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Jeffrey '94



Howdy,

As you can see, we're making even more changes with the issue and more changes at AWOL Productions. First off, how do you like the cover? We're going to try the heat-set cover even though it's a little more expensive for one reason. It wears better. Although we always felt the standard cover was good, there can be little doubt the heat-set produces a longer lasting product. The cover also gives the newsletter a little more weight, which helps keep the issue around longer. As a side benefit of this printing process you're picking up four additional pages of stuff. All at no additional charge! Sounds like a good deal to me.

We're also making some slight changes in the way we do business. First an apology. Sorry, we got caught in a rut. We've been doing so many things over the last year that we sort of got in a rut with the newsletter. It began to look like the same thing over and over. Artist and authors we'd used before kept popping up in subsequent issues. For the most part that is great. Good talent is sometimes hard to find, and when you find a winner (as we've done) you tend to want to stay with him (or her). That is not what this newsletter is about, however. Although we will always try to provide quality material, we are also committed to giving new artists and authors a chance. Look for some new names in the future. Note, however, this does not mean we won't be using material from established authors and artists. We're working with "name" writers and artists all the time, and we'll continue to do so in the future. We're just going to broaden our base a little at the same time.

Although it is still only February, we're already getting ready for the convention season. Once again AWOL Production will be at GenCon in Milwaukee. Why bring this up now? Easy question. AWOL has made some of its best and strongest contacts through the face-to-face meetings we've had at conventions like GenCon. It makes everything easier when we can talk to an artist, author, or member one-on-one. If you're interested in writing or producing art for the game market, now is the time to put together a portfolio. Start gathering your work and write us for an appointment at GenCon. Our main goal this year is to meet as many interested contributors as possible.

I've been asked numerous times, "How did you become a writer for FASA?" Another easy answer. I wrote and I wrote and I wrote. I said yes a lot and I never missed a deadline. The more work I did the more work they wanted me to do. It got to be a self-perpetuating cycle that lead to the Black Thorn novels. No reason you can't do the same thing. I've talked to enough successful artists that have the same story. So get excited, get inspired, and get going.

Enjoy,

Jim

BTW, thanx to all the people who offered support and patience during my surgery and rehab. It took lots of both to get me back on my feet (literally!).

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"Can game players look at their opposition's mech data sheets (this is called scanning) and if so, how much information must be shown?"

There are no set rules regarding viewing an opponent's 'Mech record sheet during play. It is left up to the players to decide before play is begun. However, an opponent is entitled to the following information at all times during engagement: number of hexes each 'Mech moved, how it moved—walk, run, or jump—and which way, if any, the 'Mech is torso twisted.

"How many turns does it take for a 'Mech to pick-up a downed pilot or other person?"

It takes two turns for a 'Mech to pick a pilot on foot. Turn 1 the 'Mech and/or pilot must end their movement phase in the same hex. The 'Mech may engage in combat during this turn. Turn two the 'Mech may do nothing but be a target—no movement, no combat (weapons or physical). During turn two, the pilot is assumed to be climbing a rope ladder up to the cockpit of the 'Mech along the rear center torso. If the 'Mech is *damaged* in the rear center torso during combat in turn two of the rescue, the climbing pilot is killed.

"If you destroy the engine of a 'Mech, are the weapons still salvageable?"

As per BattleTech Compendium page 29, any three critical hits to a 'Mechs engine destroys the engine and the 'Mech is out of commission for the rest of the game. In this case, three engine critical hits, the remaining weapon systems are salvageable. However, in battles played for MNA ranking, total combat value for the 'Mech with a destroyed engine is awarded (which includes points for all the weapons.)

"If a 'Mech loses all of its armor

and internal structure in either the right or left torso and has an XL engine without any prior critical hits, would the 'Mech have to take the three engine critical hits for the XL engine in that torso?"

Yes. When all of the external and internal armor of a 'Mech's torso is lost, that torso, all of its components, and the corresponding arm are considered "blown off" and fall to the ground. A 'Mechs engine has three points of shielding to protect it from battle damage, hence it takes three critical hits to destroy the engine. If an XL engine is literally blown away from the 'Mech, the shielding is lost and the XL engine is considered destroyed. All equipment located in the torso and corresponding arm is also considered destroyed (weapons, heat sinks, etc.) Reference BattleTech Compendium page 27 and 29 and Technical Readout 3050 under BattleTech rules clarification page 230.

Upcoming in the BattleTech Tactical Handbook is a new rule regarding BattleMech engine explosions. This rule is for advanced BattleTech play only. The new rule states when ever all the internal structure of a 'Mech's center torso is destroyed in a single turn, there is a chance that the engine reactor will explode. On 8+ on 2D6, the engine reactor explodes, destroying the 'Mech and any units occupying the same hex. 'Mechs or other units in adjacent hexes take damage equal to the engine's rating divided by 5 (round down). Units two hexes away take damage equal to the engine's rating divided by 10 and units 3 hexes away take damage equal to the rating divided by 20. Divide the damage into 5 point clusters. This rule applies to normal fusion engines and XL engines. As of print, the rule holds as stated above. However there will be a final edit before the Tactical Handbook is published.

"If a 'Mech takes a second Gyro critical hit and does not have to make a piloting skill roll and therefore remains standing, is the 'Mech completely out of the game or may it continue firing its weapons?"

When a 'Mech takes a second gyro hit, the gyro is considered destroyed and the 'Mech is unable to move. If the pilot is subsequently required to make a piloting skill roll with a destroyed gyro (after receiving ≥ 20 points of damage, being kicked by another 'Mech, being pushed by another 'Mech, or any other reason) the 'Mech automatically falls and is not able to stand for the remainder of the game. If a third hit to a gyro critical location is received, the 'Mech automatically falls, if it is still standing. However, a 'Mech with a destroyed gyro may engage in weapons combat and torso twist. Physical attacks and facing changes are not allowed. Reference BattleTech Compendium page 29.

"If a 'Mech has multiple Anti-Missile Systems, can they be set so each responds to a different incoming volley of missiles?"

No. Whenever a flight of missiles engages a 'Mech equipped with an Anti-Missile System, the system automatically engages the salvo before a To-Hit roll is made. The AMS can only be used once per turn. Therefore, if a 'Mech were designed with three AMS, all three would engage the first salvo of enemy missiles. Ammo expenditure is a major drawback of the AMS. A 'Mech with three AMS would still expend 1D6 (Inner Sphere) ammo per system, depleting the supply quickly. Adding additional AMS to a 'Mech would not be as effective as supplying a single AMS with additional ammo. Then again, adding additional ammo can also be a drawback in 'Mech design.



A single death is a tragedy. A million deaths are a statistic. – Joseph Stalin

New Avalon Institute of Science,
New Avalon
Federated Commonwealth
20 May 3057

Though he had killed countless times in his career as a MechWarrior, Galen Cox had never before felt like a murderer. Standing there in the Passive Life Maintenance Unit observation deck with Curaitis and Dr. Joseph Harper, he knew part of his discomfort came from the fact that he really was no longer Galen Cox. Galen Cox died in an explosion on a planet over 400 lightyears away and he had be resurrected from his faked death as Jerrard Cranston, national security advisor to Prince Victor Davion.

If I were not here under an alias, I know I would not feel as if I am participating in a crime. He shook his head. "Anyone else feel like we're killing this kid?"

Curaitis, the ice-eyed giant standing between him and Harper gave no flicker of emotion at the question. "We can't prevent his death, but we can stop his death from causing others to die."

Harper, who stood closer to Galen's height than that of the man separating them, nodded. "We've tried everything. He's hung on for far longer than anyone expected. It's time to let him die with a little dignity, Mr. Cranston."

Beyond the window Galen looked down on the emaciated body of Joshua Marik. Son of Thomas Marik, heir to the Captain-Generalcy of the Free Worlds

League, Joshua had been diagnosed with acute leukemia six years before and had been sent to New Avalon for treatment. New Avalon had been his best hope, but five years of treatment had left him sallow, bruised and, finally, all but dead. If not for the respirator pumping away beside his bed and dialysis machine cleansing his blood, the boy would have been dead weeks ago.

No one looking at this disease-ravaged child would have wished him one more second of life, but because he was more than a child, machines had extended his life well beyond any rational period. While he lived on New Avalon, Thomas Marik had a wedge to use against Sun-Tzu Liao. A living Joshua meant *he* was Thomas' heir, not Sun-Tzu's fiancé, Joshua's half-sister, Isis. Because Sun-Tzu wished nothing short of the destruction of the Federated Commonwealth, anything that kept him further from the power of Thomas' throne meant more peace and security in the Inner Sphere.

"I appreciate that, Doctor." Galen touched the glass separating them from Joshua's room. "I just wish there was something more we could have done. I feel so impotent knowing that this child is dying from a disease that has plagued mankind since before we left Terra and spread throughout the Inner Sphere."

Harper nodded. "I share your frustration. I've done everything possible to save his life. In the five years I've worked with him, I got to know and like Joshua. You're afraid that his death will lead to a war with the Free Worlds League, but I know enough about him to regret the fact that he'll never be

able to take over for his father."

"Having a Captain-General who owed his life to the Federated Commonwealth and had spent time here would have been wonderful."

"It's more than that, Mr. Cranston. Joshua was a bright boy. He was charming with the staff, yet inquisitive with me. During those times he was well enough to play with other patients he was a kid, yet when important visitors arrived, he was a noble and played that part well." Harper pressed his lips together into a thin line. "His death isn't just his family's loss, it's the future's loss."

Galen focused beyond his own reflection in the glass on to Joshua's face. "We have to ensure, Doctor, that the future's loss is not catastrophic in its scope."

"I know. Things have been arranged as Curaitis ordered. Joshua's body will be cryogenically preserved after we let him die, so he can later be sent back to the Free Worlds League. Your double was inserted in Joshua's place six months ago and has been fully accepted as being the genuine patient. Staff members who have worked with the real Joshua have been transferred to other facilities both here and on other worlds — though that's another loss. Our Oncology research projects are being gutted because of the moves."

Curaitis looked down at the physician. "They have been allowed to continue their work at their new posts."

"You don't understand. Research like this is important and difficult. There is no other facility like the New Avalon Institute of Science. You're setting cancer research back by centuries."



Galen tried to calm the doctor. "Orders have already been given to give all your people priority access to anything recovered from old Star League records as well as priority routing for data they want to exchange with their colleagues."

Harper rubbed his left hand from his receding hairline down over his face. "Look, there's a difference between this research and the other advances that the recovery of Star League records have made available. Six hundred years ago BattleMechs were invented, and they were refined and modified on up to three centuries ago, when the Succession Wars started. At that time the wars started to blast our technological base back to the Stone Age. The recovery of the library cores and old Star League equipment allowed us to bring our war toys back up to the specs our ancestors considered normal."

Galen nodded. "I know that. You should be able to benefit from the Star League's researches as well."

"I would, *if* the Star League scientists had made any advances in this area. In the same three centuries that saw BattleMechs go from crude machines to sleek, powerful and lethal engines of war, genetic research foundered. What little that was done was directed toward finding cures for the various and sundry new diseases we ran into on the worlds we conquered. They also were directed at preserving life and extending our life spans, which means we know how to control many of the diseases that kill us as we age, but juvenile diseases and genetic ailments that happen later in life both have been ne-

glected."

Harper stopped suddenly and held both his hands up. "I'm sorry, gentlemen, I know this rant in well outside your reasons for being here. I've seen a lot of research money going to projects that recover old technology from Star League files instead of being directed into new research. Granted a lot of genetic research was considered a dead end, but if the things that are said about the



Clans, their breeding programs and genetic manipulation are even half true, there have been breakthroughs that are incredible. Some of them could have even helped here."

Curaitis smiled slightly. "Could you clone Joshua?"

"I doubt it — clones created beyond the embryonic stage don't appear to be viable — but I can't rule it out as a possibility. If the Clans — with their military focus — did it, I know we could too. But that would require funding

we don't have right now."

Galen scratched at the beard he had grown since becoming Cranston. "I'll speak to Prince Victor about this, Dr. Harper. You won't get your team back — at least not for the couple of years we need to maintain the illusion Joshua's alive — but perhaps after that we will be able to reunite you."

Galen saw Curaitis look down at him and knew the intelligence operative would fight that idea as a breach of security, but Galen didn't care. "Right now what will be important is in making certain that no one beyond you in this hospital knows Joshua has died."

"Don't worry, Mr. Cranston, all the people here are professionals and patriots. The transition has gone smoothly. Up in what was Joshua's suite, your double is fully accepted. Down here, Joshua will die and up there he'll continue to live." Harper turned and pointed to a pair of switches mounted on the wall between the observation window and the door beyond it. "All the life support equipment has been routed through this red switch. Most folks think it's rather ghoulish to watch while patients in the Passive Life Maintenance unit dies, so the green switch closes the drapes on the other side."

Harper took a step back from the switches and Galen felt he should step up to them. He was willing to accept the responsibility for turning off Joshua's life support, but the broad gulf between willingness and desire loomed before him and made him hesitate. In his moment of indecision, Curaitis took a step to the side and raised his hand toward the switches.

"Wait just a second, if you don't mind." Harper looked down, then



pointed toward the door. "I know Joshua really died weeks ago, and can't hear or see anything right now, but I think I'd rather be in there with him when he goes."

Galen nodded. "If you don't mind, I'll join you."

"Thanks."

Curaitis looked at both men for a second and Galen shivered beneath the tall man's icy gaze. "I will wait until you give me a sign, then I will turn his machinery off."

"Thanks, Curaitis." Galen gave him a smile, but the agent's face remained impassive. As Dr. Harper passed through the door, Galen stopped and looked back at Curaitis. "I get the feeling you think displaying this sort of compassion is silly."

"Not at all."

"But you'll stay in here."

"My job, Mr. Cranston, is to see to it that the universe that allows you to grow up and be compassionate continues to exist. Part of doing that job is turning off Joshua's life support."

Galen frowned. "That's it?"

"I'm sorry the boy's dying, but I didn't make him sick and all my best wishes won't keep him alive any longer." Curaitis glanced down for a moment, then looked back up with electric intensity into Galen's eyes. "I can't be overly sentimental about him, though, because I didn't know him and, had he grown up, I'd have seen him as being as dangerous to the Federated Commonwealth as his father or grandfather."

"What if he would have turned out to be someone who could have united all of the Successor States?"

"Thin line between that and someone who *thinks* he can reunite all the Successor States and

starts a war to prove himself wrong." Curaitis' gaze did not waver. "His death is tragic, but anything beyond that is hypothetical and I don't deal in hypotheticals. Can't cover all the possibilities when you do."

"Do you think Victor is right in replacing Joshua with an impostor?"

"Not up to me to second-guess the Prince."

"Especially when you suggested this course of action to him."

"I made him aware of the plans his father had initiated against this eventuality. He chose to employ the Gemini option."

Galen frowned. "Deceiving Thomas Marik like this is bound to spark hostilities."

"Thomas Marik is a pacifist and idealist. His Knights of the Inner Sphere worked because of the personnel he gathered, not because of the philosophy he has bestowed upon them. Besides, Thomas has other things to worry about than the Prince deceiving him."

Galen nodded. "I read the confirmation of the report about Thomas' wife's condition." He narrowed his eyes. "Her injuries weren't caused by one of our operations, were they?"

"No. We prefer subtle means for accomplishing our ends."

"Like killing a child?"

"At least here he will not die by the violence so commonly connected to Marik deaths in their own realm."

"I doubt that's much of a consolation to a little boy who failed to thrive." Galen shook his head. "Sometimes I wish life was simpler."

"Living and dying is as simple as it gets, Cranston. All else is just a question of volume and statistics."

"It doesn't seem to me that

dying makes anything simpler."

"The kid will get it right." Curaitis smiled. "Go on, go see him off. He could do worse than have someone like you there when he goes."

"You could come in there, too."

"Thanks, but no."

"Got something better to do, Curaitis?"

"Yes, I do. While you're in there dealing with his death," the intelligence man nodded solemnly, "I'll start making certain we can survive his legacy."

Nothing is ever done in this world until men are prepared to kill one another if it is not done. --- George Bernard Shaw, Major Barbara

Tharkad City, Tharkad
District of Donegal,
Federated Commonwealth
21 May 3057

Caitlin Kell's mouth gaped open as she stared at Katrina Steiner—Davion. "Katrina, are you sure you should be telling me this? Ryan Steiner was the man behind the assassin who killed our mothers?" Caitlin slowly lowered herself into a brown leather chair. She had used to think of the chairs in this room and warm and inviting, but its covering now felt cold and as she sank deep into it, it seemed to her as if she were descending into the heart of a glacier. "Oh, God, to think I thought what happened to him was horrible."

Katrina knelt on the beige carpet in front of her and took Caitlin's hands into her own. "Cait, if there was any other way I could have let you know this, I would



have. The way Ryan died was horrible, but no more horrible than what he did to *my* mother and *your* mother and your father. When I think of Morgan and the pain on his face when he buried your mother, I..." Katrina's voice faltered and her lower lip trembled.

Caitlin squeezed her cousin's hands and bit back tears of her own. The same bomb blast that had killed their mothers had also destroyed her father's right arm. In killing Salome Kell, the explosion had done more hurt to Caitlin's father Morgan than anything else in his life, including the long-ago death of his brother. Melissa's death had been a similar blow to Morgan, as well as to the whole of the Federated Commonwealth, and Caitlin thought that her father's desire to avenge himself on the assassin's patron was the only thing that had driven him to recover from his wounds.

"My father is strong." Caitlin forced the words past the lump in her throat, as much to convince herself of their truth as to comfort Katrina. "And Ryan's lucky that sniper got him on Solaris because, even with one arm gone, my father would have torn him apart."

Katrina swiped at tears, smearing a little mascara across her cheeks. "Even though Ryan used to pilot an aerospace fighter, I have no doubt Morgan would have gotten him."

Caitlin smiled grimly. "That's right, Ryan was a pilot. That means he would have been mine."

Her golden-haired cousin sniffed. "Well, I suppose I could have snubbed him at a party. Seated him next to the Baroness de Gambier."

"Even I'd not have been that

cruel." Caitlin shook her head. Her raven hair closed down like a veil over either side of her face. "You shouldn't sell yourself so short, Katrina. It doesn't matter that you're not a warrior or pilot. You'd have had Ryan all tied up."

Katrina frowned. "What do you mean?"

"I may spend most of my time on Arc Royal training with the Kell Hounds, but it's not that much of a backwater. I've seen how effective you were in dealing with Ryan, mediating between him and Victor. You acted very maturely and stopped the two of them from doing things that would have split the Federated Commonwealth in half. Victor's decision to return to New Avalon lets you calm things down here."

"Perhaps, but I'm no where near as effective as my mother was." Katrina covered her face in her hands. "I miss her very much, Cait."

Caitlin worked herself forward in the chair and leaned down to hug Katrina. "I know, I know." *Poor Katrina. Her mother is killed by a bomb, then her sweetheart Galen Cox is killed by a bomb. With Victor leaving and Peter's vanishing, she must feel abandoned.* "We all miss your mother, Katrina, but in you she has a worthy successor."

"I don't think so, Cait." Katrina again brushed tears away. "My mother was an institution. With one cold glance or — more like her — a warm smile and firm handshake, she was able to get people to do what needed to be done to make the Federated Commonwealth better. Everyone who knew her loved her and respected her and looked to her for leadership. She was so alive. She was the foundation that supported the Federated

Commonwealth and, at the same time, the glue that bound it together."

"Your mother was radiant." A smile came easily for Caitlin as she thought of Archon Melissa Steiner-Davion. "I don't think, meeting her face to face, that anyone could have refused anything she asked of him. That's why the assassin had to use a bomb. If he'd tried to shoot your mother, he couldn't have pulled the trigger."

