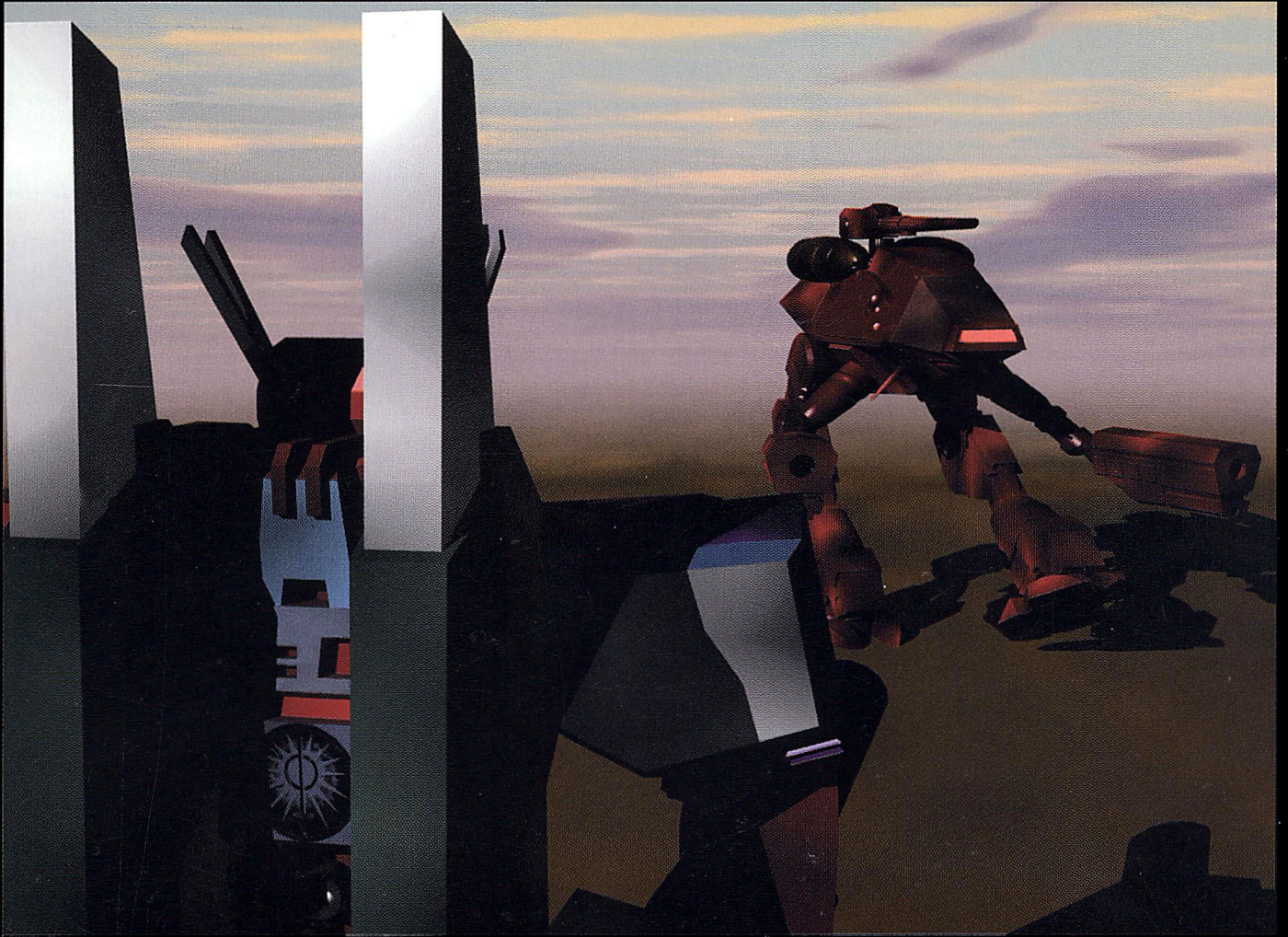


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# BattleTechnology



The  
Early Years

# BattleTechnology

## The Early Years

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### About the Cover:

The defining event of the first half of the 31st Century was the Third Battle for Mallory's World. On October 21, 3013, First Prince Ian Davion was killed in action against Kurita invaders (back cover), giving Hanse Davion the leadership of the Federated Suns and changing the face of Inner Sphere politics. Digital Recreationist Frederic Kuramura commemorates Hanse's ascension with his depiction of the first skirmish: *Opening Shots*.

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# Opening Shots

On the page opposite is our rich lineup of subjects and studies you've been asking for. Enjoy!

As I was listing them out for the table of contents, I found myself getting philosophical.

What a century we live in!

It began with the last throes of the Third Succession War, sporadic invasions and conflicts. The young Janos Marik hoped to lead the Successor Houses into a peace at the beginning of the Third Millennium, 3000. Then the invasions started again. The Third Succession War officially ended with Katrina Steiner's peace proposal of 3020. Hanse Davion took the first step in accepting the alliance. The alliance led to the Fourth Succession War, but also led to the idea of alliance. The first half of this century was the history of learning to work together against an enemy. It was a time of scientific progress, a time when the slow decline of our abilities to understand the very technology began to reverse.

Things didn't get better all at once. The idea that our species needs to prove itself every generation, to test ourselves in the risk and clamor of war, is a deeply rooted belief. The two ideas, *cooperate for progress* and *strive against one another to grow strong*, have formed much of human action at the instinctual level, and even more so at the intellectual level. It's possible that the give and take back and forth between these two drives has made those qualities in us which we most value. I can't even say whether it would have been desirable to have an Inner Sphere at peace, an Inner Sphere without conflict, an Inner Sphere which was slowly losing its skills of war.

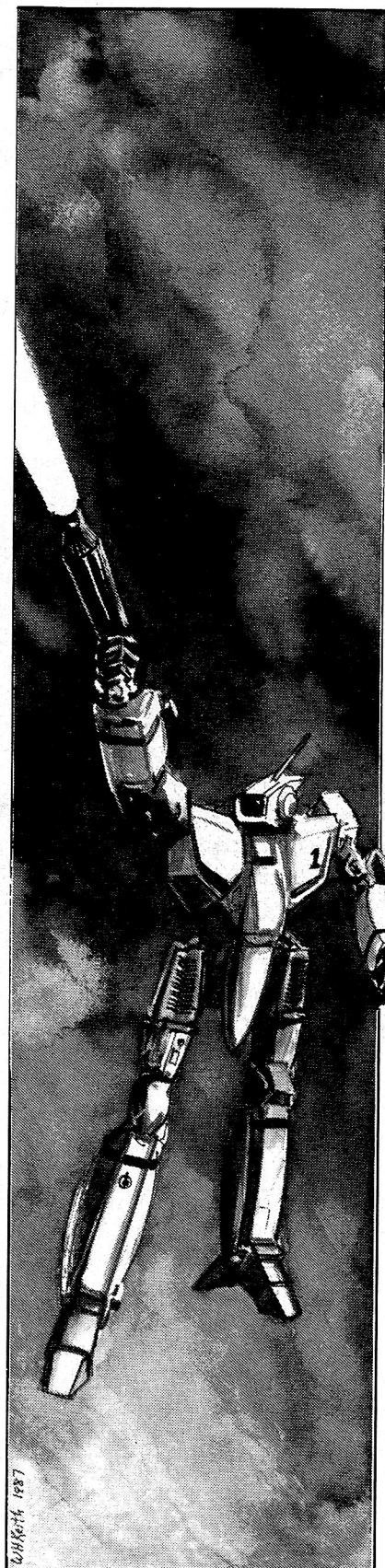
Because the Clans were out there. They value strength. They value the intellect only as it serves strength. They have specialized in strength, which has made them very good at...being strong.

We're generalists. We're good at strength when we have it, but we're also good at improving a weak position, good at improvisation, good at fighting just a little longer than a computer simulation claims that we possibly can.

This volume takes a backward look at what we have gone through to get where we are. It shows us *why* we are going to beat the Clans. You can't see me speaking, so I'll tell you that I'm saying this softly and quietly. It's not a matter of rhetoric. We are going to beat them because they are an evolutionary dead end. We can still adapt. They'll change tactics, but all of their tactics will come from one set of values. We are used to combatting the weird, the wild, the changeable, the ridiculous...

Gosh, even Romano Liao has her place in the evolutionary scheme of things.

— Hilary Ayer



# Now It's Over, What Happened?

## The 3039 War, Lyrans-Dieron Front

Troops entering from the Lyrans border had a disadvantage before they ever got to fight. Their staging areas too easily turned into 'hostile territory', as the Hanse-off and Harvest Memorial groups of separatists chanted slogans sometimes turned to actual sabotage. Later intelligence has tracked tens of thousands of K-bills which were exchanged through ComStar for Steiner S-bills, given as 'donations' to these and more radical separatist movements by Kuritan intelligence sources. Few of these would actually admit even to themselves that they were aiding House Kurita, yet they weren't just printing leaflets. They were reporting on TroopShip departures, and blowing up supply warehouses. For the first three months of the war, the Tamar and Skye regions were hotbeds of discontent. The staff conference had to be held on the conquered planet of Vega because it was safer than any Tamar Pact world. Once the DEST team took out the Lyrans Front General Staff on July 12, public opinion changed. Ryan Steiner stopped making anti-war speeches in public. War bond sales went up a record twenty nine percent. When the Archon Emerita toured the Tamar Pact in late August, at Twycross, crowds unharnessed the horses from her state carriage and fought for the privilege of pulling the carriage to the Hall of Deputies.

From Baxter, the Eleventh Deneb Light Cavalry attacked Alnasi, which was defended by the Ryukens. From Marfik, the Ninth Federated Commonwealth Regimental Combat Team and Eighth Crucis Lancers RCT bored in for Vega, defended by The Fourth and Eleventh Legions of Vega. The La Blon staging area was loyalist to the core. From there, the Third Skye Rangers departed for Konstance, while The Fourth Skye Rangers and the Second New Ivarssen Chasseurs took ship for Kessel.

Konstance, defended by the Third Dieron Regulars, seemed to roll over and play dead. The fight lasted all of a week. Leaving a mercenary garrison behind, the Third Skye Rangers bypassed several planets to attack Kaus Australis. This sparsely-settled planet has no cities, and no centralized government. Each small settlement and station is self-governed, stubborn, and individualistic to a fault. The Third Skye Rangers could not 'take the planet' by making war on and conquering the planetary government. They had to conquer each settlement one at a time, and do this without

a brutality which would unite the planet against them. The planetary militia scattered, each lance to its home territory, to lend force to this disunited opposition. When the Third Skye Rangers were given the signal to retreat, they held the skies of the planet, but less than half of its ground area.

As long as Nondi Steiner was there to ride herd on them, the Lyrans Theater general staff carried out the fast strike, lightning response policy which had been decided on before the war began. Instead of trying to take all the systems along a stretch of the frontier, then all the systems next inward of them, then all the systems next inward of them, etc (the hoary Steiner moving-wave strategy), these forces used four narrow punches, each of which took one system, left an overstrength garrison, and moved several systems inward to overwhelm some vital stronghold while having enough response forces at their back to take care of attacks from the rear. Her forces and the forces on the Dieron front, led by Field Marshal Vanessa Bisla, bypassed the Dieron corner of the Dieron district. The intent was to link up somewhere around the Sulama system, having 'broken off a chunk of the Dragon' which the Federated Commonwealth could take its time about digesting.

The Skye and Tamar Separatists spawned a backlash. In June a group of rich merchants formed an invasion force for a private effort. Three regiments strong, they placed themselves under the command of the 24th Arcturan Guard's Special Operations Group (with the bemused permission of Nondi Steiner), and set out to invade a Kuritan planet all by themselves. They managed to tie up the 11th and 12th Ghost Regiments for over two weeks, quite a feat when you realize how hopelessly out of order most of their second hand 'Mechs were.

Kessel had been expected to revolt in favor of the incoming troops. (See Cynthia Franks insert) The underground's failure to join the fight until September may have cost the Federated Commonwealth the war in this sector. Once Kessel did join, the Kuritan garrison had to retreat off-system. The first counterattack by the Fourteenth Legion of Vega was beaten off. It was only when the Twelfth Sun Zhang joined the Dragon's fight to retake Kessel that the DCMS succeeded. The Twelfth Sun Zhang were cut to pieces; it was five years before the academy graduated



# Hanse Off!!

## Federated Suns

get your greedy Hanse off our planets!

People of Tamar and Skye,  
**YOU HAVE BEEN LIED TO FOR YEARS!**

Melissa Steiner Davion and her brood of squawking brats  
have **sold out** YOUR PROUD HERITAGE

Hanse Davion is restructuring our military forces  
to **strip** the Blackjack Operations Area

**OF ALL LOYAL TROOPS**

— that is, all troops loyal to the people who live here!

**OUR OWN BOYS AND GIRLS**

are being sent to the Capellan Front to face  
'Crazy Romano'

**WHILE YOUR HOMES ARE IN PERIL**

**TAKE ARMS!**

**PROTEST THIS UNPRINCIPLED INVASION  
BY MATRIMONY**

**SAVE YOUR HOMES AND HERITAGE**

**BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE**

enough people to bring them back to strength. The fight for Kessel prolonged the war in this sector by a month, until late November.

The second wave only got as far as Altais, where frontline troops poured in from Vega and Alnasi. The Ninth Federated Commonwealth Regimental Combat Team swarmed over Altais' hard-pan deserts and strange crystalline formations. The planetary garrison staged guerilla raids along the desert edges and retreated back into the mineral-rich Precious Stone Mountains; the facets of crystal sent radio and MAD into ear-splitting wails of bollixed frequencies.

The oldest and the youngest Generals of what could be called the 'Nondi loyalists', who were committed to her policies and ready for innovative courses of action, recovered first from the bombing. It was to take critical months before their influence was felt. Unfortunately, it was Cynthia Franks, the youngest of the bunch, who banged her head against a wall at staff meetings, lacking any support. Late in July, she abandoned staff meetings to visit Sphire as he spent his last week in the hospital. There they formulated a plan of campaign. In August, she started a system-hopping campaign which revitalized the AFFC on three systems. In September, we saw her results in the stiffened opposition on Kessel. In October, she reorganized the garrison on Alnasi, linking her staff of technical experts, including a few 'dirty tricks' people from Kessel's guerilla forces, with the Edge of Night mercenary regiment. Alnasi held until December. In November, she was back on Vega to back up Jack Sphire's strength with her guile.

General Jack Sphire is a lifelong student of the martial arts. He has held the post of Margrave of the Ryde Theater for twenty five eventful years. He's always been known for blunt speaking and a hatred of politics. In his last campaign, he finally and mirthfully got the connection: politics involves using people's weak points to strike and getting them to misapply their strengths, or to apply them to your own purposes, just as, say judo does. Franks' sense of the dramatic possibilities of a situation and Sphire's extensive knowledge of the capabilities of each unit in the action allowed an eleventh-hour mitigation of the Kuritan counterstroke at exactly the moment when it was running out of steam.

At AFFC headquarters, General Jack Sphire worked like three men to keep troops moving, to meet Kuritan counterattacks head on. In the last weeks of November, the Ninth Federated Commonwealth Regimental Combat Team and the Fourth Skye Rangers, under Sphire's leadership attacked Skondia, drawing the Kuritan forces away from a

Field Marshal Nondi Steiner led Federated Commonwealth forces on the Commonwealth front. Nondi Steiner is a shrewd and flexible fighter who worked enthusiastically to implement and augment Hanse Davion's changes to the consolidated armies of the Federated Commonwealth. Her personal prestige, her rank as the Archon's sister, her unquestioned loyalty to the Archon; all these she used to change the tradition-bound Steiner armed forces, integrating them with the Federated Suns troops.

As of the Fourth Succession War, the strengths of the Lyrans Commonwealth were disciplined troops and technological superiority. The strength of the Federated Suns was tactical flexibility. The Federated Suns was second only to the Lyran Commonwealth in technology, and was becoming able to use that technology in innovative ways. Their weaknesses were their strengths turned inside out. The discipline of the Lyrans Commonwealth, that same discipline which allowed its troops to perform complex maneuvers almost reflexively, made them resistant to new tactics and inflexible in challenging situations. The technological superiority made them unused to using simple tactics, which got their hands dirty. The Federated Suns were unbeatable at the company-level action. But in actions involving the battalion or a larger force, there was too much tendency to discuss tactics rather than to choose one and implement it.

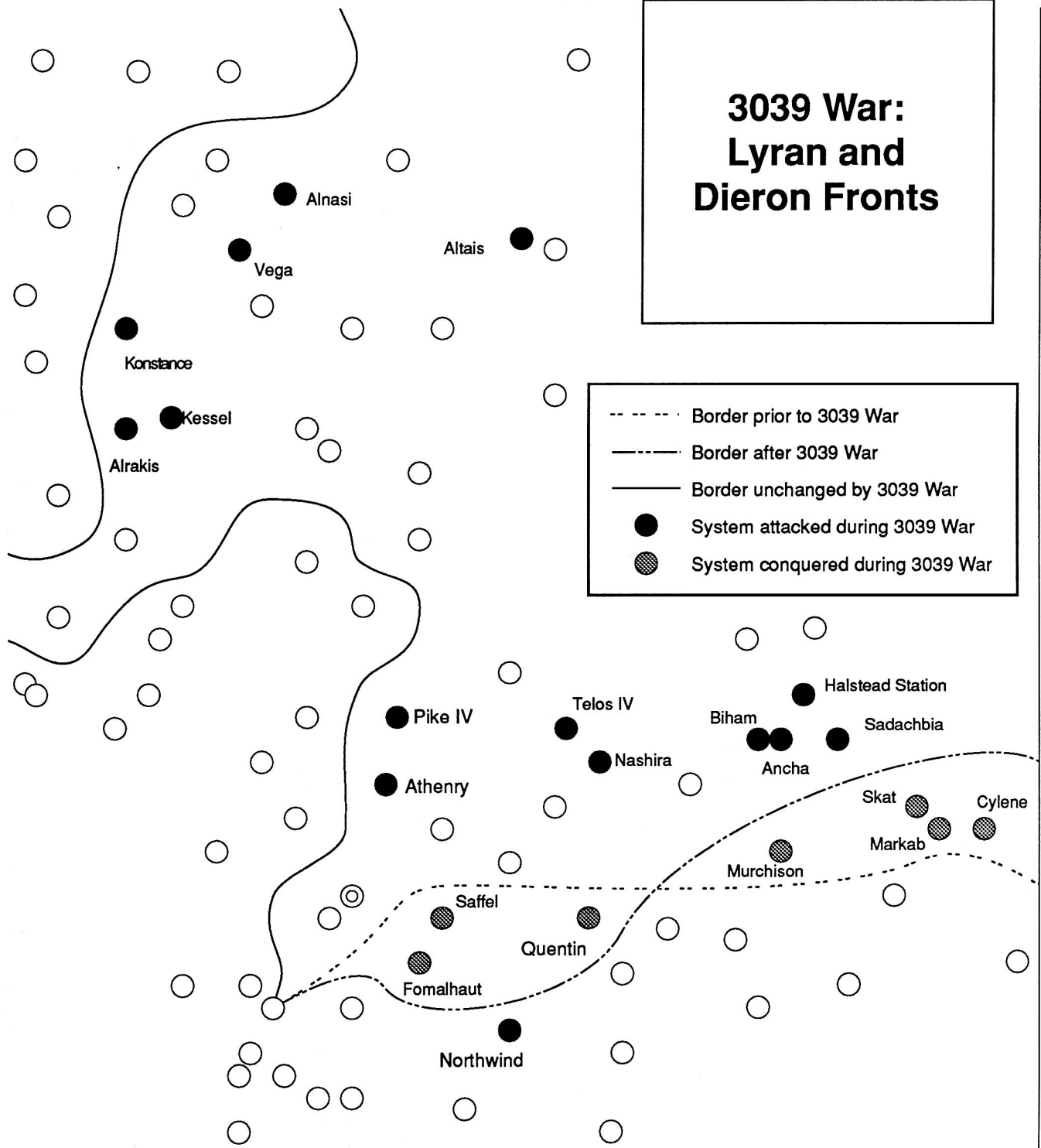
Under Nondi Steiner's leadership, young officers were trained to make BAD (best available data) decisions. "Such a decision will not be perfect," read one of the textbooks she sponsored, "in fact, it has a chance of being dead wrong. But indecision has a perfect record; it is always 100% wrong."

planned attack on La Blon, and diverting forces from Robinson. It was impossible to take Skondia; the units had almost nothing to resupply them. They made a grand appearance in the system, swatted away what fighter cover was left to Skondia, and took the slowest possible in-system route to the planet. They raided, not the capital, but the major shipping port of Moneysworth. While the defending force was still sending requests for aid, they withdrew behind Skondia II's moon for a week. Confident that by then, relieving forces would have begun their voyage to relieve the Skondia system, they rendezvoused with their JumpShips and left the system before the defense forces could discover that some of the BattleMechs had no ammunition left whatsoever. It is to Sphire's credit that no Steiner planet was lost to the Draconis Combine during the meatgrinder months of October-December 3039, while four systems were lost from the Davion border.



## 3039 War: Lyran and Dieron Fronts

- Border prior to 3039 War
- - - Border after 3039 War
- Border unchanged by 3039 War
- System attacked during 3039 War
- System conquered during 3039 War



**Port Moseby Herald, Port Moseby July 5, 3039 (Censored in the Draconis Combine)**

A communique has just been received from a group calling itself 'Lyrans Loyalists to the Archon'.

"A joint force made up of the 20th Arcturan Guards' Special Operations Group, the Port Moseby Defense Force's two regiments, and the four battalions of the Grim Determination landed today on the third planet of Trollic Prime on their first step in a voyage of liberation.

The First Succession War began when Minoru Kurita's forces conducted a surprise attack on the systems of Trollic Prime and Gram in August of 2785. These are the first two Steiner planets to be lost to House Kurita. The system of Port Moseby was colonized in the same year as Trollic Prime; both planets were colonized by the Alexandria system. Too long has our brother planet groaned under the yoke of the Dragon."

The 20th Arcturan 'Guards' garrison on Port Moseby confirms that their Special Ops Group has been detached to lead this expedition. "A group of citizens loyal to the Archon has chosen this way to aid the war effort; they raised the money to pay the contracts of the Grim Determination's City Fighters and offered to put themselves and their troops under our command if we would mastermind the operation. Field Marshal Steiner sent us authorization with the words, 'Go ahead and the war god bless you! You won't hurt our effort, and you could divert valuable forces. Tell the citizens of Port Moseby that their brothers and sisters in arms applaud their fighting spirit. Bring me a Dragon's tail! It's certainly an unusual operation, but then that's what Special Operations units are formed to do!"

ComStar sources confirm that Trollic Prime was invaded this morning.

## Could They Have Won? Trollic Prime, July 12, 3039

### Overview:

The mixed-bag invaders of Trollic Prime were hit unawares as the 11th and 12 Ghost Regiments arrived to retake the planet on July 12, 3039. A lance from the 24th Arcturan Guard was caught in a sandstorm; so was a lance from the 11th Ghost. (See '*Ghost of the Twenty Fifth*', elsewhere in this volume) Sgt Neville was separated from his lance during the sandstorm only to face the invading lance alone. This scenario is a what-if. What if the engagement had been fought lance to lance in the blinding conditions of the sandstorm?

**Attacker:** 2nd Lance, 3rd Company, 2nd Btn, 11th Ghost Regiment

*BattleMaster* (Guardian ECM Suite), Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 3

*Marauder*, Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 3

*Thug*, Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 2

*Crockett*, Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 4

Attacker enters from north side of map board. The Thug and the Crockett do not enter until turn 4.

**Defender:** Assault Lance, 2nd Company, Special Operations Group, 24th Arcturan Guard

Lt Ackerman, *Zeus*, Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 4

Sgt Neville, *Atlas*, Piloting: 2, Gunnery: 3

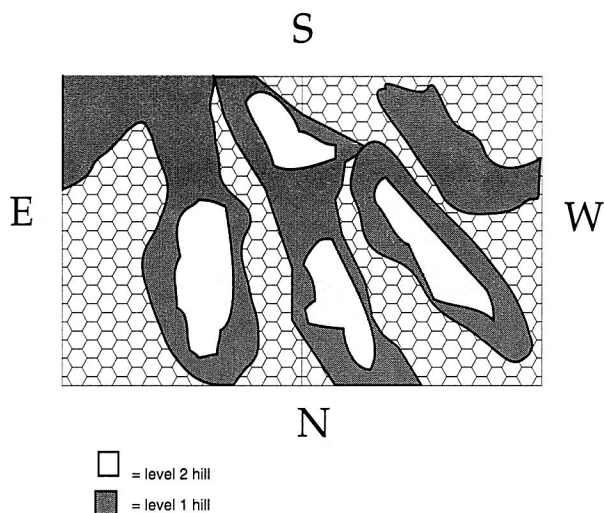
Corporal Maria Esposito, *Stalker*, Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 3

Collum Rothesay, *Banshee*, Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 4

Defender enters from east side of map board.

**Goals:** Defender wants to get at least one 'Mech retreated off the west edge of the map. Attacker wants to destroy or disable all of Defender's forces. Battle continues until one force accomplishes its goals.





**Special Rules:** Due to the fiercely-blowing sand, enemy forces are not visible past a distance of 10 hexes. Lasers do half damage. The wind is noisy and electrically active; radio communications are garbled past a 6-hex distance, and are not understandable on a roll of 7 or less on 2D6. The storm will continue until turn 8, when there begins to be a chance it has blown out. On turn 8, and on each turn afterward, player who wins initiative, roll 2D6 and consult the following table.

Turn	Die Roll	Result
8	10+	Storm Lessens
9	9+	Storm Lessens
10	8+	Storm Lessens
11	7+	Storm Lessens
12	6+	Storm Lessens
13	5+	Storm Lessens
14	automatic	Storm Lessens

When Storm Lessens result is achieved, for the 3 turns following (but not including) the turn the roll is made, visibility is increased to 13 hexes and radio communications increase to 6 hexes with no penalty, and to 15 hexes on a roll of 8 or above on 2D6. Lasers still do half damage. After that, conditions are normal.

**Debriefing Interview, Sgt Jason Neville, 24th Arcturan Guard SOG**

It was three hours before a recon sweep discovered us and sent in the rescue teams. After the first hour I'd known that something big had happened and I was just a small part of it. I had the medics fill me in as they were patching me up. During the sand storm Kuritan Jumpships had come in at a pirate point and launched a full size invasion flotilla. The lance I'd defeated had been the command lance of a four lance Ghost unit. When the invasion fleet arrived they came out of hiding and proceeded to try and take out our battalion and regimental command posts. One lance got through and totally wiped out 3rd Company's command. The other two lances had come around 1st and 2nd staging area only to stumble into a heavy armor column. Pulling back under fire, they were cut off by Lieutenant Ackerman and the rest of my lance, who had arrived in time to catch them in a deadly crossfire. The commander in the Battlemaster had lead the attack against Headquarters, as it was vital to preventing the Special Operations Group's withdrawal. My actions saved unit command and allowed us to retreat with most of our unit when the Kuritans overran us four days later.

For an account of the fight for Trollic Prime, see Sgt Neville's account, *Ghost of the Twenty Fifth*, elsewhere in this volume.

# The 3039 War as it Really Happened: A Stranger on Kessel

*August 30, 3039 BattleTechnology Magazine (censored by the Draconis Combine and the Lyran High Command)*

Kessel was part of the Lyran Commonwealth. Culturally and emotionally, it still is. But it has belonged to the Draconis Combine for three hundred years. The planet has always bred a strong resistance movement which neither Combine regular forces nor the ISF has been able to eradicate. As a consequence, at the beginning of the Third Succession War, Kessel II was made prefecture capitol. There is a strong garrison there, the 12 Sun Zhang. The planet is rich in ores; as a consequence the Combine has made of it a factory planet. The truculent attitude of its people has not made their rulers inclined to give any care to their welfare. The planet is so heavily polluted that its large continent, which takes up the northern and southern portions of the western hemisphere, is subject to acid rain alerts, mutating viral strains and 'Air Quality Alerts' during which the population of the megacity of Kessel Prime must remain within filtered environments 'or the government of Kessel will not be held responsible for your safety'.

The tiny eastern continent contains the remnants of the native mammalian life, the 'cleaner' processing plants and the so-called 'health city', where the planet's thousands of asthmatics and emphysemics have the best chance of continuing to breathe.

The ISF blames the Lyran Commonwealth's 'Loki' terrorist squad. *BattleTechnology's* sources indicate that Loki has stirred up trouble on a sporadic basis, but that the resistance to Kuritan rule is deeply ingrained in the population, along with a commitment to the Commonwealth's more democratic ideals and an emotional *heimweh*, a sort of homesickness for what they've never known, directed at the Lyran Commonwealth. The *Lyran Commonwealth* please notice, not the *Federated Commonwealth*, which was attacking the planet. The citizens of Kessel have accepted the Draconis Combine's view of Hanse Davion as scheming, ruthless, and amoral. More than half of the resistance movement sat on its hands and refused to participate in the invasion.

The Fourth Skye Rangers landed on the eastern continent on June 19, 3039. This Lyran unit was welcomed with open arms; the local resistance fighters gave them total cooperation; within five days the continent was theirs.

The 2nd New Ivarssen Chasseurs landed on the western continent on three locations on June 20. As of July 12, they were still struggling to take the planet. Their 'Mechs and vehicles were inadequately prepared to face the acid rains and the corrosive atmosphere; medical personnel had underestimated the constant reinoculations needed to counter the viruses. Scattered resistance groups aided FedCom forces; intel was spotty at best. After the bombing, morale suffered as confused and conflicting orders were received from the High Command.

On August 10, a strike in force took the central broadcast station of Kessel Prime. The next day, a special broadcast was made planetwide. The signal strength overwhelmed any attempts at jamming. The dazzled inhabitants of Kessel II saw a living legend on their viewscreens: the most charismatic heroine of the Second Succession War, the Black Pearl. (This actress-turned-Mechwarrior was as renowned for her beauty as her bravery. The Donegal-born patriot was a media darling throughout her long career as she soared to the top of the polls, left it all for the Sanglamos MechWarrior Academy, joined the elite 'Stealth' regiment, and died in battle as a Lieutenant-Colonel at the climactic battle of Sakhalin in a 'Mech-to-'Mech duel, her BattleMaster against a Kuritan Marauder.) She was dressed in the swirling robes of her most famous costume role, Mod Marian.



Background music from the vid swelled up for a moment, then muted as she began to speak.

"My name is Cynthia Franks. The Black Pearl was my great-great-great grandmother. I have followed in her footsteps as a MechWarrior. I come to you now in her spirit. She died fighting the Dragons, defending the freedom of the Lyran people. It has taken us a long time to offer that freedom to you, our conquered family. But we're here for you now! Strike for your freedom!

I am General Cynthia Franks of the ' Commonwealth General Staff. If you are worthy of freedom, this is your chance to gain it. Join us. Aid us. If you do, by the Almighty, we will win freedom together!"

Franks was the youngest general of Nondi Steiner's staff; the only one of the 'Nondi Faction' to escape the bombing. She was inspecting the science team at New Egypt when word of the disaster reached her. As her seniors stuck to outmoded tactics and quoted regulations, Franks offered plan after plan at staff meetings, only to be ignored. As one of Nondi Steiner's aides, Franks had been given signing authority over a portion of the theater's tactical response fund. On August 1, her resources were gathered. She bribed an adjutant to place her name first on the meeting agenda and cajoled the staff into a bargain while they were still occupied with their coffee and doughnuts. She promised to spend no money not already spent, and to take with her only forty resource people who were not combatants, together with their equipment. With these and one JumpShip she promised to deliver Kessel before the month was out. So successful was her preparation that she and her relief force were halfway to the JumpPoint before the council thought to examine her recent expenditures. Between July 16 and July 28, the fund had spent several million C-bills. Franks was able to promise to spend 'nothing that had not already been spent' because so much *had* already been spent.






Using a combination of appeals to patriotism and outright bribery, she acquired a pollution control specialist medteam from Zettle Metals of Ryde. They began at once to recommend and acquire vaccines, counteragents, and improved methods of filtration.

Franks was a graduate of Sanglamore, but she took a postgraduate course at Lyons Technical Institute. LTI is a small school (400 students) dedicated to battlefield technology skills. Students get hand-on experience in repairing BattleMechs, AeroSpace Fighters, DropShips, and armor. The senior class takes a year-long unit in scrounging parts from salvage, and using scrap to fix a BattleMech. Franks called the President of the college and offered a blank check 'for the alumni fund' if the entire Repair and Acquisitions department, senior students and faculty, were to take a six months sabbatical on Kessel 'for patriotic reasons'. Studying Kessel's conditions day and night, the 'Lighties' were able to offer several suggestions for revamping equipment and vehicles to protect them from Kessel's corrosive conditions.

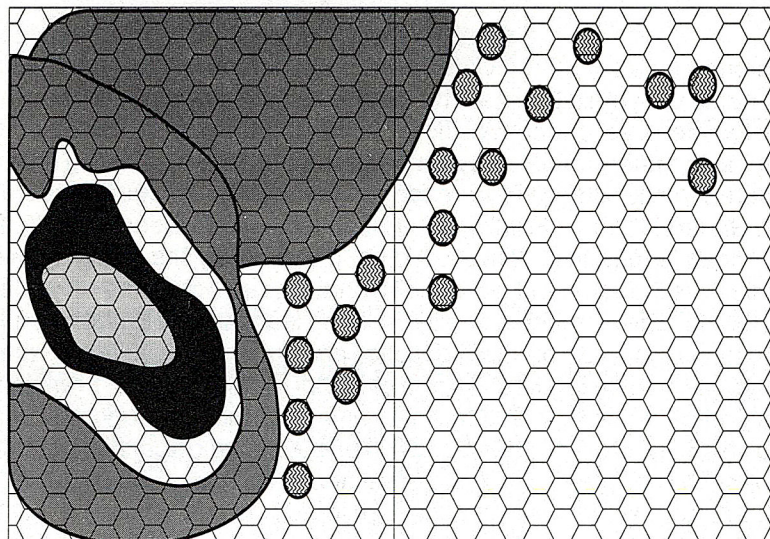
It's a proven fact that morale improves when a unit is told often enough that morale *has* improved. By mid-September the fight for Kessel was so intense that General Franks was able to take ship for her next effort. Watch out, Alnasi!





-  = Pit Trap
-  = Level 1
-  = Level 2
-  = Level 3
-  = Level 4

N



### **Kessel, November 3, 3039, FlowStream Pass, Greensward Mountains**

#### **Background and Special Conditions:**

The inland side of central mountain range of Kessel's large western continent contains some of the worst of its pollution. Strip mining and factory venting have made the ground lifeless and the air unbreathable. Although the mountains still carry the poetic name bestowed on them by explorers, they are informally and bitterly known as the Slaglands. In the Greensward mountain valley, several factories and research facilities produce myomers according to the old manufacturing process which has been superseded by the Clean Facilities Conventions of 2810. The industrial wastes produced by the process are hazardous in the extreme.

There is a tacit agreement, according to the Ares Conventions, not to fight in the factories. In practical terms, whoever hold the passes is deemed to have taken the valley. At this time the Fourteenth Legion of Vega holds the upper pass into the valley, while two lances from the Second New Ivarssen Chasseurs hold the lower pass. Whoever holds both passes will gain the valley. The lower pass is the killing ground now. The ground *itself* is a killer; there is no air circulation out of the valley. Air filters are required at all times; breathing the air unprotected leads to unconsciousness in five turns, death in twenty. The platoon of native guerillas uses light environment suits with air masks and filters. None of the MechWarriors involved have such filters; to eject is to die. The atmosphere is corrosive. 5 turns after an internal hit, electrical systems in the affected area begin to short out and myomer strength is affected, due to the corrosion of the atmosphere.

The native guerillas have done what they could to make the terrain difficult. Industrial wastes have been dumped in 'pit traps' made from old mining trial shafts, each one hex wide and one level deep. If you fall in, you must make a piloting roll to get out. After two turns in one of these, leg armor begins to melt at the rate of one point per turn. When you get out, the stuff is still on your legs unless you go to stand in the river for one turn. The river is polluted, of course, but the stuff in it counteracts the gunk that makes the pit traps deadly. The 'gunk' will burn. If your legs are covered, and infantry hits you with their inferno rounds, you



burn for twice as long. This fight was not fun for either side.

**Attacker:**

Fire Lance and Assault Lance, Second Company, Fourteenth Legion of Vega

(Unusual 'Mech mixtures reflect reformation of lances due to wartime losses)

Fire Lance

*Grand Dragon*, Piloting : 3, Gunnery : 4

*Rifleman*, Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 3

*Ostroc*, Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 4

*Quickdraw*, Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 2

Assault Lance

*Charger*, Piloting: 2, Gunnery: 3

*Charger*, Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 2

*Awesome*, Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 3

*Goliath*, Piloting : 4, Gunnery: 4

Attacker enters from north edge of map board.

**Defender:**

Fire Lance and Strike Lance, Second Company, First Battalion, Second New Ivarssen Chasseurs

(Unusual 'Mech mixtures reflect reformation of lances due to wartime losses)

Fire Lance

*Warhammer*, Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 3

*Rifleman*, Piloting: 2, Gunnery: 3

*Marauder*, Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 4

*Zeus*, Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 4

Strike Lance

*Griffin*, Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 4

*Phoenix Hawk*, Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 3

*Dervish*, Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 2

*Hunchback*, Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 4

1 Platoon native infantry with SRMs, inferno rounds

**Victory Conditions:**

The convention that keeps the factories safe makes the warriors take the brunt of the damage. Surrenders will be accepted by both sides; ComStar insists that their Kuritan allies accept surrender and the Federated Commonwealth keeps to its usual policy. But for conditions of winning the scenario, it is a case of kill or be killed. The unit who has the last undestroyed (or unsundered) BattleMech wins everything. The native infantry will not surrender; if their allies surrender while infantry is undestroyed, the infantry will escape into the mountains. They will probably not survive there.

## Slagging The Enemy

Debriefing Interview, *Gun-sho*  
Kennichi Wallendorf, Grand Dragon  
Pilot from the Fourteenth Legion of Vega

That end of the continent was ours, to the glory of the Dragon! We had taken the upper pass two weeks previously, so we held our position there, cleaning out pockets of resistance and accomplishing what repairs we could, until the ammo shipment reached us and we could proceed. The resistance had had two months to make little surprises for us in the lower pass; there is no doubt that the populace of the planet gave aid and comfort to the invader. Any of us from the counterattack would recommend stringent loyalty screening once the present emergency is over.

