to the last man.

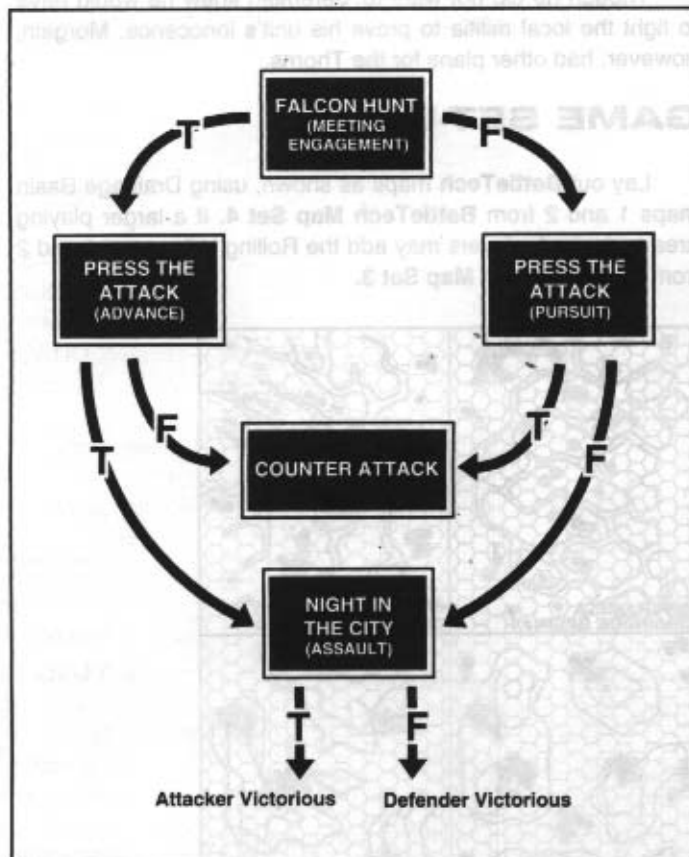
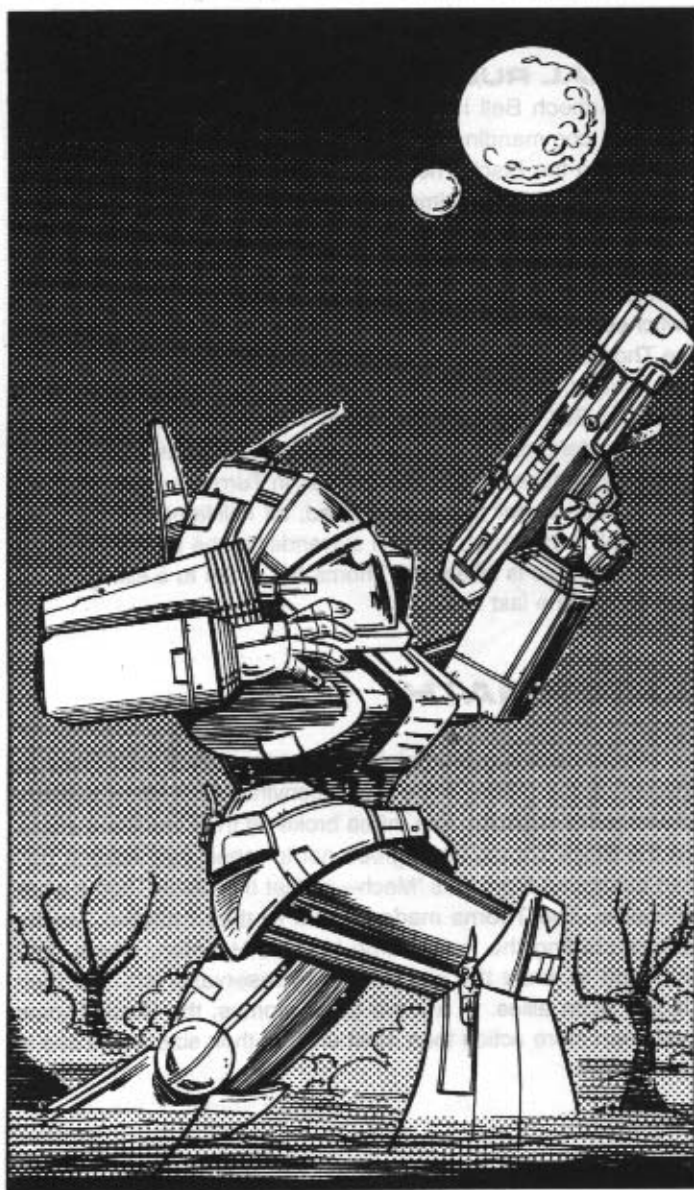
AFTERMATH

By transmitting Morgain's final conversation with Rose to the rest of the militia, Antioch Bell convinced his fellow soldiers of Morgain's duplicity. The militia broke off their imminent attack on the Black Thorns and agreed not to report that Antioch Bell had destroyed Morgain's 'Mech—or that the Black Thorns were still alive. The Thorns made repairs to their battered 'Mechs before starting the long march back to Houston, where they intended to wrest the city from the Preservationists and their Jade Falcon allies. In a mere three months, the Black Thorns had seen more action than most units of their size would see in three years.

BEWARE THE THORNS

—Excerpted from *And I Get to Wear a Laser?* by MechWarrior Hawg, Avalon Press, 3057

Despite the fatigue of the past couple of days in the out-back, I felt pretty good sitting in the cockpit of my new *BattleMaster*. My family's *Zeus* had been shot out from under me, and that hurt some—but sometimes a MechWarrior's just got to be practical. We were outnumbered, outgunned, and in an inferior tactical position, but none of that made any difference. We had no hope of winning and nothing to gain by the attempt, but we headed toward Houston under cover of darkness anyway. Despite my oh-so-short test run with my new ride, I could move it like a dream. My grandfather's surely turning over in his grave as I say this, but I didn't miss the *Zeus* one



little bit. The *BattleMaster* had everything, and I couldn't wait to use it in combat.

The rest of the company didn't exactly share my enthusiasm. Badicus was too beat up to even share in the action and the rest of the unit was riding 'Mechs that were pretty light on ammunition. Rose was worried, but I'd begun to figure out that worrying came natural to him. He's one of those guys that figures all the angles and then runs through the calculations another couple of times to make sure he's got everything right. I find that kind of dedication reassuring, but at that moment, I didn't think it necessary. Me, I wanted to kick the tail of the entire Jade Falcon Clan all by myself, right then and there. Fortunately, I didn't have to.

SITUATION: HOUSTON, BORGHESE, JULY 3055

Following the defeat of Salander Morgain and his men, Rose made what repairs he could to his available 'Mechs and came up with the only feasible scheme for returning to the capital city of Houston. Piecing together a ragtag unit from the Thorn machines and the remains of the militia, he and the militia commander devised a bold plan to take back the city from the Jade Falcon invaders.

BEWARE THE THORNS

The invaders believed Morgain had dispatched Rose and the rest of the Black Thorns, and so Rose concealed his approach to the city. If he could get close enough to fire on the Falcons before they recognized his units, sheer surprise might give the Thorns a chance to fight their way to Borghese's ComStar compound and send an SOS to the Federated Commonwealth military. Once committed to the battle, the Thorns would have to fight all the way to the compound without respite. Just as Rose feared, the night was long and deadly.

GAME SET-UP

Beware the Thorns is an operational game using the rules given on pp. 12-27, **BattleTech Tactical Handbook**. Play the scenarios given below in sequence according to the Operational Turn order except as described on the **Beware the Thorns** Flowchart. Unless otherwise noted, all operational game rules apply.

When setting up the mapsheets, keep in mind that throughout the entire campaign the Thorns' home edge is the west edge and the Falcons' is the east edge.

CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE

The Thorns' objective in this campaign is to break through the Jade Falcon defenses around Houston and send a message to the Federated Commonwealth. The Falcons' objective is to keep that from happening. The winner of the campaign can claim Borghese for his side's respective leaders.

BLACK THORNS COMBAT VALUE POINTS TABLE

Combat Pool: 29,602 points, allocated as follows:

'Mechs	CV Points
Command Lance, main body	
Captain Jeremiah Rose, Elite, CHR-3K <i>Charger</i>	5,106
Rianna Rose, Regular, PHX-3D <i>Phoenix Hawk</i>	3,208
Antioch Bell, Veteran, BNC-5S <i>Banshee</i>	6,297
Battle Lance, main body	
Esmerelda, Veteran, MAD-5A <i>Marauder II</i>	6,733
Hawg, Veteran, BLR-3S <i>BattleMaster</i>	5,004
Pursuit Lance, recon detachment	
Angus, Regular, VLK-QD <i>Valkyrie</i>	1,547
Ajax, Elite, RVN-3L <i>Raven</i>	1,707

Logistics Pool: 1,098 points

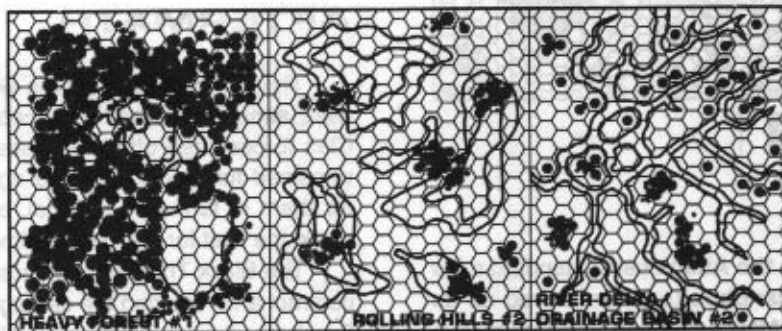
Repair Pool: 300 points

Reinforcement Pool: 0 points

MEETING ENGAGEMENT INITIAL CONDITIONS

Black Thorns

Walking speed of slowest 'Mech	-2
Beagle Active Probe	+1
Guardian ECM Suite	+1
Landing Modifier	-2
Total:	-2



Recovery and Repair

The severe time constraints of the battle for Houston allow the Black Thorns to repair damage to their 'Mechs only once during the entire operational game. This means that if they win an Operational Phase, they should press the attack rather than spending any Repair Points. If the Falcons win an Operational Phase, the Thorns may spend Repair Points as normal. The Thorns may not salvage damaged Clan 'Mechs until after the operational game has ended, but may salvage their own 'Mechs if time permits.

DEFENDER

The Defender comprises elements of the Ninth Talon Cluster of the Jade Falcon Gamma Galaxy. The defending player rolls 2D6 to determine his starting forces, applying the +2 modifier that is standard for an Extraction Raid (p. 13, **BattleTech Tactical Handbook**). The Falcon force's total CV points (see p. 28, **BattleTech Tactical Handbook**) should be divided between his Combat Pool, Logistics Pool, Repair Pool, and Reinforcement Pool

according to the standard Operational Game rules.

ATTACKER

The Attacker consists of the remaining Black Thorns listed in the Black Thorns Combat Value Points Table. The Thorns have a total of 31,000 CV points.

Black Thorns Logistics

Because they are raiding, the Thorns have no reloads. The Thorns player can pay the base logistics cost for all personnel, but may not pay for weapon reloads during the operational game. All Black Thorn 'Mechs enter each scenario with the rounds they have remaining from the previous scenario.

BEWARE THE THORNS

SCENARIO: FALCON HUNT

As the Black Thorns are already on the planet, there is no need for a Planetary Landing scenario. Begin the operational game with the Meeting Engagement scenario under the initial conditions described in the table on p. 31.

Game Set-Up

Lay out the Heavy Forest 1, Rolling Hills 2, and Drainage Basin 2 maps from the **BattleTech Map Sets 3** and 4 side by side to form a rectangular playing area.

Victory Determination

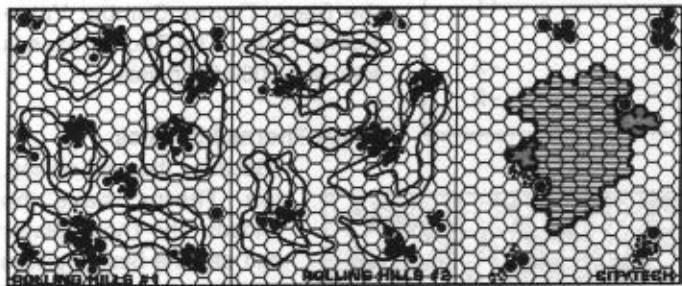
If the Thorns are victorious, they will press toward Houston in the Advance scenario. Go to **Press the Attack**, below. If the Falcons win the Meeting Engagement, they will hunt down and try to destroy the Thorns. In this case, play **Press the Attack** as the Pursuit scenario.

SCENARIO: PRESS THE ATTACK

This scenario serves as either the Advance or Pursuit scenario, depending on who won **Falcon Hunt**.

Game Set-Up

Lay out the **BattleTech** maps as shown, placing Rolling Hills Maps 1 and 2 from **BattleTech Map Set 3** next to the CityTech Map from **BattleTech Map Set 2**. The CityTech Map represents Houston.



Victory Determination

Determine victory in **Press the Attack** using standard rules (p. 19, **BattleTech Tactical Handbook**). When played as an Advance scenario, **Press the Attack** can end when all mobile Thorn 'Mechs have exited off the east edge of the map.

The loser of this engagement may choose to launch a Counterattack scenario against the winner (see **Counterattack**, below). If not, go to the Assault scenario **Night in the City**.

SCENARIO: COUNTERATTACK

If the loser of **Press the Attack** chooses to counterattack the winner, play proceeds as described on p. 19, **BattleTech Tactical Handbook**. Choose the mapsheets for this scenario according to standard operational game rules (p. 15, **BattleTech Tactical Handbook**).

Victory Determination

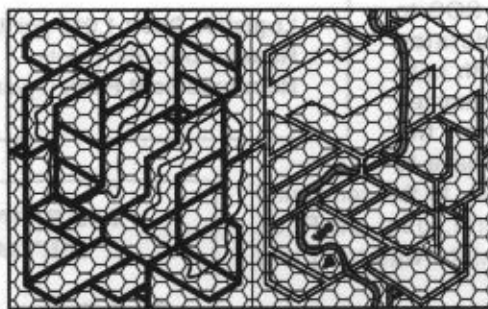
Regardless of who wins the Counterattack scenario, play proceeds to the final encounter, **Night in the City**.

SCENARIO: NIGHT IN THE CITY

This Assault scenario is the final phase of the operational game. The entire campaign has been fought over the past 18 hours, and this final nighttime battle will determine the fate of Borghese. During this scenario, use the Night Combat rules on p. 61, **BattleTech Compendium**, or p. 94, **BattleTech Compendium: Rules of Warfare**.

Game Set-Up

Lay out the City Hills/Residential maps from **BattleTech Map Set 3**.



Victory Determination

The winner of this scenario wins the campaign, ending the operational game (see **Assault**, p. 19, **BattleTech Tactical Handbook**).

AFTERMATH

Though the Black Thorns won the war on Borghese, they were almost too weak to accept the victory. By the time the Clan forces lifted off-planet, less than half the Thorns' 'Mechs remained functional. Salvage rights made the battle profitable for them in terms of materiel, but the loss of Angus Lochart made the cost for the Thorns almost too dear.

The Black Thorns spent most of the next year fulfilling their contract and repairing the damage they had suffered. Events on Borghese, though painful and difficult for the Thorns, ultimately made them stronger.

Rianna Rose left Borghese for a brief trip to Northwind, returning Angus' *Valkyrie* to the Highlanders and Angus himself to his final resting place. She then returned to Outreach to recruit additional personnel. With the salvage acquired on Borghese and their first completed contract under their belt, the Black Thorns were in a favorable bargaining position. As one of the few units with more 'Mechs than pilots, they could pick and choose the people who would help them become a full-strength company.

BEWARE THE THORNS



SOME WERE EXPENDABLE

—Excerpted from *And I Get to Wear a Laser?* by MechWarrior Hawk, Avalon Press, 3057

Despite what some people tell you, riding in a DropShip across half the known galaxy is pure hell. The boring, mind-numbing routine is enough to send the most seasoned veterans in search of the silliest diversions. There's a reason for all those shipboard romances! 'Course, there were none of those on the trip to Wolcott except for the one between the Captain and ... the Captain.