Katrina nodded. "You're right, and I suppose that's why she had to die." Katrina swallowed hard. "You'll think this is ghoulish, I'm certain, but ever since I learned that Ryan was the one who ordered my mother's death, I've tried to get inside his mind and see why he did it."

"No, no, that's not ghoulish, it's understandable." Caitlin stroked Katrina's blond hair. "I've wondered about the sort of person that would plant a bomb knowing it would kill so many people beyond the intended target. That was unnecessary. I guess he was a stupid bastard who wanted to make sure it worked. Ryan probably told him to do that."

Katrina stood and shook her head. "No, Ryan was not stupid. He was anything *but* stupid."

Caitlin looked up at her. "Killing your mother was stupid, Kat."

"Yes, it was, but I think he had lost perspective on that aspect of it." Hugging her arms to herself, the slender woman began to pace, eating up floor with long-legged strides. "Ryan saw my mother as a stabilizing influence. With her serving as Archon-Princess, my father's policies — as modified and humanized by her — would continue. We would spend the remaining years of the Clan



truce coming together as a nation. We would prepare for the Clan onslaught and even build alliances with other nations to make certain the Clans could not complete their conquest of the Inner Sphere.

"Ryan could not abide that. Stability for our nation meant stagnation for him."

Caitlin snarled in disgust. "He should have found himself another line of work."

"He couldn't. I know he was ambitious and hungry for power, but he had goals tied to both of those things. As sainted as my mother was, not everyone agreed with her policies. People like Ryan had legitimate doubts about my mother's plans for the future."

"True, Katrina, but most people brought their concerns to your mother so she could incorporate them into her plans. Ryan brought her a bomb."

"Yes, but I think he saw a fundamental problem with the nature of the Federated Commonwealth. You know as well as I do that the Clans carved 25% of their conquests from the Lyran half of the Federated Commonwealth. Ryan saw that as a mortal wound. He wanted to push back against the Clans, but my mother wanted to rebuild and train and be ready for when the battle resumed." Katrina stopped and leaned against the back of another brown leather chair. "Ryan thought my mother was killing the Lyran Commonwealth."

"And to save it he wanted to make the Isle of Skye independent?"

"He saw the rebellion as a way to wake my mother up to how serious the problem was. He still remembered how the Lyran Com-

monwealth saved the Federated Suns' economy after my father took the Sarna and Tikonov Commonalities from the Capellan Confederation twenty-five years ago. Then, after the Clans invaded, he saw frightened people leaving the Lyran half of the Commonwealth and fleeing to the safer half of the nation. My mother did nothing to stop them, confident that they would return once they saw the Clans had been stopped."



"And they were coming back, Katrina. We all know that."

"Yes, but not quickly enough. The rate of return did not match the rate at which people ran. Those returning were the ones who did not have sufficient money to make it in the old Federated Suns. Government programs financed their relocation. Worse than that, I think, for Ryan was the fact that no one else saw the situation the way he did. He saw my mother lulling the nation to sleep with her kindness, and he felt that sleep would

destroy us. Until my mother was eliminated, there could be no change, no progression."

Caitlin's green eyes blazed for a second. "Thank God his was a minority opinion."

"Minority, yes." Katrina shivered. "Unique, no."

"What are you saying?"

"Don't ask me that, Caitlin."

Caitlin stood as Katrina trembled. "What's wrong, Katrina. You can tell me."

"No, no I can't. It's too horrible."

"More horrible than our mothers being vaporized by a terrorist bomb?" Caitlin grabbed Katrina by the shoulders. "Look at me. What could be more horrible than that?"

Katrina's mouth opened in a silent scream, then she sagged in against Caitlin's chest. "I don't know that Ryan was acting alone."

Katrina's crying faded to the background as the full implication of the words hit Caitlin. Ever since Melissa Steiner died, the Federated Commonwealth had been rife with rumors about various conspiracies connected with her death. The vast majority of them had tried to pin her death on Victor Davion, but Caitlin had known Victor for years. They had all played together as children. She'd dismissed those rumors out of hand.

Katrina's admission suddenly brought them all back to her. It was true, after all, that Victor had been the one to discover his father dead of a heart attack. Galen Cox had been with him at that time. It was a fact that Victor had missed his mother's funeral on Tharkad, though her other children, who had to travel all the way from New Avalon, managed to make it. Victor inherited the



throne upon his mother's death, making him the sole ruler over an empire that spanned the entire Inner Sphere and held within its borders trillions upon trillions of people.

And the latest rumors, about a rift developing between Galen and Victor took on a sinister note with Galen dying in a bomb blast similar to the one that had killed Melissa. People suggested that Victor had killed his own father in Galen's presence, promising the commoner Katrina's hand in marriage for his silence, then Victor reneged and had Galen killed when Galen was on the verge of revealing the truth about the deaths of Hanse Davion and Melissa Steiner-Davion.

"Katrina, how can you say that? What makes you think that?"

"I don't know, Caitlin, but it's a feeling and it all begins to add up. After Ryan was killed, Victor told me that the mystery concerning our mother's death was solved. He said that Ryan had done it and had paid with his life for his crime. Then he said that he knew Ryan had worked alone, all alone. He said it was done. It was time to move on. It was time to do all the things for the Federated Commonwealth that our parents never even could have conceived of."

"But you don't think Victor had anything to do with their deaths, do you? You can't."

Katrina shook her head and tears pasted some golden strands of hair to her face. "No, of course not. Victor couldn't have, no, I'm almost 100% certain of that, but..."

"But?" Caitlin felt her stomach tightening. "But what?"

"But all those reasons why Ryan would have killed my mother, they work for Victor, too. And me. And

Peter and Arthur and Yvonne. Each of us gains from the deaths of our parents."

"But Victor? He couldn't have killed your mother or your father."

"I know that, Caitlin. I believe it. I really do. I know he didn't do it, but I have to remember who I am and what responsibilities I have. And I have to look at what Victor is doing and I have to wonder."

Caitlin frowned. "What do you mean 'what Victor is doing?'"

"For example, his going back to New Avalon." Katrina freed herself from Caitlin's grasp and began to pace again. Occasional sniffs and sobs punctuated her words, but with her head bent with determination, she spoke firmly. "Yes, the seat of government used to switch back and forth between Tharkad and New Avalon, even during the years of the invasion. And, yes, the throne remained on Tharkad in the aftermath of our mother's death, so the people of the old Federated Suns were getting short-changed, but the throne should be here. I begged Victor to stay here, but he was determined to go back to New Avalon."

Caitlin folded her arms across her chest, then plucked at the ivory silk sleeve of her blouse. "But with the Isle of Skye arrayed against Victor, don't you think his leaving will let things calm down?"

"I could have calmed things with him here. His running just means that the people of Skye who hate him think they can frighten him off. Those who love him believe he's left the high and dry. I mean, he gave Grayson Carlyle a title and demanded an oath of personal fealty in return, then did nothing to help the Gray Death Legion with the fighting on Glen-garry. Victor even left for New

Avalon months before the situation was settled. He abandoned Carlyle and he's abandoned others."

"I think, with all that's gone on, you're the one who's feeling abandoned, Kat."

Katrina stopped and smiled at her cousin. "Not with your coming here, Cait."

"I'm happy to be here, despite the circumstances."

"You're my strength, Caitlin. You've always been stronger than I am."

"You're selling yourself short, Katrina."

"May be, but no more." Katrina took a deep breath and cleared her hair away from her face. "I am a Steiner and I have responsibilities to see to it that my people are not abandoned. This government has been on autopilot during the transition. Now that Victor's people are all on New Avalon with him, I will use what Victor has given me to do what must be done. And the first order of business is healing. Healing the political rifts, healing the pain of the Skye rebellion."

Caitlin smiled. "Laudable goals."

"Oh, I'll do more. Healing is going to be the key to what I do. I'm going to focus on medical research, building hospitals, repairing damage from the rebellion and healing the hatreds that are threatening to split this half of the Commonwealth apart. If I can do that, we'll have nothing to fear from the Clans when their truce expires."

The pilot nodded. "And what are you going to do about Victor?"

Katrina hesitated, then looked down at the carpet. "My first responsibility is to my people, the



people his actions have harmed. I don't want to think Victor is the sort of monster who could resort to murder, but if I find that he is, then I will have to deal with him. No matter what happens though, I remember who comes first, and I will never let Victor harm them again."

Daosha, Zurich
Sarna March,
Federated Commonwealth

Noble Thayer smiled as Ken Fox slapped him on the back. "I appreciate the fact that your willing to rent me this apartment so quickly, Mr. Fox, but I can't let you believe I'm a veteran like yourself." Noble ran his left hand back over the black brush-cut hair on the top of his head. "Just because I have the same cut you do doesn't mean I served in the Armed Forces of the Federated Commonwealth."

Fox frowned, resting his hands on his ample belly. "A guy your age should have served against the Clans, am I right?"

Noble smiled and set his two duffle-bags inside the door of the furnished apartment. "Should have, yes. When I heard about the invasion I was living on Garrison and went with some friends to a recruiting office to sign up. On the way we were in a traffic accident and I snapped my right leg in two places." He bent and worked his trousers' leg up to show the scar from the surgery performed to set the bone. "My friends got action and I got traction."

Fox winced and chewed on the end of an unlit cigar stub. "I always hated surgeons going in to pull things out of me. I know they couldn't leave shrapnel in, but they're always so cold even

though they're doing worse to you than the enemy."

"As they say, 'Its the thought that counts.'"

"I guess." Fox looked Noble up and down. "So if you aren't a vet, how come the hair cut and the duffle-bags? I mean, I look at you and I says to myself, 'there's a guy with self-discipline and a military bearing.'"

Noble's smile carried right up into his brown eyes. "Because of my leg the military wouldn't take me. I volunteered for Civil Defense and discovered I was good at explaining things to kids. One of my supervisors had a brother who ran a small military academy on Hyde — Stevenson Military Preparatory Academy. Maybe you've heard of it?"

Fox gave him a non-committal grunt.

"Well, I got a job offer there and spent the last three years teaching chemistry and general sciences."

The landlord nodded. "So why did you come to Zurich? We don't have any schools like that here."

"I know. That's part of what attracted me to this place."

"I don't follow."

Noble blushed. "My grandfather died about six months ago and left me a bunch of money, provided I follow a dream of mine that I told him about. See, I told him, once upon a time, I wanted to be a writer, but I never had the nerve to sit down and try it out. Since there isn't any sort of academy here that I could teach at, and since this place is so far away from Hyde, I can't return to the security of teaching. It's sink or swim."

"An inheritance is one hell of a life vest, Noble."

"Well, there is *that*, yes."

"So why Zurich?"

Noble shook his head. "I want to write thrillers and, well, about a year ago I saw a holovid bit on a woman doctor who faced down and disarmed a member of the *Zhazheng de guang* and I decided I wanted, no I *needed* that sort of atmosphere to write."

Fox started laughing. His fat rippled up and down beneath his yellow plaid flannel shirt. "Well, you got atmosphere in spades here, Noble. This was that doctor's apartment."

"No!"

"Oh, yes. Hell, you're picking up the last month of her lease." Fox nodded proudly. "Dr. Deirdre Lear and her son David lived here. She paid me to keep the apartment open in case she decided to return to working at the hospital here. My daughter used to babysit for her."

"Dr. Lear sent a message two months back that she was going to stay on St. Ives for a while. Some of her friends from the Rencide Medical Center packed her stuff up and have it in the basement, in your storage locker. They put a lock on it, so you won't be able to use it until they get that stuff sent off to her. The key to the other lock on the storage area is here on your key ring. Her friends are waiting for a ship heading toward St. Ives — ought to be one going out inside a month. Hope that won't be a problem."

"No, not at all. All I've got is in those bags." Noble shrugged. "You're very trusting to give me a key to that storage area before it's cleared out."

Fox shrugged. "I can judge folks. You ain't the thieving type. You *are* going to need some stuff to fill this place, though."





"Beds, desks and chairs out to be easy to get here." Noble nodded slowly. "I figured I could buy some computer stuff here for writing and all, but I don't know how available that sort of thing is going to be."

"It's available, but a bit pricey. My son in law, Fabian, can fix you up with something cheap."

"Excellent." Noble dug into his jacket's inside pocket and pulled out a cashier's check for a thousand Federated Commonwealth Kroner. "I drew this on my accounts and assumed it would cover rent and deposits. Anything left over you can credit for future rent. We can figure it out when you draw up the lease."

"Works for me. Good to have you here, Thayer." Fox walked back out of the door, then paused on the landing and smiled back at his new tenant. "I live just down the street in the grey duplex. If you ever want to hear about some of the things I did with the 22nd Avalon Hussars in the War of '39 with the Snakes. I'll show you some *real* scars."

"I'll bring the beer."

"Deal."

Noble Thayer closed the door and looked around the modest apartment. The living room led into the kitchen and a corridor off to the right led back to two small bedrooms and a full bathroom. The walls had been painted a light

blue and the carpet was a deep navy. The furnishings, while nice and serviceable were cheaply manufactured and not meant to hold up in the long run.

That was all right with him. He'd come to Zurich to get away from his past and look toward his future. That he was ending up in the apartment Dr. Lear had rented, that was a stroke of luck he couldn't have counted on. No one would believe that was where he had ended up.

He laughed aloud and hoped Fox couldn't hear him. "This is the first day of the rest of your life, Noble Thayer. Here's hoping such good fortune marks the rest of your days."

Michael Stackpole has written and developed many of the current plots seen in BattleTech and Shadowrun. He has also written for almost every major company in the gaming industry. To say that he has made his mark in the gaming business would be an understatement. His characters, Raven and Wolf along with all of their shadowrunning cohorts, have been published in Challenge Magazine and in the Shadowrun anthology.

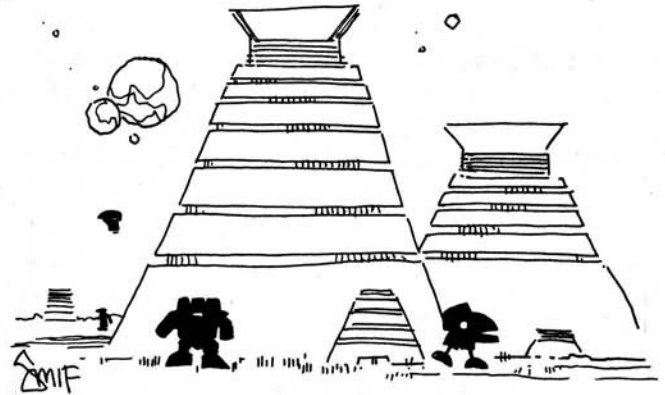
In his most recent venture Mike has taken the next step in his career and has written an original epic fantasy adventure. "Once A Hero" is a riveting tale of a legendary human hero who in one life built a kingdom and who, 500 years later, must be raised from the dead to help save it. The book is a rousing adventure of mystery, magic, and swashbuckling adventure in the tradition of David Eddings and Robert Jordan. The book is action packed and fun to read. It will appear in your favorite bookstore in May.

"Once A Hero is easy to start, easy to like, and very hard to put down." —Larry Bond

"What a magnificent tale! Scope and verve...an incredible tapestry...a page turner." —Dennis McKiernan



In recent times I have noticed a large number of people speaking poorly of the Inner Sphere. They say that the Inner Sphere is doomed because the Clans have more advanced Technology. I must admit that this technological advantage is true but one does not need to be a Sandhurst Scholar to see the superiority of the Clan's technology. The question that people should be asking is how did they develop the edge they have. How long did it take them to develop the technology they have? I can tell you that it has taken from the time General Kerensky and his SLDF left the war ravaged Inner Sphere until the first moment a Clan Omni-Mech set foot inside the Inner Sphere. We have in ourselves the ability to duplicate and even surpass the amazing array of super-tech displayed by the Clans. Just remember that history is always in motion, even as I type these words they become the past and the present moves relentlessly forward.



My point is that we are closing the gap. True it is a slow process and many years will have to pass before we can achieve the levels of technological dominance that the Clans now enjoy. With the help of ComStar, the diligent professors at the NAIS, the engineers at the Draconis Propulsion Laboratories, and the many others who strive to close the gap, we will one day achieve an even footing with the progeny General Kerensky left. On that day the Inner Sphere may finally know peace.

Until then, sit down, don't take life so seriously, and enjoy this old exam I found in a file from my college days. I received this exam during my final days at the New Avalon Institute of Science. As with all college students, my group of cohorts had given our professor the title, 'Ole Stone Face,' due mostly to the man's lack of any sense of humor. On the day of the final I remember being scared stiff. Yet, even with a severe case of nerves, I passed the exam with flying colors. Just for fun, see if you can duplicate my success.

• **New Avalon Institute Of Science** • **Comprehensive Final Exam**

For The Graduating Class Of The Spring Semester 3045 AD

Instructions :

Read each question carefully. Answer all the questions. Time is limited to four hours. Begin immediately, work in numerical order. You will be provided with the proper materials for each question. To graduate, you must score at least 97.4%. Each question is worth 10 points. If you finish early, you may leave quietly.

1) Medicine.

You have been provided with a basic surgical kit, a piece of gauze, and a bottle of Christian Brother's Scotch. Remove your appendix. If your appendix has already been removed, notify your examination supervisor and he/she will select an alternative organ. Do not suture until your work has been inspected. You have 15 minutes.

2) History

Describe the history of ComStar from its origins to the present day, concentrating especially, but not exclusively, on its social, political, economic, religious, and philosophical impact on the Federated Commonwealth, Draconis Combine, Free Worlds League, Capellan Confederation, and Bake Pharmaceuticals.



- 3) **Public Speaking** Two thousand drug-crazed aborigines will be admitted into the room. Calm them. You may use any ancient language except Latin or Greek.
- 4) **Biology** Create life. Estimate the difference in the subsequent human culture if this form of life had been created five hundred million years earlier, with special attention to its probable effect on the Twentieth Century English Parliamentary system.
- 5) **Music** Write a piano concerto. You may use the style that was popular between 1400AD and 1770 AD. Orchestrate it. Perform it with a piano and two other instruments selected at random from your orchestration.
- 6) **Engineering** You have been provided with a box containing the disassembled parts of a high powered rifle. You have also been provided with a non pictorial instructional manual printed in Swahili. In exactly 10 minutes a Bengal tiger will be admitted into the room. Take whatever actions you deem appropriate. Be prepared to justify your actions. Bonus points will be awarded for creativity, but there will be no partial credit if you do not survive.
- 7) **Sociology** What sociological problems might accompany the end of the universe? Construct an experiment to test your theory.
- 8) **Psychology** Based on your knowledge of their works, evaluate the emotional stability, degree of adjustment, and repressed frustrations of each of the following: Alexander the Great, Ramses II, Hammurabi, and Mao Tse Tung. Support your evaluations with quotations from each man's work. You may paraphrase when you translate.
- 9) **Logic** Take a position for or against the truth. Prove the validity of your position.
- 10) **Classical Physics** Explain the nature of matter. Include in your answer an evaluation of the impact of the development of mathematics or science.
- 11) **Modern Physics** Produce element 207. Determine its half life, oxidation states, and melting point.
- 12) **Energy Resources** Construct working fission and fusion reactors. Compare their power output ratios using three different reaction masses and four different room temperatures.



- 13) **Philosophy** Sketch the development of human thought; estimate its significance. Compare this with any two other kinds of thought.
- 14) **General Knowledge** Describe in detail, briefly.
- 15) *** EXTRA CREDIT** Define the universe, and give three examples.