The scene looked like...like the 'Plane of Demons' out of the *Maleficent Manticore* fantasy vids. Factories sent out black clouds which funneled up to a black sky. There were pits everywhere of some blackish, viscous liquid which steamed. The radio was jammed by various electronic countermeasures; you had to listen hard to understand orders past the howling and shrieking. I remember thinking that I wished it were a vid, so I could change the channel...



# The 3039 War: The Dieron Front

## Vanessa's Surprise

*BattleTechnology Northwind, June 10, 3039*

*(Censored in the Draconis Combine)*

Field Marshal Vanessa Bisla did not have the clout along the Draconis March that the Ducal Sandoval family possess. Duke James Sandoval headed the Benjamin thrust in the sector next to hers; he received the best of supplies and service, while she had to scrounge. Fortunately, she got first pick of the relocated Lyran troops. She picked units with attached scout companies, units with Special Ops groups, and most especially, mercenary units.

If she had to scrounge, she wanted scrounging specialists.

The fact that she also got hard-fighting troops who were used to digging in and holding ground didn't hurt a bit. Look at what she set in motion late in March:

The Sixth Lyran Guards, the 'Saucy Sixth', departed from Quentin for Nashira; the Fifth Lyran Regulars, the 'Fenris Wolverines', left Saffel for Ancha; and the Second Chisholm's Raiders RCT Jumped from Formaulhaut for Sadachbia.

Just behind her lines was the home of the Northwind Highlanders, some of the toughest mercenaries you'll ever meet. Bisla used Northwind as a staging area, leaving two regiments of Highlanders, the Second Kearny Highlanders and Stirling's Fuseliers to guard Northwind and the invasion supplies. MacCleod's Highlanders and the First Kearny Highlanders invaded Athenry, jumping straight from the Northwind system on April second. The Highlanders are a closed-mouth bunch. They felt a sense of obligation to their employer, Prince Davion, for arranging things so that the four Highlander Regiments which had been exiled in Liao service for two hundred years could return to the world they never ceased thinking of as home. At a time when the spy networks of every government in the Known Sphere were keeping generations of informants fat and happy, not a word came out of Northwind as Vanessa Bisla got ready to play leapfrog. Three mercenary regiments waited to Jump in as planetary garrisons: the Dragon's Breath, Markson's Marauders, and The Edge of Night waited three weeks and then Jumped for Nashira, Ancha, and Sadachbia respectively, freeing up the Sixth Lyran Guards, and the Fifth Lyrans. Nashira was proving a tough nut to crack even without the Genyosha in residence; the Dragon's Breath, with its two specialist heavy fighter wings, was a welcome assist for Chisholm's Raiders. The rich agricultural planet of

Ancha surrendered after a token battle. Markson's Marauders settled in as garrison. The Fifth Lyran regulars Jumped out-system; their present destination is unknown.

The Fifth Deneb Light Cavalry RCT, the 17th Avalon Hussars RCT, and the two regiments of the Screaming Eagles waited to Jump until May fifth. As it turned out, the Fifth Deneb went to Telos IV, the 17th Avalon Hussars went to Biham, and the Screaming Eagles went on to Halstead Station. The Fifth Lucre arrived on Athenry in early May to take over garrison duty; they had been sent either to aid the Highlanders or to garrison the planet. Athenry had surrendered the day before they arrived in system; the Highlander regiments Jumped for Halstead Station three days later.

The first act of the war has been a successful one for the Dieron Front. We wonder: when Theodore Kurita ends his long silence, how well will he do against Field Marshal Bisla?

## Teaching the Teacher

*BattleTechnology Weekly News, July 14, 3039,*

*Saffel, Federated Commonwealth*

*(reconstructed from notes; original lost in the retreat)*

At the end of the Fourth Succession War, Theodore Kurita was quoted as saying, "My sensei used to say that he would teach us as far as he was able, but then it was important that we never stop learning. When you stop learning, you will have only one teacher: your enemy. The Draconis Combine Mustered Soldiery had forgotten to learn new tactics, new ways of applying our battle doctrine. The Fox has been kind enough to instruct us. It is time to absorb the lessons we have paid for. When we have done so, perhaps we can teach our teacher."

Hanse Davion's forces began this war, not by striking at the systems which are the first line of border defense, but by Jumping past them to the most important planets, the planets which are at good recharge Jump Points on the way to — or from — Luthien, the industrial systems, or the breadbasket planets. It was considered a bold stroke.

Theodore Kurita's long-planned counterstrike began two days ago as his ships bypassed his own captured planets to strike at the Davion planets of Quentin, Formaulhaut, and Murchison.

*BattleTechnology, September 20, 3039, Halstead Station*  
*(Censored in the Federated Commonwealth)*

MacCleod's Highlanders and the First Kearny Highlanders hit Halstead Station on the first of June, 3039. It was a mean, tough, slogging fight that lasted, all in all, for over three months. For four decades now, House Kurita used the planet as a staging area for raid or invasion into Davion territory. The finding of a small cache of Star League weaponry in 3015 makes this planet's garrison particularly

well-equipped. Halstead Station's people feel that they are part of the original Kuritan state, brought in by personal loyalty to Hehiro Kurita in the 26th Century. Federated Commonwealth propaganda had no effect on them. Late in August, MacCleod's Highlanders were engaged in clearing the Kitsune Swamps, where the 42nd Dieron Regulars had chosen to hole up. The First Kearny had subdued the rest of the world, and were preparing to help thier brother regiment when JumpShips arrived in-system. The Eleventh and Twelfth Ghost Regiments had arrived.

It's rumored that the Ghost Regiments are Yakuza. It's certain that they have Star League equipment, in prime condition, and are excellently supplied. If the Northwind Highlanders aren't the best in the Federated Suns, they're close enough for argument. Star League 'Mechs like the Thug and the Highlander are unknown to them; they improvised tactics as quickly as possible, but possible wasn't quick enough.

Students of warfare in the future will no doubt study this campaign with interest, but this reporter hasn't the heart to tell you in detail what happens when tough and gallant fighters, worn from lengthy battle, are simply outgunned. Suffice it to say, that after significant losses, the two regiments were ordered by Sector Command to retreat. They conducted a fighting withdrawal to their DropShips and boosted out-system early this morning.

***BattleTechnology Weekly News,  
September 20, 3039, Fomalhaut***

***(Censored in the Federated Commonwealth)***

The new planetary government of Fomalhaut has issued a statement which says in part, "In spirit, Saffel has always been part of the Dragon. We thank our liberators, the 36th Dieron Regulars and the First Genyosha."

***BattleTechnology Weekly News, October 30, 3039,***

***Robinson (Not Censored)***

The Fifth Lyran Guard joined DukeSandoval's troops on Robinson today as the fight for the system entered its second month. Strategists agree that the planet's three regiments and one Regimental Combat Team will present an overwhelming force against the invading Third Ghost.

***BattleTechnology, October 10, 3039 Saffel (censored in  
the Federated Commonwealth)***

The Sixth Lyran Guard and the Fifth Lyran Regulars are fighting a gallant rear guard action against the 36th Dieron Regulars and the Ninth Ghost Regiment, but it is now clear that it is not a question of time whether the planet will fall, but when.

Still, every week they can hold the planet, they hold two Kuritan regiments back from Theodore Kurita's drive to-

The Federated Commonwealth version of the Regimental Combat Team has not totally standardized its organizational model. It consists of at least four regiments and support elements. These elements are mixed for a smooth application of combined arms theory. Up to two of the regiments may not even be BattleMechs!

It's modeled on the Star League Defense Force RCT. For example, the Eridani Light Horse, when it was a SLDF RCT, had two striker regiments as well as the two light regiments. Now it has one striker regiment, but adds an armor regiment. The Fifth Avalon Hussars RCT, one of the original Federated Suns RCTs, consists of two strikers regiments, an engineering battalion, three air squadrons, and a recon specialist unit.

The mixture of the regiments for best use is still a matter of experiment; each RCT differs slightly from any other. Add to that factor the fact that many of the units which have been combined into RCTs, subordinated to the 'Mech unit which is the central element, have histories and traditions of their own. In unsuccessful cases, the units are rigidly forced into the battle doctrine of the dominant regiment. In the most successful models, the traditions as well as the doctrine of each component unit are melded together to invent a new hybrid. How this melding occurs is not altogether understood. Yoko Malaika, one of psychologists from NAIS who has made a career of studying the human factors in combined arms, warns that incorporating the formal tactics and outlook of a unit seems to require paying attention to the half-understood myths and traditions of that unit as well. If a unit requires a new chum to orienteer around the 'Mech Bay while blind drunk, it's tactics will stress individual initiative and a high degree of improvisation.

Each RCT trains together extensively, mixing and remixing its elements until any combination can work together as smoothly as your two hands. Once an RCT is successfully created, it will very rarely be split up for any reason.

ward Exeter. Under those circumstances, the Lyran will hold as long as they have to.

"The Davion invaders have been driven back across their borders. They sought to make a meal of the Dragon. Now they will find that we have teeth, and that those teeth can meet in their throats!" Richard Nakamura, Press Secretary to the Imperial Palace at Luthien told reporters last week.

***BattleTechnology Weekly News,***

***Athenry November 25, 3039 (Not censored)***

The last Federated Commonwealth troops along the Dieron front conducted an orderly withdrawal. The remains of the Filthy Lucre and the Second Chisholm's Raiders, minus their air wing, negotiated a settlement. "The civilian population has suffered enough," said *Tai-i* Mitchell Walters, of the Tenth Legion of Vega. "We respect the willingness of our gallant enemy to do no further harm in their inevitable defeat."

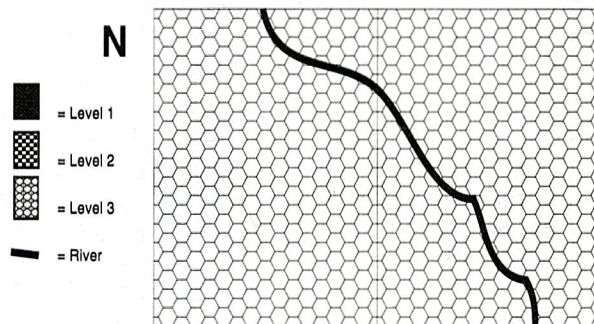


# Splish Splash

During the Fourth Succession War, the Planet Northwind suffered a Kuritan invasion. The two Northwind Highlander regiments remaining on the sundered planet had been reinforced by Bradley's Bravos and Team Banzai. As the fight for the planet grew more and more bitter, certain MechWarriors from the Kuritan 36th Dieron Regulars resorted to biological warfare; they waded their 'Mechs into the lake that served as the city reservoir for Cromartie, ostensibly to cool them down. The leg vents which they opened underwater contained one of several mutated influenza strains. They repeated the trick in two more of Northwind's small cities before the incubation period of the disease ended and the epidemics began. One third of the population of Cromartie died before the epidemic ended there.

In December of 3029, the Highlander regiments that had been separated from their world for two centuries returned under Davion contract to rid their homeworld of its invaders. This included the First and Second Kearny Highlander regiments. They returned to a world of great natural beauty where their kin were still dying in hundreds. Both Davion and Kurita warriors committed incidents which would later be called atrocities. Several MechWarriors, notably one Kyle Holt, from the Davion side were charged with war crimes for unnecessary brutality in handling prisoners, unnecessary destruction in battle, instances of refused surrender, etc. They claimed a justified anger in response to the poisoning of civilians. The Kuritans claimed that there are no civilians on Northwind; man, woman, and child, they're all either warriors or guerilla fighters. A dozen or so prisoners from either side were condemned. As of the 3039 War, they were still in prison.

We at *BattleTechnology* expected the next time these enemies met in battle would be marked by more atrocities, more incidents, more unnecessary loss of life. It is amazing that the Highlander regiments treated the swamp fighters of the 36th Dieron with such restraint when the units next encountered in battle on Halstead Station. The Highlanders treated civilians and military with a firm hand. Battle was fierce; the 36th Dieron had put to use what they had learned from the Highlanders on guerilla tactics; the Second Kearny went after them with a controlled and continuous effort, forcing the Dieron into constant and sleepless motion. Every day, a camp or a supply cache was lost to the Highlanders. But captured prisoners were treated by both sides according to the letter of the Ares conventions. There are accounts of Highlanders captured in battle being fed from scarce supplies while their captors went hungry...



## Situation:

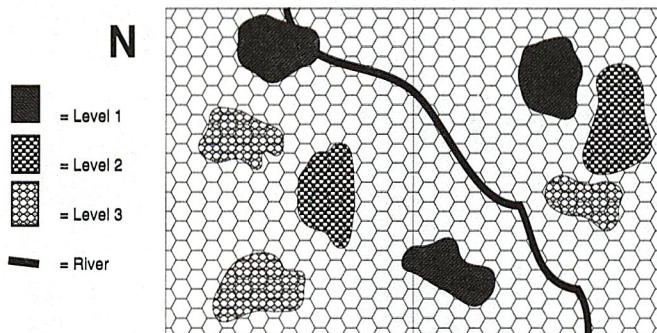
The campaign for Halstead Station began with the 36nd Dieron having the advantage of knowing where the quicksand holes are, while the invading MacLeod's Highlanders did not. By the time this scenario takes place, two companies of the Highlanders, along with most of their infantry and air support, have been painfully mapping the swamps inch by inch in order to wipe out the units using it as a base. The Highlanders know where the holes are, too. This doesn't mean that they can't misstep, fall, or be knocked into quicksand. The 36th Dierons has been up against two crack regiments. They have been severely munched; the condition of the 'Mechs reflects it. This scenario must be played so that the 36th Dieron and MacLeod's Highlanders know where the quicksand holes in the swamp are, and the reinforcements from the Eleventh Ghost Regiment do not. Either a referee is required, who can be asked "Is the hex I am about to step into a quicksand hole?", or three people must play; the ghost lance player getting the first map, the one which does not show the quicksand.

## Attacker:

Strike Lance, Striker Company,  
Second Battalion, MacCleod's Highlanders



## August 24, 3039 Kitsune Swamps, Halstead Station



*Blackjack-D* (see 3025 Technical Readout)

Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 3

*Vindicator* Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 3

*Enforcer* Piloting: 2, Gunnery: 3

*Dervish* Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 3

### Defender:

36th Dieron Regulars are in swamp at beginning of scenario  
Elements of Striker Lance,

*Jenner* (Right arm and weapons destroyed) Piloting: 3,  
Gunnery: 3

*Panther* (Right Leg Jump Jets destroyed, armor gone  
from CT rear) Piloting: 2, Gunnery: 3

11th Ghost enters on turn 10.

*Phoenix Hawk-K* (3025 Tech Readout: more armor, no  
Jump Jets) Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 4

*Shadow Hawk-K* (3025 Tech Readout): Piloting: 4,  
Gunnery: 2

*Dragon* Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 3

*Kintaro* Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 2

### Special Rules: Quicksand

If a 'Mech steps into quicksand, it will sink at the rate of one level per turn. Once each turn, after the turn it steps in, it has a chance to make a piloting roll from level one to pull itself out. This pullout takes six movement points. You will auto-

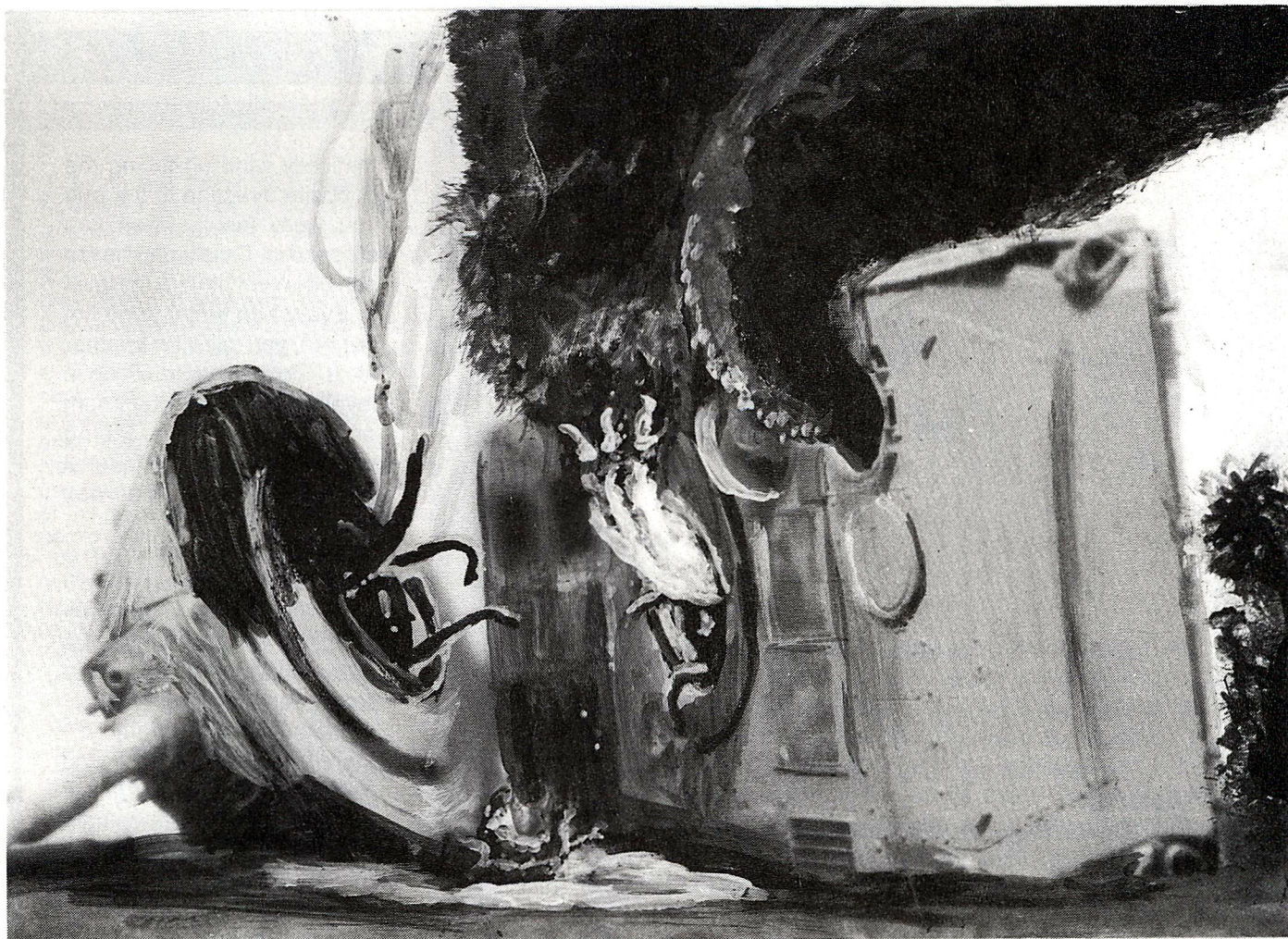
matically wind up facing the opposite direction to the one you were facing when you stepped in. Quicksand hexes can be level 1, level 2, or level 3. Every turn that you do not get out, you will sink another level. To pull yourself up a level requires 3 movement points. To chance facing while in quicksand requires 3 movement points per hex facing.

If a 'Mech falls into a quicksand hex, see page 19 of the *BattleTech Compendium*, for how he is lying in the quicksand, on left side, right side, prone (on his front), or supine (on his back). To stand up requires a piloting roll and 3 movement points if you are lying on left or right side, a piloting roll and 6 movement points if you are lying prone or supine.

### Victory Conditions:

The Ghost Player, or the Kuritan player if both forces are played by one person, wins by destroying the Highlander Lance. The Dieron Player, *if* this is a separate player, wins by retreating both of his 'Mechs off the South side of the board. The Highlander player wins by destroying two 'Mechs belonging to the other side and retreating two of his 'Mechs off the south or west sides of the board.





## Quintus Allard Resigns

*December 31, 3039*

The Minister of Information for the Federated Commonwealth resigned today. Rumor has it that Quintus Allard, long-trusted intelligence gather for Prince Hanse Davion resigned his post, effective today. He gave ill health as a reason, but sources in the know say that Allard feels he let the Federated Commonwealth down, being fooled by *Kanrei* Kurita's misstatement of troop strength during the war just ended.

Thelos Auburn, Courth Historian to Archon Melissa Steiner Davion, was asked what history would say to Minister Allard's resignation. He replied, "My book will say, 'At the end of the 3039 War, the Federated Commonwealth lost a man it could not afford to lose. Quintus Allard, Minister for Information, was lost not to enemy action, but to shame.' Whoever succeeds him will have some large shoes to fill."

Minister Allard's last surprise was the choice of his successor. His older son Justin Allard-Liao was chosen to coordinate all intelligence activity for the Federated Commonwealth. Minister Allard becomes the first man ever to hold high intelligence posts first in the Capellan Confederation, and then in the Federated Suns or the Federated Commonwealth! It is to be hoped that his sister-in-law's assassins will stop targeting the minister, his wife Duchess Candace of the St Ives Compact, and his four children.



## The 3039 War: What Happened After...

## Kessel Refugees Find New Home

*February 2, 3040, Gallery Gazette*

The Black Pearl Colony has been founded on Gallery under the patron-

age of the Duchess of Gallery, Field Marshal Nondi Steiner. During the closing weeks of the 3039 War, as she was recuperating from the aftereffects of the DEST team bombing in Archon Elizabeth Hospital, she received a priority-one message from her youngest staff General, Cynthia Franks. After the honorifics, it read:

"We persuaded the people of Kessel to rise up and fight for us by appealing to their deep belief that they are Lyrans. We persuaded them that the new Commonwealth cares as much for the welfare of our people as the old Commonwealth did. Many of these resistance fighters have given their lives for our sake. Now we must abandon the planet. Must we also abandon them?"

"Two hundred people are known by name and biotype to the Kuritans. By using every available JumpShip in the system, I can bring these people out with us when we withdraw. I have no time to wait for an answer to this. I must count on you to find these people a place to resettle. Court martial me for insubordinate action if you must, but these people must be saved from the claws of the Dragon."

Field Marshal Steiner has a weakness for bravery, and the Steiner love of taking desperate chances. She has always hated the cruelty inherent in Kurita's attitude toward rebellion. Franks chose her patron well. The Isola Del Mar archipelago on Gallery was turned over to the refugees. These people who have been loyal to the Commonwealth — Federated or Lyran — will spend their last days in the sun, and their children will breathe the fresh air of freedom.

## Lisa Steiner Promoted

*New Avalon, June 30, 3041*

One of the unsung heroes of the Dieron front of the 3039 War was a member of the Steiner royal family. Lisa Steiner is Field Marshal Nondi's daughter, which makes her Archon Melissa's first cousin. When a reporter for *The Tharkhad Court Reporter* caught up with her in March of 3035, she told an interviewer, "I have no charm. I haven't got the family charisma. I'm like my dad, Jack Milby. His family are accountants, nitpickers all of them. I can't sleep if my closets aren't in order."

Lisa has risen slowly through the ranks of the Quartermaster Corps, promoted each time on merit. She keeps her supplies accounted for and her ordering procedures simple and effective. Under her system, each unit supply officer is responsible — personally — for every item supplied to his unit. Undercover inspectors trained in techniques suggested by Simon Johnson, head of the Lyran Intelligence Corps, spot-check to keep these officers honest. "I arrange the procedures so that the person who has the authority to order is also responsible for what he or she orders. It's a simple principle, often ignored, that the person who has the motivation for keeping things orderly should have the authority to go with it. Not that any of my people are encouraged to build little empires and play favorites!"

The point is that during the 3039 War, Lisa Steiner was Quartermaster-in-charge for the Dieron Front. Troops in her area got an 88% fill rate on their resupply requisitions even during the panic months of the late Fall retreat. Supplies reached 'her troops' an average of eight days faster than on any other front.

Today in a ceremony at the rambling Royal Court Palaces, First Prince Hanse Davion announced her promotion to Field Marshal, with broad responsibilities to reform the Quartermaster Corps of the AFFC.



# Ghost of the 25th

It's hard to match the fear that runs through your body as your 100 ton 'Mech drops off a 20 meter cliff without the benefit of jump jets. It is even harder to surpass the pain and surprise felt as autocannon shells pummel your Battlemech's head, shooting broken equipment around your cockpit like gunfire. In fact the only thing a Steiner-born Mechwarrior can feel that truly surpasses these feelings, is the pride and awe of... Well I can't explain it simply, so let me start at the beginning.

It was the 3039 war and we were hitting the Dragon, hard. All along the Dieron border Steiner 'Mechs were invading Kurita planets as fast as they could advance. Many of the planets had once been Steiner worlds and we were damn glad to be taking them back. Planets like Trollic Prime. Trollic was the first planet lost to the Kuritans back in the First Succession War. Now after three hundred years we were taking it back and flying a Lyran flag over it.

My unit, the Special Operations Group of the 24th Arcturan Guards, was assigned the job of liberating it. My name is Jason Neville, Leftnant in the AFFC; Back then I was a sergeant, just one of the veteran warriors that made up the backbone of our unit. I want to tell you the story of how with a little unusual help, I managed to save my unit during the retaking of Trollic Prime.

It was the end of the beginning of the war; July, 3039. We were winning with little resistance and becoming too confident. You see, we hadn't ever heard of the Kanrei's Ghost Regiments. We definitely didn't have any idea that these Ghost Regiments would be stocked with Star League era 'Mechs. For we had believed the Intel reports, and assumed we had come upon a sleeping dragon. Dragons, my friends, are very light sleepers.

The Special Ops Group, with its allies, was spread out across the main continent mopping up resistance and hunting down stray Kuritan units. One of our recon lances had found a heavy armor unit holed up in a sheltered box canyon. Aerospace had tried to hit them and failed and the recon boys just weren't up to the task. So command sent out my assault lance to deal with the matter. We marched out, showed off our fresh assault 'Mechs, they surrendered, and we headed home. It was just as easy as the rest of the invasion.

The sandstorm blew up from nowhere within fifteen minutes' time, cutting visibility to three meters. The lance pulled in close and kept on moving. None of us wanted to end up like Selver's lance, found buried six meters under the sand the first sandstorm after we invaded. I'd extended my satellite dish so we could maintain contact with the base. It meant we could stay on course and not just stumble blindly through the storm hoping we wouldn't be buried. Forty minutes into the storm Leftenant Ackerman's Zeus walked into a waystation outbuilding, crushing the building's supports, and letting the wind tear it apart, sending debris hurtling back towards the rest of the lance. The spray of wood and metal crashed over my 'Mech's head assembly tearing my sat dish and com antennas off.

Stunned by the impact, I lost control. My 'Mech foundered and dropped to one knee. Within seconds I was awash in sand: more piling on every moment. I pushed my controls to the limit, struggling to get my Atlas on its feet before the sand immobilized it. I broke free of the storm's grip and pressed forward to rejoin my unit. They'd missed my fall in the storm. I was so far behind that I was unable to catch up. I resigned myself to making the return trip alone and began to use my compass to guide me in.

Even before the storm cleared I knew I had missed the trail. We'd been up on a plateau north of Trollic's capital, returning to Regimental Headquarters at the base of the Plateau. I'd missed the ravine that led to the base, losing myself in the maze of crisscrossing ridgelines and ravines leading off the Plateau. I was sheltered enough from the storm to know I was off course but not protected enough to do anything about it.

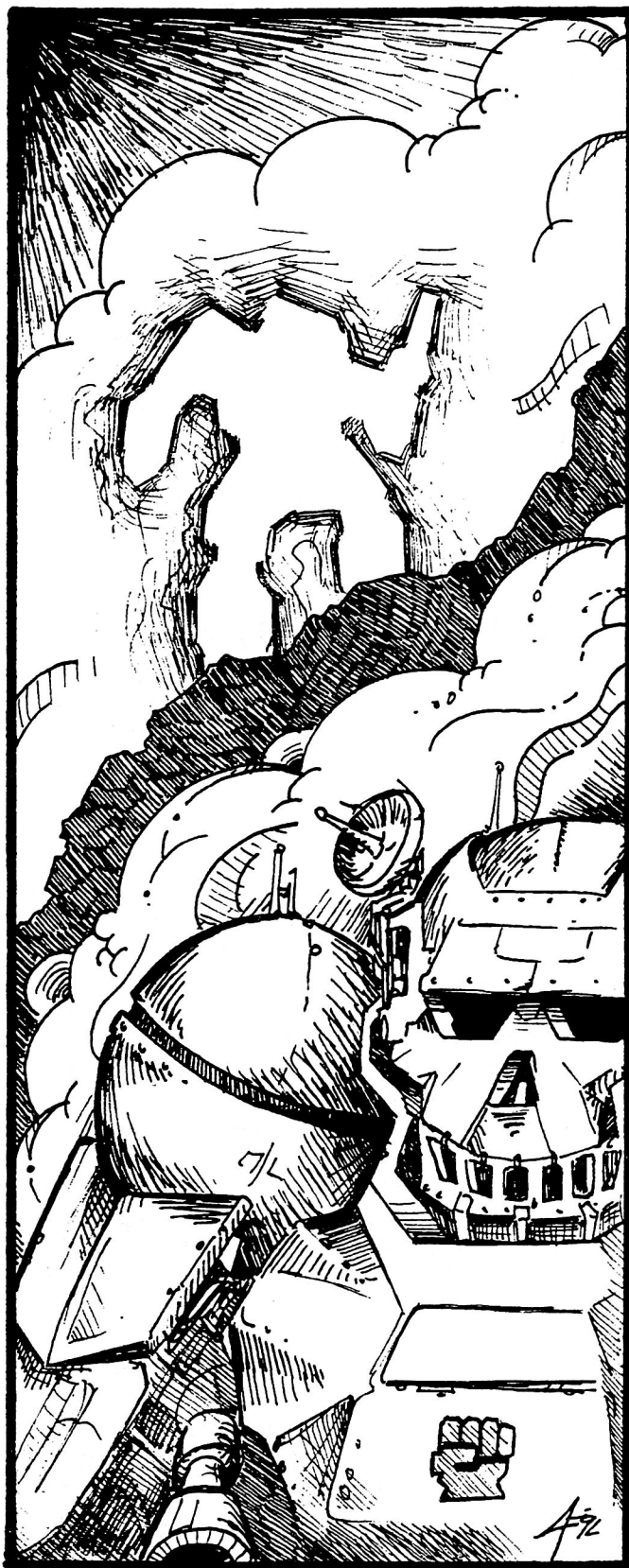
Two hours later the storm had begun to die out. I found myself in a shear walled ravine which forced me to continue on the current path. Gradually the walls began to slope out so I could get to the high ground of the ridgelines. I was about to head up the ridge to the east of me when my gaze was drawn to my right rear monitor, which was flickering wildly. It cleared up as I looked, showing me the unmistakable silhouette of a Zeus BattleMech, standing atop the west ridge. It waved in my direction, then backed up out of sight. I assumed it was Leftenant Ackerman signaling me to rejoin the lance, so I turned to head up the steeper west

side. Using my 'Mechs hands and feet I managed to scramble up the ridgetside, but found it difficult to pull myself over the sharp edge of the summit. The ground began to avalanche underneath me. In desperation I slammed my Atlas's battlefist deep into the earth. Driving in, the hand glanced off something solid and wedged there, keeping me from joining the avalanche. I levered my 'Mech up, managing to roll over onto the crest and regain my feet.

From where I stood now, I had a clear view of the surrounding terrain. The ravine on the other side was wider, resembling a small valley. A small finger hill ran closely parallel to the ridge I was on and the valley floor was dotted with small hillocks. Behind me the ravine I'd left curved east leading farther away from where I thought base was. In fact in the distance to the south west I could make out an Aerospace fighter landing at what could only be the main landing strip near the base. But what I didn't see was Lt Ackerman. No Zeus, and not a single trace of evidence one had ever been here.

I assumed that the Lieutenant had already moved out of sight heading toward the base. I was ready to follow him when movement at the bottom of my cockpit window caught my eye. Striding out of the blind spot created by the finger hill were four Assault 'Mechs, painted in distinctly Kuritan colors. I easily identified the Battlemaster that led the way, and the Marauder that brought up the left, but the other two 'Mechs were designs I'd never seen before. I looked to my Friend or Foe screen for identification, only to realize that my sensors had never alerted me. I.R. was silent, motion detectors were clear and all my MAD was measuring were high concentrations of metallic ore in the ground. The only sign of them was their presence in my field of vision; my identification of the unknowns could only go as far as guessing their weight and weapons. The first unknown looked huge and well armored, its massive arms supported by a strong torso, for all the world looking like a linebacker for an Ameri™ Football game. The other was heavier but carried an air of hilarity rather than menace. An 85 ton barrel was placed on two steel girders and given street signs for arms. I wanted to laugh, but the icy chill of fear rose in my throat, strangled the sound as I slowly came to realize how serious this all was. Because somehow this Kurita assault lance had slipped through our defenses and was nearly in striking range of our lightly defended headquarters.

"Sword of Justice", my Atlas, was the only thing that could slow them down long enough to give



Headquarters a chance to detect them. I brought my LRM's on line and targeted the Marauder by sight. The rangefinder read 560 meters to the ground at the Marauder's feet. Reaching up, I snapped down my visor and launched the missiles. I charged down the west side of the ridge without waiting to see if they'd found their targets.

I know now that the Battlemaster had been carrying a Guardian ECM suite, which had allowed it to lead its lance through our defenses with ease. What no one has been able to explain even today, is why *they* didn't see *me*! I was standing on an exposed ridge with no cover at all. Yet from post-battle interviews I learned that the first clue the Kuritans had that I was there was when my missiles slammed into the Marauder full force. No one has ever been able to come up with a logical explanation. Maybe because there isn't one. It happened and that's all that

idea. As I took 'Justice' back up the hill, I decided that it was time to take a wild leap, a long shot. Forget rationality! I was operating solely on pure adrenalin and raw luck. As I cleared the hill I discovered that the last thing the Kuritans expected was a repeat performance. They had continued to move as before. The Marauder was now far enough from the Battlemaster to register on my sensors, so I locked on and fired. My autocannon drove into the right leg, removing the last of its armor and letting the LRMs explode into the knee joint, shattering it. The Marauder pilot was unable to keep his 'Mech standing, and it toppled forward. Only the Battlemaster standing in reserve was in any position to respond, hitting me low with his PPC. Quickly, I backed down the hill before my luck ran out.

My bag of tricks was exhausted and all the remaining options led to fighting against losing odds. I was groping for a new idea, when one jumped up and bit me. My MAD (Magnetic Anomaly Detector) was scrolling information about the magnetic content of the hill I was on. In particular, it indicated a spot to my left which read as a veritable gold mine of magnetic disturbances. Once again rationality was left behind as I moved my 'Mech into the center of the magnetic concentration. There I was back to the hillside, rear heat sinks venting heat into the rocks, a prayer on my lips, as I tried not to think

how ludicrous this all was.

A minute later my motion detectors picked up the Thug heading north up the ravine. I was able to determine the metal of my opponent now as my sensors began feeding me information. With an 80 ton chassis carrying two missile racks in the chest and a PPC in each arm, I was sure it didn't want to tango. I watched as it moved, swinging side to side looking for me, calculating when I would make my move. I closed my eyes and began to count, intending to make my move when I reached five. I passed three and my radio suddenly came alive, filling my helmet with raw static for a second before cutting out again. Startled by the noise I pushed forward on the controls. Before I could stop him 'Justice' was stepping off the cliff!

Fear coursed through me as I plummeted unchecked and unguided. Lifetimes later my fall came to an end in an eruption of sound and shock. 'Justice' smashed feet first onto the shoulders of the Thug, shattering armor and sending us both tumbling to the ground. I was helplessly thrown about inside; only my restraining straps saving me from a worse punishment. I fought to recover, slowly managing to bring my hands back up to the controls. I was sure that at any moment my viewscreen would be filled with the Thug's foot as it crushed my cockpit, but as I clambered up I could see my opponent struggling to rise. I brought my crosshairs up and fired even as I stood. Autocannon and SRMs stitched damage across the sitting Thug shoving him

## Why didn't they see me?

matters!

I came barreling down the ridgeside into the narrow ravine, charging across the finger hill. By hand and foot, I climbed until I reached a ledge just below the top. Raising my sensor antenna just over the hill's top, I did a recon sweep. My surprise attack had caught the Dracs flat. I cleared the hilltop, targeted on the Marauder again and proceeded to inform him as rudely as possible that 'Justice' was not a standard Atlas. I'd replaced the standard heavy autocannon with a Luxor Medium, with more range but less power. The loss of short range power had been made up with an additional SRM rack in the chest!

My autocannon and LRM fire cut into the Marauder, severely damaging the right leg. The other 'Mechs had no time to react to my attack before I was backing over the hilltop for cover again. Safely down the hill, I took stock and formed a mental picture of the battlefield. The Marauder and the 'linebacker 'Mech' (I learned later it was an SLDF Thug assault 'Mech) were moving south, I assume they meant to try and come around that end of the hill. The BattleMaster was standing passive, and the barrel 'Mech (a Katana or Crockett) was heading north to cut off the far end of the hill.

I started racking my brain for a rational plan of attack. Suddenly in the silence the soft beep of the speed indicator caught my attention. According to it 'Justice' was moving forward at 22 klicks, even though I wasn't moving! Then the strange malfunction of my speed indicator gave me a wild



back. As I straightened up, I lashed out, hitting the Thug with one of 'Justice's huge battlefists.

We were brawling in close now, so only the Thug's twin SRM's could respond effectively to my assault. Quickly my mass and firepower put him off balance and left him struggling just to respond to my attacks. Overpowering his 'Mech I swung 'Justice's battlefist in to crush the Thug's damaged headsection. Its pilot dead, the Thug began to topple back, seeming to fall in slow motion.

As I paused for a breath before continuing, my gaze was jerked to a new problem with my right rear screen. The screen filled with snow, blacked out then snapped on again and refocused. As it cleared I could clearly see the Kuritan Marauder raising his PPCs to fire. I pulled back hard, swinging 'Justice' backwards and right, narrowly avoiding the twin beams of azure energy. As I pulled out of the PPCs' path I walked into the fire of the Marauder's Whirlwind autocannon. The staccato of the explosions filled my world as shells blasted large chunks of armor from 'Justice's head. Controls went slack, systems shorted, and the right rear monitor screen exploded, catching me in a barrage of glass and steel.