Rose and McCloud had been a couple almost from the day they met, even when they were kilometers apart. Despite their best efforts to stay away from each other, it was almost impossible to avoid each other on the ship. A DropShip's a small place, after all. Considering all the time they spent together, I'm surprised the twins didn't arrive months earlier. Not that I blame them. If I'd had somebody at that point in my life, I'd have spent just as much time with her.

In any event, O'Shea and I passed the time with "special projects," as we called them. Most of the stunts we pulled were practical jokes, but we did manage to tap into the comm circuit and set up an audio carrier to the bridge so we always knew what was happening. McCloud would have pushed us both out of the airlock if she'd known, so we played it safe and tore the system down right after we got to Wolcott.

To say the inbound trip was intense is like calling the Battle of Tukayyid a small engagement. I was white-knuckled during the entire passage. The worst of it hit when we came out of the jump point near the planet. The Clanners had blockaded Wolcott, and we arrived just as Clan aerospace fighters were roaring in hot pursuit after a couple of outbound Kurita DropShips heading for the JumpShip we had arrived on. Rose told me later that he'd had to face down the ISF agents on the bridge of the *Bristol* just to keep them from using our DropShip as bait to protect the JumpShip. I knew something had gone bad and was heading toward the bridge with my laser drawn when the situation resolved itself. I ended up sliding back to my room to await the final leg of the trip. That trip's the only time I went around on a DropShip fully armed.

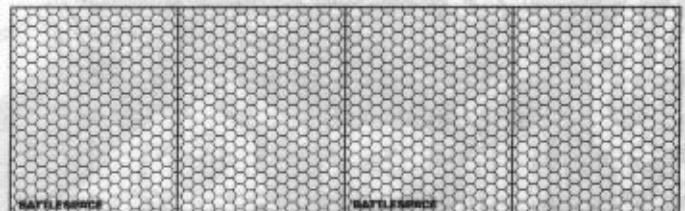
SITUATION: WOLCOTT, FEBRUARY 3057

After the Gray Death Legion arrived on Borghese to relieve the Black Thorns, Rose sent Rianna to Outreach to begin recruiting and to look for a new contract. After accepting a lucrative job on Wolcott, Rose realized that the Thorns would have to travel through Clan-occupied space to reach the planet. He assumed his Kurita employers had devised a safe way to get to and from Wolcott, but the danger of such operations didn't really sink in until the *Bristol* was actually making the run.

The Kurita JumpShip *Ellyohippus*, carrying the Black Thorns aboard the *Bristol*, entered the Wolcott system via a pirate point. According to plan, the *Bristol* detached and began burning toward Wolcott as quickly as possible. With the *Bristol* safely launched, the JumpShip needed 30 minutes to make navigational calculations and initiate the jump drive in order to leave the system. The plan called for the *Ellyohippus* to depart before the Clans discovered its presence; if they detected the DropShip, it was to divert from its current heading so that the Clan aerospace fighters could not use its course to vector in on the JumpShip. Unfortunately, the *Ellyohippus* arrived in-system just as two DropShips were burning toward it from Wolcott with Clan forces in hot pursuit. In hostile space, 30 minutes can feel like an eternity ...

GAME SET-UP

Some Were Expendable is a **BattleSpace** scenario. Lay out the **BattleSpace** mapsheets as shown.



DEFENDER

The Defender consists of the Kurita JumpShip *Ellyohippus* and three DropShips.

Inner Sphere Ships

Invader Class JumpShip Ellyohippus (modified to mount a lithium-fusion battery; this modification required the removal of a docking collar, reducing the vessel's DropShip Capacity to 2)

Union Class DropShip Bristol

Overlord Class DropShip Kirin

Overlord Class DropShip Elkford

Deployment

The *Ellyohippus* and the *Bristol* begin in Hex 0307 on the left-hand map. Both ships have a Velocity of 0. The *Elkford* and the *Kirin* enter from the "east" edge of the right-hand map in Turn 1. Both these ships have a Velocity of 5.

ATTACKER

The Attacker is a group of four Clan OmniFighters, represented by a single Squadron counter.

SOME WERE EXPENDABLE

4 OmniFighters (2 Sabutai, 2 Jengiz)

Armor Value: 6

Safe Thrust: 6

Heat Sinks: 41

Maximum Thrust: 9

Weapons

Arc	Type	Heat	Range Values			
			S	M	L	E
Nose	Mixed	12	3	2	2	0
LW	Mixed	22	3	3	2	0
RW	Mixed	22	3	3	2	0
Aft	Mixed	4	1	1	0	0

Deployment

The Clan aerospace fighters enter from the "east" edge of the right-hand map in Turn 2. The fighters have a Velocity of 9.

ATTACKER VICTORY TABLE

JumpShip destroyed	Decisive Victory
2 DropShips destroyed	Strategic Victory
1 DropShip destroyed, 1 DropShip and the JumpShip damaged	Marginal Victory
1 DropShip destroyed	Pyrrhic Victory

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Clan fighters win the scenario under the following conditions.

The Inner Sphere wins under the following conditions:

DEFENDER VICTORY TABLE

All Inner Sphere vessels exit mapsheets	Decisive Victory
JumpShip and 2 DropShips exit mapsheets	Strategic Victory
JumpShip and 1 DropShip exit mapsheets	Marginal Victory
JumpShip exits mapsheets	Pyrrhic Victory

SPECIAL RULES

1. The *Elkford* and the *Kirin* burn toward the JumpShip as the *Bristol* burns away from it, the two ships attempting to reach the *Ellyohippus* and dock before the JumpShip is forced to leave the system. The Clan fighters enter the combat in pursuit of the DropShips leaving Wolcott in Turn 2.

2. The *Bristol* tries to get past the fighters and off the opposite side of the mapsheets.

3. The *Ellyohippus* leaves the mapsheets in Turn 7 or as soon as it is attacked, whichever comes first. It will use its lithium-fusion batteries to jump. The sail is not deployed during the encounter.

AFTERMATH

The ISF agents required to be aboard every ship entering the Wolcott system attempted to change the *Bristol's* trajectory so that it would draw the Clans' fire and thus save both Kurita DropShips, but Rose and McCloud stopped them—at gunpoint. The *Kirin* made it safely to the *Ellyohippus*, but the Clan fighters destroyed the luckless *Elkford*. The furious ISF agents later claimed that McCloud's refusal to change course vectors cost the *Elkford* its life. Acting on their report, the planetary liaison ruled that the *Bristol's* captain was a loose cannon and banned the DropShip from participating in any Black Thorns operations during the tenure of the unit's employment on Wolcott.



RISE AND SHINE

—Excerpted from *And I Get to Wear a Laser?* by MechWarrior Hawg, Avalon Press, 3057

Despite what anyone else may say, we were all surprised when the Captain and Jamshid emerged from the swamp like a pair of bog monsters and began firing. We should have expected that kind of action from Rose, but he always found ways to keep us on our toes even when we were expecting the unusual. Got to be kind of aggravating, actually.

As it turned out, our swamp practice didn't do us much good in some ways—our next mission took us to a planet of rolling hills, forests, and rocky outcroppings. It taught us a lot besides handling the terrain, though. We learned plenty about teamwork in those swamps, and we got to know the new kids in the unit. We came to thank the gods for that soon enough.

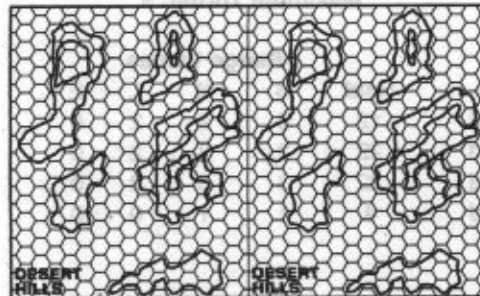
Even though our actual baptism of fire wouldn't hit us for another couple of months, in that training ambush we saw the first glimmer of the spirit of the Black Thorns. Lasers firing, computers whining and lights flashing, the entire company figured out what was going on, then turned the tables on the ambushers and carried the attack to them. We lost the engagement, but we gained the upper hand for battles in the future. Little did we know how important that lesson would be in the months to come.

SITUATION: WOLCOTT, FEBRUARY 3057

After unpacking equipment and working out the positioning of the 'Mechs, Rose and new recruit Jamshid Al-Kalibi left the Thorns' base, ostensibly for a meeting with the Kurita liaison. In fact, Rose intended to launch a surprise "attack" on his own unit to test their reactions. Rose left instructions for Esmerelda to lead the remaining Thorns on a shakedown run in their newly acquired training area. After checking the duty rosters, Rose and Jamshid climbed into their 'Mechs and started out toward town, doubling back to set up the ambush as soon as they dared. An hour or so later, Esmerelda and the bulk of the Black Thorns entered the swamp in which Rose and Jamshid lay hidden.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** maps as shown, using the two Desert Hills maps in **BattleTech Map Set 2**. Alternatively, players may use one Desert Hills map and a standard **BattleTech** mixed-terrain mapsheet, placing the mixed-terrain map to the east and disregarding all woods. Treat Level 0 terrain as Depth 1 water and reduce all hills by one Elevation Level (Level 1 terrain becomes Level 0, Level 2 becomes Level 1, and so on).



ATTACKER

The Attacker consists of Rose and Jamshid.

Ambush Force

Captain Jeremiah Rose (*Piloting 2, Gunnery 1*), Masakari Prime

Jamshid Al-Kalibi (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 4*), Mad Cat Prime

Deployment

The attackers deploy as hidden units on the eastern mapsheet. The attacking player should write down the numbers of the hexes in which the hidden units are located.

DEFENDER

The Defender is the rest of the Black Thorns.

Command Lance

Rianna Rose (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 6*), PHX-3D Phoenix Hawk

Antioch Bell (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), BNC-3S Banshee

Battle Lance

Lt. Esmerelda (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 2*), Mad Cat Prime

Hawg (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), BLR-3S BattleMaster

Greta Podell (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 4*), CHR-3K Charger

Badicus O'Shea (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 4*), WHM-7M

Warhammer

Recon Lance

Lt. Ajax (*Piloting 1, Gunnery 2*), RVN-1X Raven

"Kitten" Kittiallen (*Piloting 6, Gunnery 5*), PNT-10K Panther

Leeza Rippitcuc (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 4*), MCY-99 Mercury

Yuri Dogdorovich (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*), Dasher-D

Deployment

The Defender enters from the west edge of the mapsheets.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Attacker wins if his units destroy five or more of the Defender's units. The Defender wins if his units destroy both of the attacking 'Mechs while losing two or fewer of their own 'Mechs. Treat any other outcome as a draw.



SPECIAL RULES

The attacking units are hidden under Depth 1 water and will not reveal their presence until the defending units cannot easily escape.

AFTERMATH

Captain Rose and Jamshid Al-Kalibi both "died" in the training exercise, but in the process "destroyed" all of their fel-

low Black Thorns who entered the swamp. Jamshid fired a fatal PPC blast into Hawg's *BattleMaster* just as Hawg fired his medium lasers into Jamshid's exposed center torso, crippling the *Mad Cat's* damaged gyro and ending the training session. Though the Thorns joked about the ambush later on, they recognized the seriousness of the exercise. If Rose and Jamshid had been a real enemy, the Black Thorns would have joined the countless other mercenary units that went the way of the dodo bird.

SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

—Excerpted from *And I Get to Wear a Laser?* by MechWarrior Hawg, Avalon Press, 3057

Sitting in the cockpit of a 'Mech that's standing waist-deep in swamp slime is the perfect time to reflect on why you wanted to be a MechWarrior in the first place. As you move forward, every nerve is on fire, waiting for the first glimpse of the ambush you know is coming. You're concentrating on the footing, the terrain, the scanners and the lump in your throat all at the same time. And during the whole exercise your mind keeps going over the same question; "How did I get myself into this mess?"

Things get better once the shooting starts. That statement may sound strange, but veterans know just what I'm talking about. Before the action starts you never know what's going to happen, if anything. The waiting can be unbearable. Once that first laser lights up the sky, you know exactly what to do. At these times, a warrior feels an almost supernatural calm.

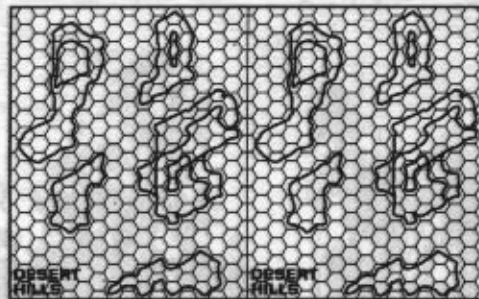
I've heard it said that the army likes their soldiers nice and dumb. They don't want somebody smart enough to wonder what's over the next hill or creative enough to question why we're doing what we're about to do. I almost envy those who lack the creativity to imagine what might be lying out there in the swamp waiting to take a shot at your back. Almost. Your imagination can run away with you in a situation like that, sitting around anticipating the worst. But I've never been able to let the tension go and follow orders without thinking. I follow them to the best of my ability in the end—I just lug along a whole lot of mental baggage.

SITUATION: WOLCOTT, FEBRUARY 3057

After the Thorns' initial failure at the swamp training exercise, Rose ordered the unit to continue the maneuvers into the night. With each "attack," the unit lost fewer and fewer 'Mechs. With each new encounter, they pulled together and began to work in unison like a real fighting team. In the final training exercise, the recon lance had a chance to test its mettle against superior forces under cover of darkness. Rose ordered Ajax to develop and execute a plan for his lance, with the goal of finding and engaging the smaller of the two forces prowling around in the field.

GAME SET-UP

Use the same mapsheet set-up as in the previous scenario, *Rise and Shine*, (p. 36).



DEFENDER

The Defender consists of the Black Thorns' command and battle lances.

Command Lance

Captain Jeremiah Rose (*Piloting 2, Gunnery 1*), *Masakari Prime*
 Rianna Rose (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 6*), *PHX-3D Phoenix Hawk*
 Antioch Bell (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *BNC-3S Banshee*
 Jamshid Al-Kalibi (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 4*), *Mad Cat Prime*

Battle Lance

Lt. Esmerelda (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 2*), *Mad Cat Prime*
 Badicus O'Shea (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 4*), *WHM-6K Warhammer*
 Hawg (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *BLR-3S BattleMaster*
 Greta Podell (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 4*), *CHR-3K Charger*

Deployment

The Defender deploys first. All defending units begin the game hidden (see p. 57, *BattleTech Compendium*, or p. 89, *BattleTech Compendium: Rules of Warfare*), and may be located in any hexes at any facings.

ATTACKER

The Attacker consists of the recon lance of the Black Thorns.