The Tzunami

Capabilities:

A well rounded light 'Mech, the Tzunami combines equable firepower with the maneuverability both of which are essential for a 'Mech' of its class. Armament includes a Firmir Maxi Lase large Laser, two Firmir Standard Medium Lasers, a Hovertec SRM 2 Streak pack, and a Mydron Mini Gun Machine gun. As with the previous light 'Mech designs by Dr. Linn, the Tzunami has an XL engine, endosteel internal structure, and double heat sink technology. These features combine to allow Dr. Linn more tonnage for additional armor, giving the pilot better protection. During field testing, the Tzunami was able to deliver sustained damage while maintaining a comfortable distant for enemy forces when necessary. The Tzunami is produced by Earthwerks Incorporated, the largest 'Mech producers within the Capellan Confederation. Earthwerks' executives are confident that the Tzunami will be a dazzling success and view its production as the beginning of an economic boom for their corporation.

Deployment: House Fujita 1st Battalion, defenders of Earthwerks Incorporated, were among the first to put the Tzunami through its paces and have reported favorably on its overall performance.

TZU-1L Tzunami

Mass: 30 tons
Chassis: Corean Model TZ Endo Steel

Power Plant: Edasich Motors-Aur XL
Cruising Speed: 60.9 KPH
Maximum Speed: 97.2 KPH
Jump Jets: Hellespont Leaper 1500
Jump Capability: 180 meters
Armor: Hellespont Light

Armament:
1 Firmir Maxi Lase Large Laser
2 Firmir Standard Medium Laser
1 Hovertec SRM 2 Streak
1 Mydron Mini Gun Machine Gun

Manufacturer: Earthwerks Inc.
Primary Factory: Grand Base
Communications Systems: Ceres Com Model 31 RS
Targeting and Tracking System: C-Apple Churchill 31

Type:Tzunami TZU-1L

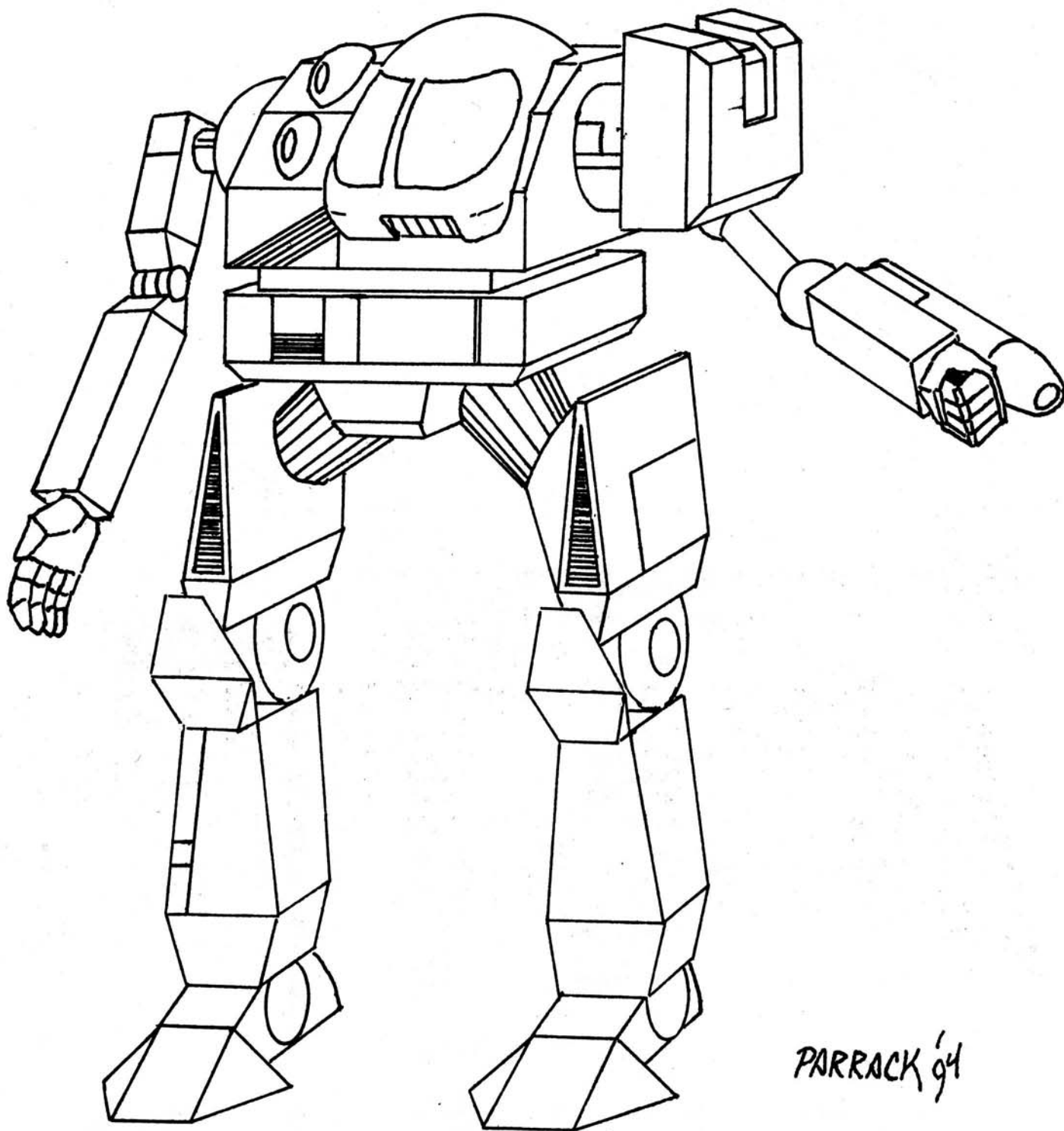
Equipment:		Mass
Internal Structure:	Endo-Steel	04.0
Engine:	Hermes 320 XL	11.5
Walking MP:	6	
Running MP:	9	
Jumping MP:	6	

Heat Sinks:	10 (20)	
Gyro:		2.0
Cockpit:		3.0
Armor Factor:	105	6.5

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	03	09
Center Torso	10	15
Center Torso (R)	—	05
R/L Torso	07	10
R/L Torso (R)	—	04
R/L Arm	05	10
R/L Leg	07	14

Weapons & Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
Large Laser	LA	2	5
Med.Laser	CT	1	1
Med.Laser	CT	1	1
SRM 2 Streak	RT	1	1.5
SRM 2 Ammo	RT	1	1
Machine Gun	RA	1	0.5
Jump Jets	RT	3	1.5
Jump Jets	LT	3	1.5

VITAL STATISTICS



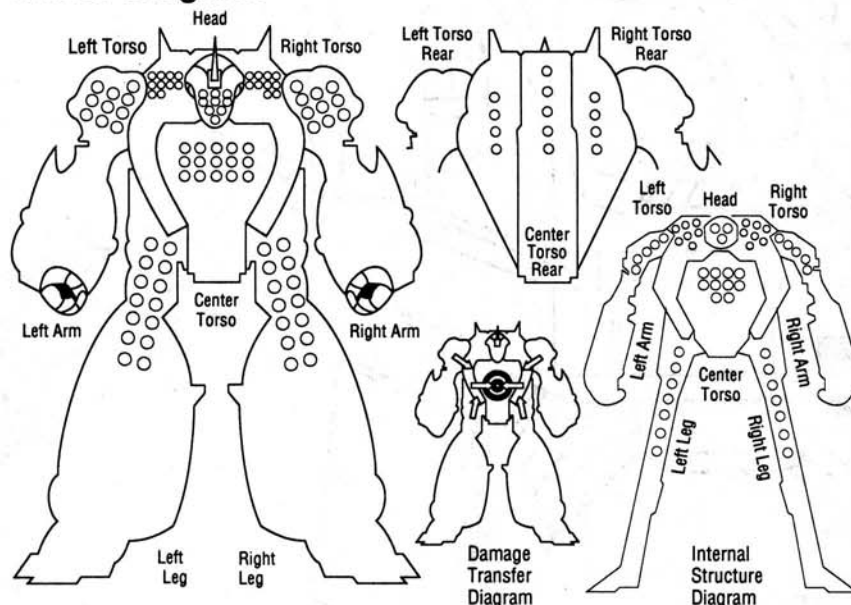
PARRACK '94



A NEW MECHDESIGN FROM...



Armor Diagram



Mech Data

Type: TZUNAMI TZU-IL
 Tonnage: 30
 Movement Points:
 Walking: 6
 Running: 9
 Jumping: 6

Weapons Inventory

#	Type	Location
1	Large Laser	LA
1	Med. Laser	CT
1	Med. Laser	CT
1	SRM 2 Streak	RT
1	Machine Gun	RA

M.G. Rounds: 100

S.R.M. Packs: 50

Missiles per pack: 2

Total Heat Sinks

Single ☐
 Double ☒

Warrior Data

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

Left Arm

1. SHOULDER
 2. UPPER ARM
 3. LOWER ARM
 4. HAND
 5. LARGE LASER
 6. LARGE LASER
1. ENDO STEEL
 2. ENDO STEEL
 3. ENDO STEEL
 4. ENDO STEEL
 5. ENDO STEEL
 6. ENDO STEEL

Left Torso

1. XL ENGINE
 2. XL ENGINE
 3. XL ENGINE
 4. ENDO STEEL
 5. ROLL AGAIN
 6. ROLL AGAIN
1. JUMP JETS
 2. JUMP JETS
 3. JUMP JETS
 4. ROLL AGAIN
 5. ROLL AGAIN
 6. ROLL AGAIN

Left Leg

1. HIP
2. UPPER LEG
3. LOWER LEG
4. FOOT
5. ROLL AGAIN
6. ROLL AGAIN

Critical Hit Table

Head

1. LIFE SUPPORT
2. SENSOR
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. GYRO
 2. ENGINE
 3. ENGINE
 4. ENGINE
 5. MEDIUM LASER
 6. MEDIUM LASER

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

Right Arm

1. SHOULDER
 2. UPPER ARM
 3. LOWER ARM
 4. HAND
 5. MACHINE GUN AMMO
 6. MACHINE GUN
1. ENDO STEEL
 2. ENDO STEEL
 3. ENDO STEEL
 4. ENDO STEEL
 5. ENDO STEEL
 6. ENDO STEEL

Right Torso

1. XL ENGINE
 2. XL ENGINE
 3. XL ENGINE
 4. SRM 2 STREAK
 5. SRM 2 STREAK AMMO
 6. ROLL AGAIN
1. JUMP JETS
 2. JUMP JETS
 3. JUMP JETS
 4. ROLL AGAIN
 5. ROLL AGAIN
 6. ROLL AGAIN

Right Leg

1. HIP
2. UPPER LEG
3. LOWER LEG
4. FOOT
5. ROLL AGAIN
6. ROLL AGAIN

Heat Scale

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 4+
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	
04	-1 Movement Points
03	
02	
01	
00	

FASA
 CORPORATION



The Oracle

Capabilities:

Exceptional maneuverability and abstemious fire power allow the Oracle to be an effective assassin to larger, slower 'Mechs it encounters on the battlefield. Utilizing its jump capabilities, the Oracle takes position behind the larger 'Mech, bores through the thin rear armor using its lasers, and then delivers the fatal blow with its hatchet. Armament includes a Magna Markwell Large Laser, a Ceres Arms Medium Laser and a Holly SRM 4 pack. Also equipped with an XL engine, endosteel internal structure, and double heat sinks, the Oracle is well armored for a light 'Mech allowing it to withstand considerable damage during engagements with the enemy.

Deployment:

Manufactured at Bergan Industries on Ares, the Oracle has sailed through it's field testing and has become a favorite light 'Mech with the 15th Dracon 1st Battalion on Bergan. Within the Free Worlds League, the 2nd Regular Hussars, defenders of Gibson Federated BattleMechs, are evaluating the Oracle and have given the design flattering reports.

VITAL STATISTICS

OCR-5L Oracle

Mass: 35 tons
Chassis: Irran Class 12 Endo Steel

Power Plant: Magna 245 XL
Cruising Speed: 75.6 KPH
Maximum Speed: 118.8KPH
Jump Jets: Heelespont Leaper 3000
Jump Capability: 210 meters
Armor: DuraLex Light
Armament

1 Ceres Arms Medium Laser
1 Magna Mark III Large Laser
1 Holly SRM 4 Pack

Manufacturer: Bergan Industries
Primary Factory: Ares
Communications Systems: DataCom 70
Targeting and Tracking System: Rad Com 011

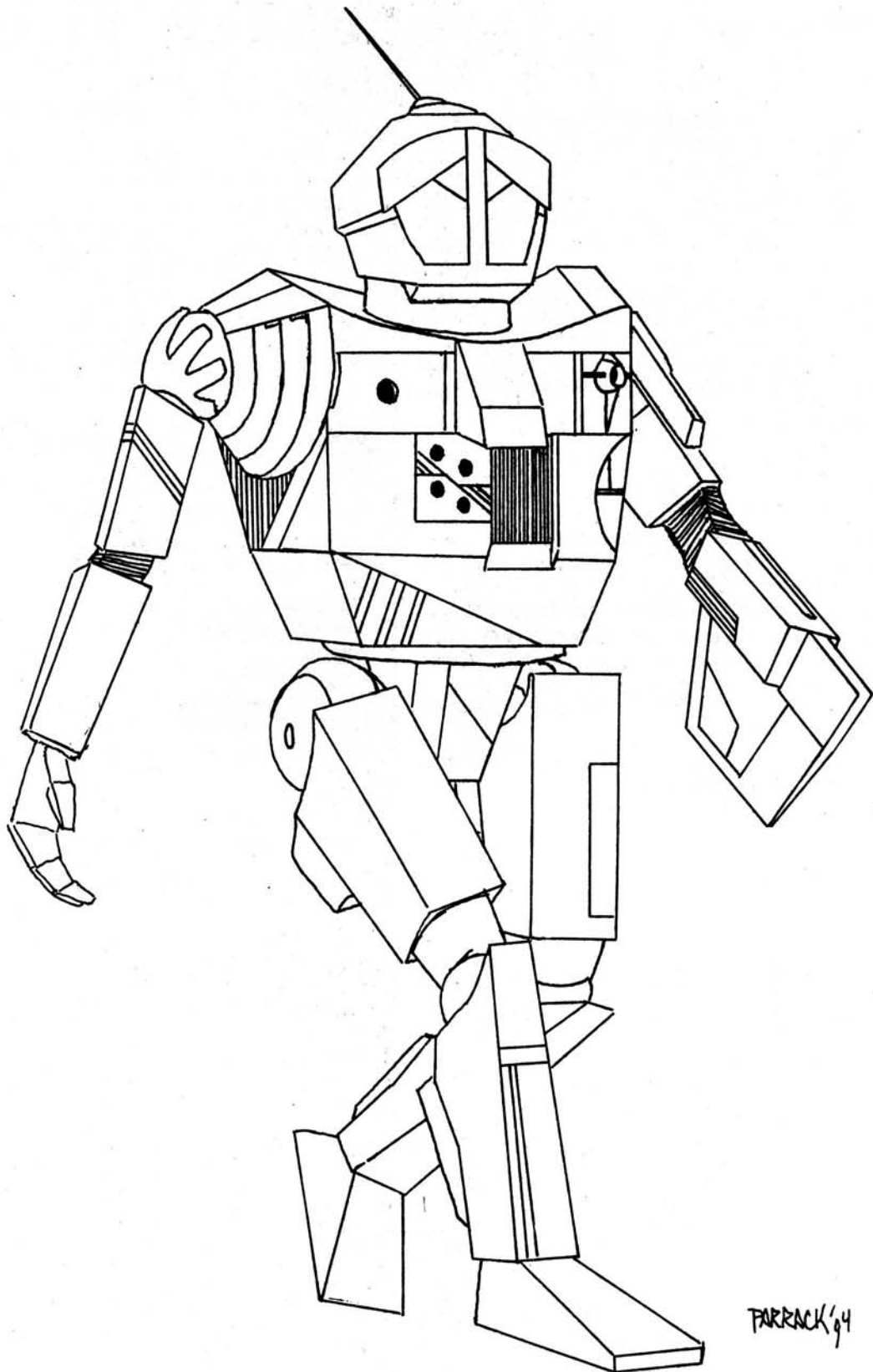
Type: OCR-5L Oracle

Equipment:		Mass
Internal Structure:	Endo-Steel	1.75
Engine:	Magna 245 XL	6.0
Walking MP:	7	
Running MP:	11	
Jumping MP:	7	

Heat Sinks:	10 (20)	---
Gyro:	-	3.0
Cockpit:	-	3.0
Armor Factor:	108	6.75

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	03	09
Center Torso	11	18
Center Torso (R)	—	05
R/L Torso	08	10
R/L Torso (R)	—	04
R/L Arm	06	10
R/L Leg	08	14

Weapons & Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
Large Laser	RT	2	5
Med. Laser	LT	1	1
SRM 4	LT	1	2
SRM 4 Ammo	LT	1	1
Hatchet	LA	2	2
Jump Jets	RT	3	1.5
Jump Jets	LT	3	1.5
Jump Jets	CT	1	0.5



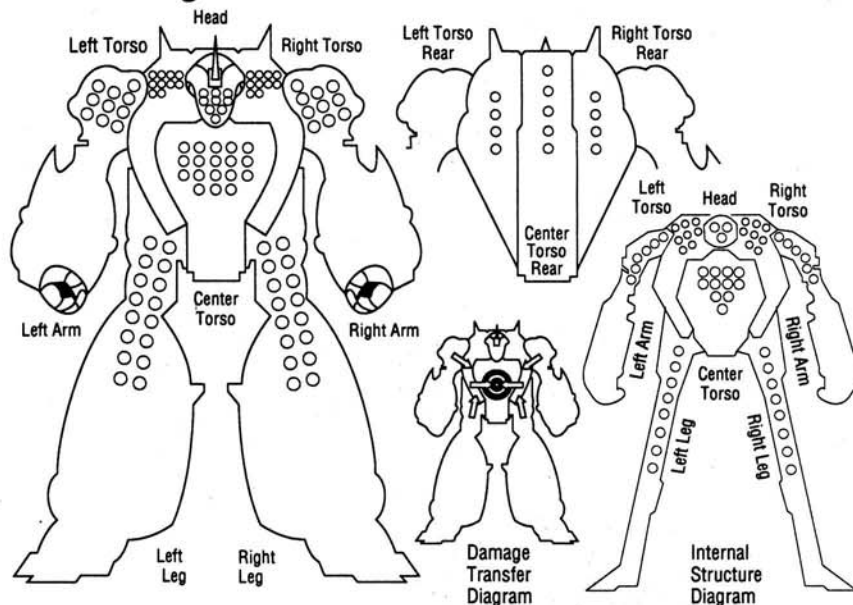
FARRACK'94



A NEW MECHDESIGN FROM...