Dazed, I let Justice stumble back almost of his own will, just as PPC and autocannon fire sliced through the air where I would have been had I moved forward as the Kuritan must have expected. I carried the turn through to face the Marauder, firing even before the crosshairs had pulsed a lock, and scored damage across his chest.

Moving on pure instinct now, I zig-zagged forward, firing my weapons as soon as they cycled. Arms raised high, I was doing my best to look as intimidating as only an Atlas could. I managed to dance between bursts of the Marauder's fire while returning a constant volley of devastation. The Marauder was backing up, desperately trying to disengage, but his damaged knee slowed him to a crawl, and I gave him no chance to get away. Then I was on top of him, ready to bring my proven fists to bear. Suddenly the Marauder's right leg gave way, under my autocannon fire, throwing the 'Mech forward. The Marauder hit the ground and I drove 'Justice's leg into the ravaged torso. Supports snapped and twisted, cracking engine shielding and crushing the gyro compartment.

I didn't stop, just moved straight past the downed 'Mech and south down the ravine. I pushed 'Justice' to the limit, hoping that I could catch up with the other Kuritan 'Mechs before they reached the base. My heat levels were dropping, armor was good, and all my backup systems had come on line. If my luck held I would be able to slow the other Kuritans long enough for help to materialize. If luck held... My gaze drifted over to the shattered monitor screen. Twice now it had acted up to draw my attention to something important. The strange coincidences were beginning to add up, and the monitor was playing a key part in the equation;

the monitor which was no longer capable of offering an explanation. Too many questions were popping up to which the answers were mysterious at best.

The finger hill was beginning to taper off, leading me out to the main valley floor. I was planning to push flat out soon as I hit open ground. I was clearing the hill when I heard a strong, even voice say "Neville! Bogies to your right! Pull back!" I didn't even think this time, seeking no reason for the warning, no "what was that", but acted from pure reaction. I twisted 'Justice' right, reversing 100 tons of 50 kph inertia. Straining at the controls, I got 'Justice' turned and heading for safety as the air came alive with weapons fire. The Kuritans had lain in ambush waiting for me to dash out onto the plain. Warned by the voice I had altered my course and saved myself from a crippling level of fire.

The Battlemaster was on one of the small hillocks and the Katana was hugging the hill, giving the two 'Mechs an excellent field of crossfire. Somehow while I turned, my crosshairs had swung across the Battlemaster. It wasn't until the lower half of the 'Mech was obscured in missile and cannon fire that I even realized I was aiming at him much less firing. Rationality long abandoned, I charged 'Justice' out across the Kuritan field of fire. The insane act caught the Katana pilot off guard allowing me to score heavy damage on him in return for a laser hit to my torso. Unfortunately, the Battlemaster was not distracted and took this time to rudely inform me that I had moved into his close range. The PPC speared out scouring left arm armor off as SRMs rippled damage across my chest and lasers harmlessly bracketed my 'Mech. Only the PPC had done significant damage, but the knowledge that I was at close range with a Battlemaster left me cold.

The Katana was coming in from the right, so I cut left hoping to lure him away from the Battlemaster. He followed but kept his distance. Suddenly I pivoted sharply and cut my speed to bring the Katana to fist range. But Katana was ready for such a move and took the opportunity to deliver his complete arsenal to me. I nearly fell as two large lasers, a medium autocannon, two SRM-6s and a duo of small lasers blasted three tons of armor from my Atlas. The devastating attack was punctuated by an SRM round slamming into my cockpit viewscreen.

I'd survived several cockpit injuries before, and had fallen into the trap of feeling invulnerable. I never wore my safety visor down on my neurohelmet; it made me feel stuffy and enclosed. Today of all days I had flipped down the visor, and it saved my life. Flechette sized slivers of plexine shot into the cockpit, shredding the armor layer from my coolant vest and slicing through my unprotected arms. But they bounced off my heavy neurohelmet, sparing my face. Ever since I've worn my visor down.

Struggling to maintain control, I managed to return the Katana's fire as I started towards him. But any joy I might

have felt at being able to fight back, slipped away as the Battlemaster reminded me that I had not escaped his close range. Breech alarms screamed and low armor warnings flashed as the Battlemaster ripped armor from 'Justice's left side. I ignored the damage and lashed out at the Katana with both battlefists. One snapped into an elbow joint, while the other crushed into the head supports over the cockpit. The Katana reeled back from the headshot, twisting to the right. I pushed 'Justice' past his left side stepping behind him, and moved into a clear field of fire on the Battlemaster. As I moved, the Katana turned, trying to track me with his weapons, but I must have blown his sensors because all his fire missed by at least two meters.

I opened up with my full close range arsenal on the Battlemaster. As lasers shot out from 'Justice's arms, heat washed through my cockpit. The heat rose well into the yellow as autocannon and missile fire joined the lasers, slagging armor from the left side. It seemed as he returned my fire that I'd never even hit him. With painful accuracy he hit me with everything he had. I mean everything! The Donal PPC speared out, snapping off 'Justice's left arm at the elbow. The remaining fire blew armor off my chest in 100 kilo chunks, throwing my 'Mech back. The supports of my LRM buckled, leaving it pointing uselessly at the ground.

My left torso now hung open clear to the internal skeleton, and my left arm was near useless. I pulled back seeking the safety of the steep wall of the finger hill. Alarms competed for my attention, as red warning lights began to steadily overthrow my status board. I hit my LRM ammo eject, as my hands began dancing across the panel trying to keep 'Justice' going just a little bit longer. Just as I was beginning to win the war against the crimson lights, the real battle demanded my attention. Even with his sensors out the Katana was able to deliver a final crippling volley of fire into 'Justice's left side, leaving that leg bare of armor. The Battlemaster added his own two C-bills, his PPC vaporizing the remains of my left arm.

By all rights poor 'Justice' should have gone down under such extreme punishment. Not only did he remain standing, but I was able to score with all my operable weapons on the Katana. Heat spiked red, throwing roaring waves of heat through my cockpit, as laser and autocannon fire opened up the 'Mech's chest leaving my SRMs a clear route to his weakened internal structure. Smoke and fire belched out as the Katana reeled back and tumbled to the ground.

One opponent down. I pushed 'Justice' forward to engage at close range. The odds had finally swung to my favor after a long game of hide and seek. I'd never expected to get this far; from the beginning it had been "slow them down, maybe help will arrive in time." Now with the Katana down, gyro shattered and engine redlining, I began to have the giddy feeling that I might just win over all of them.

You know, it's funny how a PPC and a brace of lasers can

dismiss even the brightest hopes in a thunder of sound and destruction. The Battlemaster had opened up pounding me with his weapons, as I walked towards him. I cut loose my autocannon and SRMs in response. Autocannon shells ripped into the Battlemaster's chest, ripping away valuable armor from the damaged torso. My SRMs were rocketing in dead on when they fell victim to a piece of Star League technology.

The Battlemaster's left arm came up spitting out a cloud of small caliber bullets. Six missiles exploded under the anti-missile fire; another four were thrown off course by their explosions. Only two survived to chip away some of his chest armor. I was flat out stunned as I watched my attack blunted by this new piece of gadgetry. I decided that 'up close and personal' was the best approach to this duel. Pushing 'Justice' into a charge, I closed in on the Battlemaster's high ground position. But it quickly became readily apparent the Kuritan pilot was not interested in the 'personal' approach. All the Battlemaster's weapons opened up on my charging 'Mech. I dodged the PPC, but the remaining weapons slagged the better part of 'Justice's remaining chest armor. The red warning lights illuminated my cockpit with an eerie red glow, and I received proof positive that I was running on sheer luck. The weapons status board was informing me that my rear torso lasers had been knocked out by the last frontal attack!

Praying that 'Justice' would hold together a few seconds more, I fired off a counter-attack. That damned anti-missile system shot down three more missiles and knocked five off course, but the autocannon drove in, sending up a cloud of titanium bone fragments as it hit the damaged left leg. The Battlemaster wobbled as I closed in. Planting one foot, I reached out and grabbed the damaged leg and hauled back on the controls. I stepped back, pulling the 'Mech from its feet and dragging it down the hill. The Battlemaster slid down the hill into an inglorious heap at 'Justice's feet. Risking shutdown, I spiked my heat well into the red as I fired all remaining weapons into the ravaged chest of the Battlemaster. Armor vaporized and shielding cracked as my weapons dealt a fatal blow to my enemy.

I thought it was over, I really did, but the Battlemaster pilot didn't agree. He still had the ability to fight and he was a Kuritan warrior. The Battlemaster rose up on its left arm and fired off its PPC. The beam jumped out, pumping particle energy into 'Justice's weakened left leg. My leg suddenly gave way, sending 'Justice' toppling forward. I threw 'Justice's arm out to break the fall and hit the chest of the Battlemaster, crushing the lower cockpit section.

Now it was over: 'Justice's fall had destroyed the Battlemaster's controls and knocked the pilot and his commander unconscious. I pulled 'Justice' back, shut down the weapons systems before the overrides took over, and waited for help to arrive. It was two hours before recon

spotted me and sent in a rescue team.

When the rescue team arrived I was still riding high on adrenalin.

The Techs filled me in on the big picture while I was climbing out of 'Justice'. The medics patched me up and I started to relax, putting the battle into perspective for my report. It wasn't until I was climbing into the Evac VTOL that the last piece dropped into place like a falling star, and realization dawned on me. Lieutenant Ackerman had the only operational Zeus in the unit! Yet the Techs told me that he and the rest of the lance had been rescuing 1st and 2nd Battalion's command 20 kilometers from where I'd been fighting the assault lance. There was no way his 'Mech could have been the one I saw on that ridge. Nor could his voice been the one that warned me. My rational excuses and answers fell apart as my base assumption was proven false.

Still full of adrenalin, I found myself charging up on the ridge, the VTOL pilot behind me shaking his head in confusion. I needed answers and the ridge was the only place to find them. I needed facts, real evidence to back up my report. What I found was... a ghost. The answer was in the hole Justice had made climbing the ridge. It hadn't been a stone ledge where my hand had caught and clung during the avalanche. It had been the chin of what was left of a Zeus BattleMech. Stamped into that chin was a small insignia of the 25th Heavy Assault Company, the First Succession War's 'Fighting 25th'. It had defended this planet three hundred years ago, giving its life so that other units could escape. This Zeus had been piloted by the commander of the 25th, Hauptman Fritz Rooney.

It was hard for me to believe but the facts (or lack thereof) were there. There was no other Zeus, friend or enemy, within twenty five clicks! Had I been saved by the ghost of the famous Fighting 25th?

Of course the officers at command had a number of logical reason for what happened. The favorite explanation was that I'd been suffering from the borderline insanity of battle fatigue. Everyone with any kind of authority agreed I was a hero, but they also agreed I was whacko, certifiable. But with my buddies below command status, it was another story. They proved it to me the day the shrinks let me rejoin my unit. I walked into the Mechbay to the cheers of every Mechwarrior and tech in the unit. Behind them was my 'Mech, no longer a 'Sword of Justice'. They'd painted him a ghostly gray with menacing black accents. Across each shoulder his new name was written as 'Ghost of The 25th', and to this day I still pilot Ghost.

You know I've always thought it ironic. I defeated the 'Ghost of the Dragon' with the help of a ghost.

**If your unit  
has recently acquired  
salvaged parts...  
We Pay Top Price!!  
If you need those  
Hard to Find Parts,  
remember us!  
If you need to  
Upgrade  
old equipment or buy new,  
We Can Help.  
We're  
BattleTechnic  
Military Salvage  
The Warrior's Friend!!**

About the Author: Jason Neville graduated from the Nagelring in 3027. He served with the Tenth Lyran Guard during the Fourth Succession war. He continued to serve in the AFFC until 3040, when he was transferred to a low prestige unit and given the rank of Lieutenant.

He has served in the 24th Arcturan with distinction, receiving numerous commendations, but no promotions. At the time of this writing he was due to be transferred to a front line regiment. It is hoped that the FC military has finally seen the true measure of Lieutenant Neville and will give him a chance to prove his loyalty and skill. His psych evaluations have been universally good; it is no crime to be a hero, after all. 'Ghost of the 25th' is still in perfect condition. It will be accompanying Lieutenant Neville to his new assignment.



# The Liao Protocol

I fall back into the seat of the train. It has been a long job. It's over, though. Now I can go home and see Lidia and Tormax. I haven't seen them in four years. I think over the years away: the militia duty which led to the commission to paint the murals for the homeworld of House Imarra, depicting the prowess of the Warrior House against its enemies. I look around the car. People are getting off work and going home to their loved ones. Just like I'm finally doing. I spot a paper on the seat across from me. The headlines proclaim that the Chancellor is wary of the formation of the Free Republic of Rasalhague. She says it is either a setup by the Fox or a judgement on the Lyran Commonwealth for allying with Hanse Davion. I pick up the paper to read the story.

Soon I get to my station. I stop in the restroom to make sure everything is just right. Taking out a comb, I brush back the lock of hair that always annoys me. Staring back at me is a grey-eyed short man with lean dexterous hands; usually I feel ready for whatever happens. Now I hope I still look familiar to Lidia and Tormax. Four years is a long portion of my young son's life.

I walk toward the house. Nothing has changed in the neighborhood. It's a twenty minute walk from the station to the house. And there it is; a two story wooden structure, white with blue trim, bedrooms on the top level, the rest of the living quarters on the ground level. It had been Lidia's parents' house, but they gave it to us as a wedding present. I notice the car is not in the driveway. She must be staying late at the university, I think, disappointed.

I unlock the front door and enter madness. The living room has been destroyed. Not even the couch is standing. The vidscreen has been smashed in; the stuffing of the furniture covers the room like snow. I go over to the fireplace and move the center scroll in the mantel design. The hidden panel opens. They didn't find the autopistol and the dagger there, my legacy from the fifteenth Dracons. I slip the dagger into my boot, then continue my examination of the house. I examine the rooms carefully. Whoever destroyed my house was looking for something. The damage is too well organized to be a random ransacking.

I get to Tormax's room. Opening the door, I find everything in perfect order, untouched. The connecting

bathroom door opens. A young man steps out and looks at me with fear in his eyes. I recognized him from his pictures.

"Tormax, what has happened? Are you all right?" The words tumble out of my mouth in a jumble. I run over to hug him. He is shaking like a leaf, his brown face turning white. "Has somebody hurt you, son?"

"Move away from the boy, Traitor!" A menacing voice grates from behind me. I slowly let go of my son. Turning slowly, I see a man dressed in a green overcoat. He has one hand inside his coat, a tall man wearing mirrored sunglasses. "Tormax is a most loyal citizen to the Confederation. He found evidence yesterday of the cabal you lead, Mister Ling. He sent it to us as a good Monitor should. Just an hour ago we arrested your wife and sent her to the indoctrination center."

My son shrinks away from me. I look at him. It is strange; I have always been a good citizen. As fear curdles my stomach for Lidia, I still feel honor in Tormax's initiation into the ranks of the dedicated. I look back at the Maskirova agent. "What mistake is this? I do not know anything about a Cabal!"

"Then why do you have a gun, Mr Ling? Drop the pistol, now!" I realize that no matter what I say, I am about to die. As I lift the gun, he pulls a small submachinegun from under his coat. My shot gets off first: the bullet pierces his heart. His hand twitches on the trigger, sending bullets across the room. I knock my son down, out of the way of the bullets. I look at my son again.

"I am sorry, Tormax. I hope you do well." I leave him gaping at me, charging down the stairs, taking them two at a time. I hear sirens off in the distance. I run in a random direction, seeking shadows in the falling dusk.

An hour later, I enter a bar close to the spaceport, collar up to cover my face as best as possible. I wonder what the hell I'm going to do next. The newsvid is playing at one end of the room. My picture flashes across the screen. "This man is wanted for murder of loyal citizens. He is armed and considered dangerous. He is a traitor to the people. If he is seen, report his location to the nearest police station. In other news, the rumored invasion of Trelwan has thrown the Fox's son into the war zones. The Chancellor..."

The bar is empty except for the bartender. I go over to



the bar. The bartender looks at me and his eyes widen. "Um, what can I get you, sir?"

"A wanderer's special." I only hoped that the rumor I'd picked up on the DropShip was true.

"Certainly, sir. So what do you do for a living?" He asks carefully.

"I am a travelling man." I reply hollowly.

"That must be a lonely lifestyle."

"No man is truly alone, even when travelling."

He hands me the drink. He looks back at the vidscreen. "Maybe you should get out of here; the DropShip crews will be coming in a couple of minutes. Use the back door." I nod to him and move in the direction he indicates.

I step out into the alleyway and turn left. I take about two steps, when I hear the hiss of an air gun and feel a sharp pain in my back. Everything goes black as I fall to the ground.

I awake feeling a great pressure pushing me into a prickly substance. As I become more aware of the surroundings, I hear the sounds of engines in the distance. I am in complete darkness. Some sort of air mask covers my face. I move my arms. Whatever I am in surrounds me. Feeling claustrophobic, I claw my way through the stuff. After a short time, light penetrates the material. Shoving my head through the opening, I realized that my captors have put me within the inner asbestos lining of a BattleMech cocoon. I pull off the mask slowly as my eyes adjust to the light.

"Welcome, Mister Ling!" a warm voice declares. I look at a tall caucasian woman dressed in a DropShip uniform. She speaks with a Davion accent. She's holding a laser pistol on me.

"Where am I?" I reply cautiously.

"You're on a DropShip leaving Sian. You have been unconscious for three days; we feared that you might have been accidentally er..damaged."

"Thank you. May I get out of this hot scratchy stuff right now?" She nods her head. I continue to dig myself out of the asbestos.

"So what is it you did to become an enemy of the state, Mr Ling?" The woman is holding a laser pistol on me, motioning me to sit on a crate near the cocoon.

"My son declared me to the Maskirova as a leader in some group known as The Cabal. When a Maskirova agent confronted me, I knew it didn't matter what I said; I was condemned already in his eyes. He started to pull a gun on me, so I killed him.

"I look for her reaction. She looks at me and takes a few minutes to think about what I've said, then asks, "Are you the leader of The Cabal?"

"The only thing I've ever joined with that name was a betting pool on which BattleMech was going to be the last one completed in the Capellan Confederation this year. We

set it up fifteen years ago. Several professors at Sian University were part of it; all of them except my wife are already retired."

"We're going to have to check your story out. We've set up a room just for you." She motions to someone behind me, and the barrel of a gun is shoved against my lower spine.

"Follow me, please." She turns and walks through a door. I slowly get up and follow her. The gun stays firmly planted in my back. Whoever is behind me needs to cut down on the garlic, I think to myself. We walk down the corridor and stop in front of a door.

"This will be your home until we get to our destination." She opens the door and I step into a small cabin with a fold down bunk, a chair, and a washbasin. Another door leads to a null gravity shower. "There will be two guards on this door for twenty four hours a day. Have a nice trip."

The days go by uneventfully, except for my anguish over Lidia's fate. We get to a JumpShip and leave the system. Another eight days go by, and we Jump again. The DropShip leaves the JumpShip and takes four days to reach the planet.

The door opens.

"Now, Mr Ling, it is time for us to speak." It is a small man with a Davion accent. "I have your record here. You grew up in the mercenary unit known as the Fifteenth Dracon. You were born in Capellan space, so were eligible for citizenship. You were inducted into the Artist class because of a sculpture you did of Maximilian Liao's BattleMech treading upon the Davion flag. You served in the Fifteenth Dracon as a MechWarrior during the 3029 War, and for a couple of years after that. You met Lidia St Clair and quit the Dracon to marry her a year later. Is that correct?"

"Yes, all of that is correct. I spent the next year with Lidia at Sian University. That was where we met the others and came up with the Cabal bet. We looked at it like the game *Counterspy*; we never thought it would be taken seriously. Hell, I had forgotten about it myself."

"A year later, your son was born. You didn't spend much time at home with him, did you?"

"No. I was given a series of commissions with the Warrior Houses, and then I had to do my militia duty with their allied unit as well. I have only seen him...maybe for one full year of days out of his fourteen years. I didn't even know that he'd been made a monitor."

"How reliable is this Cabal data of yours?"

"Some of the best minds of the Capellan Confederation obtained this information!" I reply testily.

"If your life was so blameless, how did you come across the information to contact us?"

"The intelligence people at House Imarra had mentioned that bar as a possible gathering place for undesirables. I took a chance that they were right. Obvious, it was."



"You might have mentioned that before. We'll get word to the owner somehow. But, more important, what were the results of The Cabal's analysis?"

"Why should I tell you?" I reply angrily.

"You came to us. You are the one who will be killed if you don't give us the information. Finally, your son is a dedicated monitor who has turned in his parents because of a *bef*. I have to tell you that this has resulted in the execution of fourteen of the brightest minds in the Capellan Confederation. That includes your wife."

I sit back, shocked by his words. My wife is dead. My son will not...my son is dead to me. I've killed a Maskirova agent. There is no going back. I have no reason to be loyal any longer. I make my decision.

"For some reason, you want this information. It's all I have to trade. What do I get in return for it?"

"The resistance will get you out of Liao space. And if you're willing to put your skills to use, both as a MechWarrior and as an artist, Candace Liao will offer you the protection of St Ives."

"I guess I must trust you to keep the bargain. On December fifteenth, on the planet Ares, a Raven BattleMech will be ready for action. As of the end of this week, it will need only a single laser connected and ammunition loaded into its ammo bay."

"I know from your file that you have piloted a Raven. We don't have anyone else who has experience in that 'Mech. What do you say?"

A number of possible answers run through my mind. They want me to prove my loyalty. What choice have I? "Very well," I reply dejectedly.

Over the next three days, the Davion man gathers his resources. He does not speak to me once about his plans. Equipment and weapons come to the DropShip. I am allowed to wander the ship, with an armed escort. By the layout, I can now ascertain that it is a Mule class DropShip. On the third day, thirty huge containers come on board, along with some martial looking 'additional crew members'.

The Davion man comes back with two new men. I am sitting in the briefing room waiting for him. "Mr Ling, these two men are going to be leading the operation. The man to my right is Lieutenant Richards. He will be leading the infantry team. And this is Sean Jerico. He will be aiding in the retrieval of the property in question."

"What is the plan?" I ask tiredly.

"It's a simple one. I have a group of resistance members who've been trained in Jump Infantry tactics. They'll be dressed in Federated Commonwealth combat camo,

keeping trouble away from you and Jericho and Michael O'Connor while you're getting the 'Mech ready. Those who survive will go to ground on Ares and wait for further instructions. You will pilot the 'Mech with Jerico as your passenger. Move to this location on the map, where we'll have a Steiner Mark VII landing Craft waiting for you. Board this shuttle and get off Ares as soon as possible. A JumpShip will be waiting to take you to St Ives. Any other questions?

"How do you know that ship will be there?"

"In these containers that were just brought on board are the pieces to the craft. The DropShip pilot and an engineer will be on board to pilot it. The Mule will have to be left behind. Anything else? Then get to work"

The DropShip takes off half an hour later. The infantrymen and DropShip crew begin to assemble the landing craft. The only people who are not involved in the project are myself and Sean Jerico. We reach the JumpShip and make

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## They want me to prove my loyalty. What choice do I have?

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the Jump to Ares. The announcement comes that we have five days before we reach planet. And the work speed up. One day out from Ares, I get the nerve up to talk to my partner.

I meet him in the briefing room. He is of medium build and obviously in excellent shape. He has this intensity about him that is hard to explain. It is like he is ready to take on the entire universe, with a fair chance of winning. Each move he makes is economical; no motion is wasted.

"Sean, what are you doing on this mission?" I ask carefully.

"For the money." is his noncommittal reply. "It's simple. I am a mercenary. If someone pays me to do a job, I do it. I've been paid to help steal a BattleMech from a 'Mech factory. I'm going to do it.

"How did you get into this business?"

"It's a personal story, goes a long way back. Excuse me, I'm trying to get ready."

I go back to my bunk. There is a knock at the door. It opens to reveal Lt Richards.

"I have brought you your gear for tomorrow, Mr Ling." He hands me a cooling vest, a neurohelmet, a jumpsuit, and my own gun and dagger. "I will not allow anyone to go into a fight unarmed. Besides, I do not trust Mr Jerico."

"Just like you do not trust me." I say flatly. He looks at me and grins. "When do I get the ammo for the gun?"

"Just before we go in." He exits the room.

I turn on the viewer and look in on the cargo bay. They are putting on the ramp to the Mark VII. After twenty minutes, they complete it.

The Mule arrives safely at the planet. The team begins to get ready. Everyone is prepared, so we move out as night falls. By midnight we get to the perimeter of the BattleMech factory. The finishing section for their 'Mechs is at the north end. The only defense the factory has seems to be infantry. Our jump infantry platoon goes across the wall. Laser fire opens up, and the fire fight begins. Jerico, O'Connor the tech, and I go over the wall. Under the suppression fire Squad Two provides, we make it to the entrance of the finishing area.

Jerico pulls out a laser pistol and cuts a hole into the main door. O'Connor sprints to the Raven and climbs up its leg like a monkey. Before I have reached its feet, he is attaching that last laser.

"Okay, Ling," says Jerico. "Here are two clips for your gun. Cover this opening as if your life depended upon it. It does." I don't reply to Jerico. I load the pistol, screw on the silencer, and chamber the first round. I sit watching the darkness. The occasional flash of lasers betrays various encounters. I keep my eyes and ears open, straining to see anyone coming at me. Occasionally, there is a muffled curse from O'Connor. He comes over to me after about thirty minutes. "In this model, the ammo still goes in the rear left torso, right?"

I nod, motioning to silence. A door creaks open. I move toward the sound. A guard is silhouetted by the door. He leaves the door open and moves toward the ammunition storage area. I follow him with the sights of my gun. A sudden movement catches both my attention and his. The guard fires his laser, and O'Connor falls to the ground. I fire at the guard, and he drops silently. I move over to O'Connor. The guard took him right in the heart.

"What happened?" comes Jerico's voice from the 'Mech.

"A guard came in and killed O'Connor. We've still





got to load those missiles. How soon will you be done?"

"Records give two possible combinations. Let's load that ammo."

He slides down the 'Mech and I meet him at the base. We run over to the ammo stores and get a forklift to move the ammunition case to the 'Mech. Jerico maneuvers the forklift to the 'Mech, and we load up the ammo. As soon as we are done, we climb to the cockpit.

"Here are two possible combinations. The first is to stretch your right arm in front of you, then turn on the weapons in this order: laser, short range missile launcher, laser, ECM suite. Then turn them off in the reverse order. The second combination is to place your right hand on your neurohelmet and say 'Death and dishonor will never befall this BattleMech.' Your choice, Ling."

I settle into the pilot's seat as Jerico straps into the jumpseat behind me and closes the hatch. A group of Liao infantrymen enter through the hole which was our doorway. They spread out to search for intruders. I put on the neurohelmet, place my right hand on it, and say "Death and dishonor will never befall this BattleMech."

The systems begin powering up. I push the cold start button to get the 'Mech going. Turning on the weapons systems, I have green lights. I begins to move and open fire on the bay door. This model of the Raven moves much faster than I realized. Shooting through the wall, I send a communique to the DropShip. We begin moving toward the pickup point. At this point I turn on the ECM suite.

Halfway to the pickup point I run across 'Mech defenders: a pair of Locusts. Using the image enhancement, I see their markings. They're from the Fifteenth Dracon.

"You are going to have to stop them." Jerico says quietly.

"This is my old unit. I fought side by side with them. I can't fire on them!"

"They are the enemy now. They will not refrain from killing you. In this 'Mech, with its ECM suite, you can get the drop on them. You've got to do this."

I stop a moment more. If I fire, I will truly have cut off all my ties to the Capellan Confederation. There will be no turning back. "Okay, I will."

I move through the trees, getting behind the two Locusts. Slowly I move up on their positions. They are staying about sixty meters apart. I open up on the further one. It freezes completely in place. The other Locust wheels about, firing off three lasers. One laser bolt cuts across the Raven's left leg. The Locust back-pedals into a copse of heavy trees. I stay right with the 'Mech. My laser fire cuts down the trees, while the short range missiles strike the Locust's birdlike legs. The Locust slides out of the copse and charges toward me. I dodge out of the way. The other pilot is faster and charges right into the rear of the Raven. I flip the arms of the 'Mech and fire at the Locust. It explodes

as I move at top speed away from the combat scene. Ten minutes later we get to the pickup point where the landing craft is waiting. I charge up the ramp and the Mark VII take off before the ramp is secured.

As soon as we take off, we secure the Raven in its makeshift bay, Jerico and I working as a team. As soon as that's done, I bandage the head wound he received while crammed in the back of a running 'Mech's cockpit.

"Good work, Ling."

"Thanks, Jerico. Next time you want to ride with someone, make sure it is a BattleMaster, so you don't get cut up as bad!"

The pilot keeps the landing craft at two g's the entire way to the Jump Point. We connect with a Scout JumpShip which jumps directly to St Ives. We leave the JumpShip and head to the planet. During the entire trip, Jerico and I talk about 'Mechs and combat techniques. Only once does the conversation get at all personal.

"You asked how I started as a mercenary?" He looks at me very carefully, like a cat sizing up his prey. "Have you ever heard of the Bloody Dawn?" I shake my head negatively. "My father began it. I grew up among some of the meanest and deadliest people in the Inner Sphere. He only hired the most dangerous people to work for him. He kept them in line by having one punishment for any crime committed. Death. He had my own mother killed for disobeying an order. I did love Louise, my mom. I realized that the only way to survive was by being strong. I got away from him as soon as I could. So I use the skills I learned from him, my only skills, to make a living in this world."

*Fathers and sons, I think. How we fail one another.*

We quickly change the subject.

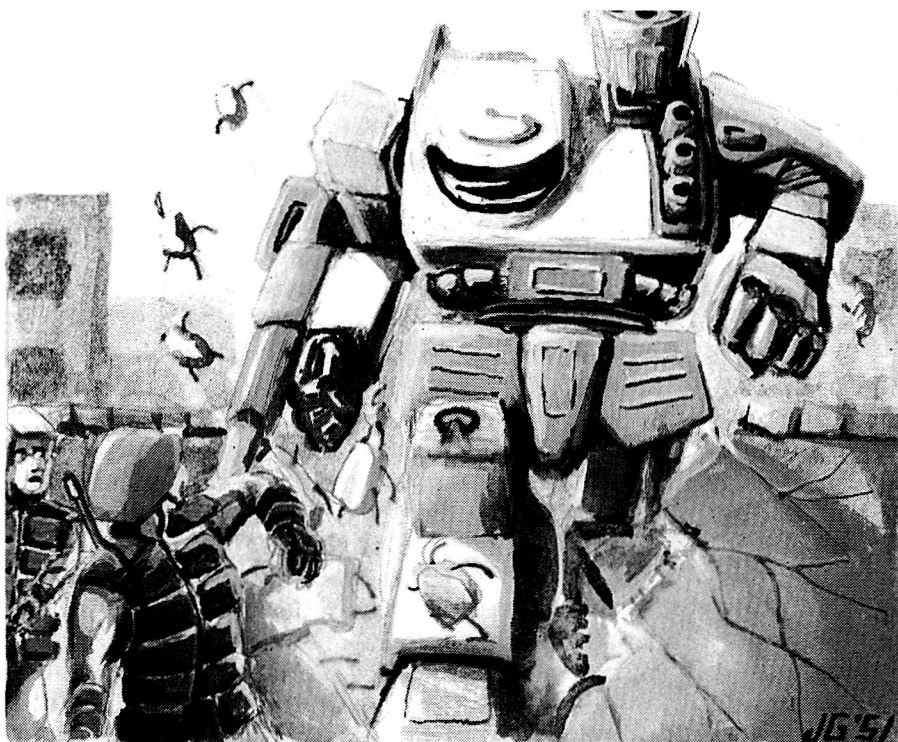
I get lucky. The Duchess fancies herself a patron of the arts. My work is known outside of the Capellan Confederation, much to my surprise. I receive an interest-free loan to set up my studio. In a brief interview with the Duchess, I tell her that I have never been comfortable with taking life.

She answers "I would like to use your artistic talents to give heart to the people under my sister's oppressive reign. Are we agreed?"

I thank her as best I can. I make my bows and leave the palace. To go to the work of my choice. To make a new life for myself.

# The Gold Rush

by Captain David P Kronar as told to Lisa Troman



I'll be the first one to admit it; I'd let the booze go to my head that night. There I was, a fresh faced twenty-two year old mercenary with brand new MechWarrior Lieutenant's bars pinned to my uniform, swapping mostly true boasts of daring deeds on and off the battlefield with a like minded group of fellow 'Mech pilots. Well on my way toward getting totally smashed, I was your average young hot-shot, obnoxious as hell, and willing to tell the whole galaxy about it.

It was a mid-winter's afternoon in Galatea Port, and one of the few days of the year that the city's arid climate remained nearly pleasant all day long. Even the ever-present ceiling fans remained motionless in the cool dark ceiling of the brick and stucco bar called The Hiring Hall.

It was not a real hiring hall, of course, just one of hundreds of similar buildings with similar sounding names that catered to the warriors that flocked to the planet known as the Mercenary's Star.

Back then, before the Wolf's Dragoons set up shop on Outreach and began to mediate outsider merc contracts, Galatea was the undisputed capitol of mercenary hiring and outfitting. And, just like millions before me, I set out with dreams of wealth and glory, dragging along an ancient COM-2D Com-mando that was more spare parts than fighting vehicle.

But, as it is said, Lady Luck smiles upon the brave and the foolish. I beat the odds, and with just five years in the Skye Rangers under my belt, I picked up a long term slot as a fire lance commander in the Blackhearts mercenary regiment. In trade for my light 'Mech, I would be piloting one of the unit's — a 60-ton Rifleman.

So I sat at this bar, drinking to my good fortune, and recounting the slightly exaggerated story of my old unit's brief conflict with a ComStar military unit that had refused to let us pass through their territory during some operation or other. I was proudly — and probably a bit too loudly — describing how I had expertly placed a kick directly onto the drive sprocket of a Com Guard Pike support vehicle, crippling the tank; when a gruff voice rumbled to my right,

"Son, you'd best watch your step around ComStar."

Sitting outside the circle of listeners was Old McFlannery. Not that he was that old, no more than forty or so, but his gray eyes had the look of someone who had seen the bitter side of war one too many times. I had seen him in this and a few other local bars a few times in the three weeks I had been on planet, but I had never really spoken to him.

"There's more to them than meets the eye, and their reach is longer than you'd think."

"Oh yeah, like how?" I said, rather miffed that he had interrupted my heroic yarn.

He set his drink down slowly on the scarred bar in the



way old warriors do just before imparting a bit of knowledge. Inexplicably, for the first time in my life I actually had the wisdom to shut up and listen to someone far wiser than I — or maybe it was the Galatea Gut Rot that was getting to me.

"Between the Fourth Succession War and the '39 campaign, the Fed Com hired on a bunch of independent merc companies. The contracts called for the groups to be turned loose on a section of an enemy's border with a minimum of interference from house liason officers. The raids were usually conducted to capture small amounts of loots or simply to annoy the garrisons. Yours truly's outfit was assigned to hit Altair V.

The Altair system had been fought over innumerable times since the days of the Terran Alliance. All five of the Successor Houses had invaded or raided it at least once, two of them holding it at least a year or more. Kurita had owned the place for the balance of the time. The planet's defenders were old hands at the raiding game.

"What made the system such a pain to defend also made attacking it a dicey proposition. Its star is extremely unstable; during its more common tantrums it throws the planet's comm systems and deep radar into a snarl, effectively blinding the defenders.

The Dracos solved the problem by parking a few of their largest DropShips in picket lines out past the normal orbital zones. Whenever a ship arrives, it is boarded and searched before being allowed to proceed to the planet. If the ship refuses or tries to bolt, the warship's usual response is to destroy its target — then ask questions. All arrivals received this attention, all except ComStar, that is.

Due to ComStar's neutral reputation, their ships were allowed to pass on to the planet with only a hard eyeballing from an aerospace fighter. The ships were usually freighters, bringing supplies or equipment for the hyperpulse generator, which just happened to have its own DropShip landing pad, conveniently within a kilometer of the planet's main gold depository. We also knew that ComStar was starting to deploy 'Mechs to garrison its communications facilities at about this time: why, only ComStar knows. But we saw this as our golden opportunity.

So: we borrowed a Mule Class DropShip and ComStar's IFF codes from the MIIO, and concocted a scheme to get in and out with the gold. The plan was to paint our DropShip and our 'Mechs with Com Guard's white, and to fake their markings. Then we'd fake our way past the defending ships during a solar storm. Unable to contact the planet, or even to speak with us, the warships would have to let us past. Once we'd grounded, the company would race across the landing field, storm the warehouses, and scatter what intel said

were a couple of infantry platoons and a few light armored vehicles. We'd load up the gold, hot-foot it back to the ship, and boost before the garrison knew anything was up. With the interference, the picket ships wouldn't be able to mount an effective defense in time to prevent us from joining the recharged JumpShip and leaving the system with the booty.

The plan came together well. Our machines looked convincingly like a ComStar unit, albeit with inferior equipment. We jumped insystem and began the burn to intercept Altair as it orbited about its violent sun. Later, the inspection party showed up, as expected. The lethal arrowhead shapes of a pair of Slayers gave us the once-over. Our prominent ComStar markings painted on the flanks of our DropShip revealed nothing wrong, so the fighters peeled off and returned to their carrier. We continued on, traveling at a leisurely 1G just as any innocent freighter should.

Approaching planetfall, we mounted up in the cargo hold and cleared most of the tie-downs from our white 'Mechs. The aerospace patrol didn't even bother to challenge us as the ship backed down into the planet's atmosphere.