Recon Lance

Lt. Ajax (*Piloting 1, Gunnery 2*), *Raven*
 Yuri Dogdovich (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*), *Dasher*
 Leeza Rippitcuc (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 4*), *Mercury*
 "Kitten" Kittiallen (*Piloting 6, Gunnery 5*), *Panther*

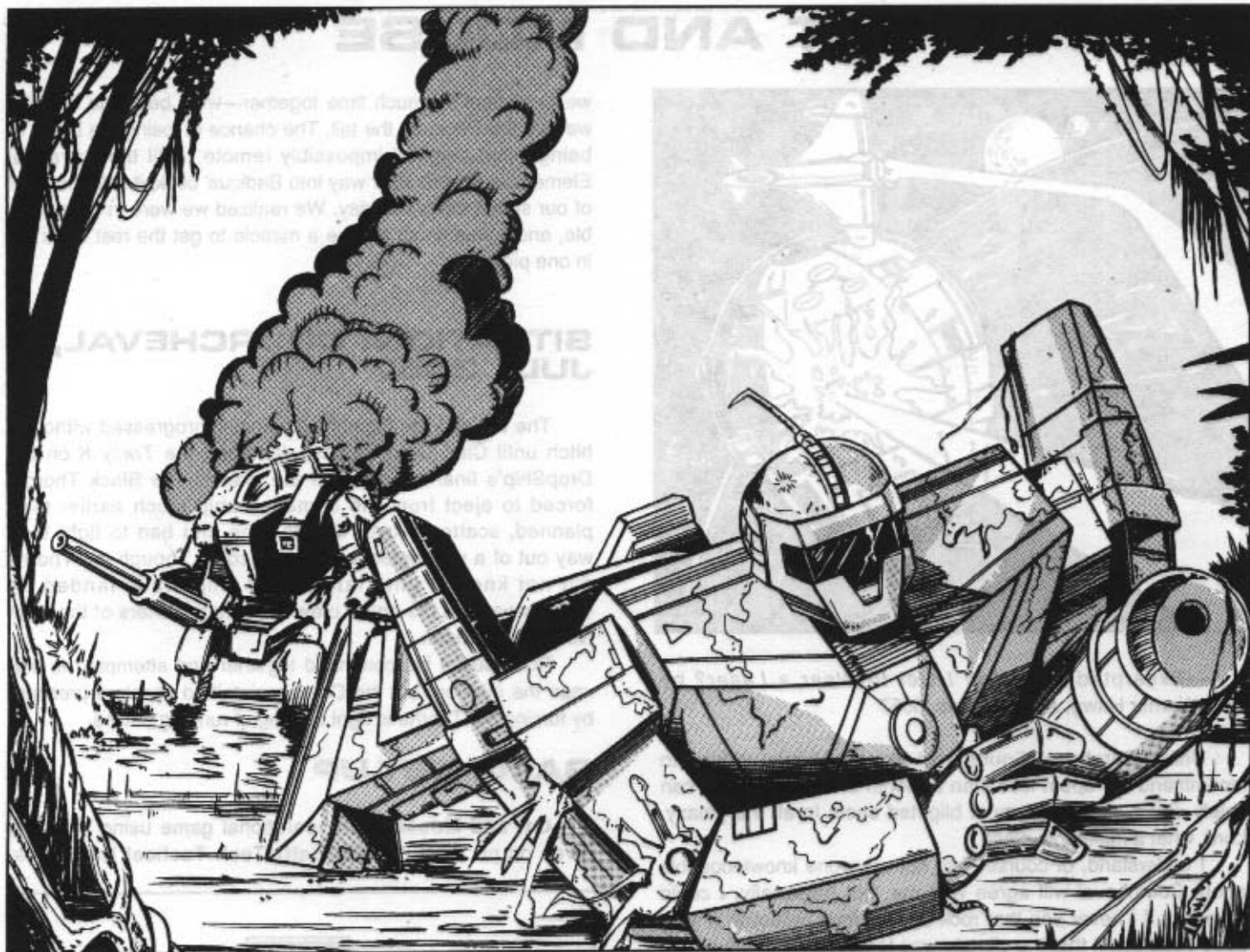
Deployment

The Attacker enters in Turn 1 from any edge of the map-sheets except the east edge.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Attacker wins if he finds the battle lance and destroys at least 2 of its 'Mechs, then exits all mobile units off the edge

SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS



of the mapsheet from which they entered. Any other outcome is a victory for the Defender.

SPECIAL RULES

The advantage of surprise and tactical coordination provided by Ajax means that the Attacker always wins the Initiative.

AFTERMATH

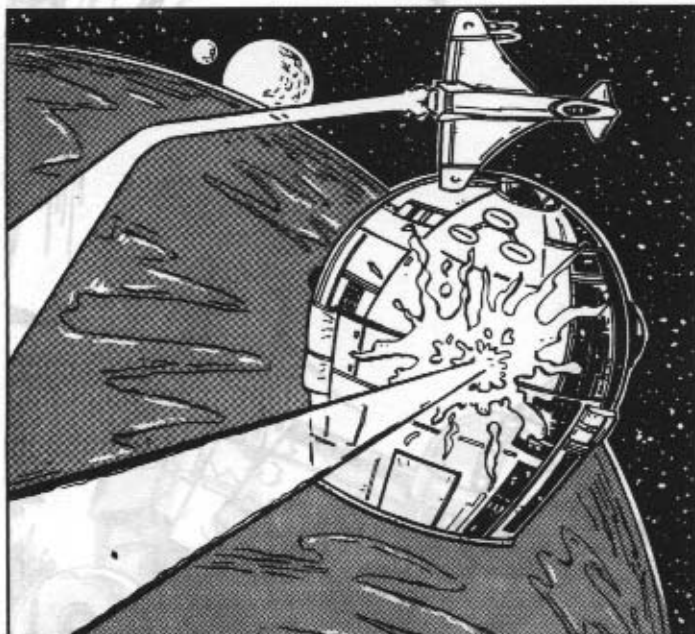
The recon lance entered the fields around the swamp in a sweeping formation. The light 'Mechs were 70 meters abreast and moving at 86 kph when they encountered the forward elements of the command lance. Skirting the swamp, the recon lance turned south to avoid the now alerted command lance, and Ajax used his *Raver's* jamming equipment to stop the command lance from contacting the battle lance. He then formed his lance into a wedge with Yuri Dogdorovich's *Dasher* leading

the charge. The light 'Mechs increased their speed to 97 kph, hoping to out-distance the scattered command lance.

Six minutes later, all hell broke loose when the *Dasher* ran straight into Greta Podell's *Charger*. The *Charger* lost its footing in the mire and fell face-first into the murky waters of the swamp. Yuri struggled to keep his 'Mech upright and moving, but only managed to continue for about 100 yards before gravity and the damage sustained in the collision overcame his machine. The *Dasher* fell on its right side, crumpling its right arm. In the sudden confusion, Ajax ordered all other units of the recon lance to stop. Unfortunately, the battle lance did not understand what had happened and opened fire on the motionless recon lance. Within ten minutes the recon lance had lost every 'Mech, but not before destroying the legs and rear center torso of O'Shea's *Warhammer*.

The exercise proved to be an expensive lesson, but no one was seriously injured. Further inspection showed that the *Dasher* had only delivered a glancing blow to the *Charger*, and the damage to the two 'Mechs could easily be repaired.

CAT AND MOUSE



—Excerpted from *And I Get to Wear a Laser?* by MechWarrior Hawg, Avalon Press, 3057

Unlike Borghese, Courcheval has absolutely nothing to recommend it. I spent less than a month there, but I feel I can safely call it one of the most blighted spots in all the galaxy. Lord, what a miserable place.

I understand, of course, that not everyone knowledgeable about Courcheval will agree with me, but personally, I could care less if I never see that rock again. Upon reflection, I suppose I can admit that the climate was temperate and the terrain not too bad. I even remember some of the sunsets and sunrises as pretty spectacular. Nevertheless, my overwhelming, lasting impression of Courcheval is as an evil place.

I know that sounds melodramatic, but it's true. I remain convinced that should I die and travel to Hades, I will discover it to be very much like Courcheval. I think the Clan occupation has the most to do with my attitude.

Despite the size of the planet and the limited resources the Clan has assigned there, every Clanner on the planet seemed to be everywhere at once. Just when we thought we'd outrun them, they showed up in front of us again. We fought and ran for what seemed like days. I lost all track of time during the countless engagements. In the end, I think I kept going because I couldn't stand the thought of letting any of the other Thorns down.

Courcheval was the final resting place of two Black Thorns, Esmerelda and Badicus. I've been a warrior for my entire adult life; I've seen many comrades cut down before their time, and these two were not the first Black Thorns to give their lives for the unit. Their deaths hit us particularly hard, though, because

we had spent so much time together—we'd begun to feel like we had the Clans by the tail. The chance of losing the battle or being killed seemed impossibly remote, until the Nova Cat Elementals clawed their way into Badicus' cockpit. We lost a lot of our stupid ideas that day. We realized we were in deep trouble, and it was going to take a miracle to get the rest of us out in one piece.

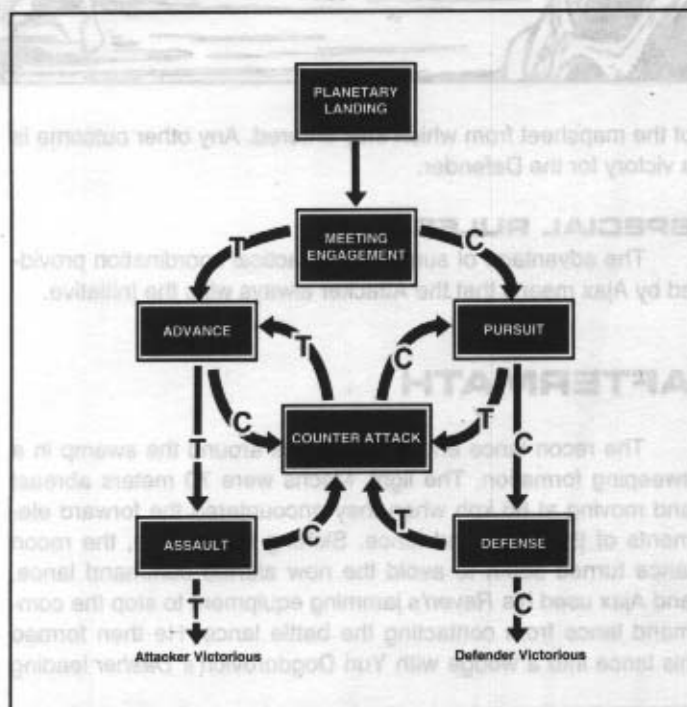
SITUATION: COURCHEVAL, JULY 3057

The trip into the Courcheval system progressed without a hitch until Clan OmniFighters damaged the *Tracy K* on the DropShip's final approach to the planet. The Black Thorns, forced to eject from the damaged ship much earlier than planned, scattered over a wide area and had to fight their way out of a well-defended landing zone. Though the Thorns did not know it until later, their ship crash-landed on Courcheval and the entire crew became prisoners of the Clan Nova Cat garrison.

Rose pulled his command together and attempted to salvage the mission, but the Clans maintained constant pressure by forcing the Thorns to fight a string of running battles.

GAME SET-UP

Cat and Mouse is an operational game using the rules given on pp. 12–27 of the **BattleTech Tactical Handbook**.



BLACK THORNS COMBAT VALUE POINTS TABLE

Combat Pool: 49,231 points, allocated as follows:

Units

Command Lance, main body

Captain Jeremiah Rose, Elite, *Masakari Prime*,
Rianna Rose, Regular, PHX-3D *Phoenix Hawk*
Antioch Bell, Veteran, BNC-5S *Banshee*
Jamshid Al-Kalibi, Regular, *Mad Cat Prime*

Battle Lance, main body

Lt. Esmerelda, Elite, *Mad Cat Prime*
Badicus O'Shea, Regular, WHM-7M *Warhammer*
Hawg, Veteran, BLR-3S *BattleMaster*
Greta Podell, Regular, CHR-3K *Charger*

Recon Lance

Lt. Ajax, Elite, *Raven*
Yuri Dogdovich, Veteran, *Dasher-D*
Leeza Rippitcuc, Regular, MCY-99 *Mercury*
"Kitten" Kittiallen, Green, PNT-10K *Panther*

Logistics Pool: 2,269 points

Repair Pool: 1,500 points

Reinforcement Pool: 0 points

Combat Value

7,107
3,208
6,297
5,897

5,897
4,824
5,004
5,106

1,707
1,363
881
1,940

Handbook), and can re-roll the dice if the unmodified result is less than 5. This means that the minimum modified result will be 7, and so the Combat Value Multiplier must be at least .75 (see Combat Value Multiplier Table, p. 13, **BattleTech Tactical Handbook**). Therefore, the smallest force the Black Thorns will face is 75 percent of the merc unit's strength.

The Defender may allocate his CV points among his Combat Pool, Logistics Pool, Repair Pool, and Reinforcement Pool per standard operational game rules.

ATTACKER

The Attacker is the remains of the Black Thorns mercenary company listed on the Black Thorns Combat Value Points Table, with 53,000 total CV points.

Black Thorns Logistics

Because their original mission was a raid, the Thorns have no reloads. The Thorns player may pay the base logistics cost for the unit's personnel, but may not pay for weapon reloads during the campaign. All Black Thorn 'Mechs enter each scenario with the rounds they had remaining in the previous scenario.

PLANETARY LANDING ENGAGEMENT

Because their DropShip was partly out of control during the drop, the Thorns scattered over a wide area and had little control over where they landed. To reflect this fact, the Black Thorns player may not apply a standard Planetary Landing Modifier to his Planetary Landing Roll (pp. 16-17, **BattleTech Tactical Handbook**). The Black Thorns have no reserves, and so it is especially important that they win the drop zone.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Standard scenario and campaign victory conditions apply to all scenarios in this operational game.

AFTERMATH

The Black Thorns battled their way past the Nova Cat defenses, but at a heavy cost. By the end of the final fight they could only limp away from the battlefield. Fortunately for the Thorns, the local underground had been searching for them throughout the day and had finally discovered their location. Soon after the final battle ended, the weary mercenaries followed a pair of hovercraft belonging to the underground deeper into the hills. They had succeeded in getting onto the planet; getting out again would be another thing entirely.

Play the Planetary Landing Engagement first, followed by an initial Meeting Engagement and any appropriate subsequent scenarios (Advance, Pursuit, Counterattack) as shown on the Cat and Mouse Flowchart. Unless otherwise stated, all operational game rules apply in all scenarios.

SELECTING MAPSHEETS

Players should use the Rolling Hills maps from **BattleTech Map Set 3** for this scenario, laying them side by side to provide an even playing area. If they need more space, players may also use the Heavy Woods maps from **BattleTech Map Set 4**.

CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE

The Thorns' objective in this operational game is to fight past the Nova Cat defenders in the area. If they break through and hold out long enough, they may be able to find an area where they can rest and refit. The Nova Cats' objective is to destroy the Black Thorns. Note that even though the Thorns' only objective in this campaign is to survive, that goal is equally as dangerous and difficult to achieve as any more aggressive action.

DEFENDER

The Defender consists of elements of the 46th Nova Cat Cavaliers and the 14th Garrison Cluster. Though both units have access to OmniMechs, the Cavaliers are much better equipped and so should lead the hunt for the Black Thorns.

To reflect the fact that the Black Thorns have dropped into the teeth of a heavily defended Clan world, the Defender should roll for starting forces with a +2 modifier (p. 13, **BattleTech Tactical**

TO CATCH A RISING STAR...CAPTAIN

—Excerpted from *And I Get to Wear a Laser?* by MechWarrior Hawg, Avalon Press, 3057

I didn't really think the captain's plan for getting the *Tracy K* out of Clan hands and making our way back to the JumpShip would work, but his wild idea looked like our only chance. We had a lot of variables to consider and the whole thing relied on a healthy dose of luck, but we all eventually decided it was that or join the underground. Not that there was anything wrong with the underground movement on Courcheval, but they didn't need a couple of assault-class 'Mechs tearing up the countryside and stirring up trouble. They had a well-oiled machine in gear and we didn't want to mess it up.

Captain Rose realized early on that using the underground's militia to help provide cover for our operation might make the difference between success and failure. Willing as the underground was to help, though, they refused to send out personnel that they couldn't afford to lose—and they needed every man to continue their efforts. In the end, one officer offered his men against the wishes of the underground's leadership, and Rose accepted the militia's help because there simply were not enough of us Black Thorns to go around. The death of those underground soldiers allowed us to lift off-planet, but the loss really hit Rose hard, because he felt he had no right to ask them to share our risks.

The first part of the commander's plan called for a sneaky operation executed with split-second timing. Everybody knew Ajax was the only man for the job, but it took several hours for Rose to decide to tap him for it. I guess he wanted to save the recon commander for something even bigger, but to this day I still don't know what else he could have had in mind.