Armor Diagram



Mech Data

Type: ORACLE OCR-SL
 Tonnage: 35
 Movement Points:
 Walking: 7
 Running: 11
 Jumping: 7

Weapons Inventory

#	Type	Location
1	Large Laser	RT
1	Med. Laser	LT
1	SRM 4	LT
1	Hatchet	LA

AMMO

S.R.M. Packs: 25
 Missiles per pack: 4

Total Heat Sinks

Single ☐
 Double ☒

Warrior Data

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

Left Arm

1. SHOULDER
2. UPPER ARM
3. LOWER ARM
4. HAND
5. ENDO STEEL
6. ENDO STEEL

2. ENDO STEEL
3. ENDO STEEL
4. ENDO STEEL
5. ENDO STEEL
6. ENDO STEEL

Left Torso

1. XL ENGINE
2. XL ENGINE
3. XL ENGINE
4. SRM 4
5. SRM 4 AMMO
6. MEDIUM LASER

1. JUMP JETS
2. JUMP JETS
3. JUMP JETS
4. ROLL AGAIN
5. ROLL AGAIN
6. ROLL AGAIN

Left Leg

1. HIP
2. UPPER LEG
3. LOWER LEG
4. FOOT
5. ROLL AGAIN
6. ROLL AGAIN

Critical Hit Table

Head

1. LIFE SUPPORT
2. SENSOR
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. GYRO
2. ENGINE
3. ENGINE
4. ENGINE
5. JUMP JETS
6. ROLL AGAIN

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

Right Arm

1. SHOULDER
2. UPPER ARM
3. LOWER ARM
4. HAND
5. HATCHET
6. HATCHET

1. ENDO STEEL
2. ENDO STEEL
3. ENDO STEEL
4. ENDO STEEL
5. ENDO STEEL
6. ENDO STEEL

Right Torso

1. XL ENGINE
2. XL ENGINE
3. XL ENGINE
4. LARGE LASER
5. LARGE LASER
6. ROLL AGAIN

1. JUMP JETS
2. JUMP JETS
3. JUMP JETS
4. ROLL AGAIN
5. ROLL AGAIN
6. ROLL AGAIN

Right Leg

1. HIP
2. UPPER LEG
3. LOWER LEG
4. FOOT
5. ROLL AGAIN
6. ROLL AGAIN

Heat Scale

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 4+
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	
04	-1 Movement Points
03	
02	
01	
00	

FASA
 CORPORATION



Overview:

In efforts to improve the garrison capabilities protecting the factories located within the Capellan Confederation, Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao has authorized the design and production of three new light BattleMechs: the Talon TAL-3L, the Oracle OCR-5L, and the Tzunami TZU-1L. The Capellan design team is headed by Dr. Sable Linn. Dr. Linn is a notable engineer who originally worked on the Raven production crew. She has recently gained favor with the Chancellor for her skills in 'Mech design and production. Dr. Linn was largely responsible for adding the technological upgrades that catapulted the Raven out of the experimental stages and into the limelight of sophisticated BattleMech warfare.

To assist with economic reform within the Confederation, and strengthen its alliance with the Free Worlds League, components for the new 'Mech designs were produced at industries within the neighboring states whenever possible.

The Talon

Capabilities:

The Talon is Dr. Linn's personal favorite among the three new 'Mech designs. A sister 'Mech to the Raven, the Talon is an excellent example of the 'recon-to-contact' 'Mech. Quick movement, jump capabilities, and beagle probe technology establish the Talon's effectiveness in recon capacity. After establishing contact with the enemy, the Talon's excellent movement and moderate firepower allows for quick in, strike, and out tactics.

Armament includes three Diverse Optics Type 5 Medium Lasers and one Small Laser. An XL engine and endosteel internal structure allow the Talon to carry more armor than many of the other 'Mechs in its weight class. The eleven double heat sinks provide more than adequate heat dissipation even in the most hostile encounters. The Talon's abilities during field testing were impressive performances and the future for the 'Mech looks very bright at Hellspont Mech Works on Sian.

Deployment:

The Talon's deployment has taken the 'Mech to numerous worlds within the Capellan Confederation and the Free Worlds League. Its main trials have been that of a garrison 'Mech but the manufacturer looks forward to seeing the design prove itself as a solid combat asset during actual combat very soon. The House Imarra 1st Battalion, garrisoned at Hellspont Mech Works on Sian, has given favorable reports on the Talon's performance and believes the Talon to be an excellent lance mate to Mech Works' Raven.

TAL-3L Talon

Mass: 30 tons
Chassis: Hellspont Type T

Power Plant: 240XL Hermes-Thermopolis
Cruising Speed: 86.4 KPH
Maximum Speed: 129.6 KPH
Jump Jets: Hellspont Leaper 4000T
Jump Capability: 240 meters
Armor: Riese 250
Armament: 3 Diverse Optics
 Type 5 Medium Lasers 1
 Firmir Standard Small Laser

Manufacturer: Hellspont Mech Works
Primary Factory: Sian
Communications Systems: Salamander System
 CommPhase Unit II
Targeting and Tracking System: Garret T10T /
 BeagleProbe Assist System 6

Type:Talon TAL-3L

Equipment:	Endo-Steel	Mass
Internal Structure:	Hermes 240XL	1.5
Engine:		6.0
Walking MP:	8	
Running MP:	12	
Jumping MP:	8	

Heat Sinks:	11 (22)	1.0
Gyro:		3.0
Cockpit:		3.0
Armor Factor:	105	6.5

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	03	09
Center Torso	10	15
Center Torso (R)	—	05
R/L Torso	07	10
R/L Torso (R)	—	04
R/L Arm	05	10
R/L Leg	07	14

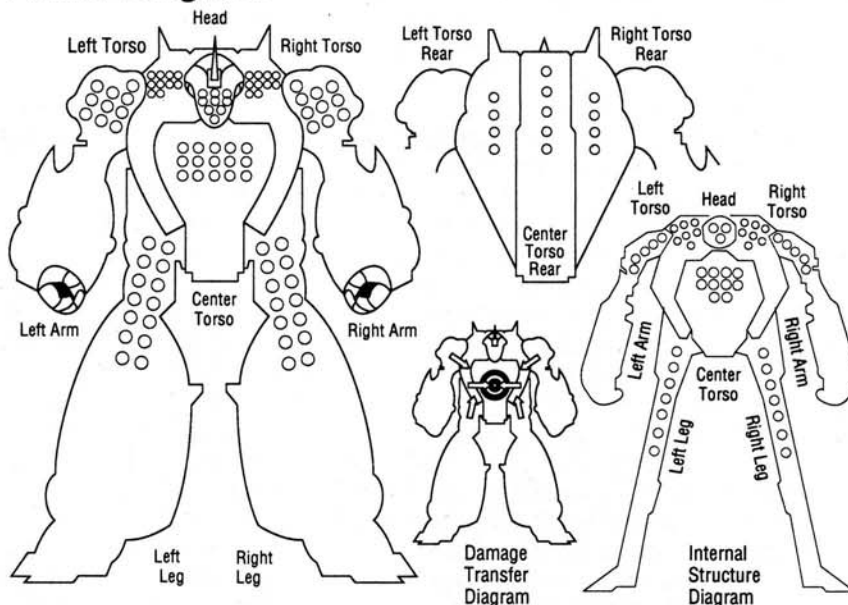
Weapons & Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
Med.Laser	CT	1	1.0
Med.Laser	CT	1	1.0
Med.Laser	RA	1	1.0
Small Laser	RA	1	0.5
Beagle Probe	RT	2	1.5
Jump Jets	RT	4	2.0
Jump Jets	LT	4	2.0



A NEW MECHDESIGN FROM...



Armor Diagram



Mech Data

Type: TALON TAL-3L
 Tonnage: 30
 Movement Points:
 Walking: 8
 Running: 12
 Jumping: 8

Weapons Inventory

#	Type	Location
1	Med. Laser	CT
1	Med. Laser	CT
1	Med. Laser	RA
1	Small Laser	RA
1	Beagle Probe	RT

Total Heat Sinks

○○○○○○ Single ☐
 ○○○○○○ Double ☒

Warrior Data

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

Left Arm

1. SHOULDER
2. UPPER ARM
3. LOWER ARM
4. HAND
5. ENDG STEEL
6. ENDG STEEL

1. ENDG STEEL
2. ENDG STEEL
3. ENDG STEEL
4. ENDG STEEL
5. ENDG STEEL
6. ENDG STEEL

Left Torso

1. XL ENGINE
2. XL ENGINE
3. XL ENGINE
4. DOUBLE HEAT SINK
5. DOUBLE HEAT SINK
6. DOUBLE HEAT SINK

1. JUMP JETS
2. JUMP JETS
3. JUMP JETS
4. JUMP JETS
5. ROLL AGAIN
6. ROLL AGAIN

Left Leg

1. HIP
2. UPPER LEG
3. LOWER LEG
4. FOOT
5. ROLL AGAIN
6. ROLL AGAIN

Critical Hit Table

Head

1. LIFE SUPPORT
2. SENSOR
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. GYRO
 2. ENGINE
 3. ENGINE
 4. ENGINE
 5. MEDIUM LASER
 6. MEDIUM LASER

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

Right Arm

1. SHOULDER
2. UPPER ARM
3. LOWER ARM
4. HAND
5. SMALL LASER
6. MEDIUM LASER

1. ENDG STEEL
2. ENDG STEEL
3. ENDG STEEL
4. ENDG STEEL
5. ENDG STEEL
6. ENDG STEEL

Right Torso

1. XL ENGINE
2. XL ENGINE
3. XL ENGINE
4. BEAGLE PROBE
5. BEAGLE PROBE
6. ROLL AGAIN

1. JUMP JETS
2. JUMP JETS
3. JUMP JETS
4. JUMP JETS
5. ROLL AGAIN
6. ROLL AGAIN

Right Leg

1. HIP
2. UPPER LEG
3. LOWER LEG
4. FOOT
5. ROLL AGAIN
6. ROLL AGAIN

Heat Scale

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 4+
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	
04	-1 Movement Points
03	
02	
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COMSTAR NEWS BUREAU REPORTS FROM AROUND THE INNER SPHERE

Federated Commonwealth

New Avalon, June, 3056

Archon Prince Settles In

Archon Prince Victor Steiner Davion has completed the transfer of power from Tharkad to New Avalon. A spokesman for the F-C government has stated the Archon Prince plans to rule from New Avalon for the next year and then return to Tharkad and resume the six-month shift between the two capitals.

"The transition has gone smoothly, with few problems," states Shella Anderson, a press agent for the F-C government. "The Archon Prince and his sister, Duchess Katrina, are in frequent communication. The Archon Prince has complete confidence in his sister." This statement, no doubt referring to the maelstrom of discontent over the Isle of Skye situation and, the recent assassination of Duke Ryan Steiner.

Archon Prince Victor spent his first few weeks at the Royal Palace on New Avalon organizing his office and playing football on the palace grounds. Over the next year the Archon Prince plans on tackling a number of problems.

The largest is the problem within the Isle of Skye. "Anger and rebellion are rampant in the region, and Victor will certainly have his hands full," quotes an anonymous government source. The Archon Prince also plans on focusing more attention on the Clan threat and dealing with the growing pirate attacks that are plaguing the border regions of the entire Federated Commonwealth.

Hoonar, July 3056

Stalemate Continues

The standoff between the forces of Baroness Jennifer Tsanma of Gronholt and Duke Vallant Deedman of Hoonar continues this month in the vicious battle for control of Hoonar and its valuable mineral resources on the southern continent.

Duke Deedman still pleads for help from the Archon Prince in this matter, but his requests for assistance remain unanswered.

The dispute between the two nobles stems from the joint Gronholt-Hoonar discovery of vast mineral deposits on Hoonar's southern continent; a treasure which Duke Deedman refuses to share with his neighbor.

In recent months, mercenary forces under the command of Baroness Tsanma attacked Gronholt, seized the southern continent, and began to make incursions to take the entire world. Duke Deedman's militia has resisted these attempts and has just recently repelled a massive thrust by the Baroness' forces to capture the city of Bloom. The Duke now seems to be changing strategies and, is making sniping attacks against the Baroness' bases.

The Baroness is having other problems at home as well. Her homeworld of Gronholt is showing signs of the economic strain the war is placing on this poor world.

A spokesman for the F-C government told ComStar News Bureau that "the Archon Prince is aware of the situation and it will be taken care of soon." No word was given as to when this would happen.

Parma, June 3056

Heavy Fighting Still Rages

It seems there is no end in sight for the civil war currently raging on the planet Parma. The hereditary ruler of Parma, Duke Antonio Garibaldi II, has suffered two serious losses in recent weeks.

A company of armor and infantry from the army of Duke Candace Murkoff succeeded in knocking out a company of mercenaries belonging to Duke Garibaldi on Colost Island. The battle occurred during a heavy storm, and the 'Mech forces of Duke Garibaldi were in disarray because of the weather according to a statement by Duke Murkoff's staff. The conventional company then went on to loot and destroy a supply depot located several kilometers outside the city of Benton.

Duke Garibaldi also suffered defeat in an attack on the city of Porast. The conventional forces of Baron Codokkan put up a stiff, but losing, fight against the attacking 'Mech forces of Duke Garibaldi. The Baron then surprised the attacker by unleashing two lances of medium aerospace fighters, which succeeded in breaking the Garibaldi lines and caused a retreat. The use of the aerospace fighters was quite a shock, as most intelligence reports indicated the Baron possessed no air assets whatsoever.

A spokesman for Duke Garibaldi assured CSNB that the war against the rebellious nobles would continue. The Duke has just recently hired more mercenary forces, both 'Mech and conventional. The addition of these forces now brings the Duke's hired army to just over a regiment of 'Mech plus additional forces.

Draconis Combine

Luthien, June 3056

Coordinator Pleads for Cooperation from other House Leaders

In a statement issued early this month, Coordinator Theodore Kurita expresses hope for the future and pleads for further cooperation by the other rulers of the Inner Sphere.

In the statement, the Coordinator expressed his sadness over the



death of Duke Ryan Steiner but hopes healing within the Isle of Skye can begin and that Archon Prince Victor can now concentrate on the Clan threat. The Coordinator also believes things are improving because the Archon Prince has moved from Tharkad to New Avalon.

The Draconis Combine has been the only major Inner Sphere power to pay so much attention to the Clan threat. The Combine has also been the most active in countering and disrupting the Clans and their occupation of Inner Sphere worlds. In the past three months several raids have been launched from Combine border worlds at both Smoke Jaguar and Nova Cat holdings. Although numbers were not available for attacks launched from "Fort Wolcott," it is believed they were high.

The statement says nothing to confirm the rumors that Theodore Kurita is hiring mercenary forces to locate the Clan homeworlds, but the rumors of such actions persist. Several mercenary units have entered Combine space and have not been seen since.

Korramabad, June 3056

Better Days for Bentlen

Knight of the Dragon Timothy Bentlen has come upon better days recently. Knight Bentlen is currently waging a revolution on his homeworld of Korramabad to overthrow the current ruler, Duke Taikara Imushiu. Outnumbered and short on cash from the beginning, Knight Bentlen has had to fight a rough, uphill battle. Things have recently turned in the Knight's favor. The Knight's forces have captured two of Korramabad's diamond mines in stunning victory against the Duke's militia. The capture of these mines is the first significant victories for the Knight and his hired forces.

Knight Bentlen has also had a problem recently with desertion. Mercenaries have broken contract

with the Knight over lack of pay or pay shortages, but an aide for the Knight has reported to CSNB that the Knight has received a large monetary grant from an anonymous source. Although the size of this grant was not disclosed, it is believed to be over 20,000,000 Dragon, the Combine currency.

A spokesman for Duke Imushiu has stated that the Duke plans on redoubling his efforts and plans to crush the Knight within the next six months. The Duke has also reported that attacks by the pirate group Vance Rezak's Band of the Damned has tapered off. The Duke has been the recent target of attacks made by these pirates, and their absence should allow the Duke to back up his pledge.

Free Worlds League

Atreus, June 3056

Captain-General Reports an O.K.

A statement made by Captain-General Thomas Marik of the Free Worlds League reports that all is well within his realm and that the Free Worlds League will continue on its upward trend, both economically and politically, for the remainder of the year.

The statement goes on to say that although still on hold, the wedding plans between his daughter Isis and Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao are definitely on.

The Captain-General also expressed hope that the situation within the Isle of Skye will soon settle down and that he and the other leaders of the Inner Sphere will be able to concentrate on the Clan presence. In a show of their support for the unification against further Clan aggression, the Free Worlds League has sent a sizable economic aid package to the Free Rasalhague Republic. The size of this aid is believed to be approximately 1 Billion C-bill equivalents.

The statement does not address the problems that continue within the Zion Province, which is threat-

ening secession if the marriage between Sun-Tzu Liao and Isis Marik goes through. It also does not comment on the continued presence of Free Worlds troops on worlds belonging to the Circinus Federation. The FWL forces have been in Circinian space since 3054 and have continually promised that they will leave soon.

Hammer, July 3056

Trading Firm Unveils Relics

Correlated Traders, a Free Worlds League trading company, announced this month that they will soon unveil the artifacts and relics recently discovered on a trade run made into the deep Periphery.

Correlated Traders is a trading cartel that operates primarily on the outer edge of the Free Worlds, often making runs into the Periphery for many trade deals. On a recent expedition, the crew of the CTS Pennysaved discovered a derelict jumpship with an attached dropship.

"We were nervous at first, but soon realized that both ships were abandoned. That's when we went inside," quotes jumpship captain Mary Schezner. The crew soon realized they had found a jumpship that dated back to the Star League. The jumpship was a total loss, but the dropship contained many interesting items from that era.

"Turns out we had stumbled upon another merchant ship. It was an incredible find," states Captain Schezner.

Correlated Traders plans to reveal their findings in a museum located on Hammer and is also making arrangements to return the remains of the crew, which were still on board, to the families to which they belong.

Many of the items that will be displayed include rare sculpture and other artwork, along with Star League era clothing and entertainment items.



Golden Blond Web

Ah, don't you just love the brotherly love flowing red from the Federated Commonwealth? If we wait long enough all of House Davion and Steiner will be eliminated, and House Hasek will be the reigning loony-bird. But we have bigger fish to fry today. The fish in question is none other than my very good friend Chancellor Sun Tzu Liao.

Now ole Sun Tzu has been very quiet recently, so the Ear decided to press himself against the ground to see what rumblings he could hear. As it turned out the rumblings we heard were that of a dropship. This was no ordinary dropship, however. This dropship belonged to the ranks of the 20th Arcturan Guard. It apparently left Port Moseby several months ago and arrived in Sian only twenty days after the assassination of Ryan Steiner.

The mortal enemies seemed quite friendly to each other when the Rosetta, a Union Class dropship, set down on the Capital Spaceport facility. The Cappellan's even allowed Federated Commonwealth BattleMechs to be posted around the dropship. The 'Mechs were painted in the ceremonial colors of the Arcturan Guard and each had a Tamar Lion painted on its left breast.

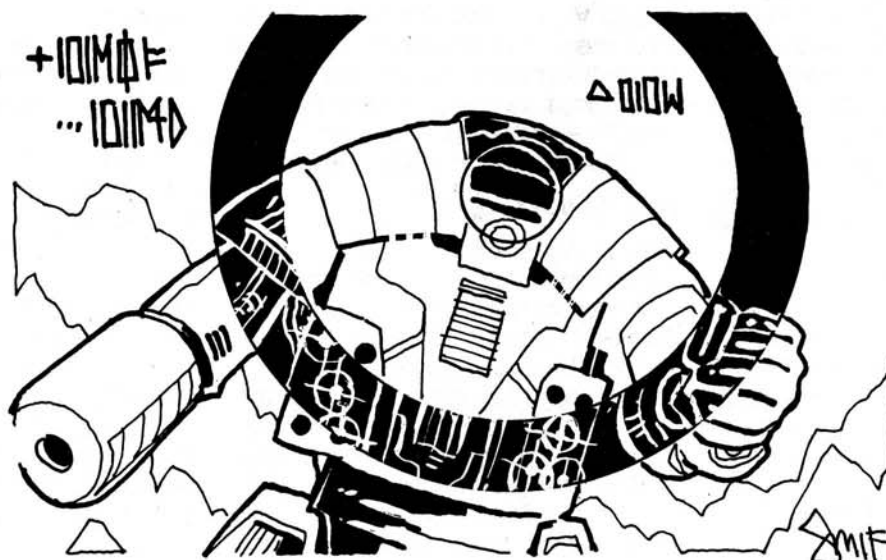
The strangest part of this entire episode occurred when a stretch limo, brandishing the flag of the Cappella Confederation, arrived and shuffled four individuals off towards the palace. Three of the individuals were male and in uniform but the fourth member of the group was a female dressed in a formal gown and wearing a ringlet of platinum in her golden blond hair. Looks like its time to wake up the neighbors, the House is on fire.

his DCMS on two occasions to quiet internal disputes between differing factions of his command. And what of all the mercenaries that have gone to the planet Wolcott? Not even Luthien has as much secrecy surrounding its operations as the oasis of the Dragon. Several unconfirmed stories report that the Coordinator is sending the mercs in search of the Clan's homeworlds. It is the Ears belief that the Combine is actually trying to reach a diplomatic agreement with the Clans.