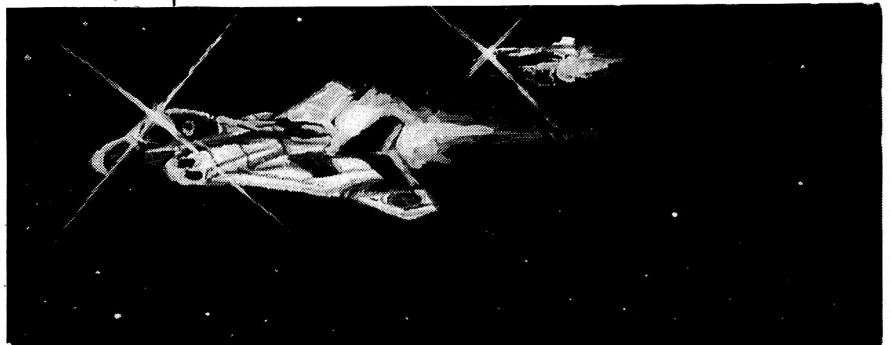
As we touched down on the ferrocrete tarmac, the DropShip's huge bay doors slowly rolled open as techs released the last of the magnetic restraints from our BattleMechs. Strapped into the cockpit of my Thunderbolt, I trotted down the ramp and surveyed the landing zone. The HPG building with its massive antenna dominated the north and our target could be seen to the south, a row of tall metal buildings painted to match the rest of the city.

As the rest of the company's 'Mechs disembarked, a hover car from the ComStar facility approached, undoubtedly very much surprised by our uninvited landing.

I fired my large laser in their general directions; the beam blasted a crater in the landing field. The hovercar took the hint, spun around, and sped back in a cloud of dust.

Running over the perimeter fence and around what were probably office buildings built with a native red stone, we came upon the fortified depository wall. At five meters tall, it could probably have kept a light 'Mech out, but my T-bolt simply ran through it in a cloud of ferrocrete chunks.

On the other side of the wall, a group of brown uni-



formed infantry stood in ranks next to a blue armored personnel carrier. The sight of a Thunderbolt leading a heavy 'Mech company, all with ComGuards stars painted on left shin and shoulder, must have been an awful shock as most of them just stood there slack jawed and goggle eyed. They only scattered when a JagerMech kicked their APC over on its side.

With the defenders gone, we tore down the sheet metal walls of the warehouses. Inside each building were hundreds of crates, each containing a ton or more of gold ingots. We loaded the cargo nets slung on each other's backs and carried as many as possible with our arms. Occasionally a group of brave infantry or an APC would attempt to engage a 'Mech preoccupied with loading the loot. One or two salvos would usually be enough to send them scurrying again.

Only twenty minutes after landing on Altair, we were lumbering back to the landing zone. Just as we cleared the last of the red offices, a flash of lighting burned past my 'Mech's right arm!

The shot hit my lancemate's Hatchetman full in the back, striking an ingot crate. Megajoules of energy vaporized the soft metal, exploding it outward. Molten gold splattered out across the ground and the nearby buildings. As the skinny BattleMech recovered its balance, its entire backed was plated with an expensive new paint job!

At first, I thought someone had fumbled with their controls and triggered the weapon by accident, but the cry of : "Enemy to the rear!" fixed that.

Turning about to face the threat, I counted a short lance of hostile 'Mechs. Of the three, I could only ID one, a 70 ton Warhammer; the rest looked like strange, starving Marauders.

After the mission I dug through some old tech readouts and learned that they were an old Star League type called the Crab. Their paint and markings were identical to ours. The real ComGuards had shown up!

Dropping the crates cradled in my 'Mech's arm, I fired my lasers on one of the Crabs. The hits scored its legs but didn't slow it any.

I ordered my scout lance to fall back to the DropShip, and the fire lance to lay down covering fire as the company



fell back to the LZ. The combined fire from an Archer and the JagerMech staggered the Warhammer, blasting its right arm off at the shoulder.

As the light 'Mechs of the scout lance moved out across the landing field, they started to take fire from the right. Another group of heavy Com Guards 'Mechs had tried to cut us off from our transport, but they couldn't get into position in time.

Even through the scout lance was taking a beating (I remember a Stinger waddling up to the DropShip with both its arms missing) it was obvious that their plan of 'capping our T' was ruined by the premature engagement with the flanking lance. Why they failed in so simple a maneuver, I can only attribute to the ComGuards' lack of experience with combat maneuvers.

As it was, we easily outran both units to make it to the LZ. Most of the exchanged shots missed after that, but as my Thunderbolt climbed the ramp into the hold, I triggered my big laser one last time. The beam hit one of the 'Guards' Crab's compound legs, severing the limb, and tumbled the 'Mech onto its back.

After that, it was easy. The DropShips own weapons held off the remaining enemy 'Mechs as we blasted off the tarmac. There must have been quite a bit of confusion in our wake, as it took them nearly an hour to launch another ship in pursuit. Three days later we made a hasty dock and jump that left the Combine flat-footed.

The raid netted us about twenty million C-bills worth of the yellow metal, with no losses to us." He finished, and downed the last of his drink.

"So you won?" I asked.

"Yeah, we won, all right; thought we'd get away with it, too, for awhile. But it seems ComStar objects to the unscheduled use of their landing facilities, and our little game of charades made relations between the local military commander and the Order a tad bit chilly.

What most people don't realize is that with is control over the communications equipment that links the interstellar empires of the Inner Sphere, ComStar has tremendous, if subtle power. Maybe even more than one of the Great Houses, I don't know, but from what I've seen I dare say they do.



At first we had trouble with supplies and transport, then the FedCom people refused to negotiate a new contract. A run of bad luck you say? No, we were blacklisted, something you never want to happen to you. Agents from any other employers wouldn't even touch us. I had to break up the company so the rest of my people could find work on their own. Then my Thunderbolt had an 'accident'. I've had to work as a freelance Tech on this rock ever since."

I never did see Old McFlannery again, and two days later I boosted for my duty station with the Black hearts, but the aged ex-warrior taught me two things that day that have proven invaluable to me as a mercenary in the Successor States. Always listen to good advice; it's cheaper and less painful than learning firsthand. And always be careful who you make enemies of; you never know how powerful they will be until it's too late.

*Captain Kronar currently commands Bravo Company, Second Battalion, of the Grim Determination mercenary regiment. As a veteran well into his second decade as a merc, David Kronar has seen action under the banners of three of the Successor Lords and has had 23 confirmed kills to his credit.*

*Professor Lisa Troman is an author and historian at the prestigious New Avalon Institute of Science. This article is one of many first hand accounts and anecdotes collected by Prof Troman to be combined into a book detailing military life before the Clan Invasions, to be published by the NAIS publishing house this Spring.*

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### REGIONAL REVIEW COURT, NEW SYRTIS DISTRICT

NOTICE is hereby given that:

MTC, Inc.

and all subsidiaries and divisions of same have been found by the court to be GUILTY of the following violations of Federated Commonwealth law:

Article I Section 1A, ECONOMIC WAR POWERS ACT OF 2802: Trading for the enrichment of an enemy state.

Article II Section 1F, ECONOMIC WAR POWERS ACT OF 2802: Trading for the enrichment of a mercenary organization under contract to an enemy state.

Article II Section 4E, NAIS SECURITY ACT, AMENDED 3030: Unauthorized transfer of classified technology to an enemy state.

Article XXV Section 2C, FEDERATED COMMONWEALTH CODE OF JUSTICE: Securities fraud, failure to disclose ownership.

Article CIX Section 7B, FEDERATED COMMONWEALTH CODE OF JUSTICE: Tax evasion.

LET IT BE FURTHER KNOWN that MTC, Inc., and its subsidiaries and divisions, have been found by the court to be wholly owned by McCarron's Armored Cavalry, a criminal enterprise liable to date for 3.5 billion C-bills in Federated Commonwealth property damage and some 79,000 counts of wrongful death.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE KNOWN that all the holdings of MTC, Inc., its subsidiaries and divisions, within the jurisdiction of the Federated Commonwealth, are hereby declared forfeit by the court. Officers and marshals of the court are hereby empowered to seize without let or hindrance such assets as can be located.

This notice is published simultaneously by all the Regional Review Courts of the Federated Commonwealth in those publications deemed to be of wide circulation and inter-est to the public.

By order of: Justice Samson Kale  
Regional Review Court  
New Syrtis District

# Snake Eyes



"When it's time for your number to come up, it doesn't matter where the dice land." Old Gambler's Proverb

(Taken from the personal diary of Captain Martha K Stanchek, ret.)

Back in '18, I was working with a mercenary company called Force Seven, a mixed regiment under long term contract with House Steiner. Force Seven was a light, mobile unit, mostly 'Mechs under 45 tons, backed by jump infantry, with a few aerospace fighters for cover. We specialized in quick raids and recoveries, and as the Third Succession War was winding down, we saw a lot of action. The Lyrans were trying to keep the Snakes off-balance, and Force Seven was doing a lot of hit-and-run beyond the border into Kurita space. In a ten month period, we averaged at least one action every three and a half weeks. We stayed on the run, trying to stay down-side for no more than a few hours. We kept supplied using parts 'liberated' from Kurita

'Mechs and sent back a steady stream of intel to keep the bosses happy. But even we couldn't maintain that pace. It ended on Dis.

You may not have heard of Dis unless you make a hobby of stellar navigation. Dis is a white dwarf about thirty light years into Kurita space. The system has no habitable planets and marginal metal resources. The system gas giants have lost most of their valuable complex, long-chain compounds due to the star's heavy radiation output. In all, a waste system except that by some quirk of astrophysics, Dis emits a focused spectrum of EM, most of which falls right in the sweet-spot for recharging JumpShip sails. A lot of commerce passes through Dis. And so do a lot of troops.

As '18 was winding down, Force Seven got linked with a number of other Steiner units into a raid on Dis. The brass was looking for intel on troop movements along the border, and wanted to disrupt any incoming attacks. Dis was a



prime target. Our job was to take a data center on an in-system moon that served as the main traffic control. The brass wanted us to retrieve the data core while their naval units dealt with the massive drydocks and ship facilities in orbit near the star. The order of battle called for us to be in-system for only three days, then evac before reinforcements arrived. After this run, we were to be rotated back from the front to refit and relax for at least four months.

Spirits were running high as we headed for our last mission in this string. As always, we found time to unwind between mission briefings, simulation runs, and weapons checks. And, as with armies throughout the centuries, we spent most of our free time talking about the upcoming mission and gambling.

I've always been a dice fan, preferring the feel of the cubes in my hand over cards or electronics. As we were preparing for our final jump to Dis, the three other members of my lance were clustered at the foot of my 'Mech, Steel Goblin, a venerable Phoenix Hawk. Beside myself, the game consisted of my lance mates; Turk, the taciturn Jenner pilot; Tompkins, who piloted a rattletrap Whitworth; and Descarz, who fought in a jet black Clint called Viper. An ever-changing number of personnel from other units drifted through the game, but we formed the nexus. As the dice passed and the C-bills flowed, we discussed the coming battle.

Turk said little, but that wasn't a surprise. Tompkins thought this might be our chance to break into the big league, get an offer from one of the bigger units. I withheld judgement. Descarz said it didn't matter. We were warriors, meant to fight and die whenever and wherever fate decreed. As she picked up the dice for her next throw, she paused to stare at the hard impact plastic and said, "If only these could show our fate, then at least we'd know."

She rattled them in her fist and threw out across the rectangle of worn green felt, my 'Mech towering above her like the image of some god hewn from blue-grey metal. After the dice spun, a single spot showed on each cube.

"Snake eyes," someone said.

At that moment, the warning klaxon went off and we had to scramble for our 'Mechs. The transport was jumping in-system to Dis, putting us only three hours of heavy burn from our target. Orders were for Force Seven to spend the transit time in our 'Mechs, ready to unload once we hit dirt side. As we webbed in, I kept thinking about those dice, bouncing off of Goblin's foot and stopping on the green cloth.

We jumped into a hornets' nest. Over a dozen Kurita war ships were in-system as we arrived. A blind mud-dog could have seen that a major invasion was forming, and we should cut and run instantly, coming back with a heavier force of our own. But the commander of the operation said 'Go', so go we did, and spent hours under heavy-G accel-

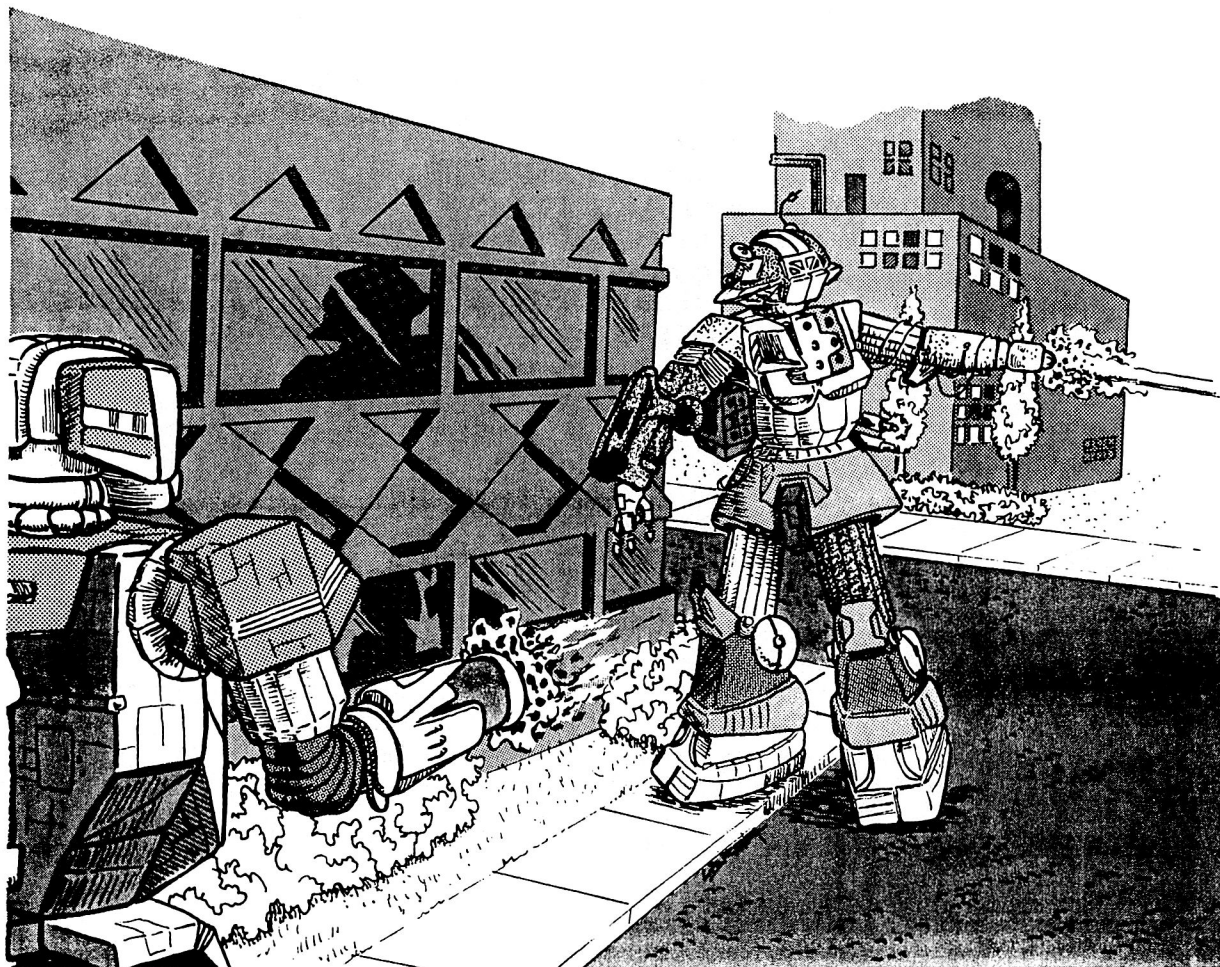
eration to reach our target. When we did, we ran into our own personal hell.

We were outnumbered two to one, by heavier machines. Tompkins' Whitworth bought it within minutes of landing. I called for an evacuation moments later. It was time to get out, no matter what fate decreed. Descarz and I wound up covering the retreat, her Viper and the Steel Goblin pouring volleys of fire into the oncoming Kurita units while our team-mates rushed for the DropShips. With only four minutes to spare, we ran for the last DropShip, trying to cover our own retreat until we got under the ship's guns.

It happened in the last hundred meters. I'd just let fly with a full barrage from behind a twisted rock formation, and confirmed that Descarz was ready to head for cover. We were going to jump for it, trying to land as close to the cargo hatch as we could. Flashing lights marked safety, blazing through the clouds of blowing dust and ammonia wind. The ground vibrated with the hum of the revving DropShip engines; we were the last. I saw the indicators on my command screen burn green, showing Goblin's jets ready to go. Then a stab of red light caught Descarz in the face. I saw her stagger, a jet of white vapor exploding from the hole burned in the right screen of Viper's head. We were all on supplied air, so I knew she wouldn't die from the atmosphere, but by the angle, I felt sure the laser bolt must have burned right through her chair. But Viper was still moving so I slipped Goblin's left arm around the wounded 'Mech and staggered for the DropShip, firing wildly with my heavy laser to keep the Snakes at bay. We made it into the DropShip and instantly were slammed by the pull of acceleration as the ship clawed its way free of the killing ground. I was screaming over the comlink to get an emergency medtech and salvage crew down to help pull a pilot out of a damaged cockpit; but of course, we couldn't do anything for hours. The Lyrans were in full retreat across the system, and if we didn't make our JumpShip in time, we'd be left behind.

We made it, and as soon as we dropped from full-burn, I was out of my 'Mech. I blew the emergency bolts on Descarz's cockpit. The stench of fused metal and scorched flesh greeted me. Coughing, I pulled her out. She was still alive, though all of her exposed skin was flash burned. Once she was in the hands of the medtechs, I went back to look at Viper's cockpit.

Sometimes, you'll hear someone say, "It's a miracle they survived." Well, I've seen the real thing. The interior of the cockpit was painted with globs of armored glass, sprayed when the laser burned through the view port. The bolt had hit the command couch, slugging the lower right third of the entire structure before pitting the back of the head armor. Descarz must have been bent over, away from the blast, and her environmental armor absorbed the brunt of the blast. Still, to this day I've never seen anyone survive



that near a miss from a vehicle laser. As I left the cargo bay, I looked back at Viper, sprawled across the deck, techs swarming across its pitted body. The cockpit was towards me, the right side up, exposing the laser hole. I remember thinking how much it looked like a single eye.

On the trip back, Descarz spent most of her time by herself. Turk and I didn't force our company on her; we were all mourning Tompkins' death, and no one had much of a hunger for games of chance. In total, Force Seven lost 34% of its combat personnel. We retreated to Stanion's World, a small agricultural planet about as far away from the Marik and Kurita borders as you can get. We set up shop and began the slow process of refit. The CO headed for more populated systems, trying to get replacement troops to rebuild the unit back to fighting strength. As the top ranking surviving officer after the CO, the task of overseeing the repairs fell to me. I did the best job I could and tried to pull Descarz out of her funk. But my help wasn't needed on that front.

It took about ten days to get the 'Mechs back into something like fighting shape. The local garrison commander obliged us with what she had, but like Stanion's World itself, the parts on-hand were what you'd expect in a backwater. This meant lots of fabrication overtime for the service techs. That was okay because the only sizeable town on the planet had just enough bars for the locals. I got in several games and the dice were good to me. Descarz turned down my invitations to join in.

My 'Mech was about back together and word had come down that Force Seven was going to assemble for the next mission. That's when the raid hit us from out of nowhere.

The attack came in from the north side of town. It wasn't a disciplined military unit, just a mob of bandits: half dozen 'Mechs and lots of skimmers full of mean over-equipped infantry. They must not have known that Force Seven was on Stanion's World, or if they did know, they must have thought we were still crippled from the fight on Dis.

The leader pulled his entire force up in a long line and demanded the surrender of the place. The garrison com-



mander told him straight away to drop dead. This was too bad, another minute and I'd have had my lance in a perfect position to rake their whole line.

The bandits opened fire and the local troops dodged into the town. Just then my lance got them in view. Turk fired first without orders. The enemy 'Mech took the big one full-side on. Descarz fired at the next 'Mech in line. As the autocannon hits made pock marks on the side of the target, the attackers raced to distance themselves from us by scattering into the town.

A brutal, street-to-street battle evolved, with Force Seven and local garrison troops stalking raiders among the buildings. Descarz and I paired off again as Turk led another light lance, and between Steel Goblin's and Viper's fire power, nothing the raiders had could stand against us. We ripped through them like PPC through aluminum plate. Descarz was in prime form. She piloted that Clint like a master, ripping through opponents with her autocannon and twin lasers. She seemed unstoppable, racking up kill after kill while I struggled to keep pace; Steel Goblin took a solid leg hit in the retreat back at Dis, and though the artificial joints all seemed fine, I kept detecting a right-side limp. I guess that's why I was nearly a hundred meters behind her when Descarz rounded that industrial complex.

The bandit 'Mech was a patchwork monstrosity. The legs were salvaged from a Wolverine, and I recognized a left arm from an Enforcer, complete with large laser. The rest was a jumble of welded parts that must have come from a dozen salvaged 'Mechs.

Descarz fired first, Viper's autocannon sawing the air as the twin lasers flashed out. The bandit took three solid hits and staggered under the assault, chips of ceramic armor and sheet metal blowing back. The infra-red showed Viper spike yellow as the heat sinks fought to dump the sudden surge her weapons produced. I snapped off a laser shot. The beam missed high, flashing off into the distance. And as I flew, both 'Mechs fired again.

Descarz gave it everything she had; she never was one for half measure. The bandit took all three hits again, losing the right arm in the process. As it fell, a swarm of short range missiles erupted from its polyglot torso and slammed into the ground beside Descarz. Smoke poured from the missile ports and I knew an internal fire was raging through the core of the machine. But as the bandit crashed into the pavement, the left arm laser fired. It should have been a blind shot, like mine blazing off into the distance. It wasn't. The beam caught her on the left side of the head, square in the view port.

Are You  
Paying MORE  
for your coolant and getting  
LESS COOL  
all the time?  
Keep Your Cool!!  
COOLSURE™  
The Inner Sphere's  
*Modern Way*  
to circulate your coolant!

I hit the ground and instinctively triggered a barrage of laser fire into the enemy 'Mech. I needn't have bothered; it was coming apart at the seams as it's ammo blew. I turned to Descarz and saw the hole burned through the armored glass plate across the left view port, congealed glass weeping like frozen tears from a single eye. Viper swayed, then toppled backwards.

Without thinking, I dropped Goblin to her knees and shut down, not even bothering to remove my helmet in my rush to get out. Yes, it was stupid. In the middle of a war zone, I abandoned a functioning 'Mech. I should have called for backup or tried to tie into Viper's on-board systems. I didn't. Something compelled me to race to her aid.

I blew the bolts of Viper's escape hatch, a horrible sense of *deja vu* blotting my senses. The same slagged metal and scorched plastic smell assailed me, and it was mixed with the stench of charred meat. Descarz was dead, still strapped into her chair, most of her chest vaporized by the laser. Hanging from the center view port was her good luck charm, the crystal dice, each of their six faces marked with a single pip.

# Ranger Ruckus

(Excerpt from 'Satalice: The Ranger Way' by Lieutenant 'Smilin' John' Klane, as told to Emorie Chalhokai, *BattleTechnology*, MERCTALK, September, 3029 issue)

"Yes, Satalice was one of the best planned and executed operations in the entire Fourth Succession War. My unit, the Waco Rangers, had been teamed up with Hansen's Roughriders and our accompanying conventional regiments. Colonel Waco had insisted that the operation be delayed for at least a week so that our respected units could conduct some training together and locate any bugs in our inter-regimental communication set-up. We were sure glad we did because, contrary to popular belief, the Ninth Rasalhague Regulars that defended Satalice weren't the pushover unit that everybody thinks now.

As our DropShips approached the planet, we sent out our AeroSpace fighters to mix it up with the Kuritans, and they obligingly came up to meet us. The Roughriders had a heavier complement of fighters than our unit so they took the first wave of enemy ships first. Our twelve AeroSpace fighters made up the second wave and took out any stragglers or cripples that came out of the fight. This one-two punch essentially broke the back of Combine airpower on Satalice, and with minimal losses for us. The DropShips

came in virtually unopposed.

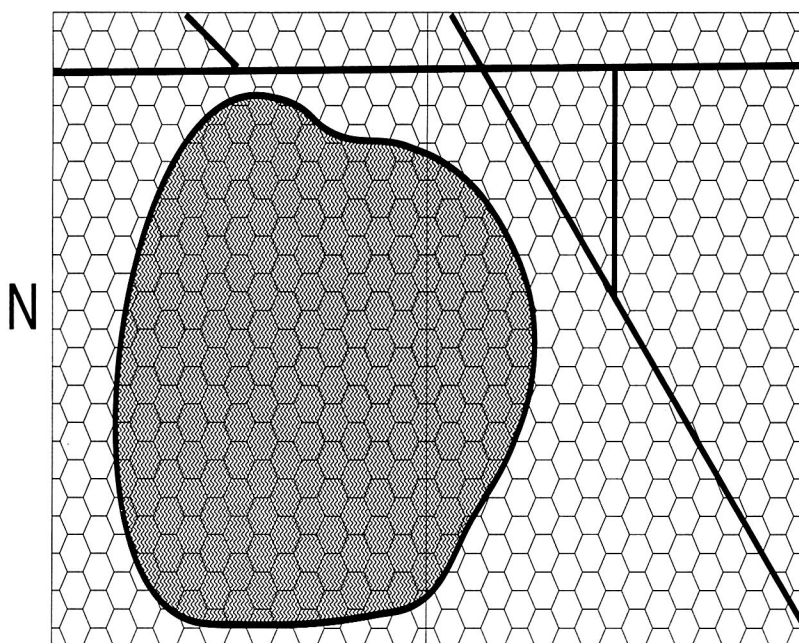
Before our landing, Colonel Waco made sure that the plan to seed the twenty four commsats and snoopers we had brought with us was begun. It would take some ten hours to finish the job, and then every one of our units anywhere on the planet would have sure communications. We were quite positive that the defenders simply didn't have the devices necessary to jam the tight beam message spurts we were trading around, and that proved correct.

The Roughriders and our regiment landed in a sort of semi-circle ten clicks long with all our conventional units between us. We were twenty clicks from the nearest enemy unit. The whole formation moved towards them immediately. Colonel Waco had come up with this plan along with the Roughriders commander from some kind of ancient history from Terra. He called it 'the Horns of the Buffalo'. I still don't know what a Buffalo is. Some kind of animal, I guess.

The Rasalhague Regulars had put a hard point across our line of advance, and then sent a good portion of their forces in an end run to try to get around our flank. It didn't work. We had the orbital surveillance from the snoopers, roving scout lances shadowing some of their units, and commteams homing in on their communication traffic. We knew where they were and what they were doing. It was simply a master of changing the facing of our massive formation and their flanking force found itself caught in the middle of a rapidly closing trap.

With all due respect to the Rasalhague commander, he did figure out what was going on at the last minute but too late to avoid a good bashing. He finally had to order a withdrawal toward their supply point. He ordered his erstwhile holding force that used to be in front of us to conduct a counterattack to cover him. Colonel Waco didn't want to dilute our attack too much in responding to this limited action, so he sent me and my lance with some accompanying armor and infantry to slow them down enough so that our main force could really take a bite out of the Rasalhagues' retreating tail.

I wish that the Colonel had sent more out to hold these guys up. As it went, the skirmish was a near-run thing. And the losses we took were a lot more than I thought necessary.





## Situation: Satalice, May 30,3029

After the successful drop by the Waco Rangers and Hansen's Roughriders mercenary regiments, a plan of advance was devised designed to be reapidly changeable to any arising situation. Taken from the study of military tactics of a native tribe from Terra's ancient history known as Zulus, a massed formation of 'Mech and armor/infantry was devised. This formation, combined with excellent communication and intelligence aided the two mercenary regiments in countering any action by the 9th Rasalhague Regulars, defending the planet.

During the initial engagement of the two forces, a flanking attack by the Regulars was thwarted by the cohesive tactics of the two attacking regiments and turned into a major setback for the Combine commander. Forced to retreat, Colonel Immanuelson of the Regulars ordered a counter-attack by the small holding force that was now on the flank of the advancing mercenary formation. These units promptly left their prepared position and were met in hilly terrain by a reinforced 'Mech lance flank guard from the Waco Rangers. What followed was a slugfest of exceeding ferocity with no quarter given or asked for.

This type of engagement proved to be the rule in the coming weeks as the Rasalhague Regulars slowly gave ground to the two advancing mercenary regiments. Colonel Immanuelson was never able to obtain an advantage over them because of their superior communication and combined arms tactics. Finally deciding to make a stand, Colonel Immanuelson hastily constructed defensive works on the ridges overlooking the Mizona Valley. Unfortunately, the Waco Rangers conducted a holding action of their own while the Roughriders flanked, then broke through the Regular's defensive lines, forcing another retreat. This final failure to hold the attackers made Colonel Immanuelson decided to boost off-planet, which he did on August 3rd.

### Game Set-up:

Lay out the BattleTech maps as shown. Use all Advanced BattleTech, CityTech, and AeroTech Rules.

### Defender:

The defender is Klane's Fire Lance, Henry's Support Company, Waco Rangers, reinforced by Baker Company, First Battalion, of the 53rd Armored Regiment.

#### Klane's Fire Lance

Lt 'Smilin' John Klane, *Battlemaster*

Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 2

Sergeant "Tiny Jim" Sundercrest, *Archer*

Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 3

Ikito Senmai, *Wolverine* Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 4

Miromo Ndeni, *Stinger* Piloting:4, Gunnery:3

#### Assault Platoon, Baker Company

2 *Hunter* Missile Tanks

2 *Condor* Hover Tanks

#### Support Platoon

*Bulldog* Medium Tank

2 *Striker* Armored Cars

A Platoon, Mechanized Infantry with SRMs

B Platoon, Mechanized Infantry with Lasers

Air support, Wright's Medium Air Lance (element)

Pilot Jan Van Allen, *Shilone* Piloting:3, Gunnery: 4

Defender enters from the south edge of the map on Turn One. The *Shilone* may begin ground support operations at the beginning of Turn Three.

### Attacker

The attacker consists of elements of the Third Support Group, Reserve Battalion, Ninth Rasalhague Regulars.

#### Samchita's Support Lance

Lieutenant Blane Samchita, *Orion*

Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 3

Tim Kaskaskia, *Rifleman* Piloting:3, Gunnery: 4

Frank Guardione, *Enforcer* Piloting:4, Gunnery: 4

Amos 'Rammer' O'Rourke, *Blackjack*

Piloting: 4, Gunnery:3

#### Nell's Armored Platoon

2 *Drillson* Hover Tanks

2 *Bulldog* Medium Tanks

2 *Vedette* Medium Tank

First Jump Platoon, Jump Infantry with Lasers

Second Jump Platoon, Jump Infantry with Machine Guns

Third Jump Platoon, Jump Infantry with Flamers

Attacker moves onto the board from the northern edge on Turn One.

### Victory Conditions:

The defender must destroy all attacking 'Mechs by Turn Fifteen. The attacker must get at least two of his 'Mechs and three of his armored vehicles off of the south edge of the map by Turn Twenty. Any other result is a draw.

# The Edge Of Night Regiment

### **'We Are the Ghosts of Doom'** *(Motto of the 'Night Regiment')*

The grim motto of the Edge of Night regiment has been borne out by this elite unit's past action; it accurately describes the unit's preferred way of waging war. The 'Night Regiment is a mixed light infantry and armor regiment that is unique among mercenary units in that this unit specializes in insurgency/counterinsurgency operations and raids only. Though the unit TO&E contains an inordinate amount of AeroSpace fighters, the unit fields no 'Mechs whatsoever.

The current commander, Colonel Ivan Koeniv, stated to BattleTechnology, "We'll never have any of those big clumsy things; they'd just slow us down." This is a highly trained unit that commands top price both for its superb covert operations capability as well as its proven track record in fomenting successful rebellions and in putting down revolts.

#### **Unit History:**

The unit had its origin on The Edge, a Kurita world which is located on the border of the Periphery. In 2950, resentment resulting from the onerous Kurita taxation and poor administration resulted in a bloody insurrection in which the citizens made good use of captured Kurita arms as well as a mercenary battalion of medium 'Mechs that the Rebel Tai-sho hired to support his insurrection.

The rebel government opened negotiations with the Butte Hold and Star's End pirates for use of The Edge as a pirate base for forays into Kurita space in return for pirate aid to the revolt. In April of 2950, a pirate force arrived on 'Edge to assist the embattled citizens. When the Kuritans received word of the arrival of the pirate force, they dispatched the Lone Star regiment with orders to crush the rebellion.

When the Lone Star arrived in late 2950, the Rebel Governor General opted for a protracted guerilla campaign, rather than face them in a pitched battle. The emphasis of the 'Edge forces was on assassination, sabotage, and quick hit and run raids against the Lone Star and its 'Mechs. After eight months of brutal conflict, the Governor's son, along with a select cadre of guerilla fighters, escaped the ever-tightening encirclement of the Lone Star regiment,

fleeing to Star's End.

His world ravaged, the Governor had little choice but to sign a surrender agreement with the Kuritan government, an agreement that imposed crippling terms on 'Edge. The failure of the insurrection was quickly balanced out by the hijacking of two Lone Star Overlord DropShips by a mixed force of pirates and guerilla cadre who had escaped to Star's End. The resulting reprisals on 'Edge have provided the descendents of the original guerilla cadre, who make up the core of the present unit, with enough hatred of Kurita to last them several lifetimes. After the Overlord operation, the cadre fled to the Periphery where the Governor's son, 'Colonel' Hund, began gathering together 'Edge refugees, Periphery pirates, and his cadre to form the nucleus of what would become known as the 'Edge of Night' Regiment.

After twelve years of honing their skills and acquiring equipment by salvage and from contracts, the fledgling regiment consisted of one light infantry battalion and a few lances of light armor. At this point, Hund signed a five year contract with the Lyrans for counterinsurgency duty on the Marik frontier. It was during this period that the unit honed its unique skills to a fine edge. Three Special Operations Group units were formally formed at this time, to be charged with espionage and covert operations responsibilities. After several highly successful raids on Marik worlds, the unit was able to purchase enough light tanks, VTOL aircraft, and AeroSpace fighters to field a mechanized infantry battalion with an attached air wing.

After a total of sixteen years of distinguished service for the Commonwealth, the unit had gained a reputation for grim efficiency and a phenomenal skill in evading pursuers when on an operation, hence the unit motto which compares the troopers to ghosts. The next twenty four years were spent in the employ of House Liao performing training duties as well as fomenting three wildly successful rebellions on Kurita border worlds, and conducting a number of daring raids on the Periphery.

The Regiment then served the Free Worlds League for twenty years in which the unit conducted many difficult assignments, earning them the nickname of the 'Captain-General's Fire Brigade'. It should be noted that by this point, twenty five percent of the unit personnel were made up of descendents of the Battle of The Edge who formed the bulk



of the officer corps and the techs. The balance of the unit personnel consisted of guerilla fighters from worlds where the unit had conducted operations, and walk-in recruits who wanted to be members of this latter-day Foreign Legion.

### Recent History

In 3028, the unit was given the task of 'destabilizing' the Periphery world of Astrokaszy, and bringing a government to power that would favor a Marik 'voice' in the management of the lucrative gem mines there. Within eleven months, the mercs had not only assassinated the Caliph, Shervan, a despot who had sought to trade his gems for the Mariks' BattleMechs, they had also set so many factions to bitter and useless military conflicts between themselves that by the middle of 3040, the Regiment were the *de facto* rulers of the planet.

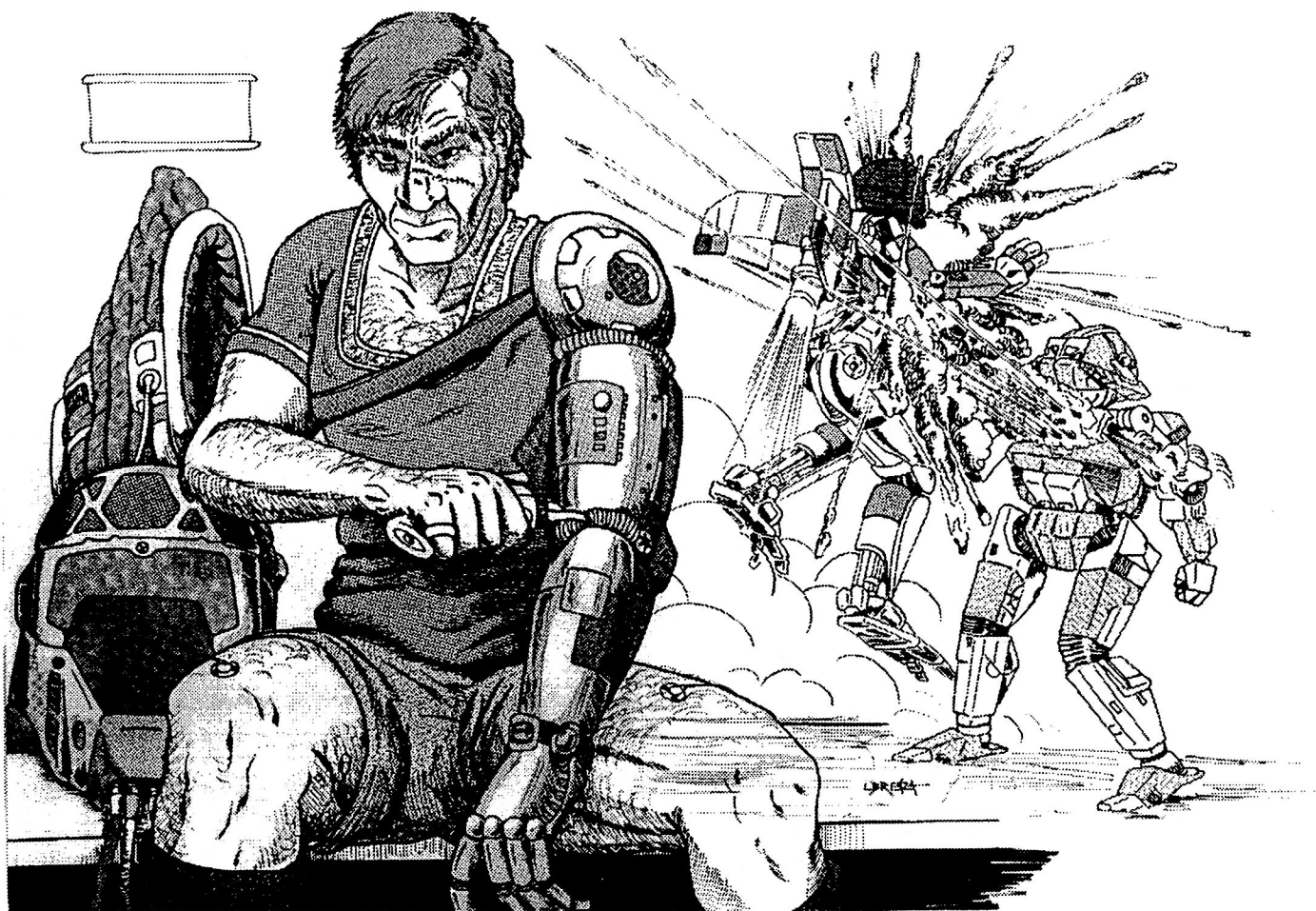
When the League sent a force of medium 'Mechs to invest the world "to oust the rapacious mercenary bandits" they found that the mercs had trained their charges well. The League force lost two Riflemen and four Shadow

Hawks to the planetary rebels. The 'Night then allegedly 'appropriated' two million C-bills worth of gems as a 'combat bonus', after which the rebellion mysteriously ceased.

