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The Magazine of Military Technology in the 31st Century

WAR!



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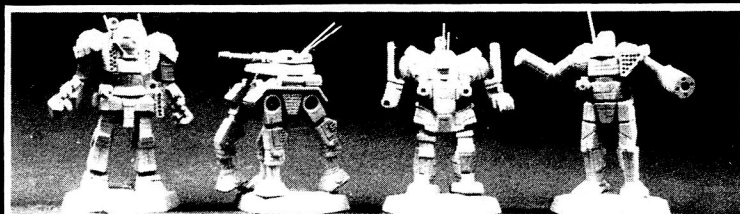
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Art and photography: William H. Keith, Jr.
Writing in this issue:

"Goliaths on St. Andre" on page 26 is an excerpt from Warrior Riposte by Michael A Stackpole, Book II of the Warrior series, scheduled to be published by FASA in August 1988.
"Home for Christmas" and "Wolfhound" by Michael A. Stackpole
"Walkover" by Thomas S. Gressman
"Sniper" and "Viking" by Michael T. Hebert
"The Hundred Pipers" by J. Andrew Keith
All other writing by William H. Keith, Jr.

About the Cover:

The War is on, with a massive Davion invasion of nine systems across Liao space. The cover shows the fighting near an archeological site on St. Andre's Ivaar Wastes where the Davion Light Guards' Delta Company squared off against the formidable Cochraine's Goliaths.

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OPENING SHOTS

THE WAR BEGINS...

After months of speculation, of rumor, of pontification by the learned and by the powerful, events which have been in the making for years have erupted at last into all-out war. For those readers new to BattleTechnology, and for those who have not been keeping up with the news, we offer this brief rundown.

3020—Sick of continuing low-level war, Archon Katrina Steiner of the Lyran Commonwealth, issues a "Peace Proposal." Though the proposal is generally dismissed by other leaders, young Hanse Davion, determined to "take history by the throat," proposes a military alliance with Archon Katrina Steiner in order to fulfill her dream of peace.

3022—After delicate negotiations, the Steiner-Davion alliance is signed on Earth. The alliance will be culminated by Davion's marriage to Katrina's daughter, Melissa, in 3028.

3024—First of the "Alliance Games," a series of military wargames between Steiner and Davion troops.

3026, August—First annual, multiple-sector wargames, code-named Operation: Galahad, held in Davion space along both the Capellan and Draconis borders. Ten Davion RCTs are involved. The maneuvers cause Kurita and Liao units to go on alert and raise widespread speculation about Hanse Davion's motives.

Several Davion units are reassigned to correct weaknesses perceived by the Davion military command in the Federated Suns' defenses.

3027, August—Second annual Operation: Galahad, this one deploying nearly 30 'Mech regiments—almost a third of the AFFS military strength. A shift in Davion's military strength towards both the Addicks Zone (bordering both Combine and Confederation space, near Terra) and the Valexa Zone (bordering the Confederation between Mira and Gallitzin) are noted.

House Steiner conducts similar maneuvers, code-named Operation: Thor. The other major houses respond with alerts, troop maneuvers, and condemnations, but response is generally much milder than it was in 3026.

3028, April—The contract for Wolf's Dragoons, the celebrated mercenary regiment in service to House Kurita, expires. Fierce fighting breaks out on Misery and on Capra, worlds garrisoned by the Dragoons along the Kurita-Davion frontier. After a bloody and destructive battle on Misery, the Dragoons escape into Federated Suns territory.

Davion plans for annual military exercises—Galahad '28—are announced. BattleTechnology reports on the possibilities of peace following the Davion-Steiner alliance.

3028, June—BattleTechnology reports that Operation: Thor, the Lyran counterpart to Davion's Operation: Galahad, will, by coincidence, be conducted at the same time as Galahad. Large scale troop and naval movements in both Lyran and Davion space are reported.

The arrival of the Crucis Lancers on Mira is announced. This massive deployment is explained by Davion officials as a reunion of the entire unit in preparation for celebrations of the Davion-Steiner wedding in August.

3028, August 1—Operation: Galahad '28 commences. A parade by the Crucis Lancers, now gathered on Mira, will be part of the grand celebration of the Steiner-Davion marriage.

House Liao and House Draconis respond with the usual denunciations and condemnations, but there is little specific reaction to "the Davion stunt."

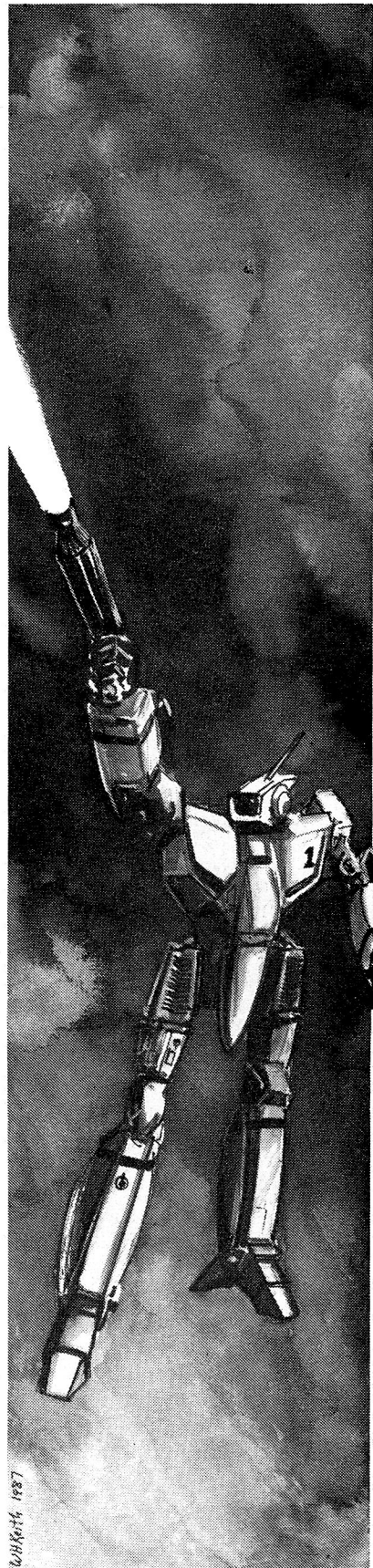
3028, August 20—Hanse Davion, First Prince of the Federated Suns, marries Melissa Arthur Steiner, Archon Designate of the Lyran Commonwealth, in a ComStar-officiated wedding on Earth. Hanse Davion, addressing Melissa in front of the leaders of the other houses attending the ceremony, says: "Wife, I give you the Capellan Confederation."

At the same time, Davion JumpShips appear in nine systems within Liao space: Aldebaran, Liao, Algol, New Hessen, Pleione, Poznan, St. Andre, Shensi, and Styk. These invasions, if uniformly successful, will isolate the Tikonov Commonality from the rest of the Capellan Confederation and deal a serious blow to Maximilian Liao's military, industrial, and economic capabilities.

The War—long expected, long discussed—has begun.

BattleTechnology regrets that the articles announced in last issue's *Incoming*—including an in-depth coverage of the Davion wedding, a close look at Melissa's gown, and a serious discussion of the possibilities of lasting peace in our time—were not run in this issue as originally scheduled.

Obviously, events seem to have caught up with us.



William H. Keitel Jr.
- 3028 -

BattleTechnology

The Magazine of Combat in the 31st Century

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— Captain Mamluke 'ap Prentiss, Drillmaster, The Faroes' Own Independent Lowlanders



'**BattleTechnology** is the keystone publication to understanding the exciting and dynamic events shaping the Inner Sphere — nothing is more embarrassing than showing up for a demo and not knowing which House holds that planet this week!

— Lieutenant Mike Stone, Tactical Demonstration Expert, General Optronics Laser Weapons Division



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0101, August 3027 — report on Davion wargames, MechWarrior mental discipline, FLC-4N 'Falcon' Mech, Battle of Kilgore, Engine Swaps, Combat drop on Scheat V, more.

0102, December 3027 — Combat Salvage, Camouflage, Hassid Ricol: The Red Duke, Black Luthien: the Draconis capital, DVE-5B 'Devastor', Long range combat, more.

0201, February 3028 — Tharkad, Decompression, GLD-3R 'Gladiator', BattleMech Weapons — range versus accuracy, Galaina the Pleasure Planet, Vacuum combat, more.

0202, April 3028 Hanse Davion Interview, Cavalry Tactics & Applications, Lasers, BansheeBattleMecn, Dragonslayers, Battle at Wittengate, Late-Breaking News, more.

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BattleTechnology News Service

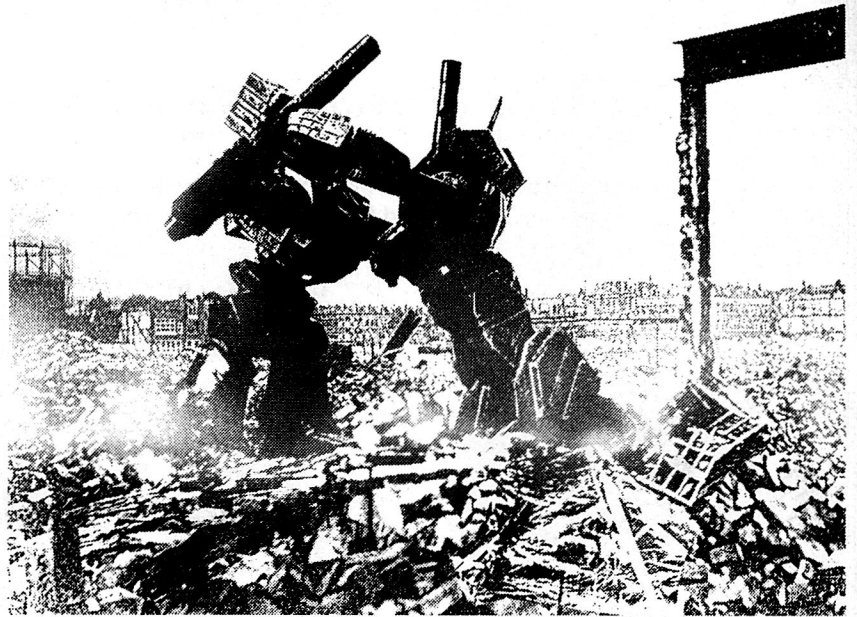
WAR!

Dateline: New Avalon—In a prepared statement widely broadcast across the Inner Sphere, First Prince Hanse Davion announced the beginning of an all-out offensive against the enemies of the Federated Suns. The speech, which was taped before his departure for Earth and his wedding to Melissa Steiner, declared that “the time has come to strike a blow, once and for all, against the enemies which surround us. It is time, once and for all, to end this twilight age of half-war and total stagnation which threatens all of us with ultimate extinction!”

“The Fourth Successor War has begun,” said Field Marshal Ran Felsner, Commander of the Royal Brigade of Guards. “It will be victory or death this time. Everything is riding on this one.”

On Earth, at the celebration of his wedding, Hanse Davion addressed his bride and said: “Wife, I give you the Capellan Confederation.” On the same day, Federated Suns invasion fleets were reported to have arrived at nine systems in Liao space, including Aldebaran, Liao, Algol, New Hessen, Pleione, Poznan, St. Andre, Shensi, and Styk.

As this issue of BattleTechnology went to press, only fragmentary reports had been received from most of these locations. Initial reports, however, suggest that the Davion offensive is proceeding smoothly, and with remarkable success.



Above: Fourth Guards RCT on Aldebaran.

A Davion *Warhammer* takes on an *Archer* belonging to the House Ijori defenders of the planet. Heavy but inconclusive fighting was reported in Chang-gi on the outskirts of the critical city of Chouchu. Chang-gi was completely reduced to rubble in the battle.

INITIAL DAVION STRIKES SUCCESSFUL!

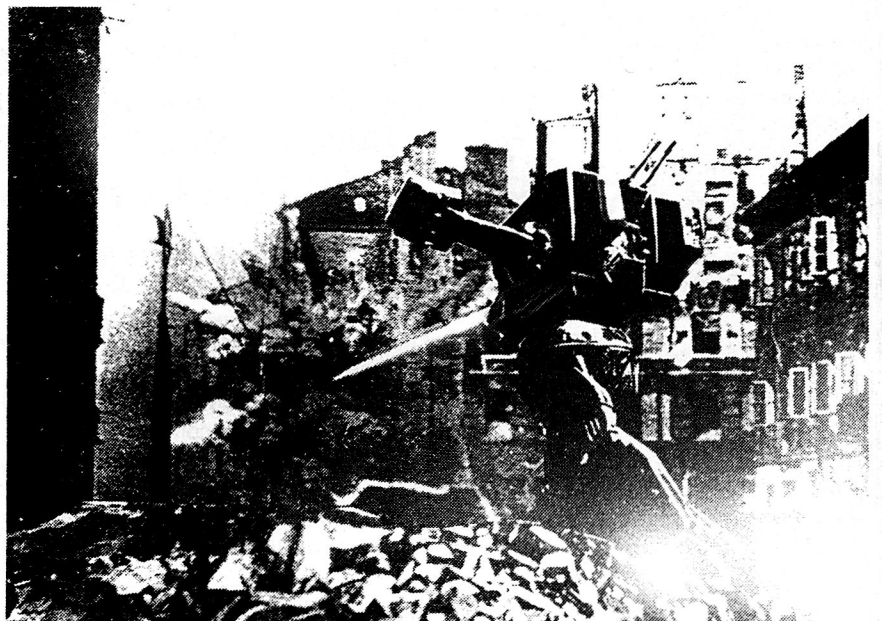
Dateline: New Avalon—Members of the Federated Suns Military Staff Command announced today that the Armed Forces of the Federated Suns (AFFS) have achieved significant victories during the first days of the massive invasion of the Capellan Confederation which began August 20.

“We’ve got them on the run everywhere,” said Colonel James Bowin, a military instructor at the NAIS. “Too early to tell, yet, but it looks like we caught them sleeping. Lulling them with those Galahad exercises for the past few years really suckered ’em in.”

Landings have been reported on nine Capellan worlds. Fierce fighting has been reported on Aldebaran, Algol, and St. Andre, but the situation on all three worlds was described as “well in hand.” Drops on Liao, Poznan, and Shensi were virtually unopposed, according to officials, while light casualties have been reported in several clashes on Styk, Pleione, and New Hessen.

Right: Assault on Shensi.

An *Archer* belonging to the 1st Davion Guards RCT fights its way into the city of Hwvang-hi. Marshal Stephen Davion reported only scattered opposition from poorly-armed planetary militia.



BattleTechnology News Service

DAVION MARSHAL FACES COURT MARTIAL

Dateline: New Avalon—Pressure is already mounting in the Davion capitol calling for the replacement of Marshal Eugene Drivers, commander of the 4th Deneb RCT and supreme commander of the Aldebaran Assault Force now fighting for control of that strategic planet in Liao space. Drivers reportedly changed long-standing invasion plans at the last minute, electing to divide his assault force between the two major continents of Aldebaran.

“The man is an idiot,” said Field Marshal Roger Cuthbridge, of Prince Hanse Davion’s Military Advisory Board. “Good Lord! He gets solid intel that the enemy has divided his forces, that he could win overwhelming local

superiority... and what does he do? He divides *his* forces and goes after them both! I’ve already recommended we yank that bozo and replace him with someone who knows a modicum of military strategy. We could have had a swift, clean victory on Aldebaran, and Drivers has guaranteed us a long, bloody slug fest. He ought to be court martialled.

A high-ranking officer at New Avalon agreed to talk to a reporter for BattleTechnology on condition that his name and rank not be used. “Let’s wait and see,” the source said. “The battle out there isn’t over yet. If Drivers wins, he’ll be justified. If not... well, I know Gene Drivers. I doubt that he’ll live to face his court martial board.”

WOLF’S DRAGOONS ENTER DAVION SERVICE

Dateline: New Avalon—Volan Karthridides, Press Secretary for the Davion Ministry of War, today announced that the famous mercenary unit known as Wolf’s Dragoons has entered Davion space and has requested a contract with the Federated Suns. “That contract has been granted,” Karthridides said. “The First Prince himself expressed his very great pleasure at being able to offer both sanctuary and employment to Colonel Wolf and his people.”

The five elite regiments of Wolf’s Dragoons were under contract to House Draconis until April of this year, when the contract expired. Rumors of severe fighting on worlds garrisoned by the Dragoons had reached Davion forces, but those rumors could be confirmed only when agents of Colonel Wolf approached members of Davion’s staff with their request. According to some reports, the move was prompted by the attempt of General Samsonov, a high-ranking Combine officer, and others to hold members of the Dragoons’ families hostage. Others suggest that a long-term series of plots by the Draconis high command, some of them originating with Takashi Kurita himself, were aimed at assimilating the Dragoons into the Draco military structure and ending their independence as a freelance mercenary unit.

Although sources cannot yet be confirmed, it appears that contract negotiations broke down in a series of sharp fights, culminating in a BattleMech duel on the ice-locked world of Misery. Wolf’s unit reportedly defeated several Draconis regiments in a hard and bitter fight, then escaped off-world and across the border into Davion space. The fighting and daring escape took place in April. The Dragoons have spent the time since April at an undisclosed location, recuperating and restoring their unit to full combat readiness.

“Wolf’s Dragoons is one of the finest fighting units going,” said Aaron Sandoval, Minister of the Draconis March. “We’re damned glad to have them on our side at last.”



“We’re damned glad to have them on our side at last.”

The photo above reportedly shows a *Warhammer* belonging to Jaime Wolf’s famed mercenary unit in action against a Draco ‘Mech on Misery.

WEDDING ON TERRA

August 20, 3028: Terra—In a magnificent ceremony at the Blake Palace of ComStar, on Earth, Hanse Davion, First Prince of the Federated Suns, today married Melissa Arthur Steiner, Archon Designate of the Lyran Commonwealth.

The wedding sets the seal on a formal military alliance between House Steiner and House Davion, negotiated and signed by Hanse Davion and Katrina Steiner in 3022.

The treaty—and the wedding which seals it—has been hailed as the single most important alliance in the history of Mankind. Opponents have decried it as dangerously destabilizing, pointing out that the ultimate result can only be endless war as terrifying and as complete as anything Man has witnessed to date.

No details are available as to the couple’s honeymoon plans.

Reports ...from the Front

FOOTHOLD WON ON ALDEBARAN

Dateline: Aldebaran

—Fighting was severe as the 4th Deneb RCT, the Fourth Guards RCT, and the mercenary regiment known as Redfield's Renegades blazed through the atmosphere of Aldebaran V and effected dual landings on this strategic world. This was not to be an easy assault. Their opponents were the elite combat veterans of House Ijori, plus 16 regiments of armor and infantry. Marshal Eugene Drivers, commander of the 4th Deneb RCT and overall leader of the invasion force, knew he was in for a stiff fight before the DropShips entered orbit. "I know the House Ijori people," Drivers told this reporter. "They're tough and they're good. But our people are tougher."

The Marshal's confidence was put to the test on August 18 at 1830 hours Shipboard Time, as the Davion DropShip fleet split into two main bodies, each slipping into different approach orbits over Aldebaran's mottled white, green and orange surface. Liao AeroSpace fighters swarmed up from spaceports and military bases on both main continents and deployed to meet the invasion craft. The Liao forces suffered heavy losses but were unable to penetrate the Davion fighter screen. Late in the exchange, a badly damaged Liao *Thrush* twisted clear of a pursuing Davion *Stuka* and plunged through one of the Davion DropShip formations. The *Thrush* struck the *Leopard*-class DropShip *Star Tigress* a crippling blow which destroyed the *Thrush* and sent the *Star Tigress* plunging into an uncontrollable burn-up in the planet's atmosphere. It is still uncertain whether the *Thrush* pilot deliberately attempted to ram one of the Davion invasion ships, or whether the pilot was already dead or had simply lost control. In any case, the attack resulted in the loss of

four 'Mechs and two AeroSpace fighters from the 4th Deneb RCT.

Aldebaran V poses an interesting strategic problem for any would-be invader. The surface of the world is divided into two major continents, each with space port and industrial facilities which must be taken and held to secure a hold on the world. Marshal Drivers had expected to land his entire force on the northern continent, choose a strong defensive position in the Kathandermedie Mountain district east of Chouchu, and allow the Liao forces to attack him, grinding them down to the point that they would be vulnerable to a counterattack. Shortly before jumping from the departure point, however, Drivers was informed by Davion Military Intelligence that House Ijori had split its forces between the two major continents. In one of the snap-judgment decisions for which Drivers is famous, he elected at the last moment to split his own forces, assigning the 4th Deneb RCT to the southern continent.

That decision has already been sharply criticized in Davion military and political circles. Marshal Drivers, in his initial battlefield report, stated that he held at least a three-to-one advantage over the defenders and could therefore afford to split his assault group in an attempt to pin and destroy both portions of the enemy force simultaneously. Critics have pointed out that Drivers could have achieved a six-to-one superiority against one element of the Ijori defenders. Such an advantage would have crushed one battalion of Ijori 'Mechs, forcing the other either to flee the planet or to attack at highly unfavorable odds. Drivers' classic answer to his critics: "Bah! They're back in their comfortable offices and I'm here! They want to fight this war, let them come out here and fight it themselves!"

"Battle strategy is never as simple as it looks on paper," said Colonel Brad Halloway, on Drivers' command staff. "If Gene Drivers had ignored half of the Ijori force, it might have come down on our rear before we'd finished with the first lot. I think he did the right thing."

The critics' judgement of Drivers' unorthodox tactics may already have been borne out, however. The 'Mechs of the Fourth Guards, the 1st Bellvue Armored Regiment, and two battalions of the Kestrel Mechanized Infantry were all reported safely down and their DZs secured by H-hour +3, but unexpectedly heavy resistance by Warrior House Ijori's 1st Battalion seems to have stalled the Davion advance outside the strategic Aldebaranian city of Chouchu.

Reports from Drivers' headquarters on the southern continent have been fragmentary. The 4th Deneb RCT, minus the 'Mechs and AeroSpace fighters of the *Star Tigress*, set down on its newly-assigned DZs and brushed aside scattered local pockets of resistance. Marshal Drivers, in direct command of the 4th, declared the assault a complete success in his first report to New Avalon. However, since the initial landings, contact with House Ijori's 2nd Battalion has been brief, bloody, and inconclusive. At last report, the Deneban RCT was pursuing the Ijori main body in an attempt to run it to ground, but the Davion invaders had already suffered heavy losses from numerous ambushes. Redfield's Renegades, the mercenary regiment dropped in support of the 4th Deneb, reported moderate casualties in a sharp encounter with an Ijori flanking company near Campo Pass, in the rugged terrain south of Tarling.

Only time will tell whether this snap decision of Marshal Eugene Drivers was the stuff of military genius... or errant stupidity.

Aldebaran

The following entry is an excerpt from *The Navigator's Guide to the Inner Sphere*, the 32-volume compendium of explored worlds published by ComStar Press Interstellar. Terra. Aldebaran was first printed in Volume 5, *The Mirach Reach*, and is reproduced here by permission of the publisher.

STELLAR DATA

Catalogue #NSC C 1-294-302

Star: Aldebaran

Type: K5 III; Mass: 5 Sol; Luminosity: 320 Sol; Radius: 42 Sol

SYSTEM DATA

Planetary System: 7 major bodies, 4 asteroid belts

PLANETARY DATA

Planet V: Aldebaran V

Mean Orbital Radius: 9.885 a.u.

Orbital Eccentricity: .017

Period: 13.89 y

Mass: 1.2 Earth

Equatorial Diameter: 13,555.27 km (1.06 Earth)

Mean Planetary Density: 5.517 g/cm³ (1 Earth)

Mean Surface Gravity: 1.06 G

Escape Velocity: 12.88 kps

Rotational Period: 28 h 53 m 45.5 s

Axial Inclination: 17° 06' 30.7"

Satellites: 1 (Planetoid-sized body at 42 planetary diameters)

Atmosphere: N₂ 75%; O₂ 24%; other 1%.

Atmospheric pressure .65 atm; ppO₂ .156

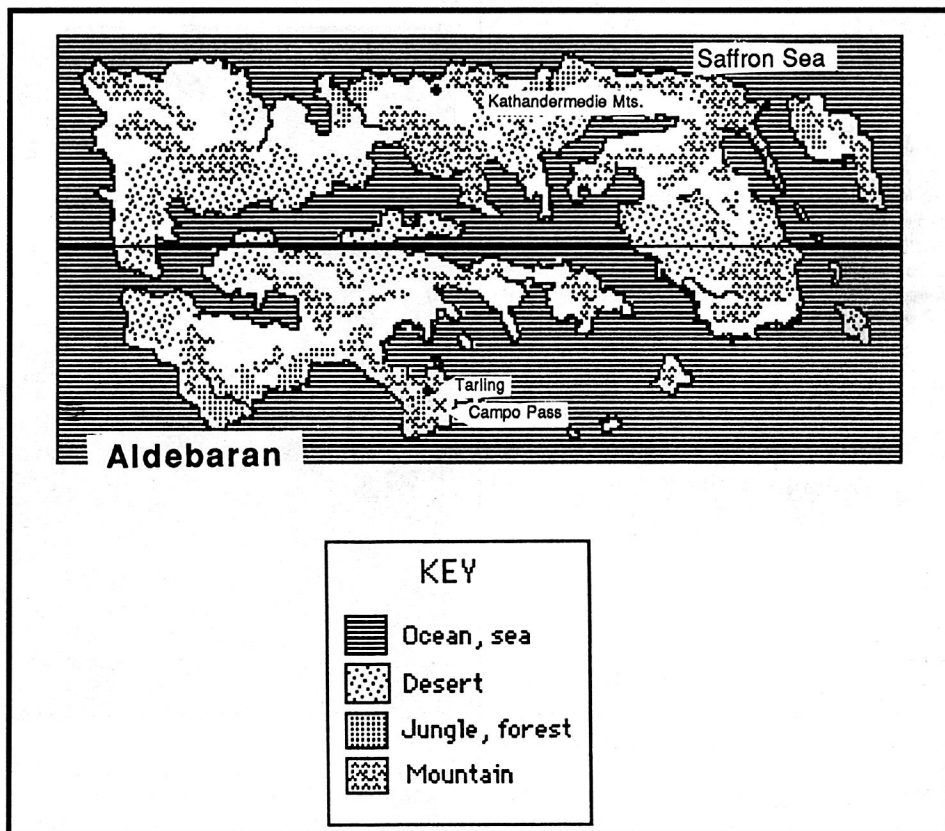
Temperature Range: 50° C.+ at equator (summer with star variability at maximum luminosity) to -30° C. at poles (winter with star at minimum luminosity).

Mean Distance to JumpPoint: Since Aldebaran is a giant star 5 times more massive than Sol, the zenith and nadir JumpPoints are correspondingly farther from the star than for lesser stars. The travel time to JumpPoint in the Aldebaranian system usually is calculated for a non-standard JumpPoint at close planetary conjunction and is generally no more than 4 to 5 days.

Planetary Population: 4.26 billion (est. 3025)

Planetary Notes

The star Aldebaran has long been known to Man. For centuries before Humanity's exodus from Earth, Aldebaran—Alpha Tauri—marked the red eye of the constellation of Taurus, a ruby-orange beacon 68 light years from Sol. Aldebaran seemed an unlikely prospect for habitable planets, an orange giant over three hundred times more luminous and five times more massive than Earth's sun, with a stellar radius which would engulf the orbit of the planet Mercury if Sol were replaced by Aldebaran in Terra's Solar System. First visited by the FTL ship *Alliance Explorer* in 2124, its surprising fifth planet was early marked as a likely target for human colonization.



Though somewhat warmer on average than Earth, Aldebaran V has a relatively moderate temperature, especially along the convoluted coastlands of its shallow seas. Its star shares to some degree the variability of many M- and K-class giants, but a combination of factors in the planet's orbit, inclination, and orbital eccentricity have conspired to moderate surface conditions. The equatorial regions are generally too hot to permit comfortable human habitation, though some cities have been carved out in the torrid zone under many meters of insulating rock. The north polar Saffron Sea, almost landlocked by the north continent, ameliorates north hemisphere conditions to a large degree and permits extensive agriculture and habitation along the continent's northern shores.

One of the oldest settled worlds in the Capellan Confederation, Aldebaran has a self-sufficient agricultural base and large, numerous, and important industrial and commercial facilities. Chouchu, a city on the north continent, is a major heavy manufacturing center of bearings, actuator assemblies, and macroelectronic parts exported to military defense and support centers throughout the Tikonov Commonality.

The Warrior House of Ijori maintains its Holdfast on Aldebaran's north continent and is responsible for the defense of this valuable world. In addition, several squadrons of AeroSpace fighters are maintained at well-camouflaged bases across the planet.

Because of its strategic location and industrial importance, Aldebaran V has been the target of Davion and Marik raids for centuries, and both continents are dotted with the scarred ruins of cities fought in and burned over time after time. Despite raids and deep-space strikes, however, Aldebaran has continued to modestly expand its industrial capability over the past several decades, and it remains a tempting target to any willing to challenge the elite 'MechWarriors of Warrior House Ijori for the prize.

Death of a DropShip

On August 18, 3028, the Davion Invasion force under the command of Marshal Eugene Drivers approached Aldebaran V, dividing into two forces and angling into approach vectors aimed at DZs in both the northern and southern hemispheres of the planet. One DropShip, a Leopard-class named *Star Tigress*, Captain Julia LaVerne commanding, was lost during final DZ approach.

The following is a transmission intercept recorded by the DropShip *Sky Fang* at the time of the incident.

Captain's Log

Star Tigress, FSN-DS 1281

Shiptime 1856:12 hours

Capt. Julia LaVerne, Commanding

Captain: "Ease her in, Mr. Winston."

Helm: "Aye, Captain. Angle of approach, one five point niner degrees, bearing oh one seven. Final orbital insertion burn coming up in 50 seconds."

Captain: "Very well, Mr. Winston. Mr. Li, patch me through to the troops."

ComOp: "Channel open, Captain."

Captain: "This is the Captain speaking, men. We're on our final approach. I know you boys can't see a thing down there, but let me tell you, the planet is spread out below us all blue and gold and green and white. The view is magnificent! Our DZs aren't over the horizon yet, but we'll be coming up on them soon. I estimate three minutes to drop. Good luck, boys! Give 'em hell!"

Helm: "Maneuver burn, Captain. Twelve seconds."

Captain: "Very well. Execute."

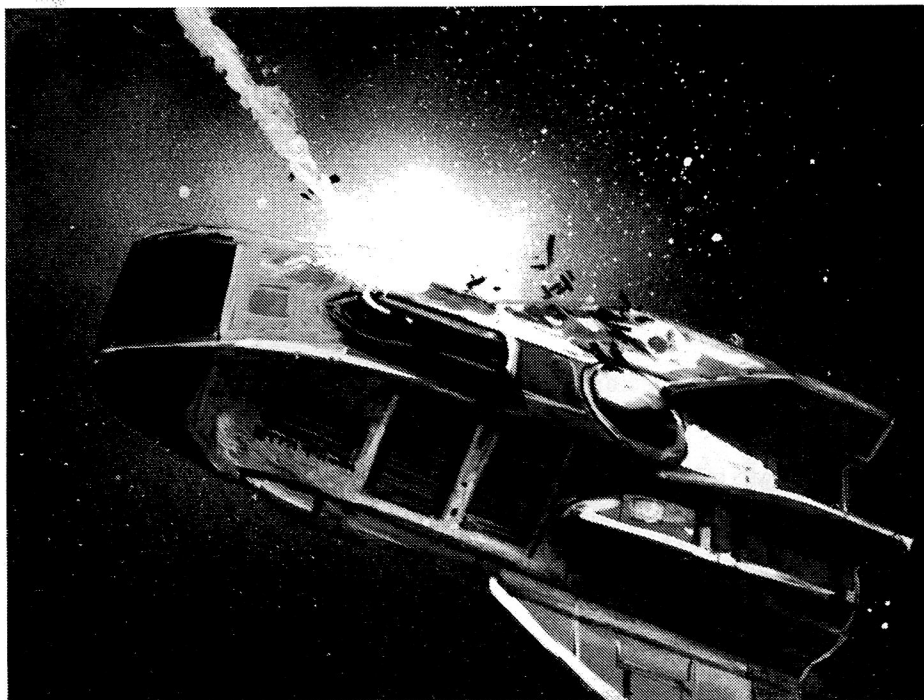
Helm: "Final insertion burn in five... four... three... two... one... burn! We have ignition. Maneuver controls responding."

Weapons: "Captain! Bogey, high port, bearing zero seven niner! On approach vector! Range twelve thousand! No ID yet."

Captain: "Stay with him, Kreuger!"

Weapons: "Tracking, Captain. PPCs warmed and ready. Lasers and LRMs standing by. We have another bogey. IFF tags him as one of ours. Closing... closing..."

Captain: "Helm! Time to drop!"



Helm: "One minute twenty, Captain."

Captain: "Malfing hell! That's forever..."

Weapons: "Positive ID, Skipper! Enemy *Thrush* on approach, range eight thousand and closing! Friendly *Stuka* on his tail, same course, same range!"

Captain: "Hit him, dammit! Hit that *Thrush!*"

Weapons: "Firing PPCs, Captain."

[Interruption of recording due to static.]

Weapons: "Negative, Captain. Miss. Firing lasers!"

Helm: "One minute five to drop."

Captain: "Steady course, Helm."

Weapons: "The *Thrush* is hit! I'm getting scatter back from a debris trail! He's spilling atmosphere!"

Captain: "What's his heading now?"

Weapons: "zero three one... damn! Collision course! Range five thousand and closing!"

Captain: "Helm! Emergency maneuver! Come to course zero five five!"

Weapons: "Three thousand! Twenty five hundred! Two thousand!"

Helm: "Coming to new course zero five fi..."

Weapons: "He's going to hit!"

[Interruption of recording due to static.]

Captain: "Mayday! Mayday! *Star Tigress*

calling Mayday! We have been hit, portside high! Maneuvering control gone! Helm gone! Power at point two one and falling! We're venting atmosphere! Port wing is gone... and most of the power plant, I think! We'll try to jettison our payload... damn! Launch systems inoperative! Those boys are trapped down there..."

[Transmission from Captain Virgil Walters of *Sky Fang*, a 4th Deneb RCT *Leopard*-class DropShip nearby.]

Walters: "*Star Tigress!* *Star Tigress!* This is *Sky Fang!* Stabilize port! You're tumbling!"

Captain: "No joy, *Fang!* We're breaking up... we're going in..."

[Interruption of recording due to static. Remaining transmission severely garbled due to static.]

Captain: "Losing ---three niner --- control. Hull temp forty five hundred-----real fireball out there. We're going in. I say again. This----- *Star Tigress* calling ----- give 'em hell for *Star...*"

[Transmission ends.]