I have learned that several attempts to speak directly to the iKhan of the Clans has fallen on deaf ears. The topic of these communications has been revealed to the Ear by sources inside the Combine. It was told to me that the Coordinator was willing not to attack the Clans as they moved past the Combine towards Terra in return for a

guarantee of non aggression in Combine space. In other words, you don't attack us and we won't assist the Inner Sphere.

If this is true, and I have no reason to doubt my source, the Combine may become the open door the Clans have been looking for to gain free and quick access to Earth. The Combine was called, '... the Inner Sphere's front door to the Clans ...', by Jamie Wolf. It seems that the door swings both ways when trying to protect its House.



In Through The Out Door

The air of anticipation continues to escalate in the Draconis Combine as the truce date's end draws closer. Military activity is shrouded in secrecy and not even the Ear can penetrate the veil. Yet, ever the hound for a good tip, I have discovered that many of the old guard do not have faith in the military plans of Theodore Kurita. The young Coordinator has had to divert several battalions of



THE STATE OF THE FREE(?) WORLDS LEAGUE

I was visiting Atreus several weeks ago and came across an underground copy of a ComStar newspaper. Needless to say I took it and hurried back to my hotel lest the Word of Blake Thought Police find me out. As I was reading a certain story, something struck me. I was looking at a microcosm of the Free Worlds League in this story.

The story was about the planet Amity. Do you know what's going on there? Let me tell you. The world's ruler, First Minister Lyle Jefferson, has completely alienated himself from his people by making many unpopular decisions lately, both economic and social. The First Minister has made enemies, both with the people and the members of his own government. Things are apparently so bad on Amity that the First Minister has hired out mercenaries to protect him from his own people. Despite all the current problems, Amity is still a prosperous world.

So how is this like the Free Worlds? Look closer. Thomas Marik has begun to alienate himself from many sectors of the population. The medical community has had nothing to do with him since Joshua checked into the Hotel NAIS. Many Ministers of Parliament have been complaining since the

Word of Blake came over. Just look at Gibson. Many more are also beginning to grumble with the pending marriage of Isis. So what does Thomas do to protect himself? He creates his own personal army and shrouds it in chivalry by calling them the Knights of the Inner Sphere. Let me tell you something folks, fighting in 'Mechs isn't all these people do. And you thought MechWarriors couldn't be salesmen.

Right now it's working, the Free Worlds League is top banana. But only because the Federated Commonwealth is beginning to grow out of its jeans, and the Combine is acting intelligently by watching the Clans. I can guarantee it won't last.

Think about it. We're talking about the Free Worlds League here. The three words that have always described this realm are: Factions, Factions, Factions. They have never been able to put aside their differences and certainly won't do so now. Fear has always kept them together, but that may soon not work. The Zion Province is already threatening secession if Isis and Sun-Tzu marry. The backwater regions are also bitching because they feel neglected and are worried about the Magistracy of Canopus. And don't forget Word of Blake. Everyone keeps telling me that the WoB are a blessing to the League. I keep reminding them that Word of Blake is just another name for the

Old ComStar. And I hope you can remember what they were like.

The funny thing is that Thomas Marik knows all this and still believes he can pull it all together. He also believes having Sun-Tzu as a son-in-law will help. That is the biggest flaw in his plan. First, the League would split apart if Sun-Tzu came into power and second, a Liao wouldn't know what to do with a realm that large.

So, what do we really have with the neighborhood we call the Free Worlds League? Well, in typical League fashion, we have a number of things. Let's take a walk down the block, shall we? First, we have Mr. Marik who's the big kid on the block with all the newest toys and an itch to use them. We also have that neighbor kid Victor Steiner-Davion holding the batteries to these toys in the form of Joshua Marik. We've got that creepy Liao boy who just keeps begging to go out with Mr. Marik's daughter. Then there's Mr. Marik's relatives. They've been hanging around the League since they were kicked out of their old house back in '52 and now seem to be taking over the place.

So what will happen to this little neighborhood in the near future? Well, remember when I mentioned about things snapping in the F-C? That's when something's going to happen in the FWL. What it will be, I don't know. But whatever it is, it won't be pretty. That you can count on.





Certification Report

Well it has been a long and tiring battle but the first batch of 'Mechs have been certified. The designs keep pouring in from all over the world and we will get to each one in turn. Listed below are the first batch of 'Mechs to be approved by the staff at FASA and AWOL.

<u>Designer</u>	<u>Mech Name</u>	<u>Category</u>
Christian McAlonan	Maverick	Light
Robert Benedetti	RoadRunner	Light
Brett Walker	RidgeRunner	Assualt
Robert Binkley	Challenger	Medium
John Sanchez	Khalil Hover Tank	Vehicle
Patrick Nelson	Golden Eagle	Assualt
Eric Olson	Ronin	Heavy
Clint Woodall	Trojan Warrior	Assualt
Andrew Thayer	FlashBack	Assualt
Brian Harris	Devastator	Heavy
Aaron Russell	Zephyr	Heavy
Jeff Hollister	Catapult II	Assualt
Leonard Miyata	Emperor Crab	Assualt
Jeff Hollister	Sprint (possible name change)	Light
Mike Peters	Sprint (possible name change)	Light
Mike Peters	Ninja	Light
Andrew Hartsell	Daemon	Medium
Gabriel Gong	Death Bloom	Heavy
Gabriel Gong	Shark	Medium
Gabriel Gong	Prowler	Medium
William Hall	Marauder II (possible name change)	Assualt
Jim Klint	Knightmare	Assualt
Kevin Dickens	HellStorm (VTOL)	Light
Douglas Spalding	Arrow	Assualt
Dana Jacobson	SledgeHammer	Assualt
Steve Hudson	Scorpion (possible name change)	Medium
Steve Hudson	Rifleman IIG (possible name change)	Assualt
Randy Grundstrom	Terminator	Assualt
Colin Pattinson	Predator	Medium
Clint Woodall	Warthog	Medium
Bob Bonnot	Mammoth	Assualt
Geoff Swift	Death Dealer	Assualt
Geoff Swift	Penetrator (possible name change)	Medium
Daniel Repperger	Dark Cloud	Medium
Daniel Repperger	Displacer	Light
Michael Repperger	Sim Jump Transport	Vehicle
Michael Repperger	Mountain Lion	Light
John Dodd	Baracuda	Light
Ryan Clark	Viking	Assualt
Lawrence Oberst	Dragon's Breath	Assualt
Jason Tuttle	White Tiger	Assualt
Fancisco Quintana	Razorback	Assualt
Alan Hyde	Wild Dog	Assualt

The second batch should be completed by March 7, 1994. We will release all the remaining names in the next issue. So if you didn't see your name in this listing just wait for the next issue.

On a design note, we would like to see more of the Light and Medium 'Mechs. The majority of designs are very good and are uniquely original. Many of the names are repetitive, however; so we are going to have to change a few of them. We will try to let each designer know before we change the name of the design. We would also like to see more art work with the designs. Even a rough sketch will help our artist develop the illustrations for the Members Tech Readout.

If you have designs for dropships, jumpships, or battleships we would encourage you to submit them also. The response from BattleSpace has been very good. In the next issue we will be printing an errata sheet for some of the bugs in the system. Until then, keep building!



My name is General Cassandra Blake, but you can call me Cassie. Don't let it go to your head though, soldiers. This lecture is the first in a series of tactical briefings that I have volunteered to present. Why would I volunteer to take an hour teaching the basics? Because I've seen too many top-notch pilots and gunners get their butts kicked on the battlefield because they don't know what they're doing. What I'm going to present to you is a good dose of common sense. Nothing complex. We'll start with the Light 'Mechs because it makes sense to start at one end of the weight range.

The Light BattleMech is probably the most overlooked tonnage of 'Mech. Light 'Mechs range from 20-35 tons, but we will also include the 10-15 ton Ultra-Lights in this group since they're basically used the same way.

For centuries commanders have only used the Light 'Mechs in low-risk roles. Whether it was recon, anti-infantry, or message carrying, the Light 'Mechs were almost always kept away from the thick of battle. The occasional exceptions to this were the minor nobles that were dumb enough to use such valuable equipment as cannon fodder. Unfortunately, the military couldn't keep this paradigm when the Clans invaded and threw their 20 ton 'Mechs at our Heavies with unprecedented fury. This new approach really stirred things up when it worked.

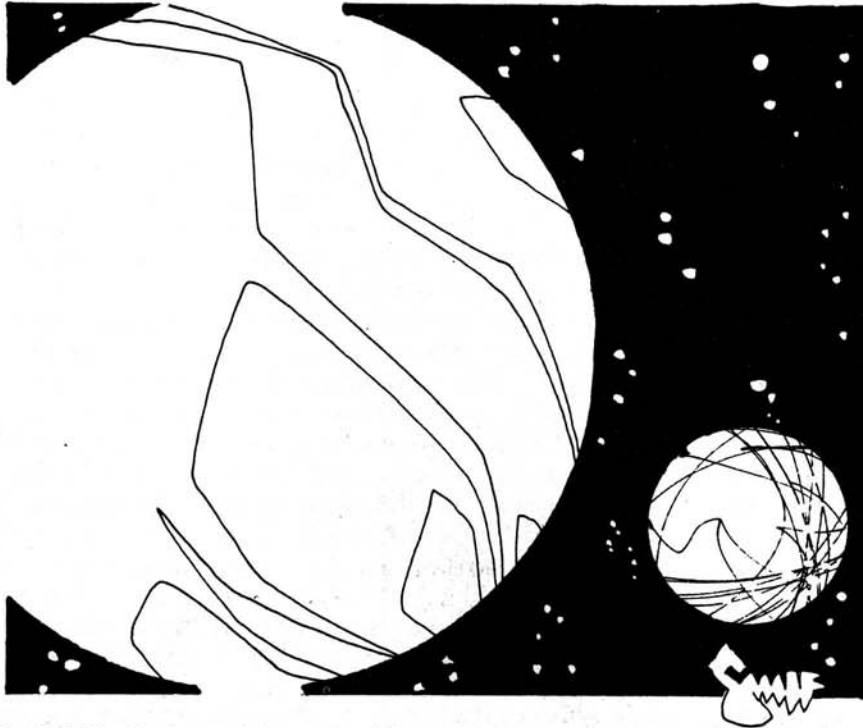
It is a mistake to see the Light 'Mech as useless in combat simply because it does not carry the armor and weaponry of the heavier machines. Granted, its low armor means that it won't take hits well, but who's to say it'll get hit? Trust me, when a little *Locust* goes racing by at 130 kph, it is not an easy target to hit.

The pilot of a Light 'Mech should always keep the 'Mech moving. You stop and you're dead. Feel free to use the speed of those ma-

hits really won't matter. Piloting a Light like this is a high pressure job, and I've been told that most Light 'Mech pilots die from heart attacks, but it works. Very few commanders have the patience to wait for a Light 'Mech to maneuver for a safe shot, but nothing scares an enemy more than a foe that he can't hit.

The Light 'Mech is also invaluable to larger units. Just because most of them are out on recon duty doesn't mean that the Light

'Mech is a loner. For the sake of illustration assume that you are piloting a *Spider* in a battle against the Fed-Com. You're buddies are mostly Heavies and Mediums and they've been pinned down in a valley with the Fed-Com 'Mechs pushing over the ridge. Your 'Mech is fast enough that you could easily zip in and out of the midst of battle, harassing the Heavier 'Mechs. If you burn a few Medium Laser



chines to keep them sprinting around the battlefield, almost always near protective terrain. If you can rely on your speed to make you a difficult target and go out in the open only when you need to, you're 'Mech will last longer than most Heavies. If you're Light 'Mech is disabled quickly, either you've done something wrong or the enemy is an inhuman gunner.

Also, make avoiding hits a priority over hitting. If you jump your *Wasp* right out in front of an *Atlas* that's ready for you, you're two

sized holes in some of the *Zeus* 'Mechs and then go running off again, the Steiners will have no idea which side to protect. Unless, of course, you're dumb enough to keep attacking along the same path. The key to a Light 'Mech, just like everything else on the battlefield, is unpredictability. Keep yourself moving and firing and you can cause some real confusion.

Now let's say that you're Company is on the east side of a valley and another friendly Company is on the west. To make things worse, the Fed-Com is beginning



to push its way into the western Company, and they need some reinforcements fast. So what is your commander going to do? Send an Awesome over to help? Unfortunately it won't be able to withdraw from the battle very quickly, much less cross the valley to the other end. So, once again, your Light 'Mech comes into play. Being so fast it is nearly impossible to pin down, it can immediately begin to cross the valley and will reach your friends in a third of the time it would have taken the Awesome. What I am trying to say is that the Light 'Mech is excellent for keeping up with a shifting battle and filling in the holes as they appear. Similarly, if a friendly 'Mech gets pinned down, a Light 'Mech can come racing in and give the enemies another target, increasing the chances of the friendly 'Mech getting out.

Finally, let's say your two Companies got lucky and beat the F-C 'Mechs. So, you've got a bunch of stragglers fleeing the battle and running for the Dropships. The battle may be won, but that's valuable salvage getting away, and you're commander wants it. Sorry, but the *Stalkers* aren't going to catch anything. Once again, the Light 'Mechs find a place on the battlefield, and with the support of some Mediums, a few of the F-C 'Mechs won't be making it home.

The bottom line is that you're guns are no good if they can't get to where they're needed. Don't misunderstand, I am not downplaying the heavier 'Mechs. I am simply trying to illustrate why the prejudice against Light 'Mechs is wrong.

Let's take another example. Your unit is deployed on a forest planet. About 20 kilometers into that forest is a communications station which is guarded by a line of 'Mechs. You don't know how many 'Mechs are in the garrison,

but you've got enough sense to know that you're out-numbered. Consequently, if you make a head-on assault, you're dead. But, if a unit could run in, hit the target, and run out, the equipment could still be destroyed. A Lance of Light 'Mechs could attempt to charge the base behind the cover of the trees. The heavier 'Mechs could give them some indirect fire support while the Lights jump over or run past the guarding 'Mechs, shoot a volley into the equipment, and then run off through the trees. Since they've got missiles coming in from one direction, and Light 'Mechs coming from everywhere else, the defenders would be forced to defend in several directions. Such a split in defense would buy the Light 'Mechs all the time they need to destroy the communications gear. While this is going on the heavier 'Mechs would be far enough off that they could disengage and flee into the forest with little difficulty. If the pilots were skilled enough, a plan like this one could actually work. Its not fool proof, but it has a higher chance of success than a head-on assault.

At this point, some of you are probably saying, "this woman is crazy, there is no way any of this could work". Trust me: it does work. I've seen it done.

The next obvious situation a Light 'Mech could be in is a lone battle. If you're alone in your 'Mech, perhaps stuck on recon duty, and you are engaged by an enemy force, you will be in an extremely dangerous position. Usually the most advisable thing to do is flee. If two or more enemy 'Mechs are present to cover each other, the speed of your Light 'Mech will only buy you time before they finally cut you down. If, however, running is not an option, there are a few things you can do that will help you to inflict as much dam-

age as possible.

If there is more than one enemy, never let them both shoot at you. This is not always possible, but when it is be sure to do it. Sometimes you can stay at a range close enough to engage one, but not close enough to engage the other. Other times there may be terrain which allows you gain a line-of-sight with one 'Mech while being shielded from the other. Or, one 'Mech may turn to guard a specific arc, turning its weapons away from you and allowing you a relatively safe area to move through.

Something else that might help is the application of a little psychology. If you move your 'Mech around the edge of their range, offering them shots that are nearly impossible, many arrogant pilots will over-heat themselves trying to hit you. The longer you can draw the battle out, the more frustrated the enemy will become. It is a well known fact that frustrated pilots will attempt many more impossible shots than calm pilots.

When you do engage one of the enemies, keep moving and keep firing. A low heat scale is one of the major advantages a Light 'Mech has over many of the heavier 'Mechs. I can almost guarantee that your enemy will have a much greater problem with heat than you will.

Finally, always maneuver for the weak spots. It is usually not difficult to maneuver a Light 'Mech out of the firing arcs of slower 'Mechs. Even if you cannot escape them all, evade some of the weapons. For instance, if you are fighting a *Marauder*, and can get into its right arc, you may not have escaped all of its weapons, but now you only have to deal with one PPC instead of five or six weapons. Sometimes it is even possible to get into the rear arc of a target. A Light 'Mech may not carry much



firepower, but even its limited weaponry is usually enough to tear well into the back of a larger 'Mech.

If you do take down the enemy, it will only be after a long time of swift movement and shots taken only at the best of moments.

For mass combat, Light 'Mech tactics can be summed up in three words: "swarm and surround". Light 'Mechs are most effective when used in groups, which are sometimes called "packs". These packs of several Light 'Mechs can simultaneously attack an enemy of any weight class with an excellent chance of successfully disabling it. They move around it, never giving it a clear shot, while attacking it from all sides. The enemy 'Mech will be quickly over-whelmed, and it is only be a matter of time before it is destroyed. Packs are more effective than lone 'Mechs since an enemy 'Mech will not have much trouble concentrating on a single 'Mech, even if it is running or jumping at a blinding speed, while a group of 'Mechs is much more confusing. It is a simple fact that any lone 'Mech that is focused on by a heavier 'Mech is usually either warded off or destroyed. However, if the enemy suddenly finds himself with four 'Mechs that are running around, he may have a lot more trouble destroying any one of them, much less all of

them. Every time he turns to face one, another one strikes at his back.

To make this more clear I will give another example. This time, however, I will tell a real story. Last year on Campoleone a group of planetary bandits managed to distract the garrison during a local ceremony and successfully raid the 'Mech facilities. Most of the bandits were shot by the security forces, but one of them successfully activated a *Warhammer* and managed to fight his way out of the city. He fled into the wilderness with it and informed the government that he would begin destroying towns unless his friends were released and they were given a Dropship to take them off planet.

The patrols were split into the smallest possible groups and sent out to search the entire planet for him. Within two days he was spotted by a *Javelin*. The Marik 'Mech bravely engaged the *Warhammer* and succeeded in firing two volleys before he was forced to retreat with heavy damage to his patrol 'Mech. The *Javelin* followed the *Warhammer* at the edge of its sensor range until reinforcements arrived. After being joined by a *Locust* and a pair of *Stingers*, the *Javelin* attacked again.

This time the bandit was surrounded by 'Mechs. One of the

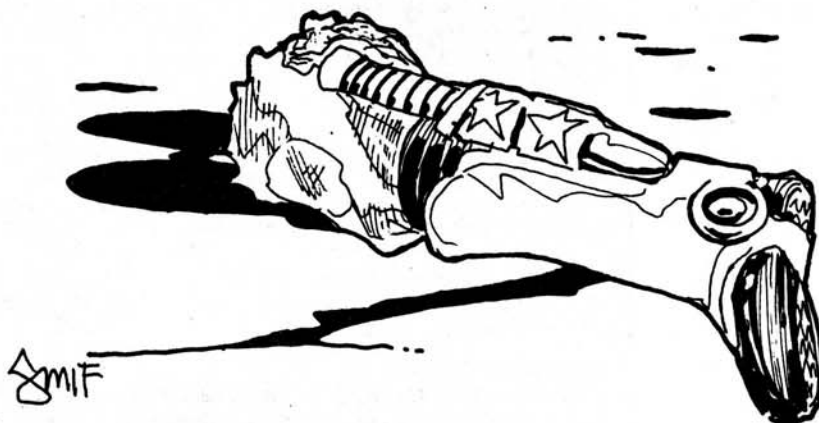
Lights would engage him, and by the time he had successfully turned to face it and locked on, it would disengage and another 'Mech would begin shooting at the *Warhammer's* rear. Within three minutes, the Heavy 'Mech was disabled and the bandit was captured. Unfortunately, during the battle the *Javelin* took a hit to its right leg and the pilot did not survive the *Warhammer's* next volley.