The matter was submitted to ComStar which ruled that the League commander was at fault for the alleged double cross; he had landed before the 'Night had given the Marik forces clearance to land. It is an indication of the unit's usefulness that the League retained the services of the 'Night.

The next major achievement of the 'Night Regiment was in the Andurien Rebellion. In 3037, the 'Night was contracted to conduct a major spoiling raid on Xanthe III, in preparation for Duncan Marik's invasion of that world. The unit completed its mission and was then contracted to conduct extended harassment and covert operations against the Xanthe troops.

When Duncan Marik's poor strategy on that world resulted in a crushing Andurien counterattack, the Regiment found itself performing a desperate rollback defense against an Andurien BattleMech force that routed the



League forces on the northeastern continent. A series of bold engagements and behind the lines raids by the highly mobile 'Night enabled the shattered remnants of Duncan's forces to withdraw in fair order to their waiting DropShips in time to escape annihilation. For their part in the Xanthe III action, the unit received a hundred thousand C-bill bonus as well as the Crest of the Eagle decoration as a unit honor.

In 3038 the unit signed a two-year contract with the Federated Commonwealth for raiding and insurgency operations in support of the strike into Kurita space planned for 3039. In 3039, the unit found itself once again in the unenviable position of covering the retreat of House forces when the Kuritans made a stunning counterattack on the planet of Sadachbia where the Regiment had been attempting to keep the Twenty-Seventh Dieron Regulars off balance by means of harassing raids and assassination of Kuritan officers and even techs. After five harrowing days and innumerable exfiltrations and breakouts, the exhausted 'Night managed to link up with Federated Commonwealth forces from the Fifth Deneb Light Cavalry RCT. The regiment suffered very heavy losses in the withdrawal and subsequent battle at the escarpment, especially in the AeroSpace and VTOL wings as well as the virtual extermination of the four anti-Mech infantry platoons. Thanks to this ill-fated mission, the unit is currently conducting extensive hiring. In 3039, they signed a four year contract with the Federated Commonwealth to perform training and raiding duties.

#### Unit Organization:

The unit currently consists of a reinforced infantry regiment and a battalion of light and medium armor. Five lances of AeroSpace fighters, three lances of VTOL fighters and three SOG squads round out the combat elements. The unit also has a large training company, a psyops platoon, and an assessment section that researches subject worlds so that the trooper can 'live off the land', or blend in as required.

#### Assessment:

The Edge of Night Regiment is a veteran formation that is able to command very good rates for its services, which translates into good pay for troopers. The trooper earns his or her pay in the hardest way imaginable. As this unit specializes primarily in guerilla warfare, a trooper's life often consists of endless evasions as enemy encirclements tighten around them and of long periods of life under very primitive conditions. Indeed, it is telling that the Regiment has four psychiatrists assigned to it.

The often abysmal service conditions are balanced out by several factors. Troopers in this unit are able, indeed encouraged, to take on an unprecedented amount of individual initiative. There have been frequent reports of ex-

Edgers being offered direct officer's commissions in House forces on the strength of their history of having served in this regiment.

Another advantage of service in this unit is it's very generous life insurance and educational program as well as the extreme *esprit de corps* that helps a trooper cope with service in what some call the 'Regiment of Devils'. A final advantage is the chance to qualify for assignment to one of the unit's SOG groups, the assignment many an ex-trooper has parlayed into a lucrative career as a House intelligence operative.

#### Restrictions

There have been unsubstantiated reports that captured Kuritan officials and officers are used as 'demonstrators' for the unit's field interrogation course. This rumor, coupled with certain incidents while in the field against Kuritan troops, means that an Edger captured by Kuritan units is in for a painful time. Any job-hunting trooper with Kuritan connections is advised to avoid this unit.

#### Ratings

The 'H' need rating reflects a steady attrition due as much to mental strain as to normal unit turnover. The unit welcomes green recruits as well as veterans. All must attend a ten-week basic training which only twenty five percent of recruits can complete. The unit training officer stated to *BattleTechnology* that, "all a trooper needs is intelligence and determination".

The 'J' pay rating is assigned because the unit's excellent success record guarantees very good contract terms. The troopers are paid very well to compensate them for the often lonely and dangerous postings they draw. Not surprisingly, the unit offers liberal death benefits to a trooper's survivors.

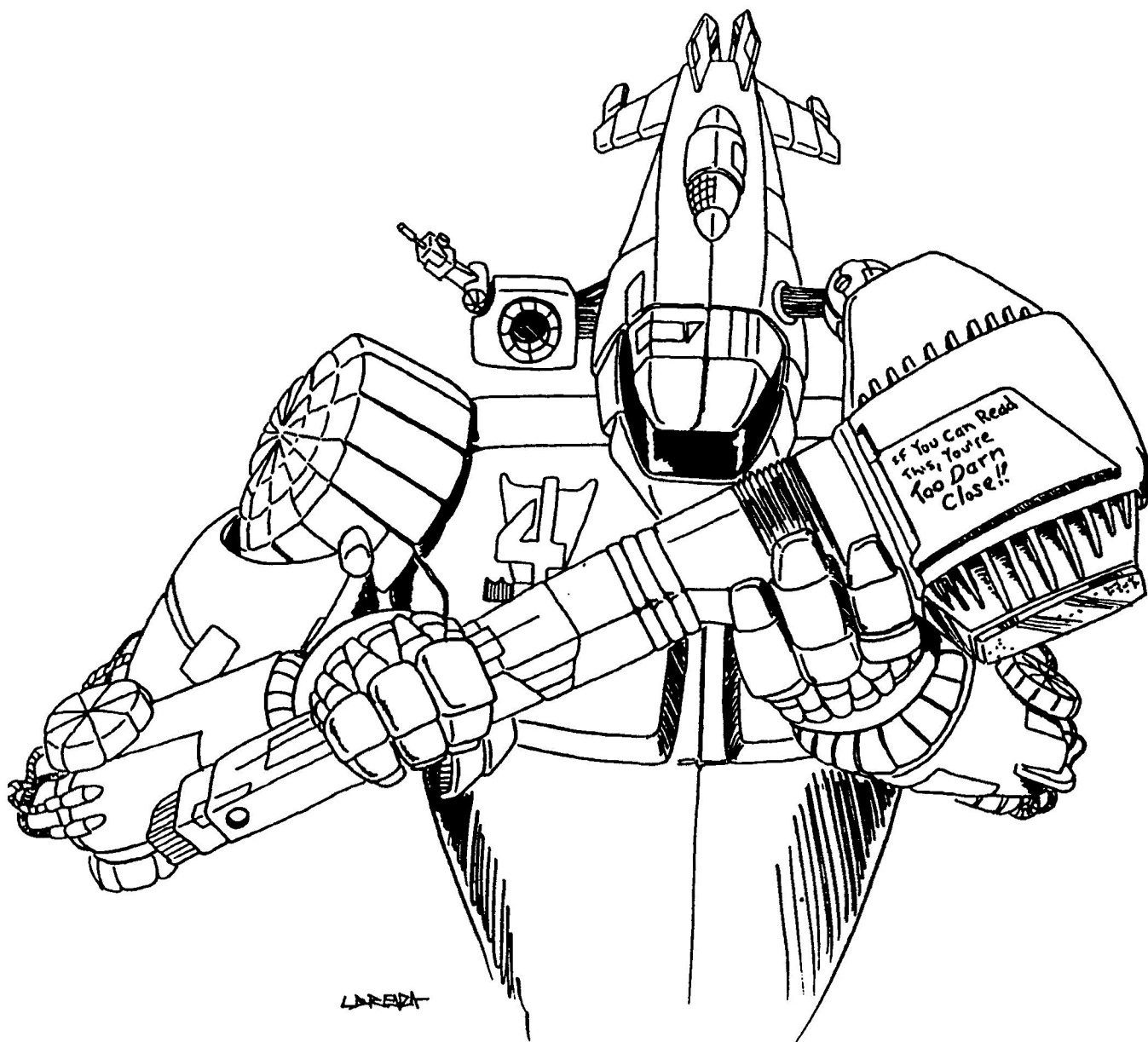
The 'X' conditions rating was assigned for the obvious reason that insurgency combat is long, frustrating, and brutal compared to conventional warfare.

**Rating: H/J/X**



More Than Warriors

# Cartoon



**About the Artist:** Lt Lawrence Brenza is a Lieutenant in the 23rd Marik Militia, stationed on Merak. He drew this cartoon when he first saw The Davion-Team Banzai Hatchetman in action.

# Twycross

## Twycross

*Ed Note: This article was compiled before the Clan invasion, and thus certain facts, particularly military information, may be inaccurate.*

### Stellar Data

Catalog # NSC D 7-366 934

Star: Bright  
Type: F01V  
Mass: 1.20 Sol  
Luminosity: 3.1 Sol  
Radius 1.19 Sol

### System Data:

Planetary System: 6 major bodies, 1 asteroid belt

### Planetary Data:

Planet III: NSC D 7-366-934-3  
Common Name: Twycross  
Mean Orbital Radius: 1.345 AU  
Orbital Eccentricity: 5.322  
Periastron Orbital Distance: 1.30128 AU  
Apastron Orbital Distance: 1.37227 AU  
Period: 1.23 Standard Years  
Mass: 1.04567 Earth  
Equatorial Diameter: 10,094.69 km  
Mean Planetary Density: 7.065 g/cm cubed (1.1 Earth)  
Mean Surface Gravity: 1.025 G  
Escape Velocity: 11.2 kps  
Rotational Period: 22h 11m 18.3 s  
Axial Inclination: 5°19' 32"  
Atmosphere: Near Earth Standard  
Composition: Nitrogen-85%, Oxygen-7.5%, Carbon Dioxide-5%, Water (mean)-1.2%, Other-1.3%  
Hydrographic: 29% of surface covered by salt water  
Temperature Range at Surface Level:  
Equatorial: 50 to 90 ° C; Polar: -28 to 33 ° C

Hiring Data: D/K/G

### The Planet

Situated in the center of the obscure Trelshire Province of the Tamar Pact, Twycross serves as the administrative center for the region. Though primarily known for having some of the worst weather in the Inner Sphere, Twycross is important to the Federated Commonwealth for the weapons factories that keep its front-line forces supplied.

### Planetology

Ancient Twycross was a markedly different world from the one now known to man. Fossil records have shown that Twycross once retained a dense atmosphere, thick with diverse and quite advanced life forms. A still-mysterious cataclysm blasted away most of the world's atmosphere, sterilizing the planet in the process. Even after almost a billion years, Twycross' atmosphere is still thin and primitive compared to other planets of the same mass and age. This thin air, powered by an energetic sun, is what drives Twycross' extreme climate.

Twycross' atmosphere is divided into three regions, north polar, south polar, and equatorial; each with its own distinct weather patterns. Of the three, the planet's arid equatorial zone is by far the most violent. During Terran Standard July through November, counter-rotating polar air streams mix and form massive cyclonic formations called Diabolis storms that dwarf the average hurricanes of more terrestrial worlds. Winds recorded in excess of 400 kph, and the many tornados and other weather disturbances spawned by the storms make most of the planet's open wastes effectively uninhabitable. Only cities, mines, and installations sheltered by mountain ranges (Camora, Fendleburg, and Mine #3), or entirely underground (Harpers Town, Mines #9 and #11) survive in marginal comfort throughout the storm season.

In contrast to Twycross's chaotic atmosphere, the planet itself is geologically quiet. The age of the



planet and the absence of satellites to impart tidal stresses means the world's crust is thick and its mantle lazily sluggish. As a result, tectonic activity on the planet is just barely able to build mountains as fast as scouring erosion wears them down.

### Ecology

At least twice in its history, Twycross has evolved complex life. This latest generation probably got its start in the warm salt marshes of the planet's lowest polar regions, and these areas remain strongholds of native life today. Most vegetable life is of the algae or a lichen-like form, totally incompatible with Terran organisms. Very few plant species mass more than a kilogram in individual weight, though their carpet-like growth radically alters what would be lakes and rivers into semi-stagnant shallow seas. By far the most dominant motile life forms are the wide variety of marine insect-analogs. From trillions of harmless, but annoying, salt flies to the largest native predator, the sometimes lethally-biting Twycross spider, these normally exoskeletal creatures form the bulk of the natural food-chain in most areas of the planet. Small, primitive mammal-like animals do inhabit the colder, arctic areas where the well established insects do not dominate.

Most of the planet's polar plains and wetlands are used as farmland for introduced saltwater crops and animals. Though, like most worlds, the introduction of alien species has had a negative impact upon native flora and fauna, the inhospitality of the climate and general resilience of the local forms has meant that very few species have been displaced or threatened. Travel in undeveloped areas, both polar and equatorial, is difficult, not only due to the difficulty off the terrain, but because of the need to carry most supplies, including food, as native life is always unhealthy, and quite often toxic to humans.

### History

First charted in 2417 by the Lyran Commonwealth Scout Corps, and originally named Bright for the intense solar flare activity experienced during the first week of the survey, the worlds of the system attracted little attention. With only average mineral deposits, and a marginally habitable terrestrial planet, the Steiner government could neither attract colonists or entice corporations to develop the system. As a result, Bright lay charted but deserted for more than a century. In 2534, the now extinct Bonhoffer Mining, a corporation that specialized in exploiting undeveloped worlds, received mineral rights to the system and began to extract light ores

### Planetography

Radius: 5,017,315 km,  
Circumference: 31,697,326 km  
Total Surface Area: 319,968,079.94 sq km  
Land Surface Area: 255,974,464 sq km  
Inhabited Surface Area: 10,420,060 sq km

Surface Topography: Ocean/Sea/Lake, 26%; Salt Marsh, 3%;

Steppe/Plain, 49%; Low Hills, 10%; High Hills, 6%;  
Low Mountains, 5%; High Mountains, 1%

### People

Population: 21,643,000      Population Density: 18  
person per sq km  
Urbanization: 16%, Ethnic Groups: Diverse  
Languages: League Anglic (90%), German (20%),  
Nuespanol (10%), Other (8%),  
Religions: Judaism (32%), Universal Catholic Church  
(44%), Islamic (12%), Other (2%)  
Major Cities: Trillington, Salt Meadow, and  
Newmarten  
Health: Life Expectancy at Birth: 80 years      Birth Rate:  
6%  
Mortality Rate: 3%      Population Growth Rate: + 3%  
per year  
Education: Literacy: 59%, Technicians/100: 2, Univer-  
sities:198

### Government

Allegiance: Federated Commonwealth: Associate world of  
the Tamar Pact, and capital of Trellshire Province  
Form of Government: Parliamentary Democracy  
Head of State: Michael Killa, Duke of Trell  
Head of Government: Jennifer McDougan, Speaker of the  
Assembly  
Local Administrative Districts: 4

### Economy

Natural Resources: Agriculture, Petrochemicals, Minerals,  
Ores  
Processed/Manufactured Goods: agroproducts, arma-  
ments, munitions, light manufacturing  
Arable Land: 13%, Labor Force: Administrative (9%),  
Agricultural (44%), Industrial (23%), Resource Extraction  
(11%), Service (13%)

### Finance

Currency: FC-bill, Per Capita Income: Cb 120, Gross Domestic Product: Cb 108 billion, Imports: Radioactives, Heavy Manufactures Goods, High-Tech Items  
Principal Import Sources: Twycross I (2%), Eciler (5%), Trell (7%), Waldorff (12%)

### Transportation

Chief Ports: Camora Spaceport, 37 other ports,  
Off-Planet Facilities: Orbital:1, Deep Space: Zenith and Nadir Jump Point recharging stations, Enclaves: 3  
Merchant Fleet: JumpShips: none, Freighters: 6, Shuttles: 28  
System Jump Point: 17.6 AU  
Travel Time (typical): 526 hours (21.93 Terran Standard Days)

### Armed Forces

Defence Spending: 5% of GDP, Military Manpower Potential: 4,328,600 (20%)  
AeroSpace Forces: Orbital Facilities: 1, Deep Space Facilities: 2, JumpShips: None,  
DropShips: 3, AeroSpace Fighters: 12, Heavy Warships: None,  
Battalions: Infantry: 75, Armor: 11, Air: 6, BattleMech: 3  
MechWarrior Training Facilities: 1

The single largest industry on Twycross (about 30%) is defense. As with surviving facilities around the Inner Sphere, the presence of a 'Mech factory attracted first BattleMech weapons manufacturers, then steadily down the line until all the weapons and equipment for an entire army could be bought on a single world. This common availability of weaponry, coupled with the stubborn character of its inhabitants means that in small, outlying towns, disputes are as likely to be resolved with a fire-fight as in a courthouse.

One pressing problem facing Twycross' future are the scarcity of resources in the system. Knoll, which is really a large, irregular asteroid into which the 'Mech factories are built, has the material to continue production for several centuries yet, but the limited mineral ores on Twycross have been nearly mined out, resulting in large-scale unemployment. Already there have been major upswings in banditry in both the polar swamps and equatorial deserts. There are reports that local leaders or even the planetary government may begin hiring mercenary forces to counter both the increasing native and Periphery bandit attacks. While this action will suppress the criminal activity, it does little to correct the underlying crisis that may result in mass migrations off-world or deep impoverishment that is likely to cause political uprisings.

and petroleum with robotic mining systems. By the 2540's, Bright III's population was a scant five thousand, mostly technicians, their families, and a small staff to serve them.

The creation of the Star League and the subsequent Reunification War permanently changed the worlds of the system. As the factories for weapons and transport lifted, many of the immigrants left for other locations. The Succession Wars that erupted a century and a half later brought wartime prosperity back to Twycross, as the 'Mech factories began churning out war machines once again. This made the system a prime target for the forces of the Draconis Combine. With a neutral Rasalhague shielding Twycross from Kurita, the main threat still facing its industries and population are the largest of the far ranging Periphery bandits, who tend to hit poorly defended targets to avoid the large 'Mech garrison.

### General Notes

### About Worldbook

Worldbook is a BattleTechnology feature drawn from the computer files of the *Navigator's Guide to the Inner Sphere*, the 32-volume compendium of explored worlds published by ComStar Press Interstellar of Terra. Twycross was first printed in *Volume 19, The Trellshire Corridor*, and is used here by permission of the publisher.





*Rifleman from Twycross Militia during maneuvers in a Diabolis sandstorm.*

## —Techs Wanted—

Good Pay! Excellent Benefits!  
Work in a pleasant environment  
on a pastoral world! Contact:

Major Tandy Starr,  
c/o 7th Virginia Dragoons  
PO Box 2673

LemPol, Alexandria  
Virginia Shire, Lyran Commonwealth

## Wanted!

**Excalibur DropShip parts,**

or scrapped ship for parts. Contact:

Captain John E Thunder  
c/o 7th Virginia Dragoons  
PO Box 2672

LemPol, Alexandria  
Virginia Shire, Lyran Commonwealth

## A Day In The Life Of The Inner Sphere

For the holidays of 3014, Millenium Press, a subsidiary of our publisher, Thorkillsen Publishers, brought out a coffee table book of photographs and art called A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE INNER SPHERE. It had taken months of planning, as writers, artists, photographers, and staff were sent to every corner of the Sphere, and to most of the noted military units as well. Most of the talented individuals involved suffered nothing more than the difficulties of boredom on a backwater planet, but at least a few of them had adventures that changed their lives. One of our writers became a convert to the One Star Faith. Another made a lifelong bond with some of the toughest warriors in the Northwind Highlanders regiments. Readers must remember that the First and Second Kearny Highlanders were still part of House Liao's forces at the time this book was published. The Liao Chancellors had kept their loyalty by telling them faked atrocity stories about their home planet, Northwind, under Davion hands. Their kin on Northwind had, for the two hundred years the Highlanders were separated, sent messages urging reconciliation. Liao propaganda cast doubt on the messages. Students of recent history will remember the dramatic coup won by Davion negotiator Lt General (now Field Marshal) Arden Sortek when he convinced the Highlanders-in-exile, by smuggling their representatives into and out of Northwind, that House Liao had been lying to them for centuries. The relief of Northwind from the Kuritan occupation force by the returning regiments of Highlanders was one of the most exciting events of the Fourth Succession War. (See page forty-one for an extended description of the Highlanders.

And on the chosen day, October 21, 3013, a tragic event happened that had lasting consequences for House Davion. Prince Ian Davion was killed in battle on Mallory's World. As if happened, we had three people on Mallory's World. Artist Aaron Froke was present at Prince Ian Davion's death at the hands of a Kurita MechWarrior, Yorinaga Kurita. He recorded his impressions in a montage which is the front cover of the present publication. Photographer Gary Homan sent in a series of brilliant photographs from Mallory's World in an envelope with an illegible return address, and then disappeared. Anyone knowing the whereabouts of this talented individual, could you please contact Millenium Press c/o BattleTechnology's Terran Office? A battle bounty is still owed to him, though we fear that after so much time, hopes of Mr Homan's survival are dim.

A fledgling mercenary unit called the Kell Hounds was dropping onto Mallory's World as Prince Davion died. Morgan and Patick Kell showed the Inner Sphere just how well the Kell Hounds could fight during the subsequent events on Marllory's World. And somewhere during that campaign, Morgan Kell and Yorinaga Kurita fought a duel to a draw, after which both men left their trade of war and secluded themselves in monasteries for fifteen years. Yorinaga Kurita formed the Genyosha for House Kurita just before the Fourth Succession War, then returned to a life in retirement. His son Akira Brahe now commands the Second Battalion of the Kell Hounds.

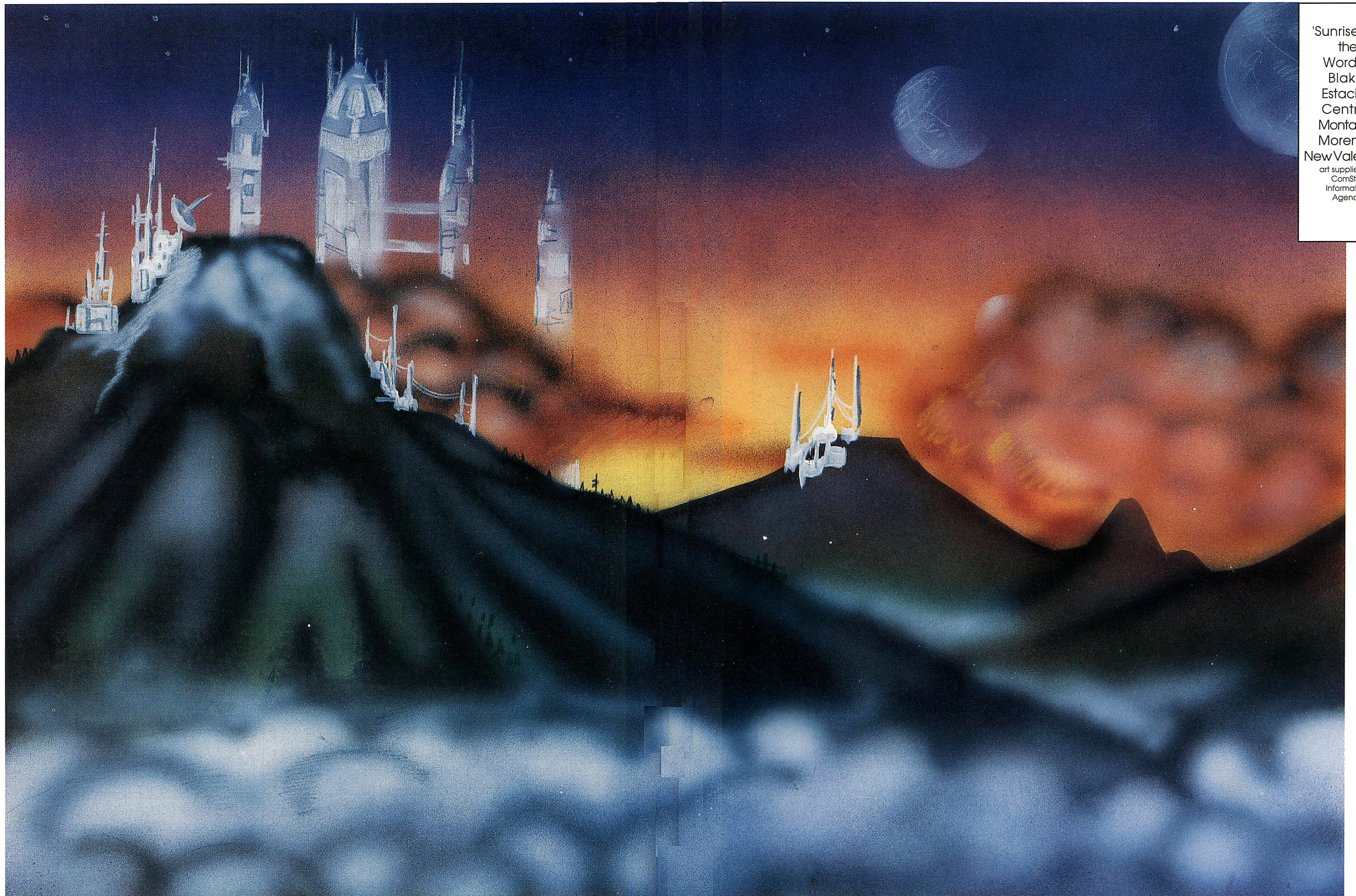
The painting on the facing page is an orbital manufacturing facility, the type referred to as *zaibatsu*. It is owned by Galileo Instruments, and orbits the planet of Carse in the Tamar Pact Region of the Lyran Commonwealth.



# A Day in the Life Of the Inner Sphere: October 21, 3013





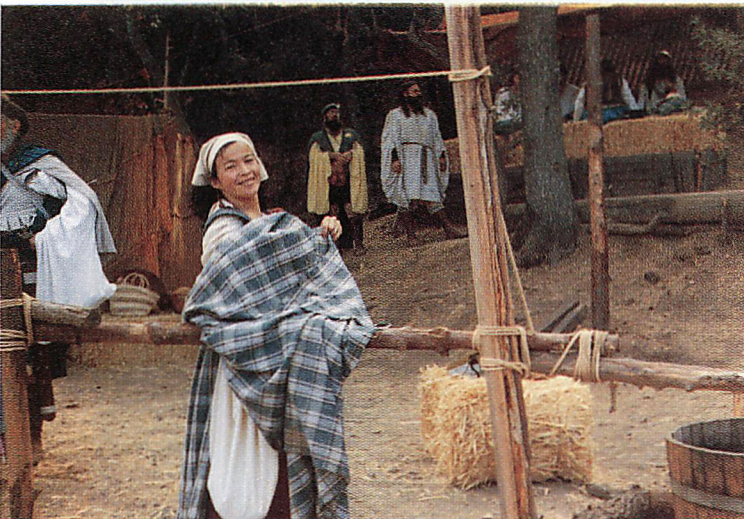


'Sunrise on  
the  
Word of  
Blake'  
Estación  
Central,  
Montanas  
Morenas,  
New Valencia;  
art supplied by  
ComStar  
Information  
Agency

A Day In The Life

Of The Inner Sphere





We found the Second Kearny Highlanders at their Annual Regimental Games on the planet Johnathan. During the Games, they dress in the styles of their Terran ancestors and compete with ancient weapons. Singing and dancing competitions are a very important part of these games as well.

Above: Capt Brandon Gunn engages in a practice sword bout against Lt Stephen Grant of the Fire Lance of the Third Company of the Second Kearny Highlanders.

Left: Early morning, Capt Rose Steelthorn dresses in an *aresaid*, a traditional Scottish draped overshawl that serves as both covering and knapsack. Capt Steelthorn later participated in the poetry competition, winning third place.





Above: on Donegal, at a gathering of the One Star Faith, Ricardo Telosa makes a new friend, Sor Martina. Ricardo's family is close to the Archon.

Back Page: On Exeter, the Tomachevsky Gallery of Combat Art was opened by Lady Jessica Sandoval. This painting, *The End of an Era*, chronicles the first use of BattleMechs in war. Skondia, February 2475. Alert readers will spot one anomaly in the modern version of the Wolverine.

### A Mech Pilot

"That dusty, crusty, grease-smeared, dirty, sweaty, bright-eyed, fuzzy faced, haircut-needing, beer-drinking, underrated, overworked, underpaid, over-sexed little runt who can take a 'Mech and do more damage in ten minutes than an armor battalion can do all day."

Michael Bingham, 'Uncle Mykill', as described by himself.

Pictured below, Michael Bingham picked up by reserve units after his Griffin suffered an ammo explosion.









## Assault Lance, Special Operations Group , First Battalion, Second Kearny Highlanders (*'The Steel Thistles' on the TO&E, unofficially known as 'The Gunn Squad'*)

The Gunn Squad are a heavy assault lance in the SOG. The SOG is the 'Dirty Tricks' unit, so it has a flexible command structure and composition due to the wide range of assignments it can be called on to undertake. Typical missions include long range scouting, personal extractions (ie, kidnapping), and deep penetration raids. The assault lance specializes in the latter; it has a tradition of being willing to handle nasty assignments no one else wants. Morale is high, and combat effectiveness extraordinary, due in large part to the *esprit de corps* of the unit, as well as to the strong personal ties between the members. The SOG is a volunteer unit which never lacks for personnel.

### **Capt Brandon M Gunn**

Captain Gunn leads the Assault Lance of the SOG. His family has a long tradition of military service dating back to the thirteenth century on old Earth. A student of ancient combat techniques, Captain Gunn pilots a vintage Ma-rauder named 'Claymore' (Old Earth Gaelic for 'Large Sword'). Captain Gunn is known for his "Vigorous tactics in the face of the enemy". One unit commander assigned to fight alongside Captain Gunn later called Brandon's tactics "blind stupidity coupled with some of the most amazing fighting I've ever witnessed." Captain Gunn also enjoys the sports of falconry and horseback riding.

### **Capt Aden MacCodrum**

Captain MacCodrum is second in command of the Assault Lance and the 'disagreements' between herself and Capt Brandon Gunn are near legendary (though reportedly the two are quite close). Aden is an accomplished electrical engineer who pilots a Grasshopper BattleMech named 'The Selkie'. As the only jump-capable 'Mech in the lance, The Selkie is often the lead element of the unit when entering combat situations. Aden chooses to wear trews (snug tartan breeches) in her 'Mech despite the high heat, due to vanity. Her legs are scarred from an electrical fire in her cockpit two years ago. She always fights with a cigar in her mouth, not to smoke (since it would tax the air circulation system), but to cushion her teeth from the impacts of modern combat.

### **Lt Adam Gunn**

Lieutenant Gunn is a distant cousin of Capt Gunn's, and is another student of seemingly out-dated weapons. Adam is an expert archer, preferring long-bows of his own construction. He says it improves his aim and his kill record as a MechWarrior bears out his claim. His Archer BattleMech, 'The Bowman', provides heavy fire support for unit operations. Lt Gunn's 'Mech has been modified, the rear-firing lasers have been repositioned into a forward firing configuration. Adam explains, "It's simple; they don't live long enough to get behind me." Adam is also the SOG

Mixologist, inventing new, semi-caustic drinks for battalion parties.

### **Lt Brion Mac Alpin**

The junior member of the lance, Brion replaced his older sister Mary, killed in combat two years ago. A self-taught astronomer, Brion has renamed his family 'Mech. Lt Brion pilots an Orion named 'Orion'. He insists that no matter what the camouflage pattern it is painted, three bright spots are always present across the base of the center torso, Orion's belt. Most think that Brion's choice of names is just part of his odd sense of humor. Capt Gunn says it serves a more important function, that of starting bar fights. Brandon is always the second to stand, right after Brion, when someone says, "that's a stupid name."

### **Master Sergeant Fergus Moor**

Sergeant Moor heads the technicians assigned to the special operations unit. Considered a Tech wizard by many, Fergus is best known for two things: his preference that all equipment under his control conforms to design specs, and always keeping a bottle of single malt with him while working. The first of the two has caused problems between Captain MacCodrum and himself. The Captain is perpetually tinkering with the cockpit controls of her 'Mech, much to Sergeant Moor's displeasure. His other major headache is Brandon and the damage inflicted on Claymore. Says Fergus, "How that boy comes through the hellstorms he always manages to find, and still keeps on breathing is far beyond me!"

### **Captain Rose Steelthorn**

Captain Steelthorn leads the Special Operations Group scouts. An expert on deep penetrations, Rose often precedes the unit by months to scout specific objectives prior to the landing of the 'Mech lance. Rose is experienced in computer tech as well as hand-to-hand combat; she serves as the unit physical training instructor, setting a grueling pace for the ground-pounders, flyboys, and 'Mech Jocks alike. Exhibition sword bouts between herself and Capt Gunn are always well attended. Capt Steelthorn is also an accomplished poet and percussionist, preferring the traditional Scottish hand held skin drum called the Boran.

### **Lieutenant Spydre MacAlpin**

A cousin to Brion, the lieutenant was made liaison officer between the Assault Lance and the air support forces of the Special Operations unit four months ago. Due to the wide range of situations the Assault Lance can expect in its mission profiles, Captain Gunn has fairly broad control of the availability of air support. Usually, either Thrush light fighters for advanced scouting, or captured Stuka heavy fighters for fire support are requested.



# No Worry, or What Could Possibly Go Wrong With a JumpShip?

For MechWarrior Simulator Campaigns

*Ed Note: It is our understanding that after several decades of extensive research by scientist at NAIS, the FASA Corporation will publish the results within the next year or so. Until then, here is a quick-and-dirty account of what can go wrong in Jump Space.*

Do you remember that old cadet chestnut for deciding when you need to worry: *If you're wounded, either it's minor or it's major; if it's minor, no worry; if it's major, you'll either get worse or get better. If you get better, no worry; if you get worse, you'll either live or die. If you live, no worry; if you die, either the afterlife exists or it doesn't. If it doesn't exist, no worry; if it exists, you'll either go to heaven or...the other place. If you go to Heaven, no worry; if you go down there, either it's as bad as they say or it isn't. If it isn't, no worry. If it's as bad as they say, either you can cut a deal or you can't. If you can, no worry. If you can't, it's still not as bad as a Periphery Contract.*

Jump Space is like that. Most of the time, there's no need to worry. When there is *need* to worry, there's rarely *time* to worry until it's over. Either your training was sufficient, or it wasn't. And if it was, you have no time to worry until it's over. If it wasn't, you'll be doing your worrying in another time and place.

A JumpShip utilizing its Kearny-Fuchida Drive has been described as 'making a hole in space and pulling it in after itself' A better description would be that it works by folding space/time and pushing the ship through it as one might push a needle through a fold of cloth. (DropShips, by contrast, move along the surface of the cloth.) JumpSpace navigation consists of making the fold which joins the right two points, entering it at the right place, and exiting at the right place. At the moment of entry and the moment of exit, a little extra punch is required. Very little goes wrong with this process. It is theoretically possible that the process can go wrong in several places.

Let's begin at the beginning. A ship is ready to Jump. Those last five minutes before jump, when all sensors are

covered, including weapons sights, is known as 'blind time'. In the bad days before the Ares Conventions, JumpShips were liable to attack during 'blindtime', just before they went into Jump. An attacker had to either come up unnoticed with a very low-emission DropShip drive, or a very fast approach at that last moment was required. Sensors were designed with increasingly longer ranges to make this sort of attack, 'blindsiding', unlikely to succeed. Nowadays, the Ares Convention largely keep such attacks from happening. Indeed, in economic terms, the capture of a JumpShip is rarely, but successfully accomplished by pirates landing space-trained infantry from fast attack stealth craft during 'blindtime'. An unsuccessful attack was almost always fatal, because of the 'suck-in effect'.

The pilot cadet mnemonic is 'dimple in, pimple out'. When a JumpShip exits real space, space dimples in as you leave. There is a 30-second period of attraction as the ship enters Jump Space. Objects close to the JumpShip may be pulled in after it. They must be 1/100th of the JumpShip's weight or less to be affected. This has been known to have fatal effects on the object so pulled; a crewman in an escape pod, or a tardy shuttlecraft have been pulled in and never seen again. In a few cases, the JumpShip itself is damaged. On March 28, 2832, a Taurian Ship, the *Calderon Star*, entered Jump too close to a massive meteor. The meteor was seen to be pulled in after it. The *Calderon Star* was never seen again.

Five things can go wrong in Jump Space. The pilot can have made an error. You can go insane. You can run into something in Jump Space. You can off course into the wrong system. You can misjump into a dangerous piece of the space-time 'continuum'.

Pilot error is covered in the table on page 52, reprinted by courtesy of the FASA Corporation.

A Jump takes from ten minutes to three hours subjective time. During that time, crew may experience hallucinations, dizziness, nausea, or disorientation. The first crews of experimental K-F Drive ships arrived at base

### Random Jump Result Table

Roll	Result
2-6	Jump Perfect
7	Missed by a few kilometers
8	Misjump to a pirate point
9	Hallucinations during Jump, persist 1 D6 days
10	Misjump, next system
11-12	Serious misjump, roll next table

### Serious Misjump Table

Roll	Result
2-3	Misjump, unknown system, 2 D6 days to find coordinates*
4-5	Misjump, system not in charts**
6-7	Severe misjump, 3-jump range 4D6 days to find coordinates
8	Severe Hallucinations during Jump personnel make a roll on INT, target number 5 or suffer trauma, 1D6 months of mental illness or gain a phobia of Gamemaster's selection
9	Severe misjump, out of Inner Sphere#
10-11	Severe misjump, out of Known Space##
12	Ship Damage, see Jump Damage Table

\* Gamemaster decide which system within a one-Jump range the JumpShip has arrived in.