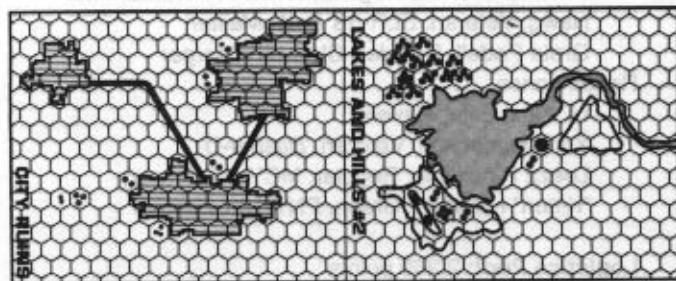
SITUATION: COURCHEVAL, AUGUST 3057

The Nova Cats, having seized and repaired the *Tracy K*, intended to use the DropShip to capture the Inner Sphere JumpShip waiting for the Black Thorns near Courcheval's pirate jump point. If they succeeded, they could then use the JumpShip as a Trojan horse in which to smuggle a Nova Cat force to the ship's next destination—Luthien. The Thorns were determined to thwart the Nova Cat plan on principle alone, but knew they also had to stop the Nova Cats or be stranded on Courcheval. To accomplish their goal, Rose and the remains of his unit had to rescue Captain Sinclair Danes and his DropShip crew from the clutches of the planetary commander, Star Colonel Denard Devereaux, then recapture and board the *Union Class DropShip* and lift off, all within the 65 minutes it would take the Clan forces to ready the ship for takeoff. Unfortunately, a trinary of OmniMechs, a star of Elementals in full combat gear, and considerable aerospace support stood in

the Thorns' way. To succeed, they needed to make maximum use of their only two advantages: intelligence reports supplied by the resistance and the element of surprise.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** maps as shown below, placing the City Ruins map and the Lakes and Hills map from **BattleTech Map Set 2** end to end with the city map to the west.



DEFENDER

The Defender consists of elements of the 46th Nova Cat Cavaliers' Second Lightning Fangs Binary.

Command Star

Star Captain Bledsoe Sumner (*Piloting 2, Gunnery 2*),

Gladiator-G

MechWarrior Jergen Watson (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*),

Vulture-C

MechWarrior Dorrian (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Vulture-B*

MechWarrior Ramsees (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 4*), *Loki Prime*

MechWarrior Jeffery (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 4*), *Thor Prime*

Support Star

Star Commander Michael Morris (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*),

Mad Cat Prime

MechWarrior Samuel Prest (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Mad*

Cat-B

MechWarrior Petersen (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Thor-B*

MechWarrior Leslie (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Vulture-A*

MechWarrior Zink (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Vulture-A*

Transport/Attack VTOL

Pilot Hunter Chen (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Peregrine Attack VTOL*

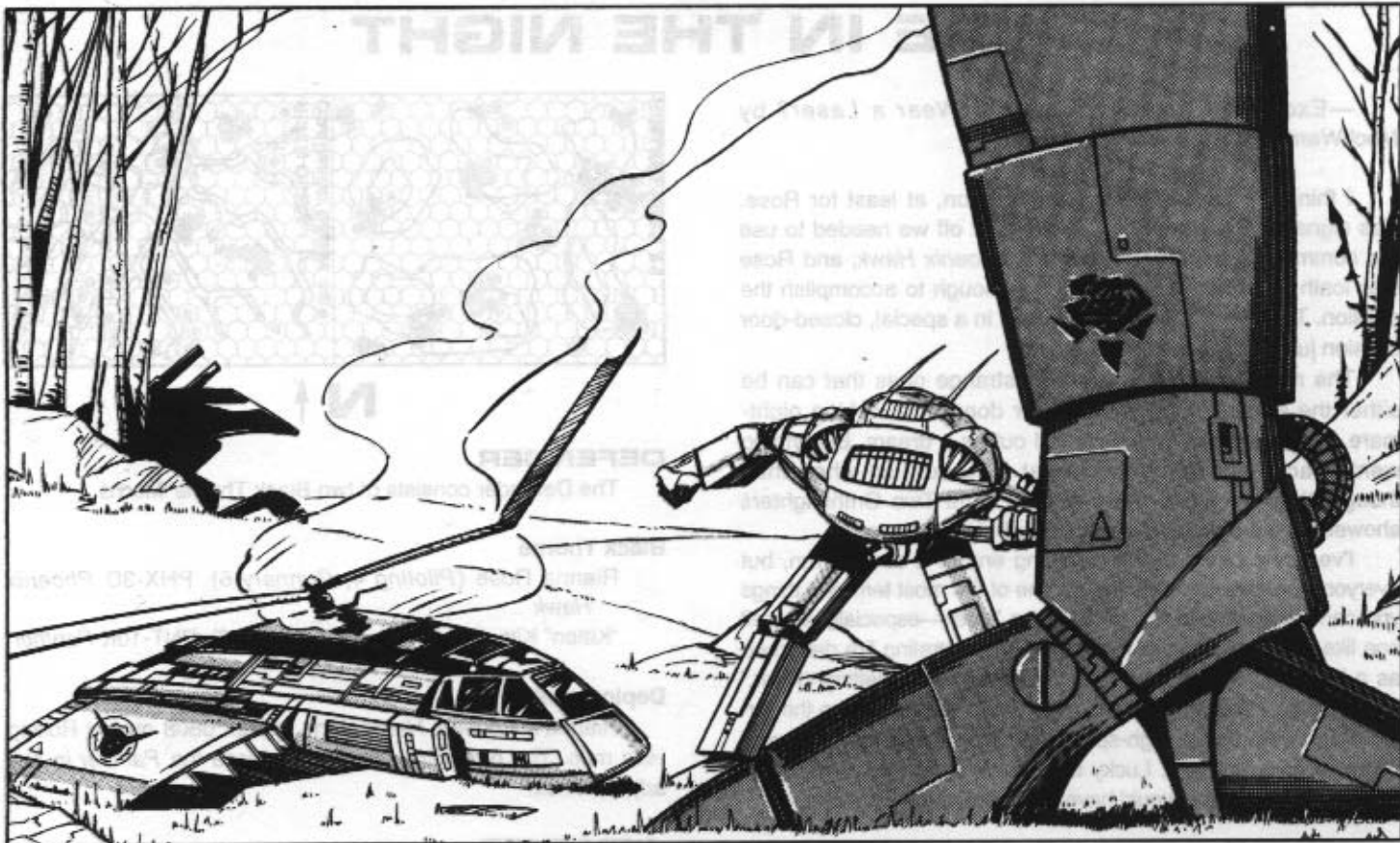
Pilot Jean Francaix (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*)

Passengers: Captain Sinclair Danes, Crewman Wilber

Mercer, Crewman James Leon, Star Captain Thrace,

MechWarrior Greta Podell

TO CATCH A RISING STAR ... CAPTAIN



Deployment

The VTOL enters on Turn 1 from the west edge of the mapsheets and proceeds to the east edge of the mapsheets enroute to the *Tracy K*. The advance elements of the Nova Cats enter from the west edge of the mapsheets after the VTOL has completed 3 Movement Phases.

ATTACKER

The Attacker is the remainder of the Black Thorns' recon lance.

Recon Lance

Lt. Ajax (*Piloting 1, Gunnery 2*), *Raven*
Yuri Dogdovich (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Dasher-D*
Leeza Rippitcuc (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Mercury*

Deployment

The Attacker sets up his units in an ambush on the Lakes and Hills map using the hidden units rules on p. 57, **BattleTech Compendium**, or p. 89, **BattleTech Compendium: Rules of Warfare**. The Attacker should record his units' positions on a separate sheet of paper.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Thorns win the scenario if they successfully ambush the VTOL and force it to land, then exit off the east edge of the

mapsheets with passengers and/or prisoners in tow. The Thorns lose the scenario if Captain Danes is killed or if the VTOL escapes off the east edge of the mapsheets.

The Nova Cats win the scenario if the VTOL successfully exits off the east edge of the mapsheets and if the advance elements of the Nova Cats destroy the Black Thorns recon lance.

AFTERMATH

The Thorns sprung their trap and got a better catch than Captain Rose could have imagined. As Rose had suspected, the Nova Cats transported their prisoners to the DropShip crash site using a captured Blackwell *Peregrine* attack VTOL. In a brilliant maneuver, Ajax disarmed the warheads on his SRMs and launched a volley at the aircraft. The missiles punched through the fuselage, sheering off one of the rotors. The pilot managed to set the craft down in one piece, but the recon lance quickly surrounded the smoking VTOL and Ajax demanded the ship's immediate surrender. Ajax rescued Captain Danes and his crew, and was delighted to discover 'Mech pilot Greta Podell—presumed dead—alive aboard the VTOL. The greatest prize, however, proved to be Star Captain Thrace, second-in-command to Star Colonel Devereaux.

FIRE IN THE NIGHT

—Excerpted from *And I Get to Wear a Laser?* by MechWarrior Hawk, Avalon Press, 3057

I think the hardest part of the mission, at least for Rose, was signaling the JumpShip. To pull that off we needed to use the comm equipment on his sister's *Phoenix Hawk*, and Rose was loath to let her out of sight long enough to accomplish the mission. The two of them hashed it out in a special, closed-door session just prior to our final briefing.

The mission was one of those strange ones that can be either the easiest thing you've ever done or a waking nightmare. To hear Kitten talk, it started out as a dream. Everything went exactly according to plan at first, but just when they thought they were out of the woods, bam! Two OmniFighters showed up out of nowhere and started blazing away.

I've never been on the receiving end of a strafing run, but everyone I've talked to tells me it's one of the most terrifying things you can experience in the cockpit of a 'Mech—especially a small one like Rianna's *Phoenix Hawk*. I've heard strafing fire described as a "glittering wall of ruby death that just keeps getting closer." Catchy phrase, but I'm not sure even those words capture the terror of knowing that a high-speed fighter is about to bathe your 'Mech in coherent light. Lucky for Rianna that the fighters didn't have bombs, or Kitten would have made the return trip alone.

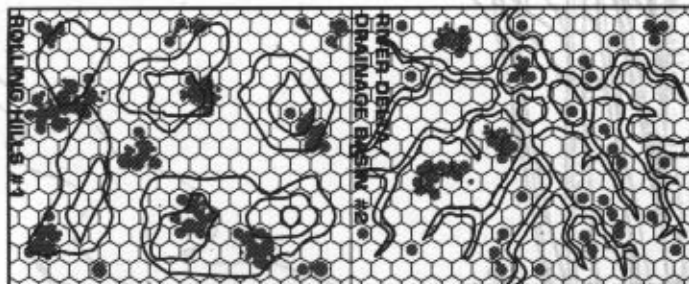
SITUATION: COURCHEVAL, AUGUST 3057

Rose knew that the ambush he had planned to rescue Danes might fail, and that he could not allow the Nova Cats to gain control of the Kurita JumpShip at Courcheval's pirate point. He needed to alert the JumpShip to its danger, and so Rose sent Rianna and Kitten on a separate mission to send a "zip" message to the JumpShip containing a command code that only Rose knew. If the waiting JumpShip did not receive the correct code when the *Tracy K* showed up to dock, the JumpShip was to leave the system as quickly as possible.

Rianna and Kitten arrived at the designated area to send the transmission just past midnight. Their mission, simple enough to that point, suddenly turned deadly as a pair of Clan OmniFighters on a routine patrol spotted the 'Mechs and attacked.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** maps as shown, using the River Delta/Drainage Basin map 2 from **BattleTech Map Set 3** and the Rolling Hills map 1 from **BattleTech Map Set 4**. The aerospace fighters in this scenario use the **AeroTech** low-altitude rules, beginning on p. 96 of the **BattleTech Compendium**. Alternatively, players may use the **AeroBattle** low-atmosphere rules beginning on page 83, **BattleSpace**. The **AeroBattle** rules also appear in the **BattleTech Compendium: Rules of Warfare**, beginning on page 70.



DEFENDER

The Defender consists of two Black Thorns 'Mechs.

Black Thorns

Rianna Rose (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 6*), PHX-3D *Phoenix Hawk*

"Kitten" Kittallen (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 6*), PNT-10K *Panther*

Deployment

Rianna's *Phoenix Hawk* starts in Hex 0808 on the Rolling Hills map. The defending player may place the *Panther* in any adjacent hex.

ATTACKER

The Attacker consists of two aerospace fighters from the 46th Nova Cat Cavaliers.

Clan OmniFighters

Pilot Fedreic Bedford (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 5*), HCT-213B *Hellicat II*

Pilot Wallon (*Piloting 6, Gunnery 5*), HCT-213B *Hellicat II*

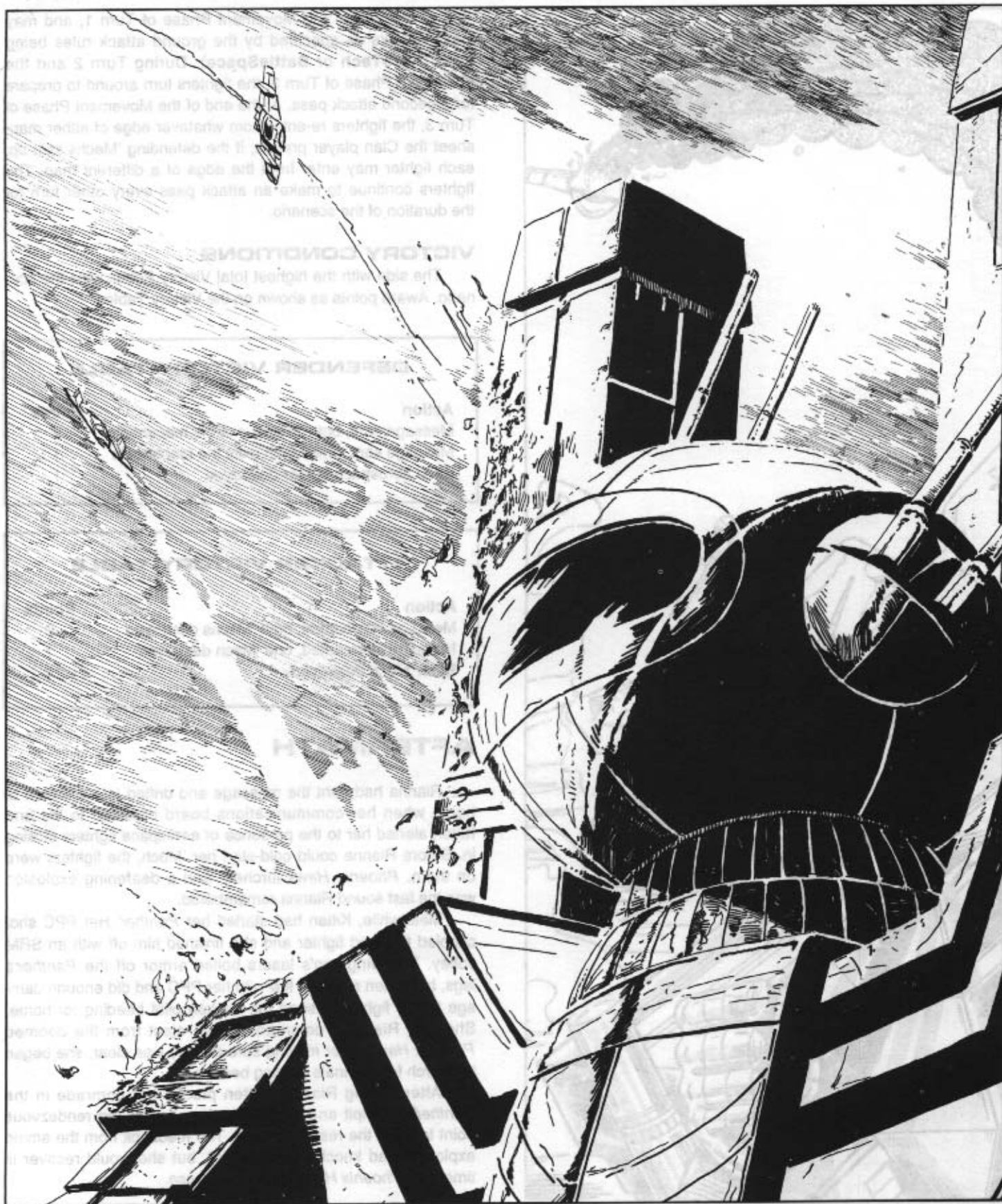
Deployment

The OmniFighters enter across the Rolling Hills map at the end of the Movement Phase of Turn 1. Neither fighter is carrying bombs.