Reports

...from the Front

DAVIDS MEET GOLIATHS ON ST. ANDRE'S ROCKY PLAINS

Dateline: St. Andre

—In what has proven to be the heaviest and most desperate fighting reported so far in the war, Davion forces descended on the chill world of St. Andre, engaging in a desperate struggle to the death in the icy, snow-swept plains of one of the planet's northern continents. The Federated Suns forces, commanded by Marshal Jonathan Riffenberg, knew they had their work cut out for them. The assault force, consisting of the Davion Light Guards Regimental Combat Team reinforced by Alpha and Beta Regiments of the 12th Vegan Rangers, was assigned the task of taking the Liao world from its defenders: Justina's Cuirassiers, Cochraine's Goliaths, and the 1st Battalion of the Blackwind Lancers.

As this issue of BattleTechnology went to press, the main assault deployed on the plains of the Swarthian Highlands south of Jerome had not yet closed conclusively with the enemy. Initial drops to secure LZs for the 12th Vegan Rangers were completely successful and virtually uncontested, though it is known that Justina's Cuirassiers occupy Jerome in force. Both sides expect the demonstration outside Jerome to build into a major battle within the next week or two, a struggle to decide the fate of this world which promises to be a bloody one.

Blood and BattleMech coolant fluid have already been spilled in vast quantities on the Ivaar Tundra, where a very special target beckoned to the Davion invaders. There, on a barren plain several hundred kilometers from the nearest village of any size, Liao scientists had recently uncovered the ruins of a forgotten outpost of the old Star League and begun excavations. Davion Intelligence was unable to determine what, if any technological treasures the Confederation might have recovered from the site, but rumors of the site's importance to the Confederation had played a major part in the planning for the St. Andre strike. Two battalions of the Davion Light Guards, backed up by a special assault unit known as "Delta Company," were scheduled to set down in the area around the excavation site.

Davion Intelligence had discovered that the area was defended by Cochraine's Goliaths,

an unusual Liao battalion in that it was composed almost entirely of rare but deadly, four-legged GOL-1H *Goliaths*. Unfortunately, Intelligence efforts had not revealed the presence of a Liao AeroSpace Battalion deployed in camouflaged bunkers hidden beneath the frozen soil of the Ivaar wastes. Capellan fighters rose in swarms as the Davion assault force maneuvered for its final approach, and the battle at the fringes of St. Andre's atmosphere was a deadly one. The Light Guards' 2nd Battalion lost two DropShips, and the survivors were badly scattered. Most managed to touch down safely, but they missed their planned Drop Zones by a good 30 kilometers and were absent during the critical opening hours of the battle.

The 1st Battalion touched down at the assigned DZs close by the excavation and found Cochraine's *Goliaths* waiting for them. Commanded by the lovely and battle-hardened Fiona Cochraine, the *Goliaths* maneuvered themselves squarely between the scattered Davion 1st and 2nd Battalions and launched a devastating, irresistible attack across the rock-strewn Ivaar Wastes. Colonel Kimball Stone ordered the 1st Battalion to begin a slow, fighting withdrawal across the plain. As the Light Guards Delta Company made its final drop approach, Stone ordered a wave-off.

The special Delta section's commander, Captain Andrew Redburn, ignored the wave-

off, pretending that static on the TacCom net had blocked his reception of the order. Redburn's 'Mechs, most of them light and medium 'Mechs trained as a special, outsized close assault company, grounded in Cochraine's rear.

Redburn's force destroyed five *Goliaths* during their initial deployment. The fast-moving, jump-capable 'Mechs used their superior mobility to rush individual *Goliaths* in twos and threes and overwhelm individual Liao 'Mechs with their combined firepower and strength. The superior weight and firepower of the heavy assault 'Mechs began to tell, however, and it was not long before Delta Company was in serious trouble.

At the height of the conflict, Captain Redburn identified Fiona Cochraine's *Goliath* and executed the dangerous and uncertain maneuver known as Death From Above. The *Goliath* was destroyed and Cochraine herself was killed. Redburn's *Firestarter* was destroyed, and he was knocked unconscious for the remainder of the fight.

That incident proved to be the turning point of the battle, however. Convinced that Redburn was dead, the surviving 'Mechs of Delta Company rallied and counterattacked. The unexpected assault caught the now leaderless and disorganized Capellan forces by surprise and started a general retreat. By the time the battered Light Guards' 1st Battalion had moved over to the offensive, Cochraine's *Goliaths* were scattering, completely routed, and many individual 'Mechs had been crippled or destroyed. The timely arrival of elements of the 2nd Battalion put the cork on the bottle. Cochraine's *Goliaths*, for all intents and purposes, were completely annihilated as a fighting unit.

Elsewhere, the battle for St. Andre continues, but local commanders believe the reduction of Cochraine's *Goliaths* may well prove to be the psychological turning point for the entire campaign. Much hard fighting remains to reduce this world, but the Davion forces are confident of certain victory.



St. Andre

The following entry is an excerpt from *The Navigator's Guide to the Inner Sphere*, the 32-volume compendium of explored worlds published by ComStar Press Interstellar, Terra. St. Andre was first printed in Volume 5, *The Mirach Reach*, and is reproduced here by permission of the publisher.

STELLAR DATA

Catalogue #NSC C 1-219-002

Star: St. Andre

Type: G6 V; Mass: .917 Sol; Luminosity: .62 Sol; Radius: .909 Sol

SYSTEM DATA

Planetary System: four major bodies, 1 asteroid belt

PLANETARY DATA

Planet

Mean Orbital Radius: .79 a.u.

Orbital Eccentricity: .013

Period: 272.9 days

Mass: 1.4 Earth

Equatorial Diameter: 15,371 km (.86 Earth)

Mean Planetary Density: 4.4 g/cm³ (.8 Earth)

Mean Surface Gravity: .96 G

Escape Velocity: 12.27 kps

Rotational Period: 23h 46m 23.4s

Axial Inclination: 24° 15' 34"

Satellites: 3

1 major moon at 36 radii; 2 planetoids

Atmosphere: 76% N₂; 23% O₂; 1% other

Atmospheric pressure: 1.2 atm; .276 ppO₂

Temperature Range: 15° C. (equator/summer) to -75° C. (poles/winter)

Mean Distance to JumpPoint: 5.15 a.u.

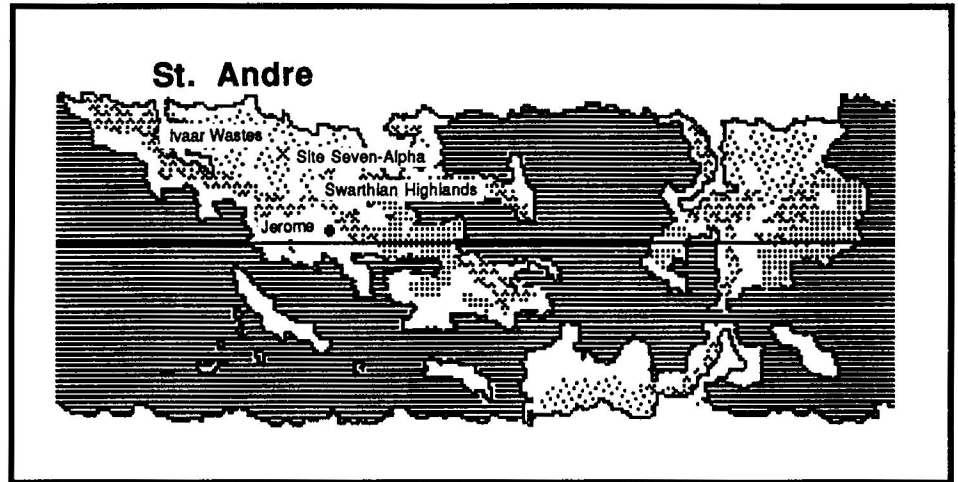
Average travel time: 4-5 days

Planetary Population: 2.1 billion (est. 3025)

Planetary Notes

The sun of St. Andre is slightly cooler and dimmer than Earth's sun, the climate of its one habitable world somewhat cooler than that of Terra. Except for the equatorial regions, most of the planet is locked in the grip of an ice age, with fully 25% of the surface covered by ice caps. Unlike Earth, which has experienced repeated episodes of extensive glaciation during the past few hundreds of thousands of years, St. Andre will never experience a wholesale thawing. In fact, as its sun quietly grows dimmer over the next few billion years, the world will sink deeper and deeper into its ice-bound lethargy until, eventually, all life perishes and the atmosphere itself freezes solid.

This icy climax to the planet's history will not occur for at least four billion years however, and in the meantime, St. Andre is, by almost any standards, a pleasant enough place to live. Most equatorial regions experience yearly snowfall, but summers are pleasant, and warm ocean currents serve to keep even northerly latitudes habitable. The only truly inhospitable areas



of the planet are at the poles, where temperatures during the long winter night can reach -70° C.

St. Andre, some 120 light years from Earth, was discovered by Terran explorers in 2203. It was not immediately colonized on a large scale, though a small private commercial settlement at Jerome maintained a modest spaceport and saw to the harvesting and exporting of Andrean Ironwood from the subtropical forests along the equatorial belt. The retreat of the Alliance during the years after 2236 threw the St. Andrean settlement on its own resources. With its population bolstered by colonists from the neighboring world of Hunan, it became self-sufficient by 2280, though both population growth and industrial development remained slow.

St. Andre's population was still less than 500 million in 2579 when the world was identified by Ian Cameron and Terrence Liao as a strategic site for one of the early Star League military bases. Industrial growth was rapid after this, with a large percentage of the planet's gross domestic product hinging on the supply and maintenance of several Star League facilities scattered across its habitable surface.

This age of prosperity ended, however, with the unprecedented brutality of the First Succession War. St. Andre, with its militarily-oriented industrial facilities, its ship yards, its 'Mech factories, received special attention from several of the competing would-be First Lords. The surface of the world today is dotted with the scorched and charred ruins of cities obliterated during repeated raids and invasions.

By the end of the Second Succession War in 2863, scant industry remained on St. Andre. Those factories which survived were geared more to the necessities of survival than to those of war. St. Andre had, after all, a harsh climate, and a certain level of technology was necessary simply to preserve

human life on the planet. The old Star League facilities had been obliterated... some by repeated 'Mech attacks and firestorms and bombings, many by the radioactive hells unleashed by both strategic and tactical nuclear strikes. There were endless rumors of "lostech" sites, places where half-magical, high-tech treasures of the Star League had been gathered safe from hostile marauders, and for many years St. Andre attracted treasure hunters and speculators from across the Inner Sphere. In the end, all of the rumors proved to be unfounded, the results of wishful thinking and the knowledge that the Star League had, indeed, maintained an extensive and elaborate presence on this world.

In late 3027, one aspect of the rumor, at least, was proved true, when Capellan scientists unearthed clues to a buried cache on the larger of St. Andre's two northern hemisphere continents. Little is known of the site's nature, since the finds have been kept under close security by the Liao excavators. It is strongly suspected that a large number of intact GOL-1H *Goliaths*, first introduced by Brigadier during the Star League era, were recovered from an underground storage bunker under the surface of the Ivaar Plains. Certainly, there is no other way to explain the fact of the 'Mech unit known as Cochrane's *Goliaths* containing so many of the previously almost nonexistent assault BattleMech.

What other secrets were uncovered at the frozen Ivaar site? The answer to that lies with the Davion officers now controlling the site after the recent battle for the excavation site. Davion Intelligence is not likely to provide much information on the question any time soon. Even more tantalizing: how many more wait to be uncovered?

That is a question which may never be answered.

THE IVAAR *GOLIATH* MYSTERY

Dateline: Exeter

—News that Davion invasion forces had met and destroyed a battalion-strength Capellan unit consisting almost entirely of GOL-1H *Goliaths* was met with general rejoicing on most worlds of the Federated Suns. The victory of the Ivaar Wastes is certain to enter the history books as one of those decisive battles which shape the course of history: Gettysburg, Stalingrad, and Galtor III.

Lingering questions remain, however, in the wake of this critical Davion victory. Perhaps the most pressing is a question so obvious few have yet taken notice of it: where did all those Capellan *Goliaths* come from?

The following quotes are from the well-known and respected *BattleTech Technical Readout 3025*, 1st Edition, published by FASA.

“The *Goliath* performed well, and the Star League began to take an interest shortly before its fall and the start of the First Succession War. The few *Goliaths* that were operational quickly became the property of their pilots, and only a handful are still in service today...”

“Due to the limited number of *Goliaths*, they almost never work in conjunction with one another. However, the *Goliath* has been instrumental in a few battles throughout the Inner Sphere...”

“The last known major action involving a *Goliath* was in 3003, when the Federated Suns squashed a rebellion of nobles on the planet Tsanna...”

“Only a handful of *Goliaths* are still functional. Of these, the majority are in the hands of House Steiner...”

And yet, at the Ivaar excavation site, Cochraine’s *Goliaths* mustered almost a full battalion—28 out of 36 ‘Mechs—of GOL-1H *Goliaths*, most, apparently, in good to excellent condition.

The *Goliath* is notorious as a heavily-armored, hard-hitting BattleMech. Massing 80 tons, mounting a Rand PPC-10 and twin Holly LRM packs as offensive armament, and supporting over 18 tons of the Star League-manufactured, 3/Star slab composite armor, this four-legged heavy assault ‘Mech is highly respected, if seldom seen on the modern battlefield.

Some observers have suggested that the question of the Capellan *Goliaths* can best be answered by looking at what they were guarding: an excavation site at what is believed to be a long-lost Star League storage depot. The first hints of the existence of the excavation surfaced less than a year ago, and it is believed that Fiona Cochraine began assembling her unit at about the same time.

Underground storehouses of Star League military equipment are not unknown, though the romance of lost, high-tech treasure has spawned more fiction than fact across the Inner Sphere. Most recently, a Star League computerized library is said to have been uncovered on the House Marik world of Helm, though details of this find are still sketchy, at best. During the past several centuries, numerous pitched battles have been fought at Star League depot sites. With the recurring problem of Lostech—the slow but accelerating technological devolution brought on by the loss of factories and technicians—these old League storehouses often contain equipment, weapons, and other materials which can change the course of a battle... or a war.

Was the St. Andre site such a storehouse?

“Some of our oldest records indicate that Ian Cameron established an extensive underground facility on the planet,” says historian Bethany Stavros, of the NAIS. “By the time of the First Succession War, there were dozens of facilities on that planet. I suppose it’s possible that one could have escaped the general destruction that overtook St. Andre... though God knows how.”

“Most unlikely,” contends Dr. Victor deSoto, of the University of Tikonov. “Remember, there have been rumors of lostech treasures on St. Andre for years, for centuries. Every treasure hunter in the Inner Sphere must have picked over that world at one time or another, and no one ever found anything. If somebody’s found something now, it’s probably insignificant... a war memorial, a tomb, something like that. Something the size of a military stores depot couldn’t stay hidden all that time.”

The Liao military certainly maintained a close guard over the site... and that guard included Cochraine’s *Goliaths*, as well as a full battalion of AeroSpace fighters. Those *Goliaths*, of course, remain the central dilemma of this unfolding mystery. Might they have been machines preserved in underground chambers for four centuries, uncovered only last year and organized into a special assault battalion? Might Fiona Cochraine and her warriors have been training with these new ‘Mechs in close-guarded secrecy, creating a unit of devastating firepower and defensive strength?

And is Hanse Davion responsible for destroying almost the last of these venerable and heavily-armored war machines?

We may never know—Davion’s generals are not talking, and the lovely Fiona Cochraine and her warriors may have taken the secret to their graves.

But it makes one wonder what else might be down there, under the surface of St. Andre...



Reports

...from the Front

AeroSpace Fighter Strike on Algol

Dateline: Algol

—In a daring gamble, Davion Marshal Herbert Hobaugh won a striking victory during the first hours of the Federated Suns' invasion of this strategic Liao world.

The attack plan called for the deployment of the 3rd Davion Guards RCT supported by the 71st Light Horse Regiment. The 3rd Guards' primary target was the city of Schan, while the Light Horse mercenaries targeted an important spaceport near the town of Groffer's Toll. The double-pronged strike was expected to crush two of the three battalions guarding the world, while isolating the third. The planet's defenders were known to be the 1st Ariana Fusiliers.

"Our AeroWing had an easy time of it during our approach," Marshal Hobaugh said. "Too easy. Our fighters scattered them on the first pass, and it didn't look like there were enough Liao fighters airborne to stop a garbage scow."

After initial combat drops to seize key positions, Hobaugh's DropShips grounded at their assigned LZs. Davion G2 had predicted heavy enemy fighter cover, and the lack of Capellan AeroSpace fighters had Hobaugh worried.

"All I could figure," he told reporters, "was that they had one hell of a lot of A-S craft in hiding, waiting for a chance to sneak-bomb our DropShips. Once our 'Mechs were deployed, we'd be sitting ducks, provided they had as many fighters available as Intel said they had."

Hobaugh had a difficult tactical decision to make. Doctrine called for him to divide his air assets between Combat Air Patrol over his DropShips, win air superiority in the BattleMech combat zones, and fly hunter-killer missions deep into enemy territory, seeking enemy 'Mechs, fighters, supply depots, and targets of opportunity. Hobaugh was convinced, however, that if large numbers of Liao fighters were being readied for a concerted air strike, following doctrine would leave his air defenses seriously divided and scattered.

Davion Intelligence had given Hobaugh a shrewd idea of where the Liao fighters must be hidden. There were two sites, marked on the most recent planetary maps as underground industrial complexes close to the city of Kollasa, with large conventional airports nearby. Intel suggested that the Liao AeroWing had been divided between the two complexes, and that it would deploy, probably after dark, from the air fields.

Gambling that Davion Intelligence had not missed anything, Hobaugh ordered all of the 3rd Guard's AeroWing back to the DropShips, where they were fueled and armed with bombs and cratering munitions. The attack was timed for sunset, with the Davion aircraft arriving over the Capellan airfields from the west, out of the sun. If the enemy was there, they might well be caught getting ready for their own strike against the Davion LZ. If not, the runways might still be cratered heavily enough to deprive the Liao

forces of them for several critical days.

An interesting sidenote was the leader of the bombing run. Dale Randolph Harrison, a 52-year old retired air officer of the 3rd, had come out of retirement and volunteered to accompany his old squadron back into combat. Though initially denied anything but a symbolic role in the action, pressure from the young flight officers and a special order by Prince Davion on behalf of "Pops" Harrison seems to have cut through a rather imposing barrier of red tape.

Harrison would fly a Davion *Corsair* once more...

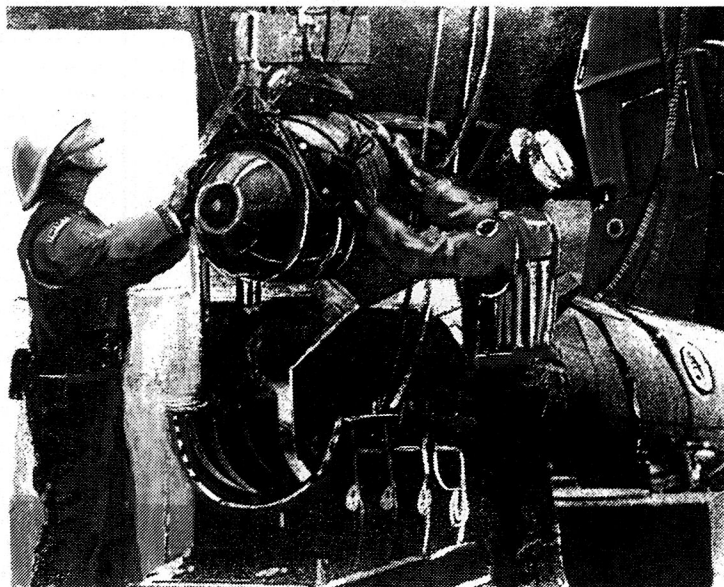
The attack was carried off with precision and elan. Screaming in at treetop level, dodging surface-to-air missiles and antiaircraft defenses, the Davion *Corsairs*, *Stukas*, and *Sparrowhawks* arrived over the airfields just as the sun was setting. High overhead, the ghostly, silvery radiance of the brilliant, nearby star Beta Perseus—the *original* Algol—was just beginning to dominate the twilight sky.

The Liao AeroSpace fighters were there, right where they were expected. The air battle was sharp and furious, and casualties to SAMs and surface laser defenses were high, but the Davion forces loosed their bombs among the close-spaced Liao craft with deadly effect. The Capellan craft were in the process of being armed and fueled. Flame fireballed into the evening sky in continuous, thundering roars. Liao fighters attempted to launch, and a few—a very

few—were able to get clear of the devastation on the ground and dogfight briefly in the flame-shot sky. The ensuing dogfights were vicious and brief. Some Liao fighters managed to escape, but most were shot down and destroyed, or so badly damaged that few would ever fly again.

In one bold stroke, the 3rd Guard AeroWing had virtually eliminated the 1st Ariana Fusiliers AeroWing. Davion casualties were relatively light, though damage from ground-based defenses was heavy and many Davion ships crashed during their return to their DropShips.

Hobaugh gave all of the credit to his air warriors. "Their courage, their skill, and their devotion won them the victory," he said. "It is men such as these who will win the ultimate victory in this war."



Timely Gamble:

3rd Guards AeroWing Techs rearm their unit's AeroSpace fighters with bombs. Marshal Hobaugh's quick action was responsible for a decisive victory.

Algol

The following entry is an excerpt from *The Navigator's Guide to the Inner Sphere*, the 32-volume compendium of explored worlds published by ComStar Press Interstellar, Terra. Algol was first printed in Volume 5, *The Mirach Reach*, and is reproduced here by permission of the publisher.

STELLAR DATA

Catalogue #NSC D 2-334-109

Star: Algol

Type: G0 V; Mass: 1.04 Sol; Luminosity: 1.21 Sol;
Radius: 1.03 Sol

SYSTEM DATA

Planetary System: 8 major bodies, 2 asteroid belts

PLANETARY DATA

Planet IV: Algol, Brieman's Star IV

Mean Orbital Radius: 1.02 a.u.

Orbital Eccentricity: .004

Period: 368.9 days

Mass: 1.2 Earth

Equatorial Diameter: 9450 km (.74 Earth)

Mean Planetary Density: 6.07 g/cm³ (1.1 Earth)

Mean Surface Gravity: .74 G

Escape Velocity: 8.3 kps

Rotational Period: 22 h 13 m 42.4 s

Axial Inclination: 12° 16' 21.5"

Satellites: 1

(Planetary body at 105 planetary diameters)

Atmosphere: N₂ 77%; O₂ 22%; other 1%.

Atmospheric pressure .9 atm; ppO₂ .198

Temperature Range: 30° C.+ at equator to -30° C. at poles

Mean Distance to JumpPoint: 6.68 a.u.

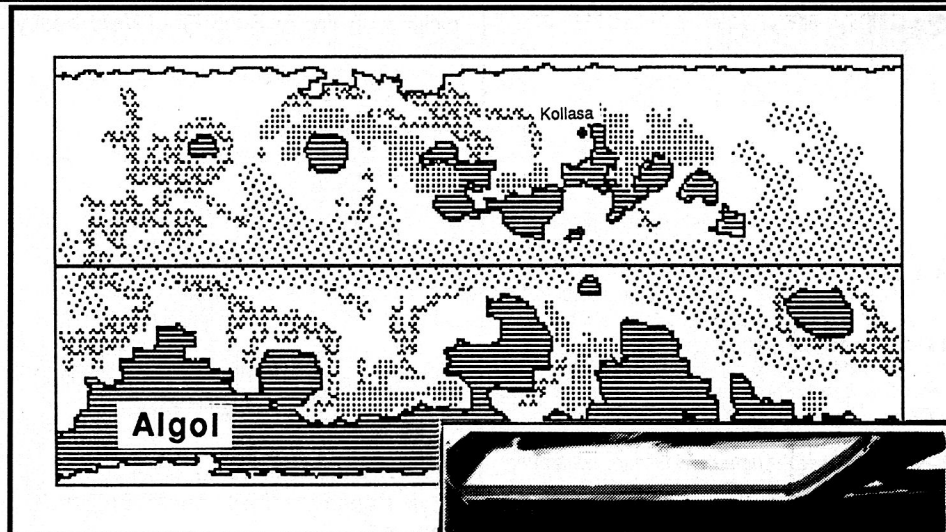
Planetary Population: 2.7 billion (est. 3025)

Planetary Notes

The name Algol is an old one in the human history of the heavens. The name comes from the Arabic *Al Ra's al Ghul*, meaning "the Demon's Head," and was originally applied to the star Beta Perseus.

This original Algol is a B8 V star, far too young, hot, and massive to have formed a planetary system of its own. Even if Beta Perseus was of a type which could have planets, the presence of a large companion star less than 11 million kilometers from the primary would be sufficient to completely disrupt any planets as they were forming.

Algol was well known to early astronomers, for even with the naked eye it could be observed to dim periodically. Later, it was realized that this variability was caused by an unseen companion star orbiting the brighter star. The orbit of this companion was such that it periodically passed between Earth and the primary star, causing it to dim sharply in partial eclipse every 2.8 days. It is now known that this companion is larger and brighter than Earth's sun, but the brightness of Beta Perseus A long kept it

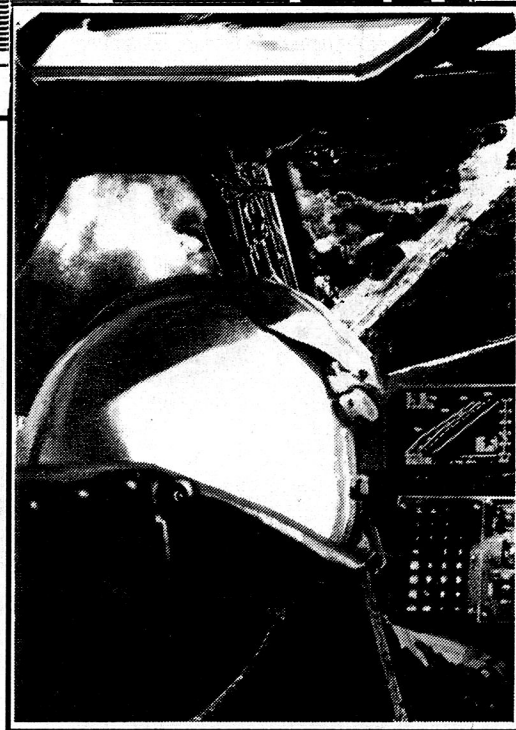


hidden. The unusual and easily noted variability of this star in what was perceived as a perfect and unchanging heaven may well have led men to first call Algol "the Demon Star."

Algol lies nearly 100 light years from Earth. In 2267, the explorer ship *Vanguard*, under command of Captain Josiah Brieman, first approached Beta Perseus, making a series of observations and studies. He found the system, as expected, barren of planets. During the survey, a star quite similar to Sol in size, age, and luminosity was discovered less than three light years from Algol. The star, named Brieman's Star, was investigated and found to have a planetary family. The fourth of those worlds was habitable.

In one of those curious twistings of nomenclature common to the history of stellar exploration, it was not long before Brieman's Star IV became known, in turn, as Algol. Certainly, the real Algol dominates the night sky of the world for the half of each year it is visible. During the other half of the year, from most latitudes, Alpha Perseus is visible as a faint spark of white light even during the day, if the observer knows just where to look for it. When Beta Perseus shines high in the night sky, it is a radiant, diamond-bright beacon bright enough to cast shadows and allow the reading of relatively fine print.

Algol—Brieman's Star IV—is a pleasant world, if somewhat drier and hotter than Earth. Its surface is divided into small, shallow, interlocking seas and a single large ocean. Land regions are predominantly desert, but there are broad belts of agricultural land, forest, prairie, and jungle.



The ice caps are small, the average surface temperature somewhat higher than that of Earth.

Algol is self-sufficient in food stuffs and in most industry. In recent years, it has developed a modest reputation as an industrial center. Numerous factories and technological assembly plants dot its surface, and the SolarHigh AeroTech fighter plant is located a few kilometers west of Kollasa.

The world is regarded as an important part of the Liao defense complex and is heavily protected by AeroSpace fighter squadrons and ground-based missile batteries. At last report, the 1st Ariana Fusiliers were responsible for Algol's defense.

Strike Low, Strike Fast, Strike Hard!

The following is an edited communications transcript recorded aboard the 3rd Davion Guards DropShip *Excelsior*, an Overlord-class vessel designated as primary command/control center for the Guards RCT during much of the battle. The transmissions were monitored during the 3rd Guards' AeroWing assault on the heavily-defended fighter bunkers and maintenance facilities early in the battle for Algol.

This portion of the communications traffic involved the AeroWing's First Group, consisting of sixteen fighter bombers divided into Gold, Blue, Red, and Green Lances.

"Gold Leader" is the commanding officer of the entire air group, the legendary Colonel Dale Randolph Harrison. "Pops" Harrison is perhaps best remembered for his part in the Battle of David some fifteen years ago. Although retired since 3025, Harrison returned to the service at his own request, evidently to take part in the grand assault by his beloved 3rd Guards.

"Jackpot" was the code phrase which was to be used to notify headquarters that the Capellan AeroSpace fighters had been caught while still on the ground.

"Gold Leader to Group. Coming up on target in... mark... thirty seconds. All ships, arm your weapons. I say again, arm weapons! Lance leaders, check in."

"Green Leader, all tight."

"Red Leader, Red Lance set."

"Blue Leader, yo!"

"Ah... Gold Leader, this is Blue Two. I've got a lot of fire coming up from Hotel niner five. SAMs and heavy laser..."

"This is Blue Four! I'm hit! I'm hit!"

"Steady Blue Four. This is Blue Three, right behind you. Doesn't look bad. Looks like some damage to your belly and starboard wing. You're trailing some smoke..."

"Roger that, Three. I've got overloads on the main accelerators, though. Picking up some vibration here..."

"Gold Leader to Group! Heads up, everybody. I have the target in sight! Keep tight, keep low. Wingmen, stay on your leaders! Let's hit 'em low, fast, and hard!"

"Copy, Gold Leader! Blue Lance... here we go!"

"WHEEEEEEEEEEOOOOOOOOOO!"

"Red Lance, going in!"

"Green Lance... copy! Here we go!"

"Watch it, Group! This is Red Two,

picking up fire at Echo One! Very heavy! Very heavy!"

"Copy that, Red! There's fire coming off the tower at Sierra two! Watch it, Green Lance! You're bracketed!"

"Gold Leader! Gold Leader! I've got the airfield! Good Lord... they're spread out three ways from Sunday! Jackpot! Jackpot!"

"This is Gold Leader. Confirm that."

"Gold Leader, Red Leader. I repeat... Jackpot! We have Liao ships on the ground! I see *Transits*... *Transgressors*... and *Thrushes*! Hell, they're all over the field, packed in wingtip to wingtip!"

"Great balls of fire... we got 'em! We got 'em!"

"This is Gold Leader. Hold the chatter, boys. Keep tight. Red Lance, you have the honors."

"Red Leader, here. Thanks, Pops."



C'mon, Reds! Let's show 'em how it's done!"

"Strike *Excelsior*, this is Gold Leader. Jackpot. Jackpot."

"*Excelsior* to Gold Leader. Jackpot confirmed. Good hunting."

"Red Leader to Gold Leader! Bombs away! Wheeeooo! You should'a seen those feathers fly!"

"Affirm, Red Leader. Blue and Green Lances... your turn to dance!"

"Green Two to Red Three! Pull up, Doug! That fireball nearly singed your tail!"

"Affirm, Green Two! What a smoker!"

"Red Leader, here! I've got a sneak-away at the north end of the main runway! Looks like a *Thrush* trying to get in on the fun!"

"I'm on him, Red Leader. Steady... steady... Oh, Lordy! Did you see him cart-wheel?"

"Watch the fire from that tower!"

"This is Gold Three. I'm on the tower. Stay clear! Stay clear! Heavy SAM fire, Hotel Three!"

"This is Blue Four... calling Mayday! Mayday! Power out! I'm losing it!"

"Blue Four, this is Blue Leader! Punch out, Slick! You're on fire!"

"What... and walk back? Blast 'em for me, guys..."

"Blue Four! Blue Four! Pull out!"

"Oh, malf! Did'ja see that? Right into the..."

"Watch it! Those are high explosives going off!"

"Great holy cosmos! Slick must've augged into a bomb dump in that hanger! That whole line of *Transgressors* went up like fireworks!"

"This is Green Three! I'm losing the target. Too much smoke."

"Affirm, Green Three... affirm. Swing wide and take 'em from the south."

This is Red Three! I've got a *Transit* airborne... on my tail! Red Four, where are you? Get him off!"

"Hold on, Three! Your Wingman went down with a SAM up the spout. Greens One and Two vectoring in..."

"Oh, malf Where's Pops?"

"Eleven o'clock high... tangling with a *Thrush*! There he goes!"

"Look at that Cappy burn!"

"Green Two to Gold Leader! Nice kill!"

"Thank you, Green Two. Now haul back and break! Watch that ground fire! Group... reform! Let's hit 'em again! I think they still want to play...!"

Of sixteen Davion fighters in the attack, three were destroyed during the battle, and another three failed to make it back to their DropShips. Five of the fighters were so badly damaged they would never fly again. Colonel Harrison counted 97 holes in his Corsair's tail assembly alone. In return, the Group was credited with the destruction of at least 22 Capellan fighters, including four shot down in air-to-air combat.

For this action, the Group won the Silver Sun Unit Citation, while Colonel Harrison won the Golden Sunburst. Aero-Warrior Linda "Slick" Evans was posthumously awarded the Diamond Sunburst.

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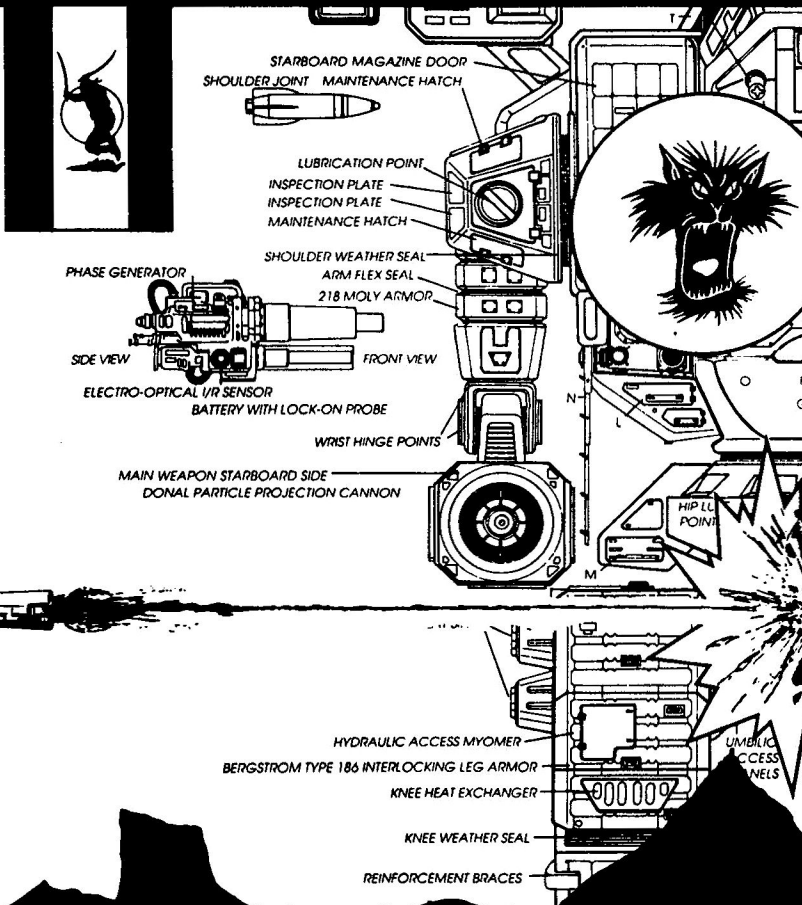
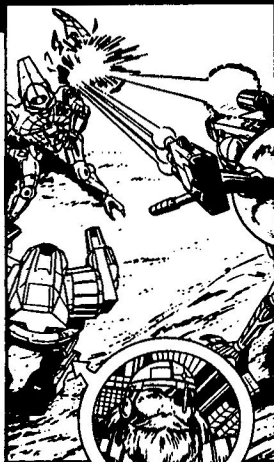
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Home for Christmas

The announcement of the Lyran Commonwealth's and Federated Suns' attack upon the other three Successor States came as a shock to those assembled at the wedding and throughout the Successor States. Almost immediately politicians, armchair warriors, and psychics all began making their predictions about the duration of the war. Is a quick victory in sight, or is the Fourth Successor War destined to grind on to the inconclusive horrors of attrition and exhaustion which have characterized interstellar wars in the past?