\*\* System is within a one-Jump range, in an unknown system between two known ones. 3 D6 days to find coordinates.

# Have Pilots make Piloting roll, target number six, to see if they have the Periphery charts

## 2 D6 months to figure out where players are, on the FAR side of some Periphery Kingdom. Roll 2 D6 on the ComStar Clock (12 o'clock is the Davion-Kurita border; 3 o'clock is the Liao-Marik border; 6 o'clock is the Marik-Steiner border; 9 o'clock is the Steiner-Rasalhague border). Find the nearest Periphery kingdom to that point, then go to the outside of that kingdom to locate your players.

### Jump Damage Table

Roll	Result
2-3	Debris in Jump, Sensor Damage
4-5	Debris in Jump, Drive Damage
6-7	Hallucinations During Jump, personnel damage ship
8-9	Ship arrives at destination disabled, needs extensive repair
10-11	Ship arrives at unknown destination, disabled (roll for location on Serious MisJump Table, ignoring a result of 12)
12	Ship disappears with all hands, never heard of again

insane. They had looked out the windows. This is why all windows and viewports are dogged shut during a Jump, why the institution of 'blindtime'. Mankind is a visually oriented species; the unsettling effects are reduced by 90% by the simple procedure of not looking at Jump Space. Occasional crewmembers who are especially sensitive still experience distressing symptoms. Most crews by consensus, pretend to have been unconscious of anything that happens in Jump Space, because the vision distortions, hallucinations, etc bring up images from the personal subconscious of the individual. It's a case of 'I won't show you mine if you won't show me yours.' Reaction to Jump Space varies from individual. As long as you don't look outside the ship, most people experience only a slight distortion. Modern Jump Space autodriven procedures and automatic weapons disengage allow a smooth transition even if a critical crewmember suffers distortion effect. The 3911 case in Marik's Oriente Province where the Second Assistant Gunnery Officer imagined that he was in a life pod and that the PPC's arming lever was the eject handle could not have the same disastrous effect today.

Early records of Kearny-Fuchida Drive experiments show almost uniformly negative mass-detector anomaly. In the first two centuries of K-F Drive JumpShips, only one case is documented where equipment malfunction was ruled out. The next century recorded three instances. This century records five. It is conjectured that with thousands of Jump departures made every year, enough debris has been sucked into Jump Space to have slightly increased the chance of running



into it. It is theorized that ships like the Calderon Star add to that debris. It is theoretically possibly to be impacted and destroyed in Jump Space. Don't stay up nights worrying about it, though. The odds are less than those of being hit by a meteor while crossing the street.

If an alien object interacts with a JumpShip in Jump Space, several things can happen. Damage may be done to the JumpShip which will not become apparent until the ship reenters real space; damage may be done which disables the K-F Drive, with the horrifying result of remaining in JumpSpace (since it happens so rarely and we have only theoretical knowledge of how it happens, we have no idea of how to recover from this possibility); or the ship may be destroyed. There are 115 recorded instances where ships never came out of Jump Space. There are three instances where ships seem to have passed through time as well as space, exiting five to thirty years after they entered.

Equipment does fail, even K-F Drives with their triple redundancy systems. Once in a thousand times, a ship comes out in the wrong place. Most of the time, it comes out close to what was intended (Off Course) Once in ten thousand times it comes out fatally wrong, say in the middle of a sun. Three times out of ten thousand, it comes out in some unexpected location.

This is why ships carry navigators, in case they must find themselves in an unknown star system, and must find their way back. This how elderly JumpShips whose drive goes wrong get rich, by accidentally discovering star systems and selling the knowledge in the right places. This is how military careers get wrecked, by an off course-discovery which is not reported to superiors, but sold to industry instead. Due to the mechanics of the K-F Drive, JumpShips cannot enter real space at a further distance than one hundred light years from a sun. Even in misjump, a ship will not enter further from a source of solar emission than that.

Assume that it's a normal Jump, you get where you're going, and you reenter real space. As a JumpShip enters real space, space pimples out as you enter. For some reason, the force which pushes from the exit point, repelling the objects at the exit point for thirty seconds, this force radiates in straighter paths than the attracting force at the entry point.

The reason that Jump Points are calculated at the nadir and zenith of a planetary system is that most planets and

### Controller Failure Table

Die Roll (1D6)	Result
1	Jump Success, Drive Coil Damaged
2	Jump Success, Drive Coil Damaged Controller Destroyed
3	Off Course, Drive Coil Damaged
4	Off Course, Drive Coil Destroyed
5	Misjump, Drive Coil Damaged
6	Misjump, Drive Coil Destroyed

This table is reprinted from *DropShips and JumpShips*, a book from the FASA Corporation which is undergoing revision. The table is reprinted by permission of the FASA Corporation.

most of the lumps and bumps that make up asteroid belts, rings, even regularly recurring meteor swarms occur along the plane of the ecliptic. The nadir is as far as you can get on one side ('above' and 'below' are inaccurate terms when you refer to the three dimensions of space) of the ecliptic plane, while the zenith is as far as you can get on the other. The nadir and zenith are the 'zones of least trouble' as far as entry and exit from real space to Jump Space and back. Not all zeniths or all nadirs are suitable for Jump Points, but at least one of them will be. Every JumpShip carries the *Astrogator's Guide to the Inner Sphere*, which lists Jump Points for each known system. The *Astrogator's Guide* is revised every decade to include minute shifts in Jump Points, newly discovered systems, workable 'Pirate Jump Points' in known systems, etc.

Pirate Jump Points, Jump Points which are not the nadir or zenith, are not that hard to calculate. They are just more likely to be populated with rocks or other moving objects. The probability is less than five percent of being hit

even at a Pirate Point, still it's not a chance one takes unnecessarily. Add the fact that most system defense forces look suspiciously at a ship entering at a Pirate Point, and you see the reason to avoid them. They are usually much closer to the planetary system, even to a particular inhabited or mining planet, than the standard nadir and zenith point.

Ninety nine point nine nine nine percent of the time, you reenter to nice comfortable empty space. If there's something there which is stationary, it will be pushed out of the way by the reentry effect. If it is large, it will be pushed a small distance, but it will still get out of your way. If it is another JumpShip which is in the process of recharging, the two ships will repel each other, as the polarity of a ship which is exiting Jump is repulsive to even a partially-charged JumpShip sail's charge. Recall, also, that Jump Points are wide, occupying a minimum of a hundred cubic kilometers apiece. JumpShips just don't run into each other at Jump Points.

So the problem isn't what happens when you reenter. It's the instant after.

That point oh oh one percent of the time, you're in real trouble. You run into something that's moving.

If you reenter into a moving pile of rock, say an asteroid or a meteor swarm, *it's* motion and direction remain almost unchanged. If you reenter into a moving cometary body (the comet's tail is too insubstantial to pose a danger of thump damage), the ice which holds the comet's head together will be melted to liquid by the reentry effect for a difference of 1-200 meters around reentry point. Still, the reentry effect does not last long enough to effect the motion of the rocks which compose the rest of that comet to be effected. So, meteors, or ex-comet, you find yourself in the center of a mass of quickly moving rocks.

Ouch.

The chance of serious damage here is less than during a recharge, because the JumpShip has its sails stowed away and its sensor gear covered during blindtime. Still, if a large enough rock hits you, you will lose armor; if enough small rocks hit hard enough, they will puncture your surface.

Once you have safely reentered, your problems are over, right? Surely you know better by now. There are several things that can go wrong now.

The bad luck factor — wars, politics, religion, refugees, quarrelsome pirates, and such are outside the scope of this article. The interplanetary journey from JumpShip to DropShip can get interesting. See your MechWarrior book for the various nasty things the universe can do to a poor merc who just wants to make his food bills. Then there's the human factor — who among your crew has skipped out on obligations, bad debts, etc, whose enemies or ex-spouses are waiting for them to land on a planet. You MechWarrior players can figure this out for yourselves. We're only talking

about the physical things that can happen as part of the Jump process.

The 'splash' made in the ordered electro-magnetic currents of a star system is recognizable by an experienced pilot, sensor operator, or comm ops operator. A small JumpShip like the Scout class sets up 'ripples' which can be misread as a natural occurrence, a minor asteroid collision or meteor strike, for example. A Monolith-class leaves a signature which could only be account for by two moon-sized objects colliding. Most JumpShip signatures can be read; a ship which has been encountered before can often be identified by its signature alone.

The next thing you do is to spread out your Jump Sails for an electromagnetic recharge from the solar winds. The engineers of a Jump Ship must be able to adjust the receptors of the Jump Sail for the various solar types, depending upon the type of sun, its age, and the distance from it the Jump Point is located. This is why a Jump Sail takes variable times to charge, anywhere from a few days to more than a week. If the JumpShip in your simulator games loses its chief engineer, or its techs above skill level four, the referee should make the techs remaining do an engineering roll for the recharge, according to the table.

Jump Sails age. As they age, they grow less able to receive energy (20% loss per century). As the sail ages, it will take longer to recharge. For every fifty years the sail has aged, it takes one day longer to recharge that sail. It also becomes more brittle with age. If sail is over 250 years old, treat all 'sail damaged' results on random events in jump table as 'sail destroyed'.

Sensor malfunctions tell the techs that recharge has successfully occurred when it has not finished. They take the sail out of alignment too soon. Or the sensors may suggest the wrong alignment, delaying the whole process until you correct the error and begin again.

If you have to break off the process and begin again due to events like an attack or magnetic storm, another roll is required.

Once the sails are charged, your ship is ready for another Jump. Are you free from worry by now? No, it's time to start at the top of this article again!

Tables Continued Next Page



### Recharge Malfunction Chart

2 D6 Roll	Result
2	Sail Destroyed
3	Sensor Malfunction Sail does not charge
4	Sail Damaged you cannot repair
5	Sensor Malfunction Roll Engineering roll 1X per shift to notice, then correct & start again
6	Sail Damaged Repair in 1 D6 days,
7	Sensor Malfunction Add 2 days to recharge time
8	Techs cannot agree on reading Add 2D6 hours to recharge time
9	Sail Fails to Align Add 1 day to recharge time
10-12	Minor or no result as determined by referee

### Solar Recharge Difficulty by Engineering Skill Level

Skill Level	Target Number for Success
9 or above	2
8	3
7	3
6	4
5	5
4	5
3	6
2	7
1	8

If even one success is made, recharge will be successful. If more than four successes are made, roll need not be made again for that type of star. If no successes are made, roll on Recharge Malfunction Chart. Referee, modify as appropriate to your campaign.

## Crew Positions

As noted in the text of the article, previously published statistics have reflected current shortages of trained personnel, and mercenaries' chronic shortness of hard cash. Most published descriptions of DropShips, for example, the Technical Readout Descriptions, have given the absolute minimum crew a ship will fly with, not the minimum needed for safe operation and good maintenance of the ship.

Star League Era manuals called for three eight-hour shifts in a twenty-four hour ship's day. (All JumpShips and most DropShips operate on Greenwich Mean Time.) Each shift included:

One pilot and one other navigational specialist, either astrogator or helmsman, on the bridge. Larger ships would have both astrogator (navigational specialist) and helmsmen (ship handling specialist) on the bridge at all times. The Captain is always one of the pilots.

One senior engineer and one engineering tech, in the engine room.

A gunnery officer and one gunner or gunnery trainee per firing arc of ship. They may spend the shift in the ready room, but seconds count if gunners are needed.

In addition, each ship carried:

Two secondary engineers per 1,000 tons of ship, minimum of two. One of these would be serving as cook, one on cargo duty (checking the integrity of cargo, cargo netting, and tie-downs, reading dials on temperature or pressure sensitive cargo, etc. 'Secondary engineers' are already trained personnel who have studied both piloting and engineering, but who are getting space experience before specializing. They will serve under both the captain/pilot and the chief engineer as well as being instructed by the gunnery officer and the cargomaster. They are in the chain of command.

At least one trainee in each department, often five to ten ensigns-under-instruction and apprentice stewards (civilian entry-level personnel) or enlisted men-trainees per ship. In a unit or company which plans for the long run, constant training of crew is an absolute necessity. These trainees will study the common tasks of bridge and engine room as well as keeping up a formidable course of computer instruction. Even these trainees have had three years of schooling before being accepted as crew members. They are below all others in the chain of command, although an ensign-under-instruction has more than once had to captain a ship when the primary bridge took a hit and he or she was the only pilot left.

The ladder of promotion for pilots went: ensign-under-instruction, secondary engineer, helmsman, astrogator, third officer, second officer, first officer, captain.

The ladder of promotion for engineering crew went trainee, secondary engineer, (secondary specialization such as gunnery or cargo), engineer, first engineer, master engineer, chief engineer. The reason for secondary specialization is that there are times such as overhaul when several engineers are needed working at once. During most of the voyage most of the secondaries work as something else, a slot where the individual often remained. You have to have a talent for engineering to be promoted to first engineer, responsible for a shift in the engine room.

The gunnery officer and the cargo master might have assistants in the larger ships, otherwise they worked, not always happily, with a crew of trainees. A merchant ship would have a crew of cargo handler/stewards, who served as loaders onplanet and food/supply/maintenance specialists otherwise.

There is always a cook on duty for each shift, aided by either trainees or stewards. In larger ships, there was a head cook to oversee them. In smaller ships, the cargo master bought the food at each port. In larger ships the head cook does. The importance of the cook to morale cannot be overestimated. In the cramped conditions of shipboard, small things grow to great importance. Crews have mutinied because of poor food.

A shuttle, a DropShip which only operates interplanetarily in a small system, or a landing craft, can get away with two pilots, two engineers, and a secondary engineer or trainee.



# Medium BattleMechs: The Quirks in the Machine

### 'BattleMech'

The word inspires awe, fear, respect, any number of a hundred emotions. Normally, the most fearsome sub-class of this synonym for terror is the assault BattleMech. Yet there are situations when the best 'Mech for the job is not an assault 'Mech, or even a heavy. There are times when you need to balance mobility against firepower. The majority of specialized 'Mechs fall on the borderline between medium and heavy. Economic factors make it more likely that a MechWarrior will run into specialized medium 'Mechs than any other weight class. So let us settle on the specific, the Medium BattleMech, and examine the quirks that may lead you to grief.

"The Medium BattleMech is a mid speed 'Mech used to support recon forces or to spearhead a heavy unit's attack." (*Roget's Dictionary of BattleMechs* 2650).

Were I piloting an Enforcer I would be glad to spearhead a heavy BattleMech Attack. Yet I would prefer a Phoenix Hawk to support a recon sweep. Were I in a Cicada, it would be more proper to be part of the recon sweep. So we have determined that even within a weight class all is not equal, even BattleMechs of the exact tonnage are different (the Spider and the UrbanMech, the Awesome and the Charger). So we can safely say that each design is unique in its performance and abilities. In actual use and combat these individual quirks are self apparent or just take care of themselves. It does not matter if that rookie piloting the Rifleman knows that his tracking system can track over twenty different aerial targets at once. All that matters is he hit that Stuka about to make a strafing run on him.

In this case everyone knows about a Rifleman's ability to hit aerial targets. Not all traits are so readily apparent: ever tried to hit an UrbanMech when it's behind a two story building? Okay, now that we all agree that quirks exist, so let's ask the question why do so many of the lower technology simulators fail to take these quirks into account? Instead of trying to get prayers out of a dead acolyte I am going to provide you with all the data you will need to update any simulator you might be forced to use (there is nothing like real live combat). This comprehensive listing will enable you to cover in more depth the variables that might occur on

the battlefield.

Did I hear some one ask "Why do I need to bother? My simulator is good enough!" Not necessarily so, oh gallant warrior: let me give you an example. A Jenner pilot on Solaris, was known to be pretty good. Now he had a big championship match coming up against a hot Clint pilot. As he was still paying off the initial loans which had gotten him started in the Games, he did not have much money. All he could afford was a simple flatscreen simulator. But oh how he trained! For a solid month he destroyed that Clint seven ways from Sunday until he figured there was no way he could lose. The fight began and the fight ended; a total of two minutes and the Jenner was a headless exploding star. It seems that his simulator had not ever heard of the Sloan Lockover targeting system!

Not convinced, you say? Then how about the Marik Wasp pilot in the civil war of 3017? Seems he managed to slip behind a Wolf's Dragoons Catapult in the city for an easy back shot. Our pilot here must have been a terrible study in school; imagine his surprise when the Catapult's dual LRM racks pivoted around and politely shredded his BattleMech.

Now that we are all agreed on those silly questions about the necessity of taking individual quirks into account, let us proceed with the meat of the article.

### BattleMech Quirks

(arranged alphabetically within a weight grade)

#### LCT-1V Locust

Arm mounted weapons can swivel to the rear. A Locust's leg structure allows it to squat, thus lowering its height from two to one levels. Such a maneuver costs one MP to execute or recover from, and provides full protection if the Locust is behind a level one hill. The triangular torso of the Locust (as with the Jenner, and the Cicada) puts the pilot at greater than usual risk in hand to hand combat. These Mechs are at +4 to punch and use the Punch/Hit Table when allocating damage from making a charge.

### WSP-1A Wasp

Remember the SRM-2 is leg mounted, so cannot fire over a level one obstruction if the Wasp is within 2 hexes of the obstruction.

### STG-3R Stinger

The cockpit of the Stinger 'Mech is very small. A pilot spending more than a few hours straight loses efficiency. After six hours a pilot is at +1 to all rolls made until he has at least an hour's rest outside the 'Mech.

### COM-2D Commando

In a Campaign-level Simulation the Commando gains additional bonuses on recon duty. Due to its small sensor profile a lone Commando is more difficult to spot by Aerospace recon. Gamemaster assigns modifiers at his discretion.

### JVN-10N Javelin

The top-heavy weight of the dual SRM racks gives the Javelin a +1 to all piloting rolls made when running through woods, rough terrain, or rubble.

### SDR-5V Spider

The solid construction of Spiders and their parts gives a -1 to all repair rolls. In the *Mercenary's Handbook*, a Spider requires only 12SP instead of the usual 15 (25 for salvaged 'Mechs). The pivotal mounted jump jets give this 'Mech great agility in the air. Assign all attackers a +2 modifier to hit when firing on a jumping Spider (instead of +1). The jump jets also allow a Spider to change course while jumping, so disregard the straight line rule for Spiders when jumping.

### UM-R60 Urbanmech

When behind level one cover an Urbanmech provides a smaller target. Assign a total +4 to hit instead of the normal +3. Its low profile does make the head

a more likely target so treat all left arm hits on the Punch/Hit table as head hits in addition to the normal location.

### VLK-QA Valkyrie

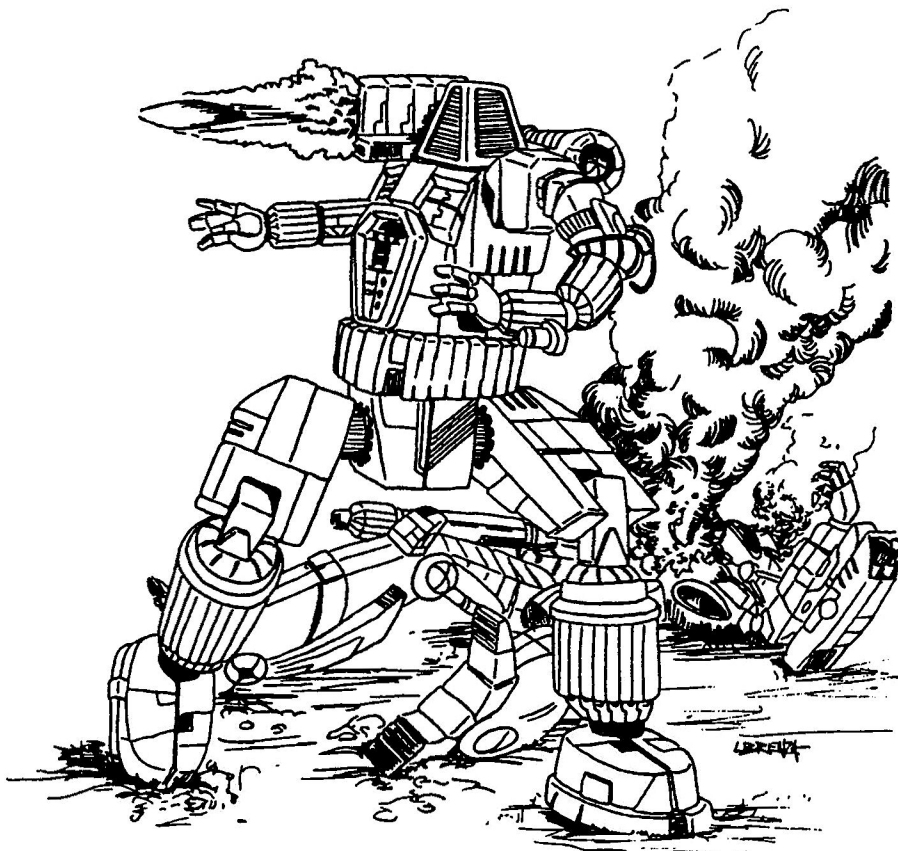
Older model Valkyries have an inefficient tracking system in their fire control computers. Unless a Targeting Tracking system built after 3032 is used, assign a +1 modifier to all weapons fire. Older systems can also be substituted with a simple Line Of Sight system, removing the modifier. The LOS system is prone to breakdown increasing monthly maintenance cost to 17SP.

### FS-9H Firestarter

The Firestarter uses a fusion backed flamer. This style of flamer is hotter than the standard models but does not have the adhesive quality of Inferno chemical flames.

### JR-7D Jenner

The Jenner is poor at hand to hand combat. Assign the normal modifiers, +4 to punch and use the Punch/Hit Table to distribute attacker's charging damage.





### OTT-7J Ostscout

The Ostscout's sensor system is especially able to detect over long ranges (a range surpassing 18 Kilometers in some terrain). The Ostscout's sensor can detect any active vehicle automatically and detect a shielded one on a roll of 8 or more if the shielded vehicle is within 13 hexes. Mechs using a Guardian ECM suite are detectable by an Ostscout as it picks up the static field as a "Dead Zone" in its sensor sweep. In the *Mercenary's Handbook* rules, an Ostscout has a maneuver value of 9 but a combat value of only 2. When the Ostscout is running a standard sensor sweep, it is possible for an enemy vehicle to go unnoticed as the sensors compile data faster than pilot or computer can absorb. A pilot must roll a 7+ to detect an enemy vehicle (add up to +3 to this roll for small vehicles at gamemaster's discretion) and 11+ to detect a shielded vehicle. This number goes down by one for every turn or until the enemy vehicle fires (on the Ostscout), jumps or moves across the front 45° arc of the Ostscout. (note that shielded vehicles are always a minimum of 7+). Any vehicle using a Beagle Active Probe within six standard kilometers is automatically detected by the Ostscout's passive sensor array.

### PNT-9R Panther

When a Panther punches with its right arm, roll 2D6. On an 8 or more the cooling system on the PPC has been "pinched". It now generates 13 heat when fired. This must be repaired by at least a field level Tech shop.

### ASN-2I Assassin

Before the Assassin enters a simulation, the other player or the gamemaster rolls 2D6. On a 10 or more the SRM will be prone to jam. After the Mech receives its first Left Torso hit roll 2D6, a 7+ means the system has jammed and is useless for the rest of the game. Each time after the first hit the Assassin is hit in the left torso or fires its SRM, roll 2D6. Like Stinger pilots, Assassin pilots lose effectiveness after long periods of time in the cramped cockpit. The same modifiers apply, +1 to all rolls made. Restructuring can be done but in addition to maintenance trouble, ejection roll is made at +2.

### CDA-2A Cicada

The Cicada suffers the same hand to hand constraints that the Locust and Jenner suffer: +4 to punch, Punch/Hit Table for all Attacker damage in a charge, etc. A Cicada equipped with the original style heat sinks is prone to mechanical difficulties. Before a simulation roll 2D6. A roll of 10+ means that the Mech only dissipates 6 heat after the first turn it fires all its weapons.

### CLNT-3T Clint

In the *Mercenary's Handbook*, a Clint requires 29 SP (69 for salvaged) to maintain each month. This is due to its non-standard part sizes. The Sloane 220 Lockover System is one of the best Targeting systems ever made. All weapons fire by a Clint with undamaged sensors and an uninjured pilot are made at +2 to hit. This system can be installed in another Mech but has a +6 modifier to the installation roll. If the roll is failed by more than two, the calibration is destroyed and the bonuses lost.

### HER-2S Hermes

The E.A.R. communication system is one of the strongest BattleMech Com systems available. On a roll of 6+ a Hermes can penetrate normal jamming systems. A roll of 9+ allows it to penetrate even the Guardian ECM Suite. In addition, a roll of 7+ by the Hermes pilot means he is able to keep his transmission undetected by sensor systems like those on the Ostscout and Cyclops. A roll of 11+ masks the transmission from even a Beagle Active Probe.

### VL-2T Vulcan

The Vulcan has no hands so is at a +1 to punch. The slim torso structure makes the Vulcan difficult to hit at longer ranges. Assign a +1 to hit modifier for ranges over 6 hexes and subtract one from the die roll on the Number of Missiles Hit Table when firing on a Vulcan.

### WTH-1 Whitworth

The fragile legs of the Whitworth are its greatest weakness. All rolls for possible crits on the legs are made at a +2. Additionally the Whitworth incurs an additional 5 points damage to itself in all Death From Above attacks it makes, due to the same fragility of the legs.

### BJ-1 Blackjack

Due to its bulky arm weapons the Blackjack is at +2 to punch instead of +1. If the lower arm actuator (located higher on the BJ-1 than on other Mechs) is removed, the Blackjack can swivel its arms and fire to the rear like the Rifleman. In addition to a +3 to punch modifier, removing this actuator reduces lateral mobility of the arms, making the Blackjack unable to fire on more than one target per turn. The shoulder joints of the Blackjack are very exposed. When a critical roll is made on the arms subtract one from the D6 roll.

### HCT-3F Hatchetman

When engaging an Aerospace fighter a Hatchetman pilot has two options. One gives a -1 to hit modifier with his AC\10



(or primary weapons system if a variant). The second gives the attacker a +1 modifier to hit the Hatchetman. This is due to the sophisticated TharHess AirTactical programs loaded into the tracking system.

#### **PXH-1 Phoenix Hawk**

The electronics systems of the P'hawk gives it an edge on the battlefield. The BattleCom system is similar to the Hermes E.A.R. (+7 for normal jamming, +9 for Guardian ECM Suites.) The Tek-Tru-Trak gives its pilot a -1 to hit, provided the pilot is uninjured and sensors are fully functional. A piloting skill roll of +3 allows a pilot to jump 8 hexes instead of 6 with a total of 9 heat generated.

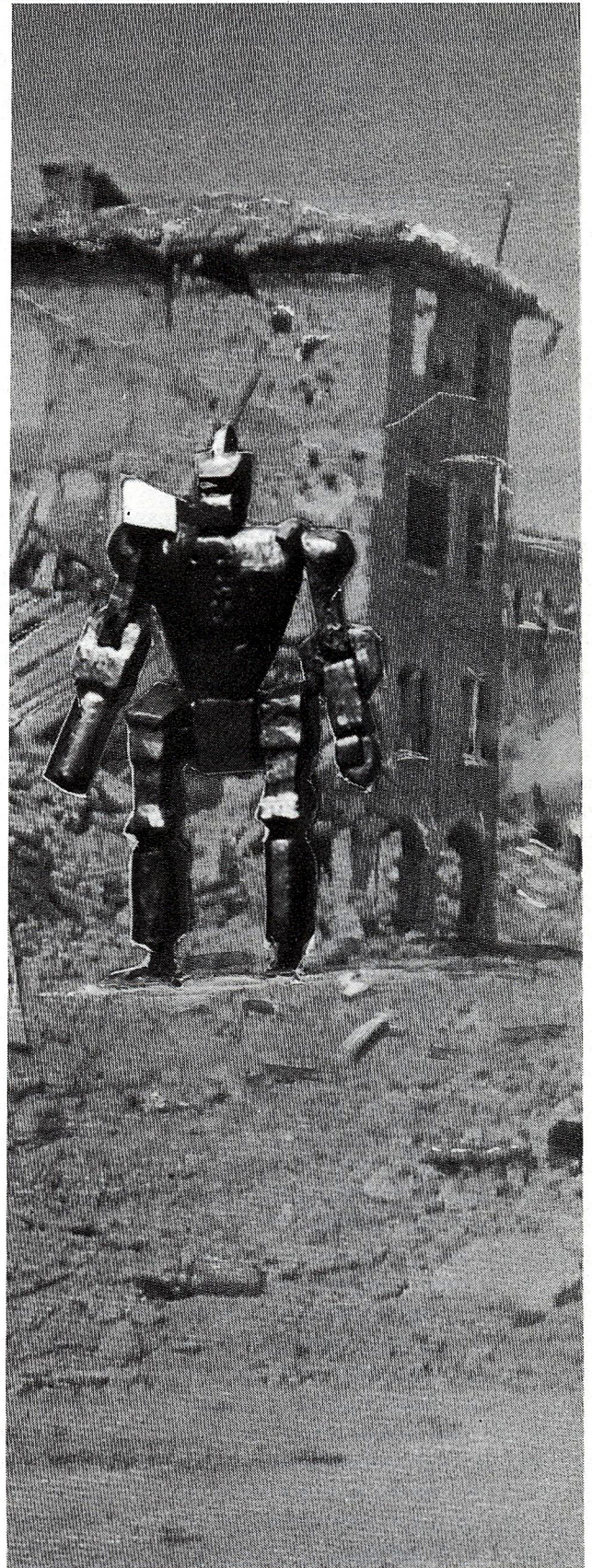
#### **VND-1R Vindicator**

If the Vindicator kneels near water or is in level one water for a turn when it does not fire its PPC, it can dissipate an extra 4 heat through the cooling sleeve of the PPC. When the Jaguar LRM is first hit on the Crit table it is still functional and can continue to fire. Only after it has been hit a second time is it damaged and no longer operational. The bulky medium laser equipment in the head gives a +2 modifier to all ejection rolls.

#### **CN9-A Centurion**

A Centurion is at +1 to punch with its right arm (+3 if equipped with an AC/20), but does 6 points of damage

*About the Author: Wallace Ritkers runs an Arena combat school on Solaris. A winner of numerous championships Wallace has also served at least twenty years in mercenary units of the InnerSphere. His harsh but thorough training techniques and inexhaustible supply of stories make his school one of the more profitable on Solaris.*





# Ch-1M Chimera

### Overview:

The years just before the First Succession War were especially grim for Dr David Harrison and the Brigadier Corporation. When Dr Harrison had pioneered his revolutionary four legged 'Mech designs he was certain that they would usher in a new era of BattleMech warfare. His vision had convinced the tiny Brigadier Corporation to gamble its financial life on his novel designs.

Now, during the last days of the Star League, Harrison's dreams were dying, and Brigadier was slowly sinking into financial oblivion. Criticism poured in from all sides, and even his supporters were referring to quads as "an idea whose time has not yet come." In desperation, Brigadier decided to try one last design. With Dr Harrison's consent, the company pooled its remaining resources, ceased production of the Rhino, and radically reduced the number of Scorpions and Goliaths being produced to begin production of this new design.

All 'Mechs are designed for a certain role: scouting, fire support, assault, etc. This new design, tentatively designated 'Omega', was no exception. The Omega was designed to save Brigadier from financial ruin, while simultaneously vindicating Dr Harrison. In short, the Omega was designed to satisfy all and displease none.

To this end, Dr Harrison began by taking a hard look at the criticisms of his designs. The Scorpion's speed was a tremendous asset, but was more than offset by its rough ride, lack of armor, and inadequate support weaponry. The Goliath had excellent protection, a good long range punch, and a smooth ride, but these were offset by its lack of short range support weaponry and its sheer cost. Brigadier simply couldn't afford to produce a large number of assault 'Mechs with their limited resources. Finally, the Rhino had demonstrated that 'Mechs based on a 'surprise tactic' were only effective until the surprise wore off. He resolved that the new design would inherit the best characteristics of his predecessors. In addition, Dr Harrison solicited opinions

from the MechWarriors themselves. This design would be popular with the quartermaster and the warrior alike.

### Capabilities:

The first critical consideration was size. Many felt that the Scorpion was too small, and the Goliath was too large for Brigadier to produce in great numbers. Dr Harrison finally settled on 75 tons, the heaviest 'Mech that Brigadier could hope to produce in reasonable quantities. This aside, he turned to popular opinion,

Warrior feedback indicated that the risky 'Death From Above' attack was extremely popular, yet none of the quad designs could jump. Dr Harrison integrated four Comet jump jets into the Omega. The jump jets are the Omega's most distinctive feature. Dr Harrison had long since proved that four legged 'Mechs are inherently more stable than two legged ones. This made the Omega perfect for 'Death From Above' attacks. If the attack is successful, the 'Mech has up to a thirty two percent better chance of remaining on its feet than a standard two legged design.

Unfortunately, there was a price to pay for this ability. The Omega required the most sophisticated gyroscope ever installed into a 'Mech. The device was reliable, but only Brigadier manufactured replacements, and these cost up to 300% more than a 'normal' gyro of the same weight.

In addition to the Omega's mobility, Dr Harrison was determined to provide the Omega with considerable punch. He began by mounting the deadly HeartSeeker Gauss Rifle (complete with two tons of ammunition) for long range work. The medium ranges were covered by a DoomBringer LRM-15 rack with an Artemis IV fire control system. Finally, anything that wandered into short range had to face the fury of an Excelsior large pulse laser.

Protection was also a top priority for Dr Harrison and his design staff. The Omega's internal systems are entombed in fourteen tons of StarGard armor.

The Omega had inherited the firepower and protection of the Goliath, and some of the mobility of the Scorpion, but nothing from the Rhino. Dr Harrison resolved to remedy this. It was well known that infantry often tried to sneak up under four legged 'Mechs, hoping for an easy shot at the cockpit. The Omega boasted a well armored underbelly, and the ability to make a special 'squash attack'. In addition, the sophisticated gyro made it possible for the Omega to brace itself on its front legs and kick directly to its rear!

Finally, the only thing the Omega lacked was a name. Some members of the design staff favored the tentative designation. Dr Harrison pointed out that 'Omega' was Greek for 'Last'\*. He felt certain that this would *not* be the last quad design once the Great Houses saw its military abilities. In the end, it was Dr Harrison's youngest daughter who solved their dilemma. She had always been fascinated with ancient Terran mythology, and she thought the new design looked like a chimera. Dr Harrison explained to his staff that a chimera was a four legged monster with huge bat wings and the heads of a dragon, a lion, and a goat. The new name seemed perfect — each of the heads corresponded to a weapons system and the jump jets to the wings. In a fit of inspiration, Dr Harrison hired the consultants that had designed the grim visage of the now famous AS-7D Atlas to improve the resemblance.

Once again these freelance consultants worked their magic. The Gauss Rifle resembled a dragon's head, the LRMs resembled a goat's, and the large pulse laser was seemingly embedded in a lion's maw. Dr Harrison was thrilled with the results, even though they delayed production by a full three months.

The Chimera entered production in the latter years of the First Succession War. All of the Houses placed substantial orders, and it looked as if Brigadier might pull out of its financial doldrums until a fatal problem in the ultrasophisticated gyro surfaced. Brigadier worked frantically on the problem, but by the time it was fully solved hostilities had ceased. Nevertheless, Brigadier resumed production until its demise in the very early years of the Second Succession War. It is estimated that of the seventeen hundred Chimeras manufactured by Brigadier, fully one fourth were destroyed in the opening years of the war, but the whereabouts of the others remained a mystery until one was seen serving in a Kurita Regiment in the 3039 War. Since then, several of these versatile 'Mechs have appeared in the Com Guards.

\* The designers of the Assault BattleMech who chose the name 'Omega' took the other meaning of 'Ultimate'.

### Battle History

Due to the incredible destruction of the Second Succession War, there are only fragmentary references of Chi-

meras in combat. In the first year of the war, a mercenary battalion in the service of House Davion was attacked by a Kuritan battalion on the planet Lucerne. The mercenaries had just bought an entire lance of Chimeras from Brigadier, deploying them as a last line of defense for the city they were defending. The Chimeras settled in on a ridge facing the expected Kuritan landing site. Their intelligence proved correct, and a horrific battle formed on the plains in front of the Chimeras. A lance of Kuritan BattleMasters managed to rip through the mercenary lines and headed for the city.

The combined long range fury of four Gauss Rifles and four LRM racks devastated the BattleMasters, who could only reply with their extended range PPCs. The wounded BattleMasters closed the gap between themselves and the Chimeras. Ostensibly, the BattleMasters had the Chimeras outgunned at short range, but the large pulse lasers and the HeartSeeker Gauss Rifle continued to deliver harsh punishment on the invaders, two of whom were destroyed. The remaining pair sought to flee, but one Chimera launched itself into what is described as "a perfect Death From Above jump kick" that devastated a fleeing BattleMaster's tattered center torso, leaving it a smoking ruin. The last BattleMaster was directly behind the Chimera that had destroyed his lancemate, and moved in for the kill only to discover, to his horror, the Chimera's 'bronco' kick. With the BattleMasters dispatched, the Chimeras returned to their ridge.

### Special Rules:

MechWarriors who would like to study the tactical implications of fighting a Chimera, but who don't wish to tangle with the Com Guards are advised to program the following rules into their simulators:

(1) The Chimera is capable of a special anti-infantry 'squash attack'. In essence, the Chimera raises its torso straight up, then brings it straight down until it actually touches the ground. The Chimera does not have to be prone to execute the 'squash'.

(2) The Chimera's sophisticated gyro provides the 'Mech with tremendous dexterity. A Chimera may plant itself on its forward legs and kick directly into the hex to its rear. This 'bronco kick' is resolved on the full body chart, not the kick chart.