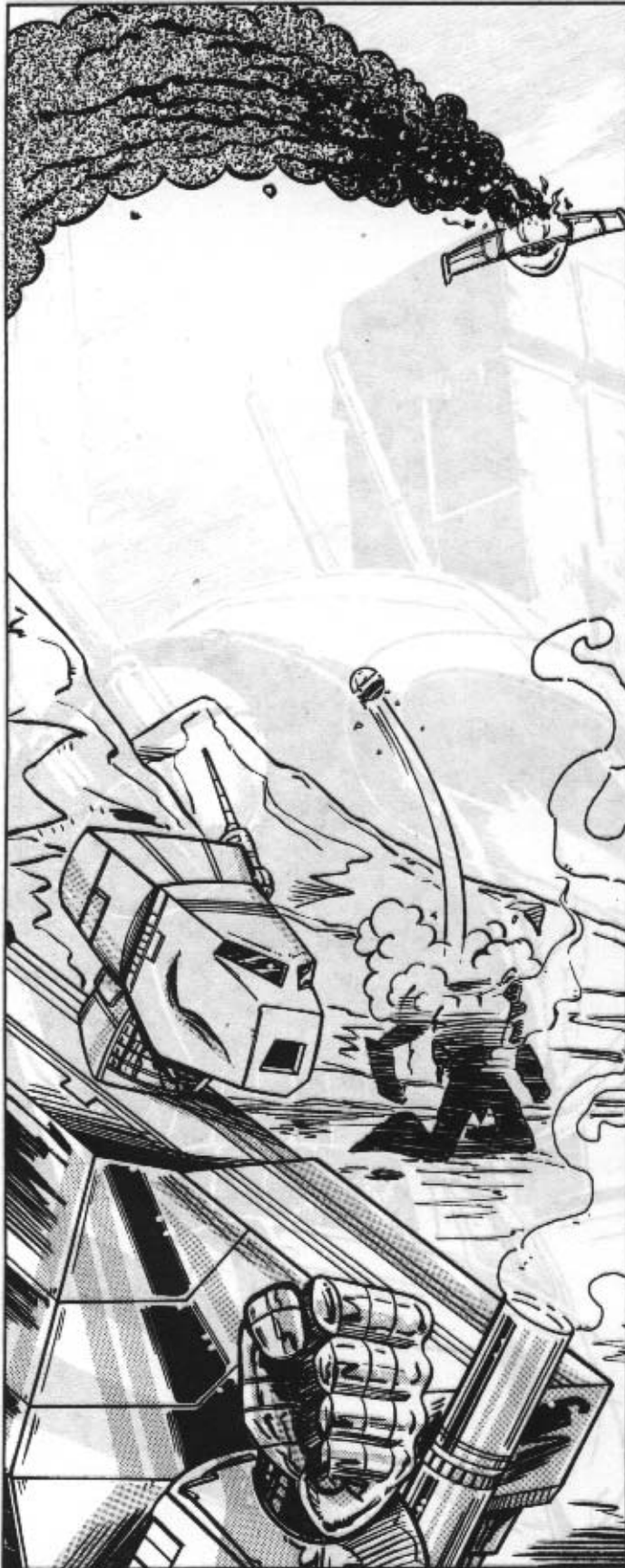
SPECIAL RULES

1. The defending units may not move during Turn 1.
2. During the End Phase of each turn, the Defender rolls 2D6 to determine if the Thorns 'Mechs have successfully signaled the waiting JumpShip. In the first turn, the Defender must roll an 8 or higher to send the message. For every unsuccessful attempt, reduce the target number by 1; the Defender must roll a 7 or better in Turn 2, a 6 or better in Turn 3, and so on. Once the Defender has sent the message, the Attacker rolls 2D6 to determine if the OmniFighters intercept the transmission. A result of 10 or higher means the transmission is intercepted.
3. Once the defending units have sent the message, they must exit off the west edge of the mapsheets.
4. The OmniFighters make ground attacks as follows. The attacking fighters enter from the east edge of the Rolling Hills

FIRE IN THE NIGHT



FIRE IN THE NIGHT



map at the end of the Movement Phase of Turn 1, and may make attacks as specified by the ground attack rules being used (**AeroTech** or **BattleSpace**). During Turn 2 and the Movement Phase of Turn 3, the fighters turn around to prepare for a second attack pass. At the end of the Movement Phase of Turn 3, the fighters re-enter from whatever edge of either map-sheet the Clan player prefers; if the defending 'Mechs split up, each fighter may enter from the edge of a different map. The fighters continue to make an attack pass every other turn for the duration of the scenario.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The side with the highest total Victory Points wins the scenario. Award points as shown on the Victory Tables.

DEFENDER VICTORY TABLE

Action	Points
Message sent, both 'Mechs exit the mapsheets	2
Message sent, one 'Mech exits the mapsheets	1
Each aerospace fighter destroyed	1

ATTACKER VICTORY TABLE

Action	Points
Message intercepted, both 'Mechs destroyed	2
Message intercepted, one 'Mech destroyed	1
Each 'Mech destroyed	1

AFTERMATH

Rianna had sent the message and drifted into a dream of home when her communications board crackled to life and Kitten alerted her to the presence of aerospace fighters closing in. Before Rianna could cold-start her 'Mech, the fighters were on them. *Phoenix Hawk* lurched, and a deafening explosion was the last sound Rianna remembered.

Meanwhile, Kitten had started her *Panther*. Her PPC shot crippled the lead fighter and she finished him off with an SRM volley. The wingman's lasers boiled armor off the *Panther's* legs, but Kitten returned fire with her PPC and did enough damage to the fighter to send the shaken pilot heading for home. She saw Rianna's command couch eject from the doomed *Phoenix Hawk*; after making sure the sky was clear, she began to search for Rianna's homing beacon.

After finding Rianna, Kitten placed her comrade in the *Panther's* cockpit and started the long trip to the rendezvous point to meet the rest of the unit. The feedback from the ammo explosion had knocked Rianna out, but she would recover in time. Her *Phoenix Hawk* was a lost cause.

TOYING WITH THE CAT

—Excerpted from *And I Get to Wear a Laser?* by MechWarrior Hawg, Avalon Press, 3057

As part of our getaway plan, one unit of resistance fighters volunteered, against their leader's wishes, to conduct a diversionary raid against the Nova Cats' base camp with their hovercraft to draw the Clans away from our true target. They were supposed to get the attention of the Clan commanders, then use their high-speed aircraft to leave before anyone started shooting. Easy in and out, but did they follow the plan? Of course not.

Well known as a renegade from early in his career, the diversionary mission's commander, Leon Quaffy—nicknamed Redbone—had built quite a reputation for himself over the past year by conducting successful hit-and-run raids against the Cats. Though the Clans' actual combat losses remained small, the very existence of a guerrilla band on Courcheval kept the Cats off-balance. It seems that Leon decided to take this opportunity to do the Cats as much damage as possible before breaking off the attack, so he and his troops stayed in the line of fire too long.

From all reports, the raid started off as a great success. Then the bottom dropped out—some Clanner took out poor Leon Quaffy, and the loss of their commander destroyed the resistance force's fighting cohesion. Even their speed didn't make them a match for an enemy that fought as a team. None of the underground force's vehicles returned from the raid.

Part of me feels bad for Captain Rose because he has to live with the knowledge that he sent those men and women out to die. He didn't mean to and didn't want to, but he did. That's got to be rough. I tend to think, however, that even if Rose had not made them part of the plan to defeat the Cats they'd have done something similar on their own, probably with the same results. They wanted to fight the Clans and wouldn't take no for an answer.

SITUATION: COURCHEVAL, AUGUST 3057

To have a prayer of freeing the *Tracy K*, Rose had to divert the Nova Cats' attention away from the DropShip. To accomplish this, Rose decided to engage the search parties Star Colonel Denard had sent out to find the Thorns. Rose had to accept that his BattleMechs were too valuable to the main attack on the DropShip to send them off on such a mission, but the resistance had armor and vehicles perfectly suited to such an operation. After several long hours of debate with the resistance leaders, Leon Quaffy demanded that they allow his Swift Strike unit to carry out the mission.

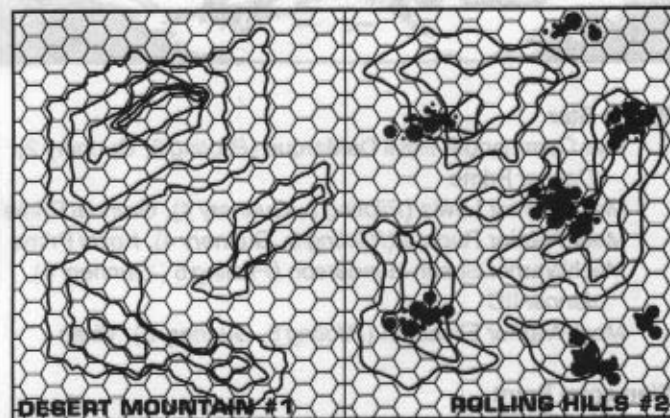
The Swift Strike's commander, MSG Leon "Redbone" Quaffy, had almost immediately volunteered his unit to serve as

Nova Cat bait, claiming that his men excelled at the hit-and-run tactics needed for success in this mission. Quaffy had always enjoyed toying with the Nova Cats, and his unit had recently destroyed three conventional fighters and a point of Elementals. The risks Quaffy took had made his superiors uneasy, but the resistance leaders rarely objected too strongly because he always got results. In Rose's opinion, Quaffy's excellent working knowledge of Clan tactics and procedures made him the perfect choice for the operation.

The Swift Strike unit loaded their vehicles in a good mood, overjoyed at the chance to bell the Cats one more time. They had no way of knowing that this mission would be their last.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** maps as shown below, placing the Desert Mountain map 1 and Rolling Hills map 2 from **BattleTech Map Set 3** side by side. The defending player should place 3 Light buildings on the western mapsheet.



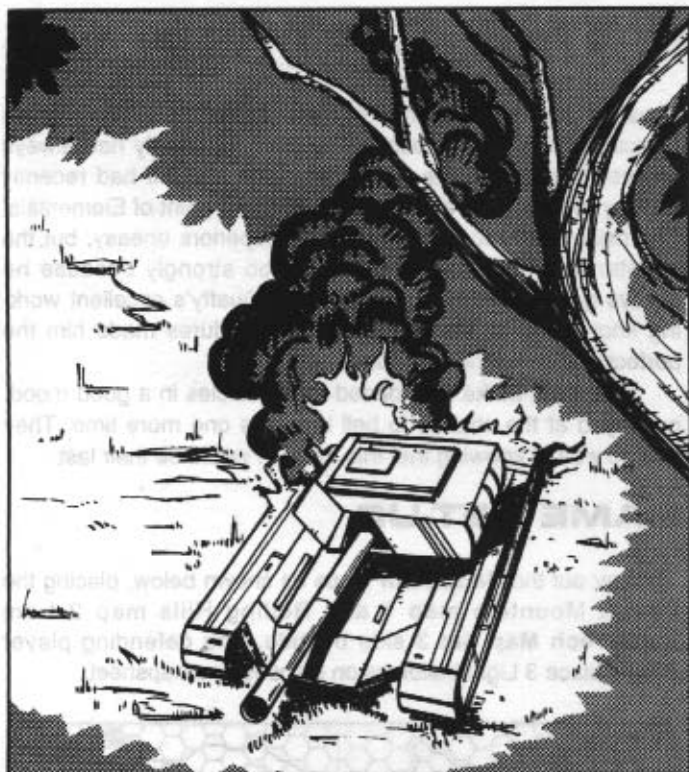
DEFENDER

The Defender is the First Lightning Fangs Binary of the Nova Cats 46th Cavaliers.

Attack Star

- Star Commander Jack Blackburn (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Shadow Cat Prime*
- MechWarrior Steven (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Wolverine IIC*
- MechWarrior Rodger Attwater (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Jenner IIC*
- MechWarrior Garth (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Vixen*
- MechWarrior Paul (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Jenner IIC*

TOYING WITH THE CAT



Recon Star

Star Commander Povil DeMarque (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 2*),
Dasher Prime
 MechWarrior Lewis (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 4*), *Grendal Prime*
 MechWarrior Rupard (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 4*), *Koshi Prime*
 MechWarrior Susan Henderson (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 4*),
Jenner IIC
 MechWarrior Elisabeth (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 5*), *Vixen*

Elemental Point

Point Commander Ellis Jackson, 4 Elementals

Deployment

The Elementals deploy on the Desert Mountains map. The 'Mechs come to the aid of the Elementals in Turn 3, entering from the west edge of the mapsheet.

ATTACKER

The Attacker is the Swift Strike unit of the Courcheval resistance.

Lance A

MSG Leon "Redbone" Quaffy (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*),
Harasser Missile Platform
 Corporal Mark Walters (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Harasser*
Missile Platform
 Corporal Thom Whent (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Plainsman*
Hovercraft
 Corporal Peter Copple (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Savannah*
Master Hovercraft

Lance B

SSG James Roth (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Scorpion Light Tank*
 Sgt. Kelly Johnson (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Scorpion Light Tank*
 Corporal Harold Jones (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Savannah*
Master Hovercraft
 Corporal Keith Henning (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Savannah*
Master Hovercraft

Deployment

The Attacker enters from the eastern edge of the mapsheet in Turn 1.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Nova Cats win the scenario if they destroy the Swift Strike unit. The Swift Strike unit wins a Strategic Victory if they destroy the Point of Elementals and two 'Mechs. For a Decisive Victory, the Swift Strike unit must also exit off the eastern edge of the mapsheet with 6 vehicles intact.

SPECIAL RULES

1. The attacking units want only to harass the Clans, and have no desire to go toe-to-toe with the approaching 'Mechs. The Attacker may move his units off the battlefield as soon as at least one enemy unit has been destroyed. Swift Strike units may only exit off the eastern edge of the mapsheet; the Tracy K is considered to be off the western edge of the mapsheet.

2. If Quaffy's Harasser is destroyed, his death throws the entire attacking force into chaos. To reflect this situation, no Swift Strike unit may move or rotate its turret during the turn following Quaffy's death. They may still fire if targets are within the appropriate firing arcs, but all to-hit target numbers increase by +1. After that turn, attacking units may move and fire normally.

AFTERMATH

The swiftness of the resistance vehicles enabled them to take their first target, the Elemental Point, completely by surprise. Unused to seeing vehicles in battle, the Clan forces were unprepared for the column of fast attack vehicles arrowing toward them. Master Sergeant Quaffy maneuvered his troops into a wedge around the Elemental Point to triangulate his unit's fire, forming a killing ground from which nothing could escape. Buildings stuffed with rations and ammunition burst into flame and lit up the night sky. The plumes of flames from Elemental jump jets added to the deadly light show. The last Elemental died just as the Garrison Cluster's 'Mechs appeared on the horizon. Forming up the remainder of the Swift Strike unit, Quaffy ordered a fighting retreat toward the safety of the forest and away from the Tracy K.

Having lost one of the Scorpion light tanks and the Plainsman, Quaffy placed himself at the rear of the formation. Moments later, Gauss rifle fire from a Clan *Shadow Cat* destroyed Quaffy and his vehicle, throwing the Swift Strikers into disarray. The Clan garrison force set upon the resistance fighters, destroying them in a hail of missiles, energy blasts and Gauss rounds. Not a single vehicle survived the massacre.

THE KILLING FIELDS

—Excerpted from *And I Get to Wear a Laser?* by MechWarrior Hawg, Avalon Press, 3057

It'd be a bald-faced lie to tell you that I remember the final fight around the DropShip. I remember the beginning of the engagement well enough—a swirl of 'Mechs pounding each other as we fought toward the DropShip and they tried to beat us back. Even my *BattleMaster* went down under the concentrated firepower of the Clan 'Mechs. At some point I lost consciousness—I'm not sure exactly when that happened.