Politicians, armchair warriors, and psychics are all notoriously unreliable in the accuracy of such predictions. BattleTechnology, however, sent its reporters off to find people who could logically be expected to know enough to puzzle out the war, its causes and its consequences. Here are their answers. As might be expected, they reveal a wide variety of opinions.

First Prince Hanse Davion



Hanse Davion

First Prince of the Federated Suns

"...victory I do promise you..."

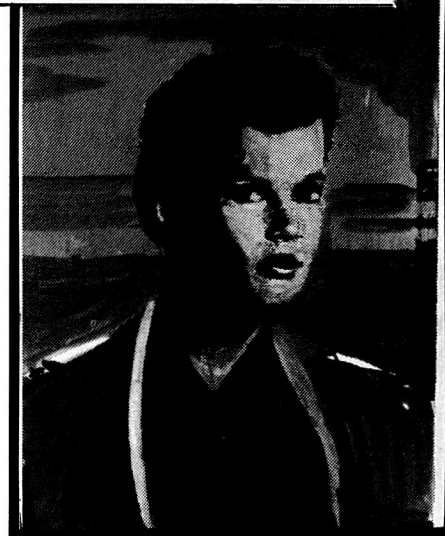
"Citizens of the Federated Suns, I wish you well. I speak to you now because of a very serious situation that has forced me to undertake action during what I had hoped to be a time of relaxation. Instead of being able to enjoy a honeymoon, as many of you have, I am forced to deal with our treacherous neighbor, the Capellan Confederation. I have directed the forces assembled for Operation: Galahad 3028 to strike at targets in the Tikonov and Sarna Commonalities..."

"...War is not an easy thing to declare and pursue, but we have no choice. As we saw with the extended raid launched in 3022 by McCarron's Armored Cavalry—a mercenary unit in the pay of Maximilian Liao—the Capellan nation will not allow us to live in peace. Our intelligence operatives have uncovered plans by House Liao to produce two never-before-seen 'Mech designs, both created specifically to deal with our troops. We also have information that suggests Liao wishes to close the St. Ives' finger down around the worlds between Teng and Mitchel..."

"...I had hoped, fervently and solemnly, that our Galahad exercises would dissuade Liaoist aggression, but they have not. If anything, Liao has seen them as challenges that he must accept or face humiliation. His blind pursuit of the ludicrous dream of being the First Lord of a new Star League has made Maximilian Liao very dangerous, and I have taken steps to end his reign of terror..."

"...I cannot promise you a quick victory, not in the face of the hosts of evil and madness which surround us, which confront us at every turn. But victory I do promise you, victory as certain and as proud and as final as the heroism of the hosts of those who carry our banner forward against the foe. Victory may not come this month, or this year... but victory, I assure you, will come..."

Excerpts from the text of a prepared statement broadcast throughout the Federated Suns, August 21.



Commandant Linsey Trevellis:

"...the worlds they take will stay ours."

Commandant Linsey Trevellis

"Overall, of course, the 'Mech regiments of the Federated Suns outnumber Liao regiments only about 1.5 to 1, but this statistic is misleading. Many analysts forget that Federated Suns' Regimental Combat Teams consist of 1 'Mech regiment, 3 armor regiments, 5 infantry regiments, 1 artillery regiments and 2 aerofighter wings. Because the Galahad exercises have proven the feasibility of this combined arms approach to warfare, House Liao will be in for some difficulty, even under the best of circumstances."

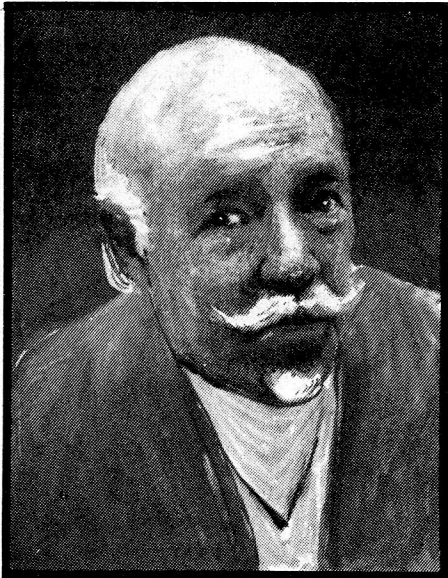
"I'm not running down the competence of the Capellan MechWarriors because, propaganda aside, they really are quite good. Unfortunately for them, House Liao has so many worlds to protect that their regiments are splintered and scattered in battalion strength throughout the Confederation. This means any battalion defending a planet will be outnumbered 3:1 in 'Mechs alone. Even if the local militia holds

off the infantry, artillery and armor, 3:1 odds are very bad for the force on the short end.

"When will our boys be home? They'll fight until we can't supply them anymore, but I have the feeling the worlds they take will stay ours. In other words, once we clear the defenders off a planet, our boys *will* be home."

Commandant Linsey Trevellis, head of the Sakhara Academy and former Colonel in the AFFS. Comments on the forces arrayed against each other, from an interview with BattleTechnology Staff Reporter, Josey Scott, on Sakhara, August 22.

Lyran Historian Thelos Auburn



Thelos Auburn, court historian:
"...it will remain hot for the next six months."

"As a historian, I would have to say that, in the short run anyway, things will go well for both the Lyran and Federal offensives. That they caught their enemies napping cannot be denied and, historically, the sort of momentum generated works well for the aggressor. Mind you, this is not a physical momentum as much as it is an emotional momentum. Victory demoralizes the enemy and convinces the attacker he is immortal. That the Prince has established a moral high ground upon which to base his attack is a good thing for political support in his home realm. Who can protest a preemptive strike against a dangerous enemy?"

"Within the Commonwealth, on the other hand, the Archon's strike against House Kurita has been met with mixed reactions. Many people welcome the assault, especially since the *Silver Eagle* affair has been exposed as an attempt to kidnap Melissa Arthur Steiner. In a brilliant move, the initial Lyran offensive has driven Draconan forces back from the border of the Isle of Skye. That should forestall any move that would add fuel to Duke Aldo Lestrade's independence movement, but a strike in his territory by the Dragon could cause political trouble for the Archon. Lestrade has already criticized the Archon, accusing her of selling out to Hanse Davion, but Melissa's presence at her mother's side, as opposed to being with her husband, has defused that bomb.

"How long the war? I should think it will remain hot for the next six months. After that, when things bog down, it will probably collapse into the smoldering abyss that swallowed the end of the Third Succession War."

Thelos Auburn, court historian of the Lyran Commonwealth, to a BattleTechnology reporter, August 22.

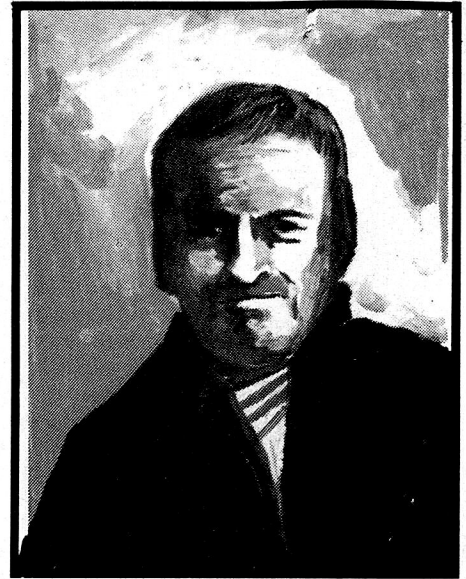
Duke Aldo Lestrade

"The Archon has clearly lost her mind. She's already sacrificed her daughter's future to appease Hanse Davion's rapacious appetite for possessions, and now she has the LCAF attack the Draconis Combine to keep the Dragon off Hanse Davion's back. We all know, despite the propaganda generated to justify the gross expenditures of the Galahad debacles, that massed assaults do not and cannot work. Certainly the AFFS will have some initial successes, but House Liao will rally and drive the invaders out. No one has the resources to sustain the sort of invasion it would take to wipe out the Capellan Confederation.

"...Am I concerned about a Draconis Combine counterstrike? Were I the Coordinator, I know I would seriously consider teaching the Archon a lesson. The Combine will withdraw, extending our lines, then their forces will fall on our troops and destroy them.

"We must face facts! This is going to be a long and bloody war..."

Duke Aldo Lestrade, speaking from his palace on Summer during an interview with BattleTechnology, August 25.



His Grace, Duke Aldo Lestrade:
"The Archon has clearly lost her mind."

Commandant Tai-Sho Jiro Iesu

"...You hear word of the war on both borders and you wonder where you will win your glory. Do not wonder, *know!* Your years here have instilled in you the knowledge and the skills needed for you to honor the Coordinator with your service. You are travelers who have reached one pinnacle only to find there is a yet higher mountain further on. This must be your new goal.

"We know that the Lyrans have made serious advances on the border, but whom did they face? The linchpin on that border was the 11th Legion of Vega! The Commonwealth claims a great victory, but we know the Legion was a collection of dishonorable buffoons who only dreamed of being True Warriors. Indeed, when Theodore Kurita—a prized graduate of this Academy—rallied the other two Vegan Regiments, the Lyrans slowed their advance.

"On the other border, our troops face mercenaries. Wolf's Dragoons are, after all, utterly without honor. They will be destroyed, crushed in our first mighty onslaught!

"Your decision, then is not one of how you will win glory, but how you will perpetuate a system of honor against forces that would destroy it. This is the struggle you face. Live or die, when you fight in this



Commandant Tai-Sho Jiro Iesu:
“...victory will be swift and complete!”

struggle, glory will be yours if you maintain your honor and serve the Dragon with each and every breath in your body.

“The glory is yours! Live with honor, and victory will be swift, clean, and complete!”

Tai-Sho Jiro Iesu, Commandant of the Sun Zhang Academy. Excerpts quoted from his address to the newly graduated class of cadets, August 26.

Precentor Villius Tejh

“War is a tragedy, an unthinkable waste of lives and of technology now irreplaceable. Yet, in a larger sense, perhaps even here, in the rack and ruin of total war, there may be found some comfort, some brightening of the darkness within the Night which consumes us. An army, any army, depends on technology to support it, to keep it going.

“You will find that the opening stages of this new war will proceed at a furious rate. There will be invasions, bombardments, words of vast movements of men and materiel from world to world. And yet, during these first few months of horror, DropShips will break down, JumpShips malfunction. Those without a full and proper appreciation of the glorious intricacies of Mechanism will

find that their blindness has led to that curse of modern life: malfunction!

“The pace of war will slow, then, as there are fewer ships to move the men and machines, fewer machines to fight the wars, fewer men to move the machines. Our vaunted technology is failing us, you see, for we have ignored the spirit which moves it.

“The war will not last long. It will be impossible to keep things going, don't you see? What is that feast the Christians celebrate... Christmas? Yes, I should say the war will be over by Christmas...”

His Most Exalted Ambassador, Villius Tejh, ComStar Precentor of Sian Station. From a press audience granted at Sian Station, August 20.



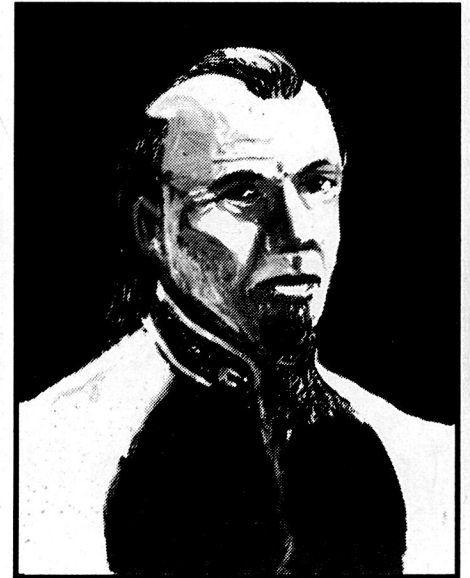
Precentor Villius Tejh:
“...the war will be over by Christmas.”

Chancellor Maximilian Liao

“So, this treacherous dog, Hanse Davion, releases his forces to rape, pillage and murder on our worlds! He considers this justifiable because, he says, we planned to attack him. Nothing could have been further from the truth. When have I *ever* been a force for anything but unity in the Successor States?

“Be heartened, my people, for these stories of Davion victories are just that, stories. They are tales with which to scare children or fools because they are not true.

Davion has made some aborted stabs at our holdings, but his forces are too confused to mount an organized attack. Hanse Davion's grand strategy only works in his mind, and not at all during those few lucid moments he has. We have seen it all before, especially in the Galtor campaign. How soon will it be until the Prince loses interest and allows his MechWarriors to flounder and die because of poor supplies and poorer planning?



Maximilian Liao, Chancellor of the Capellan Confederation:
“Then we will go fox hunting...”

“When will this war be over? The first half of it is stillborn... dead as we stand here speaking. As my forces throw the invaders back, Davion's troops will scurry back to their homes like frightened rabbits, unable to stand eye to eye with the fierce and indomitable will of the Capellan predator. Then will come our turn. Then we will go fox hunting and put an end to this madness once and for all!”

Excerpted from an address to reporters at the Chancellor's summer palace on Sian, August 23.

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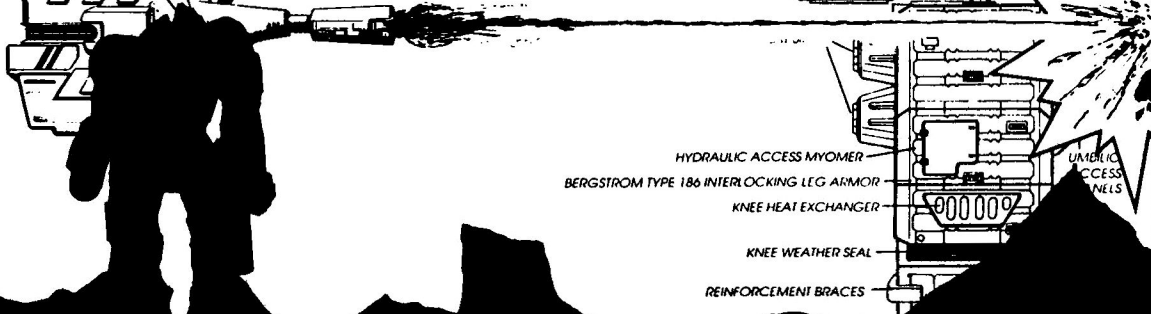
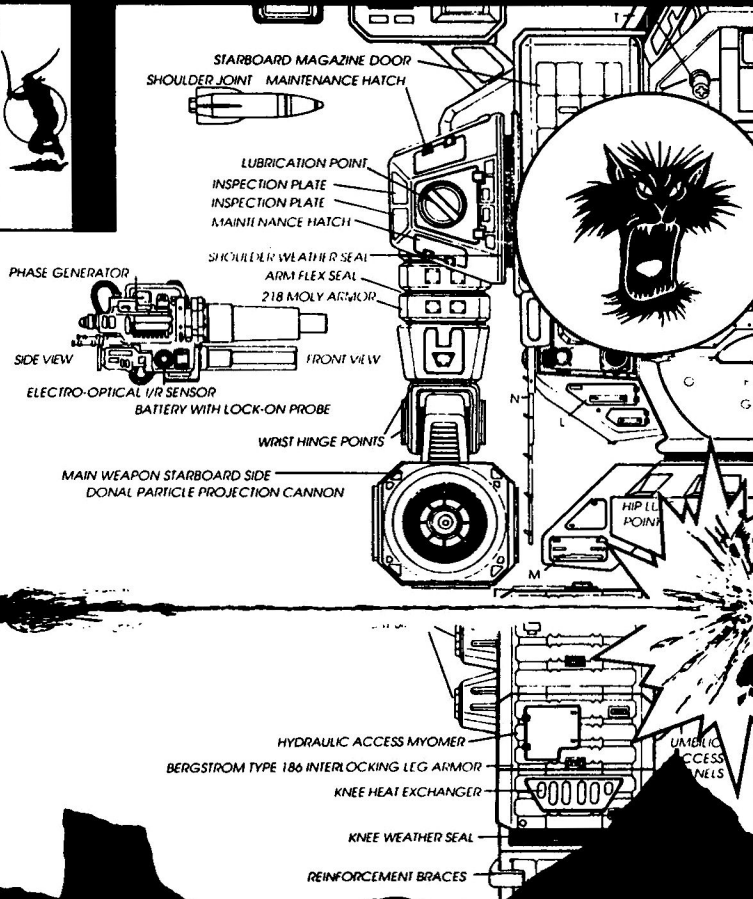
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Walkover

by Sergeant Simon Lascher

I knew something was up nearly three months ago. Sgt-Major Petrilli called B Company together for a briefing on our new training schedule and told us that all leave for the Eridani Light Horse were cancelled. New training routines aren't unusual, but losing leave time nearly caused a mutiny. The Eridani Light Horse is a crack unit, one of the best merc outfits going. My own regiment, the 71st Light Horse—better known as the White Horse—tends to think of itself as the best of the best, though the other two Eridani regiments would dispute that, of course.

But crack units need R&R, too, and the new regimen of training and drills wasn't leaving us with time enough to catch our breaths. Galahad, the brass said... we've got to be sharp for the Galahad summer exercises. We figured it was one hell of a note, training to get in shape for a training exercise.

Things got progressively worse, too, with inspection after inspection in full kit, maneuvers and deployment drill at any time of day or night, and class-A checks of every 'Mech and piece of equipment in the regiment. Then came the word: all passes are cancelled and standby for transport. Our orders were to proceed to Ampat Starport for transportation to our next duty assignment.

By that time, not one man in our entire outfit had any doubt that we were being sent into combat. We just didn't know where. We found out when Brevet General Armstrong himself made the announcement at a full dress inspection of the 71st at the spaceport.

"Gentlemen," he said, "you all know that I'm not much for long speeches, so I'll just say it straight out. The Davion-Steiner Alliance will be formalized with the wedding on Terra in one week. That marriage is going to make a lot of people very unhappy... from Takashi Kurita and Maximilian Liao on down.

"It's going to mean war.

"The specific reasons for the war don't concern us. We're soldiers, warriors, and we fight because that is what we are.

"The 71st Eridani Light Horse has been awarded the honor of spearheading the first offensive of this war. You will be fighting side by side with a regular Davion unit—the 3rd Guards. Your destination is the world of Algol, and you'll be facing the 1st Ariana Fusiliers.

"Your assignment, ladies and gentlemen, is especially important. The 71st will make an ablative drop onto the plains southwest of a city called Groffer's Toll. There's a starport there, an important one. Your orders are to take that port and hold it.

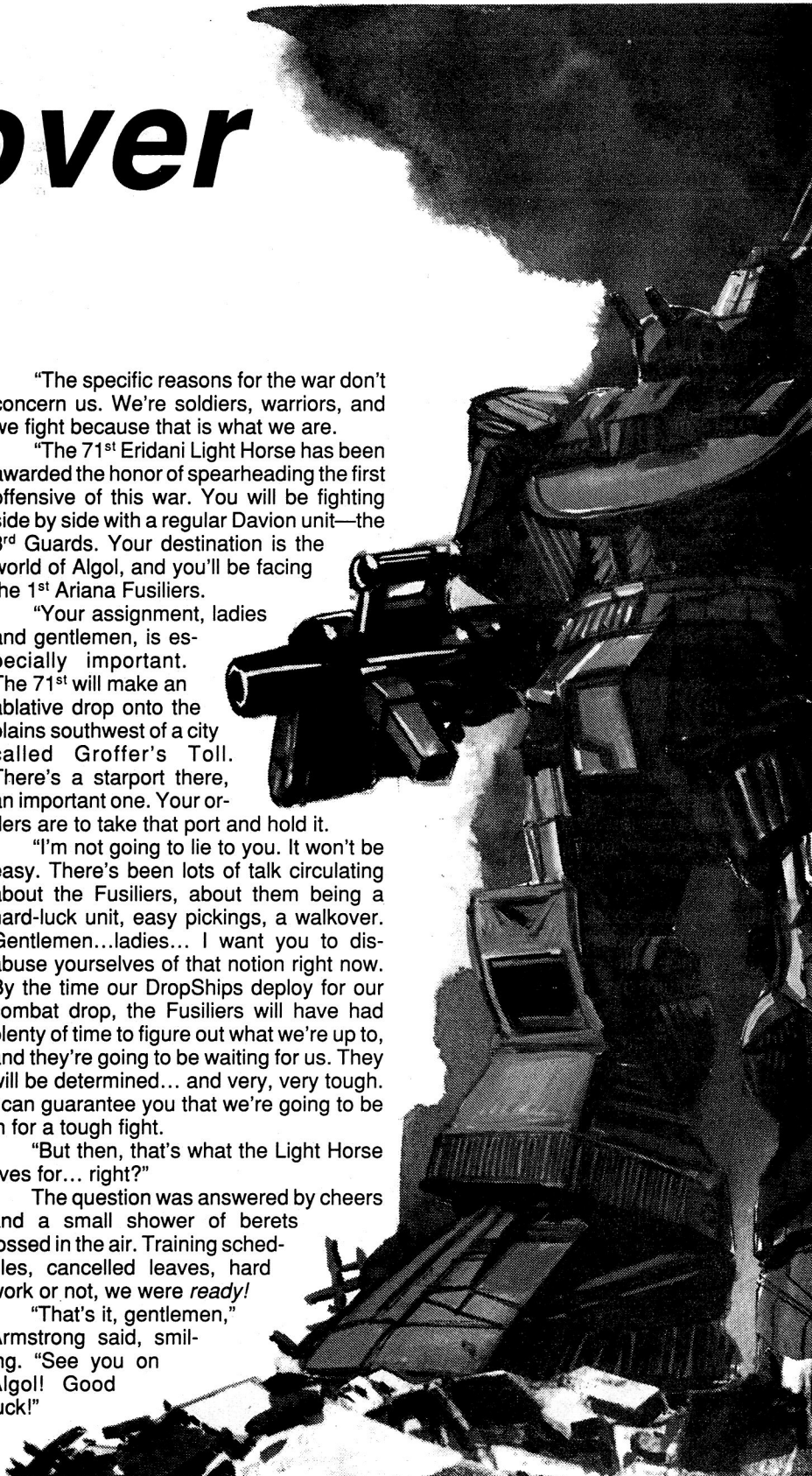
"I'm not going to lie to you. It won't be easy. There's been lots of talk circulating about the Fusiliers, about them being a hard-luck unit, easy pickings, a walkover. Gentlemen...ladies... I want you to disabuse yourselves of that notion right now. By the time our DropShips deploy for our combat drop, the Fusiliers will have had plenty of time to figure out what we're up to, and they're going to be waiting for us. They will be determined... and very, very tough. I can guarantee you that we're going to be in for a tough fight.

"But then, that's what the Light Horse lives for... right?"

The question was answered by cheers and a small shower of berets tossed in the air. Training schedules, cancelled leaves, hard work or not, we were *ready!*

"That's it, gentlemen,"

Armstrong said, smiling. "See you on Algol! Good luck!"



I had to admire old Armstrong's strategy. "Not much for speeches," huh? Yeah... right. I really liked the way he snuck that bit in about our opponents, the 1st Ariana Fusiliers.

You see, the 1st Fusiliers really is known as the Hard Luck Regiment. They've been up against Davion line units and mercenaries time after time, and time after time they've been pounded into scrap. My Granddaddy fought them on Mirach in '87, and the way he told it, they got hit six different times by six Davion units. By the time that scrap was done, they'd lost better than half of their people and scarcely had a 'Mech still standing.

No sooner had we been dismissed from formation than the rumors and stories started flying. Sure, the 1st Ariana was a hard-luck regiment, right enough. They'd been broken and reformed so many times they were brittle. Yeah... hit 'em again, and they'll shatter. Shatter, hell! They'll take one look at us and run screaming. Morale in the Light Horse was soaring by the time we boarded ship.

But I had to wonder about it. This push was big... real big. Hell, the Federated Suns had been at war for centuries, whatever the history books said about "First Succession War" and "Second Succession War" and "Third Succession War." It looked like this was going to be labeled the Fourth War, but

There was Paul Langley's *Vindicator*, still bearing the scars on its left torso from that scrape on Demeter. Jacob Engler's *Griffin* was partly disassembled as he and his techs worked to trace a short in its Delta Dart tracking array. Ted Cermac was standing in the open cockpit of his *Shadow Hawk*, joking with the crew chief on the scaffolding embracing the *Hawk's* neck. Good men, damn good men, all of them.

Below me, on the floor of the bay, technicians were unpacking and assembling the big ceramic and aluminum ablative capsules which would protect our 'Mechs as we dropped from orbit. As we dropped into history. How many of these brave men and women would still be alive and unharmed by this time tomorrow? Would I even live to see Algol's surface? So many questions ran through my mind, questions whose answers were as elusive as smoke on the wind.

Ask any soldier what the worst part of a battle is, and most will say the waiting. When that waiting must be done inside the bland world of an ablative capsule, it seems to last forever. I could imagine my comrades as they sat and thought or prayed or wept in the lonely confines of their cockpits. It may sound strange for a soldier to admit to such feelings as fear and sorrow, but soldiers are human beings with the same emotions as

pit. The cocoon, still hot from entry, split apart, leaving my 55-ton machine falling towards the ground like a gigantic sky-diver.

More fighters flashed past my 'Mech and those of my lance-mates. Off to my left, perhaps 300 meters away, I saw a fireball blossom where once was a Davion *Shadow Hawk*. Then another 'Mech died. A Liao fighter fell from the sky, trailing a long plume of smoke and fire.

At 1000 meters, I rolled my 'Mech upright and fired its landing jets.

"Too fast! Too fast!" my mind screamed as the ground rushed up to meet me. Six hundred meters... 400... 200... I landed with a bone-jarring crash, which I felt must surely have destroyed my 'Mech. As I scanned my 'Mech status display, I could taste blood in my mouth. I had bitten my tongue in the impact of the landing.

My MSD showed minor damage to my *Wolverine's* left foot. Otherwise, the big machine was unharmed. Glancing around, I saw Engler's *Griffin*, and Langley's *Vindicator*, but there was no sign of Cermac and his *Shadow Hawk*. Could one of the explosions have been his 'Mech? Or was he somewhere planet-side, thrown off course away from the DZ by the dog fights still raging above?

For that matter... where were we? This didn't look like any part of our original drop zone. Somehow, our lance had gotten scattered off the main drop. I keyed in on the Regimental Command Frequency and got a signal bounce from a command support ship orbiting over the DZ. We'd missed the DZ by ten clicks, the spaceport by twelve. We had some hiking ahead of us.

Unable to raise Cermac by radio or transponder, I formed up the surviving members of my lance and started for the spaceport. If we were to rejoin the 71st, it would have to be there.

Before we'd covered the first click, threat warnings flashed on my HUD. Coming in low, skimming the treetops, were a pair of H7 *Warrior* Attack helicopters. Engler's *Griffin* sent a salvo of long-range missiles burning toward the incoming hostiles, while Langley brought up his *Vindicator's* heavy PPC.

I raised my own subgun-shaped whirlwind autocannon and locked it onto the lead chopper. It is impossible to describe the weird half-human, half-mechanical sighing noise made by the whirlwind, but one you hear it, you never forget it. The sound still raises my hackles every time. White fire blazed into the enemy formation.

Most of Engler's missiles smashed into the twin co-axial rotors of the trailing *Warrior*, causing the 20-ton machine to blossom

"Hanse Davion was gunning for Max Liao, and he meant serious business."

the Light Horse had been fighting hard enough and often enough that there wasn't a one of us who thought we'd been at peace. But this Algol invasion was something extra special... and if the scuttlebutt was anything to go by, Algol was going to be just one of eight or ten systems hit all at once. A push? Try invasion... or all-out, bloody-minded offensive. Hanse Davion was gunning for Max Liao, and he meant serious business.

I did not doubt for one second that Max Liao and the 1st Ariana Fusiliers meant business, too. The Fusiliers, especially: they could read maps, they were combat veterans, and they were as brave and as determined and as stubborn as we were, whatever their luck had been in the past.

This was going to be a rough one. I stood in the 'Mech bay of our *Overlord*-class DropShip staring at the 'Mechs in my lance.

civilians. Heroes are often men who are just too scared or cold or tired to care anymore.

The DropMaster's voice crackled from my comlink. "Thirty seconds to Drop point. First string, stand by." Seconds crawled by, then the drop indicator on my *Wolverine's* panel flashed green and the gravel-voiced DropMaster called, "3... 2... 1... DROP!"

Suddenly, gut-wrenchingly, my *Wolverine* was plummeting towards the surface of the planet below. Unable to see, relying only on my senses and the radio traffic from our fighters, I imagined the swirling chaos outside my capsule as the defending ships fired on our descending forces, while our own aerospace support tried to keep them off us.

Soon even radio contact was lost, as entry heating ionized the air around my 'Mech. Then sunlight flooded into my cock-

flame, then arc over in a twisting, splintering fall which carried it behind the swell of a low hill. My AC burst struck home on the lead helicopter, making the VTOL lurch sideways.

Fire flashed from the surviving gunship's nose and flared from its stubby wings. Three short-range missiles hammered my *Wolverine*, while 30 mm hyper-velocity rounds chewed up the ground around me. Langley fired his particle cannon. The man-made lighting slagged the aircraft's armor and burned into its airframe. The *Warrior's* engine cowling shattered as the VTOL was engulfed in flame.

Engler had his rifle-like Fusigon particle cannon at the ready and was scanning the horizon for any sign of the line defenders.

"You OK, Sarge?" Langley asked.

"Yeah, Paul. I'm fine. I took some damage to my left torso and arm, but my armor's still intact. Are you guys all right?"

"No damage here, Sarge," was Langley's reply.

"I'm intact, too," Engler said.

"All right." I studied my tac readouts, assessing the data unfolding on the computer imaged map display. "Listen up. We're late for our rendezvous, and we're off target. We've got some travelling to do, so we'd better get moving. Langley, you take point. Make your best speed, but don't get too far ahead. I make our destination at 073° and about 12 clicks. Keep your eyes open, boys. We're a long way from Groffer's Toll, and I'd rather not get my actuators shot off trying to get there."

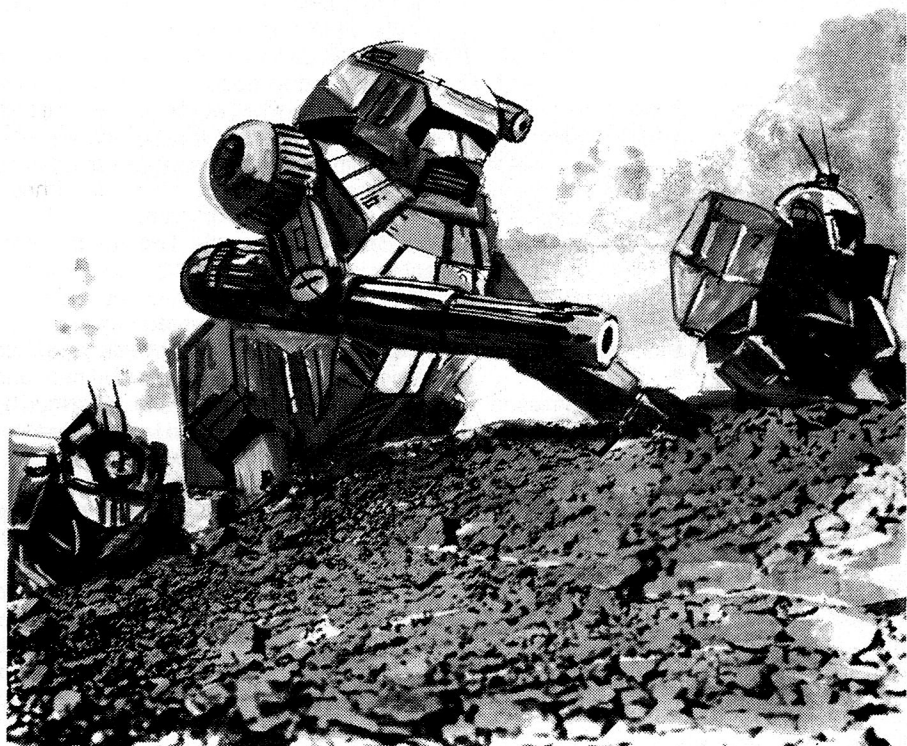
Now, twelve kilometers doesn't seem like much—especially when you're talking about a machine which can cover nearly any terrain at better than 60 kph. But when you're in unfamiliar, enemy-held territory, twelve clicks can seem like 800. It took us nearly half an hour to cover that short distance. We could see the fight before we reached it. A pall of murky smoke was spreading across the sky from just beyond a low, rugged ridgeline.

"Okay, boys," I addressed my lance as I studied my battlemap display. "Groffer's Toll Spaceport ought to be right on the other side of that ridge. Langley, hustle up there and take a look-see."

The young 'MechWarrior moved his 45-ton 'Mech up the hill, dodging from cover to cover as lightly as any infantryman.

"Sarge, Jacob, get up here!" Langley screamed over the comlink, his voice tinged with fear.

Without a moment's hesitation, I started pounding up the slight incline as fast as my *Wolverine* could go, with Engler's



Griffin right on my heels. As I topped the rise, I caught sight of what had thrown Langley into such a panic. Below us was the spaceport, a sprawl of dingy buildings and acres of tarmac, stretching out clear across the floor of a low, bowl-shaped valley. There were ships, aged merchanters, most of them, but nothing that looked military. The smoke was coming from junked 'Mechs scattered across the tarmac.

It was as wild a melee as I'd ever seen, 'Mech against 'Mech in pounding, slashing, burning, up-close combat that was claiming more casualties on both sides with every passing minute. The numbers looked about even, but it was impossible to tell through the swirl of battle machines and smoke and rising dust.

Langley began to raise his PPC. I stopped him.