# CH-1M Chimera

## CH-1M Chimera

**Mass:** 75 tons

**Chassis:** Brigadier 5000

**Power Plant:** Vlar 300 XL

**Cruising Speed, Ground:** 47.3 kph

**Maximum Speed, Ground:** 69.9 kph

**Jump Jets:** Comet Trailblazer

**Jump Capacity:** 120 m

**Armor:** StarGard

**Armament:** Heartseeker Gauss Rifle  
Doombringer LRM-15 Rack  
Excelsior Large Pulse Laser

**Manufacturer:** Brigadier Corporation

**Communications System:** Rolm 7000 X

**Targeting and Tracking System:** ICM Lok-On

**Type:** CH-1M Chimera

Equipment		Mass
Internal Structure:		7.5
Engine:	300 XL	9.5
Walking MP:	4	
Running MP:	6	
Jumping MP:	4	
Heat Sinks:	10 (20)	0.0
Gyro:		3.0
Cockpit:		3.0

Armor Factor:	224	14.0
	<i>Internal</i>	<i>Armor</i>
	<i>Structure</i>	<i>Value</i>

Head	3	9
Center Torso	23	32
Center Torso (rear)		11
Right/Left Torso	16	22
Right/Left Torso (rear)		10
Right/Left Arm	12	24
Right/Left Leg	16	30

Weapons and Ammo	Loc.	CS	Mass
Gauss Rifle	RT	7	15.0
Ammo (Gauss Rifle)	RT	2	2.0
LRM-15	LT	3	7.0
Artemis IV FCS	LT	1	1.0
Ammo (LRM-15)	LT	1	1.0
Ammo (LRM- 15)	H	1	1.0
Large Pulse Laser	LT	3	7.0
Jump Jet	LFL	1	1.0
Jump Jet	RFL	1	1.0
Jump Jet	LRL	1	1.0
Jump Jet	RRL	1	1.0

We were unable to obtain a picture of this unusual BattleMech in all its glory — only the imagination of the reader has the skill to portray the 'three-headed beast'. If any of our readers wishes to try his/her skill at a portrait, we'll be happy to publish the results.

# 'Mechs That Don't Shoot

Not all BattleMechs are meant to stand on a battlefield to take and return fire. *BattleTechnology* has a library of specialist BattleMechs. We thought you'd be interested to see BattleMechs designed for special operations, specialist 'Mechs who are not doing their jobs right if they come to an exchange of shots.

### The SND-01 Sandman LAMs

#### Overview:

The Sandman is designed to obtain and transport essential personnel from places they would rather not be to places where they are needed. It's a forcible extraction specialist with a rather odd construction history. It's the only 'Mech we know of which was conceived of by someone listening to a song. In May of 3020, Justo San Andreas, a mercenary from Carey's Cavaliers, a company working under contract to Snord's Irregulars, got into a high-stakes poker game on Kooken's Pleasure Pit. During the game, he was listening to a teammate's vintage rock tapes. He ended the four-day marathon with enough C-bills to construct his own 'Mech...and the idea for the Sandman from the Classical group Metallica's song, *Enter Sandman*. The 'Mech was constructed to his specifications while he practiced piloting it on a simulator built for that special purpose (you *can* buy anything on Kooken's Pleasure Pit).

From outside, the Sandman looks like a Stinger LAM, complete with fake weapons ports. It is faster than any other LAM currently made. The compartments are not obvious; indeed, they are shielded from most sensor scans by the same insulators which protect passengers from battlefield radiation. When San Andreas returned from leave with his own 'Mech, only his company commander and the lieutenant in charge of special operations were informed of its special properties. He was reassigned to the Special Operations Group, where the Sandman performed several 'recon missions'. In 3022, the SOG was hired for a special job, removing a fuels chemist and his family from the then-Capellan world of Tall Trees. The planet held several research stations, including the Convention-breaking BioChemical Warfare facility. The chemist, Martin Wu, had smuggled word out to the Federated Suns that he wished to leave his current employment, but that he would not go without his wife and children. The Snord observer reported that San Andreas behaved in the finest traditions of the Irregulars when he had a music tape smuggled in to Dr Wu.

The song gave Wu the clues that rescue was to occur that night.

The lightning raid took place at midnight. Wu had indeed left his window unlighted; his family were gathered behind it. As the rest of the lance made a feint at the facility's main gate, the Sandman punched a hole in the house wall in the next room, inserted its right arm, and opened the hatch. When the right arm was filled, he withdrew it and inserted the left arm for the remaining family members to enter. He then withdrew to a safe distance, fired a signal barrage, and changed form to flee. Not a shot was exchanged. As the Sandman fired his barrage, his outside speakers were blaring *Enter Sandman*.

Since this rescue, San Andreas has gone independent after receiving a substantial bonus from Snord's design team for his 'Mech design. He and his 'Mech *Peter Pan* have been reported at various times during the Thirties in Canopian space. Reports since then have been vague as to his whereabouts.

**Varlants:** During the Tall Trees rescue, the need for additional space became apparent. The SND-01 Sandman holds four passengers; Martin Wu had three children. The two youngest children had to fit into the space meant for one adult. Both were severely traumatized; the four year old suffered a broken arm. Some of Wu's samples had to be left behind, though his disks and vids arrived safely. A forty-five ton variant was designed by a Snord's Irregulars Tech Design Team. 'Security considerations' are given as the reason for lack of information on the larger SND-02's battle history. (It looks like a Phoenix Hawk LAM). It is the property of Snord's Irregulars. It is a safe bet that if you come up against a Stinger LAM or a Phoenix Hawk LAM with speakers blasting out that song, you'd better keep a wary eye on your prisoners!



## Marcus Wu's Secret Message

### Partial 'Enter Sandman' lyrics

...I'll tuck you in, warm within;  
keep you free from sin,  
'Til the Sandman he comes...

...Sleep with one eye open  
Gripping your pillow tight...

Exit: light  
Enter: night  
Take my hand.  
We're off to Never-Never land.

...Close the doors, shut the light  
Heavy thoughts tonight  
and they aren't of Snow White.

...Dreams of war, dreams of lies

Dreams of dragon's fire  
And of things that will bite...

Enter Sandman ©1990 by Metallica

### Coded Message

You are placed in a max security cell  
You can do nothing  
Until I come to get you out.

Watch and wait for me  
Be ready to move instantly

Turn out lights, sensors off  
Rescue comes at night  
Get in the arm compartment  
We're gone

Turn out lights, sensors off  
Be vigilant  
This won't be easy.

Don't believe all you've been told  
about us  
Weapons will look like smoke & fire  
*A hint at the ripping clawed hand  
that will tear down their wall*

# SND-01 Sandman LAM      SND-02 Sandman LAM

**Mass:** 35 tons  
**Chassis:** Not Recorded  
**Power Plant:** Magna 245  
**Jet Propulsion System:** Not Recorded  
**Cruising Speed, Ground:** 75.6 kph  
**Maximum Speed, Ground:** 118.8 kph  
**Cruising Speed, Air:** 1260 kph  
**Overthrust Speed:** 1980 kph  
**Jump Jets:** Not Recorded  
**Jump Capacity:** 210 m  
**Armor:** Not Recorded  
**Armament:** None  
**Manufacturer:** Not Recorded  
**Primary Factory:** Not Recorded  
**Communications System:** Not Recorded  
**Targeting and Tracking System:** Not Recorded

## Type: SND-01 Sandman LAM

Equipment		Mass
Internal Structure:		3.5
Engine:	245	12.0
Walking MP:	7	
Running MP:	11	
Jumping MP:	7	
Thrust:	7	
Overthrust:	11	
Structural Integrity:	7	
Heat Sinks:	10	0.0
Gyro:		3.0
Cockpit:		3.0
Conversion Equipment:		3.5
Armor Factor:	88	5.5

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	8
Center Torso	11	12
Center Torso (rear)		4
Right/Left Torso	8	8
Right/Left Torso (rear)		4
Right/Left Arm	6	8
Right/Left Leg	8	12

Weapons and Ammo	Loc.	CS	Mass
Rescue Pod	RA	1	0.5
Rescue Pod	LA	1	0.5
Jump Jets	RL	2	1.0
Jump Jets	LL	2	1.0
Jump Jet	RT	1	0.5
Jump Jet	LT	1	0.5
Jump Jet	CT	1	0.5

**Mass:** 45 tons  
**Chassis:** Not Recorded  
**Power Plant:** GM 270  
**Jet Propulsion System:** Not Recorded  
**Cruising Speed, Ground:** 64.8 kph  
**Maximum Speed, Ground:** 97.2 kph  
**Cruising Speed, Air:** 1080 kph  
**Overthrust Speed:** 1620 kph  
**Jump Jets:** Not Recorded  
**Jump Capacity:** 180 m  
**Armor:** Not Recorded  
**Armament:**  
     1 Martell Medium Laser  
     1 Martell Light Laser  
**Manufacturer:** Not Recorded  
**Primary Factory:** Not Recorded  
**Communications System:** Not Recorded  
**Targeting and Tracking System:** Not Recorded

## Type: SND-02 Sandman LAM

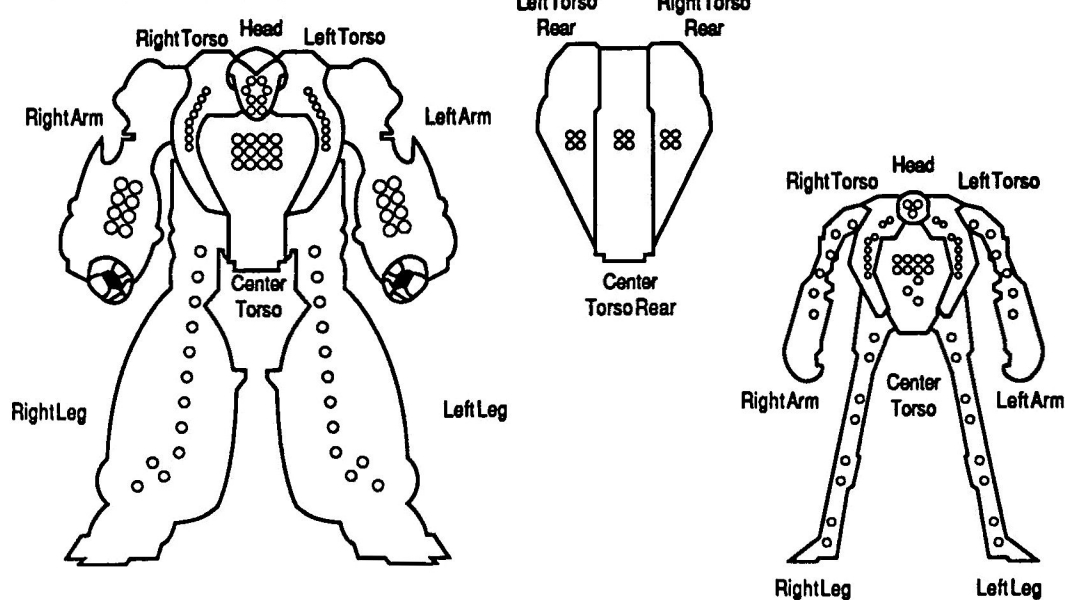
Equipment		Mass
Internal Structure:		4.5
Engine:	270	14.5
Walking MP:	6	
Running MP:	9	
Jumping MP:	6	
Thrust:	6	
Overthrust:	9	
Structural Integrity:	6	
Heat Sinks:	10	0.0
Gyro:		3.0
Cockpit:		3.0
Conversion Equipment:		4.5
Armor Factor:	152	9.5

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	8
Center Torso	14	20
Center Torso (rear)		8
Right/Left Torso	11	14
Right/Left Torso (rear)		8
Right/Left Arm	7	14
Right/Left Leg	11	22

Weapons and Ammo	Loc.	CS	Mass
Medium Laser	RA	1	1.0
Small Laser	H	1	0.5
Rescue Pod	LA	1	0.5
Rescue Pod	LA	1	0.5
Rescue Pod	LA	1	0.5
Jump Jets	RL	2	1.0
Jump Jets	LL	2	1.0
Jump Jets	CT	2	1.0



BattleTechnology
'Mech Record Sheet



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'Mech Data
Type: SND-01 Sandman LAM
Tonnage: 35 tons
Movement Points:
Walking: 7
Running: 11
Jumping: 7
Thrust: 7
Overthrust: 11

Weapons Inventory
# Type Location
1 Rescue Pod R. Arm
1 Rescue Pod L. Arm

Pod Space: None
AMMO:
AC Rounds: 0 MG Rounds: 0
SRM Packs: 0 LRMPacks: 0

Total Heat Sinks
Single [X]
Double [ ]

Warrior Data
Name:
Gunnery/Mech Skill:
Piloting/Mech Skill:
Hits Taken (Consciousness Number):
1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th
(3) (5) (7) (10) (11) (Dead)

CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Right Arm
1. Shoulder Actuator
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Hand Actuator
5. Rescue Pod
6. (Roll Again)
2
1. (Roll Again)
2. (Roll Again)
3. (Roll Again)
4. (Roll Again)
5. (Roll Again)
6. (Roll Again)

Left Arm
1. Shoulder Actuator
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Hand Actuator
5. Rescue Pod
6. (Roll Again)
2
1. (Roll Again)
2. (Roll Again)
3. (Roll Again)
4. (Roll Again)
5. (Roll Again)
6. (Roll Again)

Head
1. Life Support
2. Sensors
3. Cockpit
4. (Roll Again)
5. Sensors
6. Life Support

Center Torso
1. Engine
2. Engine
3. Engine
4. Gyro
5. Gyro
6. Gyro
2
1. Gyro
2. Engine
3. Engine
4. Engine
5. Jump Jet
6. Heat Sink

Right Torso
1. Jump Jet
2. (Roll Again)
3. (Roll Again)
4. (Roll Again)
5. (Roll Again)
6. (Roll Again)
2
1. (Roll Again)
2. (Roll Again)
3. (Roll Again)
4. (Roll Again)
5. (Roll Again)
6. (Roll Again)

Left Torso
1. Jump Jet
2. (Roll Again)
3. (Roll Again)
4. (Roll Again)
5. (Roll Again)
6. (Roll Again)
2
1. (Roll Again)
2. (Roll Again)
3. (Roll Again)
4. (Roll Again)
5. (Roll Again)
6. (Roll Again)

Right Leg
1. Hip Actuator
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Jump Jet
6. Jump Jet

Left Leg
1. Hip Actuator
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Jump Jet
6. Jump Jet

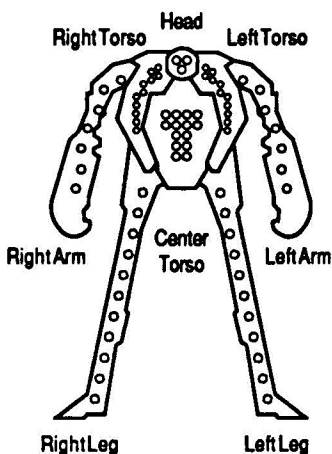
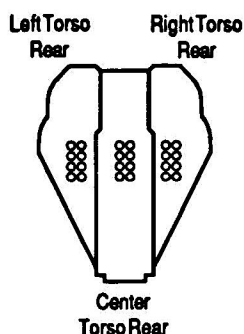
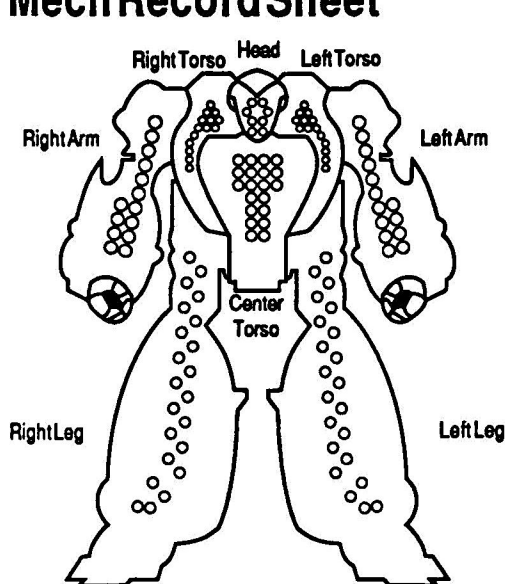
Engine Hits ○○○○
Gyro Hits ○○
Sensor Hits ○○

HEATSCALE

30	SHUTDOWN
29	
28	Ammo Explosion, avoid on 8+
27	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+
25	-5 Movement Points
24	+4 Modifier to Fire
23	Ammo Explosion, avoid on 6+
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+
21	
20	-4 Movement Points
19	Ammo Explosion, avoid on 6+
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+
17	+3 Modifier to Fire
16	
15	-3 Movement Points
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+
13	+2 Modifier to Fire
12	
11	
10	-2 Movement Points
09	
08	+1 Modifier to Fire
07	
06	
05	-1 Movement Points
04	
03	
02	
01	
00	

# BattleTechnology

## 'Mech Record Sheet



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### 'Mech Data

Type: SND-02 Sandman LAM  
Tonnage: 45 tons  
Movement Points:  
Walking: 6  
Running: 9  
Jumping: 6  
Thrust: 6  
Overthrust: 9

### Weapons Inventory

#	Type	Location
1	Medium Laser	R. Arm
1	Small Laser	Head
3	Rescue Pod	L. Arm

Pod Space: 0

AMMO:

AC Rounds: 0 MG Rounds: 0  
SRM Packs: 0 LRMPacks: 0

### Total Heat Sinks

Single ☒  
Double ☐

### Warrior Data

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gunnery/Mech Skill: \_\_\_\_\_  
Piloting/Mech Skill: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hits Taken (Consciousness Number):  
1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th  
(3) (5) (7) (10) (11) (Dead)

### CRITICAL HIT TABLE

#### Right Arm

1. Shoulder Actuator
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Hand Actuator
5. Medium Laser
6. (Roll Again)

1. (Roll Again)
2. (Roll Again)
3. (Roll Again)
4. (Roll Again)
5. (Roll Again)
6. (Roll Again)

#### Head

1. Life Support
2. Sensors
3. Cockpit
4. Small Laser
5. Sensors
6. Life Support

#### Left Arm

1. Shoulder Actuator
2. Upper Arm Actuator
3. Lower Arm Actuator
4. Hand Actuator
5. Rescue Pod
6. Rescue Pod

1. Rescue Pod
2. (Roll Again)
3. (Roll Again)
4. (Roll Again)
5. (Roll Again)
6. (Roll Again)

#### Right Torso

1. (Roll Again)
2. (Roll Again)
3. (Roll Again)
4. (Roll Again)
5. (Roll Again)
6. (Roll Again)

1. (Roll Again)
2. (Roll Again)
3. (Roll Again)
4. (Roll Again)
5. (Roll Again)
6. (Roll Again)

#### Center Torso

1. Engine
2. Engine
3. Engine
4. Gyro
5. Gyro
6. Gyro

1. Gyro
2. Engine
3. Engine
4. Engine
5. Jump Jet
6. Jump Jet

#### Left Torso

1. (Roll Again)
2. (Roll Again)
3. (Roll Again)
4. (Roll Again)
5. (Roll Again)
6. (Roll Again)

1. (Roll Again)
2. (Roll Again)
3. (Roll Again)
4. (Roll Again)
5. (Roll Again)
6. (Roll Again)

#### Right Leg

1. Hip Actuator
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Jump Jet
6. Jump Jet

#### Left Leg

1. Hip Actuator
2. Upper Leg Actuator
3. Lower Leg Actuator
4. Foot Actuator
5. Jump Jet
6. Jump Jet

Engine Hits ○○○○  
Gyro Hits ○○  
Sensor Hits ○○

### HEATSCALE

30	SHUTDOWN
29	
28	Ammo Explosion, avoid on 8+
27	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+
25	-5 Movement Points
24	+4 Modifier to Fire
23	Ammo Explosion, avoid on 6+
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+
21	
20	-4 Movement Points
19	Ammo Explosion, avoid on 6+
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+
17	+3 Modifier to Fire
16	
15	-3 Movement Points
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+
13	+2 Modifier to Fire
12	
11	
10	-2 Movement Points
09	
08	+1 Modifier to Fire
07	
06	
05	-1 Movement Points
04	
03	
02	
01	
00	



# The Fisher-Rider Duo

## The Fisher-Rider Duo

### Fisher History

The FSH-9R Fisher was developed for and by the Star League Defense Force for their own use. There is very little that is known of the 'Mech's capabilities and battle record, and what little that is available cannot be easily confirmed.

This BattleMech was built on Mars and assigned to the front line units of the Star League Defense Force. Designed and built in the 2750s, only approximately two hundred of this 'Mech type were actually constructed.

The few records available on this 'Mech show that it was unpopular among the general MechWarrior population, but personnel assigned to these units were extremely loyal, often passing up promotion or replacement in favor of staying in a Fisher/Rider unit.

From records available in the Inner Sphere, the following battle history has been confirmed:

During the Reunification Campaign, and later in the suppression of the Amaris Coupe, these units showed their true worth, often taking suicidal risks to gather information and destroy key military targets. During these campaigns, the Fisher/Rider units elected to go with General Kerensky into exile.

Researchers at NAIS have found reference to these 'Mechs in some of the records they have decoded from the Pre-Exodus computer cores, but have found very little hard information on these units.

Recently rumors have surfaced in the Periphery of a major find, specifically in the Taurian Concordat. During recent maneuvers by the TDF, 'Mechs corresponding to Fisher/Rider units have been seen. It is not known at this time if these are surviving examples of Star League technology or some new TDF design, but the chance should not be overlooked. Much of the information contained in this report has just recently been decoded from a computer core smuggled out of the Periphery. This core is of recent manufacture, but the information could only have come from a Star League source.

It must be assumed that at least one of the Periphery Houses has made a LosTech find of some importance.

### Rider History

Riders are an attached organic scout unit comprised of three specially trained Jump Infantry personnel. These personnel act in concert with the Fisher BattleMech, being used as infiltrators and saboteurs, and as extensions of the 'Mech's primary sensors. The training these units receive allows them to act as a unit, with the 'Mech transporting and supporting the Riders.

The primary job of the Rider/Fisher 'Mech unit is to gather information. To enable this, the Fisher will move to the area to be scouted, dismount the Riders, and hide, coming out only to pick up or to protect the Riders in its unit. This often leads to the Pilots of these units being called cowards. Though this 'Mech's primary purpose is not fighting, it can and does fight well, using its speed and armament to good effect. Though not heavily armored, this 'Mech can take a hit from almost any weapon without failing.

The most serious weakness in this 'Mech is when the Riders are mounting or dismounting. When these actions are taking place, three clamshell doors open in the back of the 'Mech. While these doors are open the effective rear armor of the 'Mech is 0. All hits to the rear torso at this time automatically hit internal structure, with a one in six chance of jamming the clamshell open.

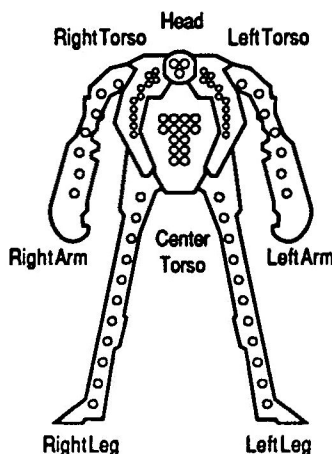
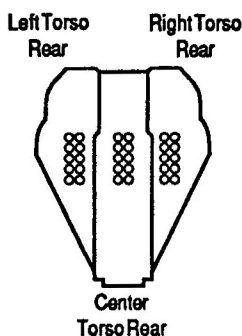
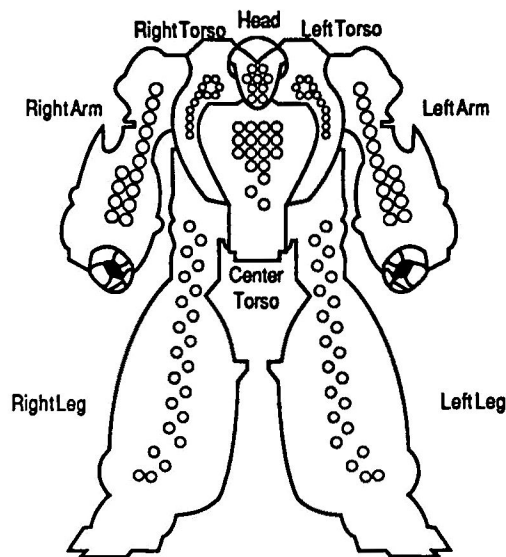
Riders may dismount from a moving 'Mech, but may only mount when the 'Mech is stationary. Mounting may only occur at the beginning of a round, and is the only movement which may take place. Weapon firing by the 'Mech is not affected, but the 'Mech can take no evasive action. If the 'Mech is forced to move during the turn, the Riders are attempting to mount, then the attempt fails and the Riders are left in the vacated hex, where they must wait until the next turn to move.

Each Rider is equipped with the following:

Mauser 960 Star League Assault System  
Camo Suit (varies according to mission)  
Jump Pack  
1-shot SRM-2 launcher  
(attached to Jet Pack,  
cannot be loaded in field)  
Personal Sidearm  
Deluxe Field Kit  
Personal Med Kit

# BattleTechnology

## 'Mech Record Sheet



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### 'Mech Data

Type: FSH-9R Fisher  
Tonnage: 45 tons  
Movement Points:  
Walking: 7  
Running: 11  
Jumping: 7

### Weapons Inventory

#	Type	Location
1	ER Large Laser	Rt. Arm
2	Medium Laser	Lt. Arm
1	Medium Laser	Lt. Torso
	Riders	R. Torso(R)
	Riders	C. Torso(R)
	Riders	L. Torso(R)

Pod Space: None

AMMO:

AC Rounds: 0 MG Rounds: 0

SRM Packs: 0 LRMP Packs: 0

### Total Heat Sinks

Single ☐  
Double ☒

### Warrior Data

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gunnery/Mech Skill: \_\_\_\_\_  
Piloting/Mech Skill: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hits Taken (Consciousness Number):  
1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th  
(3) (5) (7) (10) (11) (Dead)

### CRITICAL HIT TABLE

- Right Arm**
1. Shoulder Actuator
  2. Upper Arm Actuator
  3. Lower Arm Actuator
  4. Hand Actuator
  5. ER Large Laser
  6. ER Large Laser

- 2**
1. EndoSteel
  2. EndoSteel
  3. EndoSteel
  4. Double Heat Sink
  5. Double Heat Sink
  6. Double Heat Sink

- Head**
1. Life Support
  2. Sensors
  3. Cockpit
  4. EndoSteel
  5. Sensors
  6. Life Support

- Right Torso**
1. Jump Jet
  2. XL Engine
  3. Beagle Active Probe
  4. XL Engine
  5. Rider
  6. XL Engine

- 2**
1. EndoSteel
  2. EndoSteel
  3. EndoSteel
  4. Double Heat Sink
  5. Double Heat Sink
  6. Double Heat Sink

- Center Torso**
1. Engine
  2. Engine
  3. Engine
  4. Gyro
  5. Gyro
  6. Gyro

- 2**
1. Gyro
  2. Engine
  3. Engine
  4. Engine
  5. Jump Jet
  6. Rider

- Left Arm**
1. Shoulder Actuator
  2. Upper Arm Actuator
  3. Lower Arm Actuator
  4. Hand Actuator
  5. Medium Laser
  6. Medium Laser

- 2**
1. EndoSteel
  2. EndoSteel
  3. EndoSteel
  4. EndoSteel
  5. EndoSteel
  6. EndoSteel

- Left Torso**
1. XL Engine
  2. Anti-Missile System
  3. XL Engine
  4. Rider
  5. XL Engine
  6. Ammo (AMS) 12

- 2**
1. Medium Laser
  2. Jump Jet
  3. EndoSteel
  4. Double Heat Sink
  5. Double Heat Sink
  6. Double Heat Sink

### HEATSCALE

30	SHUTDOWN
29	
28	Ammo Explosion, avoid on 8+
27	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+
25	-5 Movement Points
24	+4 Modifier to Fire
23	Ammo Explosion, avoid on 6+
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+
21	
20	-4 Movement Points
19	Ammo Explosion, avoid on 6+
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+
17	+3 Modifier to Fire
16	
15	-3 Movement Points
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+
13	+2 Modifier to Fire
12	
11	
10	-2 Movement Points
09	
08	+1 Modifier to Fire
07	
06	
05	-1 Movement Points
04	
03	
02	
01	
00	

- Right Leg**
1. Hip Actuator
  2. Upper Leg Actuator
  3. Lower Leg Actuator
  4. Foot Actuator
  5. Jump Jet
  6. Jump Jet

Engine Hits ○○○  
Gyro Hits ○○  
Sensor Hits ○○

- Left Leg**
1. Hip Actuator
  2. Upper Leg Actuator
  3. Lower Leg Actuator
  4. Foot Actuator
  5. Jump Jet
  6. Jump Jet



# WS-2P Wisp

## WS-2P Wisp

The WS-2P Wisp is a recon 'Mech first and foremost. Though it does have some capabilities as an infantry support 'Mech, its light armor and limited armament make it unsuitable for any save the most limited of actions (ie, counterinsurgency in a world with no 'Mech forces). Its extremely high speed allows it to act as a scout, withdrawing at the first sign of danger utilizing its MASC circuitry.

The Medium Laser on this 'Mech is more useful at starting fires and harassing the enemy rather than being a true anti-'Mech weapon. These 'Mechs are often teamed together, possibly with a Locust or Hussar to act as the 'Heavy' firepower element for the lance. These lances may often be found behind the enemy lines, disrupting the communications and supply lines, or at the head of an advance, trying to draw out enemy 'Mechs. When an enemy is spotted, the pilots report the position, engage MASC, and run as if their lives depended on it, which they often do.

Pilots of the Wisp should always remember that he who spies then runs away may live to spy another day.

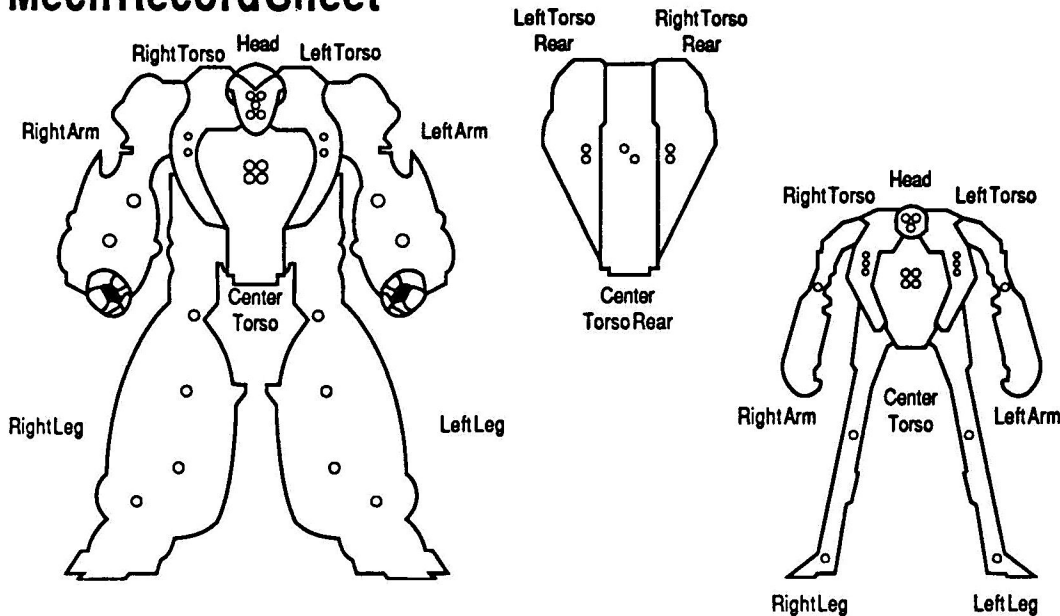
## WS-2P Wisp

Mass: 10 Tons  
 Internal Structure: DeMarc Endo-Light  
 Engine: Hermes 100XL (MASC)  
 Cruising Speed: 106.7  
 Maximum Speed: 159.8 kph  
 Jump Jets: None  
 Jump Capacity: none  
 Armor: Jungston Duralight  
 Armament: Devron MX-2 Medium Laser  
 Manufacturer: Rawlings Technical  
 Communications System: Romarc Com-2000  
 Targeting/Tracking System: Valdmuir Duotac-10

Type: WS-2P Wisp			Tons
Tonnage:			10.0
Internal Structure:			0.5
Engine:	Hermes 100 XL		1.5
Walking MPs:	10 (20)		
Running MPs:	15 (20)		
Jumping MPs:	0		
Heat Sinks:	10		0.0
Cockpit:			3.0
Gyro:			1.0
Armor Factor:	31		2.0
Location	Int Structure	Armor Value	
Head:	3	5	
Center Torso:	4	4/2	
Rt/Lt Torso:	3	2/2	
Rt/Lt Arm:	1	2	
Rt/Lt Leg:	2	4	
Weapons:	Loc	Crit	Tons
Medium Laser:	CT	1	1.0
MASC:	CT	1	1.0

# BattleTechnology

## 'Mech Record Sheet



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### CRITICAL HIT TABLE

- Right Arm**
1. Shoulder Actuator
  2. Upper Arm Actuator
  3. Lower Arm Actuator
  4. Hand Actuator
  5. EndoSteel
  6. EndoSteel

- 1**
1. (Roll Again)
  2. (Roll Again)
  3. (Roll Again)
  4. (Roll Again)
  5. (Roll Again)
  6. (Roll Again)

- 2**
1. (Roll Again)
  2. (Roll Again)
  3. (Roll Again)
  4. (Roll Again)
  5. (Roll Again)
  6. (Roll Again)

- 1**
1. EndoSteel
  2. XL Engine
  3. EndoSteel
  4. (Roll Again)
  5. (Roll Again)
  6. (Roll Again)

- 2**
1. EndoSteel
  2. XL Engine
  3. EndoSteel
  4. (Roll Again)
  5. (Roll Again)
  6. (Roll Again)

- Head**
1. Life Support
  2. Sensors
  3. Cockpit
  4. (Roll Again)
  5. Sensors
  6. Life Support

- Center Torso**
1. Engine
  2. Engine
  3. Engine
  4. Gyro
  5. Gyro
  6. Gyro

- 1**
1. Gyro
  2. Engine
  3. Engine
  4. Engine
  5. Medium Laser
  6. MASC

- Left Arm**
1. Shoulder Actuator
  2. Upper Arm Actuator
  3. Lower Arm Actuator
  4. Hand Actuator
  5. EndoSteel
  6. EndoSteel

- 1**
1. (Roll Again)
  2. (Roll Again)
  3. (Roll Again)
  4. (Roll Again)
  5. (Roll Again)
  6. (Roll Again)

- 2**
1. (Roll Again)
  2. (Roll Again)
  3. (Roll Again)
  4. (Roll Again)
  5. (Roll Again)
  6. (Roll Again)

- 1**
1. EndoSteel
  2. XL Engine
  3. EndoSteel
  4. (Roll Again)
  5. (Roll Again)
  6. (Roll Again)

- 2**
1. EndoSteel
  2. XL Engine
  3. EndoSteel
  4. (Roll Again)
  5. (Roll Again)
  6. (Roll Again)

**Engine Hits** ○ ○ ○  
**Gyro Hits** ○ ○  
**Sensor Hits** ○ ○

### 'Mech Data

Type: WS-2PWisp  
Tonnage: 10 tons  
Movement Points:  
Walking: 10 (20)  
Running: 15  
Jumping: 0

### Weapons Inventory

#	Type	Location
1	Medium Laser	Ct. Torso
1	MASC	Ct. Torso

Pod Space: None

AMMO:

AC Rounds: 0 MG Rounds: 0

SRMPacks: 0 LRMPacks: 0

### Total Heat Sinks

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Single ☒  
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Double ☐

### Warrior Data

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Gunnery/Mech Skill: \_\_\_\_\_

Piloting/Mech Skill: \_\_\_\_\_

Hits Taken (Consciousness Number):

1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th  
(3) (5) (7) (10) (11) (Dead)

### HEATSCALE

30	SHUTDOWN
29	
28	Ammo Explosion, avoid on 8+
27	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+
25	-5 Movement Points
24	+4 Modifier to Fire
23	Ammo Explosion, avoid on 6+
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+
21	
20	-4 Movement Points
19	Ammo Explosion, avoid on 6+
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+
17	+3 Modifier to Fire
16	
15	-3 Movement Points
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+
13	+2 Modifier to Fire
12	
11	
10	-2 Movement Points
09	
08	+1 Modifier to Fire
07	
06	
05	-1 Movement Points
04	
03	
02	
01	
00	



## Know Your Supplier

# Avalon Arms

### Avalon Arms Company

Home Office: New Avalon

President/CEO: Baron Michael Steele

Founding Date: January 1, 2460

#### Divisions:

Division Name: Avalon Arms and Ammunition

Division Head: Winston Eremos

Products: Vehicle ammunition and small arms

Division Name: Avalon Aerospace (Formerly Avalon Air)

Division Head: Lady Jessica Steele

Products: Aerospace parts, VTOL (Aerofighters)

Division Name: Avalon Armor

Division Head: Adam Long

Products: Conventional armor and rear echelon support vehicles

*(Ed Note: David Lintz originally worked for Battle Technology as a Staff Editor. It was during this time that he first wrote this article, in 3028. At that time he had amassed a great deal of data on the day to day operations of Avalon Arms. The Davion Ministry of Defense requested that we not publish the article due to its 'sensitive' nature. Not long after this, Mr Lintz accepted a higher paying job with the AFFC public relations department, taking all of his research with him. He has rewritten the article at our request now in 3052. Readers must be aware that the article is written by an employee of the Armed Forces of the Federated Commonwealth.)*

The financial success of the Steele family dates back to the beginning of the Federated Suns. When Lucien Davion began negotiating the Crucis pact in 2316, the Steele family was already investing their capital in industries located on the other planets of the Pact. Twenty years later, the Steele clan grossed 700% of their initial investment, justifying the gamble they had made. As the Federated Suns grew, the Steele family was right behind, investing on 70% of the planets House Davion acquired between 2317 and 2499. Often these investments were made before the planet was secure. One such case occurred in 2445, when Major Alexis Steele purchased stocks in an food

import company while his regiment was still invading the planet Mariette. These aggressive buying tactics caused the Steeles their share of disasters, but to date the successes have far outweighed the failures.