During the part of the battle I remember seeing, the different fighting styles of my fellow Black Thorns amazed me. We'd been whittled down some by then but we still fought as a team, covering each other and providing mutual support as the Clan 'Mechs closed in on all sides. When it looked like we were going down for the count, Rose appeared and engaged two Clan 'Mechs at once. He probably saved my life, though he won't admit it and nobody else can confirm my suspicion.

When I woke up, I was flat on my back in the *Tracy K's* sickbay and the ship was on its way toward the JumpShip. The sickbay seemed to have benefited from a complete Clan overhaul, but at the time I was beyond caring. Captain Rose later told me how he won our passage off Courcheval, though I can scarcely believe his version of the story. He refuses to tell any of us how his duel with the Clanner colonel in the DropShip really went, and perhaps that's just as well. Killing a man should never be easy, and I suspect Rose'll find it difficult to forget what he had to do to rescue us from that hellhole of a planet.

SITUATION: COURCHEVAL, AUGUST 3057

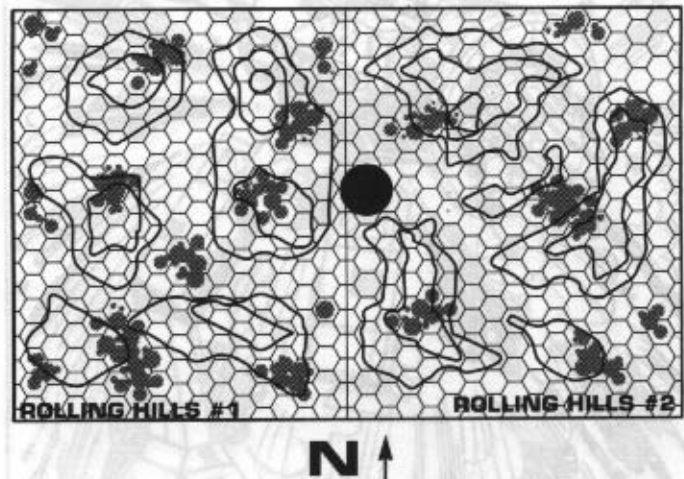
For the main assault on the 'Mechs and Elementals guarding the *Tracy K*, Rose split the Black Thorns lances into a two-pronged attack. Rose led the frontal assault with *Chu-i Myoto* and *Esmerelda* as back-up, while *Bell* and *Jamshid* attacked from Rose's right and worked their way toward his position. Meanwhile, the recon lance had orders to harass the Cats with hit-and-run tactics. By using the forest as cover, Rose expected his unit to reach the midpoint between the underground's base camp and the DropShip before the Cavaliers knew the Thorns were coming.

As Rose topped the crest and left the security of the trees, he heard the klaxons sounding the alarm in the Clan camp around the DropShip. A towering *Gladiator* stood in front of the *Tracy K*, obscuring Rose's view of the ship. The *Gladiator* launched a long-range missile salvo toward Myoto's *Grand Dragon*, covering the 'Mech with fire and smoke. The *Dragon* fell to the ground face first and skidded for 30 meters before its left arm snapped off and flew away. In retaliation, Jeremiah launched the missiles from his *Masakari* against the *Gladiator*, but the Clan 'Mech's anti-missile system downed every in-

bound LRM. For the first time since Tukayyid, Jeremiah Rose began to wonder if he might not survive the battle.

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the Rolling Hills maps 1 and 2 from **BattleTech Map Set 3** as shown. Treat all Level 1 and Level 2 elevations as Level 0, and Level 3 elevations as Level 1, and treat all woods as Heavy. The Defender should place a DropShip in the center of the mapsheets.



DEFENDER

The Defender is the Command Star of the Second Lightning Fangs Binary, 46th Nova Cat Cavaliers.

Command Star

Star Captain Bledsoe Sumner (*Piloting 2, Gunnery 2*), *Gladiator-G*
 MechWarrior Jergen (*Piloting 3, Gunnery 3*), *Vulture-C*
 MechWarrior Dorrian (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *Vulture-B*
 MechWarrior Ramsees (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 4*), *Loki Prime*
 MechWarrior Jeffery (*Piloting 5, Gunnery 4*), *Thor Prime*

Deployment

The Clan forces will surround the *Tracy K* in an effort to defend her from recapture by the Thorns. The Clan player must set up first, and must place all units within 2 hexes of the DropShip.

ATTACKER

The Attacker is the Black Thorns.

Command Lance

Captain Jeremiah Rose (*Piloting 2, Gunnery 1*), *Masakari Prime*
 Antioch Bell (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 3*), *BNC-3S Banshee*
 Jamshid Al-Kalibi (*Piloting 4, Gunnery 4*), *Mad Cat Prime*

THE KILLING FIELDS



Battle Lance

Lt. Esmerelda (Piloting 3, Gunnery 2), *Mad Cat Prime*
Hawg (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), BLR-3S *BattleMaster*
Chu-i Reiza Myoto, (Piloting 5, Gunnery 6), DRG-1G *Grand Dragon*

Recon Lance

Lt. Ajax (Piloting 1, Gunnery 2), RVN-1X *Raven*
Yuri Dogdovich (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), *Dasher-D*
Leeza Rippitcuc (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), MCY-99 *Mercury*
"Kitten" Kittiallen (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), PNT-10K *Panther*

Deployment

The Attacker enters from the north and south edges of the mapsheets in an effort to catch the Nova Cats between the Black Thorns 'Mechs. The Attacker may divide his forces in any way he sees fit.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Black Thorns win if they destroy the Nova Cats guarding the *Tracy K* before the garrison 'Mechs arrive. The Nova Cats win if at least one of their 'Mechs remains operational when the reinforcements arrive.

SPECIAL RULES

The Black Thorns have 11 turns to destroy the Nova Cats before reinforcements arrive. Beginning in the End Phase of Turn 11, the Defender rolls 2D6 after every turn. On a result of 11 or higher, garrison reinforcements receive word of the attack and arrive at the *Tracy K* three turns later. The garrison force is a Binary of Omni and garrison 'Mechs. Rather than leave the DropShip undefended, the Nova Cats defending the *Tracy K* will stand and fight until help arrives.

AFTERMATH

Victory never comes cheap, and the Thorns' victory at the *Tracy K* cut the unit to the bone. In a selfless maneuver, Esmerelda drew fire from the Clan *Gladiator* to save Rose. The Clan pilot demolished Esmerelda's *Mad Cat* in a brutal assault, leaving Rose helpless to do anything but watch as the raging fire in the center of the *Mad Cat* claimed both the 'Mech and the life of his friend and first recruit.

In the opening shots of the battle for the DropShip, Myoto's *Grand Dragon* fell under the LRM barrage from the *Gladiator* that would later kill Esmerelda's *Mad Cat*. When Myoto's 'Mech finally regained its feet, she caught the brunt of an attack from the Nova Cats' *Loki*, but the *Grand Dragon* lasted long enough to open the *Loki*'s left torso before being reduced to a scrap pile.

Hawg finished off the *Loki* that had pounded Myoto's *Grand Dragon* into the ground and turned his attack toward a *Thor*. Lightning flew from both 'Mechs in the savage battle; the *Thor* pounded the *BattleMaster*'s legs and torso, and Hawg retaliated by unleashing a torrent of manmade lightning from his PPC. Hawg managed to kill the *Thor* with assistance from Jamshid's *Mad Cat*, but the fight cost Hawg's *BattleMaster* both of its legs below the knee. As the giant machine crashed to the ground, the impact pushed Hawg's bottom teeth through his lip. Ignoring the pain and the blood rolling down his chin, Hawg used his 'Mech's left arm to push his machine into a leaning position and continued to fire his PPC at enemy targets. Jamshid arrived just in time to see Hawg engage the *Thor*, and took the Clan machine by surprise with a close-range LRM salvo. Jamshid's attack gave Hawg the opening he had been waiting for; he fired his *BattleMaster*'s PPC into the left torso of the distracted *Thor* just as Jamshid breached the same torso's rear. The combined attack shattered the *Thor* and started a fire in its left torso which quickly engulfed the Clan 'Mech.

Meanwhile, Ajax, Yuri and Leeza weaved in and out across the battlefield, using their lighter machines to harass and frustrate the Nova Cats just enough to coax the pilots into making a mistake. Whenever a Nova Cat got too angry for caution, the recon 'Mechs moved in like piranhas, ripping and melting armor with lasers and missiles. When the smoke cleared, the Thorns held the field and the *Tracy K*. Five of their 'Mechs remained mobile, though severely battered. One 'Mech was immobile, and three were ominously silent.

THE KILLING FIELDS



EPILOGUE



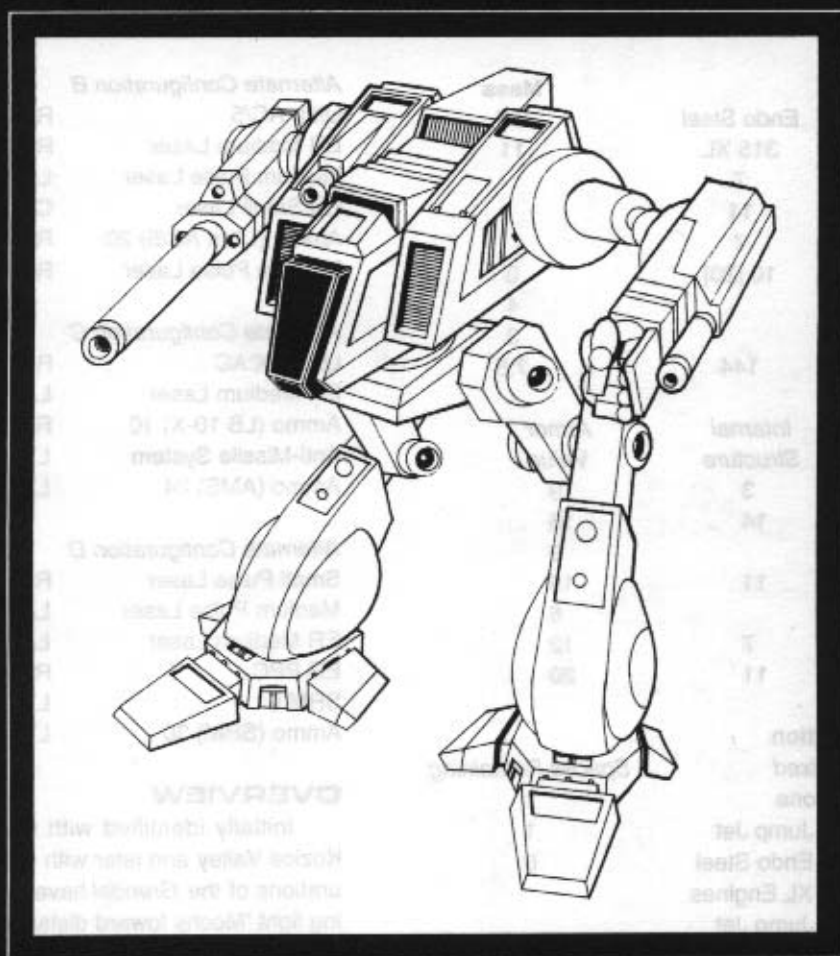
As soon as he had secured the battlefield around the DropShip, Rose sent a hurried message to Star Colonel Denard Devereaux aboard the *Tracy K*. Rose informed Devereaux that the Thorns had destroyed his defenders and ordered him to surrender. At the same time, Rose signaled Sinclair Danes and Elaine Cantrell, a resistance leader who'd fought side by side with the Thorns, to maneuver their Savannah Masters into place under the DropShip. Both vehicles had been loaded before the battle with more than two tons of military explosives; rather than let the Nova Cats have the *Tracy K*, Rose was prepared to destroy it if necessary.

When Devereaux defied Rose's order, Rose informed him of the explosives underneath the DropShip and warned that he would blow up the ship unless the colonel surrendered immediately. Devereaux called what he assumed was Rose's bluff, claiming that the Thorns should surrender before the Cats' garrison 'Mechs pounded them to pieces. As the garrison 'Mechs approached, Rose gambled and offered Devereaux one last deal. Revealing that Rianna and Kitten

had beamed a new command code to the waiting JumpShip, without which the JumpShip would not allow the DropShip to dock, Rose challenged Devereaux to a personal duel according to the rules of *batchall*. If Rose won, he would get the *Tracy K* and all equipment aboard her, and his unit would be allowed to leave Courcheval unmolested by Clan Nova Cat forces. If Devereaux won, he would get the new command code for the JumpShip, the *Tracy K*, and the Black Thorns' 'Mechs. The two commanders would fight one-on-one aboard the DropShip.

Having secured Devereaux's formal agreement to fight, Rose boarded the *Tracy K*. Forty-five minutes later, the door to the ship's south cargo bay opened and Jeremiah Rose stepped out to see the first rays of dawn. Rose had electrocuted the Clan commander, and Devereaux's death meant Rose had won the duel. According to the Clan rules of *batchall*, he and his Thorns were free. The Black Thorns loaded their wounded into the *Tracy K* and left Courcheval, vowing to rebuild and return to fight the Clans again.

NEW MECHS



NEW 'MECHS

GRENDEL

Mass: 45 tons

Chassis: Endo Steel

Power Plant: 315 XL

Cruising Speed: 76 kph

Maximum Speed: 119 kph

Jump Jets: 7

Jump Capacity: 210 meters

Armor: Ferro-Fibrous

Armament: 13.5 tons of pod space available

Manufacturer: Unknown

Communications System: Unknown

Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

Type: Grendel

Technology Base: Clan OmniMech

Tonnage: 45

Equipment

Internal Structure:

Engine:

Walking MP:

Running MP:

Jumping MP:

Heat Sinks:

Gyro:

Cockpit:

Armor Factor:

	Mass
Endo Steel	2.5
315 XL	11
7	
11	
7	
10 [20]	0
	4
	3
144	7.5
Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3
Center Torso	14
Center Torso (rear)	
R/L Torso	11
R/L Torso (rear)	
R/L Arm	7
R/L Leg	11

Weight and Space Allocation

Location	Fixed	Spaces Remaining
Head	None	1
Center Torso	1 Jump Jet	1
Right Torso	3 Endo Steel	6
	2 XL Engines	
	1 Jump Jet	
Left Torso	3 Endo Steel	6
	2 XL Engines	
	1 Jump Jet	
Right Arm	1 Endo Steel	4
	3 Ferro-Fibrous	
Left Arm	4 Ferro-Fibrous	4
Right Leg	2 Jump Jets	0
Left Leg	2 Jump Jets	0

Weapons and Ammo Location Critical Tonnage

Primary Weapons Configuration

ER Large Laser	RA	1	4
ER Small Laser	RA	1	.5
ER Medium Laser	H	1	1
2 ER Medium Lasers	LA	2	2
SRM 6 Streak	RT	2	3
Ammo (SRM) 15	RT	1	1
Double Heat Sink	RT	2	1
Double Heat Sink	LT	2	1

Alternate Configuration A

Medium Pulse Laser	RA	1	2
ER Small Laser	RA	1	.5
LRM 15	LT	2	3.5
Ammo (LRM) 16	LT	2	2
LRM 15	RT	2	3.5
Ammo (LRM) 16	RT	2	2

Alternate Configuration B

Ultra AC/5	RA	3	7
ER Medium Laser	RA	1	1
Medium Pulse Laser	LA	1	2
ER Small Laser	CT	1	.5
Ammo (Ultra AC/5) 20	RT	1	1
Medium Pulse Laser	RT	1	2

Alternate Configuration C

LB 10-X AC	RA	5	10
ER Medium Laser	LA	1	1
Ammo (LB 10-X) 10	RT	1	1
Anti-Missile System	LT	1	.5
Ammo (AMS) 24	LT	1	1

Alternate Configuration D

Small Pulse Laser	RA	1	1
Medium Pulse Laser	LA	1	2
ER Medium Laser	LA	1	1
ER PPC	RT	2	6
SRM 6	LT	1	1.5
Ammo (SRM) 30	LT	2	2

OVERVIEW

Initially identified with Clan Diamond Shark units in the Kozice Valley and later with Clan Smoke Jaguar, all five configurations of the *Grendel* have appeared in Clan front lines, leading light 'Mechs toward distant objectives. All five configurations so far observed possess a powerful array of weapons capable of delivering a consistent attack over varying ranges.