"Hold it a second, Paul." It looked to me as though our boys had snapped an ambush on the Liao 'Mechs. Despite the confusion and the smoke, I could see the regimental colors of the 1st Ariana on more of the 'Mechs crowded towards the center of that mess, with Eridani Light Horse 'Mechs closing in from three sides.

The fourth was to the east of the spaceport, near a broad defile through a ridgeline. The Liao 'Mechs must have come through there, spread across the spaceport tarmac, then been hit by an Eridani counterattack.

If things got tough for the Liao 'Mechs, that defile would be their line of retreat.

"Let's back down the hill," I said. "We'll circle around to the north, and hit 'em from behind."

Moving as quickly as we dared, the three of us backed off until we were out of sight of the brawling 'Mechs. I knew that if we were going to turn the tide of the battle, we could waste no time.

Our quarter circle took us about half a klick north and a full klick east. The defile would be guarded, I was pretty sure. The Liao forces wouldn't want anyone sneaking up on them from the rear. We came down the pass in wedge formation, with Langley in the center, and Engler and me to left and right. As we neared the opening of the pass, we could see a pair of heavy 'Mechs, a tall *Crusader* and the odd, nearly headless shape of a *Thunderbolt*.

The odds weren't real good. We had the advantage in numbers—3 to 2—but the tonnage was almost even. My *Wolverine* already carried some damage and I'd expended A/C munitions in the fight with the *Warriors*, while these two guarding the pass looked fresh. Those heavies could absorb a lot more damage than our mediums. Our one hope was to take them by surprise.

"Get in as close as you can before you open up," I instructed my team. "Paul, you take the *Crusader*. Jacob, you and I will hit

the *Thunderbolt*. Make your first shots count, boys, we may not get many more."

At my signal, we started forwards at top speed. I watched the range finder ticking off the distance to the target.

"Don't turn around," I said aloud, as though to the Liao 'Mechs. "Don't turn around. Just stay there, and don't turn around."

I'd hoped we could close to within the 270-meter effective range of our medium lasers and short-range missiles, but luck was against us there. The range finder had just flashed up 360 meters when another Liao 'Mech entered the pass.

Curse the luck! It was a 50-tonner, a *Trebuchet*. Its pilot must have shouted warning when he saw us, because the two heavies turned then, tracking our approach. The *Treb* lifted its right arm, aiming its wrist-mounted Zeus long-range missile pack at us.

"Fire!" I yelled. "Fire!"

Simultaneously, two particle streams and a burst of autocannon fire clawed out at the Liao 'Mech. At the same instant, the Capellan pilot fired both the wrist-mounted missiles and the identical pack mounted in the *Trebuchet's* left torso.

Smoke, fire, and flying rock obscured my view of the target, as all three of our shots went wide, leaving the Liao 'Mech untouched. One of his missile volleys flew over our heads, detonating along the valley behind us. The other flight showered Paul Langley's *Vindicator* with dirt and shrapnel,

but a few must have found their way to his 'Mech.

"I'm hit," Langley yelled. "It's not too bad, but he perforated my torso armor. Wait a minute... Dammit! He took out my LRMs!"

"Boss, I think we really stepped in it this time," Engler called.

"Shut up and fight!"

The *Thunderbolt* cut loose with all three of its torso-mounted lasers. I weaved left, returning fire. Engler raised his *Griffin's* PPC and sent a bolt sizzling into the *T-bolt's* left arm, then followed it up with a cluster of long-range missiles. Langley triggered his own PPC at the "trench-bucket" and then launched his *Vindicator* into a lumbering charge. I cut loose with my *Wolverine's* autocannon, spewing 50 mm armor-piercing explosive rounds into the Capellan 'Mech's legs.

Langley was trying to close to within 180 meters of the *Trebuchet*, where he would have the advantage of being inside the "dead-zone" of the Liao's LRM systems. Engler and I could only position our 'Mechs far apart so that the *T-bolt* could only target one of us at a time. After raking the 65-ton monster with more AC fire, I urged my 'Mech into a ponderous run. At that range, I was at a severe disadvantage. Neither my SRM rack nor my medium lasers could effectively lock onto a target at greater than 270 meters, and without that added firepower, we would be hard-pressed to destroy the Capellan *Thunderbolt*.

The crash-crash-crash of LRM fire thundered across the valley. I chanced a look and saw Paul Langley's *Vindicator* down, gouges chewed across his right arm and side. He had his 'Mech levered up on its left arm and was trading shot for shot with the *Crusader* with his PPC.

The damage to Paul's 'Mech looked bad, but I couldn't help him. A trio of bright flashes lit the *Thunderbolt's* left torso, as the Liao pilot fired his medium lasers again. One shot burned into my *Wolverine's* right leg, another its already savaged left arm. The third scorched into the ground beside me. My return fire went wild, sending gouts of earth geysering into the air.

When the big 'Mech pivoted to fire at me, it turned away from Engler's *Griffin*. My comrade's PPC shot burned a hole into the *Thunderbolt's* right arm, while his full complement of missiles hammered the Capellan's right leg and torso.

A shattering explosion blasted smoke and flame and debris into the sky, sending twisted chunks of metal rattling against my armor like machinegun fire. The explosion was followed by another, deep-throated and rumbling, and the blast wave knocked my *Wolverine* to its knees.

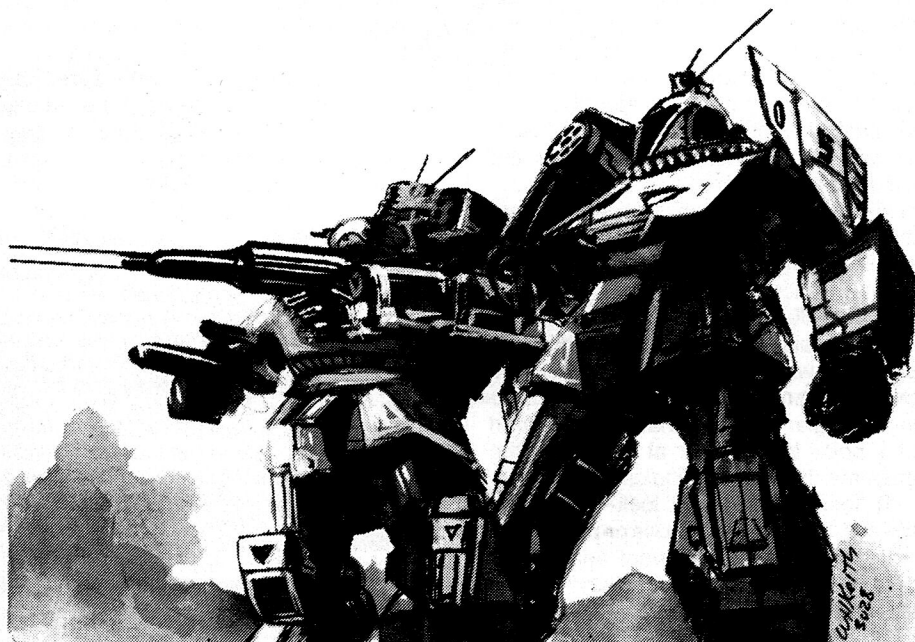
"God Almighty..." Engler said over the comlink. His missiles had found a weak spot in the *T-bolt's* armor and detonated its SRM ammunition. The big 'Mech was a wreck now, gutted by the blast and burning furiously.

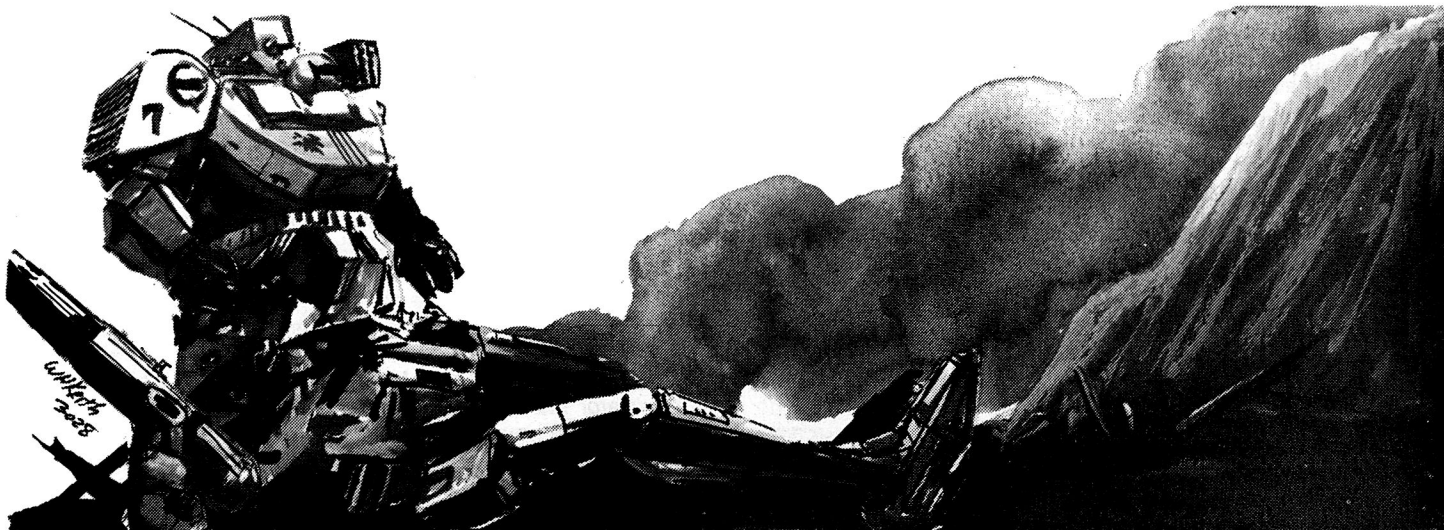
I had my 'Mech on its feet, intending to aid Langley.

Too late. The battle—our part of it, at least—was over. The Liao *Trebuchet* lay on its side, a smoking ruin where its left leg used to be, and a gaping hole in its torso. But Paul's *Vindicator* was sprawled in the dirt, most of its head and right shoulder missing. Wires and coolant conduits spilled from the hole, and oily smoke was adding to the inky overcast of battle smearing the heavens. We found out later from his on-board recorder that his LRM stores had blown at almost the same instant as the *Thunderbolt*. His 'Mech had overheated and he'd been unable to override or damp down. He should have been able to eject, but he hadn't. Maybe the *Crusader* was pushing too close... maybe he hadn't noticed in the excitement. Who knows?

Just damn bad luck...

The *Crusader* had pulled back towards the main battle, unwilling to face odds of two-to-one. Engler and I charged out onto the tarmac, to find the Capellan 'Mechs were already crowding back away from the valley's mouth.





"Lascher, where the devil have you people been?" our company commander yelled over the comlink. "What the hell are you doing way over there?"

"Sorry, Sir." I was too tired to explain. "We just got a little lost, that's all."

"Better late than never, I suppose," he grumbled. Static from a PPC blast hissed in my helmet phones, cutting the conversation for a second or two. "Join in!" he said when the air was clear. "There's still one hell of a plenty to do!" He clicked over to the general frequency. "Attention! The 71st will advance, open line! B Company... front rank, oblique left! Hype!"

Plenty to do was right. Our arrival had plugged the hole in the Liao rear... and I guess our arrival had convinced them they were surrounded. The Hard Luck Regiment had its backs to the wall now, cut off, surrounded... and dying as 'Mech after 'Mech crashed into fiery ruin. The Eridani Light Horse surged forward from all sides, squeezing them together into the junkyard tangle at the center of the spacefield tarmac.

It took five, bloody hours of slaughter and heat and dying to finish the fight for Groffer's Toll. Not many of the Ariana people broke through our lines... and fewer still got out with their 'Mechs intact. The press called it an easy victory. They said we suffered only light casualties, that securing that spaceport was a stroke of tactical genius, striking where the enemy was weakest. To hear them talk, the battle was a foregone conclusion... a walk-over. After all, Groffer's Toll pitted the Eridani Light Horse against the Hard Luck Regiment itself, right?

Hell, I was there, and I can tell you that the victory had little enough to do with luck. The Light Horse had suckered them deliberately, bypassing their positions when a scattered drop caught them looking in the wrong direction. The Light Horse made straight for the spaceport instead of the Capellan rear. The Fusiliers regrouped and came on hell-for-leather... straight into an ambush set by our tanks and infantry. They were already hurting by the time they reached the spaceport and found it deserted. Our boys had circled around, redeployed... then hit them just when they thought they'd chased us off. My lance had arrived on the scene just after the Eridani Light Horse hit them.

Walk-over? Hah! Ask Ted Cermac. They found the ruin of his 'Mech after the fight, scattered across a couple of square kilometers near our Drop Zone. Ask Paul Langley. We salvaged his 'Mech, but there wasn't enough left of him to identify, much less bury. My lance had been cut in half... and that's 50% casualties whatever the news media might say.

Ask the pilots of that *Trebuchet* or that *T-bolt*, dead in the burned-out wreckage of their BattleMechs. They gave everything they had to hold open a line of retreat for their comrades, and died in the giving. I don't hold Paul's death against them. They fought and we fought, and we shared the luck... good and bad. At that, it was a close thing. If Engler's missiles hadn't penetrated that *T-bolt's* torso armor at just about the same time that Paul's *Vindicator* blew...

It seems to me that luck—good and bad—was favoring both sides pretty evenly. But if the final measure went against the Fusiliers, it wasn't because they were a walk-over!

"Form up, people," the Captain said. We'd come through pretty well, all in all. Eight of the company's 'Mechs were still reporting for duty, and five of them weren't even too badly shot up. In the distance, other 'Mechs of the Light Horse were already picking through the ruins, marking wrecks for salvage and checking for traps. Way off to the north we could hear the rumbling thunder of heavy fighting going on somewhere over the horizon.

Exhaustion dragged at me. After five hours of fighting, it was hard to realize that I was still alive.

"Form up!" the Captain repeated. "C'mon! Look like soldiers! We've got a war to win!"

A war to win. I looked over the field of ruined machines and shattered lives and wondered if any of us would live to see that victory.

If the 1st Ariana Fusiliers had been a hard luck regiment, I didn't want to run into any Capellan units which considered themselves to be lucky!

Mech Sergeant Simon Lascher is, at last report, still on Algol with the 71st Light Horse Regiment. After suffering only light losses in the fighting around Groffer's Toll, the unit rejoined the rest of the Eridani Light Horse near Kollasa and entered a period of refit and reorganization.

Indications are that, after several pitched battles, the 1st and 2nd battalions of the Ariana Fusiliers have largely ceased to exist, while the 3rd battalion was able to withdraw off-world intact. The Eridani Light Horse, after the arrival of regimental reserves, declared itself fit for combat. Rumors abound regarding their next target, but it seems certain that they will shortly be engaged with the enemy once again.

Only time will tell whether their good luck will hold.

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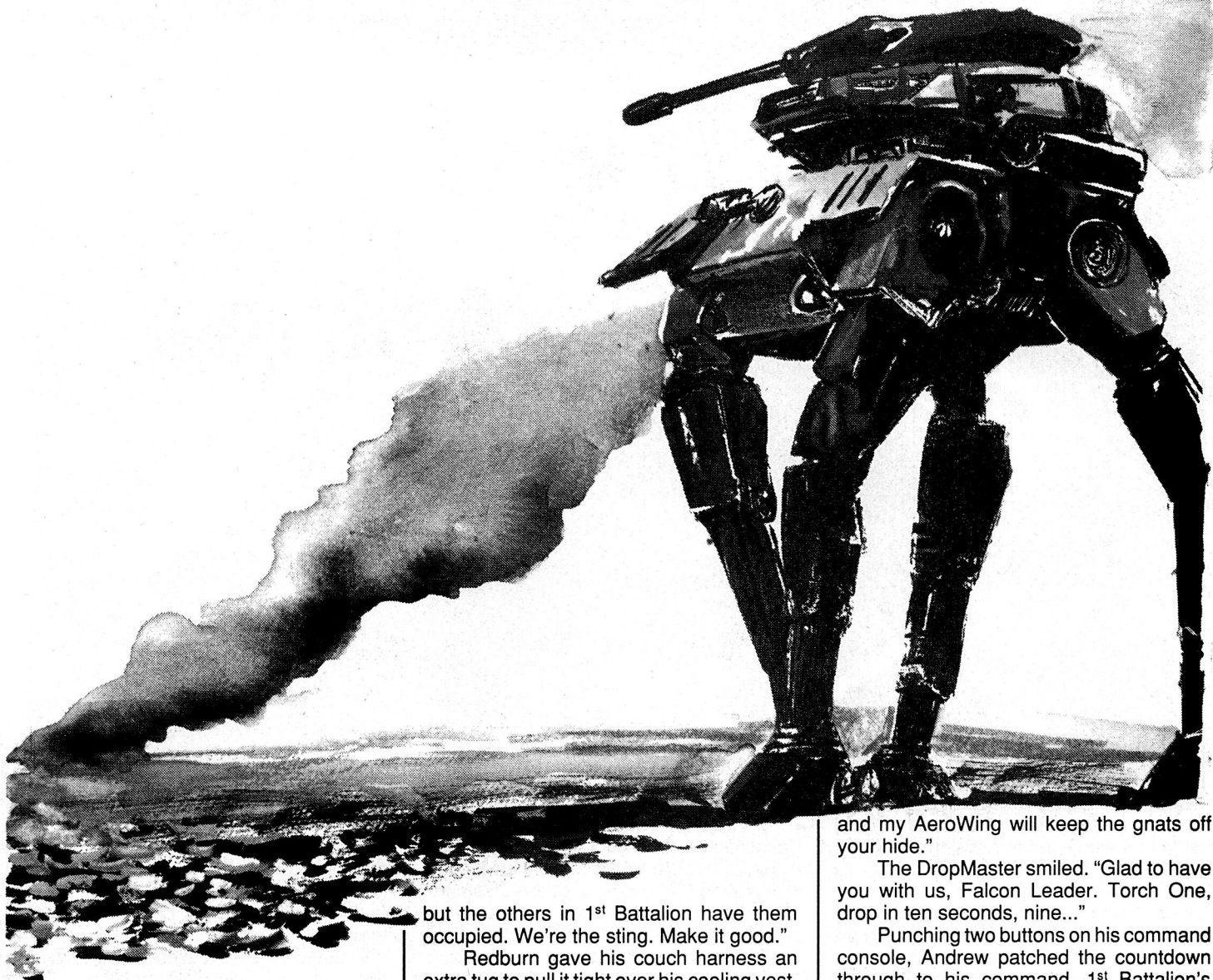
Goliaths on St. Andre



On August 20, 3028, the 1st Battalion of the Davion Light Guards touched down near a heavily guarded archaeological site in the middle of the desolation of St. Andre's Ivaar Wastes. (see: Davids meet Goliaths on St. Andre's Rocky Plains on page 9 of this issue of BattleTechnology.) The order of battle on the drop included a scratch training unit—actually a double-strength company—known as Delta Company.

Correspondent Mike Stackpole, on assignment for BattleTechnology with the Light Guards, managed to transmit the following manuscript off-world shortly after the fight. The story, told in the third person, is intended as one chapter in a full-length book describing the course of the war so far, which is due to be released by FASA this fall.

As an eye-witness report of the fierce fighting occurring on St. Andre during the opening hours of the invasion, the editors felt that BattleTechnology's readers might find the account of interest.



A missile exploding against the DropShip's hull shot static through the auxiliary monitor's picture of the DropMaster. The woman turned from the camera, then looked back at Andrew Redburn. "No sweat, Redburn, they just flamed that bird." She glanced at the time at the bottom of the screen. "Mark, one minute until drop. We're hot so your children better have their brakes on."

Redburn nodded. "Roger." He reached out and switched his radio over to the tactical frequency. "Fifty seconds to drop, campers. This is the real thing. Archer and Demon Lances will harass the targets—Bullseye, Cat and Fox Lances go in. Hit your jets when clear of the egg. Remember, we'll be facing 'Mechs lots bigger than we are,

but the others in 1st Battalion have them occupied. We're the sting. Make it good."

Redburn gave his couch harness an extra tug to pull it tight over his cooling vest. *Sending an assault lance of light 'Mechs against Assault 'Mechs? The intelligence on these Goliaths'd better be right or this Firestarter they've got me in will be my coffin.* Stinging sweat dripped down into eyes as he waited for the seconds to tick off the digital display on his monitor.

Redburn felt two more explosions rock the *Overlord*-class DropShip *Firewalker*. *I hope like hell this baby makes it to the drop zone.* Above him he heard the deep throaty roar of the ship's autocannons as they spat clouds of metal back out at the Liao fighters swarming around the ship. He switched his radio back to speak with the DropMaster and caught the piece of a transmission heading for her.

"Roger, *Firewalker*, we copy. Intercept in 15 seconds. You sow the dragon's-teeth

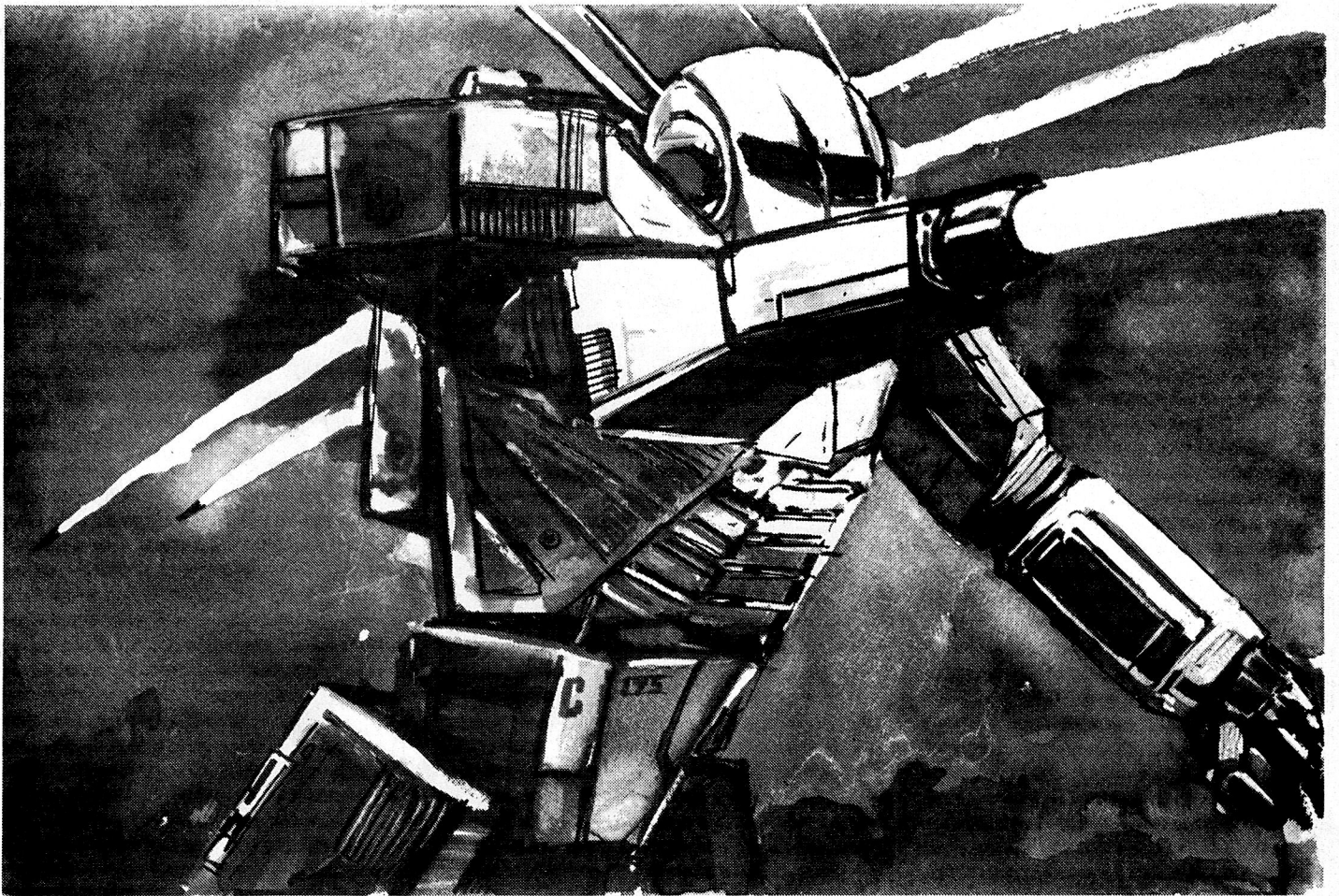
and my AeroWing will keep the gnats off your hide."

The DropMaster smiled. "Glad to have you with us, Falcon Leader. Torch One, drop in ten seconds, nine..."

Punching two buttons on his command console, Andrew patched the countdown through to his command, 1st Battalion's Delta Company. "Because you and your people appear on no official rosters, Captain Redburn, you'll be our little surprise," he recalled Colonel Stone remarking as the *Firewalker* hurled in-system from the sun's nadir JumpPoint. "The 1st and 2nd Battalions will draw Cochraine's Goliaths out and you'll goose them."

A series of sharp metallic rasps and clanks thundered through the *Firestarter's* cockpit as the drophatches irised open. Redburn's stomach lurched as if left behind as the 35-ton *Firestarter* fell from the DropShip. Suddenly the familiar thrum of engines and other comforting sounds of the DropShip evaporated into the windy quiet of a drop.

Sensory input from a thousand sources flooded into Redburn's cockpit, but



Redburn sorted it out with a single-mindedness and surety that ignored the fear he'd felt waiting for the drop. His brown eyes flashed on the altimeter, coaxing a harsh growl from his throat. "Low drop, Delta. Burn hard, now." Following his own command, Redburn pushed hard on his foot pedals, igniting the JumpJets on the *Firestarter's* back. He eased up on the left pedal for a half second, letting the right jet twist him toward the battlefield.

My God, it's a hellground. Redburn shivered as he surveyed the frozen red desert landscape. The wide, virtually featureless plain stretched out as far as he could see in all directions, except where the thick, black smoke of burning 'Mech's cut off his view. *This place is a desert because it gets so little rainfall during the year, but this high up means it stays cold.* He glanced at his external thermometer. *Zero Celsius. Damned cold.*

Opposite where his command jetted to the ground, the Davion Light Guards' 1st Battalion had arrayed themselves in a staggered formation that had engaged the Liao

Battalion at a distance. Long range missile exchanges had pockmarked the landscape with cratered reminders of poor marksmanship. Burning 'Mechs of various sizes and allegiances, or scraps thereof, decorated the battlefield as reminders of war machine efficacy.

Redburn shivered unconsciously. *Something is very wrong here. Our lines are pushed too far back!* "Eagle, how's your vantage point?"

Leftenant Craon's voice crackled with nervousness. "Not so good. I don't see 2nd Battalion."

Redburn swallowed hard. "Neither do I." Redburn studied the tactical display on his auxiliary monitor. It showed elements he identified as 1st Battalion withdrawing toward some low hill formations to the south. *1st Battalion's speed will beat that of the Goliaths, but running keeps our 'Mechs at the Goliaths' optimum range. Most of 1st Battalion's 'Mechs can't fight at that range. Where the hell is 2nd Battalion?*

Archie St. Agnan's voice cut into Redburn's neurohelmet. "My sensors have

picked up Colonel Stone's identifier still with our troops. Wait, I have a transmission from him..."

Andrew licked his dry lips. "Patch it through."

Static crackled and popped loudly, half obscuring the faint transmission. "Delta, pull out. 2nd Battalion aborted landing. Liao air cover is too heavy. The *Goliaths* will eat your recruits up..."

That's Stone, all right. Andrew keyed his throat mike. "Did you all get that?"

Drew Montbard replied strongly. "We copied, Captain. I vote we go in."

"This isn't a democracy, Drew." Andrew summoned a technical readout on the *Goliath* assault 'Mechs to his primary monitor. *Two LRM launchers, but those four-legged monsters should be out of missiles by now. That leaves them their particle projection cannons. If we get in close enough, those won't be worth spit. We're at double strength for a company.*

Andrew nodded solemnly. "Archie, don't acknowledge the transmission, we never got it. Ground 'em now, troops, land in

that wash over to the south. Hit top speed, use the wash for cover and come in from behind. If they want to court martial us for disobeying orders, they'll have to let us win this fight first, won't they?"

The massive quadruped *Goliaths* looked very much like conventional tanks sprouting a leg at each corner of their boxy chassis. Their low, flat turrets swiveled side to side as if the PPC's muzzle spied out targets before it blasted them into oblivion. Forty feet high, they stood a third again as tall as any of the light 'Mechs opposing them and, a solid line of mechanized war elephants, they drove their fleeing enemies before them.

Andrew Redburn narrowed his eyes as he settled the targeting crosshairs for his *Firestarter's* twin arm-mounted medium lasers. *Just as they said at Warriors' Hall on New Syrtis: every 'Mech has two flaws. One is the designer who believes he's created an invincible machine, and the other is the pilot who believes the designer.* "Archer and Demon Lances, let fly!"

The two *Valkyrie* lances released their flights of LRMs while the other three Delta lances raced in beneath the missile umbrella. As the missiles arced overhead, ten ruby shafts of medium laser fire flashed forward like arrows at two of the *Goliaths*. The laser slashed long, deep gashes in the giant 'Mechs' armor and the incoming missiles gnawed at the holes like maggots feasting on open wounds.

The two rearmost *Goliaths* shuddered. Missiles blasted chunks of aft armor from both 'Mechs' torsos in a fiery rain of debris. Andrew saw explosions carry further into the *Goliaths'* hearts. Subsidiary explosions wracked both, and a flash of white light on Andrew's infrared display told him the 'Mech on the right had lost some of the shielding surrounding its fusion engine.

Both 'Mechs' pilots, reacting to the assault from the rear, tried to turn their cumbersome BattleMechs to face the threat, but Delta Company's initial attack had damaged them far more badly than they realized. As the war machines began to come about, their legs, no longer coordinated because their gyrostabilizers had been destroyed, splayed out, sending each machine crashing to the ground.

Redburn fought the earthquake-like tremor triggered when the 80-ton monsters slammed into the earth. *Hope our luck holds and Stone can rally his forces.* "Move it, Delta. We're here."

Staying out at range, yet moving to make themselves as hard as possible to hit, the *Valkyries* of Archer and Demon Lances concentrated their missile and laser fire on

carefully chosen targets. Bullseye, Cat and Fox Lances, consisting of light 'Mechs designed for close-in combat, streamed into the midst of the Liao force like wolves herding cattle. Working in close concert, each lance picked out a target, then took it apart.

Fox Lance, led by Hugh de Payens in a *Firestarter*, attacked the first *Goliath* to complete the turn and engage Delta Company head on. As Hugh closed, two of his three flamers bathed the large 'Mech with orange fire. The *Goliath* pilot cranked his PPC muzzle down, releasing a savage bolt of blue lighting. It stabbed the left side of the *Firestarter's* chest. Armor peeled off like butter rolling up before a knife, but it failed to fully breach the *Firestarter's* armor.

Hugh's lancemates swept in beneath the PPC's azure beam. The three ungainly, birdlike *Jenners* released flights of Short Range Missiles that spiraled out at their massive target. Brilliant explosions blossomed over the *Goliath's* torso and two of the SRMs pierced the 'Mech's chest armor to sow havoc in its heart. Black smoke began to pour from the hole indicating damage to the engine shielding.

The *Jenners* and both *Firestarters* of Fox Lance raked the *Goliath* with relentless laser fire. Ruby beams shredded armor on the left legs of the mech. Through the ragged holes Andrew saw the massive, corded

twisting column of fire evaporated into dark, greasy smoke, it spat glowing, half-melted shards of ceramic armor to the frozen ground.

The *Goliath's* pilot valiantly fought to bring his machine around, but Cat Lance gave him no quarter. Even as the PPC's muzzle tried to find a target, the *Jenners* fired their wing-mounted lasers. Like surgeons in a field hospital, they concentrated on the *Goliath's* obvious injury.

Andrew dropped his targeting crosshairs on the *Goliath's* weakened forelimb. His lasers stabbed out in concert with those of Cat Lance. The scarlet beams vaporized what little armor remained on the leg, then cut up into the *Goliath's* shoulder. In a fount of burning metal fragments, the joint melted and the left leg slipped. The *Goliath* tottered to the left, then the limb snapped off, spinning the *Goliath* to the ground. The assault 'Mech completed half a somersault, crushing the cockpit, then fell back on its wounded flank.

Andrew pivoted his *Firestarter* back to his left as a searingly white fireball shot from the holes in another *Goliath's* right flank. Andrew watched as the miniature sun, born in the 'Mech's fusion engine but freed by the mauling given the *Goliath* by Bullseye Lance and Lieutenant Craon, sent superheated plasma tendrils throughout the 'Mech's body. Like a DropShip blasting off

"The *Goliath* pilot cranked his PPC muzzle down, releasing a savage bolt of blue lighting."

myomer fibers that made up the artificial muscles driving the *Goliath*. *One more barrage and that 'Mech is done.*

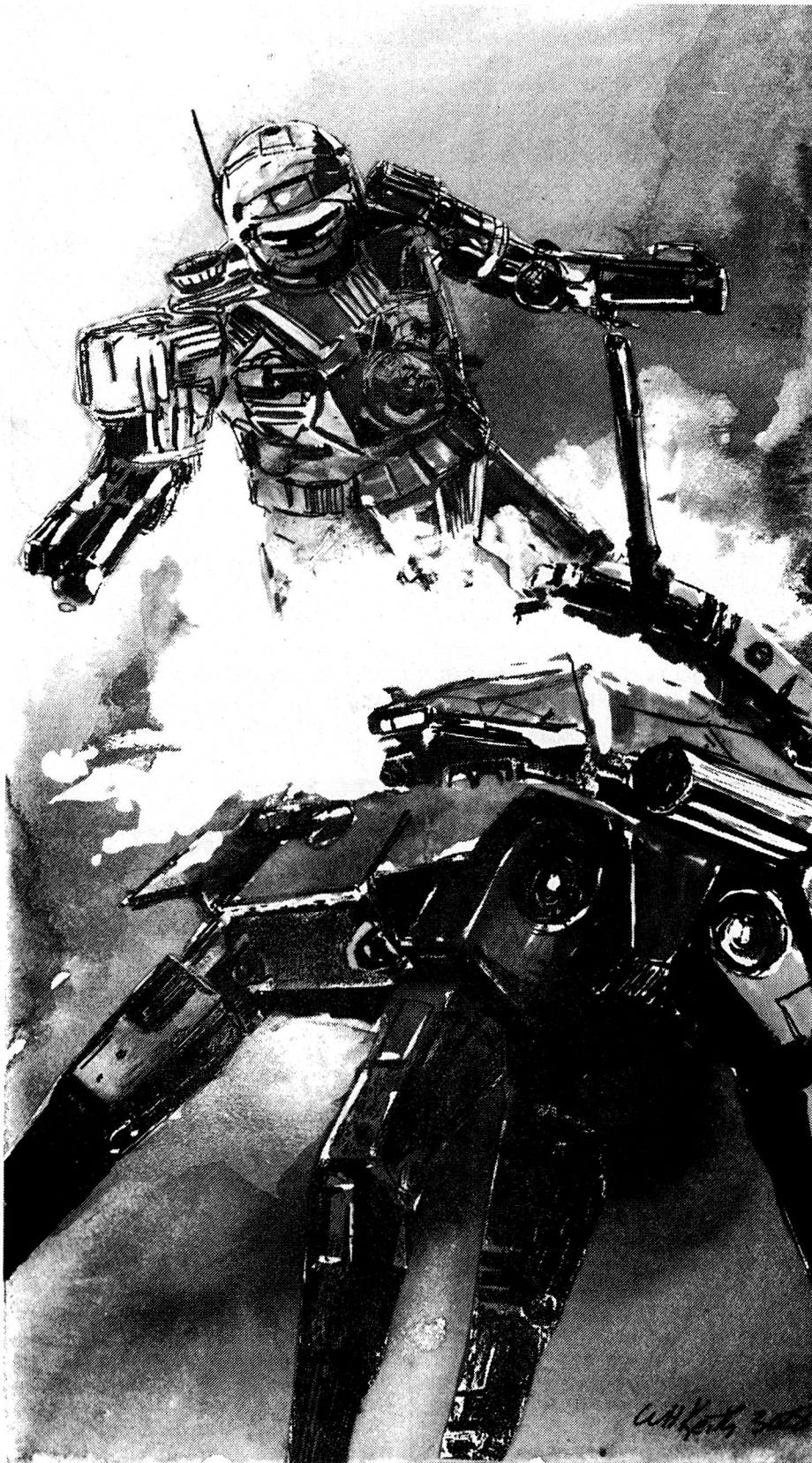
Andrew turned his attention to the *Goliath* just forward of his position. It had begun to turn in an attempt to attack Delta Company, but all it had managed to do was expose its left flank to Cat Lance. Without a second thought, Geoffrey St. Omer and his MechWarriors made the most of the opportunity.