In 2450 the Steele family acquired, quite by accident, controlling interest in a New Avalon-based ammunition plant. Seizing the opportunity for profit, the Steeles began to buy up all available shares in the company. Only the stocks held by members of the Davion family remained safe from the Steele takeover. Removing the company from the common market, in 2458 a six member board was set up with five Steeles and a seat for the ruling Davion prince, or his appointed representative. In 2460, Avalon Arms was born.

BY 2610, Avalon Arms was producing tens of thousands of tons of ammunition and small arms for House Davion and the Star League Defense Force. The 'Golden Years' of the Star League found the Steele family with investments in all of the Houses and three of the Periphery States. Even in the days of the League, Avalon Arms and its owners were avid backers of the Davion state and its policies.

In 2720, the Steele family poured decades of profits into a daring venture. Buying out a multi-planet civilian transport manufacturing firm, Avalon Arms soon began producing cheap transport vehicles for the AFFS to use in its rear echelons. Two decades later Avalon Arms entered the front lines with the release of the expensive but very reliable Kruger Combat Car (*Battle Technology* #17). Success in the vehicle market lead Avalon Arms to purchase a VTOL company which produced civilian VTOLs with surplus parts from other companies. Soon after, Avalon Arms released the first of its famous Quadrus cargo VTOLs (of which the Longcross is the latest example). The success of these first innovative vehicles led Avalon Arms to produce a wide variety of military and support vehicles over the past three centuries. Avalon Arms has been firm about eliminating non-selling lines; some items have remained in production for less than a decade. Others have undergone several design changes and remain in production still. Throughout the final years of the Star League and on into the Succession Wars, Avalon Arms provided the Davion Militia with top products at low costs.

The fall of the Star League was the death warrant for many of the small military companies that had sprung up in the past two centuries. Avalon Arms itself lost 40% of its business, and the Steeles lost most of their assets in other Successor Houses during the first days of the League's fall. By the close of the First Successor War, the Steele clan retained foreign investments only in the Lyran Commonwealth, and had lost 30% of its domestic investments to the ravages of the war; yet, in a move that has become trademark to the Steeles and their patrons the Davions, the Steeles turned adversity to advantage. They consolidated their liquidated investments in the Capellan and Draconis Marches, and then reinvested in the Crucis and Periphery Marches. Then, with the Federated Suns fighting nearly constantly, Avalon Arms was easily able to expand to meet the demand for munitions to power the Davion war machine.

#### Avalon Arms Today

The past twenty years has seen a marked growth in the Avalon Arms Company. Between 3037 and 3048 it opened three new ammunition plants. It expanded its hover transport factory to produce two combat hovercraft. It also reduced transports production by 50% on all its ground vehicle assembly lines to increase front line vehicle production. Its largest change was in 3045 when it closed its conventional aircraft firm, ending a century of reliable militia defense craft production. Avalon Arms hopes to reopen the plant by 3054 to produce Hellcat II's and Cerebus class Aerospace fighters in limited numbers.

The Federated Commonwealth alliance has reopened the previously inaccessible market of House Steiner and opened new markets in the Sarna March and the St Ives Compact. Following family tradition, the current generation of Steeles has been quick to invest in these growing markets. In addition, the Steele family has formed a new independent company, Maximum Tactical Software, Ltd, or MaxTac. This brainchild of the current family head is quickly earning a name in the Tactical and Simulator software industry.

#### Business Practices

*That which makes us small makes us strong*  
*Official motto Avalon Arms, adopted in 2900*

The survival of Avalon Arms throughout the ravages of the

Succession Wars can be mainly attributed to what most would consider its greatest weakness. Avalon Arms has always functioned through the use of many sub-contracted companies. Avalon Arms' vehicle plants are little more than assembly lines where parts from all over Federated Suns' space are shipped to be assembled. (A prime example is the Interloper Urban Scout which uses a Valiant systems Strike chassis for its base.) Because of this production style, the company is restricted in the number of vehicles it can produce in a given year. At the same time this dispersed production base is the reason Avalon Arms still exists today. As military industries were being destroyed wholesale in the

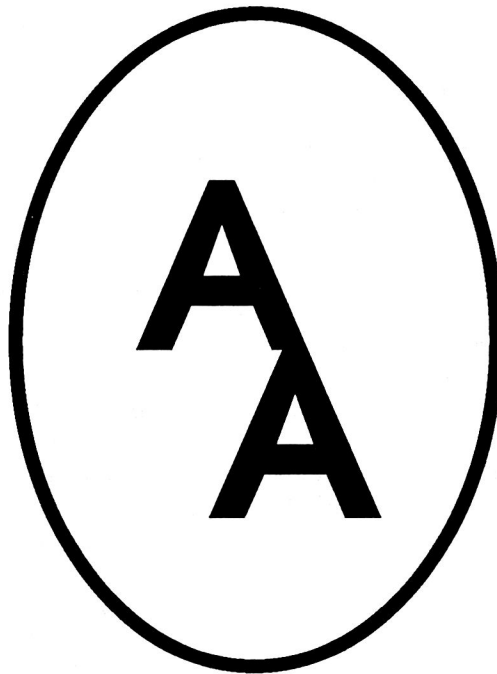
First Succession War, Avalon Arms simply turned to other industries or companies deeper in Davion space. Even today, Avalon Arms uses as many civilian products as possible when manufacturing their vehicles.

From its first days, Avalon Arms had made up for its lack of volume with its three axioms: Reliability, Affordability, and Quality. *Reliability*: through steady production, stalwart customer loyalty, and a near spotless delivery record for four centuries. *Affordability*: Avalon Arms has always granted House Davion military a 10% discount (the Davion family still maintains its seat on the Avalon Arms board of directors). *Quality*: each product produced in an Avalon Arms plant, be it an LRM or the new Roo Scout Hovortank goes through a minimum of six safety checks. Only the best

available parts and best available workers are used. Through the use of this RAQ formula, Avalon Arms has maintained itself as a viable alternative to the large highly targeted weapons industries. (**Ed Note**: only three times in the past hundred years has Avalon Arms had to honor its money-back guarantee.)

#### Production and Products

Avalon Arms maintains four ammunition plants in addition to the original plant located next to the home offices on New Avalon. It maintains three conventional transport assembly plants. Two of these plants also produces Avalon Arms' ground armor. Its one hover plant produces civilian and military transports in addition to the recent production of the Kanga and Roo Scout jumping hovortanks. The VTOL plant produces one civilian model and three military models, including the Davion Ferret VTOL, subcontracting the rights from its designers. Lastly, the small conventional





aircraft plant is undergoing extensive retooling in conjunction with a NAIS -funded contract to produce prototype Aerospace fighters for testing.

As part of its survival over the centuries, Avalon Arms has maintained strict security over the location of all of its plants save the one on New Avalon. As most of its products are sold to the Davion, now (Steiner-Davion) military, military intelligence has assisted in this for over 250 years. Due to the company's diversity, use of civilian products which can be acquired from a variety of sources, and the aid of the MIO's counterintelligence, the exact locations of most of the factories are unknown. Data on the known plants usually lists only the planet and system where it is located.

### CEO Profile

The current chief executive of Avalon Arms and head of the Steele family is Baron Michael Steele. Graduating from NAIS in 3036, Steele served in the Davion Heavy Guards before being transferred to Military Liaison special duty. Lieutenant Steele took command of a mixed arms scout unit made up of mercenaries supplied with Federated Commonwealth equipment. His unit was then attached to a long-term contracted Davion mercenary battalion. In the 3039 War, Steele's unit was instrumental in the advanced recon and initial invasion of New Mendham. Once finished on New Mendham, the unit was to have been transferred to Galtor III, where it was to rejoin its parent unit. While Lt Steele's unit was enroute, the Dragon made its sweeping counterattack. Caught behind the Kurita advance, Steele turned his JumpShip away from the front lines, heading back into the Draconis Combine. His intention was to make for the Steiner front where fighting was less intense. Raiding as they went, Steele's unit stung Kurita supply depots four times before successfully re-entering Federated Commonwealth space.

On returning to Federated Commonwealth space, the unit informed that due to the disastrous fighting on Galtor III, they were the sole survivors of their parent battalion. Using his family influence, Michael Steele obtained detached duty so he could lead this fledgling mercenary unit. Captain Steele commanded the unit until 3042 when, in a heated fight with Kurita regulars, the 'Mech was destroyed, and he was permanently paralyzed. Turning the unit over to his second, Steele returned home to New Avalon just days before his father's death. He immediately took over as head of the family and CEO of the Company.

Baron Steele commands Avalon Arms with the same brilliance and unorthodox manner that he used when leading his mercenary band. Since taking over the company, Steele has increased profits by 45%. Relying on his sister Jessica, a graduate of NAIS' engineering PhD program, Steele has managed to win a lucrative contract with NAIS to produce prototype arms and armor for testing.

### Avalon Arms Product Line as of 3052

Avalon Armor  
Mauler Citytank  
Interloper Cityscout  
Avalon Support Systems  
Kruger Combat Car  
Kanga Hovertank  
Roo Scout Hovertank  
7 support vehicle designs

Avalon Air  
Quicksilver Recon VTOL  
Longcross Cargo VTOL  
Ferret Recon VTOL  
Ranger Civilian VTOL  
Chimera (limited run)  
Hellcat II (limited run)

### SYH-A5 Sylph

The SYH-A5 was built around a GM XL140 fusion engine, making it one of the only tanks ever fitted with this expensive engine type. In conjunction with the use of ferro-fibrous armor, the Sylph had an enormous amount of space left for weapons and equipment. Two Shannon SRM-6 launchers with Artemis IV fire control gave the tank its hard-hitting firepower. Four tons of ammunition meant it could continue to fire long after other launchers in the battle ran dry. With three Sorenstein medium lasers to back it all up, the Sylph's firepower was impressive. Its lack of long range firepower was made up for by the high speed of the hovertank.

When released to the Star League Defense Force, it met with only one complaint. Commanders complained that the Sylph was a poor 'team player'. Its weapons and speed lent themselves to deep raids, but not to supporting slow artillery or complimenting the Zephyr. Grumman did not wish to lose the 'deep raid' market, but they did wish to sell to those users who wanted a support vehicle; they took a gamble in releasing the SYH-B2. Except for its weapons payload, the B2 was identical to the A5 model. Keeping the lasers and one SRM six-rack, the B2 exchanged the fire control computers and one SRM for a NARC beacon and target acquisition gear (TAG). Now the Sylph was able to mark targets for missile and artillery fire, the two models enjoyed significant success throughout the Star League

*continued page 76*

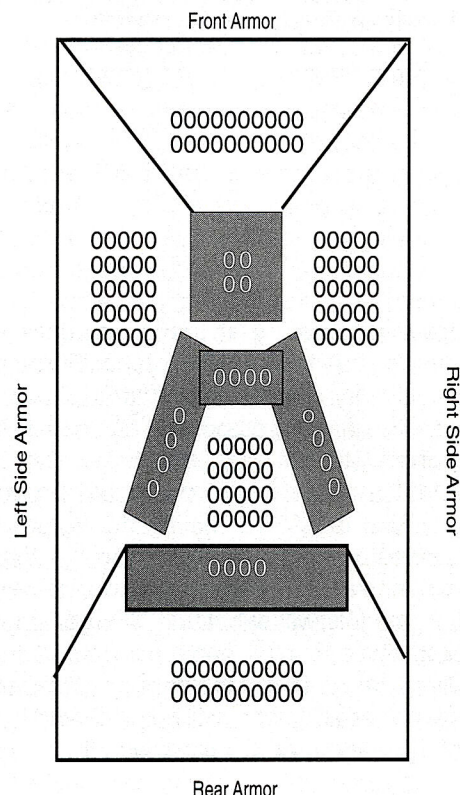
# SYH-A5 Sylph

Mass: 35 Tons  
 Movement Type: Hover  
 Internal Structure: Grumman StongStorm 2.5  
 Power Plant: GM Excel 140  
 Cruising Speed: 97 kph  
 Flank Speed: 146 kph  
 Armor: Grumman CRT Ferro-Fibrous  
 Armament: 3 Sorenstein IV Medium Lasers  
 2 Shannon SRM-6 Launchers  
 Manufacturer: Originally Grumman Industries, now  
 Avalon Arms  
 Communications System: Transcom 12  
 Targeting/Tracking System: Transom WO5 30A  
 Artemis IV  
 Type: SYH-A5 Sylph Tons  
 Tonnage: 35.0  
 Internal Structure: 3.5

Engine: GM XL 140 3.75  
 Engine Type: Fusion  
 Cruise Speed: 9  
 Flank Speed: 14  
 Control Equipment: 1.75  
 Lift Equipment: 3.0  
 Turret: 0.9  
 Armor Factor: 104 (116) 6.5  
 Location Armor Value  
 Front: 20  
 Rt/Lt Side: 25  
 Back: 20  
 Turret: 20  
 Weapons & Ammo  
 Weapons: Loc Crit Tons  
 Medium Laser Turret 1 1.0  
 Medium Laser Turret 1 1.0  
 Medium Laser Turret 1 1.0  
 SRM-6 Turret 2 3.0  
 SRM-6 Turret 2 3.0  
 Ammo (SRM) 60Body 4 4.0  
 Artemis IV (SRM) Body 1 1.0  
 Artemis IV (SRM) Body 1 1.0

## BattleTechnology Vehicle Record Sheet

Unit Type	SYH-A5 Sylph		Driving Skill:
Movement Type: Hover	Cruise Speed:	Flank Speed:	Gunnery Skill:
Tonnage: 35.0	9	14	
Engine Rating: 140	Tonnage: 3.75	Fusion: <input type="checkbox"/>	I.C.E. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Control Tonnage: 175	Lift Equipment: 3.0	<b>Weapons &amp; Ammo</b>	
Power Amplifier: 0	Heat Sinks: 0	1	Medium Laser (Turret)
Internal Structure: 3.5		2	Medium Laser (Turret)
Turret: 0.9		3	Medium Laser (Turret)
Armor: 104 Tons: 6.5	Points: 104(116)	4	SRM-6 (Turret)
Front: 20		5	SRM-6 (Turret)
Left/Right Side: 25 / 25		6	Ammo SRM (60) (BODY)
Back: 20		7	Artemis IV (SRM) (Body)
Turret: 20		8	Artemis IV (SRM) Body
		9	



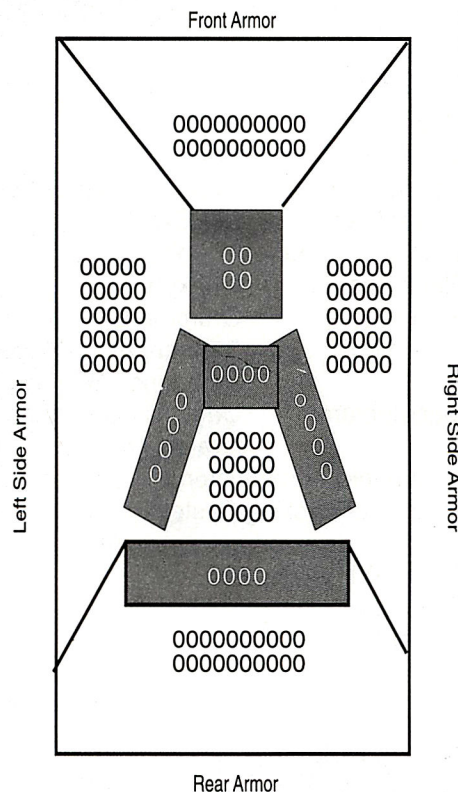
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# BattleTechnology

## Vehicle Record Sheet

Unit Type SYH-B2 Sylph				Driving Skill:	
Movement Type: Track		Cruise Speed:	Flank Speed:	Gunnery Skill:	
Tonnage: 35	9	14			
Engine Rating: 140	Tonnage: 3.75	Fusion: <input type="checkbox"/>	I.C.E. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Weapons &amp; Ammo</b>	
Control Tonnage: 1.75	Lift Equipment: 3.0	1 Medium Laser (Turret)			
Power Amplifier: 0	Heat Sinks: 0	2 Medium Laser (Turret)			
Internal Structure: 3.5	3 Medium Laser (Turret)				
Turret: 0.9	4 SRM-6 (Turret)				
Armor: 104 Tons: 6.5 Points: 104(116)	5 Ammo SRM (30) (Body)				
Front: 20	6 Narc Beacon (Turret)				
Left/Right Side: 25 / 25	7 Ammo NARC (12) (Body)				
Back: 20	8 TAG (Front)				
Turret: 20	9				



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era, even serving in the armor units of the SAS' Black Hearts, the Star League Defense Force's elite commandos.

History: The last operable Sylph was scrapped to put its excel engine into a Locust. The Locust was destroyed three months later in a DropShip accident two hundred light years from the nearest war front; a sad end to a great tank.

With the AFFC testing the Sylph once again, it may soon return to the spotlight. Though the prototypes use the expensive Excel engine, it is uncertain whether the production models will substitute a larger engine, thus forfeiting some weapons. It should be noted that the information given here is that of the original 28th Century model, and is not necessarily what will be produced for the Armed Forces of the Federated Commonwealth.

## SYH-B2 Sylph Weapon Configuration

Medium Laser	Turret	1	1.0
Medium Laser	Turret	1	1.0
Medium Laser	Turret	1	1.0
SRM-6	Turret	2	3.0
Ammo (SRM) 30Body		2	2.0
Narc Beacon	Turret	2	3.0
Ammo (NARC) 12Body		2	2.0
TAG	Front	1	1.0

## Avalon Arms Support System

### Overview

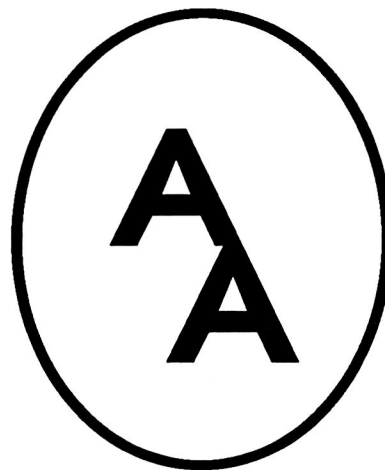
The backbone of any armor unit is its support vehicles, be they ammo transports, tech vehicles, or the many faces of artillery. Support units are what keep an armor unit going. Like a well-run armor unit, Avalon Arms has survived feast and famine with its support vehicles. One of Avalon Arms' specialties has always been fire support vehicles. The Avalon Arms Support System is a perfect example of the ingenious approach to fire support.

### Capabilities

Originally, plans called for a twenty eight year production plan with a new design every seven years. Lack of production facilities and capitol stopped this plan almost immediately. Instead, the Apocalypse Missile Carrier was released as Avalon Arms' sole fire support vehicle. Three years after production began, Military Procurement for the AFFS requested a special refit of four Apocalypses to carry SRM racks. Designers discovered that the simple, compact construction of the Apocalypse's chassis leant itself well to modification. At this point, plans went into the works for other Apocalypse variants. Within five years the Avalon support system was a viable production item.

All models of the Support System are constructed on the same chassis, the only difference being in the fire control programing. The individual weapons systems fit onto the large 'turret ring' on the back of the chassis. Ammunition and heat sinks are located in the body for protection. The 'turret ring' is actually a unique concept, fondly referred to as the variable top weapons mounting. The mounting is essentially an unpowered turret, allowing for a greater degree of flexibility than standard LRM and SRM carriers. When a weapon is in place and the ring locked down, weapon has a 120° firing arc (2 hex facings) Weapons systems mounted on the turret ring are manually adjusted by the crew from the outside, but the turret ring is not a true turret. The Apocalypse and the Ragnarok require an auxiliary vehicle of at least five tons, preferably something larger like a Pack Rat, to carry a winch-mounted cable to allow them to change the weapon's facing. This cannot be done during combat, but may be accomplished in twenty minutes, if there is sufficient time between engagements.

Avalon Arms currently produces three support designs: the Apocalypse Long Range Missile battery, the Ragnarok Short Range Missile Carrier, and the Hellfire Laser Carrier. The Apocalypse and Ragnarok are like many of the LRM and SRM carriers of the Inner Sphere, the significant difference lying in the quantity of armor carried by Avalon Arms vehicles. The Hellfire system is an expensive specialized unit capable of massive energy barrages. The Avalon Arms Support System is sure to remain a popular militia and second line vehicle.



### Battle History

Serving in armies of three Successor States and innumerable mercenary units, the AASS never grabs the glory or makes that front page picture, but it has proved its reliability time and time again.

When Avalon Arms first released the Hellfire System in 2818, it met with great skepticism. House Davion only purchased four of this model; plans called for its discontinuation after a three year production run. The AFFS assigned those four Hellfires to the famous Third Ceti Hussars RCT, whose Second Battalion is all armor. The 'Stompin' Second' had had good results with previous Avalon Arms vehicles, so they were willing to give effective use to an unusual piece of design from the company. Twelve months later, the Third Ceti Hussars were thrown into the assault on House Kurita's crumbling defense of Clovis. The Hellfire Lance was attached to three light armor lances assigned to retake the Kurita-held city of Carleton. The lighter armor darted into the city and drew out the Kuritan light 'Mech company. Meanwhile, the Hellfires had rolled into the city and taken up good crossfire positions. Using the classic 'bait and hook' technique, the light armor led the Dragon 'Mechs into the waiting sights of the Hellfires. Two and a half minutes after the first Hellfire opened fire, the Kuritans were completely destroyed. House Davion ordered a full production run after that, and the Ceti Hussars' publicity carried the Hellfire to the top seller position for three years running.

A good example of the AASS's survivability compared to other support tanks occurred in 2945 when a bandit force attacked the Davion Periphery-border world of Hyalite. A bandit Hunchback had penetrated deep into the major city of Solvang, causing massive amounts of damage with its energy weapons. The Hunchback turned the corner at

*Text Continued p 80*



## Avalon Arms Support System

Mass: 70 Tons  
 Movement Type: Track  
 Power Plant: 210 ICE  
 Cruising Speed: 35 kph  
 Flank Speed: 57 kph  
 Armor: Grumman Ground-Pounder  
 Armament: Variable  
 Manufacturer: Avalon Arms  
 Communications System: Transcom 12  
 Targeting/Tracking System: Transom WO5 30A

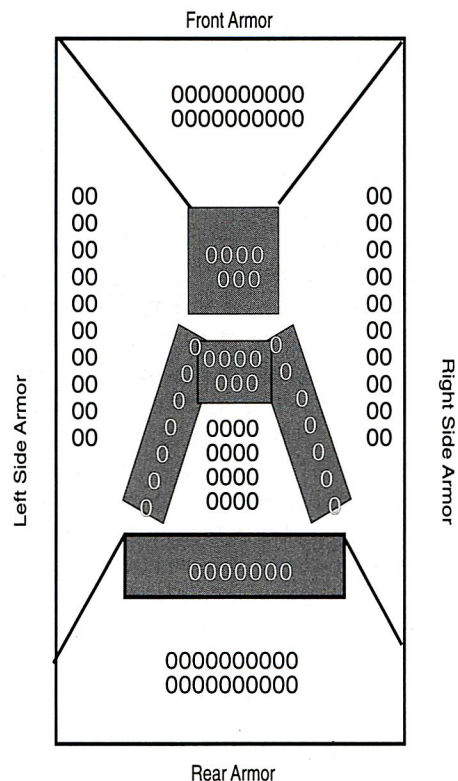
Type: AASS: APL-01 Apocalypse      Tons  
 Tonnage: 70.0  
 Internal Structure: 7.0

Engine: 210 ICE      18.0  
 Engine Type: ICE  
 Cruise Speed: 3  
 Flank Speed: 5  
 Control Equipment: 3.5  
 Turret Ring: 1.5  
 Armor Factor: 96      6.0  
 Location      Armor Value  
 Front: 20  
 Rt/Lt Side: 20  
 Back: 20  
 Turret: 16  
 Weapons & Ammo  
 Weapons:      Loc      Tons  
 LRM-20      Turret      10.0  
 LRM-20      Turret      10.0  
 LRM-20      Turret      10.0  
 Ammo LRM (24)      Body      4.0

## APL-01 Apocalypse

## BattleTechnology Vehicle Record Sheet

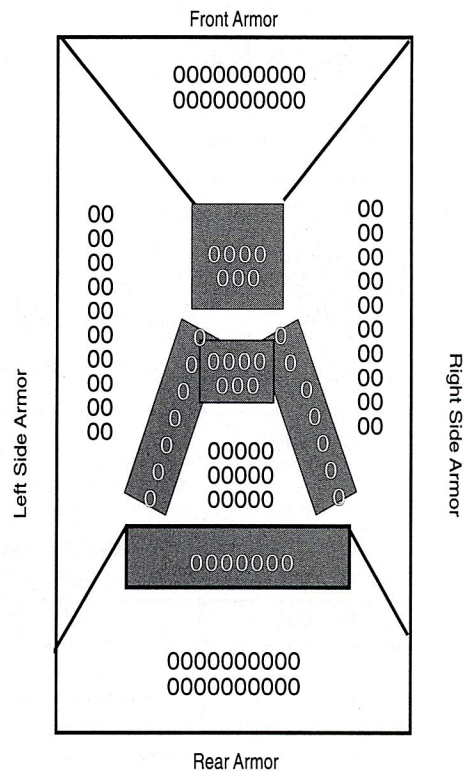
Unit Type APL -01 Apocalypse			Driving Skill:
Movement Type: Track	Cruise Speed:	Flank Speed:	Gunnery Skill:
Tonnage: 70	3	5	
Engine Rating: 210	Tonnage: 8	Fusion: <input type="checkbox"/>	I.C.E. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Weapons & Ammo			
Control Tonnage: 3.5	Lift Equipment: 0	1	LRM 20 (Turret)
Power Amplifier:	Heat Sinks: 0	2	LRM 20 (Turret)
Internal Structure: 7.0		3	LRM 20 (Turret)
Turret: 1.5		4	Ammo LRM (Body)
Armor: 96 Tons: 6	Points:	5	
Front: 20		6	
Left/Right Side: 20 / 20		7	
Back: 20		8	
Turret: 20		9	



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# BattleTechnology Vehicle Record Sheet

Unit Type		RGN-02 Ragnarok		Driving Skill:	
Movement Type: Track		Cruise Speed:	Flank Speed:	Gunnery Skill:	
Tonnage: 70		3	5		
Engine Rating: 210		Tonnage: 18	Fusion: <input type="checkbox"/>	I.C.E. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Control Tonnage: 3.5		Lift Equipment: 0		1 10 SRM 2-Packs (Turret)	
Power Amplifier: 0		Heat Sinks:		2 Ammo (SRM) 60 (Body)	
Internal Structure: 7.0				3	
Turret: 0				4	
Armor: 96 Tons: 6.0		Points:		5	
Front:		20		6	
Left/Right Side:		20 / 20		7	
Back:		20		8	
Turret:		16		9	



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## RGN-02 Ragnarok

Mass:	70 Tons
Movement Type:	Track
Power Plant:	210 ICE
Cruising Speed:	35 kph
Flank Speed:	57 kph
Armor:	Grumman Ground-Pounder
Armament:	Variable
Manufacturer:	Avalon Arms
Communications System:	Transcom 12
Targeting/Tracking System:	Transom WO5 30A

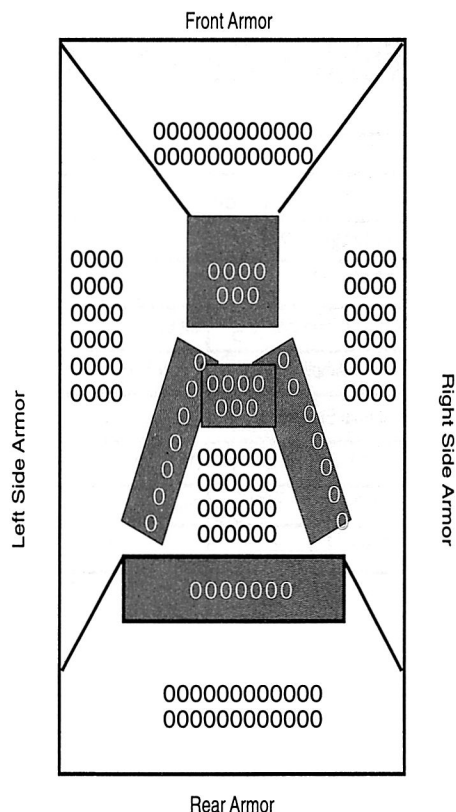
Type: AASS: RGN-02 Ragnarok		Tons
Tonnage:		70.0
Internal Structure:		7.0
Engine:	210 ICE	18.0
Engine Type:	ICE	
Cruise Speed:	3	
Flank Speed:	5	
Control Equipment:		3.5
Turret Ring:		1.5
Armor Factor:	96	6.0
Location	Armor Value	
Front:	20	
Rt/Lt Side:	20	
Back:	20	
Turret:	16	
Weapons & Ammo		
Weapons:	Loc	Tons
10 SRM-6 packs	Turret	30.0
Ammo SRM (60)	Body	4.0



# BattleTechnology

## Vehicle Record Sheet

Unit Type				HLF-M5 Hellfire		Driving Skill:	
Movement Type:		Cruise Speed:	Flank Speed:		Gunnery Skill:		
Tonnage: 70 Track		3	5				
Engine Rating:	Tonnage:	Fusion:	I.G.E.		<b>Weapons &amp; Ammo</b>		
210	18.0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Control Tonnage:	3.5	Lift Equipment:	0		1 Medium Laser (Turret)		
Power Amplifier:	1	Heat Sinks:	24		2 Medium Laser (Turret)		
Internal Structure:	7.0				3 Medium Laser (Turret)		
Turret:	1.0				4 Medium Laser (Turret)		
Armor:	120 Tons:	7.5	Points:		5 Medium Laser (Turret)		
Front:	24				6 Medium Laser (Turret)		
Left/Right Side:	24 / 24				7 Medium Laser (Turret)		
Back:	24				8 Medium Laser (Turret)		
Turret:	24				9		



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### HLF-M5 Hellfire

Type: AASS: HLF-M5 Hellfire	Tons
Tonnage:	70.0
Internal Structure:	7.0
Engine: 210 ICE	18.0
Engine Type: ICE	
Cruise Speed: 3	
Flank Speed: 5	
Control Equipment:	3.5
Turret Ring:	1.0
Power Amplifier:	1.0
Heat Sinks: 24	24.0
Armor Factor: 120	7.5
Location	Armor Value
Front:	24
Rt/Lt Side:	24
Back:	24
Turret:	124
Weapons & Ammo	
Weapons: Loc	Tons
8 Medium Lasers Turret	8.0

Text continued from page 77

Market and D streets, only to encounter a Ragnarok SRM carrier. The vehicles exchanged fire. The Ragnarok lost all of its forward armor to the Hunchback's assault. In return, fifty three of the SRM rounds slammed into the Hunchback. Even before the autocannon ammunition was hit, the Hunchback had already lost one leg, its autocannon, and its lower right arm. The exploding ammo completed the job.

#### Variants

With its simple construction and semi-modularization, it is no surprise that there have been many variations and production runs of the AASS. Some more common ones, which were actually produced for five years or more, include:

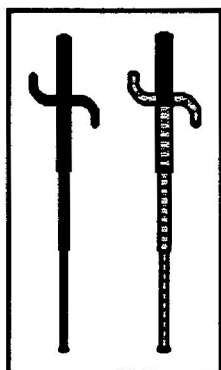
- \*The Juggernaut, with two AC/20s and six tons of ammunition,
- \*The Shotgun, with fourteen LRM-5s and six tons of ammunition, and
- \*The Air Storm, with two AC-5, two AC-2s, and six tons total ammunition.

## Thornhill Arms Presents...

### **Odin's Eye Data Scope**

Just in time for our fall catalogue, Thornhill Arms, the leaders in personal defense technology, presents the Odin's Eye Data Scope. This precise, powerful, and compact instrument lets you find your bearings, determine distances, and keep time all at once. Just look through the monocular lens and press one of the top-mounted function buttons. Built in electro-optics can zoom your view up to a x25 magnification, and optional image enhancer allows for low light operations. Rechargeable batteries provide approximately 30 hours of operation without low-light option, or 24 with it. Unit must be calibrated for local time and magnetic field 'North', and requires a planetary magnetic field of at least 0.02 gauss in strength. Neck strap included. Water proof and shock resistant. Available in matte black, grey, and camouflage patterns.

Odin's Eye Data Scope	160 C-bills	0.9 kg
Image Enhancer for low-light Operation	25 C-bills	0.3 kg
Battery Pack	5 C-bills	0.1 kg



### **Cobra Tactical Baton**

Just the thing for those close-in, crowd control or arrest situations when nonlethal force is called for. With a flick of your wrist, the baton telescopes out to its full striking length, from ten centimeters to one meter. Thick-walled tubing formed from those amazing Thornhill Arms composites assures years of heavy use, while the non-slip, formed vinyl grip fits comfortably in your hand. Optional electrified model can deliver a stunning jolt on contact, subduing even the most ardent attackers. Available in matte or gloss black, gun metal gray, and silver. Useful For Hand-to-Hand Conditions only.

Cobra Tactical Baton	Damage: 1 D6 +3	15 C-bills	0.4 kg
Electrified Cobra	Damage: 2 D6 shock	60 C-bills	0.5 kg
Extra Battery (good for 20 charges)		5 C-bills	0.1 kg

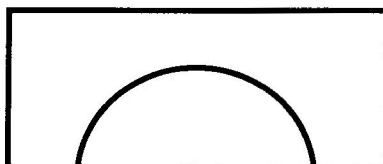
### **Four-Star PrePacks**

After a long day of fighting from the cockpit of your 'Mechs, you finally get a chance to bed down in your field camp. After setting your perimeter, you add water to your standard-issue ration pack and enjoy a well-balanced serving of cold, high protein mush that tastes like creamed cardboard, washed down with tepid coffee better suited for paint-stripping than drinking. Sounds good, doesn't it? Now there's a better way — Four-Star Prepacks! Each PrePack is a fully balanced meal prepared by one of the top restaurants in the Inner Sphere. After adding water to the hydration compartment, internal chemical heating and/or cooling units prepare your meal in a matter of moments. Each meal includes a matched beverage (selected by the chef) and oral cleansing rinse to keep your breath fresh. Available in a wide range of cuisines with alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages. See your authorized Thornhill Arms dealer for a complete list of what's available in your area. Happy Dining!

Four-Star PrePacks	Individual Pack	10 C-bills	1.2 kg
Four-StarPrePacks	Mixed case of 20	150 C-bills	2.4 kg

## Thornhill Arms

*Preserving the Past...to Enjoy the Future*

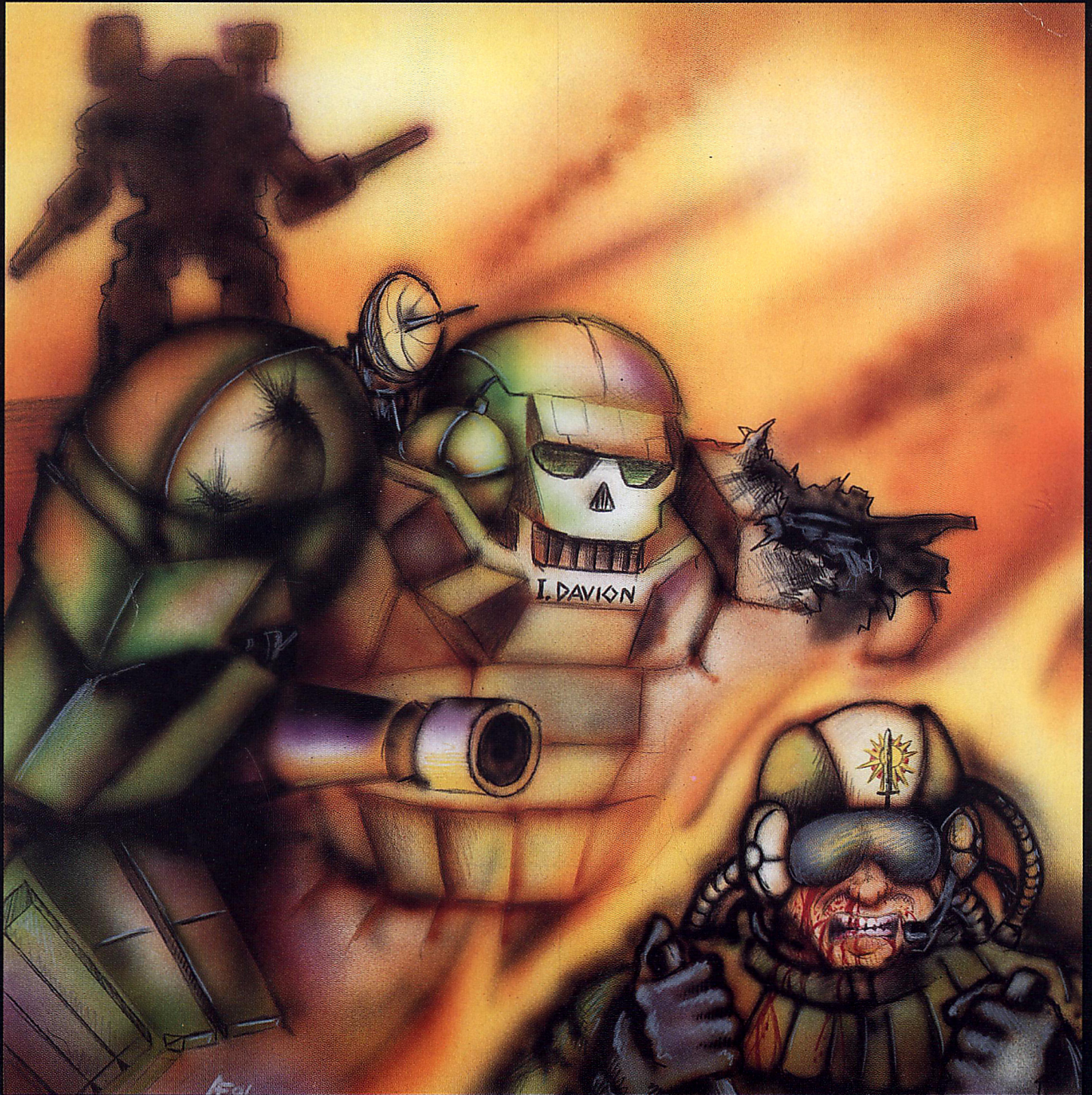




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# BattleTechnology



## The Early Years



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