I would like to close by saying that everything on the battlefield is equal, and the Light 'Mech is no exception. It will not survive a head-on brawl with a *BattleMaster*, but that's nature's way of sorting out stupid people. If you use a Light 'Mech intelligently, it can become quite a potent weapon and a reliable machine. In short, use a little common sense.

We always enjoy hearing from our readers. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please write us at:

Common Sense
c/o MECH Magazine
2101 West Broadway
Suite 305
Columbia, MO 65205-8016

Please include an S.A.S.E. We will respond as quickly as possible.

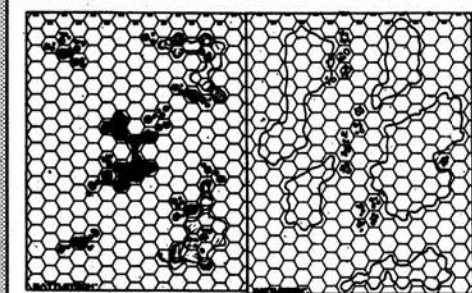




Historical Notes:

In 3044, Tarami Limited, an independent Marik company on Landfall, began to secretly develop chemical weapons, hoping to sell them to the near-by Periphery factions. The company researched and produced both Carbon Oxychloride (phosgene) and prototype Cobalt weapons. However, in 3047 when they opened relations with the Periphery, a fanatical splinter group of the Illytian Palatinate attacked the company's facilities and stole several of the chemical devices. The group then retreated to the world of Trasjkis and entrenched as they made plans to use the chemical weapons and House Marik and House Steiner.

Fearing that one of the bombs would be used against them, the survivors of the company surrendered themselves to the Free Worlds League and relayed the story to them. The FWR immediately contacted the mercenary Regiment known as Bad Dream, which was garrisoning the world of Kendall, to exterminate the fanatics. Under the leadership of Colonel Henry Bortman, a Battalion of Bad Dream left Kendall and attacked Trasjkis in an attempt to destroy the weapons. The Battalion easily dealt with the renegades, but the weapons were not with the main force. It was at that time that a patrol reported having made contact with a small group fleeing the area with a J-27 transport toward a small village. In the battle that followed, the Light Lance engaged the renegade 'Mechs and successfully disabled the cab of the J-27 without hitting the trailer or the deadly chemical containers it carried.



Set-up:

Use Rolling Hills #2 from Map Set #3. Orient the map so that the print is turned so you can read it.

Defender:

The Defenders are the remnants of the Periphery fanatics that are attempting to escape with the experimental weaponry.

Aaron Vorsta	BLR-1G BattleMaster (3025)	(Gunnery 4, Piloting 4)
Frederick Mallin	RFL-3N Rifleman (3025)	(Gunnery 4, Piloting 5)
Supply Crew	J-27 Ordnance Transport *	(Gunnery 5, Piloting 5)

(* Because the J-27 is partially loaded, it is moving at 3/5/0 instead of 5/8/0)

Deployment:

The Defenders should enter the map from the southern end between or in the hexes 0217 and 1017.

Attacker:

The Attacker is a Light Lance of the mercenary Regiment Bad Dream which has intercepted the fleeing renegades.

Lieutenant Gary Peters	HER-3S Hermes (3050)	(Gunnery 3, Piloting 4)
Sergeant Diana Myers	JR7-K Jenner (3050)	(Gunnery 4, Piloting 4)
Mechwarrior Rob Forens	SDR-5V Spider (3025)	(Gunnery 4, Piloting 4)
Mechwarrior Ross Gavin	WSP-1A Wasp (3025)	(Gunnery 5, Piloting 5)

Deployment:

The Attackers should enter the map from the western end between or in the hexes adjacent to 0105 to 0111.

Victory Conditions:

The renegades win if all of the mercenary 'Mechs are destroyed or the J-27 exits the northern end of the map within 8 turns.

The mercenaries win if they are able to destroy the J-27 before it exits the map and then exit all of their 'Mechs off of the map without releasing a chemical cloud. The side exited does not matter, but all 'Mechs must leave on the same side.

After 8 turns, two Lances of reinforcements arrive and the battle is considered to be automatically won by the Attacker.

Special Rules:

When the J-27 is engaged, the firing unit must declare the target as either the cab or the trailer. For the sake of this battle, the cab and trailer are to be treated as two separate units when figuring damage. Use the statistics in *Technical Readout 3025* for the J-27's cab and trailer. If the trailer is destroyed, roll 2d6. On a roll of 2-9, the chemicals have been released as a toxic cloud which will destroy the surrounding towns. On a roll of 10-12, the chemical containers were not breached.

If the cab is selected as the target, and the player misses, roll a 2d6. On a roll of 2-4, the shot struck the trailer instead of the cab, and damage is given to the trailer by standard rules. If the shot successfully hit the cab, damage is taken to the cab using standard vehicle damage rules.

If the cab is destroyed in any manner or explodes, the vehicle is stopped and the trailer is considered undamaged.

Keep in mind that the speed of the J-27 is 3/5/0. For the sake of this battle, 'Mechs and vehicles are allowed to travel through the partial hexes around the edge of the board without being considered retreated or off of the map.

Note from Cassie:

The point of this scenario is to teach the Attacker how to effectively use Light 'Mech groups against a superior opponent. Keep in mind that the objective of this mission is not to take down enemy 'Mechs, so don't engage anyone that you don't have to. Good luck!



Normally we report on the happenings around Solaris in this column, but today we have gone beyond the fictional realms of BattleTech to the source of the happenings.

Today we interview Sam Lewis and Bryan Nystul, the creative controllers behind the inner workings of BattleTech.

Burzhai "Bryan, you are the new developer for BattleTech. Can you tell us a little about your background?"

Bryan "Sure, before coming to FASA I worked at Mayfair Games. I have written and played wargames and role playing games for a long time. Both my brother, Mike Nystul, and my father have been involved in the gaming industry for a number of years. I guess you could say that it's in the blood."

Burzhai "Your brother was the developer here a couple of years ago. Do you think you will approach the job the same way he did?"

Bryan "No, Mike and I are very different in many ways. I have my own style and ideas on how the future of BattleTech should be. I really want the members to understand that I am not coming in here and changing anything. I do have some ideas about different aspects of the game and of how I see the plans unfold that Sam has, but the format and the timeline will remain the same."

Burzhai "When I last spoke to Scott Jenkins, the developer for BattleTech before you were brought on board, he had a list of modules and products that would be released this year. Can you tell us the current status on the releases planned for 1994?"

Bryan "No problem. Currently

the big release is CityTech 2nd Edition. We are finishing the art and by the time this interview sees print it should be out. Then the next product up for release will be the Advanced Tactical Handbook. The ATH was written by Jim Long, Sam Lewis, and a couple other writers we incorporated into the text. Everyone here is really excited about the ATH because it opens up a vast amount of new tech and game play for the BattleTechers. Then we will be releasing a Tukayyid Sourcebook and a Black Thorns Sourcebook. After that, we plan to release a module called Living Legends. Living Legends is about a Star League warship that is discovered in the Periphery. The fascinating aspect of this is the crew of the ship is in cryogenic freeze and are members of the Exodus Fleet. There is a race to see who will recover the ship. The Clans and the Inner Sphere Houses all want the ship and the crew. That should lead up to Gen-Con and we have a very special surprise planned for the attendees. After that the projects are in an even grayer area. We have several projects that we are working on but to tell about them now would be premature."

Burzhai "It sounds like you have your hands full. I understand that you are also working on a sourcebook for the remaining Invading Clans. How is that project going?"

Bryan "Well, I don't know how you got your information but the project is in the works and is looking like we will release it in the summer. It will explain more of the history about the invading Clans and the feelings they have towards each other."

Burzhai "Great. I also would like to ask you about the proper way to send a proposal to FASA. Many of the Mechforce members have some very good ideas and are extremely interested in seeing what your guys think about them."

Bryan "First off, it is best to say that the projects for this year are all

full. That doesn't mean that I don't want the readers to send in proposals. I just want them to know that even if we like a proposal, it won't be seeing print this year. The way to send a proposal starts with writing to us for our submission guidelines. You must also send a SASE for the guidelines to be returned. After the guidelines have been read and your proposal is in the correct form, send it in. First time writers are always *on-spec*. This protects both parties from the disasters which can occur during the writing process."

Burzhai "What advice can you give to those first time writers who want to break into the industry?"

Bryan "The best advice I can give is to be persistent. Try to get your work published anywhere you can. As a company, FASA is more likely to sign a writer with a good track record than someone who has no record at all. 'MECH Magazine is the perfect avenue for first time writers and artist to get the recognition they need. We review every issue AWOL publishes, and several of the writers we employ on projects today got their start in 'MECH Magazine. So never give up. Keep believing in yourself and you will succeed."

Burzhai "Thanks, Bryan. Now it's your turn, Mr. Lewis. The big question on everyone's mind is the BattleTech Movie. When will it be out, who will direct it, and what is the story line?"

Sam "The BattleTech movie is currently under consideration by New Line Entertainment and a premise has been approved. A premise is the story line for the movie. They will be deciding this week on who will write the screen play. I don't have a firm date for release or when production will start. Right now the story line takes place on a single planet right after the Clan wars. It won't be a big 'space opera' or anything like that. The plot focuses around a mechwarrrior who goes home to find that the people he left behind



don't really want him to return home."

Burzhai "With the premise, did FASA work that up or did you guys hire someone to do that?"

Sam "Chris Kubasik was the primary writer of the premise. Jordan Weisman and Charley Fake had a few ideas they added and I put in my two cents but basically it was an in-house project. New Line didn't write the story line."

Burzhai "Any clue as to who will be in the movie or as to the director?"

Sam "It is really too early to begin releasing any names. We have people who we would like to see involved with the project but only time will tell what becomes of those hopes."

Burzhai "We have also heard rumors of a new animated series. Is there one that is to be released? What can you tell us about that?"

Sam "Ah, yes the animated series. There will be an animated series released this fall by Sabon Entertainment. The two writers are Marty Eisenburg and Bob Shir. They both have done the X-men and Batman. The producer is also associated with the X-men cartoon series."

Burzhai "Will this deal with the past, present, or the future of the BattleTech Universe?"

Sam "The story will take place at the start of the Clan invasion. It will deal with a small unit called The Somerset Strikers. The leader of the unit is a character called Adam Steiner. He is the distant cousin of Melissa and will have contact to the Archon. The viewers will meet Hanse, Victor, the Gray Death Legion, Kai Allard, and many of the other main characters of the Inner Sphere."

Burzhai "What is Adam's story and by his last name is he in any way connected to the Somerset Military

Academy?"

Sam "Yes, Adam was an instructor at the Somerset Military Academy. He was on Tharkid when Somerset fell to the Clans and he feels extremely bad about this. He is this brilliant tactician type and believes he should have died with everybody else when Somerset fell. He goes to Melissa and she sends him on this secret mission to discover who these invaders are. So he gets a unit together and jumps into the fray of the Clan war."

"The animated series will also tell the viewers several of the hidden facts that were not in the novels and game materials. We have hidden several very important facts that will only be revealed in the series. So my suggestion is to tape all the episodes and not to miss a single one."

"The graphic feel and look of the series is fantastic. They are doing some really special work with the explosions the effects. There will be thirteen episodes at first and then, depending on the ratings, we will continue with more."

Burzhai "What network will the show be on?"

Sam "Right now Fox is the network who is airing it. I know that the people in the Chicago land area will see it on Fox and the other Fox affiliates are expected to pick it up also."

Burzhai "Well that is very exciting news. My next questions concern the current development of the novels. What can we look forward to this year?"

Sam "Glad you asked. We are ready to release the next Black Thorns book, DRT. This deals with the Thorns going to Wolcott and working for House Kurita. Jim Long is the author and has some really interesting plot twists and some great 'Mech battles. Then we get to Mike Stackpole's new book, Bred For War. BFW is currently the centerpiece around which all the

other books will revolve. The readers will find themselves on a roller coaster ride of emotion. The story moves very quickly and the future of the Inner Sphere will change drastically after this book. I don't want to give too much away so I won't say much more. Some readers will love this book and others will not believe some of the things we allow to happen."

After that Thurston will be doing a novel currently titled I am Jade Falcon. It deals with my favorite Jade Falcon, Joanna. The book is done under the umbrella of BFW and tells about how life is going for Joanna after the death of Aidan Pryde. It will also have a very important plot line concerning Natasha Kerensky. There are two new characters in the book and lots of things blow-up really good in this book. Before that, however; Vic Milan has a book entitled "Close Quarters." It deals with a mech unit called The 17th Recon. The 17th has been around since the original Mercenaries Handbook but we haven't talked about them much in the past few years. The unit is hired by a Kurita corporation for garrison duty. The owner of the corporation is related to Theo Kurita and he brings the Unit into the city to protect his facility. The ISF get involved, several of the other major Kuritian corporations are involved, and a Scout of the 17th. It is a very good novel. This is Vic's first BattleTech novel but he has written in the mainstream of science fiction for a while now. I was very impressed with the way the novel turned out. Vic hit the BattleTech feel firmly on the head. I believe all the readers will be very impressed with the results."

Burzhai "Will there be more books by authors who may be unknown to the BattleTech readers in the future?"

Sam "Our goal is to give the readers the best work from the best writers we can find. The writers understand going in that they are expected to produce high quality material for our readers. They also are made aware that



our readers are very intelligent and will pick up on anything that doesn't follow the BattleTech norm. I am not overly concerned with whether the author is known to the followers of BattleTech. Anyone we allow to write for us will have to present us with a proposal that knocks our socks off. There are just too many quality writers who want to work with us to pick someone just because they may have done a module or two. Writing a novel and producing a module are two totally different things."

Burzhai "What other novels can we expect this year?"

Sam "We are on a three month schedule, so the next one is by Blaine Pardoe. He is writing one called The Highlander Gambit. After Blaine we will have one by William Keith about the Gray Death Legion. William wrote the original Gray Death story and will return to tell us how things go for the Gray Death after the BFW incidents occur.

"That will bring us back around to Mike Stackpole and we will blow-up more of the Inner Sphere."

Burzhai "It really sounds like a great year for the fans of the novels."

Sam "We also will be celebrating the BattleTech Tenth Anniversary by releasing a hardback copy of the Compendium. We have it slated for a release at Gen-Con and it looks fantastic. We will take another pass at cleaning it up and clarifying it to a degree. There will be new art and everyone here is excited about it. We also hope to be able to release a CD-ROM in the coming month containing the Compendium, the technical handbooks, and a 'Mech generator. We're not certain that the CD-ROM project will work out but we have high hopes that it will.

"As for the direction of the Inner Sphere and BattleTech in general, it is safe to say that the action is going to heat up. We will see the Clans begin to itch for battle and because of the truce they will

have to vent their frustration in a different direction. Look for a surprise in the balance of power between the Houses. It has taken a long time but how shall I say this look for the south to rise again!"

Burzhai "Seriously? That is very interesting and will spark interest with all the readers. Finally, what is the status on the BattleTech Centers? Every time I turn on the TV and watch anything about Virtual Reality, the Centers are mentioned. With the novels, movie, TV show, software games, Sega, Nintendo, and all the other projects, do you think that BattleTech is growing too fast and is it forgetting the game players in that process?"

Sam "The Centers are just burning up with activity. The plan is to open one every other month. The current project is in Houston or Dallas, I can't remember which. We are excited about the centers because it allows us to expose BattleTech to a different group of people who might not want to play the board game. It is the same principle with the other projects we undertake. Every time we produce a novel, computer game, movie, or television show we are trying to broaden the base of the game and the company. It would be a very stupid move on our part to not support the game. The people who play the game are the reason we are able to do everything we do today. There is no way we will ever cut them loose or not support the game.

"FASA is a company which produces stories. These stories provide a framework for the consumers' imagination. It allows the consumer to play in and explore new and different universes. We are not committed to a delivery devise of any type. By saying that, I mean that I don't want the company to stagnate and become complacent in just printed materials. Print technology is not the only medium which I am willing to explore. We want to diverse into multimedia and other types of communication technology. The world around us is a rapidly changing place and any-

one who doesn't allow their company to change with that will soon cease to exist. The consumers today are much more intelligent about the different mediums that when Jordan and Ross started the company.

"That said the players must understand that the core of our products are for the adventure game market. If we are successful in the adventure game market it serves our customers for us to expand into the different areas we are now moving towards. I am sure that all the players of the board game would love an opportunity to fight against Victor Davion or Kai Liao in a 'Mech. The BattleTech Centers allow that, the Activision software allows that, and the novels allow that. In addition to that I want the people who have no desire to play the board game to know what BattleTech is and to understand why so many people love this game. While my attention may get diverted to the movies and the other projects, the staff in this office are committed to the adventure game. They are the same people who have been producing the best adventure game available for the past ten years."

Burzhai "I agree with you on every point. Multimedia is the future and BattleTech has always seemed one step ahead of the current trends. Just look back to the Star League Sourcebook. It predicted the fall of the Soviet Union and the civil wars that would follow."

Sam "Yea, I didn't even think of that until just now but you are right. We just really want to entertain the players and to allow them the opportunity to explore every facet of the BattleTech Universe.

Well as you can see the future for the Inner Sphere is a hotbed of activity. I personally can't wait to see what Mr. Lewis meant by the comment, "... the South shall rise again...".

Well, that is all for today, and now you have the Burzhai's View.



THE MANIFEST

*The independent journal of the independent trader.
Circulation throughout the Inner
Sphere and Periphery*

Welcome to another publication of The Manifest, the independent publication that is a must for any independent trader who makes a living dealing with those places the big boys won't go. The Manifest makes its way throughout all of known space, including, from what we hear, Clan Occupation Zones. Yes, the merchant caste of the Clans has heard of us.

Our mission is to help the small trader by keeping him informed and updated on current laws and regulations in various regions of the Inner Sphere. We also try to spread rumors and other stories about what's hot and what's not, and where to go to find the biggest profits.

The Manifest operates only because of you. We need all independent traders out there to pass on the info they learn to our offices. Send 'em out through ComStar or WoB, we're not picky. Of course, our offices are on Port Moseby, but we may be relocating soon. Things are still quite hot here, what with the Skye situation, not to mention the Clans. If we move, we'll let you know and if we do go anywhere, it'll be to Outreach.

—F. Banddax

RUMORS

The rumors presented here are just that, rumors. No solid facts have come to light to back these claims, so take 'em for what they are. For all we know, it could be just something someone said to have fun. If you find out something, let us know.

Clan Runs

From what we hear, blockade runs into the Clan OZ's are pretty profitable. Several merchants have told us they have made huge profits from sales to the indigs and even to Clan warriors. Some have even said Inner Sphere traders are more kind and reasonable than the merchant caste of the Clans.

Inner Sphere rebel groups are also big customers to these sales. Although rumor has it you make no hard cash in these deals. Barter only. The rebel groups are obviously looking for guns, ammo, medical supplies and information. Clothes are big, too.

What are the hot products for the Clanfolk? Foodstuffs and liquor are by far the biggest. Clothing and artwork are also popular. Anything made on Terra automatically goes.

Running the border is not easy. Both the F-C and DC have made it illegal. The FRR is too weak to do anything, but ComStar doesn't like it either. Neither do the Clans for that matter. We haven't heard any good tales about what happens to traders captured by the Clans. Any blockade runs should come with an armed escort.

Rumor also says the best Clans to deal with are the Steel Vipers, Ghost Bears and Diamond Sharks, that is

If you can find the Diamond Sharks.