The two humanoid *Javelins* launched two dozen SRMs at the ponderous Assault 'Mech. The missiles, augmented by another dozen SRMs from the lance's three *Jenners*, peppered the 'Mech's left flank and long legs. They spawned a fire-torrent whirling around the *Goliath's* left foreleg. As the

for the stars, the *Goliath's* turret shot into the air on an argent jet, then exploded into a million smoking scraps.

Poor bastard, never got out. Andrew shivered in sympathy for the Liao pilot, then glanced at the tactical display on his auxiliary monitor. *Four Goliaths down and three badly hurt.* "Keep their own 'Mechs between you and those with enough range to use their PPCs. Stay close!"

Suddenly a spiral of oily smoke dissipated, leaving Redburn a clear view of a *Goliath* in the middle of the Liao formation. Riding just above the stylized white castle that marked the 'Mech as belonging to Cochraine's *Goliaths*, Andrew thought he saw an insignia. He punched a order for magnification into his command console.



The holographic display refocused closer, showing the sunlight glinting sharply from the bronze triangle boldly emblazoned on the 'Mech.

Typing hurriedly on his command console's keypad, Andrew labeled the 'Mech's image with digital ID tag, then sent the information out to his command. "Archer and Demon Lances, that's Colonel Fiona Cochraine. Hit that *Goliath* with everything!"

At his command the two lances unleashed a hundred LRMs at the Liao commander's *Goliath*. Explosions saturated the *Goliath*, flaying ribbons of ceramic armor from its surface. One flight wreathed the turret in flames and crumpled previously unmarred slabs of armor. The *Goliath* staggered as the pilot fought against the detonation's shockwave. Smoke poured from hole in the 'Mech's chest.

With the range and hurried timing of the assault, the accuracy of the long range lances' laser fire suffered. Somehow, though, the shots that did hit the target made up in quality for the deficiencies of the other attacks. One beam carved more armor from the *Goliath's* chest, leaving it a pitifully small amount of protection against future assaults. Most important, one coruscating beam stabbed straight through the *Goliath's* head.

Andrew saw the *Goliath* shudder. It wavered and, for a moment, Andrew imagined the laser had hit the cockpit, killing the pilot, but the 'Mech's continued activity dashed his hopes. Sending thunderous shockwaves through the ground, the *Goliath* planted its feet widely enough apart to steady itself. Its PPC moved like an eye on a stalk, then locked on one of the offending 'Mechs with the callousness of a child stomping on a cockroach.

"Craon, move, it's got you in its sights!" Unthinking, Andrew stabbed both feet down, igniting the ion jets on the *Firestarter's* back. Inertia slammed him down into his command couch as his 'Mech rocketed up and out toward Cochraine's *Goliath*. *No free shots on my command!* Both arm-mounted blazers flaming, Redburn brought his 'Mech down on the *Goliath*.

Blood gushed from his nose and filled his mouth with a salty sweet thickness as the impact's shockwave jolted up through his cockpit. Andrew felt tooth chips grind beneath his molars. Lights flared everywhere in his cockpit and alarms rang with brain-numbing intensity, but failed to cover the scream of metal and the sharp cracking of ceramic armor. Static filled his holoscreens and sparks shot from behind his command couch.

Waves of heat washed up and over him as dazzlingly white fire flashed around the *Firestarter*. Again he felt himself slammed down into the couch as if jetting from the ground, but his legs had fallen from their positions on the JumpJet controls. Some titanic force grabbed his *Firestarter* at the feet and, like a child hoisting a doll aloft, whipped his 35-ton 'Mech into the air.

Desperately Andrew clawed for the eject button, but gravity pinned his arms to their places on the command couch's arms. Spots flashed before his eyes and a dim, horrifying realization crawled up from the place where his nightmares hid. *Out of control, g-forces too much. Can't black out!* Gritting his teeth, he forced his right hand to lunge again for the eject button, but consciousness drained from him before he could hit it.

At the time this transmission was intercepted, it was impossible to confirm either Redburn's survival or Delta Company's final victory at the Ivaar archaeological site. Subsequent reports indicate that Captain Redburn was knocked unconscious for the remainder of the battle, but that he survived, ultimately continuing the campaign in a captured Liao Centurion.

The destruction of Fiona Cochraine's command Goliath, however, proved to be the turning point of the battle. Convinced that their leader was dead, the Warriors of Delta Company rallied and counterattacked, driving the now leaderless and disorganized Liao Goliaths back in fierce and unrelenting fighting. Reportedly, Colonel Stone and his retreating 1st Battalion were invited to "join in any time they wished."

The action ended with the complete destruction of Cochraine's Goliaths.

Reports on the contents and value of the captured archaeological site have not yet been released by Davion authorities.

*The full story on the action will be available this fall, when FASA releases Michael A. Stackpole's second novel in the Warrior series: *Warrior's Riposte*.*

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Technical Readout

WLF-1 Wolfhound

Overview:

The *Wolfhound* is the first original design produced by Eire Mech Co. of Arc-Royal, District of Donegal. Until the *Wolfhound* appeared early this year, Eire Mech was only known for refurbishing old service 'Mechs for militia or training academy use. Development of the *Wolfhound* began about a dozen years before its unveiling, though operational models were apparently available as early as 3024.

The design was meant to be specifically a challenge to the Kurita *Panther*, but it turned out to be far more useful. Analysts point out that the *Wolfhound* has the firepower and armor of a 'Mech normally classed as medium at a weight accepted as light. While, on paper, the design seems prone to overheating, the use of weapons at proper ranges means it actually runs rather cool.

The design ran into bureaucratic difficulties because the prototypes had not been inspected or licensed by the Lyran Commonwealth. Archon Katrina Steiner granted the design an "experimental" license early in 3028. It is imagined she did this in preparation for this summer's Galahad '28 exercises, but the fact that the first *Wolfhounds* appeared in the Kell Hound Regiment has not been ignored as an additional reason for her action. It has been reported, in fact, that Colonel Morgan Kell financed the research and development of

the 'Mech design, and that Dr. B. Banzai consulted on the design. The Kell family is a majority stockholder in the Eire Mech Co. and Arc-Royal is a family holding.

Capabilities:

Designed as a swift yet sturdy 'Mech capable of facing Kurita *Panthers*, the *Wolfhound* carries an incredible amount of armor for a light 'Mech. The armor allows this light 'Mech to stand toe-to-toe with some heavier 'Mechs and survive. Computerized simulations have shown the defenses to be viable in battles against even a *Dragon*, though Eire officials have noted only a fool would engage a heavy 'Mech in a *Wolfhound*.

The weaponry on the *Wolfhound* is entirely made up of energy weapons. The proliferation of heavy autocannons, like the Pontiac 100 (found in the *Victor*), has made it exceedingly dangerous for a small 'Mech to load itself up with autocannon ammo or missiles. A light 'Mech's restricted carrying capacity also makes it difficult to keep a projectile weapon in full supply during an extended campaign.

Reliance on energy weapons means the *Wolfhound* becomes a viable vehicle for extended operations behind enemy lines. The light 'Mech is fast enough to elude many large pursuers and is armed well enough to fight off smaller hunters. The quartet of medium lasers can all be fired in

close combat without creating a heat problem for the pilot. The Defiance B3M Medium Lasers are an excellent choice for the *Wolfhound* because of their durability and reliability.

The Setanta Heavy Laser is a unique design manufactured at Eire. It is built into the 'Mech's right arm, with the laser's muzzle replacing the 'Mech's right hand. Engineers note the large laser is meant to be used against distant targets, damaging them enough so that the *Wolfhound* can easily finish them off when it moves in closer.

The 'Mech's left hand is fully articulated and functional. The *Wolfhound* reportedly uses the ejection system originally created for the *Hatchetman*. If a pilot is forced to eject, the whole head assembly detaches itself from the 'Mech body and jets off. As with the *Hatchetman*, the guidance rockets only have 30 seconds of burn, but it is enough to carry a pilot clear of most battlefields. In a modification of the *Hatchetman* design, the *Wolfhound* head is equipped with a para-foil that allows maneuverability when descending. (The *Hatchetman*'s cockpit is a bit too heavy to allow for this.)

Battle History:

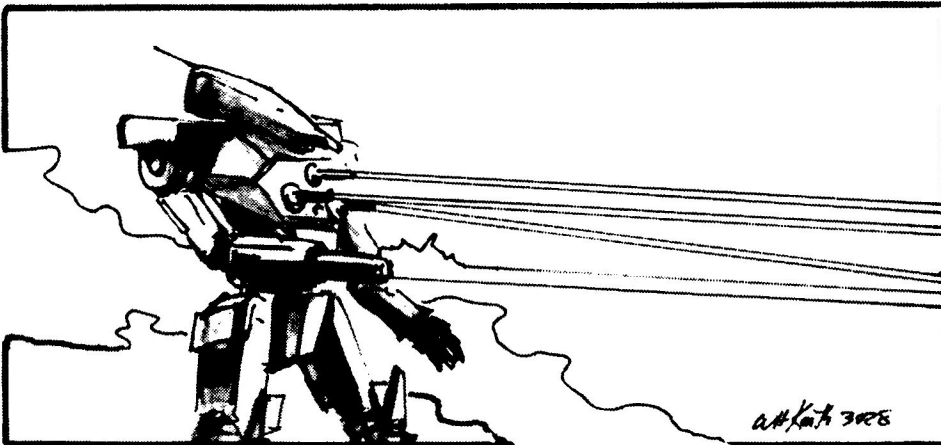
As of this writing, the *Wolfhound* has not been battletested in a genuine firefight. It has, however, undergone a harsh series of exercises as part of becoming worked into the newly formed Kell Hound Regiment. In computer-adjudicated skirmishes against a lance of *Panthers*, a single *Wolfhound* proved elusive and deadly.

While details of the battles are sketchy, observers remarked that the *Wolfhound* often ambushed the *Panthers* and used the large laser in his initial attack—hitting the targeted *Panther* from behind and often incapacitating it. The remaining *Panthers* then ran afoul of the *Wolfhound* at its optimum range. After the *Wolfhound* had hit the *Panthers* with medium laser fire, it "would then run off and let the *Panthers* chase it until it wanted to be caught." The dejected *Panther* pilots later described the *Wolfhound* pilot as "lucky."

The pilot, Captain Daniel Allard, reportedly liked the *Wolfhound* design, but mourned the lack of jumpjets. Still this veteran of several *Panther* battles in the field (including the June 3027 rescue of the hijacked DropShip *Silver Eagle*) appreciated the mobility and armor on the *Wolfhound*.

Variants:

There are no known variants at this time.



STATS

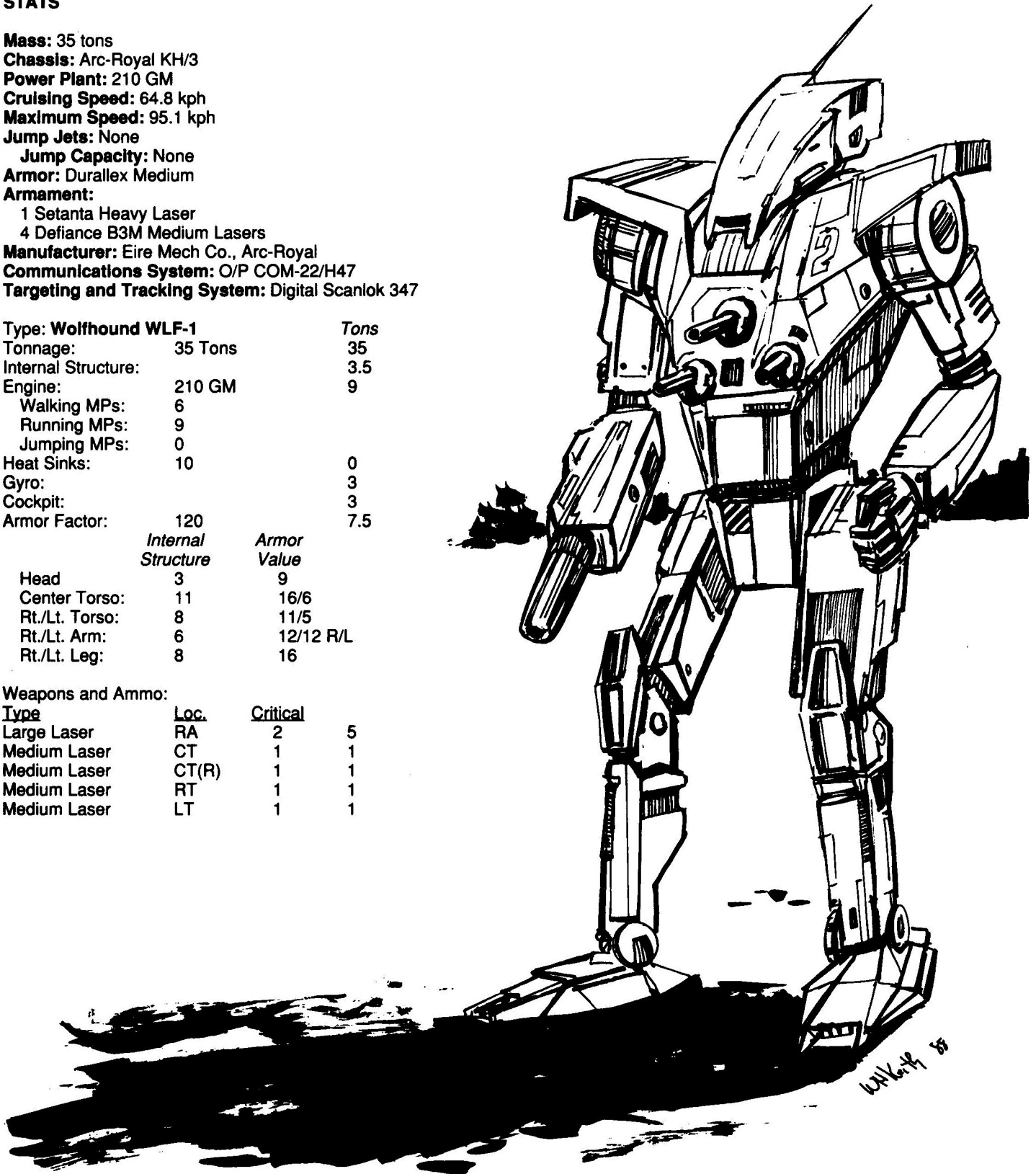
Mass: 35 tons
Chassis: Arc-Royal KH/3
Power Plant: 210 GM
Cruising Speed: 64.8 kph
Maximum Speed: 95.1 kph
Jump Jets: None
Jump Capacity: None
Armor: Durallex Medium
Armament:
 1 Setanta Heavy Laser
 4 Defiance B3M Medium Lasers
Manufacturer: Eire Mech Co., Arc-Royal
Communications System: O/P COM-22/H47
Targeting and Tracking System: Digital Scanlok 347

Type:	Wolfhound WLF-1	<i>Tons</i>
Tonnage:	35 Tons	35
Internal Structure:		3.5
Engine:	210 GM	9
Walking MPs:	6	
Running MPs:	9	
Jumping MPs:	0	
Heat Sinks:	10	0
Gyro:		3
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	120	7.5

	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Head	3	9
Center Torso:	11	16/6
Rt./Lt. Torso:	8	11/5
Rt./Lt. Arm:	6	12/12 R/L
Rt./Lt. Leg:	8	16

Weapons and Ammo:

Type	Loc.	Critical	
Large Laser	RA	2	5
Medium Laser	CT	1	1
Medium Laser	CT(R)	1	1
Medium Laser	RT	1	1
Medium Laser	LT	1	1



Technical Readout

Self-Propelled (SP) Sniper

Overview:

The Sniper (SP) is one of the most common artillery pieces in the Inner Sphere. Introduced in 2555, it rapidly became the mainstay of the Star League Artillery Corps. A simple design, requiring only basic maintenance, the Sniper saw widespread use from the outset. It has only half the firepower and range of the Long Tom but is far more mobile and easier to support. Given its excellent basic design, the Sniper will continue to have an impact on the battlefield for years to come.

Capabilities:

The Sniper (SP) chassis is based on the now obsolete Badger class medium tank. Parts availability and the rugged design of the Badger were major points in the decision to use the tank chassis. The artillery piece is set in a forward-facing mount. The lack of a turret restricts the field of fire, but this is not considered crucial in an artillery piece. No additional weapons are mounted. A companion ammo carrier based on the same chassis accompanies the Sniper. The carrier mounts a Holly SRM 6-pack which provides emergency defensive fires for both vehicles. It also serves as transport for the gun crew, since the Sniper is only designed to carry the driver and the gunner.

The key to the Sniper's success is the simple design of the weapons system. The gun is based on an old Terran artillery piece of the late 20th Century. Manufacturing methods used to construct the piece are kept as basic as possible. This insures that

even planets with a modest industrial base have the ability to build Snipers. However, the Sniper has the capability to use any current shell-fuse combination.

The Sniper utilizes the SureFire/3 gunnery system. While not as capable as other more high-tech units, it is a rugged design suited to battlefield conditions. The SureFire/3 also has an optical backup. This can be crucial in the event the computer fails. The SureFire/3 is also within the manufacturing capacity of most industrial worlds.

The Sniper has a crew of nine personnel. The driver and gunner ride in the Sniper itself. The assistant gunner and six loaders ride in the ammo carrier. The Sniper has an internal ammo capacity of ten rounds, while the ammo carrier transports an additional one hundred rounds. The ammo carrier also mounts various equipment to assist the crew in preparing and loading the artillery shells.

Battle History:

One of the Sniper's most famous moments occurred in 2796 during the defense of the Davion world of Saginaw. Kurita assault troops landed in late 2795 with three 'Mech and nine conventional regiments and quickly proceeded to rout the defenders. Late in the campaign the Davion commander decided to break up his artillery batteries into small roving units, with the

intention of harassing the Kurita forces and possibly disrupting their offensive timetable.

The Snipers succeeded beyond their commander's wildest dreams. The Sniper teams were able to hit ammo dumps, troop concentrations, and repair facilities. While none of these raids were devastating to the Kuritists, they did disrupt the offensive on a planet-wide basis. The Kentares Massacre and the ensuing chaos it wrought on the Draconian military completed the job. By mid-2798, when Davion reinforcement finally landed, the enemy was in complete disarray. After a short battle, the Kurita forces retreated off-world.

Variants:

There are currently no variants to this design.

Notable Vehicles and Crews:

"Ol' Deadeye"

"Ol' Deadeye" was one of the most renowned Snipers of the Inner Sphere. The gun and crew gained fame in the First Succession War during the defense of the Davion world of Odell. While assigned to a battery providing high-angle supporting fires to friendly troops, the unit came under attack by a raiding enemy 'Mech lance. The sergeant commanding "Ol' Deadeye" made a quick, desperate decision. Leveling the tube, he sighted the gun in on the nearest enemy 'Mech and opened fire. When the smoke cleared the 'Mech was missing the upper half of its body and the remaining enemy 'Mechs were fleeing in panic. "Ol' Deadeye" and crew had achieved that rarity in the artillery known as a direct first-round hit. The crew was decorated for their efforts and credited with saving the entire battery.



STATS—Sniper (SP)

Mass: 50 tons
Chassis: SLDI TRK/5(B)
Movement Type: Tracked
Power Plant: 200 Nissan ICE
Cruising Speed: 42 kph
Flank Speed: 64 kph
Armor: Starslab/3
Manufacturer: Star League Defense Industries
Communications System: MegaStar 180
Gunnery System: SureFire/3

Type: Sniper (SP)		Tons
Movement Type: Tracked		
Tonnage:	50 tons	50
Cruise Speed:	4	
Flank Speed:	6	
Engine:		17
Rating:	200	
Type:	ICE	
Control:		2.5
Lift/Dive/Rotors:		0
Power Amplifier:		0
Heat Sinks:	0	0
Internal Structure:		5
Turret:		0
Armor:	48	3
	<i>Location</i>	<i>Points</i>
	Front	12
	Lt./Rt. Side	12/12
	Back	12

Weapons and Ammo:

Type	Facing	
Sniper	Front	20
Ammo (Sniper) 10	Body	1
Gunnery/ Targeting Equip.	Body	1.5

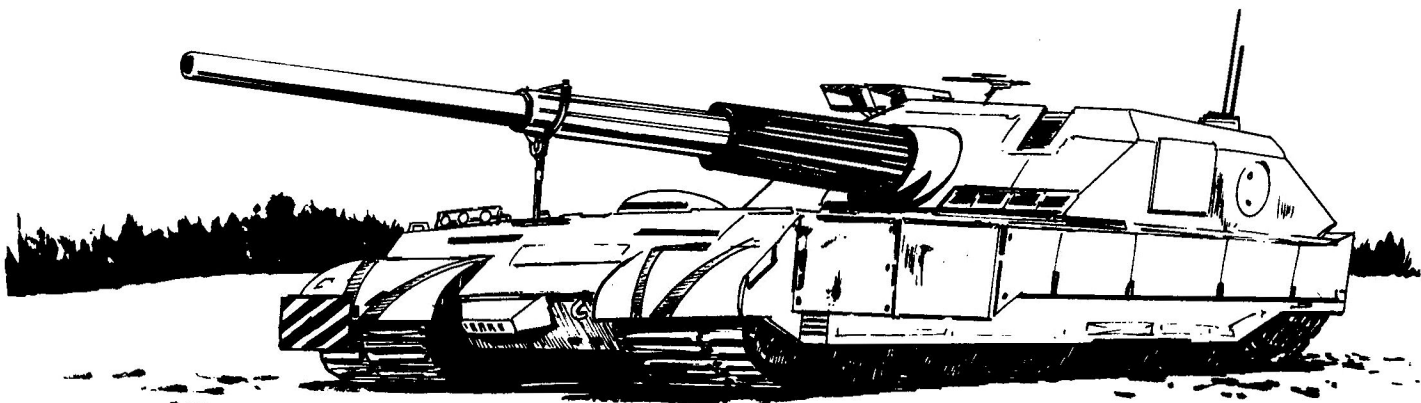
STATS—Ammo Carrier (Sniper)

Mass: 50 tons
Chassis: SLDI TRK/5(B)
Movement Type: Tracked
Power Plant: 200 Nissan ICE
Cruising Speed: 43 kph
Flank Speed: 65 kph
Armor: Starslab/5
Armament: Holly Mk. VI Short Range Missile Pack
Manufacturer: Star League Defense Industries
Communications System: KNM-3V
Targeting and Tracking System: RU-4561

Type: Ammo Carrier (Sniper)		Tons
Movement Type: Tracker		
Tonnage:	50 tons	50
Cruise Speed:	4	
Flank Speed:	6	
Engine:		17
Rating:	200	
Type:	ICE	
Control:		2.5
Lift/Dive/Rotors:		0
Power Amplifier:		0
Heat Sinks:	0	0
Internal Structure:		5
Turret:		.4
Armor:	128	8
	<i>Location</i>	<i>Points</i>
	Front	30
	Lt./Rt. Side	25/25
	Back	20
	Turret	28

Weapons and Ammo:

Type	Facing	
SRM 6	Turret	3
Ammo (SRM) 15	Turret	1
Cargo Bay (100 rds)	Body	10
Loading Equipment	Body	2
Passenger Cmpt	Body	1



Technical Readout

Viking Hydrofoil

Overview:

The Aries Manufacturing Corporation's *Viking*-class hydrofoil marked that firm's entry into the watercraft field. Previously the company had manufactured heavy mining and construction equipment. The establishment of the Watercraft Division was an attempt to gain lucrative defense contracts and diversify the company's manufacturing base. Indeed, the *Viking* filled a needed niche in the Star League's arsenal. The League had been plagued by insurgencies on tropical and water worlds, where the terrain was ill-suited to BattleMechs and other conventional forces. Hydrofoils, along with hovercraft, offered a quick reaction tool to deal with the insurgents. The unmatched speed and relatively low cost of these vessels quickly gained them an important place in the Star League defense forces. Total production figures have been lost, but were estimated to be in the tens of thousands. While many of these boats have been lost in the holocaust of the Succession Wars, they remain a fairly common sight on water-rich worlds of the Inner Sphere.

Capabilities:

The *Viking* is a fairly conventional design, well within current manufacturing capabilities. The sole exception to this is its fusion engine, which has proved the major stumbling block to maintaining production at original levels. As long as the supply of fusion engines lags behind demand, the hydrofoil can only be produced in relatively small numbers. However, current numbers of available craft are considered adequate.

The *Viking* is designed for a crew of six: two pilots, two copilot/navigation, and two gunners. The crew is divided into two shifts for long patrols. During quick reaction missions, only three crewmen are carried. The off-duty crewmen can share the amenities of a small cramped cabin just aft of the bridge. It is primarily a place to sleep and provides basic sanitary facilities along with a tiny galley.

The hydrofoil's armament is placed in a turret located forward of the bridge. It con-

sists of a single Magna Mk III large laser and a Holly SRM 6 pack. This ensures the vessel has both long and short range firepower capabilities. The hydrofoil's defensive ability is not deficient either, as the craft boasts a respectable eight tons of armor. This enables it to survive most heavy fire-fight situations it may encounter. With its cruising speed of 108 kph and a flank speed of 162 kph, it can generally outrun anything it can't handle. Its high speed also gives it the ability to close rapidly, fire its weapons, and get away with a minimum of damage.

A notable feature of the *Viking* is its communications systems. Developed especially for the *Viking* by Shafirov Maritime Comsystems Ltd., it gives the hydrofoil extremely long range communications capabilities. With the addition of an optional satellite dish, the *Viking* gains planetwide and orbital communications abilities. This is especially useful on long patrols, where the nearest help may be in the form of distant aerospace or conventional fighters. Hunter-killer teams of hydrofoils and fighters were formed late in the Star League era to take advantage of this feature. They proved especially deadly in the long guerrilla wars on Iskur and Nergal, two planets made up almost exclusively of shallow seas and large island chains.

Battle History

The *Viking* has had a fairly successful career with every military force it has served with, from the Star League to the current Successor States. It has proved suitable for both long patrols and quick strike missions, as well as providing security for such waterborne installations as oil drilling platforms. Provided it is used in its intended role, the craft is entirely capable of carrying out its assigned mission. When pressed into heavy combat roles, such as battling 'Mechs, it fares less well although still performing admirably.

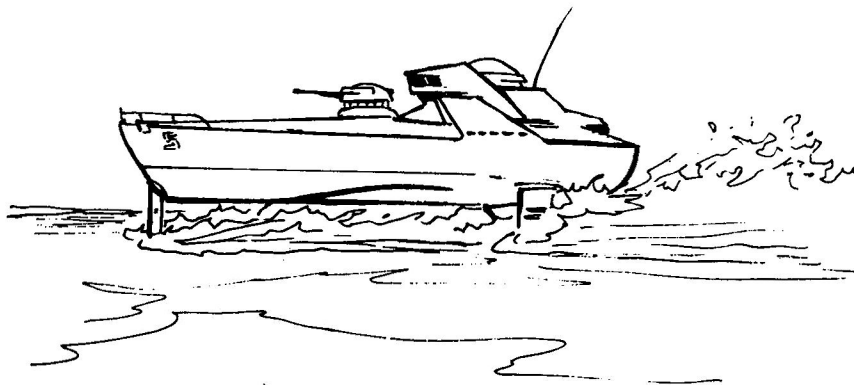
Variants

The most common variant involves replacing the large laser with an Emperor-A autocannon. This gives the hydrofoil a longer range weapon but necessitates a larger turret and the loss of 4.5 tons of armor.

Notable Vehicles and Pilots

Lieutenant "Crazy" Joe Pruitt

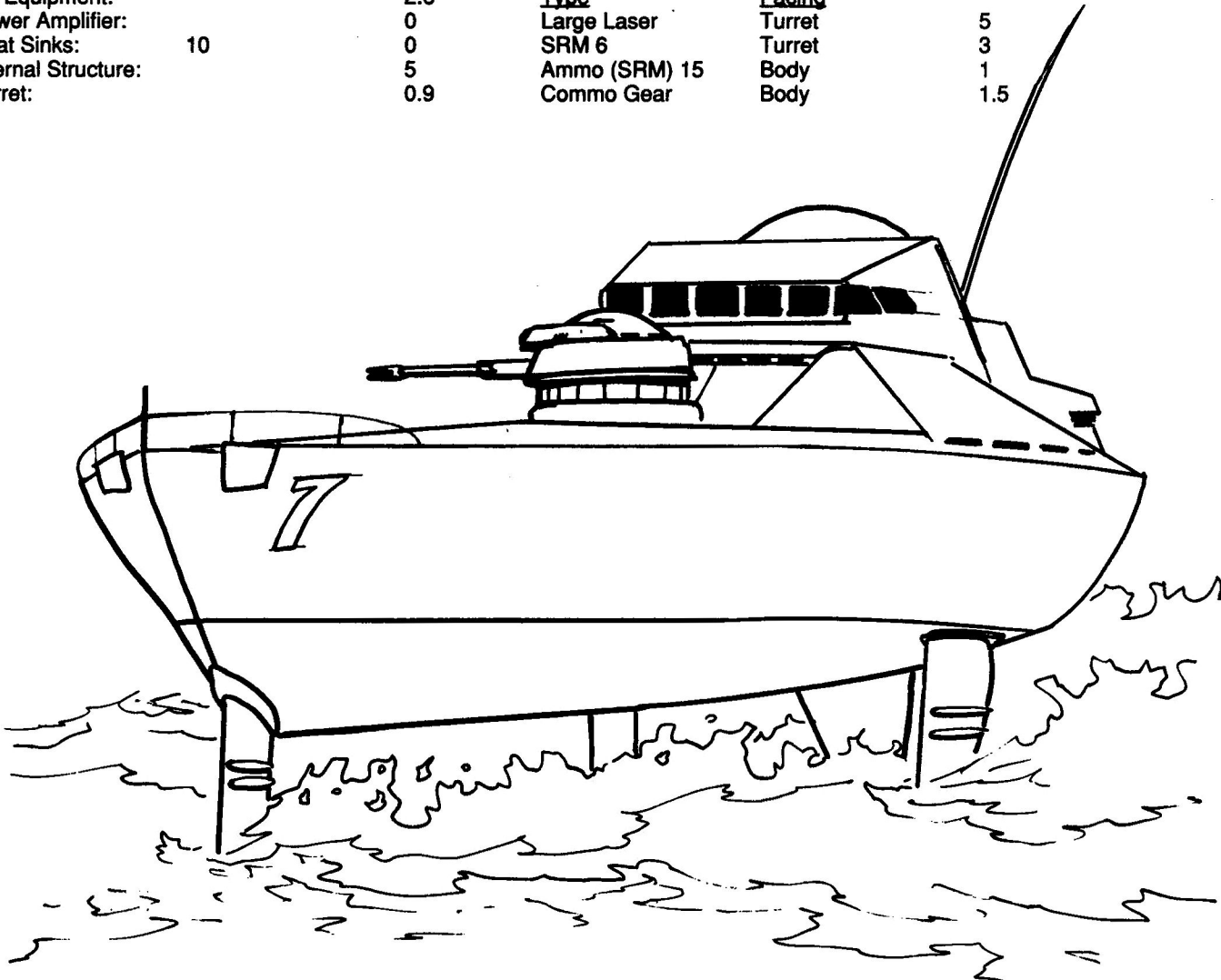
Undoubtedly the most famous *Viking* pilot, "Crazy Joe" and his hydrofoil *Oddball III* were personally responsible for locating and assisting in the cleanup of three of the largest guerrilla bases on Nergal. While shooting up the last base, "Crazy Joe" encountered his worst nightmare, an enemy 'Mech, in the form of a rebel *Griffin*. In a one-in-a-million shot, the *Viking's* large laser hit the cockpit of the *Griffin* while it was attempting a death-from-above attack. The cockpit, already damaged in previous battles, exploded, killing the pilot. Lieutenant Pruitt received the Star League's Distinguished Service Cross for his feat.



STATS

Mass: 50 tons
Movement Type: Hydrofoil
Power Plant: SeaStar 245 Naval Fusion
Cruising Speed: 108.0 kph
Flank Speed: 162.0 kph
Armor: Aries Tricom
Armament: Magna Mk III Large Laser; Holly SRM Six-Pack
Manufacturer: Aries Manufacturing Corporation
Communications System: Shafirov PV-7
Targeting and Tracking System: Aries FarTrak

Type: Viking	<i>Tons</i>				
Movement Type: Hydrofoil			Armor:	128	8
Tonnage: 50	50		<i>Location</i>	<i>Points</i>	
Cruise Speed:	10.0		Front	30	
Flank Speed:	15.0		Lt./Rt. Side	20/20	
Engine:	18		Back	20	
Rating: 245			Turret	38	
Type: Fusion					
Control:	2.5		Weapons and Ammo:		
Lift Equipment:	2.6		<i>Type</i>	<i>Facing</i>	
Power Amplifier:	0		Large Laser	Turret	5
Heat Sinks: 10	0		SRM 6	Turret	3
Internal Structure:	5		Ammo (SRM) 15	Body	1
Turret:	0.9		Commo Gear	Body	1.5



BATTLETECH SIMULATOR

OPTIONAL RULES VARIANT 0204-A

MINIATURES COMBAT

by William H. Keith, Jr.

BattleTechnology presents, from time to time, special rules variants for use with the standard rules for BattleTech from that well-known Earth-based publisher of combat simulations, FASA. This issue introduces two optional sets of rules variants which can be used either in conjunction with one another, or separately.