This 'Mech, tagged *Grendel* by Inner Sphere soldiers who encountered it, was among the first units to enter the Kozice Valley and engage the ComStar defenders on Tukayyid. These 'Mechs also fought against the Com Guards in the Racice Delta. The *Grendel*'s reliance on energy-based weapons, especially in its primary configuration, simplified initial supply problems for Clans Diamond Shark and Smoke Jaguar, allowing their units to range far into the field. Had these 'Mechs been properly supported, they could have done extensive damage to the Com Guards' lines.

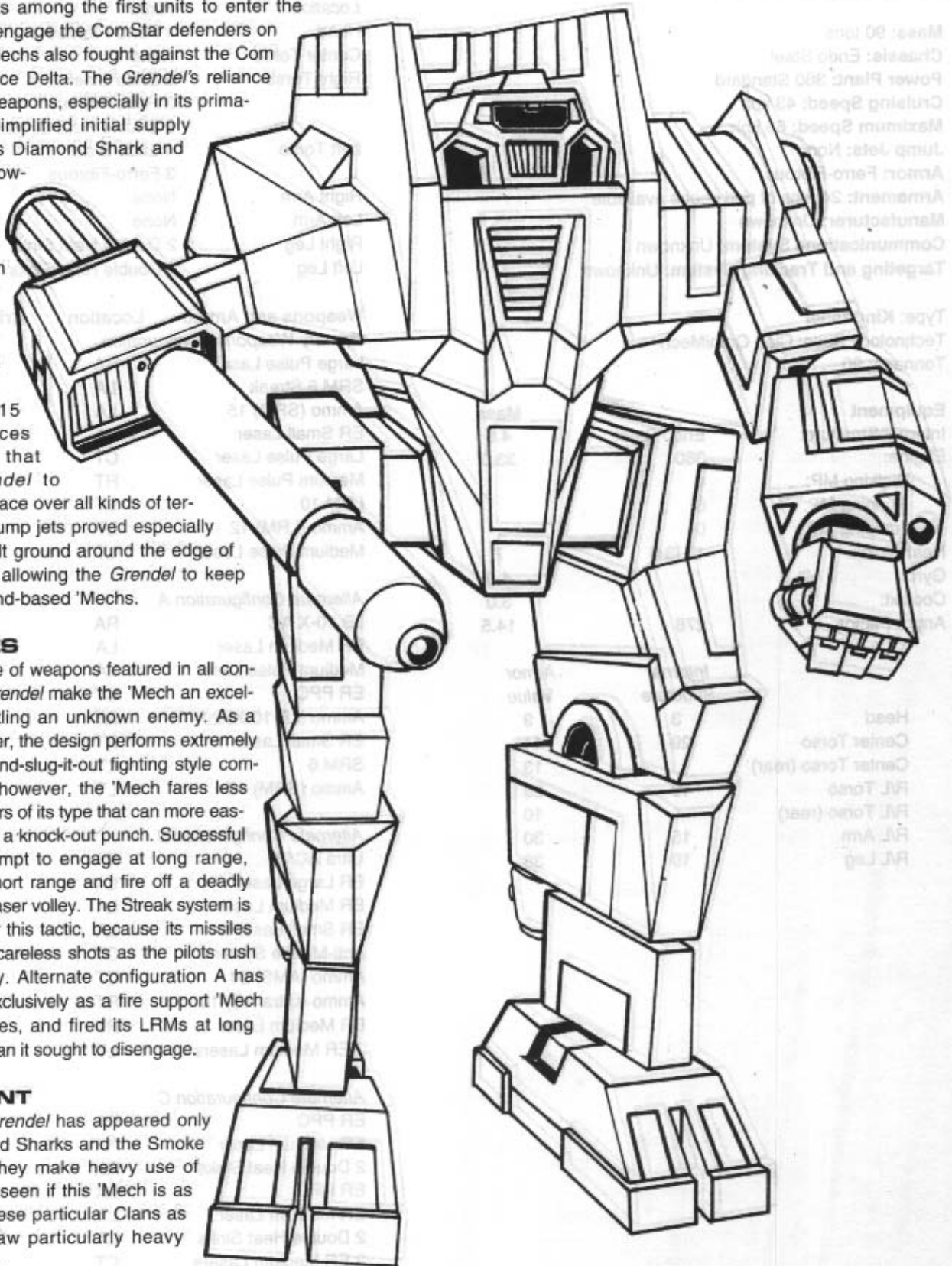
The large 315 XL engine produces enormous power that allows the *Grendel* to move at a steady pace over all kinds of terrain. The 'Mech's jump jets proved especially useful in the difficult ground around the edge of the Kozice Valley, allowing the *Grendel* to keep up with faster ground-based 'Mechs.

CAPABILITIES

The wide range of weapons featured in all configurations of the *Grendel* make the 'Mech an excellent choice for battling an unknown enemy. As a recon 'Mech or raider, the design performs extremely well. In the stand-and-slug-it-out fighting style common to the Clans, however, the 'Mech fares less well than some others of its type that can more easily close and deliver a knock-out punch. Successful *Grendel* pilots attempt to engage at long range, then dash within short range and fire off a deadly SRM and medium laser volley. The Streak system is especially useful for this tactic, because its missiles are not wasted on careless shots as the pilots rush towards the enemy. Alternate configuration A has appeared almost exclusively as a fire support 'Mech with mobile reserves, and fired its LRMs at long range more often than it sought to disengage.

DEPLOYMENT

To date the *Grendel* has appeared only among the Diamond Sharks and the Smoke Jaguars. Though they make heavy use of it, it remains to be seen if this 'Mech is as common among these particular Clans as it seems or if it saw particularly heavy action on Tukayyid.



KINGFISHER

Mass: 90 tons
Chassis: Endo Steel
Power Plant: 360 Standard
Cruising Speed: 43 kph
Maximum Speed: 65 kph
Jump Jets: None
Armor: Ferro-Fibrous
Armament: 24 tons of pod space available
Manufacturer: Unknown
Communications System: Unknown
Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

Type: Kingfisher
Technology Base: Clan OmniMech
Tonnage: 90

Equipment

	Mass
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel 4.5
Engine:	360 33.0
Walking MP:	4
Running MP:	6
Jumping MP:	0
Heat Sinks:	17 [34] 7
Gyro:	4.0
Cockpit:	3.0
Armor Factor:	278 14.5

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	29	44
Center Torso (rear)		13
R/L Torso	19	28
R/L Torso (rear)		10
R/L Arm	15	30
R/L Leg	19	38

Weight and Space Allocation

Location	Fixed	Spaces Remaining
Head	1 Ferro-Fibrous	0
Center Torso	None	2
Right Torso	3 Endo Steel	4
	3 Ferro-Fibrous	
	2 Double Heat Sinks	
Left Torso	4 Endo Steel	5
	3 Ferro-Fibrous	
Right Arm	None	8
Left Arm	None	8
Right Leg	2 Double Heat Sinks	0
Left Leg	2 Double Heat Sinks	0

Weapons and Ammo

Primary Weapons Configuration

Location	Critical	Tonnage
Large Pulse Laser	RA 2	6
SRM 6 Streak	LA 2	3
Ammo (SRM) 15	LA 1	1
ER Small Laser	LA 1	.5
Large Pulse Laser	CT 2	6
Medium Pulse Laser	RT 1	2
LRM 10	LT 1	2.5
Ammo (LRM) 12	LT 1	1
Medium Pulse Laser	LT 1	2

Alternate Configuration A

Location	Critical	Tonnage
LB 10-X AC	RA 5	10
ER Medium Laser	LA 1	1
Medium Pulse Laser	LA 1	2
ER PPC	CT 2	6
Ammo (LB 10-X) 20	RT 2	2
ER Small Laser	RT 1	.5
SRM 6	LT 1	1.5
Ammo (SRM) 15	LT 1	1

Alternate Configuration B

Location	Critical	Tonnage
Ultra AC/20	RA 8	12
ER Large Laser	LA 1	4
ER Medium Laser	LA 1	1
ER Small Laser	LA 1	.5
Anti-Missile System	CT 1	.5
Ammo (AMS) 24	CT 1	1
Ammo (Ultra AC) 10	RT 2	2
ER Medium Laser	RT 1	1
2 ER Medium Lasers	LT 2	2

Alternate Configuration C

Location	Critical	Tonnage
ER PPC	RA 2	6
ER Medium Laser	RA 1	1
2 Double Heat Sinks	RA 4	2
ER PPC	LA 2	6
ER Medium Laser	LA 1	1
2 Double Heat Sinks	LA 4	2
2 ER Medium Lasers	CT 2	2

NEW 'MECHS

Alternate Configuration C

2 Double Heat Sinks	RT	4	2
2 Double Heat Sinks	LT	4	2

Alternate Configuration D

Ultra AC/10	RA	4	10
2 ER Large Lasers	LA	2	8
ER Large Laser	CT	1	4
Ammo (Ultra AC) 20	RT	2	2

OVERVIEW

Though not built for great speed, the *Kingfisher* has the stamina to stick with other assault 'Mechs and slug it out toe-to-toe. Designed to seize the high ground and hold it, the *Kingfisher* is a welcome addition to Clan assault units.

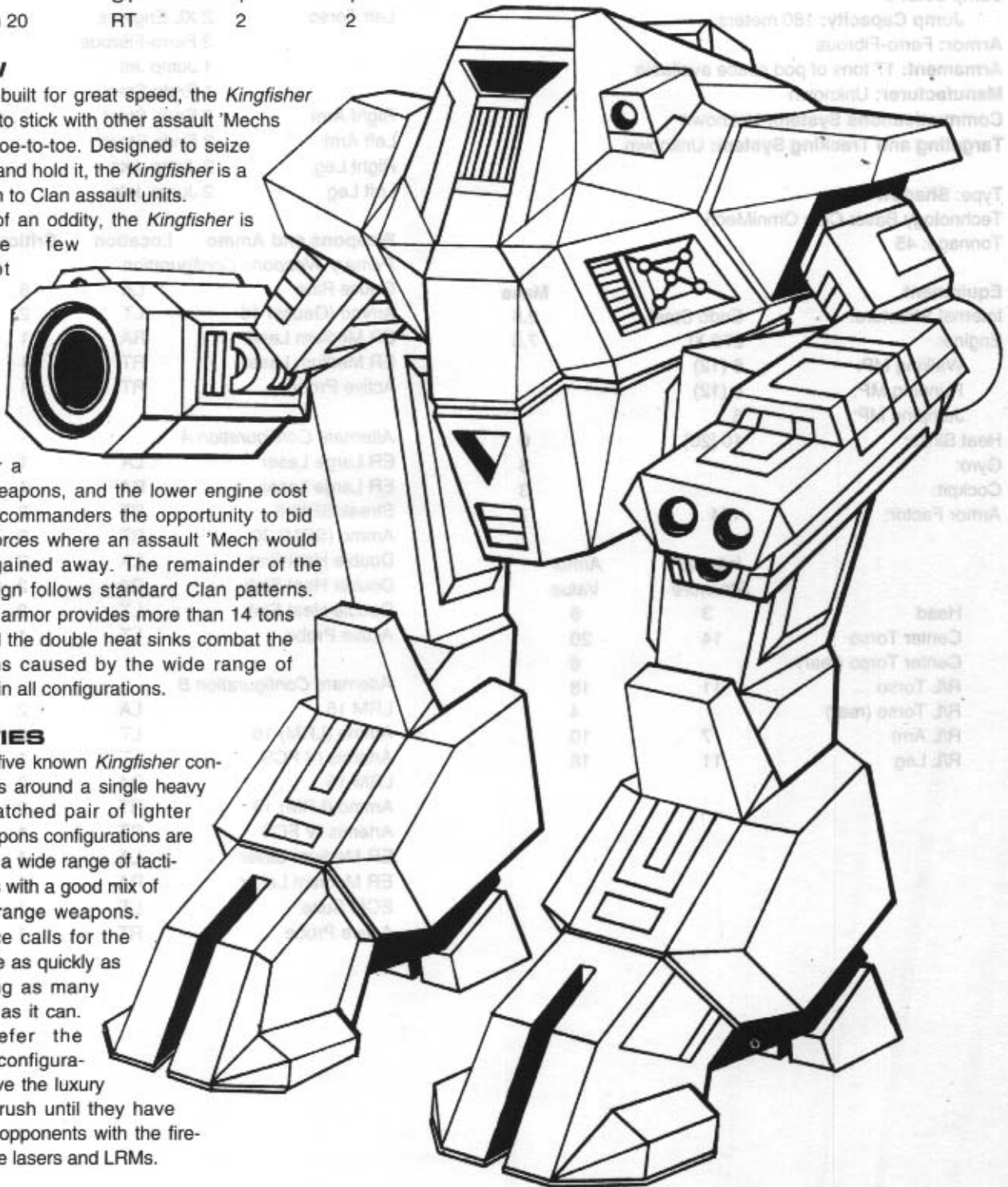
Something of an oddity, the *Kingfisher* is one of the few OmniMechs not built around an XL engine. The standard engine, though heavy, still leaves a lot of room in this giant 'Mech for a wide range of weapons, and the lower engine cost often gives unit commanders the opportunity to bid the 'Mech into forces where an assault 'Mech would have to be bargained away. The remainder of the *Kingfisher's* design follows standard Clan patterns. The ferro-fibrous armor provides more than 14 tons of protection, and the double heat sinks combat the cooling problems caused by the wide range of weapons carried in all configurations.

CAPABILITIES

Each of the five known *Kingfisher* configurations centers around a single heavy weapon or a matched pair of lighter weapons. All weapons configurations are designed to meet a wide range of tactical considerations with a good mix of long- and short-range weapons. Standard practice calls for the *Kingfisher* to close as quickly as possible, bringing as many weapons to bear as it can. Pilots who prefer the 'Mech's primary configuration, however, have the luxury of delaying their rush until they have softened up their opponents with the firepower of their large lasers and LRMs.

DEPLOYMENT

The five *Kingfisher* configurations seen at Tukayyid appeared among the Ghost Bear forces in the fighting at Spanac and Luk and among the Smoke Jaguars in the Dinju Mountains and Racice Delta. Though not as common as the *Gladiator* or *Masakari*, the *Kingfisher* often fights in the company of those OmniMechs.