Free Worlds-Capellan Trade

Murmurings from the Free Worlds-Capellan border say there is some heavy trading going on between the two states. So heavy in fact that the large companies cannot keep up. From what we have heard, concerns from both sides are paying WELL for shipments. What's the cargo? We weren't told. That either means we just weren't told, the traders weren't told, or the cargo is so hot we couldn't be told.

Tamar Lane

A merchant from the FRR has told us there exists a route called the "Tamar Lane." This route is rumored to start at either Tukayyid or Ueda in the FRR and goes through a number of uninhabited star systems all the way to Tamar. What's at Tamar? From what we were told, members of the old Tyr regiment have taken up residence and are doing to the Wolf Clan what they used to do to the Draconis Combine. Apparently, they are doing this without the help of either the F-C or FRR. But they do need outside help. How do you find out about the "Tamar Lane"? We're not sure, but you could probably find out in The Hold bar right here on Port Moseby. Hmmmm, and we thought the Tyr was done after the FRR was formed.

The Motherlode

A trader who runs through the Outworlds Alliance has apparently blabbed about a big find on a Periphery world not far from Delos IV in the Federated Suns. From what we've heard, not only does this planet have the remains of a dead colony, with all kinds of goods for the taking, it also has 'Mechs, or parts of them anyway. We're not sure where this world is, but the rumor we picked up hinted at the possibility that this world was not alone (i.e. it was part of a small, dead Periphery state). Without a doubt, if this is true, the best prices for these parts, or the 'Mechs themselves, will be the Outworlds Alliance.

NEWS

While it would be impossible to relate all the news items we get, we try to publish the ones from which we think the most profit can be made. Also, we try to include items that will still be considered timely when this rag hits the stars. The only thing that separates the news from rumors is the presence of facts.

Concordat Still Booming

The Taurian Concordat is still in need of many trading vessels. Since Jeffrey Calderon has assumed the Protectorship, the growth of the 25 colonies in Concordat space has yet to stop. According to Concordat government officials, the Concordat is woefully short of cargo ships, and trading vessels are badly needed to help keep the flow of goods going until the situation stabilizes. Stability isn't expected until either 3058 or 3059. Merchants can expect to be paid well for their services, as they will be working for the



government (Ed. note: slipping in some of your own cargo can increase your profits, big time!).

Any merchant interested in working for the Taurian Concordat can contact the Colonization Management Board on Taurus.

Reshuffle Continues

The Draconis Combine continues its efforts to shore up its realm in the face of the Clan threat. Border worlds are being reinforced, while worlds further away are being reorganized to accommodate for displaced or moving Combine citizens. A Combine official points out that the relaxation of the Combine's attitude toward mercenaries has also been extended to independent merchants as well. While never banned from the Combine, independent merchants often complained of discrimination and unfair treatment by Combine customs agents and business regulators.

Many merchants have ventured into the Combine from the Federated Suns border in recent years as the tensions between the two states have lessened. This has created a small boom of sorts on the battered border worlds of the two realms.

Rim Collection Rising

A report out from Timbuktu in the Lyran Commonwealth says that trade with the eight year old Rim Collection is on the rise. A spokesman from the Lyran Free Traders Association says that "the Collection has finally begun to make forward progress after so many years of stagnation." The report goes on to say that the Collection is importing large amounts of electronics and is exporting mostly agricultural goods. Meat from the cattle of the planet Algenib in the Collection is becoming a delicacy in the nearby Lyran region.

The Rim Collection primarily trades with the Lyran Commonwealth, but is attempting to expand to the Circinus Federation and the Free Worlds League.

President Harold Hill expressed satisfaction about the increased trade and hopes it will continue. In a speech to Collection citizens, the President said, "the good Lyran people have realized that the Rim Collection has something to offer, and they are taking rightful advantage of it."

Taxes on the Rise

A report from the Department of Economics within the St. Ives Compact says that import tariffs on goods brought from the Capellan Confederation have increased by a whopping 20% on several Compact worlds. This tariff is blanket in nature and covers all Capellan goods. A rise in tariffs for goods imported from the Federated Commonwealth also went into effect, but only affects consumer electronics, with an increase of 12.5%. This increase is only on select Compact planets and does not affect them all. The worlds where the increase has occurred include Brighton, Vestalles, Milos and Denbar.

A recent heavy influx of Capellan goods has hurt the local economies on these worlds, and both busi-

ness and governmental officials from these planets pressured the St. Ives central government to take action.

The increase of the F-C electronics imports comes as a result of the budding St. Ives consumer electronics industry. Many of these firms are happy at the increase and express the hopes that St. Ives electronics can now compete in their own homeland.

A increase in tariffs on all F-C goods which will affect all Compact worlds is expected within the next eight months.

Periphery Development

Areas of the District of Donegal in the Lyran Commonwealth and Crucis March continue to receive massive development funds despite current economic pressures and political turmoil. Several worlds in both regions near or on the Periphery border have been part of the Outback Upgrade plan. This plan helps to stimulate business and industry in the region to exploit the area's economic potential. The program was originally run by the Federated Suns back in the 3020's, but has been resurrected in recent years.

Both regions were specifically chosen for their proximity to developing Periphery realms. The region in the District of Donegal covers the sea of worlds between the Rim Collection and Circinus Federation, and the Crucis March worlds cover those between the Taurian Concordat and Mica Majority.

The program has generated some success, as many new industrial and agricultural firms have started up on several worlds. Merchant traffic has also increased in the region. Without a doubt, the most successful results of this program have been the exponential growth of the Lackland mining industry.

Protests have risen lately over the usefulness of the program in the current political climate. Many F-C officials feel the funds could be put to better use to help defuse the situation in the Isle of Skye or to help combat the continuing threat of the Clans and Free Worlds-Capellan Confederation alliance.

For now, however, the program's continued existence is assured for the next year.

HOT PRODUCTS

This section deals with what goods are currently generating the most profits in certain regions. This information is invaluable to the independent trader as it allows him/her to better choose which products will generate the most profits.

Again, this information will also be dated, as some items are only fads. But, it is better than nothing. The Manifest is not responsible for any lost profits because of what is written here.

You can help us keep this section going. Let us know what is hot in your area. If we get it soon enough, we'll use it. Remember, we only print those regions on which we receive updates. We won't be sold on old info.

One other safety tip. The regions presented here



are pretty vast and constantly vary; tastes differ from world to world. It would be impossible to catalog every world out there. Good luck!

Lyrans Commonwealth

Clan Border: Heavy construction materials and preserved foodstuffs continue to be the big ones here. It's pretty obvious the AFFC is gearing up their citizenry to help slow the Clan advance and to harass them once the world is conquered. Weapons are becoming more regulated on these worlds, but traffic can often become so heavy the crafty trader can smuggle them in. Your average SMG has been reported to go for about 200 Kroner.

Isle of Skye: Usually we don't list such a large region, but we have never seen such similarities. As with the Clan border worlds, construction materials and foodstuffs are big here. The people of Skye are taking no chances. Maybe they're assuming Archon Prince Victor will come smashing down hard on them. Whiskey and other hard liquor from Skye Interior worlds are really big on many Skye border worlds.

Lyrans-Free Worlds-Circinlan Border: The Timbiqui Ale Company continues its dominance here, especially in the Circinus Federation. If you can smuggle in any Timbiqui type of beer, it will be sold, and usually for three times the book price. Other liquor is strong in the CF as well. Free Worlds fashions are pretty big also. Especially if they come from Galisteo in the Free Worlds League.

Federated Suns

Sarna, Tikonov and surrounding systems: A wave of nationalism seems to be sweeping regions of the Sarna March. On the worlds surrounding Sarna and Tikonov anything of Capellan design or manufacture will move well. But watch out. The F-C is trying to clamp down on this with heavy tariffs. The St. Ives Compact is trying to muscle in on this fad, and their products usually sell well to the middle and lower classes. And there are no steep tariffs here. Your rich folk will hold out for Capellan goodies though.

Point Barrow: This world deserves individual mention here. The Hellion hover race car has become the hottest thing ever to hit this world. For those of you who don't know, the Hellion is a class of hover race vehicle that is safe for standard consumer use. Real hot in the Lyrans Commonwealth about 10 years ago. Everyone on Point Barrow is doing it. Hellions, and similar class vehicles are going for almost three times list price. Where can you get them? The original Hellions are made on Tharkad, but have since licensed their plans out to several factories in the Suns. The closest is on Leipsic. One other note, the fad is just beginning to spread to nearby worlds.

Ebro and surrounding worlds: These Periphery border worlds are continuing to grow as a result of the growth of the Mica Majority. The hottest items here are general supplies and survival gear. From what we hear, a fair number of adventurers are using these worlds as launching points for escapades into the Majority and beyond, often grabbing those last few

essentials before heading out. A caution though. A factory has recently sprung up on Ebro that makes a damn good arctic coat. The coat is perfect for the icy conditions that make up the worlds of the Majority. Weapons are big too. These worlds have few gun control laws at present.

Draconis Combine

Dieron and surround worlds: The hot items here are those that allow people to beautify their homes or their land. As Dieron is one of the most blasted worlds from the Succession Wars, this has become big business. Apparently a wave of national pride is sweeping this region and many Combine citizens want to dress things up.

Combine-Suns border region: Many worlds along the Combine side of this line are starving for F-C entertainment items. F-C holoshows, hologames and holotanks are the biggest. Books and magazines are also quite popular. Several F-C action and drama stars have developed cult followings. F-C music is also in fairly high demand.

Free Worlds League

By far the hardest realm to keep track of, the Free Worlds League is constantly changing what is hot or not. Some things have changed recently though. First, there are rumors of lots of FWL-CC trade (see RUMORS), and also it seems the member states of the Free Worlds League are enjoying their new position of prominence in the Inner Sphere. To this end, there is a lot of intra-realm trade going on. Most of these items are luxury goods from worlds with established reputations in their fields. This practice is only going on in the interior or Inner Sphere state border regions. There is very little going on in the areas bordering the Periphery. There are grumbings of dissatisfaction from here, so more staple items are being purchased. Foodstuffs, weapons (where allowed), practical electronics and small mercenary units are the best items here.

Capellan Confederation

"Southern" Capellan-Suns-Compact border: This region continues the healthy and wealthy exchange that has been going on since Michael Hasek-Davion's time. All along the border the three states are trading a large number of cultural items. Federated Suns transportation items are quite chic on Mitchel and Yuns in the Confederation, and Capellan clothing is the thing on Verlo in the Suns. Modern agricultural equipment is also in high demand for the plains farmers on Madras in the Confederation.

There also appears to be a large increase in tourism within the interior regions of the Confederation. Traders with large passenger capacity can easily find jobs working for any of the strapped passenger service companies, or begin their own. The planet Decatur, for example, has only one passenger service liner, which is always overbooked and constantly on the move.



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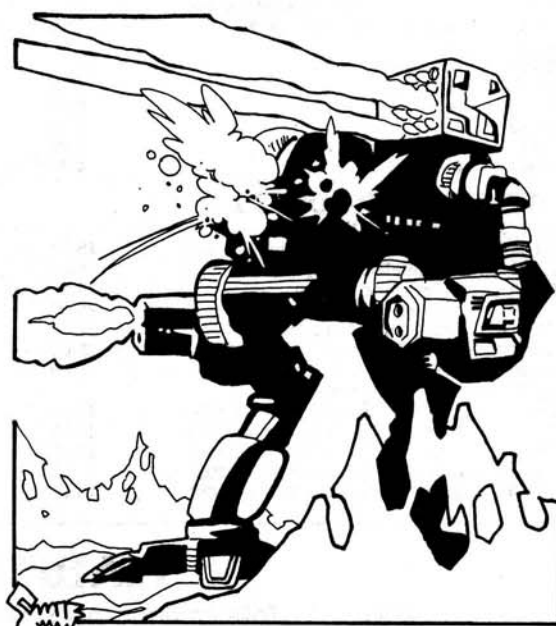
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Greg Sherwood	2,341	Bill Allee	1,213	Dale Hittle	1,050	Bradley Wade Skipper	953
Reid Wilson	2,139	Kevin Woods	1,212	Alan Kumar	1,050	Wayne Byers	952
Michael Martin	2,061	Jesse T. Hudson	1,210	Peter Sundholm	1,049	Craig Ferguson	951
Paul S. Bowman	1,948	Gary Bear	1,208	Chris Radcliffe	1,047	Edward A. JR Wilmot	950
Ken Tom	1,900	Bernad Schuhmacher	1,208	Jeffery A. Weskamp	1,045	Scott Jamison	948
Andrew Patterson	1,857	Andrew C. Murdoch	1,205	Bryan Detamore	1,040	Scott Buchheit	948
Bill Roth	1,760	Denby Cluff	1,204	Walt Harris	1,040	Dirk Schmitz	946
Kimberly Knox	1,713	Stephen R. Chenevey	1,198	Joseph Kennedy	1,039	Marc Graham	946
Doug Roach	1,677	Mike Sebastian	1,197	Mike Roston	1,037	David J. Vanden Noven	945
William A. Ransdale	1,675	Randy Grundstrom	1,196	John-David Karnitz	1,033	Leonard L. Martin	945
Leroy Thompson	1,666	Dan Hannum	1,189	Scott Blankenship	1,032	James Elliott	943
Blair VanBriesen	1,631	Ronda Gilmore	1,173	Samuel W. Scarborough	1,031	Daric Apai	943
Kivett Gresham	1,535	Michael Brodock	1,165	Daniel Gardner	1,031	Matthew Toht	937
Jeff Scorched-Earth Hollister	1,533	Jim Klint	1,163	Dale Aitken	1,031	Jeff Mink	932
Kenneth R. Reno	1,513	Scott Jack	1,160	Mart Staggs	1,029	Edward Brownlow	929
Richard Inerra	1,513	Tony Valerio	1,160	Wesley Yarch	1,029	Anthony Fleming	929
Michael James Morris	1,512	Jonathon P. Chitwood	1,149	Jeffery L. Duncan	1,027	Troy Adler	926
Roy Bacon	1,505	Lawrence R. Habig	1,139	Paul R. Endtricht	1,027	Crystal Ritchie	925
Michael Blouin	1,453	Brian Stepien	1,139	Jerry "Shrek" Coley	1,026	Seth Inselmal	925
Steve Hudson	1,453	Scott Jenkin	1,130	Franklin Yu	1,024	Paul Pringle	923
Mark Hester	1,449	Corey S. Aven	1,126	Keith A. Schacher	1,024	Ken Taube	921
Geoffrey T. Malouf	1,446	Geoffrey L. Hatten	1,125	Art Lobdell	1,022	Owen Anderson	917
Stephan A. Celuch	1,441	Manu "TMRH" Sharma	1,120	Harry Shiflett	1,021	Jim Eckerman	916
Jerry Barnard	1,441	Craig D. Cummings	1,118	Ryan Prendergast	1,021	Mykul Antezak	916
Chris Williamson	1,440	John P. Lynch	1,117	William E. Kahler	1,019	Darrell Castillo	915
Robert Huntsman	1,435	Paul Bressman	1,115	Richard Temple	1,019	Robert K. Illman	913
Jonathan Prokup	1,433	Randy Smith	1,115	Kevin McCarthy	1,010	Greg Knutson	905
Kenneth A. Lemons	1,432	Richard Cencark	1,112	Matthew W. Wilkerson	1,010	Dallas Dopko	905
Don Gilmore	1,418	John Rossomangno	1,106	Daniel Murphy	1,008	John Bass	903
Robert W. Binkley	1,418	Robert W. Binkley	1,105	Jeff Havens	1,007	Dan Grendell	897
Walter W. Illman	1,406	Robert A. Cobb	1,101	Bryn Evans	1,007	Robert L. Seitz	894
Jeremiah Lee	1,402	Scott M. Davenport	1,100	Andrew Gryn	999	James Habig	891
Sam "Shaman" Prest	1,394	Keith Stephenson	1,099	Mike Wheaton	998	Irene Reno	889
Derek Evans	1,388	James K. Bates	1,096	Timothy R. Zuck	997	Daniel E. Tingle	886
Jack T. Bender	1,387	Jeremy Lucas	1,094	Martin Moseley	997	James Carey	883
Scott Clock	1,372	John Tiffany	1,092	Andrew Teets	992	Joseph Leathlean	881
Jean-Jacques Dube	1,368	William A. R. Harkness	1,090	Randy Gross	992	Alan Dent	881
James Carney	1,361	Jason Patton	1,086	Gary Waite	992	Richard L. Harner	874
Roy Cork	1,347	Stephane Gagn	1,086	Michael Wayne Phelps	990	Abe Stecher	872
Leslie A. Streeter	1,344	John G. Hodson Jr.	1,084	Gina Adler	990	Ryan Clark	870
David S. Low	1,344	Grant Reed III	1,084	Nicole Oppermann	988	Louis E. Helmke	863
David Draper	1,330	Donald Richard Bizelli	1,079	Susan Shiflett	987	Randy Pilger	861
C. Malcolm Cushman	1,326	Jeff Rao	1,079	Kevin Bressman	987	Bryan Magill	856
Stephan Polster	1,318	Bryan Simpson	1,078	R. Glenn Klages	986	Marc Sparks	855
Gabriel D. Gong	1,308	Ean Roderick Hunter Stott	1,078	Nick Svolos	985	David Mellor	847
Brian Dolinar	1,308	Scot Zarnoth	1,073	Edward B. Teach	985	Shawn Moriarty	844
Thea M. Ulrich	1,291	Steve Illman	1,072	Michael Connors	984	Dale Dentier	841
Susan Huntsman	1,289	David Seay	1,071	Dustin Durant	982	Jon Allen Miller	840
Steve "Zai" Pitcher	1,286	Bob Becker	1,069	Mark Bodkin	981	Jason Irwin	840
Larry Mortley	1,285	Kevin Brown	1,068	Bob Eldridge	981	Chris Reigh	840
Tom Fisher	1,274	David Vance	1,065	David Habig	977	Troy "Psyche" Allen	839
Sam Johnson	1,255	Daniel Richards	1,065	Adina Duncan	974	Wieczorek Dirk	837
Robert B. Rupe	1,252	Ronnie R. Loeb	1,062	Robert W. Owens	972	Peter A. Lee	835
David "Mad Dwarf" Munter	1,247	Wally Caywood	1,061	Michael Morrison	971	Ed Garrison	831
Vincent E. Smith	1,247	Greg D. Baumer	1,061	Orval O. Darrow	971	Michael J. Sinkovich	819
Duane Rice	1,242	Michael J. Datson	1,058	Michael Manning	966	Wade Snellbaker	819
Tony Arciero	1,240	Prentis E. Hyde	1,058	Lawrence M. Pischke	966	Dan Henry	815
Scott Hudson	1,234	Michael Gibson	1,055	Perry M. Jackson	965	Travis Hofman	812
David C. Wright	1,233	Martin Stock	1,055	Joseph Cohen	963	Wesley Rugles	809
Clint Woodall	1,225	Jeremy Gioede	1,055	Roberts Waters	961	Andrew Chataway	806
Michael E. Hester	1,224	Steve Andrews	1,054	Scott Bennett	959	Seth Davis	803
		Terri Habig	1,053	Mark Adams	958	Andrew Low	800

MECHWARRIORS with a thousand points (the starting total) are not listed.

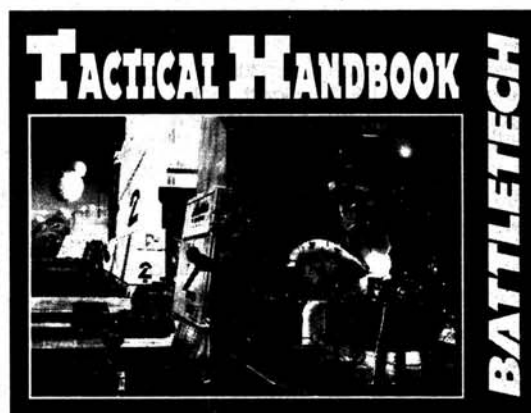


FASA

CORPORATION

BattleTech Tactical Handbook

The BattleTech Tactical Handbook is an advanced-rules supplement for the BattleTech game universe. The Handbook provides advanced rules and equipment that enables the players to add new depth and intensity to their games. Guidelines for creating long-term campaigns and double-blind games, formulas for calculating the combat values of all BattleTech combat units, detailed descriptions of advanced weapons systems and more make the BattleTech Tactical Handbook a must for the serious BattleTech player.