The first variant, 0204-A, is a set of miniatures rules designed for use with scale cardboard, lead, plastic, or holographic projection figures. Battles using with this system are fought to scale using rulers and hexgrid templates rather than a traditional hexgrid map. This allows considerable flexibility in creating battlefield terrain. It also requires considerable floor space; long range for an LRM pack (21 hexes) using these rules is 252 centimeters, or almost 100 inches. For advanced simulations using the optional rules for extended weapons ranges (rules variant 0201-A), extreme range is more than 12 meters—nearly 40 feet!

The second variant, 0204-B, is designed as a rules subset for 0204-A, allowing BattleMech hand-to-hand encounters to scale. If desired, this variant can also be used with traditional hexgrid combat, allowing greater detail in resolving physical attacks such as kicking and death from above.

As always, use of these variants is entirely optional. Referees should keep in mind that use of either or both of these systems could change the balance of BattleTech campaigns and will certainly make play somewhat more complex.

Introduction

Numerous miniatures are available for simulating BattleTech combat. Cardboard counters with plastic stands are provided in *CityTech* and *BattleTech Reinforcements*, both from FASA. An excellent line of BattleMech scale miniatures cast in lead is available from Ral Partha. TCI offers a series of highly detailed plastic model kits representing several of the more popular BattleMech designs.

The optional rules variant presented below allows players to use these or other BattleMech miniatures in scenarios without hexgrid maps.

Measurement Standards

These rules require the use of rulers or other measuring tools to determine target range and movement per turn. In order to reduce the inevitable confusion raised by using two different systems, English and metric, all measurements in these rules will be given in metric values.

Players who prefer using inches can convert easily enough by dividing figures given in centimeters by 2.56. Thus, one game hex (representing 30 meters) 12 centimeters across measures a little less than four and three quarters inches across ($12 \div 2.56 = 4.68''$).

There are 10 millimeters (mm) in 1 centimeter (cm), and 100 cm in 1 meter (m).

Scale

The scales of the various BattleMech figures available for miniatures combat vary. These rules use a standard scale of 1 cm = 2.5 meters, which agrees well with the scale used in Ral Partha's series of lead miniatures. BattleTech referees should feel free to vary this standard to fit other miniatures cast in different scales.

The *Warhammer* available from Ral Partha, for example, stands 4.2 cm tall, excluding the base and not counting the searchlight and Holly LRM Pack rising above the head from the shoulders. The printed image on FASA's *CityTech Warhammer* is about 3.4 cm tall, allowing for the 'Mech's half crouch, while the plastic *Warhammer* model from TCI stands 6 cm high.

To keep their figures in scale with their miniatures, referees using the printed cardboard BattleMechs from FASA's *CityTech* and *BattleMech Reinforcements* may wish to multiply all figures for range and distance in this article by .8, rounding the result to the nearest centimeter. A hex representing 30 meters is 12 cm across when scaled for Ral Partha figures, but when scaled for FASA's cardboard figures, it is 10 cm ($12 \times .8 = 9.6$, rounded up).

Referees using the plastic model BattleMechs from TCI should multiply all range and distance values in this article by 1.4, again rounding to the nearest whole centimeter. Using TCI's miniatures, that same 30-meter area would be represented by a hex that is 17 cm across ($12 \times 1.4 = 16.8$, rounded up).

Note: unless otherwise stated, all range and distance figures in this article are set to the same scale as Ral Partha's lead miniatures. Referees using other scales must correct these distance and range figures to keep their simulations to proper relative scale.

Position Template

BattleTech miniatures combat does not use a hexgrid map. Instead, the orientation of each BattleMech must be determined using a Position Template.

The hexagonal figure on page 40 is a Position Template scaled for Ral Partha figures. It should be pasted to cardboard or other stiff backing and then cut out as indicated, preferably using a sharp hobby knife. Permission is explicitly given to photocopy page 40 in order to make several Templates, thereby avoiding cutting up this issue of *BattleTechnology*.

The Position Template is used instead of a hexgrid to determine each 'Mech's facing during movement and combat. One end of the gaming table (or floor) is always designated "north." The north arrow on the template is always lined up with that end. If there is ever a question about a particular 'Mech's facing, the Template is laid down over the 'Mech and carefully aligned with the north end of the playing surface. The 'Mech's facing is then adjusted within the Template to align squarely with the nearest hex side.

Movement

Movement using Rules Variant 0204-A is carried out in precisely the same manner as when using normal BattleTech rules. Distances are measured using a ruler or other measuring device, however, rather than by moving from hex to hex on a map.

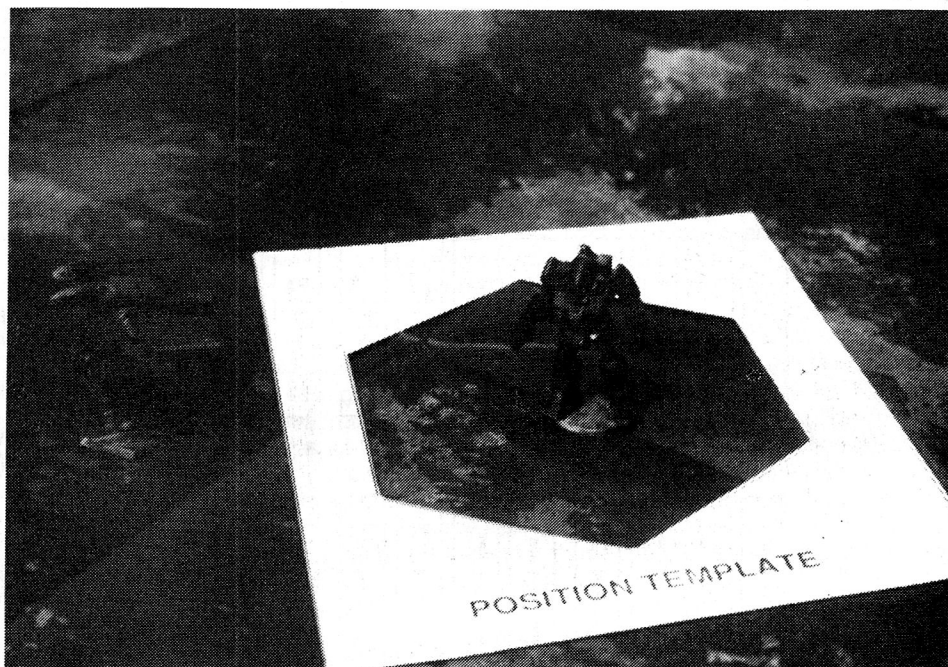
Using the basic scale of 1 cm = 2.5 meters, each hex, representing 30 meters, is 12 cm across. A BattleMech with a running movement allowance of 9 MPs can travel up to $12 \times 9 = 108$ cm moving in a straight path across flat, open terrain.

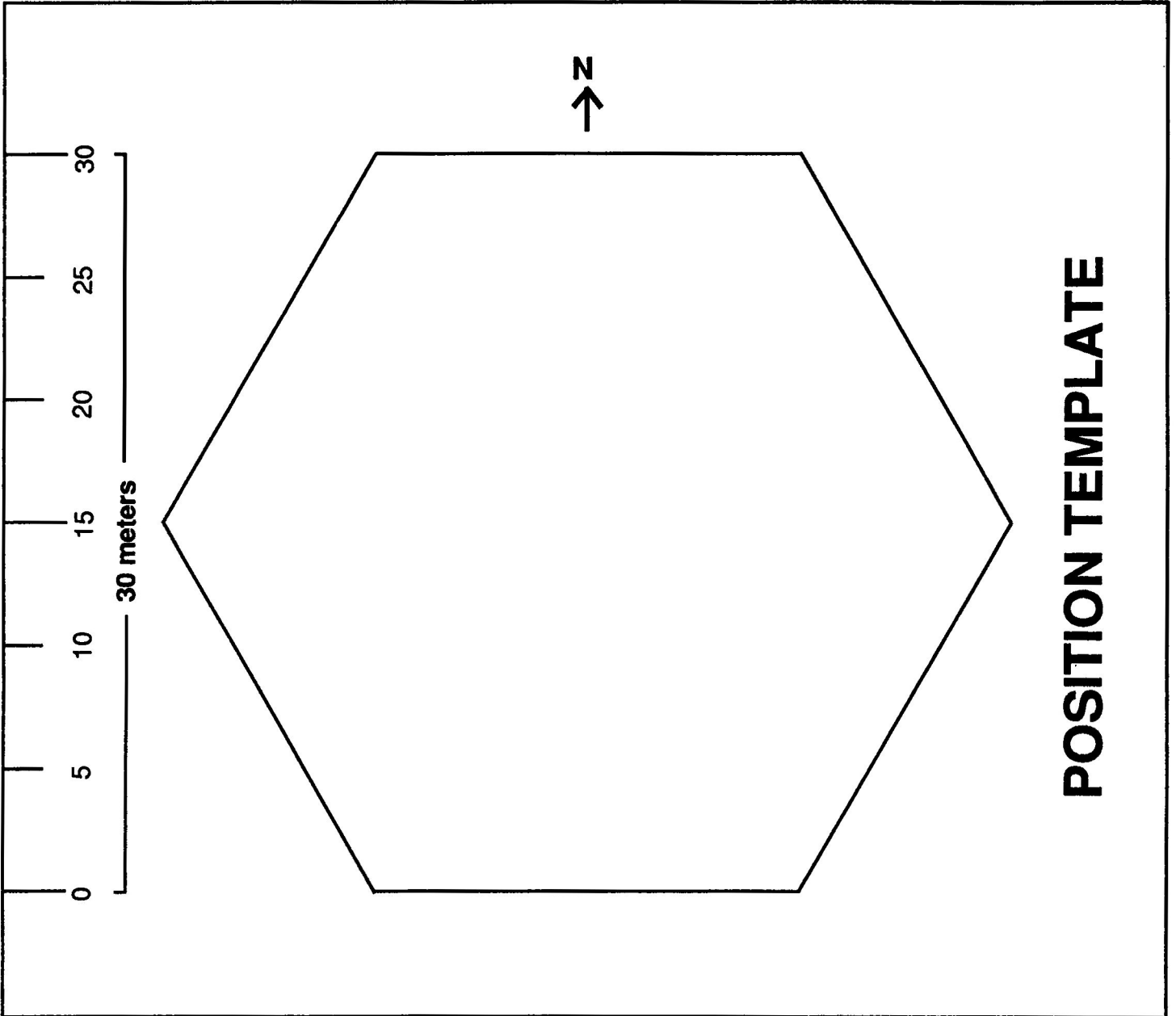
Instead of using rulers, players may wish to use lengths of string marked with tags at 12-cm intervals, a straight-edged piece of cardboard measured off in 12-cm sections, or the measured section (marked "30-meters") along the side of a Position Template. Straight-line movement is then carried out exactly as it is on a hex grid, but with each "hex" 12 centimeters long.

Players may direct their BattleMechs in a straight line anywhere within the 60° arc of the Template hexside their 'Mechs are facing. Thus, movement is not limited to straight lines along hex rows, as it is on a hexgrid map. However, at the end of movement, the template should still be used to adjust the 'Mech's facing.

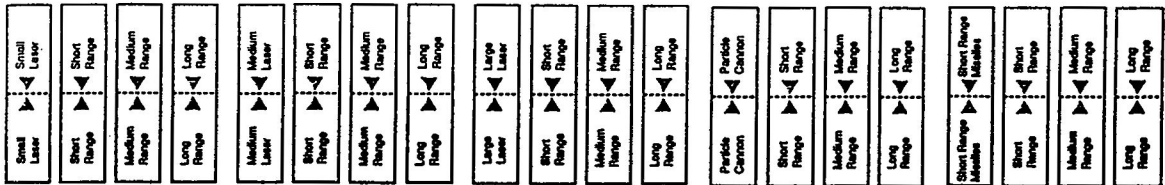
Players should still use the Position Template for turning, also. The Template is lowered onto the playing surface with the 'Mech at the center. The facing is then adjusted using the Template as a guide, as the appropriate number of movement points is expended. As with the normal BattleTech rules, a 'Mech must expend 1 MP for each 60° (1 hex side) it turns.

Jump-capable BattleMechs may move up to 12 times their available jumping MPs in centimeters. A *Wasp* with 6 jumping MPs could jump up to $12 \times 6 = 72$ centimeters.



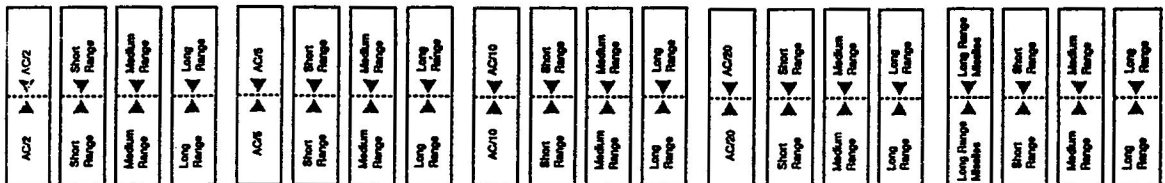


POSITION TEMPLATE



RANGE MARKERS

Note: The Range Markers for Small Laser may also be used for Machine Gun or for Flamer, since all three weapon types have the same ranges.



Terrain Effects

Since play using Rules Variant 0204-A is carried out on the floor, on a sand table, or on a large table top, rather than on a map, the players must improvise terrain where necessary. Terrain types can be suggested in many ways, depending on the players' ingenuity and resources. The playing surface can be as complex as a model railroad diorama, complete with trees and model buildings, or as simple as a bare floor with stacked books to indicate terrain elevations. Some suggestions are listed at the end of this rules section, under the heading **Improving Terrain**.

Whatever the players use to indicate different terrain types, care must be taken to reflect the effects of that terrain in sighting and in movement. In general, if there is a question about the terrain type a 'Mech is crossing, place the Position Template over the 'Mech with the 'Mech in the center. If more than about 50% of the open portion of the template is, for example, rough terrain, then the 'Mech is assumed to be in rough terrain for purposes of movement and cover, even if the miniature figure is standing on clear terrain.

The movement point costs listed for normal BattleTech combat must be observed. Rough ground, rubble, and light woods each cost 2 movement points for each 12 centimeters of movement, while movement through heavy woods costs 3 MPs for each 12 cm.

POSITION TEMPLATE AND RANGE MARKERS

Optional Rules Variant 0204-A describes the game aids shown on page 40. Readers have express permission to make photocopies of this page in order to assemble these game aids without being forced to destroy this page of the magazine.

Using rubber cement or a suitable paste, affix a copy of the position template on page 40 to cardboard or other firm backing. Using an art knife or x-acto blade, cut carefully around the outside square and the inside hexagon to create the Position Template described in the text.

The Range Markers at left are included for the players' convenience. Short, Medium, and Long markers are included for each weapon type. [Note that the markers for Small Laser may be used for Machine Gun and for Flamer as well, since the three weapon types have the same ranges.] Copy the markers and cut them out. Do not affix them to cardboard backing. Carefully measure the appropriate ranges for the various weapons on separate lengths of string. Attach the markers to the string as shown below. Assuming a scale of 1 cm = 2.5 meters, the range markers for Small Lasers would be placed at distances of 12 cm (short range), 24 cm (medium range) and 36 cm (long range) from the Small Laser marker.

When complete, each weapon type will have its own length of string with four markers attached. The first marker, with the name of the weapon, is placed on the base of the BattleMech which is firing that weapon. By pulling the string out straight, it can easily be determined whether a target falls within short range, medium range, or long range.

Relative Positions

Since players using 0204-A are not using maps with printed hexgrids, the relative positions of individual 'Mechs will not be as regular or as controlled as they would be using a normal BattleTech game map. When one 'Mech approaches another, the relative positions of the two may be less than clear.

BattleMech miniatures should not normally approach to within less than 6 centimeters (15 meters) of one another. This reflects the basic game restriction which states that more than one 'Mech cannot occupy the same hex (stacking). If a projected move would bring one 'Mech to within less than 6 cm of another 'Mech, whether friend or foe, movement must either stop or change direction.

Combat (if desired) is then carried out, with the assumption that the two 'Mechs are in adjacent hexes (range = 1 hex). Physical attacks (kicking, punching, death from above) are carried out using the basic game rules for these operations. The Position Template is placed over the defending 'Mech to define the hex. If, for example, the defending 'Mech is knocked into an adjacent hex by another 'Mech entering its hex, it is moved 12 cm in the indicated direction, and its place taken by the attacking 'Mech, just as would be done if the regular BattleTech rules were being used and combat were taking place on a hexgrid map.

Note that Rules Variant 0204-B allows 'Mechs to close to within less than 6 cm for a more detailed simulation of 'Mech-to-'Mech combat, if desired.

Ranged Combat

Fire combat between BattleMechs is identical to combat on a hex grid map. The Position Template is used to determine Firing Arcs, obstructions to Line of Sight, and hit locations.

Line of Sight: The line of sight from firing 'Mech to target is determined by stretching a string or straight-edge from the front center base of the firing 'Mech to the center of the nearest side of the target 'Mech's base. The terrain types through which the line of sight passes are noted. If the line of sight passes through areas designated as wooded, the line of sight may be blocked. The total distance of wooded area the line of sight traverses is measured, and the total (in centimeters) is divided by 12. Fractions are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number. This will indicate how many hexes of light or heavy woods the line of sight passes through—a necessary calculation in determining whether or not line of sight is blocked using the basic rules.

Similar determinations are made concerning line of sight and elevations. Remember that light or heavy woods each add two levels to an elevation, turning, in effect, a Level 2 hill into a Level 4 obstruction. If any part of a line of sight crosses an elevation, the elevation, if high enough, will block that line of sight.

Range: Once it is known that a clear line of sight exists between an attacking 'Mech and its target, range is determined. Range is measured from the front center base of the attacking 'Mech to the center of the nearest base side of the defender. This distance, in centimeters, is divided by 12 and rounded up or down to the nearest whole number to determine the number of hexes to the target. This is compared with the figures given for that weapon on the Combat table to determine whether the target is at short, medium, or long range.

To speed play, referees may wish to measure out lengths of string for each type of weapon. Paper tags can be affixed at intervals along the string, marking out short, medium, and long range.

For example, using the Rai Partha scale, the range for medium lasers is 108 cm. A length of string is measured and cut 110 cm (43 inches) long. A marker is attached at 36 cm to mark short range, at 72 cm to mark medium range, and at 108 cm to mark long range. Whenever a 'Mech fires a medium laser at a target, this string is used. If the target lies within the 36 cm mark when the string is stretched taut, it lies within close range for that weapon. If it lies between the 36 cm and 72 cm marks, it lies at medium range, and so on.

Range measurement is always made from the front center base of the firing 'Mech to the front nearest portion of the base of the target 'Mech.

Range Marker tags for various types of weapons are included on page 40. These may be photocopied, cut out, and fastened as shown to lengths of string for convenient use. Players may prefer, instead, to use yardsticks or other long, straight-edged measuring devices, with appropriate ranges marked on them.

Minimum Range Modifiers: Some BattleMech weapons, such as LRMs, autocannons, and PPCs, lose effectiveness when aimed at targets at very close ranges. These weapons have Minimum Effective Ranges listed for them in the BattleMech combat table. When firing with these weapons at targets at less than their minimum effective range, the distance to the target is carefully measured in centimeters, divided by 12, and the result rounded up or down to the nearest whole number. This gives the actual range in hexes to the target. The range in hexes is subtracted from the weapon's listed minimum effective range to determine whether or not a Minimum Range Modifier must be added to the combat Base To-Hit Number.

For example, a *Warhammer* fires its left PPC at a target at a range of 18 cm $\div 12 = 1.5$, which is rounded up to 2 hexes. The minimum Effective Range for a PPC is 3 hexes, so +2 is added to the Base To-Hit roll for that shot.

Extreme and Maximum Range: Special Rules Variant 0201-A (listed in that issue by mistake as 0103-A) described how BattleMech weapons ranges can be extended to realistic battlefield figures. That variant can be used with Variant 0204-A simply by multiplying the weapon's long range in centimeters by the extreme and maximum range modifiers given in the article.

For example, long range for a machine gun is 3 hexes, or 12 x 3 = 36 centimeters. Extreme range for a machine gun is 10 x long range, or 360 centimeters. Maximum range is 2 x extreme range, or 720 centimeters.

Obviously, referees planning on using all rules variants in a scale model BattleMech scenario should plan to have a fairly large map area available. The machine gun listed above could reach targets 7.2 meters away... or over 23 feet!

Determining Hit Location: Hit location is determined in the same way as in normal BattleTech combat. The Position Template is placed over the target 'Mech to determine whether it was hit through a front, side, or rear hex side.

If, because of the relative positions between two miniatures, the line of sight from an attacking 'Mech to a defender passes directly through one corner of the Defender's Position Template, the Defender chooses which side is affected.

All rules for determining damage, for expending ammunition, for destroying a unit, and for making aimed shots are identical to the rules for regular BattleTech play.

Physical Attacks

Players may elect to carry out physical attacks (punching, kicking, pushing, charging, Death From Above) in the same way as they would in regular BattleTech play. The Position Template is laid over the Defender's 'Mech to define the Defender's hex, and the attack is carried out in the usual way.

Players desiring additional realism (and complexity) may elect to use Optional Rules Variant 0204-B instead.

Improvising Terrain

The playing area used with this rules variant can be as simple or as complex as desired. Some options are listed here.

Complex: A complete diorama can be created, using a sand table, model train layout, or other large playing surface. Elevations should be kept distinct, with flat surfaces and nearly vertical sides to facilitate altitude, line of sight, and movement point determinations, but the rest of the scenery can be as elaborate as desired.

Though not exactly to scale, HO scale kits for model railroads can provide interesting-looking buildings or ruins to fight through. Other elements of model railway scenery, such as lichen, roadbed gravel, and miniature trees can be used to good effect. Glass, mirrors, or sheets of clear or painted plastic, with the edges covered, can represent rivers, ponds, lakes, or other water obstacles. The water depth should be recorded on a separate piece of paper, and, if necessary, the water area should be marked using paint or grease pencil to indicate various depth levels.

Many craft stores sell styrofoam spheres of various sizes. These can be spray-painted, then dressed up with bits and pieces from model ship and airplane kits to represent grounded DropShips.

Average: Terrain can be painted onto a sheet using acrylic paints from an art supply store, or lengths of camouflage-patterned cloth can be used instead. Wooded areas can be painted on, or they may be indicated using model railroad lichen or irregular clumps of paint-stained cotton balls glued in place. All players should agree before beginning the game which color or symbol means which type of terrain.

Books or sheets of styrofoam, all of about the same thickness, can be stacked on the playing surface and covered with the sheet to indicate various terrain elevations. Again, the sheet should be placed over them so that the elevations are sharp and clear-cut, to facilitate line of sight determinations.

Another approach is to purchase one or more large sheets of illustration board from an art supply store. These cost several dollars for a sheet up to 30" x 40", and offer an ideal surface on which artistically-inclined MechWarriors can paint realistic-looking terrain using acrylics or water colors. Styrofoam sheets an inch or less in thickness, available from craft stores, can be cut into interesting shapes, painted, and set down as elevations.

Simple: The least expensive approach is to simply play on a bare floor or table top, with no scenery necessary at all. Lakes, woods, rough ground, or other obstacles can be roughed out on pieces of irregularly-cut colored construction paper, and elevations indicated using large flat books or magazines.

Usually, the more detailed and elaborate the landscape used in miniatures combat, the better the "feel" and realism. However, fancier is not necessarily better, since, in BattleTech combat, it's the tonnage and the tactics which count!

OPTIONAL RULES VARIANT 0204-B

CLOSE ASSAULT

by William H. Keith, Jr.

Introduction

The basic rules for BattleTech specifically prohibit "stacking" BattleMech units in one hex. This allows play to proceed quickly and simply but sacrifices an element of realism. One BattleTech hex, after all, is three times wider than the typical BattleMech is tall, which suggests that more than one 'Mech could occupy the same hex at the same time without crowding.

Optional Rules Variant 0204-B addresses this situation and provides a means for players to resolve close-quarters combat between opposing 'Mechs.

Standards: Rules Variant 0204-B is designed to mesh with 0204-A, above. The standard scale is set at 1 cm = 2.5 meters, which fits well with the Ral Partha line of miniatures. One 30-meter hex measures 12 centimeters across.

Variant 0204-B is also designed to mesh with the basic BattleTech game. Each small hex on the Close Assault Hex measures 10 meters across. One turn equals five seconds of time.

Close Assault Hex

This variant makes use of a Close Assault Hex. A copy is printed on page 44. Permission is explicitly granted to photocopy page 44 so that multiple copies can be made, and so that players do not need to mar this issue of BattleTechnology. Paste the photocopy onto a sheet of cardboard or other stiff backing and cut it out as shown.

The Close Assault Hex represents one standard, 30-meter BattleTech game hex, expanded until it is in scale with BattleTech miniatures. It is divided into seven smaller hexes, called Tactical Hexes, each representing an area 10 meters across.

Stacking limitations for Tactical Hexes are the same as for regular BattleTech rules. No more than one BattleMech may occupy any one Tactical Hex at the same time. Up to two small vehicular units (less than 60 tons) may occupy the same Tactical Hex. Large vehicular units, however (*Demolishertanks*, and other vehicles of 60 tons or more) are restricted to no more than one per Tactical Hex.

Outside the Close Assault Hex are six additional small hexes, one on each side of the Close Assault Hex, called Approach Hexes. Entry to the Close Assault Hex can only be made through one of these Approach Hexes. They are treated as Tactical Hexes for stacking purposes.

Order of Play

Use of Rules Variant 0204-B is strictly optional. In many cases, players may wish to resolve combat in the usual manner, without using 0204-B to resolve close combat. If all players agree, however, it may be used instead of the normal Physical Attack Phase in BattleTech play. Thus, Close Assault combat is resolved after the Weapons Attack Phase and before the Heat Phase.

Close Assault

A Close Assault occurs whenever two opposing 'Mechs (or other vehicles or units) engage in combat at ranges of 30 meters or less. In the Basic BattleTech rules, this type of combat encompasses all Physical Attacks: Punching, Kicking, Shoving, Charging, and Death From Above.

In the Basic BattleTech rules, Punching, Kicking, and Shoving may be initiated whenever one 'Mech ends its movement phase adjacent to an enemy 'Mech. Charging and Death From Above attacks may be declared by the Attacker during his movement phase, if he has enough MPs (for a Charge) or jumping MPs (for Death From Above) to enter the Defender's hex.

In addition to the usual Physical Attacks, this rules variant allows certain other close-range activities, including Blocking (by the Defender) and Close Range Fire Attacks (by either side).

When using the Close Assault Rules Variant, all combat takes place within a single 30-meter hex. Rather than ending their movement phases in adjacent hexes, an attacking 'Mech actually enters the Defender's hex. Combat is then transferred to the Close Assault Hex and played out there during the Close Assault Phase of the turn.

Set-Up

The Close Assault Hex represents one hex on a normal BattleTech game map. The Defender's 'Mech starts out in the center Tactical Hex of the Close Assault Hex.

The Defender's orientation must be the same as for that BattleMech on the game map. In other words, if a 'Mech starts out facing south in a given hex, that 'Mech must begin the Close Assault segment of the game phase facing south as well.

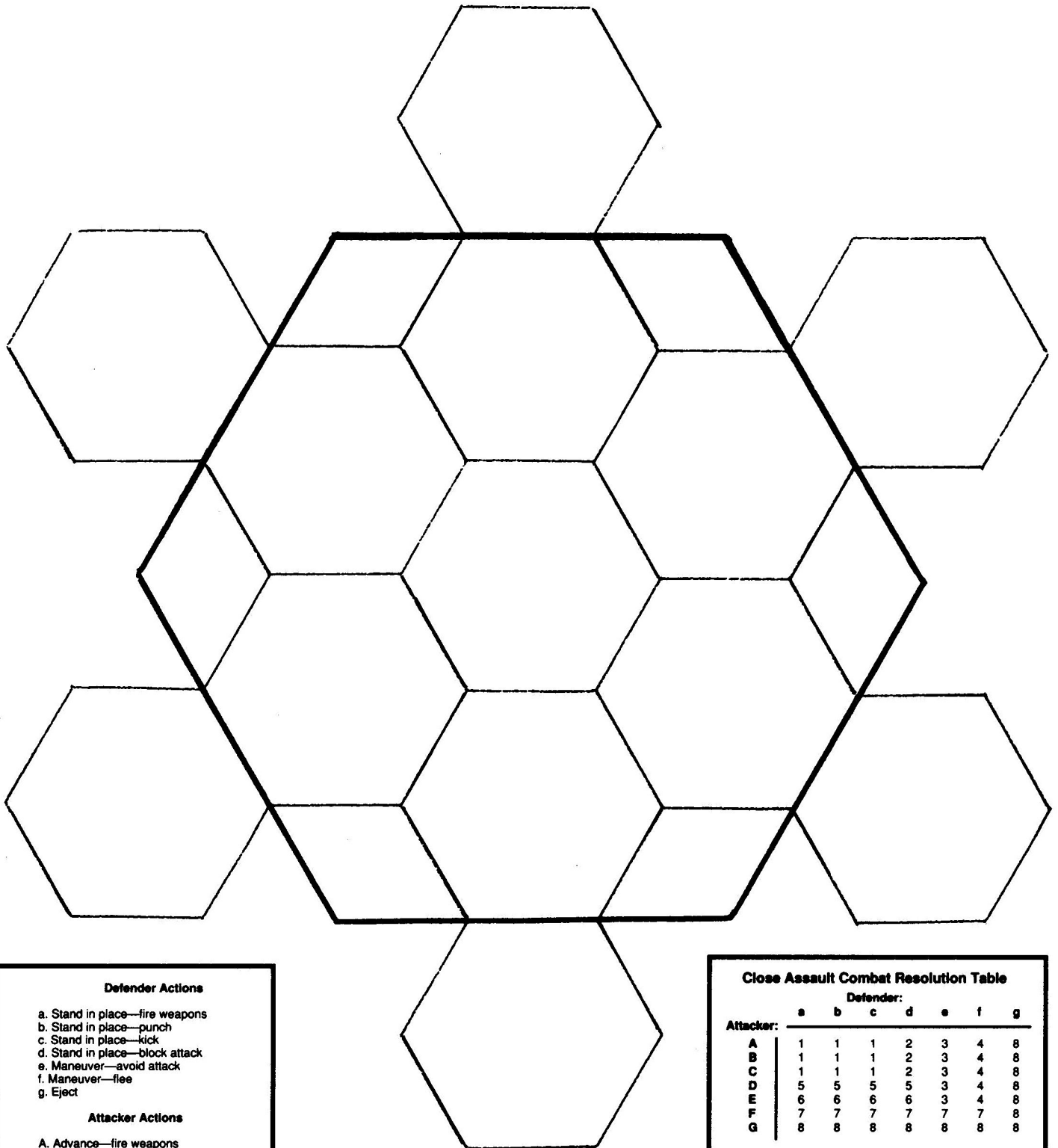
The Attacker places his 'Mech on the proper Approach Hex. For example, if an Attacker is approaching a Defender from the south, the Attacker's 'Mech is placed on the Approach Hex on the south side of the Close Assault Hex, facing north. Attacking 'Mechs entering the hex by jumping are not placed on an Approach Hex.

Note that, with this variant, more than one attacking BattleMech may attempt to enter the same hex at the same time. Theoretically, six Attackers could enter the Defender's hex from six different directions, all at the same time.

Maneuvering

BattleMechs may expend MPs to maneuver within the Close Assault Hex. Turns are performed in the same way as in basic BattleMech, by expending one MP for each 60° (one hex side) change of direction.

BattleMechs may also move within the Close Assault Hex. Movement is conducted in the same way as in normal BattleTech combat. However, only 1 MP is expended for each Tactical Hex move, regardless of the type of terrain the larger, Close Assault hex may represent.



Defender Actions

- a. Stand in place—fire weapons
- b. Stand in place—punch
- c. Stand in place—kick
- d. Stand in place—block attack
- e. Maneuver—avoid attack
- f. Maneuver—flee
- g. Eject

Attacker Actions

- A. Advance—fire weapons
- B. Advance—punch
- C. Advance—kick
- D. Advance—push
- E. Advance—collision
- F. Maneuver—avoid or break off attack
- G. Eject

Close Assault Combat Resolution Table

		Defender:						
		a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Attacker:								
A		1	1	1	2	3	4	8
B		1	1	1	2	3	4	8
C		1	1	1	2	3	4	8
D		5	5	5	5	3	4	8
E		6	6	6	6	3	4	8
F		7	7	7	7	7	7	8
G		8	8	8	8	8	8	8

Close Assault Hex

Players have express permission to photocopy this page so that they can assemble this play aid without destroying this page of the magazine.

Using rubber cement or a suitable paper paste, affix a photocopy of the design above to cardboard or other stiff backing. This is the Close Assault Hex described in the text for Optional Rules Variant 0204-B.

Close Assault Procedure

The attacking player moves first. If the Attacker has more than one 'Mech attempting to enter the Defender's hex, he chooses which of his 'Mechs moves first.

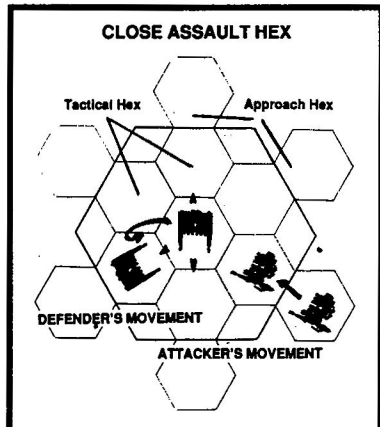
The Close Assault Phase is considered to be the resolution of movements initiated earlier in the turn. For example, 'Mechs which executed a Charge during the Attacker's movement phase resolve the results of that charge through a Close Assault.

Attacker's Movement: To make his move (or moves) the Attacker must have enough MPs remaining to enter the hex during his movement phase. If the hex represents rough terrain, for example, each 'Mech which wishes to enter the hex must have at least 2 MPs remaining to enter it. 'Mechs attempting to jump into the hex must have sufficient jumping MPs to do so.

Defender's Movement: After the Attacker has moved his first unit onto the Close Assault Hex, the Defender may, if he wishes, move to any of the three Tactical Hexes in towards his front, or step back into the hex immediately to his rear. He may not leave the Close Assault Hex, and he may not enter a Tactical Hex already occupied by another 'Mech.

This movement is free. It represents a last-minute shift in the Defender's position and does not require remaining MPs to execute it.

The Defender may also change his facing either before or after he makes his free shift within the Close Assault Hex. This movement is not free, however. The defending 'Mech must have enough MPs left over from his movement phase to execute the maneuver.



Tactical Decision: Both the Attacker and the Defender now secretly record the tactics they plan to have their 'Mechs execute during the Close Assault combat.