SHADOW CAT

Mass: 45 tons

Chassis: Endo Steel

Power Plant: 270 XL (MASC)

Cruising Speed: 67.5 kph

Maximum Speed: 96.2 kph

Jump Jets: 6

Jump Capacity: 180 meters

Armor: Ferro-Fibrous

Armament: 17 tons of pod space available

Manufacturer: Unknown

Communications System: Unknown

Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

Type: Shadow Cat

Technology Base: Clan OmniMech

Tonnage: 45

Equipment

Internal Structure: Endo Steel

Engine: 270 XL

Walking MP: 6 (12)

Running MP: 9 (12)

Jumping MP: 6

Heat Sinks: 10 [20]

Gyro: 3

Cockpit: 3

Armor Factor: 134

Mass

2.5

7.5

0

3

3

7

Internal Structure

Armor Value

Head	3	8
Center Torso	14	20
Center Torso (rear)		6
R/L Torso	11	18
R/L Torso (rear)		4
R/L Arm	7	10
R/L Leg	11	18

Weight and Space Allocation

Location	Fixed	Spaces Remaining
Head	1 Endo Steel	0
Center Torso	2 MASC	0
Right Torso	2 XL Engines	4
	4 Ferro-Fibrous	
	1 Jump Jet	
Left Torso	1 Endo Steel	
	2 XL Engines	5
	3 Ferro-Fibrous	
	1 Jump Jet	
	1 Endo Steel	
Right Arm	2 Endo Steel	6
Left Arm	2 Endo Steel	6
Right Leg	2 Jump Jets	0
Left Leg	2 Jump Jets	0

Weapons and Ammo Location Critical Tonnage

Primary Weapons Configuration

Gauss Rifle	LA	6	12
Ammo (Gauss) 16	LT	2	2
ER Medium Laser	RA	1	1
ER Medium Laser	RT	1	1
Active Probe	RT	1	1

Alternate Configuration A

ER Large Laser	LA	1	4
ER Large Laser	RA	1	4
Streak SRM 6	RT	2	3
Ammo (SRM) 30	RT	2	2
Double Heat Sink	LA	2	1
Double Heat Sink	RA	2	1
Double Heat Sink	LT	2	1
Active Probe	LT	1	1

Alternate Configuration B

LRM 15	LA	2	3.5
Ammo (LRM) 16	LT	2	2
Artemis IV FCS	LT	1	1
LRM 15	RA	2	3.5
Ammo (LRM) 16	RT	2	2
Artemis IV FCS	RT	1	1
ER Medium Laser	LA	1	1
ER Medium Laser	RA	1	1
ECM Suite	LT	1	1
Active Probe	RT	1	1

OVERVIEW

Following sketchy initial reports after the battle for Luthien, high-ranking sources within the DCMS confirmed observations of a new class of OmniMech, tagged the *Shadow Cat*. The Clans, primarily the Smoke Jaguars and Nova Cats, used this 'Mech extensively on Tukayyid, though Clan Steel Viper forces also used it at Hladno Springs.

CAPABILITIES

This 45-ton medium 'Mech appeared in the vanguard of the Nova Cats forces on Tukayyid. Fast and agile, the 'Mech was deployed primarily as a command vehicle for the Clan Nova Cat Stars that emerged from the Smoke Jaguars' defensive wedge formation in the Tukayyid campaign. According to eyewitness reports at Luthien and the Racice Delta on Tukayyid, the *Shadow Cat* moved at a speed of close to 130 kph over the open plains. On Luthien, the 'Mech overwhelmed the forward observation posts even as they relayed reports on the oncoming enemy forces back to the Imperial City. From the observation posts, the *Shadow Cats* moved out in an ever-widening crescent to search for lightly defended paths to Luthien's capitol. Similar tactics brought the Clans several initial successes on Tukayyid.

The *Shadow Cat* appears to serve in Nova Cat and Smoke Jaguar forces much as the *Ferris* serves in Wolf Clan forces, even matching the *Ferris*' sophisticated sensor array. The *Shadow Cat*'s engine is smaller and the 'Mech has a correspondingly slower top speed, but it mounts Myomer Accelerator Signal Circuitry. The *Shadow Cat* is jump-capable, and its heat sinks are certainly double strength.

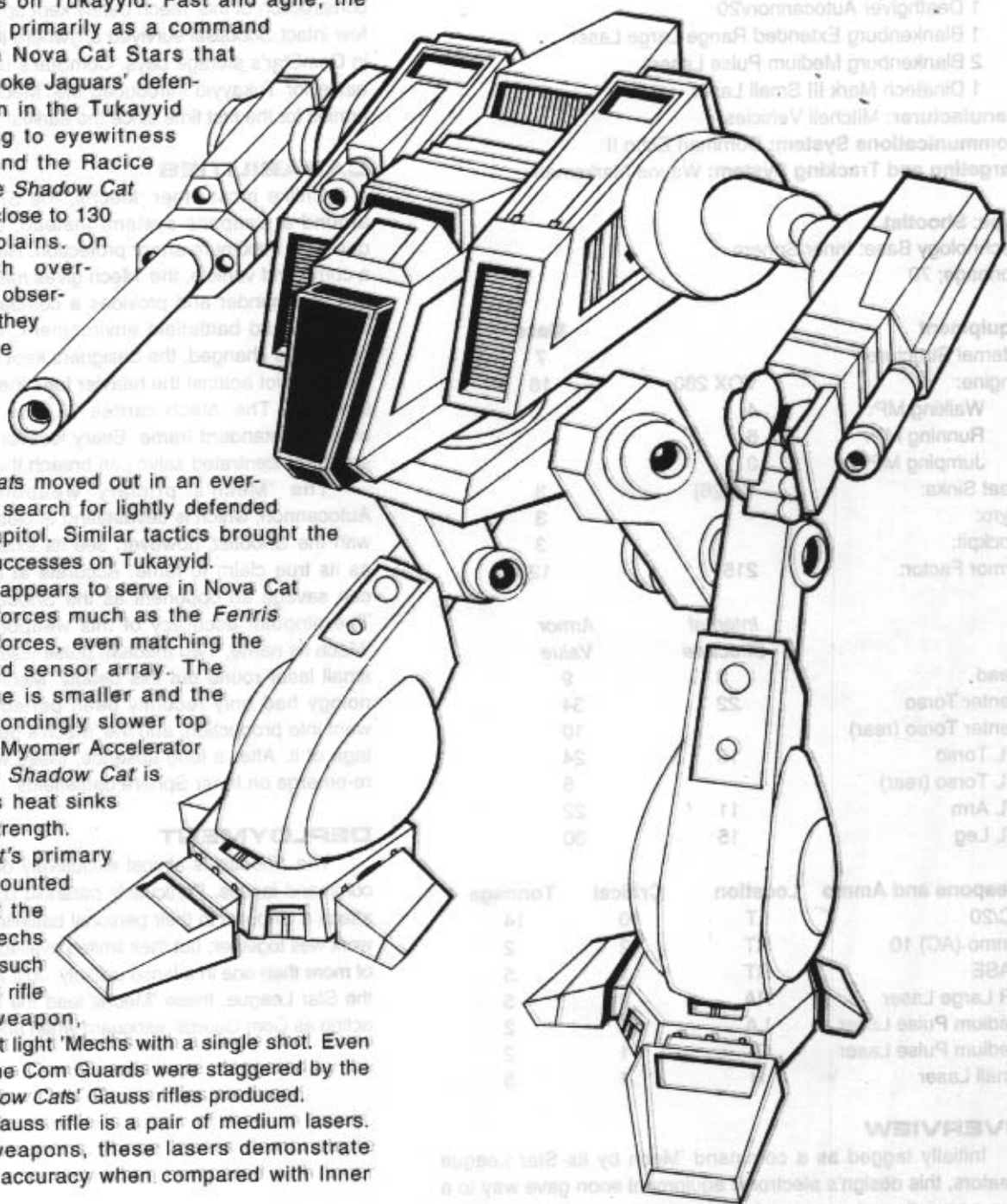
The *Shadow Cat*'s primary weapon is an arm-mounted Gauss rifle. Against the light and medium 'Mechs that normally oppose such a machine, the Gauss rifle is a devastating weapon, capable of coring most light 'Mechs with a single shot. Even the heavy 'Mechs of the Com Guards were staggered by the rain of shells the *Shadow Cats*' Gauss rifles produced.

Backing up the Gauss rifle is a pair of medium lasers. As with most Clan weapons, these lasers demonstrate increased range and accuracy when compared with Inner

Sphere weapons. Though incapable of bringing down an enemy 'Mech with a single shot, these weapons work very well as secondary armaments to the rifle.

DEPLOYMENT

To date, confirmed observations place the *Shadow Cat* only among Clans Nova Cat, Smoke Jaguar, and Steel Viper. Initial analysis suggests that the 'Mech serves as a reconnaissance unit, probably teamed with other light or medium 'Mechs or as part of a command Star.



SHOOTIST

Mass: 70 tons

Chassis: Dennenbach-Mitchell Mark IV

Power Plant: VOX 280

Cruising Speed: 43.2 kph

Maximum Speed: 64.8 kph

Jump Jets: None

Armor: Ferro-Fibrous

Armament:

1 Deathgiver Autocannon/20

1 Blankenburg Extended Range Large Laser

2 Blankenburg Medium Pulse Lasers

1 Dinattech Mark III Small Laser

Manufacturer: Mitchell Vehicles

Communications System: Dornman Echo II

Targeting and Tracking System: Wayne Marksman

Type: Shootist

Technology Base: Inner Sphere

Tonnage: 70

Equipment

Mass

Internal Structure:		7
Engine:	VOX 280	16
Walking MP:	4	
Running MP:	6	
Jumping MP:	0	
Heat Sinks:	13 [26]	3
Gyro:		3
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	215	12

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	22	34
Center Torso (rear)		10
R/L Torso	15	24
R/L Torso (rear)		5
R/L Arm	11	22
R/L Leg	15	30

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
AC/20	LT	10	14
Ammo (AC) 10	RT	2	2
CASE	RT	1	.5
ER Large Laser	RA	2	5
Medium Pulse Laser	LA	1	2
Medium Pulse Laser	CT	1	2
Small Laser	H	1	.5

OVERVIEW

Initially tagged as a command 'Mech by its Star League creators, this design's electronic equipment soon gave way to a new generation of more sophisticated active probes and elec-

tronic countermeasures. The 'Mech's delivery systems, however, remained reliable, and the Star League Army chose to mass-produce this 'Mech for use in a redefined role. With good speed for its size and an ample weapons bay, the *Shootist* became the perfect 'Mech to provide maximum firepower for heavy lances engaged in close-in fighting. Modern-day *Shootist* pilots among the Com Guards routinely seek the largest opponent on the battlefield and engage it as quickly as possible.

Though it has existed for centuries, the *Shootist* never appeared in great numbers. Even during the height of production, construction of this 'Mech barely kept up with combat losses, and few intact *Shootists* survived anywhere in the Inner Sphere save in ComStar's storage bays. ComStar's use of the *Shootist* in the battle for Tukayyid introduced the 'Mech to most Inner Sphere armies for the first time since the earliest Succession Wars.

CAPABILITIES

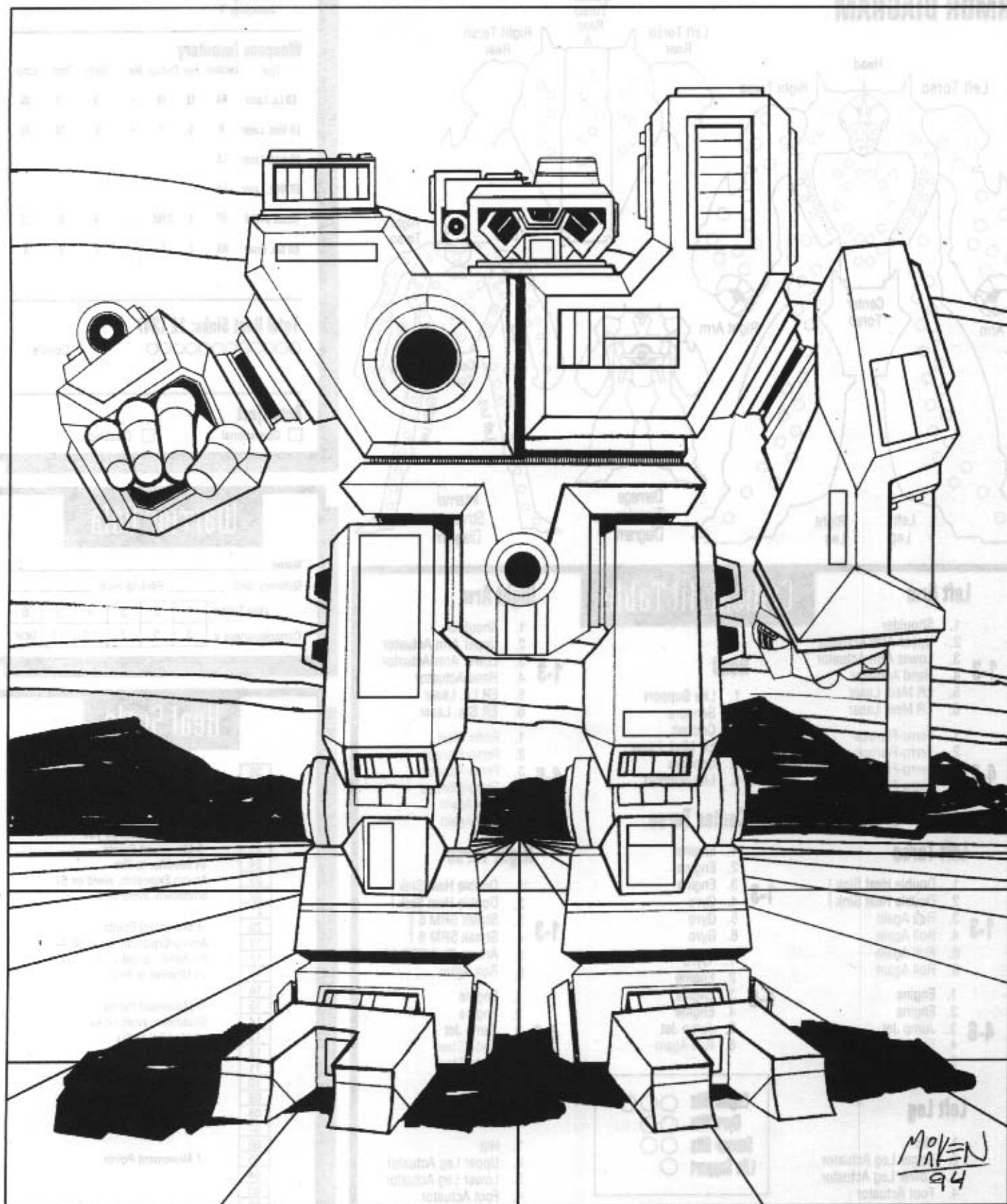
Unlike most other 'Mechs, the *Shootist* is not designed around a weapons system. Instead, the centerpiece of this design is maximum armor protection. Reflecting its initial role as a command vehicle, the 'Mech gives maximum protection to the unit commander and provides a combat vehicle from which to direct a fluid battlefield environment. When the 'Mech's proposed role changed, the designers kept the heavy armor to protect the pilot against the heavier foes the *Shootist* was expected to tackle. The 'Mech carries 12 tons of ferro-fibrous armor around a standard frame. Every location is well-armored, but a single concentrated salvo can breach the rear torso.

The 'Mech's primary weapon is the Deathgiver Autocannon, which is devastating at close range. Those familiar with the *Shootist*, however, see its extended-range large laser as its true claim to fame. Accurate at all ranges, the weapon can savage an opponent as the *Shootist* closes the distance. The pinpoint accuracy of this weapon apparently gave this 'Mech its name. Two medium pulse lasers and a head-mounted small laser round out this deadly 'Mech's arsenal. Pulse technology had only recently been perfected when the *Shootist* went into production, and the 'Mech's designers took full advantage of it. After a long absence, these weapons have begun to re-emerge on Inner Sphere battlefields.

DEPLOYMENT

The *Shootist* is almost exclusively deployed with heavy and command lances. Particularly paranoid commanders occasionally attach a *Shootist* to their personal battlefield bodyguard. *Shootists* work well together, but their limited availability makes the presence of more than one in a lance unlikely. Just as they did in the days of the Star League, these 'Mechs lead the charge of heavy lances, acting as Com Guards' vanguard when engaging the Clans.

NEW 'MECHS





EVERY ROSE HAS A THORN...

For Adept Jeremiah Rose, ComStar's stunning victory on Tukayyid was a crushing personal defeat. After losing his 'Mech and his command to the Clans, Rose resigned his commission with the Com Guards and returned home to seek a place with his family among the famed Northwind Highlanders. When the Highlanders rejected him, Rose refused to give up. He set out for Solaris VII, where he gained a new BattleMech, new comrades, and a renewed sense of purpose. Thus the Black Thorns were born ...

Recreate the exciting adventures of Jeremiah Rose and his Black Thorns in this scenario pack for BattleTech. Based on the events of the novels Main Event and D.R.T., this book includes a history of the Black Thorns, as well as MechWarrior game statistics for the main characters of this elite mercenary unit.

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