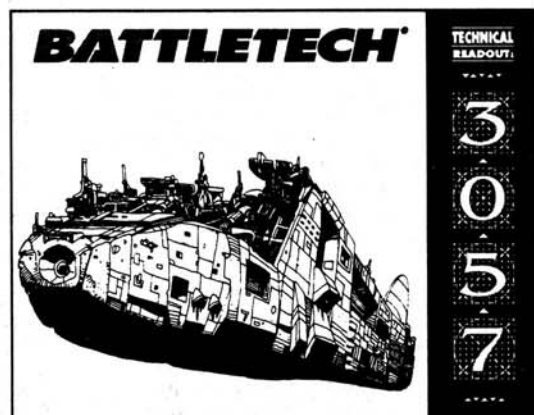


Technical Readout 3057 : DropShips, JumpShips, & WarShips

With BattleSpace comes a new age of space combat, and a new level of technology. The Inner Sphere and the Clans have built up their aerospace armadas in anticipation of the ending of the Truce of Tukayyid. These latest DropShip, WarShip, and JumpShip designs are just what your campaign needs to get blasting away. A technical readout for use with BattleSpace.

Tukayyid

On the barren plains of Tukayyid, the forces of the Clans and the units of the ComGuard met head-on in the largest engagement in the history of 'Mech warfare. Tukayyid is an expanded scenario pack that recreates the entire Tukayyid campaign and features a unique bidding system for determining the forces used in each battle.





The Black Thorns Scenario Pack

by : Jim Long and Rodney Knox
Rating : 4.5 out of 5
Price : TBA

It wouldn't be good form to review this product ourselves, so we asked our old friend Mike Nystul to do the damage. -Rodney Knox

The Black Thorns is a new scenario pack for the BattleTech Universe. Let me start out by saying that I have always been a little skeptical about the scenario pack format. Take a unit or some event for the BattleTech timeline, lead off with a brief overview, pack in as many encounters as space will allow, and round it out with a couple of new 'Mech designs. Give me a tech readout or sourcebook every time.

That said, the Black Thorns was more than I expected it to be.

For those who haven't been paying attention, the Black Thorns is the unit founded by Jeremiah Rose, hero of the novels Main Event and DRT. All of the major battles in these books appear in the Scenario Pack with additional information that will provide a new perspective to fans of Rose and his Thorns. Particularly interesting are the pivotal events on Tukayyid that ultimately led to the unit's formation.

The book leads off with the usual overview of the unit's history and current roster, including complete character sheets for most of the command staff. I found this disappointingly sparse. There is enough here to understand the background behind the scenarios but little more. In-depth descriptions of the characters and additional source materials would have been a welcome addition, particularly for the MechWarrior players.

For me the Scenarios were the high point of the book. There is more than an unwieldy collection of BattleMech fights. The Black Thorns offers a wide variety of environments and situations with inventive Special Rules and demanding Victory Conditions. I also like the aftermath section. Cou-

pled with the introduction are a running narrative of the career of Jeremiah Rose. Most products of this kind tell the story of the unit. The Black Thorns is the story of one man told through the medium of the many battles he had to fight along the way.

Towards the back we get the obligatory new 'Mech designs. With hundreds of 'Mechs and variants you would think we had our fill, but in many ways the game is about hardware, and hard-core aficionados seem to have an insatiable desire for new gear. So be it.

All in all I thought the Black Thorns was worth the price of admission. It was well thought out and well written, providing the players with some neat new 'Mechs and some truly engaging scenarios. If your group decides to play the entire campaign they are in for one heck of a ride. Give it a shot and see if you have what it takes to fill Jeremiah's shoes!

On a personal note: save for an edit pass on CityTech, Second Edition this is the first BattleTech materials I have reviewed since I left the Developer position almost two years ago and it has brought back some great memories. Jim and I worked together when he was putting together what would become Mechforce NA. It is gratifying to see that he has had an opportunity to add even more to the history of the game he loves. Although I have never met with Rodney Knox, I have heard - through the grapevine - that he too is a very capable writer and I think the scenarios in this module prove it. Congratulations, Jim and Rod, you have a lot to be proud of and a lot to look forward to.

**** Readers should be aware that Mike Nystul reviewed a prerelease copy of the manuscript, not the finished product. ****

DRT

by : Jim Long
Rating : 5 of 5
Reviewed by Kimberly Knox

Jeremiah Rose and the Black

Thorns are back. Flush with their success against the Jade Falcons on Borghese, they head to Harlech to draw a new assignment. Their only requirement: their new job must let them face the Clans. They find more than they bargained for when they accept a contract with the Draconis Combine. The mission: garrison duty on Wolcott—a Kurita planet deep in the heat of the Clan Smoke Jaguar occupation zone.

The pay is good. The advance is unbelievable. But they have to live to spend it. You will not believe the action or the situations the Thorns find themselves in. If they aren't careful the Black Thorns will be ... DRT ... Dead Right There!

This is the second book in the Black Thorns saga. After the fight on Borghese, and the re-occupation of the planet by The Gray Death Legion, Jeremiah and his unit are in search of employment once again. The unit is hired by the Draconis Combine and the excitement starts from there. A trip to Wolcott, garrison duty with another two hundred other mercenaries, and an objective raid on the Clan held world of Courcheval keep you turning the pages.

If I tell you more of the story, I would ruin some of the surprises in store for you. I will say that even as good as Main Event was, DRT surpasses it by a mile! Jim has really found a style that works for him in DRT. The reader will be swept away by the pace of the book. I am an Ian Flemming fan, and love the way Mr. Flemming weaves a story. Jim Long uses the same breathtaking speed to entrap the reader in his new book. The story flows so smooth you will hate putting it down and the action is intense to the point of panic.

Unlike in other books, where a Phoenix Hawk takes 37 points of damage to the rear torsos, the 'Mech battles in DRT seem to play out just as they would in a BattleTech game. The characters are also not so gifted as to not sustain damage to their person or their equipment. To me this adds to the novel.

The Phantom Cavaliers are looking for victims in the Clarksville TN area. If interested call Scott at 615-647-5014.

>>>Hey Phantoms, we hear the Death Merchants
are EASY pickings in Memphis!<<<

My name is Warlock. I am new and ready for Battle. Looking to scrap anyone foolish enough to defy me. I have a hunger for California scrap. Contact me after 6:00 PM anytime. Also looking for a unit to join.

>>>I wonder if this 'Warlock' knows that our editor, Rodney Knox, is also known by the call-sign, 'WARLOCK', on GENIE? Sounds like a battle brewing to us!!<<<

Group with unit names / Organ Donors / Leper Colony / The Asylum / Beefeaters / Hamburger Helper / Slaughter House / Michelin Men / Parakeets of Terror / : Yvonne Steiner-Davlon, Baron Felix Von Luckner says hello.

Mechwarrior looking for unit in Oxnard, Camarillo, 1000 Oaks area. Contact Mike Jacobs / 527 Cuesta Del Mar #7 / Oxnard, CA 93033. will play Clan or IS.

"From the western hills we come thundering all the way; we destroy, pillage, and conquer with the Dragon as our prey" With our battle cry we - Hagar's Horde - challenge the 1st Ryuken Reserve and will crush ye under the Mighty Thor's Hammer. Prepare to meet Lady Hela in Hades! Attention Commander Moody contact Mark at Horde Headquarters Grand Junction, CO 303.243.9599

LAMs what you need? Call the 1st Air Cavalry! Armed Recon, Obj. Raids, and Vertical Envelopment are our Specialties! We field a Batt+ of 3050 LAMs. If you want speed and mobility call the Cav 206.548.0067.

>>>Don't let Sam Lewis or Jim Long hear about
this group of "LAM LOVERS"!<<<

Rhino's Raiders - We of the Bloody Badgers want to meet on the field of Outreach. The Bloody Badgers is a strong and upcoming unit. We have fought for C-bills and honor. Mech Jocks in the area call 608.882.6254.

We challenge the weak-kneed, sissy boy 'Mech jocks from the Death Merchants to a trial of Possession for the right to be the Official Mechforce Chapter of Memphis Hobbies and Games! We are the Femme-Fatales and we are calling out the "Dribble Merchants"! Can you boys stand the challenge? You know how to reach us.

FOR SALE : One slightly beat-up Moo-rauder. Better know as "The Nightmare" but we call it 'Milk Shake'. We will pay you to take it off our hands! Interested parties please contact Bill Roth at 1208 Knox Ave/Memphis, TN 38127.

AWOL Productions would like to congratulate Chris Hussey on the birth of his new baby! Way to go Chris!

AWOL would also like to announce that an heir has been born to the home of our President, Jim Long. Jim and his wife are the proud parents of a new little girl. Congratulation from the staff at AWOL and all the MNA members!

Wanted: Jumpship and dropships and the Star League Source Book. Also, anyone interested in play BT or other RPG in the Pearl Harbor, HI area, call Robert at 808-423-7291

Wanted: Out of print BattleTech products. Also, I am looking for novels, especially "Blood Legacy" and "Lost Destiny." David Englander/452 Mendoza Terrace/Corona del Mar, CA 92625

High tech? Recon in force Combined Arms—
Need E. Indiana players for intricate campaign
started overseas. Help establish the new Star
League. J.L. Witt/1018 Canterbury Tr./Richmond,
IN 47374

St. Louis Metro Area MNA members. Local group in need of new blood and/or opponents. If interested contact Wes Taylor at 314.531.1734. Leave message.

Clan Wolf and Blood Spirit declare a Trial of Annihilation vs. 69th Death Dealers. Also looking for opponents near Gettysburg, PA. Call 717.337.7794 / Seyla

Will pay over book price for decent out of print BattleTech novels. Send for FREE want list. Tim Shin/1600 N. Water St. #8/Clinton, MO 64735

Victory to the elite 1st Ryukun Reserve! After 3 days of battle on Tynrel with the Nova Cats, the Dragon prevailed. 15% losses. Needed: elite Muga-buso-sensei. Money is NO object. Honor sees no battle flags, only he who fights with valor. Den CO Sol III / 303.657.0162

Either to return the Star League in the name of the great Nicholas Kerensky (Seyla) or fighting in the Jungle on Solaris. I want to play. Call Rocky/Hillsboro - Tampa, FL/813.677.0601

Fight for the F-C and his Lordship of this great realm. As for the clans, the Falcon will fall from the sky, the Coyote will yipe its way back home with its tail between its legs. Sgt. Bonnot OLD

We of OLD saluted Hanse Davion and Melissa Steiner on the day of their marriage and now we salute Victor Ian Steiner-Davion of the Federated Commonwealth and from this day on we of OLD will stand.

I, honorable warrior of Clan Jade Falcon wish to fight any warrior in a battle of honor. Contact Bryan Julias/14 Ivanhoe Drive/Topsham, ME/04086. The Falcon shall conquer all.

Mechforce North America is currently compiling a list of members interested in Beta Testing up-coming releases. Please send your name, home phone, and age to : "Attention Beta Testing" / 310 Tiger Lane / Suite 3 / Columbia, MO 65203.

To the Aces and Eights: Hope you are feeling up to a raid because we are very mobile. Sincerely,
1st An Tirian Irregulars, C/O Peter Cosgrove (503)
672-2515.

WANTED : Writers and Artist for 'MECH Magazine. We are currently looking for members and non-members who want to break into the gaming industry. Getting published is important and AWOL is the industry's most high-profile Members' Organization. If you can set and meet deadlines, approach assignments with enthusiasm and professionalism, and work independent of others we want to talk to you! Send a SASE to our address and mark it : Attention - Senior Editor.

Personal Ad Information Form

(Please Print)

Member Name: _____ MNA # _____

of issues ad is to run _____

Rules:

1. This space is for personal ads by members only, and is not to be used for advertisement of any product or service.

2. All personal ads are limited to 200 characters (including spaces).

3. Mech will not print any ads containing foul language or slanderous statements.

4. All ads must be accompanied by a \$2 handling fee for each quarter you wish the ad to run.

5. All ads must be submitted using this form or a facsimile thereof.

(Please fill out the blocks below with one character per box.)

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The following calendar lists the conventions for which we have heard rumors of BattleTech events. If you know of any conventions that are not on the calendar, please let us know so we can inform other Network members.

APRIL 1994

CLARE-VOYANCE: April 1-3, 1994. Held on the campuses of Claremont Colleges in Claremont California (about 30 miles east of Los Angeles). Includes BattleTech and other role-playing games, an art display and more. GMs welcome. Registration \$5.00, \$2.00 table fee per game. Write to Games Central, Storyhouse, Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, CA 91711. Call (909) 624-3413 or (909) 624-3664.

I-CON XIII: April 15-17, 1994. Held on campus at State University of New York at Stony Brook. Includes a BattleTech Open Tournament sponsored by MechForce NA. Other gaming includes Shadowrun, AD&D, Magic the Gathering, and many more. Media guest of honor George Takel. Gaming guests Sam Lewis, Tom Dowd, Greg Costikyan, and Ken Rolston. Much, much more in store! For more information call (516) 632-6045 or write to: I-Con, P O Box 550, Stony Brook, NY 11790-0550.

CONSINO: April 22-24, 1994 at the St. Louis Airport Hilton, St. Louis, MO. Art Show, Dealers, Gaming, Dances, Costuming. For more information please write to Name that Con / P.O. Box 575 / St. Charles, MO 63302.

MAY 1994

GAMEX 1994: May 27-30, 1994 at LAX Hyatt Hotel, Los Angeles, CA

(310.670.9000). Sponsored events, prizes variable: two BattleTech tournaments, one Solaris VII tournament. Multiple miniatures events privately sponsored and plenty of open gaming. Attendance 600+, 30+ for BattleTech. For more information please write to Strategicon / P.O. Box 3849 / Torrance, CA 90510-3849 or call and leave a message at (310) 326-9440.



Indiana State BattleTech Open Tournament: May 28, 1994 at Metal Craft Miniatures in Elwood, IN. MNA sponsored BattleTech Open Tournament. For more information, contact Leslie at (317) 552-8029 or Bryan Detamore at (317) 674-2541.
JUNE 1994

BATTLE-CON: June 4-5, 1994 at Austin Peay University in Clarksville, TN. Events include BattleTech and MNA matches, Earth Dawn, Warhammer 40K, Prime Directive, and more! For more information,

contact Scott Stewart c/o Phantom Cavaliers / 5007 Collinwood Dr. / Clarksville, TN 37042.

DALLAS GAME EXPO: June 24-26, 1994 at the LeBaron Hotel, Dallas, TX. Events include the **South West Regional BattleTech Open Championship**, sponsored by MNA, and other BattleTech, Mechwarrior, BattleSpace, and various war and role-playing games. For more information, write to Dallas Game Expo / P.O. Box 824662 / Dallas, TX 75382. &

JULY 1994

GRAND-CON: July 16-17, 1994 in Grand Rapids, MI. Events include the Michigan State BattleTech Open Tournament and Bloodname Trials for Clan Diamond Shark- Bloodname Garbeau, both MNA sponsored. For more information, contact Joe Baldwin (616) 453-8316 or Will Holden / 1023 California NW / Grand Rapids, MI 49504.

Please note that we need to receive information about events at least 60 days before mailing dates in order to insure that they will make it into the issues they need to be in. (i.e. to have convention information in the December issue (which mails at the end of Dec.) we would need to have the info in early Nov. Our other mail dates are the end of March, June, and September.

* An asterisk means that there is more information about this item in the classified section.

@ An at symbol marks the conventions at which FASA plans to have representation as of press time.

& An ampersand marks the conventions at which MNA plans to have representation as of press time.



MNA Sponsored Events:

Hi! My name is Kimberly Knox and I am the Member Liaison and Events Coordinator for MechForce North America. Over the past three months, MNA has labored diligently to establish policies for sponsoring BattleTech events at conventions annually across the regions. The following is a current list of the events MNA sponsors each calendar year:

- **The Regional BattleTech Open Championship**

(West Coast, South West, Southern, Mid-Atlantic, New England, Mid-West, West, North West, North and North East regions: consult your MechForce Manual to determine your region)

- **Bloodname Trials**

(Clan Wolf, Jade Falcon, Steel Viper, Ghost Bear, Smoke Jaguar, and Nova Cat one trial for each of above listed Clans)

- **Operation Thunderbolt**

- **Operation Blake's Revenge**

- **The BattleTech MechForce North America Grand National**

- **Gunslinger Championships**

- **Bloodname Trials**

(Clan Diamond Shark, Goliath Scorpion, and Hell's Horse limited number of each)

- **MNA BattleTech Open Tournaments**

Each sponsored event has a set of specific guidelines which must be met in order for the event to be awarded.

If you or your MNA chapter is interested in running an Officially Spon-

sored MNA event at a convention, please send your request and a SASE to:

Mechforce North America
Attention: Event Coordinator
2101 West Broadway
Suite 305

Columbia, Mo 65205-6018

and I will send out an application along with event guidelines. (Please note that the West Coast Regional, the Mid-Atlantic Regional, BattleTech Mechforce North America Grand National, and the South West Regional have already been awarded or held for the 1994 season. All applications for 1994 sponsored events must be submitted to our offices before July 31, 1994. Applications for Regionals in 1995 will not be considered until after August 1, 1994. Bloodname Trials for Clan Wolf will be held at GEN-CON 1994.)

MechForce Sponsored Events Results

Pentacon IX in Fort Wayne, IN on November 14, 1993: MechForce NA sponsored a Trial of Bloodrite for Clan Bloodspirit and the Indiana State BattleTech Open Finals. The event coordinator was Bryan Detamore, MNA member and contact person for Clan Bloodspirit MNA Chapter based in Elkhart, IN. MNA member Eric Chamberlin defeated all entrants to emerge victorious and earn the Bloodname Keogh of Clan Bloodspirit. Eric also placed first in the Open tournament. Second place in the open went to Joe Petro and third place to Bill Ebert. Congratulations to Eric, Joe, and Bill and a special thanks to all those who participated. MNA would also like to thank Bryan for his hard work and professionalism in coordinating the Bloodname and Open tournament events.

West Coast Regional BattleTech Championship at OrcCon in Los Angeles on February 18-20, 1994: MechForce NA sponsored the West Coast Regional BattleTech Open Championship. The event coordinator was Nick Svolos, MNA member and contact person for The L.A. 'Mechs MNA Chapter based in Los Angeles. There were 36 participants in the championship event. The West Coast Regional Champion for 1994 is Paul Chua with a final score of 1250. Second place went to David Granados with a final score of 1248. Third place went to Ramond Wang with a final score of 1200. Congratulations to Paul, David, and Ramond and a special thanks to all those who participated in the championship. MNA would also like to thank Nick and Mike Brodock of the L.A. 'Mechs for their hard work and professionalism in coordinating the West Coast Regional and making the event a brilliant success.

MagiCon in Elkhart, IN on January 22, 1994: MechForce NA sponsored a Trial of Bloodrite for Clan Bloodspirit. The event coordinator was Bryan Detamore, MNA member and contact person for the Clan Bloodspirit MNA Chapter. MNA member Joe Baldwin defeated all comers to earn the Bloodname Detamore of Clan Bloodspirit. Congratulations to Joe and thanks to all those who participated on the Bloodname event. MNA would like to once again thank Bryan for coordinating the event professionally and in the spirit of MechForce.

MECHFORD NORTH AMERICA EXTENDS ITS CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE WINNERS FOR A JOB WELL DONE!