The Defender may choose one of the following:

- a. Stand in place—fire weapons
- b. Stand in place—punch
- c. Stand in place—kick
- d. Stand in place—block attack
- e. Maneuver—avoid attack
- f. Maneuver—flee
- g. Eject

The Attacker may choose one of the following:

- A. Advance—fire weapons
- B. Advance—punch
- C. Advance—kick
- D. Advance—push
- E. Advance—collision
- F. Maneuver—avoid or break off attack
- G. Eject

Attacking units executing **Charge** or **Death From Above** maneuvers may *only* choose Advance—collision. Attacking units executing **Pushing** maneuvers may *only* execute Advance—push. Attacking or defending units may only choose Maneuver commands if they have at least 1 MP remaining after all last-minute shifts and maneuvers have been completed, and after all MP costs for entering the hex have been expended.

Combat Resolution

The attacking and defending players reveal their chosen tactics to one another. The lower-case letters of the defending strategies and the upper-case letters of the attacking strategies are compared with one another on the chart below. By cross-indexing the two, a numbered result may be obtained from the Close Assault Combat Resolution table.

Close Assault Combat Resolution Table

Attacker:	Defender:						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
A	1	1	1	2	3	4	8
B	1	1	1	2	3	4	8
C	1	1	1	2	3	4	8
D	5	5	5	5	3	4	8
E	6	6	6	6	3	4	8
F	7	7	7	7	7	7	8
G	8	8	8	8	8	8	8

Close Assault Combat Results

1: Both sides exchange attacks according to the basic rules for physical combat.

Damage is considered to be simultaneous, and both 'Mechs are able to complete their chosen tactics before damage is applied.

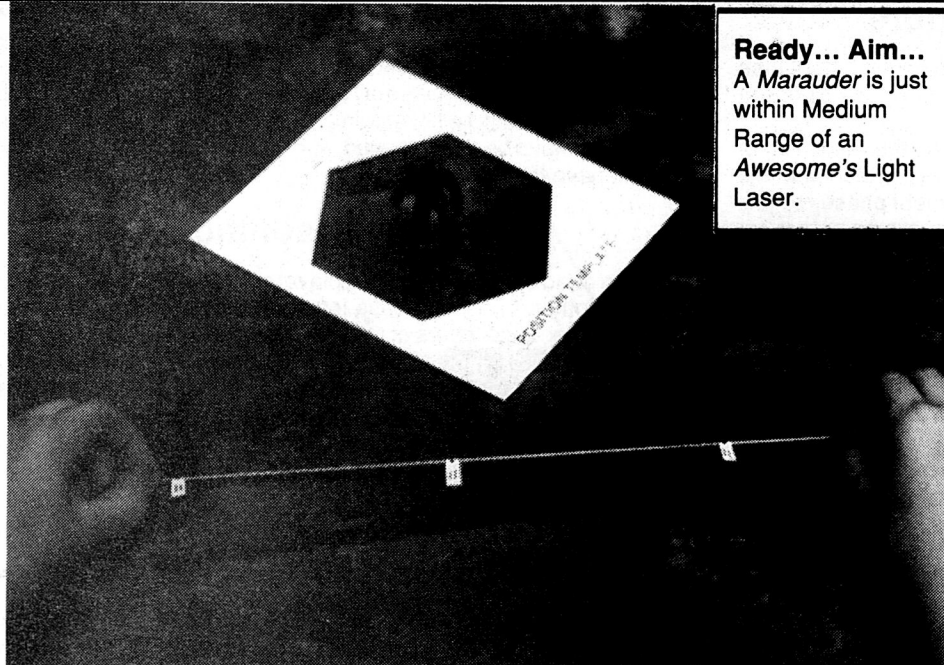
Fire combat is carried out in the usual way. LRM fire is not permitted. All other fire is resolved as for a range of 1. Fire may be directed at other 'Mechs within the Close Assault Hex at a range of either 1 or 2 Tactical Hexes. No 'Mech may fire any weapon which was fired during that turn's Weapon Attack Phase. For this reason, players should keep track of weapons which were not fired during each Weapon Attack Phase.

Punch, Kick, and Shove attacks are possible only if the two 'Mechs are in adjacent Tactical Hexes. Should the attacking 'Mechs not be adjacent to the Defender, all such physical attacks miss automatically. Any MechWarrior who misses with a kick must make a Piloting Skill Roll to avoid falling.

2: The Defender attempts to block the Attacker's kick or punch.

The attempt requires a successful Piloting Skill Roll by the Defender. If the attempt fails, damage from the Attacker's kick or punch is delivered as usual. If the blocking attempt succeeds, the damage from the attack is halved (fractions rounded up) and applied against the arm of the Defender for a punch, and against the leg for a kick. The Defender chooses which arm or leg suffers damage, unless the attack comes from the side, in which case damage is applied against the arm or leg on that side.

Sometimes, the Defender may expect a physical attack and try to block it, only to discover the Attacker has elected to fire his weapons instead. When this happens, the Defender receives



Ready... Aim...
 A *Marauder* is just within Medium Range of an *Awesome's* Light Laser.

If the Defender avoids a punch or a kick, he suffers no damage. The Attacker must roll against his Piloting Skill to avoid falling after missing a kick.

If the Defender avoids a charge, he may move to any adjacent unoccupied Tactical Hex (his choice), with any facing (again, his choice). The Attacker continues moving in a straight line through the Close Assault Hex, exiting through the opposite side from which he entered. If the Attacker has insufficient MPs to continue movement, he remains in the Close Assault Hex, in the Tactical Hex opposite from his Entry Hex. If he has sufficient MPs to continue into the next hex, he does so and is removed from the Close Assault Hex. In both cases, the Attacker must roll against his Piloting Skill to avoid falling after missing his target.

If the Defender avoids a Death From Above attack, he may move to any adjacent unoccupied Tactical hex, with any facing (his choice). The Attacker lands in the Tactical Hex vacated by the Defender and must make a Piloting Skill Roll to keep from falling.

If the Defender fails to avoid the attack, damage is suffered by both 'Mechs as always.

damage from the Attacker's fire as usual. The Attacker suffers no damage.

To block a punch, a defending 'Mech must have all of its arm actuators intact and may not fire any weapons from that arm during that turn.

If the block attempt fails, the Attacker suffers no damage. If the blocking attempt succeeds, the Attacker suffers one quarter of the total amount of damage to that arm or leg, with fractions rounded up.

Example: A Warhammer (70 tons) throws a punch at a Crusader (65 tons). Normally, if the punch was successful, the Crusader would suffer 1 damage point for every 10 tons of the attacking 'Mech—7 points, in this case. If the Crusader was able to successfully block the attack, however, the Crusader would suffer only 4 points of damage, all of it applied against the arm with which it blocked the punch. At the same time, the Warhammer would suffer 2 points of damage to the arm with which it threw the punch.

Example: A Crusader executes a Charge against a Phoenix Hawk (45 tons). The Crusader pilot has a Piloting Skill Level of 4, while the Phoenix Hawk pilot has a Skill Level of 2. The Phoenix Hawk pilot elects to attempt to evade the charging Crusader at close quarters, a maneuver not unlike that executed by a matador in the arena.
Normally, the Attacker would have to roll 5 or higher to hit the Defender with his charge. However, a very good pilot in a fast medium 'Mech is attempting to avoid the charge at the last moment. The Defender's Piloting Skill Level is 2 less than 4, so 2 is added to the To Hit Number. In addition, 1 is added because the Phoenix Hawk weighs less than 50 tons. The Attacker must roll $5 + 3 = 8$ or better to successfully charge the Defender.

3. The Defender attempts to avoid his opponent's attack by executing a last-second maneuver such as stepping out of the way.

Note that the Defender does this *instead* of trying to damage or block his opponent. The maneuver does not require additional MPs and may be attempted even if all available MPs have been used in earlier maneuvers during the turn or phase.

For every Piloting Skill Level below 4, the Defender may add one to the Attacker's To Hit Number. This modifier is in addition to any modifiers added reflecting differences in the pilots' Piloting Skill Levels.

The Attacker must also add 1 to his To-Hit Number if the target 'Mech weighs 50 tons or less, and 2 if the target 'Mech weighs 20 tons or less (reflecting the generally greater agility of lighter 'Mechs).

4. The Defender attempts to flee before the Attacker can close with him.

He does so by rolling against his Piloting Skill Level. If the Defender has a 'Mech heavier than 50 tons, he adds 1 to the To-Hit Number. If his 'Mech weighs 80 tons or more, he adds 2 to the To-Hit Number. Thus, it is more difficult for large, heavy 'Mechs to avoid attacks and flee than it is for light, fast 'Mechs.

If the Defender's roll fails, his 'Mech must remain in place for whatever type of attack his opponent delivers. If his roll succeeds, he can leave the Close Assault Hex. However, it is possible he will suffer some damage as he withdraws.

The Defender decides which way his 'Mech is withdrawing. He may change his facing, and he may enter any Tactical Hex adjacent to his own which is not occupied by the enemy. These maneuvers do not require the expenditure of any MPs. At the end of the maneuver, however, the Defender's 'Mech must be in one of the Tactical Hexes along the sides of the Close Assault Hex. He may be

facing away from the Close Assault Hex's center (exposing his back to the enemy) or he may be facing towards it (intending to back out of the hex). His facing will determine where he will take damage, if any, from his opponent.

If the Attacker elects to fire weapons, the Defender takes damage from the attack in the usual fashion. The Defender may not return fire, since the Pilot's attention during that turn was focused on escape.

If the Attacker has elected to deliver a kick or a punch, he enters the central Tactical Hex and does so. However, he may not change facing and can kick only if the target is in the Tactical Hex directly in front of him. If the target is to the left front or right front Tactical Hex, the Attacker may deliver a punch only with his left or right arm, respectively.

If the Attacker has elected to deliver a push, he does so from the central Tactical Hex. The Defender will exit the Close Assault Hex through the nearest hexside.

5. The Attacker attempts to push the Defender out of the Close Assault Hex with its arms.

The Defender may damage the Attacker by punching, kicking, or firing its weapons. The Attacker must make the usual roll against a base To-Hit number of 4+ for the push to be successful.

A successful push does no damage to the target but does move the target into the adjacent hex, while the Attacker remains in the Defender's original hex. If the push is unsuccessful, both 'Mechs remain in the same Close Assault Hex, and combat will continue at close quarters.

If the Defender successfully avoids a push, the Attacker remains in the center Tactical Hex of the Close Assault Hex.

6. The Attacker attempts to collide with the Defender, causing damage to both 'Mechs.

This is the end result of either a successful **Charge** or a successful **Death From Above** attack.

Charge: The Attacker first takes damage from the Defender's attempt to kick, punch, or use his weapons. The Defender may also attempt to maneuver clear of the attack instead of fighting back. If the Attacker is not crippled by the Defender's actions, and if the Defender is unable to avoid the attack, the results of the collision are resolved normally, by comparing the Piloting Skill Levels of the two pilots and using the difference as a modifier.

Death From Above: If the Attacker executes a Death From Above attack, the Defender will not have the opportunity to attempt a Punch or Kick against the Attacker before he is hit. He may, however, have the opportunity to fire his weapons before the Death From Above attack is resolved.

The Defender may only use weapons which can bear on the Attacker as he approaches. That is, attacks from the rear can only be met by a Defender's rear-facing weapons, while an attack from the forward left side could only be met by the Defender's left arm weapons. The Defender may not move, turn, or twist to meet a Death From Above attack.

The Defender may only use weapons which he did not fire during that turn's Weapon Attack Phase (immediately preceding the Physical Attack Phase). Long Range Missiles may not be used in the attack. All other weapons may be fired, using the appropriate modifiers for a moving target at a range of one 30-meter hex.

The Defender makes all fire attack rolls before the Attacker hits. Weapons fire will not divert a 'Mech executing a Death From Above attack from its course. Even if the Attacking 'Mech is destroyed in mid-air, the wreckage will still strike the target, according to the usual rules governing Death From Above combat.

7: Attacker breaks off attack.

The attacking player may, at the last moment, attempt either to avoid the Defender's fire or other hostile action, or to flee. To do so he advances his 'Mech from the Approach Hex onto a Tactical Hex within the Close Assault Hex, then rolls against his Piloting Skill. If the roll fails, he remains in place and is subject to any fire attacks or maneuvers the Defender may have planned for that turn. If the roll succeeds, the Attacker may withdraw his 'Mech from the Close Assault Hex, and place it in any Approach Hex within two Tactical Hexes of the Tactical Hex he entered on. He maintains the original facing he had when he entered the Close Assault Hex.

This maneuver is primarily used to give the Attacker a last chance to change his mind—if, for example, he suspects a trap after he has already committed himself to a punch or other Physical Attack. It may also be used to draw the Defender out of a strong defensive posture, to trick him into launching a Close Assault of his own, or to reveal infantry or other units hidden in the Defender's hex.

Breaking off the attack may not be used in Charge or Death From Above attacks. The 'Mech pilot must commit himself to those maneuvers during the movement phase of the turn, and the inertia of his 'Mech is too great to permit a last-second change of plan.

8: Eject.

Either the Attacker or the Defender (or both!) elects to "punch out," using their cockpit ejection systems to abandon their 'Mechs. This is always a last resort option, used when a player knows the 'Mech is lost but wants to save the MechWarrior pilot for future campaigns.

The rules for ejection are given on page 46 of *The Rules of Warfare*, from FASA. A roll is made against the MechWarrior's Piloting Skill, with modifiers for such factors as damage to the 'Mech's head and the presence of light or heavy woods. The ejected MechWarrior will land in the 30-meter hex directly behind his 'Mech.

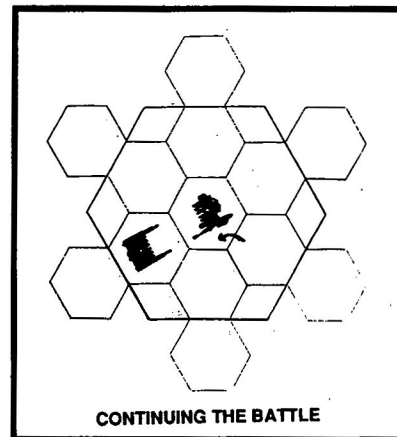
If the roll fails, the pilot takes 1 point of damage and must make a consciousness roll.

Ejection occurs before damage from the opponent's fire or other attacks is applied. However, these attacks must be resolved as planned by the opponent, since the actions are considered to be simultaneous. The target 'Mech is considered to be stationary as these attacks are resolved.

Continuing the Battle

Once the first exchange of combat has taken place, both Attacker and Defender reassess their situations. If either 'Mech has left the Close Assault Hex, both 'Mechs are returned to the basic game map, and play continues with the Heat Phase of that turn.

If both 'Mechs remain in the same Close Assault Hex, Close Assault Combat may continue. Each player secretly records his movements for the next round of Close Assault Combat. This time, there is no preliminary maneuvering. The players compare their respective tactical decisions, and the steps outlined above are repeated.



In normal BattleMech combat, one game turn represents ten seconds. Combat within the Close Assault Hex represents 5 seconds for each exchange. Thus, after two exchanges in the Close Assault Hex, the players should return to the regular game map to resolve the maneuvers and combats of the next turn. BattleMechs engaged in Close Assault Combat are left where they are until the next Close Assault Phase, when combat continues.

As soon as one BattleMech or the other leaves the Close Assault Hex, either voluntarily or as a result of enemy action, both 'Mechs are returned to the regular game map and placed in the appropriate hexes. Both are given the same facings they had when they were removed from the Close Assault Hex. It does not matter which of the Tactical Hexes within the Close Assault Hex a 'Mech occupied when it was returned to the main map.

Multiple BattleMech Combat

As many as seven BattleMechs can occupy one Close Assault Hex at one time, with one 'Mech in each of the seven Tactical Hexes. The Close Assault Rules Variant allows several smaller BattleMechs to gang up on one large one in direct hand-to-hand combat.

The order of play proceeds as for two 'Mechs. If the Defender has more than one 'Mech in the Close Assault Hex, he places them within the hex, as desired. The Attacker then places his 'Mech or 'Mechs on the Approach Hex or Hexes of his choosing.

The Attacker moves first by moving one of his 'Mechs (his choice) from its Approach Hex to a Tactical Hex. If that Tactical Hex is blocked by an enemy unit, he announces that his 'Mech is attempting the move, and that combat is occurring.

Next, the Defender moves a 'Mech of his choice as desired. He may not attempt to enter a hex occupied by an Attacker. Play continues back and forth, then, until all Attacking and Defending 'Mechs have been moved or have had a chance to move. No 'Mech must move, and the Attacker may elect at any time to leave one or more of his attacking 'Mechs in their Approach Hexes.

Both players now make their Tactical Decisions, writing down their choices for each of their 'Mechs. If more than one target is available, each 'Mech must state which enemy 'Mech it is acting against.

The Tactical Decisions are compared, and combat is executed. All combat is considered to be simultaneous, and the order of combat can be carried out in any manner agreed upon by the players. Note that BattleMechs technically in adjacent hexes (those forced to remain on Approach Hexes by the presence of defending units) may take part in combat in the Close Assault Hex. Those choosing to fire their weapons may target any enemy unit in the Close Assault Hex, and are not limited to the 'Mech blocking their way into the Close Assault Hex. Attacking 'Mechs which have not gained entry to a Close Assault Hex are free to move on without making extra Piloting Skill Rolls or Tactical Decisions during the next Movement Phase, if desired.

All normal Tactical Decisions are allowed. Note, however, that maneuvering inside a crowded hex may prove quite difficult. A BattleMech is permitted to shove or collide with a friendly 'Mech in the same Assault Hex in order to carry out a maneuver. However, damage is still applied to both 'Mechs in the usual fashion.

Fire From Outside the Hex

If BattleMechs remain locked in Close Assault Combat from one turn to the next, other 'Mechs outside the Close Assault Hex may fire at targets inside that hex. Targeting and line of sight determinations are made normally. If a friendly 'Mech is positioned

between the target 'Mech and the firer, the friendly 'Mech must be counted as partial cover.

Fire which is recorded as hitting the target causes damage during the Weapons Attack Phase, as usual. A separate roll is made for each shot which misses, however. On a roll of 7+, fire which missed the target will hit the friendly 'Mech instead. If more than one friendly unit is in the hex, the friendly 'Mech to be hit is chosen randomly each time a roll for a missed shot must be made.

Fire From Inside the Hex

BattleMechs engaged in Close Assault Combat during a Weapons Attack Phase may elect to fire at targets outside the Close Assault Hex. However, they are considered to have already acted for that turn and may take no action, offensive or defensive, during the Close Assault Phase of that turn.

Vehicles and Infantry

Vehicles (tanks, hovercraft, weapon-carrying jeeps) may participate in Close Assault tactics. Indeed, this is often the best hope such light and relatively unprotected units have against BattleMech targets.

Vehicles engage against BattleMechs or other vehicles in exactly the same manner as BattleMechs. Up to two vehicles each weighing less than 60 tons may occupy the same Tactical Hex. Larger vehicles (60 tons or more) are limited, like BattleMechs, to one per Tactical hex. Only one infantry platoon (21 men for jump infantry, 28 men for others) may occupy one Tactical Hex at a time.

Vehicles are limited somewhat in what they can do in Close Assault Combat. The only Tactical Decision options open to the Defender are:

- a. Stand in place—fire weapons
- e. Maneuver—avoid attack
- f. Maneuver—flee
- g. Eject.

The only Tactical Decision options open to the Attacker are:

- A. Advance—fire weapons
- E. Advance—Collision
- F. Maneuver—avoid or break off attack
- G. Eject

All other rules for Close Assault combat are the same for vehicles as for 'Mechs.

Special Applications

Normally, more than one 'Mech will enter the same hex only when engaged in Close Assault Combat. 'Mechs which are maneuvering do not generally approach one another closely (i.e., within 30 meters) because of the danger of collision.

A Defender may, however, elect to place several of his 'Mechs close together in a so-called "steel wall," generally to prepare for an expected Close Assault by the enemy, or to discourage vehicles or infantry units from entering a tactical bottleneck such as a narrow valley or bridge. Defending units so placed may not move *en masse* from one 30-meter hex to another. Movement must be made one 'Mech at a time, as usual. If enemy fire is directed at that hex, rolls must be made for each shot which misses against the other 'Mechs in the Close Assault Hex.

Note that this type of formation is particularly vulnerable to strafing or dive bombing attacks by aerospace fighters!

Infantry

Players may also deploy infantry using the variant rules for close assault. All rules for using infantry are the same in this variant. They are described on page 36 of FASA's *The Rules of Warfare*. The use of the Close Assault Hex allows the application of some additional tactics in the use of infantry in BattleMech warfare.

Ral Partha makes infantrymen to the same scale as their other BattleTech products. Players may also use cardboard counters or tokens from old wargames or other products to represent infantry platoons in BattleMech scenarios.

In the basic rules for BattleMech, up to two infantry platoons can deploy in one 30-meter hex at a time. Using the Optional Variants described here, infantry can occupy a hex in one of two modes, deployed and in formation.

Infantry units which are deployed are considered to be spread out and making the most of all available cover. Up to two deployed infantry units (or one infantry unit and one vehicle) may occupy a Close Assault Hex at one time. Two infantry units may be deployed in a Close Assault Hex which is then entered by one or more 'Mechs or other vehicles and remain hidden, but only until the combat portion of the Close Assault Phase. Once combat begins, all infantry units hidden in the Close Assault Hex are revealed.

Infantry units in formation may not attack and they may not be hidden. They are considered to be in parade-ground formation (marching, boarding vehicles, or awaiting orders). Up to seven units in formation may occupy one Close Assault Hex, one in each Tactical Hex. Units in formation receive no benefit for cover from the terrain they are in, and hits against them are *tripled*. Deployed and formation infantry units may not share a single Close Assault Hex.

Players may agree that infantry units in formation are occupying tents, barracks, or other shelters in an encampment.

Hidden Infantry

Players may deploy hidden infantry in ambush sites in hopes of launching a close assault against passing enemy 'Mechs or other units. The position of these hidden units is secretly recorded by the player deploying them before play begins. The record should note both which 30-meter game hex and which Tactical Hex within the Close Assault Hex the infantry is deployed in. These infantry units are considered to be dug in or well hidden behind or under available cover, sufficiently hidden or screened to keep them from being noticed by heat sensors or other normal battlefield detection gear.

Whenever an enemy 'Mech enters a hex within which infantry is hidden, the player with the hidden infantry may declare a Close Assault. Combat is then resolved using the rules for infantry combat given on page 36 of FASA's *The Rules of Warfare*.

Secret Movement: Infantry may take advantage of rough terrain or woods to remain hidden while moving. Such infantry units must begin a turn hidden in one 30-meter hex, then move into an adjacent hex with rough or wooded terrain at the rate of 1 hex per turn without revealing the unit's existence. The owning player must keep track of the hexes the unit moves through. The unit must be revealed when it engages in combat or leaves rough or wooded terrain.

Infantry units which are moving while hidden may not engage in Close Assaults or the Special Infantry Ambush Option described below.

Special Infantry Ambush Option: If both players agree, those BattleMechs which enter a hex containing hidden infantry during their movement phase may be attacked *while they are moving*. If, during movement, a BattleMech enters a hex containing hidden enemy infantry, the infantry may declare a close attack as the 'Mech passes. The 'Mech stops its movement and the combat results of the infantry attack are resolved.

After damage is applied against the 'Mech, it may then either remain in that hex or continue its movement, at the pilot's choice. If it remains in that hex, it may attack the infantry either during the Combat phase of the turn, or during the Physical Attack phase. If the damage suffered by the 'Mech is severe enough to hinder or stop movement, that damage is applied for the remainder of the 'Mech's movement. For example, a critical hit to the 'Mech's hip will halve its available MPs (with fractions rounded up). If a *Wasp* (6 walking MPs) has already expended 4 MPs when it receives a critical hit to its hip due to an ambush by hidden infantry, its remaining 2 MPs for that movement phase are halved to 1. The *Wasp* will be able to expend only 1 more MP before ending its movement.

Infantry which attacks a passing 'Mech during the Movement Phase may not attack again during that turn, either during the Weapons Attack Phase or during the Close Assault Phase. If attacked by the same or another 'Mech in either the Weapons Phase or the Close Assault Phase, they may receive fire or physical attacks but may not fire again.

The Special Ambush Option may not be exercised against airborne (jumping) 'Mechs passing over a unit's position. It may only be used against 'Mechs walking or running through the hex.

Infantry which moves or fires on other units from ambush is considered to have revealed its position; it is then revealed to the opposing player by being placed on the map.

Anti-Mech Infantry: The rules for Close Assault tactics by infantry against 'Mechs are presented under the title Anti-'Mech Infantry, on page 47 of *The Rules of Warfare*, from FASA. Note that any type of infantry may attack 'Mechs (or try to), but specially-trained and -equipped anti-'Mech infantry receives an added advantage in being able to execute close assaults without modifications for movement or terrain.

This type of attack represents an assault made with satchel charges and other special weapons by elite troops.

Tactics: Infantry units do not survive long against BattleMechs at short range. However, the judicious use of infantry, especially in prepared, hidden positions, can be an important tactic in 'Mech combat, especially for the Defender.

In particular, if the Special Infantry Ambush Option is used, hidden troops can serve as a kind of tripwire in advance of a Defender's main positions. They can slow advancing BattleMechs and armored vehicles and inflict enough damage to make a critical difference at a later stage of the battle.

Another use of infantry is to deploy them in ambush in the same hex as friendly 'Mechs or vehicles in the hope of luring an Attacker in for a Close Assault. When the Attacker enters the hex and combat is transferred to the Close Assault Hex, the appearance of infantry (especially anti-'Mech infantry) hidden in the same hex can come as a nasty surprise to an Attacker who was counting on an easy kill.

Players should not become too attached to their infantry units, however. Against BattleMechs, they rarely last very long.

WALKOVER

Ambush at Groffer's Pass

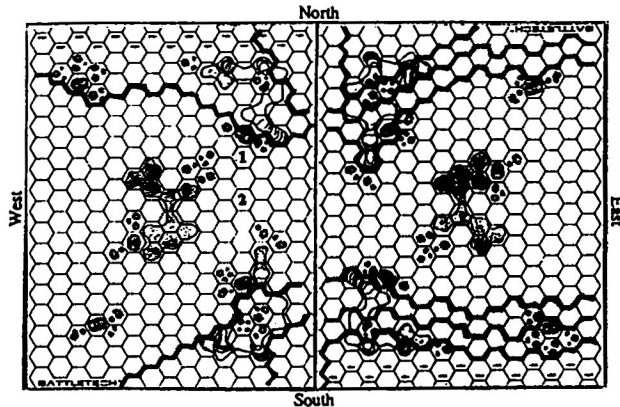
We had our orders: deploy at the mouth of the valley east of the spaceport and hold it. Bucky's *Thunderbolt* was deployed on the south, and my *Crusader* was to the north. The idea was that if our boys had to withdraw, it would be through that pass... and things were really heating up on the spacefield spread out below us. It was beginning to look as though a retreat might be a real good idea.

The invaders had mauled us already. They hadn't come down where our air-space tracking said they were going to come down... then they didn't do what any sane invasion force should have done and hit us in the rear. No, they just scrambled for the spaceport at Groffer's Toll and left us standing flat footed.

We didn't find out they'd left tanks behind to catch us in our pursuit until they cut loose at close range. We only lost a couple of 'Mechs in the exchange, but a lot of our people were pretty badly chewed up by the time we fought our way clear. Somehow, the counterattack out of the surrounding hills didn't seem like all that much of a surprise. We were up against professionals, and they were hitting us hard, with skill and precision and a deadly will to close and destroy.

So Bucky and I held the pass. How were we supposed to know the Davion mercs had still another trick up their sleeve? We didn't see that enemy lance moving up behind us until a passing *Trebuchet* caught sight of them and yelled a warning...

from *Mechfire: Life and Death on the Capellan Marches*
by MechWarrior Sergeant
Vladimir Hoskins, (ret.)



GAME SET-UP

Lay out the BattleTech mapsheets as shown, or use a sheet of blank hex grid paper. All terrain features are considered to be open, level ground. The lines on the map above represent terrain levels, where the valley sides rise towards high ground to north and south.

Players who prefer to use the optional rules variants presented in this issue of BattleTechnology can represent the valley's terrain as they please. The valley should measure about 360 meters across at its narrowest point.

Defender

The Defender represents elements of the 1st Ariana Fusiliers.

Bill "Bucky" Kingston's *Thunderbolt*

Piloting 4, Gunnery 5

Vladimir Hoskins' *Crusader*

Piloting 3, Gunnery 4

John Jorgenson's *Trebuchet*

Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Set up as shown, the *Thunderbolt* at "1" and the *Crusader* at "2." Both 'Mechs are facing west. The *Trebuchet*'s entry onto the board is determined by the special rules on the next page.

Attacker

The Attacker is three 'Mechs from the Fire Lance, 2nd Battalion, Company B of the 71st Light Horse.

Sgt. Simon Lascher's *Wolverine*

Piloting 3, Gunnery 4

Paul Langley's *Vindicator*

Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Jacob Engler's *Griffin*

Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Lascher's *Wolverine* has 3 hits to the armor of its left leg, 4 armor hits in its left torso, and 2 armor hits in its left arm. It begins the battle with 18 stored Autocannon rounds instead of the usual 20.

The Attacker enters the board on Turn 1 on any hex along the east edge of the map.

Special Rules

The scenario opens with the Attacker finding himself in a position to surprise the Defender. He automatically has the initiative, and may move, while the Defender must remain in place. The Defender may not fire. The Attacker may open fire at any time, but as soon as he does so, surprise is lost and the Defender may move and fire normally from that point on.

At the beginning of each turn, the Attacker rolls 2D6 immediately before moving his first 'Mech. As soon as the Attacker rolls a 9 or higher, surprise is lost, and the Defender may move and fire normally from that time on. At any time after the 9 or higher is rolled, the Defender may, at his discretion, bring his *Trebuchet* onto the board, entering anywhere on the west edge of the map. Play continues normally after this, with both sides rolling for initiative and both sides moving and firing normally.

Play continues for 15 turns.

Victory Conditions

The Attacker wins by destroying or crippling all enemy 'Mechs on the map, or by controlling the west end of the valley after 15 turns of play. The Defender wins by controlling the west end of the valley, or by destroying or crippling all attacking 'Mechs. Control of the west end of the valley is won by having at least one 'Mech still able to move and fire within five hexes (150 meters if variant 0204-A is used) of the points marked 1 or 2 on the map, with no enemy 'Mechs in the same area.

If neither side controls the west end of the valley, and both sides still have functional 'Mechs on the board at the end of Turn 15, the battle is a draw.

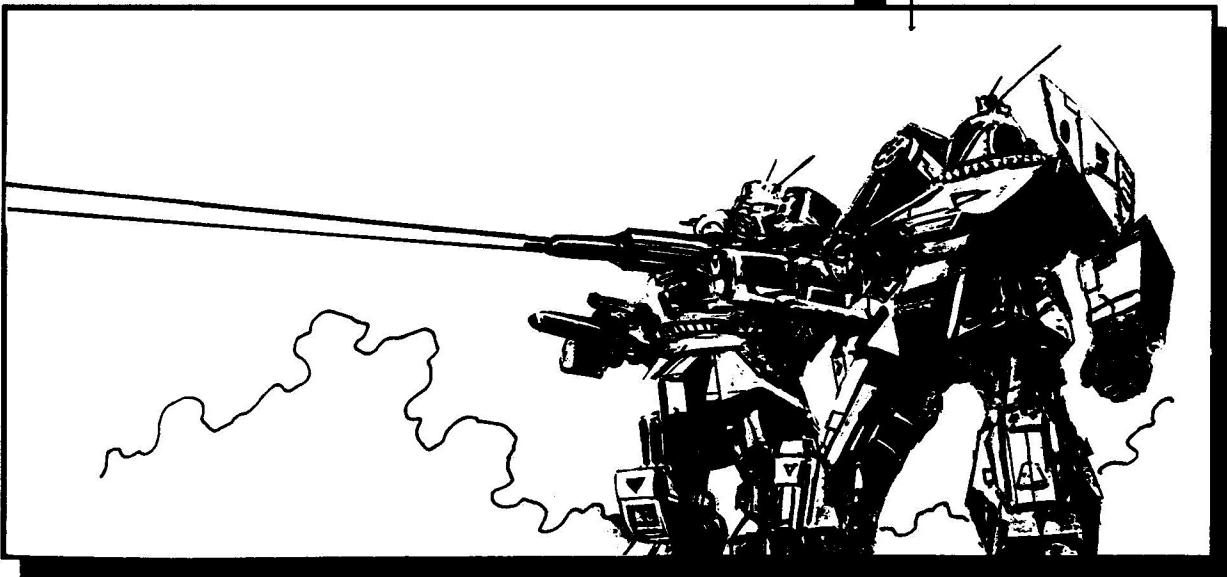
Battle of Groffer's Toll

Groffer's Toll was a small village situated on the rolling plains of the Algolian continent called Vandemar. Its spaceport had been constructed as a civil and merchant facility, but Davion intelligence felt that it would offer an excellent site for landing off-world Liao reinforcements. Capture of the site was assigned to the 71st Light Horse Regiment of the Eridani Light Horse... the famous "White Horse Regiment."

The operation was characterized by an odd blend of bad luck and improvisation. A last-moment change of their assigned DZ, coupled with a slight scattering of the invasion force, resulted in the White Horse regiment grounding ten kilometers away from where the Liao forces had been expecting them. The Capellan defenders, the 1st Ariana Fusiliers, at first formed up as though expecting an attack. When the White Horse ignored them and moved directly towards the spaceport, they gave chase. The mercs' use of armor and infantry to slow and damage the Liao column may have been critical in the battle which followed.

The pursuit ended at the spaceport when the White Horse turned and struck without warning, turning the hunter into the hunted.

This scenario recreates one episode early during the five-hour battle for control of the spaceport.



ASSAULT ON ST. ANDRE

The Battle for Site Seven Alpha

It is too early as yet to properly assess the impact of the recent Federated Suns invasion of St. Andre. The facts, as known, are as follow:

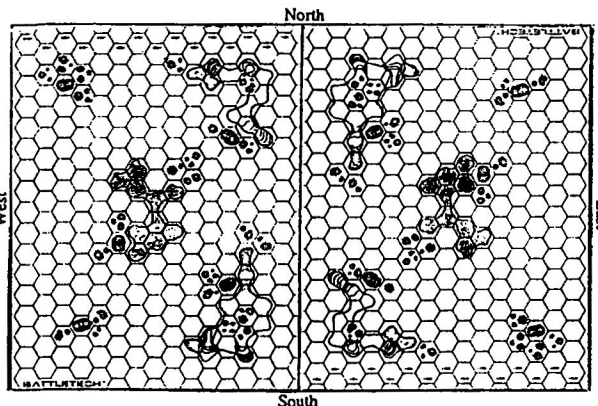
St. Andre is located at a strategic place indeed within the Capellan Confederation. Together with the worlds of Poznan, Styk, Shensi and Pleione—all of which are also targets of the first wave of Davion strikes—St. Andre occupies that single, narrowest volume of Liao-controlled space within the Tikonov and Sarna Commonalities. Davion control of these five worlds would effectively isolate the important Tikonov Commonality from the rest of the Confederation, and sharply reduce the already limited military resources available to House Liao.

Of particular importance to ComStar, however, is the discovery and capture of the archaeological site designated Seven-Alpha, located on the frozen plains of St. Andre's Ivaar Wastes. This ancient Star League storehouse was being excavated by Confederation officers under guidance from the Maskirovka. Needless to say, local ComStar agents were aware of the operation and were on hand to render technical and informational assistance, as usual.

The site was guarded by Fiona Cochraine's battalion of *Goliaths*. The MechWarriors of her command were still training with their newly-acquired machines, but they had had time to become quite proficient in their use. It was felt by Precentor Fallyevi at the Jerome Station that a battalion of *Goliaths* would be more than enough to protect the secrets of Site Seven-Alpha, albeit unknowingly.

Unfortunately, the unorthodox military tactics of Hanse Davion proved that hope untenable...

Excerpt from a fragment of partly burned message tape found on a civilian's body just outside of Jerome, St. Andre, by troopers of the 12th Vegan Rangers, August 25, 3028



GAME SET-UP

Lay out the standard BattleTech maps as shown, or use a large sheet of blank hex paper. All terrain on the map is treated as clear, representing the flat, rocky plains of the Ivaar Wastes.

Defender

The Defender represents elements of Cochraine's *Goliaths*, a battalion-strength BattleMech unit composed almost entirely of GOL-1H *Goliaths*. His forces include the following:

Lieutenant Victor Sandoval
Veteran *Goliath*
Piloting 5, Gunnery 4
MechWarrior Kathy Andurien
Veteran *Goliath*
Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

MechWarrior Chang Wu-lin
Veteran *Goliath*
Piloting 4, Gunnery 5
MechWarrior Loren Connors
Regular *Goliath*
Piloting 5, Gunnery 5

The Defender sets up anywhere on the map. All units must be facing east, and no unit may be within 5 hexes of any edge of the map.

Attacker

The Attacker's forces consist of elements of Delta Company—the Company commander and his lieutenant, plus two five-Mech lances—shortly after making combat drops onto St. Andre a short distance to the rear of Cochraine's *Goliaths*' main body.

Captain Andrew Redburn
Elite *Firestarter*
Piloting 3, Gunnery 3

Lieutenant Robert Craon
Elite *Firestarter*
Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Archer Lance
Archambaud St. Agnan
Veteran *Valkyrie*
Piloting 4, Gunnery 5
Phillip Nablus, *Valkyrie*
Arnold Torroges, *Valkyrie*
William Beaujeu, *Valkyrie*
Gil Erail, *Valkyrie*

Cat Lance
Geoffrey St. Omer
Veteran *Jenner*
Piloting 4, Gunnery 4
Odo St. Armand, *Jenner*
Bernard de Tremelai, *Jenner*
Bertrand Blanquefort, *Javelin*
Roland Montballe, *Javelin*

Situation, 0815 hours, August 22, 3028 St. Andre

The members of the two lances other than St. Agnan and St. Omer, the two lance leaders, may all be considered Regular, with skills of Piloting 5 and Gunnery 5.

The arrival of the Attacker's 'Mechs are determined by rules covered in the Special Rules Section of this scenario.

All 'Mechs are in perfect condition.

Special Rules

The arrival of the Attacker's forces, which have been scattered over a wide area during their combat drop, is largely random. On Turn 1, the Attacker rolls 1D6. The result is the number of 'Mechs (his choice) which may enter on that turn from any hex on the west edge of the map. On Turn 2, he rolls 1D6-1 to determine how many of his 'Mechs may arrive. These 'Mechs may enter the board on any north, south, or west hexside. On Turn 3, the roll is 1D6-2, and so on until all of the Attacker's 'Mechs are on the board. The Attacker must always bring at least one 'Mech onto the board, regardless of the roll.

Except for 'Mechs entering on the first turn, the Attacker's 'Mechs may enter on any hex (the Attacker's choice) on the north, south, or west edge of the map. On each turn, the Attacker must bring at least one 'Mech onto the board. He is not required to bring onto the map all of the 'Mechs to which he is entitled by his roll. 'Mechs which may enter but which are held back instead are not added to the total entering on the next turn. Instead, they are included with all 'Mechs which have not yet arrived and may enter on later turns as the die rolls permit.

Miniatures Combat

Players who wish to use Optional Rules 0204-A and 0204-B may dispense with the map, of course. The battlefield should represent an area measuring roughly 600 meters x 1000 meters.

The Attacker will find the optional Close Assault rules (0204-B) of use in simulating the 2- and 3-to-1 odds used by Redburn's Delta Company in this action.

Victory Conditions

The Attacker wins by destroying or crippling all of the Defender's 'Mechs. A 'Mech is "crippled" if it cannot move *and* its main PPC has been knocked out of action.

The Defender wins either by destroying all enemy 'Mechs on the board at one time or by avoiding the Attacker's victory conditions.

Tactical Notes

The Defender has the advantage in tonnage and armor, while the Attacker has the advantage in maneuverability and firepower. Nonetheless, the Attacker will face a serious problem if his scattered forces arrive only a few at a time and must duel with the *Goliaths* while waiting for the arrival of reinforcements. He must use his maneuverability to avoid taking heavy damage, while waiting for the arrival of sufficient numbers to overwhelm the enemy.

The Defender is slow but can take a great deal of damage before his 'Mechs are severely disabled. He must attempt to isolate the Attackers and destroy them as they come into range, before they can mobilize for an all-out assault. At all costs, the Defender must attempt to avoid closing with the light and medium Attackers. His long range weapons will suffer seriously in their accuracy at close range.

LOCATION: Site 7-Alpha, Ivaar Wastes, St. Andre

While planning his massive August invasion, Hanse Davion had given special consideration to the barren and empty wastes of St. Andre's large northern continent. Site Seven-Alpha was the location of a Liao archaeological dig, where the half-legendary Star League had maintained a storage facility some two or three centuries before. Guarding the dig was a battalion composed largely of GOL-1H *Goliaths*, commanded by Fiona Cochraine.

While two regiments of the 12th Vegan Rangers invested the city of Jerome, two battalions of the Davion Light Guards RCT descended towards Site Seven-Alpha. Unexpectedly strong Liao fighter cover forced the 2nd Battalion to land more than 30 kilometers north of the target. The 1st battalion landed on target and engaged Cochraine's *Goliaths*.

Andrew Redburn's Delta Company was a special close assault unit composed of 27 light and medium 'Mechs, piloted by MechWarriors trained in BattleMech close assault tactics. The inspiration of Hanse Davion, Delta was expected to pit numbers and maneuverability against armor and firepower. The Delta Company 'Mechs had the opportunity to prove Davion's notion when Redburn ignored a wave-off order from his commanding officer already on the ground and landed in the *Goliaths*' rear.

The scenario presented here represents one phase of the resulting clash.

GOLIATHS ON ST. ANDRE

Climax at St. Andre

The climax of the struggle for Site Seven-Alpha hinged on that aspect of combat which can never be predicted, and rarely be controlled. If only that essence of human battle fury could be isolated, prescribed, administered as we would a drug!

Though the Davion forces of the so-called Delta Company enjoyed early success, the telling weight of tonnage and numbers soon turned against them. Outnumbered, the *Valkyries* and *Firestarters* were no match at all for the *Goliaths* which, though slow, could withstand far more damage than the light 'Mechs.

The Delta Company commander appears to have panicked. At some point in the melee, he launched his *Firestarter* on its jumpjets and collided—probably by accident—with a Liao *Goliath*. By a strange twist of fate, the *Goliath* happened to be the command 'Mech of Major Fiona Cochraine.

Both 'Mechs were destroyed, and Fiona Cochraine was killed. It is believed that Redburn survived, though he took no further part in the action. His unit, however, entered an almost *berserker*-like frenzy, launching a counterattack which caught Cochraine's *Goliaths*, momentarily stunned and disorganized by the loss of their leader, by surprise.

In the resulting melee, the *Goliaths* were driven back into the sights of the Light Guards' 1st Battalion. Minutes later, the 2nd Battalion arrived on the scene, and the trap was closed.

None of the *Goliaths* escaped the field.

Excerpt from a fragment of partly burned message tape found on a civilian's body just outside of Jerome, St. Andre, by troopers of the 12th Vegan Rangers, August 25, 3028

GAME SET-UP

This scenario may be played on a blank hex sheet, or on standard BattleTech mapsheets laid out as shown to the right. All terrain is considered to be flat and open, representing the barren wastes of the Ivaar Plains.

Players who wish to use Optional Rules Variants 0204-A and 0204-B do not need to use a map. The playing area should represent ground covering approximately 1000 meters by 500 meters. The starting positions of each 'Mech may be approximated by looking at the map.

Defender

The Defender represents elements of Fiona Cochraine's battalion at Site Seven-Alpha, on St. Andre. These forces include the following:

1. Major Fiona Cochraine: Elite *Goliath*
Piloting 4, Gunnery 4
2. MechWarrior Raymond DeSanto: Veteran *Goliath*
Piloting 5, Gunnery 4
3. MechWarrior Paul Caesario: Veteran *Goliath*
Piloting 5, Gunnery 4

These 'Mechs are placed on the map first, positioned in the numbered hexes as shown. They are facing west.

Attacker

The Attacker represents 'Mechs of the battered Delta Company of the Davion Light Guards. Initially, these include:

- A. Captain Andrew Redburn: Elite *Firestarter*
Piloting 3, Gunnery 3
- B. Lieutenant Robert Craon: Elite *Firestarter*
Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

These two begin the fight in the hexes marked A and B, respectively. As the battle unfolds, Davion reinforcements may arrive. These may include any of the ten 'Mechs in Archer and Cat Lances. Each of these lances comprises four 'Mechs *in addition* to the lance commander.

Archer Lance

Archambaud St. Agnan
Veteran *Valkyrie*
Piloting 4, Gunnery 5

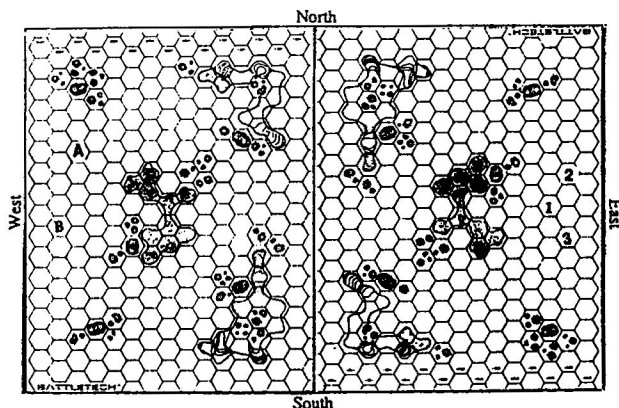
Demon Lance

Andrew Montbard
Veteran *Valkyrie*
Piloting 4, Gunnery 4

Details on the other MechWarriors in these two lances, and their 'Mechs, may be found in the previous scenario on pages 52 and 53. The arrival of the Attacker's 'Mechs are determined by rules covered in the Special Rules Section of this scenario.

The players may, if they wish, overlap the scenario on page 52—*Assault on St. Andre*—with this scenario—*Goliaths at St. Andre*. In this case, damage suffered by 'Mechs in the first scenario should be carried over to 'Mechs which are used in this scenario. 'Mechs which are destroyed in the first engagement may not be used here.

Situation, 1024 hours, August 22, 3028 St. Andre



Special Rules

The Attacker always has the initiative in this engagement.

The scenario begins with only the two *Firestarters* on the map, facing three *Goliaths*. One is Fiona Cochraine's command 'Mech, and it is assumed that Andrew Redburn has identified her vehicle from its markings.

The odds will remain three to two until Cochraine's 'Mech is destroyed or crippled ("crippled" here means both immobile and with its PPC out of action) or Andrew Redburn is dead or unconscious. Once either of these conditions is fulfilled, the Davion reinforcements may arrive on the board. No more than three 'Mechs may arrive on the board during any one turn. They may arrive from the north, west, or south edges of the map (Attacker's choice) or in any combination of the three.

Victory Conditions

The Defender wins by exiting at least two 'Mechs, including Fiona Cochraine's command 'Mech, off the west edge of the board. The Attacker wins by triggering a berserker frenzy and destroying or crippling all three *Goliaths*. Any other result is a draw.

Tactical Notes

The Defender is attempting to move his command 'Mech to a position from which Cochraine can coordinate her counterattack against Delta Company. If that 'Mech is destroyed and Cochraine is killed, the Defender's position may quickly deteriorate into chaos. The Defender must attempt to use the three *Goliaths* in tandem to keep stray Davion 'Mechs (such as the two *Firestarters*) at bay.

The Attacker is growing desperate and must take desperate measures if he is to rally his shattered command. Only the destruction of the enemy command 'Mech will suffice... plus the psychological edge gained by a force which has lost a beloved and respected commanding officer. The Attacker has no choice. He must identify the command *Goliath*, close to point-blank range, and attempt to destroy it by close assault. Death From Above is one option, but if the Davion player misses, he will probably not get a second chance.

LOCATION: Site Seven-Alpha, Ivaar Wastes, St. Andre

As the battle unfolded near Site Seven-Alpha, Delta Company enjoyed an early and unprecedented success. At least five *Goliaths* were destroyed or put out of the fight, and the others were momentarily confused by the disconcerting losses within their ranks.

Unfortunately, at this point in the contest, 1st Battalion was largely out of the fight, having been forced to withdraw shortly before Redburn's 'Mechs entered the action. As a result, some 27 light and medium 'Mechs found themselves facing an aroused herd of at least 30 heavy Battle-Mechs, most of them *Goliaths*.

Speed and maneuverability were not enough in these conditions. The rocky plain was empty of cover, save for burning 'Mechs, and there were no options for evasion, maneuver, or tactics. Though Redburn's unit enjoyed a small advantage when fighting at close range, Cochraine's MechWarriors soon learned to cover one another, even if it meant directing fire at comrades. The *Goliaths* could stand up to friendly fire much longer than *Firestarters* or *Valkyries*.

Andrew Redburn's decision at this point is still being debated. Was it an act of supreme heroism... or of desperation? Perhaps the answer must include a mixture of both. Redburn, having identified the BattleMech piloted by Fiona Cochraine, the *Goliaths*' commander, launched a Death From Above assault, sending a 35-ton *Firestarter* crashing onto an 80-ton *Goliath*.

This scenario recreates that action.

RENEGADES LOST

Redfield's Renegades on Aldebaran

"We'd set down a good twenty clicks apart from the 4th Deneb, see? Redfield's Renegades were supposed to be operating in support of the 4th, but things were kind of screwed up, know what I mean?"

"No, I don't know what you mean."

"Hell, you know. The change in plans."

"What change in plans?"

"Look, I already told you! The top CO, Marshal Drivers. He decided the invasion fleet should split up. He took the Fourth Guards up to the north part of the planet. The 4th Deneb he sent south. Redfield's Renegades were attached to the 4th Deneb. We were supposed to back 'em up. Support, see?"

"What was your objective?"

"Uh... I really don't know..."

"You want to tell us, MechWarrior Paderewski."

"Uh... yeah. Sure. But I don't know. I'm just a MechWarrior, y'know? I... ah! Ahh!"

"What was the Renegades' objective?"

"Aw, cripes, mister! You don't have to do that! I told you, I don't know! We were lost... our whole company!"

"You expect us to believe that? You were masquerading as Liao 'Mechs! It was a trick!"

"No! Please! You got it wrong! We were lost! We ran into your people by accident!"

"At the pass."

"Yeah. Campo Pass. The Liao 'Mechs were stringing out along the pass. Like they was settin' an ambush or waitin' for somebody! Only we blundered into them from another direction."

"Who told you the Liao 'Mechs were there?"

"Nobody! I told you, we blundered into 'em! We didn't... ah!"

"You want to tell us, Private."

"I do! I swear I do! Please, keep your hand off that button! Please!"

Partial transcript of taped recording discovered among the files of Colonel Janus Wu, agent of the Capellan Maskirovka. Tarling, Aldebaran V, August 25, 3028

GAME SET-UP

Lay out the BattleTech maps as shown. With the exception of the heavy black lines marked 1, 2, 3, and 4, all terrain is considered to be clear.

The black lines are contour lines for the south wall of a valley, representing elevations. Line 1 is at an elevation of 1, line 2 at an elevation of 2, and so on. The clear ground along the south edge of the mapboard is clear, flat ground along the crest of a ridge. The ground north of the terrain lines is the floor of a valley, called Campo Pass.

Players who prefer to use the Optional Variants 0204-A and 0204-B may dispense with the map. The battlefield should incorporate an area at least 1000 meters long (east to west) and 450 meters wide (north to south).

Defender

The Defender controls forces representing Warrior House Ijori under the command of Major Thomasina Frou. Frou has deployed one battalion of 'Mechs along the crest of a ridge, through which a large Davion column is expected to pass within a few hours. Her object is to lie in wait for the Davion column, ambushing it from the crest of the ridge as it moves along Campo Pass.

This scenario represents Frou's extreme right during her initial deployment. The 'Mechs available to the Defender, belonging to two of Frou's mobile lances, are the following:

Lieutenant Harold van Buren Veteran <i>Vindicator</i> Piloting 4, Gunnery 4	MechWarrior Carlos Young Veteran <i>Vindicator</i> Piloting 4, Gunnery 5
MechWarrior Roger Schubert Veteran <i>Enforcer</i> Piloting 4, Gunnery 5	MechWarrior Karl Oberhoff Regular <i>Assassin</i> Piloting 5, Gunnery 5
MechWarrior Kim Yu Pak Veteran <i>Clint</i> Piloting 5, Gunnery 5	MechWarrior Bradley Fitzpatrick Regular <i>Stinger</i> Piloting 5, Gunnery 5
MechWarrior Yvonne Logan Veteran <i>Blackjack</i> Piloting 5, Gunnery 5	MechWarrior Karen Almundssen Veteran <i>Stinger</i> Piloting 4, Gunnery 5

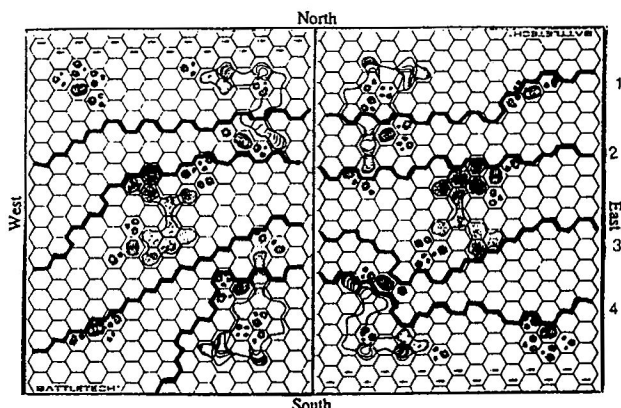
The Defender sets up anywhere along the ridge south of Campo Pass. 'Mechs may be positioned anywhere and at any elevation desired. However, no Defender may move until it is released, as described in the Special Rules.

Attacker

The Attacker represents elements of the mercenary unit known as Redfield's Renegades. They include the following:

Lieutenant Matthew Fairchilde Elite <i>Phoenix Hawk</i> Piloting 4, Gunnery 4	MechWarrior Kathy Corabella Veteran <i>Valkyrie</i> Piloting 5, Gunnery 5
MechWarrior Cindi Theisson Veteran <i>Phoenix Hawk</i> Piloting 4, Gunnery 4	MechWarrior Wallace Halvid Veteran <i>Stinger</i> Piloting 4, Gunnery 5
MechWarrior Terrance Larrimore Veteran <i>Hatchetman</i> Piloting 4, Gunnery 5	MechWarrior Opie Paderewski Veteran <i>Locust</i> Piloting 5, Gunnery 5

Situation: 1520 hours, August 23, 3028
Aldebaran V



The Attacker rolls 1D6 to determine where he will enter the mapboard on Turn 1. On a roll of 1-2, he enters on the south edge of the western map sheet. On a 3 - 4 he enters on the south edge of the eastern map sheet. On a 5 - 6 he enters anywhere on the east edge of the eastern mapsheet.

Special Rules

The Liao forces were setting a trap for a Davion force expected to appear on the floor of Camp Pass, coming from the east. Redfield's Renegades, lost and searching for their main body, encountered the ambushing forces from behind and were not immediately recognized as Davion 'Mechs.

To represent the initial confusion, the Liao 'Mechs may not move or fire until they are released, or until they, or any other 'Mech within 4 hexes (120 meters) of their position, are fired on. On each turn, roll 2D6 for each unreleased Liao 'Mech. On a roll of 9+, the 'Mech is released and may move or fight normally. Unreleased 'Mechs count towards the Defender's victory conditions.

'Mechs which are fired upon (even if the fire misses), or which are within 4 hexes of any 'Mech (friend or foe) which is fired upon, are free to move and fire normally during the next turn.

Victory Conditions

The Defender wins by accumulating points for enemy 'Mechs destroyed and for friendly 'Mechs kept on the ridge above Campo Pass. He receives 1 point per ton of enemy 'Mech destroyed, and 1 point per ton of friendly 'Mech which remains unreleased.

The Attacker accumulates 1 point per ton of enemy 'Mech destroyed, and 1 point per ton of friendly 'Mech which remains operational on the ridge by the end of Turn 15. The side with the higher number of Victory Points at the end of the game wins.

Tactical Notes

The Defender must maintain as many 'Mechs as possible in an unreleased condition, awaiting the arrival of the main Davion force. He will have to balance his forces, attempting to destroy the attacking 'Mechs with the smallest tonnage of his own 'Mechs he can manage.

The Attacker must attempt to engage all of the Attacker's 'Mechs, forcing them to abandon the ambush. The more Attacker 'Mechs which survive the engagement the better, of course.

Battle of Campo Pass

The plans for the invasion of Aldebaran had long been set and agreed to. For reasons still not entirely understood, Marshal Eugene Drivers divided his invasion force, ordering simultaneous invasions of Aldebaran V's principal north and south continents. Drivers, in overall command of the entire operation, would take his Fourth Guards RCT to the original landing zone near the important city of Chouchu. He ordered Marshal Vernon Fredricks, commander of the 4th Deneb RCT, together with the mercenary Redfield's Renegades, to redirect his landing to Aldebaran's southern continent.

Such last-minute reorganizations in any large-scale military plan invite disaster. Drivers' plan was probably an attempt to react to recently-acquired intelligence which suggested that the Liao forces on Aldebaran had also been divided between the two continents. However, the immediate result was confusion among the lower-ranking commanders of both groups. Targets and objectives had to be assigned and reassigned, often with an incomplete understanding of the terrain or the strategic background. The southern force, in particular, was forced to operate in terrain for which they had inadequate maps and only the sketchiest of first-hand reports.

Fortunately for the Davion offensive, Drivers' decision seems to have confused the Liao defenders as much as it did the attackers. They did not immediately realize that the mercenary unit known as Redfield's Renegades had landed some distance away from the main southern invasion group or that it was operating more or less independently. As a result, local Liao forces belonging to Warrior House Ijori, commanded by Major Thomasina Frou, deployed a battalion of light and medium 'Mechs to ambush the Davion force, unaware that Redfield's Renegades were moving parallel to the Davion column, on a collision course with Frou's force.

Frou, though heavily outnumbered, had settled on a plan which promised an excellent chance of success. Her 'Mechs would strike from ambush time and time again, fading into the well-known hilly, wooded terrain when the Davion 'Mechs concentrated their forces, and reappearing at another point when they dispersed. Such hit-and-run tactics, she realized, might wear the invader down by sheer attrition.

Her first attempt did not reckon with Redfield's Renegades who were, in fact, completely lost...

More Than Warriors

The Hundred Pipers

words by Sir Robert Kincaid

With a hun - dred pi - pers and a', and a',
With a hun - dred pi - pers and a', and a',
We'll up and give them a blaw, a blaw,
With a hun - dred pi - pers and a', and a'.
So it's o - ver the bor - ders a - wa', a - wa',
And raise loud your shouts of Hur - rah! Hur - rah!
New Av - a - lon's hosts come to win or to fa',
With a hun - dred pi - pers and a', and a'.

CHORUS

With a hun - dred pi - pers and a', and a',
With a hun - dred pi - pers and a', and a',
We'll up and give them a blaw, a blaw,
With a hun - dred pi - pers and a', and a'.

The Hundred Pipers

words by Sir Robert Kincaid

"From far Crucis they come sae braw, sae braw,
"Brave soldiers all marching to war, to war,
"To answer the Davion's ca', the ca',
"Of a hundred pipers and a', and a'.
"The Prince and his bride are awa', awa',
"On Earth for their wedding and a', and a',
"While the soldiers to battle they go, they go,
"With a hundred pipers and a', and a'."

CHORUS

"Dumbfounded, Liaos all saw, they saw,
"Tanks, BattleMechs, fighters, and a', and a',
"And dumbfounded they heard the blaw, the blaw,
"Of a hundred pipers and a', and a'.
"Upon the high ridge crest they saw, they saw,
"The big Long Tom cannon's great maw, its maw,
"And knew their planet would fa', would fa',
"To those hundred pipers and a', and a'."

CHORUS

"The 'Mechs stood together saw tall, saw tall,
"As they strode into battle, and all, and all,
"Their bodies a great metal wall, a wall,
"To screen all the pipers and all, and all.
"The men raised a shout of Hurrah! Hurrah!
"Storming into the battlefield's maw, the maw,
"And over the sounds of the combat saw raw,
"Played the hundred pipers and a', and a'."

CHORUS

"We'll take on Kurita, Liao, and a',
"For glory and honor, Hurrah! Hurrah!
"We'll follow our Prince into Hell's black maw!
"With a hundred pipers and a', and a'.
"So loud sound the clarion ca', the ca',
"For peace and order and law, and law,
"For Freedom from the Dragon's claw, the claw,
"With a hundred pipers and a', and a'."

CHORUS

Davion's Hundred Pipers

During the offensive into Liao territory, a pivotal part of the fighting hinged on the invasion of Algol by the 3rd Davion Guards RCT, supported by the White Horse Regiment of the Eridani Light Horse. In this campaign, the Liao forces were repeatedly outmaneuvered by the superior tactics employed by their Davion opponents.

At the height of the conflict, outside the city of Schan, the 3rd Guards faced a battalion of Ariana Fusiliers in a key engagement. The commander of the Davion contingent, Marshal Hobaugh, made a flamboyant gesture early in the battle by ordering the massed pipe band of the RCT, a hundred men strong, to play a string of marches and reels over an improvised PA system. In the early morning fog, the effect was utterly demoralizing. The battle which followed saw the total defeat of the Fusiliers, largely due to the artillery bombardment of well-sited Long Toms overlooking the Liao position.

After the battle Sir Robert Kincaid, a staff officer attached to the Marshal's command, penned these verses to commemorate the battle. Set to the tune of a much older song with the same title, it rapidly became a favorite marching tune among Davion troops on the Liao front. It is notable in that its references to "the Dragon's claw" show the echoes of long-time Davion propaganda efforts; in this Fourth Succession War, the Federated Suns has made it clear that House Kurita is regarded as the main enemy, the puppetmaster behind Maximilian Liao. Even as fighting goes on against the Capellan Confederation, strategists and soldiers alike are already looking towards the ultimate showdown with the forces of Takashi Kurita.

Letters to the Editor

Dear BattleTechnology:

I am writing this letter in response to your sidebar on page 15 of BattleTechnology, Issue 0102.

Reading the article "The David Ambush," concerning the ordeal on Penobscot, I was greatly impressed by the strategy and tactics of Lieutenant David Fletcher (formerly of Varrick's Vandals, an impressive unit in my opinion).

Destroying an AS7-D Atlas takes incredible skill, and Lt. Fletcher is to be congratulated. Although I cannot offer him a position as Lance Commander, there are many chances for career advancement in the Eridani Light Horse.

In the 17th Recon Battalion, 71st White Horse Regiment, I have an opening in the 16th Recon Company. Records will show that MechWarrior Marie Emanuelle has fulfilled her contract as of June 17 of this year, leaving an open slot in the Recon Lance known as Altescu's Anarchists. If he accepts, Lt. Fletcher would hold the number three position in the lance, under Lieutenant Peter Altescu.

Please inform MechWarrior Fletcher of this offer. Should he indicate interest, we will then discuss salary and benefits.

Respectfully yours,
Brevet General Nathan Armstrong
High Command, Eridani Light Horse

PS—You may inform Lieutenant Altescu himself of David Fletcher's decision.

Interested in doing a follow-up interview, BattleTechnology attempted to track down Lieutenant Fletcher at his last-known address on Galatea. Unfortunately, the lieutenant could not be located and was rumored to have accepted a contract with a recruiting officer for another mercenary regiment.

Though the identity of the regiment could not be confirmed, informants reported that Lt. Fletcher had been seen several times in the company of a striking, blond young woman named "Lori." The description fits one Lt. Lori Kalmar, who has been known to visit Galatea from time to time while recruiting for the merc regiment known as the Gray Death Legion.

Has Fletcher joined Grayson Carlyle's Gray Death? Since the beginning of the Fourth Successor War, the Legion has been rumored to be carrying out deep strikes into Kurita space from bases along the Lyran frontier. If so, Lt. Fletcher will certainly have an opportunity to demonstrate his grasp of strategy and tactics in the near future!

WE HAVE THOSE HARD-TO-FIND GOLIATH PARTS!

Yes, at long last, we have those impossible-to-come-by spares and replacements for the GOL-1H *Goliath*! Whether it's a high-pressure circulator for a Brigadier 1000F, a Nennison Hi-Gard C-span coupling, or a V-2020 sighting coil for the Rand PPC, chances are, we've got it! Send us full specs for the part or parts you need and we'll quote you a price. Sorry, no C.O.D.s. Delivery guaranteed to almost any world in the Inner Sphere for only a small per-parsec fee! Combat zones may cost extra.

Send queries to BATTLETECHNIC, c/o Box 1177, Highport, Exeter or write direct: Smiling Jack's Scavenger Shack, 42 Melboah Station, Ivaar Province, St. Andre.

INCOMING!

In the next,
action-packed issue
of BattleTechnology...

WAR!

- Hanse Davion's invasion of the Capellan Confederation has sent the flames of war racing across the Inner Sphere. BattleTechnology will continue to bring you news of the war as it happens direct from every front. Watch for continuing updates and exclusive battlefield reports in our new feature section—*Reports from the Front.*
- Skyfall
—Lyran AeroSpace fighters face the Marik onslaught on the border world of Wyatt
- Away Boarders!
—Ace investigative reporter Harrison Coulter takes an in-depth look at the strategy and tactics of free-fall combat aboard spacecraft and deep-space facilities.
- Plus other feature articles; regular columns; battlefield simulations; stories; and news from the Inner Sphere

**AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!
DON'T MISS IT!**

Disclaimer—

The sudden onset of the war has resulted in considerable confusion and inconvenience—not to mention outright danger—for members of the interstellar news media. This unexpected turn of events forced the editors of BattleTechnology to cancel those stories and articles announced for this issue, including a discussion about the possibilities for lasting peace in the Inner Sphere, and a close look at Melissa Steiner's wedding gown. BattleTechnology regrets any inconvenience this change may have caused our readers. However, BattleTechnology retains the right to make any such last-minute changes to our announced line-up of feature articles as last-breaking news stories continue to unfold.

THE GOLDEN

Medusas™



IT'S NOT WIN
OR LOSE BUT
HOW YOU PLAY
THE GAME?

SHE AIN'T
NO PRINCESS!

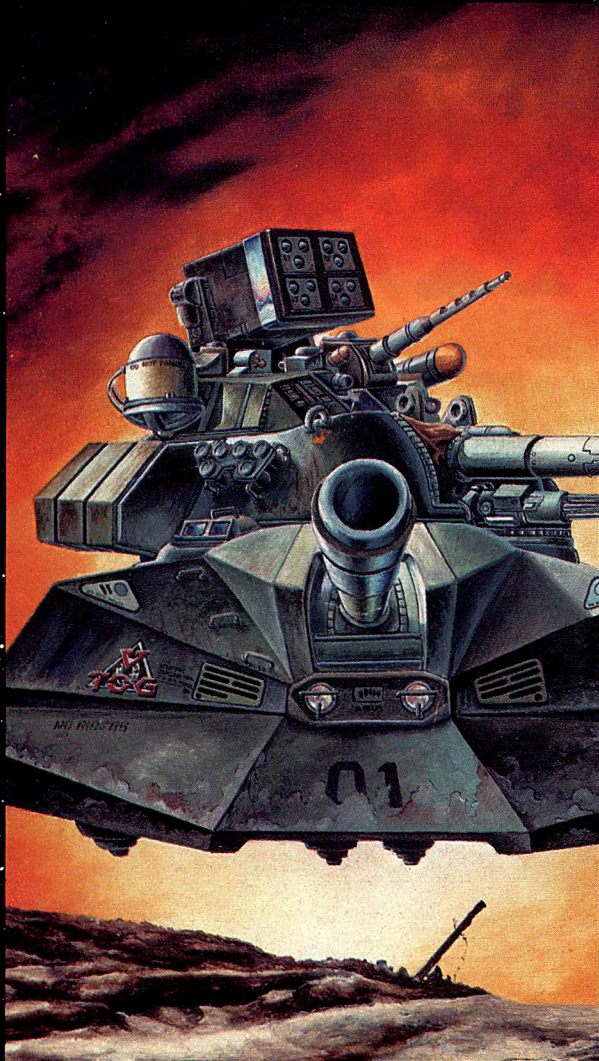
AND TO HER,
WINNING IS
EVERYTHING.

Join Captain Cassandra Lynn-Bader and the rest of the battle-hardened GOLDEN MEDUSAS in a series of major battles and minor skirmishes with their arch rivals, the ORCA Squad of the DEATH EXPRESS Fighter Wing.

The GOLDEN MEDUSAS is an adventure pack for Renegade Legion:™ Interceptor™. It contains complete history, personalities, and combat readiness for both the GOLDEN MEDUSAS and the ORCA Squadron, as well as 15 combat scenarios.

FASA
CORPORATION

RENEGADE LEGION
INTERCEPTOR
SCENARIO PACK



VICTORY IS EARNED WITH...

BLOOD

A N D

STEEL!

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

YOU RIDE IN 250 TONS OF MOLECULARLY ALIGNED CRYSTALLINE TITANIUM, WEDDED TO A CERAMIC ABLATIVE SHIELDING. YOU CARRY A 200mm GAUSS CANNON, TWO MASSIVE 10 GIGAWATT LASERS, TWO SMLM FIRE-AND-FORGET ANTI-TANK MISSILES, A VULCAN IV POINT DEFENSE ANTI-MISSILE SYSTEM, AND A MEDLEY OF OTHER EQUALLY LETHAL ARMOR DEFEATING WEAPONS.

YOUR VEHICLE IS THE ULTIMATE PRODUCT OF 4000 YEARS OF ARMED WARFARE.
YOUR LIFE EXPECTANCY IS LESS THAN TWO MINUTES.

RENEGADE LEGION™

CENTURION

B L O O D & S T E E L